

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Notes on the Sufi Tradition

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Notes on the Sufi Tradition

(with special regard to the Masnevi of Hazrat Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Khwaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jillani, Shah Wali Ullah and the writings of other prominent Sufis.)

In all cases the comments on the Masnevi are based on the well known English translation made over 80 years ago by R. A. Nicholson.

Hidden Ways	4
Mysticism and Madness	8
Miracles	14
Mevlana Rumi's defence of the use of music in spirituality	15
The Killer Mosque	18
Poem by Mevlana Rumi (Isn't afraid)	19
Original Farsi of the poem	22
Anxieties in Life	23
Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (retold)	25

Hidden Ways (The Spiritual life and the concept of 'Brainwashing')

The being of man is a jungle ... (Masnevi)

Mevlana Rumi tells us there are hidden ways between heart and heart. The disciple, who is earnestly seeking the way to God, learns of this at first by the transfer of inner understanding from the Guide (Sheykh) to him or herself. The thoughts appear to come from the disciple but they are not his or her previous thoughts. Frequently there is a struggle between the new thoughts and the old. The greatest contribution the disciple can make is to submit to and accept the new thoughts. This may be a fast process or a slow one. It may be linked to Tauba or repentance.

Firstly, one of the thoughts that is used by the disciple's mind, or rather by their lower nature, as a way of avoiding the beneficial effect of the Sheykh, is that he or she thinks 'this is brainwashing'. Brainwashing however has several qualities that are very different. The most important of which is that brainwashing uses external means to achieve its effect. The manipulation of reward and punishment by someone in order to obtain the desired behaviour from another. This process is akin to that used in clinical psychology deliberately by the manipulation reinforcements. It is justified by regarding the technique as in the individual's own interest or for society's benefit.

The transformation of thought patterns that comes from the Sheykh however is primarily an internal affair and does not even require physical proximity. In fact there can be a transfer of thought even when there is no physical meeting. It does not concentrate on behaviour as much as motivation and it does not actually change the person but rather moves them towards realising their own

potential. The mystic is not interested, on an individual level, to have an effect on those who do not have the potential for spiritual growth.

Secondly, brainwashing has an objective of some kind that is often political or motivated by some external aim. The thoughts from the Sheykh to the disciple are concerned with his or her spiritual growth and nothing else. The Sheykh is not benefitted by transforming the disciple except in the sense that he is serving the Divinity. The real Sheykh does not have political motivation in any sense except to aid in the moral development of mankind.

Thirdly, brainwashing is more or less the default situation for everyone. We are bombarded through adverts, media etc with information designed achieve certain effects that are usually profitable to the brainwasher. If this were not successful it would not be so heavily funded by commercial organisations. In fact the change of thoughts resulting from the heart effect of the Sheykh are concerned with freeing the disciple from the negative effects of such brainwashing. Mevlana says “burst thy chains my son and be free”.

When this has all been said, however, there are powerful minds and hearts that can change people they have contact with, for their own purposes, especially can they effect those with naturally weaker hearts. Some politicians are like this, though they may feel they are doing the right thing and often in their own mind are entirely justified. Usually political power is involved. People like Hitler and Napoleon probably come under this heading but Allah knows best. The holy Qur’an speaks of brainwashing, by a slightly different name, as one of the criticisms of the holy Prophet made

by unbelievers. The book reassures the holy Prophet frequently that this is not the case. In the early days of the holy Prophet on this earth, Kadijah, the Holy Prophets first wife, would give him supportive counselling. In some sense much of the holy book is aimed at reassurance that the Prophet is truly divinely inspired.

To distinguish between the true guide and persons with strong hearts that can motivate people to serve their own ends there is no foolproof external formula. To seek sincerely within for truth is the only way. If your seeking is sincere then the Divinity will guide you. If instead you find yourself with a fraud or something like it then it is an indication your sincerity was shallow.

Weak minded people may be induced by brainwashing to commit serious acts like murder and terrorism. These are nothing to do with real religion. May Allah show such persons a better way.

