

Fakiron Ki Saat Manzilen

(The Seven Steps to Ascension)

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Chapter 1

Various kinds of sounds, subtle or loud, are present in the atmosphere around us, which can be heard only by those, whose ears are attuned to listen to such sounds. Our outer ears are made of a particular kind of cells and the inner ears are made of different kind of cells. The outer ears being compatible are able to listen to the outer sound and the inner ears are compatible to listen to the sound occurring inside. We can, therefore, listen to the outer sounds by the outer ears and the inner sounds by the inner ears. In the cosmos and within us lots of vibrations (or *Shabd*) are occurring but we can listen to or feel only those vibrations, which have compatibility with our outer and inner ears. The remaining and subtler sounds cannot be heard by us. Same is the situation with our eyes, which can see only such spectrum of light, which is compatible with our eyes.

All the creatures express their feelings through some sounds made by them through their tongues, which can be heard only by those, whose ears are compatible to listen to such sounds. Human beings listen to other human beings because they belong to the same species. Ants talk to other ants by touching their mouths, because they have similarity. Only such sounds can be heard, which are acceptable to the ears, whether the sound is loud or low. Same is the case with eyes, which can see only those things, which are acceptable to eyes; excessive or absence of adequate light both being of no use to the eyes. Our nose and tongue also are similarly placed. There is everything in the world, but one can get only that much, as he is authorised to get and no more. Whatever is meant for one, is bound to be received by him, there is no doubt about it.

Maksum, *Muqaddar* and *Kismet* can be better and more appropriately termed as *Jarf* or the capability. This is what the fate is; attaching any other meaning to fate is of no use. One would acquire knowledge and understanding, only to the extent to which his physical organs, organs of senses, mind and intellect have achieved perfection. If someone disagrees, we need not dispute. One only need to know the courage and capability of the other to receive, to give, to benefit himself or confer benefit on others. It is because of this that we do not participate in debates or discussions. One needs to possess eyes to look into a mirror; there is no purpose of showing mirror to a blind.

We know that the light and sound have special place in the world. An ignorant may deny it. Let it be so. He is right and so are we, because the truth is relative and relativity has many dimensions. An owl is not able to see the sun and a bat is not able to see the light, then what is the use of telling them about it.

Yogiraj Bhuruturhari has said that the fate of a man is comparable to a small pitcher. Immerse it in a pond or in an ocean, it would carry only that much water, as is its capacity. In the same manner both an atheist and a theist are right according to their own understanding. One, who has

not seen something, how can he be impressed by that unseen and how, who has seen that can be said to be right in quarrelling with him? It would, however, be a different matter, if he has acquired the capability of seeing and showing to others that, which was unseen by them. Till he has not attained such a status, his words carry no meaning. It, therefore, means that everywhere it is a question of capability, right and aptitude. Without the right and aptitude, one cannot get anything and this right and aptitude depends upon the will of the God.

BE WAQT KISI KO KUCH MILA HAI,

PATTA NAHI HUKUM BIN HILA HAI?

(Meaning thereby- No one has got anything before time; nor can even a leaf be shaken without His will)

One, who has been blessed with knowledge, therefore, should mind his business and leave the question of attaining spiritual perfection by others in the hands of time. It is of no use to cry before death. We have been gradually moving ahead in life resolving various issues. The conditions that prevail today did not prevail yesterday and would not be there tomorrow. We all live in a continuously changing world. When this is clearly understood that circumstances keep on changing, what is the point in quarrelling with others? Why then one should not live in harmony with others? It is also advantageous to keep an eye on one's own conduct and keeping in mind the practicalities of life, keep focussed on one's own well-being.

JANAM MARAN KA DUKH YAAD KAR, KUDE KAAM NIWAR,

JIN JIN PANTHON CHALANA, SOI PANTH SANWAR,

APNI AUR NIHARIYE, AURONO SE KYA KAAM,

SAKAL DEVTA CHODKAR, BHAJIYE GURU KA NAAM.

(Meaning thereby-Keeping in mind the sufferings one undergoes in taking birth repeatedly, one should forget engaging in useless things; one should sweep only those paths, on which one intends to walk; one should mind his own business, what does he have to do with others; and leaving aside all gods, one should venerate his Master)

Chapter 2

The Seven Stations

In *Sant-mat* (in the tradition of saints) it is considered that a seeker has to move ahead on the path climbing seven steps for ascension to the highest station, for which the seeker should be ready and prepared. It is being said because simple people often get stuck with something by mistake and waste their time and effort. Someone attains the state of a *Majjub* or *Avdhut*¹ and gets stuck in that state, thinking it to be the ultimate destiny. If this is according to his capability, then there is no objection to it but otherwise it would be unpardonable, as explained through the couplet below:

AGAR BINAM KI NABINA VA CHAH HAST,

AGAR KHAMOSH BENASHINAM GUNAH HAST

(Meaning thereby-If one sees that a blind man is heading towards a well then in such a situation to keep mum would be a crime)

Majjubiyat (the state of a *Majjub*) and behaving like an intoxicated person (in the love for divine), are not considered worth appreciation for the seekers. *Majjub* means one, who has been pulled or attracted (towards the divine). He saw the brilliance of some place (some spiritual chakra or *Muqam*-the station) and got so astonished that he has forgotten everything else and got stuck in that state. The poor man could not find the way to move ahead. His progress has stopped. These conditions are not worth appreciation, though the people at large may revere them, but that is their outlook. True seekers should not take them as their ideal and instead with the help of someone engaged in internal practices gather the right information about the objective, which one should crave to achieve and if by chance such a situation arises (entering into the state of a *Majjub*), the seeker should be alert about it and be able to attain his destiny in this life itself. One should carefully utilize the time at his disposal in achieving the objective. No one knows what would happen in the next birth and, therefore, one should try and attain his objective in the present life itself. Here 'birth' does not mean taking rebirth after death. Our body is made of innumerable tiny cells, which keep on undergoing change continuously all around. The old cells get destroyed and are replaced by new cells. The change of physical body thus is occurring in this life itself. During the course of every three, seven or fourteen years all the cells and other components of the physical body get completely replaced by the new ones. A child today becomes an adult after a few years and turns into an old man in a few years. Are these not new births? A new birth means change, and changes keep on occurring. Till the passenger does not reach his destination, he keeps on witnessing various scenes, dense forests, mountains and so on but on reaching the destination, all these disappear. It is because of this that it has been said that *Majjubiyat* and the state of intoxication are intermediary stages and, therefore, one should not get stuck to them. One, who got stuck in these states, lost his way. No one knows what is going to happen. It has been stated by a great man:

EK JANM GURU BHAKTI KAR, JANM DUSARE NAAM,

¹ *Majjub* or *Avdhut*-An accomplished fakir but stuck up or absorbed somewhere and, therefore, lost and unable to explain his state of affairs.

JANM TISERE MUKTI PAD, CHOTHE MEIN NIJ DHAM

(Meaning thereby-Devotion to one's Master in the first birth, reciting the name of the Divine in the second leads one to liberation in the third birth and to the abode of Truth in the fourth birth)

To attain these states, seekers need to pass through seven stages, which in the tradition of saints are called '*Haft-Khwan*'² (*Sapt-Darshan*). *Haft-Khwan* means '*Saat* (seven) *Dastar Khwan*', which seekers are generally required to pass through. These are difficult, as well as easy, depending upon the will and courage of the person concerned. A positive person takes the challenges positively and derives pleasure in completing the task, whereas to a negative person, the task appears as a burden on his head and he keeps on complaining. Someone has stated in simple and straight forward language, some others have stated in hints and some others have stated in some different manner, but we like simplicity and do not believe in using complex words or language and, therefore, those, who hear us and sympathise with us, we explain them in simple words. We would always advice that seekers should adopt simple and easy things to guide them on their way because complex things generally confuse the matter.

These seven steps to ascension are:

- i) *Talab (Jigyasa)*- Being inquisitive;
- ii) *Ishq (Upasana)*- Love for the divine or veneration;
- iii) *Marfat (Gyan)*- Knowledge;
- iv) *Tauhid (Anek Se Ek Par Aana)*- Unity of existence;
- v) *Istagana (Upram)*- Detachment or more appropriately being indifferen;
- vi) *Fana (Laya)*- Absorption; and
- vii) *Baqa (Punarjivan)*- Being firmly rooted in the Truth.

1. *Talab- Talab* means desire, inquisitiveness, will and longing.

2. *Ishq- Ishq* refers to intensification of desire, which in common parlance means devotion, love, attachment and veneration etc. Both *Talab* and *Ishq* have their root in thought. The other name of desire is thought. When a thought occurs and start occupying the mind, the mind on its own starts perceiving it and one acquires the capability to analyse and understand the nature and purpose of the thought, which is called knowledge (*Marfat* or *Gyan*).

3. *Marfat* or *Gyan- Marfat* or *Gyan* refers to knowing and understanding. The first state was that of '*Dhyan*' (meditating or being attentive or alert), which on intensification was called *Ishq*, leading to knowing and understanding.

4. *Tauhid- Tauhid* means unity (of existence). This is nothing else but intensification of desire. After manifestation and gaining strength by meditating upon it, with the acquisition of knowledge, the thought took the form of *Tauhid*. It is the state of *Vedantis* (followers of Vedas).

² *Haft-Khwan*-Those seven *Manzils* (stages or stations) that Rustam had to cross.

Some people on attaining this state, but not being able to exercise restraint on emotions, start claiming 'Analhaq' or 'Aham-Brahmasmi' (I am the Truth). This is an intermediary stage only and not the final destination, nor can it be so. But if this is told to them, they would run after you to teach you a lesson. It is well accepted that this is a very high state and extremely difficult to attain, but it is not the last stage, nor it can be or shall be the last stage.

Vedanti claims '*Eko Brahm, Dwitiyo Nasti*' (God is one, there being no second to Him) and with great arrogance and pride asks what is there beyond it? It is worth pondering that 'one' is a relative term. In the womb of one lie many. When one talks of '*Wahdat*' (unity), it implicitly invokes multiplicity. If there were no multiplicity, the question of unity would not have arisen. It is clear, there being no ambiguity; those who want to understand should understand it, others may do what they want.

Another person claims '*La Ila Illallah*' (there is nothing except the God). They are also in the same boat. Both of them are hanging in air, wandering in their own world, but are far away from the truth. This is the stage of *Majjubiyat* (the state of a *Majjub*) and fraught with danger. *Prakriti* (Nature or *Maya*) has its influence over here, otherwise who would have spoken of unity or multiplicity. *Analhaq*' and '*Aham-Brahm*' are still to be cleansed of 'being and non-being', leaving Truth alone, as It is.

