

February 10, 2010

Wednesday



Title: [Circles of Proximity to Allah:](#)
the Relationship between the ‘Alam al-Amr and the ‘Alam al-Khalq

DVD title: The Circles of the Heart: Stages of Proximity to Allah (swt)
And the line between the ‘Alam al-Amr and the ‘Alam al-Khalq

Dinner blessing: Ya Allah! We ask You, Allah, to send Your choicest and most profound blessings upon the people whose birthdays we are celebrating tonight... and also the half birthday of Sabreen. We ask you Allah to give them health, long life, clarity of mind, strength of body, and an inspiration and vision. More than that, even, a deepness in their piety and faith. Ya Allah, let us continue to serve You with our own selves far in the background. Help us to enjoy the growth and development of our children, and pray that we can leave them a better world than the world they have today.
Amin.

Suhbat: At some point, maybe I’ll talk about the different stages of *waliyat* and other realities that are associated with the prophets. One of the contexts for which the circles were created (I guess you could say, a metaphor by Imam Rabbani al-alf ath-thānī Shaykh Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī (ra)) was to describe a means and relate to what is called being in proximity to the Divine Presence, and how to increase one’s proximity. The word is a little deceptive in English, because on the one hand you talk about increasing proximity, and on the other, you talk about Allah is present. Divine Presence and proximity is a little confusing. Maybe you could say it’s a little deceiving.

At the same time, we know that Prophet Mohammed (sal) basically said the same thing or displayed the same thing in the Isra Miraj. Allah is present, but he ascended to within 2

bows length of the *arsh* through different levels. We know that to be an internal process. Even if you feel it is also an external process, it was not in this dimensionality. It is like cosmic quantum tunneling: he was here and there at the same time. We can say it and understand it as an internal process.

These stages of increasing proximity were described, but in reality there is no real way of illustrating that in the physical reality. The Mujaddid al-alf ath-thānī (ra) explained these stages of increasing proximity by actually illustrating circles. These stages were illustrated as circles to the *muridīn* as an example of the ‘*ālam al-mithāl*, which is the passageway, the corridor. He also called it the world of illustration. Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī (ra) described human beings as being made up of ten elements, the ‘*ālam al-amr* and the ‘*ālam al-khalq*—that is, the world of command, “**Be and it became, kun fayakun;**” and the other five belonging to the universe created by Allah (swt), the world of matter, the ‘*ālam al-khalq*. Allah (swt) says in Qur’an, “**His verily is all creation (khalaq) and commandment (amr). Blessed be Allah the Lord of the worlds.**” (7:54)

Allah reveals this to us and describes there is a relationship between the ‘*ālam al-amr* and the ‘*ālam al-khalq*. For example, illustratively, he gave colors to those circles. Those colors also represented prophets, *awliyā*. In most cases these colors are the same, but in different orders, they were perceived differently. But we will say, for the sake of the Mujaddidī Order, as a standard, *qalb* was described as yellow. *Qalb* is related to *nafs*. If you remember we begin with *qalb* and end with *nafs*. The heart is associated with the self. We can understand that very logically. What do you think *rūh* is associated with? Air. It is a darker yellow or orange color. (The colors don’t matter at this point). *Sirr* is associated with water, *khafī* with fire, *akhfah* with earth, what he called dust. *Khak* is more correctly translated as dust, but since we say “earth, air, fire and water,” we’ll say earth. We also know from Torah that human beings were made out of dust.

Each one of those is also a stage. For example, the stage of reality is Sayyedina Ibrahim (as). Another stage of reality is Sayyedina Musa (as), and Prophet Muhammad (sal). That gets a little more complicated. The different stages were related to the Prophet Muhammad (sal) and different names of the Prophet (sal). So for example, in *rūh* it was the name Muhammad. In *sirr* it was the name Ahmed, etc. Each one of these stages of nearness or proximity has different experiences associated with it, different situations, different levels of understanding, of intellectual as well as intuitive comprehension. Therefore, one goes in these circles and experiences the same circumstances, but has different experiences with it. Though it may be the same kind of circumstance, the situation that gives rise to that circumstance is different, or your perception is different. Allah (swt) in the Qur'an points to these different stages of these circles by saying, "**The Exalter of Ranks, the Lord of the Throne.**" (40:15) These stages of increasing proximity are illustrated by the *'ālam al-mithāl*.