For the real seeker there may come a point when they no longer have to rely on any arguments and they themselves see and hear the real nature of things. One session spent visiting the dimension known as Yaqin (certainty) by the murid is more than enough to obliterate illusions of brainwashing and to free the murid from the conventional brainwashing of his or her social environment.

Even before this it becomes possible for the murid to observe inwardly how the Sheykh influences him or her. The image I use to explain it is that of an adviser who visits the ruler of a kingdom and standing behind the throne makes suggestions as the best way to manage the ecology of the monarch's own kingdom. None of this is external unless the murid particularly requires additional external advice. None of it benefits the Sheykh outwardly.

The passing of the leadership of a Sufi Order to a disciple in a sense goes beyond just being a heart connection. It perhaps is really a connection between soul and soul, and for this reason not much can usefully said about it but it is observable by the developed mind and heart.

Even amongst the Qwaali musicians in India and Pakistan there is a mystical passing of inspiration to a follower when the master dies.

Expressed briefly, the washing of the brain (actually the manipulation of the intellect) by persons or by organisations, amounts at best to colouring it and at worst to muddying it, whereas the true Sheykh who is ordained by God purifies it with no ulterior motive other than to serve God and benefit the recipient.

Religious or spiritual texts in themselves are more than capable of being interpreted so as to serve bad ends as well as good. Mevlana Rumi writes "... He (God) allows many to be guided thereby and many He allows to be misled thereby." The negative brainwashing that results in murder, terrorism and so on, arises from a mixture of ignorance, superstition and loss of sanity that is exploited by those with an interest in personal political power or even in imposing their own ideas on others.

Mysticism and Madness

Mevlana writes about madness, (insanity), in many places. Here is an example;.

How friends came to the madhouse for Dhu 'l-Nún—may God sanctify his honoured spirit!

It so happened to Dhu 'l-Nún the Egyptian that a new agitation and madness was born within him.

His agitation became so great that salt (bitterness) from it was reaching (all) hearts up to above the sky.

Beware, O (thou of) salty soil, do not put thy agitation beside (in comparison with) the agitation of the holy lords (saints).

The people could not endure his madness: his fire was carrying off their beards.

When (that) fire fell on the beards of the vulgar, they bound him and put him in a prison.

The above refers to a very special case but frequently people who pass through the more florid forms of insanity find justification for it in reference to aspects of mysticism. There can be no doubt that those who dabble in the occult or various forms of 'esoteric' practices without real and experienced guidance put themselves at risk of insanity of one kind or another. Even those who are guided need to be aware that the risks are substantial. The fact is that the 'madness' of the saint was quite unlike ordinary insanity.

From the spiritual perspective what we call ‘ordinary’ insanity arises from incomplete knowledge and understanding of the complex nature of the Real. A flow of thoughts or feelings or ideas reach the individual’s ordinary intellect. It tries in vain to fit this new knowledge, or rather the experiences the person undergoes, into its own pre-existing categories. This flow may have been triggered by reading or from other media or from speculation or unguided meditation or from various asceticisms or even from physical illness or pain, lack of sleep or food, or some other disturbance of the heart mind and body. The mind and heart in particular are delicate mechanisms. When they become disturbed, from whatever cause, they can find themselves in a state which so alters the social behaviour of the individual that it gets labelled as insanity. When this is more moderate it often remains at the level of bizarre behaviour or extreme idiosyncratic behaviour. When it becomes very severe it may come into conflict with the law of the land or so impinge on social norms that it requires external control such as admission to a psychiatric hospital or even prison.

The experiences undergone by the insane person are not unreal or imaginary. For example, ‘hearing voices’ inwardly has been shown experimentally by scientists to be as real as hearing external voices through the ears. The same nervous pathways are measurably stimulated in both cases. These experiences are known to the developed or trained mystic but the conventional thought processes of the insane person are unable to fit the experiences into known categories. Their thinking is overwhelmed and they are unable to create an alternative to conventional thought or feeling,

that will accommodate the new experiences. One must feel some sympathy for the psychiatrist who only knows these states of mind theoretically but is charged with finding a cure.

