

Knighthood and Kinship Activities

Pir Zia, Season of the Rose 2017

The Knighthood of Purity was formally established on September 13, 2010, the 100th anniversary of Hejerat Day. It was inspired by hints given by Murshid in his teachings and by the formal initiation on Hejerat Day 1926 of four women as Knights of Purity (*Sahahba us-Safas*) and eight others as Heralds (*Naqibs*). Murshid was trained in the ancient tradition of chivalry called futuwah by his murshid Abu Hashim Madani.

Since the establishment of the Knighthood of Purity, 722 people including mureeds of the different Hazrati Orders and others who are not mureeds have signed up to do the practice of the Herald. Of those, 149 have completed working with the 40 rules which takes a minimum of 4 years, 4 months and 20 days. And 102 have received the accolade of the knight in a ceremony devised by Pir Zia and Shaikh ul-Mashaik Mahmood Khan.

Murshid established the Sufi Movement as a world-wide movement to spread the Message of love, harmony and beauty. The Universal Worship affirms the underlying unity of religious traditions and the Brotherhood/Kinship reminds us of the unity of humanity across many perceived boundaries, one single family in the parenthood of God. The Healing Order reconnects humanity to the source of health, our relationship with our ideal. And the Esoteric School is for seeking souls ready to awaken. Ziraat was added to deepen our relationship with nature and to instill a sense of purpose through the metaphor of planting and cultivating the seed of our desires. What role does the Knighthood, the tradition of futuwah, have to play in this wide vision?

Murshid was initiated into the tradition of futuwah by his murshid as a separate and parallel line of transmission to his initiation in the Chishti lineage. While the Esoteric School trains the mureed in the discipline of the inner life, it is also a training of the nafs. The Knighthood carries the training of the nafs a step further by emphasizing the noble path of living up to one's ideal in life. The Knighthood complements the practice of zikr, the forgetting of self, by challenging habits of self unconsciously acquired through life's experience. The path of futuwah reinstates the primacy of conscience which has been compromised by the demands of nafs.

The Knighthood is a natural partner of the Kinship Activity because the tradition of chivalry is one of service to others. While Kinship emphasizes the virtues and

blessings of friendship, community, cooperation, and harmony, the Knighthood promotes protection of the innocent, justice, honor, and humble service.

In the realm of religion, the role of the knight complements the role of the priest. Between the Knighthood and the Universal Worship, there is a natural affinity. Worship, sacredness, devotion are features of the Universal Worship activity while the Knighthood upholds a sacred duty to serve God and humanity and honor the Message of all traditions.

The Knighthood has similar affinities to the Healing Order and Ziraat.

Reflection: There is one law, the law of Reciprocity, which can be observed by a selfless conscience together with a sense of awakened justice.

In this world of polarities where those we disagree with are often demonized, what does it mean to have a sense of awakened justice, from the point of view of a selfless conscience? Consider the story of Parsifal and Feierfiz. Parsifal was a Christian knight and Feierfiz was a Muslim knight. By chance they met and, considering the other to be the enemy, they began to fight. Something familiar each found in the other caused them to pause in their battle and ask of the other, “who is your father?” They discovered they had the same father. Then they embraced. Each was fighting for a noble cause, protecting the highest principles of their faith. Each faith had committed atrocities and deserved the scorn of the other faith. They discovered their kinship, rising above the differences and distinctions instilled in them.