

اسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

THE BOOK  
OF  
TAWHID

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Text of Qur'an: taken from  
the Algerian State Edition of Imam Warsh.

English meanings: from the Emirates-approved  
text of the Hajjis Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley.

## PREFACE

Due to the interregnum, soon, inshallah, to be brought to an end, which marks the period from which Islamic governance was interrupted, that is to say in the Mughal and Osmanli Dawlets, we, the Muslim World Community, experience Islam without its utterly necessary dimension of political command. One oddly regrettable result of this has been that we have started to take our Imams as leaders, making them into a priesthood, and allowing them to rule us like a slave population, which, having no power over either war or wealth, allow themselves to be commanded in the private matters of births, marriages and deaths. In this sense our Muslim population have taken on the form of a totally different religion, Shi'ism. The proof of this is that we have allowed the kuffar to

define us as belonging to “Sunni Islam”, as if accepting their definition that the Islamic religion has historically been split into two sects. There can only be one Deen al-Haqq, and it has Divine authorisation to be called Islam. Allah the Exalted says in Surat al-Ma’ida (5:3):

إِلْيَوْمَ يَبِيسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا  
تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Today the kuffar have despaired of overcoming your deen.  
So do not be afraid of them but be afraid of Me.  
Today I have perfected your deen for you  
and completed My blessing upon you  
and I am pleased with Islam as a deen for you.

Another result of this is, that in treating the Imam as an Authority, rather than that utterly replaceable figure whose noble task is to lead the Salat, the members of the Jama’at have lost that dynamic relationship with the text of the Qur’an on which a vibrant Islamic community has to be founded. In our books of Seerat and Hadith we find that the Sahaba used to gather after Fajr, and those among them who knew some Qur’an would recite it, after which they would reflect in order to see how they could apply its guidance to the day’s affairs.

It was in that spirit that we decided to hold a series of gatherings in order to give a start to this dynamic relationship between the Jama’at and the Book of Allah. In

reviving this Madinan ‘Amal, it was only fitting that we should begin the matter by extracting from the Qur’an itself the clear explications of Allah, glory be to Him, about Himself, that is, the knowledge of Tawhid.

So it was that in these nine gatherings, each one of the Fuqara, men and women, sat with the Qur’an in front of them, and at every reference to the Qur’an in the text which follows, the Jama’at would themselves look up the Ayats, and they would also be recited by our Hafidh. As a result, by the end of the study series the group felt at home with handling the Qur’an, looking it up, and finding the Surat and the Ayat. One could say that the Jama’at, in this small event, had recovered for themselves the Clear Book which had, after all, been sent down from Allah, glory be to Him, for them, and not just some priestly class who used it to assure them a living, to take it out in the rituals of birth, marriage and death, and even, *astaghfirullah*, hold it over the householder’s head when he left the house on a journey!

One could add a further result to this matter. It is precisely this Jama’at that has most fully grasped that the paid Imams (a Makruh situation in the Shari’at) have neither taught, nor called for, nor activated the need for a community to be governed by an Amir, and that the Amir, in turn, must impose with his Zakat Collectors that collected Zakat without which there simply is no Islam at all.

Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi

# I

MARCH 27<sup>TH</sup> 2004

We will Look at Surat al-Ahzab (33:34-35).

وَأذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ  
مِنَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾  
إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ  
وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ  
وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ  
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّامِتِينَ وَالصَّامِتَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ  
فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا  
وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

And remember the Signs of Allah  
and the wise words  
which are recited in your rooms.  
Allah is All-Pervading, All-Aware.

Men and women who are Muslims,  
men and women who are muminun,  
men and women who are obedient,  
men and women who are truthful,  
men and women who are steadfast,  
men and women who are humble,  
men and women who give sadaqa,  
men and women who fast,  
men and women who guard their private parts,  
men and women who remember Allah much:  
Allah has prepared forgiveness for them  
and an immense reward.

Regarding “Men and women who remember Allah much,” the Arabic term used there is “Dhikr.” It is “Men and women who do dhikr of Allah,” men and women who do the act of remembering.

وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا  
وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Men and women who remember Allah much:  
Allah has prepared forgiveness for them  
and an immense reward.



Here we have the statement that is the defining ayat of the fuqara and the faqirat, this ayat defines them.