One explanation of some experiences is that they result from ego boundaries having become 'porous'. Frequently mystical writings talk a lot about eliminating the ego. Essentially in our view the ego is an invisible wall surrounding us and separating our individual consciousness from the external world of events and from the consciousness of the various hidden spiritual levels. Pulling down the ego wall unites us inwardly with the entire psychic cosmos as reflected in the mirror of our soul. This is called Fana by mystics and is often encountered in Sufi literature. If, however, the wall is only partly pulled down then an individual is left with the conclusion that external events in the universe are affecting them personally inside. The individual becomes terrified of negative events such as a disaster at sea for example. They feel it is about them personally. Similarly TV or radio programmes may be seen by the person as related directly to them and their situation. Books or magazines may be understood to be explicitly about them. The individual becomes aware of various signs of divine origin but is unable to fit them properly into their understanding. Colours become more vibrant but then sometimes lose their vibrancy. Some things have an inexplicable 'presence'. The person's voice alters as if someone else is controlling it. Actions also may seem to be controlled by something other than oneself. The thoughts or feelings of others become accessible but on an ad hoc basis. Voices from the unseen may be critical or supportive at various times. For some poor souls ugly voices may direct them to asocial acts or to violence or even suicide. The range of experiences is vast and the result is frequently very strange behaviour when viewed from outside by someone unfamiliar with these things.

Now all of these examples are well known to the trained mystic as having some significance but they are able to put them into the context of their own knowledge of the unseen and they do not affect their social behaviour or trigger panic and fear. This state can only be reached by loving guidance and passing through many and varied states of mind. Reading about it is not sufficient. The fully developed mystic does not usually exhibit bizarre asocial behaviours but he or she is tolerant of those who are struggling to integrate unusual experiences into their psyche.

There are two routes out of insanity. One is to retreat and seek to restore conventional thought and to eliminate the confusing experiences. This is the most common route and the one advised for most persons. It requires one to basically repudiate the reality of the experiences. Often it takes time, medication and various forms of therapy to do it.

The other route is to seek the necessary knowledge to be able to manage behaviours and reach to a deeper understanding of the experiences - in short to become a mystical adept who is properly trained. This option is rarely taken and would certainly not be recommended by conventional medical advice.

There are some thought patterns which in our view are unhelpful to the person struggling with insanity. The idea that the 'whole world is mad and therefor only the insane know real sanity' is one such. It seeks to justify insanity and thus may be seized on by the individual as something that makes their insanity something good. The thought patterns of people in general may be unwise or even foolish or downright bad or wrong but they are not, because of this, actually insane. To speak of people in general as insane in this way

is to use the word in a different way. For example one might say a person who loves to have power in this world is insane because that persons power will pass away, but this is using the word to say how bad the persons attitude is, and not really to say they lack sanity in any clinical sense.

There is a general rule in mysticism which is that wherever there is duality one should seek the path between the two extremes. Between sanity and insanity the route is not justification of insanity nor the acceptance of conventional thought patterns as the sine qua non. The path followed by the mystic is between these and arises from his deeper knowledge of the human condition.

There are of course many patterns of behaviour or mood that have specific qualities that differentiate them from the general form of florid psychosis discussed above. In our experience they are generally normal traits of personality taken to extremes. Obsessive compulsive behaviour and certain kinds of depression being just two examples. They have underlying spiritual value if properly understood. Some kinds of depression for example is spoken of in mystic circles as separation from the Divine beloved. Obsessive Compulsive behaviour is rooted in the deep desire for purity. Unless that person is actually on the spiritual path, however, these tendencies have to be treated as illness.

‘Flashbacks’ are common in post traumatic stress disorders. In this a previously experienced event floods back into the mind. This event is often connected with trauma or with some other very negative event. It is common in the military. For the mystic they are not disturbing and in fact are rather valued, but for most people the need is to regard them as something to be overcome.

The solution in mystical terms is in Tauba, which if accepted by God shows even the most negative experiences as basically good. Most persons, however, are unable to make such a step and so the medical solution is to manage the situation.

