



[Tanzil, Ta'wil, and Tajalli – Part 1](#)
The Transforming Capacity of the Qur'an

I was hoping this weekend to dive a little into Qur'an. Not exactly giving *tafsir*, but to actually talk about *tanzil* and *ta'wil*, and why it is important to someone who is a seeker and a sojourner on the path. We are of *tariqah*. We are not of the people who force things down people's throats, or hold up books of rules and then hit you over the head with them. What we want is for people to understand the inner meaning of the Qur'an and life, and why we have this life, and how to apply what Allah Swt has given us for that purpose. There was an Urdu poet, Maher al Qadri, fairly contemporary poet, who wrote about Qur'an. He said,

As an ornament do they adorn me; yet they keep me and sometimes kiss me. In their celebrations, they recite me. In disputes, they swear by me. On shelves do they securely keep me till another celebration or dispute when they need me. Yes, they read me and memorize me; yet only an ornament am I. My message lies neglected, my treasures untouched. The field lies bare where blossomed once true glory. Wrong is the treatment that I receive. So much to give have I, yet none is there to perceive.

I guess in a way I could begin there and stop there. It's a bit of an uncomfortable thing to hear, I know, because so much emphasis has been placed on the form, the exoteric. Not that it's not meaningful, it is. And not that it's not useful, it will be if one knows how to receive. Qur'an doesn't change. The circumstances of human life are always changing. The potential of our thoughts and our capacities and actions,

the social, the political, the economic, the technological and environmental conditions of the times we live in are ever changing, as well as requiring us to think. The words of Al Qur'an are there to help us to think, and they are also dynamic. They apply movement. The spiritual life, the religious life, Qur'an tells us, is not about stasis. It's about movement. It's always striving to make our society and the world around us a much better place for all of us: for our children and our children's children, indeed all of Allah's creation, without any exception. There is no exception.

That means that we have a task. We have a responsibility. That is to keep asking ourselves what this holy, special, unique utterance of Allah Swt can and should mean to us. How can or should it apply to the circumstances of our life this moment, of every moment? In a strange way, the text of Qur'an has really no significance for us outside of our own time, because this is the time we live in. We can know history, and understand historically what the significance was a hundred years ago, or 500 years ago, or a thousand years ago. But the significance and the essence, or meaning, of the *'āyāt* of Qur'an have to be re-discovered every generation, indeed, in a way almost every day. Things change. Contexts change. Old meanings, customs, forms, old interpretations, as interesting as they may be, and as intellectually challenging as they may be, no matter how much fame and notoriety some may get from translating old texts and treatises – and we are all interested in them and enthralled by them – the truth is, when they were written for the time they were written in, they might have been liberating. For the time we are living in, they might be suffocating.

How do you know? I spend a lot of time with old texts. I spend a lot of time with the writings of Sunami (ra), or Tushtari (ra), or Ibn Masheesh (ra), or Ibn Atala Askandari (ra), may Allah bless all of them. How do we know what is right for the moment, and what is not? What's relevant, and what is not relevant? What can be

turned into a means to oppress people, or to oppose people, whether they are fellow believers or not, we know, from the realities of the time we live in, can be exactly the same thing that liberated people. Isn't that true – how Qur'an is used today to oppress people among our own people? We have to come to see this text in another way. We have to understand its dynamics, its relevance, its implications for our time. We have to discover, as fully as we can, and as completely as we can, what is relevant and what is not relevant.

It demands of us certain things. It demands of us that we affirm what we know, and what every human being wants to affirm, and what we see being attempted to be affirmed in Tahrir Square, and other places in the world today. We have to affirm justice. We have to affirm mercy, and stand up for the truth, and for compassion, and love, and patience, and tolerance, and understanding—no exception. We have to. It's what it demands of us. The Qur'an is not a weapon. It is not a tool for compelling people. Nor can it ever be an excuse for wrong action: destruction, murder, rape, oppression—never, never, never. And yet – look at the world we live in.

We have to understand that it is a text that Allah gave us that seeks to change us, not through political revolutions, but through an evolution, through a renovation, through peacemaking. It is there for us, to remind us, and tell us that we have to make *muhasabat*. We have to scrutinize ourselves and account for ourselves. We have to stand strongly against human beings' inhumanity to other human beings, and indeed, to all living things. It's a teaching that refines us, if we know how to let it. It polishes us, if we allow ourselves to be tossed among the other stones that will polish us, and it will uplift our soul.

