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Thursday



Title: [Al Himma: The Secret Hidden Power of the Heart](#)

DVD title: Al-Himma: The Secret Hidden Power of the Heart

Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm I think I left off speaking about the heart. I guess I'm fairly convinced that we human beings have to hear things over and over again. I think part of that reason is that hearing things over and over again is not just learning, but an affirmation of Divine Presence. I guess more than that, it's a form of *dhikr*. That craving for knowledge, if one has it... we can identify a craving for food because we think it occurs in the stomach. A lot of it is in our head and our mind. There is an intimate role between the stomach and the mind, which gets reinforced by the tongue. It's in the mind when we think about spirituality, but it's really in our heart. It also gets amplified by the tongue. [We should] understand that our heart is an organ of comprehension, that can comprehend truth or real knowledge, because it also receives and accepts the capacity of what we call intuition. It attempts to intuit things and eventually accepts intuition.

To accept one's intuition without the interference of ego is one of the most difficult things. When the heart receives the truth, and we accept the capacity of intuition sans ego, one acquires the *marifah* of Allah (swt)—not His Marifah, our *marifah* of Allah. We begin to unveil what some have called the mysteries; we lift the veils. In Qur'an, Allah (swt) says, discussing the qualities of people who reject Divine Guidance: **“They have hearts with which they understand not... They are like cattle, more misguided and heedless.”** (7:179) It makes it clear that the organ of comprehension of spiritual verity, of understanding Divine Guidance is the heart. Real, well-founded knowledge is only that which Allah places in the heart of the knower, not just in the mind.

There is a Divine Light that goes with that, with which Allah focuses on certain human beings. Really, it is an aggregation of certain qualities in a human being that become in alignment in that human being. So we say that Allah bestows His Blessings on whom He wills. It could be an angel, a messenger, a prophet, or a faithful person. “*One who has no unveiling has no knowledge.*” One who has no insight has no knowledge. We say *kashf* is the insight, the light that lifts the veil. This is sort of a moment/*waqt*, a gateway to seize special *marifah*/gnosis of the inner, *‘ilm al-bātin*. The *‘ilm al-bātin* is also known as the esoteric science. The *rūh*’s connection with the heart is made clear by Ibn Araby (ra) when he said, “*When the spirit descends upon the heart of the servant, through the sending down of the angel and casting of the Revelation of Allah, the heart of one to whom it is sent down becomes alive.*”

Of course, the heart we are talking about here is not just this thing that is beating in our chest. There is a relationship between that, because analogically or metaphorically what takes place in the heart in human life is transformational, and filled with many meanings and learnings that come up on us unplanned and unprepared. Like love or grief, loss, sorrow, fear—things are bestowed upon us by what we call reality or life, just at Allah bestows upon us His theophany or *tajalli* that causes changes in our spiritual heart/*qalb*. This gives us a taste of something we are neither in control of, nor sure of, nor necessarily have experienced before, but which we have to respond to.

The subtlety of that *latīfa qalb*, the heart, is the most important subtlety. Consequently, our heart is referred to as the most important center of the spiritual body and the most important of the *latā’if* that we contemplate. Because when the eye of the heart opens, what the seeker sees is the Divine Form or the Divine Presence. The heart in that case becomes a quality, an attribute within and of itself within the human being, which transforms us spiritually or gives us a quality, a spiritual potential to see what is more

real. When it is operating properly and functionally, it is able to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion; what is good and bad, right and wrong; true and false. If it is not functioning properly, just like the physical heart it loses its rhythm and capability.

Since the heart's purpose is an extension, or an aggregator of the revelatory organ based on the other sensory perceptions, or capabilities, or *latā'if*, a person's heart that is oriented toward the Divine Presence leads a person to this receptivity of the *tajalli* and knowledge. A person whose heart is oriented or its course is set away from that Divine Guidance, Allah says, **"They have hearts which do not understand, eyes which do not see, and ears which do not hear."** Everything is operating incorrectly, disorienting. In Qur'an we hear a lot about seeing and hearing. Just like tonight when we hear the music that is being played, you sense that you are hearing something that is right. That is only because you are hearing it rightly.

