

'Unwan Al-Tawfiq fi Aaadab Al-Tariq /

Kind of success by Etiquettes of the

Path

This is the poem of Shaykh Abu Madyan Shu'ayb Al-Maghribi (may Allah sanctify his secret) based on a poem around it, in five-line verse by Shaykh al-Akbar Muhyi Al-Din ibn Al-Arabi Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Hatimi Al-Tai Al-Andalusi born in Murcia on the 27th of Ramadan, 638 ah

It is Commentary: Kinds of success in the etiquette of the spiritual path

By the Arif bi Allah Taj Al-Din Ahmad ibn Muhammad Abd al-Karim ibn 'Ata Allah Al-Asakandari, (may Allah sanctify his secret)

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

This is the Qasida of Sidi Sheikh Muhyiddin ibn Al-Arabi (may Allah sanctify his secret)

يا طالبا من لذات الدنيا وطرا

O you who seek the pleasure of drawing near,

إذا أردت جميع الخير فيك يرى

If you wish all good to be seen upon you,

المستشار أمين فاسمع الخبر

The one who is consulted is honest, so listen to the news.

ما لذة العيش إلا صحبة الفقرا

The pleasure of life is only in the company of the fuqara,

هم السلاطين والسادات والأمرا

They are the sultans, the masters, and the princes.

قوم رضوا بيسير من ملابسهم والقوت

People who are content with the simplest clothing and diet

لا تخطر الدنيا بهاجسهم

They never think about this world.

صدورهم خاليات من وساوسهم

Their chests are free of evil whispering.

فاصحبهم وتأدب في مجالسهم

Therefore, keep their company and have etiquette in their assemblies.

وخل حظك مهما قدموك ورا

Leave your portion behind you whenever they send you forward.

واستغنم الوقت واحضر دائما معهم

Seize time and always be with them.

واعلم بأن الرضى يختص من حضرا

Know that pleasure is specific for those who attend.

اسلك طريقهمو إن كنت تابعهم

Take their path if you follow them

واترك دواعيك واحذر أن تراجعهم

Leave your claims. Be careful, and avoid being critical

فيما يريدونه واقصد منافعهم

Of what they desire. Seek their benefit.

واستغنم الوقت واحضر دائما معهم

Seize time and always be present with them.

واعلم بأن الرضى يختص من حضرا

Know that pleasure is bestowed on those present.

كن راضيا بهمو تسمو وتصل

Be pleased with them, by them you will rise and arrive.

إن أثبتوك أقم أو إن محوك فزل

If they keep you, stay. If they ask you to vanish, disappear.

وإن أجاعوك جع أو أطعموك فكل

If they do not feed you, be hungry. If they feed you, eat.

ولازم الصمت إلا إن سئلت فقل

Cling to silence unless you are questioned. Then say

لا علم عندي وكن بالجهل مستترا

I have no knowledge, and be concealed in ignorance.

ولا لعيوب الناس منتقدا وإن يكن ظاهرا بين الوجود بدا

Do not criticize the faults of people, even if it is clear and seen.

ونظر بعين كمال لا تعب أحدا

Look with the eye of perfection. Do not find fault with anyone.

ولا تر العيب إلا فيك معتقدا عيبا بدا بينا لكنه استترا

Do not look at faults unless you see a clear fault appear in you, but it is concealed.

تتل بذلك ما ترجوه من أرب

You will attain by this what you hope for of wish.

والنفس ذلل لهم ذلا بلا ريب

Humble yourself to them, without doubt.

بل كل ذلك ذل ناب عن أدب

Rather all this is modesty in place of etiquette.

وحط رأسك واستغفر بلا سبب

Lower your head and ask forgiveness without cause.

وقم على قدم الإنصاف معتذرا

Stand on the feet of just treatment.

إن شئت منهم بريقا للطريق تشم

If you want from them clarity of the path to perceive,

عن كل ما يكرهوه من فعالك دم

Avoid all the actions that they dislike.

والنفس منك على حسن السؤال أدم

Keep yourself doing good actions constantly.

وإن بدا منك عيب فاعترف وأقم

If a fault appears from you,

وجه اعتذارك عما فيك منك جري

Your face apologies from what came from you

لهم تملق وقل داووا بصلحكمو

They have flattery and say the treatment of their rectification (of you)

بمرهم العفو منكم داء جرحكمو

By their passing is pardon from you a medicine for your wounds

أنا المسئى هبوا لي محض نصحكو

I am the one at fault; give me your genuine advice.

وقل عبيدكم أولى بصفحكمو

Say, your insignificant slave is more deserving of your pardon.

فسامحوا وخذوا بالرفق يا فقرا

Act kindly in forgiveness and adhere to gentleness, O impoverished!

لا تخش منهم إذا أذنبت همتم

Do not fear from them aspiration; if you commit a sin.

أسني و أعظم أن ترديك عشرتهم

Higher and greater is the realized relationship.