It doesn't yield its meaning easily. Whoever thinks it does is a fool. The real struggle, the *jihad al akbar*, may be defined as the struggle within our own self with

our *nafs*, but there is another *jihad*. It's the *jihad* that is the struggle to understand the Qur'an, to see the significance of the allegory, to understand the *majaz*/metaphor, to separate the truth from what is just a simile, to see the eternal as it stands out from the transitory, to see the universal as opposed to what is just local to me in the moment. And then, of course there is the struggle with the words, and the concepts, and interconnections. It certainly is more than a lifetime's work. So it is not easy. It's much easier just to memorize, and recite, and walk away from it to do your work. It's much easier to do the form, instead of the essence. It's easier to confuse things.

Later on this weekend, I'm going to give you an excerpt from a writing by a friend of mine, who's written about 50-60 books, Sayyedin Sadar. He's a very beautiful writer. You may agree or you may not agree with him. He definitely has an interesting perspective and point of view, some of which I am giving you right now. Understand that what we follow has to be Qur'an, not something someone in a certain period of time has decided is Shar'ia – "This is the way it is, and it's the only way" – and has forgotten about *ijma*, and *ri'ye*, and about *ijtihad*. It is not easy, and it requires patience. If we have that patience, the reward can be very, very important.

We have to begin somewhere. We could begin in the middle, or at the end; because wherever you begin is where you begin. I want to begin with *ta'wil*. Some call it "disambiguation." It means to cause to return, to lead back to the origin. Perhaps in a way it is related to the Latin word *relegare*, to turn back. [It means] to return to the true and original meaning of a written text. It's said to cause someone the ability to sense the origin of that text. A person who practices *ta'wil* makes something revert to its truth, as if it is catalytically being re-transformed back to its essence, to its *haqiqa*. This was the practice of the Prophet (sal). It was the attempted and

affirmed practice of the *imams*, to reveal the *ta'wil* of the Qur'an, and of the events of the time.

The verses of the Qur'an as we know are referred to as '*āyāt*, and it is because the Qur'an is the revelation from Allah's speech. As such, each of the verses is in a way an '*āyat*, a signpost, a pointer, an indication of its origin. Each *āyat* has the complete DNA of the full Qur'an. It's a hologram. It has the complete Qur'an within it, and the interpretation, the hermeneutical *ta'wil* of the *āyat* leads us back to Allah Swt. But it's a terrible way to use English, because "leading you back" means He's somewhere else, or we have gone somewhere away from Allah Swt, which of course is ridiculous. There is only Allah Swt. It means that we are turning our attention back toward the origin which is, in the moment, present. That's why in one way you can say the Qur'an is constantly being revealed, and you have the opportunity to be at the revelation at any given moment. It's the same with all the things in this universe.

Everything in this universe is an *isharat*: a hint, a pointer, an *āyat*, an *alam*, a symbol of the whole of all of the signs of Allah Swt. Though some people are very, very happy just saying that, and on some level intellectually grasping that, it's totally different when you begin to see it. The universe we live in and all that's in it, all the rules and laws and nature, are all *isharat* pointing toward the Source. The Qur'an asks us to consider and reflect back on the Book of the universe, just as it urges us to reflect upon it. This is the purpose of doing *ta'wil*. The goal for every person of Tasawwuf, in *tariqah*, is to move toward Allah Swt, and to be accompanied by Allah Swt, and to realize that all is with and in Allah Swt – *sayr-i-Llah*, *sayr-fī-Llah*, *sayr-ma'-Llah*. That's the journey.

Let me begin with some examples and some references. Without the understanding of certain of these references, we cannot open ourselves to understand the necessity of *islam*. I'm using the word *islam* right now in the context of submission. But we have to always remember that it comes from "*taslim*," which means safety and security also. To comprehend submission where you feel safe and secure is sort of like the children with their parents – a trust. To receive the Qur'an on a moment to moment basis, hidden and overt prejudices and assumptions have to be overcome; otherwise, we can never receive the Qur'an. We can only receive little bits and pieces of it, things that are meaningful to us because of this circumstance, this need, this want, this fear or this doubt. And we will pick and we will choose. But in truth, every aspect of the Qur'an eventually has to give us the same feeling of safety and security and submission.

