

Book -7

JAN-FEB 2005

Issue dedicated to Hazreth Shaikh
Fariduddin Attar (RAU)
A Journal on Sufi Culture, Philosophy and Literature
(Islamic Spiritualism)

Tasawwuf

International Sufi Centre(R)

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Aims and Objectives

1. To propogate the ideals and proctice of Sufism
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3. To carry out publications of books on sufies, their lives and preachings.
4. To hold lectures, seminars on Sufi thought.
5. To Unite Sufies and members of Sufi orders all over India and abroad for achieving universal love and brother-hood.

Fore word

We wish all our readers and qutrous a very happy, prosperous, well meaning and fulfilling New Year 2006. We pray for world peace, brotherhood and well being of humanity.

In this Book-7, we are Continuing with our regular features besides introducing new ones. We are presenting excerpts from rare works of Hazreth Ghouse -e-pak (RAU) 'The Secrets of Seerets' and his letters to his beloved discipline. Surely, it will enlighten the seekers of truth.

This issue is dedicated to Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi (RAU) the greatest among the sufies, author of most celebrated 'Mathnavi'

We remind our readers to renew their subscription and support the 'Sufi-World' liberally.

Syed Liaqath Peeran
Editors

Bangalore
July 2005

Excerpts from Holy Quran

Sora LXXIV

Dahr, or Time

or Insan, or Man.

1. Has there not been
Over Man a long period
Of Time, when he was
Nothing - (not even) mentioned ?
2. Verily We created
Man from a drop
Of mingled sperm,
In order to try him :
So We gave him (the gifts).
Of Hearing and Sight.
3. We showed him the Way :
Whether he be grateful
Or ungrateful (rests
On his will)
4. For the Rejecters
We have prepared
Chains, Yokes, and
A Blazing Fire.
5. As to the Righteous,
They shall drink
Of a Cup (of Wine)
Mixed with Kafur,
6. A Fountain where
The Devotees of God
Do drink, making it
Flow in unstinted abundance.

7. They perform (their) vows,
And they fear a Day
Whose evil flies far and wide.
8. And they feed, for the love
Of God, the indigent,
The orphan, and the captive.
9. (Saying), "We feed you
For the sake of God alone :
No reward do we desire
From you, nor thanks.
10. "We only fear a Day
Of distressful Wrath
From the side of our Lord."
11. But God will deliver
Them from the evil
Of that Day, and will
Shed over them a Light
Of Beauty and
A (blissful) Joy.
12. And because they were
Patient and constant, He will
Reward them with a Garden
And (garments of) silk.
13. Reclining in the (Garden)
On raised thrones,
They will see there neither
The sun's (excessive heat)
Nor (the moon's excessive cold.
14. And the shades of the (Garden)
Will come low over them,

- And the bunches (of fruit),
There, will hang low
In humility.
15. And amongst them will be
Passed round vessels of silver
And goblets of crystal,-
16. Crystal -clear, made of silver :
They will determine
The measure thereof
(According to their wishes).
17. And they will be given
To drink there of a Cup
(Of Wine) mixed
With Zanjabil,-
18. A fountain there,
Called Salsabil.
19. And round about them
Will (serve) youths
Of perpetual (freshness) :
If thou seest them,
Thou wouldst think them
Scattered Pearls.
20. And when thou lookest,
It is there thou wilt see
A Bliss and
A Realm Magnificent.
21. Upon them will be
Green Garments of fine silk
And heavy brocade,
And they will be adorned
With Bracelets of silver ;
And their Lord will

Give to them to drink
Of a Wine
Pure and Holy.

22. "Verily this is a Reward
For you, and your Endeavour
Is accepted and recognised."

SECTION - 2

23. It is We Who
Have sent down the Qur-an
To thee by stages.
24. Therefore be patient
With constancy to the Command
Of thy Lord, and hearken not
To the sinner or the ingrate
Among them.
25. And celebrate the name
Of thy Lord morning
And evening,
26. And part of the night,
Prostrate thyself to Him;
And glorify Him
A long night through.
27. As to these, they love
The fleeting life,
And put away behind them
A Day (that will be) hard.
28. It is We Who created
Them, and We have made

Their joints strong ;
But, when We will,
We can substitute
The like of them
By a complete change.

29. This is an admonition :
Whosoever will, let him
Take a (straight) Path
To his Lord.
30. But ye will not,
Except as God wills ;
For God is full of
Knowledge and Wisdom.
31. He will admit
To His Mercy Whom He will ;
But the wrong - doers,
For them has He prepared.
A grievous Penalty.

Excerpts from The Kashf Al Mahjub

by Hz. Alibin Uthman Al-Hujwiri (RAU)

CHAPTER 1.

ON THE AFFIRMATION OF KNOWLEDGE

God hath said, describing the savants ('ulama) : "Of those who serve God only the savants fear Him " (Kor. xxxv, 25). The Prophet said: "To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Moslem man and woman ;" and he said also : "Seek knowledge even in China." Knowledge is immense and life is short: therefore it is not obligatory to learn all the sciences, such as Astronomy and Medicine, and Arithmetic, etc., but only so much of each as bears upon the religious law : enough astronomy to know the times (of prayer) in the night, enough medicine to abstain from what is injurious, enough arithmetic to understand the division of inheritances and to calculate the duration of the 'idda,¹ etc. Knowledge is obligatory only in so far as is requisite for acting rightly. God condemns those who learn useless knowledge (Kor. ii, 96), and the Prophet said : "I take refuge with Thee from knowledge that profiteth naught. "

1. The period within which a woman, who has been divorced or whose husband has died, may not marry again.

Much may be done by means of a little knowledge, and knowledge should not be separated from action. The Prophet said : The devotee without divinity is like a donkey turning a mill, " because the donkey goes round and round over its own tracks and never makes any advance.

Some regard knowledge as superior to action, while others put action first, but both parties are wrong. Unless action is combined with knowledge, it is not deserving of recompense. Prayer, for instance, is not really prayer, unless performed with knowledge of the principles of purification and those which concern the Qiblah, ¹ and with knowledge of the nature of intention. Similarly, knowledge without action is not knowledge. Learning and committing to memory are acts for which a man is rewarded in

1. The point to which a Moslem turns his face when worshipping, viz. the Ka'ba

the next world ; if he gained knowledge without action and acquisition of his part, he would get no reward. Hence two classes of men fall into error : firstly, those who claim knowledge for the sake of public reputation but are unable to practise it, and in reality have not attained it; and secondly, those who pretend that practice suffices and that knowledge is unnecessary. It is told of Ibrahim b. Adham that he saw a stone on which was written, "Turn me over and read!" He obeyed, and found this inscription : "Thou dost not practise what thou knowest; why, then, dost thou seek what thou knowest not ?" Anas b. Malik says : "The wise aspire to know, the foolish to relate." He who uses his knowledge as a means of winning power and honour and wealth is no savant. The highest pinnacle of knowledge is expressed in the fact that without it none can know God.

SECTION.

Knowledge is of two kinds : Divine and Human. The latter is worthless in comparison with the former, because God's knowledge is an attribute of Himself, subsisting in Him, whose attributes are infinite; whereas our knowledge is an attribute of ourselves, subsisting in us, whose attributes are finite. Knowledge has been defined as "comprehension and investigation of the object known", but the best definition of it is this : "A quality whereby the ignorant are made wise." God's knowledge is that by which He knows all things existent and non-existent : He does not share it with Man : it is not capable of division nor separable from Himself. The proof of it lies in the disposition of His actions (tartib-i-filash), since action demands knowledge in the agent as an indispensable condition. The Divine knowledge penetrates what is hidden and comprehends what is manifest. It behoves the seeker to contemplate God in every act, knowing that God sees him and all that does.

Story. They relate that a leading man in Basra went to his garden. By chance his eye fell upon the beautiful wife of his gardener. He sent the fellow away on some business and said to the woman : "Shut the gates." She replied : "I have shut them all except one, which I cannot shut." He asked : "Which one is that ?" On receiving this answer the man repented and begged to be forgiven.

Hatim al-Asamm said : "I have chosen four things to know, and have discarded all the knowledge in the world besides." He was asked : "What are they?" "One, " he answered, "is this : I know that my daily bread is apportioned to me, and will neither be increased

nor diminished; consequently I have ceased to seek to augment it. Secondly, I know that I owe to God a debt which no other person can pay instead of me; therefore I am occupied with paying it. Thirdly, I know that there is one pursuing me (i.e. Death) from whom I cannot escape; accordingly I have prepared myself to meet him. Fourthly, I know that God is observing me; therefore I am ashamed to do what I ought not."

SECTION.

The object of human knowledge should be to know God and His Commandments. Knowledge of "time" (ilm-i-waqi), and of all outward and inward circumstances of which the due effect depends on "time", is incumbent upon everyone. This is of two sorts : primary and secondary. The external division of the primary class consists in making the Moslem's profession of faith, the internal division consists in the attainment of true cognition. The external division of the secondary class consists in the practice of devotion, the internal division consists in rendering one's intention sincere. The outward and inward aspects cannot be divorced. The exoteric aspect of Truth without the esoteric is hypocrisy, and the esoteric without the exoteric is heresy. So, with regard to the Law, mere formality is defective, while mere spirituality is vain.

The Knowledge of the Truth (Haqiqat) has three pillars -

- (i) Knowledge of the Essence and Unity of God.
- (ii) Knowledge of the Attributes of God.
- (iii) Knowledge of the Actions and Wisdom of God.

The Knowledge of the Law (Shari'at) also has three pillars-

- (i) The Koran.
- (ii) The Sunna.
- (iii) The Consensus (ijmd) of the Moslem community.

Knowledge of the Divine Essence involves recognition, on the part of one who is reasonable and has reached puberty, that God exists externally by His essence, that He is infinite and not bounded by space, that His essence is not the cause of evil, that none of His creatures is like unto Him, that He has neither wife nor child, and that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that your imagination and intellect can conceive.

Knowledge of the Divine Attributes requires you to know that God has attributes existing in Himself, which are not He nor a part of Him, but exist in Him and subsist by Him, e.g. Knowledge, Power, Life, Will, Hearing, Sight, Speech, etc.

Knowledge of the Divine Actions is your knowledge that God is the Creator of mankind and of all their actions, that He brought the non-existent universe into being, that He predestines good and evil and creates all that is beneficial and injurious.

Knowledge of the Law involves your knowing that God has sent us Apostles with miracles of an extraordinary nature; that our Apostle, Muhammad (on whom be peace !), is a true Messenger, who performed many miracles, and that whatever he has told us concerning the Unseen and the Visible is entirely true.

SECTION.

There is a sect of heretics called Sophists (Sufista iyan), who believe that nothing can be known and that knowledge itself does not exist. I say to them: "You think that nothing can be known ; is your opinion correct or not ?" If they answer "It is correct", they thereby affirm the reality of knowledge ; and if they reply "It is not correct", then to argue against an avowedly incorrect assertion is absurd. The same doctrine is held by a sect of heretics who are connected with Sufism. They say that, inasmuch as nothing is knowable, their negation of knowledge is more perfect than the affirmation of it. This statement proceeds from their folly and stupidity. The negation of knowledge must be the result either of knowledge or of ignorance. Now it is impossible for knowledge to deny knowledge ; there fore knowledge cannot be denied except by ignorance, which is nearly akin to infidelity and falsehood; for there is no connection between ignorance and truth. The doctrine in question is opposed to that of all the Sufi Shaykhs, but is commonly attributed to the Sufis in general by people who have heard it and embraced it. I commit them to God, with Whom it rests whether they shall continue in their error. If religion takes hold of them, they will behave more discreetly and will not misjudge the Friends of God in this way and will look more anxiously to what concerns themselves. Although some heretics claim to be Sufis in order to conceal Although some heretics claim to be Sufis in order to conceal their own foulness under the beauty of others, why should it be supposed that all Sufis are like these pretenders, and that it is right to treat them all with disdain and contumely? An individual who wished to pass for learned and orthodox, but

really was devoid of knowledge and religion, once said to me in the course of debate : "There are twelve heretical sects, and one of them flourishes amongst those who profess Sufism" (mutasawwifa). I replied : "If one sect belongs to us, eleven belong to you; and the Sufis can protect themselves from one better than you can from eleven." All this hereby springs from the corruption and degeneracy of the times, but God has always kept His Saints hidden from the multitude and apart from the ungodly. Well said that eminent spiritual guide, 'Alf-b Bundar al-Sayrafi : "The depravity of men's hearts is in proportion to the depravity of the age."

