

Sheikh Nadhim's Lecture March 28, 2025

Oh God. I seek refuge in God from the accursed Satan. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds, and may God's abundant prayers and peace be upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, the Imams, and the Mahdis. May the peace, mercy, and blessings of God be upon you all. May the days and hours of the month of Ramadan be blessed ones for you, and may God accept your fasting and obedience, all of you, God willing.

The title of the lecture is "Our Journey with the Riser: Preparation and Obstacles," as our brother Abu Ahmad, may God reward him with the best reward of the doers of good, has kindly mentioned. When we want to talk about preparing to support the Riser of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him, there are certainly obstacles and barriers that might prevent us from getting ready and preparing to face this great test. Among these obstacles is inclining toward the self, which is expressed as the "ego," and may God protect us from the ego. This is an obstacle, and indeed, the foundation of all obstacles.

Another of these obstacles is the love of this world and its pleasures. Among the [other] obstacles that block us on our journey with the Riser, peace be upon him, in preparing to support him, is attachment. Attachment. This attachment begins with attachment to our own ideas. Every person has ideas. I mean, a human being is born, how should I say it? God, who brought you forth from your mothers' wombs knowing nothing. As I recall, the Quranic verse says, I mean, we do not know anything. So, consequently, we acquire things from our family, our environment, and our education. We acquire ideas, information, principles, beliefs, and so on. So this too is one of the obstacles, one of those things that, I mean, might block us or hinder our journey with the Riser, peace be upon him, the Riser of the family of Muhammad, may God's peace be upon him.

So attachment is also a problem, a dilemma, one of the obstacles. And as I said, this attachment begins with attachment to ideas, a person's own ideas, the subjective ideas of the individual. So how does one hold on to their ideas or let go of their ideas with the Riser? That is why I recall that Sayyed Ahmad Alhasan, peace be upon him, said in a statement explaining the meaning of "the bald, pot bellied one"¹ in describing the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, Imam Ali, peace be upon him.

He said "the bald one" means the one who has no ideas or knowledge in his head and mind except what God, Glorified and Exalted, has planted there. I mean, the state of Imam Ali,

¹ Translator's Note: The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, has been described as being "Anza" and "Bateen" (often wrongly misunderstood to mean "bald with a fat belly," respectively). These characteristics were not given to him to condemn his looks; they were used to praise and clarify his virtues.

peace be upon him, in this description of being "the bald one" is, I mean, not because hair symbolizes ideas. I mean, my Lord, I have no ideas of my own. I have no beliefs. I have no affiliations except what You have planted. What You have sown in my mind. So clinging to attachment. And we said attachment to ideas, then family attachment, then tribal, sectarian, and national attachment. And so on and so forth. All these attachments are also among the significant obstacles that a person should pay attention to. Even those who walked with the prophets and messengers, peace be upon them, and those who walked with the Imams, peace be upon them, this obstacle of attachment was a reason for either their lack of fortune, status, and rank, or it caused their deviation.

In truth, when a person walks with the Riser and journeys with the Riser of the family of Muhammad, this issue of attachment is a problem that one must pay attention to at all times, in every place, era, and situation. One must be mindful of the issue of attachment. Intellectual attachment, sectarian attachment, family attachment, tribal attachment, national attachment, and so on. Especially sectarian attachment. For us, our sect is the sect of the Prophet's Household, peace be upon them, the religion of the Prophet's Household. But what I mean is that every person, before starting their journey with the Riser, surely followed one sect or another, and we know that even the sects that claim to follow the Prophet's Household have, according to many narrations, a sifting process, a refinement, innovations, and trials, let alone those who do not follow the sect of the Prophet's Household, peace be upon them. Those people, their matter is done as far as they are concerned, Consequently, the Riser, peace be upon him, comes with the entirety of the truth. And this entirety of truth does not exist before the Riser, peace be upon him, arrives. Therefore, the person who is waiting must prepare to let go of every idea and every attachment on all different levels for the sake of the journey with the Riser, peace be upon him, and to submit to the Riser.

So, the obstacles are many. I have mentioned the most important ones, or the main obstacles, which are the ego, the love of this world and its pleasures, clinging to attachment, which is attachment to ideas, family attachment, tribal attachment, sectarian attachment, national attachment, and so on. Every prophet and every Imam, when he comes at the beginning of his call, in truth, is calling to a journey. This journey is to God, Glorified and Exalted, to the Holy One. So everyone who responds to the call of God's Proof in this journey, meaning the state of God's Proof or his spoken words, says: "Come, let us journey to God, Glorified and Exalted. Come, let us journey to God, Glorified and Exalted." So the one who journeys to God, Glorified and Exalted, must prepare himself for the destination he is being sent to, for the direction he wants to head toward, or the place to which he sets out in this journey, alone. And it is known that the proofs of God, Glorified and Exalted, set out on this journey and call their followers to it, to the journey to God, Glorified and Exalted, to holiness and purity. So, my beloved ones, a person must start with observing himself, his state, his thoughts and his mind in terms of purity. Because each one of us, to give the simplest example, if he wants to go to a place like the mosque always checks the purity of his body and clothes.