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ  
 مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And remember the Signs of Allah  
 and the wise words  
 which are recited in your rooms.  
 Allah is All-Pervading, All-Aware.

So Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, mentions the worship that you do – not in the mosque – but the worship that you do privately, and He begins in this ayat from that. This already distinguishes these muminun and muminat who have a special place with Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ  
 مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And remember the Signs of Allah  
 and the wise words  
 which are recited in your rooms.  
 Allah is All-Pervading, All-Aware.

“Buyut” here has been translated as “rooms”, and that is interesting because if you go to Surat an-Nur (24:36):

فِي بُيُوتٍ إِذْنُ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ  
وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا بِاسْمِهِ وَيُسَبَّحَ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾

The translation is: “In houses which Allah has permitted to be built,” but it is not so much ‘houses’ – you could almost say zawiyyas. It is the place where people have set themselves apart to do dhikr of Allah, subhanahu wa ta’ala.

Now Allah specifies the spiritual, ruhani qualities of these special people in the next ayat:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ  
وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ  
وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ  
وَالْمُنْتَصِدِقَاتِ وَالصَّيِّمِينَ وَالصَّيِّمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ  
فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا  
وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٧﴾

Men and women who are Muslims,  
men and women who are mumininun,  
men and women who are obedient,  
men and women who are truthful,  
men and women who are steadfast,  
men and women who are humble,  
men and women who give sadaqa,

men and women who fast,  
 men and women who guard their private parts,  
 men and women who remember Allah much:  
 Allah has prepared forgiveness for them  
 and an immense reward.

So Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, has meant that for these people, there is something prepared for them. They have a reward. This group of people have the reward with Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. They have forgiveness and a vast reward. What would be the vast reward after forgiveness? For the common people it would be like the bill being paid. But there is more than that, there is a vast reward. With Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, there is only one thing that would be fitting for the people He has defined and that would be Ma'rifa. The reward of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, is Ma'rifa.

The Arabic word for reward is 'ajra'. This word comes again and again in the Qur'an, and it is to do with this contract Allah has made with the special mumminun, the ones who are picked out, the ones who are elevated, and this is the vast reward.

Now we look at Surat al-'Ankabut (29:45):

أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
 وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ نَهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ  
 وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book  
and establish Salat.

Salat precludes indecency and wrongdoing.

And remembrance of Allah is greater still.

Allah knows what you do.

أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book  
and establish Salat.

So the first order is the recitation of Qur'an. Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, puts the two together because the Salat implies the recitation of Qur'an, thus it is really one thing. This, again, is the command to Salat which has built into it the recitation of the Book. There are three stages, and this is the first stage. The next stage is:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Salat precludes indecency and wrongdoing.

Having established that, Allah then puts another level on to constructing the complete human being. The next level is, "Salat precludes indecency and wrongdoing," so the moral behaviour cannot be imposed on him if you have not already established the recitation of Qur'an, and the Salat. Then you can impose on man the correct moral behaviour. It is as if the kuffar, who are nowadays attacking Islam, were saying that we are harsh with people, and in fact you could say that people in Arabia are harsh with their own people because they have not

established the recitation of Qur'an which leads to the understanding of its meaning, and the Salat – so then they can ask of their people to have a moral behaviour and if they do not, with that situation the Shari'ah is there to put the limits on human behaviour. Human behaviour has to be limited, otherwise man will go to the extremes of destruction.

وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

And remembrance of Allah is greater still.

So the highest aspect of this is that you are now another type of human being. You are people who make Salat, who worship Allah with the knowledge of the words of Qur'an, and therefore you have taken on this correct behaviour – but greater is the dhikr of Allah. So that which gives you access to Ma'rifatullah is the highest aspect of the human being. Then we come to the inescapable reality of the Muslim situation:

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

Allah knows what you do.

The dynamic of this superior being, the Muslim – that is superior to the kuffar – is that he knows that Allah knows what he does. This is another kind of being. The Wird as-Sahl, of the great Sufi of the East, Sahl at-Tustari was from Qur'an:

اللَّهُ مَعِيَ اللَّهُ نَاطِرٌ إِلَيَّ اللَّهُ شَاهِدٌ عَلَيَّ

Allah is with me, Allah sees me,  
Allah is the Witness of my acts.

This is what made him have direct experience, 'Ilm al-laduni, of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Now we go to Surat al-Baqara (2:152):

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

Remember Me – I will remember you.  
Give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful.

