

The Opening of the Door of Enlightenment

(PDF version of Candle Post No. 132)



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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Ya Ali Madad and Navroz Mubarak! On the most auspicious occasion of Idd-e-Navroz, please accept our heartfelt felicitations. May Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam grant peace, prosperity, happiness, barakat, higher spiritual enlightenment, spiritual & luminous tayid (help) and empowerment to you, your family, your Jamat and the worldwide Jamat in the New Year. Ameen.

On this special day and in this year, may Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam shower his immense baraka by opening the Door of Enlightenment as described in this Candle post! Ameen.



Eid Mubarak

The lovers crawl in and out of your alley,
They bathe in drips of blood;
And not finding you, they give up and leave.
I am forever stationed at your door like the earth,
While others come and go like the wind.

Source: Rumi, Thief of Sleep by Shahram Shiva

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Part 1: Introduction

Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam has progressively moved the Jamat by introducing fundamental concepts over time, e.g., physical and material responsibilities as well as spiritual responsibilities (Bombay, Nov. 1973); meritocracy and the importance of the intellect of man (London, Aug. 1994); & friendship and enlightenment (Toronto, Sept. 2014). The theme of enlightenment appears from 1957 to the present and was clearly highlighted in the Platinum Jubilee message of Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammed Shah (a.s.). In this post, I would like to shed more light on the topic of 'The Opening of the Door of Enlightenment' and will begin with the key aspirations of our Holy Imams.

The aspiration for the Jamat was set by our first Imam, Noor Mowlana Murtaza Ali (a.s.), as follows:

"Hazrat Ali once uttered a prayer, in which he declared that he was not in the least afraid of tortures of hell, nor did he have any lust for the pleasures of paradise. He was simply intoxicated with the love of God. This is the Haqiqat (the Truth). It is said that Hazrat Ali used to perform miracles; but even magicians perform conjuring tricks. Hazrat Ali's miraculous powers lay in his ability to help people to arrive at the Haqiqat. This is the greatest miracle."
(Usul-e-Din firman made in Dar-es Salaam on September 29, 1899)

Similarly, Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s) has also set aspiration for the Jamat as follows:

"Those who have only superficial knowledge of the faith have fantastic notions about me. They believe my job is to heal the sick. This is not my task. My task is to show you the Way to the Truth, so that you may achieve your real destiny, which is the state of fanaafillaah. Fanaa stands for "annihilation", fi meaning "in" and Allah being "God". To be fanaafillaah is to lose oneself in God's Essence."
(Usul-e-Din firman made in Dar-es Salaam on September 29, 1899)

In the same firman, Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) blessed the Jamat with the following prayer:

"I pray from my heart that God may grant such strength to you that you may achieve freedom, that you may reach Haqiqat and turn away from evil. I pray that you may follow the path of righteousness and have the gift of inner vision of the Truth. This prayer means more than any other prayer."

(Usul-e-Din firman made in Dar-es Salaam on September 29, 1899)

Part 2: What is the meaning of "Opening" (Futuuh)?

Before we get into the issue of opening, let us remember and understand that the door opens only from inside and that is why Rumi was always spiritually sitting outside the door with a conviction that the most merciful Lord would open the door for him!

Now let us explore Ibn al-Arabi's viewpoints from a book entitled 'Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge', written by William C. Chittick, published by State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989. In his book, W.C. Chittick has presented a summary of Ibn al-'Arabi's teachings as follows:

'In Ibn al-Arabi's technical vocabulary, "opening" (Futuuh) is a near synonym for several other terms, such as unveiling, tasting, witnessing, divine effusion, divine self-disclosure, and insight. Each of these words designates a mode of gaining direct knowledge of God and of the unseen worlds without intermediary of study, teacher, or rational faculty. God "opens up" the heart to the infusion of knowledge. The word "opening" suggests that this type of knowledge comes to the aspirant suddenly after he has been waiting patiently at the door. It involves neither "self exertion, raising up the gaze, nor seeking" (II 505.17), that is seeking after that particular knowledge, since man must always seek after God Himself. Opening is the type of knowledge given to the prophets (though it is not equivalent to scripture): They receive it directly from God without rational inquiry or reflective consideration.' (p. xii)

Part 3: What preparation is needed for the "Opening" (Futuuh)?

