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Thursday

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Title: [The Energy That Transforms the Character: Tasawwuf](#)

DVD title: Giving Birth to a New Being within Our Self  
The Murīd's Character Transformation

*Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm*. Last night, I was speaking about *tajalli* and I ended with statements on *tajdīd khalaq fil anat*, and *tajdīd al khalq bil anfas*. I assume you heard what I said about that. Remember the story I told a while back about Bahaudin Naqshband (ra) feeding the man stew until he couldn't eat it any more. I'll go back to that; but before I do, you have to understand that the purpose of the teaching, the purpose of any transmission, and the ultimate purpose of any *shaykh* is not just in terms of guiding someone. It is the directing or re-directing of energy and forces that will enable the individual to be receptive to that Divine Presence, to be in the state of moment to moment renewal, *tajdīd al khalaq fil anat*, that constant outpouring of the Divine Presence into this physical realm.

The idea is to be prepared to receive that irradiation of essence, and to realize that it is an endless revelation, and an endless and constant renewal that takes place within one's own self. Allah is constantly revealing the truth, and hence the Qur'an is constantly being revealed. The constant renewal that comes from being in that Presence takes place when we are conscious of it. It's not an automatic renewal. We have to open the doorway or turn on the switch, whatever metaphor you want to use. In other words, one has to verify their self as a knower of Allah, of that Divine Presence.

I ended last night starting to talk about the different stages of the Naqshbandī line and the different practices, *hosht dar dam*, *yad dasht*, *wuqūfi qalbi* and *wuqūfi adadi*. [You must] realize that these are all methods to use to recognize that Divine Transmission, and to verify that you recognize it. Then I spoke a bit on *tajdīd al khalq bil anfas*, this renewal of creation with each breath, and I gave you some clues about that. I talked about the Merciful of the breath, *nafas al-Rahman*, and about this *afāda*/over-abundance of beingness, this *fayyād* that flows into the cosmos, into this world. I asked you to contemplate this whole concept of breath. That's where we will start from.

We are going to move into something a little more subjective. That is, through this irradiation, because it is in the realm of the physical world and manifestations of Allah, something called “*takhalul*” has to take place. *Takhalul* means to penetrate. In the Sufic sense, *takhalul* means the intimate penetration and assimilation of Divine Attributes. I don't need to tell you the metaphor. The subject of Tasawwuf is love. Allah creates analogies, and gives meaning to those analogies. Hence, you find in Qur'an this emphasis periodically on the human being made from the drop of blood, the sperm and egg that come together to form the human being. If you understand this analogy, you understand that this is a scientific, biological reality; but it is also a metaphor. When the Divine Qualities of Allah (swt) are assimilated by the individual, and they are received vis a vis this *takhalul*, the result over time is that these attributes gestate within the soul of the human being. They give birth to or develop or create a new being: the Sufi. The *murīd* is created.

What has been assimilated or created is not biological nor genetic characteristics, but it is the metaphor. As we know, each cell knows exactly what to become. This cell becomes

a liver; this cell becomes the brain, etc.. It's an incredible miracle. That's why they can harvest stem cells and make them into something else. In this case, the seeker becomes penetrated or infused by the Divine Attributes, in this act of love of Allah... and receptivity. A person has to make themselves prepared to receive the irradiation, the *tajalli*, the *bāraka*, the assimilation of Divine Attributes. It is this *takhlul* that gives "the lover no rest." There is no rest for their limbs, for their eyes, no sleep for them, because every atom of the being of the lover of Allah (or in the metaphor, the human lover) has been activated and brought to life through a sincere, total, dedication to *dhikrullah*, the remembrance of Allah (swt), just like in the story of Leila and Majnun. I'll get to it again sometime.

The remembrance of Allah is, "***I am with the one who remembers Me.***" The one with *takhalul* is the true *dhaikr*, the true rememberer. As the person assumes these Divine Attributes – and you know what they are: compassion, mercy, love, the Ninety-Nine Names of Allah – they become *akhlaq* or *takhaluq*, a person who has these character traits. There is a transformative process that takes place in the spiritual development over a period of time (gestation time). A spiritual development takes place just like biological development takes place in the embryo in the fetus. That activity of the spiritual work, 'arād,' is given to the *murīd* by the *murshīd*. It is the transformation of the most fundamental character traits in an individual. They can be changed.

