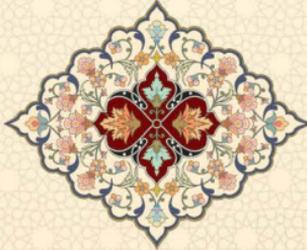


WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i
Naqshiband
RAHMATULLAHI ALAYH

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ



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(Rahmatullahi Alayh)

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PREFACE

Endless praise and thanks be to our Lord who created us and selected us from among the whole creation to be human beings, and then from among human beings He chose us to be Muslims and honored us with the blessings of Islam and Qur'an!

Endless blessings and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad, the pride of the universe, the master of the Prophets, unparalleled in his character, our greatest guide in this world and intercessor on the Day of Judgement, and also upon his pure ahl al-bayt (family) and his Companions.

Muhammad Bahauddin Shah-i Naqshiband was a great friend of Allah, who inherited the light of guidance from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), through luminous hearts in a golden chain. His connection to Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) is not only spiritual but also genealogical, since he was also a descendent coming from the pure lineage of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).



He was a great Sufi master who revived the Sufi order that was known as the “*Khwajagan*”¹ order before him into the “*Naqshibandi*” order with the indelible seal that he engraved on the hearts.

He was a spiritual engraver who carved the love of Allah, the taste of faith and the ecstatic pleasure of marifatullah (direct knowledge of Allah) into the hearts.

He was an endless ocean of marifatullah and an example of someone who freed himself from the illnesses of egotism and selfishness, and always regarded himself as a poor servant of Allah. He was the peak of humility, nothingness and modesty...

He was the fifteenth master in the Golden Chain of the *Naqshbandi* Order...

He was the chief of the army of the friends of Allah...

This spiritual splendor was a very special gift from Allah Almighty and in order to receive that gift, he developed his spiritual capacity by exceptionally

1. **Khwajagan:** It is the plural form of the word “*Khaja*” which means religious scholar and teacher of the Sufi path. Since the leaders of the *Naqshbandi* order were mostly from the learned (*ilmিয়া*) class, they used to be known by this name, especially in the period before *Shah-i Naqshiband*.



strong will power, perseverance and enthusiasm in the path.

Learning about this exceptional heart will also bring the same spiritual healing and mercy to our hearts.

It is stated in a verse:

“As for those who believe and do good actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them.”

(Maryam, 19: 96)

Indeed, Allah Almighty does not allow His beloved servants to be forgotten. He pours His love into their hearts.

The great interest and love shown by the Muslims towards Shah-i Naqshiband, Mawlana Jalaladdin al-Rumi, Yunus Emre, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi and others is shown by visiting their tombs and by reading their books.

We should take note that these righteous people neither distributed wealth nor gave worldly positions and ranks to people. They rather turned their hearts into places of mercy and distributed spiritual gifts. They healed both physical and spiritual afflictions of the people. For this reason, they continue to live on in the hearts of many even after their material existence has ended.



Dear readers!

As you know, we have begun to present to you our writings about the friends of Allah published in *Altinoluk*, in which we tried to annotate and explain their wise words, in a series comprising a separate booklet for each friend of Allah. This humble work, in which we compiled our writings about **Shah-i Naqshiband**, is a continuation of that series.

Moreover, in this booklet we deemed it necessary to include issues such as the nature of Sufism, the principles of the Khwajagan path, and the need for friends of Allah and Sufi masters. We have excerpted the sections on these issues from our previous work entitled the *Golden Chain*.

May our Lord make the love of His loved ones an inexhaustible treasure in our hearts. May He bestow upon us all a life of benevolent servitude in accordance with the guidance of His righteous servants and to be resurrected together with them.

Amin! ..²

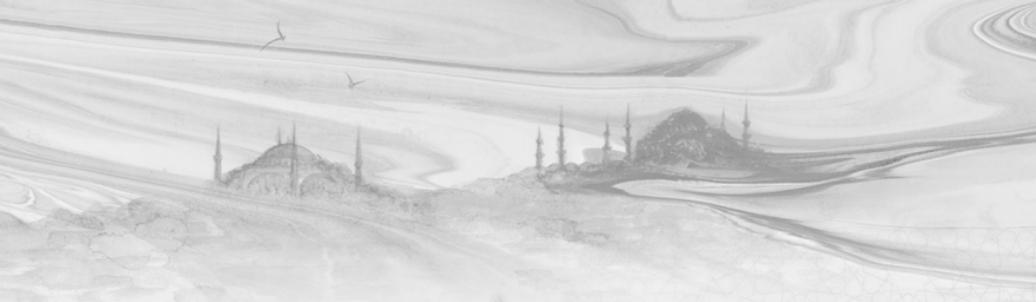
Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ

November 2016

Uskudar

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2. I would like to thank M. Akif Günay, who contributed to the preparation of this booklet, and I ask Lord Almighty make his efforts be a continuous charity.





Tasawwuf

Fiqh and Sufism are like two halves of a whole in terms of ensuring obedience - both inwardly and outwardly - to Allah's commands and prohibitions.

Imam Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) stated the following:

“Whoever practices fiqh (jurisprudence) without tasawwuf (spiritual purification) is a deviant. Whoever practices tasawwuf without fiqh is a heretic. Whoever combines the two will reach to the truth. (Ahmad Zarruq, *Qawaid at-Tasawwuf*, maxim: 4)

Abu al-Hasan al-Haraqani says:

“Not even the devil can create the corruption that the following two people cause in religion:

- 1) A scholar caught up with the ambitions of this world,
 - 2) An immature ascetic devoid of religious knowledge!” (Attar, *Tezkire*, 624)
- 





TASAWWUF

Tasawwuf is the aspect of Islam which focuses on the hidden realities in the heart. It is a path of spiritual purification and perfection in which one tries to integrate the teachings of the Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) into every aspect of his/her life. It began with the breathing the of *ruh* (spirit) into the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) and reached its peak with the final Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and continues with those rightly guided believers among the followers of the Prophet Muhammad radiating from the hearts of those filled with divine love.

The modal of perfect man (*al-insan al-kamil*)' that Allah wants us to follow was exemplified in the blessed character of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The best exemplar (*uswah al-hasana*) in every aspect of life, and also the best 'educator' and 'purifier'. As a Prophet, he had many



duties and was given a great authority. Amongst these the following four responsibilities take precedence:

1) Receiving divine revelation:

According to sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), the revelation of the Qur'an was completed with the following verse:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My blessing upon you and I am pleased with Islam as a religion for you.” (al-Ma'idah, 5: 3).

Since the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was the 'seal of the prophets, the mission to receive revelation ended when he migrated to the eternal realm.

2) Explaining the rulings and meanings of the verses of the Qur'an by his words and actions:

This responsibility continues to be carried out by the *mujtahid* scholars who make their *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) in the face of newly emerged matters by using Qur'an, Sunnah, and other methods approved by Islam such as looking at the consensus of the scholars and sometimes resorting to analogy. The fact that mujtahid scholars reached varying conclusions in their independent reasoning led to the emergence of different *madhhabs* (schools of law).



3) The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had political and administrative authority in which he applied the commands and prohibitions of the religion, and kept them alive:

This authority was taken on and continued by the caliphs (*ulu'l amr*).

4) With his inestimably luminous soul and uniquely sublime spiritual rank the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) trained and purified people's inner worlds:

The transmission of this specific duty of the Prophet from generation to generation constitutes the essential science of tasawwuf. Just as all the duties of the Messenger of Allah, other than receiving revelation, must be continued by his followers, it is absolutely necessary to continue this duty to purify and cleanse the inner world of people and bring them to spiritual maturity by those who are qualified to do so until the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, the essence of Sufism is the continuation of this Prophetic knowledge which is firmly rooted in the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet. We may say, Tasawwuf is the living formalization of the spiritual guidance and authority of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). His spiritual authority has continued to the present day from his Companions, then their Successors (*tabi'in*) and the next



generations after them. The actual compilation and systemization of Tasawwuf as a science corresponds to the second century of the Hijra.

At the time of the Prophet, the schools of theology (kalam), creed or law (fiqh) had not yet been established and had not been organized into separate sciences. However, at that time there existed all the rulings regarding belief and law and they were taught and applied to the Companions by the Messenger of Allah. Later the ‘independent reasonings’ (*ijtihad*) of the great scholars, who were considered authorities in Islamic law, were adopted and systematized by their students. This development gave rise to various different methods that were later called legal schools, ‘*madhhabs*’. These schools were later named after these great scholars.

Just as the substances of other Islamic sciences, the profound nature of tasawwuf and the spiritual practices it inspired such as ‘*zuhd*’ (abstention) and ‘*taqwa*’ (God-consciousness), were practiced by the first generation. All of the principles that form the foundation of a sound understanding of tasawwuf are present in the Qur’an and the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

As time passed, God-fearing scholars and Gnostics (ârifûn) began to advise people for the sake of



Allah to prevent people from getting too attached to worldly life and sinking into heedlessness. These individuals had no desire to open a new path or form a life style. Their sole aim was to live Islam in accordance with its essence and carry out their worship in a state of *ihsan* (excellence) and *khushu*, (serenity) as required by the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

However, those who benefited from their words, accepted them as their spiritual guides and masters. The followers of these masters then took their method of training and purification, and systematized it into a spiritual discipline. As a result, certain 'Sufi orders' named after these masters emerged. Examples of these are Naqshibandi, Qadiri, Mawlawi and Shadhili orders and so on.

The methods and practices followed by a Sufi tradition to take a person to Allah (swt) is called 'tariqa or Sufi order'. In time, various Sufi orders following various methods emerged. In this way, every believer has the opportunity to find a *tariqa*, in order to reach spiritual maturity.

The need for tasawwuf

As we know, the human being has two aspects, namely the spirit and the body. Both of these have demands coming from their nature. Islam does not deny or reject these natural inclinations and tenden-



cies. It accepts them as a reality. In the light of the basic principles of Islam, it encourages the inclinations that are acceptable and limits those that are unacceptable and damaging. Or in the latter case, it tries to transform them into acceptable inclinations.

In other words, Islam offers a balance between the physical and the spiritual. Acts of worship cannot be carried out without a body. Prayer and fasting cannot be performed without a body. Other acts of worship can also only be carried out with physical body. However, acts of worship cannot be done without a spirit, either. When we remove the excitement felt by the spirit, passion, or the tenderness and sensitivity of the heart, religion turns into a dry skeleton. Whereas Allah (swt) emphasizes the notion of ‘*taqwa*’ in over 250 places in the His Mighty Book; *taqwa* is an inward quality of the heart.

It is stated in the Mighty Qur’an:

“It is the believers who are successful: those who are humble in their prayer...” (al-Mu’minun, 23:1-2).

Tasawwuf is a knowledge taken from the Qur’an and the Sunnah. It teaches a person how to adorn the character with praiseworthy qualities, which are mentioned in the Qur’an, such as *taqwa*, *tawakkul*, *tawbah* and *rida*, and it also teaches us how to remove the



sicknesses of the character such as *riya*, *'ujub*, *hasad* and *kibr*.

If a human being remains in the realm of the flesh and observes everything from the perspective of materialistic benefit, they will see even the most spiritual matters as soulless molds. This is in fact one of the main reasons that lie at the basis of the objections against tasawwuf. However, tasawwuf turns one's attention towards the inner world without rejecting the physical and outer needs. It thus shows a way of perfecting the human being.

The Sufis say:

“Reaching one’s physical provision is possible by the efforts of the limbs. In like manner reaching one’s spiritual provision becomes possible by the efforts of the heart.”

In accordance with Divine Will, Almighty Allah has created human beings with differing capacities, both physical and spiritual. He does not expect a servitude from His servant that is beyond his capacity, but rather He makes them responsible according to the predisposed capacity with which He has created them.

When determining the religious duties obligatory on all mankind, Allah Almighty took the minimum capacity as the standard. Undoubtedly, this is a manifestation of His endless mercy and compassion



upon His servants. On the other hand, He has left the door open for spiritual ascension for whoever wishes, by their nature, the capacity, enthusiasm and the potential to do more than the duties required by the divinely ordained Shariah. He has kept the door open by allowing those believers who have the potential to advance in the realm of the heart, to progress towards the peak of closeness to Allah through various forms of worship, such as supererogatory (*nafilah*) worship, invoking Allah's names and taking on well-known virtues such as *zuhd*, *taqwa* and *ihsan*. As is known, this is the path of **Tasawwuf**.

We can illustrate this with the following example:

Shaykh Shibli was once asked: "How much zakat should be paid for five camels?" He replied:

"What is obligatory is one sheep; but according to us, all of them should be for Allah."

He was then asked: "What is your proof for this?" And he replied:

"**Abu Bakr** (may Allah be pleased with him) gave his entire wealth for the cause of Allah. Whoever gives their entire wealth for the sake of Allah, freely and generously, has the spirit and character of Abu Bakr. Whoever gives a large portion of their wealth and property, is of the temperament and character of Uthman ((may Allah be pleased with him)... The



religious knowledge that does not lead one to abandon this world is not knowledge.”³

As this example illustrates, every great Companion with the elevated capacities of their hearts is considered to be leaders in Tasawwuf.

On the other hand, the level of peace and tranquility that one reaches depends on the spiritual level of his/her heart. This is why it is necessary for the servant to pass through a process of spiritual training. Because filling the heart with knowledge and wisdom, making it aware of the elevated truths of the religion, and perfecting a servant spiritually is only possible after a series of various practices and procedures. Even the Prophets who were sent as examples for all mankind passed through periods of preparation before receiving revelation.

Before **Allah’s Messenger** (peace and blessings be upon him) was appointed with the duty of prophethood, he would retreat in seclusion (itikaf)⁴ in the cave of Hira on the Mountain of Nur. Before the Prophet Isa (Jesus) peace be upon him, heard the first divine

3. Ahmad Zarruq, *Qawaid al-Tasawwuf*, Maxim: 33.

4. **Itikaf**: means that men retreat in a mosque where Friday prayers are performed, and women retreat in a suitable place of their house for a certain period of time and engage in worship. Retreating to a mosque and giving oneself to worship especially in the last ten days of Ramadan.



words, he spent forty days and forty nights, hungry and thirsty on Mount Sinai. Likewise, before his conversation with Allah, the Prophet Musa (Moses) peace be upon him, fasted without a break for forty days on Mount Sinai. The Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) peace be upon him, was imprisoned for twelve years before he was made Viceroy of Egypt. There he was made to pass through various stages of abstention, struggle and difficulties. In this way his blessed heart was cleansed of all the refuges, havens, points of support and matters of concern other than Allah.

In Tasawwuf, the notion of **repentance from *masiwallah*** meaning everything other than Allah Almighty, indicates to such a stage of preparation in which one shuns in his/her heart and spirit all things that distance him/her from Allah, and melts in nothingness and annihilation. This is because spiritual transformation begins when one reaches the point of nothingness and annihilation.

In like manner, before the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) set out for his Ascension (*Mi'raj*) he had received **the chapter al-Inshirah**. As had happened to him twice before, his blessed chest was opened up and his noble heart cleansed and filled with knowledge and wisdom. This was because he was going to encounter such strange and wonderful events on the Night of the Ascension that would have been impossible for him to perceive



with the density of human nature. Whereas the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had the purest heart of any human being who had ever lived or would ever live. Even the staunchest of pagans admitted this.

Therefore, if Allah made even His most elect of servants, the Prophets, pass through such a purification of the heart, then we can understand how much other people's hearts are in need of such purification. It is impossible for a heedless heart to approach Allah Almighty.

Another piece of evidence regarding this matter is as follows:

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Abandon wrong action, outward and inward.”

(see al-An'am, 6: 120).

Thus, just as the human being is required to stay away from outer sins, he is also required to stay away from inner sins. In fact, inner sins such as *kibr* (arrogance), *riya* (showing off), *hasad* (envy), spite, anger and miserliness are even more dangerous. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said:

“Whoever has an atom worth of kibr in his heart will not enter Paradise” (Muslim, Iman, 147).



To remove bad traits such as *kibr and hasad* (arrogance and envy), which are diseases of the heart, is at least as important as staying away from outward sins.

In fact, outward sins are the products and results of inward sins. Moreover, inward sins are more common. People generally take these types of sins lightly and do not show the necessary attention and sensitivity to be protected from them.

The aim of Tasawwuf, then, is to cleanse one's outer and inner worlds by methods derived from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, independent reasonings of our scholars and Sufi masters, and to reform the state of the heart and prepare a ground for living with love and certainty of faith.

Therefore we can state the following: **tasawwuf is an inseparable part of the whole of the Islamic sciences. In particular, fiqh and tasawwuf, which secure compliance with Allah's commands and prohibitions –both outer and inner- are like the two halves of a whole.**

In principle, all Islamic sciences such as Tasawwuf, *fiqh* and *aqidah* (creed) were at the beginning different aspects of the same essence. In fact, **Abu Hanifa** defines *fiqh* as follows:



“*Fiqh* is one’s knowledge of what is for and what is against him/her from a religious perspective.” ‘*Marifatullah*’, or having a correct concept of one’s Lord and knowing Him through one’s heart constituted the most important aspect of this knowledge and of the utmost importance for a person’s eternal happiness. This is why the book in which Imam Abu Hanifa’s views on matters of creed is called ‘*Fiqh al-akbar*’, meaning the ‘Greatest *Fiqh*’.

Even though this was the situation at the beginning, later with the development and growth of scholarly activities, the *fuqaha*, or the scholars of Islamic law, left rulings related *aqidah*, ethics, and tasawwuf, outside the realm of *fiqh* and limited it only to rulings about practices and legal matters. This is the meaning that we understand from the term *fiqh* today.

The term *fiqh* informs us about the outward rulings of acts such as *wudu* (ablution), cleanliness, ritual prayer (*salat*) and the term Tasawwuf deals with the knowledge of how to obtain the appropriate inward state of the heart in order to be able to perform such acts of worship in the most perfect way. In this respect, Tasawwuf has been called ‘*fiqh al-batin*’, which has the meaning of being the spiritual basis for the science of *fiqh*.

Learning the outward sciences does not free one from the responsibility of learning the inward sci-



ences. Having mastered the outward sciences, many of the scholars of the earlier and later periods, have come to believe in the necessity of learning the inward sciences through training and service and have become travelers of this path.

For instance, Hanafi scholars such as Ibn Humam, Ibn Shalabi, Shurunbulali, Khayr al-Din al-Ramli, Hamawi and others...

Shafii scholars such as Sultan al-Ulama Izz Ibn Abdussalam, Imam al-Ghazzali, Taj al-Din Subki, Imam Suyuti, Shaykh al-Islam Qadi Zakariyya, Allama Shihab ibn Hajar al-Haytami and many many others...

Maliki scholars such as Imam Abul-Hasan Ash-Shadhili, Shaykh Abul-Abbas al-Mursi, Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Ata'ullah al-Iskandari, Arif Ibn Abi Jamra, Nasiruddin al-Laqani, Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq and countless others...

Hanbali scholars such as the famous Shaykh Abdulqadir al-Jilani, Shaykh al-Islam Abdullah al-Ansari al-Harawi, Ibn al-Najjar al-Futuhi and plenty others...

There are many more famous scholars such as Sayyid Sharif Jurjani, Molla Jami, Abdulhakim Siyalquti, Abdul Ghani Nablusi, Ibn Abidin, Shihabuddin Alusi and Zahid al-Kawthari, who adopted the path of the Naqshibandi order.



Many more great scholars like these have become obtained great inward knowledge from Sufi masters after having learned the outer sciences. They have benefitted from learning such sciences and adorned themselves with beautiful virtues such as sound belief, sincerity (*ikhlas*), abandoning sins via attending suhbahs, service and *sayr u suluq*.⁵

In the same manner, many learned scholars from the Naqshibandi order have reached the peak of outward sciences and received their license (*ijazah*). These include Yusuf Hamdani, Shah-i Naqshiband, Alauddin Attar, Yaqub Charhi, Dervish Muhammad, Imam al-Rabbani and Khalid al-Baghdadi.

