

THE SHAIKH WRITES:

translated by: Hasan Nizami Meerza

(Following is the translation of an excerpt from the book "Tauheed – Wahdat-ul-Wajood Kay Tanazur Mein" by Hazrat Dr. Shah Meerza Ikhtiyar Hussain Kaif Niazi.)

According to a Hadith, 'Quran not only has a visible aspect but a hidden one too and another dimension of ultimate nature.'

Mevlana Rumi (RA) says about the *Batin* (inner aspect) of Quran:

*Zer-e-aan batin yaka-e batan di'gar
Khaer-a-gardad andar o fikr-o-nazar*

(Besides apparent meaning of Quran, there is an inner aspect too which further has an innermost side where mind gets mystified by the brilliance of understanding.)

In the domain of religious wisdom, words echo superficiality. Anyone, who does not capture the essence behind the word by going deep into it, his understanding will remain shallow. This is what Tasawwuf is all about. It signifies spiritual evolution from seen to unseen. Shariat represents extrovert aspect while Tasawwuf reflects introvert dimension of the religion. However, one cannot set aside outer aspect by considering it less important. Just as an interior has an exterior, likewise exterior has an interior. Both aspects are equally important and need to be observed accordingly.

Worship is an inner attitude but its outer display should be in accordance with Shariah. Mevlana Rumi (RA) has given several examples of interdependent inner and outer realms. For instance, fruit has an outer covering. Nature preserves its flesh with that outer covering or peel. Though flesh is desired for and is the most important part of the fruit, but cannot survive without a peel. Likewise, bone marrow in human body appears more important than bones, but body cannot sustain itself without bones.

Religious wisdom is imparted through words because that is the usual way of communication available. However, problem arises when words become all and religious scholars start arguing on literal meaning while disregarding wisdom behind the message. Mevlana Rumi RA says about such literal understanding of the Quran:

*Man ze Quran bar-gazeedam maghaz ra
Istakhwan paesh-e-sagan andakhtam*

(I have taken out marrow (wisdom) of Quran and left the bones (of words) in front of dogs (literalists))

Mevlana Rumi (RA) has given some beautiful examples for understanding the inner and outer dimensions of reality. Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim in his book '*Hikmat-e-Rumi*' (Wisdom of Rumi) discusses this subject under the chapter "*Surat-o-Ma'ani*" (appearance and its implications) in a very interesting manner. At one place, Mevlana Rumi (RA) says in a couplet:

*Behr ra posheed o kaf kard aashkar
Baad ra posheed o ba namudat ghubaar*

(Ocean itself hides behind the veil of foam. Wind conceals itself behind the sand storm.)

What he implies is that the extrovert people only focuses at the appearance without going beyond it! Consequently, in a sand storm, they only notice sand and not the wind which is the root cause for the storm. Likewise, frenzy of ocean only shows the outward foamy waves and not the deeper inner realm. Dead leaves and wood floats on surface, but pearl oysters are hidden deep inside the sea. Inner and outer aspect of everything reveals this fact.

Just by observing the exterior while negating the interior is not realistic. By focusing only on the physical structure of the building of Ka'aba as the home to Allah or seeing Islamic law as the core of Islam is reflective of inadequate knowledge.

The purpose of this write up is to provide an understanding about the inner indispensable act of worship and religion which is called *Tareeqat*. This is also called *Tasawwuf* and this is what *Ehsan* is! Prophet Muhammad (SAW) never meant to restrict worship to visible acts only. Just the standing, sitting or prostrating can neither be called '*Salat*' nor depriving body of food can be called '*Saum*' unless and until elements of '*Taqwa*' (piety) and '*Khashiyyat Ilahi*' (inspirations by the Glory of Allah) are present in the acts.

Realistically, compartmentalization of religion into Shariah (outer), *Tareeqat* (inner), *Haqeeqat* (Real) etc. is the wrong approach. Religion as such is whole with these parts. It is a book with different chapters. It has chapters of Prayer, Fasting, and Piety etc. Likewise, it has a chapter of *Tasawwuf*. After incorporating all such chapters, religion gets completed and exists like a unique perfume that can never be divided into many.

ED's NOTE:

The global scenario has been changing at a relatively fast pace. The political maneuvers and regime changes have taken a front seat in the global arena. While different views on various motives behind these tactical moves are being juxtaposed, the most commonly highlighted one is the age old doctrine that has shaped the world's geography to what it is now: The Economic Supremacy.

Economic independence and economic wellbeing are the basic goals of not only individuals but at a broader level, all nations and governments strive towards achieving economic stability and independence. This has impacted the mankind in a constructive manner and also otherwise. Man has always lived in a competitive environment and has always believed in "survival of the fittest". Over time, man has developed – rather proved - himself to be superior to all other beings. He has and is continuously making efforts to harness the forces in the galaxy. He has moved from striving for basic needs to self-actualisation: to be aware of what he is capable of doing. This has resulted in wonders in almost all fields of life.

