

The Light of the Heart (Qalb) is the Light of God
Diamond Jubilee Spark :: Knowledge & Prayers for Advancement
(PDF version of Enlightenment Post No. 10)



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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

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

Ya Ali Madad! The Diamond Jubilee of Noor Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam (a.s.) is only six months away. To keep up with the momentum, here is another post to increase our knowledge and enhance our yearning through Dhikr and Angelic Salwat.



Knowledge Section:

In his speech made at the foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum and their park in Toronto on May 28, 2010, Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam quoted the following poem of Rumi:

"The light that lights the eye is also the light of the heart...
but the light that lights the heart is the Light of God."

In Ibn al-'Arabi's writing, there are different ways in which the soul acquires knowledge. In this Enlightenment post, I would like to address the topic of heart (qalb) because it has a special and completely different meaning in Islam and Sufism. I will also address how the qalb (heart) acquires gifted knowledge and propels the believer into higher realms of spiritual enlightenment.

1. Acquiring Knowledge

(Source: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge by William C. Chittick, State University of New York Press, 1989)

Chittick writes: Knowledge can be acquired through reflection, unveiling, or scripture. The human subtle reality (al-latifat al-insan-iyya), also called the "soul" (nafs), knows in a variety of modes. When it knows through reflection, the mode of its knowing is called "reason" ('aql). When it knows directly from God, the mode of knowing is the "heart" (qalb), which is contrasted with reason. Whatever the means whereby the soul acquired knowledge, the knowing subject is one. There are not two different entities known as "reason" and "heart", though there is real difference between the modalities of knowing. As we have already seen, reason knows through delimitation and binding, while the heart knows through letting go of all restrictions. 'Aql, as shown in its root meaning, is that which limits the free and ties down the unconstricted. Qalb means fluctuation, for heart undergoes constant change and transmutation in keep with the never-repeating self-disclosures of God. (p.159)

2. What is "Heart" (Qalb)?

(Source: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge by William C. Chittick, State University of New York Press, 1989)

In Islamic texts in general and Ibn al-'Arabi in particular, the heart is the locus for **knowledge** rather than for sentiments or feelings. The Koran employs the term 130 times and often attributes understanding and intelligence to the healthy heart. Ibn al-'Arabi compares the heart to the Ka'ba, making it the "noblest house in the man of faith" (III 250.24). He also declares that it is the Throne of God (al-'arsh) in the microcosm, alluding here the oft-quoted hadith qudsi, "My earth and My heaven embrace Me not, but the heart of My believing servant does embrace Me". This "embracing" (sa'a) takes place through "knowledge of God (al-'alim bi Allah)" (III 250.26). The heart possesses such a tremendous capacity (wus') because of its connection to the All-merciful, between whose two fingers it dwells. Moreover, according to the Koran, it is the All-merciful who "sat upon the Throne" (20:5); and God's mercy "embraces all things" (7:156). The only other divine attribute which possesses such an all-embracing nature is knowledge; in the words of angels who bear the Throne, "Our Lord, Thou embracest all things in mercy and knowledge" (Koran 40:7).

"The Heart is His Throne and not delimited by any specific attribute. On the contrary, it brings together all divine names and attributes, just as the All-merciful possesses all the Most Beautiful Names (Koran 17:110)" (III 129.17)

The infinite capacity of heart places it beyond delimitation (taqyid) by anything whatsoever. Like Being it is Nondelimited (mutlaq), free and absolved from all limitations and constraints. To the extent a person verifies the nature of things by means of his heart, he can understand God and the cosmos. But to the extent that he follows the way of his reason or rational faculty ('aql), he will remain in constant constriction and binding. (pp.106-107)

3. Why Does "Heart" (Qalb) Fluctuate?

(Source: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge by William C. Chittick, State University of New York Press, 1989)

One of the words employed above as a synonym for transformation was taqallub or "fluctuation". From the same root we have the word qalb or "heart". As a verbal noun, qalb is more or less synonymous with taqallub. The dictionary define qalb as "reversal, overturn, transformation, change" and taqallub as "alteration, transformation, change, fluctuation, variableness, inconstancy. Thus the Shaykh sees the heart as place of constant change and fluctuation. He finds the divine root of the heart's fluctuating nature mentioned in various hadiths. For example, the Prophet said, "The hearts of all children of Adam are like a single heart between the fingers of the All-merciful. O God, O Turner of Hearts, turn our hearts towards obeying Thee!" In many hadiths God is called the "Turner of hearts" (musarrif al-qulub) or "He who makes hearts fluctuate" (muqallib al-qulub). (p.106)