Now in the following section I will cite some saying of the Sufis as an admonition to those sceptics towards whom God is favourably inclined.

SECTION

Muhammad b. Fadl al-Balkhi says : "Knowledge is of three kinds - from God, with God, and of God." Knowledge of God is the science of Gnosis (ilm-i marifat), whereby He is known to all His prophets and saints. It cannot be acquired by ordinary means, but is the result of Divine guidance and information. Knowledge from God is the science of the Sacred Law (ilm-i shari ai), which He has commanded and made obligatory upon us. Knowledge with God is the science of the "stations" and the 'Path" and the degrees of the saints. Gnosis is unsound without acceptance of the Law, and the Law is not practised rightly unless the "stations" are manifested. Abut 'Ali Thaqafi says : Al-ilm hayat al-qalb min al-jahl wa-mir al-ayn min al-zulmat, "Knowledge is the life of the heart, which delivers it from the death of ignorance : it is the light of the eye of faith, which saves it from the darkness of infidelity." The hearts of infidels are dead, because they are ignorant of God, and the hearts of the heedless are sick, because they are ignorant of His Commandments. Abut Bakr Warraq of Tirmidh says : "Those who are satisfied with disputation (kalam) about knowledge and do not practise asceticism (sukd) become sindiqs(heretics); and those who are satisfied with jurisprudence (fiqh) and do not practise abstinence (wara) become wicked." This means that Unification(tawhid), without works, is predestination (jabr), whereas the assertor of Unification ought to hold the doctrine of predestination but to act as though he believed in free will, taking a middle course between free will and predestination. Such is the true sense of another saying uttered by the same spiritual guide, viz. : "Unification is below predestination and above free will."

Lack of positive religion and of morality arises from heedlessness (ghaflat). Well said that great master, Yahya b. Muadh al-Razi : "Avoid the society of three classes of men heedless savants, hypocritical Koran-readers, and ignorant pretenders to Sufiism." The heedless savants are they who have set their hearts on worldly gain and paid court to governors and tyrants, and have been seduced by their own cleverness to spend their time in subtle disputations, and have attacked the leading authorities on religion. The hypocritical Koran-readers are they who praise whatever is done in accordance with their desire, even if it is bad, and blame whatever they dislike, even if it is good : they seek to ingratiate themselves with the people by acting hypocritically. The ignorant pretenders to Sufiism are they who have never associated with a spiritual director (pir), nor learned discipline from a shaykh, but without any experience have thrown themselves among the people, and have donned a blue mantle (kabudi), and have trodden the path of unrestraint.

Abut Yazid Bistami says: "I strove in the spiritual combat for thirty years, and I found nothing harder to me than knowledge and its pursuit." It is more easy for human nature to walk on fire than to follow the road of knowledge, and an ignorant heart will more readily cross the Bridge (Sirat) a thousand times than learn a single piece of knowledge; and the wicked man would rather pitch his tent in Hell than put one item of knowledge into practice. Accordingly you must learn knowledge and seek perfection therein. The perfection of human knowledge is ignorance of Divine knowledge. You must know enough to know that you do not know. That is to say, human knowledge is alone possible to Man, and humanity is the greatest barrier that separates him from Divinity. As the poet says:-

Al-ajzu an daraki 'l-idraki idraku
Wa 'l-waqfu fi turuqi 'l-akhyari ishraku.

"True perception is to despair of attaining perception,
But not to advance on the paths of the virtuous is polytheism."

He who will not learn and perseveres in his ignorance is a polytheist, but to the learner, when his knowledge becomes perfect, the reality is revealed, and he perceives that his knowledge is no more than inability to know what his end shall be, since realities are not affected by the names bestowed upon them.

Excerpts from 'The Secret of Secrets'

by Hazreth Ghouseul Azam (RAU)

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent and Merciful

INTRODUCTION

ALL PRAISE is due to Allah, as He is a magnificent, gracious in and compassionate Lord. Who has gathered all knowledge in His Essence and Who is the Creator of all knowledge for eternity. The cause, the reason of all existence is from His existence. All praise is due to Allah, as He has sent the Glorious Quran that bears in its essence the reason for its revelation, which is to remind men of Allah; He sent it to the guide who leads men on the path of truth with the mightiest of all religions. All peace and blessings be upon His beloved prophet Muhammad, who was not taught by man, but by Him. He is His last prophet, the last link in the chain of prophethood who was brought to a world gone astray, the most honoured among His prophets, honoured by the most honoured of divine books. His progeny are guides for seekers, his companions were chosen among the good and benevolent. May abundant peace and blessings be upon their souls.

Certainly the most honourable of valuable things, the highest, the priceless jewel, the most profitable object of trade among men, is knowledge. Only with wisdom can we attain the unity of Allah, Lord of all the universes. Only with wisdom can we understand and follow His messengers and His prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. The men of knowledge, the wise men, are the pure servants of Allah whom He has chosen to receive divine messages. He has preferred them to other men by virtue of the grace He has poured upon them. They are the heirs of His prophets, their deputies, whom His messengers chose to be masters of men. They are connected to His prophets with the finest of feeling and with the wisest of intelligence.

Allah Most High praises the possessors of wisdom in His Quran :

The We have given the Book as an inheritance to those whom We have chosen from among Our servants : So some of them are those who wrong themselves and some of them are those who take the middle course (whose errors and good deeds are equal), and some of them are those who are foremost in deeds of goodness by Allah's will. That is the greatest grace. (Sura Fatir,32)

Then our Master, the Prophet of Allah (God bless him and grant him peace) praises them, saying, 'The holders of wisdom are the heirs of the prophets. The inhabitants of the heavens love them, and upon this earth even the fishes in the seas praise them until Doomsday'. In another verse, Allah Most High credits the men of knowledge, describing them thus:

Certainly those of His servants who are possessed of knowledge fear Him. (Sura Fatir, 28)

Our Master the Prophet, says, 'On the day of the Last Judgement Allah will gather men together, then separate the wise men from among them; and say to them, "O people of knowledge, I gave you My knowledge because I know you. I did not give you wisdom to punish you on this day. Enter My Paradise ; I have forgiven you".

All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the niverses, for He has given high stations to His devout servants to protect them from sin and to spare them punishment. He has blessed the wise by drawing near to them.

Some of our students asked us to prepare a book which would suffice them. In compliance with their wish and their need we have prepared this short book: may it heal and satisfy them and others. We named this book SIRR al-asrar fi ma yabtaju ilaybi al-abrar - "The Secret of Secrets of which the Righteous are in Need,. In this work the realities within our faith and our path are divulged. Everyone is in need of them.

In presenting this work we have divided it into twenty-four chapters because there are twenty-four letters in the sacred confession of Unity La ilaba illa Llab, Muhammadan rasulu Llab (There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'_ and there are twenty-four hours in a day and a night.

ON THE BEGINNING OF CREATION

May Allah accord you success in acts which please Him and meet with His approval.

Think, impress upon your mind and understand what I say.

Allah Most High first created, from the divine light of His own Beauty, the light of Muhammad. He declares this in a divine tradition related from Him by the Prophet.

I have created the soul of Muhammad from the light of My Manifestation (wajib).

This is declared by our Master the Messenger of Allah in his words, 'Allah first created my soul. He first created it as a divine light;' 'Allah created the Pen first;' 'Allah first created the Intellect.' What is meant by all that is mentioned as having been created first is the creation of the truth of Muhammad, the hidden reality of Muhammad. He is also (like his Lord) called by many beautiful names. He is called Nur, the Divine Light, because he was purified of the darkness hidden under the attribute of the might and wrath (jalal) of Allah. Allah Most High says in His Holy Qur'an:

There has come to you from Allah a light and a perspicuous Book. (sura Ma'idah, 15)

He is called the Total Intellect (aq! ar0kul!) because he saw and understood everything. He is called the Pen (al-qalam) because he spread wisdom and knowledge, and he poured knowledge into the realm of letters.

The soul of Muhammad is the essence of all beings, the beginning and the reality of the universe. He indicates this with the words, 'I am from Allah and the believers are from me'. Allah Most High created all souls from his soul in the realm of the first created beings, in the best of forms. 'Muhammad' is the name of all humanity in the realm of souls (alam al-arwah). He is the source, the home of each and everything.

Four thousand years after the creation of the light of Muhammad, Allah created the Heavenly Throne (arsh) from the light of the eye of Muhammad. He created the rest of creation from the Heavenly Throne. Then He sent the souls to descend to the lowest levels of creation, to the realm of this material world, to the realm of matter and bodies. Then We make him descend to the lowest of the low. (Sura Tin, 5) He sent that light from where it was created, from the Ultimate Realm (alam al-lahut) - which is the realm of the manifestation of Allah's Essence, of unity, of absolute being - to the realm of the divine Names, the manifestation of the divine attributes, the realm of the causal intelligence of the Total Soul. There He dressed the souls in robes of light. These souls are called 'sultan-souls'. Clothed in light they descended to the realm of the angels. There He clothed them with the brilliant robes of angels, there they were called 'spiritual souls'. Then He caused them to descend to the world of matter, of water and fire, earth and ether, and they became human souls. Then from this world He created the bodies of flesh.

From it We created you and into it We shall return you, and from it raise you a second time. (Sura Ta Ha, 55)

After these stages, Allah ordered the souls to enter into their bodies, and by His will they entered.

So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My soul ... (Sura Sad 72)

A time came when these souls started binding themselves to the flesh and forgo their source and their covenant. They forgot that when Allah created them in the realm of souls He had asked them Am I not your Lord? and they had answered, Indeed! They forgot their promise, they forgot their source, their way to return home; but Allah is merciful, the source of all help and security for His creation. He had mercy upon them, so He sent divine books and messengers to them to remind them of their origin.

And certainly We sent Moses with Our messages (saying): Bring forth the people from darkness into light, and remind them of the days of Allah... (Sura Ibrahim, 5)

That is 'Remind the souls of the days when they were in union with Allah.'

Many messengers have come to this world, fulfilled their duties, and passed away. The purpose of all was to bring men the message and awaken people to heedfulness. But people who remembered Him, who turned toward Him, people who wished to return to their divine origin, people who arrived at their origin, became fewer and fewer with time.

The prophets kept coming and the divine message continued until there appeared the great spirit of Muhammad, the last of the messengers who saved people from distraction. Allah Most High sent him to open the eyes of the hearts of the heedless. His purpose was to awaken them from the sleep of unconsciousness and to unite them with the Eternal Beauty, with the Cause, with the Essence of Allah. Allah says in His Holy Qur'an:

Say: This is my way. I call to Allah with the certainty of insight - I and those who follow me...(Sura Yusuf. 108)

to indicate the path of our Master the Prophet.

The Messenger of Allah, to indicate our goal to us, says, 'My companions are like the stars in the sky. Whichever of them you follow, you will find the true path.'

This insight comes from the eye of the soul. This eye opens in the heart's heart of those who are close to Allah, who are Allah's friends. Allah the knowledge in the material world will not provide this insight : one needs a knowledge that comes from the hidden realms, a knowledge which overflows from divine consciousness : ... whom We had taught knowledge from Our Divine Presence. (Sura Kahf.65)

What is necessary for man is to find those who have insight, whose eyes of the heart are open, and to be inspired by them. Such a teacher who inculcates knowledge into one has to be close to Allah and able to see into the Ultimate Realm.

