

The following is an extract from the advice delivered by Sefer Efendi to Tosun Baba and some other dervishes after passing of Muzaffer Efendi (r.a.) in Feb 1985. May Allah make these words understood and effective in the minds and hearts of all of us.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

When you receive the truth from Allah, you are a murid; when you turn to the people and pass on that which you have received, you are a murshid. In Islam, the requirement of obtaining knowledge is incumbent upon you from the cradle to the grave. When we teach, we are teachers; when we learn we are students. This is forever. When the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) received revelations from Hz. Jibril (a.s.) he was a murid. When he passed Allah's words to humanity, he was a murshid. When Jibril (a.s.) received the word from his Lord he was a murid; when he passed it to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) he was a murshid.

The three qutbs of the age were sitting at the banks of a river. The time of one of them came, and he passed away. On the other side of the river was a majdhub who had fallen in love with a flower. He was sitting in front of it in adoration. The flower had wilted a long time before, but he still remained in total devotion, as if the wilted flower had become his idol. A wind came and blew the dried flower into the river. He ran after his beloved, walking on the waters of the river, and came to the side of the two qutbs. Having seen the incident, a sign from the Lord, they took him as their third. And he said, "I worshipped a mere plant and my love brought me to truth."

He loved the flower, which brought him to truth. Man is the ultimate, the most honored of creation. Where might the love of man bring one?

Love is the prime condition of being in this path, and to be the shaykh of this tariqat, forty sincere Muslims must witness that one is a waliullah, a friend of Allah.

Let me make it very clear that Hz. Fahreddin never made anyone a dervish instantly and indiscriminately. Is it not so? (indicating senior dervishes nearby as witnesses). This was the conviction of my master; may his soul be blessed. I hope that the precedent will be remembered in the future.

(In response to a dream dreamt by us the morning before, the following interpretation was given:) In the book of Hazrati Pir it is clearly stated that sometimes when the master of a good dervish dies, the accursed Devil tries to tempt him by putting the imagination in his head that there is no other shaykh as perfect as his previous shaykh, and therefore he should not take anyone else as his murshid. Hazrati Pir warns that the shaykh of the one without a shaykh is the accursed Devil.

The cause of the accursed Devil's downfall, and his principal feature, is his arrogance. When Allah Most High created Adam (a.s.) and taught him the Names, he knew more than any of the creation, including the angels. He was to be the murshid of the angels. All the angels bowed to Hz. Adam except the Devil, because of his arrogance.

In the tariqat the greatest fault is egotism, pride – the attribute which least befits a dervish. There shouldn't be even a trace of pride in the being of those who are honored to be on this path.

Sufism is the essence of Islam. Allah condemns gossip in His Holy Quran, and His Prophet (s.a.w.s.) warns us against it in many hadiths, yet on many occasions many of us have participated in this sinful act; we are all guilty of it. We are also guilty of slander and calumny.

(Addressing Tosun baba) May Allah give you long and healthy life. We have great hopes in you, because you are going to spread the divine light abroad. You are charged to transmit and communicate the knowledge you have received. Allah Most High is the one who creates the need for enlightenment and the enlightenment to satisfy the need. As the sustenance for our body comes from a source, the sustenance of the spirit comes also from a source. Whoever's destiny it is to be enlightened will come to you to receive this. And whoever's destiny it is not, he will not come, and there is nothing for him. Neither be overjoyed at the abundance of your dervishes, nor be sad if you have few. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) says that in his Ascension he saw some of Allah's prophets who had only one follower – and these are prophets, not shaykhs. The murshids are the inheritors, the khalifahs of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

How fortunate are we that we have been brought to such a blessed place. No amount of thanks and praise of Allah is sufficient for our state. Such an immense gift is given to us. In the life of this world, any decent person who sees a heedless person running into danger will shout, "Be careful! There's danger, don't go!" That is how a murshid is. From the compassion and love he feels for his people he wants them neither to be in trouble in this world nor to suffer Hellfire in the Hereafter.

What is most important in this path is unity and union: it covers, it hides all faults. If someone seeks a friend without faults, that is unfindable – therefore he will be left alone. Without love and care for each other and the unity which hides the faults of individuals, you will be left alone, because the one who seeks a faultless friend will not be able to find one. There is no such thing.

We are a gift to each other. It is Allah's generosity that He has given us to each other. If we should lose our care and affection for one another and be cross with each other and go to our own corners, we certainly will die from loneliness. It will be a torture. We will enter Hell already in this world. Therefore, we are not going to see each other's faults.

Our Efendi used to say that a dervish may make mistakes; he has an ego to deal with. To none of us has he directly said that you have such-and-such a fault. He has taught us to have whoever is closest to the one at fault speak to him gently and sweetly, pointing out the wrong he has done. If that doesn't work, we have to pray that Allah forgive and take away the faults of our brother.

There is always a reason for doing wrong. Before reproaching – privately and kindly – someone's faults, you should imagine the causes, and after consideration of the circumstances, you should try to help him. That which is most important in our tariqat is mutual respect in accordance with adab, reinforced by the love we feel for each other.

