

The Path of Tasawwuf

(Mysticism)

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Tasawwuf is the path that leads not only to salvation, but to God Himself. Tasawwuf implies purity and so a Sufi must acquire purity in body, speech, thought, heart, and soul.

Washing off any unclean substance can purify the body, whereas purity of speech can be attained by always speaking the truth, keeping one's promises and not speaking evil of anyone. Also, one should not curse others, nor say anything that could hurt other people's feelings.

To attain purity of thought, one should not think evil of anyone, nor should one bear any ill will toward them. One should not annoy nor harm others.

Purity of heart can be attained by guarding one's heart against anger, malice, hypocrisy and pride. One should not harbour animosity, become spiteful, bear a grudge nor be jealous of anyone. Instead one should keep one's heart ready to impart love, sympathy and generosity for the service of humanity.

Purity of soul is acquired when one becomes filled with love for Almighty God. One guards this by not allowing this love to be surpassed or overwhelmed by the love for anyone or anything else.

Many pious people, religious leaders, Rishi-Munis, Avatars, Rasuls/Messengers, Pirs, Shaikhs, Faqirs, Dervishes, Yogis, Sufis, Sajjadas, and other devoted people, have attained nearness to God by putting knowledge of mysticism into practise. Then, in accordance with the Will of God, by guiding and helping others in their journey [on the spiritual path leading toward God] such people have also gained general acceptance [and popularity] among the multitude of humanity. As a delicate [and effective] essence of all morality, spirituality, theosophy, and [metaphysics of] worship, Tasawwuf [Mysticism] has been preached under different names right from the creation of the world to this day. It has been taught [and preserved] by all faiths and religions and all these pious people have given guidance on this path that leads to God. Whatever ways and means [methods] are chosen to achieve this real [ultimate] goal, they can all be called Tasawwuf.

The most common way to attain salvation is to obey the usual religious ordinances [injunctions of religious law]. However, to undertake the journey on the path that leads to God Himself, one must do more than perform the prescribed worship. In addition to standard obligatory practises, one must also perform additional [supererogatory] voluntary acts of worship by always thinking of Him. [The ability] to always think of God depends upon the love in the heart and the real centre of this love is the Guru or Murshid [Shaikh, mentor, spiritual guide]. A Perfect Murshid manifests the attributes [*Sifat*] and the subject in which the attributes adhere to God [*dhat*]. The Murshid becomes [operates as] the only link between the seeker and the attainment of that which he seeks. However, whether they live among us or rest in their graves, the souls of the saints, of Sufis, of God-realized people, also extend their help to those who approach them when facing difficulties in attaining their goal.

Genuine love means loving this centre of love [the Murshid] more than anything else in the world. This involves a willingness to bear all difficulties for the sake of this love and likewise to consider every difficulty [one encounters in the path of such love to be] a comfort [and blessing] for it leads one closer [nearer] to the Beloved.

The Nearness of God comes [to the seeker] in two ways: by efforts (striving) and as a gift of God. By following the way of effort (striving) one reaches the Nearness of God through inculcating austerity, endeavour and worship.

Love is a gift. The Murshid bestows it upon the Murid [disciple] through his grace. Often it so happens that on the path of love, [symbolic, relative (*majazi*)] worldly love often leads to real [abstract/ideal] love. Love is not in need of worship. Love itself is worship! However, worship needs love, for worship without love is like a body without a soul!

The heart of man is the Abode of the light of God. When the seeker has cleansed his heart from the pollution of this world, it becomes polished and pure like a mirror upon which visions of light [*tajalliat*] will appear. One

can see the [bright] reflection of the sun in clear water, but not so clearly in muddy water. The most excellent purifier of the heart is the fire of love. The fire of love can purify the darkness of the heart and the soul just as we can wash away the physical dirt with water. Just as fire purifies gold by cleansing it of impurities and making it bright and shining, so does the fire of love burn away the uncleanness of the heart and makes it a clear mirror full of light.

REFINEMENT OF THE EGO AND PURIFICATION OF THE HEART (Tazkiya Nafs & Tasfia Qalb)

For the purification of the heart, it is necessary that the ego (carnal self/lower self/*Nafse Ammara*) be purified. Unless the ego turns away from distractions of the world, it cannot turn toward God. One cannot achieve purity of heart and soul unless the blameworthy [undesirable] qualities of the ego (carnal self) are rectified. To attain this purity, one must first abstain from the inordinate desires [which are the source of] evils or vices of the lower self. For the Sufis, the fundamental principles of abstinence or self denial are: not eating too much, not speaking too much, not sleeping too much, and not associating too much with people. Sometimes a Sufi will go into ascetic retreat in order to practise the purification of the lower self. He stays in some isolated place usually for a length of forty days. He fasts during the day and in the evening he breaks his fast with a little simple food. At night he engages himself in the repetition of some *Wazifa* [Quranic Verse(s)] or chants a Holy Name [one of the 99 Beautiful Divine Names of God]. During these forty days he generally repeats this *Wazifa* 125,000 times. It may seem difficult] yet with love in his heart, he can easily manage to accomplish this. A lover will naturally eat less, speak less, sleep less and associate less with people. He prefers solitude and his worship [involves] recollection and contemplation of the Beloved, always keeping the Beloved before him. His heart becomes ablaze and melts, he weeps and laments until he becomes illumined and he rises above all inordinate desire by gaining full control over his passions and his anger. When he has thus removed the impurity of the lower self, his heart will become like a polished mirror and in it the reflection (image) of the Murshid will become clearly visible. The reflection of a person is never separate (or different) from the person who is reflected, [say, in a mirror, for instance]. [1] The blessings of the Murshid's reflection are numerous and they manifest themselves in various ways as supernatural powers. Such manifestations [of these

powers] serve as proof of the Truth and shows to the world the special quality of those who seek God.

