

April 15, 2009

Wednesday

Title: [Making the Heart a Receptacle for the Fā'id](#)

DVD title: Making the Heart a Receptacle for the Fā'id  
through Relationship with a Proper Isnad

*Dinner blessing:* O Allah Swt, in these days of great challenges in our country and our work, we ask You for Your Beneficence and Guidance. We ask You, Allah Swt, to fulfill our hopes and dreams for our children and our safety in our journey in our school trip, and increase their hunger for knowledge and wisdom. We ask You, Allah Swt, for protection for our community, upliftment for the souls here. Keep them safe on their spiritual journey and opening their hearts. For those who are ill, your *Shifāt*. *Amin*.

*Sohbet:* *Bismillah ir Rahman ir Raheem*. I've been talking to you about *nisbah* and the Naqshbandi teachings. I want to go back to the discussion again of *fa'id* for one *dars*, if you don't mind. *Nisbah*/relatedness is more important and more powerful when it is with Prophet Mohammed (sal) through one's *shaykh* and one's *shuyukh* than any other relatedness. On one level, it means connection or relationship. We can all relate to that when we look at it in terms of our culture, language, or nationality. We all know what it is like to have relationships and relatedness to things. This series of links through the *silsila* is often called "the Golden Chain" in Naqshbandi terms that leads back to Rasulallah (sal). It is not just a personal relationship but it is a means through which this *fa'id* or effulgence, this auspiciousness, blessing comes to us from Allah Swt. It comes from Allah Swt to the Prophet (sal) through our *shuyukh* to us.

This Divine Energy is not limited just to people who call themselves Sufis. But when it

comes to Sufis, there is an overflowing of it. For a person who is not a Sufi, there is rarely enough for them to achieve much of a level of spiritual progress. This overflowing of *fā'id*, hence *nisbah*, has an attraction/*jedhb* to the heart of the Sufi. You can imagine a huge amount of water coming from a hose, going into a glass. How much of it is wasted? But the heart of a Sufi is huge, and it receives much more of that outpouring. What is this outpouring? It is an outpouring that fills us and fulfills us, and gives us inspiration and a sense of our purpose, our spirituality. It has a component of emotion with it, spiritual emotions. All of those have a potential to turn observation, perception, information, and knowledge into *hikma*. But *hikma* does not come in *fā'id*. *Fā'id* is the catalyst for *hikma* when it is mixed with knowledge and submission, trust. For that jump to take place, for that transformation to take place, for that energy to convert into real *hikma*, one needs to have a guide, a *shaykh*.

*Fā'id* comes from the word *fāda*, to overflow, deluge, emanate. It has an active component: the effulgent, the overflowing, abundant transmissions, abundant energy that flows from Allah Swt to the Prophet (sal) as His *Nūr* and *Bāraka*, through our *Pir* to the *murīd*. When it is converted, the *murīd* becomes *murad*. This effulgence has an attractive, magnetic nature also, just as it is attracted by the open heart, once the heart is filled and the transformation takes place. Allah then calls that person a *murad*, one who Allah is attracted to or calls to. It is an energy that one has to know how to receive. When one receives it, it clarifies us and allows us to see in detail the truth. It shows us the path. For the *salik*, the journey is that path to reach fulfillment. It is renewable and sustainable. It is natural. Just like the sun, the stars, and the heavens have this incredible lifetime, and we can draw from their power.

I used to say (and now I hear it often in the news) that Allah put the nuclear plant in the right place: 93 million miles away. Just as it appears that the source of the *fā'id* is distant

from us, we know Allah is not distance. The source of the sunlight is distant, but the sunlight is here, present. As I said, one does not have to be a Sufi to receive *fā'id*. But the connection that allows the fullness of the heart to receive that endless *fā'id* comes through *bai'at*. In that is the invitation to make one's journey, one's *suluk*, into the *sayr ul suluk*, into the journey through the seven levels of *nafs*, into the journey of the roundabouts, the circles. Of course this *nisbah* takes different characteristics. It may take the characteristic of one of the Attributes of Allah. For example, in certain people their compassion is overflowing, or their mercy is overflowing, or their patience. There is no end to their patience, their devotion, their service, their love, their receptivity, or no end to their forgiveness, to their ability to see and describe, and even project or emulate the Beauty and Power of Allah Swt, or to manifest it to such a degree that the normal, politically correct constraints fall away. And sometimes their actions, like the actions of a *majdhub*, break the rules of society. Rarely do they harm society; they just sort of shock society.