Now, go back. This is not done by osmosis. You can't be forced. There is no spiritual rape, if you want to carry the metaphor forward. It is between consenting individuals: the *murshīd* and the *murīd*. Or in more popular terms, it takes two to tango. This *safsafa akhlaq* is the transformation of the individual into the noble individual with noble character traits, the beautiful character traits, *hasasna akhlaq*. As that process takes place, things have to fall away. Things are transformed. Things that were necessary at one

point are no longer necessary. This is again another level of metaphor. It is a metaphor for *fana*/self-annihilation. The first stage is *takhaluq*, this assuming of character traits when all the human attributes become transformed. Some people say annihilated. In place of those, the individual assumes his own attributes, but they are attributes of the Divine. This is when Mansur al Hallaj said, “An al Haqq!”

He realized certain Divine Attributes, and others fell away. Woe unto him. He said this thing in a process of transformation, “I am the truth.” It is true... and I’ll get to that. What is transpiring is you are assuming the character traits of Allah (swt). In other words, you are assuming the *bismilallah*. A person sees you as compassionate. A person sees you as kind, as just. You genuinely are that way. You have gone through the stages of ego transformation. You are not in *nafs ammāra*, you are not in *nafs lawwama*. You are beyond *nafs mutma’inna*. You are in this active stage of fulfilling the character, as I spoke on the Eid on *akhlaq*. Among these character traits are the names or characteristics of Allah. You are not Allah, but you have assumed characteristics Allah has created you by, but you are no longer distracted by the human aspects. Allah can only create you out of Himself. We are created out of the reality that is Allah. We are made in the image—the imagination or mind—of Allah. Then you and I must have some inherent characteristics or qualities that can be developed.

Finally, when an individual assumes those traits of the Divine Names, these Divine character traits, it means the character transformation has taken place. Well, of course! I am speaking of a very refined process. It is not one day you are this, and one day you are that. The person begins to recognize that the way of their spiritual life is governed by this transformative process. It’s more than teaching or memorizing the Divine Names of Allah (swt), and saying “I want to have this or that characteristic.” It’s allowing the transmission to come to you. Through the *latā’if*, it becomes directed, focused and magnified. It has a transformative effect as it penetrates you and gives birth apparently to

another being. But it is another being constructed out of you. Well, isn't every being constructed out of another being? All of your children are constructed out of you and your wife. So the metaphor holds. Another being is constructed within our own self out of the Divine Attributes of Allah (swt) that we have been constructed of originally. On the physical level, they are earth, air, fire, and water. They are these Attributes of Allah (swt).

There is a profound, subtle, important relationship between the *muraqabah*/meditation, the processes we do in meditation, and the names of Allah (swt). I only wish I had been able to convey this to my own Shaykh before he passed of what my intention was in talking about the Divine Names. You know we had, not a disagreement, but a matter of emphasis about it. He said I should emphasize meditation, not the Divine Names. He was right, because at the time I did not understand totally what I am telling you now. But now I understand it; and it is what it is. He understands. Where does this take us? Understand, then, what is *suhbat* and what is the tradition of the *shaykh*. I played a certain selection at the beginning tonight, a Cairene Shadhilī dhikr. They are very, very old recitations of the Shadhilī of Cairo. I will tell you about Shadhilī teaching.

This is known as oral teaching. My speaking to you is one form of teaching in the oral tradition of recitation. This *suhbat* is oral tradition. That selection I played was *suhbat*. It is *dhikr*. It is *durūd* and *du'ā*, but it is *suhbat*. That is part of the process of transformation. That is part of the process of character development. When you remove yourself from it, your energy changes. No matter what practice you do, no matter what you think, it changes. Things change. The more refined you are, the more profound the change is. A traditional way of saying that is a stain on a white sheet can be seen much easier than a stain on a dirty sheet. We have a unique way of teaching, especially among Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī and the Khwajagān, hence, transforming the seeker, the *murīd*,

the aspirant. In other words, we assist them to transform themselves by giving them the means to be open and receptive for that penetration of Divine Characteristics and Attributes. But, as I said, the seeker has to help that situation, has to help the *murshīd* in this process.

So another metaphor comes about, one you are very familiar with: one of apprenticing. I told you that Bahaudin Naqshband (ra) was a potter. The metaphor is the *murīd* is like an apprentice in the pottery. I told you that he used to draw these intricate maps – like the *naqsh* of Allah Hu hanging on this wall– on the pottery. Those designs are an inner map also, of transformation. And the design is repeated. They are *naqsh*, impressions. *Naqsh* are designs, but impressions. Now another analogy comes. You create impressions on your heart and soul, just like you create impressions on the pot. When you fire the pot, the impression stays there. What is the pot made out of? Earth, air, fire, and water. The pot is the human body. The impressions are the attributes, the transmissions of the *shaykh* onto the individual. Now a transformation has to take place.