RECOLLECTION/REMEMBRANCE Y a d

Recollection is the first step toward contemplation. Recollection in speech (vociferous, by tongue) is the lowest form of remembrance. Higher than this is the recollection in the mind, where one always remembers and thinks of the Beloved. Even more excellent is the recollection in the heart, for while the hands and feet are occupied in their usual work, the heart remains absorbed in Him. The most excellent recollection is remembrance in the soul and this is a gift from God to whomsoever He wishes to give.

Some people outwardly renounce the world and live in seclusion busying themselves with the recollection of God. Nonetheless, some others look upon this with disdain, for they say that it is better and more in accordance with the Divine plan to remain in the world and yet not allow oneself to be seduced by its distractions. If everyone became a hermit and lived in solitude, the world would soon finish and the Divine purpose would be lost. Such people say that to renounce everything and to live in a secluded place in order to gain single-minded devotion is an inferior way, whereas, to live in the midst of it all and yet attain single-minded devotion is a much higher achievement. To cut oneself off physically from the world without achieving this single-minded devotion is fruitless, just as it is equally useless to remain in the world without achieving that single minded devotion. In other words, the real object (purpose) is to focus one's complete attention upon the Ideal, no matter where and how it may be acquired.

CONTEMPLATION T a s a w w u r [2]

When the heart has become pure through refinement of the lower self, remembrance takes the form of contemplation (*Tasawwur*).

The first level of contemplation occurs in the [eye of imagination]. Then it takes place in the mind [producing a mental image] then it develops into a clear image in the heart. Finally when the soul has become the abode of contemplation, all veils will be lifted and the contemplation becomes instrumental in revealing the manifestation of the Truth. Examples taken from the physical/material realm of existence no doubt provide ample illustrative guidance toward a proper

understanding of this [systemic contemplative activity]. These examples also serve as [convincing] Proof of the hidden power bestowed upon man by God. For example, [we note that] the airplane was first conceived in the world of the imagination. It was then given a solid, visible shape and thus became the means by which man could fly. The radio is another example. It was first planned in the mind, then it came into material existence and now it enables us to hear sounds from thousands of miles away, etc., etc. In the same way, the foundation of everything is laid in the world of contemplation [imagination that provides a mental image] and then it is given a visible form. [In other words, this establishes the fact that] the basic reality of an object does actually remain present in the mental image of the contemplator].

On the path of *Tasawwuf*, one is first asked to contemplate on the Murshid. If one [does it] because one has been told to do so, he would be considered to have acquired it by his own efforts. However, if one contemplates upon the Murshid out of love, it comes to him [naturally and] automatically as a gift.

Contemplation on the Murshid is the beginning first step toward the mystic destination. Through constant contemplation on the Murshid], the face of the Murshid will appear in the eyes of the Murid. The Murshid's light will radiate from the eyes of the Murid and this will give his gaze some extraordinary supernatural effects. At times, this radiance in his eyes is clearly visible. And, this influences those whose eyes happen to meet his etc., etc. When the image (face) of the Murshid becomes manifested in the mind of the Murid, the Murid will develop the power to transmit his thoughts to the minds of others and [gradually] he will be able to read the thoughts of others and develop some other similar powers. When the image of the Murshid takes its abode in the heart of the Murid, his heart will be filled with lights and other kinds of spiritual grace. [By the grace of the Murshid], the Murid will be blessed with inner enlightenment (*'rowshan-zamiri'*).

The very breath of such an enlightened one or water consecrated by him will heal the sick and influence the mind and condition of his fellow men. Through his grace, the light of the Murshid [thus lodged] in the heart of the Murid will fill and radiate from his whole breast. He will develop supernatural powers, miracles will be wrought at his hand and spiritual mysteries will be revealed to him. When the soul has attained such enlightenment, it will cause the whole body to become radiant. In this state, even the dead can be quickened to life. The Murid [will develop angelic qualities] and he can even reach the spheres of *Jabrut* and *Lahut*. [3]

The [non-vociferous] secret Zikr [recollection of Allah] develops and fully occupies his heart. He can hear the *Saut-e-Sarmadi*, the eternal sound. It is at this level of Zikr that the Glory of God's Essence (*dhat*) is manifested. Now every breath becomes the saviour of life. He sees many splendid visions and many a ray of light shines forth from his heart.

When a Sufi has reached this state, whatever he says will occur and whatever he wishes he will receive.

F A N A - F I - A L M U R S H I D [4]

When through perfect contemplation, the seeker reaches the fundamental Truth, he can see nothing but the One. Wherever he looks, [turns] he sees Him. Whatever he hears, he hears from Him. Whatever he says, he speaks His word. Whatever he feels, he feels because of Him. In short, he sees the One in all and all in the One. He beholds the Unity in diversity and diversity as Unity. Attainment of *Fana-fi-al Murshid* [gradually], stage by stage, leads him to *Fana-fi-Allah* [Annihilation in God -- which is the state of complete absorption in God.]

