

In the name of Allah the Most Merciful,
the Most Compassionate



The Murīd and Sulūk

“The Student and the Way of Spiritual Travel”

Praise belongs to Allah Who has sent His Messenger, the Chosen One, Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) through whom the Path to Him has been made clear. In His wisdom He has placed man in the world and called him back to Him. Praise belongs to Allah Who has preserved the Path, a chain of pure and brilliant souls who one after the other have verified and confirmed the original Truth from the Messengers and Prophets. Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Who has placed a light in the breast of man. We can never be thankful enough to our teachers, the pure, the guided, those who have striven without thought for themselves, driving themselves on, following the divine light placed within them by their Lord. May Allah bless them all, from Sayyiduna Muhammad to our Shaykh.



Collected by
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1408 H

Praise belongs to Allah, praise belongs to Allah, praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. The best of prayers, and perfect peace be upon our Master Muhammad, the medicine and remedy of hearts, and the cure for the breasts from their illnesses, and upon his family and companions, none of whom lagged behind in the struggle against the self (mujāhadah nafs) and its purification. May they have abundant peace, greetings, satisfaction, and the garden of Ridwan, O Mawlana.

Al-Murīd al-Sālik

Al-Murīd al-Sālik (spiritual aspirant traveling the path by perfection of behavior) is someone who aligns his strength and will with Allah in every situation.

The *Ṭariq* (Path)

The Tariq is the statement *la ilaha illa Allah* and acting accordingly. *La ilaha illa Allah* is the statement of the Tariq and its people. Among the sayings of our shaykh, Shaykh Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahi, on this subject are the following:

- The Tariq is *mahabbah* (love, affection, attachment) and belief, not the struggle of heart and mind.
- How many are near but far and how many are far but near. Look at the closeness of Abu Jahl and the distance of the Nejashi (King of Ethiopia at the time of the Prophet) in terms of physical distance and kinship. But Allah chooses from His slaves whom He wishes.
- Above everyone of knowledge there is someone who is more knowledgeable.

Its Subject

Its subject concerns actions of the heart and senses in respect to purification and clarification. *Al-Sufi* comes from the verb *safa*, *yasfu* and is characterized by doing every good action and avoiding every bad action. Its fruits are the refinement of hearts and *ma'rifah* (knowing Allah), complete knowledge of the unseen in taste and feeling, safety in the *akhirah* (the next world), winning the acceptance of Allah the Exalted, obtaining everlasting happiness, and illumination and purification of the heart so that it can see great things, witness amazing states, and see what others are unable.

Its Virtue

It is the most honorable of the knowledges that are concerned with the knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, and His love. It is the best of knowledges without exception.

Its Relationship to Other Knowledges

To other knowledges, it is the origin having a condition, which is that there is no knowledge or action except that it be intended for Allah. Its relationship to other knowledges is like the relationship of the *rūh* (spirit) to the body.

Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has established the Tariq and His Messenger, and the Prophets before him (upon them be peace), have bequeathed it. It is the spirit of the revealed system of laws and *dīns* (religions). Know that there are three related terms whose meanings might look alike to the uninitiated, but in fact are quite different. They are *Shari'ah*, *Tariqah* and *Haqiqah*, and to avoid confusion they are explained below.

Shari'ah is the divine rules sent to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) that the scholars understand directly and through derivation from the text of Qur'an and Sunnah (actions and words of the Messenger of Allah). It is then clarified in the sciences of *Tawhid* (unity of Allah), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and *Tasawwuf* (reaching moral and spiritual perfection).

Tariqah is acting according to the Shari‘ah, resolving to perform what it sanctions and avoiding lenience in prohibited matters. In other words, avoiding prohibited matters, outwardly and inwardly, and following divine rules according to one’s ability. Or one could say, it is avoiding all that is *haram* (prohibited by Shari‘ah), all that is disliked, avoiding excess of *mubahat* (things that have no benefit in the *akhirah*), and performing what is obligatory and whatever one can of the *nawafil* (supererogatory) under the guidance of an *‘arif bi llah* (someone who has attained direct knowledge of Allah) from among the people at the end of the chain of spiritual inheritance.

Fundamental Principles of Tariq

There are four:

1. *Taqwa* (fear) of Allah secretly and openly: achieved through *warā‘* (piety) and *istiqamah* (uprightness).
2. Following the pure Sunnah in word and action: achieved through *ṣabr* (patience) and *tawakkul* (trust).
3. *Ridā* (Satisfaction) with what Allah gives, whether it be a little or a lot: achieved through *qanā‘a* (being grateful with what one gets) and *tafwīd* (entrusting all of one’s affairs to Allah).
4. Returning one’s focus to Allah in good and bad times: achieved through *shukr* (thankfulness) in good times and leaving matters to Allah in bad times, and through asking for help from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Greatest Messenger.

Patience with Obedience and Patience with Disobedience

The heart has its destructive causes and its illnesses. The murīd should have a *murabi* (teacher) and a doctor for his *rūḥ*. Just as there is a doctor for the body, there is a doctor for the *rūḥ*; therefore, the murīd must have a teacher who is a real educator, a shaykh who is an *‘arif bi llah*.

‘Abd al-Wahid bin ‘Ashir, the Maliki scholar, said:

Take the company of a shaykh who knows the Ways
Who will save you on your Way from fatal dangers
Who reminds you of Allah when you see him
And who takes the slave to His Master.

Some of the Sufi masters have said that the shaykhs are of three types: the shaykh of *ta‘līm* (the teaching shaykh), the shaykh of *tarbiya* (the shaykh of spiritual upbringing), and the shaykh of *ifāda* and *tarqiya* (the shaykh of benefit and upliftment). The teaching shaykh needs three things: a strong mind, correct knowledge, a command over the language. As for the intellect, it must be guided; as for knowledge, its application must serve as an example to be followed; and as for eloquence, it must bring clarification. Whenever one of these is missing in the teaching shaykh, he can no longer be followed. The shaykh of *tarbiya* also needs three things: firm and consistent action, a sharp mind, and complete organizational abilities. By his action he guides, by his mind he knows the depths of souls and other things, and by his management skills he acts and puts everything in its place and in its right time.

As for the shaykh of benefit and upliftment, he has three signs: his speech is mixed with the light of his knowledge, his movement is influenced by the presence of his vision, and his help arrives (just) by seeing him and keeping his company.