A person madly in love with Allah, running up and down the streets, shocks the sensibilities of people, but rarely harms anyone—like the story of Junayd when he became overwhelmed with the beauty of a young boy. As we go through these attributes – not every one of them, but the ones that are special to us as individuals – we become at times overpowered by them, surprised by them, as we move along in the *sayr ul suluk*. Our patience, our perseverance, our love, our compassion, our mercy, our commitment, our sense of justice: when we become overwhelmed by the *fā'id* of those specific attributes, we lose the sense of our ego, our *nafs ammāra* in those states, and hopefully in the *maqam* that follows.

In some way, the links in the chain of the *silsila* represent the different *isnad*. *Isnad* in the sense of the *hadith* means support of the *hadith*. The *hadith* is supported by reputable

people who heard it. That is the *isnad* of the *hadith*: reputable people heard it; they repeated it, and confirmed it. In this way, the relationship or relatedness or *nisbah* is supported by that *silsila*, by the integrity, the experience, the authority, the agreement and consensus of the people who transmitted it. *Isnad* also refers to the transmission of knowledge in general, too. There is the *isnad* of *tafsir*, for example, or of *fiqh*, or of *sīrah*. It means support or backing, attestation for information. The knowledge has to be acquired from a valid line, and tested out and affirmed. So to, the *nisbah* in our transmission has to be acquired from a valid support and tested out. That support is validated, not just by our personal experience, but by the experience of the community of believers or followers; the *muridīn* and the *shuyukh*, and the *khalifas*.

Through centuries upon centuries, there are certain understandings that come about through this, that are revealed through *bai'at* and attractiveness and relatedness. They come about through *ijma*, a consensus that comes through those experiences. When we sit before our *shaykh*, or any *shaykh* who comes from a proper *silsila* with a proper *isnad*, we are sitting in a direct *nisbah* of Allah Swt with Prophet Mohammed (sal). [It is] not just because there's a piece of paper, *ijāzah*, but because the *silsila* itself exists for us to be there. Now we can visit, and go place to place and meet many people, but just like anything else, we don't want a break in the transmission or the line. Jumping from place to place gives you the overwhelming feeling of *bāraka* or knowledge, but there's no continuity. What is important is the continuous transmission; the continuous support and the frequency of the *fā'id* that fits us as individuals.

We've been pre-tuned in the *ghaib*. How can we understand that? By going back to the systems concept of Islam. You have stem cells, T-cells. Some become heart, some become lung, some become kidney or this and that. Why? They are all the same at some level, but they are predetermined to where they are going to go—partially out of

necessity, but out of potentiality. This Divine Energy is the Will of Allah Swt and it is that will that we receive, as we receive it properly. That is to say, not only because it is supported by generations who have received it from the source, but we are actually experiencing the Will of Allah. There are some interesting sidelights. For example, when we look at the *Naqshbandi silsila*, you notice it is impossible for some of these *shaykhs* to have known each other based on the dates of their deaths. From this comes the concept of *uways*, and the power of transmission. Then after a certain point around Bistami, they overlap, and it becomes a physical line also. Behind these technical principles there are personal experiences and day to day encounters between the one who transmits and the one who receives. Without that personal contact, *suhbat*, you cannot fully receive the *fā'id*.

In Islam, spiritual knowledge is more than a fact, more than just information. It's more than just something you read, or something that is just told to you. Spiritual knowledge is something that when you see it, it is very, very clear. As you digest it, it disappears just like the food for dinner did, but its vitamins and nutrients remain. In the case of knowledge, it remains in our memory. The *'ilm*, the knowledge and clarity that is acquired with the *fā'id* that flows from Allah Swt and from Prophet Mohammed (sal) to the *shaykh* to us is not just because there is a line. It is because the overabundant energy connects to us through this line in *suhbat*. The Prophet (sal) is attributed to have said (though considered a *daif hadith*, it is used often): ***“There are two kinds of knowledge of the hear: the ‘ilm al qalb, and the ‘ilm al ihsan.”*** The knowledge of the heart and the knowledge of the .... I can't really translate it. You know what *ihsan* means.