The Murshid is not separate from God, nor from the saints. All the Sufis [taken together] are one soul [a single united entity]. By virtue of and by the blessings of] his spiritual linkage [*Nisbat*] through Divine love, the Murshid is [regarded as] the manifestation of [His] Essence and Attributes.

Stages

Having reached the state of *Fana-fi-al Shaikh*, some Muslims reach all the stages of [the station of] *Fana-fi-al Ali* (annihilation in Hazrat Ali), through the chain of their Pirs. According to Shah Wali Allah Dehlevi, Hazrat Ali was the first Sufi, the first *Majzub* [5] and the first Arif among the followers of Mohammed (pbuh). He is the Emperor of saints, the leader of all the Sufis and *Walis* (friends of Allah).

Having passed through the states of *Fana-fi-al Rasul* (annihilation in the Holy Prophet Mohammed) and *Fana-fi-Allah* (annihilation in God), they obtain the rank of *Fana-fi-al Baqa* (Annihilation in the station of Subsistence in God). At this stage they become the perfect manifestation of the essence [*dhat*] and the qualities [attributes] of Almighty God. Their acts of hearing, seeing, seizing with hands, walking and moving about is all done for the sake of God. [6]

Requisites

In order to arrive at this station, observance of four fundamental principles is an essential requirement in Islamic mysticism. These are knowledge, action, faith and sincerity. In everything one does, depending upon God is necessary. One must be sincere, patient and humble, and submit/surrender to the Will of God. One must shun the world and show mercy to all creatures. One can best acquire these qualities through love. It is the [overflow, *faizan*] of the blessings of mysticism that bring about [progressively higher states] of spirituality [in the practising mystic]. Supernatural incidents [miracles wrought in the hands of such people] occur only to confirm [the nobleness of the mystic]. By following the laws of Islam, one can gain salvation [from Hell] and enter Paradise, but one attains proximity to [communion with] God through love!

Degrees and Ranks

Among those who follow the path of *Tasawwuf*, there are four degrees: (1) *majzub-salik*, (2) *salik-majzub*, (3) *salik* [the traveler on the path to God] and (4) *Majzub* [one who is 'attracted']. [7] Among these are various ranks:-- The highest rank is that of the Friends of God [saints]. Then there are the ranks of Mashaikh, Dervish, Faqir and Sufi. Some of them are lovers, whose love for God is of the highest order. Some are the beloved ones of God. Quranic commentators have explained the verse from the Holy Qur'an [7:160]: "And We divided them into twelve tribes [various communities]" to mean that [as to their relative levels of gnostic knowledge] there are twelve different groups:--

1. Muwahid -- Those who believe in the Oneness of God. They are the most excellent. (The believers in the Oneness of God from every religion belong to this group.)
2. Arif -- Those who know [gnostics].
3. Ashiq -- Lovers
4. Muhib -- Friends [those who are loved/beloved]
5. Mu'qin -- Those who firmly believe (with certainty).
6. Mukashif -- Those who can receive inspirational disclosure of mysteries.
7. Mushahid -- Observers [witnessing mysteries].
8. Salik -- Those who live in the world, but are not of it.
9. Sabiq -- Those who press onwards.
10. Sadiq -- The sincere
11. Razi -- The contented
12. Murids -- Disciples

For each of these groups of holy ones, there is a spring

from which they draw eternal refreshment:

1. Unity (*Tawhid*) is the spring for the Mawahid.
2. Submission (*Abadiyat*) -- and always finding happiness therein -- is the spring for the Arif.
3. Sincerity (*Ikhlas*) is the spring for the Ashiq.
4. Attention (*Tawazu*) is the spring for the Muhib.
5. Contentment and acceptance (*Raza* and *Tasleem*) is the spring for the Mu'qin.
6. Satisfaction (*Taskeen* and *Wiqar*) is the spring for the Mukashif.
7. Generosity and confidence (*Sakhwat* and *I'timad*) is the spring for the Mushahid.
8. Certainty (*Yaqin*) is the spring for the Salik.
9. Truthfulness (*Sidq*) is the spring for the Sabiq.
10. Wisdom (*Aql*) is the spring for the Sadiq.
11. Love (*Muhabbat*) is the spring for the Razi.
12. Affection and sincerity (*Uns* and *Khulus*) is the spring for the Murid.

The Spiritual Blessings (*Faizan*)

Almighty God is the Lord-Sustainer of the whole universe, the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. Mohammed is His Messenger (*Rasul*) and a source of blessings for the whole universe. Through his Messengership, his light and his blessings have benefited the two worlds. Hazrat Ali is the greatest sign of the Prophet Muhammad's miraculous powers. Hazrat Ali is the emperor [prince] of all the saints and the leader of all the Sufis who are all under his command. From him originates the chain of the fourteen holy families, the seven orders and the four Pirs of the Sufis. Whatever happens in the world happens through his mediation.

