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MARIFATULLAH--THE DIVINE GNOSIS

By Luxamore

INTRODUCTION

This paper is written for the seekers of the Light, for those that wish to "see God face to face" and no longer live as mere mortals but as divine, angelic presences. In writing this paper we appropriated texts from various scriptures and have interpreted them in an esoteric sense, the way that it was intended to be read and understood. Scriptures written by Initiates ought to be apprehended using the keys of the Mysteries--as taught in the Ancient Wisdom--and this we have done in a manner revealed to us by our predecessors on the Path. Those disagreeing with the interpretations or the content of this essay need not engage in any debate with the writer as he hardly has the time or the inclination for this. Accept what you can and leave the rest as nothing is forced upon you. There is no need for one to convince others fanatically, of the faith that one professes.

We do not claim to be the sole possessor of Truth or to present flawless teachings. God gave man the freedom to choose, according to his level of understanding, so should we offer the same privilege to our fellow men. God is the best judge; judgment from the standpoint of an impure consciousness is unholy. In religious matters one ought to apply reason, the illumined intellect, and the understanding, compassionate heart; concerning the Supreme Being, one should transcend the intellect and experience what IS. The important principle on the spiritual path is knowledge, faith and understanding based upon personal experience and not mere opinions, ignorant beliefs in religious dogmas or ambiguous interpretations of scripture. Maitreya puts it this way:

"So, religion, the real religion is an individual experience or connection to God. Any other things are dogma. We are individually here to connect ourselves to Him."

Relevant to the above, the Quran explains that those who do not think function no better than animals:

"The worst animals before God are the deaf and dumb, those who do not use their reason." (Quran, Al Anfaal--Booty 8:22 Irving Translation)

Even Gautama Buddha requested his followers to subject his teachings to reason and not to give credence to them if they did not make sense. However, to properly apply one's reason one has to illumine it with an influx of spiritual light. In this matter the attainment of the divine gnosis is an effective ameliorator of the mental faculties; it likewise unfolds to a greater degree the "qalbu," the heart of the Initiate; and yet, in the first place, it is the devotions and the yearning in our hearts for God that attracts to us the Light--as we take one step towards God, the Divine One reaches out to us with strides. One must develop

"mahabbah," or love for Allah to draw near to the Throne and the Infinite Presence. A respectful, reverential attitude implied in the word "kauuf" in Sufi literature should also be unfolded. The word "kauuf" is often interpreted to mean "fear." We do not believe that God, the Father/Mother wishes us to fear them but to unite ourselves with their being with longing, love, respect, etc. Fear separates us from God as it puts up a thick psychic barrier. Fear maintains the state of dualism, the sense of "I" and "that," and is contrary to the principle of oneness, of "Tauhid," of "Laa ilaha illallah," or "there is no god but God." This Islamic verse is a statement of non-dualism and is to be found in various mystical traditions and the mystical aspect of religions. It implies that God is immanent in his creation and likewise transcends it. In truth, our existence is the existence of the Supreme Being--there is no Nature but God; there is no Universe but God, there is no Man but God; there is nothing that we can conceive or not-conceive that is not God. God will always transcend our intellectual grasp and rational/irrational beliefs.

Instead of fear, divine love and intelligence should be cultivated as they direct our energies upward from the lower chakras and ultimately melt our being with that of the Beloved. What the initiate does fear is violating the laws of the universe--expressing dishonesty is one of them, and many religious devotees do unknowingly express it such as stating the syahadat verse without any substantial evidence supporting their claim. We refer to the words, "I witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger." Before making such a statement one must have truly witnessed and known God and Muhammad; otherwise, one bears false witness. Allah has requested us to use reason--let us do so. We will address this further later.

Approaching the Divine Presence requires self-cultivation. An effort should be made to approach the Divine Intelligence with pure intentions and after having purified the components of the lower aspect of the microcosm:

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (KJV Matthew 5:8)

In the divine Gnostic vision, impurity exists as a "hijab" or veil that prevents one from perceiving the Light of God clearly.

Truth lies in all scriptures as the latter have their source in the Infinite Light. This Light is the true Quran, the real Gospel, the veritable Upanishad, the pure Torah, and the authentic Tao Teh Ching. This is the Divine Book encompassing all earthly manifestations of the Word of God that we ought to read and recite in our lives, in our daily living. No amount of human books may store the information contained in the Quranic Light.