O children of Adam, brothers and sister, wake up, repent, for through repentance you will be asking your Lord for His wisdom. Make an effort and strive ! Allah commands you :

And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth; it is prepared for the righteous (who fear and love Allah):

Those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men. And Allah loves the doers of good (to others). (Sura Al ' Imran, 133 - 34)

Enter the path, join the spiritual caravan to return to your Lord. Soon the road will become impassable, and no travelling companion will be left. We did not come to this base, ruined world to rest; we were not sent here to eat, drink and defecate. The spirit of our Master, the Prophet of Allah, is watching you. He is pained, seeing your state. He knew what would come when he said, 'My pain is for my beloved people who will come in later times.'

Whatever comes to us comes in one of two forms, either evident or hidden: evident in the form of the precepts of the religion of hidden in the form of wisdom. Allah Most High orders us to render our exterior being harmonious by following the religious precepts and to put our inner being in order through acquiring wisdom. When the outer and the inner become one and wisdom and religion unite, one reaches the level of truth, like the fruit tree that first produces leaves, then buds, and then flowers that become fruit.

He has made two seas to flow freely - they meet : Between them is a barrier that they cannot pass. (Sura Rahman 20)

The two must become one. Truth cannot be attained only through the tangible knowledge of the senses, of the material universe. One cannot in that way reach the goal, which is the origin, the Essence. True worship necessitates both religion and wisdom. Allah Most High says about worship:

And I have not created the jinn and men except that they should worship Me. (Sura Dhariyat, 36)

In other words, 'they are created so that they might know Me.' When One does not know Him, how can one truly praise Him, ask His help and serve Him?

The wisdom which one needs in order to know Him can only be attained by lifting the black curtain covering the mirror of one's heart, cleaning that mirror and shining it. Then the hidden treasures of divine beauty may begin reflecting in the secret of the heart's mirror.

Allah Most High, speaking through His beloved Prophet, says: 'I was a hidden treasure, I willed to be known, therefore I created Creation.' Consequently, the divine purpose in the creation of man is for him to acquire wisdom, to know his Lord.

There are two levels of divine wisdom. One is to know Allah's attributes and manifestation and the other is to know Allah's Essence. In knowing Allah's attributes the material man tastes both this world and the hereafter. But the wisdom which leads to the knowledge of the Essence of Allah is in the holy spirit in man knowing the mysteries of the hereafter. Allah confirms this, saying... and We strengthened him (Jesus) with the holy spirit... (Sura Baqara, 87). Those who know the Essence of Allah find this power through the holy spirit that has been given to them.

Both these knowledge are obtained by a wisdom that must have two aspects: the inner spiritual wisdom and the outer knowledge of manifest things. One is in need of both to attain the good. The Prophet of Allah explains them thus : 'Knowledge is of two parts. One is in man's tongue, which is a proof of Allah's existence. The other is in man's heart. This is what is necessary for the realization of our hopes.'

Man is first in need of religious knowledge. This is the education in which one is taught the exterior manifestation of Allah's Essence reflected in this world of attributes and names. After one becomes accomplished in this, it is the turn of the inner education in the secrets whereby one enters into the realms of divine wisdom and comes to know the truth. At the first stage one must leave everything that is not in accordance with religious precepts. In fact, errors - mistakes in good behavior and character - must be eliminated, as the Sufis require. To achieve this one must practice doing things against the wishes of one's ego, acts which are difficult for the desires of the flesh to accept. But in these efforts one must be attentive, so that they are not made for others to see and hear about. One must do these things for Allah's sake, seeking only His pleasure. Allah says :

..... so whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds and associate none other in the service of his Lord (Sura Kahf.110)

The realm described as the realm of wisdom is the first-created Ultimate Realm. That realm is the origin, the home to which one aspires to return. That is where the holy spirit was created. What is meant by the holy spirit is the human spirit. It was created in the best of forms.

That truth has been planted in the centre of the heart as Allah's trust, entrusted to you for safekeeping. It becomes manifest with true repentance and with the true effort to learn religion. Its beauty shines on the surface when one remembers Allah continuously, repeating the Confession of Unity La ilaha illa Liah - There is no god but Allah's. At the first stage one recites the Confession of Unity with one's tongue; then when the heart becomes alive one recites internally with the heart.

The Sufis refer to the spiritual states by the name tiftl, 'babe', because that baby is born in the heart and is reared and grows there. The heart, like a mother, gives birth, suckles, feeds rears the child of the heart. As worldly sciences are taught to children, the child of the heart is taught the inner wisdom. As an ordinary child is not yet soiled with worldly sins, the child of the heart is pure, free from heedlessness, egotism and doubt. The purity of a child appears often as physical beauty; in the world of dreams the purity of the heart's child appears in the shape of angels. One hopes to enter Paradise as a reward for good deeds, but gifts of Paradise come here through the hands of the child of the heart.

In Gardens of bliss..... round about them will go youths never altering in age. (Sura Waqi a, 12-17)

And round them go boys of theirs, as if they were hidden pearls. (Sura Tur, 24)

These are the children of the heart, the inspired states of the Sufis, called 'children' for their beauty and purity. Yet they are beauty and purity personified in flesh, in the shape of human beings. Due to their sweet and gentle nature they are the children of the heart, yet is he the true man who is able to change the appearance of creation because he is connected to the Creator. He is the representative of humanity. According to him there is no matter, neither does he consider himself matter. There is no veil, no hindrance, between his being and the Essence of Allah.

Our Master the Prophet explains this state, 'I have a time with Allah. At that moment nothing can come between, neither the angel closest to Him nor a prophet.' The 'prophet' who cannot enter between our Master and Allah is the material, temporal existence of the Prophet himself. The angel closest to Allah is the divine Light of Muhammad, the first creation. In that inspired state he is so close to his Lord that neither his material existence nor even his soul can come between them. The Prophet describes the time of that inspired state, saying, 'There is a paradise of Allah where there are no palaces, no gardens, nor rivers of honey and milk, a paradise where one gazes only at the divine countenance.' Allah confirms this : [some] faces that day will be bright, looking to their Lord, (Sura Qiyama, 22-23) and the Prophet says, 'On that day you will see your Lord as clear as the full moon.' But this is a state that, if any created being, even an angel, should approach, his material being would burn to ashes. Allah speaks through His Prophet.

If I parted the veils of My attribute of Might a mere crack, all would burn as far as My eye can see.

The archangel Gabriel, who accompanied the Prophet in his Ascension to the seventh heaven said that if he took one step further he would be set aflame.

Excerpts from Fut Uh-Al-GHAIB

by Hazreth Ghouseul Azam (RAU)

THE FOURTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (Allah be pleased with him) said:

O you slave of your passions! do not claim for yourself the position of the people of Allah. You serve your passions and they are worshippers of the Lord. Your desire is the world and the desire of these people is the hereafter. You see this world and they see the Lord of the earth and the Heaven. Your comfort lies in the creation and the comfort of these people lies in Allah. Your heart is bound with what is in this earth and the hearts of these people with the Lord of Divine throne. You are the victim of whatever you see and they do not see what you see, but they see the Creator you see and they do not see what you see, but they see the Creator of the things, who cannot be seen (by these eyes). These people achieve the object of their life and secure salvation for themselves. whereas you remain pawned to your desires of this world.

These people vanish from the creation and from their desires of the world and their wishes and thus they secure an access to the Great Master who gives them strength to achieve the end of their existence such as obedience and praise of the Lord. This is the favour of Allah; He gives it to whomsoever He likes. They make this obedience and praise incumbent on themselves and persevere therein with the help of the strength and ease, given by Him without experiencing any hardship. Thus obedience becomes their soul and food so to speak.

Accordingly, world becomes a blessing and an enjoyable thing for them, as if it is a veritable heaven. Because when they see anything, before they see it they see behind it the act of Him who has created them. These people thus supply the staying power to the earth and the heaven and comfort to the dead and the living, because their Lord has made them like pegs for the earth which He has spread. Thus everyone of them is like a mountain which stands firm. So keep away from their path and do not stand in the way of these people whom their parents and children have not been able to divert from their purpose. These people are the best among those whom the Lord has created and spread in the world; peace of Allah be upon them and his greeting and blessings as long as the earth and heaven last.

THE FIFTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (Allah be pleased with him) said:

I saw in a dream as if I am in a place like a mosque in which there are some people who have kept aloof from the rest of humanity. I said to myself, "If so and so were present here he could have disciplined these people and given them proper guidance, etc." and I thought of a certain man of virtue. These people gathered round me and one of them said to me, "What is the matter with you? Why do you not speak?" I said, "If you are pleased with me, I will." Then I said: "When you have stood aloof from the people for the sake of truth, do not ask people for anything with your tongue. And when you have stopped asking so, do not even think of asking anything from them either, because even the thought of asking is as good as asking with tongue. Then know that Allah is every day in a new state of glory in changing and altering and raising and lowering (people). Thus He raises some people to the highest of heaven and He lowers others to the lowest depth of degradation. Then He threatens those He has raised to the highest of Heavens and He may lower them down to the lowest depth of degradation and given them the hope that He will keep them and preserve them in the same state of exaltation, whereas He threatens those whom He has thrown to the lowest depth of degradation that He may leave them to abide in their abasement and holds out the hope to them that He may raise them to the highest of heavens." Then I woke up.

THE SIXTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (Allah be pleased with him) said :

Nothing keeps you off from the favour of Allah and His direct blessing excepting your reliance on people and means and arts and crafts and earnings. Thus people become a barrier for you in getting to the livelihood sanctified by the practice of the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) viz. the earning. Thus so long as you remain with people that is, you hope for their gifts and favours and ask from them with expectations at their doors, you are associating Allah's creation with Him. You will accordingly be punished with the deprivation from a livelihood which is sanctioned by the practice of the Holy Prophet viz. lawful earnings of this world.

Then when you have renounced your living with the people and you associating them with your Lord and have recourse to earning and you begin living on your earning and then rely on earning and become contented with it and forget the favour of your Lord, you are again behaving like a polytheist and this polytheism is subtler than the previous one; so Allah will punish you and keep you away from His favour and His direct dealing with you.

Then when you have turned away from this position and have thrown away polytheism from your midst and discarded your reliance on your earning, ability and power and you have seen Allah that He is the Giver of livelihood and Creator of causes of ease and Giver of strength for earning and Giver of power over everything good and that livelihood is in His hand, - sometimes He brings it to you through people by way of your asking from them at times of trial and struggle or through your asking from Him, the Mighty and Glorious, and at others through your earning by way of remuneration and at still others through His spontaneous favour in such a way that you do not see the intervening cause and means.

Thus you turn towards Him and throw yourself before Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, when He lifts the veil that intervenes between you and His favour and opens the door of sustenance by His favour at every time of necessity, in proportion to the need of your circumstances in the manner of a loving physician who is also a friend to the patient - and this as a protection from Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, and in order to keep you clean from any inclination towards what is besides Him and He thus pleases you by His favour.

Then when He removes from your heart every purpose and every desire and every pleasure and every object, there remains nothing in your heart excepting His purpose. Thus when He wants to bring to you your allotted share which cannot escape from you and which is not meant for anyone else from among His creation, He will create in you a desire for that share and will direct it to you so it will reach you at the time of your need. Then He will give you strength to be grateful to Him and will give you the knowledge that it is from Him and He will direct it to you and give it to you as your sustenance so that you may be grateful to Him and may recognise and know it. Thus this will increase your desire for aloofness from people and distance from men and emptiness of your heart from whatever is besides Him.