As Maulvi Ismail writes in his book '*Sirat-e-Mustaqim*,' "Hazrat Ali's [Sufic] rank is superior to that of the two Shaikhs, Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar, and this superiority is evident from the large number of his followers. All the stations [stages and states] of *Wilayat* (saintship), even the states of *Qutbiyat*, *Ghausiyat*, *Abdaliyat* and similar functions, have been attained from his day and will remain attainable until the end of the world only through his authority and his mediation. The kingship of kings and the power and authority of all the powerful leaders of the world are in his hand. This is well known to those who enjoy [the ability to sojourn through and learn about the mysteries of] the world of *Malakut*."

Imam Fakhru-din Razi says in '*Arba' in fi Usul-al-din*': "In the matter of gnostic knowledge (inner knowledge of mysticism), the ascending spiritual genealogy [family tree] of all mystics end with the final

link to Hazrat Ali."

Shah Wali Allah Muhaddis of Delhi writes in his '*Dur-e-Shaheen*': "Among the followers of Mohammed, Hazrat Ali is the first Sufi, the first Majzub and the first Arif."

Khwaja Mohammed Parsa writes in '*Fazl-ul-Kitab*': "Hazrat Khwaja Junaid, of Baghdad, says that Ali Ibn Abu Talib is our forerunner on the path of mysticism, for he is the one who has showed us the way to that [spiritual mystery] which dwells in the heart. He is the one who, after the days of our Nabi, [Mohammed, the Prophet of God], has pointed to God's Truths."

In the '*Kashfal Mahjub*', al-Hujwiri [also known as Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh of Lahore] writes: ["His (Hazrat Ali's) renown and rank on the Sufi path is very high. He explained the principles of Divine Truth with exceeding subtlety, so much so that Junaid said]: 'Ali is our Shaikh and greatest leader regarding the principles and regarding the endurance of affliction [ascetic exercises/practices] . . . As to the Truth of outward expressions and the subtleties of inward meanings, Ali is the model for all the Sufis.' "

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer writes in the book '*Ganj-e-Asrar*': "Unless a *Salik* follows Hazrat Ali and unless he has a true [genuine/deep] relationship with him in his heart and soul, not even a thousand years of austerity and efforts to subjugate his carnal self will give him even an ounce of gnostic knowledge, except those whom Almighty God might favour with His Grace."

As to Hazrat Ali's attributes, Hazrat Umar quotes this saying of the Messenger of God: "In the attainment of Divine Grace and favour, there is none like Ali." (Tabrani) Hazrat Imam Hasan, in his sermon upon the death of Hazrat Ali, exclaimed, "O people! Today a man has been taken away from you, to whom no one was superior in any way. Even those who come after him will not be able to reach his mark." (Ahmed, and Nasai).

Hazrat Ali's learning and sincerity is admired even in Europe. Mr. T. Carlyle says in his book '*Heroes and Hero Worship*', "As for the young Ali, one cannot help but like him. No one could surpass him in assimilating the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (instructions and training in the exoteric and esoteric subjects). There was something chivalrous in him, brave as a lion, yet he exhibited grace, truth and leadership worthy of Christian knighthood."

The Inner Spiritual Organization and its Administrative Structure

Hazrat Ali is the spiritual ruler of the inner [unseen] life.

For all the people of the earth, he is the fountainhead of Peace and Protection [for both the inner and the outer life]. (He is the *Qutb Madar*, which means that the administration of all affairs [spiritual and temporal] depends upon him. He is the *Ghaus al Saqalain*, which means that he responds to the cries for help coming from [the inhabitants of] both the worlds. A *Qutb al Aqtab* or *Ghaus-e-Azam* always performs the functions as his deputy in the physical world; three saints are always appointed to the office of *Naqba*. After their death, the line of succession continues by the appointment of new '*Naqba*'. To this day, this functional spiritual grace of Imam al Auliya Ali exists in the world and it will continue until the Day of Resurrection. Every *Ghaus*, *Qutb*, *Naqba*, *Autad*, *Abrar*, *Abdal* and *Akhyar* is performing his administrative duties under the command of Hazrat Ali and they will continue to be appointed in the future through his grace. The Spiritual Sovereign of India, Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin of Ajmer, the *Ghaus al Saqalain* of Iraq, Shaikh Muhyuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani, the Spiritual Sovereign of Egypt, Hazrat Sayyed Ahmed al Badawi and many more saints are his physical and spiritual descendants.

EXPLANATION OF SOME SUFI EXPRESSIONS

[Please note that the Sufi expressions explained here consist of technical Sufi terms used in Arabic, Persian, and the Urdu languages.]

'Ishq: Attachment, friendship, fondness and affection are all degrees of love. However, the highest degree of love is *Ishq* (ardent spiritual love), the love of the lover for the Beloved that surpasses (or overshadows) the love for anything else.

Bekhudi: (Ecstasy). Ecstasy is that stage of love, where one completely forgets one's own existence.

Fana-fi-al Mehboob: (Annihilation in the Beloved). This is the stage in love where the lover forgets his own existence and is conscious of none other than the Beloved.

Tawhid (Oneness). In the state of *Tawhid* none other than the One exists. Everything is a manifestation of the One, in all its different aspects. To know everything as the One, to regard [the abstract/initial origin of] every act as the One, that is Oneness!

