

The Cycle of Ziraat

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Preface

For the past 44 years it has been my privilege to work the land as a farmer. Hazrat Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan's initiatory stages of Ziraat hold a particular resonance for me, as the activities they metaphorically represent are deeply ingrained in my practical everyday life. This paper aims to look at each stage of initiation in light of Murshid's teachings.

Because Murshid founded Ziraat late in his life, the teachings specific to Ziraat are incomplete. We don't know how Murshid would have augmented Ziraat further. This has left his mureeds to glean what they are able from his broader teachings to begin to round out the richness of Ziraat. Perhaps the fact that Murshid incompletely developed Ziraat is a calling to each of us to be participants in the discovery of Ziraat's mysteries. One's approach naturally varies according to what is meaningful and applicable in one's life. What I have written, and the quotes that I have selected, live within me. Ultimately, all one can do is offer up one's perspective in humbleness and gratitude.

Introduction

Plougher, Harrower, Sower, Reaper, Thresher, Garnerer, and Farmer make up the progression of the first seven Ziraat initiations. There are times when the challenges and opportunities one faces in life call for plowing and at other times, other aspects of the Work. Both in our external endeavors and our internal evolution one not only finds oneself at a particular station, but one can recognize that this station is part of a larger cycle. By recognizing the stage of the cycle that one is experiencing one learns to make the best use of them, allowing one to flow with the cycle rather than denying or fighting it. These cycles often build one upon another creating an evolutionary process so that something is gained from the experience of each preceding cycle, allowing one to deepen the sense of meaning and purpose in one's life. One sees this clearly in nature, as species adapt due to the conditions of the previous year opening the way to be better prepared to fulfill their potential in the years to come.

Plowing

As with any cycle there is really no beginning and no end, but plowing is a good place to start. An experienced farmer before putting the plow to the earth understands that the rhythms of the cosmos, manifested by the seasons, the moon, the planets, and the weather determine whether it is the right time to plow. To ignore these rhythms bring

failure. To plow respecting them brings success. Similarly when one wishes to begin a new initiative, one needs to be clear whether the rhythm is in sync with one's desire.

What does it mean to plow? Murshid talks of removing the remnants of past harvest from the field of the mind.

"Before a field can be sown with fresh seed, everything previously sown there must be cleared away, the field left empty and bare to the purifying rains and winds of God. But even that is not enough, for underneath the brown earth, deep down and hidden from sight, there may be many old roots and stems of a past Harvest." (1)

By plowing one releases that which binds one from going forward. One turns under what is seen or known, to decompose, while exposing that which is hidden, to the surface to be dealt with. To cling to old patterns and old thoughts leaves no room for a new perspective or insight to be born and develop. Without first plowing future harvests are impossible or at least greatly diminished.

Murshid states that not only what is deemed to be bad needs to be purified, but that which one has deemed to be good as well.

"The process of purification does not mean that all which is desirable should remain and the undesirable be thrown out. It means that every substance that is to be purified must be purified of all that is foreign to it; in other words, of that which does not belong to it." (2)

I can say that from my experience as a farmer that plowing an old crop under brings a mixture of emotion. One remembers with fondness the beauty of the crop prior to harvest, the bounty it provided, and all the work it took along the way. And at the same time there is a deep satisfaction in transforming a now bedraggled looking field into freshly plowed earth, making way for the next crop.

There is a sense of renunciation that comes with plowing. One must let go of one's attachment to the prior crop, not just its stubble, but the recollection of the beauty and bounty as well. Murshid says,

"It is the nature of life in the world that all things we become attracted to, in time become, not only ties, but burdens. If we consider life we see it is an eternal journey. The more one is loaded with burdens on one's shoulders, the more the journey becomes heavy. Think how the soul, whose constant desire is to go forward, is daily retained by the ties--continually more burdened. Therefore all the thinkers and wise who have come to the realization of life have taken renunciation as a remedy." (3).