PAHUNCHENGE TAB KAHENGE, PAHLE KAHA NA JAY,

BHIR PARE MAN MASKHARA, LADE VIDHOU BHAG JAY

(Meaning thereby-It can be talked about only after reaching there and not before that; in the crowd the mind acts like a clown but runs away from the scene of fight)

Those attaining this state are not free from fear. We revere them and respect their names and emotions. But then this stage lacks stability and because of the presence of *Maya*, there is always a danger of slipping. Man never wants to stick to any single thing, by nature he likes variety.

5. *Istigna*- When one is filled up to the brim with the feeling of unity, then he gets tired of it and loses his interest both in unity and in multiplicity and understands the fact of the matter. Now, he is neither attached nor detached, which is called *Istigna* or neutrality or being indifferent.

6. *Fana* or *Laya*- When the state of *Istigna* firms up, it is called *Fana* or *Laya*. *Fana* does not mean 'death' or 'destruction'. In nature nothing is destroyed nor can it be destroyed. Dissolution is only a state, which is devoid of self. This is the objective.

7. *Baqa*- Unless one attains the state of *Fana*, it is not possible to attain the state of *Baqa* or being firmly rooted in the Truth.

BE FANAYE KHUD, MAYAISSAR NEST DIDARE KHUDA,

ME FAROSHAD KHESHRA, AVVAL KHARIDARE KHUDA

(Meaning thereby-Unless one dissolves the self, one cannot realize the God; the one, who desires to buy the God, has to first sell himself)

Even now if one is unable to grasp the meaning, one should read the above text repeatedly. Careful reading is sure to reveal the meaning.

If one asks the religious preachers to explain something, they would use such words, which would only confuse the listeners. The real intention behind doing so is only to impress the listeners. In the alternative the so called scholars are really animals without horns, who have merely repeated what they have learnt from others, without understanding the real meaning thereof. They have no understanding of their own.

Chapter 3

The ways to travel through the Path of Saints

Look O! Gentlemen, this strolling of the seven stations keeps on taking place naturally. In reality, nothing needs to be done. That which is there, is there. But this is not applicable to the ordinary people; they need to do something and should engage in doing something. Those, who have the capability to understand the secret, they know that everything is taking place on its own. Of course, the beginners have to engage in doing something. That also would happen in accordance with that rule and is taking place, which has been hinted above.

Sant Dadu Dayal has said:

NAHIN JAHAN SE SAB HUA, FIR NAHI HO JAY,
DADU AISA SOCHKAR, TU MAT DHOKHA KHAY,
NAHIN TAHAN SE SAB HUA, FIR NAHI HO JAY,
DADU NAHI HO RAHO, SAHAB SE LOU LAY,
UPJE BINSE GUN DHARE, HAY MAYA KA ROOP,
DADU DEKHAT THIR NAHIN, CHIN CHAYA CHIN DHOOP,
DADU DAVA DUR KAR, FIR DAVA DIN KAAT,
KAISE SAUDA KAR GAYE, PANSARI KI HAAT,
DADU DAVA AADI KI, NIR DAVA KAISA,
DIL KA DUSHMAN DUR KAR, SAUDA KAR AISA,
JIVAN BHARI HO RAHO, SAIN SAMMUKH HOY,
DADU PAHILE MAR RAHO, PICHE MARE SAB KOY

Now listen to the hints for the ways to travel through the path of saints. 1. *Tisra Til* (the seat of the third eye-in between the eyebrows)³=*Talab* (desire or inquisitiveness) 2. *Sahstradalkamal* (located in the skull)=*Ishq* (love, veneration) 3. *Trikuti*=*Marfat* (*Gyan* or knowledge) 4. *Sunn*=*Tauhid*

^{3 3} The soul pervades every cell of the human body in the same manner as the light illuminates the entire space. Certain points in the human body, however, act as the storehouse of spiritual energy. From the lowest to the highest, the seven spiritual chakras, popularly known as the Kundalini located in the human body are - *Mooladhar* chakra (located at the base), *Swadhisthan* chakra (located at the genitals), *Manipoorak* chakra (located at the naval), *Hridaya* chakra (located at the heart), *Vishuddh* chakra (located at the throat), *Agya* chakra (located at the forehead in between the eyebrows) and the *Sahstradalkamal* chakra (located in the skull). The eighth chakra is *Trikuti*, also known as the first *Sunn* (void). Some Sufi saints mention the first eight Chakras up to *Trikuti* same as above, and chakras beyond *Trikuti* as *Shunya* or *Sunn*, *Mahashunya*, *Bhanwar Gufa* and then *Satlok*, *Alakh Loka*, *Agam Loka*, *Akah* or *Anami Loka* and the *Dhruv Pada* or the ultimate abode of the Truth.

(unity) 5. *Mahasunn=Istagana* (detachment) 6. *Bhanwar Gufa=Fana* (*Laya* or absorption, dissolution of self) and 7. *Satlok=Baqa*.

1. Talab

Talab arises in mind using its power, which turns into *Ishq*, *Marfat*, *Tauhid*, *Istigna*, *Fana* and lastly in *Baqa*. The state of *Baqa* exists even now, but is covered by the veils of various thoughts. The whole effort is aimed at removing these veils, as a result of which the seeker acquires the capability to see the eternal light. The light exists even now but as one is unable to see the moon or sees two, three or four moons by putting fingers before his eyes, similar is the situation here. The state of one's affairs, doubts, misgivings and *Khatrat* (thoughts obstructing intelligence) act as the veils, which in fact are all imaginary. But then the obstruction created by thoughts is to be removed in the same manner, as it appeared and it disappears in this manner only. It would disappear and surely disappear, if not today then tomorrow or day after. One should have firm faith in this and the things would happen automatically.

Some people enquire that seekers are asked to move ahead on the path, ascend from one station to another, what does it mean? Though it has been answered earlier, even then I would like to say that moving ahead and ascension are movements. The movement in thought produced darkness, which would now be removed only by removing the thought. The finger has covered the eyes making the moon to disappear, which would now be seen only on removing the finger from the eyes. This is the only meaning of moving ahead and ascending, nothing else. The path taken by the *Surat* (consciousness) to descend is the path through which it would ascend. If you wish or if the matter is not clearly understood, I would explain it further. Listen! This world is the place where examples (simile) work and explain the matter clearly. Look around and see what anyone has gained, whose energies are diverted all around. It is a popular saying:

DUVIDHA MEIN DONO GAYE, MAYA MILI NA RAM

(Meaning thereby-One caught in a duel gets neither this nor that)

Listen carefully. A child, who has just been born, craves for milk. He opens his mouth, throws his body and the mother immediately caresses and feeds him. This is *Talab*. When the *Talab* grows stronger, the child cries. The mother knows his intentions and cares for them, it is *Ishq*. Crying and showing restlessness are the symptoms of *Ishq*. Sant Kabir says:

KABIR HANSANA DUR KAR, RONE SE KAR PREET,

BIN ROYE KYON PAAYE, PREM PIYARA MEET,

HANS HANS KANT NA PAAYA, JIN PAYA TIN ROY,

HANSI KHUSHI JO HARI MILE, TO KAUN DUHAGIN HOY,

SUKHIYA SAB SANSAR HAI, KHAVE AUR SAUVE,

DUKHIYA DAS KABIR HAI, JAGE AUR RAUVE

(Meaning thereby-Sant Kabir says stop laughing and love crying. Why should one meet his beloved without crying? No one has met with his beloved without crying. If that was so who would have bothered? The whole world is happy in eating and sleeping; it is only Kabir, who is sad, awake and crying)

The child only has *Ishq*, not knowing who feeds him? Because of *Ishq*, he started throwing his hands and feet and started to recognise his mother. This is *Marfat* or *Gyan*. Now, when he started recognising his mother, he gained strength. He now recognises his mother amongst a group of ladies and looks for happiness in her lap. When this knowledge is rooted deeply, it attains the form of *Tauhid*; the mother and child become one. Before this, the child might have been in the lap of others but when he gets up from sleep he remembers his mother and feels comfortable only in mother's lap. It is so because one feels at rest only when the two meet and become one. This unity of mother and child should be a lesson for one to acquire the knowledge of love. The child gets annoyed with the mother, insists, tears her cloths, hurts her and so on and the mother also scolds the child and even beats him but even then no one can separate them, no one can pull away the child from mother's lap. Whatever may happen, the child belongs to the mother and the mother belongs to the child. Both of them understand it without anyone telling them about it. *Tauhid* is not something that can be explained or made to be understood. It is an emotion, a feeling, which is truth and no photographer can shoot a photo of it, nor can any poet imagine about it. The child is the flesh and bone of the mother, born from her and the fact of her life. This knowledge is not acquired from any book or from anyone's preaching.

Howsoever dirty the child may be or howsoever clean cloths may the mother might have put on, if she sees her child lying in mud, she would immediately pick him up in her lap. If the child is frightened, where would he go? He would rush towards his mother. One may try to reason out to any extent that the mother is not capable to save him from the danger, but the child would ignore everything. He is the most intelligent. When he would turn towards anything he would turn towards the *Asal* (the truth-his mother, who has given him birth).

When the love (*Ishq*) grows and leads to acquiring knowledge (*Marfat*), *Tauhid* (unity) comes on its own. There is no need to crave for it. When in the oven of heart the fire of love burns, the beloved rushes to extinguish it. The lover is not afraid of burning. Consider this couplet:

AAG JALTI DEKHKAR, SAIN AAYE DHAY,

PREM BOOND SE CHIRAKKAR, JALTI LAI BUJHAY

(Meaning thereby-Looking at the lighted fire, the beloved came rushing and by sprinkling a drop of the water of love, he has extinguished the fire)

Seeing him cry, the mother leaves aside all other chores and rushes to comfort her child. Similarly, *Talab*, *Ishq* and *Marfat* lead to *Tauhid* and the seeker and the sought unite to become one. On the growing of *Tauhid*, *Istigna* (*Upram*-neutrality or being indifferent) is attained. One does not remain in the same condition forever. On growing a bit, the child knowing his mother well becomes carefree and one with her and now he keeps on playing. The mother now summons him but he laughs and runs away from her. Both are playing; they are playing the game of *Tauhid*. No one should say that the child and mother are two, if someone says so, it should be understood that he is suffering from mal-functioning of eyes because of which he is seeing two things in place of one.