It has been said: Don’t accompany someone who prefers himself to you, for such a person is mean. And don’t keep the company of one who prefers you over himself, for such a person’s company seldom lasts. Be in the company of someone who, when you see him, you are reminded of Allah and by that you are satisfied. And, in addition, when he is not present, he is replaced by Allah. The reason for this is that some divine qualities appear on him because He exalted him in nearness to Him with a light of beauty, an awe of pride, and safety with dignity. Looking upon such men, Allah is remembered due to the divine qualities which are lights that have settled in the heart like precious stones. When the face drinks from the water of the heart, their effect appears on the face thereby exalting it in radiance and beauty. The writer of the *Hikam*, Ibn ‘Ata Allah, said, “Don’t keep the company of someone whose state does not uplift you and whose words don’t direct you to Allah. Better to be in the company of an ignorant person who is dissatisfied with himself, thinks that he has not fulfilled

what he is supposed to do, and is lowly and broken than to be in the company of a learned man who is satisfied with himself.

It has been said:

Take from the one whose *nafs* is managed
When in this time it despairs of itself.
Know that the way of the people is its destruction,
And the state of he who claims it today is as how he is seen.
Carefully check the one of keen intelligence
For by knowledge all faults are hidden.

Know that the murīd must have the company of a shaykh who is a verified guide and who has perfected his *adab* (spiritual courtesy). The murīd must then submit himself to the shaykh with complete obedience, following his instructions without doubt, interpretation, or hesitation.

Keeping the company of a shaykh, an *‘ārif bi llah*, is a great blessing from Allah to you, O murīd. Appropriately, such a companion must be a shaykh who takes you by your hand to the shore of safety. Beware, Allah leads astray whoever makes books his shaykh. These books cannot take the place of shaykhs, rather they are companions when one is alone, being what the shaykhs have extracted of their knowledge of fiqh, tafsir, or similar sciences. Reading such books without a teacher who knows what is in them, will be a problem for the reader. It has been said that the best and most beneficial knowledge is the knowledge that has been extracted from the breast of a great man who has in turn extracted it from the breast of another great man before him.

Entrusting one’s self to a shaykh, *‘ārif bi llah*, is proof of your desire, O murīd, to travel the path to Allah (sulūk wa sayr). The shaykh, *‘ārif bi llah*, is an expert in the *nafs*’s weaknesses, its diseases, and its treatment. He knows how to cure the hearts and souls completely. The shaykh is the doctor, the teacher, and the guide of the *rūh*. He is just like a father. The *rūh* is just like the body, if it does not find the one who will bring it up and teach it *adab* it will go astray, unbridled, uncontrolled, and unguided. The *‘ārif bi llah* perceives the *rūh* and the *nafs*, always receiving lights and help from Allah. He is the trusted retainer of inspirations, following the Book, the pure Sunnah, and established law in all matters. The *rūh* passes through stages and the shaykh, *‘ārif bi llah*, knows those stages. He

observes the murīd, calling him to Allah and guiding him according to his state. Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, says:

[T]hose of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah . . . (35:28)

The shaykhs truly know Allah such that they reach the station of *khashyah* (fear), *khawf wa raja’* (fear and hope of Allah). O murīd, be with these people, and travel the well-established Tariq with their help, thereby winning the highest rank on the Day of Rising while humanity is being tried with great difficulty. The shaykh, the arrived, the traveled, the *‘ārif bi llah*, is the guide on the Tariq, and its expert. Your situation with the shaykh is like someone who has gotten lost. You don’t know where the path leading to your people and your country is. You are bewildered. You must ask the people of the region who will direct you to the way. When you entrust yourself to the shaykh, you are asking about the way leading to Allah. He will tell you “follow this road and you will arrive, inshallah.” The shaykhs are the means and by them the murīd rises. By their honored rank with Allah, the murīd is able to hold the rope that controls his destructive *nafs*. The shaykh, *‘ārif bi llah*, takes you by your hand to the shore of safety and to the path of success and salvation. The shaykh, *‘ārif bi llah*, follows the Messenger of Allah in all his states:

All from the Messenger of Allah have a request
Whether great or small.

Clearly, there must be a shaykh who teaches, cures, and directs the murīd to way of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic. In turn, the murīd, desiring the way of guidance, follows him and his method, traveling the way by his hand.

The Tariq are the words of Truth, sincere truthfulness, certainty, the *‘urwat al-wuthqa* (the strongest binding), decisive speech, ease, belief, *taqwa* (fear of Allah, piety), *ihsan* (perfection), Islam, and *la ilaha illa Allah Muhammad al-Rasul Allah*, and doing exactly what the words require in speech and action, with heart and soul. The way of the Sufis is complete submission to Allah with all the senses and following Him in complete obedience.

What I mean by keeping the company of the shaykh is taking an oath of allegiance from him (i.e. taking bay‘ah), and by it moving forward on the

straight path. Allah says: “And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited” (3:103). Allah also says: “Surely those who swear allegiance to you do but swear allegiance to Allah; the hand of Allah is above their hands. Therefore, whoever breaks (his faith), he breaks it only to injury of his own soul, and whoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will grant him a mighty reward” (48:10). The shaykh, *‘arīf bi llah*, takes the Messenger of Allah as an example to move toward Allah upon the way of guidance and light, so that Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will be pleased with him. He orders the slaves of Allah to travel to Him so that they can obtain His pleasure and draw close to Him, Exalted in His Highness. The Messenger of Allah said, “By the one in whose hands Muhammad’s soul is, I swear that the most beloved of the slaves of Allah to Allah are those who make others love Allah, make Allah love his slaves, and who, while they walk upon the earth, deal with people with sincerity.”

In Tasawwuf, the shaykh holds one of the highest stations. He represents the Prophet when calling others to Allah. The shaykh travels with his *nafs* the way of purification. When the *nafs* is purified, the mirror of the heart becomes clear and the lights of *ma‘rifah*, the divine greatness, and the beautiful appearance of Tawhid are reflected in it. Allah, the Exalted, says: “The one who purified himself has succeeded” (87:14). Allah also says: “There are those whom Allah guides, so from their guidance take an example” (6:90). In this meaning the shaykh of the Sufi path, Imam al-Junaid (may Allah be pleased him) said, “Part of the Sunnah of Allah in His timelessness is that the way to Allah can only be found by the one who has a knowledgeable teacher who will guide him to methods of slavehood to Him, and aid in the ascent of his *rūh* and his heart to the witnessing of His lordship and be the mediator between him and Allah. If he doesn’t find this knowledgeable teacher, he at least needs a sincere friend who observes his states and actions. If he doesn’t find a shaykh or a friend, then he has to know his states from his enemies and from mixing with people. By this he will find out about his bad qualities and will be able to avoid them.”