Mushahada: (Vision, observation). Between God and His servant there are many veils of heedlessness. When the slave of God sincerely, faithfully and earnestly gives up [inordinate] worldly pleasures and then occupies himself

only with [the consciousness and the omnipresence of] God, these veils [of obstruction between the worshipper and the worshipped One] will be lifted. The Glory of God will begin to shine within his purified heart.

Zuhud wa War'ah: (Abstinence and Temperance). Temperance involves giving up the love of worldly things for the love of God. Abstinence involves purifying the heart and mind from the defilement and pollutants of the world.

Irfan (Gnostic knowledge). Gnostic knowledge is the soul of mysticism by which a man recognises the reality of all that exists. When a man acquires the knowledge of himself, he acquires knowledge of the essence of God (*dhat*).

Suluk: (Walking on the Path [to Allah]). *Suluk* means to follow the inner path virtuously. Among the Sufi saints, *Suluk* involves being ardent (passionately eager) in the search for Truth.

Yeksui (Concentration). *Yeksui* is to bring all thought, movement, stillness and perception to one central point. To attain *Yeksui*, it is necessary to avoid [distractions of] noise and the company of people with nonconforming [beliefs] and mental attitudes. The best and easiest way to acquire perfect concentration is through ardent spiritual love (*Ishq*).

Ruh: (Spirit) The spirit is the essence of the eternal world of command (*Amr*) and [serves as] the sustaining agent of the created world. Fathoming the extent of its power is difficult for man's intellect. It brings about the manifestation of supernatural events and Divine inspiration [occurring due to Divine action, commonly referred to as miracles]. It is the cause [operating as the active agent] of sustaining the [whole] world. Being active in every atom [and particle], it exercises its effective control over the continual sustenance of the whole world.

Dil: [Qalb] (Heart). The heart is the manifestation of the Divine Name (*'Adil*) in that the balance between the powers of the ego (carnal self) and the spirit depends on it. It is this heart that acts as the *via media* (a middle road) between the ego (carnal self) and the spirit. The Prince of the Illumined, Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Hasan Chishti of Ajmer says: "The real heart is that heart which is neither on the right nor on the left, neither above nor below, neither far nor near. To know (and identify) this real heart is not easy, only those who are close to God know it. The heart of a perfect believer is in reality the Throne of God. It is the place where the Holy One manifests Himself through His everlasting mirror of splendour." (*Israr al Wasalin*, compiled by Ahmed Akhtar).

Yaqin: (Certainty of faith) Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz of Ajmer says: "Faith is a light by which man becomes enlightened. He then becomes one of the lovers and one of the pious." (*Daleel-al-Arifin*) There are several kinds of faith: faith in something about which the eye can see (*ain ul yaqin*), faith in something in which truth is known (*haqqul yaqin*), faith in something of which one is certain (*yaqin ul yaqin*). Yet perfect faith is that which requires no reasoning.

Fana, Baqa: (Annihilation, Subsisting in Allah) In reality *fana* means the absence of things, whereas *baqa* means fellowship and nearness to God. Therefore, die to that which perishes and live with that which does not perish (*baqi*).

Tajalli (Splendour). The literal meaning of '*Tajalli*' is light; it means to reveal, to enlighten, to shine. The mystical meaning of '*Tajalli*' is the rising of the sun of Truth from behind the clouds of human attributes (qualities). The light of *Tajalli* shines in a variety of colours: white, green, rose, gold, and so on.

Mazhab: (Religion). Hazrat Gharib Nawaz of Ajmer says: "The reality of religion lies in this: that the disciple should follow his Murshid. This means that in the way of spiritual obedience, the Murshid is like the path and God is the Guide. O my dear one! One adopts religion so that it may lead the seeker to the Sought [to his goal]. There is no better religion than that which in the early stages teaches the seeker not to become a slave to his habits. For he who is a slave to his habits remains far from true religion . . . A religion which leads man to God is Islam, one that does not is heathenism." (*Ganj-e-Arsar*)

Tark and Tajrid: (Renunciation and remaining aloof). Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz of Ajmer says: "You must give up greed and avarice. Those who have done so have reached their goal. *Tajrid* involves remaining alone even in the midst of a crowd."

Khulus-e-Niyat: (Purity of Intention). Pure intention is that intention which is based on truth and sincerity.

Sama (Music). *Sama* is not just fun and games [or mere entertainment]. It is one of the mysteries of Allah. The Murshid of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz, Hazrat Khwaja Usman Haruni Chishti, said that *Sama* is one of the greatest secrets (mysteries) of God. During the highest states of *Sama*, nothing can come between [the Glory of] God and His slave (all in proportion to the rank of the listener). Just as grain, fruit and vegetables are food for the body, so sweet fragrance, beautiful objects and beautiful sounds are food for the soul.

Sabr (Perseverance/patience). This means to not to resent trials and difficulties sent by the Beloved/Friend. Instead one bears them gladly, knowing that they come

from Him.

Raza and Taslim: (Consent and Acceptance). One accepts all that comes from the Beloved.

Tazkiya-e-Nafs: (Purification of the ego or carnal self). Controlling the ego involves freeing oneself from its attributes. A novice can purify his ego by rejecting the inclination toward evil and by taking his carnal self to the task of accounting for its slips and shortcomings. At the intermediate stage, purification involves guarding oneself against the undesirable qualities of jealousy, avarice and malice; not bearing grudges nor causing anyone harm; not telling lies nor deceiving anyone and so forth. To the adept, purification involves focussing all of one's attention on one's relationship with God.

