



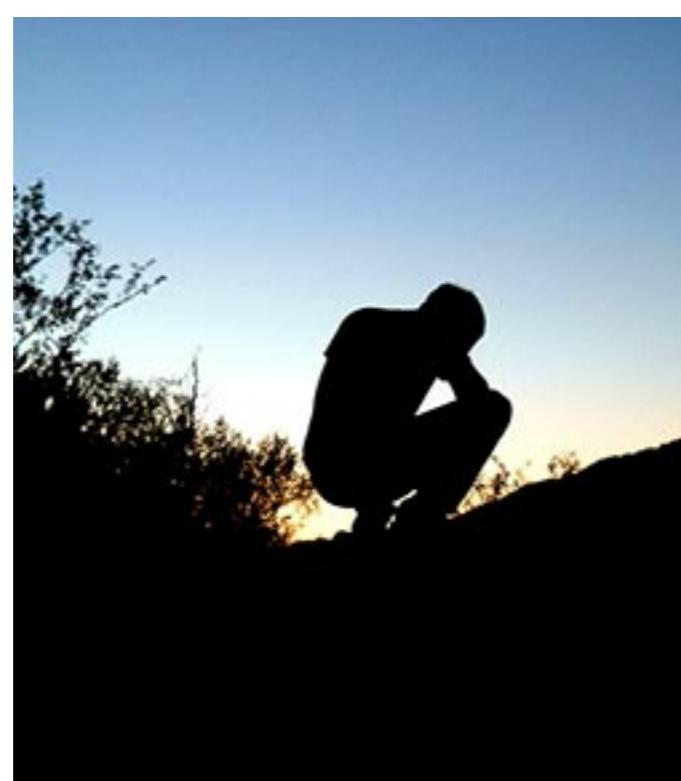
SURRENDER – THE FOUNDATION OF LOVE

The Sufi wishes to love and be loved by Allah. In *tariqa* (the Sufi path) he or she follows in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) footsteps with this single goal in his heart, because he knows Muhammad (pbuh) is *Habibullah*, Allah's lover. He understands that the only way to gain Allah's love is through surrender, for in surrender he denies the selfish urgings of his *nafs* (egoistic or animalistic nature) in order to secure Allah's good pleasure. Allah created the Prophet (pbuh) as the model of a human being in a state of complete surrender to his Lord. His exquisite state embraced the perfect balance of his inner and outer being. The key to this balance was an unwavering focus on Allah in all things. From the firmness of his faith sprouted his impeccably pure intention to serve his Lord lovingly in thought, word, and deed.

That is because Allah never changes the grace He has bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their *nafs*, and truly Allah is Hearer, Knower. (Qur'an 8:53)



In the dynamic of their loving relationship, as the Prophet (pbuh) scrutinized the purity of his intention, Allah in turn increased his faith. The Sufi *murid* (student) is encouraged to reenact such a working relationship with Allah, maintaining focus on Allah with the intention to surrender to Him in every way. Intention is the springboard of surrender, the inner aspect which gives meaning to outer deeds. The intention to act in a way pleasing to Allah is the foundation of faith, because in it is the tacit assumption of Allah's complete sovereignty. The acknowledgment "*La ilaha illallah* (There is no god but God)" is implicit in the believer's pure intention.