ليسوا جبابرة تؤذيك سطوتهم

They are not tyrants that their power will harm you.

هم بالفضل أولى وهو شيمتهم

Take for granted their goodness for that is their nature.

فلا تخف دركا منهم ولا ضررا

Fear neither overtaking nor harm from them.

إذا أردت بهم تسلك طريق هدى

If you wish to tread the path of guidance,

كن في الذي يطلبوه منك مجتهدا

Exert (oneself) in that which is sought from you

في نور يومك واحذر أن تقول غدا

In the light of your day, be careful not to put it off until tomorrow.

بالتفتي على الإخوان جد أبدا

Be chivalrous to the brothers in generosity always

حسا ومعنا وعض الطرف إن عثرا

Sensory and meaning. Lower the eye if someone slips.

اصدقهم الحق لا تستعمل الدنسا

Be truthful with them, do use blemish,

لأنهم أهل صدق سادة رؤسا

Because they are the people of truth, the masters and leaders.

واسمح لكل امرئ منهم إليك أسا

Pardon everyone of them who offends you.

وراقب الشيخ في أحواله فعسى

Observe the states of the Shaykh, perhaps

يرى عليك من استحسانه أثرا

A trace of his approval will be seen on you.

واسأله دعوى كي تحظى بدعوته

Ask he Shaykh to supplicate for you to acquire form it;

تتل بذلك ما ترجو ببركته

Attaining by it what you hope in blessings.

وحسن الظن واعرف حق حرمة

Keep a good opinion of him and realize his true inviolability.

وقدم الجد وانهض عند خدمته

Advance seriousness and arise to serve him.

عساه يرضى وحاذر أن تكن ضجرا

Perhaps he will be pleased, and beware lest you become irritated.

واحفظ وصيته زد من رعايته

Guard his bequeathment to increase in his protection.

ولبه إن دعا فوراً لساعته

If he calls you, answer him immediately.

وخفض صوتك بالنجوى لطاعته

Lower your voice to gentleness in obedience to him.

ففي رضاه رضى الباري و طاعته

In his pleasure is the pleasure of the Creator and obedience

يرضى عليك فكن من تركا حذرا

Makes him pleased with you, then beware of leaving it.

والزم بمن نفسه نفس مسايسة

Be with he who is diplomatic to his nafs,

في ذا الزمان فإن النفس آيسة

In time because the nafs despairs

منهم وحرقتهم في الناس باخسة

From them, for the vocation of people is nominal

اعلم بأن طريق القوم دراسة

Know that the Path of the People is learning

وحال من يدعيها اليوم كيف ترى

The state of the one who claims it today, how do you see.

يحق لي أن نأوا عني لألفتهم

My right if they distance themselves from me by their familiarity

ألازم الحزن مما بي لفرقتهم.

My sadness is constant from those who have separated from me

على انقطاعي عنهم بعد صحبتهم

Being severed from me after their company

متى أراهم وأنى لي برؤيتهم

When I see them and whenever I see them

أو تسمع الأذن مني عنهمو خبرا

Or if the ear hears from me about them news

تخلفي مانعي من أن لائهم

Separation stops me from being worthy of them.

منهم أتيت فلمني لست لائمهم

I came from them, so blame me. I am not blaming them.

يا رب هب لي صلاحا كي أنادمهم

O my Lord, grant me righteousness so that I may spend the night in discourse with
them.

من لي وأناي لمثلي أن يزاحمهم

Whom do I have, who is like me to crowd them

على موارد لم ألف بها كدرا

Upon the wells that do not contain impurity

جلت عن الوصف أن تحصي مآثرهم

Glorified from description and number are their traces

على البواطن قد دلت ظواهرهم

Their internal (states) have indicated to their external

بطاعة الله في الدنيا مفاخرهم

Their obedience to Allah is their pride in the world.

أحبهم وأداريهم وأثرهم

I love them and treat them gently and their traces

بمهجتي وخصوصا منهمو نفرا

Are my methods and a band from them is specialty

قوم على الخلق بالطاعات قد رؤسوا

A people who are made leaders of all of creation by their acts of obedience;

منهم جليسهم الأداب يقتبس

Those who sit with them acquire their courtesies.

ومن تخلف عنهم حظه التعس

He who absents himself from their company, his portion is misery.

القوم كرام السجايا حيثما جلسوا

A people of noble qualities wherever they sit,

يبقي المكان على آثارهم عطرا

A fragrance remains in the place after them.

فهم بهم لا تفارقهم تزد شغفا

Try to be with them, do not separate from them, and increase in love.

وإن تخلفت عنهم فانتحب أسفا

If you absent yourself from them, cry with regret and sorrow.

عصابة بهم يكسى الفتى شرفا

A group with whom a young man gains honor from being with them.

يهدي التصوف من أخلاقهم طرقا

TaṢawwuf is guided by their character in the Paths.

