

**Pir Nasir Khusraw's Perspectives on the *Zahir* and the *Batin***  
**Diamond Jubilee Spark :: Knowledge & Prayers for Advancement**  
**(PDF version of Enlightenment Post No. 24)**



**The lit candle represents the Light of  
Imamat. Let us expand our spiritual  
hearts to carry this Holy Light.  
Ameen**

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May 21, 2017**

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## Pir Nasir Khusraw's Perspectives on the *Zahir* and the *Batin*

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##### **Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

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

Ya Ali Madad! The launch of Diamond Jubilee year of Noor Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazar Imam (a.s.) is only 50 days away so we only have 49 days for prepare for this great event. To keep up with the momentum, here is another enlightenment post to increase our knowledge and enhance our yearning through Dhikr and Angelic Salwat. This enlightenment post has a luminous dhikr track titled 'Noore Ali, Noore Karim' which is most appropriate as we approach the launch of the Diamond Jubilee of Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam.



##### **Knowledge Section:**

In this Enlightenment Post, I would like to present Pir Nasir Khusraw's knowledge and wisdom about: (1) understanding the *zahir* and the *batin*, (2) the importance of esoteric knowledge, (3) Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam's perspectives on exoteric and esoteric dimensions of our faith, and (4) Pir Satgur Nur's advice on the development of the knowledge of the Soul.

##### **1. Understanding the *Zahir* and the *Batin***

(Source: Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan by Alice C. Hunsberger, I, B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000)

Hunsberger writes:

'In Ismaili thought, whatever is in the world consists of two parts, exoteric and esoteric, *zahir* and *batin*. Whatever is *zahir* is known by the external senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, through specialised organs, such as eyes, ears, hands, tongue and nose, but 'that which is *batin* is hidden from these external senses' (*Wajh-i Din*, 78-9). Nasir Khusraw explains that 'the position of the Shi'is' is that the *zahir* consists, in part, of those acts which can be observed or otherwise felt by the senses, such as prayer (*namaz*), fasting (*ruza*), charity (*zakat*), pilgrimage (*hajj*) and holy war (*jihad*), as well as all that is made of bodies that exist in the heaven and earth and in between. The external senses perceive only bodies not the *batin* which is 'what you call those things which have not part in perceiving' such as knowledge of unity, proofs of prophecy, Heaven and Hell, reward and punishment, resurrection and judgement, and the corruptibility of the earth. Thus, even religion requires the full use of both aspects of being. The believer is required to employ his external senses to carry out the external duties of the faith, and also employ his internal senses to understand and know the meanings of the faith. (pp.73-74)

Nasir applies the logic of this dynamic pairs to religion as well. The scriptures and the law are both manifest. That is, the Qur'an as the Book of God is visible and tangible to everyone, as is the *shari'a*, the law of Islam. But their inner meaning and esoteric interpretations (*ta'wil*) are hidden to those who do not know, while obvious to those who know, (*Wajh-i Din*, 82). Knowledge is therefore that which clarifies, that which illuminates both structure and content. What the scriptures actually mean can be determined only by knowledge. The human body is required to obey the commands and fulfil the exoteric religious strictures [i.e. limits] and duties stipulated in the Qur'an and the *shari'a*. The human soul, however, needs to know the inner meanings and significance of these acts and the scriptures on which they are based. The physical world and all it has within it is merely a stepping stone—but a necessary stepping stone—to that spiritual world beyond. Knowledge and the act of knowing are that which separated the ignorant from the knower.' (pp.75-76)

Here is a poem of Nasir Khusraw:

Look with the inner eye at earth's hiddenness,  
for the outer eye cannot see it.  
What is the hiddenness of the world? The noble ones  
see the esoteric, but not the exoteric.  
It [i.e., the esoteric] is the world chained in iron shackles of wisdom;  
even if this globe seems too wide, too loose  
To be bound, two things will do: knowledge and obedience.  
Your body is a mine, your spirit the buried jewel  
of these two treasured qualities; so exert yourself, body and soul.  
(*Divan*, 5: 1-5)

## 2. Experience of Heaven and Hell

(Source: Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan by Alice C. Hunsberger, I, B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000)

Hunsberger writes:

'Indeed, knowledge is of such critical importance for Nasir that, in this world, the believer can experience a foretaste of Heaven or hell through knowledge or ignorance. Hell in this world, he says, is 'fear of the sword,' that is dying a painful death (*Wajh-i Din*, 5). For Nasir, the believer experiences that Hell whenever he or she acts in ignorance. Conversely, in this world Heaven is experienced in the optimistic and upward-looking feeling of hope based on true knowledge. When one advances, acting on true knowledge, and when knowledge drives and directs one's action, free of doubt and falsehood, one experiences a portion of Heaven on earth.' (pp.79-80)

### 3. The Search for Deeper Knowledge

(Source: Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan by Alice C. Hunsberger, I, B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000)

Hunsberger writes:

'When this primacy of knowledge is combine with the notion of *zahir* and *batin*, the search of knowledge becomes the search for the inner meaning of things, the esoteric dimension:

Here is an excerpt from Nasir Khusraw's Wajh-i Din:

Knowing the hidden meanings of exoteric (*zahir*) things is comparable to hidden knowledge (*danish-i ghayb*). Hidden knowledge belongs to God, as He says [in the Qur'an, 11:123], 'to God belongs the unseen [secrets] of the heavens and the earth.' So whoever knows more hidden knowledge (*danish-i pushida*) is closer to God. (*Wajh-i Din*, 30)