These impressions are made on *qalb*, and by extension, *rūh*, *sirr*, *khafī*, and *akhfā* also. Therefore, a person who practices this can be honestly and accurately called a Naqshbandī. You can be called a Naqshbandī because you have been impressed, and fired. The foundation of this is *lā ilāha illa-Llāh*, which is the fundamental essence of the way of all Sufis. This is the *hibb*, and with *hibb* comes *hubb*. Oh, wait a minute! Where did I start this talk? I talked about seeds of love and intimacy. *Hibb* and *hubb*. A seed comes from love. A seed with love creates a being, a person, a beautiful being. Out of this seed grows the tree of life, which you find in every religion. In Judaism is the tree of life. In yoga, you find the same thing. You find it in so many animistic religions. Buddhism has the Bodhi tree. This is the essence: *Ahad/One*.

This reality makes Allah (swt) synonymous with existence. If there is only one, there can't be two. So there cannot be any existence but Allah. The very beingness of existence is Allah—everything that is manifest, and everything that is unmanifest. Allah (swt) is not separate from creation. Allah is present; therefore, when Allah says, **“Wheresoever you look, there is the countenance of Allah,”** that's a factual statement, not a metaphor. There is no duality. Allah is as near to you as your jugular vein, which means there is no distance. Allah is your life. Whatever you see, whatever you come across, whatever you touch—this is Allah. But this is not a pantheistic or polytheistic view. It is just the fact that if *lā ilāha illa-Llāh* is true, there is only Allah. Whether you are looking at the mountains at the head of the driveway or the trees in the forest we live in, it's all Allah.

And you get into trouble, philosophically here, but we'll say it with some degree of safety: All our expressions, manifestations are exemplars of the Attributes of Allah (swt): the beautiful leaves, the maples we planted all along the road that are looking so beautiful today. These are manifestations of Allah. It is what I was talking to you about last night [regarding] the whole process and all the methodologies to remember that. No matter to what degree of austerity you have to practice to remember that, eventually the austerity falls away and you become in that state of remembrance. You come into that uplifted, higher state. All are manifestations of that energy. All are manifestations of that *fayyād*, that *tajalli bari'ta'Allah*, the greater irradiation. That means you are, and the people you love are, and the people you hate are, and the people who love you are all manifestations of the same *Ahad/Oneness*, Allah.

Why then is there so much misery and so much disharmony? Think about that. The Creator is the creation, and is not far away. This may seem to be a very unimportant, obvious statement that you have heard a hundred times; but I hope you hear it differently.

For one reason or another, I was on the United Press International (UPI) blog today. There was a guy who was ranting and raving about how terrible Islam is, and said all you have to do is read the Qur'an to find out how terrible it is. I'm not usually moved to write anything, but I was moved to write a paragraph. His name was "Skeptic Sam." So I signed mine, "Honest Harry." I said basically, like anything else, a true skeptic would be open-minded. Of course you can open up the Qur'an or any holy book and read it. Why not try reading it for compassion, mercy, tolerance, and love, and understanding? Then that's what you will find in it. If you read it for hate, retribution and killing, that's what you will find in it. While you are at it, you can read the Bible for the same thing, unless of course you are reluctant or afraid to do that. Then of course you are no different than most other people who are reading something for exactly what they want to get out of it. What's the point?

This insignificant statement I have made to you has the capability of transforming your life. It's how you look at it, what you bring to it, what permission you give to receive knowledge and information. Believe Honest Harry! It can change the parameters, the paradigm of how you see, the gestalt. The very moment you or I recognize that everything is one, then the whole world becomes an extension of that same energy, *fayyād*. Everything. Something happens; transformation begins. As soon as the egg and the seed meet, something happens, an energy happens. Transformation takes place on an existential, exponential level. Two becomes four, four becomes eight, eight becomes sixteen and so forth. Boom, boom, boom, and within 3 days, you have a heart beat. What does that mean?