One cannot renounce that which is not known, so through plowing we bring to the surface of our awareness that which needs to be analyzed and purified.

Murshid, in the Ziraat metaphor, has used plowing to connote the removal of obstacles or attachments from the field of our mind. He leaves the integration of our experiences to be represented by later stages of the cycle. Still I think it is important to be aware that even in plowing integration is occurring. In plowing we willingly return to the soil

all that was previous growing there. As these residues decompose, they transform into soil and the field is thereby enriched. But is only by letting go of what was, that this alchemy takes place.

Harrowing

Murshid describes harrowing as *“the finishing of that clearing process which began in the form of Ploughing”*. (4). The plow can only do the rudimentary turning of the soil. It takes a harrow to complete the task. The fields of our farm, unlike those referenced by Murshid, are naturally, and thankfully, free from stones and roots, so for us harrowing is primarily the process of breaking up any soil clods left by plowing, into a seedbed with a fine tilth. Nevertheless the metaphor applies, as at heart, what one is doing is readying the field of the mind to be able to accept the seed to be sown. Murshid counsels,

“The principal thing to attain happiness, is to purify one's mind from all things that disturb it and create inharmony. There are not only bad impressions which disturb the tranquility of mind, but there are many feelings of resentment and resistance against things which do not agree with one's own idea which disturb one's mind. The person who has some business to carry out, some profession to attend to, requires a tranquil mind, but especially the one who journeys on the spiritual path needs tranquility of mind most. Prayers, concentrations, meditations make no effect when the mind is not purified from all disturbances.” (5)

There are successive stages to harrowing. At first the field is uneven making the tractor ride over it rough, not unlike the feelings that might arise when initially taking stock of one's attachments. Murshid aptly gives the watchword for this initiatory stage as “courage”, for it takes fortitude to face ones limitations and attachments and vow to overcome them.

After several passes over the field with a harrow, the field begins to smooth and one's attention shifts to perfecting the seedbed. When the work is complete, one stands on the cusp between harrowing and sowing and in this shift, one enters a kemal state. The seedbed of the mind is prepared but the seed to be sown is yet unknown. The seedbed is perfect, but the future uncertain. Left in this state, the field will become infested with weed seed, destroyed in its usefulness.

Sowing

Before one can sow one must know what seed to plant. For every soil, every landscape, every climate there are certain crops appropriate for the environment. So in one's life there is a time when a certain initiative is the right one to take, whether that is an external activity or inner work. This is the time to become receptive to the Spirit of Guidance.

“It is the receptivity of our heart and the passivity of our mind, it is the eagerness, the thirst and hunger after truth, it is the direction of our whole life to that Ideal from who all light and truth come, that alone can bring to us truth and the knowledge of God. All knowledge of the

earth is as clouds covering the sun. It is the breaking of these clouds and the clearness of the sky, or in other words the purity of heart, which give the capacity for the knowledge of God. The question may be asked: Is any effort required for realizing the truth? The answer is: Yes, there is a work that one can do which is as the work of a farmer: it is to cultivate the heart. But where man makes a mistake is that, when he cultivates the heart, he wishes to sow the seed himself instead of leaving the sowing to God.”(6)

“The Spirit of Guidance is as the yeast which is used to make bread, to prepare humanity for the purpose for which it was created. The Spirit of Guidance is a plant that grows and blossoms when it receives response and care; and when it is watered by the rainfall of divine inspiration it blooms in the light of the Divine Sun. The Spirit of Guidance is the Light of God, which may be likened to a lantern that the farmer carries when walking on the farm in the darkness of night. The Spirit of Guidance is like a searchlight. Any object on which the searchlight is thrown, it shows clearly; so the Spirit of Guidance thrown upon any aspect of life gives one a keen insight into it. In the Spirit of Guidance one finds a living God active in the heart of every person. One who depends upon the Spirit of Guidance to guide his life is guided aright.” (7)

