

February 24, 2010

Wednesday

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Title: [The Essence of Adam and the Need to Reflect](#)

DVD title: Hazrat Adam (as): Made in the Image of Allah
Reflection on the Manifestation of the Nūr of Allah

Dinner blessing: Ya Allah, a lot of people moving in our community this week from here to there and there to here. We ask You for protection, Ya Hafidhu, for those who are traveling, and healing for those who are ill. I ask You to give me clear mind and better ability to treat the patients, and to be patient, and to have a treat. We thank You for all the blessings You give to us, and we ask You also for blessings for this weekend, and the *dars*, and the good company of good people, *inshā'a-LLāh*. I'm sure I missed something. *Amin*.

Suhbat: In a *hadith*, called the Hadith of Jabir (ra), it is said, “**Allah created Adam in His image.**” There is a lot of meaning to that. According to Islamic, as well as Judaic belief, Allah is not someone that can be seen in this life. The obvious reasons are, if you could see something it would have to have form, limitation and direction. Since Allah (swt) is the Creator of all form and all directions and is formless, we can't see Allah. Aside from that kind of logic, what is believed and what is obvious to us—even to the point of sitting in this room realizing that you couldn't see me, I couldn't see my notes, and we probably couldn't get here, if there was no light—what can be seen is the manifestation of Allah (swt). What can be seen is the manifestation of His Nūr.

“In His Image,” which I have discussed in terms of *khayāl* recently, I will also discuss now in another way. This is a reference to the *madhahar* of Allah (swt), the manifestation of His Nūr. Mim – Hah – Mim – Dal. Nūri Muhammad. Nūri Mim. Nūr Allah. The meaning of Adam is related to the statement of Shaykh al-Akbar, Ibn Araby (ra). He said, “*Allah created 100 Adams, and we are the descendants of the last of them.*” Generally it means this is not an exact number, just the idea that there are many. It is said that Hazrat Adam was created from Turab. The meaning of that is Abu Turab was the first Adam. In the Hadith of Jabir, he says, “*The first thing Allah created was my nūr.*” Then he says, “*Allah created Adam in His Image.*” I quoted it incorrectly before. “*The first thing Allah created was my light, and the light was divided into four parts, then another four parts, and then another four parts, until the 12 veils were manifest.*” This, some would say, referred also to the 12 *imams* of the Shi’a. There were different transmissions of this *hadith*. The one starting with (Shaykh reads the Arabic), some say is a weak *hadith*; some others say it wasn’t. The truth is, it is weak but not because of the fact of the Nūri Muhammad. Because the words “created” appear in the narration of Jabir, it is not clear. But let’s take it as if it has relevancy to it, having gotten rid of the argument of whether it is strong or weak for a moment.

Prophet Muhammad (sal) said, “***After me there will be 12 successors, all of them from the Qureysh.***” This is why the Shi’a take it as the 12 *imams*. As I told you the other day, these letters from Qur’an (*alif, lam, mim, rah*) are letters that come from the *ghaib*. It is language from the *ghaib*. Language carries meaning, and meaning takes some form. According to the early Sufis, and also Ibn Araby, these letters also refer to Muhammed (sal). Allah appears through the light of creation through the Prophet Muhammad. The *nūri* comes through these articulated letters that form concepts and words, as *mim hah mim dal* represented Prophet Muhammad (sal). Other saints said that creation was nothing but the visible manifestation of Allah, just like the *Asmā’ al-Husna* are not other than Allah. You’ve heard me say it so many times: these names are the manifestation of Allah that is known to us, that we can relate to, perceive, and see active.

The other point is, it's not just light that shines on something or gives rise to something. The Prophet Muhammad is not a statue. Light doesn't give manifestation to things that are static but to things that are dynamic. This juxtaposing or moving back and forth between names and reality, names and action, is very important in Sufism and Islam. It is not named only; it takes form and action. Though a man, the Prophet Muhammad (sal) is a man of action, a man who manifests the qualities of the attributes of Allah. Every one of those qualities has a specific meaning, a specific light, and a specific effect to it. On one hand, knowledge is an endless ocean; yet at the same time it is something that is available to us in the most obvious and simple ways. It is an interesting subject, things like the *abjad* and the numerological meaning of names. They appeal to people who realize that in creation there are hidden many, many mysteries. For the Sufi, those of us who would like to walk this path in a way we can experience some level of personal knowledge and progress, many of these things though interesting are also distractions.

I think my understanding and insight is that these are means to develop a comfort with a living system that is internally and externally consistent. You can decode the presence of the light of Allah and realize that this Adamic reality is ever-living. The choices between good and evil, right and wrong, expansion and contraction, between openness and closedness, between justice and injustice are living. What transcends being caught in this kind of *barzakh* (I use the word more as an adjective as opposed to "the *barzakh*") is *nisbah*. There are the types of relatedness or relationships we have with Allah, with our faith and belief, with our understanding of what life is.

