



[Tanzil, Ta'wil, and Tajalli – Part 3](#)
 Stages of Faith and the Ta'wil of Salat

Dinner blessing: Ya Allah, we are grateful for the company we keep this weekend, and for the light You are showering upon us, and the love and friendship, *suhbat*. We plead with You, Allah Swt, to make us worthy of the love of one another, of the brotherhood and sisterhood of one another, and to be a light for others, *inshā'a-LLāh*, in this world of strife. We ask You, Allah, to bless our children, that they might have healthy and long lives, and do good in this world. And [we ask You] to give us good work, Allah Swt, and answer the deepest prayers of each one here, prayers which I'm sure include service to You. *Amin*.

Suhbat: I was talking about the inner dimensions of Qur'an and about *'adl/* justice, and *mu'assis/* organization. Understand there is an inner dimension through all of these attributes of Allah Swt. *Mu'assis*, from a Sufic point of view is the organizing principle behind Tasawwuf. It's the subtle principle that gathers us together. We are all unique individuals, but something joins us together. There is something else, and it has a different taste to it, a different *dhawq*. You can taste it. It has a good taste to it, doesn't it? And you can feel the energy of it. When you think that when you are memorizing the *asma al husna*, and you are contemplating it, there is something in the inner dimension of it that gives up its meaning to you if you are receptive. I can give you a little exercise that you can do, and it's a very profound one actually if you do it.

Often people come to me and say, "Shaykh, my mind is running and I can't sit in *muraqabah*. What can I do to still my mind?" And there are a number of things you

can do, if you are not the kind of person who can sit and watch your mind go crazy, and be still, watching your mind go crazy. There are many things you can do, one of which is to begin reciting the Names of Allah Swt. Recite them slowly and sincerely – sincerely is the operant word here – with the attitude that I’ve been speaking of in the last two talks, to mine that nectar. And as you do that, do it slowly. One of those Names is going to have a different taste to you. It may be Tuesday at 3:00 in the afternoon, and on Wednesday it will be a different name. And when you do that, and you hold that name in your mind, everything else will become still. You will begin to see how the rest of your day or period of your day will be influenced by that attribute. It will draw out of you like a sponge draws water. It will draw out you that attribute.

Why am I saying that? Remember at noon I was talking about reflections. We can shortspeak it and say, “Oh, it’s all Allah.” But I’ve been trying to explain to you what that means this weekend. When you draw on the essence of that name, it is because it is reflecting that essence from you, and your mind will become still. Of course, we all strive for that. We hope that people around us would also strive for such understanding. Unfortunately, in the world we live in today, people are unfortunately very content with form and appearances. When you are content with form and appearances, it creates arrogance. Most people in the world are arrogant. They think their interpretation and understanding is correct, and they don’t apply the template that is available to them in Islam. Not the Islam most of them know, I might add, but the *ihsan* that is Islam, which requires *iman*.

It is the Islam that is *hasana* / beautiful, in the sense of *jamal* and *jalal*, that kind of overriding beauty and magnanimity. It’s dimensional, not linear. It’s not two-dimensional; it’s multi-dimensional. You can describe a mountain by telling the kind

of rocks that are on it, or the height of it, and how far away it is from you, and even approximately how many years that mountain has existed. But that doesn't capture at all, any of that, the magnificence of that mountain. Until you can speak of that mountain in terms of its magnificence and its beauty, unless you can speak of yourself and others in terms of the resources that the mountain provides (and I don't mean literal resources, but the resources of the reflection of beauty and magnanimity), we are not going to really grasp the mountain. We can understand that the mountain has rocks, and we can build with it, that it has minerals that we can reduce from it. We can make concrete with it. We can do all kinds of things with the mountain. But whatever we are doing exoterically with that mountain is in some way taking away from its beauty and its magnificence. It is the same thing about Islam.