Imam Malik said:

“Whoever practices fiqh without Tasawwuf is a deviant. Whoever practices Tasawwuf without fiqh is a heretic. Whoever combines the two reaches the truth..”⁶

5. Allama Muhammad bin Suleyman al-Baghdadi al-Khalidi, *al-Hadiqat al-Nadiyya*, Istanbul 1403, p. 25-26; Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Hani, *al-Bahjat al-Thaniyya*, Istanbul 2002, p. 6; Id., *Adâb*, İstanbul 2009, p. 8-9.
6. Ahmad Zarruq, *Qawaid at-Tasawwuf*, maxim: 4; Ali al-Qari, *Mirqat al-Mafatih*, Beirut, 1422, I, 335; Id., *Sharh al-Shifa*, Beirut 1421, II, 510. Cf. al-Sharani, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, Egypt 1315, II, 156.



Since the integrity of the heart determines the spiritual quality of a human being's deeds, which are his capital for life in the Hereafter, the need for Tasawwuf, which aims to help the heart reach at an acceptable and perfect level of integrity, becomes apparent. In this respect, the view of certain circles which try to present our elevated religion as being merely compilation of rules and their subsequent rejection of Tasawwuf becomes clearly unacceptable.

It is very wrong to judge and reject the reality of Tasawwuf on the basis of the acts and approaches of certain ignorant and incompetent people who think that they are practicing it or those with ulterior motives. Just as mistakes and abuse can be found in all scientific fields, they may happen within the religious sciences. These can be easily distinguished by their experts.

Just as there are various heretical schools that have strayed from the straight path, there are false *orders* that have strayed from the reality of tasawwuf. We must not confuse the true masters of tasawwuf with members of such cult-like false orders.

Another aspect of the need for tasawwuf is that it follows the method of forgiveness and mercy in order to reform people.

Today many people are in a spiritual crisis as a result of distancing themselves from religion and hav-



ing committed many grave sins. Rather than becoming angry with and scolding such people, the Sufi is the one who shows them forgiveness, tolerance, mercy and compassion. Sufism presents Islam as a divine cure for humanity suffocating under the tyranny of their minds and their *nafs*. It throws them a life line, advising people not to transfer the anger felt for the sin to the sinner but rather to view the sinner like a bird with a broken wing, and approach them with kindness and compassion. Undoubtedly, this is a much more helpful way of guiding people to the truth and this is indeed the way of the compassionate and merciful final Messenger may Allah's abundant peace and blessings be upon him.

Throughout history, the Sufis have always ensured the continuity of spiritual vigor and vitality by preventing laziness and indulging in lower appetites in times of economic and social prosperity. The men of this inward knowledge always opened up windows to let people breathe in times of confusion and suffocation during the periods of enemy invasion and oppression. The great Sufi orders have consistently provided a healing for wounded hearts, a consolation for exhausted minds, and a fountain for thirsty spirits.

Hence, tasawwuf is a completely Prophetic approach. Whenever the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) received any blessing or



achieved a victory, he said: “O Allah! *The real life is that of the hereafter*”, thereby he prevented the heart from inclining towards this world or being overcome with pride and egoism.

On the other hand, whenever he experienced any suffering, pain or hardship, he would also say: “O Allah! *The real life is only that of the hereafter.*”⁷ He thus warned the believers of falling into despair due to fleeting distress or complaining and becoming drowned in excessive sorrow and harming their state of contentment (*rida*). He gave his community a spiritual prescription for remaining content, at peace and in balance in all circumstances and situations.

In fact, as long as the human spirit remains distant from Allah, it will not be able to free itself from being dragged into a state of depression, both in times of affluence or poverty. In case of the former, a person is required to control himself while in the latter case he needs consolation. This is why the human being needs the teachings of tasawwuf, which are established on the Prophetic method of education, both in times of ease and in times of distress.

However, we need to state, before all else, that tasawwuf is not a theoretical science but rather an applied one. That is, it is a science that cannot be

perceived fully by merely reading books, but rather by being practiced. **Muhammad Parsa** expressed this truth as follows:

“The words of the Khwajagan people are not words that are passed down blindly, but rather are experienced states and tasted spiritual pleasures. This is why the people of discernment say about these words that they are fiqhullah al-akbar (The greatest science of knowing Allah) and burhan-i azhar (the most obvious proof). The yaqin (certainty) that arises from contemplating the words of these blessed people is better than the certainty that arises from witnessing miracles.”⁸

That is, it is impossible to explain what tasawwuf really is due to the limitations of language. Tasawwuf can only be really understood by experience. Now taking this into consideration, the friends of Allah, who have looked at the crystal of tasawwuf, which reflects light of different colors from each of its facets have come up with differing definitions of tasawwuf. This is why it would be more appropriate to say that tasawwuf is the sum of all of these definitions.

8. Muhammad Parsa, *Muhammed Bahâüddîn Hazretleri'nin Sohbetleri*, (translated by Necdet Tosun), p. 19, Erkam Publications, Istanbul 1998.



Definitions of Tasawwuf

TASAWWUF: means to abandon undesirable and objectionable traits and adopt good character.

TASAWWUF: means purification of the *nafs* and cleansing of the heart. A sacred method of education and spiritual training in which one learns to keep under control the tendencies towards evil that are present in human nature and also allow the seeds of ‘*taqwa*’ to grow and flourish.

TASAWWUF: means the art of reaching the state of ‘*taqwa*’.

TASAWWUF: means the skill of living uprightly. Uprightness (*Istiqama*) is to firmly embrace the Book and the Sunnah, to perceive the divine and Prophetic instructions in the depths of one’s heart and apply them with a passion to every stage of one’s life. It is when living with the spirituality of the Book and the Sunnah becomes the greatest pleasure for the heart.

TASAWWUF: means a state of contentment and submission. It is to avoid becoming affected by the ups and downs of life, to maintain one’s equilibrium in the face of changing situations, to abandon complaining and reach a state of maturity and being ever content with the decree of Allah.



TASAWWUF: is the skill of being a righteous slave of Allah via love (*muhabbatullah*) and knowledge (*marifatullah*) of Him.

TASAWWUF: refers to the responsibility felt by those believers who have perfected themselves both physically and spiritually, and approach other creatures with a selfless heart, trying to compensate for their deficiencies. It is when compassion, mercy, love and service for creatures on behalf of the Creator becomes a part of one's nature.

TASAWWUF: is a sacred journey that takes the servant to Allah, via true love and friendship.

TASAWWUF: is to perceive in truth that the real life is the life of the hereafter and to free one's heart from becoming attached to the *nafs*' fickle and inconstant desires for the world.

TASAWWUF: means to become one with the blessed life of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), both outwardly and inwardly and connect to him with a deep love. Tasawwuf is the 'state' of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), both his outer and inner manifestations. This is why tasawwuf consists of the struggle to take one's share from the spirituality of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).



In short, what we have tried to define as being tasawwuf, is **the life of 'taqwa'**, lived by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), in a state of ecstasy. Anything other than these (definitions), which do not take their essence and their standard from the Qur'an and the Sunnah are baseless and false, however they may be attributed to tasawwuf.

The principles of the Path of the *Khwajagan* (The Masters)

The scholars of Islam derive their principles from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. So too the scholars of tasawwuf have also substantiate their views with evidence from the *shari'a*, just like the *mujtahid* imams. However, in certain Sufi orders where the *Shaykhs* have not been selected from among people who have internalized and digested the outward rulings of the religion some errors have occurred due to the domination of Sufi drunkenness. However, where the guides of various *Sufi orders* have been people of knowledge, that is scholars and gnostics who have also mastered the outward aspects of religion, they have been protected.

In fact, since the masters of **Naqshibandi order** have come from a group called '*Khwajagan*' i.e. qualified scholars, it has continued on the way of the



Qur'an and the Sunnah, this Sufi order has also been known by the name of **Khawajagan** in the history of Tasawwuf.

Let us now mention the main tenets of the *Khawajagan* way and thus illustrate the necessary principles that a sound Sufi order should possess.

1- The first principle in the Khwajagan way is to adopt the creed **of ahl al sunnah wa jama'a**. The Khwajagan way has throughout history, taken the Sunni Islam understanding as the basis of its Sufi order and thus preserved its members from certain esoteric (*Batini*) and *Hurufi* movements.

2- The second principle of the Khwajagan way is a firm devotion to **the Book** and **the Sunnah**. It teaches that spiritual progress cannot be realized without a meticulous application of the Sunnah, however 'minor' it may appear, such as eating, drinking, sleeping and other daily acts. This is why the followers (*murids*) who enter upon the Khwajagan way strive to follow the slightest indication of **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him), with great love and enthusiasm.

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“Once, I fell into heedlessness and entered the toilet with my right foot. On that day, I was deprived



of many spiritual states (because of this behavior that does not comply with the Sunnah).”⁹

Another day Imam Rabbani said to one of his students:

“Bring a few carnations from our garden.” That student went and brought six carnations. When Imam Rabbani saw this, he said sadly:

“Our students still do not pay attention to the hadith: “Allah is one (an odd number) and He loves the odd number.”¹⁰ Whereas paying attention in this matter is a commendable action (mustahab). What do people think of the mustahab? The mustahab is that which is loved by Almighty Allah. If the entire world and the hereafter is given in return for an act loved by Allah Most High, this amounts to nothing. We abide by the mustahab to such a degree that when we wash our faces we bring the water to the right side first. It is also mustahab to begin a task with the right.”¹¹

Abdullah al-Dahlawi also carefully avoided acts and behaviors that were against the Qur’an and Sunnah and made people around him avoid such behaviors. One day, when he was fasting, people talked against the sultan. Abdullah al-Dahlawi said:

9. Al-Kishmî, *Barakât*, p. 197.

10. Al-Bukhari, *Da’awat*, 68.

11. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmediyya*, p. 198; Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 180-181.

“Alas! Our fast was broken!”

One of his students said:

“Sir, you did not backbite!” He replied:

“Yes, we did not backbite, but we listened to it. The one who backbites and the listens to it are the same.”¹²

Bayazid Bistami has the following to say about this matter:

“Even if you see a person who has been given extraordinary powers (karamat) and is able to sit cross-legged, floating in the air, do not be taken in immediately. First, check to see whether he abides by the divine commandments and prohibitions, whether he maintains the divine limits, whether he properly carries out the rulings of the sharia’. (If this is not the case, then this is not a karamah but rather istidraj¹³.)”¹⁴

Shah-i Naqshiband has summarized¹⁵ the essence of his *tariqa* as following the Sunnah of the Messenger

12. Abdulgani bin Ebi Said, *Hüvelganî Risâlesi*, p. 152.
13. *Istidraj* is the opposite of *karama*. *Istidraj* refers to the extraordinary acts manifested by unbelievers, sinners and *mutashayyikh* (certain individuals who pretend to Sufi masters even though they are not). Such manifestations are divine tests and will drag the people who manifest them to their destruction.
14. Al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab*, III, 304, al-Qushayri, *Risala*, p 58.
15. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat Hazrat Haja Naqshiband*, Bukhara, 1328/1910, p. 58



of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and the words of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and said:

*“Whatever we have attained by the grace of Allah, we have attained by acting in accordance with the verses of the Holy Qur’an and the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). In order to see the results of one’s deeds, one must abide by the rulings of taqwa and the sharia’, to embrace azimah (firm and strict following of the rulings), to act upon the principles of the ahl al sunnah wa’l-jama’a, and to shun all innovations in religion (bida’).”*¹⁶

3- Another principle of the Khwajagan way is to act upon the ‘*azimah*’¹⁷ rather than the ‘*rukhsa*’.¹⁸

Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani said:

“Take the way of azimah and stay away from the rukhsah, follow the way of the Messenger of Allah

16. Yaqub al-Charhi, *Risala Unsiyya* (critically ed. Muhammad Nezir Racha), Islamabad 1983, p. 14.

17. **Azimah** refers to the original rule enacted initially, regardless of an undue reason such as hardship, necessity and need, and normally addresses each and every competent believer individually. Azimah consists of performing certain acts such as fard, wajib, Sunnah, and mustahab acts as well as avoiding other kinds of acts such as haram and makruh acts.

18. **Rukhsah** refers to a temporary, mitigated ruling that allows for the abandonment of the original ruling due to an arbitrary reason such as hardship, necessity, need, and which is limited only to the temporary situation in question.

(peace and blessings be upon him), apply his Sunnah and shun innovation in religion (bida')."

4- The Masters of the Khwajagan way always acted very sensitively in the matter of **lawful provision**. **Shah-i Naqshiband** strongly shunned unlawful provision and also avoided eating anything doubtful and would not allow his students to eat from what was doubtful either.¹⁹ He also viewed the food of state rulers as being doubtful and so he never ate at the table of King Hussain.²⁰

Baqi Billah insistently emphasized the crucial importance of eating lawful provision in order to advance in the path of tasawwuf saying:

"One should be content with little food and give much importance to the wood, water and pots that it is cooked with being lawfully gained. Also, the one who cooks the meal should not be heedless and cook the food with the awareness of being in the Divine presence. Food that is prepared without paying careful attention to these matters will emit such a smoke that will block the channels of prosperity."²¹

19. Muhammad Qadi Samarkandi, *Silsile al-Arifin wa Tazkira al-Siddiqin*, Suleymaniye Lib, Hajji Mahmud, nr. 2830, fol. 175b

20. See Salahaddin ibn Mubarak al-Bukhari, *Anisu al-Talibin wa Uddet al-Salikin*, p. 66, Iz Publications, Istanbul 2003.

21. Rushdi, *Malfuzat*, p. 34, (in Kulliyat-i Baqi Billah, pub. by Abu'l Hasan Zayd Faruqi and Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, Lahore 1967).



In addition to paying attention to whether the food is lawful or unlawful (*halal* or *haram*) even the mood of the person who cooks it can have an effect on the state, actions and the quality of worship of those who eat it. This thus presents the importance of the approach one takes towards one's food.

5- In the Khwajagan way, much importance is also given to the supererogatory acts of worship and righteous deeds in addition to the obligatory ones. Each kind of righteous deed is seen as crucial investment for one's eternal life and to be able to carry them out is considered to be a great opportunity.

Junayd Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"We did not attain tasawwuf through gossip, altercation or quarrelling. We have attained it through hunger, sleeplessness and embracing righteous deeds in sincerity and devotion."

6- The Khwajagan way is to take on the character of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him); it commands to treat people with the best of character.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said in a hadith:

"On the Day of Resurrection there will be nothing that will weigh more heavily on the Scales of the



believer than good character. Allah Most High abhors the one who displays ugly behavior or speaks an ugly word” (al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 62/2002).

“The angel Gabriel told me that Allah said:

*“This religion is a religion that I have chosen for Myself and that I am content with. Only **generosity** and **good character** befit it. As long as you live as Muslims elevate this religion with these two traits”* (Al-Haythami, VIII, 20; Ali al-Muttaqi, Kanz, VI, 392).

7- The reality of the Khwajagan way is to constantly consider oneself as being in the presence of Allah, by remembering Him and contemplating Him in the heart. The traveler must never be in a state of heedlessness of Allah and consider that he is always in His presence and that Allah is always with him.

8- The Khwajagan way places great importance on beneficial knowledge. The traveler should learn and benefit from the religious sciences, live in accordance with them, and help others to do so also.

Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) said that it is only possible to reach the state of annihilation of the *nafs* by taking the Qur’an in one’s right hand and the hadith in one’s left and



journeying in the light provided by these two.²² When advising one of his students he said:

“Learn the sciences of *fiqh* and hadith and stay away from the ignorant amongst the Sufis”²³

Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was a friend of Allah who was particularly learned in the hadith sciences and who gave great importance to knowledge and scholars. Due to this special trait of his, many of the teachers and students from the Bukhara mosque came to follow him and participate in his assemblies. When this began some of the scholars were anxious that the madrasahs would be emptied. In response, Bahauddin Naqshiband said to those scholars:

“Let us explain our *Tariqa (path)* to you and if you see anything in opposition to the Qur’an or the Sunnah tell us and we will abandon them.” The scholars could find nothing and they said:

“Your path is upright and we have no objections.” Some of them said:

“The hat that you wear is a means to fame.”

Bahauddin replied:

22. Abdurrahman Jami, *Nafahat al-Uns min Hadarat al-Quds* (rev. Mahmud Abidi), Tehran 1375 AH/ 1996 CE, p. 384.

23. Abdul Khaliq Gujduwani, *Vasaya*, Bayazit Devlet Lib., Valiyyuddin Efendi, no. 3229, paper. 11a.



“Since my hat is a means for altercation, it would be more proper not to wear it.” He then took it off and gave it to a poor person.²⁴ After this event the esteem held by the scholars for Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was enormous.

9- In the Khwajagan way there is no withdrawal to a life of constant seclusion and distancing oneself from the people. There is the danger of fame in such seclusion. Whilst amongst the people, the Sufi should seek any opportunity to serve the religion of Allah and His servants. Islam wills the Muslims to come together to form a community. A perfect believer learns **to be with Allah while he is among people.**

The prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said:

“The Muslim who mixes amongst the people and endures their pain, is better than the one who does not mix amongst them and does not endure their pain” (al-Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 55/2507).

The following words of **Ali Ibn Abi Talib** (may Allah be pleased with him) are filled with wisdom:

“There are two bounties of that I do not know which pleases me more:

24. Salahaddan ibn Mubarek al-Bukhari, *ibid*, p. 278-279; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalet al-Bahaiyya*, paper. 74b-75b; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 79-81.



The first one is when a person comes to me with the hope of having his need met and asks me in all sincerity to help him.

The second is when Allah Most High uses me as a means to bring about or facilitate that person's wish.

I would prefer to relieve the distress of a Muslim than to possess a world full of gold and silver.” (Ali al-Muttaqi, VI, 598/17049).

Every Muslim is responsible for the state of affairs of the world, in accordance with their potential and the capacity given to them. They are obliged to concern themselves with the concerns of the Muslims and make efforts to make Islam reign supreme. Those who live an individual and selfish life and remain indifferent to the problems of their Muslim brothers and sisters are subject to the Prophetic warning below:

“Those who do not concern themselves with the concerns of the Muslims are not from them.” (al-Tabarani, Saghir, II, 131/1907; al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab, VII, 361).

To remain indifferent to the pain of a brother or sister is a serious crime. **Sari As-Saqati** (may Allah have mercy on him) describes this lack of empathy and, having fallen into such heedlessness even for an instant and the person's subsequent regret through this story:



“One day the market of Baghdad had burned down. One of my students came running up to me and said: “O Master! The entire market of Baghdad has burned down and only your shop was saved. Congratulations!” Not considering the shops of my other Muslim brothers I said “Alhamdulillah” on behalf of my own *nafs*. However, for thirty years now I have been seeking forgiveness for that instant of heedlessness.”²⁵

10- The dress of those who enter upon the Khwajagan way must not be different to that of the other believers. There are no turbans or crowns or other distinguishing garments in this path. They do not give importance to their appearance or to stand out from others and they do not dress themselves differently. They prefer to live a life of modesty. Every disciple wears what is required of their profession and their form and dress is not different from their peers. To be a dervish is not related to one’s outer form but to one’s heart.

Yunus Emre (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What they call being a dervish is not through one’s robe or turban

25. Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh*, IX, 188; al-Thahabi, *Siyar*, XII, 185-186.



If being a dervish was due to one's turban or robe

We too would buy them for 30 or 40 (coins)

Mawlana Khalid-i Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The essence of Sufi path is to embrace the creed of the ahl al sunnah wa’l-jama’a, that is the saved group (firqa al-najat). It is to perform azimah and avoid resorting to the rukhsah, to turn to Allah always and consider oneself under His continuous watch. It is to turn one’s face from the adornments and pleasures of this world, in fact from everything other than Allah (masiwallah) and to reach the state of ihsan, described in the hadith, that is, of being with Allah (to minimize one’s carnal desires and perfect one’s spiritual potential to the best of one’s ability).