The child came of age and now he is lost in himself, this is *Fana*. He has risen above the stage of *Tauhid*. He is absorbed in himself. This continued for some time and then it is the state of *Baqa*. Now, he is not concerned with what has been left behind.

An attempt has been made to explain this matter through this simple example. If the effort has been successful, it is a matter of satisfaction, otherwise let it go. One, who has not understood has not yet grown to this level; let the time come.

A Sufi wayfarer after listening to the aforesaid text asked if all that which has been stated above is true then why you always lay stress on the need of a Guru (spiritual guide or Master or Sheikh). There is no need of a Master in crossing these seven stages.

This is strange. This is just like saying that the child does not need a mother or that the student does not need a teacher. At least in the present conditions it is difficult. Without the help of a spiritual guide, it is not easy to tread the spiritual path. If there were no mother, how would the love of child grow? Similarly, if there were no teacher, how would the student attain perfection in his learning? So is the case with spirituality; if there were no spiritual guide, how would a seeker acquire esoteric knowledge? Here one needs a support on every step. But there is no gain quarrelling about it. Listen, it is being repeated again. The seeker got inquisitive about spirituality and, therefore, presented himself at the feet of Master and like a child started receiving his feed (spiritual food) from the words of the Master and started growing. The attraction turned into love for the Master and this love made him know the reality of the Master, which gave him an opportunity to mould himself in the personality of his Master and become one with him. Sant Kabir says:

JAB MAIN THA TAB HARI NAHI, AB HARI HAIN MAIN NAHI,

PREM GALI ATI SAKRI, YA MEIN DO NA SAMAY

(Meaning thereby-Till it was me, the God was not there; now it is the God and I have no existence. The path of love is so narrow that it cannot accommodate the two)

Now, the disciple and the Master both have become one, the mind of one has started affecting the other. After this again the states of neutrality or *Istigna* and *Baqa* were attained.

Having heard this that person again asked: 'Did not it result in separation. The moment one attained the state of neutrality, was not the Master left behind?'

But this is not correct. Where is the question of existence of two in *Tauhid* (unity)? Earlier there were two, the disciple and the Master but now even that feeling of Master and disciple ceases to exist. A couplet of Sant Kabir is related:

Q: GURU HAMARA KAHAN HAIN, CHELA KAHAN RAHAY,

KYON KAR KE MILNA HUA, KAISE BICHUDE JAY

A: GURU HAMARA GAGAN MEIN, CHELA HAI CHIT MAY,

SURAT SHABD MELA BHAYA, BICHURAT KABA HUN NAY

(Meaning thereby: Q-Where is the Master and where should the disciple be living; how did they meet and how can they be separated? A-The Master is in the sky and the disciple is in the Chit

(thought or intellect); when the *Surat* (consciousness) and *Shabd* (vibration)⁴ have united, they never get separated)

Guru or Master is the name of the ideal (the perfection), which enters and occupies the mind and heart of the disciple through the physical appearance of the Master. How can it be separated? This is called the state of '*Fana-fil-Sheikh*' (absorption in the Master)

JERE AFLAQ SE TAHTUSSARA KE GAAR MEIN AAYE,
UTAR KAR ARSH SE, IS DARE NAHINJAR MEIN AAYE,
NA TUM SAMAJHO KI HUM DUNIYA KE KAROBAR MEIN AAYE,
GARAJ THI ISHQ KE SAUDA SE, IS BAZAR MEIN AAYE,
ADAM SE JANIBE HASTI TALASHE YAAR MEIN AAYE,
HAVISE GUL MEIN HUM, IS WADIYE PURKHAR MEIN AAYE

(Meaning thereby-Descending down from the heavens, we have fallen in the pit of this world of death. Leaving aside the high position (our true form) in which we were, we fell so much down that we now appear to possess animal like instincts. Do not think that we are engaged in the business of the world (worldly chores), we were looking for love and have come to this world in search of love. In the search of the Beloved, we have come out of the state of non-being (*Shunya*-void) and taken this form. In the search of flowers, we have landed in thorny shrubs)

We have come to this world but how and why we have come is not known. There is longing for something and we are looking for it day and night but what it is is not known. Like the waves in the ocean, which keep on striking the shore and surge to sky, we are also restless. Like a diver, who dives under the water and keeps on coming to surface occasionally, we are also the divers, diving in this world, as if it were an ocean. We sink down to the bottom and then surface and keep on repeating the cycle till the pearl is found. This is what is known, as the cycle of birth and death, the state of duality or the world.

If one considers the basic instincts of a child, one would find three things:

- i) Desire to enjoy-desire for food etc.;

⁴ According to Saint Kabir, the entire creation is based on '*Surat*' (consciousness) and '*Shabd*' (word or vibration). While the capability of expanding and manifesting existed only in '*Surat*', it exhibited its presence in the form of '*Shabd*'. Saint Kabir has explained the different states of existence in terms of '*Surat*' and '*Shabd*' both being the characteristic qualities of the soul. While '*Surat*' is the consciousness i.e. the attentive power of the soul, '*Shabd*' is 'word', about which the Bible says: 'In the beginning there was the word, the word was with the God and the word was the God'. The *Shabd* (vibration or the beat occurring in every cell of the body) is flowing in the body of every single living creature by the necessity of their breath-even without will-as a sign of obedience, which is part of their creation. Once the '*Surat*' gets united with the '*Shabd*' it gradually becomes one with it and effortlessly traces back its Origin, the Truth.

- ii) Desire to know-inquisitiveness, to know the secret of everything; and
- iii) Desire to impress-natural desire to show off and impress others.

These three tendencies would be found in every child, be it human or animal. They crave for everything, desire to know the truth (or secret) of everything and keep trying to impress others. There is no end to these desires to enjoy, gaining knowledge and exhibition of the self. Whatever one likes, one wants to gain access to it. One considers oneself to be the most deserving, considering others to be nothing before him. If the attraction towards one thing is lost, one starts getting attracted to something else. But one always craves for things of his liking. If one is given a bitter pill or medicine, one tries to spit it out. This is not peculiar to human, children of animals also behave in the same manner, and rather animals possess a better sense to choose their food. If one looks at animals, many lessons could be learnt. Animals do not even look towards the food not suited to their taste. Like this there are many things, which they are not taught, but it is their natural instinct. Though this is seen in animals but non-living beings are also not devoid of them. Non-living beings also attract something towards them and push some other things away from them. Everything has a natural tendency to grow, to blossom and to associate with others. This natural tendency is '*Talab*'.

Here nothing is living or non-living; one looks upon things according to his own perception and considers things as different from each other. Things that match our perception, we consider them to be the living beings and those, which do not outwardly so match are called non-living beings. But then what is the truth? In this universe every particle is moving; one particle attracts the other and unites with it. Look at the piece of wood, its particles are also in the state of motion. After some time their condition undergoes change. Every single thing undergoes change and this rule applies universally. Change in the condition of things proves the fact that the particles were in a state of motion and motion is the sign of life. Though one may say anything depending upon the state of present knowledge but can one deny it? In our opinion one should not deny it because every now and then one comes across such examples. Affection and animosity are the result of this *Talab*.

We like only those things, which suit us and those, which do not suit us we wish to keep them away. One may ask that if everyone is aiming at 'unity' then where is the question of affection or animosity? We are attracted towards things, which are in tune with us and those which do not gel well with us, we do not like even to have a look at them. We call this natural tendency, as *Talab*. *Talab* (desire to know), *Talib* (one, who seeks to know) and *Matlub* (the one that is desired to be known), these three are the essential components and the first step of *Gyan* (knowledge). If anyone of these three components is absent, one cannot acquire knowledge. The intention here, however, is not to go in details and to confuse the issue. To give a hint is enough, though many examples can be given.

Talab plays its role. The life has begun but its end is not known. Stupid and inexperienced people make fun of the ways of saints and fakirs but they do not know that their teachings are the highest, at the apex of all knowledge. Magnate attracts iron towards it and in the same manner we (acting as magnate) keep on attracting the world (as if it were a piece of iron) towards us. In this pull there is scuffling, which is the source of sorrow. In this process *Gyan* keeps us guiding that we should be concerned with only that, which we require and keep on ignoring all other things, which alone would lead us to our destiny.

This knowledge comes from the experience gained through *Sadhana* (practice-engaging in religious practices), speech and actions, *Japa* (recitation of the name of the Divine) and *Tapa* (religious austerities), which keeps on exhorting us to be good, humble and noble. Love all and shed the ego, because it is with these qualities that one can succeed in *Talab*. If you lose the way, it is up to you; you would have to face the consequences and waste your time and effort. It is likely that initially one may face some difficulties because changing one's habits does cause inconvenience. But once the habits are changed, we come to know that we have found the right path, which guides us and we start respecting it and with its help we gain strength and move ahead on the path. This is the first *Manzil* (station) of *Talab*. Initially its appearance may be ugly but gradually it starts looking beautiful and glorious.

A sculptor entertains the idea of carving out a statue. This idea in reality is *Talab*. It is possible that in the beginning the idea is not clear and there may be some hesitation. But as he starts working and chiselling out the slab, the figure starts appearing. The sculptor now works with patience and composure and carves out a beautiful statue from the stone. Similarly, the seeker goes to the Master and gradually develops love and devotion for him looking at his (Master's) qualities of nobility, patience, humility, politeness and so on and starts giving up his own vices and starts moulding his character in the character of the Master. In some time he gets completely changed. The purpose here is to say that the intention of giving up vices and to mould one's character is *Talab*. Do you have the same *Talab* for the Lord? If yes, you need not worry. Let it grow and it would find its destiny.

There is *Talab* and the mind keeps on pursuing. The desire is intensifying. Their search does not end, nor does their desire, nor do they rest content. Kabir Sahab has said:

BIRHAN DIYO SANDESHRA, SUNO HAMARE PIV,

JAL BIN MACHALI KYON JIYE, PANI MEIN KA LEEV

(Meaning thereby-The lover separated from her beloved sends a message to the beloved; why should the fish live without water, which is her life)

2. Ishq

On intensification and culmination, *Talab* reflects in the form of *Ishq* (love or veneration). A little bit of effort gradually accomplishes great tasks. Developing a thought bit by bit results in making great plans; a little bit of public speaking, makes one a great orator and ordinary habits ultimately mould the personality of the person, which also reveals the way of living of the person concerned. In the same manner *Talab* and its engraving on the mind, fills the heart with love and affection and one becomes a true devotee, true servant and true lover. Habit is the most important thing, which may pull one down or lift him up. When one gets filled with love, it is not possible that he may cause suffering or hurt others.