This knowledge overlaps for us in the *Shahadah*. We say it, but unless there is heart in what we say, there is only an attestation but not necessarily an affirmation. This *fā'id* in *nisbah* is communicated to us. It's focused in us and has its capability for transformation

only through the personal content. Occasionally and under special circumstances, it is transmitted *uways*; nonetheless, there is personal contact, like Uways Qarni felt the presence of Prophet Mohammed (sal). We are in the line of Uways Qarni. We are also Qarniyya. That personal, verbal or non verbal contact is the heart of the recipient touching the heart of the *shuyukh*, which is often, as you know, symbolized in the *hadra* when I touch the heart with four fingers. This is one of the reasons we say the transmission is heart to heart, a transmission of Divine Power, of glance, of grace, of effulgent light, of abundance, of clarity, of attestation of Divine Presence, of the power from Allah Swt and the power from the Prophet Mohammed (sal) to each of us as individuals, and to us collectively.

Above all, the student (or any of us as *murīds*) in order to make real progress (not false progress) [we are tested]. Often progress is measured by the tests and trials we are given; false progress is often measured by how you feel in the moment. Real progress is: here is a test and opportunity to be forgiving, merciful, tolerant, or patient, to persevere. In that circumstance, few people in the world would act that way. But you do, because you have real tolerance. The *fā'id* has done its job. Real progress can only come about when we have companionship on this journey; when we have *suhbat* with those people who are more fully perfected than we are spiritually, who are adorned with an inner and outer knowledge and experience. Whether it is in *fiqh* or *tafsir* or *hadith*, it's best to learn those things in *suhbat* from someone who is perfected in those areas. Their ability to transmit that *fā'id* will be stronger. **“Light upon light,”** Allah says in Qur'an. The heart has to be tried and tested, strained and stretched. It has to be emptied and filled again and again, until it becomes the proper vessel, receptacle for spiritual knowledge.

We all begin our journey with the inability to receive all the *fā'id*. But if we receive it and keep ourselves in the right company of the right people, and we understand the

meaning of giving *bai'at*, then the heart becomes stronger. It becomes more able to receive and to hold that energy that flows in to this organ that expands and contracts, fills and empties, and breathes and feels and thinks. Under all kinds of situations, the heart becomes trained until it is the proper vessel, the proper receptacle, like the lump of clay that is worked over on the potter's wheel until it becomes a vessel that holds water, but it has to be fired. Only when the heart is linked with the *suhbat* of one's guide can this knowledge be transformed, and afterwards transmitted into the religious / spiritual depth of *hikma* that is inherited from the Prophet Mohammed (sal), and all the prophets.

For the people of Naqshbandi and Mujaddadi Tariqah, and the Shadhili and Chishti-Qadriyya Tariqah, the real *ulema* are spoken of by the Prophet himself: "***The ulema are to my people as the prophets were to the sons of Israel.***" When we talk of *ulema*, we talk of Sufic *ulema*: the *pirs*, the *shuyukh*. We have to regard the *shuyukh* as the way the Bani Israel regarded the prophets who would walk in from the desert and give a message, then walk back into the desert. If we can grasp the idea of this energy, this power, we realize it's like standing in the ocean with it crashing over you, and the undertow is very strong. It moves us, pulls us, throws us, and drags us. If we consider ourselves to be a vessel that can contain that kind of power and transform it, then we can absorb that force and hold it and transmit it ourselves over and over again. The *nisbah* and *munasabat* with our *shuyukh* is not to lift up the value of the *shaykh*. It is to complete the connection of receptivity to that *fā'id*.

