

2009

TAOSHOBUDDHA

MARAQBA-I-NAQSHBANDI

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Naqshbandi

Meditation is just to be! Not doing anything!
No action! No thought! No emotions!
Just you are! And it is sheer delight!
Meditation is an understanding, an experience of
Oneness – both inner and outer! It springs forth from the
deepest core of your being.
An evolution! Just as no doctor can give you health,
So too no master can give you meditation.
Both meditation and health belong to the fourth
dimension.
A dimension beyond the known!
A master can only help you in removing the obstacles
So that meditation happens!

Taashobuddha: Meditation the way to self realization

When the lips are closed, then the heart begins to speak; when the heart is silent, then the soul blazes up, bursting into flame and this illumines the whole life. This is Meditation. Although there is no specific way that meditation can be explained. Yet still the masters speak. I have earlier written a book ***Meditation: the way to self realization.*** This is simply to bring an

understanding in an aspirant along the way so that the journey becomes easier. Without understanding the journey becomes really difficult. All that I am overflowing is like a finger pointing towards the moon. So do not look at the fingers instead look towards the direction fingers are pointing.

जब को दिल को नींद आ जाती है फिर मैं ही अकेला होता हूँ

और यार की महफिल होती है कल साहिल वालों से रो रो

यह डूबने वाले कहते थे जो मौज डुबा दे तूफ़ां को

वह मौज ही साहिल होती है

WHEN THE ENERGYFIELD OF THE MASTER FLOWS! THE
MIND IS AT REST ENTERING THE REALM OF TOTAL
RELAXATION! BEYOND ALL

Muraqaba is the Sufi word for meditation. Literally it means 'to watch over', 'to take care of', or 'to keep an eye'. Metaphorically, it implies that with meditation, a person watches over or takes care of his spiritual heart or soul, and acquires knowledge about it, its surroundings, and its creator.

Stages of *Muraqaba*

Following are the *maqamat* (stages) in which Sufis have broadly categorized their journey of ascension or meditation. This categorization is an arbitrary one, and each level is generally further sub-divided into several sub-levels. During the process of enlightenment, some stages can merge or overlap each other. There are various categories.

These are:

1. Gnosis of self or the individual plane;
2. Gnosis of the universe or the collective plane, and
3. The gnosis of the creator or the cosmic plane.

These are further sub divided into sub- categories.

GNOSIS OF SELF

This is the starting level of meditation. When a person starts meditation, he enters into a somnolent or sleep state. Quite often this is considered as meditation. This happens only through proper understanding that you can transcend. This is the beginning. With the passage of time, the person goes into a state between sleep and wakefulness. So the person can remember that he saw something, but not specifically what it is. This stage lacks clarity. Various stages of this meditation are as under:

***Adraak* (experience)**

With continuous practice of meditation, the sleepiness during meditation slowly and slowly decreases. Conscious mind is no more suppressed by sleep and is able to focus. The aspirant can now receive the spiritual understanding from his subconscious mind. At this stage, the person is unable to see or hear anything. However he is able to experience or perceive it.

***Warood* (coming, beginning)**

When *Adraak* or experience becomes deep it is exhibited as sight. The stage of *warood* starts when mental concentration is sustained and somnolence or sleepiness is at its minimum. As soon as the mind is focused, the spiritual eye gets activated. The conscious mind is not

used to see through the spiritual eye, so concentration comes and goes. Gradually the mind gets used to this kind of visions and the mental focus is sustained. With practice, the visions or experience becomes so deep that the person starts considering himself a part of the experience rather than considering himself an observer alone. Thus he moves from the subject to the object.

GNOSIS OF THE UNIVERSE:

This is the second stage. During this stage the aspirant gets connected with the universe. Many things happen like *Kasf* etc.

***Kasf* or *Ilham* (unveiling of arcane knowledge)**

Kasf or *Ilham* is the stage where aspirant starts getting information that most people are unable to observe intuitively. In the beginning, this condition occurs suddenly without personal control. With practice, however the mind gets so energized that it can get such understanding at will. Journey along the inward path can happen only through *Kasf* or *Ilham* the instruction form the masters- a silent communion.