This ayat is an ayat 'adhim because this is a very high thing that Allah is telling the muminun. Look at the construction:

فَاذْكُرُونِي

Remember Me,

أَذْكُرْكُمْ

I will remember you.

It has exactly the same construct but is like a mirror image of it. It is like saying “If we remember Him, He remembers us” – and the Sufis say, “Who is the rememberer?” Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says, “Remember Me and I remember you.” So the lover becomes the beloved. Who is the lover and who is the beloved? This is the secret, this is the very heart of what can be spoken,

because beyond that you cannot say. But Allah, subhana-hu wa ta'ala, has openly said in the Qur'an that the lover is the beloved and the beloved is the lover. "Remember Me – I will remember You." Love Me and I will love you.

Let us look now at Surat al-Muzzammil (73:8-9):

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿٨﴾ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ  
وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

Remember the Name of your Lord,  
and devote yourself to Him completely.

Lord of the East and West –  
there is no god but Him –  
so take Him as your Guardian.

This is the command. This is what runs through the Qur'an. Remember that the Qur'an is full of very ferocious things, terrible things – it is full of these warnings to the kuffar about the Fire, about the destruction of cities, about the punishment of Allah, about how He will not allow these deviations of the human beings and how in every age He has smashed them. But then underneath this running all the time is this message to the muminun: "Allah has prepared forgiveness for them and an immense reward." This is what you have to do. This is your business. "Remember the Name of your Lord." Dhikr is the order on these ones who are the elite, and the elite of the elite is to be people who live in dhikr. They are created for dhikr because Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says in Surat adh-Dhariyat (51:56):

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي ﴿٥٦﴾

I only created jinn and man to worship Me.

This is the order from Allah. This is what you are created for, and is what only these special people have understood.

وَادْكُرْ إِسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلاً ﴿٨﴾

Remember the Name of your Lord,  
and devote yourself to Him completely.

Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says: "Devote yourself to Him completely," which means you do nothing else! The people who did not have the Sirat al-Mustaqim would think therefore that they had to go up into a mountain and stand on one leg, and that they had to shut themselves off from the world in order to do this thing. But Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, explains in Surat al-'Imran (3:191):

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ

...those who remember Allah, standing,  
sitting and lying on their sides.

This means that in every situation you remember Allah. Also Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says in Surat an-Nur (24:37):

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ



...not distracted by trade or commerce  
from the remembrance of Allah.

So trading, doing business, does not distract you from the remembrance of Allah. So this order: “Devote yourself to Him completely,” means that you live in the Presence of Allah, the Hadrat ar-Rabbani in every situation.

If you look at the Diwan of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib, radiyallahu ‘anhu, he says that the thing which stands in your way is your nafs. If you remember yourself, you are forgetting Allah. Surat al-‘Asr (103):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
وَالْعَصْرِ ① إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ② إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ ③

In the name of Allah, All-Merciful, Most Merciful  
By the Late Afternoon, truly man is in loss –  
except for those who have Iman and do right actions  
and urge each other to the truth  
and urge each other to steadfastness.

So man is in forgetfulness and what he is forgetful of is the reality of his own existence. He owes his existence to Allah. His existence is evidence of Allah, and he forgets! And Allah says: “When you forget, remember.”

Now we look at part of Ayat 165 in Surat al-Baqara:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

But those who have Iman have greater love for Allah.

So Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, is placing a certain group of the humans higher because they have greater love of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala. This is a qualitative difference. All men are not equal. With Allah they are not the same. There is no equality, because there is a portion of the human race who are the muminun, who are pleasing to Allah, and who have a greater love for Allah, and this places them higher.

Look now at Surat al-'Imran (3:31):

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي  
يُحِبِّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

Say, "If you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you for your wrong actions.  
Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

Now is revealed the whole process by which this happens, because it begins with this vital word in Qur'an which is 'Qul'. This means that it is a command from Allah from the angel to Rasul.

Now we get the whole story: "Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me.'" So Rasul is ordering the people, "If you love Allah, then follow me." You cannot love Allah and

not follow Rasul. This means we have no dialogue with other religions. There is nothing to say to other religions. If you love Allah then you have to follow Rasul – finished! That is the end of our dialogue – go back, go away! If you really love Allah then you will follow Rasul, sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

This is an order from Allah where He says: “Say!” Sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam is not saying it from himself, he is saying it under the Divine imperative.