Now it is a matter to think about. Love and affection is the other name of the God, it is well known to everyone. If, therefore, one is attracted towards the God, how it is possible that his heart would not be illuminated with love and affection? The inner condition reflects outside. It is our thoughts that reflect in our outwardly behaviour. Now we should carefully consider that we want to realize the God but how do we treat His creation? Do we love His creation, or have we thought about it? If not, today is the opportunity to think with us, think at least a bit. One would come across different facets of that love and affection, which would fill him with joy. Love is unidirectional but it also has the power to influence the beloved. In spite of being limited, love has the tendency to grow beyond all limits. Without speaking about it, it expresses itself. It occupies all the space, all dimensions.

Having love towards those younger to us means to treat them with affection, kindness, mercy and pardoning them for their mistakes. We feed poor and hungry and take pity at their sufferings. It is so because we are filled with the thought that the God is kind, merciful, well-wisher and pardoning. If we remember Him (God) or tell beads in His name or if we think of Him and meditate upon Him, we should remember that this company of the divine would have its impact upon us. It is not possible that one is not influenced by the company one keeps. We are sure to copy the attributes of the Divine. If we have yet not been influenced by these attributes, it should be understood that our devotion, veneration and love are false and that we are interested in the world and not in the Divine. The courtiers of the king automatically get respect by merely being king's courtiers.

One experiences warmth near fire and chill near water. How it is then possible that we claim that we love God and yet we are devoid of His attributes? Even if it is presumed that our love for the Divine is only imaginary and this is only our thought, even then the thoughts, doubts and imagination also have their impact.

Harmony in thoughts, action and behaviour is love for those younger to us. Those, who are equal to us in status and position, love towards them reflects in friendship and attraction. The God is our true friend and this friendship is shared with equals. Love for elders reflects in observing proper etiquettes with them, give them proper respect, regard and honour.

We know that the God is great, Who deserves being regarded, respected and venerated. Therefore, when His love impacts us, we start showing regard and respect to those, whom we consider our elders or higher in status than us.

We have no hatred, jealousy, ill-feeling or enmity towards anyone. We share the same love with everyone in different forms. Besides this what is around us? It is air, sky, trees, water, animals and a lot of other things. What do we do with them? We understand that we should not pollute the air or water, lest it would result in the spreading of air or water-borne diseases. We should water the plants and trees and look after the animals because these activities provide us an opportunity of selfless service.

It is possible that a man may behave with another man in a particular manner because of his self-interest, but a careful consideration would show that here (in *Ishq*) the motive force is selfless service of the highest order. This in fact is the true *Havan* or *Yagya* (an oblation-an offering in sacred fire) and the true giving. Why do we do so? Because we think and we know that the God has no self-interest in anything, He is completely selfless and, therefore, we are also forced to imitate Him. Keeping this principle in mind, we keep ourselves under control and above such things so that we may not be the cause of hurt to anyone.

Since love is the most beautiful thing in the world, a true lover can be no less beautiful. A true lover, leave aside human beings, showers his love even on animals. Lovers get happiness in return and this treasure of love makes them fearless and worriless. Neither they cause any suffering nor do they hurt others in any manner. Birds play with them and beasts bow their heads at their feet. Neither the lovers hurt anyone nor anyone can hurt them, because there is no scope here even for the thought of hurt. Do what you wish and keep on doing it but mind it that never hurt the feelings of anyone. Following this path would automatically remove all our wickedness from us because love is such a fire which purifies heart, illuminates mind and cleanses the body. Maulana Rum states: "If love has filled our heart, nothing else is required. There is no need of engaging in any *Japa* (recitation of the holy name), *Tapa* (religious austerities) or any *Amal* or *Shagal* (various religious acts and spiritual practices-*Sadhana*), all are useless. Love is the cure of all ailments. The ailment may be physical, mental or spiritual, love cures all of them. The moment love enters our hearts the roots of all vices in us dry up.

The lover beholds nothing except the beloved, no complaints no unpleasantness. This is the path of living in accordance with the will of the beloved. This is the path of surrender to the Divine. Worldly people keep on complaining against the God and keep on accusing Him, because they do not look towards Him, rather they are concerned with their self-interest. Being selfish is the root cause of all quarrels.

Let someone ask these stupid fellows, whether the God is wise or not? If He is wise, where is the question of anything being ugly in the world? If He is Perfect, where is the question of anything being imperfect or lacking in any manner? To what extent can one describe? He (the God) can be realized only by the true lovers.

It would have been now understood how love turns an impure mind into a pure mind and a cruel-hearted person into a merciful person. Love is a fire which burns in the oven of the heart and reduces all its impurities into ashes, leaving behind nothing except the Beloved.

True lovers cry; they sacrifice their lives in the love for the Beloved, because this physical body is perishable and only Beloved would be left behind. One may call them mad or afflicted but

they are truly wise and connoisseur. They do not divert their attention from their goal and even if they look towards anything else, their mental state is described by the following couplet:

SIYARAM MAY SAB JAG JANI,

KARAHOON PRANAM JOD JUG PANI

(Meaning thereby-Considering that the whole world is pervaded by the Lord, I bow before it with folded hands)

Someone may argue that love is nothing but a thought. Yes, it is a thought but then what is the thought should be understood. It is mentioned in the Upanishad (religious scripture) that the man has been created by a mere thought and, therefore, he becomes what he thinks. Contemplate on the words 'has been created' in the above sentence. No wonder, one may understand the truth.

In the oven of your heart, heat the thought like gold, the impurity will reduce into ashes and the pure gold would start shining. This is understandable and rest it is on Him.

The question that arises now is how to garner such a love? The answer is- i) let the *Talab* grow and let it intensify day-by-day; ii) go to the Master and garner true love for him, keeping aside your selfish-interests (worldly desires). He is love and Truth personified in this world. It is possible that someone is inclined towards an incarnation of god, some non-living (past) saint or towards some gods; we have no intention of entering into a quarrel with them. One is free to choose his path but then think Vaidya Dhanvantari (a legendary figure considered to be a physician par-excellence) has died, who would give you the medicine now or when the old sources of water have dried, how would your thirst be quenched?

It is good to love someone, be it a woman, mother, father, brother or sister, everything is auspicious at its place but the real auspiciousness lies in reaching the living fountainhead of love, getting completely drenched in it and attaining perfect peace i.e., in taking refuge at the feet of *Satguru* (the accomplished Master) or in getting absorbed in the love of Divine. True love can be found only at the feet of the Divine or His true devotees, who truly love Him in their hearts and are called '*Guru*'. One may make millions of offerings before an idol, but neither would it respond nor would one get the opportunity of sacrificing one's self at the altar of love.

Guru (Master) is not the name of the physical body of the Master, but it is the ideal, the perfection. Learn first to love the outer appearance of the Master and gradually you would reach to the true-self of the Master. The reality is within and not outside. This is the only way to strengthen the feeling of love. No one, however, should misunderstand that I want anyone to venerate me as the Master. If someone thinks so, it would only be conception.

I am neither a Guru, nor do I claim to be one, but I inspire others by the order of the Lord to take the right path and move towards the truth. This is also the order of my Master. It is not me alone, who is doing so, but everyone in the past has been doing so. The Vedas, Gita and Upanishads also have mentioned:

GURURBRAHMA, GURURVISHNU, GURURDEVO MAHESHWAR,;

GURU SAKSHAT PARBRAHM, TASMAI SHRI GURUVE NAMA:

(Meaning thereby-It is the Master who is the Brahma, the Vishnu and the Maheshwara; the Master is the God personified, at whose feet I bow)

If someone disagrees, let him do so but no one's heart should be devoid of love. Let love fill your heart and it will find its way one day. Yes! It may take some time but what is lost; it is better to be late but reach safely. If nothing else let the *Talab* intensify.

A seeker approached a Sadhu and requested to show him the God. The Sadhu having sensed his feelings, asked him to have patience. But then one in haste behaves like mad, he did not have patience and insisted upon the Sadhu to show him the God then and there. The Sadhu caught hold of him through his neck and tried to push him in the fire lighted nearby (fire lighted by a Hindu mendicant, who sits near it and inhales the smoke). Feeling the heat and the smoke, the man got frightened and started throwing his hands and feet. The Sadhu freed him and the man took a deep breath. The Sadhu then asked him what he craved most when he was near the fire. He replied-I was feeling suffocated, craving to breath in fresh air and wanted to run away from the heat. The Sadhu said, look my son! This world is a house of fire. Unless you develop aversion towards it and unless your devotion at the feet of the Lord is as intense, as the craving you had to escape from the fire and breathe in fresh air, you cannot acquire eligibility to see the God. Go and let your *Talab* intensify, which would confer on you the eligibility to see the God.

The lovers develop aversion towards the world and garner devotion at the feet of the Lord for making an entry on the path leading to the Beloved. All others are like rubbish, who act as fuel for the fire of the world.

Enough has been said on the subject and, therefore, I conclude here.

3. Marfat

If one wishes to know, there is a lot of material to understand the meaning of many words like *Shariyat* (rules governing conduct), *Tariqat* (the path), *Marfat* (knowledge); *Karma* (action or deeds), *Upasana* (worship or veneration), *Gyan* (knowledge); *Jism* (body), *Dil* (mind or heart) and *Rooh* (spirit or soul). The other name of these triplets is *Talab*, *Ishq* and *Marfat*. Perhaps no one would have used these terms earlier to refer to these triplets. We felt need of something, started thinking about it and acquired knowledge about it. The first stage is desire, the intermediary stage is *Lagan* (determination) and acquiring knowledge about it is the third stage. Desire is the root of tree, whose stem is determination and acquiring knowledge about it is the flower of the tree. In other words, one felt hungry, the desire intensified and one acquired knowledge that he was hungry. These three stages are the stages of the *Triputi* (triplet-three pronged stages). Here *Shariyat*, *Tariqat*, *Marfat* or *Karma*, *Upasana* and *Gyan* are needed only in initial stages. One should not take it even by mistake that *Gyan* is the ultimate stage. No, a lot of path still needs to be covered and as one keeps on making progress, his area of understanding also keeps on expanding. People with pride say that we are following the path of knowledge, we are concerned with *Ilm-Irfan* (*Brahm-Vidya* or gnosis), which is the apex knowledge.