There are two conditions which are often classified as a form of insanity. One is sociopathy and the other is called psychopathy. In our view these are terrible conditions of the soul but according to mystics like Shah Saheb, they are not remediable except by Allah. Our advice is to avoid such people who will seek out any weakness you have and exploit it for their own ends. The only advantage they offer is their skill in finding your weakness. Once they have unintentionally pointed your weakness out to you, do your best to avoid such persons who have in effect accepted evil and given up any struggle against it. They are pitiable but you cannot help them. You can however pay attention to remedying your own weakness that may have emerged during any encounter. I recently watched a movie based on real life events which recounts the disastrous effect such persons can have on the life of others. It was called Rogue Agent and is a Netflix film.

As for the behaviour of the developed Sufi who may indeed have passed through many stages and states, Shah Wali Ullah puts it this way:

As soon as pure sobriety, unalloyed establishment and absolute permanency comes into being then all these visions disappear and there remains neither ecstasy nor the ravings of the ecstatic. The Sufi is then indistinguishable from any normal person.

This is a vast topic, as Mevlana Rumi might say, and there is no end to it.

Miracles

Mevlana tells us that: ‘Yes, He has created some qualities from which it is impossible to withdraw oneself and He has also created qualities which are only accidental, so that a hated person becomes acceptable. If you tell a stone to become gold it is futile but if you bid copper to become gold the way of transmutation exists.

Even such miraculous events as prophet Moses crossing the sea with the Israelites he points out are within the realm of the possible. The miracle lies within the realm of high improbability rather than impossibility. The swallowing and regurgitation of a living man by a whale, as in the story of Prophet Yunus, also happened to a person in relatively recent history, as a recorded event.

In the case of the destruction of cities such as Sodom and Gomorrah and in the case of the Flood of Prophet Nuh (Noah) and similar events spoken of in the holy Quran and in the Bible, there are actual climatic events that are the apparent cause even though the circumstances were undoubtedly miraculous.

We should also note a theme that is partly hidden by the references to things like stones not being able to become gold. The human heart that is not purified is often referred to by Sufis as being hard like a stone. The implication of the entire verse is that there are souls capable of spiritual development and there are those that do not have this capacity. The mystic’s business after he has reached the level of sufficient knowledge by Allah’s grace is to guide those who have the potential to reach a higher state. The rest he leaves alone. Similarly the holy Prophet Muhammed laid down Shariat or holy law by changing many practices current at the time. He also left many practices unchanged.

Mevlana Rumi's defence of the use of music in spirituality

In book four of the Masnevi Mevlana gives a brief but important defence of the use of music for spiritual purposes. Many orthodox Muslims are highly critical of the use of music. Even some Sufi orders oppose its use. Shah Wali Ullah of the Naqshbandi order of Sufis says that music has the power to effect animals and what can affect animals should not also be used for spiritual purposes. However it appears from the text of the Sacred Knowledge that he is referring to the ordinary use of music which indeed causes the body to move in rhythm and thus promotes animal like passions as can be seen in modern rock concerts. The tension between the body's natural reaction to music and spiritual discipline is arguably a very important element in the spiritual effect of turning.

Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti, Mevlana Rumi and many others extoll the use of music. A famous mystic named Mamshad Dinwari (d. 912) dreamed of asking the holy Prophet if he accepted music used for spiritual purposes and it is said that he accepted it providing it began and ended with recital of the holy Qur'an. In any case all agree that music used for worldly purposes was not acceptable. Generally speaking the poems set to music by the Qwaali in Ajmer and elsewhere in the sub continent are either praise of Allah or his holy Prophet or a companion or a well known saint. There are also love songs but with a spiritual content implied. Majnun and Layla being very popular.

The conditions for proper use of music were laid down and followed with various degrees of strictness. Today in Ajmer music (Qwaali) is used but preceded and followed by Qur'an recitals.

The area used for performance should be clean and well lit and the participants should be like minded or followers of the same Sheykh according to old texts and actual experience.

In Konya music is used for formal occasions when there is group whirling and musicians are used for the purpose. The music follows strict rules and there is recitation of the holy Qur'an at the start and end. The audience however in some cases buy tickets and it is regarded by the government as entertainment.

