

# Mystical Journey in the Modern Times<sup>1</sup>

## Part 2

Haj Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh

Q: What is the most important mystical point to which followers of tariqa; dervishes, should pay attention at the present time?

A: The whole Quran is informative; it thoroughly includes mystical points and is useful for fakirs. I will give you a simple example. Imagine a dining table on which there is grape juice concentrate and also salt and pepper. Can we say two of them might not come in handy and just one of them is enough? (Of course not). All of them must be on a well-set table but each at the right time. If you would like to have rice milk, you should add some concentrate or sugar to it. If you add salt, you will ruin the taste. But if you would like to have a stew, you can add salt and definitely not sugar.

Paying attention to all verses of the Quran is useful and worthwhile to every extent that we move forward on the path of mysticism as we may discover some new points. Take this verse: **“Remember Me, I remember you”**<sup>2</sup>. There is a mystical interpretation in this remembering. However, those who pay attentions only to the literal meaning of the verse believe that it means to repeat some chants like " سبحان الله " (Glory be to Allah), whereas the mystical interpretation is a lot deeper. Even some mystics have brought it up as which one comes first, **“Remember Me”** or **“I remember you”**? They want to know whether they can remember God even if He does not.

**“Remember Me; I remember you”** is a short phrase but in which there are such deep mystical points about which we can write books. There are plenty of such phrases in the Quran. It says: **“Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?”**<sup>3</sup> What could it possibly mean to be able to intercede with Him only by His permission? In some other verses that the Quran points to some historical stories in which there are some invasions by enemies, it actually teaches us how to defend ourselves and deal with the enemies. Take the surah of Al-Anfal: **“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah; surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing. And if they intend to deceive you, then surely Allah is sufficient for you”**<sup>4</sup>. It briefly means: Do not worry as what they are going to do the day after, also the next days, I will

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<sup>1</sup> The second part of an interview with his honorable Haj Dr. Nour Ali Tabandeh on May 5, 2009. Please find the first part on [www.sufism.ir](http://www.sufism.ir).

<sup>2</sup> The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 152: فَادْكُرُونِي أَدْكُرْكُمْ

<sup>3</sup> The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 255: مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

<sup>4</sup> The Quran, Al-Anfal, 62 & 63:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ أَنْ يَخَذُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ

be with you. In Another verse, He says: “**And be not sad, and be not grieving, and you shall have the upper hand if you are believers**”<sup>5</sup>. This verse asserts how the followers’ spirits should be and somehow teaches them a kind of defense.

There are many stories in the Quran which are not only historical but also are educational so that they can tell us how to deal with enemies, although God can do whatever He wills. According to the well-known hadith<sup>6</sup>, He does not want to get things done via intermediaries other than those He has provided us with.

In addition to reading this Quran and practicing its instructions, we follow and pay attention to the Living Quran. In the Battle of Siffin, when they raised the Quran by their spears, Ali (AS) said: “That’s not the Quran, but a bunch of papers on which something is written. *I am the Living Quran.*” This saying has been used as an example in history. Therefore, as we follow the Living Quran, we also value and respect the covered book of Quran in which there are the printed papers. We carry it along with us and put it into practice, and we never ignore the Living Quran.

Q: One of the mystical stories of the Quran is about Moses (AS) and Khidr (AS). What mysticism points does this relationship include; Moses as the follower and Khidr as the guide?

A: Plainly speaking, Moses (AS) was sort of close to God. He was Kaleemullah (He to whom God talks). It is said that after passing some stages, it pushed into his mind that there was no one spiritually higher and more advanced than him. Although he did not share that idea with anyone else and kept it to himself, as God knows everyone’s inner feelings, when he had that feeling, God ordered him to go to Majma-ul-Bahrain (The Confluence of the Two Seas) where the two seas converge. Mystics have given several interpretations of Majma-ul-Bahrain. Of those are the spiritual life and the earthly life for the two seas. Here, Moses (AS) says “**I will not cease and I will go on for years until I reach the junction of the two seas**”<sup>7</sup>. When Moses (AS) finds Khidr (AS) in there, the Quran reads: “**Then they found one from among Our servants whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves**”<sup>8</sup>. Then Moses said to Khidr: “**Shall I follow you on condition that you should teach me right knowledge of what you have been taught?**”<sup>9</sup>