حسن التألف منهم راقني نظرا

Excellent harmony is theirs that delights my eye.

جررت ذيل افتخاري في الهوى بهم

I pulled the tail of my robe being proud of my love for them

لما رضوني عبدا في الهوى لهم

When they accepted me as a small slave in their love.

حقهم في هواهم لست أنسهم

Their right is in their love, I am not their equal.

هم أهل ودي وأحابي الذين هم

They are the people of my love and my lovers who are among

ممن يجر ذيول العز مفتخرا

Those who trail the coat-tails of might in magnificence.

قكعت في النظم قلبي في الهوى قطعا

I cut my heart into pieces, making poetry about their love.

وقد توسلت للمولى بهم طمعا

I asked Allah earnestly through them,

أن يغفر الله لي والمسلمين معا

Hoping that Allah would forgive me and all the Muslims together.

لا زال شملي بهم في الله مجتمعا

O everyone who has been in this circle with us, I ask Allah through them to erase our

sins.

وذنبنا فيه مغفورا ومغتفرا

Our sins be forgiven and pardoned in Him.

يا كل من ضمه النادي بمجلسنا

O all who are included in the call of those us sit with us

ادع الإله بهم يمحو الذنوب لنا

The divine call of their wipes all our sins away

وادعوا لمن خمس الأصل الذي حسنا

Call to those five parted principles that are excellent

ثم الصلاة على المختار سيدنا

Then blessings be upon the Chosen, Sayyiduna

محمد خير من أوفي ومن نذرا

Muhammad, the best of those who fulfilled and who vowed.

Commentary begins

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most

Compassionate

The Shaykh, the Realized in Allah (ārif bi Allah), the Exemplar, the Recognized, the Crown of the Realized, the Tongue of the Theologians (Mutakallimīn), the Imam of His Time, the Unique of His Era, Taj al-Dīn Abu al-Faḍl Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karīm ibn Aṭā Allah al-Sakandarī, may Allah be pleased with him, and give us benefit through him, amīn, said the following:

"All praise belongs to Allah who is alone in creating and organizing, the Unique (al-Wāḥid) in judgment and decree. He is the King (al-Malik) who has no minister in his kingdom, the Owner (al-Mālik) from whose dominion nothing is excluded large or small, the Sanctified

(al-Mutaqaddis) in the perfection of His attributes from resemblance and similarity, in the perfection of His essence far above likeness and representation, and the Omniscient (al-Alīm) from whom nothing in consciousness can be hidden.

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

"Does he not know who created? And He is the Knower of the subtleties, the Aware." (Qur'an: Surah al-Mulk 68, ayah 14). He is the Knowing (al-'Ālim) whose knowledge surrounds the beginning and the end of matters, the All-Hearing (al-Samī) who in His hearing distinguishes between the apparent and the hidden sounds (i.e., He hears both what man can hear and what he cannot hear), the Provider (al-Razzāq) who gifts nourishment to the creation, the Self-Existing (al-Qayyūm) who takes responsibility for caring for created beings in all conditions, the Bestower (al-Wahhāb) who grants to the souls the existence of their lives, the All-Powerful (al-Qadīr) who brings them back after their death, and the Reckoner (al-Ĥasīb) who meets out reward or punishment according to mankind's good or bad deeds on the day they return to Him. Glory be to Him who by His generosity provides for the servants even before their existence, provides them with their sustenance whether they accept or deny His existence. He supports everything in existence with His gift, maintaining the world by extending its continuance (baqāī). He is apparent by means of His wisdom on the earth

and His decree in His heaven. I witness that there is no deity but Allah alone, without partner, as a servant of Allah who surrenders to His decree and accepts His judgment. I witness that Muhammad (may Allah bestow peace and blessings upon him) is His servant and messenger, the Preferred One over all of His prophets, the Chosen by virtue of his great giving and generosity, the Opener and the Seal are titles given only to him, the Intercessor for all of mankind when the Real gathers them for judgment. May Allah bless him, his Family, and his Companions who held strongly to their loyalty to him, and grant them abundant peace.

O brother, may Allah place you among the people of His love. May He present you with the existence of His nearness, and give you a taste from the drink of the people of His love. May He secure you from being turned away from Him by a continuous presence with Him. May He connect you to Him through His servants, those upon whom He has shown special favor by conferring upon them His messages. Know that He restored their broken hearts when they came to know that the eyes could not reach Him because of the light of His self-manifestations (tajaliyyāt). He opened the gardens of nearness then blew from them upon their hearts spiritual visions of His fragrant breezes. He showed them what He had already prepared for them, so they submitted to His command. He exposed the secret of His kindness (luṭf), and thus they left argument and obstinacy,

submitting to Him and relying upon Him.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

يحشر المرء على دين خليله فلينظر أحدكم من خال

"A man will be gathered on the Day of Gathering upon the religion (Dīn) of his intimate companion. So let each one of you look to whom he is keeping intimate company." (Imam Ahmed, Abu Dawood and Imam Al-Taylasi) O Dear brother, be intimate only with someone whose state raises you and whose speech shows you the way to Allah (the Exalted). Such a person is the faqīr, stripped of otherness, drawing close to the Master. There is no sweetness except in his intimacy; there is no happiness except in his service and company. Thus, the Shaykh, the Realized, Abu Madyan (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

ما لذة العيش إلا صحبة الفقرا

The pleasure of life is only in the company of the fuqara,

هم السلاطين والسادات والأمرا

They are the sultans, the masters, and the princes.