Sakhawat: (Generosity). To use all that one possesses for the benefit of others.

Qana'at (Contentment). To be content with whatever one receives.

Muraqaba: (Meditation). The real goal of meditation is to be in the presence of God and absent from all else. The most common method of meditation is to bend the head and focus one's attention upon the heart.

Bayhama: (Nothing but God). This is the stage where the *Arif* sees only the One Creator in the whole of creation.

B ahama: (God in All) This is the stage where the *Arif* sees the whole of creation in the One.

Bay'at (Pledge, Initiation of disciples). Here one submits oneself entirely to the Pir-o-Murshid [like a slave is sold (or sells himself) to his master].

Mohabbat-e-Murshid (Love for the Murshid). The love for the Murshid surpasses all. There is nothing, neither body, mind, nor possession more precious to the Murid than the Murshid.

Iradat and Aqidat: (Purpose and faith). One considers everything the Murshid says as beneficial and the disciple (Murid) carries out his wishes without questioning [hesitation].

Tawajjuh (To inspire by directing one's attention [at the heart of the seeker]). In the Sufi phraseology, this means to direct one's attention upon God with all one's spiritual strength. The Murshid's spiritual attention finally enables the Murid to become like him [by acquiring his Murshid's qualities].

Barzakh (*Via Media* or middle road). *Barzakh* is that which stands between two things. The Prophet of God, by virtue of his apostleship, is a great *Barzakh* between the Creator and His Creation.

Pakizgi: (Purity). Purification involves freeing oneself from uncleanness. Outward purification involves cleansing the body from dirt, whereas inner purification involves protecting the mind, the heart and the soul from

impure thoughts. Purity in thought is not to think anyone as evil, nor speak evil to anyone and [in modesty] to consider oneself the lowest of all. We reach perfect purity when body, mind, heart and soul have become cleansed and we love everyone for the sake of God.

Zikr: (Remembrance of Allah). The result from chanting *Zikr* is constant recollection and realization (gnostic knowledge, *marifat*) of God. Almighty God says: "Remember me and I will remember you."

Nisbat (Spiritual connection). To the Sufis, *Nisbat* (spiritual affinity) signifies that kind of real [genuine] relationship which connects a person with the one to whom that person becomes [spiritually] attracted. They often name it after a saint or an attribute, as for instance *Nisbat Uways* (connection with Uways) or *Nisbat Ishq* (connected to the love of the Beloved).

Barkat-e-Tasawwuf: (Grace and blessings of mysticism) The blessing of the mysticism (*Tasawwuf*) is that the Sufis [mystics] of every religion and faith are strung like beads on a single string. In the Sufi Brotherhood no one is considered an alien. Everyone considers the other as a good person, no matter what class or society to which he may belong. Sufis have only one aim -- to find God.

Ibadat: (Worship) When practising *Zikr*, (remembrance) *Fikr* (contemplation) or *Salat* (ritual prayers or service of worship) or other forms of worship, one should imagine that one sees God. If one is unable to do so, one should think that God sees us.

[F O R M S O F] W O R S H I P

Zikr, *Fikr* and *Ashghal* are non compulsory forms of worship. These are the best way to find favour with God and to come into close contact with Him. When performing *Zikr* and *Fikr*, keeping ourselves in a state of outward and inward purity is necessary. The use of incense is helpful. There are many kinds of *Zikr* and *Ashghal*, but here we will content ourselves with a brief description of some of them:

Forms of Zikr: The negating and affirming [8] *Zikr* has two forms -- the vociferous (with voice) and the voiceless (quiet). Among the great Sufi saints the best form of *Zikr* is the one that combines both negation and affirmation: "*La ilaha ill-Allah, Mohammed-al-Rasul-Allah*" (There is no deity except God and Mohammed is the Prophet of God). One should repeat it at least one hundred and one times, in the solitude of the night before going to bed or just after midnight. This affirmation is the beginning of *Shariat* (Religious Law) and the conclusion of *Tariqat* (the way to Allah). [9] With patience and perseverance,

it will lead us to the object of our inner longing. In this form of *Zikr*, there is the affirmation of the existence of God and negation of all else.

Another *Wazifa* is "*Qul huw Allah hu ahad, Allah-hu-Samad*" (Say, He is Allah, the One, Allah, the Independent has no needs). One should repeat this *Wazifa* eleven hundred times, every night (without missing it any night) before going to sleep.

One should remember the name of Allah under all circumstances, whether sitting, standing or walking. He should always repeat the name of Allah, be it in speech or in mind or in heart..

Zikr Pas-Anfaas: (*Zikr* with the breath). When you perform *Zikr* with the rhythm of the breath, one should mentally repeat 'Allah' with the inhalation and 'Hu' with the exhalation. Some Sufis suggest repeating "Allah" with the inhalation as well as with the exhalation. The key to this exercise is to focus on visualizing the image of the Murshid in the heart.

