

Avicenna

SHIFĀ' (HEALING)
Al-Nafs (Psychology)
Book 4¹

*Chapter One: In Which is Contained the Discourse
Concerning the Internal Senses Belonging to Animals*

As for the common sense, it is in reality other than what the people teach who suppose that the common sensibles belong to the common sense. Rather, the common sense is the faculty to which all of the sensibles are conveyed. For if there were not a single faculty which perceived the coloured thing and the tangible thing, then we would not be able to distinguish between them, saying that this is not that. Suppose that this power of discrimination belongs to the intellect. Then it would be necessary that, without a doubt, the intellect would have to find them together, in order for it to distinguish between them. And this is because, insofar as they are sensible, and of the species of what is sensed, they are not perceived by the intellect, as we will explain later. But we do [in fact] discriminate between them; so it is necessary that there must be some collation of them in the thing discriminating [between them], either in itself, or in something else. But this is impossible in the case of the intellect, as you will learn later. So it is necessary that this take place in another power. And if it were not the case that they are collated in the imagination (*al-khayāl*), of beasts who have no intellect, but who incline through their appetite towards sweetness, for example, that something whose form is of this sort is sweet, then it would not be the case that whenever they saw such a thing, they would move to eat it. Just as, if it were not the case that we had [such a power] in us, to [discern] that the white is the singer, then when we heard his individual singing, we would not confirm him [to be] the self-same individual, and vice versa. And if there were not in the animal something which collates in it the forms of the sensibles, living would be impossible for them; so too if smell did not signify taste for them, nor sound signify taste for them, and if the form of wood were not remembered as the form of pain, so that they shrink from it. So it is absolutely necessary for these forms to have a single meeting place within [the animal.]

And the existence of this faculty has already been shown to us from considerations of the things which show that it has an instrument other than the external senses, from the fact that everything seems to us to be moving in a circle

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when we imagine something moving a circle.² For this is either an accident that befalls the visible objects, or an accident which befalls the instruments by which the vision is completed. And if it is not in the visible objects, it is without a doubt in some other thing. So the dizziness only occurs with respect to a motion of the vapor in the brain, and in the spirit which is in it. For it happens to this spirit that it moves in a circle, so therefore the faculty established there is the thing to which the thing which we determined earlier happens. And likewise dizziness befalls the person who considers what is frequently turning, as we have made clear. This is not because of something in a part of the eye, nor because of the spirit diffused throughout it. For this reason we imagine the speed of a moving point as a line or circle, according to what was said earlier.³

And because the representation (*tamaththul*) of false apparitions and the hearing of false sounds may happen to those whose sense organs are defective, or, for example, to someone whose eyes are closed, there is no cause for this except for their representation in this principle [of sensation].⁴ And the acts of imagination (*al-takhayyulāt*) which occur in sleep either come to be on account of the impression of the forms in the treasury that retains the forms (but if this were the case, it would be necessary for everything which is stored in it to be represented in the soul, rather than some things apart from others, so that this one would be as if seen or heard in isolation); or **165** their representation comes about in another faculty. And this is either an external sense, or an internal sense. But external sense is not operative in sleep; and sometimes the person who imagines colours has some injury to his eyes. So it remains that it is an internal sense. But it is not possible for this to be anything other than the principle of the external senses, this being the thing which the estimative faculty seizes command of and conjures up when it conjures up what is in the treasury. And if it were to occur during waking, then, if its establishment takes root in it, it would be like direct observation (*ka-al-mushāhadah*). This power is that which is called the common sense, and it is the centre of the senses, from which they branch off, and into which they are channeled. And it is in reality that which senses.

But the act of holding on (*imsāk*) to what the common sense perceives belongs to a power called imagination (*khayāl*), which is also called the formative [faculty] (*muṣawwirah*), and the imaginative faculty (*mutakhayyilah*). And sometimes one distinguishes between imagination and the imaginative faculty with respect to convention; and we are among those who make this

² I.e. the experience of becoming dizzy upon watching something spin.

³ Probably a reference to the raindrop example in 1.5.

⁴ I.e. referring to the idea that the common sense is the principle of the proper senses.

distinction. And the common sense and the imagination are like a single power; and it is as if they do not differ in subject (*fī al-mawḍū'*), but rather, in form (*fī al-ṣūrah*): this is because what receives is not what retains. Thus the form of what is sensed is preserved by the power called the formative faculty or imagination. And it possesses no judgmental capacity at all,⁵ but rather, only preservation (*ḥifẓ*). As for the common sense and the external senses, they judge in some respect, or with some judgment. For they say that this moving thing is black, or that this red thing is sour. But this thing which preserves does not judge of any of the existent things, unless perhaps of what is in itself, that there is in fact in it a form of this kind.

Next, we know certainly that in our nature we compose some sensibles **/166** with others, and separate some from others, not according to that form which we have found in them externally, and not accompanied by assent (*wa-lā ma'a taṣdīq*), to the existence of any of them, nor to their non-existence. So it is necessary for there to be a faculty in us by which we do this, and this is the faculty which is called cogitative (*mufakkirah*) when the intellect employs it, and imaginative (*mutakhayyilah*) when the animal faculty uses it.