Even when we are young, we can see that life is brief. It's a strange kind of brevity, because days can be very, very long. Difficulties can be weighing on you for a long time. Grief can last as if forever. Yet it is all within the context that time is passing very, very quickly. It was just like yesterday! These polarities of time exist within us. "How am I going to get through the day?" And you look back and two years have passed. How does

that happen? We say that one of the things that makes time go very slowly is also something that later on makes time go very quickly. One of the ways of *nisbah* is of the lover. When the lover becomes engrossed in the beloved, time goes very, very slowly. The other is to be the beloved, when the relationship deepens with the lover, and nothing else exists. Everything else falls away, and only the things related to the beloved are there to take up your mind, and your time. Everything else is put aside, or everything else is colored by that love.

The first one is *khalili*, and the other is *habibi*. *Khalili* is when every move the lover makes is according to the desire of the beloved. The *nisbah al habibi*, is when every move of the beloved is acknowledge by the lover. In this kind of *nisbah*, time goes very, very slowly. They are related to each other, of course. There is the lover and the beloved. The true meaning of *nisbah* of course is the relationship we have with Allah. The heart is in contact with Allah. When it is in its most perfect state, everything reminds you of Allah. You can become absorbed in everything or anything: a tree, the moon, a thought, your meditation, your prayer. Time doesn't mean anything. It's running: you are getting older and grayer. But inside of you, time is very, very slow. But also, going back to the metaphor of the beloved and the lover, when the lover leaves, like Majnun and Leila, or the beloved passes on, now you have this extreme feeling of grief and time. Everything goes so slowly now in the world, not in the love. Does that make sense? Now the *dunya* has slowed down very much.

But one day you wake up and you realize, "Oh, so much time has gone by. The time has gone very quickly. It seemed just like yesterday I was with the beloved/lover. And it's been two years, years!" It is the same thing, the same *nisbah*. Now you see it as just the time flew. "We were together for such a short time." If your heart is attached to Allah, if you have made enough progress on the path to taste the *dhawq* of eternity, to realize that within all of this *dunya* there is this light that comes from some place eternal; there is something that outlasts this life and you become comfortable with that; then when it goes

just like that, it doesn't matter anymore. That love has now gone into another dimension. Now you relate to that love in another dimension, and that individual, and that circumstance, in another dimension. This is the Sufic way of looking at this light, this questionable *hadith*.

All the *awliyā* and *ambīyā* are related somehow to this *nisbah*. A saintly person is sometimes called the *sahibi nisbah*. It means the person has a deep love for Allah. That love, and the light in that individual who sees the manifestation of that love everywhere in the world has gone beyond the limitations of time. That person has gone beyond the limitations of just the material aspects of love. This is important to the sincere seeker, because they realize that Allah (swt), or you may say the whole design, doesn't deprive that individual from either refining themselves, or experiencing through the *awliyā*, through their *murshid*, through their life experiences the love and the attraction and the relationship that exists wherever this light shines.

I was having a conversation today with someone. Literally, what I was trying to do was shine this light on a subject. Certain things have to be decided, and certain things have to be done. I won't go into detail because it was a personal conversation. When you make decisions and think about things, it has to be done within a context. What is the context? The context is what you believe, and what your values are. Where do they come from? They don't just come out of nowhere. They are inherent in how you are brought up, what your parents teach you, what you practice. They are there. If you don't allow yourself to be distracted by the idea that you are on some kind of a journey from one decision to the next, and then you will find out where it takes you, but rather you have a context of values and responsibilities; then you will see with the light of your *iman*, with the light of *islam*, with the light of *ihsan*, Tasawwuf. You will be seeing over the horizon. You will be making decisions and seeing them in a much broader context, not a narrow context.

There was a man who constantly searched for a murshid. He couldn't find one. One day in frustration and desperation, he said, "By Allah! I will become the murīd of whoever comes to my home tonight!" And he sat in anticipation for that murshid to come. Coincidentally, that night a thief came to his house. The man was overjoyed and regarded the thief to be sent by Allah because of his du'ā. As the thief entered, he grabbed hold of his hand and said, "O master! Make me your murīd!"

So this thief was taken by great surprise, and was scared to death. In this difficult situation, he realized that the only way to free himself from the crazy man who was holding onto him was to go along with him. So the thief mumbled a few words and said, "Now I have accepted your baī'at and made you my murīd." The man said, "Give me some instructions so I can devote myself to your spiritual guidance!" The thief was ignorant and didn't know anything about Tasawwuf. And he was afraid and needed to get himself out of this dilemma. So he said, "Cut yourself off from your family and go into the jungle. There you will engage in dhikr, and control your heart, and devote yourself to the dhikrullah of Allahu, Allahu." This was what came into his mind.

