

Tasawwuf (part 4)

Written by Anwar-un-Nabi (ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ)

Sunday, 21 September 2008 23:46 - Last Updated Saturday, 07 August 2010 21:02

[What about the great madhab scholars ? What were their views on tasawwuf?]{pullquote position=right;}What about the great madhab scholars ? What were their views on tasawwuf?{/pullquote}Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala), in order to attain this ma'rifa, although he was at a high degree in knowledge and ijtiḥad, ran to be in the service of Hadrat Bishr al-Hafi (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala). When he was asked why he kept close to Bishr al-Hafi, he answered, 'He knows Allah better than I do.' {footnote}He was the most superior scholar of his time in fiqh and ḥadīth. He was at a very high level in wara' and in following the Sunna. He was born in Baghdad in 164 and died there in 241 A.H. It is written in Farid ad-din al-Attar's (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala) Persian Tadhkirat al-awliya' that Ahmad ibn Hanbal attended the lectures of many mashayikhs, for example, Dhu 'n-Nun al-Misri's and Bishr al-Hafi's (150-227). A crippled woman sent her son to Imam Ahmad and asked him to pray for her. The Imam performed an ablution (wudu') and salat and prayed. The son found his mother welcoming him at the gate when he returned home. She recovered her health through the blessing of Imam Ahmad's prayer.{/footnote}

"Al-Imam al-a'zam Abu Hanifa (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala) gave up the work of ijtiḥad in his last years. He attended Hadrat Ja'far as-Sadiq's (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala) suḥba for two years. When he was asked why he had done so, he answered, 'Nu'man{footnote}Hadrat al-Imam al-A'zam's name was Nu'man.{/footnote} would have perished if it weren't for those two years.'

{pullquote position=left;}Al-Imam al-a'zam Abu Hanifa (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala) gave up the work of ijtiḥad in his last years. He attended Hadrat Ja'far as-Sadiq's (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala) suḥba for two years. When he was asked why he had done so, he answered, 'Nu'man {footnote}Hadrat al-Imam al-A'zam's name was Nu'man.{/footnote} would have perished if it weren't for those two years.{/pullquote}

Although both the imams [Abu Hanifa and Ahmad ibn Hanbal] were at ultimately high grades in knowledge and 'ibadat, they went to the superiors of tasawwuf and attained ma'rifa and its fruit, iman al-ḥaqiqi. Was there another 'ibada more valuable than ijtiḥad? Was there a deed superior to teaching and disseminating Islam? Leaving these aside, they clung to, embraced the service of the superiors of tasawwuf, and thus attained ma'rifa.

"The value of a'mal (deeds) and 'ibadat is measured with the degree of iman. The brilliance of 'ibadat depends on the amount of ikhlas. The more perfect iman becomes, the more ikhlas is attained, and deeds become all the more glorious and acceptable.

The perfection of iman and completion of ikhlas depends on ma'rifa. Since ma'rifa and real belief depend on the attainment of fana' and death-before-death, the perfection of iman is as much as one's fana'.

Descending and ascending does not make you closer,

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To get closer to Haqq means to cease existing!

It must be for this reason that it was declared in a hadith ash-sharif that Hadrat Abu Bakr as-Siddiq's (radi-Allahu ta'ala 'anh) iman was superior to all other Muslims' iman:

'Abu Bakr's iman, if weighed against the iman of all my umma, would weigh more,' for he was the most advanced of all the Umma in fana'. The hadith ash-sharif...

'The one who wants to see a walking corpse must look at Abu Quhafa's son,' confirms this. All the Sahabat al-kiram (radi-Allahu ta'ala 'anhum ajma'in) had attained to the degree of fana'. The preference of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq's fana' in this hadith shows that his degree of fana' was very high.□

to be continued in article "Tasawwuf (part 5)" ...

- Imam Muhammad Ma'sum al-Faruqi
□ (rahmat-Allahi ta'ala 'alaih)
sixty-first □ letter of the second volume of his *Maktubat*,
Reformatted extracts from the book
"Advice for the Muslim - Eleventh Edition"
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