***Shahood* (evidence)**

When a person can get any information about any event or person willingly this condition is called *Shahood*. This stage is broadly categorized according to activation of the senses. The aspirant can see things anywhere in the universe. Can hear things anywhere in the universe! He can smell things anywhere in the universe and also can touch things anywhere in the universe (*Hadith*)

***Fatah* (opening, victory)**

The peak of *Shahood* is called *Fatah*. At this stage, the aspirant need not close his eyes for meditation. Here the person is freed from both space and time. He can see or hear; taste or touch anything that is present anywhere in time and space

GNOSIS OF THE CREATOR:

***Fana* (extinction, or annihilation)**

Through a series of stages (*maqamat*) and subjective experiences (*ahwal*), this process of absorption develops until annihilation of the self or *fana* attains fruition. And the person becomes *al-insanul-kamil*, the 'total man'. It is the disintegration of a person's narrow self-concept, social self and limited intellect. The river of life dissolves in the vastness of the ocean drop by drop. The stage is also called *Fana fit tawhid* or extinction with the unity, and *Fana fil Haq* or Extinction in the reality.

***Sair illallah* (journey towards the God)**

Now the aspirant starts his spiritual journey towards the ultimate reality of the universe, i.e., God. This is also called *Safr-e-Urooji*.

***Fana Fi Allah* (Extinction of the self in God)**

One of the important phases of mystical experience which is attained by the grace of God by an aspirant on the mystical path is the state of *fana Fi Allah*. In this stage the individual totally dissolves in Allah. This is called 'extinction of the self in God'. This is the state where the

person becomes merged or extinct in the will of God. It is important to mention that this is not incarnation or union. Most Sufis, while passing through this experience, have preferred to live in the greatest depth of silence which transcends all forms and sounds, and enjoy their union with the beloved. The highest stage of *fana* is reached when even the consciousness of having attained *fana* disappears. This is what the Sufis call 'the passing-away of passing-away' (*fana al-fana*). The mystic is now wrapped in contemplation of the divine essence.

Since it is a state of complete annihilation of carnal self, absorption or intoxication in God, the pilgrim is unable to participate in worldly affairs, he is made to pass into another state known as *Fana-al-Fana* or the forgetfulness of annihilation. It is a sort of oblivion of unconsciousness. Since two negatives make one positive, the pilgrim at this stage regains his individuality as he was when he started the journey. The only difference is that in the beginning he was self-conscious, but after having reposed in the Divine Being, he regains that sort of individuality which is God-consciousness or absorption in God. This state is known as *Baka-bi-Allah* or living or subsisting with God.

Sair min Allah (journey from the God)

Here the person comes back to his existence. This is also called *Safr-e-Nuzooli*.

Baka Billah (Eternal life in union with God)

This is the other shore of enlightenment. The first is the stage when the river of being flows towards the ocean and dissolves drop by drop. The drop does not exist as drop now. And this is mystical. The moment drop dissolves in the ocean it becomes oceanic. Then a gap comes. The

journey has to continue. Only then the aspirant reaches the other shore. Sometimes it takes long to realize the other shore. The moment the drop dissolves into the ocean it becomes ocean like. The qualities of the ocean become the very essence of the drop. It attains to the magnanimity. This is *baka Billah*. This is the state where man comes back to his existence and God appoints him to guide the humans. This is a state in which the individual is part of the world, yet still remains unconcerned about his or her rewards or position in it. This doctrine is further explained in an authentic tradition of the prophet which states that God said:

And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing *Nawfal* or praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory till I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks.

There is another verse from Quran that is used to explain this concept. We (Allah) are nearer to him (man) than his jugular vein (50:6)

When Sufis have come out of the *Fana Fi Allah* state and enter *Baka Bi Allah*, many of them have produced works of unsurpassed glory, especially in the fields of philosophy, literature, and music. These works have crowned the culture of the entire Islamic world and inspired Sufis and non-Sufis for generations. As the great Persian Sufi poet, Hafiz of Shiraz, who is fondly remembered as the ‘tongue of the unseen’, said centuries ago: ‘He whose heart is alive

with love, never dies.’ Allah says about these people in the Quran:

‘Lo, indeed, the friends of God have no fear, nor are they grieved.’

DIFFERENT TYPES OF MARAQBA:

There are many different kinds of muraqaba that are practiced in various Sufi schools in different parts of the world. Following is a list of the ones commonly practised.

Beginner level *maraqba*:

Maraqba of light: These are usually used for beginners, or for cure of various diseases. These are also used as color therapy by many practices. Violet, Indigo, Blue, Turquoise, Green, Yellow, Orange, Pink, and Red are used for the cure of various physical conditions. This has developed as a separate science.

Ihsan: is the gratitude for all that is happening

Noor: It refers to the light of the unknown or the invisible light.

