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Thursday

Title: [The Internal Reflected in the External](#)DVD title: The Foundation of the Journey: Practices to Receive Transmission
Our Reflections in the 'Alam al-Mithal

Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm. In the original Naqshbandī line, the Khwāja Khwājagān, up until Abdul Bari Shah (ra), it was very common as you know to talk about the three stages of *fana*: *fana fī shaykh*, *fana fī Rasūl*, and *fana fī Allah*. He didn't say that it didn't exist or that it wasn't right, but just that it wasn't necessary to practice *tasawwuri shaykh* in order to receive the transmissions. He said, if you receive the transmissions from the *shaykh* in *muraqabah*, you don't need to practice *tasawwuri shaykh*. You've heard me say a number of times that the way I studied with Hazrat, I was sure there was *tasawwuri shaykh* and that the *tajalli* and the *fayyād* came in these bursts from him.

In those days, the foundation of the *sayr ul suluk* was called the *barzakhi shaykh*, or *tasawwuri shaykh*. When the *murid* or *salik* realized the importance of it, they would put their attention on it like in “*main mutawwajeh – I pay attention*,” when you receive a transmission. Only that would be a very long practice. They would actually visualize the *shaykh* with the eyes closed, and that is what they called *muraqabah*, visualizing the *shaykh* with the eyes closed, aligning the *latā'if*. It's not that it's so much different now, but we say you only do that now when you receive the transmission. How that was done was they would visualize one self as if they were sitting in the presence of the *murshid* with their heart attached to the heart of the *shaykh*, just below the heart of the *shaykh*. The constant flow of the *fayyād*, the spiritual energy and light of the *ma'shaykh* of the *silsila* was filling the heart of the *murshid* and it was overflowing from his heart into the heart of the *murīd*. It was by virtue of this overflowing drops of *fayyād* [the heart was

transformed]. It is not like a torrent overflowing. The heart of the *ma'shaykh* fills the heart of the *shaykh*, and drops of the *fayyād* fall on the heart of the *murīd*.

By virtue of this process, the heart was transformed. Just as the heart of each *shaykh* takes on some of the qualities of the previous *shaykh* as you go through the *silsila*, those drops begin with the *murīd* taking on some of the attributes and qualities of the *murshid*. Those are the qualities—with the addition of *niyyat*, *ikhlas*/sincerity and one's *himmat*—one would achieve higher and higher states of spiritual advancement. One would make progress. The correlative to that is when one is sitting and doing that, which is one process, one must also be aware of that condition regarding the presence of the *shaykh* at all times. This was also part of the *tasawwur* of the *shaykh*, not just during meditation. The *murshid* became a reflection of the Divine Attributes of Allah as al-Alim, the All Knowing, or as One Who was of the *ghaib*, the Knower of the unseen. It is by the virtue of these qualities that the *murshid* becomes aware of the *murīd*, not just in the world, but in the *barzakh*.

The *murshid* is the reflection of these certain attributes, and the attributes are metaphorically attributed to the *murshid*. Though they are the attributes of all the line, and of Rasūlallah and of Allah, they are attributed to the *murshid*. In the depth of this *barzakh*, the *shaykh* has two specific qualities of Allah (swt). That is, the name or *isma hādi* (the name of guide, al-Hādi,) and the *isma 'alim* or *'arif*, the Knower. This *barzakh* is dynamic, and there are stages to it. In the last part, neither the *shaykh* nor the *barzakh* of the *shaykh* is present. The only thing that is present is the Divine Reality. As you go through this process, the identity, attributes and qualities of Allah are seen in the teaching of the *shaykh*, and then *in fana fī Rasūlallah*, and then *in fana fī Allah*. That's how it works.

In the *tajalli*, the *nūr* or Divine Light that comes through this *fayyād* purifies the heart of the seeker. Once the heart becomes purified, or begins to be, and once the *latā'if* begin to

open, then the communication with the *murīd* and the *murshid* [begins to develop]. It's like when you are dreaming, and having a conversation in the dream. There are no real sounds, but it is a conversation and it even has the characteristics of the person you are talking to. It's their tone of voice, and yours, but no sound is there. That dream is like a *barzakh*. Hold on to that: the dream is like the *barzakh*. As the heart becomes purified, as the *murīd* becomes more in resonance with the *shaykh*, these conversations go on in the *barzakh*. It sounds like each other's voices, but nothing is happening. Sometimes you might walk into my office and hear me talking.