I'm going to quote Imam Ali (ra), because, first of all, all of our Orders except Naqshbandi line go back to him. But also because he's the person everyone went to, to understand. All the Sahabah went to him to understand, to answer the difficult questions. Imam Ali on the means of intellectually interpreting and spiritually assimilating the Qur'an indicated that there were very subtle relationships between the Holy Qur'an and the principle of *waliyat*, the process of spiritual awakening / realization. Now, here we are in the month of Ramadan. It's the month in which the Qur'an was revealed. It also happens to be the month in which Imam Ali was sacrificed, the 19th – the 21st, the days that just passed us. Sometimes in the current terminology, we say that it is a coincidence. But Allah Swt wanted to indicate to the world the close affinity of Imam Ali (as) and the Qur'an. Both happened in the same month, but most important, the principles of living and dying are articulated in the Qur'an.

If you were to count how many times the subjects of living and dying, *dunya* and paradise, Jahanam and Jannah were mentioned, you'd be counting a lot. It's also about life's work, so it's important to think of the role of Imam Ali, who he was in association with the Qur'an, for us to understand that. For some people, especially our Sunni brothers and sisters, just mentioning that causes difficulty. And I will tell you quite honestly, for them, the full understanding of the Qur'an is closed. We have to overcome all of our prejudices, and all of our assumptions, and all of our biases. I want to refer to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet (sal) regarding the times in which we are living today, times of crisis, of *fitna*, of upheavals in society, of oppression and sedition. He was asked how we should cope with these crises when they come. And one of the answers he gave in this particular narration was simply by referring to the Book of Allah the Almighty. He quoted a *surah*:

Those who reject the message when it comes to them are not hidden from Us. And indeed, it is a Book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it. It is sent down by one full of wisdom and worthy of praise. Nothing is said to thee that was not said to the Messengers before you. Your Lord has at His command all forgiveness, as well as a most grievous penalty. Had We sent this as a Qur'an in other than Arabic, they would have said, "Why are not its verses explained in detail? What, a book not in Arabic?" And a messenger, an Arab says, "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe. And for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears and a blindness in their eyes. They are, as it were, being called from a place far distant." The Qur'an, which falseness cannot approach either from before it or behind it, is a revelation from the Wise.

This was his answer. You cling to that where there is no possibility of falsehood, where falsehood has no access, no influence. This has a lot of important meanings for us. Not simply that the Qur'an contains teachings that would help us to deal with our daily life crises and demands, but also that it is a living, dynamic presence that we have access to. If you are going to cling to something, you have to have access to it. It is a presence that can give us inward peace, grace, and mercy to cope with outward difficulties. In so many ways, in his answer, Imam Ali (as), especially toward the end of his life, was one who had to cope with the most difficult of crises of we know, the most heartbreaking kind of *fitna*: civil war. He did something similar to what the Prophet (sal) did when he spoke of the way out of crises, out of trouble, out of tribulations. He said,

“One who has fear with piety (taqwa) (we might say a kind of pious awe), Allah will establish for him a way out.” This is from Qur'an. He adds, *“What is that you have the way out of? He who has pious fear of Allah, He will establish for him a way out of various types of crises, and will establish for him a light out of all darkness.”*

These are particularly relevant teachings for us, because of the times we live in today. Knowing full well that only in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find their peace and their tranquility. Our souls, our minds, our bodies may be pulled here and there by tests and vicissitudes of the outer world; but if our heart is at peace, it will only affect a relatively superficial aspect of our life, our consciousness. It will allow our heart at the deepest level, at the most profound level of our consciousness, to be at peace, a peace that is based on servitude. That's the principle we get from Qur'an, the *surah* that tells us about **“...those who believe, and whose hearts are at peace in remembrance of Allah Swt. Is it not in the remembrance of Allah Swt that hearts find peace?”**