Haatif-e-Ghabi:

The existence is a mystery. It remains unknown and unknowable as well. Mystics say the existence came into being through the sound. This is uncreated sound and remains unheard by normal faculties. For example you see through the eyes. Eyes open in the outer world of duality. It can only see the superfluous. However these cannot envision that which is. Through the eyes you can divide on

the basis of gender, color or race. You can certainly say this person is a man or woman. But you cannot say anything about the religion or relationship with the person. This is another dimension. So too the entire existence remains an unknown and unknowable sound vibration. You can be it but you cannot uncover it. This is also called the **Unbearable sound of Cosmos.**

Names of God:

These names are not just names for names sake. Each name represents a particular attribute of god. These are the ninety-nine names of Nothingness. This is an allegoric way of describing various attributes of that which remains unknown and unknowable. Can really any name be given to that which is existential? Those who know to them it is futile. Yet still the efforts have been made not by ordinary ones but by those who have known. This is done to enumerate various attributes. Just as the word water is not water. So too the word God is not God. Lau Tzu says nothing can be said about Tao. The moment you express this becomes false. Yet still these names are symbolic of various attributes of the Unknown and Unknowable.

This is simply to acquaint the aspirant with the attributes. Quran mentions of ninety nine names of Allah, and Hindu scripture mentions of thousand names of Vishnu one of the Hindu Trinity. This does not mean that a Hindu God has thousand attributes and Allah has only ninety nine attributes. This is not so. The number is a way to say something. The allegoric way to say the unsayable! The attributes are infinite.

Allah: Final level of *Maraqba* of names of God:

In this process the first stage is the recognition of the attributes of God. It is not that an aspirant has to meditate on all the names. Just as while travelling you do not use all the vehicles to reach the destination. One vehicle alone is enough to take you to your destination. The multiplicity of vehicles is there because of so many travelers. Now it becomes essential for the aspirant to introspect and use the name that appeals the most. Remember that which emanates from within alone can take you further along the journey.

Middle Level *Maraqba*:

Once the aspirant has passed through the first stage only then he can reach the second stage in *maraqba*. This stage also has the following sub-divisions. Accordingly the aspirant meditates to experience various states of awareness. With the help of the master it becomes easy:

Moat (Death):

For getting acquaintance with *Life after Death* this meditation is necessary. Life and death are the two shore of the river of life. Or you can say both are like two sides of the same coin. The two are complimentary to one another. You cannot really experience life in its totality unless you taste death. One leads to another. This is an understanding. You can start with the understanding or the experience first. In the absence of understanding you miss a lot. In fact meditation is death. Death of ego! Unless your finiteness dies or dissolves or disappears you cannot encounter God. You only know your physical being. And body must perish. Matter decomposes. And even in that

decomposition tremendous energy is released. This energy can be harnessed for transcendence or the journey beyond finiteness. The experience of death through meditation is the very beginning of a new life. In fact meditation is death.

Qulb (Heart):

For getting acquaintance with Spiritual Heart. Ordinarily what we understand by heart is the biological one. Spiritual heart is not a biological mechanism. It refers to the movement of energy. Just as blood reaches to the heart first where it is processed and purified before it is sent to various parts of the body. So too the stimuli reaches the heart. There through the process of transformation it becomes energy. This energy is used for various functions. The energy that is thus purified meditatively creates the faculty of heart that Sufis call as *qulb*. From here really the journey begins. After travelling through various heart centers of the aspirant masters takes the aspirant through the centers of *rooh* or soul!

Wahdat (Unity):

For getting acquaintance with the reason behind cosmic unity i.e., God's will is an important milestone in the life of an aspirant. Ego considers itself as an island. For ego individual will and the divine will are separate from one another. Ego is always interested in fulfilling its will over the divine. And when this does not happen anger breeds in. You are part of the whole. Cosmos is composed of both macrocosm and microcosm. These remain like two wings of the same reality. To flow with the divine will is not only sublime but leads to the ultimate experience. Buddha gave

so much importance to the divine will that he is reported to have said, 'If one accepts all that is happening without a murmur he can attain enlightenment that very moment.'

La (Nothingness):

La is the first word of the Sufi *kalma La Illaha Illallah*. The *kalamat* begins with negating all that is. All that we understand through our sense perception is finite and therefore vanishes. The first part of the *kalma* is the negation of all that is finite or short lived. Then the aspirant moves to the other stages of this meditation.

Adam (Pre-existence):

This is the next level of *Muraqaba* of Nothingness. Accordingly the aspirant moves to pre existence stages. On your own and through the Primal Therapy one can reach to the age of five. Beyond this it is not possible by the aspirant to move on his own. Masters admonish the aspirants to move on their own beyond the age of five. The journey is arduous and also there are many dangers. The night is long and dark. You need a guide, one who has journeyed. This is what Buddha calls as *Jati Smaran*.

Fana (Annihilation):

Annihilation of Self, getting acquaintance with the alpha and omega of universe comes in this stage of meditation.

