

## **Luminous *Ta'wīl* or Unveiled *Ta'wīl*** **(*Nūrānī Ta'wīl* or *Kashfī Ta'wīl*)**

Luminous *ta'wīl* or *Kashfī ta'wīl* are the terms of the Cycle of Resurrection coined by our revered teacher Ḥaẓrat-i 'Allāmah Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai, may his secret be sanctified. This is in the context of the Qur'ānic prophecy that the earth of the *da'wat* will be illumined by the light of its Lord (39:69), which has now become a reality. Here, first of all it is necessary to understand the simple literal meaning of *nūr* (light) and *kashf* (unveiling). Light is something which itself is illumined and also illumines other things. Similarly, unveiling (*kashf*) means to remove the parabolic and allegorical veils by which the reality (*haqīqat*) was covered in the cycle of concealment (*satr*) and to make it absolutely clear. The gist of its technical meaning will be discussed in the following short article in which for the sake of brevity, only the term luminous *ta'wīl* will be used.

Luminous *ta'wīl* is also called the “absolutely pure *ta'wīl* (*ta'wīl-i maḥẓ-i mujarrad* or *ta'wīl-i mujarrad-i maḥẓ*) in the works of *da'wat-i ḥaqq* (invitation to the truth).<sup>1</sup> Regarding this *ta'wīl* our revered teacher says: “It is that pure and bare [free from physical allegories and parables] *ta'wīl* or the esoteric knowledge which is given to someone in his personal world, in which the real spiritual and intellectual manifestations and miracles are described without allegorical attire and parabolic veil. This knowledge was first of all given to Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam.”<sup>2</sup>

Observed in the light of the holy Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions, it becomes known that the veils of *ta'wīl* are not only physical allegories and parables of *tanzīl*, but also those of the *ta'wīl* itself. This is because of the fact that the Qur'ān has an exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and an esoteric meaning (*bāṭin*) and in each esoteric meaning there are several other esoteric meanings.<sup>3</sup> Further, the *tanzīl* (*ẓāhir* or exoteric meaning) is related to the time of the holy Prophet or the *nāṭiq*, whereas the *ta'wīl* (*bāṭin* or esoteric meaning) is related to his entire cycle which has the duration of more or less a thousand years. During this entire cycle, due to the exigencies of time and space, a chain of changes continues to occur in both the spiritual and physical aspects. This is evident from the Qur'ānic verses (7:52-53), particularly where God says: “The day its *ta'wīl* comes/will come (*ya'tī*)”. The verb *ya'tī* is *muẓāri'* (aorist) tense in Arabic, the meaning of which comprises both the present and the future tenses. That is, the *ta'wīl* is going to come throughout the entire cycle. In this regard Ḥaẓrat-i Mawlānā Imam Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī says: “... while the words of the Koran remain the same, every generation, every century, every period must have a new and different interpretation to that of the past, otherwise Islam will die ....”<sup>4</sup>

It is also necessary to know that the personality whom God chooses and appoints for the execution of *ta'wil*, is not constrained by any rule or law confined within time and space, rather He appoints him with sole authority over all human religious and worldly matters and as an absolute physician for all spiritual and worldly diseases,<sup>5</sup> therefore he can make different *ta'wils* or *farmāns* for every individual and every community appropriate to their conditions. For instance, he can prescribe a medicine with an element of poison for certain diseases, which may be cured by it, but for some others it may be fatal. With reference to this, the exalted Imam says: “When you have a headache, you go to the doctor who prescribes medicine for it and you benefit from it. However, if after six months if your foot is aching and you use the same medicine, what benefit are you going to get from it? At this time you must go to the doctor for the prescription for the foot and you will benefit from it.”(purport)<sup>6</sup> Further, with regard to the change of *ta'wil* according to the changing time and circumstances, he says: “I have changed [my *farmāns*] seventy times in my seventy years of Imamāt. That is, you see great difference between my early *farmāns* and the present *farmāns*.”<sup>7</sup>

In short, this process of *ta'wil* reaches its culmination at the beginning of the cycle of resurrection, and no need for any physical allegory or parable is left. In such a situation, the *ta'wil* is called absolutely pure *ta'wil*. In order to facilitate the understanding of this reality, our revered teacher uses simple words and terms such as ‘Luminous *ta'wil*’ (*nūrānī ta'wil*) or ‘Unveiled *ta'wil*’ (*kashfī ta'wil*).

It is evident from the Qur’ān (3:7) that its *ta'wil* is known only to God and the *rāsikhūn fi'l-ilm* (those who are well-grounded in knowledge). According to the holy Prophet’s own explanation, the *rāsikhūn fi'l-ilm* are he himself and Mawlānā °Alī and his and the latter’s progeny, namely the designated (*mansūṣ*) pure Imams from the progeny of Mawlānā °Alī and Mawlātinā Fāṭimah. The holy Prophet says: “I am the master of *tanzil* and °Alī is the master of *ta'wil*.”<sup>8</sup> Further, in the Tradition of the Two Heavy Things (*Saqalayn*) explaining the eternal bond between the Qur’ān’s *ta'wil* and the guidance of the community by his and Mawlānā °Alī’s progeny, he says: “I am leaving two heavy things, the Book of God and my progeny (*itrat*) among you. As long as you hold fast to them both, you will never go astray after me.”<sup>9</sup> This has been elaborated more by Imam al-Bāqir when he was asked about the *rāsikhūn fi'l-ilm*. He said: “The holy Prophet was the most excellent among the *rāsikhūn fi'l-ilm*. Indeed, God taught him all of what he revealed to him from *tanzil* and the *ta'wil*, and nothing was revealing to him except that he used to know its *ta'wil*. Then after him, the

*rāsikhūn fi'l-ilm* are the *awṣiyā* (legatees, i.e., the Imams) who know its (i.e., the Qurān's) *ta'wīl* completely."<sup>10</sup>

In short, although the holy Prophet was the most excellent among the *rāsikhūn fi'l-ilm* or well-grounded in the knowledge of *ta'wīl*, practically it is being executed by Mawlānā °Alī and after him, by the designated Imam of every time as the sole authority of *ta'wīl*.