4. How Does the "Heart" (Qalb) Receive Light?

(Source: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge by William C. Chittick, State University of New York Press, 1989)

In many passages Ibn al-'Arabi explains the difference between two basic kinds of knowledge: That which can be acquired by rational faculty, and the "gnosis" which can only come through spiritual practice and the divine self-disclosure. In general, he refers to this second kind of knowledge as "unveiling" (kashf), "[direct] tasting" (dhawq), "opening" (fath), "insight" (basira), and "witnessing" (shuhud, mushahada), though he employs other terms as well, and often distinguishes among various terms. (p.168)

True knowledge is unveiled by God, without the intermediary of reflection or any other faculty. According to a saying often cited in Sufi texts, "Knowledge is a light which God throws into the hearts of whomsoever He will". (p.170)

"Sound knowledge is not given by reflection, nor by what the rational thinkers establish by means of their reflective powers. Sound knowledge is only that God throws in the heart of the knower. It is a divine light for which God singles out any of His servants whom He will, whether angel, messenger, prophet, friend, or person of faith. He who has no unveiling has no knowledge (man la kashf lah la ilm lah)". (I 218.19)

"There is no knowledge except that taken from God, for He alone is the Knower. He is the Teacher whose student is never visited by obfuscations [i.e., confusions] in what he takes from Him. We are those who follow His authority, and what He has is true. So we are more deserving on our following His authority of the name "learned masters" ('ulama) than the possessors of reflective consideration, those who follow the authority of consideration in what it gives to them. Necessarily, they never cease disagreeing in knowledge of God. But the prophets, in spite of their great number and long periods of time which separate them, had no disagreement in knowledge of God. So also are the Folk and Elect of Allah: The later ones affirm the truthfulness of the earlier ones, and each supports the others. (II 290.25)" (p.170)

5. The Knowledge in the Heart of the Holy Prophet

(Source: 'An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries. Volume 1: On the Nature of the Divine', edited by Feras Hamza and Sajjad Rizvi with Farhana Mayer. Oxford University Press in association with IIS, London. 2010. (ISBN 978-0-19-960059-5))

Transliteration

English Translation

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Allahu nuru'l-samawati wa'l-ard; matalu nurihi ka-mishkatin fiha misbah al-misbahu fi zujaja al-zujajatu ka-annah kawkabun duriyyun yudaqu min shajaratin mubarakatin zaytunatin la sharqiyyatin wa-la gharbiyya; yakadu zaytuha yudi'u wa law lam tamsahu nar; nurun 'ala nur; yahdillahu li-nurihi man yasha' wa-yadribu'llahu'l-amthala li'l-nasi wa'llahu bi-kulli shay'in 'alim (24:35)

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp—the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star, fuelled from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would well-nigh shine even if no fire touched it; light upon light; God guides to His Light whom He will and God strikes similitudes for humankind, and God has knowledge of everything.

The book authors have written the following paragraph about Furat, the commentator who has provided the hadith presented below:

For Furat, the light verse must be interpreted with reference to the Prophet's immediate family, the *ahl al-bayt*. Just as Muhammad received the prophetic inheritance from Abraham, so 'Ali b. Abi Talib, as the Prophet's trustee, inherited prophetic knowledge directly from him. The focus then turns to the imams, who are essential for salvation, and to the significance of light as the instrument by which they guide those that believe in them. The imams are intermediaries in creation, since it is through them that divine favours are bestowed, and through enmity towards them that God's wrath is incurred.

Here is a hadith which goes back to Imam al-Baqir (p.357):

[Hadith no. 381]³⁰ Furat b. Ibrahim al-Kufi³¹ reported to us through a chain of transmitters (mu'an'inan) from Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Ali [al-Baqir] with regard to God's saying, *the likeness of His light is a niche wherein is a lamp*, that he said that the niche is the knowledge in the heart of the Messenger of God; *in a glass*, he said the glass is the Prophet's heart; *as it were a glittering star, kindled from a blessed tree*, i.e., the Prophet has passed the light of knowledge from his heart to the heart of 'Ali b. Abi Talib; *that is neither of the east nor of the west*, from Abraham, the Intimate of the Merciful One (khalil al-rahman),³² all the way through Muhammad the Messenger of God to 'Ali b. Abi Talib; neither Christian nor Jewish.³³ *Whose oil well-nigh would shine, even if not fire touched it; light upon light*, he said that the knowledgeable one from the family of Muhammad would well-nigh utter words of knowledge before being asked about it.³⁴

30. Furut, *Tafsir*, I, 281-87.
31. Furut b. Ibrahim al-Kufi is the father of the commentator.
32. In reference to Q. 4:125: *and God took Abraham as his intimate*. Cf. Reuven Firestone, 'Abraham', *EQ*, I, 5-10.
33. The doctrine involved here is the transmission of prophetic knowledge from its divine source through the line of prophets to the imams as the heirs of prophetic knowledge. See Kulayni, *Kafi*, I, 223-38.
34. It is the duty of the Imam, as one divinely appointed and sustained and informed, to pass and transmit the knowledge bestowed upon him. See Qummi, *Basa'ir*, 144-9; Kulayni, *Kafi*, I, 275-7.