He also checks for impurity and filth, may God keep you honorable. He removes anything of filth or impurity because he is heading toward something or a place that is sacred and pure. When a person wants to enter such a place, he should enter it pure and clean. So how much more so when it comes to heading toward God, Glorified and Exalted? Well, God, Glorified and Exalted, looks at what? God does not look at your bodies or your forms, but He looks at your hearts. So, if we want, for the first time, to journey or respond to the call of the Riser of the family of Muhammad, and God's Proof in this journey, we must observe our hearts, the purity of our hearts, and the purity of our souls and selves. This is the foundation of this journey with the family of Muhammad because the Riser of the family of Muhammad, Imam Mahdi, peace be upon him, calls to the entirety of truth.

The narrations are successive in this matter, that He does not leave an innovation to remain without destroying it, and he does not leave a tradition [behind] without reviving it. Consequently, the one who responds to the call of the Riser, peace be upon him, and wants to walk with the Riser of the family of Muhammad in this journey to God, Glorified and Exalted, and to the divine kingdom, must purify and sanctify himself, and must be worthy of this group, this band that revolves around this divine axis, who is the Riser. The Riser of the family of Muhammad is the light and Proof of God on the earth. The Riser of the family of Muhammad is the executor of God's will on the earth. So the one who wants to respond to the call of the Riser in this journey must hasten his steps and take the utmost care to resemble this light as much as possible. The more the wayfarer and the one responding to this journey with the Riser of the family of Muhammad resembles the Riser of the family of Muhammad, the further he is from deviation, misguidance, and loss.

And the more he neglects this aspect, the more he neglects the cleanliness of the heart, paying attention to the obstacles we mentioned and trying to let go of them, and the more exposed and vulnerable he is to deviation, misguidance, and doubt. Or, at the very least, his share with the Riser of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him, lessens, and his gain in this great, sacred journey diminishes. Not to mention the obstacles that will obstruct this journey, and those walking in this journey, from fear of the oppressors, loneliness, isolation, alienation, lack of resources, and so on. Now, we are not talking about something unique to Muhammad alone. Rather, this is what all the prophets and messengers followed, and what was realized with all the prophets and messengers and God's Proofs: the scarcity of supporters, the scarcity of followers, and the lack of resources because God, Glorified and Exalted, wants to test His servants. If divine calls were surrounded by desires and pleasures, then everyone and anyone would follow them, and the creation and people would not be distinguished, nor would the wicked be separated or distinguished from the good. So, when we talk about the journey with the Riser and preparation and obstacles, there are three aspects we must address and seek assistance in explaining through the words of God, Glorified and Exalted, and the words of the Infallibles, peace be upon them.

We are talking about three aspects. The first aspect is moral preparation. The second is intellectual preparation. The third is physical preparation. You want to journey with the Riser, peace be upon him. There are three aspects [required] to be qualified and prepared for the journey with the Riser. To overcome the obstacles that will obstruct the path of this journey, you must be prepared, at least, through three aspects or dimensions, which are: moral preparation (the first aspect), intellectual preparation (the second aspect), and physical preparation (the third aspect).

Let's first talk about moral preparation. Moral preparation: talking about moral preparation means talking about spiritual completion. Spiritual completion is, in the end, the foundation that results in completion in belief, action, and behavior, and so on, across various levels. Moral completion is the foundation, because when a person is morally complete, meaning spiritually complete, this is the thing that God, Glorified and Exalted, says in the sacred hadith, the meaning of which is that God does not look at your appearances or your bodies, but He looks at your hearts. So if God, Glorified and Exalted, tells us that there is an aspect that is the focus of my consideration, attention, and gaze, the fundamental thing upon which everything is built, and that is the heart, then what does the heart mean? The soul. Spiritual preparation. Moral preparation. Because the one who is characterized by weakness in this aspect, or lacks preparation and worthiness in this aspect, which is the aspect of moral preparation, surely this will reflect on his belief, actions, and behavior. Why? Because everything is built on the soul and on morals, and intention is the foundation. Intention is surely built on the soul and on morals. Indeed, intention is better than action, as is mentioned in the noble hadiths. Consequently, we must pay attention to this aspect, which is the aspect of spiritual completion because Imam Mahdi, and all of God Almighty's Proofs are leaders of souls. They are leaders of souls and leaders of hearts. Therefore, if they are leaders of souls, then the bodies are subservient to the souls, and bodies are merely reflections. The movements of bodies and the behavior of bodies are merely a reflection of what the soul dictates, what morals dictate, and what the heart dictates. Let's move on, since we are talking about preparation and the journey with the Riser, peace be upon him.