

November 21, 2009

Saturday

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Title: [Barzakh, the Place of Imagination. Akhfah and Khafi.](#)

DVD title: The Fuel for Our Journey is Light from Within
Moving through the Barzakh by the Dhikr of Each Latifa

Dinner blessing: Bismillah. O Allah, You are still providing for us from the gardens, *alhamdulillah*, and extended our season now almost to December. Hopefully, we don't take this for granted because it is unusual this year, but we remember the *fadl*. We ask You, Allah, to keep us aware of the bounties You shower on us, and the opportunities You give us, and the beauty You surround us with, and the friendship You give to us. Help us not to take things for granted in that way either, and remember the needs of our brothers and sisters. Every day, we should scan every face we come across in this community and ask ourselves the question, "What can I do to uplift and assist that individual, or provide for that individual?" In doing that, Allah (swt), we come to know Your Divine Presence. Amin.

Suhbat: Think about, once again, the fuel for this journey. Food fuels our body, along with air and water. What fuels our soul? What fuels our heart? What propels us from the 'alam al-khalq to the 'alam al-amr? Where do we get the energy to turn our attention to the Divine, and to move from one state to another? Is it strictly just a biological phenomenon that has to do with our brain chemistry, fueled by the same thing that fuels our physical bodies? Or is it something beyond that, that came from somewhere to here, and is returning to there? What is it that can lift us out of our torpor and laziness, even when our bodies are ill, for example, and can give us even in illness an epiphany or inspirational or creative thought, when the body is fighting disease?

The *‘ālam al mithal* we traverse, this corridor, has a similar meaning as *khayal*, also. *Mithal* can be translated as image, form, or analogy or symbol. In that sense, it is synonymous with imagination, or *khayal*. In this corridor of imagination, this passageway of analogy or form we are transformed, where the thing of form somehow, while still in its body, passes through this passageway while still in this physical reality. Some thing of us passes through this passageway and perceives, imagines, through *basīra* and *firāsa*, images of another place. Many years ago, when you sat in *muraqabah*, some of you would say you weren't seeing anything. So I created guided meditations. Many of you liked those guided meditations because it would take you from here to somewhere.

When I used to sit with Hazrat at the tombs, and though I would not in my conscious mind see anything (for which I'm very thankful), I would imagine that I was seeing something. I would create an image. I would ask myself, why would I pick that image? Who is guiding that image? As soon as I would construct an image and it was active – like I would construct an image of sitting among the *shuyukh* – then I would be sitting among the *shuyukh*. Hazrat would say, “What did you see?” Sometimes I felt a little guilty, but I didn't get into the details of what I had done. Also, I didn't want him to tell me to stop doing it! But I would tell him what I saw and heard, and he would say, “Oho!” I would say, “Does that make sense? Is it right?” He would invariably say, yes.

Khayal is imagination, but it is also image-making. This is the reality when it say in Torah that Allah made people in His Image, in His Imagination. Through this capacity or quality of *khayal* or *mithal*, He created this world. He imagined it, and He said, “**Kun faya kun.**” The *mithal* is a *barzakh* between the world of the seen and the unseen world. It is within the realm of imagination. This is why some

Sufis, including me, have said that all this is in the imagination of Allah. All this is imagined by Allah. We are playing a role in the imagination of Allah.

He created us out of His Imagination. We are made in the image-ination of Allah. It is within this realm of imagination or imaging that a human being is given the clearest expression of what Allah is and is not, of what existence is and is not, of what Reality, Truth is and is not. It is in this realm of *khayal*, in the ‘*ālam al mithal*. Now, think: if the ‘*ālam al mithal* is a *barzakh* between this world and the unseen, when we die and we are in ‘the grave’ or in the *barzakh*, where are we? To the degree that you have *basīra/firāsa*, that you can see, you will then we seeing with the sight of Allah, hearing with the ears of Allah. The *barzakh* is not a contained little space where somebody cut out a porthole where you can look on Jannah, as some people say. It is the realm of the imagined. What are you going to imagine in that realm? What will you see? You will carry with you the sight that you developed in this world.