Next, we can make judgments concerning the sensibles by means of intentions which we do not sense, or which are not in their natures sensibles at all, or which are sensibles, but we do not sense them at the time of judgment. As for those which are not sensible in their natures, they are, for example, enmity, malice, and the aversion which the sheep apprehends in the form of the wolf, and in general, the intention which averts it from the wolf; and the concord which it perceives from its companion, and in general, the intention which makes it friendly towards it. And the animal soul perceives these matters, although the sense does not signify anything of them at all. Therefore, the power by which they are apprehended is another power, and it is called estimation. As for those which are sensibles, we see, for example, something yellow, and we judge that it is honey and sweet. For the thing sensing (*al-ḥāss*) does not convey this to it at this time. And it is in the genus of what is sensible, even though the judgment itself is not through anything sensible at all—even though its parts fall under the genus of the things sensed, nonetheless, [the thing sensing] does not perceive this in any way—for it is only a judgment by which one judges this, and sometimes there may be error in it. And this too belongs to this faculty.

And in the human being estimation possesses special judgments from among the totality [of judgments] which the soul predicates, according to which it

⁵ *laysa ilay-hā ḥukm al-battata.*

impedes the existence of things which cannot be imagined, and are not imprinted in [the imagination], and it refuses assent (*al-taṣdīq*) to them. /167 And without a doubt this faculty exists in us, and is the directress and judge in the animal, with a judgment that is not decisive (*laysa faṣlan*), as is the intellectual judgment, but which is an imaginative judgment (*ḥukman takhayyulīyah*), joined to the particular and to the sensible form. And from this judgment, most animal actions emanate.

And it is customary to call the thing apprehended by the sense a form (*sūrah*), and the thing apprehended by the estimation an intention (*ma'nān*). And each of these has a treasury, the treasury of what is apprehended by the sense being the imagination (*al-quwwah al-khayālīyah*), whose subject is the anterior of the brain. And for this reason, whenever an injury occurs there, this type of conception (*hadhā al-bāb min al-taṣawwur*) is corrupted, either by the imagining of forms which do not exist, or because it is difficult to stabilize what exists in it. And the treasury of what is perceived by the estimation is the power called retentive (*al-ḥāfiẓah*), and its seat is in the posterior of the brain. And for this reason, whenever an injury occurs here, there is a corruption of what is proper to the preservation of these intentions. And this power is also called memorative (*mutadhakkirah*). For it is retentive on account of its conservation of what is in it, and memorative due to the speed of its preparedness for discovering [what is retained], and its conception, recalling it when it has been forgotten. And this occurs when the estimation turns towards the imaginative faculty, and begins to represent each of the existent forms in the imagination, in order for it to be as if one were observing the things of which these are the forms. And when the forms have appeared in it, along with the perception of the intention, after they forms had disappeared, then the intention will also appear to it at the same time, just as if it had appeared from outside, and the retentive faculty will establish it in itself, just as it was established at that time, and thus it becomes a memory. And sometimes the process (*al-musīr*) is from the intention to the form. In this case, the remembered object being sought (*al-mutadhakkir al-maṭūb*) /168 is not related to what is in the treasury of retention (*al-ḥifẓ*), but rather, to what is in the treasury of imagination (*al-khayāl*). For its recurrence is either with respect to the return to these intentions which are in the retentive faculty, so that the intention requires the appearance of the form; in this case the relation to what is in the imagination recurs a second time; or it is through a return to the sense. An example of the former is that when you have forgotten the relation to a form, and then become aware of this relation, you will consider the activity which was intended by it; and when you know and discover the activity, and you know which flavour, colour, and shape are proper to it, then the relation between them

is established. So you will be familiar with this, and it will produce a relation to the form in the imagination (*al-khayāl*), and you will reestablish the relation in the memory. For the treasury of the activity is the retentive power, because is from the intention. But if this too is doubtful for you, and it is not clear, then sensation will provide you with the form of the thing, which has returned, being established in the imagination, and the relation to it will return as well, being established in that which retains.

And this faculty composes form with form, and form with intention, and intention with intention. And it is as if it were the estimative faculty in subject, not insofar as it judges, but rather, insofar as it acts to arrive at the judgment. And its locus is the centre of the brain, so that it has a connection with the two treasuries, that of intention, and that of form. And it seems that the estimative power is itself cogitative, imaginative, and memorative, for it is itself the judge. For through itself it is a judge, whereas its activities and its motions are imaginative and memorative. For it is imaginative through what it effects in the forms and intentions, and memorative through what its activity terminates in. And it seems that reminiscence, which occurs voluntarily, is a notion belonging to human beings alone.

And the treasury of forms is the formative faculty or imagination, whereas the treasury of intentions is the retentive. And it is not impossible that the estimative faculty is a judge per se, but through its movement imaginative and memorative.