Surely the *mu‘min* (believer) is a mirror to his brother. The murīd who is seeking the path of truth and guidance must always frequent meetings of *dhikr*, associate with groups that perform goodness by service, attend lessons for knowledge, and pray in the congregations of Muslim groups. Doing these things are useful to his *rūh* and nourish and strength it against

ghaflah (heedlessness) and *wawās* (temptation). It must be understood from this that the murīd should not avoid people unless he has permission from the shaykh because the shaykh knows what is good and beneficial for the murīd in his *dīn* and his character and can observe him. For the people of the end of the path, however, there is safety in avoiding people. As for the beginner, he must keep the company of people and sit with the people of *dhawq* (taste) and guidance. It has been said:

Surely Tasawwuf is a knowledge unreachable
 Except by someone with keenness of mind and generosity
 Who is satisfied with little of this world and giving it freely
 And is known by existence for his *taqwa* of Allah.

This is the state of the murīd, the one who is serious about making great effort. He deserves congratulations for taking this great path. In it he finds purify and clarity from turbidity and distress; he follows the truth and the *dīn* and humbles the heart to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, seeking help and assistance from Him. Everything is in the hands of Allah, the Exalted. There is no strength or power except by Allah, the Most High, the Mighty.

Tasawwuf

Tasawwuf may be described as the following:

- Acquiring every praiseworthy deed and leaving every ugly deed.
- It is purity of *niyyah* (intention) that appears in character (akhlāq) and behavior (sulūk). Al-Junayd said, “It is that the Haqq causes you to die and then brings you to life.” He also said, “It is that you are with Allah without relationship.”
- It is making every sunnah a part of one’s character and leaving every low character trait.
- It is noble character appearing at an auspicious time among honorable people.
- It is not to own or be owned by anything.
- It is when the *nafs* whole-heartedly follows Allah in what He wishes.

- It is based on three characteristics: holding to poverty, proving one's self through unselfish giving, and leaving management of affairs.
- It is taking the realities and leaving what is in the hands of people.

Ibn 'Ajiba said, "The sign of the true Sufi is poverty after wealth, humiliation after high esteem, and obscurity after notoriety." Abu Hamzah al-Baghdadi said, "The sign of the false Sufi is wealth after poverty, high esteem after humiliation, and notoriety after obscurity."

It is said that the Sufi is like earth, every beautiful and ugly thing is put into it, but only the beautiful comes out from it.

It is said that nothing is uglier than a miserly Sufi.

Shibli (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "The Sufi is disconnected with people and connected with the Truth, for Allah, the Exalted, says: "I have chosen you for Myself."

Shaykh Zarruq (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Tasawwuf includes and is drawn and interpreted with about 200 facets, all referring to the sincerity and the betaking of oneself to Allah, the Exalted, and it is only one facet.

People differ about Tasawwuf and dispute

In ignorance, thinking it is derived from wool.

I am not applying this name to a youth,

Pure, with hair covering his body until he is recognized as Sufi."

The beginning of this science indicates fear of Allah, the Exalted, the middle indicates acting according to Allah's will, and the end indicates knowing Him and occupying oneself exclusively with Him, the Exalted. On this subject al-Junayd (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "If you know of a science under the heavens nobler than the one we are talking about with our friends, strive to obtain it."

Everyone who believes in this science is among the elect; everyone who understands it is among the elect of the elect; and everyone who explains it and talks about it is an unreachable star and an endless sea. Some have said, "If you see someone for whom belief in this way has been opened, give him good tidings. If you see someone for whom understanding in this way has been opened, rejoice for him. If you see someone for whom

expression of it has been opened, exalt him. And if you see someone criticizing it, flee from him as you would flee from a lion." At some point every science becomes unnecessary and is dropped, except the science of Tasawwuf, which is necessary at all times.

Shaykh Zarruq said:

The relationship of Tasawwuf to the *dīn* is like the soul to the body. It is the station of *ihsan* (perfection of worship) which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) explained to Jibril (may Allah be pleased with him) saying: "It is to worship Allah as though you see Him, and know that though you may not see Him surely He sees you." This is the only meaning for *ihsan*. What is meant by it is *muraqah* (vigilance over the self) after *mushahadah* (witnessing the divine presence) or *mushahadah* after *muraqabah*, otherwise the existence would not be established for him and the existent would not be apparent to him. So understand and may Allah guide you.

States of the Sufi

Shaykh Zarruq (may Allah be pleased with him) said in his commentaries, "What is the science of Tasawwuf but the results of correct actions and the fruits of pure states."

Whoever acts according to what he knows, Allah bestows upon him the knowledge of what he does not know. Ibn 'Ata Allah, who begins his *Hikam* by talking about action or deeds, says, "One of the signs of relying on one's own deeds is the loss of hope when a downfall occurs." In view of this, it is *iman* that takes hold in the heart, is expressed by the tongue, and is proven with action. The body's faculties (limbs and senses) are corrected by three things: *tawbah*, *taqwa*, and *istiqamah* (uprightness in actions). The hearts are corrected by three things: sincerity, truthfulness, and tranquility. The secrets are also corrected by three things: *muraqabah*, *mushahadah*, and *ma'rifah*. Or you could say, the externals are corrected by avoiding the prohibitions and obeying the orders coming from Allah. The conscience is corrected by leaving vices and adorning oneself with virtues. The secrets here are the *arwah* (*rūhs*), and they are corrected by humbling and breaking them until they are trained with *adab* and modesty.

The murīd that is desirous to travel the path must follow the Shari‘ah in both speech and action. He transports himself to the *Haqiqah* (the Reality) by means of the ‘*ārif bi llah*, the spiritually realized. Today, we see the state of people who practice tasawwuf in word not in action, by outward appearance not by *batin* (inward) meanings. They strive to develop the outward life, whether it be in clothes or in sweet but useless speech. There is no greater enemy than this condition. No wonder that today we can find innovators who are related to a shaykh, like a son. Whoever relates himself to a shaykh, in one way or another, thinking that his relationship will free him from something in the Shari‘ah, is sorely mistaken.