This path consists of occupying oneself with dhikr (remembrance) and tafakkur (contemplation) as one does when one is alone, even if one is mixing amongst people.

In addition, it is learning the religious sciences and benefitting from them and benefitting others also by sincerely applying what one has learnt. It is to hide one’s spiritual state from the other believers by dressing



*as they dress, in order to avoid ostentation (riya) and self-conceit or vanity ('ujb)...*²⁶

Thus, the aim of the path of Khwajagan is that, by complying with these and other similar principles, Islam is lived with great love, deep passion and profundity. The basic mortar of tasawwuf and its most important capital is **love** and the best manifestation of this is **paying attention to good manners and adab**. Without love and adab, it is not possible to advance spiritually. If love of Allah and fine courtesy in His presence is lacking one will not receive any pleasure from one's faith, worship or service towards others. **Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi** (may Allah have mercy on him) has the following to say about this matter:

"My reason asked my heart:

"What is religion?"

My heart then whispered into the ear of my reason:

"Religion is manners (adab)"

Sacred words (Kalimat-i Qudsiyya)

The eight principles put forth by Ghujdawani are considered to be the fundamental rules of the *sayr al-suluq* (travelling the way) of the Naqshibandi order.

26. As'ad Sahib, *Maktubat Mawlana Khalid*, Istanbul 1993, p. 121-122, (4th letter).



These rules, which have been termed the ‘Sacred Words (*Kalimat-i Qudsiyya*)’, are as follows:

1- *Hosh dar dam* (Awareness while breathing):

With every breath one should be in a state of *dhikr* and spiritually, awake and wary of heedlessness.

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

*“This path has been established upon the breath. This is why one must protect their breath while inhaling and exhaling. In fact, one should even protect the period between two breaths.”*²⁷

2- *Nazar bar qadam* (Watching one’s step):

When walking, one should look at the tips of one’s feet in order to avoid seeing anything that will lead to heedlessness. What veils the heart the most are those unnecessary and negative images that are reflected on to it by the eyes.

As all Muslims are aware that lowering the gaze protects the eyes from looking at the forbidden and has the virtues of good manners, modesty, humility and devotion to the Sunnah.

3- *Safar dar watan* (Journeying in one’s home-land):

To move towards Allah Almighty with every step and move away from carnal desires. It is to start



the inner journey of developing one's spirituality, which will allow one to reach its peak.

In its outer form it is to travel to visit a Perfected Guide and to enter under his training.

4- *Khalwat dar anjuman* (Solitude in a crowd): Outwardly, it is to be with the people while inwardly one's heart is with Allah.

King Hussain once asked Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him):

“What is *khalwat dar anjuman*?”

Naqshiband replied:

“This is to be outwardly familiar with the people while inwardly one is constantly pre-occupied with Allah; familiarity with the people is possible for those who do not neglect their *dhikr* and contemplation of Allah.”

The King asked again:

“Is such a thing possible?”

Naqshiband recited the following verse in reply:

“...there are men who proclaim His glory morning and evening, not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah and the



establishment of salat and the payment of zakat...”
(al-Nur, 24: 37)²⁸

5- **Yad kard:** (Remembrance): With the *dhikr* of the tongue, the heart is also brought to a state of remembrance by doing ‘*nafy u isbat*’. This is the struggle and effort to delve into the reality of the *kalima al-tawhid*. Saying ‘La ilaha’ (there is no god) is to banish from the heart all desires and whims that leave the servant heedless of his Lord and to remove and erase all aims for other than Allah from the heart. Then it is to establish the reality of ‘illallah’ (but Allah) in this cleansed heart, and struggle to turn the heart to Allah only.

6- **Baz gasht** (Restraint): After *dhikr* of ‘La ilaha illallah’ it is to say the following sentence:

إِلٰهِي أَنْتَ مَقْصُودِي وَرِضَاكَ مَطْلُوبِي

“O Allah! You are my aim and my purpose is to gain Your pleasure.”

7- **Nigah dasht** (Watchfulness): To protect the heart from unnecessary thoughts and to preserve the meaning of *nafy u isbat* in the heart.

8- **Yad dasht** (Recollection): Continuing the spiritual vigilance provided by the *dhikr* and being aware that one is always in the presence of God.

In addition to these eight rules, there are three more principles that have been known from old:

1- ***Wuquf zamani*** (awareness of time): To be in control of one's time, to use it well and to struggle to spend each moment in a state of spiritual awareness by frequently taking account of one's nafs.

Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“*Wuquf zamani* is when the traveler is always in control of his state. If his deeds necessitate that he be grateful, then he is grateful, if he needs to repent, then he repents. That is, he should be grateful for the times of ease and expansion (*bast*), and be repenting and seeking forgiveness for the times of constriction (*kabd*).”²⁹

2- ***Wuquf adadi*** (Awareness of numbers): This is to observe number when performing *dhikr*. In *khafi dhikr*, the counting of the number of *nafy u isbat*, it is important to ensure that the number is an odd number. This meticulousness protects the heart from disarray. There are many more secrets and of wisdom in abiding by the number declared in *dhikr*, however, only those who have been given wisdom can perceive them. The number in *dhikr* is like the teeth on a key. Just as if the number of teeth is either too great or too

29. Salahaddin bin Mubarak al-Bukhari, *Anis al-Talibin*, p. 95.



little, the key will not open the lock, so too if one does not observe one's number whilst performing *dhikr*, then the effect will be lessened.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) himself advised us to count our *dhikr*.

3- ***Wuquf qalbi*** (Controlling one's heart): This is to turn to the heart or for the heart to turn to Allah whilst performing *dhikr*. This is an indication that *ihsan* has become a constant state of consciousness. The traveler must be in control of his heart at every moment and look at what state it is in since the true aim in *dhikr* is that the heart knows the one who it is making *dhikr* of. *Dhikr* is not merely words uttered by the mouth. This is why during *dhikr* one should concentrate all of one's attention on the one who is being remembered. As is stated in the Noble Qur'an:

'Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely' (al-Muzzammil, 73: 8)³⁰

In short, the aim of all these principles is to train the heart in accordance with the meaning of the following verses of the Qur'an:

30. *Rashahat*, p. 62-77; Nizamaddin Hamush, *Risala*, Suleymaniye Lib., Aşir Efendi, nr. 443, fol. 153b-154a; Tajaddin bin Zakariyya, *Risala fi Tariq al-Sadat al-Naqshbandiyya*, Suleymaniye Lib., Reşid Efendi, nr. 474, fols. 51a-52b; Hani, *Hadaïq*, p. 355-369.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

“...He is with you wherever you are...” (al-Hadid, 57: 4)

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

“... We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.” (Qaf, 50: 16)

In like manner, reaching the taste of closeness to Allah Almighty in accordance with the meaning of the following verse:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“...only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace.” (al-Ra'd, 13: 28) is the main purpose of all these principles.

Being educated by Tasawwuf: The journey of the spirit (*Sayr-u suluq*)

The Arabs of the *jahiliyyah* (ignorance) period were a people of hardened hearts who had all but lost their humanity, so much so that they use to bury their female baby daughters alive. They were a people devoid of compassion and mercy, who believed that rights should only be for the strong and that the weak should be deprived of all their rights. With the event of **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be



upon him) delivering his message and fulfilling his task, this community became the very best community in the history of mankind and founded such beautiful civilizations as have never been witnessed before. By the tremendous love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in their hearts, they attained spiritual illumination and vitality, and their worship was filled with awe and reverence for Allah (*khushu*).

Words as precious as diamonds fell from the lips of those Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) who followed in the enlightened way of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). These words were a means of refreshment for those who heard them, like the gushing flow of a pure river. These believers, with the inspiring and elevated character that they obtained from the Prophet, were like newly blossoming flowers, which attracted the hearts and tickled the spirits with their beauty, purity and pleasant fragrance.

This radical transformation that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) brought about in the spirits of his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and in the social conscience of mankind requires that we carefully analyze his method of guidance.



The method used by the people of tasawwuf has always been to take this Prophetic modal and apply it to their own time and background as required. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) trained his Companions by conversing with them (*suhbah*), transmitting knowledge and wisdom at every opportunity. With his personal example, he allowed the poor *ahl al-suffa* (the people of the bench) in particular, to reach an unimaginable state of perfection through *zuhd* and *taqwa*.

The distinguishing features of the Companions were eating little, sleeping little, speaking little, spending their time reciting the Qur'an, remembering Allah, performing supererogatory worship, and contemplation. A lifestyle of excessive spending, luxury and waste was unknown by the community of Companions. They were content with what was enough and gave away any excess to those in need. They worked in order not to be dependent on others and rushed to serve those who were stricken and afflicted which gave the believing hearts much pleasure and joy.

As a result of the spiritual training that the Companions obtained they did not waver for a second even after the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) migrated to the next world. They spread throughout the world as soldiers of knowledge, wisdom, propagation and struggle in the way of Allah. They took the flames of their heart that were ignited in Medina



to Africa, Iran, China, Anatolia, Istanbul, and to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, with the prosperity they received from the Prophet. Their only concern was to seek the pleasure of Allah and be close to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in the next world, the real world.

Abdurahman Ibn Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

“Islam brought certain difficult commands which were unpleasant to the *nafs*. We found the best of the best to be in these difficult commands that were unpleasant to the *nafs*. For instance, we left Mecca and migrated to Medina with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). It was because of this migration that was difficult upon the *nafs* that we were granted superiority and victory and the road to success was opened for us. Allah Most High says in the Qur’an:

‘Just as your Lord brought you out of your house with truth, even though a group of the believers disliked it, arguing with you about the Truth after it had been made clear as though they were being driven to their death with open eyes’. (al-Anfal, 8: 5-6). As is described in these verses, we set out for Badr accompanied by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Here once more Allah, Most High, gave us superiority and victory.



And so, it was that we always encountered the best of outcomes, on account of these commands that our *nafs* found difficult” (al-Haythami, VII, 26-27).

As so these Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) went against the desires of their *nafs* and were personally trained by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) through *riyazat* (abstention) and *mujahadah* (struggle).

The last expedition of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) to Tabuk was also filled with severe difficulty and hardship. The Muslim army travelled thousands of kilometers and then returned. When they arrived back in Medina they had practically changed form, their skin was taut over their bones, and their hair and beards were disheveled. It was while they were in this state that the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said to them:

“You have come back in the best way. Now you have come back from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.”

The Companions asked:

“What is the greater jihad?”

The Prophet replied:



“The jihad (struggle) against one’s desires”
(al-Bayhaqi, *al-Zuhd al-Kabir*, p 198/374; Suyuti, *Jami*, II, 73/6107).

Another time the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) praised the righteous believers who struggled against their caprices and whims as follows:

“The true mujahid is the one who struggles against their nafs” (al-Tirmidhi, *Fadail al-Jihad*, 2/1621; Ahmad, VI, 20).

The following words of Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) summarizes the station of the heart that the Companions reached under the spiritual education of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and as a result of the struggle against their nafs:

“We reached such a state that we were able to hear the glorifications (tasbihat) of the food that we ate”
(al-Bukhari, *Manaqib*, 25).

Thus, tasawwuf in the hands of Sufi teachers (*murabbi*), who are the real heirs of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), and through the Prophetic methods of training becomes like a spiritual school in which the *nafs* is refined and the heart is purified. Enrolment in this spiritual school and the steps taken in the process of becoming a perfect human being is called ‘*sayr-u suluq*’.

As a result of this *sayr-u suluq* everything that distances a person from Allah is renounced from the



heart. This is such an arduous and demanding task that it is like panning tons of dirt in order to obtain one gram of gold.

The aim of this process of spiritual refinement, is to allow the human being to live in a constant state of remembrance Allah. It is to find Allah in one's heart, to be united with Him in one's heart and to reach the peak of happiness. In the eyes of those who reach this peak anything other than Allah (*masiwallah*) falls short to its true worth. In the face of this spiritual joy and ecstasy, all other fleeting pleasures pale into utter insignificance.

Ibrahim Ibn Adham (may Allah have mercy on him), who rejected his worldly kingdom for the sake of the ocean of divine love that he later found, said:

“If the passion and rapture found in the love we felt for Allah was something material, kings would have sacrificed their entire wealth and kingdom in order to take it from us.”

It is without a doubt then that the way to reach this peak of happiness is only possible through perfecting the spirit; that is through *sayr-u suluq*.

Methods of spiritual training

There are many methods of training that are applied in *sayr-u suluq*, both general and specific. We will focus on some of the general methods:



a. *Suhbah* (Spiritual conversation and togetherness)

Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an:

'And remind them, for truly the believers benefit from being reminded.' (al-Dharyyat, 51: 55).

The most fruitful setting for this reminding and warning is the *suhbah* of tasawwuf. The words '*sahabi*' and '*suhbah*' come from the same root, which shows the importance of this matter since the *Sahaba* were named as such due to the immense benefit from their companionship with the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Hence, we can say that "*suhbah* is a '*sunnah al-muakkadah*.'"³¹

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) did not place a book in the hands of every Companion. Rather he gave great importance to *suhbah* and their hearts being together. The Companions were thus witness to the spiritual states of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) as they poured out directly from his heart. As a result of this their hearts were filled with the spiritual gifts from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon

31. ***Sunnah al Muakkadah***: These are the acts done continually by the Prophet Muhammad, but which he would occasionally abandon only in order to demonstrate that there was no binding definite command to carry them out; acts that are not obligatory (*fard*) and necessary (*wajib*).



him). In addition to the words and knowledge of this interaction, there was also a transfer of subtle energy and indications from one heart to the other.

In other words, the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) received an education which produced in their hearts the realization of the Truth of Certainty (haqq al-yaqin) for 23 years directly from the Prophet himself. As they got to know the Prophet closely, they admired him and loved him and followed him in everything that they possibly could. The people of the age of ignorance were transformed into the gentle, sensitive and elegant people of the age of illumination. The Companions were under the personal guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and built a unique “civilization of virtues.”

As we just mentioned this is one of the most important secrets of what made the Companions what they were. It is due to this *suhbah* or close companionship with the Prophet that even righteous individuals who came after the Companions would never be able to reach their degree, even if they worshipped more than the Companions.

Suhbah has a special importance in all of the Sufi order and no less in the Naqshibandi order, due to this transfer of spiritual energy and blessings from heart to



heart. **Shah-i Naqshiband** (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Our way of spiritual training is founded upon suhbah.”

Assemblies of *suhbah* and *dhikr* are like gardens of paradise in this world, in which divine mercy and tranquility (*sakinah*) rains down. **Abu Hurairah** and **Abu Saïd al-Khudri** (may Allah be pleased with them) reported that they heard **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) say:

“Whenever there is a gathering for the remembrance of Allah, the angels encompass them, divine mercy envelops them, a tranquility (sakinah) descends upon them and Allah Most High mentions them amongst His superior servants (the prophets and the angels)” (Muslim, Dhikr, 39).

Allah Most High says about the ‘*sakinah*’ mentioned here:

‘He it is who sent down serenity (sakinah) into the hearts of the believers, thereby increasing their belief with more belief.’ (al-Fath, 48: 4).

When Allah sends down His *sakinah* upon them, their seriousness increases and they gain a spiritual grandeur. In this way their devotion to the commands of Allah is strengthened and their reverence and love for Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessings be



upon him) increase. The result is a spiritual peace, tranquility and certainty (*yaqin*).

Therefore, truthful and righteous believers should deem such assemblies as valuable treasures.

Another of the most fruitful benefits of these assemblies of *suhbah* is that the spiritual states of those present spread to one another. In spiritual assemblies of *suhbah* the hearts benefit from each other just like in the Law of Communicating Vessels.³² Transmission of the states and the exchange of influence take place. In time the hearts begin to resemble one another. The pleasures felt, feelings and understandings become the same.

One condition for this benefit is that one participates in these assemblies of *suhbah* with the intention of worship; one listens with love, respect and courtesy; and one keeps one's heart receptive and awake. This is because true *suhbah* takes shape according to the state of those who are listening. Unexpected events occur in accordance with the state of the hearts of those listening. It is from a true *suhbah* that each person

32. **Law of Communicating Vessels:** When either two or more different vessels are connected at the base they are called communicating vessels. Whenever some liquid is placed into any of the vessels, there will be a flow of the liquid between vessels until each has the same amount of liquid. This is because their base is the same the characteristic of one vessel becomes the same as the others.



can take his own spiritual medicine, having realized his own defects and faults and try to reform them. In this way his enthusiasm and efforts in his journey to Allah increases.

The more one attends the *suhbahs* with the right intention and desire, the more spiritual benefit will increase. The Companions described the state of their manners and awe in the *suhbahs* of the Messenger of Allah as follows:

*“We thought we had a bird on our heads and it would fly if we moved.”*³³

b. Dhikr/Awrad

According to some linguists, the word ‘*insan*’ (human being) comes from the word ‘*nisyan*’. *Nisyan* is the opposite of *dhikr* (which means remembrance) and indicates forgetfulness which is one of the fundamental weaknesses of the human being. Our Lord warns us of the danger of forgetfulness as follows:

“Do not be like those who forgot Allah so He made them forget themselves. Such people are the deviators.” (al-Hashr, 59: 19)

The best way to minimize the weakness of forgetfulness is through *dhikr*.

The ability to be a true servant of Allah and thus reach a stage of *marifatullah* (direct knowledge of Allah) is in accordance with the degree that *dhikr* is established and its depth is felt.

Dhikr is the most pleasing of acts to Allah and the best means for those servants who wish to reach direct knowledge of Him. Out of all of the duties of the human being, *dhikr* has a special place as is indicated by the fact that the word '**dhikr**' is mentioned in over 250 places in the Qur'an.

In many verses Allah, Most High, commands His servants to remember Him much. He tells them not to remain heedless of *dhikr* even at the most precarious of times, such as on the battlefield.³⁴

In his commentary, **Ibn Abbas** (may Allah be pleased with him) interprets the verse: '**O you who believe, remember Allah much....**' (al-Ahzab, 33: 41) as follows:

"Allah Most High has placed a certain limit on those acts of worship which are obligatory. He has accepted the excuses of those who have an excuse. However, dhikr is an exception. Allah Most High has not placed any limits of dhikr. He does not accept the excuse of anyone who abandons it, unless they have

34. See Nisa 4:102-103.



*lost their mind. Allah Most High has commanded that people be in a state of dhikr under all circumstances.*³⁵

How instructive it is for us that when Allah, Most High, sent two of His Prophets servant **Musa** and **Harun** to warn Pharaoh, He said to them: “**But speak to him with gentle words, so that hopefully he will pay heed or show some fear.**” (Ta Ha, 20: 44). Thus, He even warned two of His prophets and all of mankind in their about being neglectful of *dhikr*.

This is why in tasawwuf, those followers who wish to reach Allah, are advised to perform various forms of *dhikr* and *awrad* at certain times, thus demonstrating an important path to reach spiritual perfection.

Dhikr allows a person to take on the attributes of Allah. A name reflects its meaning. As a person continues to invoke the Beautiful Names of Allah (*asma al-husna*) they begin to reflect the meaning of those the divine attributes.

Dhikr is the greatest aid to help the servant get closer to Allah. The believer must remember and contemplate upon the name of Allah and His attributes and reach the awareness that Allah is always with him and always sees him. In time his character is enhanced

35. Al-Tabari, *Jami al-Bayan an Ta'wili Ayi' al-Qur'an*, Beirut 1995, XXII, 22; al-Qurtubi, XIV, 197.



and made beautiful and the love for Allah increases in his heart.