Over the years, I have started talking in the *barzakh*. I will hear myself articulate what's going on internally. The *shaykh* and the *murīd* begin to be able to communicate. The state or condition of the *salik* is known to the *shaykh*, and the questions of the *salik* will be heard by the *shaykh* in the *barzakh*. They may be identified as "so and so's question" if that person is in the mind, or it just might be in *jamat* like this. The questions become answered because they are heard, quite unconsciously, sometimes. We think we only pay attention to what is being said externally. But we also, unbeknownst to ourselves, pay attention to a lot of dialogue that goes on internally. You know that because you make decisions all the time. You don't walk around talking all the time, but you are thinking a lot. It's as if there is a dialogue going on all the time in your head. Well, there is.

Since everything in the *dunya* is reflected in the *ghaib* – and I'll be more specific later, in the *'ālam al-mithāl* – what's going on inside of you with your thoughts is a transmission, and they are being heard somewhere. When this happens, it's as if the doorways in the *malakut* (the world of the angels) and the *jabarut* and the *lahut* will be opened and shown to the traveler (the journeyer, the *murīd*). Images and responses will come into the heart of the *murīd*. The person will begin to make decisions because they will be assisted by these images, and be able to communicate and meet with all of the souls in the *malakut* and in the *lahut*. Eventually, the metaphor is (or you can take it as reality) that a person is introduced and can sit at the court of Rasūlallah (sal) where all the doors are opened.

In the *malakut*, there is a reflection of every soul, like a carbon copy. The *barzakh* lies between the *'ālam al-mithāl* (the world of images, metaphors, the corridor where the *majāz* exists between this world and the next world. It is said that there are actually divisions. Up until now, I have been saying there is *dunya*, the *'ālam al-mithāl* and the *ghaib*, but it is said they are divisions. (I don't usually like to give talks like this, because there are just facts you cannot relate to). In the world of images is the doorway to the *'ālam al-malakut*, the world of angels. The *barzakh* lies between the *'ālam al-mithāl*, the *'ālam al-arwah* (the world of souls), and the *'ālam al-ajsad*, the world of physical bodies, the physical world. The interesting reality or fact (if you believe it is a fact) is that every human being has a reflection in the *'ālam al-mithāl*—every one of us.

Think about it. You have a reflection of yourself in your dream state. When you sleep tonight, if you have a dream and you're in the dream, who is in the dream? We can talk about memory and chemical processes, but spiritually we say that there is a copy of your self, a reflection of yourself in those worlds. Dreams are another dimension. We've said it thousands of times. Dreams are another world where all kinds of things can happen that can't happen in this world, and that DO happen. You know how we say about a dream, "I saw him in a dream. It didn't look like him, but I knew it was him." It is said that when you die, everyone will look like your beloved, even someone else. These kinds of metaphors also have a kind of hagiographic reality to them. There is a consistency.

It is by the power of the reflections of us in the *'ālam al-mithāl* that the *awliyā* can be present and seen in various places at any given time, because they are not constrained by any of the limitations of the physical world. It is their reflections and our reflections that are communicating with each other—our copies. It's like Kurzweil's theory that once you do the brain scans and put it into the computer, the computer will be sure it is you,

just as you are sure you are you. It's you and me, but you need this corridor to transmit the message back to this physical world. Sometimes it's hard to remember the dream, and sometimes you can remember the dream. These things are going on, and we are connected with all the *awliyā*, all the *shuyukh* through our *muraqabah*, and through our submission and through our Islam.

In *muraqabah*, you might be having this communication, but you don't know you are having it, like you dream but you don't know it. Most of us dream at night, and it only takes seconds. Sometimes we remember the dreams. Researchers tells us that most people dream throughout the night, according to their brainwaves, but you only remember a small portion of them. So too, when you have *baī'at* and you are in the sway of the *shuyukh*, you are in the *'ālam al-mithāl* in your *muraqabah*. It's just like being in a dream state. You are in this communication, and you are getting their *madād*/assistance and guidance. Your state is known to the *shaykh* and the *shuyukh*, and the questions are presented and answered. Because there is no restraint, the *shuyukh* have the capability of being in many places, and in whatever shape or form they need to be in.