Tasawwuf is not wearing the patched wool,
 Weeping when singers sing,
 Shouting, dancing, or enjoying (these things),
 Or behaving like a madman;
 Rather, tasawwuf is being pure without turbidity
 And following the Haqq, the Qur’an, the *dīn*
 And humbling the self to Allah, feeling unworthy
 Sad, for having committed sins throughout life.

Support for this is found in the Book of Allah. The Exalted says in one ayat: “And no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another” (6:164); and in another: “And that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be rewarded for it with the fullest reward” (53:39-40).

O murīd, you must be calm and your approach to this path must be the pure Shari‘ah. Your actions must be in accordance with the glorious Shari‘ah both literally and interpretively. The Shari‘ah is the cutting edge and the shining sword that protects itself from imperfection. In this meaning, the Chosen One (upon him be peace and blessings) said, “I leave you with the ‘white’ method (al-muhajat al-bayḍā’), its night is like its day. Deviation from it leads to destruction.” He also said, “I leave with you something which, if you hold to it, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah.”

Sayyid Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (Allah be pleased with him) said, “Whoever wishes to be truthful in his will, all his actions, and speech, let him seal himself within the pure Shari‘ah and stamp it with the seal of the Reality. Let him kill himself with the sword of *mujahada* (spiritual striving) and swallowing what is bitter.”

Imam ‘Abd al-Karim al-Qushayri (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Know, may Allah have mercy on you, the shaykhs of this group have built their fundamentals on sound roots in Tawhid which preserve their beliefs from innovations. They are indebted to the *salaf* (those who joined the ranks of the Muslims at the beginning of Islam) and *ahl al-sunnah* (those who formed the basis of the belief, *ahl al-sunnah wa jama‘a*, People of the Sunnah and Consensus) whose Tawhid was faithful and sure. They know the right of those who came before them and they have verified by the description of what is existent from what is nonexistent.

The foremost of the Sufis, Sayyidi al-Junayd, said, “Tawhid is distinguishing what has come before from what is new.” The shaykhs have defined the origin of beliefs by giving proofs and wonderful evidences. For example, Abu Muhammad al-Jariri (may Allah have mercy on him), said, “Whoever does not stand upon the evidences against delusion given by the science of Tawhid, shall slip and fall to his ruin.” What he means is that the one who follows without pondering the proofs of Tawhid shall leave prophetic practices, which offer safety, and be lead to destruction. Whoever carefully considers the shaykhs’ words, collectively or individually, finds that the ones who came before were not deficient in verification and fully knowing in detail. Some of what they have said is the following:

- The portion of the *nafs* in disobedience is outwardly apparent and the portion of the *nafs* in obedience is inwardly hidden. What is hidden is difficult to cure.
- The heart is incurably diseased when it is seized by the sweetness of passion.
- Sexual desire can only be extracted from the heart by unsettling fear or alarm, so the treatment of the apparent diseases necessitates *tawba*, *taqwa*, and *istiqamah*. If this treatment is hard to administer, then the protection of a shaykh who is ‘*ārif bi llah* is required. Continuous sitting before him and looking upon him is an antidote. If the student accompanies a shaykh and is not cured of his disease, he must know that his sincerity is little. If the shaykh has *nur* by which he walks among people, joining *sulūk* (sober traveling along the path to Allah) and *jadhāb* (intoxicated

attraction to Allah), the sick person who accompanies him with sincerity must be cured immediately.

Some of the *salihin* (righteous) have said, “Our way is like a knife.” It is described like this because it cuts out everything that is not in the Shari‘ah, the Tariqah, or the Haqiqah. The murīd must devote himself completely to his shaykh, keeping his good company, being satisfied with him, and leaving the wishes of his *nafs* and its caprice. This is expressed in the following poem:

Be humble before the one you love, for caprice is not a simple matter;
If the beloved consents, then the union will be good for you.
Be Humble before him, win the vision of his beauty;
In his face are the obligatory (*farā'id*) and the supererogatory
(*nawāfil*).

The murīd must occupy his senses with continual performance of the *awrad*, transmitting it to his heart, wherein is the affair of love and spiritual knowledge. Some men of Allah have said, “People are of two kinds, those whom the Haqq occupies in His service and those whom He selects for His love.” In the Qur’an Allah says: “All do we aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined” (17:20).

The author of the *Hikam* said:

The slaves of Allah, those specialized with divine care, are of two types. One group is well prepared by the Haqq for His service and they are of different types. One type leaves the company of people to go into the desert and wilderness to pray all night and fast all day. They are the worshippers and the *zuhhād* (people of renunciation) whom the Haqq directs to establish the *din* and protect the Shari‘ah of the Muslims: they are the scholars and the especially righteous. And among them are the ones the Haqq prepares to support the *dīn* and raise His words, and they are the *mujāhidīn* in the way of the Lord of the Worlds. And among them are those who are being prepared by the Haqq to set everything right in the land and quiet the people, and these are the princes and the sultans.

Sayyidi Ibrahim bin Adham, when giving spiritual advice to a man while making *tawaf* (circumambulation around the Ka‘bah), said:

You must know that you will not obtain the degree of the *ṣālihīn* (righteous) unless you perform six tasks. The first is closing the door of *ni‘mah* (ease) and opening the door of hardship. The second is closing the door of rank and esteem and opening the door of lowliness and abasement. The third is closing the door of comfort and ease and opening the door of *juhd* (effort). The fourth is closing the door of wealth and opening the door of poverty. The fifth is closing the door of sleep and opening the door of keeping vigil all night. The sixth is closing the door of hope and opening the door of preparation for death.

This spiritual advice is found in several books of the People and it is always based upon the Book, the Sunnah, and the words of the early *ṣālihīn* and the best *tābi‘īn*.

About the first piece of advice that Sayyidi Ibrahim ibn Adham gives to the *faqir* (spiritual aspirant; poor in Allah), that is, to close the door of ease and comfort and open the door of hardship, we refer to the words of Our Lord, the Blessed and Exalted, in His Precious Book, where He defines the *dunya* (the worldly life) by saying: “And the life of this world is nothing but a provision of vanities” (3:185). In another place He describes the *dunya* as a place of frivolity, decoration, boasting, and extended hopes. That is, it is a place of accumulation, a place in which rains come, gladdening the *kuffār* (disbelievers), causing the plants to grow; and it is a place in which all things that grew are seen to wither and die.