Then when your knowledge has been strengthened, as also your certainty and your heart has expanded and is illumined and your nearness to Allah and your position with Him and your trustworthiness and worthiness in the matter of guarding His secrets have been increased thereby, you will be given knowledge beforehand as to when your share will come to you as a sign in your favour and as an exaltation of your dignity. This is a favour from Him, and an act of kindness and a guidance. Allah says:

"And We made it a guide for the children of Israel. And We made of them leaders to guide by Our command when they were patient and they were certain of Our communications." (xxxii-24)

"And (as for) those who strive hard for Us, We will most certainly guide them in Our ways," (xxix-69)

And Allah, the Exalted and Glorious also says:

And fear Allah and He will teach you, then He will invest you with the power of controlling the universe, with a clear permission, which will have no obscurity in it and with clear signs which will be bright like the bright sun and with sweet words which will be sweeter than all sweet things and with true revelation without any ambiguity and will be free from any evil suggestion of the animal self and from the promptings of the devil, the accused." Allah says in one of His books:

"O child of Adam, I am Allah, nothing deserves to be worshipped excepting Me. I say to a thing "be" and it comes into being. Obey Me, I will make you such that if you say to a thing "be" it will likewise come into being." And He has done like this with many of his Prophets and Awliya and people specially favoured from among the children of Adam.

A letter by Hazret Ghouse Ul Azam (RAU) to his disciple Hz Ali ibn Husamuddin al .Muttaqi(RAU)

The First Letter

Concerning the initial stage of the attraction exerted by the Truth (jadhbat al-Haqq), and the final stage thereof.

My dear friend!

When the lightning bolts of direct perception (shuhud) come flashing forth from the cloud-bank of the grace of :

Allah guides to His light yahid 'llahu li-nuri-hi
whomever He will. (24:35) man yasha.

- and the fragrant scents of attainment waft on the wind that blows from the gracious favor of:

He singles our for His mercy yakhtassu bi-rahmati-hi
whomever He will. (3:74) man yasha.

- the sweet-smelling plants of intimate friendship will blossom in the meadows of our hearts, and the nightingales of longing will sing in the gardens of our spirits, with the tremulous tones of:

Oh, how I grieve for Joseph! (12:84) ya asafa ala Yusuf.

The fires of yearning will smolder intensely in the stoves of our innermost beings, and the wings of the birds of our thoughts will shed their feathers, from flying too far in the vastness of sublime exaltation.

The stallions of our minds will lose their way in the deserts of intuitive knowledge, the foundations of our intellectual principles will quake from the shock of awe, and the ships of our firm intentions will lose their bearings in the depths of the oceans of:

They did not assign to Allah the wa ma qadaru llaha
attributes that are due to Him.(6:91) haqqa qadri-hi
So it sailed with them in the midst wa hiya tajri bi-him
of mountain-like waves. (11:42) fi mawjin ka-l-jibal.

- and at the moment when the waves collide in the ocean of the ardor of :

He loves them yuhibbu-hum
and they love Him.(5:54) wa yuhibbuna-hu

-each and every one will exclaim, in the spiritual tongue that needs on ordinary words (lisan al-hall):

*My Lord, bring me to land Rabbi anzil ni
in a blessed harbor, for You munzalan mubarakan
are the Best of harborers! wa Anta Khairu l-munzilin.*

So then they will receive, as a foreordained gift, the gracious favor of:

*As for those to whom inna 'lladhina
the (reward) most fair has laready sabaqat la-hum
gone forth from Us...(21:101) min-na l-husna.....*

-and it will bring them ashore on (mount) judi, a trustworthy landing site (maq al sidq)2.

It sill introduce them to the sessions of the delirious ecstasies of the Day of:

"Am I not.... ?" (7:172) a-lastu.....

It will spread for them the table -mat of the bounty of :

*To those who do good belongs the li-lladhna ashanu l-husnd
finest -and an extra reward! (10:26) wa ziyada.*

-and it will pass to them the cups of attainment, filled from the jugs of nearness, by the hands of the cupbearers of :

*And their Lord will quench their wa saqa hum Rabbu-hum
thirst with a pure drink. (76:21) sharaban tahura.*

They will thus be honored with the everlasting estate and the endlessly enduring fortune of:

*And when you see, wa idha ra aita
there you will see a state thamma ra'aita
of bliss and a great domain.(76:20) na'Iman wa mulkan kabira.*

Hazreth Habib al-Ajami (RAU)

by Hz Farid al-Bin Attar (RAU)

THE FOURTEENTH DISCOURSE

Habib ibn Mohammad al-Ajami al-Basri, a Persian settled at Basra, was a noted traditionist who transmitted from al-Hasan al-Basri, Ibn Sirin, and other authorities. His conversion from a life of ease and self-indulgence was brought about by al-Ha'an's eloquence; he was a frequent attendant at his lectures, and became one of his closest associates.

The story of Habib the Persian

Habib to begin with was a man of property and a usurer. He dwelt in Basra, and every day he made the rounds to dun his clients. If he got no money, he would demand payment for his shoe leather. In this manner he covered his daily expenditure.

One day he had gone to look for a certain debtor. The man was not at home; so failing to find him, he demanded shoe leather payment.

"My husband is not at home," the debtor's wife told him. "I myself have nothing to give you. We had killed a sheep, but only the neck is left. If you like I will give you that."

"That is something, " the usurer replied, thinking that he might at least take the sheep's neck off her and carry it home. "Put a pot on the fire."

"I have neither bread nor fuel," the woman answered.

"Very well," the man said, "I will go and fetch fuel and bread, and it can be charged to shoe leather".

So he went off and fetches these things, and the woman set the pot. When the pot was cooked the woman was about to pour its contents into a bowl when a beggar knocked at the door.

"If we give you what we have got," Habib shouted at him, "you will not become rich, and we will become poor ourselves."

The beggar, despairing, petitioned the woman to put something in the bowl. She lifted the lid of the saucepan, and found that its contents had all turned to black blood. Turning pale, she hurried back and taking Habib by the hand, led him towards the pot.

"Look what has happened to us because of your cursed usury, and your shouting at the beggar!" she cried. "What will become of us now in this world, not to mention the next?"

On seeing this, Habib felt a fire within him which never afterwards subsided.

"Woman," He said, "I repent of all I have done."

Next day he went out to look for his clients. It happened to be a Friday, and the children were playing in the street. When they sighted Habib they started to shout.

"Here comes Habib the usurer. Run away, lest his dust settles on us and we become as cursed as he!"

These words hurt Habib very much. He took his way to the meeting hall, and there certain phrases passed Hasan of Basra's lips which struck Habib straight to the heart, so that fainted. Then he repented. Realizing what had happened, Hasan of Basra took him by the hand and calmed him.

As he returned from the meeting he was spotted by one of his debtors, who made to run away.

"Do not run away," Habib called to him. "Till now it was for you to flee from me; now I must run away from you."

He passed on. The children were still playing. When they sighted Habib they shouted again.

"Here comes Habib the penitent. Run away, lest our dust settles on him, for we are sinners against God."

"My God and Master!" cried Habib. "Because of this one day that I have made my peace with Thee, Thou hast beaten the drums of men's hearts for me and noised my name abroad for virtue."

Then he issued a proclamation.

"Whoever wants anything from Habib, come and take it!"

The people gathered together, and he gave away all his possessions so that he was left penniless. Another man came with a demand. Having nothing left, Habib gave him his wife's chaddur. To another claimant he gave his own shirt, and remained naked. He repaired to a hermitage on the banks of the Euphrates, and there gave himself up to the worship of God. Every night and day he studied under Hasan, but he could not learn the Koran, for which reason he was nicknamed the Barbarian.

Time passed, and he was completely destitute. His wife asked him for housekeeping money constantly. So Habib left his house and made for the hermitage to resume his devotions. When night came he returned to his wife.

"Where have you been working, not to bring anything home?" his wife demanded.

"The one I have been working for is extremely generous," Habib replied. "He is so generous that I am ashamed to ask him for anything. When the proper time comes, he will give. For he says, 'Every ten days I pay the wages.'"

So Habib repaired daily to the hermitage to worship, till ten days were up. On the tenth day at the time of the midday prayer a thought entered his mind.

"What can I take home tonight, and what am I to tell my wife?"

And he pondered this deeply. Straightway Almighty God sent a porter to the door of his house with an ass-load of flour, another with a skinned sheep, and another with oil, honey, herbs, and seasonings. The porters loaded up all this. A handsome young man accompanied them with a purse of three hundred silver dirhams. Coming to Habib's house, he knocked on the door.

"What do you want?" asked Habib's wife, opening the door.

"The Master has sent all this," the handsome youth replied. "Tell Habib, 'You increase your output, and we will increase your wages.'"

So saying, he departed. At nightfall Habib proceeded homeward, ashamed and sorrowful. As he approached his house, the aroma of bread and cooking assailed his nostrils. His wife ran to greet him and wiped his face and was gentle with him as she had never been before.

"Husband," she cried, "the man you are working for is a very fine gentleman, generous and full of loving kindness. See what he sent by the hand of a handsome young man! And the young man said, 'When Habib comes home, tell him, You increase your output, and we will increase your wages.'"

Habib was amazed.

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed. "I worked for ten days, and he did me all this kindness. If I work harder, who knows what he will do?"

And he turned his face wholly away from worldly things and gave himself up to God's service.

The miracles of Habib

One day an old woman came to Habib and, falling at his feet, wept bitterly.

"I have a son who has been absent from me a long time. I can no longer endure to be parted from him. Say a prayer to God," she begged Habib. "It may be that by the blessing of your prayer God will send him back to me."

"Have you any money?" Habib asked her.

"Yes, two dirhams," she replied.

"Bring them, and give them to the poor."

And Habib recited a prayer, then he said to the old woman, "Be gone. Your son has returned to you."

The old woman had not yet reached the door of her house, when she beheld her son.

"Why, here is my son!" she shouted, and she brought him to Habib.

"What happened?" Habib enquired of him.

"I was in Kerman," the son replied. "My teacher had sent me to look for some meat. I obtained the meat and was just returning to him, when the wind seized hold of me. I heard a voice saying,

"Wind, carry him to his own home, by the blessing of Habib's prayer and the two dirhams given in alms."

One year on the eighth day of Dho l-Hejja, Habib was seen in Basra and on the ninth day at Arafat.

Once a famine was raging in Basra. Habib purchased many provisions on credit and gave them away as alms. He fastened his purse and placed it under his pillow. When the tradesmen came to demand payment, he would take out his purse and it was full of dirhams, which he gave away as loans.

Habib had a house in Basra on the crossroads. He also had a fur coat which he wore summer and winter. Once, needing to perform the ritual washing, he arose and left his coat on the ground. Hasan of Basra, happening on the scene, perceived the coat flung in the road.

"This 'barbarian' does not know its value," he commented. "This fur coat ought not to be left here. It may get lost."

So he stood there watching over it. Presently Habib returned. "Imam of the Muslims," he cried after saluting Hasan, "why are you standing here?"

"Do you not know," Hasan replied, "that this coat ought not to be left here? It may get lost. Say, in whose charge did you leave it?"

"In His charge," Habib answered, "who appointed you to watch over it."

One day Hasan came to call on Habib. Habib placed two rounds of barley bread and a little salt before Hasan. Hasan began to eat. A beggar came to the door, and Habib gave the two rounds and the salt to him.

"Habib," remarked the astonished Hasan, "you are a worthy man. If only you had some knowledge, it would be better. You took the bread from under the nose of your guest and gave it all to the beggar. You ought to have given a part to the beggar and a part to the guest."

Habib said nothing. Presently a slave entered with a tray on his head. A roast lamb was on the tray, together with sweet-meat and fine bread, and five hundred silver dirhams. He set the tray before Habib. Habib gave the money to the poor, and placed the tray before Hasan.

"Master," he said when Hasan had eaten some of the roast, "you are a good man. If only you had a little faith, it would be better. Knowledge must be accompanied by faith."

One day officers of Hajjaj were searching for Hasan. He was hiding in Habib's hermitage.

"Have you seen Hasan today?" the officers demanded of Habib.

"I have seen him," he answered.

"Where was he?"

"In this hermitage."

The officers entered the hermitage, but for all their searching they did not find Hasan. ("Seven times they laid their hands on me," Hasan afterwards related, "but they did not see me.")