Concurrently it is also evident from the Qur'ān that from the time of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam till today the main function of the Prophets and Imams is to teach human souls and make them like themselves as mentioned in the Qur'ān in Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm's words: "So whoever follows me, he verily is of me." (14:36) Therefore, although in reality the sole authority of *ta'wīl* is the Imam of the time, but as a result of his complete recognition, submission and devotion to him, his light also rises in his *murīds*' personal world and they too can also become capable of seeing the world of Command with their inner eye despite being in the physical world. Such *murīds* are granted the permission to do *ta'wīl*, a reality which is mentioned clearly in the following verses of Sayyidnā Nāṣir-i Khisraw:

*Bar jān-i man chū nūr-i Imām-i zamān bi-tāft*  
*Laylu's-sirār būdam-ū shamsu'z-zuhā shudam*  
*Nām-i buzurg Imām-i zamān'ast azīn qibal*  
*Man az zamīn chū zuhrah ba-dū bar samā shudam*<sup>11</sup>

When the light of the Imam of the time shone upon my soul  
[Though previously] like the last pitch dark night of the lunar  
month, I became the blazing sun  
The Supreme Name is the Imam of the time, therefore,  
Through him, like Venus I reached the heaven from the earth

It is through this light of the Imam of the time and his permission that Sayyidnā Nāṣir wrote a book like *Wajh-i Dīn* on *ta'wīl*. In the history of the True *da'wat*, like Sayyidnā Nāṣir, there have been many luminaries in whom the light of Imamāt had risen and who have written books on *ta'wīl* with the permission of the Imam of their own time, such as Sayyidnā Ja'far bin Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, Sayyidnā Qāzī Nu'mān, Sayyidnā al-Mu'ayyad, Sayyidnā Pīr Sadr al-Dīn, Sayyidnā Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn. A few only examples of their respective works are *Ta'wīl al-Zakāt*, *Ta'wīl al-Da'ā'im*, *al-Majālis* and *Gināns*, etc.

In our own great cycle of Resurrection a very resplendent example of this luminous tradition is our revered teacher Ḥaẓrat-i °Allāmah Naṣir al-Dīn Naṣir Hunzai, in whose personal world the Imam's light had risen and he was thus blessed to receive the permission to do luminous *ta'wīl*. With utmost gratitude he dedicated his precious life in fulfilling this sacred duty. He

has written over a hundred books on *ta'wīl* in both prose and poetry, which Mawlānā Ḥāzīr Imam has graciously approved and has commanded that his "... learning and scholarship should have a wider Jamati exposure ...."<sup>12</sup>

Faquir-i ḥaqīr,

Markaz-i ʿIlm-ū Ḥikmat,

London.

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<sup>1</sup> Sayyidnā Nāṣir-i Khisraw, *Wajh-i Dīn*, ed. Gholam-Reza Aavani (Tehran, 1977), p. 306; See also: Sayyidnā Hibatu'llāh al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Dīn Shīrāzī, *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*, ed. Ḥātim Ḥamid al-Dīn (Oxford, 1407 A.H., 19860, II, 395, 612; *Ibid*, (1426 A.H./2005 A.D.), III, 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> ʿAllāmah Nāṣir al-Dīn Nāṣir Hunzai, *La'l-ū Gawhar* (Karachi, 1999), p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Hazār Ḥikmat* (Karachi, 2005), pp. 114, 396.

<sup>4</sup> Mawlānā Sultān Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī, *Mubarak Talika and Messages* (Mombasa, 1955), p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Sayyidnā Nāṣir-i Khisraw, *Jāmi' u'l-ḥikmatayn*, ed. H. Corbin and M. Mo'in (Tehran-Paris, 1953), pp. 14-15.

<sup>6</sup> Mawlānā Sultān Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī, *Kalām-i Imām-i Mubīn* (Gujarati) (Bombay, 1950), I, 125-126.

<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Kalām-i Imām-i Mubīn* (Gujarati) (Bombay, 1950), II, 491.

<sup>8</sup> *al-Majālis al-Mu'ayyadiyyah*, II, 395.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 218, 557.

<sup>10</sup> Sayyidnā Qāzī Nu'cman, *Da'ā'im u'l-Islām*, ed. A.A.A. Fyḏee (Cairo, 1963), I, 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> Sayyidnā Nāṣir-i Khisraw, *Dīwān*, ed. Sayyid Naṣru'llāh Taqawī (Tehran, 1367 solar/1988), p. 273.

<sup>12</sup> Azeem Ali Lakhani, *ʿAllāmah Nāṣir al-Dīn Nāṣir Hunzai's Great Contribution to Esoteric Knowledge*, (Karachi, 2013), p. 4.