The Shaykh Ibrahim ibn Adham directs the murīd to close the door of ease (*ni‘mah*) and open the door of hardship. *Dunya* is not only the place of ease, but also the place where good works are performed. In a *hadith* (recorded and verified speech of the Prophet) the Prophet (bless him and grant him peace) is reported to have said, “Put some roughness into your life for surely the comforts (of this world) will not last.” The hardship meant here is the struggle in the night with worship (‘ibadah) and in the day with watchfulness (*muraqabah*). The murīd is given patience and endurance. You can say the murīd’s patience with misfortunes yield Allah’s gifts to His slave (*waridat*). You can also say that what strengthens the murīd to carry His decrees is witnessing the goodness of His choices. The murīd knows that no *qadr* (decree) occurs unless it is preceded by His *lutf* (gentleness) and wisdom; so therefore, the murīd has patience with hardships until he reaches the *maqam* (station) of carrying the secrets.

Also he has patience because he knows of the existence of His knowledge, gentleness, support, and assistance.

As for the door of abasement (zill) after the door of high rank and honor ('izz), he knows that there is no honor in *dunya* except for the honor of the *dīn* and the *akhirah*. This is verified by the words of Allah: "Then surely all honor is for Allah" (4:139). So they do not seek the honor of the *dunya*, rather the honor of the *dīn*. Amir al-Mu'minin 'Umar ibn al-Khattab guided us when he said, "If we were to seek honor without the *dīn*, Allah would humiliate us." His complete statement was: "We were the lowest people and Allah honored us with Islam. If we were to seek honor without Islam, Allah would humiliate us." It follows then from what 'Umar said that the greatest honor is the honor of the *dīn* and acting by the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Therefore, Allah will humiliate whoever seeks honor without Islam and will cause him to be among the losers.

Sayyidi Ibrahim ibn Adham advises the *faqir* to close the door of rest and relaxation and open the door of effort. The question is what kind of rest and relaxation is sought by man. Is it the rest of the body or the rest of the mind? The answer is that Allah will ask man about both of them. The entire life of a Muslim is seriousness and struggle in both his body and his soul. Following the orders of Islam, in respect to the work of the body, is good exercise that brings bodily health. Allah created the human body and knows what it can and cannot do. Allah ordered physical actions like *salat* (prayer), *sawm* (fasting), and Hajj, to purify the body and give it health and goodness. As far as inward efforts, the shaykh directs us to *ijtihad* (spiritual striving).

Sayyidi Abu Ali al-Daqqaq (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Whoever decorates his outward with *mujāhadah* (efforts), Allah will decorate his inward with *mushāhadah* (witnessing); and whoever does not struggle against himself in the beginning will never smell any of the *tarīqah*."

One of the characteristics of the Path (Tariq or Tariqah) of the people of Allah is that unless the slave is given all of the Path, the Path will never give him any part of itself. With this meaning in mind Sayyidi Abu 'Uthman al-Maghribi (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "If anyone believes that part of this road will be given to him without struggling

against himself, he is looking for the impossible." Also our Masters (may Allah reward them with goodness) say, "Whoever doesn't have a standing at the beginning will never have a sitting at the end." They intend by this: enduring hardships by closing the door of ease. Struggling against the *nafs* is easier to endure than being negligent of Allah. *Ghaflah* (distraction) is the greatest disease, causing great harm to the murīd, distancing him from Allah and the *dīn*.

The pillars of the house of *wilaya* are divided.

Our masters are of the '*abdal*,

Always in silence and isolation,

Hunger and dear precious night vigil.

The shaykh directs us to close the door of wealth and open the door of poverty. Love of *dunya* is the head of every vice. *Zuhd* is the corrective for the one who knows it and its deception (ghurūr).

Imam 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

Live in contentment, surely for the young man

It is wealth. And this is the point of what I am indicating.

Surely wealth is wealth within oneself. The true murīd is rich with Allah, the Exalted; he has no need of other than Him, and everything else needs Him. From a *du'a* of al-Mustapha, the Chosen One (peace and blessings be upon him) we find: "O Allah, there is no life but the life of the *akhirah*."

Sayyidi Muhyidin ibn al-'Arabi (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "People's needs are met by avarice and running after them. Our needs are met by denouncing them and busying ourselves with Allah."

The People of Suffah (Ahl al-Suffah; the Messenger's followers who lived in the mosque on a raised platform to be near him) were molded by his vast character. He was the most complete man in *zuhd* (doing without), *wara'a* (scrupulousness in abstinence), fear of Allah, hope in Allah, struggle for Allah, reliance on Allah, acceptance of Allah, contentment, love, mercy, pity, forbearance, generosity, courage, and knowledge. Allah revealed the truth about Ahl al-Suffah in the *ayat*: "And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face" (18:28).

Sayyidi ibn ‘Ajiba (may Allah be pleased with him) said when describing Ahl al-Suffah:

They left *dunya* to its people and isolated themselves completely for Allah. When they heard the speech of their Lord and their Prophet they understood the requirements of the Divine Law. Allah and His Prophet had denounced *dunya* and occupation with it. They praised and embraced complete freedom for *‘ibāda* (worship) and *ijtihād* (struggle) in it. Allah had described what He prepared for the *zahidīn* (abstinent) and the *qānitīn* (obedient). So they left the causes (asbāb), which is the law of the weak, for *tajrīd* (stripping off), which is the law of the strong and the reality of the sincere friends of Allah.

For Allah, they left everything they possessed.
So every Sufi is related to them.

In fact, Ahl al-Suffa were people of wealth and business. When they emigrated to Madinah they left worldly pursuits to seek Allah’s acceptance. Next to the mosque, the Prophet built the *suffa* (raised platform and resting place) so they could spend their nights in prayer and days in fasting. In the battles that the Muslims fought, they fought alongside the Messenger of Allah in the vanguard. As a result, most of them were killed. After the death of the Messenger of Allah, wealth came to those who were still alive. Some of them accepted nothing of *dunya*’s wealth, like Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Abu Darda’, Abu ‘Ubayda, Mu‘adh, and uncountable others. But there were those who took it for the sake of Allah and spent it for the sake of Allah. They were like servants entrusted with their master’s wealth; they invested it in the best possible way. The real Sufis follow this method; they and their masters own nothing and nothing owns them. This is the method of the people of this way of life. They know Allah with real knowledge and they follow His method and His confirmed path. Whoever knows the old knows the new. They devote themselves to *dhikr* of Allah. They endure sleepless nights, their eyes without rest, for the sake of obedience to their King. They give up their hopes in the *dunya* and busy themselves with Allah, sticking to *dhikr* and *maraqabah* of Him. *Ghafilah* and hope in this world find no way to them. As a result, their hearts are full of Allah, the One, the Vanquisher.

