

July 14, 2010

Wednesday



Title: [Adab of Love: The Difference Between Faith and Belief](#)

DVD title: The Five Divine Elements within Us:
Knowing Your Name is a Step to Knowing Your Lord

Dinner blessing: O Allah, we are in constant awe of the provisions, Your Rizq, and all that You provide for us. We are in constant awe of the beauty of nature around us. We are in constant humility for the position You give us in service to You, and allow us to serve You. We ask You, Allah, to make us worthy of the service, and worthy students of knowledge. We ask You, Allah, to be good, faithful people and be in service of all humanity as we serve You. For those who we know who are suffering from illness, we ask You for Your Shifāt (healing). For those who have passed, we ask that You embrace them and keep them near to You. We ask You for protection for those who have come to be with us, to visit us, and be part of our community and part of our Global Youth Village. Keep them safe, keep them secure, and give them upliftment in their life and their Lord. *Amin.*

Suhbat: I think I'd like to do a small series that would include a talk on *adab* of love, some things from the Futahah Maqiah, and on the difference between faith and belief. I want to say a few things first about love. We are in this month of Sha'ban now, and I think that most people have a kind of attitude toward the coming month of Ramadan, that preparation for Ramadan is one that is sacrificing and difficult. Or, we do things out of habit, and fast out of habit. I don't think it is often discussed that these months are also ways of reminding ourselves. This month of Sha'ban is a month of reflection, and *inshā'a-Llāh*, we should reflect every day - without being reminded to reflect on Allah

because we have lost something, or have felt the loss of some dear one or some love or something like that.

Most of us don't reflect on the heart and its capacity. We shouldn't have to have pain to be reminded that each of us lives with our own *qadr* and with the *taqdir*/destiny of humanity. I wonder if you have ever contemplated the fact that there is a destiny that affects each one of us virtually every second of our lives, from the moment we are born to the moment we leave, and beyond that. We tend not to think of what is happening to us as somehow interfacing with our destiny and choices. In a sense, our destiny precedes us. We are told that we are born with some clear purpose. We are born not in vain, so to speak. We are born with a purpose, and therefore there is some functionality. The assumption is we have the capabilities, capacities, and faculties necessary to fulfill whatever that function is.

We can't know our destiny very clearly, most of us; but we can find out somehow what our destiny is by looking at our potential, how we approach things, where we have difficulties, what we can change in our own selves. We look at our talents, our interests, how we acquire knowledge and how we prefer to use knowledge. Some people prefer to use knowledge to earn money, and some people prefer to use knowledge to serve others, to teach, to cook for them, to support them, to provide opportunities for others and for themselves. Perhaps, in some way through knowledge, we can find out what the purpose of our lives is and we can try to fulfill it. Those who have come before us, our *shuyukh*, have told us in many different ways to learn and to seek. If you seek, find. If you find, then be what you can be.

Knowing or learning knowledge is a very active process, and ignorance is a very passive process. Action is a sign of being alive and attentive. Passivity, in the spiritual context, is a kind of immobility. It is akin to death. Allah (swt) says in Qur'an, "**Only those who possess knowledge serve (meaning obey and work) with Allah.**" What is this

knowledge that makes it obligatory, that obliges us to serve and to work and to obey Allah? I think that this knowledge is the knowledge one has the ability and the capacity to know what is true, to be able to discern truth (*fīrasa*) about oneself, to know what is right and wrong in society, and to learn and be able to extrapolate from the words of Allah (swt) that we receive in Qur'an and the Sīrah from the life of the Prophet (sal), from the Hadith, from the wisdom of the *shuyukh*, and from listening to one's own conscience, what is a clear way of knowledge, of submission, a way of faith and understanding, and then to approach life in a reverential way. From observing just existence, life itself, the little ant walking on the road, observing human existence and nature; or from looking through the telescope into the farthest reaches of space, or through the microscope into the inner world of the *'ālam al khalq*, one asks the questions, "How could this be made? What is my place in this?" One allows oneself to have a reverence, indeed, a love for the Creator of this process, this reality.