“When a person turns for guidance to God, to the inner Being, then all light and all knowledge are his for his guidance. “But,” people say, “how can we attach ourselves with the inner Being, so as to have that guidance?” When the mind is fixed upon anything, then the person becomes linked to that, a current is established between him and it. It may be called the guidance of God or the guidance of the self. If we look within, God is nearer to us than our mind and our body, because He is that life in which as is said in the Bible, we live and move and have our being. The soul has within it the inner faculty of guidance, pointing to the person what to do, which way to go.” (8)

When intuition is clear, guidance received, one knows what seed to plant, what to pursue. Then comes the momentous act of sowing the seed and making the prayer for the fulfillment of our desire. Murshid chose the watchword of hope for the initiatory stage of sowing, and a better watchword could not have been found. As in any initiation, one cannot know what lies ahead, but one can carry hope in one’s heart and mind that the harvest will be bountiful. Murshid states,

“The optimist can accomplish things without knowing how or why. Hope cannot be called sureness of certainty, but it is a feeling which, almost by its own force, may bring sureness and certainty”. (9)

Throughout history how many people have cast their very survival along with their seeds with only faith that the rains would come to germinate the seed and nourish the crop?

From Sowing to Reaping

Interestingly, Murshid assigns no initiatory levels between Sower and Reaper, though in the Ziraat dialogue and in Murshid’s other writings there are indications of the

worker's responsibilities and how one should best approach the task at hand. When one embarks upon a new endeavor, what attitude should be adopted?

"The mystic finds the secret of life by knowing how to make a plan according to what he wishes. However, he arrives at this stage by first giving up his plan. For a person who has no power over his plan, it is better to give it up into the hands of God. The more one depends upon the Maker of the plan, the more one is able to make it oneself. It is just like the mother who, as long as her little child cannot walk by itself and depends on holding her hand, does not allow the child to go alone. And even when she allows it to walk alone she holds her hands round it so that it may not fall. When a man takes his own responsibility into his hands, calling it free will, he loses, so to speak, that dependence on God which holds him and which makes God responsible. Therefore it is a saintly person who arrives at resigning himself to the will of God; and afterwards this may develop into his free will, which will then be the will of God. This is what marks the difference between the saintly character and the character of the master; the character of the saint is to be resigned fully to the will of God; and character of the master is to find the will of God in his own free will." (10)

In the Ziraat dialogue Murshid recognizes both of these inclinations. When the Experienced Farmer asks, "What raises the crops?" The worker replies, "The sun", indicating it is not the farmer who is doing the growing but God. But later in the dialogue the question is asked, "What does the Farmer do during the day?" To which the answer comes, "The Farmer works". Here the indication is that though the Farmer recognizes that it is the sun that raises the crops, he/she has a part to play, and that work when done rightly is the will of God.

As an occupational farmer I have become amused by having to answer the question repeatedly, "What do you grow?" It has become clear, in a very real sense, that I don't do any of the growing at all. All that I do is help create an environment where the elements of nature, the soil, the water, the sun, and the air will dance together effectively, and to do that well brings harmony to the atmosphere of the farm and all that grows there.

Yet to cultivate one's mind in order to bring a seed thought to fruition, there is work to be done through the power of concentration.

"The earth holds the seed, and the result is that a plant springs out and bears fruit. So with the heart; the heart holds the seed of thought, and there also a plant springs out and brings the fruit of fulfillment. But it is not only the thought, it is the power of holding the thought which is of very great importance. Therefore the factor of the heart, a factor which holds the thought, is of very great importance for the fulfillment of life's purpose. Often a person says: 'I try my best, but I cannot concentrate my mind; I cannot make my mind still'. It is true, but it is not true that he tries his best. 'Best' does not end there. 'Best' really brings the purpose to its fulfillment." (11)