On the contrary, this has also started a mad rush for acquiring all the worldly wealth that can be used to buy the best of everything available. In some instances this has transcended into a greed for amassing wealth and in doing so, the man has bulldozed lives of other human beings and his environment. On a macro level, certain regimes have also shown this tendency.

Amidst this hullabaloo of life and a race to take over the others, man has realized that a balance needs to be struck between the material world and the spiritual realm. Although people have also used this particular desire of man for commercial reasons, a closer look reveals that with every passing day, man struggles for a respite from the rat race he has gotten himself into.

One needs to realize that in the present world, one cannot remain apolitical. Therefore, if one expects a change in the political scenario, one needs to start bringing a change within him. Any nation's policies are made by, and are reflective of, its people and their ideologies; hence a change in person leads to a change in society and resultantly a change at the macro level can be achievable. A very basic form of spirituality where people care for each other and tolerate each other may easily be attained at a national level.

- Talib

EXPLANATION OF MEVLANA RUMI'S (RA) COUPLET:

by: Hasan Nizami Meerza

*Yaad e ou sarmaya e iman bo'ad
Her gada az yaad e ou sultan bo'ad*

His remembrance is the foundation of faith
Beggars are kings due to His remembrance)

Most of the people with a religious inclination, at least, intellectually know the importance of 'Zikr Allah'. However, for the Sufi, 'Zikr' is an indispensable act of devotion. Through *Zikr*, he proceeds to apply real meaning of 'La Ilaha illah' in his day to day life by negating himself while affirming Allah. With constant remembrance of Allah, he not only becomes aware of Allah's presence everywhere but develops a deep understanding that whatever good or bad happens in life comes from Allah which brings an immense strength to his *Qalb* - the spiritual heart. Let me share an event with the same perspective from the life of Dr. Meerza Murtuza Hussain (RA) who is the Shaykh of our Shaykh. On his death bed, Dr. Saheb (RA) uttered some of the most precious words to our Shaykh:

"God is more of a Beloved for us than a Creator and whatsoever comes from the Beloved whether pleasure or pain is acceptable for the lover. Always remember it in any situation and every stage of your life, then life will be a beautiful experience for you. You will see HIM everywhere and you will find HIM everywhere and this is what the purpose of life is!"

While remembering Allah in good and bad times, a seeker ultimately arrives at a spring of inner peace. Quran itself says in Surah *Ra'ad*:

'Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace' - Quran 13: 28

Inner peace creates harmony in daily interactions with others too. Life becomes more of a positive experience rather than a depressing phenomenon.

In the above couplet, Mevlana Rumi (RA) compares 'Remembrance' to "Sarmaya-e-iman" i.e. treasure of faith as it not only brings Allah closer to a remembering heart but contentment in life also follows like a shadow. If not entirely, still one can vouch the validity of this verse by experiencing the glimpse of power of *Zikr* while performing *Zikr-e-Khafi* i.e. *Shaghal* (silently) or *Zikr bil Jahr* (loudly). Such remembrance, out of nowhere, creates a situation, where one feels like a Sultan (King). It is a feeling of complete fulfillment with not a slightest hunger for even a trivial desire. One's demanding nature like that of a *Gada* (Beggar) simply evaporates and he transforms into a *Sultan* (King) i.e. the giver of bounty

IMAM BUSAIRI (RA)

contributed by: Sheeza Asim

Sufi path is a love oriented path, hence its flowering gets quite aptly reflected in the poetry that gushes forth from the burning hearts of the Sufis like Rumi, Hafiz, Attar, Niaz, Bulleh Shah etc. who were consumed in the sweet fire of love, only to be reborn as love incarnations themselves. Likewise, Imam Busairi (RA) started re-living his life after writing a great poem in the praise of none other than Prophet Mohammad (SAW).

This poem is known as *Qaseeda Burdah Shareef* (poem of the mantle). Events that compelled Imam Busairi (RA) to write that poem remind me of the following couplet:

*Dil se jo baat nikalti hai asar rakhti hae
Per nahin, taqat-e-parwaaz mager rakhti hae*

(Whatever comes out of the sincere heart is always effective

Despite not having wings, yet it has a power to fly)

Imam Busairi (RA), who is famous for his 'poem of the mantle', suffered a stroke that left him partially paralysed. Out of sheer desperation and helplessness, he approached Prophet Mohammad (SAW) in the universe of his heart while praying to Allah for his recovery. Such an invocation stirred something within him that gave birth to the immortal poem in praise of Prophet Mohammad (SAW), which is still capable of rejuvenating spiritual hearts.

Once completed, Imam Busairi (RA) would often read the poem to himself, repeating and deriving spiritual strength through timeless words. One night, while asleep, Imam says:

"I was reading the poem in the dream and Prophet (SAW) stood beside me. While listening, Prophet (SAW) touched me with his blessed hand and placed upon me his mantle. Immediately, I woke up and realized that I was healed from my ailment and could easily walk.