How does one work towards knowing oneself, which is essential for knowing the purpose of life: know one's self to know one's Lord? Allah says, "**Man cannot have anything except what he has worked for.**" Allah also says, "**Allah will repay each soul for what he has earned.**" It is a very active process. It is not a passive process. When we think of ourselves as "I," most of us think of our physical bodies. But in reality, there are many more parts to this "I." The one who knows says that the human being is made up of five Divine Elements called the *hadrati hamsa*. What is *hadrat*? Presence. These are the names, because without a name there is no distinction; and *sifat*, the attributes; *rūh*, the soul; and the body; and *'ilm*/knowledge. These are the five *hadrati hamsa*.

Name is like identity, because a nameless thing really has no existence. When Allah (swt) created our father Adam, He asked him his name. He said that he had none. As a reward for his purity at that moment, Allah (swt) named him Adam (*alif-dal-mim*), which indicates not just a name but the form or positions of prayer/*salat*: standing, bowing and prostration. The indication here, as the Sufis interpret it, is that Hazrat Adam was

created as a symbol for worship. The human being has the capacity and ability to move and show reverence for one's Creator. Then Allah (swt) taught Hazrat Adam His Beautiful Names and His Attributes, which became the *sifāt* part of the human being. The attributes are a reflection of the Attributes of Allah (swt), and passed to us. Then He blew into his soul/*rūh* from His own Rūh. Allah had made the body of Adam from earth, air, fire, and water, the same elements with which He made everything else in what we call the 18,000 universes. Everything is made out of the same thing. Though of this world, in the sense of a temporal being, Hazrat Adam (as) was the physical microcosm of the macrocosm, and was the connection between all the universes and Allah (swt). That's why Allah made him the *khalifa*, the deputy, His governor, His appointed representative to the worlds. Then He says, **“I have created all and everything for you, and I have created you for Myself.”**

The four Divine Elements (the names, attributes, souls and bodies) are put by Allah (swt) in every one of us. We are not very conscious of this. It's as if we live independent of what moves us, what created us, and what comprises us. The last of those Divine Elements, knowledge, was created separately, but human beings are given a mind and free will to learn and acquire knowledge or to choose not to. That's the test. This knowledge, *irfan*, depends on many things. One of which is the will/*irāda* to have it. It depends on action, and the willingness to learn. The knowledge is of the knowledge of Reality, Haqq, Truth. Truth is not a subject; it is an existent reality. Allah says to us, **“If you know yourself, you will know your Lord.”** That means first you have to know yourself, then you will know your Lord.

You can spend your life trying to know your Lord, but if you don't know yourself, you won't know your Lord. Maybe that's the difference between the academic scholar and the Sufi, to know one's Lord. It is to know first the truth of oneself, and then, as in Rasulallah's promise, **“He who knows himself knows his Lord.”** ‘To know oneself’ means what? Really, in a strange way, it means to know your name. Your name is a

reality. Not the name ‘Khaled,’ necessary, but ‘Khaled’ has a meaning. ‘Abdul Mu’nim’ has a meaning. ‘Hameed’ has a meaning. ‘Salma’ has a meaning. To know the name and one’s real identity is to know clearly what your attributes are, and how well you reflect the attributes of Allah (swt). This is not a religious test, or a test of knowledge of religion. This is a test of knowledge of your own attributes that are reflections of the Attributes of Allah. This is a test to say, “Will you take the time to recognize the essence of your own soul?” And also, [it is to know] the temporality of one’s own body, and your own character and how you operate it, and where your strengths and weaknesses are.

Then these five elements will unite into one whole. One sees that neither the name, nor the attributes, nor the body, nor the soul, nor the knowledge with which we reflect are our own. They are not from us. They are us, but they are not from us. Allah (swt) has even scientifically shown us this in the creation of this earth. There are elements of this earth that scientists know did not originate on this earth. They came from other worlds in space. By understanding the attributes, the soul, the knowledge, the name, we realize what the truth is, hidden in the name Allah. It was originally Al Illah, but it was too long so the *hamza* was removed.

