

The Paramount Need for Higher Spiritual Education

**Researched by:
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**SalmanSpiritual.com
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Researcher's Note

Ya Ali Madad. I have been thinking about higher spiritual education for about 35 years and have actively promoted continuing spiritual education through SalmanSpiritual.com . Some of my ideas were crystallized into four postings which were published on the web in July and August 2008. Here is the list of four items:

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Salmanspiritual.com has a great pleasure of presenting the above information in a PDF format. We hope that this document will catalyze some more thinking on this important topic.

Global Prayer:

Ya Ali, Ya NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazir Imam, grant us, our families, our Jamats, the worldwide Jamat, the Muslim Ummah, and humanity at large, luminous (noorani) and spiritual (ruhani) ta'id (help) to advance materially, spiritually and intellectually.

O Mowla make us **One global Jamat** with **One Sound Heart** (Qalb-i Salim), bless us with the **Golden Noorani** and the **Golden Jubilee Didars**, and empower us to present **Material, Spiritual** and **Luminous Nazranas**. Ameen.

Peace, light, barakat, tayid, and a Golden Noorani Didar,
Noorallah Juma
October 31, 2008

The Paramount Need for Higher Spiritual Education

Spark No. 1: The Light of Imamat Purifies Mu'mins

Ya Ali Madad. We practise the Alid tradition of a thinking and spiritual Islam. Our faith is esoteric and leads to the enlightenment of the soul through a personal search under the guidance of the NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam. As we are a batin tariqah, there is a paramount need for higher spiritual education across the world. Let us reflect on the following pearls of wisdom on the topic of purification of the soul at the level of light:

1. The Light of Imamat Purifies Mu'mins:

"The eternal light (33:46) which has been commanded by God to cleanse and purify the people of faith (9:103), has already been made the cleanser (mutahhir) and purifier (muzakki) both externally and internally. In reality, this cleansing and purification is in the form of (higher spiritual) knowledge and wisdom. Thus God has appointed the light of Imamat as the successor of the light of Prophethood so that it may continue to wash and purify people in the water of light (higher spiritual knowledge) and this chain will never cease. It is in such sublime meanings that it is said that the Divine light will continue to illuminate and that nobody can extinguish it (9:32; 61:8: 57:28).
(Source: Fruit of Paradise, p. 110)

2. Knowledge ('ilm) Versus Ignorance (jahl):

"... the opposite of knowledge ('ilm) is ignorance (jahl). Thus, in the Wise Qu'ran just as knowledge has been mentioned so often both directly and in many examples, so also in the same way ignorance has also been mentioned. Thus if knowledge is light, then ignorance is darkness whether this comparison is conceptual or literal; if knowledge is certainty, then ignorance is doubt; if knowledge is Paradise, then ignorance is Hell; if knowledge is guidance, then ignorance is deviation; if knowledge is healing, then ignorance is sickness; if by hearing, speaking and seeing, knowledge is being alluded to then saying that "they are deaf, dumb and blind" is a condemnation of the ignorant. If the soul and intellect are cleansed and purified by (higher spiritual) knowledge, then their impurity and filth lies in ignorance."
(Source: Fruit of Paradise, pp. 110-111)

3. Manifestation of Knowledge in the Form of Light:

"It is well known to all that where the level of (spiritual) knowledge is higher, there the true knowledge manifests according to that standard. Another condition of this (higher spiritual) knowledge is humility and abundant dhikr and bandagi. By being inebriated with zeal of (spiritual) knowledge and listening attentively, one can create that magnetism for the manifestation of knowledge (in the form of light)."
(Source: Sublime Realities, p. 3)

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Spark No. 2: The Three Levels of Human Existence

Ya Ali Madad. Why do we need higher spiritual education? The simple answer is because we have a personal world which consists of a body and a soul which can be enlightened. Let us examine these concepts in more detail:

1. What are the three components of a human being?

"A human being is like a three story building, in which the body is the lowest storey, the soul is the second and the intellect (in the form of light) is the third storey, just as the Ark of Nūh, may peace be upon him, had three levels, the bottom, the middle and the top. It resembles human existence, for the spiritual ark is in the personal world (i.e., within yourself). Thus in the above mentioned three storey building, the physical (worldly) bounties are available at the ground level, the spiritual bounties (of the soul) in the middle and the intellectual bounties (in the form of light) in the upper, so that, those who strive hard for the sake of God, should be enriched, not only with the everlasting wealth of the recognition of the self (soul), but also with the recognition of Paradise through these lofty spiritual and intellectual (luminous) bounties (Holy Qur'an 47:6)."