6. Illumination of the Heart (Qalb)

(Source: Ibn al-'Arabi's *Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge* by William C. Chittick, State University of New York Press, 1989)

Unveiling takes place when God illuminates the heart, enabling it to see into the unseen world. "Opening" (fath, futuh) 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 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. (pp.222-3)

"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 subsidence but disappear quickly, this is the 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 prevent 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)

Please read the [Candle Post No. 119](#) titled 'Unveiling or Self-Disclosure of God' to get a perspective from our ginanic literature.

Dhikr Section: New Luminous Dhikr Titled Noore Ali, Noore Karim

Since we are in the theme of enlightenment, a **new** luminous dhikr titled Noore Ali, Noore Karim has been created. The aspect of Noor (Light) makes the Ismaili Imam unique, therefore, let us perform the luminous dhikr of Noore Ali, Noore Karim with utmost humility and tenderness of the heart (length 2 min 47 sec; 3.8 MB). Let this dhikr ring in our spiritual hearts and create an aspiration to actualize the Light of the Holy Ahlul-Bait and Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam so that our spiritual hearts get filled with this NOOR and nothing else. Ameen. The lyrics for the 40 beads are given below:

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

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

Download [Noore Ali Noore Karim sound track](#) in mp3 format

Noore Ali, Noore Muhammad; (12 times)

[The Light of Ali and Light of Muhammad (are one)]

Noore Ali, Noore Karim; (12 times)

[The Light of Ali is the Light of Karim Shah (through the Chain of Imam)]

Noore Karim, Hazar Imam (12 times)

[All the above Lights are One Light which is in Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam]

Noore Ali, Noore Muhammad; (1 time)

[The Light of Ali and Light of Muhammad (are one)]

Noore Ali, Noore Karim; (1 time)

[The Light of Ali is the Light of Karim Shah (through the Chain of Imam)]

Noore Karim, Hazar Imam (2 times)

[All the above Lights are One Light which is in Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam]

Al-hamdu lillahi rabbil 'alamin

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds!

Reaffirmation of Baiyat:

Let us also reaffirm our baiyat to our Holy Imam, NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam by reciting the Shahada from the second part of our Holy Dua:

"La ilaha illallah, Muhammadur-Rasoolullah, 'Aliyyun Amirul-Mu'mineen 'Aliyullah, Mowlana Shah Karim ul Hussaini, Al-Imamul Hazarul Maujood."

"There is no deity except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, 'Ali - the master of believers - is from Allah. Our Lord Shah Karim Al-Hussaini is our present and living Imam"

Angelic Salwat Nazrana:

Let us now start presenting a nazrana of at least **101 salwats** or **continuous salwat for 3 to 5 minutes** to our beloved NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam for the fulfillment of our noble wishes. May our beloved Mowla continually keep us on the Right Path. Ameen.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

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

Listen to Real audio streams online:

[\[33 times\]](#) | [\[66 times\]](#) | [\[99 times\]](#) | [\[198 times\]](#) | [\[990 times\]](#)

or download [33 salwat sound track](#) in mp3 format

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(1\)](#)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on and through Muhammad and his Descendants)

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(2\)](#)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on and through Muhammad and his Descendants)

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(3\)](#)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on and through Muhammad and his Descendants)

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(4\)](#)

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(5\)](#)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on and through Muhammad and his Descendants)

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(6\)](#)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on and through Muhammad and his Descendants)

[Allâhumâ salli alâ Muhammadin wa âle Muhammad \(7\)](#)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on and through Muhammad and his Descendants)

Al-hamdu lillahi rabbil 'alamin.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds!

May NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam (a.s.) grant peace, prosperity, happiness, barakat, higher spiritual enlightenment, spiritual & luminous tayid (help) and empowerment to you, your family, your Jamat and the worldwide Jamat! Ameen.

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

Haizinda — Qayampaya

(Our Present Imam is Living and His NOOR is Eternal)

Your spiritual brother in religion,
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