Mevlana points out that whilst old philosophers think that music originates from the turning of the planets, the true believers say that it is an echo of paradise. A memory of when we were united with Adam. Water and earth in our clay have caused us to forget this but music is a reminder of that time. Some say it is a reminder of Alast where the souls dwelt outside of time.

Mevlana draws an interesting analogy basically saying that the liquid content of man may mostly be impure urine but nevertheless despite its impurity it retains the ability to put out a fire. Similarly despite the impurities of music it retains the capacity to allay the fire of grief. Therefore he says Sama is the food of lovers.

He also specifically says that the fire of love is made keen by melodies.

The translation equates Sama with music (albeit in brackets) however they are not synonymous despite the tendency of people to equate the two. Nevertheless music is an established route to Sama albeit one can reach Sama without music by just listening in the right way to sounds such as the hammering of the goldsmith as Mevlana did.

Mevlana goes on to tell the story of a youth who drops walnuts into a river only so he could hear the sound of them hitting the water and watch the bubbles rising. That sweet sound filled him with joy. He had no intention of collecting the walnuts. The bubbles rising constitute the visual part of Sema, in which the veil over mundane sight is removed.

From this we take it that the listening to music in the right way is the route to Sama and is not for worldly gain but for inner joy to be found therein.

The brief defence of music being used for spiritual purposes is made by Mevlana without the heaviness of philosophical debate.

The Killer Mosque

(Book 3 of the Masnevi)

This is a story interrupted numerous times by various other discourses related to the underlying theme of spiritual courage. In the story a man arrives in a city where there is a mosque which is never used at night because people who stay there die. He nevertheless insists on staying there at night. A terrifying sound comes but he does not attempt to run away. Then this passes and a flood of treasure is revealed.

This story and many of the intervening stories and mystical ideas explored, really focus on a certain kind of spiritual courage. There is discrimination between those who have the capacity for this kind of courage and those who do not. Those who do not have this kind of courage are wisely turned away from the mosque but for those few who do have that courage there are great spiritual rewards. Mevlana is quite clear in saying that there are great dangers in a person only imagining they have that courage. He talks about the artificial courage of the soldier who is brave up until he actually faces the reality of fighting.

Passing from Tariqat to the experience of Haqiqat also requires a spiritual kind of courage as spoken of in this wonderful poem translated by Nur Jamil from Farsi.

Poem by Mevlana Rumi

Isn't Afraid

*The one that for his life is not afraid,
Of killing both good and bad is not afraid.*

*One who saw the beauty of Joseph,
Of the jealous or of jealousy is not afraid.*

*One who has the desire for the King,
Of an uncountable army is not afraid.*

*One who is seeking for converse,
Of the hoof and kick is not afraid.*

*One who sees the felicity of Alast,
Of the destiny of the Last Day is not afraid,*

*There must be one with a heart like the mount of Ahud,
So that, except of that Oneness, he is not afraid.*

*The bird who became free of the snare of self,
Wheresoever it may fly it is not afraid.*

*Treasure is called treasure wherever it may be,
The one killed by the oneness of the grave is not afraid.*

*The one whose essence is of water,
Of the sinking boat that one is not afraid.*

*One who has a heavenly nature,
Of going to hell he is not afraid.*

*The one who is helped from inside,
Of this unhelpful world is not afraid.*

*It is foolishness and not courage,
If the ignorant one of the wise one is not afraid.*

*The abject one does not have an intellect
When he abandons your love and is not afraid.*

*It is a curse when the fool,
Hurts the hearts of kings and is not afraid.*

*The one who tears their own veil,
Reveals the secret of you and me yet is not afraid.*

*Why does one who does not have an antidote
drink the world's poison and yet is not afraid.*

*In the presence of a guard that one,
Casts a look at the beautiful one yet is not afraid.*

*Be wary, go wholeheartedly to that way,
Where your heart of being observed is not afraid.*

*The gold seller makes a trap for a thief,
The thief comes and takes the gold and is not afraid.*

*There wolves are shepherds,
There a man of one hundred men is not afraid.*

*There there is not I nor you nor he or she,
Of getting a loan from oneself one is not afraid.*