The *'ālam al-amr* (*qalb, rūh, sirr, khafī, akhfā* and *nafs*), the universe created by Allah, and the *'ālam al-khalq* (*nafs, fire, earth (dust), air, water*)—when these two realities come together, they take on another name. That name is the *'ālam al-kabir*. That is the universe created directly by Allah's commandment, "**Kun,**" and the universe that is created by Allah physically with matter. "**Be, and it became.**" That's how close it is. The only separation between the two is the "and it." The elements of this universe created by Allah that is matter (the *'ālam al-khalq*: the five elements, dust, fire, air, water, and *nafs*) is what is said to exist below the *arsh*/throne. We have the throne, [and descending from there are] *nafs, fire, air, water, dust*. The five elements of the universe that are created directly by Allah as "kun," (the *'ālam al-amr: qalb, rūh, sirr, khafī, akhfā*) are above the throne. Allah places the throne between the *ghaib* and the physical world.

The higher element in one category, the *'ālam al-amr*, has an association with the lower element—like *qalb* with *nafs, rūh* with air, *sirr* with water, *khafī* with fire, and *akhfā*

with dust. Here you have now this reflection. It has practical relevancy and it also has a kind of universal validity, of balance. Allah, as He creates human beings, creates associations and attractions, or one might say affection, between the physical world and the non-physical world, between the five elements that are of the created universe and the five aspects of the *kun*, of the command. The physical body is created by these five elements, but the physical body has an attraction to its correlative in the world of command.

So, there is an attraction between *qalb* (I'm not talking about the physical heart now, but from the world of command) and *nafs*/self. We understand that. There is an association and attraction between *rūh* and air. The combination of these elements is also called the '*ālam al-saghir*. *Saghir* is sort of the collective, '*ālam al-kabir*. The elements of the universes are created directly by Allah's commandment in the '*ālam al-saghir*, and they manifest in the human body. These locations are described differently in different Orders, but generally we call them *qalb*, *rūh*, *sirr*, *khafī*, *akhfā* and *nafs* when we describe them.

When these five elements were created directly by Allah vis a vis His commandment of "**kun fa-yakun**," along with that was created an association in love for the all the elements of the body. The association of the physical elements with the *latā'if* of the '*ālam al-amr* is the force of attraction of the physical elements with each other that allows this body to exist. Because of the '*ālam al-amr*, because of these commands through the *latā'if*, the physical body has cohesiveness. When the *rūh* returns to its source, the cohesiveness ends, and all those elements now have to resolve themselves back into the realm of command. Most of the teachers, most of the great seers, saw and described that as light, the light of this or that *latīfa*.

A saint is called a *wali*. More than one saint is called *anwar*: the light of Muhammad. The saints are always described in terms of light, because each *latīfa* was lit. And every

path talks about enlightenment. As each *latīfa* is lit or reveals its light, that light is a reflection of the Nūri Muhammad, the Divine Light. The *anwar* are the lights/*chirag*. When the light goes on, the light of the eyes sees these circles and sees this relationship, and sees that what binds us together is this attraction. We say to someone we love, “You’re the light of my heart,” or “the light of my love,” or “You light up my life.” We all understand what that means.

Now, when we talk about the *latā’if*, each one has also its own disposition. For example, if we are talking about *latīfa qalbi*, it is where you witness your own deeds and awaken to the knowledge of what nourishment comes from *dhikr*. In *qalb*, you realize the attractiveness of *dhikr*. In *rūh*, you become aware of life beyond this world (the ‘*ālam al-araf*: what happens after death) and you feed the *rūh*. [In the recitation in *sama* of] *hādarī, nādhari*... when you say *hādarī*, you are stimulating the *latīfa rūh*. You don’t have to know all this, but I’m just telling you that this is what is going on. You don’t have to remember this. So each *latīfa* has its different face, its different light that it shines.