But friends this is not so; be clear in your understanding. The real target is still far ahead. *Talab* is action, engaging in religious practices and austerities are *Japa* and *Tapa*. Action is unavoidable. Being engaged in action and being concerned with action would lead to garnering love towards action. This is *Ishq*, veneration, devotion and love and when one starts understanding the essence of action, it takes the form of *Gyan* and *Ilm-Irfan*.

It is the same thing but having three facets, which is natural. One needs to make use of this in one's life. The child in the beginning throws his body around. Gradually he gains strength and starts thinking and thereafter using his intellect. In all the three condition, his attention is focussed on different levels.

The first seat of *Tavajjoh* (the attentive power of soul or attention) is the physical body, the second is the mind and the third is the intellect. The physical body is inclined towards engaging in action, mind in veneration and intellect in acquiring knowledge. A young person started thinking about marriage-this is *Shariyat*; he started entertaining a thought about the wife-this is *Tariqat* and he developed an understanding about the wife-this is *Marfat*. It happens that different people get stuck to different things. One stuck with the physical body is called wrestler; the other stuck with the mind is called an emotional person and yet another stuck with the intellect is called *Gyani* (one engaged in the pursuit of knowledge). All the three enjoy different personalities and are a necessity in their own places but blessed is he, who gradually promotes all the three aspects and ensures his progress. He alone would rise to the level of *Wali* (an accomplished saint), *Nabi* (prophet) and *Avtar* (incarnation of God). If not today then tomorrow, one, who keeps on crossing various stages of progression, is sure to keep on climbing up. Such persons cannot be stopped; no one can obstruct their path.

If the stages of *Talab* and *Ishq* have been crossed, one should move to the stage of *Marfat*. This stage is the highest amongst the three. At this stage alone one would acquire understanding of

his real objective and the knowledge of the Truth. The essence of Truth is your essence. Knowledge of the Self is the highest knowledge and science.

The essence of all knowledge is to know 'who am I'? You know the value of everything but not of your own self. It would only be stupidity, if someone asks how it could be possible to acquire knowledge of the self, without meeting or seeing the self. The question definitely is interesting. But then do not you first see your wife before enjoying her company? Is it true or false? You would definitely accept it because there is no other go. Now, someone whose name is 'Nainsukh' (blessed with eyes) but who in fact is blind may say that a blind man cannot see his wife but enjoys the company of his wife. Good. Use your brains. Knowledge is not one dimensional; touching, seeing, tasting; hearing; thinking; knowing, all are the different dimensions of knowledge. Which blind has enjoyed the company of his wife without touching her? Have you understood even now or not? If not still you are groping in the darkness of ignorance. The example has been cited earlier but again listen it.

The sculptor entertained a desire to carve out a statue. He picked up the chisel and the hammer and started carving out the statue. He chisels the stone and carves out the statue, finishes it and makes it beautiful. From where has this beauty come out? This beauty was hidden in the mind of the sculptor and has reflected in the form of the statue from his mind. This is 'Ilm' and 'Irfan' (*Gyan*). *Gyan* does not have horns or tail. The sculptor has yet not completed the carving of the statue, but he has known it already. The statue is incomplete but the comprehension is there. Is it true or not?

This is a short but clear explanation of *Gyan*. It would be useless to find it in books but only within oneself, which is the treasure house of knowledge and where all the books are stored.

KITABON MEIN DHARA KYA HAI, BAHUT LIKH LIKH KE DHO DALI,

HAMARE DIL PE NAKSHEKAL, HAZAR HAI TERA FARMANA,

NA DEKHA WAH KAHIN JALWA, JO DEKHA KHANAYE DIL MEIN,

BAHUT MASJID MEIN SIR MARA, BAHUT SA DHOONDHA BUTKHANA

(Meaning thereby-What is there in books, many have been written and washed of; in my heart is engraved what you have said; what I have seen in the heart of my Beloved, could not be seen anywhere though I have knocked at the doors of innumerable temples and mosques)

Similarly, when *Talab* and *Ishq* are on the boil, it becomes inevitable and indispensable that the *Irfan* (gnosis) would be attained. It is like a tree begetting fruit on its blooming, which is natural and inevitable unless the tree has been sterilized. This *Gyan* or *Irfan* is within you, because of you and it is you, provided you have understood it. Hold the nose straight, what is the point in twisting your hand? *Irfan* in reality is nothing else but to remove the veil from the mind and to realize one's own true self.

Rising above the states of *Jagriti* (the state of being awake) and *Swapna* (the state of sleeping) and to be conscious of the state of *Sushupti* (the state of deep sleep) and to suppress the *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tama* (the three modes of *Prakriti*-nature) is *Gyan*. Crossing the stages of *Jabrut*,

Malkut and Nasut is Irfan. Science, knowledge and intellect all are good but the best is this *Gyan*, which means to know one's own true self and acquire the knowledge of one's essence.

The state of *Gyan* is attained by those, who have made physical, mental and intellectual progress. Others unnecessarily create confusion and confusion destroys the man.

This *Gyan* develops understanding but one should avoid getting stuck to or be confused by the literal meaning of words, rather one should try and understand the real purport thereof, otherwise one could be said to possess bookish-knowledge only. There are only few really knowledgeable persons in the world and the knowledge is its own reward.

Generally, knowledge is acquired to earn livelihood but through this *Gyan* (gnosis), one cannot earn livelihood. What does then one get out of it? It gives happiness, mental happiness, happiness of acquiring knowledge and happiness of acquiring knowledge of one's own true self. Is this a small thing? No. This is the greatest of all happiness. This *Gyan* takes one closer to his soul (real self). It is the soul alone, which is stable and unmoveable. Everything is threaded in it (soul) but it is not threaded by anything. The body and mind both belong to it but it does not belong to them. It is completely independent, free from all bondages, unrelated and unattached. In fact this is the essence of everything and rest all is nothing.

This has reminded me of an interesting anecdote related to Lord Krishna. Once queen Rukmaniji (the chief consort of Lord Krishna) desired to visit Mahrishi Durvasa (a legendary sage, who was extremely wrathful and who would curse anyone even on the slightest provocation) sought permission of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna allowed her to visit Mahrishi Durvasa, who was camping on the other side of the river Yamuna. By chance there was no boat to cross the river. Rukmaniji prayed Lord Krishna to show her some way to cross the river. Lord Krishna said-“Go and tell river Yamuna that if Krishna has never cohabited with me, give me the way”. Rukmaniji thought in her mind that Lord Krishna has been spending married life with her but still he is asking me to say so to the river. Nevertheless, she went to the river and repeated what had been told by Lord Krishna. The river gave her way to cross and reach Mahrishi Durvasa. She had taken sweets and other things with her to offer them to Mahrishi Durvasa, who relished everything and blessed Rukmaniji. By then river Yamunaji started overflowing and it made Rukmaniji worried as to how she would cross the river to reach back her palace. Mahrishi Durvasa asked her how she had crossed the river on her arrival. She narrated the entire thing to Mahrishi Durvasa, who laughed and said-“ Go and tell river Yamuna that if Durvasa has not eaten the sweets brought by me, give me the way”. Rukmaniji was again perplexed that Durvasa had eaten all the sweets etc. before her eyes but still asking her to say to river Yamuna that if Durvasa has not eaten the sweets brought by her, give her the way. Nevertheless, she went and said so before the river and the river gave her the way. On returning to her palace she asked Lord Krishna to explain why the river Yamuna gave her way both ways though what was said before her was not apparently true. Lord Krishna replied-‘Krishna and Durvasa both are soul and the senses (*Indriyan*) are the Gopis (the playmates of Lord Krishna). For the sake of saying it is said that everything is done through the power of the soul, but the soul is not associated with anything’.

It is the reality of the soul that it does everything and yet it does nothing. The brilliance of soul reflects in the entire universe but it is understood only after *Talab* and *Ishq*. It is difficult to acquire knowledge without action and veneration.

4. Tauhid

Talab arose, *Ishq* surfaced and then one acquired belief. First it was a thought; the thought was pursued, which culminated in knowing the desire of the mind. Now the desire is to unite and become one with the beloved. The time to live with the pain of separation has gone; it should now be time to meet the beloved. The world is the place of duality. Existence of one proves the existence of the other. You exist because I exist and I exist because you exist. If anyone out of you and me ceases to exist, neither you nor I would exist, it would become meaningless, of no consequence. In this world of duality, one is always associated with the other; poverty with affluence, day with night, pain with pleasure, bondage with liberation and form with formless.

So far we have been talking of duality and have mentioned of the pairings of two, but shall we reach the one? So far we have been showing our stupidity, whether we shall become wise? With two (in the state of duality), there is always disputes but in one (in the state of unity), there is no dispute. When it is only one, what would it say and to whom; what would it hear and from whom; what would it know and about whom? There are no two there that they can talk to one another or share their pains and pleasures. Therefore, there was the desire of being one and that oneness has been attained, what is now left behind to attain? With the attainment of the knowledge of unity, one enters the domain of *Tauhid* (unity), one knocks at the threshold of *Tauhid*. The candlestick is lit, the moth burns itself and reduces to ash; the drop fell in the ocean and became one with it losing its individual identity.

This is *Tauhid* but it could be understood only by one in a million. One believing in triplet asserts the existence of God, *Prakriti* (nature) and *Atma* (soul) and claims that this triplet is eternal. One believing in the existence of two says that all souls in reality are one and that there is no need to believe in the existence of God. The one believing in the existence of only one says both of you are wrong; why do not you say that it is only the God and nothing else and why not believe in '*Hamaost*' and '*Hamajost*' i.e., 'He alone exists and everything exists because of Him'. Thus it is three persons stating three different things. All the three are right in their own way and according to their individual understanding but incorrect if considered from different point of view. Even amongst monotheists there are three types of people:

- i) *Dvaitadvait*-Those, who accept both duality and non-duality, according to the context;
- ii) *Vishishtadvait*-Who consider existence of both *Jad* (inert or non-living beings) and *Chetan* (possessing consciousness or the living beings) in the same One; and
- iii) *Advait*-Who consider differentiation between non-living and living beings as imaginary and consider existence only of the One as the truth.

The three groups keep on quarrelling, because they are far from the truth. They have learnt to talk and argue but they have not understood the *Tauhid*, which is something else and they have understood it to be some other thing. They say something but believe in doing something else. If they were the believers in the pure *Tauhid*, there would have been no quarrel or dispute amongst them, because on the way of reaching *Tauhid* all such quarrels and disputes would have disappeared leaving behind not even a trace thereof.