So this devotee immediately let go of him. He heard the instruction, immediately broke all ties with his family and set off into the jungle. He engaged in dhikrullah. The thief returned to his home, glad to get away from that crazy man. He didn't even steal anything. Since the murshid was imperfect, the murid couldn't attain to his goal. But he was very sincere, so Allah (swt) sent Khdir to rectify the thief's state and lead him through the states of perfection. And then he ordered him to go and lead the murīd to his state of perfection. So Khdir appeared to the thief, and in a short space of time, at-tazkiyya, he purified him. He took him personally through the maqam (stations). Now the thief became a waliyullah. He

approached the murīd in the jungle, dressed in spiritual garb, and guided him to the nearness of Allah (swt).

There are so many things to be seen in this story: the impact of a sincere *murīd* on an imperfect *murshid*. Look where the sincerity of the *murīd* led an imperfect *murshid*. Another thing is the power of the *niyyat* is so strong that Allah (swt) will rectify. When sincerity is used, and such intentions are set into motion, the light of Allah is shining on that. That light contains all the names of Allah, and they are exactly the things that need to be purified in the heart of the individual. Even in the heart and mind of a thief who has come to steal, just to save his own self, he turned to Allah and said, “Go into the jungle and say ‘Allahu, Allahu.’” The only way he could figure out of that circumstance was that. You could say, “Any thief?” Of course not. Some other thief might have just hit the man over the head and ran. No, because Allah put together the people who had to be put together in a circumstance that didn’t appear to be at all, from one point of view, a spiritual circumstance. But from the second man’s point of view, it was purely a spiritual circumstance.

What else happens in the story? Everything gets sped up. Time changes. You go and leave. You change everything in your life, because you are so committed to the goal. Because one man changed everything in his life, the thief goes home, and now everything is changed in his life because Allah now changes his life. Allah could have sent Khdir to the man and purified the *murīd*, but he didn’t. Why? Because *baī’at* was given to the apparent *murshid*, the thief. It was his responsibility. First he had to be purified, and then he kept the *silsila*. See how much is in that story? That’s just some of it. I’ll tell you one more thing about this story. The worst thing can change to the best; grief can turn to happiness and understanding. It may be the means. Loss can be the means to gain. That’s why Tiger Woods’ apology is so important.... and Rush Limbaugh’s, and Elliot Spitzer’s, and Senator Edwards’ ... bad turns to good. People say that Americans are very forgiving. All you have to do it apologize and they’ll forgive.

It's true. Part of it is stupidity, and part of it is the fact that everyone lives in a glass house, and some people realize it. Part of it is the fact that we have the capacity to accept change.

There was a story that one of the *murīds* of a *shaykh* asked him, "How is it we see some dervishes, *awliyā*, eating *haram* food?" One said he had even seen someone eating an animal that had died. They even gave the meat to others to eat. When the meat was inspected very closely, it was *halwa*, very sweet. It wasn't even the meat of the dead animal. Something had transformed in it. It had become *halal* in their hands. This is how the story was told. When the *shaykh* answered, he said, "*Kun fayā kun*. This is a divine quality of Allah that when a human being becomes the inheritor of a certain state of progress, he develops the power to change what is ordinary into what is extraordinary."

This was exemplified when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. There are many stories about the dead being raised, or people drinking poison and it didn't kill them. They have these little frogs in the Costa Rican jungle, which if you touch them they kill you. But they take swabs and recreate it in the lab, and use it for curing cancer and many things. It's used for anesthetics and things like that. So poison becomes something good in the hands of someone who knows how to turn it into something good, like a microbiologist. It can be turned into a good remedy. This is not just a metaphor; it's a reality. How things can become transformed from something poisonous to something that helps us. It is the same thing with Nux Vomica. Nux vomica is poisonous but it helps us. It's helped everyone in this room probably at some point.

Built into this universe is this paradigm where something that is bad can be something good. Something that is unhappy can be a foundation for happiness. Something that is difficult can be a foundation for knowledge and understanding. Remember the Sahaba Khaled Ibn Walid. I went to his tomb in Qums, Syria. He never could get killed. He

wanted to die a martyr, and fought a hundred battles. But he felt that he failed because he was never martyred. He ate poison food and it didn't affect him. He couldn't die. It wasn't his destiny. Nobody could kill him; he had to die of natural causes. These powers are very interesting. Take grapes: they are wonderful things. Ferment them, and they become wine which is *haram*, unless it has to be used for healing purposes. At the same time, you can make them into vinegar, which is *halal*. There are so many examples of this.

