

March 25, 2010

Thursday



Title: [The Chishti Stages of Love: The Continually Changing Heart](#)

DVD title: The Chishti Stages of Love: Havā
Ta'alluq and Muraqabah: Watching the Changing Heart

Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm. Do you want me to continue? Let's start in a slightly different place and then get back to the poetry.

Qalb, the heart, undergoes continuous change, just like everything else in creation. I know that we all look just as young as we used to. We all recognize each other just like we did 25, 30 years ago. But as I explained to you once before, I wasn't too happy when I went and looked at my old graduation pictures, and then looked at the people who are now on-line for the x-number anniversary. I'd rather remember them the way they were. But I must say, I'm one of the better looking ones! Some people just let themselves, go, you know?

Everything in the *'ālam al-khalq* undergoes changes—so too, the heart—continuous change. But in each moment, change is taking place. If we watch this change, it's called *muraqabah*: watching. If we watch over the heart and make *muraqabah*, you are watching the dynamics. That continual change is called *tabaddul*. Through the process of watching (what we call meditation) over the heart, the *'arif* (the one who knows) becomes aware of this continual change. The knowledge of continuous change is a way to gain the knowledge of Allah (swt). It has other names, other ways it is referred to. We find it in different texts. *Tabaddul* means complete change. It comes from this “*tab*,” a sense of nature. We say, the nature of something, the imprint of something. The nature of something is the total uniquenesses that are impressed onto that entity. We call them

characteristics or temperament, or a person's constitution. It's imprinted on that person. It's a person's nature.

That nature undergoes constant change, but somehow remains similar unless something transpires. What needs to transpire is this watching, noting, and constant devotion (*tabattul*). *Tabattul* is a characteristic of the people of Allah. They are known as "the worshipers." Also, it's linked to the word "*atabai*," which means the natures (like the humors: heat, cold, wetness, and dryness like you find in Oriental medicine). That makes up our physical constitution, which also undergoes change under the influence of our *hal*/spiritual state. It's not just by physical processes, but also by our spiritual state that our physical body and entity responds. The person of *ta'alluq* that has the relationship that exists between the attribute and its object, between a name and its effect, between the *shaykh* and the *murīd*, has to also be watched. One sits and watches their state. When one watches their state, one in a sense becomes the poet we have been hearing.

The poet is watching their state. "O my Beloved this" and "O my Beloved that" and "without, you, that" and "with you, this." Watching the state and writing, commenting on it. That state gives both pain of separation, and a sense of belonging and being together. "If I can't have you in this world, I will have you in the next." That state is creating out of love and yearning a relationship that transcends or replaces, in some cases, the physical relationship. It is very palpable, very real. We know it affects the physical body. It brings out certain characteristics of that individual, certain qualities of their character. Love also affects you physically. "I'm just sick over that loss." "I'd die for the love of the beloved." We use those kinds of words, both the poets and us. We may not be poets, but we use the words the poet uses, because it's a state/*hal*.

We don't realize that that state is a gift of Allah, also. It is an analogical state, a living metaphor for us. When we have that love, it's the reflection of how we must feel toward

Allah and toward His Prophet. It is how we felt perhaps at the moment of separation when Allah said, “**Kun fa-yakun**” and we became; or maybe at the time when Adam and Hawa (rah) separated from the realization of Allah, from the presence of Allah, from their consciousness of the Presence of Allah.

Just like the poet expresses his/her experiences in watching their state of love, *qalb* and how their heart is changing, so to we are guided to express our state to our *shaykh*, to Rasūlallah in salutation, and to Allah in prayer by reflecting on our own self, seeing the state of our hearts. The parallel is there. It is from this that poetry springs: reflection on the Beloved. When it is the mystic poet, they are reflecting on their own state and then they use the metaphor of love. It is one step closer. It is not just, “I’m in love with so and so; I’m going to write a poem.” It is, “I am experiencing and watching the heart in love, and writing this poem metaphorically.” It’s an actual state, but I’m writing about the Beloved, the bewitching eyes or arching eyebrow, whatever the symbol is. I’m expressing it. It’s a very pure expression of a state of love and attraction to Allah (swt), when the mystic poet is writing it.