Why we spend time in the *latā’if* and while we are doing *dhikr*, try to do the *dhikr* in each *latīfa*. When I say, *darba* (striking) *qalbi, darba rūhi*, it’s like turning on a light. You might not see the light, but the light will see you. You may not see a light, like that light bulb, but the result will be that your perceptions will change. With each one of these perceptions changing, you come into more proximity to Allah. You have more awareness of the nearness of Allah. The macrocosm of ‘*ālam al-kabir* and the microcosm of the ‘*ālam al-saghir* are all these expressions of Allah’s creative force.

Then, Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī (ra) got very complicated. He said that the universe as you see it through the inner eye of the heart, the ‘*ain al-qalbi*, appears as a circle. This is quite a common reference. You may remember that Paramahansa Yogananda said if you concentrated here on *akhfā* (Shaykh gestures to the middle of the forehead), you’d see a

circle, and inside the circle you would see a star. That circle was known as *daira al mumqinat*, the circle of possibilities. Ah, not probabilities, but here we are back at possibilities. Where? In the heart/*qalb*. It was felt that if one would understand the circle of possibilities, you could be anywhere and anything could be revealed to you in the heart, in this *latīfa*.

It was at this point where he said, “This is divided into the ‘*ālam al-amr* and the ‘*ālam al-khalq*.” The circle of possibilities has two parts to it. Hazrat used to talk about the upper part of the heart and the lower part of the heart. The ‘*ālam al-amr* was the world of eternity and command, but it referred to him to something very specific. To him, the *ālam al-amr* referred to the moment creation was created. From out of this *ghaib* came a command, and in that moment, the big Bang [happened]. Only in this case, it was the big Hu. He said that this moment was outside of time and space, not inside time and space. So, there is a realm of possibilities outside time and space. You’d think he was Max Planck or Einstein here. He’s not a physicist, but he’s talking astrophysics.

The *ālam a-khalq*, the ephemeral world, contains time and space. In that moment, outside of time and space comes *kun*, and in that moment, time and space became a reality. Day and night, birth and death, and all this only took six days. Really, Muslim scholars call it *wa’lah al-alam*. It happened in six segments. In the middle of the circle is the *arshi mualah* is like the ‘*ālam al-mithal*. It is the line between these two worlds. There is always a line between these two worlds, but that line has to have some dimension; otherwise it can’t be a line. Even a line has some dimension. When you cross that line, everything reverses, everything is absorbed. That line is like a black hole.

Allah made everything in space correlative to something in the unseen world. When we look at the sky, we are looking at things in the sky, but mostly we are looking at space, which supposedly is empty but is not. It’s filled with energy. Beyond that space, we are still looking at a line. Beyond that line is the place of origination, *kun*. That exists within

us also. That's the line we cross. It's symbolized by birth and death, but that's the line of eternity. When you drop off this body and you have nothing holding you to the world, you are in that eternal state. This is the original way, the idea that Allah lives in the heart/*qalbi* of the believer. There is a line between the two (*'ālam al-amr* and *'ālam al-khalq*) in the heart, which we call the upper and lower chambers. One gives, and one extracts. One pushes, and one extracts. One oxygenates, and one removes the carbon dioxide. This process of creation, returning and purification is going on all the time.

Allah makes the human heart and body, made up of all these elements, the manifestation symbolic of this creation and destruction, cleansing, *at-tazkiya*/purification, expression of life and removal of life. This is what happens. A person can live and be brain dead, but cannot live without a heart. You have the circular motion of the blood throughout the body and the purification of the heart. This is the expression of the circle in the physical body. Mujaddid al-alf ath-thānī Shaykh Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī (ra) said it simply: the human being is a microcosm, a small universe.

When Allah (swt) made human beings, HU used His powers to place the *latā'if* of the *'ālam al-amr* in the chest, and caused these *latā'if* to be in love with the human body. This is because Allah (swt) wanted the human beings to become complete, inclusive, comprehensive, and aware of the relationship between the *'ālam al-amr* and the *'ālam al-khalq*, which is a love affair between the physical being and the command, between the Commander and the one He commands, between the Creator and the one He has created, between the Truth and the expression and manifestation of the Truth, between the Giver of light and what that light shines on, between the One Who creates and the one who reflects on that creation. Because of this, the human being is allowed to be called *'ālam al-saghir*.