Ashghal: *Shaghl Rab-ul-Arbab* involves concentration on the attributes of God. By virtue of His divine Attribute of Rab [One who is Lord and who can sustain and bring everything to perfection], He is the real Doer [the Cause of all causes] who keeps the body and soul together. He is the Lord-Sustainer of the soul and also the Lord of all lords. He is the Lord of the whole universe, from Whom all action, inaction and speech reach the soul and through the soul, terminates in the body. In his *shaghl*, the *Salik* (the traveler on the path to God) should concentrate on the existence of Allah, so as to reach the stage where the soul transcends its physical connection with the body and obtains access to and sees nothing outwardly or inwardly, but the Lord God.

Shaghl-e-Aina: *Shaghl* before a mirror. The Murshid instructs the Murid to sit before a mirror and look intensely at the reflection of his face while occupied in repeating the name of God. By the grace of God and according to his ability, the seeker will experience a certain amount of joy. Because this *Shaghl* is subtle, the seeker who is of a subtle disposition will in his meditation soon have experiences of a truly subtle nature.

Shaghl Sultan al Azkar: (The king of all forms of *Zikr*.) This *Zikr* is also known as the '*Zikr* of the Soul'. During the late part of the night the Murid should lie down in a quiet place. He should close his ears, either with a piece of cotton wool dipped in jasmine oil or rose water, or with his thumbs. He should then try to hear the subtle [high pitched] inner sound in the head, above the left ear. At first this sound also comes from the heart. This is the primaevial sound, the origin of all sounds from which all other sounds are manifested. The *Salik* who is blessed to

hear this sound is called 'the one who can hear' (Ahl-e-Sama).

Afkar: Concentrated mental effort to look into [the wonders of] Nature is called Fikr. Obtaining the knowledge about [the reality of] his own self by means of Fikr leads to knowledge of Almighty God, Who says "Everything is within you, but you do not take notice of it." The Holy Prophet Muhammad said: "He who knows his own self knows God." So this establishes that man is the sum-total of all existing things [microcosm] and is the trustee of the Divine Essence and Divine Attributes. The key to this treasure house lies in establishing a special spiritual relationship known as the Affinity of Sincerity (Nisbat-e-Ihsan) At this stage the body acquires Divine qualities, as Almighty God says in the holy Hadith [Qudsi]: "I become my servant's ears, his eyes, his hands and his feet." [6]

To the outward eye, the external parts of the body (eyes, ears, hands, feet) are visible. A doctor or a Hakim feels the pulse or uses instruments. Through careful study he diagnoses the condition of the stomach, the heart, the brain and other internal parts of the human body. Yet the efforts of a doctor can only go as far as understanding the proportionate construction and formation of the human body and its activities. So according to medical opinion, man consists of four elements (air, water, fire and earth) and his life depends on the proper arrangement of these four elements. Death is the term we use for the disintegration of these elements.

The inward glance of the gnostic (*Arif*) perceives more than this. He grapples with the intriguing questions relating to the source of intelligence, intellect, discernment, understanding and perception in the human structure. He looks into nature of human life, its origin and its spiritual source which enables him to perform such bodily functions as walking, seeing and hearing.

He tries to find out who the real omnipotent source of all human acts and man's power. He tries to find out Who is the real omnipotent source of all human actions and of man's power and Who in reality is the Soul of all souls (*ruhul Arwah*). Sometimes the research of a gnostic (*Arif*) brings him to the truth that man really consists of only one element -- earth. He also notes that the other three elements depend on earth [in that, in the final analysis] extended aspects of the elemental earth constitute the elemental fire. Likewise, the liquid particles of earth constitute water and the subtle particles of the earth become elemental air. Thus the different particles of earth transform themselves into all existing things and consequently appear in various shapes. But it is only for

our convenience that we give them separate names.

So it is that all existing things are composed of a mixture of different particles of earth. [Likewise] every particle of earth contains within itself the sum-total [microcosm] of all existing things. The nature and extent of the conciseness of such a microcosm is such that [on the one hand] things can be visible to the physical eye while they appear and 'reside' in the phenomenal world. [On the other hand], when residing in the realm of the invisible world, things can be seen only with the eye of imagination and mental perception (although not by the physical eye). For this reason, in this state of 'distance' such physically invisible things cannot be regarded as non-existent. For, they do have a [special] existence [of their own], albeit in the world of imagination and perception. To put it differently, in terms of visible and invisible worlds, the existence of the universe lies in between physical existence (*wujud*) and physical non-existence (*'Adum*) -- i.e., between the phenomenal realm of "it is" and "it is not"! To put it in yet another way, it follows that the universe exists through and by means of knowledge and is only apparently nonexistent to one who does not perceive it in terms of its attributes of [physical] existence and [physical] non-existence.

What we know as the atomic bomb, radium, or the sun and moon are actually particles of earth called by different names because of their attributes of light, radiance, speed and other attributes of stored and/or released power and energy, etc.

Sometimes the revealing glance of the gnostic (Arif) leads him to acquire knowledge of his origin and the beginning of his manifestation, in what realm of existence [world] was he hidden before his birth [into the phenomenal world] and where will he go after his death. Fikr guides him to the truth about man's existence and finally to the ultimate Truth.

Sometimes the gnostic (Arif) comes to know as to how and from where the first man came and what his origin was. He knows how, and Who placed the reproductive capability into that delicate jewel, his seed. In drops of human seed, a complete man is hidden just as a tree is hidden in one small [botanical] seed. Planted in healthy soil a seed will grow into a tree, but who causes its manifestation? Who is the real Doer? Who is the Omnipotent by whose perfect power the first seed came into being? By asking such questions, the gnostic (Arif) will realize that after the flower and the fruit, the end result of the plant is again the seed. The seed is the beginning and the seed is the end.

