

al Qadin

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The practices for the seven leading names have been given by Pir Zia for the whole membership of the Sufi Order to participate in over successive lunar cycles, beginning on the new moon. These are the commentaries for the second name, al Qadir – the Powerful. The previous name was al Alim – the Knower.

### *The Seven Leading Names*

I would like to focus on one grouping of the 99 names, which have been highlighted by the classical Sufis as being especially important. They are the names which refer to aspects of the consciousness of God; so the Sufis have given them priority and have called them the *al asma al ayima al sabaha*, that is to say the seven leading names. There is a kind of hierarchy within the names in terms of the order of ontological precedence. Within that hierarchy these seven are considered to occupy a special position. At the Abode of the Message, we have been working with these names successively one after another for the last year. And I have composed instructions based on Murshid's teaching and Pir Vilayat's teaching and the teaching of the ancient Sufis for each of the names including practices to do relating to each of the names. I hope you will find these are names you can use in your own work. Most of them I think you will be familiar with.

*Zia Inayat Khan*



Of the seven leading names the third is Qadir, the Powerful.

Imagine, if you will, the incredible power which is the root of this created universe. Just as the eternal Life evolved as self-awareness, self-awareness exploded forth as a manifestation of unlimited potential, pure power. This manifestation of power is exemplified in the primal flaring forth, the big bang billions of years ago, which carved out the universe from the infinitude of the void through an explosion of unimaginable ferocity, originating from a single point, spreading out and filling reality with emergent energy, indescribable heat and light bursting forth with incredible enthusiasm. That is the heritage of each of us.

Our story is not only the story of our birth and life on this planet; it is also the story of the life of this planet, and the life of the sun and the galaxies and ultimately the onrush of energy out of the Unmanifest – a display of incredible passion: the zeal of the Divine for self-expression, unencumbered by constraint, almighty and omnipotent. Perhaps we have entertained a notion that God is limited in His/Her power because we see all of the tragedy around us, and we think that God must be constrained. Otherwise, God, being the perfection of what is good, would act to change things. How can we invoke God as omnipotent? But then, the Sufis remind us, the Necessary Being endures our endurance of the unendurable, not in impotence, but out of love for the possibilities of our becoming.

Our lack of power is always the result of our isolation from the truth of our being, our alienation, our identification with the small self which is just a fraction of our being. This could be illustrated in the example of a fierce thunderstorm. Perhaps you have had an experience of being in nature and suddenly the sky darkens and the thunderclouds roll in, and lightning is striking nearby, and you feel the whole landscape vibrating. Under those circumstances there are two choices: one is to experience oneself as separate from the storm; and if you do

that, then you are terrified and you are cowering, seeking shelter – you are overwhelmed by the power, because the power is outside of yourself. The alternative is to identify with the power of the storm, to internalize the power of the storm. Then you feel just the opposite, and then you find yourself emboldened and empowered. Each surge of lightning fills you with renewed magnetism. You thrill to the sound of the rain and the lightning.

That is a metaphor of our relationship with the Divine power. We are surrounded by the Divine power and its ferocious manifestations, and either we can cower in fear, or we can identify with this power and let it flow through us and fill us.

Murshid speaks about awakening power. He says, "I remember a Persian verse made by my murshid which relates to the self. 'When I feel that now I can make peace with myself, it finds time to prepare another attack.'" That is our condition. We think that our little faults, since they are small, are of no consequence, or we do not even think of them at all. But every little fault is a flag for the little self for its own dominion. In this way battling makes man the sovereign of the Kingdom of God. Very few can realize the great power in battling with and conquering the self. But what does man generally do? He says, "My poor self – it has to withstand the conflicts of this world. Should I also battle with the self?" So he surrenders his kingdom to his little self, depriving himself of the Divine power that is in his heart.

# Practices:

The practices associated with Qadr have to do with affirming the Divine power, seizing control of oneself, and asserting the will.

## Kalama

One practice which was given by Murshid to Murshida Martin is the Kalama – the affirmation of faith –

*La ilaha illa'llah  
wahdahu la sharika lah  
lahu'l-mulk wa lahu'l-hamd  
wa huwwa 'ala kulli shayin qad' r*

This means, "There is no God but God. In His unity he has no partner. To Him is dominion and for Him is all praise, and He is almighty

## Wazifa

*Ya Qadir (the powerful), ya Muqtadir (the potent)*

*Fikr: inhale Qadir, exhale Muqtadir*

*Ya Qahhar, ya Jabbar, ya Mutakabbir*

*Qahar* could be translated as "the Prevailer, the One Who Prevails." *Jabbar* is "the Compeller." *Muktakabir* is "the Majestic." The sense of majesty is always a consequence of the ability to prevail, to compel, to be in control of one's health.

## Walking Zikr

This is a very important practice that Murshid has given, in which I find tremendous benefit. It is the combination *Rasul – Maqbul*. *Maqbul* means "accepted". When you say *Rasul – Maqbul* you accept the Messenger. This can be done as a walking zikr, with the right foot forward – *Rasul*, left foot – *Maqbul*. To accept the Messenger means to accept the Message, and to devote yourself to the service of the Message, to align yourself with the spiritual hierarchy and

feel that in all circumstances in life, you have to represent the imperatives of the spiritual hierarchy. You have accepted the Messenger. It is a word that you find, actually, in revivalist Christian groups: Have you accepted Jesus? It's a very powerful idea: Have you come to a state of conviction in which you have accepted the compulsion of the soul to reaffirm its covenant with the Divine through alignment with the spiritual hierarchy?

If you are aligned to that power, it gives you great power, because when you are acting on behalf of your own private interest, you cannot expect help from outside. But when you are fulfilling a purpose that is greater than yourself, then all power that there is is there for you.

## *Sadhana*

To really attune to Qadr means to activate your willpower. To do that it is not enough to repeat a wazifa or have thoughts about the subject. You really have to make changes in your life. You have to overcome precisely what is most difficult to overcome. That always means habits, and especially addictions. Because worse than the toxin that is associated with the addiction is just the fact of being addicted. One loses control of oneself; one is not self-sufficient; one is reliant on something else.

One sadhana is fasting. Fasting is a wonderful practice to do. That means not eating or drinking from sunrise to sunset. This could be done one day per week as an exercise in will. It's more than an exercise in will, but it's also that.

Another would be to wake up in the middle of the night for midnight prayers – wake up, splash cold water on your face.

Another sadhana would be to master one uncontrolled and undesired habit. Examine your life and just notice what is the one habit that you just do by compulsion. It's not that you want to do it – you know that it's not in your interest – but you just do it because you have no control. So take control and master one such habit.

## *Muhasiba*

Examine the interrelationship of compassion, wisdom and power in your life. These three qualities need to be in balance. Any one of the three without the other two will be destructive – compassion, wisdom and power.



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