This remembrance of Allah Swt takes many forms. One of them is recitation of Qur'an. But again, lest we forget, the morphology of the word "*dhikr*" as I have previously described, please keep in mind what it means. Nine out of ten Muslims when asked what is *dhikr* will say, "Remembrance." But what is it also? Penetration. In the process of remembering Allah, it penetrates to the core of our being. There are no accidents in the morphology of Arabic. In one of his statements, Imam Ali talks about an age in which trials and tribulations will be many. In one of the descriptions he gives Muslims, he says, "*They will forget the Qur'an, and they will consider nothing of less value than its correct recitation.*" The right way of reciting the Qur'an is clear. But then on the other hand, if there's no penetration, if there's no remembrance, the right recitation is only right recitation.

He put a lot of emphasis on this, because the recitation of the Qur'an is not only a form of *dhikr*, and one of the most powerful, penetrating, and intoxicating, but it also is one of the ways in which we are able to assimilate in depth of essence the prophetic message. What I mean by that is it is not a textual message. It's not just speaking, or a matter of discourse, or knowledge. The essence of the prophetic message is living, transformative, as if he's weaving by degrees some kind of a Divine Presence around us, like wrapping us in a cocoon. If we are wrapped properly, and if we have fed properly, we are going to emerge. We are going to metamorphize as something totally different than what was wrapped.

I read recently a saying which states, "*The one who recites Qur'an is as if he is having 'nebu' (prophethood, prediction) woven into the very being.*" It's as if he is weaving by degrees a very spiritual substance of *nebu* into your being. In other words, there is the creating of the Prophet within each and every one of us. If it is the light of Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) that is carried from the beginnings of time to this very moment;

and if it is that light which carries the message to us, then we have to understand and accept the fact that there is the potentiality of a kind of essence of the prophethood within each one of us. When we recite Qur'an, we are not simply drinking in this message, or learning about a doctrine or rules or regulations, fears and hopes. We are entering into, or being entered into, by a prophetic presence. When we hear it, when we recite it, we need to be open to the prophetic presence of it.

Imam Ali says, *"You will never become a prophet in the full sense."* So, the *nebu'a*/prophecy is the exclusive prerogative of the prophets themselves, but we have access to that *nebatī*, to the inner dimensions of *nebu'a* which we call *waliyat*. This is the first subtle relationship I want to speak about, the subtle relationship between that *waliyat*, which we may define for a time as being sanctity or holiness or spiritual authority. Those words, *wali*, *waliyat*, *maula*, *awla*, we are all familiar with. The roll right off our tongues, "Ya maula." They have all been derived from the same root. The various forms of that root and its derivatives are the most occurring words in the Qur'an. The original meaning of this root word is mentioned by Raghīb in his lexicon, *"Mufaradatu qur'an is one thing taking place by the side of another thing, in such a way that there is no distance between them."* The two things are placed side by side in such a way that there is no other thing between them.

The root word is naturally used for nearness or proximity, but also it means physical and figurative nearness. And again, for this very reason, it has been used in the sense of, especially among the people of Tariqah, friendship, love, guardianship, patronage, control. All these concepts involve some sort of contact and proximity; hence, the relationship of the master to the student, the *shaykh* to the *murīd*, and also the *murīds* to the *murīds*. Particularly in the Islamic context, *waliyat* is the faculty of legal and moral authority that enables a person with this authority, with

whom it is vested, to exact obedience, to fulfill some kind of moral and ethical vision of Islamic truth.

According to the Qur'anic context of Divine guidance for humanity, the prophet's role should be considered as the head of the state, as well as the founder of the Dīn. The sense in which the Holy Qur'an speaks about *waliyat* is not just in that sort of social and political sense. It is as near to you as your jugular vein. Each 'āyat of Qur'an reflects a relationship between ourselves and the Prophet Mohammed (sal). Indeed, the light, the Nur-i-Mohammed, that same *nūr* runs as a thread through Adam (as), and Nūh (as), and Musa (as) and Ibrahim (as), and Isa (as). The *waliyat* that we have access to, which is called in theological terms "*al waliyat muqtasebah*" (the *waliyat* that can be acquired), is not the spiritual authority of the prophets or the *imams*. The *waliyat* to which we have access is defined as the *waliyat* of *irfan*. The *waliyat* is the inner dimension of the *nebua*.