Dhikr is a refuge in times of sorrow and distress and in times of joy, it is a means for increase in spiritual states and gratitude.

Dhikr is to breathe in the air of Paradise while still residing in this world. In Paradise people will be in a constant state of *dhikr* since there is no heedlessness there.

All of the *awrad* and *adhkar* taught in Sufi path are very effective prescriptions for the diseases of the heart.

Dhikr is the most important infusion that the hearts need and Allah Most High says in the Holy Qur'an:

الَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Only in the remembrance of Allah can the heart find peace.” (al-Ra'd, 13: 28).

Muhammad Parsa (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“The purpose of all worship is to remember Allah Most High, that is *dhikr*. Those people who migrate from this world with love (*muhabbah*) and intimate



knowledge (unsiyah) of Allah dominant in their hearts will have migrated to true happiness.

There can be no love or intimate knowledge without increase in dhikrullah.

The essence of Islam is 'لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ' - La ilaha illallah', that is the declaration of the oneness of Allah and this is the very essence of dhikr. All other worship is done to strengthen this dhikr and to bring it to life...

The sign of real and perfect dhikr is to not forget Allah in the divine commands and prohibitions and always be prepared and willing to obey His commands at all times and in all places. Otherwise, a person's dhikr will not be more than the whisperings and temptations of the nafs.

*This is why the essence of beginning dhikr is to sincerely turn to Allah asking His forgiveness for any wrong deeds whether they be in regard to Allah or to people; those that were done both openly and in secret. **There can be no real effect of a person's dhikr, if that person's deeds and character are in opposition to Allah.***³⁶

36. Muhammed Parsa, *Muhammed Bahâüddin Hazretleri'nin Sohbetleri*, p. 45-46.

c. Muhabbah (love of Allah)

When we look at the core of education in tasawwuf we see that its real capital is *muhabbah* and the form of its best manifestation is displaying *adab and good behavior*.

As the love for a being intensifies, everything related to that being earns a share in this love to the extent of its closeness to it. For instance, a *murid* who loves his *murshid* feels love for anyone who possesses similar characteristics -however deficient they may be. If he encounters someone close to his *murshid* he compliments him as if he has met with a pilgrim recently returned from visiting the Ka'bah. To possess any object that his *murshid* uses brings about an unparalleled joy in his spirit. This is similar to the joy felt by **Uways al-Qarani** when Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) sent him his blessed robe.

Ibrahim Dasuqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Allah increases the spiritual rank of the one who cherishes love in his heart for his Shaykh.

However, the following should not be forgotten:

If the Shaykh was not carrying out the function of being a ladder to allow his followers to reach Allah, then Allah's wrath would have descended on those



hearts which harbor love for other than Him. Allah is very possessive or ghayur in this matter, and wills that all love be directed to Him only."³⁷

“**Al-Raqib**” is one of the great names of Allah Almighty. It means the one who is observing and overseeing everything but is sometimes used as the one who is the rival in love and Allah certainly does not like any love in our hearts for other than Him.

All love for other than Allah (*ghayr*) is **metaphorical** because the heart belongs to Allah in the absolute sense. Consequently, the real beloved cannot be any other than Allah. All other things that are loved and the states that arise from them are like the steps that lead to the palace. These are the steps taken for the heart to prepare it for love of Allah.

The most prosperous stage in these efforts is to meet with a Perfected Guide and experience the spiritual excitement of familiarity and love with him. The most effective tool for this is **rabita**. To reach an elevated stage in which love for a spiritual guide in one's heart is felt and strengthened and reaches a stage which cannot be compared to the any ordinary and base of connections.

37. Imam al-Sharani, *İbrahim Desûki'den Öğütler*, (trans. Erdoğan Baş), Istanbul 1996, p. 64.



The Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) grandson **Hasan** (may Allah be pleased with him) expressed his spiritual state after asking his step-uncle **Hind Ibn Abi Hala** for a description of his grandfather:

“My uncle Hind Ibn Abi Hala would narrate the hilya of the Messenger of Allah very beautifully. It would give me great pleasure to listen to him tell me about the Messenger of Allah so that my heart could remain devoted to him and I could follow in his footsteps.” (al-Tirmidhi, *Shamail*, p. 10)

These words express *rabita* in its actual sense. To listen to the description of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is one of the best means for establishing devotion of the heart to him.

The lexical meaning of *rabita* is connection and bond. In this respect, there is no creature in the universe without a connection. Everything is connected to everything else.

Consider a mother whose son goes to the army. She thinks about him constantly. Whenever she cooks a meal, she says, “O how my son would love this.” Or when a young man gets engaged, he cannot stop himself thinking about his future wife. Whenever he sees something beautiful, he thinks, “If only my fiancée could see this too.” If he is brought a delicious meal, he thinks, “If only my beloved could eat this too.”



In other words, if there is such a bond of love in such worldly matters then we cannot imagine this bond not to be present in spiritual matters. On the contrary, as one's spiritual state increases, the bond of love in one's heart is strengthened.

This is why the Blessed Companions would find great pleasure and joy in being able to say to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him): *“May my life, my wealth and everything be sacrificed for you O Messenger of Allah.”* They felt it to be an obligation to be able to sacrifice everything they had for the cause of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

We consider the love of **Abu Bakr** (may Allah be pleased with him) to **the Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) the peak manifestation of *rabita*. Thanks to the blessings of this heartfelt connection, that blessed Companion became the most distinguished people in understanding the Prophetic secrets and wisdom.

This bond in tasawwuf is to keep alive the love felt for a Perfected Guide and imitate his righteous deeds and good behavior. Keeping alive love and respect for one's guide or Shaykh, gains for the disciple a spiritual vitality. Love of righteous individuals is just as effective and beneficial as their discourse.



Love and familiarity are like a channeled flow between two hearts. The strength of this flow determines how much the state of the *murshid* spreads to the *murid*.

According to a narration, one time the great **Bahauddin Naqshiband** (may Allah have mercy on him) was leaning against a mulberry tree in the garden of Shahrisabz. Learning of this event years later **Ubaydullah Ahrar** (may Allah have mercy on him) bought that garden and would go there from time to time to observe that tree.³⁸ This is a manifestation of the love leading to adoration felt by a follower of the Shaykh of his Shaykh.

Love is essential if one wishes to advance spiritually. In order to imitate the behavior of the *murshid* and be able to reflect his spiritual state the *murid* must be bonded to his *murshid*. This occurs through love because a person will only imitate and wish to resemble the one they love.

Through *rabita*, the transfer of spiritual states between the *murshid* and his *murid* indicates a development in the direction of the *murid* becoming one with his *murshid*. It is said in a hadith:

38. Muhammed Hashim al-Kishmi, *Nasamat al Quds min Hadaiq al-Uns* (ed. Munir-i Jihan Malik), Tehran University, Faculty of Literature. (Unpublished doctoral thesis) 1375/1996, p. 167.



الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ

“A person is with the one he loves...” (Bukhari, Adab, 96)

This togetherness is a bond of state, behavior, thoughts and of attitude and direction, rather than a mere physical togetherness. It is doubtful whether a love that does not bring about such a bond of togetherness is true love.

Through *rabita*, the *murid* is able to prosper from the spirituality of his *murshid* and preserve his state of peace by cleansing his heart of worldly thoughts.

On the other hand, it is highly likely that people who do not attach their hearts to a spiritual guide will lose control of their carnal desires and follow lowly guides in accordance with the truth that “Nature abhors a vacuum.” This is why Allah, Most High, encourages the believers to keep the company of truthful and righteous people:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

“You who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truly sincere” (al-Tawbah, 9: 119).

Khwaja Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:



“The command to ‘be with’ in this verse indicates a constant togetherness. Since this togetherness is mentioned in the absolute sense, it indicates both an active and a nominal togetherness. Active togetherness is to be actively present with one’s heart attentive in the assemblies of the righteous. Nominal togetherness consists of envisioning their states while being absent from them.”³⁹

Therefore, the first step in becoming righteous is to keep to company of the righteous; that is to be with them in a state of familiar love. A natural result of this situation is that one becomes righteous. In fact, the saying ‘**a grape becomes darker by looking at other grapes**’ is an expression of this truth of maturation as a result of reflecting each other’s attributes.

One time the Companions asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him):

“Who are the real friends of Allah?” He replied:

الَّذِينَ إِذَا رُئُوا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

“The friends of Allah are those who when you look at their faces they remind you of Allah” (Al-Haythami, Majma al-Zawaid, X, 78; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 4)

39. For details see *Rashahat*, p. 453.



Thus, keeping company with the friends of Allah and observing their blessed faces is a means for the prosperity, spirituality and expansion of the heart.

The purpose of *rabita* is to strengthen one's spiritual bond via the chain of friends of Allah which goes back to **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) and to benefit from this special connection. When people stand in line holding an electric cable, the last person in the line will also be affected by the current.

If in addition to this spiritual togetherness, there is also a physical togetherness then it becomes '*nurun ala nur*' (light upon light). However, only a physical togetherness is not acceptable because there are men who sit at the foot of a Perfected Guide but not take their share due to their heedlessness.

On the other hand, there are those sincere *murids* in distant lands, who due to the deep respect, longing, love and bond felt for their *murshid*, are subject to unique openings. Some of our great scholars have said: "**The one in Yemen is here with me whilst the one next to me is in Yemen.**" this is because the important thing is that one should not lose the togetherness of the heart, wherever one may happen to be.

As is the case in every other matter, displaying *adab* is essential in *rabita*. **Khawaja Abdulaziz** (may Allah have mercy on him), one of the *murids* of



Khawaja Imkenegi (may Allah have mercy on him), expressed that in *rabita* it is more in accord with the adab of tasawwuf, that rather than the murid imagining his Shaykh coming to him, he should imagine himself going to enter the presence of his Shaykh.⁴⁰

Rabita which is applied in practically all of the Sufi orders, even though its name and way of application may differ.

However, from the 19th century onwards, *rabita* has been intensely criticized and viciously attacked and accused of being unbelief. Whereas, the fact is that, as stated above, *rabita* is a natural psychological outcome. It has no connection with unbelief.

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) has the following to say about this matter:

*“... the one whose heart is attached to worldly things such as property and wealth and constantly thinks about them is not considered an unbeliever, so why should attaching one’s heart to a believer be a cause for unbelief?”*⁴¹

In short, *rabita* is to keep constantly alive the love that a *murid* feels for his *murshid*. In no way does it indicate any sort of deviance such as attrib-

40. Al-Kishmi, *Nasamat al-Quds*, p. 340.

41. Ali ibn Hussain Safi, *Rashahat Ayn al-Hayat* (ed. Ali Asgar Mu’iniyan), Tehran 2536/1977, II, p. 636-637.



uting some sort of divinity to one's *murshid*. Islam rejects everything that opens a door to *shirk* (associating partners with Allah), such as the idea of priesthood in Christianity.

Let it not be forgotten that all human beings, apart from the Prophets, are weak and imperfect. Even the Prophets have erred due to the fact that they were human beings. However, since they were subject to divine support their actions were divinely corrected.

Thus, however necessary it is to show love and respect for our spiritual guides, it is also of utmost necessity to abide by the limits of the sharia in refraining from elevating them.

d. Serving others

The greatest fruit of faith is mercy and a natural result of this is serving others. To have mercy and feel for other people is a great favor of Allah. It is only possible to speak of a heartfelt, discernment and a conscience for the one who can feel for other people. It is said in a hadith:

“Have mercy on those on the earth so that the One in heaven will have mercy on you” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 58).

Mercy is to offer something that you have to those who do not have it. In other words, mercy is to



try to compensate for the deprivation of others and run to their aid.

In the Glorious Qur'an, our Lord most often makes mention of the attributes 'Rahman' and 'Rahim'. Consequently, we cannot conceive of a heart that believes in Allah being lacking in mercy, giving out and serving others. A perfected believer cannot remain indifferent to the voiced or silent cries of any creature, and of a human being in particular, and will not refrain from doing whatever they can to help them.

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Shams taught me something: “If on the face of the earth, even only one believer is cold, then you do not have the right to warm yourself.” I know that there are many believers who are cold; and I can now no longer warm myself..”

In other words, Shams instilled in Rumi (may Allah have mercy on them) a sensitive conscience that shuddered at the thought of fellow believers suffering. It is possible to warm the body with clothes. However, to warm the conscience is dependent on the heart approaching Allah and by serving others with mercy and compassion.



This example is like a template, which can be used in the face of the deprivation of every creature. This is why all instances of disaster should cause the conscience, before the body, to shudder. In this way, all shudders of the conscience that are due to righteousness and compassion are means for the hearts to become warmed up and find peace.

In Sufi training the importance of serving others is great. The most effective way of adorning the heart with humility and compassion towards others is to serve others for the sake of Allah. From this respect, all the Perfected Guides have done is nothing other than to serve others and regard serving others as a fundamental aspect of their teaching and have said:

“The one who serves will be served.”

Serving others is a unique and elevated step that ennobles the character and purifies the heart. It is such a step that all of those who were subject to divine closeness and endless reward - the Prophets, the saints, the *abrar* and the *asfiya* - were all elevated on this step.

That is, they embodied the hadith of **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him):

*“The servant is the master of the people”*⁴².

42. Al-Bayhaqi, *Shuab*, I, 334; VI, 334; al-Daylami, *Musnad*, II, 324; Ali al-Muttaqi, *Kanz*, no: 24834.

Ubaydullah Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Our Shaykhs would keep those whose future they were hopeful about, occupied with serving others.”⁴³

“It is necessary to occupy oneself with whatever is the requirement and necessity of that moment. Dhikr and contemplation (muraqaba) is done when one cannot find a Muslim to help or serve. Serving others, which is a means to relieving the distress of a person, takes priority over dhikr and contemplation (muraqaba). Some people think that occupying oneself with supererogatory worship is more important than serving others. The fruit of serving others is the blossoming of love and peace in the heart. The following saying illustrates this: “The hearts have been created in a way that they naturally love those who are good to them.” The result of supererogatory worship can never be equal to that of gaining the love of other believers. I did not learn this by reading the books of the Sufis; I learned it by serving the people.”⁴⁴

Just as the body has necessities for physical nourishment, so the spirit also has its needs for nourishment. Worship, behavior towards others and good character are the most vital and necessary forms of

43. Al-Kishmi, *Nasamat al-Quds*, p. 244.

44. Mir Abdulawwal, *Masmu'at*, Istanbul 1993, p. 16, 89; Safi, *Rashahat*, I, 94, II, 407-408.



nourishment for the spirit. Serving others, which is one of the social responsibilities of the believer, is an act that completes these others. The believer should try his best to avoid neglecting any of these.

Our ancestors built a civilization of virtues that set an example for us in this regard. With the motto of showing compassion and mercy to those created because of the Creator, they comforted the grieving and sad hearts. They built dervish lodges that fed the needy hearts just as they built soup kitchens that fed the hungry bellies. In addition to bath houses that cleaned the body, they built places of worship, and dervish lodges that purified the hearts. They established a civilization that even delivered compassion to destitute birds.

Again, our ancestors lived and had people live the peace of the Islamic brotherhood. The kind of huge gaps we see today between the rich and poor, between the noble and the peasant simply did not exist. In a society where the hearts are united, there were dramatically less insanity, depression, and suicides.

Our blessed ancestors, who were successful in such beautiful service, left behind them many domes and pleasant sounds in the sky.



“This world is the place of service. The hereafter is the place of *qurba*, or closeness to Allah. The degree of a person’s closeness to Allah is dependent on the degree of his service to others.”⁴⁵

Through their service, the friends of Allah train and refine those who love them and bring them closer to Allah. Thus, we can state “tasawwuf is the path of service.”

The author of *Rashahat*, which is a biography of the Naqshibandi masters, **Ali Ibn Hussain Safi**, one day rose to take his ablutions. His nephew wanted to fill his urn with water however, Safi prevented him from doing so, saying:

“The Khwajagan path is the way of serving others, not being served by others.”⁴⁶

In conclusion, a believer who wishes to improve his spiritual state should seek out the ways of serving others for his eternal gain, and seek Allah’s pleasure in every act, big or small.

There are many other important Sufi practices in addition to *suhbah*, *dhikr*, *muhabbah* and serving others in *sayr-u suluq*, the pathway to spiritual purification and perfection. The methods mentioned here

45. Ahmad al-Qasani, *Adab al-Saliqin*, Istanbul Un. Book, FY, pub. 649, issue. 53b-54a.

46. Al-Kishmi, *Nasamat al Quds*, p. 213.



are only a few of the general methods. These methods of purification can vary depending on the conditions of the time and place and the person's character and capacity. In the sharia, there are rules that are general and applicable to everyone, whereas in tasawwuf, in addition to the rules of sharia, there are also personalized methods, just as there are unique prescriptions for glasses in accordance with the degree of the person's sight.

The friends of Allah and the Perfected Guides *(Murshid al-Kamil)*

Out of all of the human beings that have ever lived, the best in character and the was undoubtedly **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him). All virtues and beautiful character were present in him. His heart was like a rose garden filled with beautifully scented roses and delicate graceful flowers. The friends of Allah, who are the heirs of the Prophet, are like winds of mercy filtered from that rose garden.

The hearts of the friends of Allah, who applied with the greatest of care and meticulousness the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in their own lives, are like polished mirrors, ever reflecting the brilliant light of the Prophetic character. For the leader, master, beloved and sultan of the friends of Allah is the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) himself.



By reaching a state of *fana fi'l-rasul*, that is annihilating oneself in the love of the Prophet, and having tasted real peace and happiness, the friends of Allah, like the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) himself, also do not speak from their own *nafs*, desires or whims. They are like the *ney* (flute) hollowed out and purified that distances them from Allah. All of the echoes of guidance that are heard from them are taken from the blessed breath of the Prophet whose character they have adopted.

It has been said in a *hadith qudsi*:

“...Almighty Allah becomes the ear with which they hear, the eye with which they see, the hand with which they grasp, the foot with which they walk and the tongue with which they speak” (See al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 38; al-Haythami, II, 248)

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him), the great Islamic scholar stated in one of his books:

“The *awliyaullah* (friends of Allah) and righteous people... they are the real purpose of this universe being created. It is they who have delved into the truths of knowledge and acted upon it”⁴⁷

Wherever they are, the friends of Allah are a means of mercy, forgiveness, and blessings. They are

47. Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifat al-Safwa*, Qairo 1421, I, p. 17.



with open arms ready to embrace with mercy and compassion all classes of society. They are also like magnets, centers of attraction for the people of truth.

Almighty Allah loves righteous servants of His, who have adopted His own beautiful attributes and made them beloved to those of his servants whom He has favored. He says in a verse from the Blessed Qur'an:

“As for those who believe and do right actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them.” (Maryam, 19: 96).

Harun Rashid, the Abbasid caliph, was living in Rakka in his glorious palace. One day Abdullah Ibn Mubarak (may Allah have mercy on him) arrived. All of the people of the city went out to meet him. The caliph was left practically all alone in the big city. Watching this scene from his balcony, one of the servants of Harun Rashid called out:

“What is this? What is happening?” They told him:

“A great scholar has arrived from the Khorasan. His name is Abdullah Ibn Mubarak. The people have gone out to greet him.”

The servant then said:

“This is the real kingdom it is not the kingdom of Harun. This is because in the kingdom of Harun, the workers cannot be gathered together unless the police force them.”

Thus, true kingdom is the love that Allah places in the hearts of people. Because the mortal kingdoms are destined to perish one day, while the spiritual kingdoms continue to live on in the hearts with the same magnificence, even after death. The fact that a constant stream of visitors come to visit the tombs of Shah-i Naqshiband, Rumi, Yunus Emre and Aziz Mahmud Hudayi, from far and wide every day, should be cause for reflection.

