

Halqa Meeting March 1, 2015

Abdul Hayy: During the month of February our attention was largely focused on our dear Yosuf Jan, (May Allah swt have mercy upon him) who after struggling with his illness, was returned to the Divine Presence on February 23. When a Muslim dies, what is always said is, “**Inna liLlahi wa inna ilaihi raji’un**” meaning, “**We belong to Allah and to Him do we return.**” May Yosuf Jan be held in the Divine Ocean of Mercy. Yosuf Jan was steadfast in patience with his condition and striving for God’s grace. He will remain for us an example of untiring devotion to Allah despite illness and pain. During my eulogy at his funeral, I referenced the verse of the Qur’an where God says, “**We will test you until we know which of you are striving, and which are patient.**” The Patient One (**as-Sabur**) is the last of the Divine Names of God. As it happens, The Patient One has the same numerology as the All-Merciful (**ar-Rahman**), the very first of the Divine Names. They both equal 329 in the numerological scheme known as *abjad*.

The result of proper spiritual practice is to enter into a direct experience of the Spirit. Spirit is of itself, its own proof. As Rumi says, “The sun is its own proof. If you need proof don’t turn your face from it.”

Aftaab aamad dalil-e aftaab
Gar dalilat baayad az wey ru mataab

The world of Spirit is a realm of expanded awareness and of the most profoundly intimate communion. Those who enter this spiritual domain, witness the Divine Presence directly within their own expanded field of awareness. As the boundaries of our limited consciousness disappear, we can witness a universal awareness that is vast and single. This awareness permeates each and every living being and comes into expression in accordance with each being’s limited nature. The gnostic develops his or her receptivity to Spirit and is guided by It into increasingly expansive expressions of Spirit’s Self-manifestation. Ultimately, the gnostic verifies that there is only Divine Existence and Divine Awareness. Our limited human awareness in relation to Divine Awareness can be compared to a wave supported by the ocean.

The perceptual limitations that we experience in this life are due to our reliance upon sensory perception. Rumi compares the bodily senses to the palm of the hand, called *kaf* in Persian. The same word in Persian also means ‘foam’, employed as a pun in Rumi’s re-telling of the story of ‘The Elephant in a Dark Room’. The people in that room have never before seen an elephant so they run the palms of their hands across the elephant hoping to understand its nature. In one stanza, Rumi writes:

**The eyes of the senses are like the hand's surface;
The palm of the hand can't apprehend the whole.
The Ocean's eyes aren't those of its surface;
Push aside the foam and see with oceanic eyes.
The foamy surface agitates day and night;
You see the foam and not the Ocean, how strange!
We are like boats tossed about on the sea,
blind, while sailing on a luminous Ocean!
You've fallen asleep in the vessel of the body;
You've seen water, look into the Water of waters!
This vast Water is what moves the waters,
an endless Spirit this, that calls to all spirits.**

In the final couplet of this stanza, Rumi describes Spirit calling to all spirits, and in the case of the dying body, calling back the spirit 'blown into it' by God, as per the Qur'anic verse, "I blew into him of My Spirit". In the poem, Rumi describes the ocean as 'luminous'. He is referring to a fundamental property of Spirit, which is that It is Light.

Rumi also writes,

**That sense through which God is manifested
isn't a worldly sense—it is otherworldly.**

*Aan hissi ke Haqq bar aan hiss muzbar ast
nist hiss-e in jihaan aan digar ast.*

The Sufi does not need to use religious terminology to describe the witnessing of Divine Awareness. People are invited to look into their own nature in quiet meditation, with sincerity and a willingness to let go of whatever comes to mind or the bodily senses. Mind and the senses are where Awareness manifests, they are not that Awareness in and of itself. Whoever discovers the Universal Awareness will know that religion, at its best, is inviting people to explore that part of themselves which can witness Universal Awareness.