This is the follower-guide relation which is far beyond the teacher-student relations in the worldly sciences. If it were the daily definition of teacher-student relation, then the teacher’s teachings would be limited to those sciences comprehended by average people. For example, a law teacher might tell a law student not to kill anybody, but in the story of Moses and Khidr, as the spiritual teacher of Moses, Khidr committed some acts which could not be realized by a rightful mind. In the journey, they came across a child, and Khidr killed him. “**So they went on,**

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<sup>5</sup> The Quran, Al-e-Imran (The Family of Imran), 139: وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزِنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

<sup>6</sup> أَبِي اللَّهِ أَنْ يُجْرِيَ الْأُمُورَ إِلَّا بِأَسْبَابِهَا

<sup>7</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 60: وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَتَانَهُ لَا أَبْرَحُ حَتَّىٰ أَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ أَوْ أَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا

<sup>8</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 65: فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

<sup>9</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 66: قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَىٰ هَلْ أَتَيْتَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تَعْلَمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا

until when they met a boy, he slew him”<sup>10</sup>. Here, if it were a typical teacher-student relation, Moses’s objection made against Khidr would be acceptable. But when Moses argued with Khidr: **“Have you slain an innocent person who never committed manslaughter? Certainly, you have done an evil thing”**<sup>11</sup>, Khidr told him that he (Moses) had not had the right to argue, and then Moses apologized. At the beginning of the journey, when they got on the ship and Khidr scuttled it **“when they embarked in the boat he made a hole in it”**<sup>12</sup>, Moses argued and said to him that they had been passengers of that ship **“Have you made a hole in it to drown its passengers?”**<sup>13</sup> Khidr said to Moses that he (Moses) could not complain. At the end of the journey, when Khidr fixed that wall which was falling down, **“Then they found a wall which was on the point of falling, so he put it into a right state”**<sup>14</sup>, Moses said: **“If you had wished, you could certainly have taken a recompense for it”**<sup>15</sup>. At this point, Khidr explained to Moses: **“So your Lord desired that they (the two children) should attain their maturity and take out their treasure (under that wall)”**<sup>16</sup>. By that time, as Moses’ spiritual ability advanced, Khidr explained to him that why it happened and attributed it to God’s will and that it had not been him who did that action, **“So your Lord desired”**. Since he directly took lessons from God and then taught the same lessons, and his lessons were not the same as typically educational lessons. Therefore, his teaching position was far beyond a typical teacher, and he was actually the Guide. His Holiness Reza Ali Shah thoroughly explained the story of Moses and Khidr in the book **“The Holy Quran and the Three Mystically Cryptic Stories”** by translating the book **“Describing Happiness on the Stages of Worshipping”**.<sup>17</sup>

In the story of Moses and Khidr, as mentioned above, at first, it pushed into Moses’s mind that he had become wise and considered himself higher than others and this opinion damaged him a bit. Then God ordered Moses (AS) to serve Khidr (AS) in order to expel that idea out of his mind. However, some argued that it was another Moses who went to serve Khidr, as Moses (AS) was Kaleemullah and would not need to serve Khidr. This opinion is not right as God decides whom to donate His knowledge and mercy to. It is no trouble for Him to make whatever He wills.

In essence, this opinion (of superiority) has not been limited to Moses (AS). Throughout history, there have always been people to think that there is no one else superior to them. After the occultation of Imam of the Age, his enemies thought that there was no one superior to them anymore, but they were not aware that God’s servants are always under His protection as Hafiz says:

<sup>10</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 74: فَأَنْطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ

<sup>11</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 74: أَقْتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا

<sup>12</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 71: حَتَّىٰ إِذَا زَكَيَّا فِي السَّفِينَةِ خَرَقَهَا

<sup>13</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 71: أَخْرَقْنَاهَا لِنُغْرِقَ أَهْلَهَا

<sup>14</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 77: فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارًا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَنْقُضَ فَأَقَامَهُ

<sup>15</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 77: قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَاتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا

<sup>16</sup> The Quran, Al-Kahf (The Cave), 82: فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَبْلُغَا أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزُهُمَا

<sup>17</sup> بيان السعادة في مقامات العبادة: written by His Holiness Haj Mullah Sultan Mohammad Gonabadi; Sultan Ali Shah