I got up and left the house. I had told no one about the poem and the circumstances that made me write that particular poem. Outside, I met a spiritual wayfarer who asked me to give him a copy of the poem that was written in praise of the Prophet (SAW). I asked, 'which poem?' He said, 'The one, you wrote during your illness.' Then, he read the opening lines while saying, 'By God, I heard it in a vision last night recited in front of God's Messenger (SAW). It greatly pleased the Prophet (SAW) and I saw him place his mantle upon you.'

Then, I gave that poem to him and started telling others about it so that all of the listeners and readers could get benefitted from it."

SIMPLY SUFI

contributed by: Shakil Aslam

(An Interview with renowned Sufi singer Hans Raj Hans by Shailaja Tripathi)

A name synonymous with Punjabi folklore and Sufi songs, Hans Raj Hans is as Punjabi by nature as his songs - donning a beard and long curly hair, he is the epitome of the rural Punjab village youth.

Hans Raj Hans, Punjabi folk and Sufi singer reluctantly settles for snacks at Pickwicks, the 24-hour multi-cuisine restaurant at The Claridges. There are two reasons that explain his reluctance — first, he had just eaten in his room and second, food seems to be just a medium to sustain oneself. Nothing to get excited about unlike music and Sufism. He pulsates with joy; eyes sparkle with reverence as he holds forth on the subject in the next one and a half hour over just kathi roll and a glass of orange juice.

"I am not fussy about any kind of food as long as it is vegetarian. I strongly believe in 'jaisa ann vaisa mann' philosophy which is why I eat vegetarian food and not because I am a Sufi singer," says the singer, a day after his performance of Punjabi music at Sangeet Natak Akademi's Desh Parva which concluded this week. His presentation included rich compositions of Sufis and poets, Moinuddin Chisti, Amir Khusrau, Bulleh Shah, Sultan Bahoo, Shah Hussain's folk and Sufi songs and Warish Shah's Heer.

Punjab being the transit point of the Sufi mystics coming from Pakistan, the region developed a distinct genre of Punjabi folk Sufi music. Padma Shri awardee Hans Raj Hans is too a practitioner of the genre. "The amalgamation was easy because both revolved around the daily life and the common people. While a folk singer loved an ordinary man, a Sufi was drawn towards that higher force. Simple hummable tunes and easy language also facilitated this merger," he notes.

Sufism was all around as he grew up in a village called Shafipur near Jalandhar in Punjab. "Sufi dervish Shafi Muhammad founded it. There are dargahs and masjids all around. But not everybody got influenced by Sufism the way I did. To surrender yourself unconditionally is what Sufism is about and I got a glimpse of that while working with Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Saheb. He completely surrendered to music. He ate less, slept less, talked less but only concentrated on his music. I met him first at the Asian Song Contest in 1984, in England. He was a judge and so was I. Once, he wore a kurta inside out and when I pointed that out, he touched his throat and said, 'this is the only design I (continued on page 3)...."

RUMI's CORNER

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE SUFI PATH?

A question arises naturally, as to why follow the Sufi path, when one is already following the basic tenets of Islam? What is so different about it? There is nothing different about it rather it is inherent part and parcel of Islam. How?

First of all, it is said in the Quran:

Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides --- (4:191)

In order to arrive at such a state where one becomes capable of remembering Allah at all times, *Shaghal* (silent Zikr) or other Sufi exercises play a major role because Wudu (ablution) is not needed beforehand and no particular timing or posture is required for taking part in such spiritual practices.

Secondly, *Shaghal* is not recited rather imbibed as *khayal* (visual thought) within, through the *Qalb* (spiritual heart). Our Peer-O-Murshed once said, "*Shaghal* is to be felt like an ever-increasing rippling effect just like the ever-expanding vibrations of the Sitar, when the musician touches the string."

As poetically said by Hazrat Amir Khusro (RA):

Tan rabab mun theekri, so ragein bhaee sub taar
Mera rom rom sur daet hai so bajet naam tehaar

My body is Rabab*, my heart is mizrab**!
My veins create rhythm (with the pounding of heart)
Consequently my whole being tunes in and sings your name

*Stringed musical instrument

** Plectrum

Similarly Sultan Bahu (RA) says:

Alif Allah chambay de booti, Murshed mun wich laaee hu
Nafee asbaat da panee milya, her rugay her jae hu
Ander booti mushk machaya, jaan phullan te aae hu
Jeevay Murshed kaamil Bahu ,jain eh booti laee hu

My Master has planted in my heart the jasmine of Allah's name.

Both my denial (that the Creation is Real) and affirmation (embracing of God as the only Reality), have nourished the seedling down to its core.

When the buds of mystery unfolded into the blossoms of revelation, my entire being was filled with God's fragrance.

May the Perfect Master who planted this jasmine in my heart be ever blessed, O Bahu!

