

BECOMING GOLD

by Shaykh Taner Ansari

Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim, [In the Name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy, The Source of Mercy]. All praise belongs to Allah. He owns everything. All power belongs to Him and not to us. May His peace and blessings be on His Prophet Muhammad and his family and on all the other prophets and their families.

Allah's Love Passes Through Us

The keeper of the house, that's me. That can be you too. You go through your life experiences to prove your sincerity, your loyalty, your stupidity and your wisdom. The only thing that counts is love. I know that whoever loves me, actually, he or she loves Allah and whomever I love, it is Allah who loves them. I'm like a conduit, passing Allah's message to you and back to Allah from you. I want to make you like that, the same thing.

Being Smart and Being Stupid

The brain is a very important organ in our body. It is the medium where *Az Zahir* [The Outer] and *Al Batin* [The Inner] meet. It is your throne, where you make your decisions to run this body. As you are making decisions, you are getting data from your outer with your senses, and you are getting data from your heart from the Divine Essence. This Divine Essence communication depends on your attainment of *Sultani Ruh* and *Ruhani Ruh* (levels of souls). When the connection is clear, you can get good transmission. When you are not aware of this connection, you are stupid because the transmission is not good. When you are aware of the connection, you are smart because the transmission is good.

What Is a Fool?

The term "fool" in Sufism [*Abdal* in Arabic] refers to the people who have connected their brain totally to the Divine Communication. They have purposely quit making any decisions independently. They have recognized Allah's wisdom and His capacity to make the right decisions and have connected themselves to that. They have sold themselves in exchange for Allah's presence, which is why they are called "*abdal*." They are intelligent enough to accept the fact that this intelligence belongs to Allah and not to them. A person with no intelligence is sometimes called "fool". In Sufism, a person who has realized that they have no intelligence, compared to Allah's wisdom, is also called "fool".

Allah's Magnificence in You Comes with Your Surrender

Allah is wise. Allah is merciful. Allah is all knowing. Allah is the accountant. Whatever attributes that are covering you and that you are utilizing are Allah's. Allah is using you to manifest these attributes in different degrees. As your surrender increases, this manifestation increases in you according to Allah's will, not according to your will. Whoever Allah loves and manifests His qualities to a greater degree is closer to Allah. However much of Allah's magnificence is being manifested in you, it belongs to Allah. Everything is Allah's. We have nothing.

At times, some people refer to a shaykh as a big shaykh. What's a big shaykh? A big

shaykh is the one who has surrendered more than anybody else has. Allah's manifestation of His attributes is more in him than in anybody else.

Behavior Driven by *Nafs* Is Predictable

When you look at people, you see two things: one is their *nafs* [egoistic or animalistic nature], and the other is their Allah. So why do we hate or dislike people? We don't like people because of two things:

1. Because we see their *nafs*.
2. Because of our own *nafs*.

Why do we like people? Either the Allah in us sees the Allah in them, or they are doing something to boost our *nafs*. It's not that we like them, but we will get along with them. Actually *nafs* is always in love with himself or herself. If you are a Sufi, you can see the Allah in them. You can see which is from *nafs* and which is from Allah. You can see clearly, so you can predict what they are going to do next, because you know how the *nafs* acts. It's not a big wonder. You don't have to be a magician to know what the idiot is going to do next, because you know the *nafs* has taken over him.

Act in Relationship to Allah

When you respond to other people's actions or reactions, you do it in relationship to Allah. Then you don't care what he does or doesn't do. Your *nafs* doesn't mean anything to me. I'm not going to act according to what you say or what you do. I act according to what my shaykhs tell me. What does Allah want me to do? If He wants me to do something, I do it. You can swear at me all you want. I won't do anything until Allah says, "Hit him," then I'll hit you. But until then, I won't. You can lie all you want. Some people lie. They think they're conning me. They think, "You don't know." But you can only cheat yourself. You cannot cheat me, although you may try, because I only listen to Allah. I don't listen to you. If you want money and Allah says, "Give it to him," I'll give it to you whether you are lying or not. If Allah says, "Help him (meaning you)," I'll help you, not because of you. I'll help you because Allah wants me to help you. Your lying is between you and Allah. Allah says, "Help him," so I help you for Allah's sake.

