

# What Are Sufis After?

*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. Allah owns everything. All power belongs to Allah and not to us. May Allah's peace and blessings be on the Prophet Muhammad and his family and on all the other prophets and their families.

## *Ya Haqq*

Allah created everything with *haqq* [truth]. So what should we be after? The truth! Not only us, but the whole world. Everybody who is created, seen and unseen, should be after the Truth. Truth is the Name of Allah that Allah uses.

Allah is the truth because Allah exists and Allah will always exist. Allah won't go away. Allah will always be there. So anybody who claims he is working for Allah has to act with the truth. Before we pass a judgment on anything, we have to refer to the Qur'an to determine if the action is correct. If you don't know, then read the Qur'an and if you are still not certain, ask those who know. Allah says in *Qur'an-i Karim* [Generous Qur'an], "Even if it's against you, bear true witness."

## Everyone Has A Right to Enter Allah's Sanctuaries

A lot of people think they are doing the right thing and that they are very good Muslims. This is to sell themselves to their friends and their environment because the public whom they are with buys and supports this kind of action. First of all, many don't want to let women into the mosques. Some of them, even in my own mosque, didn't want to let a Christian pray with them. Look what's happening with Shia and Sunnis in Iraq and India? They do not want to allow the Christians to do their pilgrimage. What the Christians do is none of their business. Even if they are unbelievers, they have no right to kill them. Yet they will blow themselves up and then kill many of the pilgrims who are going to pilgrimage. Nobody has the right to do this and Allah is not pleased with this.

Allah says in *Sura 2 Al-Baqara, ayat 114*:

And who does more wrong than he who forbids (people from) going to the sanctuaries of Allah, stopping them from doing *zikr* of His name therein, and who also strives for their ruin? These people should enter (the sanctuaries) only in fear. For them is disgrace in the world and in the hereafter a great torment for them.

Allah is saying directly, "How can you stop people from going to my sanctuaries? *Masjids*[mosques]? How can you stop them? You yourself should be going in there with fear!"

Allah continues in *ayat 115*:

East and West belong to Allah. No matter where you turn, Allah's countenance is there. Indeed, Allah is *Wasi* [All-Embracing; All-Encompassing; Vast], *Alim* [All-Knowing].

Allah is saying all that. I don't go to the *masjid* and say, "You are doing wrong." It's none of my business. But if I am confronted with criticisms as to why I have women in the circle, like in Mauritius and London and the US, then here is the answer. Allah doesn't say why are you not stopping the men from going? Whoever is going into the *masjid*, you cannot stop. You cannot stop anyone. That's why in Hajj, women, children, old men, young men, everybody are there.

## Prayer With Mindfulness

Last week I explained *Aqam al Salat* [Allah's command to establish a system of connection and devotion to Allah]. Some translate it as worship. We translate it as prayer, especially prayer of your heart. Prayer of your heart is very important.

Establish the prayer when you're eating. Establish the prayer when you're sleeping. Establish the prayer whatever you're doing.

Establish the formal prayer, which we call *namaz*. Allah said this to all the nations. Establish the prayer does not just mean you have to establish *namaz*, which means going up and down.

Establish the prayer means all of that, and especially *zikr*.

Some people say Sufism is *bid'a*. First of all, Sufism is not *bid'a*. Second, our Prophet (pbuh) himself established *zikr* for everybody. The *zikr* of Sufism is special to those people who want Allah's *Zat* [Essence]. The *zikr* of Sufism is designed to clean your *nafs* [egoistic or animalistic self]. This is what the Prophet (pbuh) established. After each prayer, you say *Subhanallah* [Exalted is Allah (free from all defects)] 33 times, *Alhamdulillah* [All praise and gratitude be to Allah] 33 times, and *Allahu Akbar* [Allah is Greater than Great] 33 times. Allah said: "When you are reciting from the Qur'an, you start with *Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim*". Then He added, "*Euzu billahi mines shaytan irrajim, Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim* [I seek refuge in Allah from Satan the outcast. In the Name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy, The Source of Mercy]."

## Be Conscious

What I am trying to do is to bring you to the consciousness of your actions and your acceptance and the belief so that you do not do actions blindly. You have to be conscious of what you are doing and acknowledge the importance of being conscious of what you are doing. Allah created us as Allah's *khalifas* [representatives] against Shaytan's objections, against the objections of the angels. So we owe Allah a lot. Allah chose us. And in return, we should choose Allah.

That is why we say, "*Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim. Euzu billahi mines shaytan irrajim.*" What does this mean? It means that whatever you are doing will be in the Name of Allah. So that is a reminder to you that you are connected, you are representing Allah, and not to do anything that Allah is not pleased with. I also suggest you start each morning when you wake up by saying this: "*Euzu billahi mines shaytan irrajim, Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim.*"

## Seeking Allah's Pleasure

So how will we know what Allah is pleased with and what Allah is not pleased with? You need to read the *Qur'an-i Karim* and to listen to the Prophet to find out what Allah likes and what Allah doesn't like. Mainly, Allah likes the Ten Commandments. The principles of Islam are these: you do not want to hurt anybody; you do not swear at anybody; you do not steal, and so on. You unite and do not separate. You love, love, love, love, love. Love your wife, love your husband, love your kids, love the dog, love this, love that.

