

February 17, 2010

Wednesday

Title: [Beyond the Circles: Progress and Regression](#)DVD title: The Maqam of Progress: Reaching the Spiritual Goal
The State of Descent (Tanazzul): Returning to Help Others Reach Higher

Dinner blessing: Bismillah... O Allah, send your blessings on the new Paderewski. We thank you for the beauty of nature, wherever it may be. For the silence that surrounds us. For the peace and calmness in the hearts of the people. For the love of and for our children. Ya Allah, many challenges face this world and face us. We ask you for the strength and discernment and ability to act properly and rightfully and with good will in our hearts. Members of our community are traveling long distance. We ask you for their safety, and plead for the blessings of goodness and mercy upon the poor people who are suffering in this world. Amin.

Suhbat: In Arabic, “*taraqi*” means progress, and “*tanazzul*” means regress. Both of these refer to two separate stations for the Sufi. I’ll use the word with some reservation because of the definition of it. When the *salik* enters into the valleys of *suluk*, travels through different stations (*nasut*, *malakut*, *jabarut*, and *lahut*) and completes them, it’s called the completion of the *sair-ilillah*. These are the transmissions and stations above the circles: *sair-fi-Allah* (journey in God), *sair-bi-Allah* (journey by God), *sair-ma-Allah* (journey with Allah), *adaniyyat*. These are the four transmissions after all the Orders and all the circles. After *sair-ilillah*, there is the *sair-fi-Allah*. This journey is endless. A person at this stage needs to be willing to entertain; or has been prepared to entertain and accept al-Hayyu al-Qayyum.

Step by step a person develops more and more subtle understanding of this journey of *sair-fi-Allah*, until finally there is no memory of anything but Allah. So much so, that a person forgets and is no longer concerned with, their own existence. Some say, one becomes abstracted, or lost in the Divine Reality in Allah. That's what most people refer to as *insani kamil*, the more perfected being. This *maqam* is known as the *maqamat tariqi*, the *maqam* of progress. This is where one moves from *dunya* or from *kath'rat* to *wahadat*, from the creation to the Creator. Ultimately, this is the goal of spiritual progress. This individual (or group of individuals) who achieves this station still does not possess the *nisbah a taqdiyya*: the relationship to human beings through communication. In other words, there is not a direct line of communication from a person in that state.

A human being cannot necessarily benefit from somebody in that state who has passed on. But, there are always two aspects to every station or state in Tasawwuf. One aspect is always the *nai'mat*/grace; and Rahmat of Allah. While there may be no technical communication, there is the communication from the mercy of Allah that Allah grants benefit and assistance to other human beings.

For someone who has achieved that state and still is alive, in the physical body, they descend from that state, *tariqi*, into the world of *dunya*. That descent is called *tanazzul*. That is regression. That descent, that state of return to the communicative state in *dunya* is only to help or assist fellow human beings and lead them to the upper stations. The state of descent (because it is granted by Allah) in that *salik* happens when Allah (swt) places in the mind of that person something other than the awareness of Allah (swt). Then the *salik* realizes again the sense of their own existence in *dunya*. When this happens, they move from the state of *lahut* to *nasut*, but it doesn't change their state of perfection. It only changes their state of action. Obviously, they have to have a state of perfection in order to bring someone to a higher state. This gift of Allah (swt), to return the person to a lower dimension so they can help those who are less developed in nearness to Allah, is considered a tremendous blessing.

This is one reason why we end our meditations and remain in our *latīfa nafs*. We go from *qalb* to *rūh* to *sirr* to *khafī* to *akhfa* to *nafs*, and we remain there. We remain at the place of that doorway. Though our state may be very high: *ser Allah, ser fillah, main apne nafs ko zat pak kiteraf mutawwajeh kartahoon, mere nafs per ser illah, ser fillah, ser mallah, adaniyyat*. It's in *nafs*, because it keeps the doorway of the self open, for the Mercy of Allah to take a person who has achieved a very high state and bring them back to *dunya* to help others. To the degree that you may only see that person in *dunya*, you may never see that person who may spend 1 or 2 or 3 hours in the state of *adaniyyat* or *insani kamil* while alive in this world. It's different if they are in the grave. You are working with them, talking with them, acting with them, sitting with them. You have a sense of something else, but you don't see it, because you can't see what you can't see. Also, you don't know that from 2:00 in the morning to 2:30 in the morning, that person is in that state. The rest of the time they are operating somewhere else. You don't know.

Such people are known as *muqamal*, perfected by the grace (*nai'ma, fadl*) of Allah. The state of retreating or withdrawal is known as the state of *maqamah tanazzul*, the station of descent or regression. In that state, the person sees "diversity in unity" the many in the one. Since these type of individuals / seekers / travelers/ journeyers – and it's good to call that person a *salik*, because it is a journey back and forth – are in a condition of being able to communicate, they are able to help others. It's considered in our *tarīqah* a very subtle thing. You don't hear it in others. This *tanazzul*, this state of descent from *lahut* to *nasut*, is better than and more beneficial than the *tanazzul al malakut*, the ascent to the station of ancients. In the station of the angels, there are *karamat*, powers. But it doesn't have any benefit. The real objective, if one is contemplating the objective of all these practices and what they do and what they accomplish ... if you get in a vehicle driven by someone else, you arrive at your destination. If you take a train, the track takes you to the destination.