At the wine-house gate, there are Kalandar profligates  
Who are able to both take away and grant the imperial diadem

There is nothing but a brick beneath their heads, but their feet rest on the summit of the seven-  
star Pleiades

Behold their hands of power, and the enormous dignity of their unimaginable position

A very recent example can be found in what happened between late Haj Sheikh Abdullah Ha'eri (Rahmat Ali Shah) and Reza Shah. Before Reza Shah became known, late Ha'eri had foretold him that one day he (Reza Shah) would become the king of the country. Of course, it did not mean that he (Rahmat Ali Shah) would place the crown upon his head, it happened because that word originated from a pure nature. Haj Sheikh Abdullah Ha'eri was a great mystic and scholar, and also was of sheiks assigned by Their Holiness Sultan Ali Shah, Nur Ali Shah and Saleh Ali Shah. He has a heart-rending liturgy which somehow describes what happened to him and has been published. In a part he says:

I wish I had no education  
Nor anyone taught me the alphabet  
My pride and haughtiness rooted in my sophistication  
I beg my Master to help me clean all this dirt

The dirt of formal lessons in my head  
The illusion of wisdom; my greatest obstacle  
Worse than these two; the ecstasy of my existence  
Only my guiding Master's hand could clean them all<sup>18</sup>

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## **Mysticism in Current Iran<sup>19</sup>**

Q: To what degree have religious controversies influenced the crackdown against people of tariqa?

A: An angle of this controversy, which is the weakest one, is a different interpretation and understanding of the religion. On the one hand, some gentlemanly clergies who are against mysticism are my friends, and they come and discuss things with me. On the other hand, there are those who take advantage of this disagreement and find it a good pretext for oppressing us.

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<sup>18</sup> Please find the complete poem in the series of Irfan-e-Iran, Vol. 11, a tribute to Haj Sheikh Abdullah Ha'eri, edited by Dr. Seyed Mustafa Azmayesh, Haghghat Publishing, 2001, P. 72 & 73.

<sup>19</sup> This interview was held on the second anniversary of the Dervish Day, Feb 22, 2011.

They think this unity and affinity of fakirs may trouble others' presence or may interfere with their intended purposes. Contrary to what they think, they should realize that this is a spiritual group who tries to maintain itself and not to attack the others. These things have caused the crackdown, and in the last few years, they have become openly harsher.

Q: One of their recent pretexts, as they want to be oppressive, is a new term they have come up with called "False Mysticism" or "Newly-Emerged Mysticism", other than those mystical questions such as "Pantheism" or some other unimportant rituals like "The Whirling Dance" that we have already been questioned. The interesting point is that they consider Sufism as a part of it. No doubt that wise enemies know about these sophistries, and in fact, to wear off Iranians' enthusiasm for mysticism and genuine Islamic Sufism, they argue that these people of tariqa appeared just recently and did not belong to the real mysticism. What is your opinion about it?

A: Mysticism literally means apprehension. If a man has had an apprehension about God, then initially they have a kind of mysticism, even to the smallest degree. They may not know a lot about God but have a sense that there is a God. And when they keep moving on, their apprehension and understanding of God grow more precisely. If a man truly says: "I witness that there is no god but Allah"<sup>20</sup>, they have mysticism. They become mystics only when this mystical apprehension and this belief appear on all their manners. Many people know there is a God. But they think God is sitting down somewhere; so to speak, and has nothing to do with us. But those who advance into the spiritual path see God in everything everywhere, "**Therefore, whither you turn, thither is Allah's face**"<sup>21</sup>. These people are called mystics.

"False Mysticism" being said, I do not know what false means when they address mysticism. Mysticism has a certain definition, but I do not know how it can be "False". I know some people say that "Those who do not know us are not mystics at all", but what would be a false one? I do not know that. Does it mean to have a false interpretation? A false interpretation means you think highly of bad things and badly of good things. Then it cannot be mysticism at all. A real mysticism cannot be false unless it is the same definition as what I just said. There is a paradox in the term "False Mysticism". It is like you say "a factual lie". If it is a fact, it cannot be a lie. "Newly-Emerged Mysticism" also follows the same logic. When a man makes a spiritual and unworldly progress and decreases the materialistic and worldly interest, their spirituality will shine more brightly. Therefore, every individual at all times may have mysticism to some extent and demonstrate it in some way. It can neither be new nor old. Indian ascetics also have some mysticism. But apparently, those who have invented "False Mysticism" and "Newly-Emerged Mysticism" imply that if you do not believe in them, then you are following "False Mysticism" and/or "Newly-Emerged Mysticism". Mysticism cannot be false or new, from the mysticism viewpoint.

