

The Universe and Traveling

Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim [In the Name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy, The Source of Mercy]. All praise belongs to Allah. He owns everything. All power belongs to Him and not to us. May His peace and blessings be on His Prophet Muhammad and his family and on all the other prophets and their families.

Shaykh Taner's *Sohbet*:

What is the purpose of the Universe?

Allah wants to tell you a lot of things, and [He] tells you a lot of things. But the important thing is to hear them and to observe them, make them part of you, and then act with them.

This is a 500 dollar trick question: What is the purpose of the universe? Let me ask you this: what is the purpose of a tree, say an apple tree, or peach, or olive tree? To yield its fruit. So I am asking you again, what is the purpose of the universe? To produce its fruit, which is you!

Now I didn't ask, "Why did Allah create the universe?" I said, "What is the purpose of the universe?" The universe is like a tree and you are the fruit and its purpose is to produce this fruit. So, what about the fruit? The fruit contains the tree. The fruit—until it became the fruit—didn't know anything about the tree. But as soon as it became the fruit, and looks into itself, it finds that the tree is there. So the tree is in the fruit, and the fruit is in the tree. Can you dig this? So the human being contains the universe.

Now, if the fruit wants to learn and wants to know what the tree is, where can it go to find this information? To itself. To its essence. Where is this essence? The seed, where all the information is contained and protected. So the fruit does not have to go too far to find what it is looking for. It is within itself. The information you are looking for is within you. So, what is the next step? The fruit gets to know the tree. And then he/she/it is very happy that there is a tree. And the fruit loves the tree. And the tree, seeing that it produced the fruit, also loves the fruit, because it contains itself therein. '*aashiq* and *ma'shuq*, loved and beloved.

Grasshoppers

There was a very famous TV series called "Kung Fu" starring David Carradine. Kung Fu was filled with Sufi stories, and that's why I loved it a lot. David Carradine is a novice monk who has joined the Shaolin Monastery where the martial art of Kung Fu was taught. David's master is blind. In one of the first scenes, the novice and his master are outside in a field, and his master says, "Be careful, there is a grasshopper next to you. Don't step on it." The novice is amazed that this blind man can know or see that the grasshopper is there, and he asks him, "Master, although you are blind, how do you see all this?" What does the master answer? He says, "Although you see, how is it that you do not?" So from then on, the master called his student "grasshopper." So when I call you "grasshopper," I am referring to that story of the Master and the novice. All of you are like that novice called "grasshopper." You have eyes, but you do not see. Allah says in the Qur'an, "They have eyes, but they do not see. They have brains, but they do not have sense. Don't you have any sense?"

Traveling with Allah

This is from Allah. What is not from Allah? Nothing. Even nothing is from Allah. I guess you want me to talk about our recent travel with my *murids* [Sufi students]. *Alhamdulillah*, Allah was the Host, we were the guests. And Allah gave us a good time. He fed us with a different variety of foods, and He showed us different places, and what He did and how He lived with other

people, before time, even in our time. So in Turkey we were blessed going here and going there. We saw how Allah is diverse in providing for us. He is an Ample Provider. As we found when we traveled to Tarsus, you have things that you don't have anywhere else. You go to Istanbul and find that, you have things that you don't have anywhere else. So He shared His blessings that He has given in that area with us.

That's what happens when you travel. Allah shows you what other blessings He can do. When you go to Mauritius, there are different blessings. Like fried everything. Fried and spiced. In Cape Town, you do not taste meat; you only taste masala. They marinate the meat so you wouldn't even taste the meat— might as well just eat the spice, why eat meat? In Mauritius, they were amazed that I can cook things with only salt and pepper and it tastes very good.

So Allah gives you all of this, but you need to appreciate all that He gives. Try to enjoy it as close to its original form as you can. Anyway, Allah gives different places different blessings. This is how you know that Allah is Able to do all things and He is the Nourisher; He is *Ya Razzaq*.

Traveling is *fardz*, obligatory, so you can get to know Allah everywhere. When you travel, Allah is the Host and you are the guest. When you are the guest, act properly. That's the thing. The thing He doesn't like most is lies: you deny that there is God, and you attribute powers to other people. And then there is arrogance. Allah doesn't like arrogance. He likes humility. Human beings need to have humility and love and kindness and observation of Allah's contentment.