The real objective is to perfect the imperfect human being. To do this is not possible without someone in *tanazul al nasut*, withdrawal or regression back into *dunya*. Human beings are created, and we see our social structures and systems reflect this: we are created to depend upon assistance, from something, from others—not from the angels, but from human beings. There is a great virtue and benefit not only to achieve that state, but also to help others. It is reflected in *fiqh*: there is a benefit to having means so you can give *zakat*. There is benefit to have success and means, like Shaykh Kaftaro used to say: the sixth pillar of Islam is success, because without success, you cannot have the means to make the *zakat*. This is one of the lights/*nūr* of the Naqshbandiyya. There is the *nūr* of the Prophet (sal), and the *nūr* that precedes the Prophet as a physical being that shines through our *tarīqah*.

Another one is based on *nisbah*, the relationship between the knowers (*arifin*). We say a person can be a *fakhī* (person who knows the *fiqh*). A Sufī who has made accomplishment is usually called an ‘*arif*, a knower. There are two kinds of relationship/*nisbah* among the ‘*arifin*. One is the *kashifi jahri*, the articulated or obvious manifestation. The other is the *qori khafī*, the hidden blindness. The one that is exposed, manifest, is aware of their status and condition, aware of the status of others, and operates with that awareness. The other is not aware of their own state or the status of others, even though they have a very high seat in intuition. You have people who aware of their capacity and capability, then you have the ones who are aware of what that capacity is giving them, but not that they have that capacity or capability. Does that make sense?

They are people of hidden knowledge, hidden capability. You go through your life, and you have developed through your practices tremendous knowledge and insight. You are not aware of it or of the specific status or state of another individual; but it is operating. You are not bothered by any possibility of the *nafs*, so it is a higher state. When you pass on from this world, you become fully aware of that status and capability. The similarity

to that is of someone who is born blind but is aware that there are such things as colors and shapes, but doesn't see them. They just know they exist.

The *salik* who journeys in the *sayr ul suluk* is like a person who is in a dream. When you are awake, you are in a state of awareness. When you are asleep, you are only aware of the state in your sleep, not of anything that is happening in the world around you. Even if a person becomes aware of anything in the *kashifi* state, even if you become momentarily aware of something in the exposed, manifest state... I'm trying to find an example. You are sitting in *muraqabah*/meditation. You see with your *kashf* something. It's very real to you, like in a dream. You trust it to be real. When you open your eyes, you don't see it. But what you have intuited and seen is real, but you don't see it in its manifest form. You see it only in your *kashf*. It takes a tremendous amount of spiritual faith and courage to act upon that, because you don't have the physical manifestation of it to verify it. The verification is totally in your *kashf*, in your intuition and seeing.

You can have the kind of *kashf* where you are fully aware of your own state by your *kashf*, and you help other human beings who get benefit from you because you have this ability, because you have regressed and come to the point where you can assist other human beings. Not only that, the *shaykh* who is the guiding or teaching *shaykh* can transmit part of their status and awareness to another person, to a sincere seeker. The creations and manifestations of Allah also respond to that individual. So you get stories like the *awliyā* who, in a moment, can change the state of something, or transmit something of their own state to that person. Or the animals in the forest stop and talk to them, or the trees bow down to them. You hear all those stories, whether you take them as metaphors or real. Or, there is a *salik* who is aware of their own status, but because of their *kashf*, doesn't have the *nisbah* and cannot really help other people, nor are other people aware of their status. It's like a person who walks and sees everything, but doesn't have the communicative ability to transmit it.

Sometimes this manifests as a teacher who speaks and tells the truth, maybe they make *tafsir*. A person hears it and may be inspired by it, but the insight is not transmitted to the person. The person with the insight is not transmitting it to the individual. They are giving them clues and teaching, but not transmitting it to them. So people are getting some benefit, but it's not because it's being transmitted in the sense that we use the word transmission. It's not being transmitted from their *kashf* to the *kashf* of someone else. It is not being transmitted from their *latīfa* to the other person's *latīfa*. You could have a teacher in school who stands there and tells the kids what is what, and they have to learn things; then you can have the inspiring teacher who inspires someone, somehow transmits that enthusiasm for the subject to the student. And so you could say that the student receives it directly from the teacher.

Then there is the *salik* who is not aware of their own status, because their *nisbah* is hidden while in this world. The people won't benefit from that person because they won't recognize that person. Even though Allah is fully aware of their state and condition, no one else is. Therefore, they will not see that person or understand that person to be any different than themselves. Nor will that person, that *salik*, know.