The foundation of transformation is seen when this disharmony changes to harmony. We can go back to the story of Hazrat Adam (as) and Hawa (as). What becomes disharmonious? Breaking the rules, the guidelines, which means moving away from that knowledge, from the *suhbat*. What do you mean by *suhbat*? There was no one to sit

with. *Suhbat*—you are sitting with Allah! Everything in the Garden is praising Allah, so you are in *suhbat*. Everybody is a *dhaikr*. Every thing is making *dhikrullah*: every tree, every fruit, every thing on its own. Then disharmony comes: *khannās*, the whisperer, the kid who shows up for a meal. You have to get this synergy happening and capture the harmony. You have to accept it and realize it; as we used to say in the 60's, “flow with it.” You have to flow with it. If you become receptive to that energy, you feel that Divine Energy—[as we say in our meditation niyyats:] *ka faiz aye*—coming to you.

The bounty and the energy/*fayyād* come to you. What is the bounty/*rizq*? Not bounty as in ‘bounty hunter,’ but as in bounteous. It means it is constantly being renewed. It surrounds us. This energy is love/*hubb*. Is it any wonder, then, *hibb* and *hubb*, and their relationship with each other? All the *murshīds* from the beginning, from the time of the Prophet (sal) (in each cycle of the Prophet) have transformed this *fayyāz*. *Fayyāz* is the invisible energy field that gets transferred from the *shaykh* to the *murīd*. This is called *muraqabah*. This is what is called meditation and transmission. What happens when that takes place? Automatically, in the laws of the creation of the universe, the character changes. When this takes place, love comes forth out of its own accord. And this energy, this love, has a name. The name is Tasawwuf, Sufism.

It is the path of love, and it is a path of awakening and awareness. It’s not the pursuit of intellectual knowledge, though knowledge comes. It is the pursuit of pure beingness, knowingness, awareness. The whole concern is the process of love that gives rise to all the character traits. Instead of falling in love with one person, you fall in love with One/*Ahad*, the Whole. You see the metaphor. You fall in love with one person. Nobody falls in love with three people at the same time. Sequentially, maybe; but not at the same time. You see again the metaphor. You fall in love with one person: Leila and Majnun. You fall in love with the One/*Ahad*: Allah (swt). We all know, then, what has to happen.

It becomes a whole process of becoming in harmony with that person, or (as we said in the '60's) attuned. Attunement is like at-one-ment, and that is atonement. Atonement is *tawbah*, the means to rid yourself of your distractions. Repentance. Repent (in Latin) means to turn back toward, to go toward the source.

How do you cross the distance between the creation and the Creator Who is present? There seems to be a chasm between us. You become distracted. The beloved says to you, "Pay attention to me. Look at me. Where are you? Where did you go? Come back!" How do you bridge the gap between the Creator and the creation—between the place where you are, that you don't know where you are, and the place where you are not, but you think you are. Most of us have realized that organized religion is not the best way of getting there. Organized religion does exactly the opposite: it teaches duality. There's me, and there's Allah. There's me and there's God. There's me and Jesus, or whoever. You have this terrible fight to get to wherever they are. But the Creator is not higher than creation; the Creator is creation. Allah is not separate from creation; Allah is creation and beyond creation. We want to not get into the process of argument saying, "You do this and we do that." What we would rather do is affirm.

The Sufi wants to affirm every moment that we are in the Divine Presence. That's called *dhikr*: to affirm, happily and joyfully, that we are in the presence of the Divine, in the middle of our work, in the midst of our misery, and in the midst of our work. We have a joyful understanding that everything is, indeed, everything. It is in that kind of affirmation and receptivity that this transformation takes place. I'll read something to you. [This is from] Khashani, in his series "*Adab il Suhbat*." This is the *adab* of *suhbat*. You won't like this, because it is rules. Nobody likes rules.

*Do not sit or rise or move without being concentrated (mutawajjuh) on the master. Do not ask questions for any reason at all. If you experience*

*difficulty, it is your responsibility. Asking questions is unruly. Do not bow your head or look down during the suhbat. This is unruly, because the aim is to contemplate, mushahadah, the Divine truth. Yet the disciple is not able to perceive this at the beginning, consequently, he has to contemplate the beauty of his master.*

Khashani adds:

*This is unruly, and has bad effects not only on your but on others present. In this respect, the communal element of initiation is essential. Do not raise your voice when the master asks a question. Do not quit the assembly (majlis) of suhbat even if you need to relieve yourself. It is actually a diabolical trick to distract you.*

We have to rejoice every moment in everything, and that's what we should be learning. Jalaludin Rumi (ra) said, *"If you are not one with the beloved, then seek. And if you are in union, rejoice, because such an assembly is a Sufi assembly. And you are of my Sufis, the Sufis of the new age. I am introducing you to the world of love, and initiating you into the ways of love."* Then there are the two kinds of love: *muhabbat* and *eshq*.

*Asalāmu aleikum.*