My heart has to tell me what to do. My brain is not that good. I think I have enough intelligence to know what's going on, but I wouldn't count on my intelligence. I count on my heart, my connection to Allah. I am saying this to be an example for you. I want you to do the same thing. Then you'll be a lot happier because you won't pay attention to others' shortcomings thinking, "They are stupid. They are lying to me. They make me so mad. There are so many stupid people on earth." Yes, but that's not my problem. Nobody is God. Only God is All-Wise and All-Knowing. People are stupid. Allah says, "You are ignorant." We are ignorant, yes.

An Excellent Trade

That's why we want Allah and not ourselves. I am the winner because I get Allah. Allah is worth getting. Allah gets me. What am I worth? Nothing, a worthless thing to the Whole. "I am all Yours, Allah! Are You all mine?" I think that's a good trade. People are so afraid to give up themselves. "I don't know if I can surrender. It's tough." What? Do you want yourself? Well, good, we don't really care. You can have yourself

all you want, because you are nothing. Don't think that you are so valuable. You are holding on to your attachments saying, "I don't know if I should give it up or not." Excuse me? What do you think? You are smart? Then give it up, Dummy, you are nothing. You are worthless.

In return, you get something of worth. In Sufism this is called gold. What is valuable is measured with gold. You are fake and you become gold. You give up fake and Allah fills you with gold because Allah is gold. Now don't get me wrong; gold is not Allah. You are fake. Allah is real. He makes you real with truth, *haqq*. Allah said, "I created everything with *haqq*." Al Hallaj realized this and said, "*An Al Haqq*," (I am The True [a Name of Allah]) because he was thinking, "Allah created everything with *haqq*. He created me too. Then I must be *Haqq* too." They killed him for calling himself 'God'. Ignorant people are apt to do anything. So be careful.

Sufis Don't Talk Too Much

Don't blabbermouth everywhere to show off your knowledge, whatever crumbs you may pick up from here and there. We don't discuss anything until we're asked. We mind our own business. We don't go around bragging. Your relationship is with Allah. Finished. I am sitting here, minding my own business. But this is Allah's business – if He wants. I do whatever He wants.

We are not after converting people to anything. We are after those people who want Allah. We want to help them get to Allah. If they don't want Allah, it's their business. There is no compulsion, no force, no nothing. We want to help humanity. It's Allah's business.

From the Students: Contemplating *Sura Yusuf* (12:7)

Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim

"Verily in Joseph and his brothers are signs (of Allah's Sovereignty) for the inquiring."

Students' Responses

1. Every person in the story of Joseph sees some part of the truth. His brothers see "something" in Joseph and recognize that and only that. The caravan traders see in Joseph his money value. The Pharaoh's wife sees only his beauty and not the Source of his beauty. Joseph, peace be upon him, sees the whole picture; he sees and acknowledges the whole Truth and its Source. That is our lesson: not to latch onto just one portion of the truth, but see and act with the bigger picture.

2. Maybe this story is on one level about each human being. Hz. Yusuf represents the spirit of Allah, or the Essence. His brothers represent the partial reflections of Allah's different attributes from which the *nafs* tends to build its separate identity. He is one; they are many. In other words, Hz. Yusuf could symbolize the *fitrah*, the "inner child," the direct and secret connection to Allah. His qualities, when he appears, are overwhelming beauty and awareness. But he is often hidden. His brothers are all the rest of our ingredients: The multiple and divisible elements of our identity, including the conscious mind, personal history, social conventions, judgments, attitudes, opinions, rationalizations, and so on. Hz. Yusuf is meant to be high above his brothers, and they don't like it. Their jealousy is how Shaytan divides us from

our true nature. They want to put him down and hide him away so they can stay in the spotlight. Pride, greed and lust are the qualities of the *nafs* that keep our Hz. Yusuf hidden away inside. The relation of the different characters to Hz. Yusuf can be seen as stages in the purification of the self. When Hz. Yusuf comes out of the well or the prison, he is seen differently by various people. His appearance at the early stages is like the *Nafs al-Mulhama* - when the inspiration comes, our ego tries to possess its beauty for our own. So the merchants tried to turn him into a product (verse 8), and the chief's wife finds her romantic and physical passions aroused (*Nafs al-Ammara*). Distress and blame afflict his brothers (*Nafs al-Lawwama*) while they are estranged from him. At these points, he is sent back and hidden away again until people are ready for his life-saving gift of spiritual vision. When he ascends to his true place of highness in relation to his brothers and the chief's wife, all of them realize that they could only find their true worth in subservience to him. When the others finally prostrate to him, he unifies them (brings the brothers and their families to Egypt) and the whole human being is reunited.