That is, the spiritual traveler on the way to his Lord and Master has no sweetness in his life except in keeping the company of the fuqara (those poor in their need for Allah). The word fuqara is the plural of faqīr. The

faqīr has stripped himself of attachments, turned away from them. He no longer has a direction (qiblah) or an intention except Allah the Most High. He denounces everything other than Him. He is realized in the reality of 'There is no deity except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' Thus, his companionship causes you to taste the sweetness of the path (Ṭarīq). He pours into each of your hearts a most delicious nectar from the drink of the people (Sufis). He acquaints you with the path, cuts short the infliction of punishment, and removes impediments from your heart. Through his spiritual aspiration (himmah), he lifts you to the highest of ranks. Whoever is like this is the sultan over the reality, the master over the people of the path, and the prince over the people of inner sight (baṣīrah).

So, O wayfarer (sālik), do not diverge from this path. O diligent traveler (sālik), dear traveler strive to reach this companion. Keep his company and be courteous when sitting in his gatherings. By the blessing (barakah) of his companionship, he will remove every impediment. As he (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

فاصحبهم وتأدب في مجالسهم

Therefore, keep their company and have etiquette in their assemblies.

وخل حظك مهما قدموك ورا

Leave your portion behind you whenever they send you forward.

That is, keep the company of the fuqara; maintain courtesy with them when attending their gatherings. Surely, the assembly is the apparent form (shabâh) and etiquette is its soul. If you unite them, you seize the benefit of keeping the shaykh's company; otherwise, your companionship is but a corpse. What hope is there from benefiting from a corpse?

One of the most important courtesies of the gathering is leaving your portion behind you. Do not spend your aspiration (himmah) except in obedience to their orders. As a result, your efforts will be appreciated. If you take on this character, you will quickly seize the reward of presence. Being sincere in this, your degree will rise and your aspiration be exalted. About this Abu Madyan (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

واستغنم الوقت واحضر دائما معهم

Seize time and always be with them.

واعلم بأن الرضى يختص من حضرا

Know that pleasure is specific for those who attend.

That is, utilize the time being in the company of the fuqara and always be present with them in heart and body. As a result, their spiritual

nourishment will easily enter you and their benefits flow over you. Your outward will be made healthy by their courtesies, and your inwardness illuminated by the adornment of their lights. When you keep company of someone you become like them. If you sit with a sad person, you become sad, and if you sit with a happy person, you become happy. If you sit with the heedless, heedlessness comes to you. If you sit with those, who make divine remembrance your heedlessness will awaken and you will awake. They are a people whose company is kept without lose to anyone. So how can those who serve them, love them, and hold intimate discourse. The best that can be said about this is the following:

"I am a master because of their great rank and honor, my masters feet are on the heads; Even if I am not one of them, just by loving them I attain rank and honor."

Know that this is satisfaction (*ridā*). This station is bestowed upon those who are present with them by means of etiquette, excluding the nafs, and adorning oneself with humility and brokenness. So exclude yourself if you are among them. If you enter their gathering, be low and broken, then you will taste the sweetness of presence. Be aided by adhering to silence. The lights of joy will dawn upon you. Gladness will flow over you. As Abu Madyan (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

ولأزم الصمت إلا إن سئلت

Cling to silence unless you are questioned.

فقل لا علم عندي وكن بالجهل مستترا

Then say, I have no knowledge, and be concealed in ignorance.

Constant silence with the people of the path (tarīqah) increases their intention and completes their cultivation. Silence is of two kinds: silence of the tongue and silence of the heart. Both of them must be present in the path. He, who silences his heart while his tongue speaks, speaks with wisdom. He who silences his tongue and his heart, his secret is manifest to him, his Lord speaks with him. This is the goal of silence. The speech of the Shaykh points to that. So adhere to silence, O traveler (sālik), unless you are questioned. If you are questioned, return to silence and connection and say, "I have no knowledge." And cover yourself with ignorance. The lights of other worldly knowledge (al-ilm al-ladunī) will rise within you. Surely, whenever you acknowledge your ignorance and return to your origin, knowledge of the nafs dawns upon you. If you know it then you know your Lord, as it is related in the hadith:

من عرف نفسه عرف ربه

"He who knows himself knows his Lord." (A saying of one Salaf possibly Yahya ibn Mu'adh). All of this is from the benefits of silence and

adhering to etiquette. So be silent, be courteous and cling to the door and you will be among His beloveds. The best of what I heard said was:

"I did not leave the door until my crookedness is straightened; accept me with my blemishes and shortcomings; if you please them in might and my honor; if you disobey them then what can be hoped from my disobedience?"