"O People of the Book, Our messenger has come to you to explain much of what you have been concealing out of the Book, and to dispense with much of it. Light and a Clear Book have been brought to you from God." (Quran, Al Maa-idah--The Table 5:15 Irving Translation)

In the above verse it is implied that to clearly understand the Scriptures one has to "read" from the Light, or listen to those that are familiar with the Light. The Light has been given unto us, but it lies hidden in the depth of our being until awoken and revealed to us by the Gate-Keeper, the "Guru Murshid" as the Spiritual Initiator is called in Gnostic circles. This Light is the essential message that was "concealed" out of the scriptures but given to candidates of the Light Initiation. In Hinduism, the commentaries on the Jabala Upanishads, refers to the contemplation upon the Light as "shukla-dhyana (white meditation)," and also as the "meditation on the white brilliance of the Absolute." In yogic philosophy, experiencing the Light is known as "siddha-darshana," or "vision of the adepts." In the merkabah mysticism of Esoteric Judaism, practitioners are taught to ascend through the spiritual realms to witness the Light and hear the Holy Name. These Gnostic practices are described in Hechalot literature.

Mohammad, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) read and recited from this Light as it did not require any literacy, only purity and divine love to know the commandments and the Word of the Spirit. He was later described as having ascended the seven heavens (Isra' Miraj) as other prophets had done before him and others are doing even to this day. The Master now known as "Jesus" or "Esa" lived in that Light as did Gautama the Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Lao Tse, and a host of other Messengers of the Spirit. All religions reveal a facet of that Light, thus all is necessary to embrace. Though they are similar in essence, each has their own unique message to humanity. We evolve spiritually by living the essential spiritual message of every religion--by keeping and living the kernel, and placing the husk to its proper place. There is no one true religion but the Light that reveals itself through each and every one of them. Most religions have been corrupted by mortal minds, but sincere seekers of the Light have always been directed to realize the naked Truth.

Experiencing the Divine Presence of Light also involves the Divine Sound. This sound is the true name of God, symbolized by the Tetragrammaton of the Qabbalists--the unutterable four letter-word--unutterable cause human mouths profanes its nature if attempted to speak it. The Divine Sound is called by many names by Hindu, Islamic, and Christian mystics: "Shabd," "Nam," "the Word," "Nad," "Kalma," "Ism-i-Azam," "Bang-i-Asmani," "Kalma-i-Ilahi," "Ram Dhun," etc.

The Divine Name can only be heard and experienced internally. The Light seen is indescribable, the Sound heard unpronounceable and the transformation in one magickal--all occurs by the will of God.

Experiencing and connecting oneself with the Divine Light and Sound is the Path of the Saints, Walis, and Prophets. In Javanese literature, for instance, there are stories of Sunan ("sunan"--Javanese for "saint") Kudus, one of the eminent Muslim saints of past centuries acquiring the techniques of the divine gnosis from Ki Ageng Pengging, a disciple of Syech Siti Jenar, who was one of the most controversial figure in the propagation of Islam in Indonesian history. Sunan Kudus was given the technique of "dying while living." The irony was that Sunan Kudus had a hand in Syech Siti Jenar's "political execution" with charges of claiming himself to be God (like Al Hallaj's case)--the

execution of which, Sunan Kudus later sorely repented, not realizing the spiritual verities that Siti Jenar conveyed in his teachings.

After Siti Jenar's demise, during one of his meetings with Ki Ageng Pengging (also known by other names), Sunan Kudus was shocked to find the man's face surrounded by a holy radiance. He was so moved to tears that he grasped Ki Ageng's feet requesting forgiveness and explaining his sorrow for past incidents. Ki Ageng explained that even as a devout Muslim and a member of the "Wali Songo," or the "Council of 9 Saints," he had not yet known God, but only had notions and beliefs, and was actually spiritually blind.