When the perceptions [become veiled], because of circumstances, worldly things, personality defects, fears, doubts, jealousies, anger, passions for other things, distractions because of worldly issues, life, work whatever it may be, the heart becomes dull and it is not alive enough for it to extract the inner meaning. There is plenty of evidence in the Qur'an of how people with those kinds of situations and lack of sensitivity or sensation find themselves devoid of wholesomeness, knowledge, or completeness. Allah says in Suratu-l-Baqarah, **"And those who reject faith, it is same to them whether you warn them or you do not warn them. They will not believe. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil. Great is the penalty they incur."** (2:6-7)

We see all this progress in the world, and define success as successive generations having more: more wealth, more power, more information and knowledge. But they are warned also. Allah says in Qur'an, **"We could punish them, too, for their sins and seal up**

their heart so that they could not hear.” (7:100) This quote makes it pretty clear that using the ears for listening, even to the ‘*āyāts*, is not enough. Seeing *āyāts*/signs is not enough. The real key to guidance and receptivity lies in the openness of the heart. The heart allows for an aware or cognitive comprehension of the outer means and the inner means; the outer means of the revelation of Qur’an and the inner means. That has an effect on the way a human being’s life is guided or directed in the way of piety and righteousness. Allah (swt) tells us this in Qur’an. The *latīfa qalb*, the subtlety of the heart is also a large part of the core essential ability to develop intuition. Go back to that. It is not just intuition about what’s going to happen tomorrow, if I should I wear this coat or that coat, or if it going to rain today. It’s a transcendent intuition, which corresponds also with the physical heart, just as thought has a correspondence with the brain.

Where is a thought? You know where the brain is. It is definable. The thoughts in a sense transcend the physical brain just as the intuition/*kashf* transcends the physical heart. That’s why Allah says it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts that are blind. That heart He is defining is where we feel the presence of the one you love. In that transcendental heart, you feel the Divine Presence. Because this heart has no limit or end to it, it is where the *rūh* is known to dwell. The potential of that aspect of the heart, therefore, is by definition unlimited, too. So the potential for spiritual growth in the human being is also unlimited. There is a correspondence between the physical heart and the spiritual heart, the *latīfa*, what transpires in that heart, which we just described, and the fact that that heart has no limit to it. That’s where Allah can dwell because it is limitless.

Allah says, **“You find Me in the heart of the believer.”** It’s not in the physical heart of the believer, but it is contained in a *latīfa* that is, in and of itself, boundless. So the outer heart has the inner heart, and the potential for spiritual growth within the human being that is unlimited is, in and of itself, a proof of the infinite reality that is called Allah. When people talk about “the thoughts of God,” or “what God likes or doesn’t like,” as

Desmond Tutu did two days ago, it is a reference to the unlimitedness of Allah (swt). I don't know what he knows, but that's what I know. Sometimes you personify Allah so much, in his case God, you might limit that personification and not think beyond it. So I don't know what's in his mind. It's a good story and very uplifting, but I don't know what's in his mind. But I know what's in my mind.

Those Self disclosures are infinite. This is how you can say they are contained within the human being. Allah can dwell within the heart of the believer, and the disclosures within the heart of the believer are infinite. Any knowledge that Allah has is boundless. Again, that leaves us to understand that the ability of the human being to experience this unveiling of the mysteries, or of the truth of the things of the *bātin*, are a result of the heart's openness; and what is contained in that opening is infinite as well. A vision of the Divine Presence can only be attained through the eye of the heart, '*ain-l-qalbi*. It's like saying that you can only see microorganisms through a microscope; you cannot see them with your physical eyes.

The secret hidden power of the heart is called *al-himma*. *Al-himma* is sometimes called yearning. It is a secret power or energy, *quwwata khafīya*, a hidden power. It is also what we call the *bātin*. It IS the force or power of the *bātin*, the hidden. It corresponds to certain Divine Realities or spiritual awareness. The expressions of Allah are reflected, like in a mirror, in the heart of a human being when you lift the veil off the mirror. *Al-himma* in this case indicates a powerful force that includes the intention and desire of the heart to see. That's why it is called yearning. *Himma* is a quality of the heart and an intention of the soul, so strong and powerful that it can, in and of itself, bring into existence that which is only a possibility among the possibilities of the unmanifest Divine. (If you wanted to get into that, you could get into astrophysics and worm holes and energy and all kinds of things like that as an analogy.) It is something of such mass and infinitely small size that it can engender universes upon universes. Such is the power of the heart within the *bātin*.

Like anything else, you want to understand it. If you analyze the concept of *himma*, especially in the way Shaykh al-Akbar looked at it, you see that it is a dynamic capability, a creativity of the heart that we all have to project onto an external plane (the *dhāhir*) what is conceived by the heart. It's all there in potential—operating because it's dynamic, not dead, but infinitesimally small—then it projects onto the outer something so powerful. It's this ability of the heart that has the perception of the Divine Consciousness. That force itself is a reflection of Divine Power and Consciousness. It's like saying, one little bit of your DNA could clone all of you. It's compressed, condensed, Winzipped energy that projects out onto the outer.