A GHAZAL BY DR. IKHTIYAR HUSSAIN MEERZA - KAIF

translated by: Hasan Nizami Meerza

Gum houn tere khayaal mein mujh ko jahan sae kya

Mera jahan hai tu mujhay matlab yahan sae kya

Tum per hazaar jaanein bhi qurban houn mere dost

Tum meri zindagee ho mujhe apnee jaan sae kya

Kerta houn tumko sajda jahan bhee kahin ho tum

Daer o Haram sae kya mujhe dasht-o-makan sae kya

Shikwa mein kya karun ya talab tum sae kya karun

Tum jaantay ho jab tou mein boloun zabaan sae kya

Sajdoun ko maeray ab tou mila hai yehan qarar

Sir mera ab uthay ga teray aastan sae kya

Azad hoon mein waqt o jagah ki girift sae Hoon ayn tera mujh ko zaman o makan sae kya

Manzil yehi hai pohoncha jo qadmon tak aapke

Duniya o deen sae kya mujhe Hur o Jinan sae kya

Daeta hun jaan tum pae silae sae gharaz nahin

Sauda-e ishq mein mujhe soud-o-ziyaa sae kya

Thha Kaif kaun koe bhi ab jaanta nahin

Tujh par mita ho jo usae naam-o-nishan sae kya

Lost in your thoughts, I am disconnected from the world

You are my universe! Who cares about anything else?

I will sacrifice all my lives for you my friend

You are my life; why should I care about mine

I prostrate before you, wherever you are

Whether a temple or Kaaba, be it desert or dwelling

What to complain and what to demand from you

You are all knowing, so why to voice any request

My prostrations have found their serenity at your place

Will I ever lift my head now from your altar

I am free from the hold of time and place

I am You! Time and space are meaningless to me

I reached my destiny; the feet of my beloved

Who cares about his faith & this world and nymphs & paradise?

I sacrifice my life for you without expecting any return

Who cares about profit or loss in the business of love?

No one knows now who Kaif was!

Whoever is lost in You does not need name and fame

SIMPLY SUFI

.... (continued from Page 2)

am concerned about", remembers Hans who worked with the legendary singer Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in Kachchay Dhaagay. Khan, as the music director of the film had roped in Hans to do playback for 'Ishq Di Gali Vichon Koi Koi Langda.'

While Hans considers Ustad Puran Shah Koti to be his spiritual guru, Ustad Salamat Ali Khan, Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan are the singers from whom he learnt the finer nuances of his art. "It takes me back to my childhood days when my mother would make a roll of roti with vegetables or butter inside," quips the singer as he at last, takes his first bite of the kathi roll.

Commenting on the rich food tradition of Punjab, he says, "There was a reason for it to be spicy and heavy. People used to work hard in their fields and it was thus easy to digest such kind of food. But as they gradually made money, stopped working on the fields,

instead hired people and now they are pot-bellied, suffer from the same diseases the urban people do," says the artiste.

Continuing with his few and far in between outings in Bollywood, Hans' voice will be now be heard in an upcoming Akshay Kumar starrer Patiala House. The distance between him and Bollywood is maintained by his packed schedule of concerts and tours, around the year.

"And also the visits to dargahs and shrines of the sufi mystics. I have been to Baba Bulleh Shah's mazar and one of the senior most Sufi Data Ganj Baksh's shrine. I sit and meditate and observe the devotees. I have eaten churi ka parshad at Heer's mazar and seen Shah Inayat's mazar in Lahore. When I don't feel like performing, you can find me in such places. And I feel more confident when I sing their compositions," tells the singer, who is working on a Sufi album.

(This interview was published in New Delhi in daily "The Hindu" on October 13, 2010)

A FINGER POINTING TOWARDS THE MOON

by: Hasan Nizami Meerza

In a way 'God' is just a word. Since, words are vehicles of thoughts; every believer has his own concept of God depending on his religious and cultural upbringing. Usually, each one of us turns into a believer from the so-called knowledge of others. One may not even be thirsty but drinks water out of societal pressure; may not be hungry but eats under compulsion. Hence, people are vomiting all around in the name of beliefs and religions. If one is honest then reality is:

Khuda kae hukm sae Kaabe ka kar raha hoon tawaaf

Khuda kae ghar mein khuda hai kahan khuda jaane

- Dr. Ikhtiyar Hussain Meerza – Kaif

(I am circumambulating Ka'aba by the order of God.

However, only God know; where God is, in His own house?)

This is the basic problem with most believers of the established religions that they consider veil of words as the ultimate reality without realizing a simple fact that words can never replace 'Niyat' or 'attitude of prayerfulness'. As a matter of fact, on the basis of words, sects upon sects keep taking birth. Rigidity in religious ideas also occurs due to too much indoctrination, which results only due to play of words. Priest class/ Maulvis try to fit same shoes in every foot. Obviously, such words based ideology can only give rise to psychological pain where slogan of 'I am right, others are wrong' sow the seeds of violence in the domains of their influence.

In this context, Mevlana Rumi (RA) has told an anecdote of four people who wanted to buy fruit but only had one dinar. They all wanted to buy grapes but could not communicate with each other as they spoke different languages. A fight ensued as they only had one way of recognizing the fruit i.e. through the 'word' associated with their respective languages. A wise individual was able to reconcile their differences and made everyone happy by buying grapes from that single dinar. Likewise, followers of a particular religion or a religious group close their eyes for other religious sects/groups without realizing the simple fact that people belonging to any religion or sect try in their own way to reach God. Such isolated beliefs only give rise to hate, which then spreads like a fire.