This montage that we call Islam is a kind of mentality. It's a kind of mentality and thought, which periodically expresses itself in movements and in circumstances and in localities. This community is an expression of Islam and a locality, isn't it? Or in the whole movement, there is a kind of growth that takes place, if from within the knowledge we talked about as *ta'wil*, infuses us with the sense of the magnanimity, the beauty, the patience, the love, the values of justice, the values of patience, perseverance, all of the names. What's considered important in this process of understanding *ta'wil* is the necessity for each of us, each person on this sojourn, to go through a process of becoming aware of themselves in order to harmonize and create balance /*mizan*.

Mizan is created with knowledge. It is a kind of balance between the esoteric understanding of Islam (with the *dhahir* and the *batin*) and the exoteric. How you achieve that balance is a line; and where is the line between the two? And when do

you cross that line? This is really the essence of Tasawwuf. We are placed on that line between the outer and the inner, between the *dhahir* and the *batin*, between *dunya* and the *akhirat*. That's our place. When we turn our attention to the *dhahir*, we also know we could turn our attention to the *batin*. And when we know how and when to turn our attention to the *dhahir*, and to draw from the inner teaching, and when we turn away from the world and we turn to the inner in our *muraqabah*, in our prayer, in our *fikr*, we become facile in moving between these two dimensions.

Balance, as you know, is dynamic. It is not static. If you have a balance scale, it is a dynamic process. Life is dynamic; it is not static. So we have to continually come to balance, so that we can move at will from the *dhahir* to the *batin*, as I was speaking to you earlier about the difference between *'adrak*, watching your dream; and *warud*, being able to control it. We need to continually come to balance, and this is the purpose of *ta'wil*, to move from the outer dimension of something to the inner dimension, from the obvious to the subtle, from the outer necessity to the inner driving force or intention behind that sense of necessity.

Mevlana Jelaludin Rumi said, "*Change comes about through necessity; therefore, O man, create necessity.*" Why? Because change is absolutely necessary for you, yourself. You and I, [have] to have a say in the change that is taking place in us, and not be changed by external circumstances only, where we are always in a reactive modality. How do you move between these two apparent worlds? They are not two apparent worlds, really. They are one world – two aspects of one world. Nasr al Khusru on his journeys came into contact with the Ismailis during the time of the Fatimids. He converted, meaning he embraced Ismaili thought, which to this day has remained very esoteric and metaphysical. In fact, it is the only form of Islam that still has the *khalifat*, because they still have the Aga Khan.

The synthesis between these two worlds of thought may be something you have heard a thousand times – at least those who study with me have – but it may sound foreign to the ears of most Muslims. It's not without *furqān* / discrimination these points are made. There is a story. A man was given a definition by Imam Jafar Sadiq, who was the third person in our line, in response to a question regarding the significance among Muslim theologians, which was, "Tell me about faith," – a very deep question. He was asked, "Is it profession with action, or profession without action?" Meaning, do you profess the faith along with action, or do you profess the faith without action. Imam Jafar Sadiq said, "*Faith consists entirely in action, and profession is a part of action. Action is made obligatory by Allah. It's clear from the Book (Qur'an). Faith professes circumstances, stages, grades, states. So in faith, there can be total perfection, or else it will be imperfect.*"

Faith is dynamic; it is not one thing a person has. When you start to think about what does it mean to be Emir Mu'minin, for example? What is he the leader of? Muslims? Why is it not Emir Muslimun? Why not the Emir of the Muslims? Why is it the Emir of the Faithful? This is really important to understand, because people of faith often do not act in good faith, do they? We say it in court, don't we – to act in good faith. As you go through these stages of faith, you eventually come to *ihسان*, which we all know is defined as, "***Live as if you were seeing Allah, and if you don't, know that Allah is seeing you.***" (Hadith of Jibreel) Eventually you come to that.

The concept of faith establishes action as a very integral part of spiritual growth and development. It's not a thing. Even though you may think you come to life with faith, or you think that you are a faithful Muslim, you are thinking FORM most of the time. The next thing you are thinking about is, "I'm fasting at Ramadan. I'm making

Hajj. I'm praying 5 times a day. I'm making my *wudu*. I believe in the Holy Book. I believe in angels. I believe in the last day." That's what you are thinking, aren't you? You are not thinking anything very esoteric. If you are really lucky and faithful, you might have a taste to that word. This word *dhawq* is a very important word, by the way. It doesn't mean just tasting my tea. What kind of tea is it? Is it good tea or is it bad tea? It's good tea. It's Persian tea; it has to be good.