What do we mean by *Tauhid*? It is such a union of the two that after the union there is not even the thought of the two. This in fact is the real *Tauhid*.

MAN TO SHUDAM TO MAN SHUDI, MAN TAN SHUDAM TO JAN SHUDI,

TA KAS NA GOYAD BADJIN, MAN DIGARAM TO DIGARI

(Meaning thereby-I have become you and you have become me. I became your body and you have become my life so that no one can now say that you and I are two)

The husband has embraced his wife and the two have become one. At this moment there is no quarrel, no dispute, its only pleasure. The husband has moved away, one has become two and now there are quarrels, all the bliss has gone. This is an everyday example, which helps a bit to understand *Tauhid*, but even this is not the right example of real *Tauhid* and then *Tauhid* is never real. When there is one, there is always existence of two. Till one entertains the thought of being lover or that of being monotheist, there would always be the thought of the presence of the beloved and the existence of the other and we would be far from the reality. In the worldly sense this word is only imaginary and assumptive, there being no reality in it. Until the monotheist dissolves his self in the One (*Jaat-Wahid*, the Truth) and forgets even about the thought of *Tauhid*, the reality of *Tauhid* cannot be grasped in the mind and it is because of this that those, who have even a little bit of the understanding of *Tauhid*, they do not talk about *Tauhid*.

Truth is Truth and falsity is falsity. In *Tauhid* there is neither Truth nor absence thereof. The one, who keeps on talking about *Tauhid*, in reality, is a dualist and the one, who venerates *Tauhid* is in fact an idolater. One, who points out towards it is confused and the one, who talks about it is ignorant because one, who is a real monotheist, for him it is a screen of light. *Tauhid* is such an unexplainable wonder, viewing or hearing of which is only a figment of imagination and conjecture.

JUBAN BAND KAR, LUB KO KHAMOSH KAR,

NA KUCH MUNH SE KAH, HOSH KAR HOSH KAR

(Meaning thereby-Shut your mouth and close your lips; speak not and come to senses)

But then how to understand it and how do you want to understand it, philosophically, scientifically or spiritually, so that an effort may be made to explain it accordingly. But then you should not say that at last you (the author) have also started speaking, because speaking invites problems. The moment something is spoken about, its meaning is lost. But then I would explain, to the best of my ability. If it makes you understand, it would be great and both of us would be happy. If not, both of us would sink together. If there is a desire to understand, God-willing both of us would be fortunate.

First of all one should look towards one's own self. Look at your body, it is a micro-cosmos comprising of so many nerves, arteries, cells, muscles, bones, flesh and skin and so on. Who can deny that there is multiplicity but all of these are mutually threaded and this threading is called unity or *Tauhid*. Proceed further and you would find that from the head to toe, you are one, there is none else except you. Look and answer whether it is one or not? This is *Tauhid*.

'Hamaost' and 'Hamajost' can be explained through the example of an ocean. In the ocean there is water, pearls, coral, waves, shells and conches and so on. The collective name of all these is the ocean. If anyone of these or all of these are separated then where is the ocean? It was the show of many in one and the one in many. That show is over and now the ocean has disappeared. The ocean is the name of *Wahdat* (unity) and all other things are the multiple existences. Many other such examples can be cited.

What does science say, lets us consider that also? The substance is one but it appears differently. There is stirring in water and it brings out froth. The froth dries up and gets converted into mud. From the mud springs out plants and trees, insects and animals and so on. On the other hand mix up all these components of mud and then what would be left except water? The dualists are quarrelsome, *Taslisi* (believing in the existence of triplets) and mischievous. Monotheists are good, they do not quarrel, nor do they enter in discussions or disputes; whatever they have understood is good enough for them.

Look at your own routine life. You had hatred towards people inferior to you. You thought that you would have to live with them. You compromised with the circumstances. The moment you started looking up, the gap created by hatred started diminishing. You started adopting them and they started adopting you. Now there is neither the hatred nor malice. You look upon their shortcomings with pity and mercy and they love and respect you. Now you are happy and they are also happy because happiness lies in unity. Alienation is the root cause of all quarrels. Assimilation is the state of peace of mind and this is *Tauhid*. Everyone searches for it. I have explained the meaning of *Tauhid* and now it is the drop scene of the drama. The intention is to go back to the religious aspects, because that is the focus of this discussion, which does not disappear from the sight. It is also not possible since day and night it is this aspect which keeps stirring us and our emotions. Though many examples have been cited but the focus is on that aspect (religious or spiritual aspect) only.

The scholars of *Tauhid* have divided *Tauhid* in many categories. Dividing and assimilating is the tendency of nature (*Prakriti*). If then people categorise *Tauhid* also, why should we have any objection? One would act according to his nature and understanding but in my opinion discrimination in *Tauhid* is not appropriate because if there is diversity in *Tauhid* then where is the *Tauhid*? It would become *Bhanmati Ka Pitara* (a casket of assorted goodies), which includes all miscellaneous things. Nevertheless, we should hear them also.

Sufis belonging to the Islamic tradition have stated of four kinds of *Tauhid*:

- i) *Tauhid Sharai* (unity according to the scriptures)-This means to believe in the unity of God and to consider Him older than self and to consider Him seeing, listening and speaking through our eyes, ears and mouths;
- ii) *Tauhid Tariqat* (veneration)-this is sub-divided in two categories:
 - (a): *Tauhid Afali* (action)-To consider all existence as the result of God's action;
 - (b): *Tauhid Sifati* (with attributes)-To consider the qualities exhibited by creatures, as the attributes of God;

- iii) *Tauhid Jati*-To consider everything as the essence of God; and
- iv) *Tauhid Haqiqat*-Complete dissolution of the self in the essence of God.

In fact this is no issue. The above are the categorisation of *Tauhid* as per Sufis. Now I am mentioning various categories of *Tauhid* according to the Hindu scholars. These are: i) *Salokya* (being in the abode of Truth), ii) *Samipya* (the state of Nearness), iii) *Sarupya* (attaining the same form) and iv) *Sayujya* (attaining unity). People also refer them as various forms of liberation (*Mukti*) and *Tauhid* is also a form of liberation. *Tauhid* is getting out of the clutches of duality and entering the domain of unity, which is liberation.

The above four forms of *Tauhid* are explained as under:

- i) *Salokya*-means being in the abode of Truth;
- ii) *Samipya*-means attaining the state of Nearness;
- iii) *Sarupya*-means attaining the same form, and
- iv) *Sayujya*-means attaining unity with the God or dissolving the self in the essence of God.

All these are explanations and nothing else. Now we should revert back to the example of the sculptor, who carves out the statue from stone. The sculptor peeped through the veils in his mind and saw the beauty, which is reflected in the statue carved out by him using the chisel and hammer. He recognised that beauty and understood that it is there within his mind and is a reflection of his own personality. What did he do then? He tried to concentrate and to hold on to that to become one with it. Waves surged in the ocean and disappeared in the ocean. It is his *Tauhid* and it is true and real. Where else would have he looked for and for whom?

Crossing the stages of *Talab*, *Ishq* and *Marfat*, one witnessed the show of Truth, oneness and unity within oneself and attained unity with it. Is it not *Tauhid*? Kabir Sahab has said:

GURU MILE TAB JANIYE, MITE MAUH TAN TAAP,

HARSH SHAUK VYAPE NAHI, TAB GURU AAPAI AAP

(Meaning thereby-One should understand that he has met the Master only then when he has got over attachment and sufferings; when one has moved beyond pains and pleasure and he becomes one with the Master)

The disciple has met his Master and become one with him. Now the Guru (Master) has merged in him and he has merged in the Master. The veil of separation is removed. It is the state of dissolution (*Shunya* or *Sunn*). The third eye is the seat of *Talab*, *Sahsradalkamal* is the seat of *Ishq* and *Triputi* is the seat of *Marfat* and the stage of meeting the Master. The *Shunya* or *Sunn* is the seat of *Wahdat* and *Tauhid*. The Master, who was visible outside till the stage of the third eye, knowledge about him is gained at the stage of *Triputy*. In *Shunya* or *Sunn*, he is realized within us.

Learn to give and do not think of receiving; serve with body and mind, then you would meet the Master. All that belongs to you when surrendered at the feet of the Master, then only one would become a true disciple; before this one does not meet the Master in the real sense (the link between

the Master and the disciple is not established). Do not make fun and understand the reality. Do not find fault with the venerable, this is the real secret. Kabir Sahab states:

KABIR WE NAR ANDH HAIN, GURU KO KAHATE AUR,
HARI RUTHE GURU THAUR HAI, GURU RUTHE NAHI THAUR

(Meaning thereby-Kabir says blind are they, who blame the Master; if the God gets annoyed, one can take refuge at the feet of the Master but if the Master gets annoyed, there is no place to take shelter)

Guru is the *Isht* (one's beloved or the deity) and the objective. Where can a person rest, who has fallen from principles? Therefore, everything is worth sacrificing at the feet of the Master.