O brother, rise with high aspiration to the door of your Master. Realise your slavehood so His resplendent lights will shine upon you. As the Shaykh, Abu Madyan (may Allah be pleased with him), indicates saying:

ولا تر العيب إلا فيك معتقدا عيبا بدا بينا لكنه استترا

Do not look at faults unless you see a clear fault appear in you, but it is concealed.

That is, be realized in your attributes of poverty, inability, and lowliness. When you have realized your attributes, you will witness your faults but they will be covered. You will gain the favor of the attributes of your Master appearing within you, as it has been said: 'Glory be to He who conceals the secret of the elite in the manifestation of mankind.' The greatest of the Lordship is manifest in servitude. Understand from this the secret meaning of the words of Allah, "Glory be to He who took His slave for a journey." (Quran: Al-Isra 17:1) He did not say His Messenger or His Prophet. Therefore, it was said,

"Do not call me except as 'O servant'; that is the most honorable of my names."

O brother, be broken and thrown by the path (Ṭarīq). Do not let other than this be seen in your state or speech. There is nothing you can say that will remove any hindrance from you and ask for forgiveness from anything that comes into your heart concerning your slavehood (opposing your slavehood). Stand on the feet of justice against yourself to reach the highest stations so humanness is annihilated. The Shaykh (may Allah be pleased with him) says the following about this:

وَحِطْ رَأْسَكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ بِلَا سَبَبٍ

Lower your head and ask forgiveness without cause.

وَقُمْ عَلَى قَدَمِ الْإِنصَافِ مُعْتَذِرًا

Stand on the feet of just treatment.

That is, humbleness, brokenness is the honored share you have. Your head lowered in humiliation of what is, (looking) towards the earth. To attain the station of closeness. As reported in hadith,

أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ

"The closest a servant is to Allah the Exalted is when he prostrates."

(Ahmed, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Al-Nisa'i.) Because the closeness of the

servant is in humility and brokenness, and leaving the attributes of his humanness.

Testify against yourself as a constant sinner even if there is no cause of sin manifest upon you, because the servant is never free from their own limitations. Stand upon the feet of justice of your sins in shame of your wrong actions and faults. Whoever does the action of creation this is the action of one He loves. He who does not testify to his sins considers them the same to his good actions. So how could the actions of this companion be reality? That which was realised is this is not an evil doer. This has been mentioned in the hadith:

اللهم انت صاحب في السفر والخليفة في الأهل والمال و الولد

"O Allah, You are the companion of the traveler, the keeper of the family, possessions, and children." (Muslim, Abu Dawood, Al-Tirmidhi)

O brother, be ready for this treatment (transaction) with your brothers, the fuqara, so that it will be for you a mirāj (night journey, referring to the mirāj of the Prophet (may Allah bestow peace and blessings upon him)) by which you gain access to a transaction with the Lord of heaven. You will gain acceptance among mankind and the Creator, and the transaction will be purified for you. The lights of realities will dawn upon you, as he (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

وإن بدا منك عيب فاعترف وأقم

If a fault appears from you,

وجه اعتذارك عما فيك منك جري

Your face apologies from what came from you

وقل عبيدكم أولى بصفحكمو

Say, Your insignificant slave is more deserving of your pardon.

فسامحوا وخذوا بالرفق يا فقرا

Act kindly in forgiveness and adhere to gentleness, O impoverished!

هم بالفضل أولى وهو شيمتهم

Take for granted their goodness for that is their nature.

فلا تخف دركا منهم ولا ضررا

Fear neither overtaking nor harm from them.

That is, your state should always be humbleness, brokenness, seeking pardon, and asking for forgiveness, whether you have committed a sin or not. If a fault is seen upon you, admit it and ask for forgiveness. (Hadith,) "He who repents from sin is like he who has no sin." (Ibn Majah and

Al-Tabarani) This does not mean that you did not commit a sin, rather, it means that you did not persist upon the sin. It has been transmitted that, "With Allah, the moaning (of regret) of the sinner is better than the humming of those who are glorifying Allah." (Al-Bayhaqi and Al-Manawi) meaning (praising Allah (the Exalted) with self-admiration and pride. I have said this in the Hikam: 'Sometimes He opens the door of obedience for you but not the door of acceptance. Sometimes a sin is decreed for you which is a cause of arrival (to him). Perhaps a disobedience that bequeaths humiliation and extreme need is better than an obedience that bequeaths self-infatuation and pride.' (Hikam number 92 and 93) With your admission and asking for forgiveness, apologize for what has preceded from you, so that will be the cause for erasing the sin and leading to acceptance. Be humble, modest, and broken, and say, 'Your slaves are more deserving of your pardon.' Certainly, the slave has no other door than the door of his Master. The best of what I heard on this is, "I met at your door my submission, I am not concerned with my submission, my constriction left me and expansion increased, and my fear turned into hope."

