

December 4, 2008

Thursday

Title: [Seek Beyond the Physical Reality](#)

DVD title: Stages of The Path that Come Naturally Through Muraqabah
Proven by Those Who Came Before

Bismillah ir Rahman ir Raheem. I remember a number of years ago, in conversations with Hazrat, a discussion of the concept of *fana fī rasūl, fana fī Allah, baqi billah* and other results of *muraqabah*. I had a discussion with someone today about *salat*. The person said to me they had made a resolution to do all their prayers, though they had resisted doing that. This is not someone here in the *khanqah*. They had resisted doing their prayers, because they didn't want to do it just because they were supposed to do it; they wanted to do it because they wanted to do it. This is a very nice, post-modern kind of explanation. It's like going to the dentist, who tells you to brush your teeth, but you don't want to do it because the dentist told you to. And the dentist isn't Allah, but respectfully I listen.

Unless we understand these stages, stations on the path, it's hard to commit oneself to pursuing them. Though we think that someone debating about doing prayer is being a bit naïve, believe me, respectfully, I guarantee you, you can be just as naïve about the stations that are achieved through *muraqabah*. Just like one can get into these spiritual political discussions about whether or not people speak to you from the grave or from the *barzakh*. The proof in the Qur'an is the fact that the Prophet (sal) ascends in the Isra Miraj and has this conversation with Sidna Musa who gets him to negotiate with Allah to reduce the prayers down to 5 times a day, or the fact that there are *hadith* which say the Prophet led the *anbiyā* in prayer while his body was on this earth, and they were in the

barzakh. Believe what you will.

I would like to talk a little about *fana fī rasūl*, *fana fī Allah*, *raqibillah*, or *insi kamil*. [These are] stages of the path which hundreds of thousands of sincere seekers have strived to achieve. Even though we say in our Naqshbandi Mujaddedi line that we don't strive directly for *fana*, it comes naturally by doing our *muraqabah*. Many of the people who have strived for these states have left this world unfulfilled. Many of the people who left this world unfulfilled, did so because they didn't strive for this station. But a person with sincere yearning, sincere desire for understanding these states and experiencing them is a person who has learned the value and meaning of *irāda*, hence being a *murīd* or *murad*. Understand that one aspect of that is a verb: to desire something; and the other aspect is will: to act or do something. It's a noun. It's a very interesting word. Sometimes people get it confused with .

Know that before one's intention can really be effective, one has to have *irāda*. By implication, one has to be a *murīd*. At some point, maybe one becomes *murad*. A person who has a sincere desire to experience the stages in *muraqabah* will achieve a state of goodness—pure good. You respectfully realize that these stages can't be just achieved by verbally praising Allah. They can't be realized through *dhikr jahri* alone, because these stages belong to the most subtle core of the *qalb* and the *ruh*. Articulating the name of Allah, even, is not sufficient to purify, illuminate or cast light on our soul enough for us to reform the heart. So our teachers have told us that we have to do *dhikr qalbi*, and adhere closely to the Shar'īah, and the Sunnah, and to be guided along this way.

It's not important until it is important. Something can be very valuable, but if you don't value it, it has no value. It can even be gold, or palladium. Those of us who at least understand a little of this know that we have to really attend to our *latā'if*. So those of us

in our line of *shuyukh* have been taught to do *muraqabah hadiyat*, and to create a strong connection or relationship where a kind of spiritual force or power can be directed through *muraqabah (maiyat i hubbi)*. and create three circles: the circle of love (*hubb*); the circle of meditation on the names (*idhm al dhāhir* and *al bātin*, identification of the outer and the inner realities); and awareness that our *sair ul salat* (journey in salat), our prayer and meditation also become part of the journey of *salat* and *sair ul Qur'an*, journey in the Qur'an, living in Qur'an.

We begin to realize that as we refine our *latā'if*, we are auditioning/*sema* before the Prophet Mohammed (sal). We are in the audience of Prophet Mohammed (sal). We are in his *masjid*, in the Haram of Prophet Mohammed in Medina, as Abdul Bari Shah was in his *kashf*, transported daily to that Haram to meet with Abul Hasan as-Shadhili (ra). In this state, with this sincerity, will, and desire, fulfilled by our commitment to prayer, to *muraqabah*, to Qur'an, we find that our meditation becomes *fana fī rasūl*. We become obliterated for a moment or transfixed in Rasulallah. That means we become completely absorbed in the love of Rasulallah, in the *adab* of Rasulallah, and in the *akhlaq* of Rasulallah. The meaning for us of *fana fī rasūl* is this.