"Habib," Hasan remarked on leaving the hermitage, "you did not observe your duty to your master. You pointed me out."

"Master," Habib replied, "it was because I told the truth that you escaped. If I had lied, we would both have been arrested."

"What did you recite, that they did not see me?" Hasan asked.

"I recited the Throne-verse ten times," Habib answered. "Ten times I recited The Messenger believes, and ten times Say, He is God, One. Then I said. 'O God, I have committed Hasan to Thee. Watch over him.'"

Hasan once wished to go to a certain place. He came down to the bank of the Tigris, and was pondering something to himself when Habib arrived on the scene.

"Imam, why are you standing here?" he asked.

"I wish to go to a certain place. The boat is late," Hasan replied.

"Master, what has happened to you?" Habib demanded. "I learned all that I know from you. Expel from your heart all envy of other men. Close your heart against worldly things. Know that suffering is a precious prize, and see that all affairs are of God. Then set foot on the water and walk."

With that Habib stepped on to the water and departed. Hasan swooned. When he recovered, the people asked him,

"Imam of the Muslims, what happened to you?"

"My pupil Habib just now reprimanded me," he replied. "Then he stepped on the water and departed, whilst I remained impotent. If tomorrow a voice cries, 'Pass over the fiery pathway'- if I remain impotent like this, what can I do?"

"Habib," Hasan asked later, "how did you discover this power?"

"Because I make my heart white, whereas you make paper black," Habib replied.

"My learning profited another, but it did not profit me." Hasan commented.

Excerpts from 'Away of Sufi'

Hazrect Moulana Jalaludin Rumi(RAU)

by Idris shah

Rumi's major work, generally considered to be one of the world's greatest books, is his Mathnavi-l-Maanavi (Couplets of Inner Meaning). His table-talk (Fihi Ma Fihi), letters (Maktubat), Diwan, and the hagiography Munaqib El-Arifin, all contain important parts of his teachings.

The following selections, from all these sources, are meditation-themes which can be taken as aphorisms and declarations of dogma, or as pieces of sage advice. Their Sufic usage, however, goes far beyond this. Rumi like other Sufi authors, plants his teachings within a framework which as effectively screens its inner means as displays it. This technique fulfils the functions of preventing those who are incapable of using the material on a higher level from experimenting effectively with it; allowing those who want what stories; stimulating the intellect in those who prize such experiences.

One of the most revealing of his sentences is the title of his table-talk : 'In it what is in it' ('You get out of it what is in it for you').

Rumi had the uncomfortable Sufi habit of excelling in literary and poetic ability beyond all his contemporaries, while constantly affirming that such an attainment was a minor one compared with Sufihood.

How Far You Have Come !

Originally, you were clay. From being mineral, you became vegetable. From vegetable, you became animal, and from animal, man. During these periods man did not know where he was going, but he was being taken on a long journey nonetheless. And you have to go through a hundred different worlds yet.

The Way

The Way has been marked out.

If you depart from it, you will perish.

If you try to interfere with the signs on the road, you will be an evil-doer.

The Four Men and the Interpreter

Four people were given a piece of money.

The first was a Person. He said : 'I will buy with this some angur.'

The second was an Arab. He said : 'No, because I want inab.'

The third was a Turk. He said : 'I do not want inab, I want uzum.'

The fourth was a Greek. He said : 'I want Stafil.'

Because they did not know what lay behind the names of things, these four started to fight. They had information but no knowledge.

One man of wisdom present could have reconciled them all, saying : 'I can fulfill the needs of all of you, with one and the same piece of money. If you honestly give me your trust, your one coin will become as four; and four at odds will become as one united.'

Such a man would know that each in his own language wanted the same thing, grapes.

I am the Lift of My Beloved

What can I do, Muslim? I do not know myself.

I am no Christian, no Jew, no Magian, No Musulman.

Not of the East, not of the West. Not of the land, not of the sea.

Not of the Mine of Nature, not of the circling heavens,

Not of earth, not of water, not of air, not of fire;

Not of the throne, not of the ground, of existence, of being;

Not of India, China, Bulgaria, Saqseen;

Not of the kingdom of the Iraqs, or of Khorasan;

Not of this world or the next: of heaven or hell;

Not of Adam, Eve, the gardens of Paradise or Eden;

My place placeless, my trace traceless.

Neither body nor soul : all is the life of my Beloved....

The Owls and the King's Hawk

A royal hawk alighted for a time on the wall of a ruin inhabited by owls. The owls feared him. He said: 'This may seem a prosperous place to you, but my place is upon the wrist of a king.'

Some of the owls shouted to the others: 'Do not believe him! He is using guile to steal our home.'

Another Dimension

The hidden world has its clouds and rain, but of a different kind.

Its sky and sunshine are of a different kind.

This is made apparent only to the refined ones- those not deceived by the seeming completeness of the ordinary world.

Profiting by Experience

Exalted Truth imposes upon us

Heat and cold, grief and pain,

Terror and weakness of wealth and body

Together, so that the coin of our innermost being

Becomes evident.

Awakening

A man may be in an ecstatic state, and another man may try to rouse him. It is considered good to do so. Yet this state may be bad for him, and the awakening may be good for him. Rousing a sleeper is good or bad according to who is doing it. If the rouser is of greater attainment, this will elevate the state of the other person. If he is not, it will deteriorate the consciousness of the other man.

He was in No Other Place

Cross and Christians, end to end, I examined. He was not on the Cross. I went to the Hindu temple, to the ancient pagoda. In none of them was there any sign. To the uplands of Herat I went, and to Kandahar. I looked. He was not on the heights or in the lowlands. Resolutely, I went to the summit of the (fabulous) mountain of Kaf. There only was the dwelling of the (legendary) Anqa bird. I went to the Kaaba of Mecca. He was not there. I asked about him from Avicenna the philosopher. He was beyond the range of

Avicenna.....I looked into my own heart. In that, his place, I saw him. He was in no other place.

Those Who Know, Cannot Tell

Whenever the Secrets of Perception are taught to anyone His lips are own against speaking of the Consciousness.

Joha and Death

A boy was crying and shouting before his father's coffin, saying :

'Father! They are taking you to a place where nothing covers the floors. There is no light, no food; no door nor helpful neighbour.....'

Joha, alarmed since the description seemed to fit, called out to his own father:

'Respected Parent, by Allah, they are taking him to our house!'

Intelligence and Real Perception

Intelligence is the shadow of objective Truth.

How can the shadow vie with sunshine?

True Reality

Of this there is no academic proof in the world;

For it is hidden, and hidden, and hidden.

The Human Spirit

Go higher - Behold the Human Spirit.

Detachment Brings Perception

O Heart ! Until, in this prison of deception,
you can see the difference between This and That,
For an instant detach from this Well of Tyranny ;
stand outside.

Thou and I

Joyful the moment when we sat in the bower, Thou and I;
In two forms and with two faces - with one soul, Thou and I.
The colour of the garden and the song of the birds give the elixir of immortality
The instant we come into the orchard, Thou and I.
The stars of Heaven come out to look upon us -
We shall show the Moon herself to them, Thou and I.
Thou and I, with no 'Thou' or 'I', shall become one through our tasting;
Happy, safe from idle talking, Thou and I.
The gay parrots of heaven will envy us-
When we shall laugh in such a way, Thou and I.
This is stranger, that Thou and I, in this corner here....
Are both in one breath in Iraq, and in Khorasan - Thou and

Two Reeds

Two reeds drink from one stream. One is hollow, the other is sugar-cane.

What Shall I Be

I have again and again grown like grass;
I have experienced seven hundred and seventy moulds.
I died from minerality and became vegetable;
And from vegetativeness I died and became animal.
I died from animality and became man.
Then why fear disappearance through death?
Next time I shall die
Bringing forth wings and feathers like angels:
After that soaring higher than angels -
What you cannot imagine. I shall be that.

The Man of God

The Man of God is drunken without wine :
The Man of God is sated without meat.

The Man of God is rapturous, amazed :
The Man of God has neither food nor sleep.

The Man of God is a king beneath a humble cloak:
The Man of God is a treasure in a ruin.

The Man of God is not of wind and earth:
The Man of God is not of fire and water.

The Man of God is a sea without a shore:
The Man of God rains pearls without a cloud.

The Man of God has a hundred moons and skies :
The Man of God has a hundred sunshines.

The Man of God is wise through Truth:
The Man of God is not a scholar from a book.

The Man of God is beyond faith and disbelief alike :
For the Man of God what 'sin' or 'merit' is there ?

The Man of God rode away from Non-being:
The Man of God has come, sublimely riding.

The Man of God Is, Concealed, O Shamsudin!
Search for, and find - The Man of God.

Truth

The Prophet said that Truth has declared :
'I am not hidden in what is high or low
Nor in the earth nor skies nor throne.
This is certainty, O beloved:
I am hidden in the heart of the faithful.
If you seek me, seek in these hearts.'

The Science

The Science of Truth disappears in the Sufi's knowledge
When will mankind understand this saying?

Dust on the Mirror

Life/Soul is like a clear mirror; the body is dust on it.

Beauty in us is not perceived, for we are under the dust.

Action and Words

I am giving people what they want. I am reciting poetry because people desire is as an entertainment.

In my own country, people do not like poetry. I have long searched for people who want action, but all they want is words. I am ready to show you action; but none will patronize this action. So I present you with - words.

A fool's ignorance eventually harms, however much his heart is one with yours.

Work

Work is not what people think it is.

It is not just something which, when it is operating, you can see from outside.

How long shall we, in the Earth-world, like children
Fill our laps with dust and stones and scraps ?
Let us leave earth and fly to the heavens,
Let us leave babyhood and go to the assembly of Man.

The House

If ten men want to enter a house, and only nine find their way in, the tenth must not say:
'This is what God ordained.'

He must find out what his own shortcoming was.

Owls

Only sweet-voice birds are imprisoned.

Owls are not kept in cages.

Efforts

Tie two birds together.

They will not be able to fly, even though they now have four wings.

Seeking

Seek a pearl, brother, within a shell;

And seek skill from among the men of words.

This Task

You have a duty to perform. Do anything else, do any number of things, occupy your time fully, and yet, if you do not do this task, all your time will have been wasted.

The Community of Love

The people of Love are hidden within the populace;

Like a good man surrounded by the bad.

A Book

The aim of a book may be to instruct,

Yet you can also use it as a pillow;

Although its object is to give knowledge, direction, profit.

Epitaph of Jalaludin Rumi

When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men.

Excerpts from "The Purification of the Soul"

collected and arranged by Hz.Ahamad Farid (RAU)

(Courtesy Al-Fifdous Ltd, London)

THE NATURE OF INTENTION

The intention of a person is not his utterance of the words, "I intend to do so and so". It is an overflowing from the heart which runs like conquests inspired by Allah. At times it is made easy, at other times, difficult. A person whose heart is overwhelmingly righteous finds it easy to summon good intentions at most times. Such a person has a heart generally inclined to the roots of goodness which, most of the time, blossom into the manifestation of good actions. As for those whose hearts incline towards and are overwhelmed by worldly matters, they find this difficult to accomplish and even obligatory acts of worship may become difficult and tiresome.

The Prophet said: "Actions are only by intention, and every man shall only have what he intended. Thus he whose *hijra* was for Allah and His Messenger, his *hijra* was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose *hijra* was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his *hijra* was for that for which he made *hijra*."

Imam ash-Shaf'i said: "This hadith is a third of all knowledge." The words, "actions are only by intention", mean that deeds which are performed in accordance with the sunnah are only acceptable and rewarded if the intentions behind them were sincere. It is like the saying of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, "Actions depend upon their outcome."

Likewise, the words, "every man shall only have what he intended", mean that the reward for an action depends upon the intention behind it. After stating this principle, the Prophet gave examples of it by saying, "Thus he whose *hijra* was for Allah and His Messenger, his *hijra* was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose *hijra* was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his *hijra* was for that for which he made *hijra*." So deeds which are apparently identical may differ, because the intentions behind them are different in degrees of goodness and badness, from one person to another.

