

LETTER TWO
**CONCERNING THE *DHIKR* OF THE NAQSHBANDĪ
MUJADDIDĪ *TARĪQAH***

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear Respected Sister:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

May Allah ﷻ keep you in His protection. I received your letter and was very pleased. Know that whenever this *faqīr* receives a letter, he immediately makes a supplication and sends a spiritual reply. Written replies are sometimes delayed because of an extremely busy schedule. You asked about the litanies [*dhikr*] of the Naqshbandī Mujaddadī *tariqah*. I have outlined some relevant details below.

REMEMBRANCE [DHIKR]

Begin by conceptualizing that Allah ﷻ is watching you at every moment and then imagine that your heart is calling “Allah! Allah! Allah!” In all circumstances, whether walking, sitting, or doing your daily activities, you should focus on your heart and make certain that it is concentrating on Allah ﷻ. Your hands should work while your heart remains in remembrance. Our great elders have said that a single moment spent in neglect and

inattentiveness should be regarded as a moment spent in a state of disbelief [*kufr*].

Allah ﷻ describes the signs of the intelligent in the Holy Quran: “*Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and on their sides.*” (3:191) Aim for such a state throughout your day. This *faqir* will pray that you reach your goal.

REFLECTION [MURĀQABAH]

When free from your worldly duties, whether in the morning or evening, make ablution and isolate yourself. Sitting on a prayer rug, close your eyes, bow your head, open the window into your heart, and look at your true self.

Drown deep into yourself and find the secret of life.

At least unite with yourself if you refuse to be mine.

Man's world is but play and waste.

Eternal is the wealth of the Hereafter.

Man's wealth comes and goes like a shadow.

You lose everything, world and Hereafter, when you submit to someone else.

Murāqabah entails waiting patiently for the mercy of Allah ﷻ to descend into your heart. Perform this for ten to fifteen minutes daily. Remain quiet and still, without moving the tongue or limbs, and empty your mind of all thoughts. Focus on the mercy of

Allah ﷻ descending into your heart and purifying it from the corrupt and blameworthy. Sit quietly and listen as your heart calls “Allah, Allah, Allah” in gratitude for His mercy. Remember that *murāqabah* is the essential key to attaining stillness of the mind and the soul.

*Not with world, and neither with wealth nor household,
The heart begets peace only with remembrance of Allah.
What tranquility is associated with Your name?
Sleep comes even on a bed of thorns.*

Indeed, it is possible that malevolent and distracting thoughts will enter your mind when you first begin *murāqabah*. Do not let this deter you. The thoughts that have gathered in your heart over a lifetime will now resurface as you cleanse them through remembrance. How would you face Allah ﷻ had you left this world with such a soiled heart? God willing [*inshā'Allāh*] as you further immerse yourself, your inner self will become purified and you will connect with Allah ﷻ. If you lack spare time for such exercises, then sit for a few minutes on your bed before going to sleep. You will begin to form a habit.

*I can see the portrait of my Friend in my heart
whenever I lower my head.*

In time you will begin to achieve tranquility through *murāqabah*.
By all means, sit for longer periods of time if you so desire.

*The heart searches distressingly for those free days and
nights.*

To sit lost in thoughts of the Beloved.

Do not worry if you start dozing off during *murāqabah*. It may
also be performed lying down or leaning against something
should the need arise. If you feel uncomfortable closing your eyes
when in the company of others, *murāqabah* may be performed
with the eyes open.

*Oh my Beloved! Reflections of You are ever in my mind
and Your praises on my lips.*

*Where can You hide when thoughts of You race in my
heart?*

Consider *murāqabah* and its maintenance more necessary than
food and drink. According to a *hadīth*, Allah ﷻ prefers those
actions that are consistent, be they however few. Unchained
through *murāqabah*, your heart will gain perception.

Desire an insightful heart from Allah;

Sight of eyes and sight of heart are not the same.

Sometimes you may feel that apprehension and worry remain overpowering despite regular *murāqabah*. This exercise is not easy but it must be performed. Exert yourself! You may even perform it while traveling by car or bus.

*Life is the command of Allah; life is a mystery.
The pinnacle of living is for the heart to cry “Allah!”*

I am confident that your situation will improve with regular *murāqabah*. If the heart awakens, the eyes will see differently, the limbs will function differently, and the mind will reason differently. Your life will traverse a new path for the sake of Allah ﷻ. People take delight in a deer whose meat emanates fragrance. I hope that you attain the fragrance of our true destination.

*May trials from Allah confront you
For I see no restlessness in your soul.
Reading books leaves you no time to act,
You are indeed a reader but lack action.*

Enjoyment in and desire for worship increase manifold when remembrance [*dhikr*] becomes regular. Having prayed, you will anxiously await the next prayer. You will not view worship and good deeds as burdensome obligations. Rather, they will be gifts toward which you will run.

SALUTATIONS ON THE PROPHET ﷺ

Send salutations on the Prophet ﷺ one hundred times a day:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا
مُحَمَّدٍ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

Allāhumma salli ʿalā sayyidinā Muhammad wa ʿalā āli sayyidinā Muhammad wa bārik wa sallim.

O Allah send salutations upon our guide Muhammad, and the family of our guide Muhammad, and bless them and send upon them peace.

Recite this with extreme sincerity, humility, and love--as if you are presenting a gift to Allah ﷻ in His distinguished court.