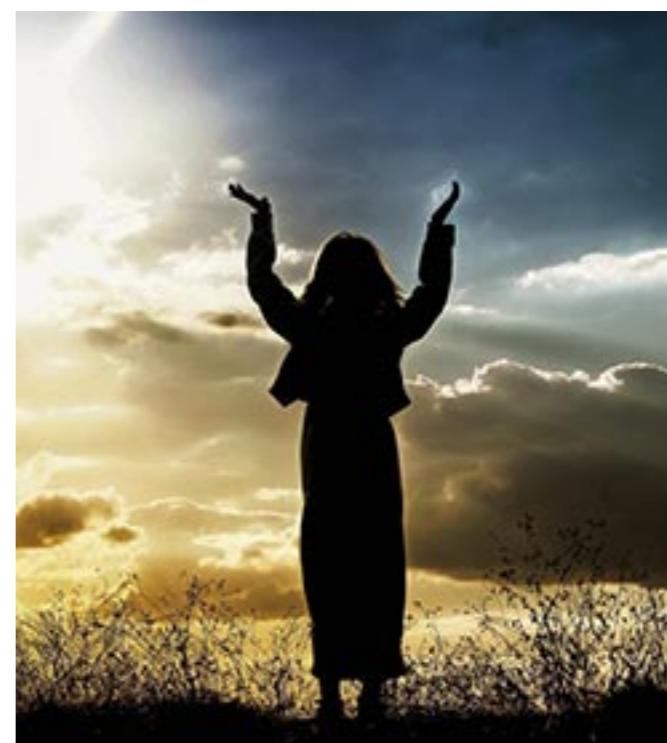
One who knows that Allah holds all power, as our Prophet (pbuh) did, should preface every action by saying, "*Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim* (In the name of Allah, The One Who Acts with Mercy, The Source of Mercy)." By saying this with sincerity, the believer states that he is acting in Allah's name, with Allah's power and not his own. Saying "*Bismillah er Rahman er Rahim*" is to be in a state of *rabita* (spiritual connection) with Allah, and is the beginning of surrender.

Whoever surrenders his whole attention to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his Lord. And for them there will be no fear nor will they grieve. (2:112)

"Islam" means "Surrender." Sufism is the way to surrender knowingly, willingly, and lovingly in every action. Sufis must continually surrender throughout their lifetime and its sometimes hard lessons. This insistence on surrender is the key to bringing the Sufi closer to Allah.

Every Sufi is encouraged not only to observe and emulate Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) flawless behavior, but to truly internalize his refined demeanor. This cannot be accomplished without profound surrender. We must begin the process with the intention to surrender willingly, and Allah, Who has all the power, will then help us to realize His love deep within our being. This love is the fruit of surrender, which is the composite of pure intention with good *ahlak*, manifest in acting with good *adab* at all times.

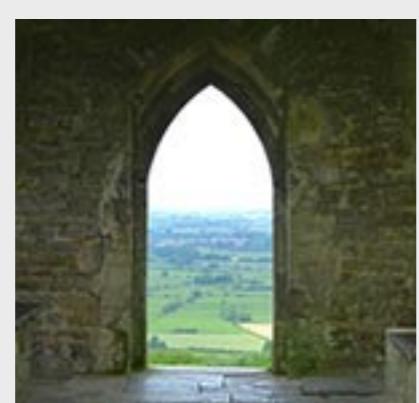
Surrender is an ongoing practice. Just as there is no end to Allah's infinite grandeur, there can be no limit to our willingness to yield to our Maker. When the Sufi *murid* makes *rabita* with his shaykh, with the intention of fighting his *nafs* and acting in Allah's name, the channel between him and the Creator opens up in his heart. This line of Allah's life and love widens with each effort made on the part of His servant.



As the beginning of surrender is in the pure intention to act in Allah's name, the completion of surrender is in the outer aspect of right action. Right action is propelled from the heart of one who has been cleansed from his *nafs*' interference, and is shaped by his excellent character.

For a Sufi, being close to Allah is reaching a state of nothingness, whereby one is a fitting vehicle through which Allah may act as He wills. The point of Sufi training is not to gain in spirituality, but to realize one's nonexistence and thus to better know, praise, and serve the One who exists.

Practices Overview



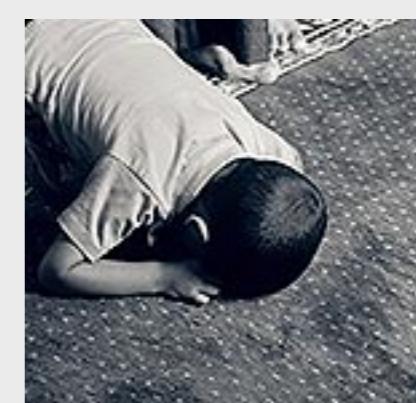
Rabita



Adab



Surrender



Zikr



Sohbet



Contemplation



Service