Good intentions do not change the nature of forbidden actions. The ignorant should not misconstrue the meaning of the hadith and think that good intentions could turn forbidden actions into acceptable ones. The above saying of the Prophet specifically relates to acts of worship and permissible actions, not to forbidden ones. Worship and permissible actions, not to forbidden ones. Worship and permissible actions can be turned into forbidden ones because of the intentions behind them, and permissible actions can become either good or bad deeds by intention; but wrong actions cannot become acts of worship, even with good intentions. When bad intentions are accompanied by flaws in the actions themselves, then their gravity and punishment are multiplied.

Any praiseworthy act must be rooted in sound intentions; only then should it be deemed worthy of reward. The fundamental principle should be that the act is intended for the worship of Allah alone. If our intention is to show off, then these same acts of worship will in fact become acts of disobedience. As for permissible deeds, they all involve intentions - which can potentially turn them into excellent acts which bring a man nearer to Allah and confer on him the gift of closeness to Him.

The Excellence of Intention

Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "The best acts are doing what Allah has commanded, staying far away from what Allah has forbidden, and having sincere intentions towards what-ever Allah has required of us."

Some of our predecessors said: "Many small actions are made great by the intentions behind them. Many great actions, on the other hand, are made small because the intentions behind them are lacking."

Yahya Ibn Abu Kathir said: "Learn about intentions, for their importance is greater than the importance of actions."

Ibn Umar once heard a man who was putting on his ihram say: "O Allah! I intend to do the Hajj and Umrah." So he said to him: "Is it not in fact the people whom you are informing of your intentions? Does not Allah already know what is in your heart?" It is because good intentions are exclusively the concern of the heart, that they should not be voiced during worship.

The Excellence of Knowledge and Teaching

There are many proofs in the Qur'an concerning the excellence of knowledge and its transmission. Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, says:

Allah will raise up to high ranks those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. (58:11)

And also:

Are those who know equal to those who do not know? (39:9)

Also, in the hadith, the Prophet says, "When Allah desires good for someone, He gives him understanding of the deen." He also said, "Allah makes the way to the Garden easy for whoever treads a path in search of knowledge."

Travelling on the path to knowledge refers both to walking along an actual pathway, such as going on foot to the assemblies of the ulama, as well as to following a metaphysical road, such as studying and memorising.

The above saying of the Prophet probably means that Allah makes learning the useful knowledge that is sought after easier for the seeker, clearing the way for him and smoothing his journey. Some of our predecessors used to say: "Is there anyone seeking knowledge, so that we can assist him in finding it?"

This hadith also alludes to the road leading to the Garden on the Day of Judgement, which is the straight path and to what precedes it and what comes after it.

Knowledge is also the shortest path to Allah. Whoever travels the road of knowledge reaches Allah and the Garden by the shortest route. Knowledge also clears the way out of darkness, ignorance, doubt and skepticism. It is why Allah called His Book, "Light".

Al-Bukhari and Muslim have reported on the authority of Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah said: "Truly, Allah will not take away knowledge by snatching it away from people, but by taking away the lives of the people of knowledge one by one until none of them survive. Then the people will adopt ignorant ones as their leaders. They will be asked to deliver judgements and they will give them without knowledge, with the result that they will go astray and lead others astray."

When 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit was asked about this hadith he said: "If you want, I will tell you what the highest knowledge is, which raises people in rank: it is humility"

He said this because there are two types of knowledge. The first produces its fruit in the heart. It is knowledge of Allah, the Exalted - His Names, His attributes, and His Acts- which commands fear, respect exaltation, love supplication and reliance on Him. This is the beneficial type of knowledge. As ibn Mas'ud said: "They will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go beyond their throats. The Qur'an is only beneficial when it reaches the heart and is firmly planted in it."

Al-Hasan said: "There are two kinds of knowledge : knowledge of the tongue, which can be a case against the son of Adam, as is mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet : 'The Qur'an is either a case for you are a case against you; and knowledge of the heart, which is beneficial knowledge. The second kind is the beneficial kind which raises people in rank; it is the inner knowledge which is absorbed by the heart and puts it right. The knowledge that is on the tongue is taken lightly by people" neither those who possess it, nor anyone else, act upon it, and then it vanishes when its owners vanish on the Day of Judgement, when creation will be brought to account."

Notes

1. Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2. Al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Qadar, 11/499.
3. This is illustrated in a hadith recorded by Imam Muslim in his Sahih, in which it is related on the authority of Abu Dharr that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "You will receive the reward for sadaqa even when you have sexual intercourse with your wives." The sahaba said, "Will we really be rewarded for satisfying our physical desires?" He replied, "If you have haram intercourse, you will be committing a sin; similarly, if you have halal intercourse, you will be rewarded. "Imam an-Nawawi said, "This hadith clearly shows that permissible actions become acts of obedience if there is a good intention behind them; sexual intercourse becomes an act of worship if it is accompanied by any one of the following good intentions : keeping company with your wife in kindness, as Allah ta'Ala has commanded; hoping to have, as a result of the intercourse, good and righteous offspring; guarding your chastity and that

of your wife; helping to prevent haram lustful glances or thoughts, or haram intercourse; and any other good intention."

4. Tahdhib al-Asma li-Nawawi, 1/173. Abu Ishaq ash Shirazi once entered the mosque to have something to eat, as was his custom, and then realised that he had dropped a dinar. He retraced his steps and found it lying on the ground, but then left it where it was, saying, "Perhaps it is not mine; perhaps it belongs to somebody else."

5. Sahih, ja'mil - Ulum wa'l Hikam, p.19

6. Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

7. Muslim, 21/17.

8. Muslim, Kitab at-Tahara, 3/99

Excerpts from KITAB ADAB Al-Muridin

By Hz Abu Al Najid al Suhrawardi (RAU)

(Continued from Previous issue)

54. Sufi ethics in conversation (muhawara). Their purpose in conversation should be to offer advice and guidance and whatever can benefit other people. The Sufi should speak to people according to their intellectual capacity. (A saying of the Prophet on the latter point.) The novice should not speak on any question unless he is asked about it, and his answer should be suited to [the understanding of] the interrogator. (A saying of Junayd on this subject).

55. The novice should ask only questions pertaining to his station. He should not speak about what he has not practiced, but some say that it is permissible. (A saying of the Prophet in support of the latter view.) Knowledge should be divulged only to qualified persons, although another view has it that it may be divulged to others as well. One should not speak in front of a more learned man.

56. One should not seek to obtain social standing or worldly goods through his knowledge. Two traditions of the Prophet on the above subject. One should strive to practice what he hears and learns. "Whoever hears something of the Sufi doctrine (ulum al-qawm) and practices it, it becomes wisdom in his heart, and those who listen to him will derive benefit from it; but whoever hears and does not practice, it is mere talk which he will forget after a few days." It is said: "If words come out of the heart they will enter the heart, but if they come from the tongue they will not pass beyond the ears."

57. The merit of speech and silence on different occasions. Junayd and Ruwaym disagreed on the question of preaching Sufism before the uninitiated (al-amma); Junayd asserted that it was worthwhile whereas Ruwaym argued that it was of no avail. Junayd rebuked Shibli for pronouncing the word allah on a certain occasion, and another time he rebuked him for asking a question.

As for the ecstatic utterances (shathiyyat) quoted from Abu Yazid (al-Bistami) and others, these were uttered under the compulsion of hal and the power of intoxication, and so they should be neither accepted nor rejected.

58. Sahl b. 'Abdallah said, "There are three kinds of 'ilm: 'ilm from God which is the science of law, 'ilm with God which is the science of Sufi states and 'ilm of God which is

knowledge of His attributes and qualities," The science of the inner aspect of religion is derived from the science of the external aspect.

59. [on 'ilm as compared with amal (praxis), 'aql (intellect), and ma'rifa (gnosis). There is a saying : "He who listens with his ears will relate (what he has learned), he who listens with his heart will preach, and he who practices what he has learned is guided and gives guidance." There is another saying" "Ilm calls out praxis, but if the latter does not respond, 'ilm will go away."

'Ilm is conception of the object as it is, intellect is capacity and talent for perception by which one can distinguish between true and false, commendable, and repugnant. The learned man (alim) should be taken as an example for conduct, and the knower, the man of gnosis, should be a source of guidance. 'Ilm is mediated information, whereas gnosis is experience of the senses.

60. [Some sayings in praise of intellect.] The pious would not deceive and the intelligent man cannot be deceived. Intellect keeps man away from destructive things. When passion becomes supreme, intellect disappears. You can distinguish between an intelligent man and a stupid man by the following rule: a stupid man will believe whatever absurdity he is told.

If you need the knowledge of a man, you should not examine his faults.

61. The rules concerning the stage of beginning. The first thing that the murid should do after awakening from the state of carelessness (ghafla) is to go to a Sufi shaykh who will guide him to the Sufi way and teach him his rights and obligations.

62. The most appropriate thing for the murid is to choose only pure food, drink, and clothes, for thus he will enhance his inner state. Asaying of the Prophet : "To seek the permitted things is an obligation after the (explicit) obligations." One of the Sufis said, "To seek the permitted things is an obligation after the (explicit) obligations." One of the Sufis said, "To seek the permitted things is an obligation for people in general and to renounce the permitted things is an obligation of this group (the Sufis) except in case of compelling necessity."

63. The next thing is to fulfill the religious duties which he has neglected, and to correct wrongs which he did to people. (A saying of the Prophet on the above point). For physical injury (which he caused in the past) he should be punished by retaliation, and for verbal abuses he should ask forgiveness from those whom he wronged. He should then

recognize the lower soul (nafs) and discipline it by exercises, hardship, fasting, prayers, and vigils.

64. On repentance (tawba). He will then be one of the repenters who merit the love of Allah (Quran 2.222 quoted). A saying of the Prophet: "The repentor is the beloved of God." The repentor is one of those whose evil acts God will change into good ones; (there follows a Hadith on this point). Repentance is a religious duty for all Muslims. Failure to repent of a sin is more serious than committing the sin. There is time to repent until death or until the locking of the Gate of Repentance.

65. He should then adhere to moral scrupulosity (wara) in all circumstances and he should know that God takes everything into account.

66. When the murid properly achieves the stations of repentance and scrupulosity and begins the station of renunciation (zuhd), then comes the time for him to wear the patched frock (muraqqa) if he aspires to it. He should observe all necessary observances attached to the wearing of the muraqqa. Wearing the muraqqa'a should not be taken lightly. The wearer of muraqqa'a should have disciplined his soul by the rules and have tamed it, and he should have passed the stations. Whoever is not thus qualified should not aspire to the rank of shaykh of murid.

67. On self-examination. The murid should recognize his own faults and know how to remove them. He should control his soul by exertions and by examination of conscience. He should reveal his inner state to his shaykh and constantly ask for his instruction and advice.

68. The murid should follow the stations (maqamat) according to their order, and he should not move from one station to another before he has properly accomplished its rules (adab), for example, he should occupy himself with the station of zuhd only when he has completed that of ware. He should follow this course until the actions reach into the heart. One of the Sufis said, "It is nobler to engage in the movements of the heart than to perform outward acts (of worship)". Hadith : the excellence of Abu Bakr's faith came from something which was in his heart, not from much prayer and fasting. When the actions come to take place in the heart, the limbs will be restful.

69. The novice should be heedful of each moment. He should be constantly occupied outwardly with supererogatory devotions and inwardly by aspiration, until inspiration descends upon him.

70. To render service to his brethren is more valuable for the novice than to be engaged in supererogatory prayers. A'isha said that the Prophet had always been busy with some charitable work. Abu Amr al-Zujaji said that he had not merited the blessing of Junayd by his constant worship but rather by an act of service, when he cleaned his place.

71. The murid should not leave his shaykh before the eye of his heart opens. The distinctive mark of the murid is "to listen and obey." Distinctive symptoms are suggested so as to recognize falseness on the part of murid, mutawassit, and arif. Junayd said: "But for the distinctive marks, everyone would have claimed to be pursuing the Sufi way."