Spiritual traditions, which reflect the inner core of religions, approach God in a different way altogether i.e. by going beyond the word-based ritualism. For instance, in our Sufi order, a religious ceremony is held on frequent basis with the beginning of Quranic recitation in a meaningful pattern. Subsequently, we

remember the lineage tree of the Sufi order starting with the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) to the current Shaykh of the order, as such an invocation creates atmosphere of Baraka and peace. Following the discourse by our Shaykh, we sit silently to find our connection with the Universe of silence i.e. a 'word-less' world. Such an experience can only be tasted and can never be revealed through speech or words. Hazrat Pir-O-Murshed says in this context:

Tuloo-e-subha ki shayad naveed mil jaye

Ufaq ki simt mein nazrein jamaye betha hoon

(Perhaps, I get good news of the new dawn, (as) I am staring unswerving towards the horizon.)

Above couplet further indicates by *tuloo-e-subha* i.e. 'new dawn' that the 'Universe of silence' is full of light (*Noor*). A connection with such a universe is actually a connection with Allah because it is said in the Quran 24:35: Allah is the Light (Nur) of heavens and earth

Ufaq i.e. horizon denotes a meeting point of sky and earth which metaphorically points to

Alam-e-Barzakh or *Haqeeqat-e-Mohammadi* (SAW). In this light, above couplet discloses the secret of silence where emphasis remains on *Haqeeqat-e-Mohammadi* (SAW) in order to reach Allah. This is how; Sufis convey spiritual messages metaphorically through poetry to avoid word-based disclosure of something extraordinarily subtle.

Such a spiritual practice in a silent backdrop prepares an individual to offer *Salat* in a more meaningful manner too. It brings him in tune with the *Qalb*, otherwise mind keeps on projecting innumerable thoughts like cloud of smoke causing hindrance in the clear and straight path leading towards the open sky of Truth or *Nur-Allah*.

A Hadith states that *Salat* without presence of the heart (*Huzoor-e-Qalb*) does not lead to the Truth. In order to develop presence of the heart, single-mindedness is needed which is possible only when inward silence provides necessary strength to focus in the solitary direction of remembering Allah and that is the sole purpose of performing prayers. This is why; *Salat* is mentioned as the '*Mai'raj-ul-Momineen*' i.e. it spiritually uplifts believers.

However, such a silence should not be taken in an ordinary sense of the word like a dull graveyard silence. It rather throbs with life making one rise above the realm of chattering thoughts. It is the silence that one experiences while looking at the ever expanding ripples found in a peaceful lake surrounded with tall trees; movement of eyes; dive of an eagle from a peak to a valley; smiling lips to name a few.

Once, Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani (RA) sat silently in the company of a visitor. The visitor waited and waited but Hazrat did not utter a word. As he came to listen to the words of wisdom, felt quite disappointed.

Later upon enquiry, Hazrat revealed that when he could not be benefitted by my silence, how he would be helped by the spoken word.

Basically, silence reflects a state of realization where one goes beyond his ever babbling mind that spews forth thoughts upon thoughts. Consequently, he experiences inner calmness culminating in a strong feeling of freedom making him aware that it is only his limited perception of the totality based on thoughts that causes him feeling like an isolated being and fastens him to a world of labels. In the same context, above couplet conveys a message for seekers on the Sufi path that the spiritual eye opens up only in an immaculate environment, while silently remembering *Haqiqat-e-Mohammadi* (SAW).

With continuous practice, one emerges out of his deep sleep like state of spiritual confinement and experiences a new dawn where a new dimension emerges of the same yet not the same universe.

COUPLETS BY HAZRAT SHAH NIYAZ BE NIYAZ (RA)

Jabhi jaa kay maktab-e-ishq mein sabaq-e-maqam e fana liya

Jo likha parrha thha Niyaz nae woh saaf dil say bhula diya

When I took the lesson about the State of 'Annihilation in God' from the school of Love. Whatever I studied Niyaz, it was completely forgotten

Tu nay apna jalwa dikhanay ko jo naqab munh sae uttha diya

Wahin mehv-e-hairat e baykhudi mujhe aaina sa bana diya

In order to show your splendour, when you lifted veil from the face

I was awe struck and in a state of selflessness transformed into your mirror

Malk e khuda mein yaaro abaad hein tou hum hein

Ta'ameer e dou jahan key bunyaad hein tou hum hein

O friend, in kingdom of God, inhabitants we are Foundation of both the worlds, truly we are

Bul-hawas paaoun na rakhiyo kabhi is raah kay beech

Koocha-e-ishq hai yeh reh guzar e aam nahin

O slave of desires, do not step on this pathway. It is not an ordinary path but leads to the home of love.