*Chapter Two: On the Activities of the Formative and Cogitative Faculties
Among the Internal Senses*

*In which is contained the discourse concerning sleeping and waking,
and concerning true and false dreams,
and concerning one of the species of the characteristics of prophecy¹*

/A 169; L12; F119

Now let us take up the discourse concerning the formative faculty first. We say that the formative faculty, namely, the imagination (*al-khayāl*), is the last faculty in which the form of the sensibles is established, and that the side of it which is [turned] towards the sensibles is the common sense, and that the common sense leads to the formative faculty by way of storing what the senses have conveyed to it and deposited in it. And the formative faculty also stores things which are not among the things that have been taken from sensation. For the cogitative power may freely dispose of (*tataṣarrafu*) the forms which are in the formative faculty, through synthesis and analysis, because they are its subjects.

/A170 For when [the cogitative faculty] composes or divides one of the forms among them, it is possible that it will preserve [that form] within it, because it is not a treasury for this form insofar as this form is related to a thing, and comes from inside or outside, but rather, it is only a treasure for it because it is this form through this species of abstraction (*al-tajrīd*). For if this form, to the extent that it is within it from an act of composition or division, had returned from outside, this power would take them as fixed, in the same way as it does when they appear to this faculty because of something else. But if it had happened because of some cause, either from the imagination (*al-takhayyul*) and cogitation (*al-fīkr*), or because of some heavenly configurations, that a form is represented in the formative faculty, while the mind was inattentive,² or resting from considering it, it would be possible for this to be impressed upon the common sense itself, according to its shape. So one hears and sees colours and sounds which have no existence externally, nor are their causes external. And most often these things happen when the intellectual faculty is at rest, or the estimative faculty is negligent, and the rational soul is preoccupied from watching over the imagination (*al-khayāl*) and the estimation. For then the formative and imaginative faculties have control over their proper actions, so that what they furnish from among the forms is represented as something sensed.

¹ Translation © Deborah L. Black; Toronto, 2009.

² Literally, “absent.”

And let us add to this a proof (*bayānan*). For we say that it will be made clear by us later that all of these powers belong to a single soul, and that they are servants to the soul. So let us grant this as something posited, and let us know that the soul's occupation with some of these [faculties] diverts it from helping the other faculties in their activities, or from restraining them from their deviation or from leading them to what is correct. For it is part of the soul's nature, whenever it is preoccupied with internal matters, for it to be neglectful of the establishment (*'an istithbāt*) of external matters, and so fails to verify the sensible things which it ought to establish.

/A171 And whenever it is preoccupied with external things, it neglects the employment of the internal powers. For when it is perfect in its attention to the external sensibles, at some moment when it is directed towards this, its imagination and its memory is weakened. And whenever it is intent upon the activities of the desiderative faculty, the activities of the irascible faculty subside from it; and whenever it is intent upon the activities of the irascible power, the activities of the desiderative power subside from it. And in general, whenever it is directed towards the perfection of the motive powers, the apprehending powers are weakened, and vice versa. And whenever the soul is not preoccupied with the activities of some faculties from the activities of other, but rather, is tranquil, as if withdrawn, it happens to the strongest and most active of the faculties to be supreme. And whenever it is preoccupied by some power and common occurrence from correcting another faculty, it only restrains form that faculties excessive movements with respect to the soul or to its estimative sense. This power [of estimation] will have authority, and it will be effective in those of its activities which are natural, “that the air is already empty of her.” And this is what happens to the soul from not being occupied with the activity of one or more powers, something which may occur because of injury or weakness distracting it from perfection, as occurs in the case of sickness or fear; or because of a certain relaxation, as in sleep; or because of being excessively preoccupied with the effort to employ one faculty to what concerns it, and distracted away from other things.

In this case, the imaginative faculty (*al-mutakhayyilah*) is a power which the soul may divert from its proper action in two ways: (1) sometimes, as is the case when the soul is occupied by the external sensibles, the formative power is turned towards the external sensibles, and is moved by them through what appears to it from them, so that the cogitative faculty does not submit to the imaginative. So the **/A172** imaginative faculty is preoccupied from its proper

activity, and the formative faculty too is preoccupied from isolation by the imaginative, and that which these two require from the common sense is established and fixed in the occupation of the external sense. This is one of the two ways. (2) And sometimes, when the soul uses it in those of its action to which it is joined from the discriminative (*al-tamyīz*) faculty and cogitation (*al-fikrah*), something which also happens in two ways: (2.1) one of them is that it has mastery over the imaginative faculty, and makes it its servant, along with the common sense, in composing forms with their specifying characteristics, and in analyzing them, in a respect in which a correct end befalls the soul. And the imagination does not, for this reason, take mastery over the free exercise of what it possesses to exercise it through its own nature; rather, it is drawn forth in some way when the rational faculty controls it. (2.2) The second way is that it diverts it from the imaginings which do not correspond to external existents, and restrains it from these things by nullifying them. Thus, the imagination is not capable of representing and symbolizing them forcefully.