So you see that the *dhahir* of virtually every faith is a concept that establishes action as an integral part of spiritual growth and development. You have a mass in Catholicism. You have the Ark of the Covenant in Judaism, and the Torah. You have rituals in Buddhism and Hinduism. You have prayer and fasting and Hajj in Islam. These are all movements and dynamic aspects and forms that some people say prove your faith, but in truth, we might say they don't prove your faith. They improve your faith, and they may disprove your doubt /*kufr*; but they are not, themselves, faith. By definition, *kufr* is to bury or cover something over, putting accretions over something so it doesn't move. Is that *hujud*, also? *Hijab*? Good question. What about a seed? You cover the seed with dirt, and because you do that, it moves. It grows. What's the word for seed? *Hibb*, and the same root is *hubb*. What's the relationship between a seed and love? Ah, now we are thinking.

Back to *dhikr* and *rahmat*. Why are the most important Names of Allah Swt, Rahman and Rahīm? Who said that? I said that. "Shaykh Rashid said those are the most important Names!" Because we say, *Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm*. How many times do we say that? A lot! But is that the reason why? That's the reason people would say, and it is one of the reasons. But what is the *ta'wil* of that? You know it already; I'm going to tell you again. Some people here didn't hear it; so you don't mind hearing it again, do you? *Rahm*, the womb. **Iqra bismi rabbika**. Remember:

in the name of Allah. *Dhikr* is remembrance? Penetration. *Rahma* comes from *rahm*, which means womb. So what do we have? We have *hibb* that comes from *hubb*, the seed is placed there out of love. This is *ta'wil* of just three words. And where do we see it? We are it. We are the result of it, of a moment of love. How more simple could it get?

How come people don't know? What does it mean if you *do* know that, and if you remember it? What does it mean when you look at another human being? What does it really mean, if you absorb this, and it's the way you look at other human beings? It means you love them. It means the love that is planted in them is reflected from the love that is in you, and you love them. Are we the only ones who know that? No. But the definition of something is not necessarily the understanding of something. "Namaste," the Hindus say. What does it mean? "The God in me bows to the God in you." Same thing I just said, isn't it? How many people know what it means? It's better than saying, "Hi," which means nothing. "Hello," which is "hell" with an O in it. "Hey," which is something cows eat.

So where are we? Can you make love without action? Impossible. Love struggles against inaction. Anything that tries to keep it from manifesting it struggles against. This is also called the path of love, Sufism. The path of love is a dynamic path. Only love, only the *hibb*, has that power. That little seed in the spring has that power because it gets warmed a little by the sun to break through the frozen earth—one little seed. And if that seed... you are not out walking enough here; it's a beautiful place to walk... if you go over to the rock over here, and you climb up the Indian steps on the side of it – I call them the Indian steps because the Indians long time ago cut steps in it – you will see that in the cracks in the rock there are little plants growing. Those little plants eventually will break that rock. Those fragile little

plants, which if you touch with your foot, they'll break; if you touch with your finger they'll break; they are going to break that rock. That's the power of *hubb*. Only love can break through the earth, and that tiny little seed will crack the earth. That's a whole other talk.

Action is made obligatory by Allah. In the Holy Qur'an, faith possesses circumstances. It possesses grades. The concept of faith that establishes action, a very integral part of life and spiritual development and perfection, is really the basis of all these rituals that we do. But are the rituals all the same? And are the rituals anything more than *isharat*? If you make the ritual your life, it will never point you away from the ritual. If you make the ritual an integral part of your life that you are always trying to understand and doing to perfection, you have a better chance of it pointing you toward the Haqq / Truth. We prayed today. We prayed Asr and Maghrib. We had a beautiful recitation, a wonderful call to prayer, *alhamdulillah*. We felt it. But our prayer should be different than the average Muslim's prayer, especially after what we have been talking about.