GURU SAMAN DATA NAHI, YACHAK SHISHYA SAMAN,
CHAR LOK KI SAMPADA, SO GURU DINI DAN,
SATYA NAAM KE PATTARE, DENE KO KUCH NAY,
KAHN LAG GURU SANTOSHIYE, HAVIS RAHI MAN MAY

(Meaning thereby-There is no greater giver than the Master, who gives away all the treasures of the world to his disciple in a moment. The master gives this treasure in the form of *Shabd* by transmitting the *Shabd* from his heart to the heart of the disciple. The *Shabd* is invaluable, as the entire world has originated from the *Shabd*)

Sacrifice all that belongs to you at the feet of the Master. Leave all your burden on to him and then you can roam about freely in the world. Kabir Sahab states:

MAN DIYA JIN SAB DIYA, MAN KE SANG SHARIR,
AB DENE KO KYA RAHA, YUN KATH RAHE KABIR,
TAN MAN DIYA TO BHAL KIYA, JASI SAR KA BHAR,
JO KABA HUN KAH 'MAIN DIYA', TO BAHUT SAHEGA MAAR,
TAN MAN DIYA TO KYA HUA, NIJ MAN DIYA NA JAY,
KAHAT KABIR WA DAS SE, KAISE MAN PATITAY,
TAN MAN DIYA AAPNA, NIJ MAN TAKE SANG,
KAHAT KABIR NIRBHAY BHAYA, SUN SATGURU PARSANG,
NIJ MAN KO NEECHA KIYA, CHARAN KANWAL KI THAUR,
KAHE KABIR GURUDEV BINU, NAZAR NA AAVE AUR

This is the status of the Master amongst seekers. One, who does not think so, he is like a dead person, who possesses no capability to understand *Tauhid*. The seeker met his Master and received from him the message of real *Tauhid* and he became one with his Master. Now there is no gain saying anything. One, who has not received the shelter of the Master, he would only be confused hearing about *Tauhid*. He may keep on saying '*Ahambrahmasmi*' or '*Analhaq*' (I am the Truth) but in reality he is nowhere near *Tauhid* or being one with the Truth. Kabi Sahab says:

SATGURU PURA NA MILA, SUNI ADHOORI SEEKH,

SWANG YATI KA PAHANKAR, GHAR GHAR MANGI BHEEKH

(Meaning thereby-One, who is not under the shelter of an accomplished Master and who has not been trained fully, he may pretend to be an ascetic but ends up begging at doors)

One becomes what he longs for. For example a photographer applies his mind in photography and he captures the beauty of image in his mind, which he shoots with the camera. Sculptor feels interested in the statue and the outline of the statue appears in his mind. An astrologer feels interested in astrology and the movement of stars and planets occupies his mind. Similarly, one, who fixes his mind on his Master, the Master appears in his heart and he starts swimming in the ocean of *Wahdat* (unity) in union with his Master. The Master is the aim of *Tauhid*; it is the Master, who is everything and anything else is of no consequence.

Where did you reach? The light was seen within, what is there outside? Whatever is there, it is all within. Everything manifests from within in the outer world and, therefore, *Tauhid* is also within. One should never look for it outside because as much as you look towards the world, you face more and more opposition. One can find peace and contentment only within. Pleasure and satisfaction is also within. *Tauhid* is over. If not much, at least some understanding of it would have been definitely acquired.

Living in the world in harmony with all others is *Tauhid*. If it has got an opportunity to enter your mind, it is easy to understand *Tauhid*. If the mind is restless, it would be difficult to understand *Tauhid*.

Existence of all in unity is called '*Jaat-Wahid*' (homogeneity). Neither He separated from anyone anytime, nor did He unite with anyone anytime. He is what He is. Yes, if there could be any defect or fault, it could be in the thinking of man, because he sees what he thinks. There is a tree, one person sees it as the tree but another person thinks it to be a ghost. The tree is as it is but thinking has turned it into a ghost. Different people have given different name to the same thing, as they thought about it. A greedy person perceives silver in shell, thirsty perceives water in liquor and a frightened person perceives snake in rope. Some persons have squint in their eyes and they see two things in place of one. These mistakes happen because of an error of mind or because of narrow mindedness. Similarly, people have taken the One to be many and behave accordingly. Since duality has entered their minds, they have become dualists. This is an imaginary ailment and can be cured only by correcting the thought; its cure lies in correcting the thinking, because this duality has entered the mind only because of thinking.

An attempt has been made to explain *Tauhid* in whatever manner it has become possible to do so.

5. Istigna

Now we come to the fifth stage, which is called *Istigna* by Sufis, *Vairagya* (asceticism) by recluse and *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* (entering into a trance or getting absorbed with no thought flowing and with no discrimination of I and you-immutable absorption) by Yogis. All these are difficult words and somewhat confusing. Ordinarily *Istigna* means indifference. It is alright but very rich people can also be called *Gani* (affluent). *Tauhid* is a great treasure, one, who has attained *Tauhid*, he has become *Gani*. Poor and dependant people cannot be indifferent. A person with abundant money becomes indifferent towards money. Abundance of money is, therefore, called *Istigna*. *Vairagya* means not being attached but this does not mean absence or deficiency of attachment. Condensation of attachment in fact is *Vairagya* because it is then only that one understands the essence of renunciation or getting detached. What is to be renounced? It is granted that one has left behind the family, wife, house and so on and come to the jungle but here also the family, wife, house and Maya (worldly desires) continue to occupy the mind. Therefore, unless there is condensation of attachment, one cannot truly renounce anything. Condensation of attachment in fact is true *Vairagya*. Till one lacks in this, nothing could be attained.

The idea of *Tauhid* intensified; it got firmly rooted and turned into *Vairagya*, which is founded on detachment and renunciation. Detachment and renunciation are the higher states of thought and pretence. Till someone is weak, the physical weakness troubles him. He gets it treated and takes healthy food that nourishes his body and looks after his body. Once the weakness is gone and he gains strength, he does not worry about his body now. Earlier the physical body was a burden but now he is indifferent towards his body. This is *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, which begins with *Savikalpa Samadhi* (entering into a trance or getting absorbed in a thought). A Yogi is Yogi only till such time that he exercises restraint and is focussed on attaining some goal and is desirous of pursuing Yoga. When this desire condenses, he becomes a different person. It appears that now he is no longer pursuing that desire and Yoga. This condition is that of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. Till there is desire, there is duality. Let the desire culminate and when satisfaction is attained, the desire ceases to exist; this is *Istigna*, nothing else.

In *Sant-mat* (in the terminology of saints) this *Istigna* is referred to as the stage of *Mahasunn* (one of the spiritual chakras, which is above *Sunn* or *Shunya*). Those, who have reached this stage are called *Hans* or *Paramhans*⁵. Those, who have reached the stage of *Istigna* are the ascetics in the real sense (who have really renounced the world). Though in the eyes of common men they may still be worldly people but those, who can see the reality, they know that they are indifferent towards the world.

SIR BIRHANA NESTAM DAARAM, KULHI CHAR TARK,

TARKE DUNIYA, TARKE UKAVA, TARKE MAULA, TARKE TARK

⁵ 'Hans' and 'Paramhans'- Sadhus are categorised as 'Hans' or 'Paramhans', depending upon their spiritual attainments.

(This means—My head is covered with four crowns. First, renunciation of the world (*tarke duniya*); second, renunciation of the heaven (*tarke ukava*); third, renunciation of the God (*tarke Maula*); and fourth, renunciation of the will power through which the first three renunciations were made (*tarke tark*))

Who asks you to renounce the world? What would you retain and what would you give up? In reality, living in this abode of duality, one can do justice neither with the family life nor with renunciation. What is needed to be done is to change the state of mind in as much as that neither he loves anyone nor hates anyone, which is the real *Vairagya*.

MOOD MOODHAYE KYA HUA, KIYA JO GHOTAM GHOT,

MANUVA KO MOODHA NAHI, JA MEIN SAARI KHOT

(Meaning thereby—What is the point in getting your head shaved; you have not shaved off your mind, which is the treasure-house of all evils)

Having crossed the stage of *Tauhid*, when one attains the stage of *Istigna*, he attains a state of bliss. All the quarrels and disputations have vanished and now they sing blissfully:

SANTO SAHAJ SAMADHI BHALI,

GURU PRATAP BHAYO JA DIN SE, SURAT NA ANAT CHALI,

AANKH NA MOONDOO, KAAH NA ROONDHOO, KAYA KASHT NA DHAARUN,

KHULE NAYAN MEIN HANS HANS DEKHUN, SUNDER ROOP NIHARUN,

KAHOON SO NAAM, SUNOO SOI SUMIRAN, KHAUN PIYUN SO POOJA,

GIRHAN TYAG EK SAM LEKHUN, BHAV MITAUN DOOJA,

JAHAN JAHAN JAUN SOI PARIKRAMA, JO KUCH KARUN SO SEVA,

JAB SOUN TAB KARUN DANDAVAT, POOJON AUR NA DEVA,

SHABD NIRANTAR MANUVA ANURAT, MALIN WASANA TYAGI,

UTHAT BAITHAT KABAUN NA BISARUN, AISI TARI LAGI,

KAHE KABIR SO UNMAN RAHANI, SO PRAGAT KAR GAAI,

DUKH SUKH KE EK PARE PARAM SUKH, TEHI SUKH RAHA SAMAI

It means that natural *Samadhi* is good. From the day I have fallen in love, I have not lost the way. Neither I close my eyes, nor do I trouble my body for doing penance. My eyes are open and I look at the face of my beloved smilingly. Whatever I utter is thy name, whatever I hear is thy remembrance and whatever I eat or drink is offering to Him. In my eyes everyone is same and I have given up all the feeling of animosity and hatred. Wherever I go, it is circumambulation of Him. Whatever I do is service and devotion to Him. My sleeping or lying down is bowing down before Him and it is venerating Him. Now I do not worship anyone else and listen blissfully to the melody

occurring within me. All the ill-thoughts have disappeared and I am continuously absorbed in *Samadhi*. Kabir Sahab states that this is the state of flux (*Unmani*). I have sang this song openly in clear words. Beyond pain and pleasure, there is a blissful state, which I enjoy. In the eyes of such people, bondage and liberation is same; neither good nor bad.

6. Fana

Five stages have been crossed and now the sixth is described. *Fana (Bhanwar Gufa)* is described clearly but briefly. It may cause some confusion but do not worry. Common people mean complete dissolution or non-existence of self by *Fana*. They are not to be blamed because they do not understand the real meaning of *Fana*. In this world existence can be perceived but not non-existence. What is there is there. No gain saying anything beyond this. Dictionaries or Sufis may define *Fana* variously, but *Fana* is the name of that state where manifestation of self is denied. It is there but there is only a hint and, therefore, one has to explain it through example or simile. Now think of an astrologer, who saw the sun, the moon and stars. From outside the attention turned inside and now brilliant screens are being sighted in the mind because the outer appearance had come out from within. The astrologer pondered over it and the scene kept on changing. Later the movement in the mind also stopped and he entered the state of unconsciousness, where there is nothing. While he was awake, thousands of things were being seen but now the eyes are closed and the same scenes are being seen in dream, because they had reflected from within. In the state of deep sleep there was nothing, no dreams. But is there really nothing in that state. Yes, it is there, there is no doubt about it, only it is not being seen. How can one see anything in that state; the eyes are closed, the eyelids are shut and the mind too is shut, how and what can one see? This is *Adam* or *Nesti*-the state of dissolution or non-existence.