And if the imagination is preoccupied by both of these aspects together, its activity will be weak. And if it ceases to be occupied by both these aspects, as occurs in the state of sleep, or from one of them, as in the case of sicknesses which weaken the body and distract the soul from the intellect and the discriminative faculty, as also occurs when one is afraid, so that the soul is weakened, and almost sanctions what does not exist; and in general, the soul is turned away from the intellect, owing to its weakness and its fear, which comes from corporeal things. And so, it is as if it abandons the intellect and its governance. It is then possible for the imagination to be strong and to draw near to the formative faculty and make use of it, and for their uniting to be strong. But the formative faculty becomes more open in its activity, and so the form which is in the formative faculty appears in the common sense.

/A173 And so it appears as if it were existent externally, because the impression perceived from what comes from outside, and what comes from inside, is that which is represented in it, and they are only distinguished by relation. And when the thing sensed exists in reality as it is represented, then its state which is represented is like the state of what has returned from outside. And for this reason, what the madman, and the fearful man, and the weak man, and the sleeping man, see as existent representations are like what is seen in the state of health in reality. And likewise he will hear sounds. So when the discriminative faculty or the intellect perceives any of these things, it wins the imaginative faculty over to itself by admonishing it/alerting it, and so these forms and images will disappear.

And it may happen that in some people the imaginative faculty is by nature very strong and predominant, so much so that the senses have no authority over it, and the formative faculty cannot resist it. Moreover, the soul is also strong, and its inclination to the intellect and what is prior to the intellect does not nullify its orientation to the senses. So these people possess in waking what other people possess in sleeping, and have a disposition which we will discuss later. And it is the same state of perception as that which someone sleeping has of absent things, by verifying them through their disposition, or through the resemblances which they possess. And frequently it happens to them, by means of these things, that they are finally absent from the sensibles, and something akin to fainting befalls them. But often this does not happen. And often they see something in its actual state, and often its likeness (*mithāl-hu*) is imagined for them owing to the same thing that causes it someone who is asleep to imagine a likeness of what he has seen—one of the things we will later establish. And often a likeness (*shibh*) is represented for them, and they imagine that what they apprehend is a speech (*khiṭāb*) from this likeness, by means of auditory expressions which have been remembered and recited aloud. And this is particular prophecy (*al-nubūwah al-khāṣṣah*) through the imaginative faculty. And there is another type of prophecy whose nature we will explain [later].

/A174 And there is no one who does not have some share in the matter of dreaming, and in the state of perceptions which occur in waking. For the notions (*al-khawāṭir*) which occur all at once in the soul, their cause is only connections of which there is no awareness, nor is there any awareness of that which is connected to them, neither before them or after them. For the soul is transferred from them to some other thing, different from what is of their order. And this may be of any genus, for it may be of the intelligible, or of rare things, and it may be of poetry, or of something else according to one's disposition, custom, and nature. And these notions are due to causes which for the most part arise surreptitiously in the soul, and are like secret hints which are not fixed and remembered, except that the soul hits upon them with a firm grasp, and often what it does it to occupy the imagination with a variety unconnected to what is in it.

And part of the nature of the imaginative faculty is to be continually preoccupied with the two storehouses, that of the formative faculty and that of the memorative faculty, and to be always mindful of the forms, beginning with the sensed or remembered forms, and moving from them to a contrary or an equivalent form, or to something which derives from that form as by way of

causality. For this is its nature. And as for the specification of the motion from the thing to its contrary rather than to its equal, or to its equal rather than from its contrary, there are particular causes for this which cannot be enumerated. And in general, it is necessary that the root of the cause in this be that whenever the soul unites together the consideration of the intentions and the forms, it moves from the intentions to the forms which are most proximate to them, either absolutely, or because of the recent occurrence of their perception (*mushāhadati-hi*), because of the /A 175 combination of the two in a sense power or in the estimation. And likewise it can be moved from the forms to the intentions. And the first cause which particularizes one form rather than another form, and one intention rather than another, is something which appears to it from the sense which is proper to it, or from the intellect, or from the estimation. For it is particularized through [the thing itself] or through something celestial. For when they are particularized by this thing [itself], its persistence and its transference are particularized by the particularization of the two principles, and by the dispositions which are combined in custom, and owing to the proximity in time of some forms and intentions. And these states may also be due to celestial states, and they may be due to things arising from intellect and sense, after the first particularization which is attached to them.

And know that rational cogitation (*al-fikr al-naṭiqī*) is afflicted by this power, and because of the nature of this power it is greatly preoccupied. For whenever it uses [this power] concerning some form, for some use directed to some end, it is quickly led to some other thing which is not related to [that end], and from it to a third thing, so that it makes the soul forget the first thing from which it began. Thus it is necessary for the soul to recollect, taking refuge in analysis by conversion (*al-taḥlīl bi-al-'aks*), until it returns to the starting point. And whenever it happens that the soul perceives something in a state of waking, or that is it joined in some way to the heavens in a state of sleep, in the manner that we shall later describe, then, if [this power] enables the soul, through its rest or its subjugation, to establish [some form] firmly, and does not overcome it by curtailing the time during which what appears to it from the imaginings is established, /176 then this form will be established in the memory very strongly, according to its own aspect and form (*'alā wajhi-hi wa-ṣūrahti-hi*).