Muhammed Hamidullah, one of the leading Muslim scholars of the last century, points out this fact as follows:

*“Ever since I started living in a city like Paris in Western society, I have been amazed to see so many Christians accepting Islam; The reason that leads them to embrace Islam is not the views of the scholars of Islamic law or theology, but the Sufis like **Ibn al-Arabi** and **Mawlana Rumi**.*

I now believe that, after Hulagu’s devastating invasions, it is neither the sword nor the mind that will serve Islam today, at least in Europe and Africa, as in



*the time of Gazan Khan; but rather the heart, that is, Sufism.*⁴⁸

Throughout history, people have always gathered around these model personalities. These individuals did not distribute wealth or treasure to the people nor any worldly thing. They assured peace for their spirits and nourished their spiritual hunger. This is why they continue to live on in the hearts of the people long after their death.

Allah the exalted has bestowed on those of His friends (*awliya*) that He loves and has made beloved to others, various features according to their states.

For instance, He made Shah Naqshiband an unparalleled ocean of spiritual yearning (*himmah*) through his spiritual disposal and *marifatullah* (direct knowledge of Allah); He made some like Majnun, wander throughout the desert. He made some of them remain in a continual station of wonder and admiration; others He made speechless in the face of His awesome manifestations and hid them in the seclusion of silence. Some He made nightingales of love like Yunus Emre; others, seas of meaning spurting out wisdom from their lips like Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. There are also some amongst these noble individuals who

48. M. Aziz Lahbabi, *İslâm Şahsiyetçiliği*, trans. İ. Hakkı AKIN, p. 114-115, footnote 8. Ist. 1972.



gathered together all of these attributes within them. (may Allah have mercy on them).

The friends of Allah are, to use the common expression: 'perfect human beings' (*al-insan al-kamil*). As we just mentioned each *wali* does not bear the same characteristics. Even though they may be 'perfect' themselves, only those of them who are perfect and perfecting, '*al-murshid al-kamil*', who are in a state in which they can help others to reach spiritual perfection, are entrusted with and given permission to guide others.

The Perfect Guides are lofty spirits and noble personalities and have arrived at a state of true knowledge, as a result of their loving obedience to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him). They are individuals who have completed their spiritual training and reached a degree of competence in guiding others. Having reached such a state, they have then turned towards the people to invite them to become beautiful servants of Allah, and a worthy member of the community of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him), occupying themselves with their spiritual purification.⁴⁹ Allah, Most High, has endowed them with *marifatullah*

49. See Muhammed Parsa, *Muhammed Bahâüddin Hazretleri'nin Sohbetleri*, p. 77-78.



(direct knowledge of Allah) and the Divine attributes and appointed them as unique guides for humankind.

There are certain principles of this ‘divine appointment’, which ensure the continuity of the chain of spiritual guides. The following event sheds light on one of the most important of these principles:

Alauddin Attar narrates:

“I was present when **Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshiband** was nearing his death... Those present were thinking to themselves:

“I wonder who the Master will leave in his place to continue the spiritual guidance of his students.” Shah Naqshiband took this opportunity to say the following:

“Do not cause me any confusion at this time. This matter is not in my hands. Whoever Allah, Most High, appoints will be occupied with teaching you.”⁵⁰

Thus, the continuation of the chain of spiritual guidance takes place through the appointing of another guide to be the spiritual heir of the perfected guide. This appointment is not in the power of the previous guide. This appointment can only be made in the spiritual realm, through the indication and per-

50. Ali bin Huseyin Safi, *Rashahat Ayn al-Hayât*, p. 123-124; Muhammad bin Abdullah Hani, *Adab*, p. 305-306.

mission given by Allah and His Messenger (peace and blessing be upon him). That is, it is not enough to be competent in the duty of spiritual guidance, but one also needs spiritual appointment.

Throughout history, many of the Sufi orders have not been able to continue because a spiritual guide has not been confirmed through spiritual appointment. In some Sufi orders, based on the same wisdom, more than one worthy guide has been given permission. This is the reason for the different branches in the chain of the masters of Sufi orders.

On the other hand, being spiritually appointed is a divine favor bestowed on the one who is worthy of it. Even if this duty is bestowed upon one who is not competent in the people's eyes, this situation actually demonstrates that this individual is in fact competent or will be made competent enough to perform this duty. This appointment can be made for someone who is well known or to one who has remained hidden from the people and sometimes it passes from father to son. Throughout history, there have been many father and son Prophets. The situation is the same for the chain of Perfect Guides. For instance, **Imam Rabbani's** duty was passed on to his son **Muhammad Masum** and from him to his son **Shaykh Sayfuddin**.



Thus, physical inheritance is not an obstacle to spiritual inheritance. What is important is competence and spiritual appointment.

Perfect Guides are those individuals who have been raised under the guidance of other Perfect Guides like themselves, who have arrived to Allah, and who are knowledgeable in the rulings of the *sharia* and practice them. They are aware of all the hazards and obstacles on the spiritual journey and the tricks of the *nafs* and Shaytan, and are always cautioning their students and advising them in an effort to protect them. They inculcate in them patience, forbearance, contentment and gratitude, thus helping their students reach their goal in safety. Whether present or absent, they try to protect their students from all forms of misguidance.

All of their states, actions and words are in meticulous conformity with the commands and prohibitions of the *sharia* and the elevated *adab* of the *tariqa*. They themselves avoid physical comfort, pleasure and amusement. They refrain from taking the easy way and shun innovations (*bid'a*). They patiently bear all tribulations and struggles, striving to carry out their acts with meticulousness. They race to help their brothers and turn to *zuhd* and *taqwa*, sufficing with what is enough and living a non-troublesome life of simplicity. In this way, they become embodied examples of the standards that they advise.



In this aspect, the Perfect Guide is in the position of an *imam* whom his students follow. In none of their states or acts can there be found any conflict with the Book and the Sunnah.

Hence, to follow so called 'Shaykhs' who do not abide by these principles and yet claim to be Shaykhs is utterly disastrous. Instead of bringing those who follow them closer to Allah, they in fact distance them even further. They become the cause of their misery.

The need for a Perfect Guide (*Murshid al-Kamil*)

A believer progressing along the path of spirituality encounters many different phenomena. The human heart is like an ocean without a shore. Sometimes the waters in this ocean are still and other times they are like terrifying waves and whirlpools. In order to pass across this ocean in safety and reach the shores of salvation, one needs a sturdy boat and also a capable and skillful captain. If the captain cannot control his boat in stormy times he will be destroyed by the pounding waves of the ocean. A capable and skillful captain can steer his boat even in the fiercest of storms.

This is why those who wish to surpass their spiritual ocean and arrive to Allah, Most High, must first find a skillful captain and travel in his company and



in the direction given by his advice and instructions. Otherwise, he may lose his way in this journey, which harbors endless dangers and hazards, and he may well eventually be destroyed.

For those who are at the beginning of their spiritual journey, the trials one encounters in one's life are not so severe nor so complex.

However, as they go deeper into the ocean they are faced with many different events, spiritual manifestations that differ from individual to individual and states of *inqibad* and *inbisat*.⁵¹ They are in need of guidance from an experienced, skillful and perfect guide for the correct evaluation of these matters and the precautions that need to be taken.

From its beginnings until today, even though it has been recorded and its teachings written down, the religion of Islam is practical and has been transmitted through practice and then taught, and comprehended as one lives one's life.

Many people do not have the time to study scholarly books and so they learn their knowledge of the religion by either listening to the talks of a scholar or observing and modelling their own life on the lives of the righteous. Rather than theoretical truths, the

51. **Inqibad** (qabd): Spiritual constriction due to fear and similar emotions. **Inbisat** (bast): Spiritual relief due to hope.



human being is in awe of elevated characters and personalities who reflect those truths in their own states and behavior.

Truths that are learned by observing their embodied examples leave indelible marks on the heart and are more lasting.

The practical transfer of religious knowledge from generation to generation is a sounder method than what one learns from books. This path ensures learning Islam with a complete understanding and application. Learning merely from words can result in many contradictions and doubts in the application of those words. Thus, the friends of Allah, who practice their Islam with great love, rapture and excitement, have a great share in transferring this religion, unspoiled, from generation to generation.

The required spiritual transformation for the perfection of the human being cannot be gained by merely reading books. Despite the knowledge found in books being necessary and beneficial, it must be applied in one's life. Furthermore, in order to solve the problems that one is bound to face, one needs an experienced guide, as a model and one who knows the intricacies of the path. Just as one cannot perform an operation by reading a medical textbook, and a legal case cannot be solved by reading a text on law, so too in the spiritual realm, practice and application



is needed together with theoretical knowledge. Moreover, learning this is similar to work experience as an apprentice to a master. It requires learning by listening to a sound source and observing, without book or pen. Thus, it is the Perfect Guides who perform this service for their students. They are the leaders, role models and guides whose arena is experienced education and application.

They guide them along the path in safety without letting them make mistakes or deviate from the way.

This is why we cannot speak of a proper life of *tasawwuf* without one dedicating one's heart to a Perfect Guide. Those who set out on this path without a guide generally end up slipping of the path except for the rare exception. Those who attempt Sufism on their own without undergoing spiritual training at the hands of a guide quickly err and because they have no one to warn and caution them, they remain totally unaware of their mistakes. Most of the time they are deceived by their own *nafs*.

It is due to this need of the human being that Allah has never deprived the world of His friends (*awliya*) or people of guidance. This is undoubtedly a manifestation of our Lord's infinite mercy, compassion and grace.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him) stated the following:



“A group from my community will continue to carry out and establish Allah’s commands. Those who leave them without helpers or who oppose them will not harm them in any way. Eventually when they are superior Allah’s command will come.” (Muslim, Imara, 174)

“A group from my community will appear at each time, until Judgement Day and struggle for the truth to be known and lived. They will be ever subject to the help of Allah and eventually reign superior.” (Muslim, Iman 247, Imâre 173)

These are the Perfect Guides, the friends of Allah who guide others in inner matters and the righteous Muslim scholars. They first practice the religion of Allah and then guide others with their states, their words and their actions.

It must be noted that Perfect Guides are a means for arriving to Allah and not the goal. Thus, it is incorrect to compare Perfect Guides to priests in Christianity. Perfect Guides simply show the path to Allah and it is up to us to take on the path from our own free will and desire. The Sufi Master advises the servant about how to eliminate the obstacles of their *nafs*, to save their hearts from the slavery of all other than Him, and turn to Allah only. In fact, after the servant has reached this stage, the guide moves out of the way.

The great guide Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) describes this truth as follows:



“We are only a means for reaching the goal. What is necessary for the traveler (*saliq*) is to reach a state of perfection and leave us to reach their ultimate goal. The way of the trainer is to take the spiritual children of this path and bind them to the crib of the *tariqat*, then with the nipple of purification, and the milk of *himmah* they nourish them and bring them to the point of arrival at the presence of Allah (*wuslah*). They then wean them off themselves and allow them to enter the court of Unity. After that the Lord of all the Worlds trains and nourishes them.”⁵²

Thus, the Perfect Guides struggle to bring the believer to a life of *taqwa*. Once the state of *taqwa* is established in the heart, no need remains for any other spiritual compass and Allah the exalted then continues to direct that heart to the truth and to goodness, and bestows upon it the light of foresight and discernment to be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, and right from wrong.

The Holy Qur’an states:

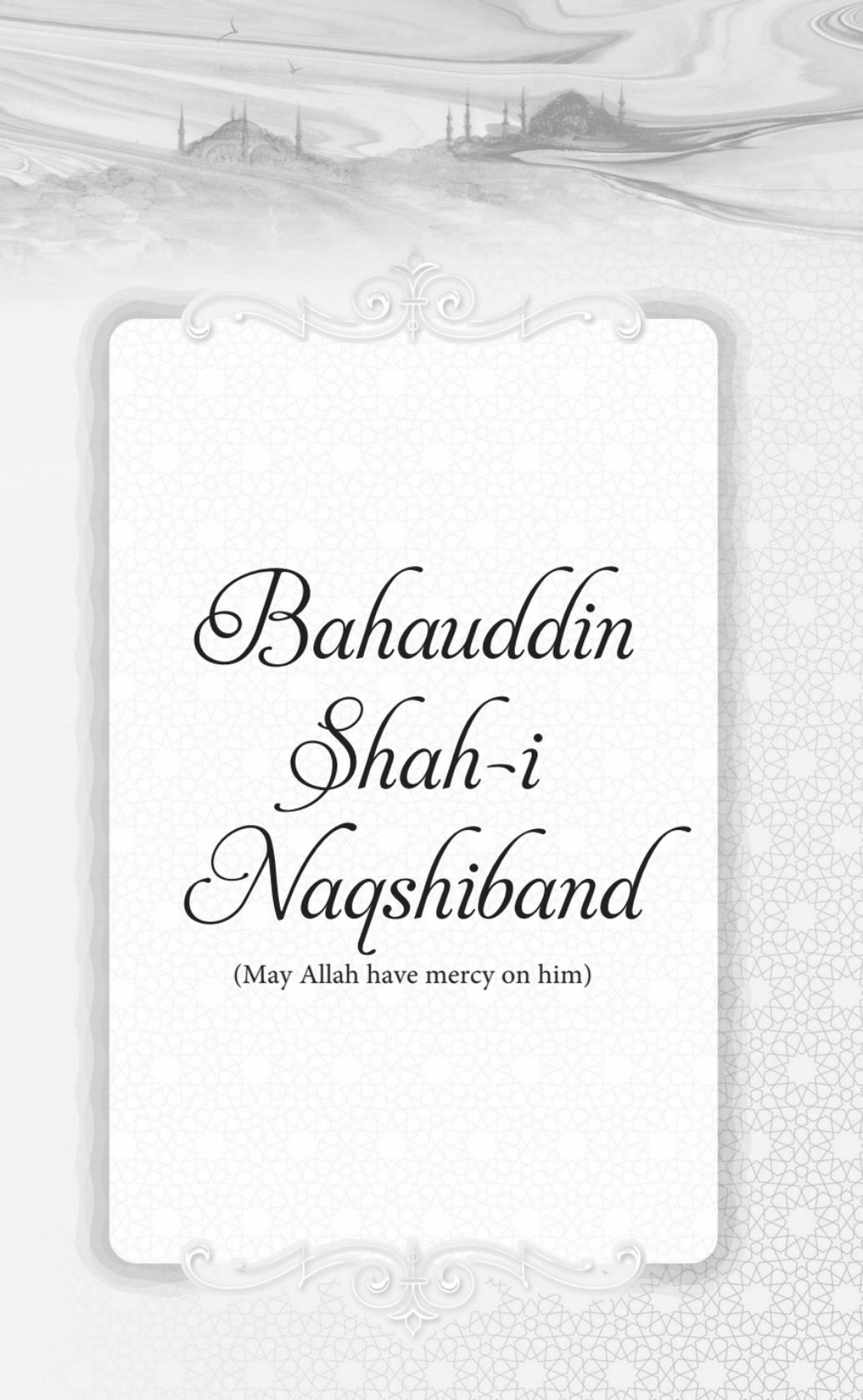
“...**Have taqwa of Allah and Allah will give you knowledge...**” (al-Baqara, 2: 282).

Shah-i Naqshiband (May Allah have mercy on him) 

“You who have faith! If you have *taqwa* of Allah, He will give you discrimination and erase your bad actions from you and forgive you. Allah’s favor is indeed immense” (al-Anfal, 8: 29)





The background features a light gray, intricate geometric pattern of interlocking stars and polygons. At the top, there is a faint, stylized illustration of a mosque with multiple domes and minarets, set against a backdrop of soft, wavy lines. The central text is enclosed in a decorative, rounded rectangular frame with ornate scrollwork at the top and bottom.

*Bahauddin
Shah-i
Naqshiband*

(May Allah have mercy on him)



Bahauddin Shah-i Naqshiband رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

[1318-1389]

Bahauddin Muhammad Ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) was born in 718 AH, in the month of Muharram in the village of Qasr al-Hinduwan, in Bukhara. His lineage reaches back to **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) on his father's side and to **Abu Bakr As-Siddiq** (may Allah be pleased with him) on his mother's side.⁵³

When he was young, he used to be an engraver with his father and so he became famous for the name Naqshiband (*Naqsh* means engraving). In some works, it is recorded that because Shah-i Naqshiband was continuously occupied with *khafi dhikr* (silent dhikr), the word 'Allah' was engraved on his heart

53. Nasiruddin al-Bukhari, *Tuhfat al Zairin*, p. 54; Sadriddin Selim Bukhari, *Bahauddin Naqshiband Yaki Yetti Pir*, p. 13; Id., *Teberruk Ziyâretgâhlar*, Tashkent 1993, p. 25.



and so he became known by the title ‘Naqshiband’, the engraver.”⁵⁴

Before he was born, **Baba Sammasi** (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently go to Qasr al-Hinduwan and say in his talks:

“Very soon this place called Qasr al-Hinduwan will become Qasr al-Arifan” (Salahaddin Ibn Mubarak al-Bukhari, *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 36)⁵⁵.

Shah-i Naqshiband has the following to say about those days:

“One of the greatest favors of Allah Most High upon me was that I was honored with the blessed gaze of Master Sammasi during my childhood and his spiritual adoption of me.”⁵⁶

54. Al-Shirazi, *Taraiq al-Haqaiq*, II, 351.

55. Salahaddin ibn Mubaraq al Bukhari, the author of *Anisu al-Talibin* affiliated himself with Shah Naqshiband through Alauddin Attar in the year 785 (1383). Whilst he was alive, Shah-i Naqshiband did not give permission for such a work to be published, however after his death, they began to publish it after performing various prayers of istikhara and having received a spiritual indication. The author has compiled the statements heard personally by his closest khalifahs and murids after attending his talks, and the spiritual states that they witnessed. Thus, it contains information about Shah-i Naqshiband from the original sources. This is why it was the most important reference for such famous books as *Rashahat* and *Nafahat*.

“When Master Sammasi passed away, my grandfather took me to Samarkand. Whenever my grandfather would hear of a dervish, he would immediately take me to him and request, and practically beg that they do not withdraw their beautiful gaze from me and they would complement me.”⁵⁷

In his youth Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently visit the blessed tombs of the great men of Bukhara. One night when he was visiting one of these tombs, he saw that even though the lantern was filled with oil, the light was weak because the wick was not moving. From there he went to Mazar-i Mazdahin.

Whilst he was sitting facing the Qiblah he was suddenly overcome by a state of ‘*ghaybah*’.⁵⁸ He saw a man whose face was veiled sitting on a large throne with many people surrounding him. When he saw Baba Sammas (may Allah have mercy on him) in that gathering he realized that these were the Friends of Allah who had passed away. One of those Friends came to Shah-i Naqshiband and told him that the man sitting on the throne was Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujduwani and that those around him were his successors.

57. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 37.

58. **Gaybat:** Is a state in which one’s heart loses all ties with the physical world.



He then named each of them one by one. When it came to Baba Sammas he said:

“You saw him while he was still alive. He is your Shaykh and he gave you a hat in trust from Ali Ramitani.”

Then that gathering said:

“Listen well! The master Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujduwani will teach you what is essential in your *sayr al suluq*.”

Abdul Khaliq lifted the veil from his face and informed him of the beginning, middle and end of the path of tasawwuf.

Thus, Naqshiband was known as *Uwaysi*, since he received knowledge and prosperity from the spirit of Ghujdawani in this way and his true murshid is accepted as being Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani, who lived one hundred years before him.⁵⁹

59. Uways al-Qarani, from Yemen, was subject to the prophetic compliment of the Messenger of Allah, and benefited from his spirit, even though he never saw him. On account of this, in tasawwuf, a person who does not physically see their perfect guide but benefits from their spirit and blessings in the spiritual realm is called ‘*Uwaysi*’ and this method is called ‘the method of *Uways*’.