Rida and Muttaqi

Whatever you do in your deeds, ask yourself, "If I do this, will Allah be happy? Will Allah be content?" Contentment is called *rida*. This process of asking if Allah will be happy with a deed is called *ittiqa*. If you do this, then you will be among the group that Allah praises a lot: *muttaqi*. (One of the things in Sufism is you have to learn Sufi terminology. I want to raise my kids [students] right, so you have to learn these Sufi terminologies. You learn them by using them through repetition.)

So for me, one of the most important virtues is consideration, being considerate. What is being considerate? The first person you need to make sure that you are not hurting or offending is your Creator. And then from there, you go to the created; what He created. Consideration means you watch out for the well-being of others before you do anything, which means they come first. A Sufi has to be this. First you have to be considerate. You have to think: Am I putting a load on people or am I taking a load off of people? Am I abusing other people of their rights? Are the other people, other creations, happy in my presence? Are they safe from me and my actions? I would like you to be this person. Then Allah will love you more.

Shaykha Muzeyyen Anne's *Sohbet*:

Added blessings of travel

We think we did something and you're like, "Wow, I did such a good thing." And then later on, you find out you didn't do it. Allah says in the Qur'an, "When you did something good, it is from Allah." What does this mean? Some of you during the trip to Turkey actually realized this. In our three-week trip, people came to me and said, "As I keep traveling and learning more and more, I realize that our Pirs Hz Abdul Qadir Geylani and Hz Ahmed Rifai were with me even when I was a child. I just didn't know the signs. I didn't know that was what it was." So, what a blessing!

Hz Abdul Qadir Geylani said the blessing was given to him and all his followers. He has the list until the Judgment Day. What does this mean? This means our Pirs know us. What a big blessing Allah has blessed us with. But the buck stops with you. So when the time comes, we have to take that step into that blessing. As *Silat* [a martial art] people say, “Will you take a step to Allah?” And, *alhamdulillah*, we are all trying to take that step to Allah, or have taken that step and are trying to make it firmer.

There you go. Gratefulness; thankfulness to Allah; being able to recognize this blessing. People would travel for years in old times, and they traveled by foot to get this blessing.

— Excerpts from Saturday *Sohbet*, October 10, 2012

Shaykh’s Potatoes

As told by Shaykha Muzeeyen Anne

Yesterday we were telling Jessica, our daughter-in-law that, when Shaykh first started traveling to South Africa, he had to go by himself because, first of all, they could only send him one ticket, and second, the kids were little and I could not travel with him. This was a long trip. It took 36 hours to get there. Shaykha Sheila and I were worried because he was going to go to a place he had never been to and to people he had never seen. At the same time, people from Durban were writing and calling us asking, “What do we do? How do you take care of a shaykh? We have never had a shaykh stay with us. We are so thrilled we are going to see him but how do we take care of him?” So Shaykha Sheila and I sat down and wrote a manual and in it wrote the things Shaykh likes to eat: potatoes, bread, and so on. We didn’t write down fried things at the time because we didn’t realize how much our Durban folks were frying things. We wrote that he has to exercise every day and regular foot massages really help his health a lot. What ended up happening is that people took turns cooking. Every other day Shaykh was eating potatoes. Wherever he went and whoever cooked for him, they said, “Okay, look at the manual, what does Shaykh like? He likes potatoes.” So they cooked him potatoes. I would talk to your Shaykh on the phone and ask, “How are you doing?” After a few calls, he said, “Everything is fine, but I don’t think they have too much food. All they keep cooking are potatoes!” Shaykha Sheila and I then realized the reason he is eating potatoes all the time is because in the manual it says Shaykh likes potatoes. We then changed the manual to include some of his other favorite foods.

They say in Turkish, even if it’s baklava, you cannot eat the same thing every day. That was the only time in his life he had too many potatoes, but may Allah be happy with all those people who were there in the beginning of the *tariqa*. They took very good care of him and he got back without being sick. But he didn’t want to eat potatoes for a while.

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Call of the Divine

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Editorial Staff: Shaykha Muzeeyen Ansari, Shaykha Sheila Khadija Foraker,

Carol Janan Taylor

Transcription: Kamila Binte Hussien