Here is an answer by W.C. Chittick:

'If a person wants to achieve opening, he must discipline himself according the norms of Shari'a and the Tariqa (the spiritual path) under the direction of a spiritual master or "shaykh" who has himself traversed the path. In several verses the Koran tells us that God may bestow knowledge upon His Servant if He wills. Most commonly, Ibn al-'Arabi quotes the verse, "Be godfearing and God will teach you" (2:282). This "godfearingness" which prepared the disciple for God's teaching entails his complete absorption in putting the revealed Law into practice and invoking (dhikr) the name of God under a shaykh's guidance. Until the disciple reaches opening, he will have to seclude himself from people through spiritual retreats (khalwa), though after full opening, retreat and presence in society (jalwa) are the same. As Ibn al-'Arabi remarks, if a person wants to gain knowledge of things as they are in

themselves, "He should follow the path of great masters and dedicate himself to retreat and invocation. Then God will give direct awareness of that to his heart" (I 120.12). "Unveiling comes to them in their own retreats when the divine lights dawn within them, bringing sciences purified of "corroding stains" (II 600.3).' (p. xii)

Part 4: Do All Disciples Reach the Opening?

Here is answer by W.C. Chittick:

'Opening is a not a goal that every disciple will reach. The least of the necessary qualifications is the "godfearingness" referred to earlier, an attribute which Muslims have always perceived as the epitome of human perfection. As the Koran says, "The most noble among you in God's eyes is the most godfearing" (49: 13). Innumerable factors combine to make up an individual's preparedness for opening. One disciple may practice sincerely and assiduously throughout his life and never have his heart opened up to the unseen world. Another may practice for a relatively short time and reach the goal. The nature of the opening itself depends largely upon on the individual human nature. Ibn al-'Arabi never tires of reminding us of the saying of Junayd, "The water takes the color of the cup.'" (p. 223)

Part 5: How the "Opening" (Futuuh) Happened to Ibn al-'Arabi?

Here is an answer from W.C. Chittick:

'Ibn al-'Arabi's extraordinary spiritual career was marked by many signs, not the least of which being the fact that he reached opening at a young age in the space of an hour or two. His disciple Shams al-Din Ismail ibn Sawdakin al-Nuri (d. 646/1248) quotes him as follows:

"I began my retreat at the first light (fajr) and I had reached opening before sunrise. After that I entered the "shining of the full moon" and other stations, one after another. I stayed in my place for fourteen months. Through that I gained all the mysteries which I put down in writing after opening. My opening was a single attraction in that moment." ' (p. xiii)

Ibn al-'Arabi confirms, rather allusively, Ibn Sawdakin's report that he gained all his knowledge through his initial opening and that his writings consisted of the gradual expression of that knowledge in verbal form. The Shaykh al-Akbar does not mention the term "opening" itself in this account, but he alludes to it through mention of "knocking on the door". He is commenting on these verses found towards the beginning of the Futuhat:

"When I kept knocking on God's door I waited mindfully, not distracted. Until there appeared to the eye the glory of His Face and a call to me, nothing else. I encompassed Being in knowledge—nothing is in my heart but God." (I 10.26)

"Everything we have mentioned after that [vision of the glory of God's Face] in all our speech (kalam) is only differentiated of the all-inclusive reality which was contained in that look at the One Reality." (II 548.14)

Though all Ibn al-'Arabi's knowledge may have been included in undifferentiated form in the initial opening, this does not imply that the door stayed closed after that. Quite the contrary, his soul was constantly being unveiled by the inrushes of divine wisdom. He frequently met with Prophet Muhammad and other prophets in the unseen world, and many of the great contemporary or past Sufis would appear to him in the imaginal realm. In the case of Ibn al-Arabi at least, once the door to the invisible world was opened, it stayed open.' (p. xiv)

Part 6: The process of Unveiling According to Ibn al-Arabi

Here is a short excerpt from W.C. Chittick and a teaching from Ibn al-'Arabi:

'Unveiling takes place when God illuminates the heart, enabling it to see into the unseen world. "Opening" (fath, futuuh), as discussed in the introduction, is for God to "open the door" to the unseen world through disclosing Himself to the heart, or to 'open up" the heart to direct knowledge of Him. The term also signifies the beginning of something, and hence it is often used to refer to that stage of spiritual ascent when a person enters into the realm of unveiling. The door is opened for him, and he no longer has to follow an authority outside himself.' (p. 223)

Here is a description of unveiling from Ibn al-'Arabi's writings:

'If the seeker desires divine loci of witnessing and lordly sciences, he should multiply his nightly vigils and continually multiply within them his concentration (jam'iyya). If scattered lights should appear to him such that between each light darkness is interspersed, and if those lights have no subsistence but disappear quickly, this is one of first marks of acceptance and opening. Those noble lights will never cease becoming manifest to him through his acts of spiritual struggle (mujahada) and his striving until a greatest light is unveiled for him. Then the obstructions which prevented people from reaching these knowledges will be removed and mysteries of which he had nothing in himself and by which he was not described will be unveiled for him in their stations. (II 626.3)' (p. 223)

Part 7: What is the Difference Between Sight and Insight?