72. He should know that maqam, hal, or any act of worship can be accomplished only by sincerity, namely by keeping it pure from any ostentation (a saying of the Prophet on this). However, if his acts of worship and ahwal become publicly known without any ostentatious intention on his part, then this should give no cause for blame. Sincerity can be achieved only by recognizing the worthlessness of mankind.

73. The murid should strive to watch his lower soul (nafs) attentively and recognize its qualities because it is the nafs that commands evil. The Prophet used to seek refuge in God from the nafs. (A saying of Ali b. Abi Talib on the need to watch over the soul constantly.) Abu Bakr al-Warraq describes the soul as being always ostentatious, in most cases hypocritical, and sometimes idolatrous. A saying of al-wasiti: "The soul is an idol, looking at it with sympathy is idolatry whereas looking at it with scrutiny is worship." If the soul is excused, it will follow its caprice (Quran 41:51 is quoted). Two similes on the misleading appearance of the nafs: "It is like a glowing coal, it is beautiful in color but it scorches." "It is like clean, quiet water hiding the dirt under it."

74. Nafs (the lower soul) is an opposite to God. Nafs makes the same demands of obedience and admiration on man as does God. It is a "delicate matter" lodged within this mold (of the body). The soul is the substratum of blameworthy qualities. The spirit (ruh) is the mine of good and the soul is the mine of evil. The intellect is the army of the spirit, and success which is granted by Allah is its reinforcement. Capricious desire is the army of the soul, and failure is its reinforcement.

75. All matters are of three kinds: those whose rightness is obvious, so they should be followed; those whose error is obvious, so they should be avoided; those which are dubious, and so should be left aside until the right course becomes clear. If you are in doubt as to which of two things is the best, follow the one which is farthest from your

desire. The murid should strive to exchange the blameworthy qualities of his soul for the opposite praiseworthy qualities.

76. The ethics (adab) of companionship (suhba). It is better to sit alone than with an evil companion, and it is better to sit with a worthy companion than to sit alone. Three sayings of the Prophet on friendship: "Man is in the religion of his friend, therefore you should consider carefully whom you befriend." "A man who mixes with people and endures their evil is superior to one who does not mix with people." "There is no benefit to him who does not befriend others and is not befriended." Abu Hafis al-Nisaburi on the rules of companionship among the Sufis : to respect the shaykhs, to have intimate friendship with their peers, to give advice to younger people, not to associate with people who are not of their kind, to act with altruism (ithar), not to accumulate property, and to extend their help to others.

77. The Sufi should associate with people of his kind and those from whom he can benefit. "The man most worthy of your company is he who agrees with your religious beliefs and before whom you are ashamed (for your faults)." He should not associate with people who are opposed to his religious affiliation even if they are related to him. (The story of Noah is cited on this point: God told Noah that his scornful son is not of his family; Quran 11:45-46)

He should associate with those in whom he has confidence as regards their religion and trustworthiness.

78. The Sufi should undertake to serve his brethren and companions (khidmat al-ikhwan) and help them in obtaining , their sustenance. He should endure their offence and should not rebuke them unless they transgress the law. He should recognize the value of every man. Sufyan b. 'Uyayna said: "Whoever is ignorant of the value of other people is more ignorant of his own value." He also said: "Only he who has no value whatsoever belittles the value of other people." He should correct the faults of his companion and try to guide him to the right way. The Prophet said: "One believer is the mirror indicate my faults to me."

79. His association with each person should be according to his state and what is appropriate for him: with shaykhs and seniors - with respect and service; with one's peers - with cheerfulness, informality, agreement, kindness, and spontaneity. (Saying of Abu al-Abbas b. Ata and Junayd approving of informality among friends. A Hadith praising informality on the part of the Prophet toward Abu Bakr and Umar.)

80. He should not flatter his fellows in what is contrary to the religious requirements. He should acquiesce in the truth; an example cited: 'Umar accepted the criticism of al-Abbas b. Abd al-Muttalib.

81. Companionship with the young-with compassion, guidance, and instruction. He should warn them when necessary. God reproved the Rabbis for not warning their people (Quran 5:63 quoted).

82. Companionship with the master (ustadh) is by obedience, so it is not really companionship but service. Complete obedience and respect toward the master are required. The master in the midst of his followers is like the prophet in the midst of his community. Junayd once answered a question of one of his disciples and the latter expressed objection to the answer; Junayd then said, "If you do not believe in my words, dissociate yourselves from me." He should behave toward the shaykh like the Companions with the Prophet in following the ethics of the Quran. (Quran 49:1, 49:2 and 24:63 quoted.)

83. Companionship with visitors from other places (ghuraba) should be with cheerfulness and good manners and respect, because they honor him by coming to him.

85. Association with ignorant persons should be with patience, good manners, and sympathy. He should recognize the favor of God in not making him like them. Offences by the ignorant should be answered as the prophets did (Quran quoted: 7:61, 7:67, 28:55, 45:14 and 3:186)

86. Companionship with one's wife and children should be with compassion. One should instruct them in right conduct. Commentary of Quran 66L6, "Instruct them and teach them and thereby protect them from Hell." In particular, one should behave with his wife according to the rule of God (Quran 2:229 quoted). One should spend upon his family from his lawful earnings.

87. Companionship with young men is reprehensible because of the harms involved in it. Whoever is tried by this experience should safeguard his heart and body from them and should prompt them to undertake exercises of self discipline (riyadat) and ethical training, and he should avoid informal behavior with them. The desire of the young to associate with the old is praiseworthy, but the desire of the old for the company of the youth is a sign of weakness and stupidity.

88. Companionship with brothers involves agreement in everything, except what is unlawful, and avoiding malice and envy.

89. Association with the ruler (sultan) : one must obey him except in disobedience to God or violation of traditional law (Quran 4:59 quoted.) One should pray for the ruler and avoid slandering him. It is meritorious to visit a just ruler; but one should stay away from an unjust ruler except in case of necessity or in order to reprove him. He who has to visit them should pray for them and exhort them and reprove them according to his capacity. Some eminent Sufis used to approach the rulers for the welfare of the people. Ibn 'Ata' said: "It is more meritorious to be ostentatious (with regard to one's piety) in order to gain social esteem and thereby be able to assist another Muslim than to act in total sincerity for the sake of one's own salvation."

90. Association with people in general should according to the example of Abu Damdam. He used to say: "O Allah, I give my life and my honor to you, I forfeit my honor for your sake; whoever reviles me, I shall not revile him and whoever wrongs me, I shall not wrong him."

91. Every limb has its own special ethics (Quran 17:36 quoted). Good ethics with regard to God is that none of your limbs should move for any purpose save for the pleasure of God.

92. The ethics of the tongue. The tongue should always be busy in reciting God's names (dhikr) and in saying good things of the brethren, praying for them, and giving them counsel. He should not say to them things which they dislike. One should not slander nor talk about things which do not concern him. The tongue was created as an interpreter for the heart. Silence is praiseworthy because it is "a cover for the ignorant and adornment for the intelligent."

93. The ethics of hearing. One should not listen to indecencies and slander. One should listen to things which are religiously beneficial. One should listen attentively to the speaker.

94. The ethics of sight. One should lower one's eyes in order not to see forbidden things; one should also avoid looking at the faults of other people and one's brethren (Quran 40:19 quoted). Immodest glances bring about severe retribution (three sayings). Sight should be used to achieve understanding of God's omnipotence, and it should not be tainted by the desires of the soul. An immodest glance at any person violates the rights of God, because all creatures are His slaves.

95. The ethics of the heart are to observe the exalted states (ahwal) and to reject base thoughts and to think about God's favors (Quran 3:191 quoted). Hadith : Meditation for one hour is better than ritual worship for a whole year."

It is of the ethics of the heart to think well of God and of all Muslims and to purify the heart of rancor, deceitfulness, disloyalty, envy, and wrong religious beliefs. The Prophet said: "There is a piece of meat in the body; if it is good, the whole body is good, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt; that is the heart."

96. The ethics of the hands: to give charity and serve the brethren and not use them in acts of disobedience.

97. The ethics of the legs not to walk in arrogance and not to use them in acts of disobedience.

98. The first stage of companionship (suhba) is acquaintance, then friendship, then familiarity, then intimacy, then companionship, then brotherhood. Suhba is realized only by inward agreement (Quran 59:14 quoted). Suhba is the loftiest of all modes. The companions of the Prophet were therefore designated by the attribute of companionship rather than by other attributes such as 'ilm or fiqh, which they also deserved.

99. Of the ethics of the Sufis: there should not occur in their speech "that is mine and that is yours" nor "if this had been so, that would not have happened" nor "perhaps" nor "why did you do this ?", for these are the manners of the common people (awamm). There should not be among them borrowing lending, competition, rivalry, and slandering; rather, each of them should be like son to the older, brother to the equal, father to the younger, and slave to the master.

100. Of their rules of conduct: when they assemble they give priority to one of them (chosen for his excellence in various respects) so that they can rely on his authority. Priority should be given first according to learning and then according to seniority (Hadith). The Prophet accorded priority to the people of Badr(Hadith). Priority is also deserved by those who have met eminent shaykhs.

101. Miscellaneous saying on companionship. When you associate with a man, you should pay attention to his intellect more than to his theological doctrines, because his religion will benefit him and his intellect will benefit him and you.

You should not befriend a man who is primarily concerned with worldly goods (Quran 53:29 quoted).

One should not mention other people's faults. When asked about the meaning of *suhba*, Abu Uthman al-Hiri said that it consisted of acting with generosity, equity, and kindness toward one's friend without expecting reciprocation.

Al-Zaqqaq on *suhba*: "Befriend him who would know of your secrets like God and yet you can trust him (not to betray your secrets)".

It is harmful to associate with a man before whom one has no shame.

(Three miscellaneous sayings on companionship.)

102. Of their ethics : to avoid haughtiness and aggressive behavior. Abu Ali al-Rudhabari said : "To act aggressively against one who is above you is impudence, against one who is your peer, bad manners, and against him who is below you, weakness." Conceit is a sign of the degeneration of one's intelligence.

He who adopts the ethical rules should beware of despising any Muslim. (Two sayings of the Prophet to this effect.) A Sufi saying: "You should willingly accept as a brother whomsoever Allah has accepted in His benevolence as a servant."

103. Rules of conduct in visiting and hospitality. When any of his brethren visit him, the Sufi should give them whatever food or drink he has. A saying of the Prophet: "The host should not despise what he has to present nor should the guest despise whatever is given him." A saying of the Prophet: "It is a noble quality to visit one another for the sake of God (fi Allah)." One should give to the guest what is readily available even if it is only a drink of water. (The story of Abraham is quoted as an example of hospitality, Quran 11:69 and 51:27) When Hasan al-Basri had food to serve, he would receive the guest in his home; if not, he would go out to meet him. One should not strive to please a guest in an affected or ceremonious manner. Abu al-Bakhtari tells about the hospitality of Salman and quotes the latter, saying, "The Prophet forbade us to behave in an affected, forced manner (*takalluf*)."

Abu Hafs al-Nisaburi visited Junaid in Bagdad and served him with great attention and much ado.

Junaid disapproved of this conspicuous behaviour; Junaid said, "Futuwwa (chivalry) is the renunciation of *takalluf*."