Shaykh Ibrahim ibn Adham directs us to close the door of sleep and open the door of night vigil because too much sleep wastes time and hardens the

heart. Whoever increases his eating increases his drinking, and whoever increases his drinking, increases his blood. Whoever increases his blood, increases his sleep and his heart is hardened. You find the People of the Way rushing to perform any action that softens the heart; therefore, they close the door of sleep and open the door vigilance by *mujahadah* and *muraqabah*.

And finally, the Shaykh shows us that placing one’s hopes in this world is one of the sicknesses of the heart about which the knowledgeable have often talked. When hopes are placed in the *dunya*, the heart loses its certainty (yaqīn) and its reliance on Allah (tawakkul). Drawing out of hopes in this world makes the soul sick. O murīd, you have your present moment, neither what is past nor what is coming. What is with Allah is what is best for the righteous (al-abrār).

The Heart (al-Qalb)

Allah, the Exalted, says: “They on which property will not avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah with a heart free (from evil)” (26:88-89) and “Most surely Ibrahim followed his way (i.e., the way of Nuh, the previous messenger) when he came to his Lord with a free heart” (37:83-84).

One of the *du‘as* of the Messenger of Allah is “O Turner of the Hearts and Vision, fix my heart upon Your *dīn*!”

When we speak of the “heart,” we speak of it referring to two meanings. One refers to the piece of flesh on the left side of the chest. All animals have this heart, and this heart dies. The second meaning of heart refers to the spiritual, divine, and subtle. It is connected to the bodily heart like symptoms are connected to the body, and like descriptions are related to what is described. *Qalb* is the reality of man and the intended meaning whenever it is mentioned in the Qur’an and Sunnah. Allah indicates this meaning when He says: “Most surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a heart or he gives ear and is a witness” (50:37). It is the eternal light and exalted secret placed in the eye of the existences through which Allah, the Exalted, looks at mankind. This is expressed in the Book as the *rūh* of Allah blown into the *rūh* of Adam where He says: “And I breathed into him of My *rūh*” (15:29).

The eternal light is called the *qalb* and it has several meanings. One of them is that it is the *lubb* (core; essence) of created beings, the cream of all existent things. It is given this name because the heart of something is its essence and its cream. Another meaning is “fast changing” because it is the focal point around which the names and attributes turn. Another meaning is “mirror” because the heart reflects the realities of existence just like the mirror reflects the face. Since the world changes quickly and its form is impressed in the heart, the heart also changes quickly. It is also said that the world is the mirror of the heart and not the opposite. So the source of the world is the heart; the world is derived. Allah says in a *hadith qudsi* (Allah speaking through the Prophet but His words are not part of the Qur’an): “Neither earth nor heaven can contain Me, but the heart of a *mu’min* can contain Me.” If the world were the source then it, not the heart, could contain Allah. The statement “the heart contains Allah” has three aspects. The first is containment of knowledge—*ma’rifah* of Allah. The second is containment of *mushahadah* (witnessing of Allah)—*kashf* through which the beauty of Allah, the Exalted, dawns in the heart. The third is containment of *khilafah* (representation; succession)—verification by His names and attributes until Allah is seen as essence. The identity of the Haqq is the source of the identity of the slave of Allah. He acts freely in existence just as the *khalifah* acts freely in the estate of the one who the *khalifah* replaces. This is the containment of the realized. The lords of hearts are the source of the realities among the murīds. They are the *‘arifīn*, the realized, the people of *mujahadah*, the people of paradises, and the people who are brought near by obediences, inwardly and outwardly.

Adabs (Inner Courtesies) of the Murīd

The *‘arif bi llah*, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Mamduh Nur al-Din, said, “The reality of *adab* combines two qualities, *khayr* (goodness) and doing what is preferred in both action and speech.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Surely Allah, Mighty and Majestic, taught me my *adab* and it is the best *adab*.”

Abu ‘Ali Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahab al-Thaqafi said, “He who does not take his *adab* from someone who orders and prohibits him, showing him

the defects in his actions and the foolishness of his *nafs*, shouldn’t be taken as an example in correct dealings between people (mu‘amalat).”

Sayyidi Yusuf bin al-Husayn al-Marazi (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “By *adab* you understand knowledge, and knowledge corrects actions; with action you obtain *hikmah* (wisdom), and with *hikmah* you obtain *zuhd*; with *zuhd* you leave the world, and by leaving the world you desire the *akhirah*; with the desire for the *akhirah* you obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.”

Abu ‘Ali al-Daqqaq said, “The slave of Allah reaches paradise by his obedience, and he reaches Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, by his courtesy in his obedience.”

Know that the murīd needs to have *adab* toward himself, his shaykh, his brothers, and the common people. We will briefly summarize these below.

Adab with Oneself

It is to pursue and embody *himmah*: sincere resolution, extra firmness, strong seriousness, and complete passion for Allah. He holds firmly to the performance of the *sunnahs* and the *nawafil*; he closes the door on what might please or displease others, never turning to others whether they come or go. He scolds himself (against slacking off), making it absolutely necessary to carry on. Whenever he feels tired in his *ibadah*, he reminds himself that rest is for the next world. He struggles with idle thoughts and corrects the bad qualities in his character such as self-admiration, showing off, anger, and pride. And lastly, he determines to worship Allah whether his requests have been answered or not.

Sayyidi Muhyidin ibn al-‘Arabi said, “Don’t leave the *mujahadah*, even if you don’t see a sign of an opening. The murīd must do this *mujahadah*, but the opening has a appointed time. Don’t accuse your Lord, for surely your actions must have their fruits, if you are sincere.”

Another *adab* is hiding one’s actions and states as much as possible until one is firmly established.

The murīd should not seek luxury in eating, drinking, clothing, and cars as long as he is a *sālik* (a wayfarer traveling towards his goal, *ma’rifat Allah*). His tongue should only be used for *dhikr* Allah, the Mighty and Majestic.

He shouldn't leave *dhikr* for other things such as increasing in knowledges, and the *nawāfil* of the acts of worship. For surely the *dhikr* of Allah will never accept partnership. Anything that has partnership with Him, the murīd will be delayed by equal to this partnership, whether it is a lot or a little. He should know what is necessary to be known so that he can enter the *tariqah* of Allah with the light of knowledge, thus relieving his shaykh of the fear that he will leave the Sunnah for *bid'a*.