Reaping

“The Sufis say, 'God is Love'. That is true, but the Love was not sufficient. The Love had to make an object to love in order to see its own nature, to experience its own character, to fathom its own mystery, to find its own joy. For instance, the seed has in it the leaf and the flower and the fruit; but the fulfillment of the purpose of that seed is that it is put in the ground, that it is watered, that a seedling springs up and is reared by the sun; it brings forth its flowers and fruits. This is the fulfillment of that seed which already contained in itself, the fruit and flower. A person who does not see the reason of all this, is in the seed state; his mind is in the state of a seed which has not yet germinated, which has not yet produced its seedling, which has not yet experienced the springing of the plant. No sooner does the soul begin to unfold and experience in life the purpose which is hidden within itself, than it begins to feel the joy of it; it begins to value the privilege of living; it begins to appreciate everything; it begins to marvel at everything. For in every experience, good or bad, it finds a certain joy, and that joy is in the fulfillment of life's purpose. That joy is not only experienced in pleasure but even in pain, not only in success but also in failures; not only in the cheerfulness of the heart but even in the breaking of the heart there is a certain joy hidden. For there is no experience which is worthless; and specially for that soul who is beginning to realize this purpose, there is no moment wasted in life. For under all circumstances and in all experiences that soul is experiencing the purpose of life.” (12)

With this realization one's perspective radically changes from ordinary thinking. One recognizes the elegance of how the One and Only Being, through our life experiences, conspires to bring us to ever closer into the arms of the Beloved. There is an acceptance and appreciation of the outcome of all of one's endeavors as one recognizes that one's experience is part of the fulfillment of one's purpose. Murshid chose the watchword “Joy” for reaping. When the soul is attuned to one's life purpose, whatever one's experience in life, whatever one reaps, one is joyful, for one glorifies in the participation of God's unfoldment in life.

Threshing

The process of threshing actually consists of two actions, threshing and winnowing. The first breaks apart the grain from the chaff and the second separates the two from each other. In Murshid's day threshing was a difficult job, as most folks did not have available to them the new machines being developed to combine (thresh and winnow) the grain. While in Eastern Tibet in 2014, among Tibetan nomads, I happened to be there during threshing season. The woman did this work up on the flat roofs of their winter homes. They would take a sheaf of barley and with a stick beat the grain from the stalks and chaff. This was not easy work and Murshid aptly gave the watchword “strength” for the initiatory stage of threshing.

But what does threshing mean in the context of Ziraat? Again we are left to imagine what Murshid was referring to, as there are no written lessons of this stage. After the reaping, one must ascertain the quality of the harvest in order to know how it is to be used. What is of value? One must thresh.

“Life is such that when there are two things before our view, it is demanded of us to lose one of them. It depends upon man's discrimination what to renounce and for what, whether to renounce Heaven for the world, or the world for Heaven, wealth for honor, or honor for wealth. Whether to renounce things momentarily precious for everlasting things or everlasting things for things momentarily precious. The nature of life is such that it always shows two things.

Many times it is a great puzzle to choose between two things. Very often one thing is at hand and the other further from reach. It is a puzzle to renounce the one or how to get to the other. Very often man lacks willpower to renounce. It does not require only discrimination between two things, but also willpower to do what we think to do.” (13)

And how does one go about choosing what is right?

“You must remember that God never misleads His followers. Those who follow the advice of the God within are always protected by God, for their affairs God Himself is responsible. Only, what is necessary is an open discrimination for what you wish to do. You must ask your self, “Is it my real feeling? Is it telling me to do it? Is my sense of justice satisfied with it? Is my reasoning in accordance with it? Is my deepest feeling in harmony with it? Is there any conflict with myself or is it all smooth?” If all is smooth within all is smooth without, the way is open, it is all clear. Then you only have to have faith, trust and courage to go forward in the strength of the goodness of God. And remember, it is not your strength, or your experience, or your knowledge that can give your success. No, it is God.” (14)

From this one knows that from the outcome of any experience one can glean exactly what is necessary for one's unfoldment. What is required is that one be attentive to what has been reaped and to discern what has value for one's next step. This requires the strength of faith to listen and follow one's inner guidance.