Imam Ali tells us that when we are reciting the Qur'an, it is as if by degrees the *nebua* is being introduced into your being, infused in you. If you can't recite it, you can hear it, but you need to have ears that hear. You can see it and its beauty—but you have to have eyes that see. You can taste it / *dhawq* – but you have to have a tongue that is clean to taste it with. In fact, [it is] what prevents us from becoming prophets. It is a spiritual presence entering into us when we give ourselves wholeheartedly to the Qur'an. Then we know what our capacity is; now we know what our *qadr* is. We know. We can't pretend we are prophetic; we can't pretend we are great *shuyukh*; we can't pretend that we are the *awliya-Llāh*. If you know, you know. "*He who knows, knows. None else knows.*"

It takes courage to know, because you are going to know things you don't want to know. It may go against your ego, your dream; hence the spiritual practices to

overcome the ego, the *nafs ammāra*, *nafs lawwama*, and *nafs mut'mainna*, and all that comes between and after. Those are the only three that are mentioned in the Qur'an, but there are seven. That's also a very interesting thing to remember: what is mentioned in Qur'an, and what is not mentioned in Qur'an. The entering into our being of the Qur'an by means of recitation is directly related to the concept and principle of *tajalli*. It's a very important concept for those of us in our *tariqah* and in our line: *tajalliyat-e-bāri ta'la*. This is the third of the three terms I hope to focus on in these *dars*.

The first is *tanzil*; the second is *ta'wil*, and the third is *tajalli*. All three have an important relationship in the Qur'an in the text and the principles. *Tanzil* is revelation. It really means the coming down and revelation of the Qur'an. Coming down in the sense of a descent, like a rope from the heaven to the earth, from the sublime to the mundane; therefore, there is a continuing vertical connection. The Qur'an is just as much in Allah Swt, in the *ghaib*, in the higher ontological degrees of this realm, as it is in the material realm. Nothing from Allah diminishes Allah. Whatever we know is still present within Allah Swt. We have this habit of going up like this (palms open upward to the sky as when praying), and looking as if Allah is out there somewhere.

Whatever is on paper, whatever is in print, whatever is recited to us – that's the *tanzil*, without any change or location. Coming down, but always present in the sense of manifesting in a much less subtle way, [like] the descent of the Divine Word into this realm as a book. After all, that's what Allah called it from the very beginning.

The second term, *ta'wil*, can be interpreted in a slightly other way: as the esoteric, mystical, inner interpretation as opposed to *tafsir*, explaining outer meanings,

commentary, exegetical works, linguistic meanings, historical contexts. *Ta'wil* literally takes you to exactly what it says. *Ta'wil* takes you back to *al ahwal*. *Al ahwal* is related to the same root: it's the process of retracting or retracing the revelation back to the beginning, back to the first. It's a process which is very intimately associated with *waliyat*. But it's also in particular with the *waliyat* of Imam Ali. Just think about it: think about forensic medicine for example.

Someone wants to solve a crime. So you have some evidence, and you have to trace everything back to the source of it. Think about how astrophysics operates in the world we live in today. We are looking at light, at the stars. What are we looking at? We are looking at time, not at place. In effect, we are tracing back to some degree the source of that light by just looking at it. This is *ta'wil*. It takes you back to the *waliyat*. The famous narration which was given both in the *sunni* and the *shi'a* texts, the Prophet (sal) said,

I have fought for the tanzil of the Qur'an, and one of you will fight for the ta'wil of the Qur'an. It was reported that Imam Ali at that time was outside of his tent, outside of the group of Companions to whom the Prophet (sal) was speaking at that time. And he said, "The one who is going to fight for my ta'wil is the one who is mending my sandals." At that time, Imam Ali was mending the Prophet's (sal) sandals outside of the group.

That's the prophecy. Imam Ali was going to be the one who fought, not just physically in the wars, which he had to do. ***The Prophet (sal) said, "Imam Ali will have to fight against three types of circumstances."*** There were three civil wars the Imam had to fight against (the ones who were hard-hearted). What is more significant is

the fighting for *ta'wil* in the spiritual sense, fighting for the esoteric understanding, for the inner meaning of Qur'an. This is given in a wonderful incident.