Adab of the Murīd with the Shaykh

There are many *adabs*, but today most of them have disappeared. Very few use these *adabs*, even though to follow them is confirmed. One of these them is not to enter the shaykh's presence without *tahārah* (being absolutely pure outwardly and inwardly): outwardly by the purification according to the Shari'ah; inwardly, by *tawbah* from every sin. Another is knocking on the door of his private chambers and then mentioning Allah aloud before entering his presence. If the shaykh hears him and tells him to come in, he enters, otherwise he leaves unoffended. In addition, in the presence of the shaykh, the spiritual aspirant doesn't talk except when answering. He lowers his voice and his head. He doesn't hide his thoughts from the shaykh, good or bad. The shaykh treats the *nafs* just as the doctor treats the body. If the patient tells the doctor everything he feels, providing a clear picture of the illness, the doctor can easily prescribe medicine and cure him. The relationship between the shaykh and the murīd is like this, but what is being cured is the *rūh*, not the body. The shaykh cures the *rūh* of its illnesses and observes its conditions. In this situation, the shaykh has a right over the murīd and the murīd has a right over the shaykh.

The murīd doesn't walk in front of the shaykh except perhaps at night when the way is obscured, or when he gives his permission. Then, the murīd must follow his instructions to go before him. When he is with the shaykh, he doesn't leave him unless he is excused. If the shaykh stands, he stands; if the shaykh comes, he greets him. He should never turn his back on him. He always stands facing him until he disappears. In his presence, he doesn't sit crosslegged, unless he is allowed to or it is absolutely necessary. When the shaykh holds a *majlis*, he is never absent unless it is absolutely necessary. Before the murīd does anything, he consults the shaykh.

The murīd should not interpret the shaykh's speech, rather, he should take what he says literally. If something is difficult for him to understand, he asks the shaykh about it immediately.

He shouldn't step on the place where the shaykh sits or on the rug upon which he prays. He doesn't sleep on his pillow or wear his robe or scarves. He doesn't make *tasbih* with his *misbahah*. If the shaykh gives any of these things to him as a present, he shows his respect toward them.

In addition, the *adab* of the murīd is that he always looks at the shaykh so that his esteem for him doesn't decrease in his heart, thereby denying himself his *barakah*. He respects the shaykh's children and relatives, his companions, all his murīds, and all others that are somehow connected with him.

Adab of the Murīd with His Brothers

He should love them all for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. He doesn't look at the unseemly mistakes or slips of his brothers, for he knows that he himself might fall into such mistakes. If he hears about these mistakes from others he doesn't believe them. He loves good for them just as he loves it for himself. For example, he calls attention to the need to do *wuḍu* before it's time, be active in worship, and get up in the night for prayer. He doesn't cause any of the brothers to be impolite with the shaykh. He is not a cause for others to be late or miss the *majalis* (meetings) of *dhikr*, congregational prayers, or classes of knowledge and *adab*. If he does so, he himself will have committed these mistakes and will bear the punishment of those who followed him. If his brothers blame him for their not coming, he doesn't argue with them but simply says, "May Allah reward you. This is the proof of your genuine love."

Adab of the Murīd with the General People

The murīd has no grudge, envy, quarrel, deceit, betrayal, or mockery with anyone. He is modest with the young and old. He keeps contact with his acquaintances even if they cut him off. He pardons even those who were unjust to him; he does good even to the one who has insulted him. He doesn't object to the actions of anyone unless he contravenes the Shari'ah. The murīd follows the Shari'ah in all of his actions, inwardly or outwardly; his degree of success is equal to his ability to follow it. This

can be proven in reality; it is not to be taken figuratively. Success on the path cannot be achieved except by following the Shari‘ah!

Imam al-Nawawi said, “If you see someone who claims a special status with Allah that takes him out of the knowledge of the Shari‘ah don’t get near him, for he is an innovator.”

Abu Yazid al-Bistami said, “If you see someone who is granted such *karāmah* (miraculous capacity) that he ascends into the air, don’t get near him until you find him commanding to goodness and forbidding evil, keeping the limits, and acting according to the Shari‘ah.”

Al-Nasr Abādhi said, “The basis of Sufism is adhering to the Book and the Sunnah and leaving innovations and desires for recognition.

Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd said, “Our way (madhhab) is bound by the Book and the Sunnah.”

And he also said, “If you see a man walking through the air, ignore him, for Shaytan can fly from the East to the West and walk upon water. See if he is following the Book and the Sunnah, for Shaytan can never follow the Book and the Sunnah.”

Ibn ‘Ata Allah al-Askandariya said, “Allah will illuminate with the light of knowledge the heart of he who clings to the *adab* of the Shari‘ah. There is no station more honorable than the station of following the Habib (peace and blessings be upon him) in his commands, in his actions, and in his character. If anyone claims that he has a state (hal) with Allah which takes him out of the Shari‘ah knowledge, he is deflected from the Real (al-Haqq).”

Imam al-Ghazali said, “If one claims that he has a state that frees him from prayer or prohibition of alcohol, he must be killed.”

Al-Junayd was told that a group of people claim that they reach a state in which everything obligatory upon a Muslim falls from them. He said, “Yes, they reach, but what they reach is Hell.”

Clearly, the Tariq of the People is conditioned by *adab* because *adab* is the foundation upon which rests the being (hal) of the murīd.



Sayings

The Sayings of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (May Allah be pleased with him)

- Every claim of Reality (Haqiqah) which is not confirmed by Shari‘ah is *zindaqah* (corruption in belief leading to kufr).
- Fly to the Real (al-Haqq) with the Book and the Sunnah.
- O young man beware of envy, it is the worst companion. It destroyed Iblis’s house and him, and placed him among the dwellers of Hell. It made him cursed by Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, His angels, His messengers, and mankind.
- Wash your clothes from dirt and your heart from sins.
- Be not conceited or misled by anything you feel you have done. “Surely your Lord does what He pleases.”
- *Taqwa* is the basis of every goodness and the reason for coming into the world. It is the foundation of wisdom (hikmah), knowledges, purity of hearts, and secrets.
- O young man, do not run away from *bala’* (tribulation). Be patient with it. See how the nature of this world and those in it change for your sake. The prophets, who are the best of people, have been tested, as well as their followers who emulated them, and their followers, and everyone who later followed in the footsteps of the prophets.
- If you find in your heart hate or love for someone, examine his actions according to the Book and the Sunnah. If they are approved of by them, then love him. But if they are disapproved by them, dislike him. By this, your love or hate will not be based on your *hawa* (personal whims and desires).
- Sitting with the Haqq (Allah, the Real) is inappropriate for anyone except he who is purified of the dirt of moral lapses. The Exalted’s doors are opened only for those who have removed thoughtlessness and the making of claims.