After discovering how to best utilize the portion of the harvest meant for oneself the question remains; what about the portion of the crop that one sees no apparent benefit in utilizing? How will that portion of harvest be used, for nothing lies outside of God, and everything therefore everything has a purpose.

In practical farming after the plumpest seed has been separated for next year's seed and this year's human consumption, there is further sorting of the grain. The medium sized grain is for the feeding the livestock, the smallest and cracked grain is for the poultry, and finally the chaff is just fine food for the compost heap. Here are Murshid's words.

“Everything has its purpose, but knowledge of the purpose makes us able to use it to the best advantage.” (15)

As one recognizes that everything and every experience has its purpose, one naturally cultivates an attitude of gratefulness no matter how difficult an experience might be. And this brings us to Garnering, whose watchword is “thanksgiving”.

Garnering

“O Thou, the Sustainer of our bodies, hearts, and souls, Bless all that we receive in thankfulness. Amen” (16)

The sorted harvest is now to be stored. Nothing is wasted, as everything has its purpose. Everything adds to the experience of the One and Only Being.

“The reason is that there is a mind behind all minds; that there is a heart which is the source of all hearts, and that there is a Spirit which collects and accumulates all the knowledge that every living being has had. No knowledge or discovery that has ever been made is lost. It all accumulates and collects in that mind as an eternal reservoir. This is what is recognized by the seers as the divine mind.” (17)

From the station of the Garnerer one realizes that all one does, all one thinks, all one experiences is added to the Divine Mind. And from this storehouse all wisdom and all inspiration can be found.

“It is natural that inspiration should come from a being living just now on earth or from someone who has passed; yet the most profound inspiration comes always from the divine mind, and to God alone the credit is due. Even if an inspiration comes through the mind of a person living on earth or through a soul who has passed on to the other side, it still has come from God, for all knowledge and wisdom belong to God.” (18)

Farming

The seventh initiation in Ziraat is the initiation of Farmer. The Farmer carries an understanding of the first six stages, and therefore has developed a clearer sense of the cyclic nature of Life on the Farm.

In the Ziraat Dialogue there is a sequence of questions and responses relating to the rhythm of a farmer's activity. For instance it is asked, “At what time of day is sowing done?” And “When does the Farmer take the midday rest?” A good farmer knows that Life's rhythms must be respected and that by harmonizing with those rhythms success is likely.

“Every aspect of the life of an individual and the life of the world has its cycle. In the life of an individual the period from his birth to his death is the first part, and from death to assimilation in the Infinite the second part. The sub-cycles in man's life are from infancy to youth, where one part ends and from youth to old age, which is the close. There are again under-cycles: infancy, childhood, youth, maturity, senility; and there are the cycles of man's rise and fall.

So there is a cycle of the life of the world, and the cycle of the creation of man and his destruction, the cycles of the reign of races and nations, and the cycles of time, such as a year, a month, a week, day, and hour.

The nature of each of these cycles has three aspects, the beginning, the culmination and the end, which are named Uruj, Kemal, and Zeval; like for example, new moon, full moon, and waning moon; sunrise, zenith and sunset. These cycles, sub-cycles and under-cycles, and the

three aspects of their nature, are divided and distinguished by the nature and course of light.” (19)

The Farmer also knows where the harvest is stored and how to utilize it.

“The Spirit of Guidance in other words may be called the divine mind; and as the human mind is completed after its coming on earth, so the divine mind becomes completed after manifestation. In fact, the Creator's mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the divine mind; therefore, the divine mind has the knowledge of all beings. It is a storehouse of perfect wisdom. It is the soul of Christ, and the spirit of prophecy. Intuition, inspiration, vision, and revelation, all come from the same source whence every kind of revelation comes.” (20)

Where the preceding stations were concerned with a specific task, the Farmer has developed an overview, allowing the Farmer to see how it all fits together, how the Farm is really a unified whole.

“What is the length of the Farm? As long as time. What is the breadth of the farm? As broad as space.” (21)

Conclusion

Embedded in Murshid's teachings are all the clues one needs to make sense of one's life, to see how one's existence fits into the cosmic plan. In every moment of life one participates in this, sometimes consciously, sometimes not. The stations of Ziraat are one tool for bringing to our awareness how to approach life and ultimately how to discover our purpose.

“Kabir, the great poet of India says, 'Life is a field and you are born to cultivate it. And if you know how to cultivate this field you can produce anything you like. All the need of your life can I be produced in this field. All that your soul yearns after and all you need is to be got from the field, if you know how to cultivate it and how to reap the fruit.' But if this opportunity is only studied in order to make the best of life by taking all that one can take and by being more comfortable, that is not satisfying. We must enrich ourselves with thought, with that happiness which is spiritual happiness, with that peace which belongs to our soul, with that liberty, that freedom, for which our soul longs; and attain to that higher knowledge which breaks all the fetters of life and raises our consciousness to look at life from a different point of view. Once a person has realized this opportunity he has fulfilled the purpose of Life. “ (22)

Yet, this is not a selfish endeavor. When Murshid speaks of the Message he makes clear its scope and our role in it.

“It is for the benefit of humanity and for the well-being of the world. What does it matter if we work and others become known, or if we sow and others reap the harvest? It is our work and our mission to sow and to leave the harvest to others to gather.” (23)

So even as Ziraat can be taken as a means for our personal realization, so too it can be seen as the process of the Message cyclically coming to humanity. Murshid indicates in the previous quote that it is now time for Sowers to sow the seeds of the Message. And that, in time, those seeds will take root, grow, and become ripe for harvest.

Further Murshid reminds us that this work, this awakening of humanity, ultimately makes God conscious of God's self.

"The reason for all manifestation is that manifestation is God's nature. By this he obtains His satisfaction through the fulfillment of the purpose of the whole creation. But God's satisfaction is not something He is only conscious of; it is something which belongs to Him but is brought to fulfillment. Joy is something which belongs to us, but it is aroused by a certain emotion, a certain action; so this whole creation, which is an action, brings to God the satisfaction for which it was created. It does not bring anything new to God; it only makes Him conscious of what He is." (24)

Footnotes

All quotes from Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

- (1) The Ziraat Papers, Method of Ploughing.
- (2) The Ziraat Lessons, Lesson Four.
- (3) HIK Works, Social Gathekas, Social Gatheka Number 29, Renunciation, p. 114.
- (4) The Ziraat Papers, The Method of Harrowing.
- (5) Gatha II, Taqwau Taharat, Everyday Life, Number 5, Purification of the Mind.
- (6) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (8) Sufi Teachings, The Privilege of Being Human, VII Truth, p. 1518
- (7) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (9) The Unity of Religious Ideals, The Spiritual Hierarchy, The Spirit of Guidance, 1, p. 1652.
- (8) HIK Works, Class for Mureeds VII. Inner Guidance pp. 3013-3014.
- (9) Gatha I, Tasawwuf Metaphysics, Number 3, Hope.
- (10) Message Volume XIII, Sufi Teachings, Part II. Destiny and Free Will, p.137.
- (11) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (2) The Mysticism of Sound, Cosmic Language, VIII Will, p. 520.
- (12) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (1) The Inner Life, 1 – 4 The Purpose of Life, XII Purpose of Creation, p. 371.
- (13) HIK Works, Social Gathekas, Social Gatheka 29 – Renunciation, p. 115.
- (14) Sangatha I, Tasawwuf – Metaphysics.
- (15) The Complete Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Nirtan, Aphorisms, #1613, p. 193.
- (16) The Complete Sayings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Gayan, Gayatri, Nazar, p. 58.
- (17) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (4) Mental Purification, XX Insight (2), P. 894.
- (18) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (2) The Mysticism of Sound, Cosmic Language, XIII Inspiration, p. 541.
- (19) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (1) The Way of Illumination, Some Aspects of Sufism, The Masters, p. 245.

- (20) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (9) The Unity of Religious Ideals, The Spirit of Guidance, p. 1651.
- (21) The Ziraat Papers, The Ziraat Dialogue.
- (22) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (6) The Alchemy of Happiness, Life, An Opportunity. Page 1156.
- (23) HIK Works, Gathekas, Gatheka 29 – Our Sacred Task: The Message, p.53.
- (24) HIK Works, The Message Volumes, (5) Spiritual Liberty, The Phenomenon of the Soul, III Manifestation (2). pp. 989-990.

Addendum

Zikr-i Ziraat

This is a zikr that came to me based on the first 6 initiatory stages of Ziraat.

This is a rather involved zikr with a somewhat complicated series of concentrations. I recommend performing it quite slowly so that one can attune to each stage. As one begins to feel the flow of the zikr one can speed it up, if desired. When I originally introduced this zikr I spent quite some time familiarizing those present to the initiatory stages plowing through garnering.

The Ziraat "watchwords" for each initiatory stage are underlined.

Plowing – La – Head moves from left shoulder to right shoulder.

Plowing rids the mind of attachments both "good" and "bad" from past experience, and allows them to decompose so they are no longer obstacles for the next cycle. Improper plowing will have its effect for years. What stands in the way for you? Are you ready to plow it under? This is difficult work and toil is an apt watchword.

Harrowing – ilaha – Head moves from right shoulder to zenith.

The ground is rough after plowing. Successive harrowing breaks large clods into finer and finer particles, smoothing the field of one's mind so that one is prepared to receive a new dispensation of inspiration. Without proper tilth the seed will not find accommodation to sprout and grow. This is time to purify yourself of thoughts and habits that interfere with readying the mind to receive new seed. It takes courage to let go of expectations of the future or attachments to the past. As the head reaches the zenith, feel completely immaculate and receptive.

Sowing – illa – Head moves from zenith down to solar plexus.

Within the seed lies the potentiality of our divine inheritance. The sun, the earth, the wind, the water, the accumulation of all past generations experience is there. In sowing we receive the divine seed, in a particular way uniquely suited for our unfoldment. Allah plants an aspect of the divine nature in our being. The totality has necessarily and voluntarily limited itself in order to become a unique expression that is perfect for us at this moment. What is being sown in you at this time? What feels as though it wants to emerge? Experience hope in the sowing.

Reaping – *'llah* – *Head moves from solar plexus to zenith.*

The seed germinates, grows, comes to fruition, and is harvested. In this comes the expression of joy and fulfillment. The natural limits of an environment allow the plant to express the potential of the seed only partially, BUT it is manifested in that way for the first time. The experience and unfoldment of our being is an evolution of the One Being. What is germinating, growing, and coming to fruition in your life at this time? Feel the joy of the harvest.

Threshing – *pause in words of the zikr* - *No movement. Head stays at zenith.*

Any experience contains a variety of lessons and outcomes. Some have obvious usefulness, some less so. In threshing we use discrimination, so we can best glean from this experience and know how to apply the wisdom gained in the future. What are the lessons gained from a recent experience/harvest in your life? Can you see how those lessons may be useful in the future? It takes commitment and strength to do this work.

Garnering – *Hu* - *Head moves from the zenith to heart.*

We must take care of the “good seed (that) is more valuable than gold”. With thanksgiving the harvest is placed in God’s storehouse. Our heart is full with the privilege of participation in Life. We know that by looking into the “barn” of our heart we may find all that we need.

Fikr: Exhale: La ilaha
Inhale: illa 'llah
Hold: Hu