3. Perhaps this ayat means that if we study the actions of Yusuf and his brothers and the results thereof, we can see the correct actions that please Allah and the incorrect actions which do not please Allah. Maybe we should use Yusuf as an example to follow.

4. Joseph and his brothers have a contrast of good and evil, Joseph is in search for a true spiritual knowledge and evil is between the brothers through greed and jealousy.

5. Although I am limited in knowledge what comes to mind is that Allah is the Bestower of all Wisdom and Knowledge. Some people view Sovereignty as a tool to control our world, while others view it in terms of the Mercies of Allah (SWT) being bestowed upon us in our quest to attain nearness to Allah. Although Prophet Yusuf (A.S.) and his brothers were all the Family of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) with whom Allah's covenant had been made, Prophet Yusuf's brothers appeared to lose their Focus On Allah in the beginning as is shown in Ayat #8. They appeared to view the Sovereignty as being power rather than wisdom. Despite this, Allah showed His favor to them by granting a part of His wisdom to Prophet Yusuf (A.S.). Allah in His Sovereignty turned what seemed to be a bad situation into good by allowing Prophet Yusuf (A.S.) to bring his family, from which he had been driven away years earlier, to safety during the famine; thus, Allah's covenant to the family of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) was fulfilled as countless generations continued to follow the One True God. The Sovereignty is given by Allah to whom He wills, and He raises in degrees whom He will. Despite the objections of some family members, Allah raised Prophet Yusuf (A.S.) and granted him His protection, guidance and patience through all the struggles of life. Inshallah, may The Almighty grant us all His guidance so that we may come closer to Him.

6. The story of Joseph is one that is rich and beautifully woven with lessons of Allah's manifestations and sovereignty. Allah in His manifestation of *Ya Mu'izz*, Bestower of Honors, endowed Joseph with beauty and the gift for understanding prophetic dreams. *Al-Jabbar*, The Compeller, told Joseph's brother to throw Joseph into a deep well instead of killing him and then *Ya Muhaymin*, The Guardian, watched over Joseph until the caravan discovered him. *Ya Musawwir*, The Detailer, took Joseph to serve in the home of an Egyptian family and *Ar-Rashid*, The Capable of Right Judgment, helped Joseph to reject the seductions of the Egyptian's wife and not dishonor his employer. *As-Sabur*, The Patient One, helped Joseph during his imprisonment and *Al-Basit*, The Reliever/Expander, brought the prisoners to Joseph for help in understanding their dreams. *Al-Qawi*, The Strong One, gave Joseph the courage

to be honest with the prisoner whose dream revealed that he would be put to death. *Ya Bari*, The Shaper, brought Joseph's abilities to understand dreams to the attention of the Pharaoh. *Al-Fattah*, The Opener, led Joseph to his position as grains-keeper. *Ya-Adl*, The Just, brought Joseph's brothers to him, without their knowing, for a loan of grain, when the family had fallen on difficult times. *Ya-Haqq*, the Truth, revealed to his brothers all that had happened to Joseph since he had been thrown in the well. *Al-Aziz*, the Victorious, restored Joseph to his father. *Al-Ghaffar*, the Forgiving One, instilled Joseph with forgiveness towards his brothers.

Al-Bari, Allah shapes our lives. Joseph's story is one of surrender to *Al-Alim*, The Knower of All. And Allah is *Ya-Wali*, our Protecting Friend.

Shaykh Taner's Talk on Love

Love

Allah wants to give His love. Allah wants to share His love, but Allah does not give His love when somebody loves himself. Then we call it lust. When you are after you, then you are not after Allah's love. You have an identity that you think you are. From the human point of view there is an irony here, "If I give up this, who's going to be after the love?" Who? Still you. We are not saying disappear. Allah wants to preserve your identity, but He wants your inclination to Him. Purification means getting your fondness for yourself and getting your desires out of the picture.

Service

That's why Islam is very important. Surrender is very important. Who are you going to serve with this identity? If you are going to serve Allah, that's surrender. If you're going to serve your- self, then that's surrender to yourself. You are surrendering one way or the other. Islam is surrendering to Allah. The opposite of that is surrendering to your *nafs*.