*You never hurt your own heart,
Of ones self one is not afraid.*

*The garden of spring and the lily garden,
Of the delicate cypress is not afraid.*

*When the flower blooms and sees itself,
Of acceptance or denial it is not afraid.*

*Stop, although until the Judgement day,
This sea provides pearls and is not afraid.*

Original Farsi of the poem:

از کشتن نیک و بد نترسد
از حاسد و از حسد نترسد
از لشکر بی‌عدد نترسد
از جفته و از لگد نترسد
از عاقبت ابد نترسد
تا او ز جز احد نترسد
هر جای که برپرد نترسد
کشته احد از احد نترسد
گر غرقه شود عمد نترسد
بر دوزخ برزند نترسد
زین عالم بی‌مدد نترسد
گر جاهل از خرد نترسد
کز عشق تو پا کشد نترسد
دل‌های شهان خلد نترسد
پرده من و تو درد نترسد
زهر دنیا خورد نترسد
در شاهد بنگرد نترسد
کان جادلت از رصد نترسد
از کیسه درم برد نترسد
آن جا مردی ز صد نترسد
چون وام ز خود ستد نترسد
هرگز ذقنت ز خد نترسد
وز سرو لطیف قد نترسد
زان پس ز قبول و رد نترسد
این بحر گهر دهد نترسد

آن کس که ز جان خود نترسد
وان کس که بدید حسن یوسف
آن کس که هوای شاه دارد
آخر حیوان ز ذوق صحبت
آن کس که سعادت ازل دید
چون کوه احد دلی بیاید
مرغی که ز دام نفس خود رست
هر جای که هست گنج گنجست
هر جانوری کز اصل آبست
هر تن که سرشته بهشتست
وان را که مدد از اندرونست
از ابله‌یست نی شجاعت
خود سر نبست آن خسی را
این مایه لعنتست کابله
هم پرده خویش می‌درد کو
پازهر چو نیستش چرا او
در حضرت آن چنان رقیبی
زنهار به سر برو بدان ره
صراف کمین درست و آن دزد
آن جا گرگان همه شبانند
آن جا من و تو و او نباشد
هرگز دل تو ز تو نرنجد
گلشن ز بهار و باغ سوسن
چون گل بشکفت و روی خود دید
بس کن هر چند تا قیامت

Anxieties in Life

Mevlana speaks of the person who has many anxieties and contrasts him with the person who has one anxiety. According to Mevlana, the former, Allah says, He will destroy 'in whatever valley he is'. The latter He will reward far beyond expectation.

This is a clue to dealing with the myriad anxieties that beset man. People in every country and in all periods of history have no doubt had this difficulty, but in modern times this has become a major problem, costing a fortune in lost work hours and more importantly contributing to the unhappiness of so many - in fact of most. Anxiety can even be physical in its effect. Physical functions stop working properly for the person suffering severe anxiety.

The 'valleys' referred to in the passage above means, I think, the different modalities of life, like jobs, parenting, education, transport, competition, marriage, religion and so on. Anxiety is not spoken of as something that should be overcome but as something that should be reserved for one purpose only.

In religion the one anxiety, which justifies the existence of anxiety itself, concerns how our soul will fare in the eternity after this life has passed. If this is our overriding concern it seems that the Divinity will be pleased. Most people, however, are anxious for many things that are the concern of this present world. So much so that anxiety itself seems to arise from having many worries in this life. Often competing worries. It's clear from the text however that the problem arises from having so many areas of concern not from the concern itself. In a sense it is idolatry in fact. Much of the problem of idolatry lies, in having many gods, whereas true religion is concerned to worship One God.

Anxiety for the one really important thing, is something extremely good. In religion it is anxiety about our future life beyond the cares of this world. For the mystic it is a kind of love. One should be anxious about being faithful to the beloved. Thus the root of anxiety is extremely positive, it is merely a matter of focusing on what really matters. There are various stories in the literature of Sufism. One is about a dervish who was blind. Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti tells how he asked the dervish about his blindness and was told that it resulted from his allowing his attention for a moment to fall on something worldly. He immediately heard a voice say that he called himself a lover of God but his attention for a moment went elsewhere and thus he was unfaithful. Hearing this the dervish at once prayed that the sight which had betrayed him should be taken away. There and then he lost his sight.