It is this perceptive capability of the heart that allows for the Prophet Mohammed (sal) to experience the highest spiritual state, which is the vision of Allah (swt). He said it this way, “***I have seen my Lord in the most beautiful of forms.***” This vision of Allah, Ya Rabb, through the power of *himma* is not just the power of yearning. Remember, it is this secret force, *quwwata khaḥfīya*. That experience has a name to it; the name is *dhawq*. *Dhawq* is a taste or intimate touch, a taste. You shouldn't think of it as “sight” when he says, “I've seen.” It means he has gone past the normal boundaries of consciousness to a state where Allah (swt) pervades his consciousness. It is like a sense, just like a taste pervades your being. You taste something so delicious. My daughter said tonight, “Don't you think it's a good day for ice cream?” I said, “You've had enough sweets in the past few days.” She was already tasting it and associating it. She had the desire for it inside, and the taste of it. If you tasted it in that moment, it would pervade your being, like decadent double chocolate cake.

That *dhawq* takes you to a state so high, Allah's Divine Presence is the only thing in your consciousness. That is that union with the Divine Beloved, that state of all-pervasiveness. *Al-himma* in its most practical sense is the *taskhir al ashya*, the “open, complete disposition of things.” The perception becomes such that it pierces the veils,

and the[re is the] incredible power to penetrate the *dhāhir*, to see behind it the secret; everything that lies past the grasp of logic, reason, and physical perception... what is universal. He says in *The Wisdom of the Prophets*, “*Who is here and what is there? Who is here is what is there. He who is universal is particular, and he who is particular is universal. There is but one essence, the light of the essence also being darkness. He who heeds these words will not fall into confusion. In truth, only he knows what we say who is possessed of al himma.*” And he quotes Qur’an, “**Surely in this is a lesson for him who has a heart and who gives ear, and who is a shahid** (who sees, witnesses with his eyes, an eye-witness).” (50:37)

What Shaykh al-Akbar (ra) says on this subject is that human beings are three different types: those who are the students of the disciples of the science of the heart, and who are the people who possess this organ of perception (*irshad al qulub*). These are the mystics among the Sufis, perfected beings (*insani kamil*), and Allah’s representatives on earth (*khalifatullah*) Then there are the disciples of the rational intellect. This group includes the theologians who put all their emphasis into understanding religion from a rational standpoint. The third group is the simple believers, the *mu’minūn*. He says, “*Under a spiritual guide, the simple believer can develop into a mystic.*” But between the mystics and the rational theologians, there is an unbridgeable gulf. The simple can become the mystic, but the theologian cannot.

The heart of the mystic is the eye through which Allah reveals Himself to Himself, because He is in the heart, and He reveals Himself to Himself, as much as He wills. It takes place within the heart of the mystic, the heart of the believer, and the heart of the seeker through the unveiling, which I have described, that is yearned for. It is veil upon veil, disclosure upon disclosure, secret upon secret. He says that each disclosure is unique, each is incomparable, and He never reveals himself twice in the same manner to anyone. This *himma* plays a key role in the whole creative unveiling and shows the

seeker, the person of *marifah* that Allah is constantly and ever-changingly bringing from the *bātin* to the *dhāhir* new *tajalli*, new theophanies.

The people of Allah know Allah, in whatever form Allah discloses Himself to that individual. They do not deny His Divinity just because it doesn't manifest itself in the way it was manifest before. You see the problem with the "archaic revivalists" (as Shaykh Noorudeen calls them), with the evangelical nutcases. They want it all revealed the way it was before, literally. They are literalists. Consequently, a person who sees with the eyes I have described does not deny that Allah can reveal Himself this way, and you call it Christianity; or that way, and you call it Islam; or this way, and you call it Judaism, or whatever you call it. It can or has manifest in other creeds, other traditions, at the same time. The reality is known and is not denied, because it cannot be denied. Those who know in this world will know in the Hereafter.

That is why it is said that a person who is possessed of the heart is one who understands the transformation of reality and adapts oneself so that he/she knows themselves. I'm going to stop there. This brings us to the basic concept of Tasawwuf, which is, as you well know, "like attracts like." A Sufi recognizes a Sufi. The true identity of a seer is a projection of the Divine Identity, and since that is characterized by certain light, knowledge, and understanding and it is timeless, the identity of the knower of the self is always the same as the identify of every knower of the self. ***"He who knows himself knows his Lord."*** One is identifying the Divine Presence in the person, the Divine Qualities. This sets the moment and the dynamic between the human being who loves Allah, and Allah Who is the Beloved; between the Divine Lover, Allah, and the one He loves, the human being who seeks Him and knows Him. *Asalaamu aleikum.*