It becomes a very refined expression, and language follows and becomes refined from that. You find this very beautiful poetry in Farsi, which is a very refined language and describes very refined states. It transfers that meaning to the person who understands it. It lifts us up, just like the words and rhythms of this music uplift us. As the poet seeks relief in the expression, the mystic must seek counseling from the *shaykh* or prophets, and from the Sunnah, the Qur’an and Allah to move through this state. Just like the person who is in love goes to the friend and says, “Ah, what am I do to? Does she love me or not?” And the friend says, “Look, you should do this and that. I know. I have been there. I have experienced that.” Or, “Don’t worry, this will pass.” We access and analyze that *hal/state*.

For the believer, the Sufi, the *salik*, the seeker, the journeyer, the *murīd*, we have to constantly reflect and analyze how we spend our day, our morning, our evening; how we react and deal with different people; how we respond and deal with different situations and ideas; what was good, what was bad—*muhasabah*. To keep ourselves in the company of good people means not to be in the company of bad people, people of bad manners. At some point, the time comes that we notice, even amidst all the difficulties, that what is happening in our own nature is that goodness, mercy, compassion, kindness and love are dominating our personality now. The evil and vices and all the other things are decreasing.

When it is seen that the person is at that stage where the goodness needs to come out, and they have the yearning, the *shaykh* may suggest *bai'at*, just like the lover may suggest marriage. “We’ve been dating for a while. I think we should get married,” kind of thing. Or the student themselves suggest it. A student may say, “Ya, Hazrat, may I please give my hand to you so that I may derive the benefit from the *silsila*. So I become part of that family.” Then it is accepted. It could happen in a moment, after a year or years, but giving *bai'at* is *sunnah*. We have plenty of examples of the Prophet (sal) receiving *bai'at*. So this *ta'alluq* is beneficial, *inshā'a-Llāh*. With that introduction in mind, I'll just go a little deeper tonight.

We ended with *muraqabah* and watchful contemplation of the beloved. That also has phases. The first phase (also known as the first phase of the fourth stage called *havā*) is called *khozu* (or *khushu*)/ humility. In English, there is a statement by Hasan: “*The first phase is khozu. For meeting the Beloved face to face, nothing is better than presenting yourself with humility at the threshold of the Beloved. As the lover said, ‘What’s the value of this one life that I sacrifice for You? But what can I do. It’s the only life I have.’*” Here I am. Who am I? I have come to the realization that I am nothing. I am ready to give my life to you, Ya Hazrat. I am going to make this journey in whatever time

I have—60, 70, 80 or 90 years. I am going to do it on your train. It's not much I have to offer, but it's the only thing I have. I wish I could offer more, but it's all I have.

What will I do? What value can you get out of me? Well, what you can get out of me is I will be obedient. I may not be very intelligent, but I can be obedient. [The second phase is] *etā'at-e mahbub*, obedience to the One that you love." Remember that we are talking about Allah. The implication is that you spend your life in obedient devotion to the beloved, and therefore to dedicate to that person all that you have. *"As long as I'm alive, I'll love You. As long as I have my head, it's a ball You can bounce and play with."* And *"Our entire life has been spent in the service of the Friend. Our work is just this very service!"* This is reflection now.

I was having a conversation today with someone about their work. They were looking at the pros and cons of the work, the time, what they are doing, and many things about it. I said, "All the things you are saying may be very true: the positive and negative, the traveling, and whatever else is associated with your work. But look, how many people don't have work in the world today, and you do? The work you are doing has some benefit to other people. Not only that, it provides you with income. Because it provides you with income, you are able to relieve yourself of certain burdens and necessities, bills; and contribute to your family. So, where's the gratitude? Has Allah not put you in a very good position? You have work; others don't. The work you do it good. It's not just picking up garbage in the street to make a few pence to live. It's work that adds to the benefit of others. [Your situation] is not like many people's [situation] who come to this country with a PhD and it is not recognized in this country, so they are serving in a restaurant. It's not like that." You understand what I mean.

If you earn a lot of money, or if you earn a little money, you should have the same gratitude. If it's easy to do or hard to do, if it's distant or near, this is what it means to live and work *fī sabīli-Llāh*. It doesn't mean you say, "Don't pay me. I'm doing this *fī*

sabīli-Llāh.” It means that it is all for the sake of Allah. If you remember that, it relieves you of a lot of burdens. You can spend your life in the service of the Friend, and no matter what the work is, it’s in the service of the Friend.