Then there is a fourth one, which is the person who is aware of their own status because they have this *nisbah kafiya*, and renders assistance to others. People benefit from that individual though they, themselves, don't see their own state, their own status. People see it, and they benefit from it, but they may be very humble and simple and not see it at all. Their ego is not blocking anything, but people do recognize there is something in what the person is doing, saying, or the way they act. This is another way of light.

I'll just continue with one other aspect of this. That is, when the end of that *salik's* life comes, or when the person is near the end of the journey in the *sayr ilillah*, Shaytan confronts that individual, just as Shaytan confronts individuals as the time of death. When this person is near to the end of their journey in *sayr ilillah*, it is said Shaytan does

not send any of his disciples; he comes personally. Because it is a big threat. Here is someone who is nearing the end of their spiritual journey; coming ever so near to *insani kamil*, perfection. So Shaytan himself comes and tries with all his power to destroy the *iman* of that *mu'min*. This is where Allah says, he who is guided, no one can misguide him. Allah protects that individual. He cannot protect himself, but the blessing of Allah comes and protects that individual.

Similarly, just before the completion of *sayr ilillah*, when Shaytan tries to destroy the devotion, not just the *iman*, but also the love of the *salik*. Allah guides that person, and the *awliyā* of the *tariqah* are at the side of that person. Those who have come before, those who have achieved that state in the *silsila*, surround that individual. Hazrat used to like to talk about this. The *awliyā* are present. They surround the individual and will save that *salik* from catastrophe in that moment; hence, the value of *baī'at*. Knowing this, even just from tonight, it will be in your mind. You say, "I won't get to the state of *sayr ma Allah*. I may not get to the state of *sayr fi Allah*. I won't get there." Maybe it's true; but maybe you get there and you don't know it. Maybe you are one of those who don't know. Maybe you know, but you are not sure; and others benefit from you. Maybe you don't know, but others see. This is there is all ties together.

For sure, if you complete the transmissions, and you get past the circles to these, you want to get to *sayr-fi-Allah*, *sayr-bi-Allah*, *sayr-ma-Allah* and *adaniyyat*. Because the doorway is open, and the acceptance by the *awliyā* is there. That's why from the beginning of the circles until you get to that point, a person has to be in *tariqah*. Up until that first transmissions, we don't require anyone to give *baī'at* or be in *tariqah*. Ghaus Azam Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (ra) said,

Once he came to the desert. He was very, very thirsty. A lot of days had passed without having water. Suddenly, a cloud appeared above his head and little drops fell on him, and he drank what he could drink. Then he said he saw this nūr, a

bright light on the horizon. Off the horizon, a figure appeared, and a voice called out: "Abdul Qadir! I am your Lord, and I have made all haram halal for you." So he was traveling without water; then Allah sent a cloud with little drops of water like dew and he drinks his full. And this voice came. So the Shaykh said, When I heard this, I said "Auuzu billahe minas Shaytan ar rajim!" And instantly the light turned into darkness, and the figure changed to smoke. The Shaytan appeared to me and said, "Abdul Qadir, the mercy of your Lord and your knowledge saved you. By Allah, I have misled 70 men of tariqah at this point in this manner." I said to him, "It was only the mercy and protection of my compassionate Lord (swt) that saved me." Later people asked Abdul Qadir Jilani how he knew that it was Shaytan who intended to mislead him. He said, "I recognized him by his words, that he made all haram halal for me. I immediately understood it was Shaytan, because Allah (swt) never commands anyone to sin.

This is the journey. It's not bad if you take it seriously. Al Hamdulillah. This is a little deeper knowledge on the ser ul suluk.

Q: (Hanifa) If a person doesn't get through all the circles of transmission, what are the implications for that in the afterlife?

Shaykh: The implications from which point of view?

Hanifa: The person on the journey.

Shaykh: Yeah, but all you need to do is be on the journey for 12-14 years to get through all the circles. So, what's the implication to whom? To me? I'm still giving Daoud transmissions. ...What? Would you repeat that? What are the implications? You tell me. Probably nothing. You've probably explained it away to yourself in a hundred different ways and it doesn't matter.

Hanifa: I have a feeling that it really matters at some point.

Shaykh: Why should I be the voice of threat? I do that enough anyway. That's why a prophet is called a warner and a messenger. What can I say? It's never too late... until it's too late. You could get the abbreviated, sped-up version. There must be a sped-up version, because it used to be that the person would serve and serve and serve the Shaykh in the Tariqah and then there would be one transmission and the person would be lifted, so there must be something in between.

Hafiza: You said that we have an insight, and then we don't see it, and I didn't understand that.

Shaykh: I didn't say that. I know I didn't say that. Tell me what I said, and I can explain it. You have insight, but you don't know that it is, but you act on it. Something like that. You are acting on it strictly out of your kashf. There are people who have insight, and know they have it; they see that they have it and they consciously regress into the state. But Allah brings some people back who have been lifted to a high state but they don't know they have been. They receive the benefit of that high state and bring it back. They act what they feel is normal, but their intuition is there. Just like the old story I used to tell about the holy shadow. He wanted to go to the state where he didn't see. Remember that?