Aar kya hai tujhay logoun ke malammat say Niyaz Aashiqoun mein tu akaila he tou badnaam nahin

Why are you concerned Niyaz about the accusations of people.

Among lovers, you are not the only shunned one.

RIDDLES BY HAZRAT AMIR

KHUSRO (RA)

contributed by: Asim Meerza

Hazrat Amir Khusro (RA) was a legend, an institution of the spirituality where rich Sufi heritage of music, poetry, folklores, *dou-sukhane* (two liner riddles), *keh-mukarni* (say and deny riddles) and Hindvi *pehalees* (riddles with answers within) found home. He was like a multifaceted diamond whose every dimension was out of this world. Here, I like to share some of his Hindvi riddles* where answer lies hidden within the question:

1) *Nar naari kehlaati hai,
aur bin warsha jal jati hai;
Purkh say aaway purkh mein jaai,
na di kisi nay boojh bataai.*

Is known by both masculine and feminine names,
And lightens up (or burns up) without rain;
Originates in timelessness and goes into timelessness,**

2) *Pawan chalat weh dehe badhavay
Jal peevat weh jeev ganvavay
Hai weh piyari sundar naar,
Naar nahin par hai weh naar.*

With the blow of wind she flares up,
And dies as soon as she drinks water;
Even though she is a pretty woman,
She's not a woman, though she's feminine.

3) *Beeson ka sir kaat liya,
Naa maara naa khun kiya.*

It has beheaded twenties of people,
But neither killed nor shed any blood.

4) *Saawan bhaadon bahut chalat hai
Maagh poos mein thodi,
Amir Khusrau yun kahay,
Tu boojh paheli mori.*

It moves mostly in the rains,
Not much in winter, summer;
So says Amir Khusrau,
You solve this riddle of mine.

5) *Ek purukh hay sunder moorat,
jo dekhay woh usi ki soorat;
Fikr paheli paayi na,
boojhan laaga aayi na.*

This fellow is beautiful like an idol,
whoever sees him, looks like him;
Haven't understood this riddle,
am guessing but can't figure out.

Answers:

1) *Nadi-Stream* 2) *Naar-Fire* 3) *Naakhun-Nail* 4) *Mori-Stream* 5) *Aayina-Mirror*

* taken from Amir Khusro website compiled by Yousuf Saeed

** translation modified

DROPS OF RAIN

contributed by: Muhammad Tauseef Ansari

(Below are extracts from a chain of emails between the group members of Agha Rang)

Tauseef Ansari wrote:

It was a pleasure reading the article on Ashfaq Ahmed. He sure was a simple man of love and devotion with a lot of humbleness. He used to be on a program called *Zaviya* (perspective) where he discussed all about humanitarian issues and love of God. One anecdote from his life that has stuck to my mind and has always provided me with a unique insight is given below (in Ishfaq Ahmed's own words):

"I used to go to *Noor waloun ka dera* and to the baba (Sufi) there on a regular basis. A man also used to visit who carried a disheveled appearance and obviously was quite poor. He also was a regular visitor and from a much longer time than me. After the *dars* (spiritual discourse) at the *dera*, he would get up and align all the shoes parked outside the room by the attendees. He used to do it every day. He inspired me a lot and I used to think that this guy has killed his ego and is doing a task many would not even think of.

One day when the discussion at the *dera* finished, I got up, under the inspiration from that man, to align the shoes outside the room. As soon as I started it, the *baba* at the *dera* called for me to stop immediately. I went to him and asked why did he stop me and not that man from the same task? He replied that for the person who does it regularly, it further annihilates his ego and he does it selflessly whereas this act, if done by me, would boost my ego further as I would have the thought in my mind that "I" Ashfaq Ahmed, a man of good stature is doing such a low kind of job. This would serve as a deterrent in achieving my real goal. So the act that looked humble on someone else would have a completely opposite effect for me. One should also do these things without a hint of boosting their ego or with their "I" being involved."

This reminded me of a similar anecdote from Hazrat Agha Saheb (RA)'s life where carrot juice was a medicine for a person with an ailment whereas it did completely the opposite to a person having similar signs of illness.

In Response, Rumi Ikhtiyari wrote:

Dear Tauseef and All,

An anecdote is mentioned on our website:

Shibli (RA) went to visit Junaid (RA). The wife of Junaid (RA) was about to conceal herself modestly behind a screen. Junaid (RA) said, 'Stay where you are - Shibli is absent.' At that moment, Shibli (RA) began to

weep. Junaid (RA) said to his wife, 'you must now be absent, for Shibli has returned'.

Ego is the central theme of our lives, yet we have to go beyond. It is like a vehicle that is only to be used for reaching the base of a mountain. Then it has to be left behind for onward journey towards the peak of the mountain. We have to become light, subtle, burden-less for moving higher.