(Source: Healing through Knowledge, p. 116)

2. How can human beings cure themselves?

"He who derives pleasure only and only from physical bounties and has no sense of the pleasure of spiritual bounties, namely, dhikr-u ibadat and of intellectual bounties, namely (spiritual) knowledge and wisdom, then frankly speaking, such a person suffers from spiritual diseases, therefore he should cure himself through dhikr-u bandagi, contemplation and (spiritual) knowledge."

(Source: Healing through Knowledge, p. 117)

3. What can a human being see from his palace?

"Man, in fact, lives in a palace, in which through the windows of the first storey can be seen the scenery of nasūt (human kingdom), through the windows of the second storey the secrets of malakūt (angelic kingdom) and through the windows of the third storey, the manifestation of the beauty of the jabarūt (Kingdom of the Divine attributes, i.e., the Light of the 99 beautiful Names of God). But man is always very negligent and lazy and hence he is in great loss (Holy Qur'an 103:1). He confines himself to the first storey and does not take the trouble to climb the stairs of the second and third storeys. Or, he is ill and therefore is not able to use the upper storeys of his palace. Except what God wills."

(Source: Healing through Knowledge, p. 117)

4. What can a human being achieve in his/her personal world?

" Microcosm is also called the personal world. Thus, potentially, you are a world. If you accept the real spirit of Islam (Holy Qur'an 8:24), you save your personal world from the death of ignorance and by the Divine tayid (help) you bring it to life from potentiality to actuality. The example of this feat is as if someone rescued the entire people of the world from an atomic destruction. Why is this feat so important and so great? It is so, because of the fact that, in the personal world (i.e., within yourself) live the people of the entire world (in form of alm-i dhar: the world of spiritual particles). It is in this sense that Habil was a personal world, whom Qabil assassinated and destroyed his inner world with all the people of the entire world (who were present in the form of spiritual particles in his personal world)."

(Source: Healing through Knowledge, p. 112)

From the above examples, it is absolutely clear that we need higher spiritual education in order to reach our three-dimensional, hierarchical human potential. May Mowla bless us immense barakat of his spiritual (ruhani) and luminous (noorani) knowledge so that we may all become his real, luminous spiritual children in this glorious, extended Golden Jubilee year! Ameen.

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Spark No. 3: Lessons from the Mi'raj of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.)

Ya Ali Madad. Mi'raj means a ladder or a series of steps or stairs, or the occasion of Holy Prophet's vision of the Divine light in the higher world. Let us study upon the higher dimensions of Mi'raj by studying the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "Sûr"?

"Let us first analyse the word "Sûr" literally. The root of the word is "s-w-r" and its derivatives are: sara yasiru sawran, meaning "to call", "to cause to incline", "to cut", "to separate"; as-sûr, trumpet, bugle ..."
(Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 31)

2. What is the function of "Sûr-i Israfil"?

"... Hazrat Israfil, who is the custodian of the Sûr, is (an angel) to wake people up, both today and tomorrow (36:52)."
(Source: Healing Through Knowledge, p. 24).

3. What is the function of "Sûr-i Israfil" from a ma'rifat point of view?

"According to the people of ma'rifat, to conceive as-sur as a trumpet or bugle is nothing more than a veil, for the reality is that through the angel Jadd (72:3), it is the soul-seizing and soul-giving melody of Divine love, i.e., it is a living, unique, unprecedented luminous flute, which for the friend of God, has the effect of fana' fillah (annihilation in God) and baqa' billah (survival in God). In the above examples you have seen that among the meaning of the word "sûr" are "to call (= da'wat-i-haqq)", "to cause to incline (= to make humble)", as well as "to cut (= to slaughter)". The slaughtering, however is not with the usual knife, but with a dagger of Divine love. With it, Hazrat Ibrahim slaughtered his beloved son Hazrat Isma'il in the path of God. Otherwise, the appellation Dhabihillah (Sacrifice for God) does not have any real meaning."
(Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 31-32).