At the beginning of these three battles, at the Battle of Jamal, a Bedouin came and asked the Imam a question about the oneness of Allah Swt. The other companions said, "This is not the time or the place to ask such a question!" Imam Ali said, "Let him come and ask the question. After all, that's what we are fighting for. We are fighting to defend the truth of the meaning of the oneness of Allah Swt on every level, and not simply at the material level of tawhid as regards justice in society and politics, but tawhid as regards the deepest and most mystical understanding. So let him come and ask me the question."

There are at least three groups: those who broke their oath of allegiance to him, the ones who rebelled against him (Mu'awiyya and his people), and then the third group, the Khawaraj, the hard-hearted ones. What's most significant in this story is the fighting for the *ta'wil* in the spiritual sense. What are you fighting for, land, a book on paper, forms, a *masjid*? What are you fighting for? You are fighting for knowledge, for understanding, for submission, for peace and security in your own heart. That's the real courage and bravery. This was given in that wonderful incident when, at the beginning of these three battles, that Bedouin came and asked him that question.

On the field of battle there was a remarkable mystical interpretation of the meaning of *tawhid*. The Prophet (sal) said, "***That which has no second does not enter into the category of number.***" What the heck does that mean?! We are not talking simply about the oneness of Allah, which is 'one' as opposed to 'many,' which is the obvious answer to that. We are saying His Oneness is a oneness which has no otherness. There is no existence reality apart from the one reality of Allah Swt,

which goes on through different grades and degrees of self-manifestation; hence, we can understand that **“wherever you turn your face, there is the countenance of Allah Swt,”** and because there is no otherness. So what is real has to partake of the Divine Reality.

Many of you have heard me say this, time and time again. I’m going to quote Sanskrit. If this glass is full (a large water glass), it’s full. If this glass is full (a smaller tea glass), it’s full. Are they the same? *“Om poornamidah poornamidam poorna poorna mudachayate... Om, this is full and that is full. From the fullness, the fullness is taken and only the full remains.”* Tawhid—the truth is the truth, whether you say it in Sanskrit or Arabic or Farsi. The truth is the truth. Somewhere along the line, somebody is going to know it. Why? Because Allah Swt said what? “There has never been a society I have not sent a messenger to”—not the Amazon, not the North Pole, anywhere, everywhere. If you dig deep enough, you will find the truth, somewhere. Is it the final truth? No. Is it the full truth? No. But it’s an *isharat*, a hint to tell you what’s coming next, until you arrive at the Prophet Mohammed (sal).

Why? Culturally, am I saying that? No, because it’s the aggregate of everything that came before. It’s not because we are Muslims and we are supposed to say that. You’ll find every teaching in the Prophet Mohammed’s (sal) teaching, everything in the Qur’an that came before. If you go find something that isn’t addressed, then we’ll go wait for the next prophet. But there isn’t going to be one, because there is no need. Allah only fulfills the needs. **“Wheresoever you turn, there is the face of Allah”** is because there is no otherness. Whatever is real must partake of the Divine Reality. Other than that, there’s nothing. There is only illusion, apparency, and with illusion comes confusion. This is one of the ways in which Imam Ali (ra) fought for *ta’wil*: by giving these kinds of explanations, and interpretations, and openings for people to go from the literal in the outer toward the inner, toward the *batini*. We

just went from *tanzil* to *ta'wil*. If I'm going to talk about it, I should give you examples of it.

The third concept, which I'll end with tonight, is *tajalli*. This is extremely necessary to understand. When I say "understand," I mean absorb. I don't mean understand here in your head. The words I'm speaking go into your ears. They go into your head. You're thinking about it. You are categorizing it. You have quantum events happening in your brain. Things are being linked in ways that are non-linear, and all that is taking place. But, until it becomes your awareness and consciousness, it's only in the mental world. And many, many people spend their time in that world. It's important that we talk about the self-manifestation, the revelation of Allah Swt, the disclosure of Allah Swt, because Imam Ali taught us that the Qur'an itself is the mode of *tajalli*.