After an accomplished *murīd* and accomplished *murshīd* journey in this way in *muraqabah*, one moves independently to *fana fī Allah* and *baqi billah*. These states cannot be achieved just by *dhikr jahri*, but only through *tawajjuh*, through paying attention to the *qalb* in the *latā'if*. As this begins to become accomplished, a person experiences certain almost dichotomous experiences where physically you are present, on the ground so to speak; but spiritually you feel almost ashamed or humbled by being in the presence of Allah. Naturally coming from the heart and soul of such a person is the sublime Creator; the throne of Allah is your focus. The light within you and the light outside of you are all radiating the light of Allah Swt. The stones, the trees, the animals,

the sky take on a different appearance.

I don't know there is much value in describing something someone cannot see or imagine. What I think *is* valuable is the admonition and encouragement for us all to take seriously something which can be experienced. In our *muraqabah*, we get a taste of this reality if we allow ourselves to. In our prayer, in silent *dhikr*, in the quiet of the night, we get a taste of this reality, just like Allah Swt tells us that all souls must taste death. Most people think it means that everyone has to die, but the soul does not die. What does Allah mean when He says, "All souls must taste death?" We have to understand that when we have a taste of food, we survive after tasting the food. You survive and the food survives. In the same way, spirit tastes death and survives.

When we are in our *muraqabah*, we have a taste of Jannah. We can have a taste of the *barzakh*, of contentment and fulfillment. We have a taste of the presence of Allah Swt. Physically, we are still here. We have a taste of something that continues, just like we continue. When we have that taste, we realize that you are not just surviving just to have that taste again. You have been granted proof of something that exists beyond this physical reality; consequently, those who allow themselves to really engage, to really direct their will, don't fear death, and don't grieve in the same way others grieve. Certainly you grieve if someone you love passes, but you understand. Also, you have a different kind of relative view of what is happening in the world. You work very hard for the world to be peaceful, or the family to be secure, or people to overcome oppression. This is the role of the Muslim. At the same time, understand that what is transpiring outside in the *dhāhir*, in *dunya* is intricately related to education (*talib*) of the soul. It's not the total reality; it's symbolic (*alam*).

We are blessed with a mind and an intellect, and we are created to praise Allah and

worship Allah. But at the same time, there is a state beyond the intellect in *muraqabah* where we can communicate with those aspects of Allah's creation that don't have intelligence. We can communicate with the trees, the stones, the sky, the minerals, and the oceans. We realize that not everything is based on the cognitive processes of the mind and intellect, but Allah Swt is present in everything. Not only can we perfect our human language and communicate, but we can perfect an inner language, the language of *tawajjuh*, of attention, of facing, of seeing.

Many of our *shuyukh* have chosen not to guide students in early periods of the teaching to this kind of understanding, because it can be misleading. It can develop a desire for *karamat*. It can make a person turn away from their responsibilities in the world. That's why our *shaykhs*, especially Hazrat, would emphasize *darūd sharīf* over *dhikr*. If one has a strong will and allows oneself to be guided, however, along this way by really sincerely doing *muraqabah* and making *muhasabat*; by really sincerely challenging their own *nafs ammāra*; by really sincerely acting with compassion, love, and generosity to others; then hopefully one lives longer in the presence of the *shaykh* long enough to be guided in this way.

This is the way Prophet Mohammed (sal) was guided on his Isra Miraj, where he had conversations with angels. You can have conversations with angels, with the *jinn*, even with the *shaytans*. Being familiar with your *ruh* is really the preliminary step on the highest level of the Sufi Tariqah. As we develop proficiency in engaging with our *ruh*, we become more and more aware of the endless relationship that we have, the unbreaking, unending relationship we have with Allah Swt. We are not cast adrift in this world alone. We are, if you will, on a ship on the ocean that has a mooring line to Allah. That is our *ruh*. We begin to feel that we are never far from Allah.

There are certain aspects of *muraqabah* that a student is encouraged to go through, which allows us to begin to see things as they really are, to observe the real reality, even to observe the reality of the spirit before it takes form, to see the real shapes of things, to see really what something is, who someone is, what forces are active. You know, [for example], people see auras or entities other people don't see. There are not many people in today's materialistic world who can keep their *ruh* so pure that they can fully access these characteristics and qualities, because the *fitna* we talked about last night is disfiguring. It disfigures the human spirit. In extant literature, you find that human beings change into animal forms at times, like werewolves and such.

Why do we have that in our literature? It is an outer expression of the disfigurement that takes place in the human soul by *fitna*. This is nothing new. Of course, a lot of people deny this, but they don't have knowledge of it. If one believes this to be the truth, it is manifest to us in many ways. I have given the example so many times: despite the distance between the radio and the transmitting station, the information takes form at your radio. Despite the fact we are not seeing anything in the room, if we had a television we would see all these tv stations that are in this room right now. So why should we doubt there are other things to be seen, when human technology has replicated that reality? How could we create something Allah hasn't already created in some other form?