It was only after he had spent some time with Ki Ageng that Sunan Kudus was initiated into the "dying while living" technique, the Divine Gnosis, or the marifatullah of the true Path of the Saints. The initiation ceremony is described in a veiled manner in the book "Ajaran dan Jalan Kematian Syekh Siti Jenar (The Teachings and Death of Syekh Siti Jenar)" by Abdul Munir Mul Khan. The story goes as follow :

After certain instructions Sunan Kudus was led by Ki Ageng Pengging towards a pond. A piece of white cloth was laid on the ground. Sunan Kudus was immediately requested by his initiator to lie on his stomach on the white cloth. He was then wrapped carefully, with all of his senses sealed, unaware of anything else but his self. After the Isya prayers in the early night, while still wrapped in the cloth, Sunan Kudus was submerged into a pool of water as though a corpse. At the bottom of the pool Sunan Kudus did not move at all which was a sign of his successful oneness with his Higher Self. In the pool he stayed till early dawn. He was then called by his initiator to which he responded. The surface of the pool began bubbling with activity. Seeing thus, Ki Ageng pulled Sunan Kudus out of the pool and removed the white cloth, which was miraculously dry. Sunan Kudus while still not fully conscious was revived by Ki Ageng. After reviving, Sunan Kudus bowed before Ki Ageng and exclaimed, "Oh honorable one, I now know the 'Holy Water.'"

Thus was a saint matured to true sanctity after the marifatullah initiation.

The goal of life is to be divine, to be spiritually perfect, to be a spiritually integrated ascended master, to know and be one with God, to reflect the qualities of the Divine One in daily expression, to spiritualize the matter composing ADAM, or the physical body (even the planet Earth). In Sufism this is referred to as "Insan Kamil." Qabalists call the perfect man "Adam Kadmon," the "Heavenly Adam." This perfect being is symbolized by the New Jerusalem as seen by John the Beloved as issuing forth from Heaven. It is of no import to declare that one is spiritual--as the ego is so fond of doing. It is by the fruits that you shall know others as well as yourself. The Light within a person cannot be hid; therefore, it would be superfluous to declare it with words. The divine gnosis initiation literally sheds abundant Light upon the fortunate recipient and causes the innate spark of the divinity within to grow and expand. A higher awareness and a transcendental consciousness are thus attained. Once this state is reached it is the will of the Divine that

we enflame others with this Light that they too may be radiating, illuminating centers of consciousness.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (KJV John 12:32)

We are candles, and if we are aflame we should set others on fire. Those whose candles are unlit are not able to light other candles--the blind cannot lead the blind. The blind places their faith on the literal words of scripture; those with eyes to see, understand sacred teachings with the heart--knowing them to be symbols and indications of inner realities. The ritualistic formalities of religion are symbolic of the inner processes of the soul that should take place. In the marifatullah tradition that we represent, if one does not see and know God mystically one is considered blind--"kufur." The result of such blindness :

"While anyone who has been blind in this [life] will remain blind in the Hereafter, and go even further astray." (Quran Al-Israa'--The Night Journey 17:22)--Irving Translation.

The blindness relates to the blindness of not perceiving, witnessing, knowing, and being one with Allah :

"It is not their eyesight which is blind, but their hearts in their breasts which are blind." Quran Al Hajj (Pilgrimage) 22:46--Irving Translation.

The Divine Plan is that humanity evolve and Communities of Light (as explained by Maitreya) be established on the physical plane that eventually the Kingdom of God may be made manifest so that the reign of the "Prince of Peace" may commence. What hinders us from assisting in the fulfillment of this? It is the beast, "Iblis," the "Antichrist," the "Dajal" called "the false negative ego." The false ego or one's lower self is one's own worst enemy; this is why the old mystics called it "the adversary" or "Satan." The false ego believes itself as being separated from God and having an independent existence. It believes itself as having no spiritual relationship with all sentient beings, this is one of the causes of its spiritual arrogance, its feeling of a false superiority. God is omnipresent, even in the lowest worm. Ironically, the false ego may even believe that God is omnipresent and yet judge, condemn, and attack the manifestations of Life, the very expression of Allah. The false ego has been on a rampage ever since Adam and Eve ate that forbidden fruit of unenlightened intellectualism.

There are no "accidents" in the universe. Everything occurs according to cosmic laws, according to some plan of the Higher Intelligences. We may call this "synchronicity" or some other term, it matters not. The fact that you are reading this paper indicates that you have been brought here for a reason. Perhaps you are spiritually ripe for this knowledge that this work conveys, or perhaps you need the nourishment that it provides to awaken your slumbering divinity; or you may even need some rocks to be thrown upon your self-complacency and self-righteousness that expresses in a spiritual narrow-mindedness and fanaticism. Whatever the reason, know this: you are blessed! In days of yore, many have sought for this gnosis, this divine knowledge searching far and wide, and for countless

lifetimes--sometimes failing in their attempts; however, the spiritual currents enfolding this planet at this epoch has made the acquisition and attainment of this knowledge and experience of the divine gnosis much easier. Initiators are readily accessible unlike in the past when they were mostly found in remote regions. Presently, all that one has to do is to ask that it shall readily be given, to knock that the door be speedily opened--appropriate actions after having sought and found what one is seeking for.