Annihilation

Annihilation starts after this inclination, which is *niyet* [intention]. When you want to choose Allah with this identity, then this love happens after a lot of work and appealing to Allah. Then there comes a moment this identity disappears or goes into the very minimum. This identity becomes an identity with no power and unites with the same identity of Allah. Then it becomes one big identity.

Identity

Every cell has your identity, but every cell is a separate cell in your body. All these cells make you. Each one of them has your print. That's why they can make another one of you from your one cell. Love destroys identity. That's why love is very important in getting to Allah, because when you love somebody you are giving up your identity and you want his identity or her identity or, in this case, Allah's identity. You want Him, not you. That's why love is surrender, because in love you don't want you, you want the opposite. For me, it is more than that. Love is seeing the other part of love and getting together. Recognizing the other love, the other part of itself. So actually, love is just an existence.

Attention

Saying, "I love; you love," is nothing. I don't believe, "I love you and you love me." What I believe is that either love exists in you and me at the same time, or in you and not in me. You love me. I don't feel that it does me any good. When I love you, now that does something for me. True? You feel your love, not his. You like the attention you are getting because he loves you, maybe. Who cares about getting attention? That's not what love is about.

Everybody is just feeling his or her own love and love is the property of Allah. So when you love, then Allah is there with you right now in Wadud. Ya Wadud is there. We get confused with human activities. We think, "Ok, I have to have him or her." Yes, there are some times when Allah does this for creating children. Besides that, Allah gives His love to whomever He wants or whoever deserves it or is looking for it. You should just feel that love and feel Allah. If it is illegal to pursue a relationship (if the person is married or in another relationship, or is like a parent), then you should not pursue it. You're burning, yes. That's why it's going to burn you out, so there'll be no you. There'll be He/She/It, Allah.

Allah is saying all these things.

Getting to Allah Is in Degrees.

The degrees are actually degrees of understanding that are happening in your head. The whole thing is bringing your head (your consciousness) to your heart. We keep giving these lectures to that level. There is always more. You might think, "I've heard the very bottom of this. I've heard everything." No, it's never that. There's always more because you are in a flight in an endless place. There is no end; that's Allah. So how can you say, "I got it." I said this so many times, "I GOT IT!" And then the next minute, "No, I didn't."

I went to Turkey and met this Naqshibandi dervish. He didn't have more than an elementary school education. I had been a professor, lecturing to university students. I said one sentence to the dervish. He found what was missing in what I was saying: boom! another one, boom! another one, boom! So I said, "The best thing for me to do is to shut up." For seven years I shut up. I didn't talk much because whatever I said was incomplete. For seven years I went there one hour every day. Two thousand, five hundred hours I spent loading. I always went there empty. I thought, "This is good, I won't have to say anything. I don't have to ask any questions." But I'd go there with some subject in my mind and the shaykh told me, "Your shaykh is talking to you through me." My shaykh taught me through him. So I am blessed. I had a very good education, as much as I can get. Inshallah, you are having a very good education too.

We are all lucky, *Alhumdilillah*, thank you, Allah. These are Allah's blessings. Allah chose some people for His *Zat*, which means His Essence, His Person. Sufis are these people. I am grateful to Allah, and I hope I am one of these people and I pray that you are too.

Message about *Rabita*

Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim. When you say "*Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim*," you are addressing your Shaykh. These are the words of *rabita*. You are making *rabita* to

Allah. You are connecting to Allah and Allah is working through you. *Rabita* to your shaykh is a step. Shaykh is in the middle, so that you can imagine his form. Make *rabita* to your Shaykh, so that your Shaykh can:

- feel when you are doing your *rabita*.
- know how you are doing your *rabita*.
- add his love to your love and give it to Allah.
-

Message from Hz. Ali (may Allah be pleased with him):

Shaykh received this message during *zikr*, on April 4, 2003.

If you're looking for an enemy, the *nafs* is enough for you.
If you're looking for a friend, your heart is enough for you.
If you're looking for wisdom, the Quran is enough for you.

Call of the Divine

Volume 9, April 2003

© 2003 by Qadiri Rifai Tariqa All Rights Reserved

Publisher: Ansari Publications

Editorial Staff: Muzeyyen Aslihan Ansari, Elizabeth Muzeyyen Brown,
Sheila Khadija Ansari Foraker, Debbie Rosenblatt, Mushtaq Ali Shah, Ali Vargonen