Q: Seemingly there are allegations against mysticism made by the Shiism. What is the touchstone of a credible allegation according to the Shiism principles?

A: First, we should ask what their alibi is when they say The Four Deputies were designated by

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<sup>20</sup> اشهد ان لا اله الا الله

<sup>21</sup> فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ: The Quran, Al-Baqara (The Cow), 115:

The Twelfth Imam (May God hastens his appearance). Did they have any other permits aside from delivering the Shiites' words to The Twelfth Imam during The Minor Occultation? Would it be a different permit than the one The Twelfth Imam firstly granted to Uthman ibn Sa'id Amri and then to others? On that permit, there is nothing which proves they had a religious position. They were some trustworthy, and reliable persons who believed in Imam and their mission was only to deliver Shiites' messages to Imam and to receive the replies. They knew where Imam was, but Shiites did not. Imam first said to Uthman ibn Sa'id to bring Him the letters so that He could reply on them and then send them back. And then before Uthman's death, Imam said to him: "Assign Muhammad ibn Sa'id al-Asadi your duty", then the same way, He assigned Husayn ibn Ruh al-Nawbakhti after Muhammad ibn Sa'id. Finally, prior to the death of the fourth person; Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samarri, He said to him: "You will leave this world a few days later, and I will disappear from view. There will be no connection anymore, and you shall not assign anybody else". None of these authorizations was full-scale. As we know, one of the Imams' duties was to describe the religious and juridical issues, and aside from this duty for which The Four Deputies also were to some degree responsible during The Minor Occultation, The Imams had another duty, which was to conduct the Faith Bay'at (Transaction). In the time of the Prophet (PBUH), some were Muslims only because they had to obey the sharia commands and governmental laws, so they took the Islamic and governmental bay'at. On the other hand, in addition to the governmental bay'at, there were those who followed the Prophet (PBUH) spiritually by conducting the Faith Bay'at. Later on, when the worldly government was separated from the Imams after Ali (AS), the Caliphs considered themselves to be the successors of The Messenger of Allah (the Prophet) and carried out the bay'at for their own ruling. The Imams conducted the other kind of bay'at which was the Faith Bay'at or the Guardianship Bay'at. It is recorded that although the Imams did not have the worldly government, they conducted the Faith Bay'at and there was no report that it was abolished. The Imams' Bay'at was different than that of caliphs' governmental bay'at. At times, they accused and troubled the Imams because they conducted the Bay'at. They thought that it was the same governmental bay'at they carried out. When the Imams said, they did not conduct any bay'at, they referred to the bay'at caliphs carried out for their ruling, but we are confident that the Imams always conducted the Faith Bay'at.

As I said, explaining sharia commands is one of the Imam's duties, and according to the hadith: "As for the religion scholars who devitalize their own will, who safeguard their faith, who go against their own desires and who are obedient to the command of their Master, then it is permissible for the common people to follow them"<sup>22</sup>, those scholars who comply with the four above-mentioned conditions are responsible for that duty during the Major Occultation. The last phrase of the above hadith; "then it is permissible for the public to follow them", proves that people should follow these jurisprudents. However, the Imam did not designate any certain person. Therefore, anyone who meets those conditions can be followed. This obedience is limited to the physical practices and not faith; it means we can only follow this qualified person's instructions for religious issues. But for the faith, we should research on our own, as it is mentioned at the beginning of every practicing treatise.

Some have come to me to ask how they could spot people who meet those four conditions, and if they did a research and found no one with those conditions, what they would do. I replied that it

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<sup>22</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 2, P. 88: فأما من كان من الفقهاء صائناً لنفسه حافظاً لدينه مخالفاً لهواه مطيعاً لأمر مولاه فللعوام أن يقلدوه

was not my job anyway to authenticate people with these conditions and introduce them to you; I recommended them to read books, meet persons and go on with the research.