But it is not necessary to recollect if it is awake, and if it is asleep it is not necessary to and if it is inspired it is not necessary to interpret. For interpretation and explanation are in this case analogous to recollection. For if the soul does not seek to establish what it sees of these things in the faculty of memory, according as it is necessary, but rather, the imaginative power opposes

to each singular among the things that it has seen in sleep a single image, or opposes to a complex among the things that it has seen in sleep a single or a composite image, and it does not cease to oppose what it sees here to an imitation composed from forms and intentions, then the soul's seeking to fix in itself what it sees is weaker than its seeking to fix, from the formative and memorative faculties, what imagination presents. Thus what it sees from the heavens is not fixed in the memory, whereas what is imitated by it is fixed.

And often it happens that what is seen from the heavens is something like the head and the principle. But the imagination prevails over the soul with a control which distracts it from completing what it sees, so it is transferred, one move after another, without it imitating through these motions any of the things which were seen from the heavens, and then it has already been cut off. And this is a type of dream. The occasion³ for interpretation in it is only slight, and the rest are confused dreams. And what is included amongst the genus of dreams over which the imagination has dominion necessarily requires interpretation.

And sometimes a person sees the interpretation of his dream in the dream itself, and this is in fact recollection. For just as the cogitative power may be moved first from the root to the imitation (*al-hikāyah*), because of the correspondence between them, so too it is not unlikely that it may be moved from the imitation to the root. So it happens often that this action of its own is imagined again, and it seems as if /177 someone is addressing it through this. And often it is not this way, but rather, it is as if the thing were being viewed with a sound vision, without the soul being joined to the heavenly bodies, but rather, there is an imitation of the imitation from the imagination, and so it returns to the root. And this type of true dream may occur from the imagination without the help of another power, even though it is the root in which this exists, and to which it returns. And sometimes the imagination imitates the imitation with another imitation, so the interpreter must interpret a second time. And these things and states cannot be determined precisely.

And there are people who have the truest dreams. And this occurs when their souls are habituated to the truth, and have subdued false imaginings. And most of those to whom the interpretation of their dreams occurs in their dreams are those whose attention is preoccupied with what they see. So whenever they are asleep, their preoccupations with it and with its condition remains. So the imaginative faculty begins to imitate it in the opposite way from the way it first imitated it. And it is recounted that the king Heracles saw a dream which

³ Literally, "place."

preoccupied his heart, and he could not find anyone among the interpreters who could unravel it. But when he slept afterwards, the dream was interpreted for him in his dream. For it comprised reports of matters which would occur in the world and in particular his city and his kingdom. So when he recorded these predictions, they emerged in the way in which they had been interpreted for him in his sleep. And this has been experienced in other cases.

And those who see these things while awake include the person who sees them on account of the nobility of his soul and its power. For his imaginative faculty and memorative faculty are not distracted from their proper activities by the sensibles. And they include the person who sees these things because of the cessation of his distinctive faculty,⁴ because the soul which he has is freed from making distinctions. And for this reason, if his imagination is strong, he will be able to receive invisible⁵ things in the state of waking. For in order to receive the emanation of what is invisible, the soul requires the internal senses in two respects. One of them is in order to be able to conceive (*taṣawwur*) the particular intention in them by means of a preserved conception. And the second is in order that they might be an aid to it, by their being freely disposed of /178 in accordance with its will, but not distracting it nor drawing it over to their side. For it is necessary for there to be a relation amongst the absent/invisible thing, the soul, and the internal imaginative faculty, and a relation between the soul and the internal imaginative faculty. For if sensation is employing it, or the intellect is employing it according to the intellectual manner which we have mentioned, then the imagination will not be empty of other matters, the way a mirror must be empty when it is turned away from one direction and faced towards another. For many things whose nature is to be reflected in this mirror are, unexpectedly and suddenly, because of some relation between the two, not reflected in it. And this distraction is either from sensation, or from the intellect's seizing it. So when one of them goes away, the relation required between the absent thing, the soul, and the imaginative faculty, and between the soul and the imaginative faculty, is on the verge of occurring. So some appearance appears in the imagination after the manner of appearances.

And because the discourse concerning the imagination has transferred us to the matter of dreams, there is no objection to our indicating briefly the principle from which premonitions come in sleep, by means of things which we will later posit. For these things will only be proven by us in the art which is First

⁴ *tamyīz*, a synonym for the cogitative faculty, insofar as it analyzes or distinguishes images, as well as synthesizing them.

⁵ Literally, "absent."