When I say you will be looking out on Jannah/Paradise, and waiting for the Day of Awakening, now we can understand better that in this corridor, this space between here and there, it, itself is in the realm of imagination, and it is here where we get the clearest sight of what is real and what is not real. In other words, you see whether what you thought was real, is real or not; or what you thought was true, is true or not, good or not, bad or not, right or not. If you haven’t developed the ability to see that, you will bring only the sight that you brought into the *barzakh*.

We may have the opportunity to remember the covenant we made with Allah (swt) in that moment in pre-existence—the *al-mithaq*, the covenant we made with Allah when all of the souls of the children of Adam bore witness to Allah’s Lordship over them. How is that possible? All the children of Adam weren’t born yet. (It

always raises a big question about if and how many people exist, and where were they all stored, like on shelves somewhere.) Allah asked His Creation that had not been created yet: “**Alasti bi rabbikum. Am I not your lord?**” And what did they answer: “**Yes, we bear witness to that.**” The Sufis call this moment, this day, this event, the Day of Alast, a day of questioning or monologue. Note that this movement from life to the Hereafter, through the corridor of the grave, many people take very literally. It is also an important metaphor for imagining or returning to the image that Allah has projected in this creation as our soul in accordance with the *mithaq*, the agreement or covenant.

The light that we bring, that we have developed through our *dhikr*, through our *muraqabah*, and awakening and awareness of the Divine Presence, through our *tawajjuh*, is the light that will illumine that pathway for us. It is the energy that carries us. It is the enlightenment one has, the epiphany or insight that one has, the momentary *hal* granted by Allah for us to see. That’s what fuels our journey, when the body is no longer doing that. We are being fueled by this light. And we are attracted to that light like the moth to the flame. There is an analogy of the story of the moth to the flame. “I’ll fly close to the light and tell you what it is,” he said. He came back with his wings singed and told them, “Don’t go there; it’s very dangerous.” They don’t believe him, so they go anyway, one by one. We have to go one by one, *fana*.

You know the spirit, and you know the secrets, *sirr*. The innermost secret is *khafî*. What is this *khafî*? *Khafî* is also another name for consciousness. *Khafî* itself is a Divine Substance. It is hidden within the *rûh*. It is an essential element of one’s *rûh*. You won’t see it, unless you have the sight to see it. Just like the vitamins and minerals and the lipids and enzymes fuel your body, you don’t see them unless you have the right tools; nonetheless, they are there doing their jobs. The hydrochloric acid is in your tummy digesting dinner.

Khafī was placed within us as a trust to be awakened and to manifest, operationalized, fully at the time when the lover has been overwhelmed by *eshq*, Divine Love. When the light of love for Allah comes, *khafī* awakens. Why? Because it is the innermost secret. I told you about the secrets the other day. Now, the innermost secrets are revealed only to the one who loves, who has the heart to love—*shawq*. It is called also *sirr ul sirr*, the *sirr* of the *sirr*, the secret of the secrets. This is the person who is really *habiballah*. Who is *habiballah*? Mohammed (sal). He is *abdallah*, *habiballah*, *khalilallah*. He is the beloved of Allah.

There is the *dhikr* of *khafī*. The *dhikr al-khafī* is the secret remembrance. When you are doing *dhikr al-khafī*, silent remembrance, it is very subtle. It is very refined, very delicate, and very sweet. It is like a secret. It is hidden. It is *halwa*, the sweet—*dhikr al-khafī*. When you do *dhikr al-khafī* properly, that's when you get the vision of the light of the beauty of the Oneness of Allah—the light of unity, *tawhid*, when you do *dhikr khafī* subtly, delicately. When you do *dhikr al-qalb*, remembering in the heart, you contemplate the Beauty and Majesty of Allah (swt) in the deepest recesses of the heart. That *dhikr* is very sweet as the Beauty reveals itself and the Awesomeness and Majesty of Allah reveals itself.