Ubaydullah Ahrar said:

“Before Islam there was a group of righteous people who would set up of spiritual assemblies, without using language, and communicate with each other. They were called Burhiyan. From

These are some of the words spoken by Ghujdawani (may Allah have mercy on him) at that time:

“Those lanterns that you saw are a sign for you. You have great potential upon this path, but your wick (your capabilities) has to be set into action so that the unknown becomes clear and the mysteries can be uncovered. Also, you need to perform righteous deeds in accordance with your capacity so that you can reach your aim.”

Then the Master spoke the following words with great emphasis:

“In all states and circumstances, one must walk in the path of the *shariah* and uprightness (*istiqama*) and abide by the divine commands and prohibitions. One should prefer *azimah* in one’s deeds and follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). One should stay away from the *rukhsah* and from innovations in religion and take the hadith as their guide and seek out and strive to learn about any news or transmissions of the Prophet and His Companions.

When Ghujdawani finished giving his advice, his successors asked Khwaja Bahauddin to take the

the time of the appearance of the religion of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), people with these traits began to be known as Uways.”



skullcap that belonged to Ali Ramitani from his home and take it to **Amir Kulal** who was in Nasaf. In addition, they informed him of some events that he would see along the way as a sign of the truthfulness of this event. Then they shook him a little and Khwaja Bahauddin came back to his senses.⁶⁰

Shah-i Naqshiband immediately set out to do what he had been told. He felt honored to be at the service of **Amir Kulal** (may Allah have mercy on them both). Amir Kulal inspired Shah-i Naqshiband to continue to perform *dhikr* and the *kalimat al-tawhid* (*nafy u isbat dhikr*) in a silent manner. In accordance with the command that he received from Ghujdawani in the state of *ghaybah*, Shah-i Naqshiband carried out his deeds with *azimah* and did not perform audible *dhikr*.⁶¹ However, he did not oppose nor speak out against either *dhikr jahri* or the *sama*. In regards to this matter, he would say:

“We do not occupy ourselves with this matter but we also do not speak against it.”⁶²

60. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 41-42; Parsa, *Qudsiyya*, p. 8-10, 14; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 13b-14b; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 11-12; Muhammad Qadi, *Silsilat al Arifin*, fol. 43b-44b; Ali Asgar Mu'iniyan, “Aya Khwaja Bahauddin Muhammad Naqshiband-i Bukhari al Majzuban-i Salikast”, *Gevher*, II/8 (1353/1974), p. 740-742.

61. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 43; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 15a-b; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 14.

62. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 41; *Rashahat*, p. 139.



Shah-i Naqshiband would carry out his teacher's every command immediately and with great care and felt obliged to serve all creatures of Allah with great sincerity.

He speaks of his state from his initial days:

“Wherever there was something being discussed I was all ears. If the words were relevant to the spiritual path I would receive great pleasure but if they were about another matter I would be extremely grieved and saddened.”⁶³

Once he reached a certain state of maturity, Amir Kulal left the spiritual training of his son **Amir Burhan** to Shah-i Naqshiband and wanted to see for himself that he was capable of guiding others.⁶⁴

Eventually Amir Kulal saw that Naqshiband had reached a very high spiritual station and had the potential to go even higher and one day he said to him:

“My son Bahauddin, I have carried out to the letter the last request of my teacher in regards to you.”

Then he pointed to his chest and continued:

“I have transferred to you whatever is in my breast. Your bird of spirituality has finally emerged from the egg of humanity. Your bird of aspiration is now flying

63. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 53.

64. Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 387-388.



high. I now give you permission. Whenever you find someone from whom the scent of spirituality reaches you, pay attention to him and do not neglect to benefit from him in accordance with your spiritual hunger.”⁶⁵

His life of guiding others

When Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) began his task of guiding others he was living in the village of Qasr-i Arifan in which he was born. He would also go to give talks in the region of Transoxiana next to Bukhara, to towns such as Nasaf, Kharwizm and Karmina.⁶⁶ Having heard about his perfections and virtues there, people would come from large cities such as Samarkand to listen to his talks or align themselves with him.⁶⁷

The affiliation of Husamaddin Khwaja Yusuf, one of the leading scholars of Bukhara with Shah-i Naqshiband was an important turning point. After that many of the scholars and students of Bukhara came in groups to attend the circle of Naqshiband.⁶⁸

65. Al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 42a; Jami, *Nafahat*, p. 387; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 34; *Rashahat*, p. 121-122.

66. Al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fols. 123a, 104a, 108a-109a, 127b, 130b, 131a; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 141, 158, 173.

67. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 157-158.

68. See Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 75a-b; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 79-81.

Shah-i Naqshiband went on Hajj two or three times.⁶⁹ The day he returned from his first pilgrimage was the day that his teacher Amir Kulal passed away. Before he passed away he told his disciples to follow Khwaja Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on them).⁷⁰

Shah-i Naqshiband relates an incident that occurred at hajj:

“I saw two people in Mecca; one of them had a very high *himmah* and the other, in total contrast was very weak. During the tawaf (ritual walking round the Kaba) the one who was weak attached himself to the door of the Baytullah. At such an honorable place and such a precious time he was asking for certain things other than Allah. The person I saw whose *himmah* was quite high was a young man in the market of Mina. He made purchases to the value of approximately 50000 *filori* (an old unit of currency) but he never remained heedless of Allah for one instant. When I saw that youth’s efforts the blood rushed to my heart (thinking of my own faults)”⁷¹.

69. See Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 62b; *Rashahat*, p. 113; Hani, *al-Hadaiq*, p. 404.

70. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 194; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 36; *Rashahat*, p. 122.

71. *Rashahat*, p. 473.



His sensitivity in eating lawful provision

Shah-i Naqshiband would place great importance on lawful provision. He also displayed great care in avoiding that which was doubtful. In his talks he would frequently cite the hadith:

*“Worship is ten parts; nine of those are to ask for lawful provision and one is the other acts”*⁷² and advice to act accordingly.⁷³

Khwaja would produce his own food from agriculture. Every year he would grow a certain amount of barley, black-eyed peas, and wild apricots. He took great care in making sure that the animals, field, seed and water he used on his farm were all lawful. This is why many scholars would join his talks in order to take the blessing of eating from his meals prepared of lawful origins.⁷⁴

Naqshiband would not eat from the table of kings nor would he accept their gifts. The wife of King Hussain once sent him some robes, which she had embroidered with her own hands. Despite all her insistence Shah-i Naqshiband would not accept them, even though at that time all he had to wear was a shirt

72. Daylami, *Musnad al Firdaws*, III, 107/4062.

73. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 63.

74. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 64; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 37, 112, 138; *Rashahat*, p. 159, 184.

made of felt. His turban and his shoes were also very old⁷⁵.

One time one of his students complained that he was losing his spiritual state and he said to him:

“Investigate very well whether what you are eating is lawful or not.”

When his student did in fact go and investigate, he found that some of the wood that was used to cook his food was of doubtful origins and he immediately corrected it.

Shah-i Naqshiband placed great importance on earning his livelihood with his own hands. He lived by the principle of working in worldly matters to earn his livelihood and not be dependent upon anyone but at the same time not being heedless of Allah, Most High.

He would warn of heedlessness

Most of the time Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would personally cook his food or prepare the table. He would continually advise the dervishes to be awake when eating and to maintain presence of heart. If he saw any of his disciples take a bite of food in a state of heedlessness he would immediately caution him gently and his heart was not

75. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 65, 67.



content that they ate even one bite in such a state. If a meal happened to be prepared in anger, unwillingly or by force, he did not eat it nor was he pleased when his followers did:

“There is darkness in this food and it is not suitable for us to eat from it”⁷⁶.

One day they had gone to the region of Gadivat. A dervish brought them a meal. Shah-i Naqshiband said:

“It is not suitable for us to eat this food for it has been prepared in a state of anger. The one who sifted the flour, kneaded it and then cooked it was very angry when doing so.”

If he saw someone place a ladle of food into a pot in anger or grudgingly he would not eat that food and would say:

“There is no blessings in something that is done in anger, in heedlessness, grudgingly or by force. For

76. We should take note of the following matter: These states and others seen in Shah Naqshiband and other *ahlullah* are the states of discernment, insight and unveilings reached by them on account of the state of their heart. Consequently, for a person who has not reached such a state to make similar comments seeing themselves in his station, is completely wrong. One should shun such highly veiled words which are mixed with *riya*. Otherwise those who superficially imitate the words of stations that they have not reached will meet with spiritual harm.



it has become tainted by the whims of the *nafs* and with Shaytan.”

Righteous deeds and good behavior are only possible through lawful provision. Furthermore, lawful provision should be eaten not in heedlessness but with presence of the heart and in a state of wakefulness. Abiding by the principle of *wuquf-i qalbi*⁷⁷ at all times. To remain aware and conscious at all times will be an important spiritual exercise for a person, and it will be a means for presence of the heart during prayer.⁷⁸

One time when he heard some of his students talking vainly, whilst heating the water to be used for cleaning and ablutions, he cautioned them as follows:

“Do you not know even this much? When cooking and when heating water one should prepare one’s heart and protect one’s tongue from useless words. This state will bring about a state of presence of the heart and awareness in the person who eats that food or performs ablution with that water. As for the heart of the one who takes ablution from water that has been heated in heedlessness or eats food cooked in heedlessness, it will be filled with darkness and heedlessness will arise from it.”⁷⁹

77. For the explanation of *Wuquf qalbi*, see page 30 (buraya baskıya girecek nüshada *Wuquf qalbi* ile ilgili bilginin olduğu sayfa numarası yazılacak)

78. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 64-65; *Rashahat*, p. 513.

79. *Rashahat*, p. 513.



Knowledge and Action

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“As ordered by Abdul Khaliq Ghujdawani I tried to investigate the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be up on him) and any news of the Blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). I attended the assemblies of the scholars, took lessons in hadith, and learned the transmissions of the Companions. I acted upon each of these and by the grace of Allah I was able to witness their effects on me.”⁸⁰

While serving at the Sufi lodge Shah-i Naqshiband also continued to study in the madrasah. He said:

“I was studying tafsir and hadith from **Diggerani (Kishlaki)**. At that time, I happened to go to Nasaf. My teacher was gardening. Since there were quite a lot of tamarisk trees, he needed an axe. My teacher said:

“Our axe was left with Husamaddin Efendi in Bukhara.” I immediately understood what he meant. Without them knowing, I went to Bukhara the next day and brought back their axe.”⁸¹

80. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 44.

81. See *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 52; *Rashahat*, p. 118; Mawlana Shihabaddin, *Agahi-yi Sayyid Amir Kulal*, p. 34-36.

Shah-i Naqshiband would place great importance on Hakim al-Tirmidhi (who passed away in 320 AH) and benefitted greatly from his spirit, his ideas and his works.

He would continually seek to converse with any of the scholars and righteous men who were his contemporaries. One day he went to visit one of the great scholars of that time, **Hamiduddin Shashi** (may Allah have mercy on him). He said to him:

“The kernel is protected by the shell. If there is a sickness in the shell, this will contaminate the kernel.” Mawlana Hamiduddin was left in awe of these words. Shah-i Naqshiband continued:

“We are people who harvest the virtuous fruits from our precious scholars”⁸².

One of the scholars of that time, **Khwaja Yusuf** would attend the assembly of Shah-i Naqshiband from time to time and he would solve any problems of the dervishes if there was a need.”⁸³

Alauddin Attar said:

The attention, love, loyalty and enthusiasm of the great scholars of that time for Shah-i Naqshiband was very great indeed.

82. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 277-278.

83. *Jami, Nafahat*, p. 539.



In fact, many students and great teachers would abandon their madrasah and even return any property belonging to the foundation given to them for their services, in order to attend his talks day and night.

One day a great number of scholars from Bukhara gathered together in the presence of Shah-i Naqshiband. Some bigoted people amongst them said:

“In our madrasahs today, there is no brightness of knowledge nor any study left. No importance is given to educated debates, investigation or research. Most students have inclined to your way and left the pleasure of knowledge and study and retreated to the corner of *fana* and lassitude. What is this state?”

Shah-i Naqshiband replied:

“O assembly of noble scholars! We are devoted to you in the path of the sharia and we follow you in this path. We follow whatever you transmit to us from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). If there is anything about our way that is in opposition to the Sunnah of the Prophet, then show us, and we will abandon it. Caution us in accordance with the verse: “**Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know**” (al-Anbiya, 21: 7) and let us know if we are on the path of guidance or not.”



“We have investigated your way from all aspects. There is nothing in it which is not in line with the Sunnah of the Prophet.”

However, there was a scholar by the name of **Molla Hord** amongst them and he said:

“The robe that you wear is a means of fame in two respects. The first is that the robe is something that the dervishes are most proud of and the other is that by wearing it you consider yourselves distinguished from others. Is this allowed? Those things which cause a person to desire fame will lead them to disaster.”

Shah-i Naqshiband replied:

“This robe that we wear is not something so precious that it will lead to a desire for fame or distinctiveness. It is the average robe of the dervish. However, since it has become a cause of contention and gossip we will no longer wear it.”

He immediately took it off and presented it as a gift to one of the dervishes there.”

The scholars from Bukhara who had witnessed this and many other virtues and displays of good character from Shah-i Naqshiband, finally said:

“Just as the eye needs both the black and white parts in order to see, we too are in need of you.”⁸⁴

84. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 278-279.



One time Shah-i Naqshiband was asked:

“If a person studies ‘logic’ with what intention should he study it?” He replied:

“He should study it with the intention of distinguishing truth from falsehood”⁸⁵.

Shah-i Naqshiband received solid training in hadith and he would frequently explain many hadith in his talks and he would make expositions from tasawwuf. He knew Arabic, Turkish and Persian⁸⁶.

His uprightness (istiqama)

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“One should not incline towards extraordinary acts or *karamat*. The real skill is to be upright.”⁸⁷

“One should only accept extraordinary states and wonder-working when one’s deeds are upright and one is in accordance with the Sunnah. If one is not in accordance with the Sunnah then one should pay no attention to his miracles.”⁸⁸

85. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 106.

86. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 38, 54, 57, 77-113, 249-250; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 168.

87. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 88.

88. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 26.



He used to narrate the following words from one of the friends of Allah:

“If a *wali* happens to enter a garden and every leaf in that garden calls out to him: “O friend of Allah”, he should not heed that voice, neither outwardly nor inwardly. On the contrary, he should increase his efforts and take even more care to be in a state of servanthood, *taqwa* and supplication to Allah. The rank of perfection in this station is particular to Muhammad the chosen one (peace and blessings be upon him). The Messenger of Allah was subject to countless bounties and favors of his Lord and these only served to increase his state of servanthood, seeking refuge with Allah and his supplication to Him, he would say, “Shall I not be a grateful slave?” (Bukhari, Tahajjud, 16)”⁸⁹.

Shah-i Naqshiband would relate the following beautiful words from Sulami (may Allah have mercy on them both):

“Seek uprightness and do not seek wonder-working! Your Lord desires uprightness from you, but it is your *nafs* that desires wonder-working.”⁹⁰

In order to protect himself from the compliments of mere mortals, Shah-i Naqshiband would

89. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 88; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 57.

90. Sulami, *Haqaiqu al Tafsir*, [Hud, 12]; *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 88.



hide his miracles. One day he was asked to show some wonder-working and he said:

“Our wonders are here for everyone to see. Look – we are still able to walk the earth even though we have such a weighty load of sin on our shoulders”⁹¹.

When his disciples would mention some of the wonders they saw from him he would say:

“They are the *wonders* of my disciples, not mine.”⁹²

Whenever some extraordinary wonders were observed about him, he would always warn his dervishes as follows:

“O my friends! We have no control over this. That is, these do not occur through our seeking or desiring them. They are from Allah. No such things can come from something that is destitute, bankrupt, weak, and completely deficient.

Another time he said:

“Even though the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was the most perfect of all created beings, the closest to Allah, and all of his prayers were accepted, he was told by Allah:

91. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 112; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 58a.

92. Ahmad Qasani, *Adabu al Saliqin*, fol. 58a.



‘...you did not throw, when you threw, it was Allah who threw ...’ (al-Anfal, 8: 17).

In that case we should think of the state of his community, how wretched and weak they are. There is no share in the extraordinary acts that can be seen appearing from dervishes. Maybe those states are there in order to open up the horizons of those who seek Allah.”⁹³

Straying even an inch from uprightness has an immediate effect upon one’s spiritual state. Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Any sort of slip or erring on the part of a friend of Allah is a result of a fault in his humility.”⁹⁴

His following of the Sunnah

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would summarize his Sufi order as ‘following the words of the Messenger of Allah and of his Companions’. He received great pleasure from applying the Sunnah in every aspect of his life.⁹⁵ This was to such a degree that when his son passed away he said:

93. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 156.

94. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 88.

95. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 64, 89-90, 93, 188, 198, 249, 277; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 58.



“Praise be to Allah, this too is from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. He saw his own children pass away while he was still alive. Most of the states that befell the Messenger of Allah have also befallen us.”⁹⁶

It is because of the efforts and sensitivity to act in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) that Bahauddin Naqshiband was known as “مُحْيِي سُنَنِ سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ / (the Bringer to Life of the Sunnah of the Master of the Messengers) and مُوَضِّحِ آثَارِ الصَّحَابَةِ / (The Expounder of the path of the Blessed Companions).⁹⁷

One time Shah-i Naqshiband advised **Yaqub al-Charkhi**:

“Try as best as you can to act upon the following hadith of the Messenger of Allah: *“Keep contact with your relatives even though they cut their ties with you give to those who do not give to you, and forgive the one who oppresses you.”*⁹⁸ All of these are in opposition to the *nafs* but when applied bring great benefit.”⁹⁹

His worship

Bahauddin Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was very meticulous when it came to worship. He narrates an example of this.

96. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 261.

97. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 19.

98. Ahmad, IV, 158.

99. Yaqub al-Charkhi, *Risala al-Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 116.

“When it was made possible for me to repent I was living in the village of Rivertun. I would show great care in performing my prayers in congregation at the masjid. One time I was unable to perform my prayer in the congregation. The imam of that masjid was very pious and knowledgeable and He said to me:

“I always saw you standing in prayer, and I considered you to be a brave man who continued to perform prayer in congregation. However, now I see that you are one who neglects the congregational prayer.”

I responded:

“Sir, you imagined me to be one who stands in the prayer ranks but in reality I am of those whose hearts are veiled.

May Allah have mercy on him I heard the following lines from that great man:

“In the market of love, no one would purchase a dirty heart. A pure heart is needed in order for it to come out of the fire clean.”

These words weighed down upon me. That fire burned in my heart always and that my spiritual hunger and increased.”¹⁰⁰

Shah-i Naqshiband expressed the importance of worship in the path of spiritual perfection:

100. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 40.



“**Metaphors are bridges to reality.**” What is meant by this is that all forms of worship, apparent, inner, spoken and active are metaphors. Those who enter this path will not reach the truth unless they take care in all of these forms and pass this stage (as long as they travel from the stage of faith (*iman*) to *ihsan*).”¹⁰¹

Another time he said:

“One should continue to occupy oneself with litanies and supererogatory worship in the dawn and after the evening prayer (Maghrib).”¹⁰²

His humility and selflessness

When the occasion arose Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would say the following:

“The most profitable of those who travel in this elevated path (*tariqa*) are those who are in a state of complete humility, who ask Allah and who have high aspirations. This is the door through which they made us pass. Whatever I have found, I have found through being in a state of selflessness and humility.”¹⁰³

In reality, the secret that allowed these Friends of Allah to reach their peak was this state of humility,

101. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 108.