The Initiator--the Guru Murshid, Syech, or Pir holds the keys to the portals of Heaven. This is symbolically described in Christianity as St. Peter guarding Heaven's gate. The way to the Divine Throne is shown by someone who has already been there, someone expressing the Christ spirit :

"Jesus (the Initiator) saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (KJV John 14:6)

The Father is present in his kingdom and the Initiate ascends (miraj) to it not in the afterlife, but right here and now :

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." (KJV Luke 9:27)

The Nazarene Master refers here to the candidates to marifatullah, the divine gnosis. After the initiation into the gnosis they are referred to as "children of God." These children of God (initiates), the "chosen ones," are the babes that have reach the Promised Land where milk and honey, or spiritual nourishment flows. These are the beings that the Master alluded to in the following verses :

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child (the Initiate), the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe (know, having seen) in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (KJV Matthew 18:1-6)

The chosen ones are actually those that have chosen to walk the Path of Light doing the Will of the Divine Intelligence. They no longer have any self-centered or egoic-interest. They work to fulfill the divine mandate. They have sacrificed their ego upon the Cross of Life; they have surrendered their self and allowed the Divine One to determine the results of all of their actions; they have submitted their mortal consciousness so that the Spiritual Consciousness may function through. Long before being aware of their true spiritual estate, they would have been brought to the doorstep of a Gate-Keeper for initiation and instructions.

The Prophet Muhaamad (Peace upon him) is the supreme exemplar. He not only showed the way to a spiritual life but the way to the Divine Throne--the manner in which one should ascend. True muslims are they who emulate the Prophet in every aspect, even engaging in the ascension or Isra' Miraj to be Allah's guest at the Divine Throne. This is not impossible but is an absolute guarantee to those that strive with the appropriate faculties and instruments given unto us :

"Everyman, you are toiling constantly for your Lord, and you will meet Him." Quran Al Insiyaq (Splitting Open) 84:6--Irving Translation.

In the initiation ceremony, the Initiator, the Guru Murshid, transmits a certain power, his divine essence--often referred to as "Zat Guru"--to the candidates that seek to witness and know Allah "face-to-face." This transmission is expressed in yogic terminology as "Shakti-pata," or "Shaktipat" and carries a divine blessing. The keys to ascension are shown and demonstrated by the Guru so that the journey of the soul to God's Throne may be undergone by the candidate. The Guru Murshid takes the candidate by the hand, so to speak, and leads him or her to the Vision of the Throne where they may be God's guest. Although the full keys of the divine gnosis are not revealed openly in this paper, enough will be given to stimulate the reader's interest and thus to mobilize him or her to tread the right path. We can just but point the way.

MARIFATULLAH

What is Marifatullah? The word "marifat" is an Arabic word for "knowledge." "Ullah" or "Allah" refers to the Supreme Being, the Divine Presence. Thus the conjoined words literally means "knowledge of God," or "knowing God." Western Gnostics refer to the latter as simply the "divine gnosis." Knowing God or rather the "Divine Essence" is not an impossibility as we have often been told by sages, mystics and prophets that to know the Self is to know God, and is one of the main purposes of life. The temple at Delphi advises all that walk through its portal to "Know thyself."

In the context of Islam, marifat is considered to be the fourth and highest step in one's spiritual development. The other previous three steps being "Syariat," "Tariqat," and "Hakikat." In Syariat one basically purifies and prepares oneself for the gnosis through worship, fasting, alms-giving, study, etc. In Tariqat one conditions oneself to remember the Divine One as well as to strengthen the body for the entry of Divine Forces that would transmute the "lead" of mortal consciousness into the "gold" of human perfection. This is done through various spiritual exercises which includes "zikir," or chanting of the Divine Names. In Hakikat one is acquainted with the Truth, not knowing it personally as yet, but by logical inference--this step corresponds to Jnana Yoga. In this step the esoteric truths within scriptures are understood. In marifat (ullah), one is a witness to the Divine Presence; one receives the Light and unites with its Being. The four steps corresponds to the cultivation of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual components of the microcosm.