This was the first centre where the soul rested during its descent (in the human body). Here there was oneness, which turned into multiplicity with the descending down of the soul. Can it not be understood? From the state of deep sleep, one gets in the dreaming state and then in the awakened state and vice versa. This is the daily experience of everyone. Ponder over it whether it is true or not. This waking up, dreaming and going into deep sleep (*Jagruti*, *Swapna* and *Sushupti*) is in reality a reflection of creation, sustenance and dissolution. This is also the world, the heaven and the *Adam* (beyond heaven-the next world). This is also the essence of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (the lords of creation, sustenance and dissolution resp. as per the Hindu mythology). This is also the *Rooh-ul-Quddas* (the Holy Spirit), the father and the son and also the *Sat-Chit-Anand*. If one has understood this, he has understood everything, if not then nothing is understood. What is great about acquiring worldly knowledge; that is the knowledge relating to the state of awakening, which is extremely limited and incomplete.

There are three aspects:

- i) The seer (one, who sees),
- ii) The scene (that which is seen), and
- iii) The sight (the power or the faculty of seeing)

In the state of *Fana*, the seer and what is seen both exist, but the power to see (the *Gyan-Shakti* or the knowledge) is left behind and it does not experience anything. There is absence of knowledge and, therefore, nothing is seen. This is called *Fana*.

Fana is not non-existence. It is the name of a particular state of the *Rooh* (soul), which saints have termed as the state of flux (*Unmani Avastha*). The earlier elders did not find any other word to describe this state and, therefore, called it *Fana*, but it did not mean non-existence.

If the five stages have been crossed, one would attain peace at this stage.

7. Baqa

Now the seventh stage is that of *Baqa*. As difficult it was to understand *Fana*, understanding *Baqa* is also equally difficult. '*Fani*' means the state of undergoing change, whereas *Baqa* means that which remains (left behind after changes have occurred and now no more changes have to occur), which would neither die nor vanish, but remains forever. It is neither perfection nor regression; neither existence nor non-existence and neither 'Khuda' (the One, Who is there on His own) nor created by anyone. *Baqa* is the name of that on whose strength the show of the world is going on and shall go on. This substratum or base has no name and all the names belong to it. Though nameless, it is the most renowned. Doing anything but he is the doer. He speaks without tongue and opens all locks without key. He is the beginning and the end of all. Well, how it is? The reflection of his brilliance fell on the oceans, rivers and streams etcetera. This is the climax (the end, the highest point), but difficult to understand. Even angels do not have access there. If it could be understood a bit, it is possible only for the man. It is the reality and the truth, which is called *Baqa*, which never dies, nor is born. That alone is the Truth and the name of the Truth.

From the seed to the fruit and from the fruit to the seed, there is nothing beyond this. If someone is stuck with the intermediary stages like the stem, leaves and flowers etc., he would not be able to see the reality, the truth, which would always be beyond his perception. In the stage of *Fana*, one lost his small and limited existence. Now He would appear and look thereafter you are no more, it is He and He alone.

Dreaming, waking and deep sleep, all three are temporary states, which are lost. Sometimes one sleeps, sometimes one is woken up and sometimes one enters into deep sleep where he loses all senses. These states keep on changing everyday but you are the same, which you were earlier. Though you passed through all these states but you did not change. Does not this point out to you your real 'being' passing through all these states? If you are unable to grasp, it is worth feeling sorry about it. The physical body is born, grows young, gets old and then dies one day. All this takes place on your strength. You were neither ever born, nor did you die, nor you ever grew young or old. All these characteristics are that of the body. If for a little while you move away from associating yourself with your body, this matter could be easily understood. Till one is stuck with attributes, it is difficult to attain perfection since attributes suffer from being limited.

Learning and intelligence, *Gyan* and *Dhyan* (knowledge and meditation), all are perishable. Man at times acts stupidly and at other times intelligently. Similarly he acts foolishly or wisely or at times as a beginner or as an accomplished person. One lost wisdom and became stupid or one lost health and became sick but you (your essence) are the same, as you were. What has your essence lost? But you have become a slave of attributes. Till you entertain desire to become famous, earn reputation, acquire wealth, showing of and so on, it would not be there, because your attention is on them. That, which is in front of your eyes, is not seen. Turn your attention and look within yourself. Till you are attracted towards looking below, you do not see upwards and when you start looking up, it is He and He alone; there is none else except Him.

Ignorant say that the droplet fell in the ocean and it became the ocean but I ask what drop and what ocean, what falling and what merging? You are neither the droplet nor the ocean. These are comparative conditions. Comparison can be made between parts and not of the whole. Those,

who desire to perceive the whole, have nothing to do with the parts (*Anshas*). If He is the droplet, you are the ocean.

If it is stated clearly, there would be disputation. Sufis would be annoyed, so would be the followers of other sects and scholars. If he was or is distinct from us, then why He is not looked for outside and why do they ask to look for Him within? Is it not said that *Jabrut*, *Lahut* and *Nasut* (all the three worlds) all are within you. The path is also said to be within us. If it is clarified and explained, people start showing annoyance. A Sufi saint has said:

CHASM BANDO, GOSH BANDO, LUB BA BAND,
GAR NA BINI SIRRE HAQ, BAR MAN BA KHAND

It means-close your eyes, ears and the lips and even then if you do not realize the Truth, you may laugh at me. Guru Nanak dev has stated:

TIN BAND LAGAY KAR, SUN ANDAR TANKORE,
NANAK SUNN SAMADHI, NAHI SAANJH NAHI BHOR

If He cannot be found by closing eyes, ears and nose, then where can He be found, within or outside? If He is found within, then it is clear that He was always there within us and we are the same as we were before. Why should we twist our hand to catch hold of the nose when it can be held straight away, so that this dispute is over forever? But then people say that this would mislead people. It appears that they are the caretakers of the whole world. Why the *Qazi* (the judge) is losing weight worrying about the town? It has, therefore, been stated earlier that without *Talab*, there cannot be *Ishq*; without *Ishq* there cannot be *Marfat*; without *Marfat* there cannot be *Tauhid*; without *Tauhid* there cannot be *Istigna*; without *Istigna* there cannot be *Fana* and without *Fana* there cannot be *Baqa*. It is not recommended to go on talking purposelessly. This message is only for those, whose veils have been lifted or are getting lifted. Messages are meant for human beings. If you are a human being, you would have to face problems. If you are not a human being then it is a different matter. You do your job and we do ours but why do you want to hold our tongue and why do you not allow us the freedom to do what we want?

What He was or what He is has never been known, nor would it be ever known. In the context of creation, He was one in the beginning. From one He became two, then three and from three He became manifold and kept on multiplying and spreading and when it would be time for dissolution, He would become three from manifold, two from three and one from two. But here what difference did it make. He is as He was; He has not undergone any change. This is called *Baqa*. Everything perishes but He is Imperishable, He alone remains and that is your real essence. Many examples of this can be given but that would cause confusion. Waves surged in the ocean and merged with it. Now there is not even a sign of them. The sun is shining and its reflection is being seen in millions of pots filled with water. The viewers are seeing millions of sun at millions of places but those, who see in the sky, they see only the one sun. All the reflections belong to the sun alone and there is nothing else except that one sun.

What is the matter, nothing is understood and how can it be understood? We lack the vision. Someone saw a rope and mistook it as a snake and now that rope is snake for him. When he

pacified and had a closer look, he found it was not snake but the rope and now the rope is rope and not the snake. The appearance of the snake was based on the rope and this world is also alike. A greedy person saw a shell and mistook it as silver; when his mind calmed down, the silver was gone and it was the shell.

The question, however, stands at its place. How did the mind get confused? The answer is that the mind was focussed on the parts. When one focuses on one part of the whole, the other parts of the whole are not seen. To see the whole, turn away your mind from parts and focus at the whole. In the same manner knowledge and ignorance keep on creating confusion and when both of these disappear that One alone is left behind. The matter is complex, how can it be explained? Till we are caught in the grip of selfishness and ego, we are in the clutches of death because the dimensions of ego keep on changing and this change is death.

What increases or decreases in the ocean, waves or the ocean? It could be said about the waves since the ocean has nothing to lose, it is as it was. This is *Baqa*.

Similarly when the waves surge in the ocean of Truth, the *Anshas* (parts) of Truth are seen as human beings, animals, angels, sun, moon and stars and so on, which keep on coming and going, living and dying. But when the mind turns towards the whole, the show of the parts disappears and then even the thought of the whole also would disappear. This is *Baqa*, which is eternal, because death occurs to the parts and not to the whole, if the whole has been understood with open mind.

The appearance of the *Anshas* (parts) and the whole is also only in your mind (thought) and these relative stories are also carved out of ego. To leave them is *Baqa*, because in *Baqa* there is no relativity. The word *Baqa* is not wide enough to fully cover what we wish to convey and if another word is considered, even that also would not help, as all these are *Aanshik* (partial).

Now once again all the stages from the beginning to the end are being briefly mentioned in hints. We entertained *Talab* and it resulted in developing *Ishq* in us. From *Ishq* came *Irfan* (*Gyan-gnosis*), which grew in *Tauhid* and the feeling of oneness entered our mind. Then we entered the state of *Istigna* in which we got absorbed (*Fana*) and later got rooted in the state of *Baqa*. Nothing came from outside; there was nothing outside and shall never be, it is all within and in everyone. But one should keep mum and should not announce it otherwise there would be misunderstanding. It is enough to say that whatever is there it is He and He alone. Kabir Sahab states:

EK KAHOON TO HAI NAHI, DUJA KAHOON TO GAAR,

JAISA HAI VAISA RAHE, KAHE KABIR VICHAR

This is *Baqa*, this is Truth and this is the reality and the *Satya-Loka* (the abode of Truth).

This article has been written with an intention to remove the misunderstanding caused by the principles of *Sant-mat* (in the tradition of saints) and to benefit those, who are interested in gnosis. If it benefits some people, the objective is achieved. It would obviate the need of going through voluminous scriptures. But to whom scriptures would not be needed? It would not be required to them, who are inclined towards *Tasawwuf* (*Sant-mat* or Sufism).

There are three stages of *Fana*:

- i) *Fana-fil-Sheikh* (getting absorbed in the Master);
- ii) *Fana-fil-Rasool* (getting absorbed in the Prophet or incarnation); and
- iii) *Fana-fil-Allah* (getting absorbed in the God or the Truth).

It is not possible to attain the states of *Fana-fil-Rasool* or *Fana-fil-Allah*, without first attaining the state of *Fana-fil-Sheikh*.

May the *Gurudev* (Master) bless us and grant us the capability to understand.

ALHAMDUIILALLAH

(ALL THE PRAISE BE UPON THE GOD)