Philosophy. Thus we say that all the intentions of the things existing in the world, including what is past, present, and what is intended to be existent, exist in the knowledge of the Creator, and of the angelic intelligences in respect, and in the celestial angelic souls in another respect. (We shall explain these two respects for you in another place, and the fact that human souls have a stronger affinity to these angelic substances than they have to sensible bodies.) And there is no concealment nor withholding [of knowledge] in this case;⁶ the concealment is due only to the receptacles, either on account of their being submerged in bodies, or on account of their being polluted by things which attract them to their lower half. But whenever it happens to them that they are almost empty of these activities, an insight into what is there befalls them. Thus the first thing which is established is what is /179 related to this human being, either to himself or to his land or his region. And for this reason most dreams which are related are specific to the person who dreams them and to those who are close to him. And the intelligibles will appear to the person whose zeal is for the intelligibles; whereas the person whose zeal is for the things which are good for people, he will see them and be rightly guided towards them; and so on, in an analogous fashion.

And not all dreams are true, or of such a nature that requires one to take heed of them. For not all of the imitations of the imaginative faculty are simply of what emanates upon the soul from the heavens. Rather, most of these things which come from [the heavens] exist only when this power has ceased from imitating the matters which are closest to it. And the matters which are closest to it include natural and voluntary things. For the nature are those which come from the mixture of the powers of the humours with the spirit⁷ that the formative and imaginative faculties depend upon.⁸ For in the beginning it imitates and is preoccupied with these things alone. And it may also imitate the afflictions which occur in the body, and the accidents which are in it, such as happens whenever the expulsive force of the semen moves ones to ejaculation. For in this case the imagination imitates forms which it is the soul's nature to incline one towards [desiring] intercourse with them. And foods are imitated by the person who is hungry; whereas the person who needs to excrete waste, the place for so doing is imitated by him; and by the person whose limbs happen to be hot or cold because of some heat or cold, it is imitated that this limb of his is placed near a fire or in cold water. And it is a wonderful thing that, just as a certain

⁶ I.e., on the part of the angelic substances with respect to us. These are technical Avicennian terms used to describe a political or pedagogic technique of not fully disclosing known philosophical doctrines, either for fear of their being misunderstood by those of a non-philosophical disposition, or in order to goad novice philosophers to discover them for themselves.

⁷ *Rūh*, which translates the Greek *pneuma*.

⁸ Literally, "ride" or "mount."

imagining occurs from the natural motion of the ejaculation of sperm, so too sometimes a certain imagining of desired forms occurs from some cause, and thereupon nature is provoked to gather the semen and emit the spirit from the sexual organ, so that sometimes it ejaculates semen. And this may occur both in waking and in sleep, even if at the time there is not also /180 arousal and lust.

As for voluntary things, they occur when the soul is striving while it is awake after something to whose contemplation and government it attends. So when it is asleep, the imaginative faculty imitates this matter, and what is of the same genus as it. These things come from the residue of the cogitation which occurred while it was awake, and all of them constitute confused dreams. And [dreams of this sort] may also occur from the impressions of the heavenly bodies. For they may, with respect to their affinities and those of their souls, cause forms to befall the imagination in proportion to its preparedness, forms which do not come from the representation of anything invisible/hidden, and which are not premonitions.

And as for those [dreams] which it is necessary to interpret and to explain, these are those which are not related to anything from amongst the [foregoing] group [of dreams]. For it is known that this occurs from an external cause and that it has some significance. So for this reason, the poet's dream is not for the most part sound, nor is that of the liar, the wicked person, the drunk, the sick person, and the sad person, or of anyone over whom a bad disposition or cogitation has control. And for this reason too, for the most part only that part of a dream which occurs at the time of dawn is veridical, because all thoughts are dormant at this time, and the movements of likenesses are still. And if, while asleep, at times such as this, the imaginative faculty is not occupied with the body nor cut off from the memorative and formative faculties, but rather, is in command of them, then its service to the soul can scarcely improve. For it is without a doubt necessary that the form of what returns to [the soul] from these [faculties]⁹ be impressed on this [imaginative] power as a correct impression, either in itself, or through an imitation of it. And it is necessary to know that the people whose dreams are truest are those whose temperaments are most balanced. For even if those whose temperament is dry retain well, they do not receive well; whereas those whose temperament is moist, even if they receive quickly, lose quickly, so that it will be as if they had not received anything at all; for they do not remember well. And those who are /181 warm in temperament have confused motions, and those who are cold are dull-witted. But the soundest of the lot is the person who is habituated the most to the truth, for the habit of

⁹ The formative and memorative.

lying and of corrupt cogitation renders the imagination corrupt in its motions, and disobedient to the direction of reason; or rather, its state is that of the imagination of someone whose temperament has been corrupted to the point of confusion.