We are all sitting in *muraqabah*. We are all part of the *tarīqah* and we are all perceiving the *shuyukh* (knowingly or unknowingly, let's say knowingly for the sake of argument). They are appearing at the same time, but they are appearing differently to each one of us, but simultaneously. They are in many places at one time, and not just here. So when the *murīd* or the *salik* or the traveler perfects this process, they will notice that they have a companion. Who is the companion? The companion is the *shaykh* and the *shaykh* is always about a meter away from you on your right side. For you Americans, that is about three feet. Always to your right side. Why three feet? Think about it. Who is it? It is the image of the *shaykh* and that image can be seen.

What is the Arabic word for image? *Khayal*/imagination will be able to address your problems, to guide you, to help you in transcending the *nafs ammāra* and will help you to

replace them with the good qualities, perfections. The *salik* is raised to higher and higher stations, higher and higher, *maqam*, until they reach the level *insani kamil*. If any time the imperfect person is privileged to be in the company of the *insani kamil*, then we say, if you ever have the opportunity to be in the company of Khdir, what are you supposed to do? Grab the hem of his cloak. Grab it or his feet and hold onto it. When we do that, the company, the accompaniment (what is the word for accompaniment?) *ma'yat*, the accompaniment of love (what is the phrase: *ma'iyat qulbi*) will re-instate or reboot you. It will re-instate the reality of your spirituality and cleanse you whenever you do that. That is why we also make *wuqufi qalbi*. They *shaykh* is always three feet away from you. He will assist you. This is like a re-boot. You are getting an upgrade. There is an upgrade available to you. You have to re-boot in order to install it.

The *fayyād* of the *shuyukh* and the *baraka* will transform each one of us to our original state, which is our *fitrah*, which is another way of saying the perfect being, *insani kamil*. Without that, a person is entangled for a long period of time in their own faults, in their confusions, in their desires, in their fears until they die a fairly miserable death. May Allah remove us from this sort of situation. You may remember the story before I embraced Islam and became a Sufi, and I was studying with Paramahansa Yogananda, what would I do? Do you remember the story, any of you who have been with me a long time? I would take his hand. I would just reach out and take his hand. So now, why is it three feet? Do you have a three foot arm? Pretty close. You remember the story about the shepard who raised a lion cub as a sheep dog.

The lion cub lived among the sheep and was guarding them because he had been raised like a dog. The lion cub had lost all of its original identity, and his heart and mind had been totally transformed to be a watch dog. But coincidentally, one day, a wild lion attacked the flock and he started to run away. This story is told in many ways. One way that it is told is that the lion sees this other lion running away and catches up with him and says, "What are you doing? Why are you

running away?” The other way it is told is that he starts to protect the sheep and the other lion says, “What are you doing brother? Don’t you know that we are the same kind and the sheep are our food? Why are you protecting them?” The lion cub replies, “I am not a lion. I am a sheepdog for the shepard.” The lion says, “By Allah you are mistaken. You have been raised in a manner so that you might forget your identity. You are a lion but you regard yourself as a dog. Follow me and I will guide you from your destruction to your origin.”

So he takes him down to the river, and they both gaze into a still pool of water. The images are identical. The lion says, “See, we are one. There is no difference between us.” The cub saw this and when he saw this, he was absolutely overwhelmed. He was absolutely amazed. The veils/*hijab* of deception had been torn away. He realized that he was a lion, but the upbringing of the shepard had hindered his reality and had him believing he was a dog. So he returned to the flock and began tearing the flock apart. The shepard saw this and screamed, “My Dog! What are you doing?” The cub replied, “Be quiet, you miserable person you. You removed my identity and you made me a dog. Thanks to Allah (swt), He sent my real brother to guide me and to reinstate my identity. He saved me from your deception and your misguidance.”

Now I think it is very interesting in the time of PETA and all the rest, that we wish that he stayed a dog. We don’t like this story because we feel bad for the poor sheep. We don’t want him to change. We want him to stay deceived, don’t we? Our hearts go, “Oh, no! Now there are two lions eating the sheep, and before there was a lion protecting the sheep who thought he was a dog. Oh, no, the poor sheep!” We don’t want him to regain his identity. But we have to pay a lot of attention to this, because you have to remove the destructive qualities. We have to remove the destructive qualities: the state of being an animal, anger, temperament, Shaytan and replace them with *malakut*, angelic qualities.

We have to learn how to adopt our original image so that we can be human/*insane*, and not an animal.