*Whose honored name arrives at my lips O Allah?
The name that caresses my tongue as I call?*

REPENTANCE [ISTIGHFAR]

Recite the following supplication for forgiveness one hundred times a day with extreme humility and shame, reflecting on your sins:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

Astaghfirullāha rabbī min kulli dhambin wa ‘atūbu ilayhi

*I seek forgiveness from my Lord for every sin and to Him
I turn (in repentance).*

If tears of shame and regret do not stream down your eyes then at least assume facial expressions consistent with these states.

May a tear be so true that its falling be accepted by You.

Seeking forgiveness [*istighfār*] with neglect and laziness is improper, and this lapse in itself merits additional *istighfār*. One must strive to eliminate these characteristics. He must not merely seek forgiveness for them. Attempt to experience the bliss of crying to your Lord during the pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*] should you be blessed with the ability to wake up for it.

*Be he Attār, be he Rāzī, be he Rūmī, be he Ghazālī
No one begets anything without weeping near the dawn.*

Today, most enjoy the delicious tastes of exotic foods, but sadly they are estranged from the delightful tastes of supplicating

at the time before dawn [*tabajjud*]. Where have the people gone who used to spend their nights in sorrow and want?

Your gatherings have ended, those seeking You have gone.

The cries and tears of the morn are no more.

Some take pleasure spending the day cleaning their house and making it sparkle. Would that they seek forgiveness [*istighfār*] and perform *dhikr* a few minutes during the day to clean their hearts as well. My dear sister, darkness fills the world as quickly as the light of righteousness dims, and with each passing day this world descends further into ruin.

Those with faith the likeness of Mount ‘Uhud feared lest they lose it at any moment, while we with our paltry faith remain self-confident that we will die as believers. This gift is a precious treasure that must be guarded. How often we overlook the blessing of faith! For this we must seek forgiveness everyday. It is our duty and our pleasure. Allah ﷻ has a fondness for two drops: the drop of blood from a martyr’s body and the teardrop of shame and regret from a sinner’s eye.

My Lord has accepted as diamonds

Two drops of my innermost shame.

A mother has intense love for her child and shelters him under all circumstances. A mother's love is a mountain whose heights cannot be scaled, an ocean whose depths cannot be reached. If a disobedient son falls to his mother's feet in apology and shame, she will become overwhelmed by her inherent love and will forgive him despite her anger.

Pay attention to the meaning of this narration: The combined love of seventy mothers is miniscule when compared to Allah's ﷻ love for His servants. When tears of repentance shed from our eyes Allah's ﷻ mercy pours forth.

It is related that Allah ﷻ says that His mercy overcomes anything. If someone sins for a thousand years without respite, even then his sins are few when measured against the ocean of Allah's ﷻ mercy. If he repents sincerely, it is accepted and his record wiped clean. Moreover, it is written that Allah ﷻ proclaims that if your sins are greater than all the leaves of all the trees in the world; if your sins are greater than all the stars in the sky; if your sins are more than the foam of the oceans; if your sins are greater than the grains of sand in all the deserts, even then your sins are few and His mercy is greater.

Moreover, from a Prophetic narration we learn that Allah ﷻ says: My servant, you repented but then regressed, and then repented and regressed again. If you repent and regress a hundred times, even then, My door is open and I will accept your repentance if you come.

RECITATION OF THE HOLY QURAN

Read a quarter *juz'*¹¹ of the Holy Quran every day. Remember women cannot read the Holy Quran during those days when they cannot pray. Take as much pleasure in recitation as you do with every spoonful of ice cream, and imagine the essence of the verses descending upon your heart at that very moment.

*You cannot untie knots, you cannot solve mysteries;
Until such time when the Book descends upon you.*

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE [SHAYKH]

The summation of these daily prescriptions is that you keep in contact with your spiritual guide [*shaykh*] by letter or by phone, keeping him apprised of your spiritual condition. Be absolutely candid regarding your condition and abide by his advice. The gardener is pleased when he sees a plant develop from a seed nurtured with love and care.

Anyone who hopes to be cured from physical ailments must communicate with their physician. Likewise, if you seek to rid yourself of spiritual ailments, you must communicate with your teacher. A teacher is essential for learning any skill or subject.

¹¹ *Juz'* refers to a portion of the Holy Quran comprising 1/30th of the entire book.

Know that one who learns without a teacher is without a foundation, ready to collapse.

May Allah ﷻ reward our teachers and mentors who have taught us to walk on the path of Islamic Law [*sharāḥ*] and the way [*sunnaḥ*] of the Prophet ﷺ rather than on their own footsteps. Today false and corrupt people without a foundation in the *sharāḥ* hold positions of leadership in mosques and institutions of learning. Their lives are devoid of the *sunnaḥ*; they are astray and lead others astray. The one who himself cannot swim can hardly save another from drowning and such people only serve to bring ill repute to the name of *tasammuf*.

Pay careful attention to these words! The purpose of this pledge [*bayāḥ*]¹² is to please Allah ﷻ, to adhere to the Messenger's ﷺ *sunnaḥ*, and to rectify the self. The above-mentioned duties are so potent that you will notice a change with a few days of regularity; you will find it easy to adhere to the *sharāḥ* in your daily life. Be regular and you will live your life in peace. More sugar is sweeter than less, and so we will see how

¹² Students begin their spiritual development by taking an oath [*bayāḥ*] with a spiritual master [*shaykh*]. This oath entails seeking forgiveness from Allah ﷻ for past sins and renewing a lifelong commitment to live according to the Holy Quran and the example [*sunnaḥ*] of the Prophet ﷺ. The Messenger ﷺ took such pledges from many of his Companions ﷺ and hence, the act of *bayāḥ* is classified by traditional scholars as a *sunnaḥ*.

consistently you observe these duties. Convey my greetings to your household.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī