

Purification of the Subtle Centers
Dhikr-i Jarūb (Zikr of the Broom)

by Pir Zia

Sufism offers a technology for working with the subtle centers which are embedded within the body. These are called in Sufism the *Laṭā'if*, which is the plural form, singular *Laṭīfa*. These are the subtle organs that exist within the body, each corresponding from the outermost to the innermost. Together, they form two axes which cross at the heart. And so the centers of the heart form the crux of the cross of the human body and the place of ultimate integration...

Our outermost level of manifestation is represented by our physical body, which itself, as Pir Vilayat has so often described, is embedded within our life field, within which it is configured. Scientists now verify the existence of the electromagnetic field within which the body is formed and reformed, in the cases for example, of amphibians whose tails might be severed and re-grown within the matrix of the electromagnetic field. So our body has a subtle body to which it corresponds, and this subtle body may outlast the physical body which is formed within it. Whereas the physical body is less malleable, the subtle body is more immediately responsive to changes in our attunement. Through meditation, we may participate in our resurrection, in the configuration of the subtle body which corresponds to and outlasts this physical body.

The Sufis refer to this as the *Qalab*, the “mold,” because it is the mold within which our physical body is formed. The first subtle center is the *Laṭīfa Qalabīya* at the base of the spine. This subtle center relates to our embodiment, and because it is the outermost, it has the tendency to collect the detritus of all the subtle centers and be the last filter. To access to inner realities, this center needs cleaning as it takes in very crude energy and stores lethargy, and physical inertia... Each center is purified and energized by the influx of energy from the next higher center, so that ultimately all the centers must be made in alignment.

The next *Laṭīfa* is the *Laṭīfa nafsīya*, which comes for the word *nafs*, which means the self, the ego — and also means “breath.” In its crudest state, it is the *Nafs al-Ammara*, the primitive, demanding, domineering, highly constrained and deluded self. It develops through acts of consciousness. The next stage is the *Nafs al-Lawwama*, the self-critical, the repentant, compassionate self. The higher self is the *Nafs al-Mutmaīna*, the self which is tranquil and peaceful. The *nafs* represents our psychosomatic identity, our body-mind complex. The issues that correspond to our image of ourselves have their place within the domain of this center. This center is accessed within the body in the abdomen just below the navel, two finger breadths below the navel (comparable to the *hara* in Zen Buddhism).

Now we come to the third *Laṭīfa*, the *Laṭīfa Qalbīya* from the word *qalb*, the heart. That is the heart in the left breast which corresponds to the physical organ of the heart, the cardiac center. Pir-o-Murshid says that the mind is the surface of the heart and the heart is the depth of the mind... This is the domain of the unconscious explored by Freud and Jung, in which the deep themes of our lives are communicated in the way of symbols.

This is the plane that the Sufis describe as *Alam al-Mithal*, the world of the symbol, the world of the image. The world of the image is a *barzakh*, that is to say an intermediary zone between the sensible — what we perceive with our senses — and the intelligible — abstract objects of contemplation. Between these two levels of cognition transpires the image, and it is here that bodies are spiritualized and spirits are embodied. The *nafs* relate to our biography while the *qalb*, the domain of the heart is working with our mythology, the symbols and myths which underlie our experience and give meaningfulness to it.

Now as we come deeper, we come to the *Laṭīfa Ruḥiyya*, from *Ruḥ*, the spirit. God breathed the divine *Ruḥ*, the divine spirit, into Adam and Eve, which gave life to them. So the creative act is a manifestation of the divine spirit breathed into us. It is our pristine condition at the level of what the Sufis call *Malakut*, the angelic plane. We exist simultaneously on every plane, so not only do we pass through the angelic plane but at a certain level we continue to exist as an angel...If you gaze into the eyes of a newborn child and witness the innocence, the purity and wonderment, you can reawaken in yourself this state which has never really been lost. That pristine purity remains within us and can be accessed. It can never be marred by the ugliness of the world. In the body, this center is located in the right breast.

And now we come to the *Laṭīfa Sīrriyya* (from the word *sīrr*, the “secret”). As we progress through these stages each successive level becomes more abstract and therefore more difficult to describe in words. The *sīrr* corresponds to the plane of *Jabarut*, the celestial sphere beyond the sphere of the angels...So at this level, consciousness is reabsorbed in its ground as pure intelligence, consciousness without object. A luminous presence. This *Laṭīfa* has its subtle organ in the center of the chest and corresponds in yoga to the *Anāhatā chakra*.

Proceeding still deeper we come to the *Laṭīfa Khafīyya*, which corresponds to the level of *Alam al-Lahut*. We are retracing the process of our becoming, retracing our origins. In the initial stage of the divine creativity, there is a manifestation of the divine archetypes, the qualities. The divine being does not manifest randomly or chaotically but the creative energy flows through preordained channels. The *Sifat*, the Divine Names, are essential archetypes. From these archetypes, the qualities of the cosmos arise. In our own personality also arise these qualities. This dimension represents the seedbed of our being. These are the seeds that we activate as we develop our personality. This subtle center has its place in the human body in the third eye center, *Ajna chakra*, where the eyebrows meet.

Now we come to the transcendent pole of our being, the *Laṭīfa Ākhfāyya*, corresponding to the plane of *Hahut*, the Absolute, the essence, eternal, silent, infinite, beyond description, totally transcendent, without individuality, differentiation, duality, or boundary. Pure being! This level, this dimension can be accessed at the crown center, which in yoga is the *Sahasrara chakra* at the top and toward the back of the head, in the fontanel.

Practice: Zikr of the Broom

This has been a review of the *Latā'if*. Now we'll put this theory into practice. This practice comes from the *Naqshbandīyya* lineage of Sufism. It is important to sit with the back straight not leaning against something. I prefer the kneeling position, but you may also sit cross-legged. We are working with the breath. The breath is the current which flows through and unites all seven levels of our being and it is the breath which unites our experience as a single reality. The breath is the secret of the two divine Names, what is called '*Isṁ-i Dhāt*, the essential Name *Allah*, and the name *Hu*. The *h* in *Allah* and in *Hu* represents the breath. *Allah* is the breath, the breath of all breaths. In invoking the name *Allah*, the final letter is *h* and in *Hu* we begin with the *h*. So we take the names as silent invocation, inhaling "*Allah*," exhaling "*Hu*."

Now be aware of the base of the spine, the *Laṭīfa Qalabīya* and from there, inhaling with intensity of concentration, draw the breath up to the *Nafs* center in the abdomen, just below the navel. As you exhale "*Hu*," the energy of the awakened *Nafs* is channeled downward to the base of the spine, purifying and magnetizing the *Qalab*.

Now we redirect the breath, inhaling "*Allah*" from the *Nafs* in the abdomen...to the *Qalb* in the left breast which becomes activated and radiates a red light. We exhale "*Hu*," drawing the energy of the *Qalb* into the *Nafs* which is purified and magnetized.

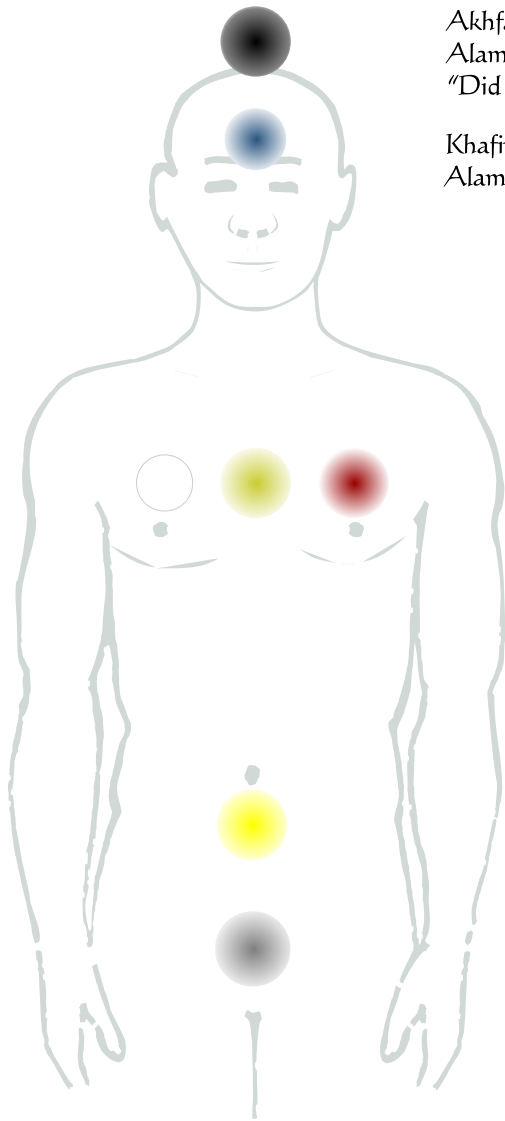
We redirect the breath, inhaling "*Allah*" into the *Ruḥ* in the right breast, which awakens and radiates white light, exhaling *Hu* charging the heart center, with the magnetizing energy of the *Ruḥ*, purifying and magnetizing the heart.

Once more we redirect the breath inhaling "*Allah*" into the *Sīrr* at the center of the chest which awakens and glows with a golden green light, exhaling "*Hu*," purifying and re-magnetizing the *Ruḥ* with the light of the *Sīrr*.

Inhaling "*Allah*" upward into the third eye, the *Khafīya*, which opens and radiates an indigo blue light, exhaling "*Hu*," drawing the light of the third eye down into the *Sīrr*, purifying and re-magnetizing the *Sīrr*.

Once again we redirect the breath upward, up from the *Khafīya*, inhaling "*Allah*" into the crown center. *Ākhfa*, which opens up and radiates black light, and we exhale "*Hu*," channeling the light of the *Ākhfa* into the third eye, purifying and re-magnetizing the *Khafīya*.

The name of this practice is *Dhikr-i Jarūb*, the *dhikr* of the broom. It is a *dhikr* of sweeping; there is a sweeping motion of the breath over the subtle centers. It is a very powerful practice for purification.



Akhfa, The Deeply Hidden. Color is black.

Alam al-Hahut. Beyond mind.

"Did I pass through life? No, it is life that passed through me."

Khafiyya, The Hidden. Color is indigo/blue.

Alam al-Lahut.

Ruḥ, the Spirit. Color is white.

Alam al-Malakut. The "Body of Joy," Anandamayakosh
The "Immaculate State."

Sirriyya, The Secret. Color is Gold-green.

Alam al-Jabarut. The soul is simply the act of perpetual
self-realization. Equivalent to the Anahata Chakra.

Qalbiyya, the Heart. Color is red.

Alam al-Mithal.

Latifa Nafsiyya, The Breath. Color is yellow.

Qulub or Qalabiyya, The Mold. Color is gray.
Equivalent to the Muladhara Chakra.

The Laṭā'if as given by Pir Ziā Inayat-Khan

from Pir-o-Murshid Inayat
Khan, and the Chishti and
Naqshbandi Sufis