It is something not by your mind, not thinking, "I want my prayer to be different tonight, because after all, what Shaykh Rashid was talking about should make my prayer different tonight." No, you have to get away from that mind who says that. You should just absorb the *ta'wil* of prayer, the *ta'wil* of what I've been telling you. If you do that, something will be different about that prayer. You may not know what it is. You may not have felt it or seen it, but it will be different and it will affect you. Moreover, we made *dhikr* tonight, *hadra*. Our *dhikr* should be different than the average Muslims' *dhikr* also. Not because our is better, but because some of us have spent years trying to understand what it's all about inwardly without even asking the question once, "What is it all about?", without ever trying to analyze it with our

minds. We just surround ourselves with it, just putting it against the Qur'an and the Hadith, and against the sense that we have a growing sense of love for our brothers and sisters of this world, not brothers and sisters defined by religion or race. We try to understand through love; and because of that, it should be different.

It is not just understanding with the mind, but the knowledge that flows into the open doorways of the *latā'if*. Why do we want to open the doorway of the *latā'if*, *qalb*, *rūh*, *sirr*, *khafī*, *akhfā*? Because when we open that doorway or the window, the breeze comes in. If you have ever read Hizb ul Bahr, you know about the breeze. In the *khutbah*, I talked about wafting on the breeze of the Mercy of Allah Swt. You don't have to ask a lot of questions. The knowledge flows into those open windows or doorways, and they are senses in and of themselves, the *latā'if*. You don't have to tell your eyes to see, or your ears to hear. You don't have to tell your tongue to speak or taste. It is its capacity, its quality.

“Okay, tongue; I'm about to eat now. Start tasting.” It's in potential all the time. You have saliva in your mouth all the time, except if you are snoring a lot late at night. You wake up and your tongue is like leather. When are you using your tongue to taste? Have you thought anything about the taste until you put the food in your mouth tonight? Your tongue was there. You were not walking around saying, “I'm tasting my saliva. My saliva tastes really good right now. I'm tasting the top of my tongue. I'm tasting my teeth. I'm tasting the air, like a dog.” You are not doing that, am I right? But as soon as the food goes to your mouth, “Hmmm. Tea is very nice! Although cold.”

Things happen at the right time. Everything lies back in potential. You go to sleep at night; you are not seeing. Do your eyes shut off? I have a friend who, when he's

going to take a nap in the afternoon, says, "I'm going to go contemplate the back side of my eyelids." You are thinking about something... "Did you hear what I said?" "No, I'm sorry. I was distracted thinking about something." Were your ears turned off? I'm sure your wife never says that to you. "Did you hear what I said?" If we don't respond appropriately in the moment, to the appropriate stimuli, there's something wrong. If I pick this up, drink it, and don't taste anything, "Oh, Doctor, I have a problem!" If you start talking to me and all of a sudden, I'm not hearing something, "My God, I went deaf." "My eyes are open; and I'm not seeing. What's the problem?" We have to respond in the right moment.

The Qur'an is a series of consecutive – I should also say simultaneous – moments. We want to approach it with our senses that we have been given by Allah Swt to respond to it. Well, I don't know. Most of you probably don't pick up the Qur'an and sniff deeply and, "I got it! Surah 15!" Most of you probably don't take a page out of the Qur'an and put it into your mouth, "Mmmm, Surah Baqarah!" Or put it up to your ear, "Ahhh, *tajwid!*" Allah gave us different senses for that. You know what they are called? *Latā'if*. When you approach Al Qur'an with *qalb*, it's different than when you approach it with *rūh* and *sirr* and *khafī*, and *akhfā*. It's different. When you approach it or reflect upon it in the first circle, the second circle, and the third circle – don't worry, it's all technical – it's different than when the first time you reflected on the same thing. Dimension upon dimension upon dimension – that's what it means that there are multiple dimensions to faith / *iman*.