(To be continued)

THERE IS NO NEED FOR DESPAIR

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

'Riots after Riots' by Mr. M.J.Akbar, published by Penguin recounts about communal Riots at various times in different part of our country, where harmless Muslims have been killed, their houses burnt, their women raped and children killed. Well done Mr. M.J.Akbar, but Mr. Akbar, does not record any of his experience of what happened next, how human sympathy, compassion overflowed thereafter, how the Muslims were rehabilitated soon, by help pouring in, from all parts of the country and as to how, their Hindu brethren soothen the injured feelings and applied the soothings balm on their wounds. Did the Muslims licked the wounds for long? Did they retaliate? Or did they forget about the incident and started the life all over again, as ever before, forgetting the incidents as a bad dream? 'Riots after Riots' have taken place throughout this century and so also during the 19th Century. During the Mughal period, bloody wars were waged between Mughal forces and opposing Rajput forces. Were Mughal's alone? No, they had Hindu soldiers along their side. And afghan, Lodhies and Pathans were the back bone of Rajput forces. After the wars, did the Rajput reconciled or continued with the mania of killing? Compromise was struck and they were goaded with riches, relationships were patched by marriages and soon everything was forgotten. Emperor Aurangzeb's forces harmed the family of Guru Gobind Singh. But it is the same Guru who joined the army of Aurangzeb's son and killed the opposing younger son of Aurangzeb History keeps repeating every time.

'Ram JanamBhoomi-Babri' dispute took a serious turn after Shri. V.P.Singh's announcement of Mandal's card. The Rath Yatra of Shri. Advani carried with it a bloody stream. The victims were poor Muslims. Riots broke out throughout the country. The official figure of death is 1250, out of which 750 were Muslims, the rest Hindus. A section of antisocial Muslims retaliated with Bomb blasts in Bombay resulting in 250 deaths, scores injured and property worth crores destroyed. Shri.P.V.Narasimha Rao, our then Prime Minister, admitted on Ramparts of Red Fort on Independence's Day of 15-8-1993 that the Bomb blast brought in loss to exchequer of Rs. Ten Thousand crores. Have the Hindu's retaliated ? Everthing is forgotten and life continues as ever before. Neither there is acrimony nor hatred. These incidents/ riots are accepted as accidents in life and as, usual happenings and things go on as usual in India.

Today, these truth are more intriguing than the bloody happenings. A little understanding of our history and psychology of our people would open to us the realities and this indeed would help to solve the malady, we are in.

In Ajmer, there is the tomb of Indian Muslim's greatest Saint Khwaja Gharib Nawaz. He is till date considered as 'Sultan-ul-Hind', 'Taj-e-Awaliya', king among Saints. It is related about him, that when he arrived in Ajmer, a Hindu yogi challenged him for a duel and the Khwaja emerged a victor, The subdued Yogi became his most honoured disciple. The victor did not vanquished the loser. As per the tradition from the antiquity, the victor should bless the vanquish, if king, with riches, and if Saints with blessings and benediction, this is the most valuable tradition of our country. Our rich lores and traditions bemoans such tales and this is the truth, which is ever present in our country and the drama gets enacted every now and then, when we are bored of ourselves, Either we need to have Saints to show us of their miracles, or kings to show their valour and strength or men of letters to exhibit their talents or poets/ qawals to match their skill in composing and reciting poems, qawwalies in poets symposiums, or wrestlers to match their strength. If nothing else, the mother-in-law should quarrel and this is the simple truth of our Indian settings.

Our Nawabs and Rajas used to arrange for kite competitions, cock fights, dog's marriages of which the nawab of Junagarh was famous. During Dusehrah celebrations, fakirs shows their rope tricks, sadhus and sanyasins equally matching them with their skills with black magic and trickeries. There were traditional and customary rivalry exhibited during these festivities and it is going on ever since time immemorial in every town and hamlet in our rich tradition ridden country. It is not surprising that matching with their skills and in competing with each other in every aspect of their lives in considered as a blessings and a tradition. It is to build up a big lore and to achieve either riches or to maintain the family name, whether it is drinking, dancing merry making, theft, or killings. The Mahabharat and Ramayana is enacted every now and then. It is a tradition among the people of India to enact this play in real life as well every year. The Ganesh festival is celebrated with fervour and it is equally matched with Moharram and Tazias. The killing and fighting is an exhibition of valour and it is more a sport and both sides take pride in each other's triumphs. Either side does not take it as an offence but only as a pleasure. Most of the times, bettings and wagering, goes on. However, these activities today are not fully understood by the elites and the novices term the happenings

as a 'preplanned attack', 'genocide' and what not. They do not realise that it is the yearly festival and games, played with fervour of jealousy and hatred and also to exhibit love, affection and compassion. Holi festival is played with blood. People do not notice that both the communities have their goondas and underground world, who draw the rules of the game and the booty is shared. The village banker, the marvari and the pathan has to bill the kitty and after the entire show is over both sides revel in each other's triumph. The elders who are watching the game from the fence, enter the area to exhibit their benevolence, charity, kindness and bring the factions together. This is matter of pride and family tradition and these elders pride among themselves for the good they have brought about. The elites compete in this act. This is the time for achieving glory, name and fame. The fakeers, sadhu and saints, syeds and Brahmins all join to share the glory and they wait for the next show to commence.

In the changed times, the games structure has slightly varies and it has changed only in nomenclature. The opposing wrestlers continue to be the matching communities. Ram as Hindu and Ravan as Muslims. We have the competing traders businessmen, smugglers and underground racketeers. After the game, comes in the philanthropists, social workers, journalists, human right activists, film stars, media, former judges, scholars, Intellectuals and poets to play their parts of fakeers, sadhus/saints, Brahmins and the syeds to patch-up the matter, to get the vanquished his share of the spoil and in return, These brokers get their share of ego satisfaction, laurels, "wahwahs and shabashs".

You would notice life coming back to normal within hours, both sides accusing goondas and bad men for spoiling the sport and each petting the back of the other and each praising the other's rich tradition, of great compassion and love, each has for the other. Each reminding the other that it is like a family fight of two brothers and remind themselves of each other's help, one has to lend for the other, to restore order and peace in the society.

When a riot breaks out all essential commodities become scare, mutton and chicken are not available. The daily vegetable hawker has not come. There is no daily news paper, milk is scare. Sewage lines are blocked, autos and taxies are off the road. Suddenly, everyone realises that Bakshu has not slaughtered the sheep Alla-Baksh has not moved with his cart of vegetable, Azeer Bhai has not baked his cookies, Ramu has not come to clear the sewage, Sabjan has not plied his auto, Rahim has not driven the vegetable lorry, Babajan has not opened his fruit mandi, Prakash is not available to fill gasoline or repair

the car. Our lawyer friends are missing the paying clients. Criminal lawyers do not find their petty Muslim offenders and drug peddlers to pay for the day. Civil lawyers keep their fingers crossed for they pawn broken his daily articles, the banya his daily customers. The employers of all shades and hues keep waiting for their agarbati and beedi Muslim labourers, and skilled artisans to resume their work. The market is closed. There is no screening of films in theatres and everyone is missing their favourite stars. Everyone cry out "forget Bhaijan, forget about what has happened, has happened, start the work, God will bless you".

Our Sarogamma, has not taken her child to Mastan - sab's Dargah for getting a talisman. Sitamma wants to take the child to the Masjid to get the Mantra read from the Moulvi. All cry out for peace. We need our old darzi Zafar to stitch the frock. The marriage season is close-by the flowerist Kareem, the decorator khader, the Electrician Faiz the driver Sattar, all small and sundry are required. Each one is as important as the other., Life has to go on. Our rich tradition should flourish. Can anyone break our love? No political force can break the unity and diversity of Indian people. This is our motherland-Bharat.

A poem from Divani Shamsi Tabriz

By Moulana Rumi (RAU)

That moon, which the sky ne'er saw even in dreams, has returned
And brought a fire no water can quench.
See the body's house, and see my soul,
This made drunken and that desolate by the cup of his love.
When the host of the tavern became my heart-mate,
My blood turned to wine and my heart to kabab.
When the eye is filled with thought of him, a voice arrives:
'Well done, O flagon, and bravo, wine!'
Love's fingers tear up, root and stem,
Every house where sunbeams fall from love.
When my heart saw love's sea, of a sudden
It left me and leaped in, crying, 'Find me.'
The face of Shamsi Din, Tabriz's glory, is the sun
In whose track the cloud-like hearts are moving.

FEAR GOD FOR HIS BOUNTY

By Dr. Shujaat Hussain

Forgive or chastise
Stark gamut of His wills
Showers glories on the creatures
Blesses bounties for their features

The fear of God,
Harbinger of pleasure,
Guarantees comfort;
Dreading His displeasure
Causes measure for measure

Quite apparent for His beings
Just needed for offerings
The sincerity in faith;
The purity of intention.

The matter of belief
God's are the host of
The heavens and the earth.
Creation of life and death
All are His art and skill

To understand or realise
Acquire the purity of mind
As pure as the snow melts;
Water falls from the highest peak of the mountain
Such as lofty and crystal thoughts of the fountain
The sincerity of the quest for the true guidance
To serve the determined personal excellence
After purgation of soul
Leaving behind foul

To raise from the abyss of degradation
To spiritual glory with solid foundation.

Take trials and tries, indeed
Tries to prove who is the best in deed;

He made the earth
The mountains a bolt
Adorned the lower heaven with stars
Provided precious sleep for a rest
Blessed the night a covering

Caused the day for seeking livelihood
Created the seven strong skies
Therein a peerless lamp burning
He sends down from the clouds
Water in torrents
Brings forth by it, corn and herbs.

Look at the sky
Watch the birds how do they fly?
Outstretching their wings
And contracting.
The mind strikes
How does an insect
Survive in its hole?

What hell is ?
Neither leaves nor spares,
It shrivels a human body
Fire! Fire!! Fire! Fire!!
No escape from fire.
When it brightens
It becomes one of the grievous woes!

And warning unto mankind

The hell is....

The destination for the transgressors

But never lose the heart

Hope is given of availability of God's forgiveness

And His pardon for those who sincerely seek it.

For the pious ones is a great realisation

Gardens enclosed and vineyards

And mates, beautiful maidens,

And a cup full,

A recompense from thy Lord,

An award according to the reckoning.

The motions of each body in the space

So marvelously regulated by the universal law

In the universe the lease flaw

Of irregularity or failure or a gap

No incongruity in the working of the laws

Of nature nor any disorder or laxity

Shows and confirms absolute unity of the One singular

And supreme authority ruling the whole world,

Visible or invisible

This unity and continuity is the sings of the unity of the creator.

An open challenge to the brilliant men

To scrutinize or examine His vast domain

Not once but as demand their desire

With the mortal eye in its travel

Would only be their travail.

So, hallow Thou the name

Of Thy Lord, The Great
Those who fear their God
Guarantees them for their forgiveness
And a great recompense.

PIOUS MEN

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

Have you seen birds ever stopping in mid flight
Trees moving around, stars coming down
Chosts appearing in broad day light
Thunder and lightning occurring on a clear sky?

You can't shut the light that pierces
The darkness that surrounds
The changing seasons, the reverberating sounds
The pollution, the disorder, that life presents.

Suddenly virtuous men, saints prophets appear
In an age full of turmoils, chaos and wars
Like rainbows on dark clouds of pathos
To cheer men and clear minds from grief.

Pious men are beacon of light
A light house of knowledge and will-power
To dispel doubt and darkness
To lead men to solace and peace.

SOUL'S OUTPOURINGS

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

When the soul gets entangled
In webs of sharp wires, in tenterhooks
In pangs of conscience

When the soul gets caught
Between the evil's delight
And body's pleasures

When the soul gets entrapped
In the guilt of grave sins
And in the troubled mind

When the soul gets anguished
At the sorrows and pains
At the destruction of good

It is the time for the soul
To sing, pray and meditate
One the Higher Being for solace and grace.

A DISTANT CALL

By Dr. S.L.Peeran

A distant call from the unknown
Emanating from deep within
To lift you from mire and mirth
And inspire you to deep meditation.

Expanding moments stretching themselves
Beyond the boundaries of space and time
Touching the horizon and infinity
Mind with lighting speed, illuminating.

Consciousness awakened soul enlightened
Spreading colourful wings of all hues
Like a peacock dance and charm
And to sing like a nightingale.

You float like a lovely butterfly
Like pleasant lotus unfolding petals
Like rose to spread fragrance
And like banyan tree to spread its branches.