

al-Uwaysiān

Hazrat Moulana Shah Maghsoud is a 20th century Sufi and one of the members of the caravan of the Uwaysi Robe. Safa Ali Michael Newman, an American student of two students of Hazrat Maghsoud, and himself under the Robe of the Uwaysi, writes the following in his book "The Gift of the Robe": "For Sufis following the Uwaysi '*mashrab*' (style or way of belief), no knowledge can be received except from the heart of their inner teacher, who is a mirror of the divine light, nor can knowledge be understood except in the realm of the heart. As Uways himself said, 'Be with your heart.' Indeed, if we carefully study the way of the Sufis and the principles of Sufism, we can see how the method of Uways, the receiving of knowledge in the heart as understanding, is the only way to be a Sufi. All Sufis, whether they call themselves Uwaysi or not, have become knowledgeable only by receiving the knowledge in their hearts by the Divine guidance of an unseen teacher. A Sufi receives this guidance even if he or she has a physical teacher."

Thus, even today, a major Sufi Order, the Uwaysi, still believes in the "unseen teacher."

Excerpted from: [TRANSMISSION](#) by Abdullah Muzaffer (Laurence Galian)

Silsilah literally means “chain.” It is a key term in the vocabulary of Sufism and Ṣūfī orders (*ṭuruq*, sing. *ṭarīqah*), designating a spiritual lineage and chain of transmission of both mystical knowledge and authority. This chain connects an individual who studies under a particular Ṣūfī master to his spiritual forefathers and to the eponymous founders of the order, and then further on to Prophet Muhammad.

The term *silsilah* has slightly different connotations than *ṭarīqah*, depending on the usage of the latter. *Ṭarīqah* may refer to the broader Ṣūfī spiritual path (often assimilated with the word *ṭarīq*, “way”), to a particular Ṣūfī order (e.g., *ṭarīqah-i Naqshbandīyah*), or to the mystical practice and methodology of a particular path (e.g., *ṭarīqah-yi rābiṭah*, or method of establishing a spiritual connection with the guide). In the second case (referring to a Ṣūfī order), *silsilah* can either be used synonymously with this meaning of *ṭarīqah* or, taken in a more narrow sense, may be seen as one feature of a *ṭarīqah*. In the third case (methodology), however, a particular *ṭarīqah* may be handed down through a *silsilah*. The fact that the terms *ṭarīqah* and *silsilah* were once (and in certain regions, still are) used synonymously likely indicates that many of the eponymous founders of Ṣūfī orders did not originally intend to found an order or method.

Most lineages connect themselves to the Prophet through his son-in-law, the fourth caliph ‘Alī, who began to be popularly associated with the esoteric understanding of the Muslim tradition. This conception drew ‘Alid loyalties into an *ahl al-sunnah* paradigm and created a space for these in popular practice, exemplified by the songs in praise of ‘Alī that are a part of every South Asian Ṣūfī *qawwālī* performance. Other lineages create links through the first and second caliphs Abū Bakr (in the case of the Naqshbandīyah) and ‘Umar (as does the Rifā‘īyah) or through early Ṣūfīs of the ninth and tenth centuries. Two of the key figures of the latter group are Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 910) and Abū Yazīd Bisṭāmī (d. ca. 874).

A lineage is not bound by time or space, and there can be initiatory linkages between individuals who were not alive at the same time. In the Şūfī tradition, spiritual initiation can occur through the spirits of earlier masters or through the figure of al-Khaḍīr (al-Khiḍr), the legendary “green man” who serves as a spiritual guide in the Muslim exegetical and literary tradition. Initiation that transcends historical and physical boundaries is known as Uwaysī, named after Uways al-Qaranī, a legendary or semi-legendary figure of the time of the Prophet who was initiated by him through a dream. Uwaysīs often claim to have been initiated directly by the Prophet himself, and one can even find references to entire Uwaysī lineages.

Excerpted from: Ziad, Homayra. “Silsilah.” In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. John L. Esposito, editor. New York. Oxford University Press. 2009.

Sayyidina Shah Bahaudin Naqshband al-Uwaysi al-Bukhari received the silent dhikr from the spiritual presence (*ruhaniyya*) of Khwaja Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani. He did not meet with him physically because there were five shaikhs between them in the Golden Chain. Similarly Sayyidina Abul Hasan al-Kharaqani took spiritual guidance and initiation in the Naqshbandi Order from the spiritual presence of Bayazid Bistami.

In this form of spiritual transmission, the spirits meet in the world called *alam al-arwah* (the world of spirits) which is beyond *alam al-ajsam* (the material plane). Whoever takes knowledge through spirituality from a deceased Master in the Naqshbandi Way, is called both Uwaisi and Naqshbandi. That spiritual connection is as powerful and effective as the physical connection.

The sign of the Favor of Allah Almighty and Exalted on his servant is to authorize one of His saints to uplift that servant to the Divine Presence. That is why many saints who came in previous times were guides for those who came after through this spiritual (Uwaysi) connection. It is known that many saints have been under the guidance and training of prophets and other saints that lifted them up.

Excerpted from: "The 'Uwaysi' Transmission of Spiritual Knowledge"

<http://www.naqshbandi.org/topics/uwaysi.htm>

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