The Qur'anic verse quoted here provides the proof-text for the Ismaili doctrine of the existence of a distinct realm of unseen things and activities existing here in this world as in the heavens. Nasir also finds justification for this doctrine of esoteric knowledge located in several other Qur'anic verses. For instance, he quotes 62:2, that God sent a Messenger 'to teach them the Book and the Wisdom,' in which the Book is understood to be the Qur'an and the Wisdom the *batin*, the inner meaning of the manifest book. Without knowing the inner meaning of the sacred book a believer's faith is rendered sentimental and wishful at best.' (p.80)

### 4. Esoteric Knowledge and Fear of God

(Source: Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan by Alice C. Hunsberger, I, B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000)

Hunsberger writes:

'The superiority of those who have esoteric knowledge over those who do not is founded on the direct relationship of knowledge to fear of God; the more knowledge one has of God and His Power and Mercy, the more one will fear him, as in the verse 'Only those of His servants fear God who have knowledge' (35:28). Nasir Khusraw argues from this verse to another, 'Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most Godfearing of you' (49:13), to prove the noblest in the sight of God are those who have knowledge. Knowledge is necessary for life in general, certainly. But Nasir Khusraw has in mind a deeper knowledge, of a kind which transmutes the believer's soul from its base condition to perfection:

Here is an excerpt from Nasir Khusraw's Divan:

What is your soul without knowledge, but lead?  
Religion is the alchemy that will make it gold. (*Divan*, 45:54)

How shall human beings attain this knowledge, the gold of the alchemists of the spirit? First, what kind of knowledge is this? Even in this world, Nasir explains in his *Zad al-musafirin*, there are two types of knowledge, physical and spiritual, and human beings possess two corresponding types of senses, external and internal, in

order to understand each (ZM, 18—19). Physical knowledge is known through the five external senses and spiritual knowledge through five internal senses\*. The theoretical grounding for this argument is based on the connection between the *zahir* and *batin*.' (p.80-81)

\*The five internal senses, according to Nasir Khusraw, are conjecture (*wahm*), thought (*fikr*), imagination (*takhayyul*), memory (*hifz*) and recollection (*dhikr*) (p.82)

## 5. The Attainment of Deeper Knowledge

(Source: Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan by Alice C. Hunsberger, I, B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000)

Hunsberger writes:

'An important example of the workings of the internal senses concerns the activities of angels, especially the so-called recording angels and angel Gabriel. Nasir ridicules the 'unthinking masses' for actually believing that angels are recording their deeds in a ledger which will be placed in their hands on Resurrection Day. These people do not understand the difference between body and spirit (*ruh*), he says. They even think that the angel Gabriel gave the Prophet Muhammad the revelation by physically speaking into the Prophet's ear. 'This is absurd,' he says, 'because a voice is only produced by the expulsion of air between two bodies, and angels are not bodies but spirits. Angels do not take up space, and there is no point that air can enter and escape. What the ignorant masses think, he says, is exactly opposite of the meaning of God, for He Himself says that the sending of the Qur'an was by spirit:

Here is an excerpt from Nasir Khusraw's *Wajh-i Din*:

Truly it is the revelation of the Lord of all Being.  
Brought down by the Faithful Spirit  
Upon thy heart, that thou mayest be one of the warners,  
In a clear, Arabic tongue. (26:192-5)

By this Qur'anic verse, according to Nasir Khusraw, a physical voice did not issue from the angel, but rather Gabriel came unto the 'heart' of the Prophet, that is, communicated into his internal, subtle senses.

Thus, that attainment of knowledge, being the highest achievement possible to human beings, should become each person's goal. For Nasir, this knowledge and wisdom is gained through employing the God-given internal and external faculties, in the path of Islam indicated by ahl al-bayt, the Prophet Muhammad and his progeny, especially the Ismaili Imams.' (pp.83-84)

## 6. Conclusion:

In his firman made in Mumbai on November 22,1967, Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam said:

"It is important that in learning parts of the Qur'an, you must clearly understand the meaning ... I hope that you will not forget that the meaning is the foundation of our concept of Islam, because our concept is esoteric. If it were exoteric, then it would not matter. But it is not exoteric, it is esoteric, which means the meaning is for our Jamat; it is for our *Tariqah* and this is the foundation. So do not forget this."

In the following verse of 'Bhaai-O Bharam Na Bhuleeye' Ginan composed by Pir Satgur Nur, let us heed to the advice of the Pir to develop the esoteric dimension of our Faith, i.e., develop our soul:

Eji           aatmaa neergunn bhrahm chhe,  
              dehee chhe taralaa ne ghaas  
              nur satgur boleeyaa munivar,  
              karjo aatmaa abheeyaas  
              bhaai-o.....16

O Brothers   The destiny of the soul is towards the formless Creator  
                  and the destiny of the body is under the reeds and grass.  
                  Nur Satgur has said,  
                  O momins contemplate upon the development of  
                  the esoteric knowledge of the soul continuously.....16

I hope we can all apply the exoteric (Zahir) and esoteric (Batin) types of knowledge into our lives. Those who have the esoteric knowledge have a greater fear of God and be bestowed with a bigger share of His Power and Mercy. May Noor Mowlana Hazar Imam fill our spiritual hearts with his NOOR and nothing else! Ameen.

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

Since we are in the theme of Imamatus and enlightenment, the luminous dhikr titled Noore Ali, Noore Karim is most appropriate as we approach the launch of the Diamond Jubilee. The aspect of Noor (Light) makes the Ismaili Imamatus 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 are 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 Imamatus)]

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 Imamatus)]

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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Monday, May 22, 2017