

Learning Together

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 Is The Doer and The Teacher

All power belongs to Allah, to nobody else. When we say this the Arabic part of this is: *la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah*. You have to think of the meaning and believe and apply that. It really doesn't belong to you or to me. All power really belongs to Allah and nobody else. With His power, Allah uses us to do things on earth. That's what *khalifa* is. You are the *khalifa* of Allah, which means Allah does things on this earth through you so that you can learn. The important thing is learning. When Allah puts you in situations, it means that Allah wants to teach you different things. In order for Allah to teach you different things, He will put you into different positions, places, maqams and levels so that you will learn. Allah is steady on his word. He is going to teach you.

The Promise of *Biat*

When you took *biat* [initiation into a Sufi *tariqa*, or order], what promise did I give you? What promise did you give me? You gave me your word that you are going to obey your Shaykh. You're going to keep Allah's rights as your rights and Allah's wrongs as your wrongs. You will uphold the criteria of right and wrong, which is *furqan*. What did we give you in return, as a commitment, as a pact? We will protect you and we will guide you. I never said I will find you a husband or a wife or solve your marital problems or heal you. I said I will guide you and protect you. As a Shaykh, my job is to nourish you and help you. That's what I do. Allah is very Generous. He is giving us all the knowledge that we can ask for or don't ask for. It is flowing. We need to be able to handle this. We need to be able to take this guidance and apply it. Otherwise we are wasting Allah's guidance.

Our Only Mission

We are, as human beings, on a mission on this earth, and what is our mission? It is to learn Allah. That's our only mission. All the other things are byproducts of these. Allah teaches us Himself while we are doing our job, sports, reading, studying, learning, science, making a plane or anything. When we are doing all this, we are learning Allah. That is our goal.

When I read *Qur'an-i Karim* [Generous Qur'an] to you, I read it in English so you can understand. It's a language you can understand and I can understand. Allah sent *Qur'an-i Karim* in Arabic so that the Arabs could understand because they didn't know any other language. We have to learn what Allah is saying in our own language. We learn not only in English or in Arabic, but also in the language of the time, which is science. So we try to relate everything to scientific references to show you that what we are saying is true and that we can prove it.

Stick Close to Each Other

Lately there are a lot of things happening. Shaytan [Satan] is working hard to stop us from what we want to do. He is threatened, so he tries to put *fitna* [causing trouble] between us to cause fights and doubt. That's what Shaytan does. Please don't let Shaytan win. We are all here to fight against our own *nafs* [egoistic or animalistic nature]. I told you from the beginning this is a tough job. You and I are going to get together and fight against your *nafs* because your *nafs* is your enemy. Your *nafs* is a partner to shaytan. They both want to hold you back from getting closer to Allah. Shaytan and your *nafs* want to hold you back from Allah because they themselves want to be God to you. Let us not be stupid. Let us be friendly and kind to each other so that Shaytan will not win. If you stick close to each other, Shaytan cannot get in there.

Seven Conditions for Building a Society – Our Way of Community

1. Focus (on Allah)
2. Knowledge
3. Unity
4. Love
5. Economic strength
6. Exercise
7. Good physical health

Projects

Do not assign too many projects to one person, if you can avoid it. Get into projects that you can handle step by step. Do one thing at a time; do not rush. Give the right person the right project. As the head of the project, always follow up. Everybody can do something. You have to exercise and eat healthfully; you have to be healthy. If you are not healthy what can you do? Nothing. Give yourselves deadlines for projects. Trust me, an organized few can do a lot more than disorganized millions. My final words on this subject: listen carefully.

The Farther Away from Your *Nafs*, The Closer to Allah

Allah is trusting his light with us. Are you there with me to spread and preserve this light? Do I have your word and your oath? I will also do my best to carry Allah's light and share it with you, help you, nourish you and protect you. I make this pact with you so we can go forward. Please, let's have more peace. Have good assumptions about Allah, about your Shaykh, and good assumptions about each other. The Arabic word for this assumption is: *dzan*. What do I mean by this? Allah says this in Qur'an, "Have good *dzan* for Allah." *Dzan* means good assumptions, good thoughts. When you hear something from me or you see my action, don't immediately translate it as I am punishing you or I am mad at you, or I am this or that in a negative way. Don't translate it into the negative. I am not here only to please you, I am trying to do things as my Shaykh tells me to do. I have a boss who tells me what to do. That's why this *tariqa* is a true *tariqa*. It's because we have a live connection to Allah. As I ask you to obey me, I am also obeying my Shaykh who obeys the Prophet, pbuh. This is the rope of Allah. That's what Allah says in *Qur'an-i Karim*, "Hold onto the rope of Allah and don't let go."

You can check your actions. Always ask this question: Who is the subject in this claim? If it is "I" then you are with your *nafs*. Remember our goal is Allah and not our *nafs*. The farther away from your *nafs*, the closer to Allah you get. "*Allah bes baki hawas*," which means, "There is Allah and the rest is all air or desire."

Call of the Divine

Volume 10.2, July 2004

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Publisher: Ansari Publications

Editorial Staff: Muzeyyen Aslihan Ansari, Elizabeth Muzeyyen
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