102. Yaqub Charkhi, *Risala al-Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 95.

103. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 46.



selflessness and an unassuming nature. This is why the Sufis said: **“When you get out of the way, what is left is the One who created you.”**

The following event is a good illustration of the state of humility and nothingness of Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him):

Once Shah-i Naqshiband went to a place called Kufin. His own disciples and a great crowd from the people of that town were following him. Seeing that he had drawn the attention of so many people the Shah began to weep. Those who saw him also began to weep; however, they did not know why he was crying. A little while later, Shah addressed himself as an expression of his own selflessness and humility before the Divine Greatness:

“I am in a state of desolation, incapacity, exhaustion and incompetence and not worthy of even greeting anyone or receiving their greeting of peace. Allah, Most High, has not humiliated me amongst the people and has made them follow me.”

“No one knows my state.” He continued to weep bitterly and then recited some lines, which meant the following:

*“If they truly knew me they would cast me out of their town. Woe to me. Nobody knows my true state.”*¹⁰⁴

104. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 80.



This is the sensitivity of the heart of the Friends of Allah. Whenever one senses one's own ego taking over, one should immediately seek refuge in Allah and try to rid himself of it and take great care against this state.

One time a disciple from Nasaf had an argument with his neighbor and offended him. Shah-i Naqshiband was very upset by this and he travelled to Nasaf from Bukhara. As soon as he entered the city he went straight to the house of that offended man and knocked on his door. With great humility, he made the following request:

“Please forgive us this sin, the fault is ours.” As a result, he appeased the neighbor of his disciple. The coming to Nasaf of Naqshiband all the way from Bukhara to mend a broken heart astonished the people of Nasaf and many of them became his disciples¹⁰⁵.

One of the sincere students of Shah-i Naqshiband, Musafir Khwarazmi narrates:

“One day Khwaja Bahauddin was constructing a building for some service. All of the dervishes were present and were all covered in dirt, working very carefully. Muhammad Parsa had been given the duty of mixing the mud. The sun had reached its peak and it was very hot. Shah-i Naqshiband gave the command

to his workers to rest for a while. Everyone washed their hands and feet and went to sit in the shade. Since they were so tired, they fell asleep where they were. Muhammad Parsa also fell asleep in the place where he was mixing the mud. While they were in this state Shah-i Naqshiband looked at each one of them. He then went by the side of Muhammad Parsa. When he saw him in this state he was moved and he wiped his blessed face over the feet of Muhammad Parsa and prayed as follows: “O Allah. Have mercy on Bahaud-din for the sake of these feet.”¹⁰⁶

Alauddin Attar narrates:

“There is no hope for salvation other than to perceive your own weakness and repent. The traveler should always see the deficiency in his deeds and his shortcomings. He should consider his own repentance from his own weakness and sins and seek refuge in Allah, believing Him to be One of grace and favor. Shah-i Naqshiband would command his students to this state and say: “I was continually reminded of these attributes.”¹⁰⁷

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

106. *Rashahat*, p. 139.

107. *Rashahat*, p. 175-176.



“The way of the people of the heart is to see their righteous deeds as few, to be in a state of humility, nothingness, and weakness and to know that one’s deeds are faulty and one’s state defective. There is no better way of breaking one’s ego than to see oneself as lacking and to see one’s own shortcomings. This is one of the wisdoms, in which even the Prophets erred.

The reality of repentance is this: to perceive one’s own incapacity by abandoning the arrogance and pride of the ego, which are the origins of all wrong actions. This comes about by recognizing the selfish nature of the *nafs* and realizing the danger it brings to one’s spirituality. While in this state of pain and incapacity, one should plead with Allah and beg Him wholeheartedly. This is the reality of repentance.

“O my Lord! People fear you, but I fear myself. From You, my Lord, I have seen only good but from myself I have seen nothing but bad.”

On the other hand, a fault occurring in the people of Allah may be the reason for their annihilating their ego. This is one of the wisdoms in the Prophet Musa objecting to Khidr (peace be upon them both) due to his looking at matters with the eye of the Shariah, while Khidr knew something he didn’t about the reality of the situation which, on the face of it, looked to be unacceptable. The Prophet Musa realized his objections were wrong due to the truth that was hid-



den from him and not hidden from Khidr and then his ego vanished and he obtained the knowledge that he was aiming for from Khidr (may Allah be pleased with him).”¹⁰⁸

Khwaja Husamaddin Yusuf wished to compile and write down the words and anecdotes of Naqshiband while he was still alive, however; Shah-i Naqshiband did not give him permission, which is another indication of his high level of humility.¹⁰⁹

His generosity

Shah-i Naqshiband gave no importance to worldly wealth and preferred to live as a poor man. He was still extremely generous, and would give away a lot of charity to people. If somebody gave him a gift he would offer a similar gift in return or something much better, in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

His followers who attended his talks could also be seen to have these traits. If a friend or guest happened to visit one of his disciples, they would prepare a meal and offer them whatever they had. In fact, they would prefer their brothers to themselves, and would not hesitate to offer something that they were in need

108. Parsa, *Muhammed Bahâüddin Hazretleri'nin Sohbetleri*, p. 68-69.

109. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 20.



of themselves. For instance, when one of their guests stayed the night, they would give their own item of clothing to wear and would endure the cold weather without making this known to their guest.¹¹⁰

His service

Once Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) told his students that he had cleaned all of the toilets in all of the madrasas of Bukhara in order to encourage them to serve others. He then continued saying:

“My master advised me of the following: “Be careful about the hearts. Serve those who have fallen, the weak and broken-hearted. Pay attention to those whom the people belittle and be humble and modest with them.” I then occupied myself with such acts of service as indicated by my teacher. Then my master turned to me and said:

“Take care of the animals with humility and attention. The animals are also creatures of Allah (Observe His manifestations in them. Try to look at them with the glance of compassion shown to them by their Creator). Occupy yourself with treating the sick and injured.”

Upon his command, I took up the duty of taking care of animals. I continued like this for a while. If an animal happened to pass me by, I would allow him to pass first. My days continued like this for seven years. In like manner, that dearest master turned to me and said:

“Take sincere care of the dogs of this blessed lodge and search for one who will expand your horizons of happiness.

I considered this act of service to be a goldmine and I embraced it fully. One night I saw a dog. A completely different state overcame me. Beside him, I supplicated and pleaded with Allah. I began to weep and sob uncontrollably. While I was in that state, that poor dog laid down on his back and turned his face towards the sky. He raised his front legs and began to whimper mournfully. I then raised my hands and supplicated and said: “Amen.” This continued until he was silent and returned to his normal state...

My dearest teacher again turned to me and said:

“Occupy yourself with the roads and passes. If you see something on a path that is an obstacle for people, remove it so that those passing by are not harmed by it.”

Then I began to occupy myself with this act of service. It was such that I was constantly covered in



dirt for seven years. I carried out with great fidelity every act that the Friend of Allah ordered me to do. I was able to experience the result of those acts on my own state.”¹¹¹

Shah-i Naqshiband would carry firewood on his back to the lodge of Amir Kulal (may Allah have mercy on them both). Again, while the village mosque was being built, he would carry the mud mix on his head and would read some lines, which had the following meaning:

*“O Allah! I would gladly do anything in Your Path. O mosque, I would carry your load upon my head.”*¹¹²

Alauddin Attar said:

“My master Shah-i Naqshiband’s character was very elevated. If a friend happened to visit him in his house, he would serve him personally in the very best way, taking all manner of care to host him. He would also look after the mount of his guest with great care to the degree that his friend was no longer worried about his animal.”¹¹³

One of the disciples of Shah-i Naqshiband, Shaykh Shadi narrates:

111. See. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 49-50; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 17-18.

112. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 52; *Rashahat*, p. 121.

113. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 52; *Rashahat*, p. 121.

“Whenever a friend or guest arrived, Shah-i Naqshiband would serve him and then prepare water and food for his animal. He would consider all acts of service to be a bounty for him. Even if some of his own dervishes whom he was training came to visit him, he himself would prepare their water for cleaning and say: “All of these acts of service are an obligation on me.”

Whenever Shah-i Naqshiband would honor one of his disciples with a visit to their house he would ask about his children, his relatives, his servants, his animals and even his chickens. He would complement them all and endeavor to please them.”¹¹⁴

Whenever a meal was being prepared in an assembly, he would serve it to those who had cooked it.¹¹⁵

One of his students narrates:

“The reason that I devoted myself to Shah-i Naqshiband with all my heart is this; one day the dervishes from Bukhara came to visit Khwaja who was ill and I also joined them. We saw Shah-i Naqshiband in a place called Bagh-i Mezar. Even though he was ill, he still greeted us with a smile. He immediately went to

114. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 71; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 46b; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 38.

115. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 198; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 153.



prepare the lambs that would be slaughtered. In fact, he himself carried one of the lambs on his shoulders and he cooked it himself. This beautiful character and behavior of his made me his disciple.”¹¹⁶

Shah-i Naqshiband would make an effort to solve everyone’s problems. This is why he was known as ‘Khwaja-i Mushkil-ghusha’, that is, the “the Master who solves difficult problems.”¹¹⁷

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) narrates:

“The true friends of Allah bear the burden and troubles of the people in order to beautify their character. There is no heart which is not observed by Allah, whether the owner of that heart knows it or not! Therefore, the people of Allah bear the burden of others so that they can succeed in pleasing the heart. Thus, may they then hope to benefit from the Divine observation of them.”¹¹⁸

His attention to *suhbah*

One of the dervishes narrates:

“At every opportunity Shah-i Naqshiband would tell us that the *suhbah* of the friends of Allah was a

116. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 145.

117. Kavak, *Divan Mawlana Khalid-i Baghdadi*, verse: 136-137.

118. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 100.



great bounty and that ‘to stay away from this bounty is a fault of the traveler of this path’. When this weak servant travelled from Samarkand to Bukhara to listen to him speak I saw that the most important thing for his students was to perform the prayer in congregation in the masjid as much as they could and to benefit from the spirituality that radiated from his talks.”¹¹⁹

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would say:

“A person finds more peace of heart when he serves the people, than when he retreats in solitude (That is, he attains unity within multiplicity and if he can be with Allah whilst he is in a crowd, then his heart finds even more peace). This is how the realm of the heart develops on this path. **Our way is the way of *suhbah***. There is fame in seclusion and fame is something very dangerous. Goodness and blessings come from being together and unified. It is possible to be together through the *suhbah*. However, the *suhbah* must be beneficial. This arises when a person abandons their ego and enwraps himself in selflessness.”¹²⁰

“In the hearts of some of those who come to our talks there is the seed of love, however due to their concern for the world and the impurity that results,

119. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 291.

120. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 90; *Rashahat*, p. 68; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fols. 52a, 62a.



their seedling does not develop and grow. Our duty is to cleanse their hearts of these worldly and carnal desires and to nourish the seed of love. In some hearts, however there is only a trace of the seed of love and then we strive to make divine love grow form there.”¹²¹

His Death

During his old age Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) went for the pilgrimage once more. He became ill on his return.

One of his students narrates:

“Shah-i Naqshiband would remember death often. Especially in his last days he would remember his past elders and say: “How beautiful is the realm of the hereafter to which our friends have gone.” At a time close to his death, he repeated often the following hadith narrated by Aisha, the wife of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him):

“My great Prophet brothers (the five Prophets of Resolution) and the other blessed messengers suffered greater and more intense tribulations than this. In that state, they went and were reunited with their Lord. Almighty Allah offered them great things and bestowed upon them many rewards. I would be embarrassed to

121. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 90; Abu al-Qasim, *al-Risalat al-Bahaiyya*, fol. 63b; Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 59.



elevate my standard of living in this world. If I do so, my share in the hereafter may decrease and I will lag behind my brothers. To be patient for a few days in this world is more pleasing to me than decreasing my share of the hereafter. For me, at this moment there is nothing more pleasant than to be reunited with my Companions and my brothers” (Ghazzali, Ihya Ulum al-Din, III, 82).¹²²

Alauddin Attar narrates:

“During the last moments, we were reciting chapter Yasin from the Qur’an. When we came half way, the lights began to appear. Shah proclaimed the *kalima-i tawhid* and then gave his last breath. He had lived 73 years and had begun his 74th year. He passed away on a Monday night on the 3rd day of the month of Rabia al-Awwal in 791 (1st March, 1389).¹²³”

Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) was buried in his garden at Qasr-i Arifan. He had requested that the following lines be read while his coffin was being carried:

مُقْلِسَانِيْمَ اَمَدَه دَرِ كُوِي تُو
شَيْئاً لِلّٰهٍ اَزْ جَمَالِ رُوِي تُو

*We are the bankrupt who come to Your village
Show us some of your beauty!*

122. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 292.

123. *Rashahat*, p. 124.



Abdulquddus, one of the great friends of Allah, tells of one of his visions¹²⁴ as follows:

“When the burial of the Shah was finished, a window opened up on the side of his coffin where his blessed face was, in accordance with the hadith that ‘the grave is a garden from the gardens of Paradise...’¹²⁵ Two huris (beautiful women of paradise) appeared and after greeting him they said:

“Allah, Most High, created us for you. We are yours and we await your service.”

Shah-i Naqshiband said to them:

“I have a covenant with Allah Glorified and Most High is He. I will not occupy myself with anything until I have been honored with witnessing His Beauty, the likes of which there is none.”¹²⁶

Yaqub al-Charhi narrates:

“When I heard that Shah-i Naqshiband had passed away, I was very saddened and I began to cry.

124. Spiritual states of unveilings can never define an absolute ruling. Imam Rabbani said: “There are great mistakes to be made in unveilings. Who can truly know what a person of unveiling sees or understands?” (*Maktubat, volume 1, 256th letter*). *The real measure in this matter are the rulings that have been accepted by the ahl al sunnah wa al jama’*. That is, one can rely on such unveilings if they are in accordance with these rulings and if not, then one does not give them any worth.

125. Al-Tirmidhi, Qiyama, 26/2460.

126. See *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 293; Hani, *al Hadaiq*, p. 435.



That night I saw him in my dream reciting to me the verse: **‘If he were to die or be killed, would you turn on your heels?’** (Al Imran, 3:144). Then he said: “Zayd Ibn Harith narrates...” When I awoke, I understood the meaning of this verse. That is, their beautiful compassion continues in the spiritual realm just as it did in the Manifest Realm. On the second night, I saw him again in my dream. He said: Zayd Ibn Harith said: “Religion is one and forever” thus completing his words from the night before.”

By giving Zayd Ibn Harith, the Companion, as an example, he was showing me that I should not part from his way. Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) was the adopted son of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and he never parted from him. Our Master did not immediately accept a student but once he did they became like his sons.

On another occasion when I saw his spirit, I asked him:

“How are we going to find you tomorrow on the Day of Judgement?” He replied:

“By remaining devoted to the shariah”, that is by acting in accordance with the commands of the religion.

As can be understood by these dreams, the blessed Shaykhs are ever training and educating their



disciples, while they are alive and also once they have passed away. If one turns oneself towards their spirit and attaches their hearts to them, then this is a means of a person attaining perfection and being subject to divine prosperity and enlightenment”¹²⁷.

May Allah bless their spirits and keep their favors upon us. Amin!

The tomb of Shah-i Naqshiband was a very humble grave, but with time it was extended to include a prayer house, a school, a dervish lodge, a guesthouse, and a fountain until it has turned into a large complex.¹²⁸

His mother’s grave is found in the village of Qasri Arifan, which is now known as Bahauddin. In accordance with his last requests, those people who come to visit his tomb first visit his mother’s grave.

His words of wisdom

- “One needs two wings in order to fly to the sacred realm. One of them is to perform many righteous deeds and the other is to see oneself as having many faults.”¹²⁹

127. See Yaqub al-Charkhi, *Risala al-Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 93-94; *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 293.

128. Al-Shirazi, *Taraiq al-Haqaiq*, III, 687.

129. Abdullah Dahlawi, *Makatib-i Sharifa*, p. 232, no: 119.



- “Ever embrace Allah’s attribute of al-Latif and seek His grace and favor. Never await recompense for your deeds. Whatever perfection and virtue appear from your words or behavior, forget them immediately. Always see the faults of your *nafs*.”¹³⁰

- **Ubaydullah Ahrar** narrates:

“One time a devout man saw Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) in his dream after he had passed from this world and he asked him:

“What should we do for our eternal salvation? He replied:

“Occupy yourself with whatever you should be occupying yourself with at your last breath.” That is, just as you need to be calling on Allah at your last breath, do so continuously throughout your life.”¹³¹

- “To inspire others to do *dhikr* is like giving someone a flint. After that, it is up to the student to act in order to receive a good result (to light the fire).”¹³²

- “The aim of *dhikr* is not merely “Allah” and “*La ilaha illallah*.” It is to go from the cause to the Causer and to witness bounties coming from Allah Almighty.”¹³³

130. *Rashahat*, p. 126.

131. *Rashahat*, p. 130.

132. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 62.

133. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 78.



- “The reality of *dhikr* is to rise to the realm of witnessing from the arena of heedlessness”¹³⁴ (That is, *dhikr* should not merely remain on one’s tongue but should affect one’s behavior).

- “*Dhikr* is the removal of heedlessness. When heedlessness is gone, even if you are silent you will be in a state of *dhikr*.”¹³⁵

- “One should occupy oneself with the pillars of the prayer and its invocations and turn oneself to it completely. This will change according to the state of the beginner and never forget that there are a great many rewards in performing the ablution of prayer.”¹³⁶

- “Allah, Most High, is above everything that one can see, hear, imagine or conceive of. The reality of “la” in the *kalima-i tawhid* is to exalt Allah, Most High, above all such things.”¹³⁷

(One of the attributes of Almighty Allah is ‘*al-Mukhalafatu lil-hawadith*. That is, He does not resemble any of His creation).

- “To justly abide by other’s rights in every situation is from the manners of those travelers in the way of Allah. That is why those who have attained their

134. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 68.

135. Yaqub al-Charkhi, *Risala al-Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 104.

136. Yaqub al-Charkhi, *Risala al-Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 97.

137. Imam Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 200, no: 272.



goal and desire are those who complied with justice and *adab*.”¹³⁸

- “To attach one’s heart to *masiwallah*, (other than Allah) that is, all worldly things that distract a person from Allah, is the greatest veil of heedlessness for those who travel this path.”¹³⁹

- “One of the benefits of consulting with the people of the heart about a certain matter is that you will be freed of being egotistical if you find that your decision in the end was the right one. If your decision turns out to be the wrong one, then you will realize your own deficiency and fault and be able to correct yourself.”¹⁴⁰

- “The basis of this path is to turn towards one’s heart, then to turn to Allah with that heart and remember Him often. As a result, the servant of Allah is aware and cognizant of being ever under divine observation.

Another principle of this path is to perform the obligatory and the acts of the Sunnah in the best possible manner. One should be moderate in one’s affairs and habits, and in acts such as eating, drinking, dressing and sitting. It is to protect one’s heart from evil

138. *Anisu al-Talibin* p. 72.

139. *Anisu al-Talibin* p. 78.

140. Parsa, *Muhammed Bahâüddîn Hazretleri’nin Sohbetleri*, p. 49.



thoughts and from misgivings. One should realize that the *suhbah* of one's spiritual master is a great bounty. One should act with *adab*, both in his presence and absence.

The aim of this path is the station of *ihsan* which entails being aware of and experiencing the presence of Allah, Most High and that His gaze is always on you. As one progresses on this path, one reaches stages such as the elimination of the desires of one's *nafs*, becoming surrounded by light, reaching *fana* (annihilation) and *baqa* (going on) and becoming a person of very noble character¹⁴¹.

- “One can never reach their goal as long as one does not eat from what is lawful.”¹⁴²

- “A traveler on this path of ours should not know which station he is in; so that this does not become a veil for him and he can continue in deep humility and a state of selflessness. The one who is pleased with his state will have drawn a veil over his own progress.”¹⁴³

- “We are only a means in the path of reaching Allah. One should break away from us and reach the True Goal.”

141. Heyet, *Encyclopaedia of Awliya*, III, 445.

142. Yaqub al-Charkhi, *Risala al-Unsiyya* [in *Ney-Name*], p. 115.

143. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 90.