High Level Maraqba:

Tasawwur-e-Sheikh- Focusing mind on master: Masters have emphasized on *Tasawwur-e-*

Sheikh. Naqshbandi masters like Bahauddin Naqshband, and Baqi Billah have pointed its merits. Accordingly the aspirant has to introspect on the words of the master. This opens new avenues of intuitive flights and insights. Without such intuitive flights and insights one cannot progress. It is only through this the master can really impart and facilitate the transfer of spiritual knowledge or the mind seal as Buddha calls this the Mind Seal from master to the student.

Tasawwur-e-Rasool-Focusing mind on

Prophet: This is used to facilitate the transfer of *Faiz* or arcane spiritual knowledge from the holy Prophet to student. For Muslims, this focusing of mind is done on Muhammad. For the aspirants following other religions, their particular holy figures are used to focus mind upon.

Tasawwur-e-Zaat-e-Ilahi-Focusing Mind on

God: With the help of this Muraqaba, the student experiences the *Tajalli-e-Zaat* of God.

MARAQBA: ON VIGILANCE

There are certain conditions necessary for the *murid*. These are:

1. Not to object in the heart against the *sheikh's* actions, but to find all possible explanations for them. If this is not possible, the *murid* must blame it on his lack of understanding. Objection is most repulsive and the one objecting is not excusable. The veil that results from objection has no cure. It is very difficult, and particularly results in blocking the channels of *faiz* (spiritual downpour,

abundance) upon the *murid*. It is therefore advised to avoid this.

2. To disclose his thoughts, whether good or bad, to his *sheikh*, so that he can treat him. The *sheikh* is like a doctor, and if he is informed about the states of his *murid*, he performs *Tawajjuh* (turns to Allah) for correcting him and curing his ailments. The student should not rely on the *Kashf* (unveiling) faculty of his *sheikh* because *Kashf* may be 'distorted' and may be mistaken.
3. To be truthful in his seeking, unchanged by afflictions and hardships, and not diminished by reprobation and vexations. Thus he must have truthful and excessive love for his *sheikh*, more than his own self, possessions and children, believing that he does not get his objective from the worshipped Lord without the intermediary help of his *sheikh*.
4. Not to emulate any of his teacher's normal actions - unlike his verbal orders (which must be totally obeyed) - unless so ordered. The *sheikh* may do some actions according to his own *maqamat* (level) and *Hal* (state), such actions may be a lethal for the *murid*.
5. To do the *dhikr* (mentioning Allah in the heart), *Tawajjuh* (turning the heart toward Allah), and *muraqaba* (watchfulness over one's own thoughts) as instructed by his *sheikh*, and to leave out all other *awrad* (daily routines of *dhikr*) except the ones related in the *Sunna*; because the former were

prescribed by the *sheikh's* scrutiny which is from the light of *Allah*.

6. To see himself as the lowliest of all creatures, and not to see that he has any right imposed on anybody, and to discharge his responsibilities concerning his obligations to others by fulfilling or paying them and by severing all attachments to anything other than his goal.
7. Not to betray his *sheikh* in any matter, but to respect and honor him to the utmost, to fill his own heart by *dhikr* as instructed, and to drive away *GHAFLAT* (forgetfulness of Allah) and thoughts (involuntary thoughts, other than *dhikr*).
8. That his objective from this life or the afterlife be nothing but the Unique Entity (*Allah*): not even a *Hal* (state), *maqamat* (level), *fana* (annihilation) or *baka* otherwise, he would be seeking the perfection of his self (*nafs*) and its conditions. Not to rebut the *sheikh's* words even if the *murid* is right, but to believe that the *sheikh's* error is stronger than his own correctness, and not to advise his *sheikh* with anything unless he asks him to.
9. To be compliant and submitted to the orders of his *sheikh* and to whomever he appoints among his other successors or *muridin*, even if their outward actions are less than his own.
10. Never to disclose his needs to anyone other than his *sheikh*. If his *sheikh* is not present and he is under

an afflicting necessity, then he only turns to a righteous, generous and pious man.

11. Not to get angry at anyone because anger kills the light of *dhikr*, and to refrain from debating and argumentative discussion. All debating results in forgetfulness (of *dhikr*) and impurities (of the heart and soul)! If he gets angry or argues with anybody, he asks *Allah* for forgiveness and asks this person to excuse him even if he is right.

Though meditation begins in the mind, it is not real meditation. Begin with the mind. One day you will attain meditation. When the mind ceases, you are beyond it;

Only then real meditation begins.

Even to go beyond the mind you have to use the mind itself.

**However, use the mind negatively.
You will certainly attain meditation.**

LA ILLAHA ILL ALLAH