We want to be human. So why should we join the dogs if we are a lion? We should join the company of the *insani kamil* – the lions – and save us from this loss. Our conditioning tells us that we feel bad for the sheep. We become very comfortable in the deception. The shepard knew he wasn't a dog, but he convinced him that he was. So Allah (swt) shows us through many transmissions of light, both in this physical world and also in the *'ālam al-mithāl* (just like in the dreams) that there is a whole other dimension to guidance that we are getting, and presence. Whether it is the *kathira*, the many, or the *wahad*, the one, it all exists within Allah. It is all contained, it is all controlled, it is all designed by Allah, the One. Do you remember the story of the three archers that went into the jungle?

They found an old man sitting on a throne with a lamp lit in front of him. His courtesan was dancing to the music being played by some musicians. These three persons watched the old man in amazement, who was engrossed in this dancer. Now these are three archers. They decide that they should end this sinful thing that is going on. So one of them suggests they should shoot the old man. The other one says, "No. Kill the girl." The third person says, "Shoot the lamp. So that the darkness will end all the fun they are having, and we will achieve our goal." That suggestion was welcomed, and one person took aim at the lamp. As soon as he hit his target, not only was the lamp extinguished, but everything vanished. When they saw that, they all ran away because they realized something strange had happened.

The next morning they went to retrieve their arrow and they found the arrow stuck in a beak of a dead owl. (What do most Native Americans think of owls? They don't like owls.) There was no other sign of anything else having been there. So

they realized that what they had seen was not a real situation, but rather the work of the owl. The whole evil situation came from the heart of this owl. The beak acted like the light. The old man, the courtesan, the musicians were all a construction of the owl.

This story is told for three reasons. One is the larger, this is the situation of all of creation. All of creation is like this. What we see are constructed illusions. The second reason is this reflects in us what we do in the construct of how our own wrong actions and sins are constructed out of our *nafs ammāra*. This takes us back to the story of Adam and Hawa. We understand that Adam and Hawa were deceived. They perform an act that causes them to be receptive to deception. The idea is that everything that comes after that is a construct. It is not the reality. If you shoot the arrow, not to kill the man and not to kill the girl, but to put out the light, the deception, then the next state you come to is the realization that all of that was a deception.

All these terrible things that we see in the world are a deception. It is lived out as reality. But you say, “Oh, but people live and they die.” Yes, this is true. Just like it happens in a dream. We just happen to be walking and living in this one, and we have been dreaming in that one. When we wake up from that one, we think, “Oh, everything is okay! I was having this terrible nightmare and everything is okay!” Then you turn on the tv or read the newspaper. As long as it is not me, it is okay. But we are being affected by it all, infected by it all. It just isn’t that close to us as our dream was in the moment, supposedly. That is why you put out the light of deception, *auudhu billahe mina Shaytan ar rajim*. You return to retrieve your arrow and what do you find out? You find out that it was all deception, and you realize that this is the condition all around you. That takes us to the *barzakh*, which we won’t talk about tonight, and the different perceptions of what that world is.

If any of what I say is true, if any of what I quote is true (and these teachings come from the Naqshbandī Khwāja Khwājagān), even if only some of it is true, you should ask yourself: how should you deal with all the things that you see within your own self that need to be transformed or changed. If this is so, and if one world reflects another, and if there is *mayat* (accompaniment) and *madad* (assistance), and if you have the capability to remember, then what is it that stands in the way of taking it? Oh, well, it is the ego, the *nafs*. But remember that you are using the rules of *dunya* to judge things. You are using the rules of this world and the *tarbiyya*/education that you got in this world to make decisions. Each one of us has the experience of the intuition, the inspiration and the love in this world, and the experience in the world of sleep and dream (imagination), of other ways of responding and acting. You have another standard from another dimension that we are familiar with in sleep and dream.

How do you move then, to the place where you can see, make decisions, change character, and adjust while you are still alive, while you are still in the physical world? How do we adjust our behavior? How do we refine our character while we are still performing the acts of this world, many of which are performed out of habitual patterns or proven experiences that “work” in this world? How do we change the character qualities, the ‘*aqīda* that goes along with this? Our character rises up and our personality changes, and we find that place of perfection within ourselves. That at least is one of the type of questions that we could ask ourselves. But, thank God, we probably won’t.

Asalaam aleikum.