Therefore, being the deputy of Imam does not mean that He designated a certain person to illustrate the religious and jurisprudential issues, too. Honorable jurists have a general succession; in other words, the Imams (AS) thoroughly stated whatever they must have. During the Occultation, only persons who meet those conditions are eligible to research in order to find the right religious and jurisprudential issues.

Now, the question is, during the Occultation, how can we do the Bay'at with the Innocent Imam (AS)? And Bay'at is the duty of the One who is chosen and designated by God, and this choosing comes out of God's mercy only. Speaking of mercy (according to the Rule of Mercy), it is said in Ilm al-Kalām (the science of discourse); Islamic scholastic theology, that God has sent the prophets since He has mercy on mankind. After the Last Prophet (PBUH), the continuation of this mercy necessitates presenting the next Imams. But now that the Imam is in disguise, does the mercy expire? As we know, according to this rule, this mercy will not stop, and it is not something declining, as we can see in the Prayers of Commitment: "Today morning and any other day on which I may be alive, I reaffirm my contract, pledge and Bay'at to your Successor, and I will not turn my back on it, and I will never spoil it".<sup>23</sup> It is obvious that during the Occultation, it is not possible to reach and visit Imam (AS) in order to do the Bay'at. Moreover, the Imam has not asserted that this duty must be done by jurists. Jurists have never had such a claim either. Here, people of tariqa and mysticism believe that prior to His disguise, Imam had designated a certain person named Junaid of Baghdad and he secretly did the Bay'at as the Wilayah (Guardianship) is not a public issue and also the Imams did it in private.

Now, some have criticized that they have not seen Junaid of Baghdad's name in any books mentioned for that position. To reply to them, I should say it cannot be found in your intended books or in the books you read. In essence, many mysticism books have explained Junaid's teachings and words, and they have considered Him entitled to that position. But since the critics exclusively believe in, read, appreciate and validate their own intended books and Junaid has not been mentioned in them, they have come to this conclusion that there has not been any Junaid like that.

Q: In the last few years, a controversy has been provoked, trying to define a mystic as someone who has studied jurisprudential and ethics lessons related to the theoretical mysticism and books like Fusus ul-Hikam (The Bezels of Wisdom) by Ibn Arabi, and if one has not read these books and is not familiar with them cannot be considered a mystic. I would like you to explain this issue and the role of mysticism and ethics in society.

A: I will give you a simple example. Publishers of cooking books can tell you exactly how much sugar, flour, etc., and how much heat is required to make pudding. But should you ask them if they have ever made pudding, they may reply that they do not know or they have never made any. This example is the same as the one who has just studied mysticism. On the one hand, someone says how to make pudding, and on the other hand, another says that they have made

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<sup>23</sup> اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَجِدُّكَ لَهٗ فِى صَبِيْحَةِ يَوْمِىْ هٰذَا، وَ مَا عِشْتُ مِنْ اَيَّامِىْ عَهْدًا وَ عَقْدًا وَ بَيْعَةً لَهٗ فِى عُنُقِىْ، لَا اَحُوْلُ عَنْهَا، وَ لَا اَزُوْلُ اَبَدًا<sup>23</sup>

and eaten it. Now the question is, can anyone be a mystic when they just know how to make pudding without tasting the sweetness of it? In other words, they have just read the mysticism books. Was Abuzar a mystic while he never knew how to read and write? That Christian in Karbala wanted to kill Imam Husain (AS) as his enemy, but when he met Him and was going back, he became a loyal friendly. Was he a mystic while he never read books like Ibn Arabi's or Sheikh Morteza Ansari's? There is a connection between humans and God of which no one knows about. Humans are not just bodies with some appearance. This spiritual connection between God and humans cannot be expressed verbally.

There is an incomparably exceptional connection  
Between the Creator and the human's soul<sup>24</sup>

One may write the direction of how to make pudding, but it is not the actual pudding after all. Mysticism is the same. Mysticism is to know, to know the connection mankind has with God and to behave accordingly. No doubt that it is good for everybody to learn mysticism as much as possible, but, is this connection via books? Basically, learning sciences can be useful, and it is said that Ali (AS) studied Farsi language under Salman Farsi. Neither was it beneath Ali's dignity nor did Salman think highly of himself. Mysticism has to give us a tasteful knowledge. Imagine you are over a dining table, and someone is telling you about this food and that food on the table. But you may ask them which they have tasted or eaten before.