There can be no mistake that Allah is different than gods and goddesses and things like that. You can have a big G God and small g god and goddesses, but Allah is just one name: the God, Al Illah – the Truth, the Reality, the One. We can realize that all of this that I call me is not really me. As we understand this, progressively one becomes much more committed to the mortar that makes the human being distinctive. We also say that what makes the human being distinctive is consciousness, being able to choose –and that’s true. But human beings have another capacity, which allows us to see the *jamal* and the *jelal*, to be humble and worship, and that is love. Love alone is like the mortar.

In this non-existence of our own self is the state of dying before we die, as I spoke the other day. One progressively realizes that there is not really any death; but there is a

rebirth, a transformation. When you physically disappear from the eyes of the world, Allah says, **“On that day the earth will be changed into a different earth, and the heavens will be changed into a different heaven, and you will come to Allah the only One,”** the One Who has enforced that transformation.

What stands in the way, what counters love between human beings or between a faithful person and their Lord, or what fertilizes it and supports that relationship are these two opposite things: arrogance and humility. Arrogance is a state where we are convinced, where we believe that we have the right to be above everything else or others: “I know better.” It is accompanied by self-love without comparing ourselves to others, from feeling superior to others to being vain individuals. If arrogance was a thing, it would be *haram*. It would be like pig – *haram*.

Justified or not, whether truly in our hearts we believe that we know more than someone, we are superior to that individual, or wiser to that individual, if that ego is manifest, if it is communicated to others by the impression we give to others or the acts we perform, it is considered a sin. What’s worse is when there is no justification for the feeling of superiority. One of the attributes of Allah (swt) is The Proud. The only occasion when the feeling of pride is not considered a ‘sin’ (which is not a word I like to use but I don’t know what other word to use) is when it is manifest against an aggressive, arrogant person or an enemy. The Prophet (sal) said that when you are waging battle in defense of the *dīn*, your family, your loved ones, or your country, you can show pride to the arrogant person. That’s considered a good deed. Jabir related that the Prophet (sal) related, **“The only state of pride Allah permits is the one shown in battle or while doing a generous act.”**

In this case, the meaning of pride changes. When you are helping a person who is in need, and the source of this pride is your humility itself and your love – your love for your *dīn*, for your Lord, for your loved ones, your love for the truth – you show that with

an attitude of pride and faithfulness. This becomes a very subtle act. Humility, whether it takes the form of modesty in one's outer appearance or modesty in one's actions as a kind of abject quietness, this is a beautiful thing. The exaggeration of humility also is problematic. Jabal reported that the Messenger of Allah (sal) said, "***Showing excess attachment and appearing abject, reducing oneself to the state of a beggar does not suit the character of a believer. The only exception is the humbleness of a student towards his teacher, seeking to receive knowledge.***"

Knowledge, in other words, is something you can beg for. It is something worth receiving humbly. To give an example of the right and wrong way to manifest humility, one of our *shuyukh* said, "Imagine a totally coarse, ignorant person entering into the company of wise men. If these wise men show excessive respect to the newcomer – they stand up and greet him, offer him the best place, show him to the door when he is leaving – this is definitely wrong. On the other hand, if they show him kindness so as not to make him feel unwelcome; listen to him; answer his questions at his level of understanding, even if his questions are beneath them; and especially never think of themselves as better than he is, doing all they can to make him feel as equal, then their behavior is proper.

The relationship between this arrogance and humility and love is very important. Sometimes we feel that we are not feeling love, or our love is not accepted (usually in relationship to another human being), or we feel that we don't know that our prayers are accepted, or we don't feel a strong love for Allah, or for the *dīn*. Often, then, we resort to our own ego, and this is when the arrogance comes. It is born out of a feeling that what we had or had hoped in our heart wasn't accepted, and that we have been rebuffed. We can understand this better when we think about relationships between human beings, and we feel rebuffed. So we become arrogant. With that arrogance come the lowest qualities of the human being: anger, jealousy, vengefulness – not physically, but vengeful. These things come out of the lower part of our nature.