O Fakir pardon your servants, adopt companionship with them and transact with me. I am a poor servant and it is not correct for me except to act with compassion and virtue. Do not rely on me except by virtue, I have no power, no strength and my method is weakness and peace to you.

Then he says (may Allah be pleased with him) that they (the fuqara) are more deserving of pardon. It is their practice while always remaining kind and generous. This is their way with their friends and it is natural to them. How can it not be their disposition since they are taking on the character of their Master. It has been narrated, "Take on the attributes of Allah."

(Al-Manawi)

Fear no harm from them, O traveler (sālik), the one in their company, and hold to their coat tails. They are the people in whose company one will never feel unhappy or miserable. If you know that, O sālik, take on their good qualities and be generous with your brothers, and lower your gaze from their mistakes. In this way, you will take the best of their qualities. He says (may Allah be pleased with him):

بالتفتي على الإخوان جد أبدا

Be chivalrous to the brothers in generosity always

حسا ومعنا و غرض الطرف إن عثرا

Sensory and meaning. Lower the eye if someone slips.

That is, be generous to your brothers and always be generous to them. 'Hiss' meaning be generous with your wealth. It means by raising the aspiration in states. Do not be stingy with anything that you can give to

them, for generosity is the core of the path. Whoever embodies this then all obstacles will be removed from his heart.

Shaykh Abd al-Qādir (may Allah show him mercy) said, "O brothers, I did not arrive to Allah by prayer in the night, fasting the days, or acquiring knowledge. Rather, I reached Allah by generosity, humility, and purity of heart."

These words of the Shaykh prove that generosity is the foundation. The addition of humility completes the cultivation. When these matters are complete then his heart is free from attachment. All hindrances will be removed from his way. It has been narrated in a hadith:

إن في الجنة لغرفا يرى ظاهرها من باطنها وباطنها من ظاهرها أعدها الله تعالى لمن ألان الكلام
وأطعم الطعام وتابع الصيام وصلى بالليل والناس نيام

"There are rooms in Paradise whose outside is seen from the inside and whose inside is seen from the outside. Allah has prepared them for the one who is gentle in his speech, feeds others, and is constantly in standing in prayer at night while the people are asleep." (Al-Tirmidhi and Abu 'Yalla)

Think deeply about this hadith, O brother, wherein he (the Prophet (may Allah bestow peace and blessings upon him)) first mentions gentleness of speech, pointing to humility, then feeding others, and indicating generosity. Then after that prayer and fasting as, as indicated by Shaykh

Abd al-Qadir (may Allah show him mercy). So, my brother, rise to these glorious deeds and hasten to them. Add to them the best of honorable characteristics and ignore the faults of the brothers. Do not see them except their good actions. He (Abu Madyan) said in one of his early wisdoms, "Seeing the good actions of the slaves of Allah and not paying attention to their bad actions is one of the perfections of Oneness (tawhīd)."

It was said, "If you see Allah in every action then you see all of creation pleasant."

O brother, acquiring these honorable qualities make you eligible to be with the Shaykh. So, get up and move to his door. Observe him with exalted himmah. The Shaykh (may Allah be pleased with him) indicates this, saying:

وراقب الشيخ في أحواله فعسى

Observe the states of the Shaykh, perhaps

يرى عليك من استحسانه أثرا

A trace of his approval will be seen on you.

That is, if you acquire the good manners which have been mentioned and arrive at the Shaykh with your poverty and brokenness, holding fast to the

traces leading to the steps (to his door), observe his states. Strive for the attainment of his pleasure. Be broken and submit to him at all times. For he is an antidote and a cure. Surely, the hearts of the shaykhs are the antidotes of the paths. Anyone who has had the good fortune of reaching him, gets his desires fulfilled by him and is delivered from every obstacle. O brother, struggle in witnessing this meaning, for perhaps some traces of improvement of you state.

Some of those who have arrived have said, 'One of the most difficult of debarments is being with the Awliyah Allah without gaining their acceptance.' It is caused by nothing other than your bad etiquette, not their meanness nor their deficiency. As I have said in the Hikam: "The matter is not making a request. What really matters is that it bequeaths good etiquette." (Hikam number 125)

A sultan who visited the tomb of Abu Yazīd (may Allah be pleased with him) said, 'Is there anyone here who has met Abu Yazīd?' An old man was pointed out to the sultan, who was present at that time. The sultan asked him, 'Have you heard anything that he said?' The old man said, 'Yes, Abu Yazīd said, 'Whoever visits me will not be burned by the fire of Hell.' The sultan was amazed by this, and exclaimed, 'How can Abu Yazīd say such a thing when Abu Jahl, who saw the Prophet (may Allah bestow peace

and blessings be upon him), is burning in the fire of Hell?' The old man answered the sultan, saying, 'Abu Jahl did not see the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace); rather, he saw the orphan of Abu Talib. If he had seen him the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), he would not be burning in the fire of Hell.' The sultan understood and admired this answer from him (the old man).