4. What happened to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s) during Mi'raj?

"The Holy Prophet was the embodied and living religion of God. When his personal Resurrection took place, according to the Divine promise (9:33; 48:28; 61:9), all the people of the world in form of particles entered his personal world (110:1-3). In the Surah of Nasr (Succour), the word nasr is the name of Israfil and Fath (Victory) the name of Mika'il. By naas (people) are meant all people and by dini'llah (religion of God) is meant the Holy Prophet himself, because everything of God is living."
(Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 60-61).

5. What is the meaning of the phrase "heavenly love"?

"By "heavenly love" is meant that extremely sacred, pure and ardent love, which is in the hearts of the people of faith for God, the Prophet and the Imam of the time, which is enjoined in many ayats of the Holy Qu'ran. As for its benefits, what can one say about them in this world and the next world! If the purpose of religion is well-wishing, then its best form is love. It is through love

love that all religious obligations become easy. About the exegesis of "Verily, with every difficulty, there is ease" (94:5), we can also say that every difficult task becomes easy with love. Divine remembrance of love is the supreme remembrance (dhikr-i azam) and greatest dhikr (dhikr-i akbar), which is initially through the rubab, and on the higher level it is with Sur-i Israfil. The form of supreme remembrance is that, not only the tongue and heart, but all the particles of soul and cells of the body together and in harmony remember God. In this state, the light of love surrounds the existence of the believing servant."

(Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 45-46)

6. What is the take home message of Mi'raj for Ismailis?

"The progress of heavenly love depends upon the believing servant's obedience and piety and his ability to see the unique beauties of the Imam of his time. In the light of the knowledge of certainty ('ilmu-l-yaqin), he must observe various manifestations of the Holy Imam's elegance and beauty and with the eye of certainty ('aynu'l-yaqin) must attain the Holy Imam's complete recognition at the ultimate stage of the truth of certainty (haqqu'l-yaqin). He must see the Imam in the Qur'an and the Qur'an in the Imam, then heavenly love will reach its climax."

(Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 48).

7. What happens during the personal resurrection of mu'mins?

"By the command of God, when the time of personal Resurrection of a searching mu'min comes, the wonders and marvels of Sûr-i Israfil starts with a voice which is called "ringing of the ears". In Qur'anic wisdom its example is given by a gnat (ba'udah = its noise, 2:26), about which Mawla Ali (a.s.) has said: "I am the gnat whose example God has given in the Qu'ran". This means that the ringing of the ears is the beginning of the voice of Sûr-i Israfil as well as the spark of the light of Imamate. This voice gradually becomes louder and louder and eventually surrounds the entire universe so that all people are gathered and present for the judgement of the Resurrection mentioned in the Qur'an."

(Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 36-37).

I humbly urge the readers to develop an appetite for higher spiritual education and understand the path of our lofty destiny. Every morning and evening, we sing ginans and qasidas in our Jamat Khanas. These are mild forms of the experience of Sûr-i Israfil, however, as we progress in our faith with good deeds and intensive Divine remembrance (dhikr) and Ibadat (bandagi, luminous prayer at the luminous time with luminous word) we will experience the majestic luminous flute of Hazrat Israfil (a.s.). What will we not see when this happens? May Mowla bless us immense barakat of his spiritual (ruhani) and luminous (noorani) knowledge so that we may all become his real, luminous spiritual children in this glorious, extended Golden Jubilee year! Ameen.

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Spark No. 4 : Actualizing Higher Spiritual Enlightenment

Ya Ali Madad. Over the past 51 years, Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam has consistently made firmans on the topic of higher spiritual enlightenment. Let us reflect deeply on the spiritual and luminous dimensions of Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam and then assess our progress on the path of enlightenment:

1. What is encompassed in Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam?

"God encompasses all the subtle things of the universe, the existents, this world and the next world in the manifest Imam, because it is the Imam who is the house of His sacred light. Thus, the act of reviving the two kinds of the dead and the record of deeds and traces is also in the Imam, as Allah says: "Verily We bring back the dead to life, and We write down what they have sent before them, and their traces. And We have encompassed everything in a manifest Imam." (36:12). That is, nothing is beyond the domain of the subtle body, the great soul and the perfect intellect of the pure and holy Imam." (Source: Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 24)

