

# Al Kalim

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 seventh name, *al Kalim*– the Interlocutor. The previous name was *al Basir* – the All-seeing.

## 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-a'immat as-sab'a*, 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*

# Ya Kalim

## Of the seven leading names the seventh is Kalim, the Interlocutor.

*Al Kalim* is the Speaker, the Interlocutor. The breath of compassion is the *Nafs ar Rahman* – the exhalation of passionate longing – which is the origin of manifestation. Ibn’ al Arabi said:

*The Divine qualities suffocated in the silence of eternity, and so it was a sigh of compassion which brought forth life from the stillness of eternity, and aired the names.*

Out of the infinitude of the suspension of breath, the breath was released as a sigh of longing, and as that released breath reached the mouth of the cosmos – the accommodation, the mouth of the universe – the sigh became articulate as speech, as word, just as breath becomes word in our pronunciation. The breath of compassion from which all manifestation originates resounds in the mouth of the cosmos as *logos*, the Divine word. In resonance, matter has made and remade itself, eventually reaching the form of the human – the speaking – soul. The Divine word, which is pronounced in the mouth of the cosmos, resounds, and matter itself progressively takes shape, increasingly complex, increasingly organic, culminating in the Divine shrine that is the human body and which is most expressive of the *logos*, of the eternal speech. That is why the Sufis call the human soul the *Nafs Natiqa*, the speaking soul.

*Man is a wonderful creature. He speaks through a lump of flesh.*

Hazrat Ali

What a miracle it is that this lump of flesh is so articulate and reaches such heights of poetry.

*The moment when the infant begins to speak is the time that its spirit has formed.*

Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Murshid is distinguishing between soul and spirit. He does not mean to say that the soul forms at that time, but the soul comes into alignment with the mind and the body. Body, mind and soul become united, and thus the soul – the spirit, he says – is formed.

An experiment was made by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick, in which he wanted to discover what is the original language of humanity, the natural language, and whether that would be Hebrew or Latin. He had some infants, orphan children, raised in such a way that all of their needs were attended to – they were fed and clothed and bathed and so on – but they were not spoken to. Tragically the result of the experiment was that none of the children survived. Speech is essential to our humanity. It is inconceivable to be human without speech. It is in speech that the abstract intelligence becomes limited, because our language is relative. Of course, if you know more than one language you can see the limitations in any given language. A certain language will have the capacity to express a thought or an idea that is not possible to articulate in another language. All languages are relative, all are limited, and in this way the perfect intelligence becomes limited. But it’s through this limitation that meaning can arise in a special way.

Intelligence becomes limited, but in that same way it also becomes incarnate. But what originally is a blessing to the descending soul, which brings about its spiritualization, its manifestation as a complete being – eventually one becomes lost in language, and language loses its power, and the resonance of the Divine *logos* becomes attenuated in the great hubbub of meaningless speech, the post-modern cacophony.

## Practices:

### Wazifa

Ya Kalimu

### fikr

Speech itself requires silence for its perfection, and so the fikr that I suggest is to think as you exhale: “Speech is the incarnation of intelligence.” Then think as you inhale: “And silence is the resurrection of speech.”

*Speech is the incarnation of intelligence, and silence is the resurrection of speech.*

### Sadhana

As a sadhana, it is very effective to maintain silence. Murshid asked Rabia Martin to maintain each day at least one half hour of intentional silence, for a definite period each day to maintain complete silence. We all have a lot of responsibilities in life and it’s difficult to arrange that, especially now with cell phones and email; but perhaps under contemporary circumstances it’s all the more important to reserve time for silence.

Then feel when you are not maintaining silence, what has been the effect of your silence on your way of being, on your speech at other times. I think that you’ll find it does make a difference.

### Sadhana

When you speak, consider your words as inscriptions on the eternal tablet of the cosmos. What mark do you wish to make?

If you cast a pebble into a pond, the ripples will travel further and further out and ultimately the whole of the pond or even the ocean will be affected by the pebble, so each word that we pronounce has its effect, even after it is no longer audible. We are in truth inscribing something on the eternal tablet of the cosmos. What is it that you want? What impression do you want to make? How should your being alter this cosmos?

You have been given an opportunity, a rare privilege that the cosmos will not merely be as it is, but because of your life it will be different. But how will it be different? That depends upon you, and your speech is one of the primary instruments for making a difference. Speech is the extension of your breath, which is your essential life.