Here is a short excerpt from W.C. Chittick and a teaching from Ibn al-'Arabi:

'There are two basic worlds ..., the "unseen" and the "visible". The outward eye or "sight" (basar) perceives the visible world, while the inward eye or "insight" (basira) perceives the unseen world.'

Here is a description of the world of insight in Ibn al-'Arabi's writings:

'...The eye of insight is veiled by such things as rust (rayn), passion (shahwa), and gazing upon "others" (aghyar) within the dense world. These things come between it and the vision of the World of Dominion, that is, the World of Unseen. But when man applies himself to mirror of his heart and polishes it with invocation and the recitation of the Koran, he thereby gains some light. And God possesses a light called the "light of existence" which is deployed over all existent things. When these two lights come together, unseen things are unveiled as they are in themselves and as they occur in existence.' (p. 223)

Part 8: What Happens During 60 minutes of Bandagi With Full Concentration?

Let us reflect on the following teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Jêo das minute ek dhiyânthi ibâdat kari shakê chhê têoni chalis varasni ibâdat kartâ vadhâre ibâdatno faydo ha(n)shal thây chhê anê châlis varas karta vadhu kabul thâya chhê. Têthi tamê hama~~n~~â ek kalak ibadat karo, te barâbar ek khayâlthi, to ghanu chhê. Tamo badhânâ dilmâ ekaj umêd hovi joe-ea. Tê kêvi ritê, jêm rasulillah mearaj par gayâ hatâ anê badan â duniyâmâ pa~~d~~yu(n) hatu. Têm tamâro ruh â duniyâmâthi âsman mathê pahonchê anê â badan duniyâmâ(n) hoy anê ruhnê tyâ pahonchâdo. Zikarno ek kalâk jê tamârâ upar faraz chhê tê barâbar khayâlthi karsho to tê kalâkma(n) das minute evi âvshê jê têni andar tamê fanâfi-Allah th-ee shaksho." (Karachi, 3-5-1920)

Literal translation: Those who can concentrate for ten minutes in bandagi will get the benefit of 40 years of bandagi (performed without concentration) and will get the acceptance of having performed more than of 40 years of bandagi. Therefore, at this time, it is enough to perform bandagi with full concentration for one hour. All of you should have only one wish in your heart: How to achieve mi'raj from the example of the Holy Prophet, in which his soul ascended the heavens and his body remained on this earth. Similarly, you should send your soul from this world to the heavens so that your body remains here but your soul goes to the other world. It is your duty to perform bandagi with full concentration for one hour. During this hour, there will be ten minutes in which you will be annihilated in Allah, i.e. experience fana-fi-Allah.

In his Baitul Khyal firman made in Dacca in 1977, Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam said that when you are physically no more you should seek to be part of that Light, i.e., the Light of Hazrat Ali (a.s.). Thus, it through the Light of Hazrat Ali (a.s) that we will get a better and clearer understanding of He who is above all else.

Part 9: Unveiling or Self-Disclosure of God in the Holy Ginans

In [Candle Post No. 119](#), the knowledge on the topic of kashf (unveiling or self disclosure) as described in our Holy Ginans was presented. I request my readers to [download the PDF version](#) of this post and read the ginanic perspective.

Part 10: Conclusion:

The ism-i azam is the door to luminosity, therefore it is a treasure that should be constantly remembered. Let us pray to NOOR Mowlana Hazar Imam to empower us to practice the luminous prayer at a luminous time with a luminous word, i.e., perform bandagi with ism-i azam, the Supreme Name of God, with a greater effort, strength and enthusiasm. This effort has to be full of honesty, humility and submission so the door of luminosity opens up for all of us! Ameen!

Part 11: Links:

1. [Download](#) the PDF version of Candle Post No. 132 :: The Opening of the Door of Enlightenment ::
2. [Download](#) the PDF version of Candle Post No. 119 :: Unveiling or Self-Disclosure of God in the Holy Ginans ::
3. [Download](#) the PDF version of 'Eighteen Bandagi Gems'
4. Download [Noore Karim plus 21 Tasbis sound track](#) in mp3 format (4.44 minutes; 6.52 MB)

Ardent Supplications:

Ya Ali, Ya NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam, create Sunshine in our hearts, light in our foreheads, and bless us all with the inner vision of the Truth!

Ya Ali, Ya NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam, grant the global Jamat luminous (noorani) and spiritual (ruhani) tayid (help) to advance materially, spiritually and intellectually. Ameen.

Haizinda — Qayampaya
(Our Present Imam is Living and His NOOR is Eternal)

Rakh Mowla je Noor te Yaqeen (Certainly, we trust in Mowla's Light only),

[Noorallah Juma](#)

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