This means that Abu Jahl never looked at him (Prophet) (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) with respect and honor, believing him to be the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). If he had seen him with this meaning, he would not be burning in the fire. Abu Jahl looked at him with spite and contempt, believing that he was only the orphan of Abu Talib, so his seeing the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not benefit him. In addition, if you, O brother, meet the pole (qutb) of the time without etiquette, you will not benefit from this meeting. In fact, it may have more harm in it than benefit. So have etiquette in front of the Shaykh and struggle to travel the best ways of conduct (sulūk). Apply what you know with seriousness with sincerity, rise to serve him in order to become one of the masters.

وقدم الجد وانهض عند خدمته

Advance seriousness and arise to serve him.

عساه يرضى وحاذر أن تكن ضجرا

Perhaps he will be pleased, and beware lest you become irritated.

ففي رضاه رضى الباري و طاعته

In his pleasure is the pleasure of the Creator and obedience

يرضى عليك فكن من تركا حذرا

Makes him pleased with you, then beware of leaving it.

Meaning, rise to serve the Shaykh with seriousness. Maybe you will gain his pleasure and become a master among the masters. Beware of showing discontentment because in discontentment is corruption. Adhere to the means leading to the door (of the Shaykh), morning and evening, in order to gain his friendship. The best of what I heard of this,

"Be patient upon the harm of the edges in the dawn, to the rare of the obedient acts early, few of those who try this matter is hoped in him what accompanied patience except he succeeded, victorious."

O sālik, if you succeed it is by His pleasure, Allah will be pleased with you, and you will gain more than what you hoped for. So understand this dear brother that is the pleasure of your Shaykh. Your obedience to him is success in obeying your Master, gaining His pleasure and gaining an abundance of His generosity.

Hold fast to service of the Shaykh when you achieve arrival to him. Know that joy will engulf you from all directions when Allah (the Exalted) introduced you to him and made you informed of him. Therefore, you are successful especially in these days which is greater than red sulphur (a rare mixture of materials that makes gold).

Know that the path of the People is studying (knowledge). The state of the one who claims it today is as you see. But, if divine concern helps you, you will win and smell the fragrant breeze of goodness, more fragrant than the strongest scent of musk. Abu Madyan (may Allah be pleased with him) says:

اعلم بأن طريق القوم دراسة

Know that the Path of the People is learning

وحال من يدعيها اليوم كيف ترى

The state of the one who claims it today, how do you see.

متى أراهم وأنى لي برؤيتهم

When I see them and whenever I see them

أو تسمع الأذن مني عنهم خبرا

Or if the ear hears from me about them news

من لي وأني لمثلي أن يزاحمهم

Whom do I have, who is like me to crowd them

على موارد لم ألف بها كدرا

Upon the wells that do not contain impurity

أحبهم وأداريهم وأثرهم

I love them and treat them gently and their traces

بمهجتي وخصوصا منهمو نفرا

Are my methods and a band from them is specialty

The Shaykh starts by making the traveler yearn of the travelers to the path and its people. He informs them that their path is learning (knowledge). The state of those who claim it today are as you see in this period. It is as if the aspiration of people is disappear. This is how the matter of the path gains its might. It is as though the Path were from a vanishing age. The path is only obtained by one individual at a time. This is the well-known Sunnah. Like valuable jewelry, it is not easily found. Because of its scarcity, (people) often think it is nonexistent. The people of the path are hidden in the world like night of power is hidden in the month of

Ramaḍān, or like the hour of Friday (in which supplication is accepted) in its day until the seeker makes an effort to reach it. Surely, he who is serious finds what he is looking for, and he who knocks insistently on the door will enter it.

After I said mentioning that there must be a Shaykh in the path, from the path of question and answer, then how can we be ordered by it? He said, "The presence of the (true) Shaykh is like red sulphur or a legendary bird. Who has its presence is successful? How can you order me to reach someone of this matter (spirituality)?

He said, "If you are true in your quest, like a child suffering from thirst, you will never be satisfied until you achieve your intention." The Shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, indicates that the Shaykh exists. How can he not exist while the building of the world is by means of those like him. The world is like a person and the Awliyah are its soul. As long as the world exists, they exist. But, because of their hiddenness and lack of outwardness it is judged that they are missing.