Now, think about being the Emir of the Faithful. That's why you have to go back to the Ahl al Bayt, quite honestly. The Prophet (sal) said, "***I'm leaving my family.***" "Uh-oh. Shaykh Rashid just became Shi'a!" No. There's no Shi'a; there's no Sunni. The truth is the truth. My line goes back to the Prophet Mohammed (sal), right

through the family line. What does it mean, *ahl al bayt*/ people of the house? What house, like a house with rooms in it, with a bathroom, a kitchen? Think about it. What house? What is the original house? The Ka'aba. People of the Ka'aba. What does it mean? It means Hazrat Adam (as). Go back to my talk in Charlottesville on Hazrat Adam (as). You'll see what I was getting at; not the historical end, but the Adamic reality within each one of us, lit by light of the Prophet Mohammed (sal) and carried through the line of the family of Rasūlu-Llāh (sal). Who are the family of Rasūlu-Llāh (sal)? What did we say this morning? We all have the *nubuwa*, the prophetic impulse within us.

The basis for the rituals of the believers and the Sufis, and I use the word to mean "those who know," not just the ones who call themselves Sufis – and I especially underline the "goofy Sufis," (they live in California...!) – is for the exchange of the dynamic between the ideas that are perceived in the *dhahir* in the Qur'an and, in this case, in the *batin*. In the context I am speaking of today, this can be referred to as ritual movements in actions, but their universal inner truth or meaning. We have the prayer; but it has a universal reality to it. You are plumbing the depths of that reality. You have the opportunity five times a day to do that. If you want to study something, you could be like the old anthropologists who sat at a desk and studied being anthropologists. Until someone decided one day, "Hey, instead of reading reports about people who saw people, I ought to go myself!" What a phenomenal idea!

We have to go ourselves on this journey, I have to tell you. We are not going to get it from a book. Maybe I can inspire you, or give you some tools for insight, but you should go to my shed and see how many tools I have hanging up in the shed I haven't used in a long time. You don't want to get to the point where you are too old

or too decrepit to use the tools, even though you really, really want to use them. As human beings, we have the capability to act and develop awareness of the meanings of something. Especially with this process, we can develop an understanding through a dynamic action on a cosmic level. Hence, we become very interested in seeing that, not just intellectually, but tasting, getting the *dhawq*, along with the spiritual practices. Those who have heard me speak before have heard me say that everything is a metaphor, not just analogical.

What is *majaz*? *Majaz* is metaphor. Metaphor, as you have heard me say, also means a tunnel, a passageway. Think about what a metaphor is: a shortcut to an understanding. Just like in quantum physics, you have quantum tunneling. You can be in two localities at one time. That's Sufism: being in two places at one time, to be in the *dhahir* and to be in the *batin*. To be at that line I talked about earlier today, where you can turn this way and look into the inner world, and turn that way and look into the outer world. Who are you, where are you standing? We are standing where Allah Swt created us to stand. The angels make no errors. We have to know the Names in order to be conscious. Hazrat Adam (as) tells the names of things to the angels. Now, the process starts to happen of responding and responsibility, the ability to respond. Human beings have an ability to respond to all these inputs, if you want to call them that. How we will respond is the real issue.

In a writing on *ta'alim*, to understand how our actions become a way of unlocking the inner meaning of things, all of our actions, all of our thoughts, all of our understandings can act in a dynamic way to extract meaning. That's why I gave the example of the bee.

There was a wasp. He was watching the bees. He thought, "This is pretty good! They get all that honey, all that good stuff. I'm going to dress up like a bee. I will put a lot of mud on me so they don't know I am wasp, and I'm going to fly with them." The bees are very diligent; they do a lot of hard work. The wasp has a lot of mud on him, and he's supping all this honey and thinking, "This is cool! I'm going to be like the bees." Only he starts to perspire, because they work so hard. And wasps don't work very hard, as you may know. So the mud starts to fall off. What happens? The bees say, "Hey, he's not one of us! That's a wasp!" And they sting him and kill him.