Similarly, by really giving ourselves to our *muraqabah* and meditation and practices, we develop this kind of spiritual insight where we can see and communicate with a human spirit, even if the spirit is in the grave. Even Allah Swt tells us in Qur'an that stones and minerals possess some kind of consciousness: **“The seven heavens and the earth and all that is within it praise Him. And there is not a thing but hymns His praise, but you understand not.” “Have you not seen that unto Allah pays adoration? Whoever is in the heavens, and whoever is in the earth; and the sun and the moon and the**

hills and the trees and the beasts, and many of mankind, where there are many of whom the doom is justly done.” Clearly Allah Swt is telling us there is some form of consciousness in everything, to be heard, seen, and to participate with. On one hand, it is a statement that proves that everything is a sign of Allah. But it is very clear that this is an absolute statement of adoration and belief.

Prophet Mohammed (sal) said, **“When a pilgrim recites ‘Allahumma labaik. O Allah I am present,’** (as millions are doing today as we sit here), ***all the stones and all the trees and all the pebbles of the earth around him join him until the chain extends from east to west.***” This is a Sahih Hadith. It confirms a spiritual vision of the human being of knowledge that the stones and minerals possess some consciousness through which they listen to the *talbiya* of the *hajjis*, and they are compelled to join in. Doesn’t that give a little extra meaning to casting the stones at Mina? It’s not just casting the stone at a pillar representing Shaytan. It’s praises being thrown at the Shaytan. One can even make the case that the pillars themselves are praising Allah, because everyone there is saying, **“Allahumma labaik.”**

My job goes on: to encourage myself to encourage you, to admonish myself to admonish you, to really understand that by doing this *muraqabah*, this meditation—not just by making *dhikr* aloud, not just through the lips praising Allah—but by doing the meditation and *tawajjuh* in the *latā’if*, different skills, different abilities, automatically come. These make us more comfortable with life and death. They give us more capability with our insights, with our creativity, which bring us peace and understanding even in difficult times, which set us on a path where we are, even though physically here, living in eternity. Why the resistance to it? Why the laziness we all have? Why do we want to shape it to our own will, our own design? Why do we want to innovate? That’s not *bida hasana*; that is such a distraction. There are certain things you just do, because they have

been proven to others that it's beneficial. It works.

If you are going to learn to fly an airplane, and you have never flown one before, and someone gives you a checklist, you very carefully go through the checklist. It's a big checklist. It has been proven by others who have come before you that going through the checklist is beneficial. You can say, "You can't prove to me quantitatively that going through the checklist kept you from having an accident." You could have *not* gone through the checklist and flown the plane and not had an accident—probably not many times. But you don't say that. You go through the checklist, because you have a sense of your own safety, your own mortality, your own responsibility; especially if someone else is flying in the plane with you. You are not a total fool. So you go through the checklist.

Why don't we have that attitude toward our own spiritual practices? Those who came before us have instructed us, told us, admonished us, proven to us, based on the life of Prophet Mohammed (sal), as well as the other *anbiyā* and what they have learned. You can debate whether or not, when the Prophet was leading the other *anbiyā* in prayer, his body was there or not. That's just a sign that your intellect is resisting and there is a rebellion going on. The reality is, if we really bring our sincere effort to this *muraqabah*, to these practices, those who come before us have attested to the fact, and proven it by their words, their wisdom, by the mere fact their words still exist a thousand years after they uttered them.

Whose words among us will last a thousand years? Go to the publications office and look at all the words Shaykh Ahmed Abdur Rashid spoke. But a thousand years from now, do you think anyone will know that or care about it? Who are these people whom we are still quoting 400, 600, a thousand years later? What made it last—the efficacy of what they said? They are quoted generation after generation, because it's proven to be

true. That's why I try to play it safe and quote them. I don't know if you wanted to hear that tonight, but I get to these periods where I don't know what to talk about, so I talk about things like this.

Make sure you don't do any meditation tonight. Don't do *darūd sharīf* tonight. But tomorrow... *manaña*... you can start. Be sure not to say *darūd sharīf* when you go to sleep. Don't take 12 minutes to do it. You'll be losing 12 minutes' worth of sleep. You'll wake up tomorrow morning and be 12 minutes more tired tomorrow than you were today. But tomorrow... *Insh'allah*. Not today. Remember this. If you want, we can talk about talking to people in the grave, too. *Allahumma labaik*. Be present. Even if being present is difficult. *Asalaam aleikum*.