And since these are things which are associated with sleeping and waking, it is necessary for us here to indicate briefly the nature of sleeping and waking. And we say that waking is a state in which the soul is using the senses or the motive powers apart from the will, in which there is no necessity. And sleep is the privation of this state. For the soul in sleep has turned away from the outside to what is internal. And its turning away inevitably comes from one of these directions: either owing to fatigue befalling it from this side,¹⁰ or on account of some concern which befalls it from the other side,¹¹ or owing to the disobedience of its organs. And that which occurs because of fatigue is such that the thing which is called “spirit” [=pneuma]—you will learn of this in its proper place—has dissipated and weakened, and so is unable to extend itself [throughout the body], and so turns inside, with the powers of the soul following it. And this fatigue may occur because of bodily motions, but it may also occur because of cogitations, and because of fear. For not only sleep, but even death, may occur on account of fear. And sometimes cogitations may put one to sleep, not from this side, but because of the heating of the brain, so that the humours are drawn to it and the brain is filled, and put to sleep by the moistening. And that which is owing to concerns which are within occurs when the nourishment and the humours have united from within, and require that the pneuma proceed straight to them with all of its natural heat, or order to accomplish complete digestion of them, so that what is external is inactive. And that which occurs from the side of the organs is when **/182** the nerves are full and are obstructed by the vapours and foods which penetrate it in order to be digested, or when the pneuma is too oppressed to move, because of the weight of the moisture.

And waking is due to causes which are the opposite of these: among these are causes which produce dryness, such as heat and dryness; also amongst them is the cessation of digestion, for then the pneuma has returned to a state of diffusion. And among them is a bad state which distracts the soul from what is internal, and instead leads it out towards what is external, such as anger or fear of something proximate, or suffering because of something painful. And these things may enter into the matter with which we are concerned incidentally, even though in fact sleeping and waking ought to be discussed along with the

¹⁰ The Latin translation understands this as meaning “from the outside.”

¹¹ I.e. internally.

accidents that belong to sensation.

*Chapter Three: On the Activities of the Memorative
and Estimative Faculties
And On the Fact that All the Activities of These Powers Occur
Through Corporeal Organs¹*

Just as we have examined what is said about the state of the imaginative and formative faculties, it is necessary to speak about the state of the memorative faculty and its relation to the cogitative, and about the state of estimation. So we say that estimation is the greatest judge in the animal, for it judges the way to provoke the what is imaginative (*takhayyulī*) without this being verified. And this is like what happens to the person who considers honey unclean because of its resembling bile. For the estimative sense judges that it is of such a judgment, and the soul follows this estimation, even if **/183** the intellect falsifies it. And animals and their like among humans (*min al-nās*) only follow in their actions this judgment of estimation, which has no logical analysis (*lā tafṣīl mantiqīyan*), but rather, is by way of a certain impulse (*inbi'āth*) only. Nevertheless, something may happen to the senses and faculties of a human being, because of their proximity to reason, that may make his internal faculties almost become rational, and different from those of beasts. For this reason, a human being can attain things which other animals do not attain from the utility of composite sounds, colours, smells, and tastes, and from hopes and desires, for the light of reason is like something emanating and flowing into these powers. And this imagination too which belongs to the human being becomes subject to reason, after being subject to the estimation in animals, so that he makes use of it in the sciences; and his memory also comes to be useful in the sciences, as is the case with the experiences (*ka-al-tajārib*) which he attains through memory, as well as the particular observations, and other things like these.

So let us return to the account of the estimation. We say that one of the things which the researcher must investigate and consider is how the estimation which the intellect does not accompany at the time of its estimation (*'āla tawahhumi-hi*) acquires the intention which is in the sensibles, while the sense acquires its form without anything of its intention being sensed, and without many of these intentions being useful or harmful in this circumstance (*fī tilka al-ḥāl*). And we say that the [ability to do] this belongs to the estimation from many directions. Among them is the inspirations (*al-ilhāmāt*) that emanate upon everything from divine mercy, such as the state of the infant at the instant it is born of being attached to its mother's breast, and such as the state **/184** of the child when it is lifted up and made to stand but it almost falls, and hastens to

¹ Translation © Deborah L. Black; Toronto, 2009.

hold on to something solid, on account of a natural instinct (*li-gharīzah*) which divine inspiration has planted in it. And if a person has a mote in his eye, all of a sudden he closes his eyelid, before he understands what has happened to him, and what he must do about it, as if this were innate (*gharīzah*) to his soul, and not his choice.

And in the same way natural instincts belong to animals, and the cause in this case is the relations which exist between these souls and their principles, which are eternal and not intermittent, and different from those relation which only happen sometimes, and not others, such as the perfection of the intellect, and the idea of correctness. For all of these things come from there. And by these inspirations the estimation comes to know the intentions which are mixed with the sensibles, concerning the harmful and the beneficial. So every sheep is wary of the wolf, even if it has never seen one, and no danger has ever befallen it from the wolf. And many animals fear the lion, and other birds fear predatory birds, and weak birds avoid them without any [prior] experience.

And this is one division [of how estimations occur]. And another division is because of something that is like experience. And this occurs whenever pain or pleasure occurs to an animal, or some sensible utility or sensible danger reaches it, conjoined to a sensible form, imprinting in the formative faculty the form of the thing, and the form of what is conjoined to it, and imprinting in the memory an intention of the relation between the two, and the judgment concerning [the relation]. For the memory, by its own essence and nature, acquires these things; so whenever these forms appear in the imagination from outside, then [these same forms] will be moved within the formative faculty, and with them what is conjoined to them of useful or harmful intentions, and in general the intention which is in the memory, by way of /185 the transfer and inspection,² which belong to the nature of the imaginative faculty. So the estimation perceives the totality of these things simultaneously, seeing the intention accompanied by this form. And this takes place by a method which approximates experience. And for this reason, dogs come to fear clods of earth and sticks, and other such things.