Is that a nice story? They sting him to death, because he's not one of them. The bees were not there just to drink the honey, the nectar. They were doing something with that nectar. They were creating royal jelly with that nectar. They were creating hives with that nectar. Not the wasp. He was a selfish wasp, and just wanted the nectar for himself. I don't have to explain that story, do I? You get what I'm talking about. You understand that people look one way, but they are another. Someone asked me about my swords today. It's the same story.

In this dialogue between the outer and the inner, we can begin to understand the most basic practices of Islam. You will find it in the *ta'wil* of the *salat*. That's where you will first find it. It's very interesting where tradition gets mixed up with the reasons for it, and comfort gets mixed up with the purpose. The tradition gets mixed up with the meaning. Even Santa Claus means Christmas at some point, instead of Newroz. The first thing they tell you as a Muslim is to pray. You have 1.2 billion Muslims in the world, out of which a goodly number of them are praying. Those who get benefit from the prayer are all those people. They get *thawab* from that prayer, no matter how good they pray, how poorly they pray. Just because they

have the *niyyat* to pray, they get *thawab* from it. How many get the inner meaning of it? Well, that's another story. Just like in the madrasas in Pakistan and other places, they memorize Qur'an. How many of those children know what they are memorizing? So someone comes in and tells them, "This is what it means," and they believe it. Why shouldn't they? Their teachers tell them. And the rest of the story you know.

If you start to hear the message of Rasūlu-Llāh (sal), if you start to understand what happened to Adam (as) and his family, what happened to Hazrat Nūh (as) and his family, and Hazrat Musa (as), and Daoud (as), and Isa (as), you start to see a thread between these things. You understand when you get to Rasūlu-Llāh (sal), when Allah says, **"I have completed my religion/Deen for you,"** He's saying there is no need for anything else. Now, here is the totality. With *ta'wil* of My revelation, you can begin to now unravel this mystery. You can begin to understand what has linked all of history together and all of the future together. And you will be able to drink that nectar. **"And He will raise you up from among the people and give them a message."** What's the message? The message is you and I have the capability and the capacity. We have the opportunity. We have the means, the method, the assistance, the accompaniment. All we have to do is to turn toward Allah Swt, and we begin with *salat*.

The first aspect of it is to understand why the times of prayer? What is the *ta'wil* of the times of prayer? It is based on the references in the Qur'an that I can give you. These established prayers during the day signify some very interesting things. For the Sufi, it is Time Pause, which is to give you a chance to stop, reflect, to go inward, to attune yourself, to make *wuqufi qalbi*, to put your head on the ground, to make *tawbah*, to recite, to think about Qur'an. All these things we talk about are one level

of action. But on another level, the prayer during the day signifies different eras in the development of Shar'iah. Now I'll give you some *ta'wil* on prayer.

For example, the six prophets we just talked about: Adam, Nūh, Musa, Ibrahim, Isa, and Rasūlu-Llāh (sal). Each brought another dimension to the inner meaning of Shar'iah. Each one gave us more understanding. But each one of them, as you know, also began a process. Adam (as) began a process of repentance. Noah (as) began patience and perseverance. The Prophet Ibrahim (as) brought about an era of trust. The Prophet Musa brought about law. The Prophet Isa (as) brought about the teachings of compassion and peace. He also started the concept of justice, kicking out the moneylenders from the temples. He brought a message of love to the people. Then the Prophet Mohammed (sal) combined all this under the rubric of "*Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm.*" In the dynamic processes of ever-expanding universes, he is the *rabbi-l-ālamīn* (plural). You don't hear anyone else called that.

Each step with each prophet brought something new to the prayer, the *salat*. It may be obvious to you that there is a depth of understanding the *salat* represents, and also *zaman*/time –the beginning, the middle, and the end of prayer. But also, if your rhythm is right, there is a *majaz*. There is a corridor that opens between this world and the next world during prayer. You are praying here; but you are there, somewhere else. You are doing the physical prayer here, and that's why you want to do it as correctly as possible. But you don't want to *think* about doing it correctly. You want to do it correctly. Did you ever finish a prayer, and not know you have finished it, but didn't make any error in it? Did you ever have that experience? Where were you? It is similar to the example I give when you are driving. I always give the example, especially to new students.