All of the steps are rungs of a ladder leading to Heaven, or to be more precise, having "Heaven" develop in one's being--all of the phases are necessary; but the forms followed may be in accord with the principles and methodologies of other religions or spiritual traditions. Marifatullah is the revelation of the Light, of God's Presence and those of any religion may be initiated into it after having first undergone certain preparations. It is well to keep in mind that the Light is not the sole property of any religion; and no Initiator has the right to prevent someone from knowing God on the pretext of having a different religion or belief-system. No one chooses God unless God has chosen him previously--and every Guru Murshid complies with God's will. When the light alights upon the candidate like a dove, he or she becomes the anointed, the young Christ. The descent of the Light is the baptism of, and by Fire--in Qabbalism the "Schamayim," symbolized by the letter "Shin."

Apart from knowing the Light by personal experience, another facet of marifatullah pertains to the unfoldment or cultivation of the 99 Beautiful Divine Names within so that they become a daily expression. The more we express divine qualities, the more we reflect God in the physical sphere, and the more we come to realize the Supreme Being. The "heaven within" is made to manifest without in the Earth. The true Gnosis, however, is not simply the knowledge of God's names, which is as plentiful as the language of rational beings, but the knowledge of the Divine Essence (Dzat).

Religious teachings requests us to have faith in God, but how can we have faith in something that we do not know or understand? Beliefs alone are not trully spiritually transmutative unless accompanied by the certainty of knowledge, apperception and understanding. Isa or Jesus may have stated that those who had faith but have not seen the "Personal Self" as blessed (John 20:29), however, it is the very perception of the Light that makes one truly blessed as can be inferred from the following statement :

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." (Matthew 6:22)

One must first know that which one prays to, otherwise one prays to a concept and this is fundamentally what Islamic orthodox teachings refer to as "shirik."

In Islam it is mandatory to embrace the five pillars of its foundation. One of these pillars is referred to as the "syahadat" statement :

"Ashadu Alla Illaha Ilallah Waashadu Anna Muhammadar Rasulullah," or "I witness that there is no god but Allah (Nur Allah, the Light of Allah) and I witness that Muhammad (Nur Muhammad, the Light of Muhammad) is his messenger (the intermediary force between Man and God).

The key word in this statement is "witness." To witness is to perceive, to see. The American Heritage dictionary defines witness thus :

"One who has seen or heard something . . . to be present at or have personal knowledge of . . . "

If one has not seen Allah or know that there is no other God other than the One Being, than the statement that is uttered is a lie. This spiritual principle is from the Gnostic, marifatullah perspective. Keep in mind that the above is the essential verse that converts a person into a follower of Islam.

By not witnessing "Nur Illahi" or the Divine Light, the reality of God's existence, as well as "Nur Muhammad," or the "Light of Muhammad"--the secondary Light as the intermediary between the Light of the Soul (Nur Insan) and the Divine Light--one is considered, "kufur," or "blind" and a "kafir"--"infidel," or "unbeliever." It does not matter what one is called by ordinary mortals, even with our seeming piousness and devotion--so long as we have not seen the Divine Light and experienced the marifatullah vision, from God's perspective we are spiritually blind. Religious titles of "Father," "Rabbi," "Imam" "Ustadz" or "Ulama" means little from the divine perspective--if one is blind to the Light, one remains in the abyss of darkness. To be ignorant of one's ignorance is a deeper state of hell than the awareness of one's blindness. Hell is self-created--no merciful, all-loving, all-compassionate divine being would ever conceive of such an idea of an everlasting hell as a place of punishment. Frail mortals do project their limitations and failings upon the Creator and even spiritual beings that do not possess them.

The Quran has this to say about spiritual blindness :

"While anyone who has been blind in this [life] will remain blind in the Hereafter, and go even further astray." (Quran Al-Israa'--The Night Journey 17:22)

Fundamentalist might protest as to our statement above, but the fact remains that there are devotees of religions who are not knowers of the Word but merely followers of human (exoteric) interpretations of the Word.

There are various levels of faith, however. Basically there is the blind faith of the simple mind, and the faith built upon strong foundations of direct perception, experience and knowledge. In Islam there are four levels of faith: "ilmu yakin," "ainul yakin," "hakikul yakin," and "isbatul yakin."

So do we need to know God?

Where have we come from, where are we going, who are we? What is the purpose of existence?

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