The reason why some *shaykhs* were *majdhub* and couldn't have many followers was because they couldn't hold that *fā'id* and direct it. They weren't "directing *shaykhs*," as we call them. They became so filled with that power they had to express it. It had to flow through them. The *ulema* that are being referred to [in the above *hadith*] are those who have both the outer knowledge of the *dīn* and the inner knowledge of Tasawwuf. The

real link to the Prophet (sal) comes through the potentizing of the heart through this process of *nisbah*; this process that begins with *jedhbah*, through the meanings of our practices, our transmissions, meditations, *Hizb ul Bahr* that we do, that we can only receive from the *shaykh*. If we do it, then the light and power accrues to us. When you do it given by the *shaykh*, then you have *ijāzah* in a sense. You have *idhn* to do it. If you then do it, and it becomes part of you, it expands your heart and remains with you. It has a transformational force or power in you that allows your words to have different meaning, your thoughts and intentions to have a different force. If you don't have that attraction, that relatedness, if you are not in *suhbat* with your *shaykh* and you do it, then you don't have all the receptivity, all the love, all the transformational power that comes with it. As a result, it can be unintentionally misused and can harm us.

We have to keep the transmission open: the transmission to receive this energy that doesn't end, this force that is always present, this ocean that crashes down over you and then moves back and receives. Even if you practice these things by day but you don't allow your heart to be open to them, the pressure builds up. One can find they can't control their emotions, their words, or they don't know this from that. It is because they have not allowed their heart to be opened and expanded. It's like the ocean crashing down on something when it's not doing its job. It's also coming to us with love, not just power. With that love, it has a healing energy. It has a capability to not just transform our mind and knowledge, but to transform our whole being—this ocean of *fā'id* always flowing from Allah Swt. When we sit in meditation or do *Hizb ul Bahr*, you have to keep the doorway open. Those practices are doorways. You could throw a big box into the pond, and if it was closed, nothing would get into it. It would just bob and float on the ocean. But if you open it up, the water will flow through it.

There were things that were developed for people to feel that power quickly so they get a

taste of it, like *khilwa* for ten days or 20 days, or 40 days, or even the 1000 day chilla. People have to give up normal thinking, and release themselves from the sense of time, and release themselves from everything just to become compatible with the environment of the *khilwa*/retreat modality. When that happens, the energy begins to flow much freer through them, and they become much more attuned to it and in rhythm with it. In the same way, we create an environment like the community, which is not *khilwa*, but is a contained space with a purpose where that energy can be focused and used for very good purposes. If you just think about community in terms of *fā'id* and *nisbah*, you begin to understand it better. Just like the key to really understanding something in school is to have a teacher who can explain it to you, not just a book, [so too,] you have to have *suhbat* with a teacher and have this relatedness and relationship.

We also have to have someone presenting this knowledge and information to us, but we have to turn it into wisdom ourselves. The key to learning pedagogically is *suhbat* in that sense. The spiritual communication between hearts is the spiritual component to it. When the heart becomes a receptacle, it is linked to the guide that is sending the *fā'id* directing it toward us. This wisdom that develops in us is like the *hikma* of Nebi Mohammed (sal) which has now been inherited by us. When it comes, it comes labeled in a sense: “This is the knowledge of Prophet Mohammed (sal).” You know it when it comes, you don’t know it before that. This is the wisdom of Prophet Mohammed (sal). It comes and has a certain *dhawq*/taste. It has a certain transformational quality to it. The people who don’t know, just don’t know. You can read it; it can be the words of Rasulallah (sal), and it’s just the words of Rasulallah. But when you know it, and you really receive it, then it has a certain taste to it, the taste of all the prophets. With that, it has certain *bāraka* to it. It is the same when you read Qur’an or hear the words of the great prophets.

One can go on and on, on this subject. Understand that the link of *suhbat* to the guide, to the Prophet Mohammed (sal), to the source of this Light of Allah is real. And the *ulema* of Tasawwuf, the people who are the knowers and givers of knowledge, or protectors of knowledge or the experts are the ones who have their hearts and minds open to this transmission. Ahmed Farooqi Sirhindi (ra) said,

*“The murshid is a vehicle transporting fā'id. He is like a tap, allowing the fluid coming from the basin, the main source. How can one attain one's goal if the vehicle is not at true one, and if the tap is not connected? Then for attaining the rank of fana fi Allah, it is necessary to become fana in murshīd, which is connected to the source. To attain this love, forget about everything.*

Then he goes on and talks about the blessing of being in this line and in this *silsila*. Insh'allah, I hope you don't mind, I'll end at this point. *Asalaamu aleikum*.