In *dhikr al-rūh*, you are contemplating the Attributes of Allah. You see the lights of the Attributes of Allah. Those attributes become clear to you through *rīh*. In the *dhikr* of *sirr*, remembrance in the innermost part of the heart, we talked about the Divine Mysteries. And *dhikr al-khafī* I just told you about. Then there is the *dhikr al-akhfah al-khafī*. But before we talk about that, I should talk about *akhfah*. If *khafī* is also consciousness, then *akhfah* is the innermost consciousness or the most hidden. It is that place or state where “you know Allah through Allah.” In

truth, it is only Allah Who sees, called the *ghaib-i-ghaib*. You are more and more seeing that Divine Presence everywhere.

Allah says in Qur'an, **“I will see through your eyes and hear through your ears, and I will speak through your tongue.”** You realize that through that *latīfa* of *akhfah*. You begin to realize that whatever you are seeing, you are seeing not just by the Will of Allah, but through Allah. Later you say, *hadhari, nadhari, shazari, mai'* in the *dhikr*. Allah's Presence sees, is near and within you. But also you later say, *sair ma'allah, sair il'allah, sair fi'allah*. This is after the circles. That's what you contemplate. You become more and more aware through each *latīfa* of slightly different things. Maybe not so slight! You realize in *akhfah* that everything you are seeing, you now have the *iman* and you now have the *tawakkul*, and the *'ilm* and the *yaqīn* that you are seeing this only by Allah. You are seeing Allah, by not just the Will of Allah (Allah is out there, willing me to do this), but by the means within you that Allah has placed there.

Akhfah and *khafī*, the most secret of the secret, and the most hidden of the hidden, the most unseen of the unseen—this is the secret *dhikr*. It is the remembrance of Allah, and the remembrance of who is the slave, the *'Abd* of Allah, of who is the lover and who is the beloved, of who is the knower and who is the known. It is the vision with certainty of the Truth. When you make the *dhikr* in *akhfah* and *khafī*, you are remembering the truth. What is the truth? Allahu Akbar. That's the truth. The stupid people, the stupid killers, the stupid jihadis! Whatever there is, God is greater than that. I hope you read the article I sent you from Zaid Shakir . He gave a very nice explanation.

How can we remember Allah if Allah does not first remember us? Allah says: **“Remember Me and I'll remember you.”** But before we can remember Allah, for Allah to remember us, Allah has to create us. We know the metaphor, the

statement of the clay and the breath, fashioning us. I've explained that so many times. That creation is dynamic, just like the *dhikr* is dynamic, just like all the manifestations are dynamic, just like everything is changing, always changing. Just like all of the celestial bodies are rotating. By rotating, certain forces are created. Everything is dynamic, nothing is still. So the *dhikr*, this remembrance, is the *nai'ma*/grace of Allah. To whom? To His Slaves. It's an unfortunate term. But what is a slave? A slave is a being owned by some other being. We are owned by Allah. How do we know? *Mowt* (death). The irony is that's how He frees the slaves.

The body is limited; it is enslaved to many forces. H1N1. Tiny little viruses control the body, affect the body. Viruses that can't be weighed get into your body and drive it crazy—one little bacteria, one little E.coli created by the body itself. Only it is supposed to go out, and not come back in. It affects your whole body. One little thought drives you literally crazy. One little phrase, "Allahu Akbar," empowers a crazy person who doesn't understand. Whatever misery this is, don't worry about it. Allah is greater than that. What makes you so important? Allah is greater than that. Why do you reduce Allah by your stupid, selfish, miserable, anti-human, anti-Islamic action? How dare you? And then put Allahu Akbar next to it! I don't want to get political.

The hearts become overwhelmed when it is engaged in the *dhikr* of *akhfah* or *khafī*, because the Allah's remembrance is greater than whatever you can remember. You become overwhelmed by it. You lose consciousness. You fall over. You spin in circles. You scare the women. The women scare the women. They fall over and bounce their heads [on the floor]. Ah! What is that? When that happens, that is *dhikr al-akhfah al-khafī*. The *dhikr* has reached the *akhfah* and the *khafī* and has taken away your physical state. You become overwhelmed when

you are engaged in that *dhikr*. You have some consciousness left, “Oh, I’m spinning around.”