So we tend to worry about whether or not we are making progress, if our prayers are accepted, if our intentions are good. [We worry] that something must be wrong with what I am doing, because I'm not feeling the love. I'm not feeling the humility. I'm not feeling the acceptance. The capacity for each of us, which we began with in speaking of Hazrat Adam (as) and the reflections of the Names, becomes easy to understand. If we focus on the *jamia asmā' al husna* (the transmission of the 99 names of Allah), as we do in the third circle, we extend our will, which is where we started. You turn your will toward those attributes, which are reflected in other human beings and in nature, affirming our place in this universe.

When we think of the vastness of this universe, and the depth of the realities of the cellular realities within us placed in this nexus, in this crossroads, [when] we are traveling in the *'ālam al-mithal*, [and when] we take seriously these attributes of Allah, we will avoid that arrogance. We will find ourselves much more humble, and not so much caring whether or not our prayers are accepted or not by some sign that comes to us, but rather by the signs that surround us. Not caring whether this prayer was accepted or this person's love was received, but rather we are able to see through our insight that Divine Presence and that love in the meaningfulness of what is related to us in Al Qur'an. Our capacity to identify our self and our attributes, our compassion, our mercy, our love, our patience, our tolerance, our search for knowledge – not selfishly but gratefully – transcends the feelings of rejection or fear or non-acceptance, or being rebuffed.

Indeed, you come to a point (and believe me, I know this point very well) where you see the beauty and the capacity, and the magnanimity and the light in others that they, themselves, don't see. They may not see it out of fear, ignorance, or because if they did they would have to make certain decisions in their lives that would be counter to their lower nature, or their desires. But *you* see it. When you see it, even though in the moment you feel, "Why don't you see that? I'd like to shake you and make you see it," you love them. You see what they have in their heart and soul. It's very hard to be

vengeful and arrogant. It's very difficult to be angry for a long period of time. It's very difficult not to be forgiving, because you see. You have reflected on your attributes, the attributes of Allah (swt) as reflected in yourself. There is no room in that for arrogance; there is only room there for humility.

We work hard with these qualifications, to support our family, to help our community and do the work we do in the *'ālam al khalq*. But we have to work equally as hard... were you in Blacksburg today? (Charlottesville). You drive so much for your work and family, and it takes time and effort. It makes you tired and many things. We have to do that same kind of work inwardly. Life is not about getting so tired out that you barely have time for the inward. It's not about giving love to everyone, but not to the ones nearest to you. You have to create this *mīzān*, this balance; otherwise we become arrogant, and we lose our capacity for humility. Arrogance is usually directed toward someone. It's not some esoteric thing you carry around in you. Of course, the example of arrogance is Shaytan not bowing down. That's a good beginning, *inshā'a-Llāh*; and maybe an ending.

Just remember the *hadith* of the Prophet (sal): **“Whoever has an atom of pride will not enter Paradise.”** There are two things to remember. What trumps that is? Because how many of you think you are not going to have an atom of pride in you when you die? Raise your hands. So what trumps it? Allah's Mercy. That is directed toward you because your *niyyat* is known. Your will is known. If I stand out on the porch and yell, someone down by the bridge will hear my voice. There is no form to my voice, just a wave pattern, but it is heard. Your *niyyat* is heard. So keep a good intention. How? That takes us back to *muraqabah*, which won't be tonight. We should talk again about *muraqabah*, because we all have a sense. We call it a sixth sense.

The state of *muraqabah* is like having a sense. If some stranger came into this room and they had a really bad day – of course none of you ever have really bad days – you can

look at that person and sense their vibration. We all have another sense, and *muraqabah* takes that sense and expands it. We can sense other dimensions and other transmissions. I want to talk about that another time, *inshā'a-LLāh. Asalaamu aleikum.*

Any questions?

Student: You said our intention, *niyyat* is heard. Can that also be said about a group of people, such as this community?

Shaykh: Do you think there is a group purpose? (yes). Do you think there is a group will? (yes). There's your answer. If you lose the group purpose and will, then I think it's every man for himself. But there seems to be a group will and a group purpose. A student told me, "Don't ever feel that it hasn't been worthwhile, even if they close you down tomorrow." It meant a lot to me, and I appreciate it. And that's your answer, right?