Ego gives a false perception of permanence. Though, we observe that everything is in a state of flux, but power of ego belittle that observation and project us to be living forever as we are, if not in this world then in the other world. Ego based desires continue to be projected in heaven. Permanence can only be attributed to Perfection. Only a Perfect entity needs not be changed, otherwise everything is evolving towards perfection. The tension within us, a longing for something more is actually a spiritual thirst for perfection. But, ego colours it in a worldly way. This is why, in every religion, prescribed methods of prayers become just plain rituals feeding more to ego than a spiritual cause. Having said that, I do not mean to undermine the importance of Shariat, but without Tariqat (spirituality) it does not bear any fruits. Look at the mess around and you will see what I am saying!

Yes, it has been a way of Sufi Shaikhs to determine the spiritual condition of a disciple and prescribe certain practices accordingly. Just as a pill for headache cannot treat stomach ulcers, likewise same practices cannot be given to everyone. A thousand rupees do not mean the same for a millionaire and a poor person. Fasting has a different effect on a dieting body as compared to the one indulgent in three meals a day. Due to this, *Baba* did not assign the same practice to Ishfaq Ahmed, as he could see it as a hindrance. This event has reminded me of a gentleman whom I found doing dishes at the canteen of the Sufi Centre in NY. Later, I came to know that he was doing Doctorate from The Cornell University, NY.

ED's NOTE:

Un-intentional delay and further delay in coming up with this issue of Newsletter goes parallel with the story of a villager who left his tiny village and moved to a city for better prospects. Just as in the larger cities, time gets shorter while days get longer, likewise our group of contributors had to turn the clock backwards in order to find time for this creative exercise. Again, we as a group try our best to come up with original pieces of writing rather than cutting and pasting from the different sources, hence it becomes an uphill task to divert attention from our silent and not so silent world for finding genuine spiritual material.

احوال عرس مبارک حضرت قبلہ ڈاکٹر شاہ میر زامر تفضلی حسینؒ

صوفیائے کرام کے تذکرے خلیق اللہ کی رشد و ہدایت اور عاشقین صادقین کے لئے بالیدگی، روح اور رہنمائی کا موجب ہوتے ہیں۔ اور ان بزرگوں کی تاریخ، عظمتِ اسلام کی تاریخ ہے۔ آج ہم جس عظیم صوفی بزرگ کے ”عرس مبارک“ کا تذکرہ کر رہے ہیں ان کا نام نامی اسم گرامی امام العاشقین، شریعت پناہ، مرشدی و مولائی حضرت قبلہ ڈاکٹر شاہ میر زامر تفضلی حسین نیازی، نظامی، آغائی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ ہے۔ آپ کے والد مرشد گرامی حضرت شاہ میرزا آغا محمد، حضرت شاہ نیاز بریلوی کے بڑے فرزند و جانشین حضرت شاہ نظام الدین حسینؒ کے خلیفہ تھے اور حضرت قبلہ ڈاکٹر صاحب علیہ الرحمۃ کو حضور سراج السالکینؒ نے خلافت سے نوازا تھا۔

حضرت قبلہ ڈاکٹر شاہ میر زامر تفضلی حسین قدس سرہ العزیز کا عرس مبارک سال گذشتہ کی طرح اس سال بھی انتہائی عقیدت و احترام کے ساتھ منایا گیا۔ اور بیرون ملک مقیم مریدین و اعزاء کو عرس مبارک کی تقریبات انٹرنیٹ پر دکھانے کا اہتمام بھی کیا گیا تھا۔ کراچی، میں سرد موسم و سیاسی سرگرمیوں کے باوجود خاصی تعداد میں لوگوں نے شرکت کی۔ عرس مبارک میں شرکت کے لئے حسب سابق ”دعوت نامے“، اعزاء، داخل سلسلہ حضرات و احباب میں تقسیم کئے گئے اور کچھ دعوت نامے کو بریسروس کے ذریعہ بھجوادئیے گئے۔ دعوت ناموں کی تقسیم کا کام ۸ محرم الحرام کی فاتحہ سے ہی شروع کر دیا گیا تھا۔ عرس شریف کے دیگر کام نقیب الاولیاء جناب محمد سمیع صاحب کی زیر نگرانی سرانجام پائے۔ ہمارے پیرو مرشد حضرت قبلہ ڈاکٹر شاہ میرزا اختیار حسین مدظلہ عالی جنوری ۲۰۱۲ کے شروع میں جہلو رائڈ یا تشریف لے جا رہے ہیں۔ اس لئے عرس مبارک تاریخ مقررہ سے قبل یعنی ۲۳ دسمبر ۲۰۱۱ء بروز ہفتہ کو منعقد ہوا۔