Qalb is under Adam (as), and the result is the sight of *qulub*, *kashfi-l-qulub*: changer of hearts. *Rūh* is also called the *'ālam al-anwar* or the *'ālam al-jabarut*, the realm of souls,

and is usually described as red. It's under the feet, we say, of Hazrat Ibrahim (as). The result is the *kashfi-l-qubur*; the sight of the grave, what is seen in the grave. It's a transition.

Latīfa sirr is the 'ālam al-lahut, or the *sifat* (attribute) of *sayah*. 'Ālam al-lahut is the world of shadows of the attributes of Allah. The shadow of each attribute is *al-lahut*. It's usually white, and is the circle under the feet of Hazrat Musa (as). What is the result of that? *Jedhbah*, attraction and absorption in the light. Mujaddid al-alf ath-thānī Shaykh Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī (ra) said this is the stage of *sukr*, intoxication in *sirr*. *Latīfa khaft*; 'ālam al-sifat, the world of attributes. Some call it 'ālam al-bahut, the world of Allah's attributes; the hidden world. It is usually black in color, and is the circle under the feet of Hazrat Isa (as). When one is totally in this *latīfa*, one leaves the *bashriyat*, the attributes of the human being. Hazrat Shaykh Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī (ra) said this is the stage of bewilderment or bedazzlement, amazement, in which the *shuhūd*, the omnipresence of Allah is evident to the person. You just see Allah everywhere. It's obvious that wheresoever you turn, there is the countenance of Allah.

The *latīfa akhfā* is 'ālam al-hahut, or *dhat*/Divine Essence. It is the most hidden, bright green in color, and under the feet of Prophet Muhammad (sal). The result is *haqqu-l-yaqin*, unity/*tawhid*, non-existence. It's also called *wujūdi adam*, the place of the attention of non-existence.

To finish up, the *fayyād* (overflowing energy-force) in the *latīfa qalbi* is contained in the veins and arteries and capillaries, and it's always circulating in the body. It fills the body with *fayyād*. Physically, it fills the body with oxygen. The *fayyād* is this overflowing energy. Sirhindī (ra) said when you complete the five *latā'if* of the *ālam al-amr*, when you have completed the circles and contemplated it and meditated on it, and they have become alive in you and have begun to be the way in which you see and perceive, the *latā'if* of the *ālam al-khalq* are also automatically completed, fulfilled. In order to get to

this first stage, (in those days) this was *fana fī shaykh*. Most of the travelers stop at this stage, thinking they have reached their destination. But they have to move beyond this circle by breaking out of this *ālam al-amr* and seeking the *fana* of Rasūlallah (sal). And that is another topic.

Again, you don't have to know all this, but everybody asks, "What are the circles and what do they mean?" The fact is, the *muraqabah* reveals the reality of all this, and that's why we want to do *muraqabah*. For more on this subject you can read Al-Tawfah Quds by Shah Waliyullah (ra). The idea is to just get a sense of how balanced it all is. Get a sense of what is this attraction we have for each other, like the poles of the magnet are attracted or repulsed. What is this internal consistency in creation and its reflection in the world of command. What is happening inside of us physically is a constant *dhikr* and a constant testimony. We are walking around in this body, which is a microcosm of exactly what we are searching for. If we could only see our self, it would be revealed to us. That's why in the Hadith Quds Allah says, "**Know yourself and you will know your Lord.**" It's literally true.

If you really knew the self, and understood the dynamics of the self and the physical creation; and [understood] the moment of that command and what is created by it, you would realize that we, as we walk around, are in time and space; but we, as we are created, are beyond time and space. Allah gives us that experience also in our sleep and dreams and everything else. It's not just that the body has to rest. It's literally the Isra Miraj that is happening every single day in our lives. *Asalām Aleikum!*