In the same way, when the Nuri Muhammed shines on Hazrat Adam (as), Adam's life begins to unfold. In the unfolding of his life, according to the Torah and Qur'an, it now turns to difficulty, sin, and problems. But out of that comes all these value systems that comes through Sidna Musa (as), Sidna Suleyman (as), Sidna Dawud (as) and Prophet Muhammed (sal). All these good things come out of this struggle between good and evil, between right and wrong. So too, we can look into our own lives—how the light shines on our light, and how this Adamic principle lives within us, and how we can learn from the circumstances of life, and how we use the time that Allah (swt) has given to us. How much time we waste! What is wasted time? If I'm sitting here with my BlackBerry looking up things. You're wasting time! You could be making *du'ā*! I'm being obsessed with my BlackBerry and my Iphone and my computer... but, maybe I'm studying something. Maybe I'm texting a message to someone that might be very important to them. Maybe I'm reading something I have to remember and deal with for a higher purpose. We can't say that this thing itself is bad (don't give me the argument that people kill, and guns don't).

Who created this? We get to choose a lot of where we put the light. Allah's Nūr comes to us, and if we are sincere on this path, we are learning and linking what we are learning to our spiritual life. We are seeing the circumstances in our day to day life and what we can learn from them. We are not just saying intellectually, "What can I learn from this

difficulty, from this death, from this life, from this birth or this challenge?” But we are in a state of mind because we have sat in meditation and received certain transmissions. We come to a certain level in our existence, our life, and our maturity. We become accepting of our *iman* in the form of our life, and naturally we are learning, *tarbiyya*. We have come to that point, and we have a relationship with Allah (swt). We have come at least to the point where every few minutes, *inshā'a-Llāh*; every other hour, every couple of seconds, something is reminding us. Just like everything reminded us of the beloved. Everything. “We used to sit under that tree.” “Oh, look, a piece of paper with the handwriting on it.” A flower comes up in the spring. “He or she used to love that flower.”

You look at the face of your child. Every few seconds something is reminding you of the light of Allah. Every opportunity for compassion, for service, every opportunity for patience is reminding you. Even if you get upset about something, something inside of you is reminding you. In the quiet of your own mind, it doesn't even come to your lips, “Astaghfirulaha.” I sat at my desk today in a drifting off state because I didn't have protein before carbohydrates. You should start your day off with a couple of bites of protein and you won't have the tiredness that comes [from a chemical imbalance that happens] after eating carbohydrates. These certain things remind you of this Divine Presence. How is that done? I'll tell you very quickly. I'll talk about *rūh* very quickly. *Rūh* is the shadow of Allah's attribute of *hayat*, life. It is impossible to have any grasp of the *dhat*, Divine Essence, or of the *sifat* (the qualities and attributes of Allah) without that shadow or reflected *tajalli*, that irradiation of life. *Rūh* is life, not just physical life. *Rūh* is the soul, the every-lasting life. It is the ever-livingness of Allah (swt) that is placed within the physical confines of this body. When one can attach oneself to that and understand it, one identifies less with this physical body and more with the *rūh*, and one is identifying with al-Hayyu al-Qayyum, the Ever Living.

We have to make some effort reflecting on our life, our decisions, our actions, the forms we operate in, and on the systems, whether it is this community, our work, our family, or the way we make decisions. Why? Because we, ourselves, have our life as a reflection. Remember where I started tonight? It's a reflection of the Divine Light. What we are reflecting on is this Adamic nature. If Adam was the father of all humankind, and Eve the mother, then we carry that DNA. We carry that identity. If Hazrat Adam was the reflection of that essential light, the Nūr, then our own acts of reflection/*tafakkur* are also part of the Adamic principle. Hazrat Adam had to reflect on his actions. We have to reflect on our life. Hazrat Adam (as) was given the means to reflect on his actions directly by Allah. We are given it directly by the line that comes to us that carries the light. Where they meet is in Hazrat Adam (as). We can say that Adamic principle lives today. The process lives today. Time in that sense is meaningless. In *dunya*, time is very, very serious, and we have to use it well. From the Adamic point of view, linear time has little meaning. It is how we use this moment.

When I am having a discussion like I had with someone today, time is moving, maybe half an hour or forty-five minutes. But every moment was filled with reflection on Allah, guidance by Allah, assistance in focusing life and purpose. This is how we should spend our days. Sometimes it will seem very quick. Sometimes it will take a long time. It will invariably be interfered with by reality and circumstances of life. But if you can build a context in the *khanaqah*, in the *zāwiya*, where people are moving in concert with one another, when any interruption comes in, it will be absorbed by the whole. It will go through a filtering process, a transformative process that makes the poison, the difficulty, the pain, and the grief into something that is meaningful. Have I tied it together? That's why *tariqah* is so important. You know what it means, right? You say path. It also means observance. When you are on *tariqah*, you have to observe. *Asalāmu aleikum*.