دوسرے روز یعنی مورخہ ۲۳ دسمبر ۲۰۱۱ء کی صبح ہی سے تنظیمین ”دربار اختیار یہ“ پہنچ گئے تھے۔ انہوں نے حسب سابق اپنی ذمہ داریاں سنبھال لیں تھیں۔ موسم سرد ہونے کی وجہ سے موجودہ سماج خانہ کی جگہ کو قناتوں اور شامیانہ سے مکمل طور پر بند کر دیا گیا تھا صرف آمد و رفت کی جگہ کو کھلا رکھا گیا تھا۔ مرکزی دروازہ سے راہداری تک اور سماج خانہ کو برقی قتموں سے سجایا گیا تھا جو انتہائی دلکش منظر پیش کر رہا تھا۔ سرکار عالی کی مسند شریف کے عقب میں حضرت صاحب قبلہ اور حضرت قبلہ ڈاکٹر صاحب علیہ الرحمہ کے مزارات کے بڑے بینرز آویزاں کئے گئے تھے مرکزی دروازے سے داخل ہوتے ہی بائیں جانب کتابوں کا ایشال لگایا گیا تھا جو برقی قتموں سے جگمگا رہا تھا جہاں کتابوں کے علاوہ بچوں کے کھانے پینے کی چیزیں وغیرہ رکھی گئیں تھیں اور دائیں جانب کھانے کی دیگیں اور میزیں رکھی تھیں تاکہ کھانے کو ڈشوں میں صحیح طور پر نکالا اور تقسیم کیا جاسکے۔

حضرت قبلہ سرکارِ عالی مدظلہ وقت مقررہ پر مندرجہ پر رونق افروز ہوئے بعد ادا کی گئی نماز عشاء قرآن خوانی شروع ہوئی جو تقریباً ۹ بجے تک جاری رہی۔ پروگرام کے مطابق ۹ بجے شب سماع شروع ہونا تھا لیکن ٹریفک کے مسائل و دیگر وجوہات کی بناء پر جناب عبداللہ نیازی قوال و ہمنوا وقت پر نہیں پہنچ سکے۔ چنانچہ سماع ۱۵ منٹ کی تاخیر سے شروع ہوا۔ سماع کی ابتدا قبول سے ہوئی۔ اس کے بعد نعت شریف و دیگر صوفیانہ کلام پیش کیا۔ آخر میں حسب دستور رنگ پڑھا گیا۔ کلام گو کہ نئے نہیں پڑھے گئے لیکن عبداللہ نیازی کی گائیکی نے محفل میں رنگ جمادیا تھا بالخصوص ڈھول کی تھاپ نے سونے پہ سہاگہ کا کام کیا تھا۔ ہر شخص جو سماعت تھا۔ ایک روحانی کیف تھا جو سب پر چھایا ہوا تھا اور حضرت قبلہ سرکارِ عالی مدظلہ کے تہنیت نے اسے دو آتشہ بنا دیا تھا۔ لیکن سرکارِ عالی نے دو دروازے آئے ہوئے لوگوں کی خاطر اور موسم کی وجہ سے ساڑھے دس بجے رنگ پڑھنے کو کہہ دیا تھا۔ قابل ذکر بات یہ ہے کہ سماع کے دوران آداب محفل کا خاص طور پر خیال رکھا گیا کیونکہ برادرانِ طریقت کے علاوہ احباب و مشائخ بھی نہایت محفل ہوتے ہیں۔ محفل سماع کے علاوہ بھی ہمارے یہاں کی تقریبات میں تہذیب و تمیز کو ملحوظ رکھا جاتا ہے۔ فاتحہ خوانی کے وقت طعام تہزک کے ساتھ خوشبو کے لئے عطر اور چومک روشن کر کے رکھی جاتی ہے کیونکہ یہ طریقہ سلسلہ چشتیہ میں رائج ہے اور خاندان نیازیہ میں بھی یہی طریقہ رائج ہے۔ فاتحہ خوانی کے بعد طعام تہزک کا اہتمام کیا گیا۔ خواتین اور مردوں میں ایک ساتھ کھانا کھلایا گیا۔ آخر میں منتظمین کے لئے دسترخواں لگایا گیا۔ کھانے سے فراغت پانے کے بعد خواتین نے سرکارِ عالی کی خدمت اقدس میں قدمبوسی کا شرف حاصل کیا۔ سرکارِ عالی شفقت و محبت کے ساتھ حسن سلوک سے پیش آرہے تھے اور دعاؤں سے نوازتے رہے۔ حسب سابق برادرانِ طریقت کی واپسی کے لئے بس کا انتظام کیا گیا تھا۔ رات کافی ہوگئی تھی اور سردی بھی تھی۔ اس لئے لوگوں نے سرکارِ عالی سے بعد قدمبوسی اجازت حاصل کی۔ کچھ دیر بعد سرکارِ عالی بھی گھر کے لئے تشریف لے گئے۔ کچھ دیر بعد بقیہ کچھ اعضاء نے بھی اجازت حاصل کی اور یوں یہ پرسکونہ اور باوقار تقریب اختتام پذیر ہوئی۔ منتظمین تمام سامان سمیٹنے کے لئے دیر تک ”دربار اختیار“ میں ہوتے ہیں چنانچہ بقیہ خواتین و حضرات بھی اپنے گھروں کے لئے روانہ ہو گئے اور یوں یہ بابرکت محفل ان دعاؤں کے ساتھ اختتام پذیر ہوئی۔

آباد رہے ساقی، دائم تیرا میخانہ

از

جمیل احمد اختیاری