He said in one of his sermons: "*Allah has manifested Himself to his creatures through or by His Kitab*. Has made Himself manifest. Dimensions of His perfected Reality can be manifest, and at the same time, maintain all that is hidden in the Divine Essence, all that is beyond all possibilities of manifestation. Some things can never be manifest. We know from the examples that have been given so many times. If you light one candle from another candle, the candle you are lighting it from doesn't lose any of its light. Why is that important? Because it's analogical. Because Allah has given us, everywhere we look, an example of every deeper teaching. That silly candle... a simple candle is a profound teaching, because it's an analogy to something much greater. That also means, "**Wheresoever you turn, there is the countenance of Allah Swt,**" because the countenance of Allah Swt is *haqiq*, the truth.

If you can't understand it intellectually academically; if you can't grasp it through the mind, look at a candle. There is an example for you. Is it the full truth? No. But is it enough? Yes. It's enough to begin to understand that everything represents Allah. The difference between this kind of revelation and the revelation of just a text is simply like hiding something from you. One of the *shuyukh* said that it's like hiding something in a box. You don't know what's in the box. Then they open it up and show it to you, and you reveal something that was hidden. It is as simple as that. But that kind of revelation, *tajalli*, is much more like having, he said, "*a mask over the face. I appear to be something else to you. And you can't see. And then I unveil my face, and what I'm showing to you is not an object apart from myself. I'm revealing myself to you.*"

Tajalli is a revelation of one's self, not something else. It's not a revelation or disclosure of something other, like objective. It is a revelation of one's self that is being revealed. We can understand something of the transformative power of Qur'an, because when we get to the point where we begin to understand *tajalli*, we have gone from *tanzil* to *ta'wil*, and now we begin to understand our self, what is being revealed to our self by Allah through the Qur'an. When we recite and realize we are in the Divine Presence, and the manifestation of Allah is coming to us... For the Christians, the Catholics, what is the analogy for them? It is the Eucharist, the blood and the body of Jesus. As soon as you take it, it's supposed to transform itself into something else. This is an analogy.

The Qur'an tells us that the Prophet Isa (as) was the Word breathed by Allah into the womb of Maryam. We know that this is the Word of Allah. It is a hidden book, placed into this woman, who gives birth to this prophet, who is, according to Allah, the living Qur'an also, as all the prophets are. We can participate through recitation, through reading. We can remember that we have access to the manifestations of

Allah Swt. So at least entertain understanding this concept before you approach the Qur'an the next time. In the Qur'an we are told, **"By the night, when it encloses or hides, and by the day when it is resplendent, it shines forward with its self."** ...by the night when it covers, by the day when it appears. We are also told that the day reveals the sun. Just like the sun's rays make our lives clear, clean, and beautiful, so too the Qur'an will do that.

I will conclude tonight with this word that is extremely important in the invocation of the Divine Name of Allah. Going back again to Imam Ali (as), he describes *dhikr* as innovation. He said, *"Allah has made the dhikr His remembrance bida hasana (the beautiful innovation, not bida [in the pejorative sense]), polishing the heart by means of which the hearts come to see after being blind, come to hear after being deaf, yield after being resistant."* This is how the inner light, *tajalli*, is brought into remembrance. It's a self-manifestation of Allah Swt. It's similar to the self-manifestation of Allah Swt to Prophet Musa (as), when he asked to see Allah. Allah said, **"You will not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it stays in its place, then you will see Me."** When He showed him the mountain, the mountain crumbled. Musa described himself as falling prostrate at this manifestation.

It is related that the recitation of Imam Jafar Sadiq was so beautiful that when people walked past and heard him recite, they would faint. It's not just the sound; it's what you allow yourself to receive. It's very easy to emulate, to create a pretense, and a beautiful one, and bring happiness and joy to people. But for yourself, if you want to understand, then you have to do the things that purify your *latā'if*. You have to open up yourself and submit. We started with *islam*, and we wind up with *islam*. We started with submission tonight, and we wind up with submission. That's where we find our safety and security. In my talk tomorrow, if you are still interested, I'll talk about the relationship between *tajalli* and *ta'wil* and the world in which we live,

and what is insignificant, and how we try, at times, to convince ourselves that the insignificant is the most significant, and the most significant is something we can just do a couple of minutes a day, or a few hours a day, of. *Asalaamu aleykum.*