

Re “divine stations”: An Ant goes to Mecca

[from “In the Mystic Footsteps of the Masters”
Shaykh Nazim Adil Al Haqqani (p.131-133)]

[quoted for thread on Twitter (X), February 13, 2024 by @StefanPasti]

“Every person from among mankind may attain divine stations. The Way is not barred to anyone: we are all candidates for the position of ‘Deputy of God on Earth.’ The holy verse is clear enough: ‘Oh man, verily you are striving towards your Lord, and you will meet Him:’ therefore, whoever makes a serious attempt to reach, must reach. But if we consistently take one step forward and two steps back-- and make ourselves fit Allah Almighty’s description: ‘They believed, then fell into disbelief, believed again, and once more fell’—then we will find ourselves lost.

“Steadfastness is the quality that will aid our progress, even if that progress is slow. Be steadfast and you may reach your goal; and even if you don’t, your Lord perceives your sincere intention and may convey you towards your goal, just when you have despaired. Our grandshaykh said that such perseverance in the face of immense odds is most difficult. Imagine that a person has been told: ‘There is a treasure waiting for you inside the earth, a fourth of the way to China—you must dig and take it. Here is a broken pick and a spade with a broken handle, now you may start digging.’ Imagine being ordered to such a task with such tools! You must start.... Don’t say: ‘It is impossible! Even an oil drill can’t reach down that far!’ No, you must say: ‘My Lord has ordered me to proceed and He has given me these instruments with which to proceed with my task, so I must start digging.’ Then you dig, and when you collapse from exhaustion your Lord may deliver that treasure up to you in the blink of an eye.

“Perhaps an ant with a broken leg may intend to travel from London to Mecca in order to perform the rites of pilgrimage. He may intend such a journey and start on his way, but do you think that there is any hope of him arriving? (Then) Allah Almighty sends a pilgrim who sets down his handbag; (and) as the ant crawls in to see if there is any food to be found for the way, the pilgrim comes, picks up the bag and gets into the taxi to the airport. When the pilgrim arrives at Jeddah, he boards a bus to Mecca, then a taxi to his hotel. At the hotel he leaves his other bags, but takes this valuable one with him to the holy Mosque to make his Tawaf of the Kaba.... After his Tawaf he sits down to read Quran, and the terrified ant slowly emerges, only to find himself in front of the Kaba.

(more)

“Allah Almighty made a way for that ant because it firmly intended to reach that unattainable station, with its broken leg and all; and he helped it arrive quickly, too. So don’t lose hope! We are like that ant; we are directing our faces towards the Divine Presence and asking to attain to it. He may take us to that state, but we can never make it on our own.

“Question: Is keeping our way in the non-supportive surroundings of the West also like this?”

Shaykh Nazim: These surroundings are like a whetting stone that serves to make our faith sharper and stronger. Our grandshaykh used to say to me: ‘Oh, Nazim Effendi, if you can go to the downtown area of Damascus and return to this mountain without indulging your eyes, without casting your glance here and there, that is a greater feat and of more value than staying forty years in seclusion in a cave.’

“Yes, a man may go to Mecca and Medina for six months, fasting Ramadan there in the scorching heat and suffering thirst he never imagined when he fasted at home; he may stay through the Hajj season and experience overcrowded conditions unparalleled on the face of the earth. He may perform so many ritual prayers and rites with sincerity and may feel his faith renewed, but just as he is leaving the holy cities and their constraining atmosphere, and boards the plane at Jeddah, a seductive stewardess greets him, saying: ‘Welcome aboard....’ Then his ego catches him and wrestles him to the ground.

“Therefore, here in the West where conditions are difficult, you are offered the challenge of controlling your ego under conditions exactly contrary to those ends—but the reward is greater and of more lasting benefit. Here you may lose it all or you may reach your goal quickly. Yes, it is difficult to lead a chaste life under such circumstances, but you must not make excuses for yourself! You may live in surroundings that ensure that you are never for one moment allowed to forget sexuality, and you may feel that you will never be able to resist such an onslaught, but you must only intend sincerely to keep yourself and He will help you attain that goal—just remember the ant with the broken leg!”