2. What can be seen through the Light of Imamat?

"By the Divine Pen is meant a great angel called the Universal Intellect and the Guarded Tablet is also a great angel called the Universal Soul, and they are the perfect intellect and the soul of the Imam of the time. They are one Light, which works like the Pen and the Tablet of the higher world. It is a miracle of the perfect power of the omnipotent God, the spiritual miracles of the light of Imamat are practically shown in the personal world of each arif (a mu'min who sees) so that the chain of His spiritual favours may continue forever." (Source: Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 24-25)

3. What is the potential of an ardent lover of Mowla?

Noor Mowlana Murtaza Ali (a.s.) has explained one of the great wisdoms of the personal world as follows:

"Do you think that you are a small body; while the great cosmos is contained within you? You are the speaking Book; By whose letters the hidden (secret) is revealed."

The explanation of the above wisdom is as follows:

"Although apparently this external universe is the macrocosm and man is the microcosm, yet in reality, it is the man who is the macrocosm, because the heavens and the earth of the external world are enfolded (i.e., wrapped up) in him, as mentioned in the following verses of Holy Qu'ran (21:104; 39:67). This supreme miracle takes place when the mu'min on the spiritual path becomes annihilated in the true Imam. In this the mu'mins (male and female) attain the light (57:12, 29; 66:8) and they become the speaking Book which contains the secrets of recognition within it." (Source: Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 40-41)

4. What is the best advice for actualizing higher spiritual enlightenment?

"We should become the true lovers of the real light, because we are granted a special place in Islam and all the means are availed to us to attain this sublime goal. Let us see and reflect on our religious status among countless people of the world, look back and assess how many people there are behind us and far distant from our destination."

(Source: Adapted from Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 45)

5. What is the practical action for actualizing higher spiritual enlightenment?

"We should make a habit of the vigil of the night for the sake of remembrance of God and ibadat (i.e., practice bandagi), and dive in the ocean of love and annihilation through luminous means of supplication in the court of God, the Provider of needs, so that the mirror of the hearts (consciousness) may be cleansed and God willing, we may see the manifestations of the higher world in it (i.e., in our foreheads) and as a result the heavenly love may be firm."

(Source: Adapted from Manifestations of Wisdom, pp. 45-46)

6. What do we need in order to be blessed with higher spiritual knowledge and manifestation of light in our foreheads?

"Just as birds have two wings, our spiritual birds also have two wings. One of them is ibadat (bandagi) and the other of (higher spiritual) knowledge. Just as the birds use their wings frequently in search of sustenance, we too should use our two wings of (higher spiritual) knowledge and ibadat (bandagi) frequently, so that we may have sustenance in the form of tayidi (given) (spiritual and luminous) knowledge."

(Source: Adapted from Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 48)

7. What do we have to do as followers and friends of the Ali of our time, NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam (a.s.)?

"Just as daily physical food is a necessity for the subsistence of the body, remembrance, ibadat (bandagi), (higher spiritual) knowledge and wisdom are necessary for the subsistence of the soul and the intellect, respectively. We should also know that in comparison to physical bounties, spiritual and intellectual (luminous) bounties are far greater, sweeter and more superb. This is why the earthly and heavenly angels are always engaged in (Divine) remembrance (dhikr) and ibadat (bandagi), (and acquisition of higher spiritual) knowledge and wisdom, and they are enlightened thereby." (Source: Adapted from Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 51)

8. What is our fundamental duty from a spiritual point of view?

"O lovers of the Holy Qur'an and the Manifest Imam! It is the fruit of this blessed love that we should always yearn for the pearls and gems of higher spiritual knowledge and wisdom and also acquire them. How generous we would be that we could give these to others also? We would be very fortunate because we are happy not only by amassing them but also by distributing them."

(Source: Adapted from Manifestations of Wisdom, p. 49)

In preparation of NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam's visit to Syria and Canada, let us practise our faith with conviction and start attending Jamat Khana regularly, submitting dasond, saying three Duas on time, practising bandagi because it is a luminous prayer, reciting angelic salwats, performing abundant dhikr, performing volunteer service, balancing din and duniya, and accumulating material, spiritual and luminous nazranas in our personal worlds. Educational resources for these activities are listed as quick links on SalmanSpiritual.com. May Mowla bless us immense barakat of his spiritual (ruhani) and luminous (noorani) knowledge so that we may all become his real, luminous spiritual children in this glorious, extended Golden Jubilee year! Ameen.

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