All kinds of things come to my mind when I think of Allah. How can I do this? This is a long process. How can you not do this? It is because you are so attached to your *nafs* and your day-to-day activities. There are certain ways you can overcome this. One is, of course, the Sufi way. You have to cleanse your *nafs*, cut your attachments, and your goal has to be Allah Allah Allah Allah, nothing else! Even if you are being fired Allah should be there.

Allah gave us a lot of examples. Of course, we cannot be like our prophets, but at least we should try. I don't want to be tested like our prophets, however. May Allah also keep you from tests like our prophets have known. Abraham (pbuh) was catapulted into the fire. First, Allah said to the fire, "Be cool and safe for Abraham" [*Bardan wa Salaaman 'alaa Ibrahim.*]. Then Allah sent Gabriel to Abraham and Gabriel asked, "Do you need anything?" Abraham said, "Does Allah know that I am here?" Gabriel said, "Yes." Abraham said: "Then I don't need anything." Now how many of us can say that?

So that is the focus we are after. Why? Because Abraham is always thinking of Allah. His focus is his relationship with Allah and what Allah wants. When you cleanse your *nafs* and you cut your attachments, your line to Allah becomes stronger and stronger and your focus gets stronger with LOVE. Love, love, love. When you love somebody, all you can think of is that person. So when you love Allah, what do you do? You cannot think of anybody but Allah.

When you're praying, of course, your focus will be Allah. Love is too hard to attain. Even if you attain it, it is too hard to keep. It needs constant maintenance. For example, constant maintenance is like growing a lawn. You have to keep plucking the dandelions and other things that grow in the yard that interfere with the health of the lawn. That's a lifetime job. Especially when Allah is testing you with things and you want to think of Allah, but you are thinking, "Why is Allah doing this to me? What is happening? Where is Allah when everybody is abusing me? How long am I going to put up with this?" Of course, there it shows that you love yourself, the "I".

### **Having a Relationship with Allah**

The next thing I'm going to teach you is about listening attentively. Some of you (during this online *sohbet*) are probably playing with or checking on the kids and looking around at things near you. But when you have a conversation with someone, your full attention has to be there. And *namaz*, formal prayer, is like that. You are having a relationship with Allah. You are in Allah's presence and you are having a conversation with Allah. Or you are in the heavens having a conversation with the angels and you are praising Allah with the angels. That's what *namaz* is. When you sit down and make *sajda* [prostration], you are praising Allah; you are talking to Allah. When you stand up, you are talking to Allah. That's how you should pray. When you pray, be conscious of what you are doing.

Ali Baba (a Turkish shaykh) used to say, "You are tumbling. They are tumbling." The Naqshis in Turkey would say, "Ali Baba, why are you are not going to the mosque?" The Naqshis have to go to the mosque for every prayer. So, Ali Baba says, "You go pray, you go, you go." And they say to him "Ali Baba, why are you are not going to the mosque?" Ali Baba replies: "Let me tell you. You guys are not praying for Allah, you are praying for me. You go to the mosque, but you are thinking why is Ali Baba not coming. You are thinking of me! You should be thinking of Allah and you shouldn't be asking me this question."

### **The Prayers**

First of all, do the prayers slowly, don't do them fast. It is not important that you pray four *rakats* or ten *rakats* or whatever number. I am saying that if you pray even two *rakats* that's equal to many *rakats*. I'm not saying not to pray more than two *rakats*. You can do anything you want. What I am saying is pray with attention! Know that you are talking to Allah. Talk to Allah in your prayer. TALK. The problem is that you don't see Allah, and that's why you think you're not talking to Him.

During Ramadan you make *Tarawih* [extra prayers]. You have to pray fast and then it becomes exercise. When I was imam, I would pray the whole twenty *rakats* in 20 minutes. People compete with each other to see who can do it faster. Now I realize: Is this prayer?

Pray one *rakat* and say, “O Allah, I love you.” If I had the right to establish the prayer, I would do it like this: *Allahu Akbar*, I love you, I love you, I love you. Say *Subhana Rabbi Al A'la*: [Glory to my Lord the Most High] two times and then say, “I love you, I love you, O Allah, I love you, I love you, I love you, and I want nothing from you. I love you, I love you.”

On those special nights, like *Laylatul-Qadr* [The Night of Power], I’m going to pray like that: “I love you, Allah”. As a Shaykh in my *tariqa*, this is the prayer I am establishing. Pray two *rakats* on every important night like *Laylatul-Qadr*. Stand up and say 33 times: I love you, *Ana Muhibbak*, *Ana Muhibbak*, *Ana Muhibbuk*, *Ana Muhibbuk*, I love you, I love you.

I am not saying you should always pray like that. I am saying that you are to pray from your heart. I’d like to do a prayer like this as an extra *nafileh* prayer.

Okay, do you have any questions?

Student: Allah has made many religions and unbelievers may also have good connection.

Shaykh: Everybody has a connection, whether they are aware of it or not.

— Excerpted from Saturday *Sohbet*, January 21, 2012

A message from Shaykh Taner:

Read *Sura Ya Sin* every day and know the meaning of it.

*Ya Wadud* [O Love], *Ya Salaam* [O Peace], *Ya Jami* [O Togetherness]

### Call of the Divine

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**Publisher:** Ansari Publications

**Editorial Staff:** Shaykha Muzeyyen Ansari,

Shaykha Sheila Khadija Foraker,

Carol Janan Taylor

**Transcription:** Kamila Binte Hussein