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي  
يُحِبِّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

Say, ‘If you love Allah, then follow me  
and Allah will love you and forgive you  
for your wrong actions.  
Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’

The Prophet’s order is to tell the people that if they love Allah, they have to follow the Rasul. Then Allah will love them, which means, again, in this contract which we have taken, that if Allah loves the mumin then the lover becomes the beloved. Then the door is open to Ma’rifatullah. Once the sentence is read, that is Ma’rifa. There is no other way that you can go. You have now reached the point where you have available to you Ma’rifatullah.

“Allah will love you” means that you love Allah so that you follow Rasul, sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, and you have Ma’rifa of Allah, subhanahu wa ta’ala. And you are forgiven

for your wrong actions. In other words, the life-term is wiped out, the whole thing is gone. Then you are told:

وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

About this matter which we have been looking at: first of all, it is like the Qur'an has one aspect for everybody because the Book is revealed for the whole world. So there are a few places in the Book where Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says, "Ya ayyuhann-Nas." He speaks to mankind because there is always the possibility among these millions and millions of people that there would be one who hears the message.

Then Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, warns with tremendous warnings which are terrifying. He says, "Ya ayyuh-al-Kafirun" – to the kafirun this is going to happen, make no mistake about it. There is the inevitability that the darkness of that inner life will in the next world have a punishment which will be a torment greater than the torment they had in this world.

Then He says, "Ya ayyuhalladhina amanu," and he speaks to the muminun and gives them guidance. Then he tells them that He has set up the people on different levels, and He has mentioned, as we saw in the Surat al-Waqi'a, the Muqarrabun, the people who come near. He has now revealed this whole structure for the access to Ma'rifa.

You might think that this is not in the Qur'an, but these

ayats are embedded like jewels among the other decorations and beauties of the Qur'an. That is that Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, talks about Ma'rifa. He talks about love in a very high and exalted way which is connected to direct knowledge. There is a knowledge that is not information, there is a knowledge that is illumination – 'Ilm al-laduni, direct from Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

One of the shuyukh of the East made a very similar description to Imam al-Ghazali's, radiyallahu 'anhu. He said that this love has ten stages. The first is Muwafaqa – Compatibility. The way of having this compatibility with Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, is to regard the enemies of the Beloved as our enemies, and His friends as our friends. So right at the beginning he makes this division that is in the Qur'an: Do not take the kafirun as your friends. You separate yourself from them and regard the enemies of the Beloved as our enemies and the friends of the Beloved, of Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, as our friends.

The next is Mayyal – Inclination. The heart is an instrument and the heart begins to move. The word for heart in Arabic is 'qalb' from the root QLB which means to turn over. So the heart is always turning over, it is always in motion. It is like that part of the steering of a ship or submarine which is like a fulcrum that is always turning. So the heart will always go to something, and if it does not go to the halal it will go to the haram, and if it wants the haram it will get the haram because it is like a magnet – if it wants the bad it will get the bad, if it wants the good it will get the good. If it wants food, then the food is coming to it, and the secret of understanding the

destiny is that the food is coming to you before you get hungry. It is actually on its way! It was a sheep in a field which has been slaughtered, and then it has been hung, and then sent to the butcher's, it has been bought, it has been taken to the kitchen – you think, “I’m hungry,” and there it is on the plate in front of you. The Awliya say that this meal has been coming to you from before the creation of the world, because Allah is the Provider. The rizq is from the Razzaq.

This is the first movement of the heart. First you are compatible, you are in tune with the Beloved because you have learned not to like the enemies of Allah. That makes you compatible, it makes you acceptable. Then comes inclination, and this is to busy yourself on your quest for the Beloved. In other words, your heart begins to ask, “Why is it so difficult? What do I do? What should I do? How am I to move about? How am I to have knowledge? How is it that I sit through the dhikr and am not having something happen inside me?” and the heart begins to incline.

Then the next stage is Muanasa – Fellowship. The heart begins to want to be with the people who love Allah because one of the signs of the lovers is that they love to hear the name of the Beloved. It is like the story of Layla and Majnun. It is enough for Majnun to hear the name of Layla that he is happy. So he wants to go where her name is said. The beginning of Muanasa is to attach yourself to Allah sincerely and to detach yourself from everything else. The way you detach yourself from everything else is by beginning to get into the habit of sitting with the

people who love Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala.