You have *dhikr al-ihsan* on the tongue, and *dhikr an-nafs*. *Dhikr an-nafs* is when you have that inner movement and inner feeling in your *dhikr*. You have *dhikr al-qalb*, when the heart contemplates beauty and majesty, and *dhikr al-rūh* and *dhikr al-sirr*. You have *dhikr jahri* or *jali*. Remember that the *dhaikr* who vocalizes is only partial *dhikr*. To become total *dhikr*, every organ, every sense, every cell, every atom has to be immersed in the remembrance of Allah (swt), not just what you are hearing. All this is fueled by the *fayyād* of Allah. That fuel catapults you into this dynamic ‘*ālam al mithal*. It fills you with imagination. It feeds your dream images. Are your images beautiful, or are you having nightmares? Nightmare after nightmare is Hell. What is Hell? The worst thing you can imagine, and more than that. Hell is all the things you can imagine and worse than that. I’ve always imagined Hell as having cadres of millipedes. I don’t like millipedes.

All this comes out of nothingness. It all came out of nothing when the cosmos began. Do you know that those Persians and Arabs knew that? They had a word for it. They called it *al-khala*, the void. How did they know that? Everywhere they look, there was something. In the sky were stars, in the sea were animals and fish. How did they know? *Al-khala* was described as the place where the cosmos takes its shape. It was described as the outermost limit of density and darkness. It was said that the whole cosmos was in this void, this emptiness; and it is always eternally descending in search of its own center. Does that sound like good astrophysics? This search is described as the search for knowledge, and the center is the place of rest. The Hindus called it *pralaya*, absolute rest, peace, *sakīna*/tranquility. When one attains to that place of absolute rest, which is the place of total knowledge, there is no more searching. That rest is impossible. It cannot be attained to except by Allah, because the search is endless.

The objective of the search, therefore, is to realize that it has no end. Allah has no end, and there is no rest, ever. So you might as well be energized in your journey, because the journey goes forever. The person who wants only to rest is in Hell. The person who is filled with that light and *fayyād* is traveling forever. Star Trek: Captain Janeway The pleasure of what one observes in this process, given by one's *basīra*, by *firāsa* gets deeper and deeper as the believer/*mu'min* begins to discern (discernment is *firāsa*) and discover the deeper and deeper spiritual dimensions and meanings of things and events. One's *rūh*, one's *khafī* and *akhfah* experiences dimension after dimension in these realms; and our consciousness becomes the eye through which we see, feel, and understand all that is around us and within us.

We realize this *firāsa*/discernment, this clarity denotes such a depth of insight it is as if the knowledge is coming out of the perception itself, as if your consciousness is giving birth to knowledge. Instead of thinking, "I am seeing it clearly," it is as if your understanding is coming out of that clarity, giving birth to itself. Why is that so? Because everything is seen as and by and through the Light of Allah. All that knowledge is in the light of Allah, like the example we always give as a hologram. The Light of Allah contains all this knowledge, endless knowledge. The streaming of the Light of Allah is endless, and contains endless knowledge. The light by which you see reveals that knowledge, that truth. By that radiance and light, every issue, every question, every apparent reality is seen clearly.

As I said the other day, nothing is confused. Even when the things are very complex and intricate, things are similar. Events are similar. One doesn't become distracted by the uniqueness of anything, but rather one sees. It is just like you taste the sweetness that is hidden in the sugar. The thing we call water is hidden within the oxygen and the hydrogen, in that sense. When one is not distracted by

the many Faces of Allah, one is not a polytheist nor a pantheist. If the secret is in remembering, there must be some value in the reminder. When someone says, “Shaykh talks about the same thing all the time,” I do. But there is always a little twist to it. This week, I’ve shown you a big twist.