The authentic mysticism is the one which spiritually transcends and elevates humans. Now, when someone knows to where this way goes, knows the way, surely it is better. For example, someone is going to Mashhad on foot and may rest somewhere on the way. A friend knows where he is and phones him to say there is a hill near you on top of which there is a precious gem and that he should be careful with that, or emphasizes not to pollute the stream nearby as the people down there consume the water. Surely, it is better for the traveler if they know these things, even if not, they will arrive in Mashhad. Therefore, it is not necessary for the mystic to study the theoretical mysticism.

Here, some may criticize that people of tariqa are against sciences. It is not true. They are against the ignorance that looks like knowledge. They believe that illiterate people are better than those who try to look sophisticated. God said to Adam that He would throw a rope; anyone who grasped the rope would be rescued. For the descendants of Adam's to know Him, God Himself provides them with the guidelines. The playful looks for other things, while the serious finds the right way and follows it; it does not have anything to do with studying lessons. Surely, studying is enlightenment, and it possibly increases intellectuality, and it is very good. But again, I ask whether Uwais al-Qarani who was illiterate was a mystic or not. Some have categorized mysticism into two, namely theoretical and practical, and they name the practical one as Tasawuf (Sufism). But the purpose of mysticism is to get the mankind know God better. When you want to be a mystic and to know God better, you should know that God cannot be known by reading worldly scientific books; it has to be realized by heart. Many scholars disagree with that connection and believe that the jurisprudential commandments suffice for religiousness. But religiousness is different from jurisprudence, and the position of faith which is on the basis of

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<sup>24</sup> Masnavi, 4<sup>th</sup> Volume, Verse 760.

Islam should not be ignored. Memorizing these commandments is not knowledge. About one-sixth of Muslims of the world are the Shiites, and the rest are the Sunnites. If studying jurisprudence can be considered to be knowledge, can we say that all the Sunnites are ignorant and we (the Shiites) are the only knowledgeable? No. Among them, too, there are knowledgeable and understanding persons. Therefore, we are not against sciences, but we are against the kind of ignorance which seems like the science. As a matter of fact, we want salvation for every individual via mysticism. Fortunately, those who know the theoretical mysticism are like they are entrapping religion enthusiasts into the God-seeking tunnel; in other words, attentions are drawn. A poet says:

When I saw that wart on her face  
I was afraid to be trapped by that seed like a bird

These sciences and lessons are similar to seeds for God-seeking birds to be trapped and fell into the right path. Mevlana is a good example for this. Who was Mevlana in the first place? He was a scholar jurisprudent but dropped everything all at once. A spark of fire ignited the harvest of his whole being, and he left everything. So, the foundation of mysticism is neither educational nor false and newly-emerged. These things cannot be mysticism at all. Those who are familiar with mysticism cannot consider them to be so. It is like a waiter brought vinegar for you but said it was grape juice and very sweet. What would you say when you drink it? If you showed respect, you would keep calm; otherwise, you would call him names.

Q: My last question, according to what we have discussed, it seems that one side of the disagreement with mysticism and the people of tariqa is their beliefs and the other side which is more important is their power. Perhaps many of them believe in these principles, but the love of power prevents them from admitting openly.

A: This is exactly what I said about covetousness and monopolization. Basically, when a covetous person gains power, he is not willing to share it with others, let alone telling him that, in comparison with us, he is just a primary school student and we are at the university level. There are different types of power such as intellectual power, political or financial. There may be no problem with gaining these powers but we; people of tariqa, have always stated that we never get involved in politics. However, they have always pushed us towards politics so that they could suppress us by political tactics. The fact is, they are not able to suppress us and the mysticism. Some may think they can, but the thing is, not only they cannot suppress our ideas but also the more they try the stronger our faith will be. Whatsoever they do we will not become political. So, what you said is completely right about what power does. **“Men will surely be the most disdainful when they consider themselves to be privileged”**<sup>25</sup>. May God save us from whatever that causes rebellion and violation against Him.

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<sup>25</sup> The Quran, Al-Alaq (The Clot), 6 & 7: كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ ۚ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ كَبِيرٌ ۚ