We realize that all love requires *sabr* / patience (the third phase), and also perseverance. One poet said, “*Endure and gulp all the pain without remonstrance. The only way open for the lover is tacit endurance.* (Why not just “endurance?”) *The Beloved does what pleases him.*” A tradition of the Prophet observes, “***When Allah loves anyone devoted to Him, He puts them to severe tests. When he endures them steadfastly, he is marked out for distinction with all of his imperfections overlooked, and with unasked spiritual favors conferred on him, [with] no special effort on his part to deserve them.***” It goes without saying that this *hadith* is true for all lovers, too.

Allah loves anyone devoted to Him. He puts them to severe tests. Doesn’t love put you through severe tests? You endure them because of love, patiently and you persevere with them steadfastly. That marks you for distinction, because your imperfections are overlooked by the Beloved, because you have persevered. The Beloved recognizes that. All these unasked for favors are conferred upon you by Allah in the greater scheme of things. All you are doing is being steadfast in your love. You are not doing them for the favors; the favors come for you. What is the greatest favor? Reciprocity: reciprocal love. It is not a ribbon, not an award that says, “You have persevered in love; therefore, you are now a sommelier of love.” “*Only patience polishes restless hearts. When water stands still, it resembles a mirror.*” Isn’t that nice? The heart is calm when restlessness goes away from patience, and it too becomes a mirror and reflects the beauty before it. This is a relationship we have to develop.

We develop it by this *muraqabah*, by this *fikr* we have been talking about, by the *fi sabīli-Llāh* service to Allah, by regretting the loss of time that has passed, by reaffirming our commitments, by obedience and trust—how many other things did I talk about? By

having many meetings with the Beloved face to face, by being in the service of the Beloved and the family of the Beloved, by being in the *silsila* and knowing the family of the Prophet, of the Beloved, by being accepted. When one reflects on all this, on your life, on all the time that has been lost, on all the things that have to be made up, that's when Allah says to you in the Qur'an that Allah is Merciful and the Forgiver, and those nearest to Him are loving Him.

Where do you find Him? In the hearts of believers; not on the lips or tongue or in the minds. It is in *muraqabah* one realizes the Mercy of Allah, when one regrets the time loss and repents of it, and makes an effort to make up the lost time and prayers, the lost study or affection. You pause and you say, "I have to begin to make that up." That's when the Mercy of Allah comes. It doesn't come from, "If I say this, the mercy will come." It comes from actually feeling that regret, that remorsefulness.

What kind of a person is that? *Tazarro* (the fourth phase), the humble person, the one who abases themselves, whose supplications are not just automatic, or "my favorite *du'ā* of Zein Abedin," and "woo- hooo –hooo," forcing yourself to cry. They come earnestly—earnest, sincere, supplications, real serious complaints about their own self, real lamentations of the soul. **"And remember your Lord in your self, in humility."** (7:205) There are so many examples in love. One regrets what comes off the tongue that is not in the heart. One regrets the glances that you could have had that you didn't have. People like me, who are ADHD, are always looking here and there, doing this and that. "Tell me about it, I'm listening..." we are multi-frustrating. "Can I just see your eyes for a second? Can I have your attention for a second?" The Beloved says to the lover. The true lover can't take his eyes off the Beloved, unless he has ADHD.

This is what Allah is saying to us: "Pay attention. I know you love Me; pay attention. Look into your heart; that's where I am. Pay attention. Stop looking out here everywhere. Even if you are praising Me out there, know that I address that praise to

your heart.” Just like Majnun and Leila. Leila is absent, and Majnun is always looking for her. But she’s never far away from him, because his mind is always on her. So he is truly seeing her in everything. When the situation comes, when meeting the Beloved does not lie in your power, or even the scent of proximity of the Beloved reaches your nose, when you don’t either possess the physical strength to even speak or your soul is so weak that you can’t fly to your Beloved, what else do you do but feel helpless and hopeless?

Because my hands have no strength, and my power of resistance has waned, I have to take the path of humility and prayer.

I have nothing left. This is like the people of intellect: they talk and talk about Allah from an intellectual point of view. But I have no strength left, the only thing I have the strength to do is pray and realize that this is what I didn’t do before. What’s left for me in my humility is prayer. As a result of that, if you are still not bored with the subject, you will find out on Saturday. Assuming one thing: that we’re still here to find it out or to tell it, *inshā’a-llāh*. Saturday is two days away. A lot can happen in two days.
Asalaam aleikum.