Sometimes the gnostic (Arif), in his search for the knowledge of God, reaches the point where he recognizes

that man, by calling Him the Eternal or Absolute Being, merely demonstrates the limitation of his perception in that he cannot perceive of Him beyond such perceptive bounds of the human mind. For the real Truth [is something] beyond the bounds of sensory feelings and is above and free from the limitations of human perceptive capabilities; there human wisdom and perception are helpless. There is only Truth [and nothing but the Truth]. It is for this reason that the perfect gnostic, the Holy Messenger of God, has ordained: "Do not give too much thought [in your contemplation] to the *dhat* (Origin), but do contemplate in His *ayat* (signs).

When an Arif proceeds toward the knowledge that everything is in man, then the animal, (germs) vegetable (hair) and mineral (bones) kingdoms within his being testify to this fact. When the light of the sun and the moon, which enables us to see the world around us, become manifested in his eyes and his inner heart, he realizes that the Throne and the Pedestal (*Arsh* and *Kursi*) are the [Kingdom of God] within him. The hidden secret is found to be within man himself -- a testimony that man himself is the mystery of God. The world of *Nasut* is the human body, the world of *Malakut* is hidden within human behaviour, the world of *Jabarut* is manifested in the heart of man and the world of *Lahut* is the hidden secret, yea, the most hidden mystery.

The slave [man] cannot go beyond his bounds. The personal name of Allah [name of His *dhat*] also has its fixed position [apparent limits], but in reality both are free from any limitation of bounds. [So it is that] there is no limit to the slave's [man's] service [for his Master], nor is there any end to the loving and sustaining qualities of the Cherisher and Sustainer.

Notes

[1] It is a peculiar phenomenon of reflective imaging (e.g., a shadow of a person who is reflected in a mirror) that the reflection of the person always remains 'attached' (although reflected in a distant object) with the person who is reflected. The shadow of a person, for instance, moves with him, it goes wherever he goes; it does not get 'detached' in the sense that we understand the meaning of the words 'attached' or 'detached'. In other words, the person is never really 'separated' (nor is it separable!) from his own reflection/image. A reflection may be seen in the mirror clearly, yet it cannot be claimed that the object reflected in the mirror has actually assumed

existence in the mirror. The object or person thus reflected is visible in the mirror, but no-one believes that it/he exists in the mirror or that it/he has been incarnated or carved in the mirror. The reflection remains a mere resemblance or similitude, but it is not identical with the object. Yet, its existence is not independent of the object which is reflected. Furthermore, there is another peculiarity of the phenomenon of reflective imaging: the subtle play of Light and Shade also makes the shadow increase and decrease according to external conditions such as distance, etc. The Holy Qur'an [25:45] brings this to our attention beautifully: "*Hast not thou turned thy vision to thy Lord? - How he doth prolong the shadow! If He will, He could make it stationary!*" This metaphor of the mirror holds true here as well in that the polished and illumined mirror of the Murid's spiritual heart functions (receives the reflection of his Murshid) on the same principle as an ordinary mirror reflects objects. So, we note that through the special treatment of applying mercury plating to it in a certain way, the mirror is made capable of receiving an image. In the same way, through the special ascetic treatment of cleansing the heart, the spiritual heart of the Murid becomes capable of receiving the image of his Murshid. All this is stated by the author in a nutshell -- in one short sentence Hazrat Nawab Sahib, r.a. tells the whole tale!

[2] The term 'contemplation' in this context is used to denote meditative activity with *Tasawwur* (Imagination which provides a mental image of an object, e.g., The Murshid).

[3] (a) *Nasut*: The plane of the world of man. (b) *Malakut*: The jinn sphere. (c) *Jabarut*: The angelic sphere. (d) *Lahut*: The highest sphere, the fourth sphere of which man becomes conscious after his birth on earth.

[4] The state of complete absorption in the Murshid.

[5] *Majzub* - one who is attracted/highly absorbed in God's contemplation.

[6] Literally: "I (God) become his ear with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, his feet with which he walks."

[7] (1) *Majzub-salik* = devotedly attracted (2) *Salik-Majzub* = attracted devotee (3) *Salik* = not attracted by the attraction of God (4) *Majzub* = attracted (i.e., love developed to a point which makes the traveler forget everything but God). When he proceeds (rather than stops at the stage of attraction) from this to

self-examination, he becomes 'devotedly attracted' i.e., (1) above. If devotion be first practised, and the attraction of God, step in, such a person is called an 'attracted devotee' i.e., (2) above.

[8] This refers to the Creed of Islam: "There is no deity but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God" The first part ('There is no deity') is known as the *Nafy* (negation or rejection). The second part ('but God') is known as *Isbat* (affirmation).

[9] It is through the [efficacy of this formula or] creed that while one marks the beginning of his legal (*Shariah*) status as a Muslim, it also (through assimilation in the heart as a genuinely sincere belief) enables a person to gradually achieve his ultimate goal on the Sufi path (*Tariqat*) -- i.e., attaining/proceeding to the Beloved.