And other judgments may occur to the estimation by way of similitude (*al-tashbīh*),³ when a form belongs to some object, which is conjoined to an estimative intention in some sensibles, but is not always conjoined to that intention, and not in all of them. So [estimation] will consider this intention along with this form, even though they may differ.

² *'alā al-sabīl al-intiqāl wa-al-isti'rād*.. The latter term is used generally of entertaining images, passing them through one's mind.

³ This term is used for metaphors in Arabic poetic theory.

Thus the estimation is a judge in the animal, and it requires the obedience of these faculties which belong to the animal in its acts. And most often what it requires is memory and sensation. As for the formative faculty, it requires it on account of memory and recollection. While memory may be found in the rest of the animals, recollection is the artificial skill (*iḥtiyāl*) for recalling what has been forgotten, and so in my opinion it is only found in humans. And this is because the inference (*al-istidlāl*) that something was, and then disappeared, only occurs by means of the rational faculty. And if it does belong to a non-rational faculty, then it might be the case that it belongs to the estimation, embellished by reason. So the rest of the animals, if they do remember, only remember, and if they do not recollect, then they do not desire to recollect, nor does this occur to their minds, but rather, this desire and this search belongs only to humans.

And recollection is relative to some object which was in the soul in a past time. And it resembles learning in one respect, and differs from it in another. As for its resemblance to learning, this is because recollection is a transference from things which are perceived /186 externally or internally to some other thing, and in the same way learning is as well, for it too is a transference from what is known to what is unknown in order to know the latter. But recollection is a search to cause the like of what occurred in the past occur in the future, whereas learning is only to cause some other thing to arise in the future. Moreover, in recollection one does not reach an end in which are contained things which require the occurrence of that end necessarily, but rather, only by way of signs (*'alāmāt*). Whenever the most proximate of these [signs] to the end occurs, the soul is transferred to the end which belongs to the like of this state; but if it were a state other than this one, then even if a more proximate form or its intention came to mind, it would not be necessary for it to be transferred. This would be as if someone were to call to mind a specific book, and then recollect from it the teacher under whom he read the book. For it would not be necessary for every person to call this teacher to mind when calling to mind the form of the book and its intention. But as for the path leading to knowledge (*al-'ilm*), it involves a necessary transference to it, and this path is the syllogism and the definition.

And there are some people for whom learning is easier than recollection, because they are connatured (*maṭbū'an*) to things whose transference is necessary; and there are some people who are the opposite, and some people who have strong memories, but are weak at recollection. This is because they have dry temperaments, and so they preserve what they do perceive, whereas they do not have the liveliness of soul and the obedience of matter to the activities of the imagination and its representations. And there are also people who are the opposite. And the people who are quickest at recollecting are those

who are cleverest at interpreting signs (*al-ishārāt*). For signs cause a transfer from the sensibles to the intentions of other things. So whoever is clever with signs is quick at recollection. There are also people who are good at comprehending (*al-fahm*) but are of weak memory. And it is almost the case that the nature of comprehension is opposed to that of memory, for comprehension requires an element (*'unṣur*) for the internal form which is very impressionable. /187 And moisture alone is an aid to this. As for memory, it requires a matter in which what is conceived and represented is difficult to delete. And this requires dry matter. So for this reason, the combination of these two things is difficult. So most of the people who can retain are those whose motions are not numerous, and their concerns are not diverse. Whereas the person who has many concerns and motions does not remember well, for memory, along with the appropriate matter, requires that the soul be turned intently upon the form and the intention to be established, without being distracted from them by any other concern. And for this reason children, despite their moisture, retain well, because their souls are not preoccupied with what the souls of mature people are. So they are not distracted from what they are directed towards by something else. And as for youth, owing to their heat and the confusion of their motions, and despite the dryness of their temperaments, they have memories that are not like those of children and adolescents. And this also happens to the elderly, from their predominating moisture, that they do not remember what they have perceived.

And there may occur, along with the recollection of sadness, anger, grief, and other emotions, something which resembles the state that befalls us from these emotions themselves. And this is because the causes of sorrow, anger, and grief do not exist in what is past, except as the impression of these forms in the internal senses. So whenever the form returns, it produces these emotions, or what is proximate to them. And desires and hopes too produce these emotions, although hope is different from desire, for hope imagines some matter, along with a judgment or opinion that it will be existent for the most part, whereas desire is the imagination of a thing, and concupiscence for it, and the judgment concerning some pleasure which would exist if it were to be. And fear is opposed to hope by way of contrariety, whereas desperation is the privation of hope. And all of these are judgments belonging to the estimation.

[The chapter concludes with the proof that these powers all require a corporeal organ. It is reproduced in the psychology of the *Najāh*, chap. 8. English translation in F. Rahman *Avicenna's Psychology*, 41-45.]