I have been friends with ... baba for many years since our youth. When Allah brought us to the presence of Hz. Fahreddin, he asked about us and about our ages. We are of the same age. He called me to take hand first. I am one minute ahead of him. In the thirty or forty years following that we have stayed very close. During that time this perfect man has not once walked in front of me nor turned his back to me. And ..., who is from the family of Hazrati Pir, out of adab has never walked in front of me either. It also falls upon me to follow the adab and be respectful to them.

The designation of the offices in the dergah should also be by a sign from Hazrati Pir. It is not by seniority. The one chosen does not even have to be a khalifah. I was a very young dervish when Fahreddin Efendi gave me the office of farraj, the one responsible for the order of the dergah. I didn't even know what it meant. When I was given this honor, I didn't become familiar with or less respectful of the elders.

A dergah cannot be run by one person. There has to be an organization, people with definite duties, even at the highest level. If the shaykh wasn't there, his khalifah took care of the duties. If he's not there either, the next senior khalifah takes over. The dervishes should be aware of this situation and recognize the authority of the ones with office and show respect.

A dergah is not a club, it is not a stable. It is a place where sincere men congregate and work together to become perfect men. It is a place where the love of Allah and the love of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) spread from one heart to the other. That is what happens in a circle of dhikrullah. Why do we love each other? Do we think of that? The one who loves another and respects him in reality is showing respect for himself, even if the person cared for and respected is poor or ignorant, unintelligent, primitive, or a mere child.

Fahredden Efendi said that to be a dervish is to be a thief of hearts. You have to steal the heart, obtain the love of the one whom you encounter. How can you obtain the love of someone without loving him? You must love him so that he loves you, and that love cannot be for any material reason – because he is rich or because he is handsome or because he is powerful. We have to love for Allah's sake, for no other reason than that he is our brother in faith.

To choose one over another because of material reasons – because someone is rich, or someone has this or that quality – is unlawful. You have to be even and equal in your affection. Yet love is the decision of the heart, and the heart is affected by the state of being and the good behavior and virtues of the beloved. And one's heart is not under one's control. Yet it is your duty to treat your brothers and sisters equally. Otherwise love, which provides the means of unity, will have a reverse effect and create jealousy and division. This is especially true for the shaykh in his relationship with the dervishes – that he should not favor one over another, as they are not yet perfect, even mature. Their relation to the shaykh is like the relationship of children towards a father. Fahreddin Efendi was extremely diligent in this respect. If he would say, "... is the jewel of my eye," he would indicate his other eye and say, "... is the jewel of this eye!"

May this love and care for each other continue until the end of time, passing from one heart to another. May we realize the true value of each other. As one evolves towards perfection, even if one's brother is lacking, one's own perfection will hide the fault of the other. Show respect to the man of knowledge – this is a direct order of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) – and he in turn will be humble, as humbleness is a sign of perfection.

You should organize and establish the various offices in the dergah so that in the absence of one the work is not interrupted and that the work be done by the order of rank.

It should be made clear that it is not so important how many asma you are given. What is important is continuity without interruption in the performance of the asma.

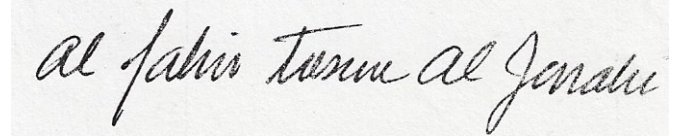
We have learned like this and you will transmit it this way, and it will continue until the end. You will inform everybody in America of all this, the ones who love us and the ones who seek. I am asking you this in front of these witnesses. It is their choice to accept it or not to accept it. You are my representative there; you are the one who brought us there; you are the one who brought me there. As you have taken hand from me, our people there will take hand from you. This is taking my hand; this is taking the hand of Hazrati Pir. You are to propose this to all the rest of, the khalifahs in the US. As I told you in the interpretation of the dream that was given to you, you may tell them Hazrati Pir's words that when one's shaykh passes away, the accursed Devil may cause one to say to oneself that one doesn't need another shaykh. The Devil is the shaykh of the one without a shaykh, and like him one risks rejection from the Presence of Allah, may Allah protect us.

I wonder if they know the greatness of the tariqat to which we belong. An example is enough. In this country, where Sufism was strongest, all dergahs are closed. Many shaykhs were imprisoned, even killed, but this dergah continued through the worst of conditions and increased in greatness. Just before you arrived, they arrested the shaykh of another tariqat. In times like these you yourself witnessed how thousands of people followed the crown of the Jerrahi's on Efendi's coffin, how the official authorities cleared streets for us and we were able to put Efendi in the ground under the same roof with Hazrati Pir – which is illegal to the point of being impossible – in a country under martial law; and all this made public on the front page of the newspaper. How well we are protected, how strong is our protector. for one and all!

Work hard for the people and with the people who will follow you. Take care of the people in other places. They must be visited, and they must be taught. Pray not only for the realization of what you think is right: pray for the realization of what is good for all of us. Allahu alam.

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I humbly offer my hand in the name of Sefer Efendi and Hazrati Pir to serve you in this world and in the Hereafter in my small way. This I do with the wish of Shaykh Sefer Efendi and inshallah with the approval of Allah Most High, His beloved Prophet (s.a.w.s.), and Hazrati Pir Muhammad Nureddin al-Jerrahi (q.s.).

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "al-fahir Turum al-Jerrahi" in a cursive, flowing script.