Then this closeness begins to take on a dynamic. The next stage is *Hawa* – Passion. But this passion is the opposite of the passion of the world, it is to keep the heart in *zuhd*. In other words, not to let it have anything except the passion for the *dhikr*, for the Presence of Allah, for the knowledge of Allah. So with this, the heart begins to become certain, it begins to become pliable, it begins to become accessible to things it was not accessible to before. That is the explanation of the famous sentence of Imam al-Ghazali, radiyallahu ‘anhu: “The person who has put one foot on the path is like a star. The one who is advanced on the path is like a moon. The one who has achieved knowledge of Allah is like the sun. But the one who has not put one foot on the path is like a stone.”

The fifth stage is *Muwadda* – Friendship. What makes the friendship with Allah is that before anything else the dominant experience of the heart is yearning. So you are reaching beyond the business of living. You have a yearning that reaches out past everything to do with ‘thing’. Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib, rahimahullah, says in the *Diwan*,

وَعَبُّ فِيهِ عَن سِوَاهُ

Withdraw yourself in Him  
from all that is other-than Him.

The sixth stage is *Khulla* – Exclusive Friendship. You book in not just your intellect and your heart, but you

book in all the limbs of the body to be in this condition. This is what Salat is for, this is what fasting is for, and this is what the imara is for – that the limbs of the body become worshipful.

The seventh stage is Mahabba – Affection. Mahabba is that the intensity of this longing and love and desire begins to burn up in the faqir the things which are no good, the things which are not right. They just galvanise and in their place comes the possibility of doing good actions. You move from being concerned with yourself, which brings about bad actions, to not being concerned about yourself but having compassion for others, because this love spills out into a love for the fuqara. It spills out, it overflows so that your body overflows to take in all the people and you do not know which is you and which is them. This is because you then have taken on good actions. Living in good actions, in what is called birr – birr is active, it is not just goodness, but that you are actively doing good.

Then you come to the eighth stage which is Shaghaf – Violent Affection. So the intensity increases and the Shaghaf becomes so that you are so intoxicated that you are liable, as he says, “To risk tearing the veil of your secret,” because to disclose the secret is like kufr. In other words, in the dhikr you become so intoxicated that you might reveal this knowledge which is coming into your heart of Allah, subhanahu wa ta’ala, yet no-one must know. Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib says in his Diwan:

وَأَذْكَرُ بِجِدِّ وَصِدْقٍ      بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ عَبِيدِ اللَّهِ



Do dhikr with gravity and sincerity  
in front of the slaves of Allah.

The Ninth stage is Taym – Enslavement. You become a captive slave of love, and that is to put on tajrid which is to strip away. There are two tajrids: there is the tajrid of the outward which is to do without, like zuhd. Zuhd is not, “I won’t have it,” it is “I don’t need it.” Imam al-Ghazali tells of Sayyiduna ‘Isa, ‘alayhi salam, having a comb and a mirror. He saw a child running its hands through its hair and he threw away the comb. Then he saw the animal go to the water, and realised that if you look into the water you can see yourself, so he threw away the mirror.

This is outward tajrid, but the inner tajrid is to strip away the body itself. In the khalwa there is a tajrid of the batin which is that you lose the hearing, the sight, the touch – you lose all the senses one by one, so that what is left is a consciousness which in its turn vanishes which is, in the language of Tasawwuf, ‘Fana fillah’. One of the Sufis said about Taym, about this enslavement: “You wish to buy Him – first sell yourself.” This is the counsel of the ‘Arif to the one who wants this knowledge.

The tenth stage is Walah – Bewilderment. Muhiyuddin Ibn al-‘Arabi has written many things about Walah. This shaykh says it is, “To place the mirror of the heart before the Beloved to be intoxicated in the wine of beauty.” There is another of these shaykhs – Yahya al-Muniri, who said, “Love (hubb) sends a message from the Beloved, and the message to the heart is: ‘Be always in motion, restless.’

To life: 'Let go of joys.' To the head: 'Do not settle.' To the face: 'Lose your complexion.' To the body: 'Say goodbye to vanishing strength.' To the eyes: 'Shed tears,' and to the lover himself: 'Hide your condition. Shut your mouth. Pull back from friends. Get rid of both the worlds.'"