When you are sitting in *muraqabah*, what is it like? Well, it's like driving somewhere – I hope you don't mind me repeating this for the hundred thousandth time – and you get there, and you don't remember driving there. Have you all had that experience? How did I get here? I don't remember driving here. I don't remember one light, the car in front of me, turning left or right. I don't remember anything. I remember getting in my car and leaving home, and now I'm here in Lynchburg from Farmville. How did I get here? And you didn't make any mistakes. You didn't run over anyone. But you got here. Maybe you listened to Qur'an. Maybe you were having a conversation with someone in the car. Maybe you were just thinking about something. We've all had that experience driving.

And if a ball rolls out into the road, all of a sudden, you are present. You got to Appomattox, and you don't remember how you got there. But the ball rolled down into the road, and you are waiting for the kid to follow the ball – now you are totally present. You were always present, but you were also somewhere else, and this is how we want to be in prayer: present and somewhere else. This is the *ta'wil* of *salat*. There is a corridor that opens between this world and the next. Do you know what it is? *Subhāna-Llāh rabbi-l-ālamīn. Bismi-Llāhi-r-Raḥmāni-r-Raḥīm*. You are at the beginning. (Recites Surah al Fatiha.) Where is the corridor? Where does the door open? Look for it.

When you pray Isha tonight, look for the door. Have you ever seen a door that you don't know what is on the other side of it? Of course. You may not be able to open it tonight, but you will know where it is, if you really look for it. This is the *ta'wil* of *salat*. I'll give you a hint: where should you pause the most in prayer? This is a quiz! Anybody can jump in. *Sujud*—that's where you will find the doorway. When we enter through that opening, we come full circle. The Prophet (sal) winds up being

the full circle, because through him, this revelation comes. The Qur'an exists from time immemorial. Everything is written in the *Lawhim Mahfūdh*. There is nothing new in the universe. But you have to go through Adam (including the minor prophets), to Nūh, to Ibrahim, to Musa, to Isa, to Rasūlu-Llāh (sal) to get to that point where you know the door is there, and it will open for you. Is this too esoteric? I hope so!

I wanted to fulfill my promise to you and told you a secret tonight that you maybe never heard before. It took me about 38 years to get there, to realize that. I was still Shaykh Rashid before that. I had students; I was teaching; they are sitting here, but that *ta'wil* came to me about 38 years into it. The Prophet Mohammed (sal) said **"Seek out knowledge from the cradle to the grave."** I'm very grateful. I can't wait for the next thing I discover. And you know what I'll do the first time I get it? I'm going to sit with it and not share it, right? No. When you go outside and see a beautiful sunset, you want to share it with someone. "Wow, look at that beautiful sunset." You don't say, "I'm not going to tell anyone; it's my sunset. And I'm not going to tell you or share that sunset with you. Forget about it!"

You have the natural impulse to share. "What a beautiful sunrise! *Alhamdulillah-Llāh!*" "Look at those lights from the Masjid, aren't they beautiful!" Isn't it a natural thing to do? Form. Make *muraqabah*. You will understand more. We are all living in unfinished houses. When you build a house, when you just have the footers in, you can't live in it. I guess you could pitch a tent and live on the property. Then they put the floor joists in, with no flooring on it. You can't live in it that way. Then you frame it out; you could live in it then, but not for long. You have to finish the house, because the rain's coming, etc. Eventually, you get to the point where you can live in it, but it's not complete.

A lot of people have incomplete houses they live in, and they never finish them. Finish the house. Don't become so self-absorbed that you forget to finish the house. That means *muraqabah*, *mushahadah*, *munasabat*, *islam*, *imam*, *ihsan*. So far in these talks, I have told you about *islam*, *iman*, and *ihsan*; and how to extract from the Qur'an and from life this *ta'wil*.