So struggle, dear brother, and be truthful in your quest, you will find what you are seeking. Seek help for that quest from the knower of the unseen (Allah (the Exalted)). Surely, gaining what one seeks is not possible except through His generosity. If He leads you to the Shaykh, He leads

you to Himself, as I have said in the Hikam: "Glory be to Him who does not make the evidence leading to His Awliyah, except as an evidence leading to Himself, and Who does not lead to them except him whom He wants to arrive to Him." (Hikam number 153)

After the Shaykh (may Allah be pleased with him) mentions that the Ṭarīq is precious and its people have disappeared, he begins to feel regret for not having met them, and wishing to, when he had the opportunity to be honored to meet them. His humility and brokenness because he sees himself as lowly. That is why he said, afterward, "Whom do I have, who is like me to crowd them..." This is the One who knows himself by himself. He is complete in his knowledge of his Lord. He is adorned with divine blessings because he does not see for himself any state or speech. Rather he sees himself less than everything. This is the complete vision. The poet said: "The more knowledge one has, the humbler one becomes; he who increases in ignorance increases in arrogance, Just as the green branch laden with ripe fruit is easily reached; while the branch without fruit is out of reach."

Look at Shaykh Abu Madyan (may Allah show him mercy) and his high status in the Ṭarīq. Although twelve thousand murīds have arrived through his spiritual education, look at his humility and abasement. The

branches from the tree of his knowledge of Allah (marifah) hang low, descending to the earth of humility and brokenness until he sees that he is not even worthy of meeting with the people of the Ṭarīqah. This abasement increases his ascension, for the deeper the roots of a tree, the higher it grows.

So be humble in the Ṭarīq, dear brother. Take this great source from a fully realized knower, it will remove all obstacles from your way.

After this he (Abu Madyan) (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "I love them . . ." Meaning even though I am not one of them, I love them. He who loves a people is one of them, as stated in the hadith:

المرء مع من أحب

"A person is with those whom he loves." (Muslim) The poet also says: "I love the righteous people, although I am not one of them; maybe I will attain their intercession. I hate him whose commodity is disobedience; even though we are together in this commodity of disobedience."

This is also from him (may Allah be pleased with him) from complete lowering, completeness and fullness. Therefore humbleness, which is not attached to the honor of generosity in his meeting garden, may Allah (the Exalted) benefit us by His blessing and give us support of this actions. These are the qualities of the people (Sufis) and their attributes. Therefore,

their rank is elevated and their gifts increased, as he (may Allah be pleased with him) describes:

القوم كرام السجايا حيثما جلسوا

A people of noble qualities wherever they sit,

يبقي المكان على آثارهم عطرا

A fragrance remains in the place after them.

يهدي التصوف من أخلاقهم طرقا

TaṢawwuf is guided by their character in the Paths.

حسن التألف منهم راقني نظرا

Excellent harmony is theirs that delights my eye.

هم أهل ودي وأحابي الذين هم

They are the people of my love and my lovers who are among

ممن يجر ذيول العز مفتخرا

Those who trail the coat-tails of might in magnificence.

لا زال شملي بهم في الله مجتمعا

O everyone who has been in this circle with us, I ask Allah through them to erase our
sins.

وذنبتنا فيه مغفورا ومغتفرا

Our sins be forgiven and pardoned in Him.

ثم الصلاة على المختار سيدنا

Then blessings be upon the Chosen, Sayyiduna

محمد خير من أوفي ومن نذرا

Muhammad, the best of those who fulfilled and who vowed.

That is, they are a people of noble qualities and their aspiration is great.
Wherever they sit, they leave behind their beautiful fragrant scent.
Wherever they go, the sun of their knowledge shines and hearts are
illuminated. By them, the world and the afterlife are rectified.
Taṣawwuf leads the yearning traveler in the path by their character on a
path anew indicating to the (true) path. There, he is able to carry on in his
sulūk in a praiseworthy manner. Therefore, theirs is the best gathering.
Everyone who looks likes what he sees; they work hard to achieve every
complete and subtle meaning until the lights of inner sight are adorned
with their kohl.

The Shaykh also says, 'They are the people of my affection and love . . .'

A person only loves who he is like, or one with whom there is a kinship.

These words indicate that he is one of them, from the same special clay.

What he has already mentioned of modesty and brokenness is an

evidence of his realization of this glory and pride. So we ask Allah (the

Exalted) to lead us to the best of spiritual paths.

Then he makes supplication and asks that he be included among them for

Allah (the Exalted). He asks to be pardoned for his sins. We also ask

Allah (the Exalted) for complete blessing and peace upon our Master

Muhammad, the Chosen, the best of those who fulfilled vows, the most

noble neighbor, and upon his family and companions, the righteous

masters, the Followers, and their followers to goodness until the last day.

These point are for who is thirsty in the night for the meanings of these

verses. We know by weakness and short comings of (attaining or

explaining) these meanings. Actions are commensurate to intentions and

Allah (the Exalted) knows best.