The Sayings of Sayyidi Ahmad al-Rafa'i (May Allah be pleased with him)

- Protect your beliefs from being founded upon the apparent in what is similar in the Book and Sunnah.
- Declare Allah exalted above the characteristics of the *muhdath* (those things brought into being) and the attributes of the *makhluq* (created). Purify your beliefs from interpreting the meaning of the *istiwa'* (mounting) of Allah [upon His throne] with the meaning of the *istiwa'* (mounting) of objects [in their place], which leads to [the deception of] incarnation. Allah is exalted above that.
- Magnify the greatness of *'ilm* by fulfilling its requirements, because the realities of things are reached by listening and reflecting.
- If the servant of Allah comes to his own aid he tires; however, if he surrenders the affair to Allah, the Exalted, Allah aids him to victory without the help of his relatives or family.
- All of mankind neither harm nor benefit. There are *hijabs* (veils) which Allah has put for the slaves (*'ibād*). The one who is able to lift them arrives to Allah.
- He who shields himself with patience is safe from the arrows of haste.
- Among the signs of the *'arif bi llah* is concealment of state, silence, and relinquishing hopes.
- The inward and outward of a shaykh is divine law (Shari'ah).
- The one who boasts about his father, mother, uncle, his wealth, and his supporters won't smell the scent of knowledge. Allah has nothing for the one who is fascinated with himself.
- The shaykh is the one who binds you to the Book and the Sunnah and drives you away from innovations.
- The biggest liar among people is the one who sees himself better than others.

The Sayings of Sayyidi Ibrahim al-Dasuqi (May Allah be pleased with him)

- The one who has no mercy for people, will never ascend to the ranks of Allah's people.
- As long as your tongue tastes the harām, don't expect to taste any wisdom or knowledge.
- The capital of the murīd is *muhabbah* (love in brotherhood) and *taslīm* (submission to Allah).
- Whenever the murīd stops doing his *wird*, Allah cuts the murīd off from His help on that day. For surely His help comes from doing it.
- The entirety of the Tariq is expressed by two words: *ta'arruf* (knowing) and *ta'abbud* (worshipping) your Lord.
- If your Lord loves you, the people of the Heaven and Earth love you. The jinn, mankind, the water, and air will obey you.
- Man is not perfected until he banishes everything that comes to his heart, his secret, his knowledge, his concern, his reflection, and his mind except his Lord.

The Sayings of Sayyidi Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd (May Allah be pleased with him)

- The Tariq is entirely blocked to the people except those who follow in the footsteps of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him).
- He who does not memorize the Qur'an and write the hadith should not be taken as an example in this affair, because our knowledge is bound by the Book and the Sunnah.
- We have not taken Sufism from what has been said, rather from hunger, leaving this world, and cutting our self off from the familiar and comfortable.
- Valor and manliness is patiently enduring the slips of your brothers.
- *Zuhd* is emptying the heart of hopes for things not possessed, making the world small, and erasing its traces from the heart.

The Sayings of Sayyidi Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili (May Allah be pleased with him)

- Among the signs of *nifaq* (hypocrisy) is *dhikr* being heavy on the tongue. So turn to Allah in repentance so that *dhikr* will be light on your tongue.
- He who doesn't have *zuhd* for this world and its people will never smell the scent of *wilayah*.
- We don't prevent our murīds from meeting others apart from us. Rather, we say to them, "If you find a source of water sweeter than ours, follow it."
- This Tariq is not traveled by practicing monasticism and eating barley but by patience and presence with Allah.
- He whose modesty toward other people is not increased by his knowledge and deeds is destroyed.
- Do not depend upon your knowledge, your deeds, and the help of others. Be with Allah, by Allah, and for Allah.
- To us there is no greater sin than love for this world and preferring it to the *akhirah*, and giving rulings in the *dīn* from ignorance.



The Qasida of the Shaykh of Shaykhs*

Abu Madyan Shu'ayb al-Maghribi

To guide the wayfarers to the pleasure of the Lord of the Worlds

The pleasure of life is only in the company of the *fuqara'*—they are the Sultans, the masters, and the princes.

Therefore, keep their company and have *adab* in their assemblies. Leave your portion behind you whenever they send you forward.

Seize the moment and always be present with them. Know that *ridā* (Allah's pleasure) is bestowed on those who are present.

Cling to silence unless you are questioned. Then say, "I have no knowledge," and be concealed by ignorance.

Do not look at fault unless you see a clear fault appear in you, but it is concealed.

Lower your head and ask forgiveness without cause. Stand apologizing in just treatment.

If a fault appears from you, then apologize and lift the face of your apology for what has flowed in you from you.

Say, "Your insignificant slave is more entitled to your pardon." Act kindly in forgiveness and adhere to gentleness, O *fuqara!*

Take for granted their goodness for that is their nature. Fear neither overtaking nor harm from them.

Always be generous in singing the praises of the brothers in sensory and meaning. Lower the eye if someone slips.

Watch the shaykh carefully in his states, perhaps a trace of his approval will be seen on you.

Advance with seriousness and leap to serve him. Perhaps he will be pleased, and beware lest you become irritated.

The pleasure of the Creator is in his pleasure and his obedience. He will be pleased with you, so then beware of leaving it.

Know that the Path of the People is obscure needing study, and the state of the one who claims it today is as you see.

When will I see them and where will I see them? When will my ear hear some news of them?

Whom do I have to help me, and how is it possible for someone like me to compete with them in wells about which I do not recognize impurity?

I love them and treat them gently and I offer them my heart's blood—especially a party of them.

A people of noble qualities—Wherever they sit, a fragrance remains in the place after them.

Tasawwuf is guided by their character in the Paths. Excellent harmony is theirs that delights my eye.

They are the people of my love and my lovers who are among those who trail the coat-tails of might in magnificence.

May I be reunited with them in Allah, and my wrong actions forgiven and pardoned in Him.

Then blessings be upon the Chosen, Sayyiduna Muhammad, the best of those who fulfilled and who vowed

* In *Diwan of the Lovers* (Blanco, TX: Zahra Publications, 1982). Translation, Diwan Press (Norwich, England: 1980).