Focusing on many things of transient importance at the same time brings the negative effects we associate with anxiety. As a matter of fact focusing on even two or three things is negative. Only when we are single minded does anxiety becomes a blessing.

One issue is that since God is unknowable, except to Himself, on what then should our anxiety or worship be focussed? If we take anxiety in the best sense as associated with attention on the One God and therefore as worship, the holy Qur'an answers the question with a rhetorical question. It asks 'Is not worship for God alone?' It then points out that some people follow a particular person in order to reach God. It does not condemn this but says that the issue is in sincerity. I take this to mean that even if the focus of our anxiety is placed in one person then that fidelity

amounts to a proper way of worship if that one has melted away in the reality of the Divinity. In the holy Qur'an we are told to worship Allah but also to obey His prophet.

In the story of Prophet Solomon, Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, worshipped the sun but was shown by the Prophet that it was the Creator of the sun who alone was worthy of worship.

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (retold)

*Solomon, to Bilqis, gave the command, 'Come to me!'
Now a Queen, such as she, does not obey so easily.*

*The threats that he made to invade her domain,
Made her prevaricate, and in Saba to remain.*

*She was a woman of renowned feminine allure,
But he was a man who by Allah was made pure.*

*She offered him gifts of jewels and much gold,
In his gold and jewelled palace, this left him cold.*

*Her idolatry was limited to only worshipping the sun,
He wanted her to see, that the sun is a created one.*

*She was far from being a fool, and counsel she took,
But the call from Solomon made her in to herself look.*

*She abandoned pride and vanity, and left her realm,
Did she secretly seek a true man to take her helm?*

*Now Prophet Solomon knew intuitively what to do,
And he identified the one thing she was attached to.*

*It was a throne of most intricate intertwined filigree,
Though to Solomon a mere bauble it appeared to be.*

*By the power Allah had given to him especially,
Asaf had the throne transported miraculously.*

*Now Solomon did not rely on argument with Bilqis,
Better than debating, a demonstration surely is.*

*Instead he showed her the wealth and power,
That the One True God on him did shower.*

*Seeing her unique throne reproduced that way,
Destroyed her attachment to things made of clay.*

*Then he showed her just how deluding perception can be;
A great pool of water lay before her, she could clearly see;*

*And abandoning any last pretence of a royal dignity,
She began to wade through, lifting her skirts for all to see.*

*Then the skirts of illusion were lifted too, from her mind,
As, underfoot, marble, polished to perfection, she did find.*

*Now she could see, that in praying to the shining sun,
She had been diverted from worshipping the True One.*

*The queen in her, in Solomon's royalty melted away,
And, girl like, she begged him to show her the Way.*

*Great Solomon was a true man in every respect,
So the woman in her was overcome too, I suspect.*

*Soul and body integrated in perfect unity,
She knelt silently before him with sincere piety.*

*The ground at his feet received the impress,
As into it, her forehead and face she did press.*

*'I submit my whole being, to the One True God', said she,
'May His Prophet Solomon, in eternity, my witness be'.*

*The gates of heaven and all beyond, now opened to her,
That the submission had been accepted, one must infer.*

*Her outward and inward faculties, now all in accord,
She tied herself to the Prophet with Love's silken cord.*

*This may appear to be just an ancient tale to you,
But it has a deeper dimension for us today too.*

*The worshipper of delusion, enthroned in the heart,
Must yield to wisdom and from ignorance depart.*

*Beneath the shiny illusions find the hard marble floor,
Then maybe you will enter through heaven's open door.*

Zahuri

The problem which causes the individual to call upon Him (Allah) of course originates from Him in one sense. The benefit of the problem is precisely that the individual reaches the point of no longer relying on his or her self or their own skills, but instead turns to Him for the answer. Zahurmian used to say when you have a problem turn to the one who sent it (God) for the solution.