That is once the disciple has reached the state of the annihilation of his experiencing self in the presence of Allah (*fana*) and then returns to his life by his station of going on in Allah (*baqa*), one should break free of everything. This station is the station of the perfect saints who can perfect others.

Even if the seeker who reaches this state lives forever, he will never succeed at being grateful for the bounty of his Master's spiritual education.¹⁴⁴

- Shah-i Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently read the following lines about hiding one's spiritual state:

*“On the inside, be acquainted with Allah but on the outside unaware. Such a beautiful way is rare in this world.”*¹⁴⁵

- “A person who is in the house of a generous man will be offered many things. The state of the one who serves the servants of Allah by touching their hearts is like this.”¹⁴⁶



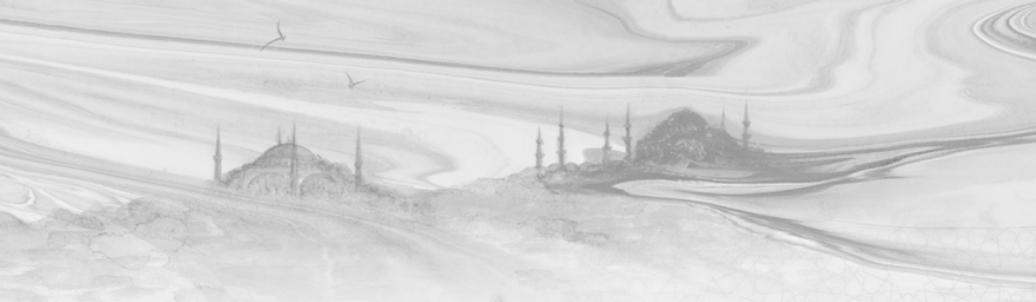
144. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 97.

145. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 67.

146. *Rashahat*, p. 165.







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Shah-i Naqshiband, Sultan of the Friends of Allah says:

*The world is wheat, I am straw,
Everybody is good, I am bad!*

How beautifully Necip Fazil expresses the state of “nothingness” and modesty of friends of Allah in their spiritual world:

*Those men who are in the abode of the heart
Suffering the pain of crawling over the ground
While the stars are their rosary beads
They stand on the back row in prayer ...*





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband ﷺ - 1-

Shah-i Naqshiband narrates an exemplary scene that strengthened his strong enthusiasm, determination and effort on the path of Allah as follows:

“One day when I was on my way, I was passing by a casino. I saw a group of people inside gambling very ambitiously. Two of them especially, were so caught up in the game that they were unaware of anything. They were so absorbed into gambling with all their physical and spiritual might and wealth that it was as if they were drunk by the excitement of gambling and passed out.

The two of them were exchanging money between each other. After a while, one of them started to lose. He then lost more and more. He put all his wealth to the table and in the end, his opponent took away everything he had in this world.

Despite his miserable state in which he had fallen, the gambler kept playing the game persistently and with great effort. The more he lost, the more his ambi-



tion increased. At one point, he said to his opponent who always beat him:

“Look! If I knew that I would give not just my property and all my wealth, but even my head for this game, I would still keep playing! I will play it even if it costs my life. Until you too fall into this miserable state that I have fallen into!”

When I saw the persistence, determination, greed and will power of the gambler that he could give up everything and even his life in gambling, I felt a completely different enthusiasm and zeal. Taking this scene of misfortune as an example, I thought to myself:

If a gambler is so determined, diligent and ready to sacrifice everything he has on such a false path, why should I not be so determined on the path of Allah? Since that day, my determination to take on the path of Allah has only increased. Praise be to my Lord, it continues to increase every day.”¹⁴⁷

As can be seen, Shah-i Naqshiband was a friend of God who saw with the eye of heart and he could take lessons and derive wisdom from every positive or negative scene that he witnessed.

As Shaykh Sadi said:

147. See Ekrem Sağıroğlu, *Şâh-ı Nakşibend*, Yasin Yayinevi, İstanbul 2001, p. 99-100.



“A wise man takes lessons even from jokes and fairy tales. As for the heedless man, it does not even matter if you read him a hundred chapters of words of wisdom, it feels like a fairy tale to him.”

Thus, when one’s heart reaches that kind of spiritual level, he can learn great lessons even from a gambler, about patience, perseverance and will power, which are indispensable qualities for a man striving to reach direct knowledge of Allah.

Indeed, it is a very remarkable that many people are willing to sacrifice their comfort, property, health, and even their lives for the sake of empty dreams and whimsical affections. While today’s Abu Jahils show a keen effort and devotion to carry on their false causes, how can we, who are the members of a true mission, deem the level of our striving sufficient? How can we get out of this matter of heart-searching with grace?

These difficult questions, which every believer has to ask himself or herself, require ceaseless effort, care and service in the way of Allah with love, sincerity and enthusiasm.

The great people of Allah who have reached the truth have always arrived by walking devotedly on the way to serve Allah. In fact, we can see the brilliant examples of these efforts and services starting from the first steps of the spiritual path that Shah-i Naqshiband took.



In order to mend the whimsical inclinations in his heart and to develop his spiritual aptitudes, his master **Emir Kulal** ordered him to search and find the weak and the needy; to serve the sick and the suffering, even the wounded animals; and to clear the paths that people would pass. When Shah-i Naqshiband sincerely observed all of these tasks with perfection, special horizons opened up in his heart.

Spiritual maturity can be possible not just reading books or listening to spiritual talks, but by drawing up a prescription from what is read and listened to, and then living in accordance with that prescription for the sake of Allah. The ability of the hearts to become acquainted with divine secrets and wisdom depends on these kinds of efforts.

As a result of the spiritual instruction he received, Shah-i Naqshiband reached the real spiritual blessings, inspirations and revelations after putting the crowns of “nothingness” and “humility” on his soul.

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

*“The world is wheat, I am straw,
Everybody is good, I am bad!”*

The following lines of Necip Fazil is another explanation of this state:

Those men who are in the abode of the heart
Suffering the pain of crawling over the ground



While the stars are their rosary beads
They stand on the back row in prayer

The great friend of Allah, Shah-i Naqshiband, lived in such humility and modesty that he always deemed himself at the doorstep despite his lofty position in the spiritual abode. In return, Allah Almighty exalted him for his humility, made people love him and made him worthy of the duty of guidance and education, which is a lofty position in the Divine presence.

How well another poet summarizes this secret:

Mazhar-ı feyz olamaz düşmeyicek hâke nebât,
Mütevâzı olanı rahmet-i Rahman büyütür...

“Unless the seed falls on the ground, it cannot enjoy the blessing of growth....

In like manner, with His mercy, Allah looks at His humble servants, glorifies and makes them ascend.”

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“With the help of Allah Almighty, it becomes very easy for a person who tries to purify his soul by seeing his own mistakes and knows the tricks of his lower self properly to stand up against his lower self..”

Knowing what a cruel enemy the lower self is and becoming familiar with it is the first step of fighting



against it and being successful in that fight. Those who are unaware of the trap of the lower self, let alone the harms it causes, regard that disastrous state as normal, as if it was sweet music. That is, they cannot feel its weight in their anesthetized souls. Hence, they do not feel the need to make an effort to correct their situation.

For this reason, a believer must first get to know the tricks and traps of his lower self so that he can resist it with the necessary precautions, that is, with the armor of fear of Allah (taqwa) and good deeds.

As it is famously said, *“Whoever knows his self knows his Lord.”*

Shah-i Naqshiband said:

“The Messenger of Allah said in a hadith “Take away the thing that will give pain from the way.”¹⁴⁸ What is meant by “something that will give pain” mentioned in the hadith are the desires of the lower self. What “the road” means is the “path of the Truth.”

Step on your lower self and rise! If you want to enter the circle of qurbiyya / closeness to Allah, first leave the desires of your lower self!”

The barrier of the nafs is like two fingers placed in front of two eyes that make a person blind against

all truths. For this reason, the servant should try to remove the veil of the lower self, which is the biggest obstacle between him and his Lord. That is to say, he must train his lower self by giving up its desires and restrain its excessive demands, and thus rise by turning it into a step under his feet.

The lower self is no different from a wild horse unless it is educated and made to be an instrument for righteous deeds. A wild horse leads its owner to destruction by rolling off a cliff, instead of carrying him to the desired destination. However, if a riding horse is well groomed and well restrained, it will carry its owner safely even through the most dangerous ways.

For this reason in order to find a way to Allah, it is necessary to remove the whimsical desires and ambitions of the lower self with the application spiritual practices. In fact, it is said, *“When you leave your nafs, there remains your Creator.”*

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“The way of the people of the spiritual world / the people of the heart is to deem their righteous deeds little, to be in a constant state of humility, nothingness, modesty and weakness, and to regard their actions and behaviors flawed. There is nothing more beneficial to breaking the egoism of the lower self than seeing oneself



as defective. This is one of the reasons why even Prophets made small mistakes.”

The state of a repenting sinner, crushed under the burden and embarrassment of his sins, is far superior to a person who is proud and vane; relying on his deeds and who acts comfortably as if he is sure of his fate. Performing prayers, fasting, giving charity are indeed ways that bring a person closer to Allah. However, the most important thing is not to become arrogant and see superiority in oneself while doing all these things and to know that the blessings and success is from Allah.

How beautifully Luqman Hakim elucidates:

“Do not forget two things: Allah Almighty and death. Forget about two things: the good you do to someone else, and the evil that someone else has done to you.”

In order not to give oxygen to selfishness, it is necessary to forget a good deed immediately after doing it. If good deeds such as prayer, fasting, charity, and services done in the way of Allah end up causing a sense of superiority over others, then this a sickness of the heart, which must be cured. The way to do this is to get rid of this is to balance hope with fear and remember that no knows their final outcome and to take refuge in the mercy and forgiveness of our Lord.



The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the peak of humanity with his vast character and righteous deeds, said in his supplications:

*“O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. I cannot reckon Your praise. You are as You have lauded Yourself”*¹⁴⁹ and became an example for us.

In other words, the closer a believer gets to Allah Almighty, the more his acts of worship, praise, thanks, dhikr, knowledge and understanding of his defects in his state increases. For this reason, the gnostics (*arifun*) who know Allah best are the ones who grasp their utter inability to know Him. The devout worshipers (*abidun*) who worship Allah in the best way are the ones who understand that they are incapable of worshipping Him properly.

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“If a traveler (salik) does not see his lower self as worse than Pharaoh’s self, he cannot be a follower of our way. In our way, passing through the claim of existence and reaching nothingness is a tremendous task. It is not easy to see one’s lower self with its attribute of deficiency. However, being able to comprehend the defi-

149. Muslim, Salat, 222.



ciency of the lower self is the secret of success in reaching Allah Almighty.

Therefore, while studying these attributes, I compared my lower self with every being from all levels and weighed it with every particle from the universe. In reality, I saw everything, every being, every creature better and more pleasant than my lower self. Seeing my lower self so weak and miserable cleansed all the dirt and rust inside me ...”

Even if a person is as severe as Pharaoh in disbelief, he has the means and possibility to be purified from all his faults before his last breath. For this reason, a believer should not consider himself superior to anybody, and should never “despise the servants of Allah” and therefore attribute superiority to himself.

The root of all oppression and injustice is considering one’s self better than others and regarding oneself worthier of blessings. The most effective remedy to get rid of this bad habit is to train the lower self by considering everybody and every being more valuable than, and to put a stop to the transgression and excessiveness of the lower self.

According to a narration, while passing through a coastal village, **Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi** saw a young man drinking wine. The same young man, on the other hand, was molesting a woman next to him. Ibn al-Arabi said:



“Man should know himself at the lowest level among creatures and must be humble. However, I am probably no worse than this sinful young man. I do not drink wine, nor do I engage in such easy manners and immoralities.”

Just then, a cry was heard from the sea:

“Help! We are sinking, help!...”

Hearing this cry, the young man threw his wine jug and jumped into the sea, and within a few minutes, rescued the four drowning people and carried them to the shore.

Watching what happened in astonishment, Ibn al-Arabi was embarrassed by the thoughts that had passed through his mind and said to himself:

“Look! That young man you despised and deemed sinful saved four people at once. What did you do? You could not save even one person!...”

In the end, because of the young man’s compassion and mercy, there emerged a friendship and love between him and Ibn al-Arabi. The young man abandoned his previous lifestyle and began learning a decent life under the care of Ibn al-Arabi and became a devoted follower of him.

That is to say, many of the virtues we think that we have may be present in many people that we



despise. For this reason, despising Allah's servants is a wrong action that actually lowers us.

Achieving this state of modesty when looking at people and even all other creatures strengthens the servant because the servant's understanding of his nothingness and modesty in comparison to the Divine might and Majesty is the first thing among the manners of servitude. No matter what spiritual stage a servant has reached, he must see himself as an insolvent beggar in the divine presence. He should know that all the beauties come from Allah Almighty and all the flaws are from himself.

How nicely the poet states:

There is no complete measure than the eye of mercy,

There is no better knowledge than knowing one's own deficiency.

According to a narration, once it was asked to **Shaykh Abul-Abbas Qassab**:

“Which verse from the Qur'an shall we read in front of you while your body is being taken away in your funeral?” He replied:

“Reading verses is for the great men. For us, you may say the following.” Then he recited a couplet that means:



“What is there in the world more beautiful than a friend reaching his friend or loved one?”

After telling this story to his disciples, Shah-i Naqshiband said in humility and modesty:

“Reading this couplet is also for the great men. Read the following passage in front of my funeral:

مُفْلِسَانِيْمَ اَمَدَه دَرِ كُوِي تُو
شَيْئاً لِلّٰهٍ اَزْ جَمَالِ رُوِي تُو

“We are insolvent beggars; we have come to Your presence. For Allah’s sake, grant us something of Your beauty!”¹⁵⁰

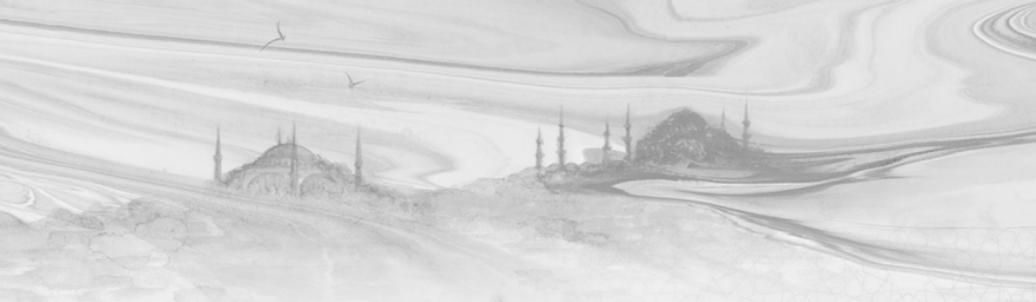
Despite the lofty spiritual state they reached and the inspirations they had, those great people never paid attention to the greatness of their states and deeds. On the contrary, at every opportunity they stated that they were the helpless beggars at the gate of Allah Almighty, and without His mercy and blessing, they would be “nothing.”

May Allah Almighty help us all succeed in living a life of servitude on the straight path by holding tightly to the Qur’an and Sunnah. Amin!..

150. *Anisu al-Talibin*, p. 113. This couplet belongs to Mawlana Jalaladdin al-Rumi. However, there it says “we are Sufis” instead of “we are insolvent beggars.” (Mawlana Jalaladdin al-Rumi, *Kulliyat Diwan al-Shams*, (ed. Furuzanfer), Tehran 1377, II, 835)







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband

(May Allah have mercy on him)



Islam demands from us to act in a harmony of the heart and the body. It is a great mistake to pay attention only to the spirit and inner aspect of the religion and to neglect its outer aspect. The spiritual level and maturity of the heart is reflected only by acts and behavior. For this reason, one cannot perform ritual prayer or fast without a body, as he cannot execute financial acts of worship without wealth and possessions, which are all apparent materials. Even if “belief”, first requires confirmation of the heart, immediately afterwards it becomes necessary to manifest that truth confirmed with the heart in acts and behaviors by expressing it with tongue.



WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband ﷺ -2-

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Those from the men of Allah who have the sagacity and intellectual subtlety in the face of spiritual manifestations and occurrences evaluate those occurrences in terms of their accordance with principles of Islam. If these states are in accordance with Islam, they rely on them and show them. However, if those occurrences that happened to them are contrary to the criteria of Islam, they do not pay any attention to them.

One of the distinguished men said:

“I will not accept a word coming from my heart without checking it with two just witnesses, i.e. the Qur’an and the Sunnah.”¹⁵¹

Junayd Baghdadi -may Allah sanctify his secret-says:

151. Muhammad Parsa, *Muhammed Bahâüddîn Hazretleri'nin Sohbetleri*, p. 62-63.



“If you see a person flying in the air and know that his condition does not measure up to the Qur’an and Sunnah, do not be fooled for it is istidraj.”

Istidraj are the feats that break the laws of nature that may transpire from the hands of certain persons, who are either nonbelievers or those who carry a pretention for sainthood, certain extraordinary feats similar in appearance to authentic *karamah* manifested from the true friends of Allah. *Istidraj*, which transpire in line with their pretensions, are brought about through certain spiritual exercises. In other words, it is possible to actualize the potential for certain capabilities inherent in the spirit through certain nonreligious influences. Hindu monks, for example, are known to acquire a spiritual force mostly through abstinence. At times, this is made possible through magic or mobilizing a khuddam from among the jinn. Some people show such feats as an illusion or a product of imagination by affecting the eyes of those who witness it.

Distinguishing feats of this kind from real *karamah* is a matter of knowledge. But this much can be said that the person who exhibits *istidraj* never measures up to the standard of *taqwa* or piety. They lack in abiding by the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet -upon him blessings and peace-. In fact, this is the first point that one needs to pay attention to.



Therefore, a believer should not be stuck with whatever spiritual manifestations or occurrences he encounters in the world of the unseen; he should not think that every dream he sees is a truthful dream inspired by Allah Almighty. He should always take the Qur'an and the Sunnah as a criterion. In like manner, the believer should never forget that his goal is to gain Allah's consent and come nearer to Him. He should not fall into the heedlessness and boldness of seeing his own views and criteria superior to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and should adopt the following divine warning as a principle in his life:

“You who believe! Do not put not yourselves forward in front of Allah and His Messenger; but fear Allah. Allah is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.”

(al-Hujurat, 49: 1)

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Break off your relations with the qari (heedless readers who are stuck with the outer aspects of the religion), be with the Sufis (the true ones who have attained the truth of the religion)!

If one asks who is “qari”, who is “Sufi”, what is the purpose of this saying:

“Qari (reader) is the one who is only occupied with “name” while “Sufi” is the one who deals with “musamma” (with the owner of the name) ...”



In other words, the “reader” is always interested in the cover, shell and surface, while “Sufi” is the one who can get to what is inside the cover and reaches the essence and the truth of the religion.

Those who stick to only the outer aspects of the religion and neglect its inner aspects cannot grasp its essence and miss its main purpose. In this way, those who observe religion through the glasses of a mere blind “reader” are deprived of the aspect of “the state and the spirit” which can be achieved by living in harmony of the body and the heart.

For this reason, true Sufis try to grasp the divine realities not only formally, mentally and physically, but also spiritually, with their heart and soul, and make an effort to apply them in their lives. They worship with a harmony of the heart and the body, they read the Qur’an in this harmony, and make what they read affect their acts and behavior in this harmony. Every verse of the Qur’an and every saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) creates a profound depth in their souls.

In essence, Sufism is the inner, essential and spiritual aspect of the religion. In this respect, it is like lactose in milk. When it is removed, there only remains a dry composition of rules and principles. Therefore, the most important point emphasized by Sufis is to



never forget the main purpose of comprehending and living the divine decrees.

How beautifully Yunus Emre points out this issue:

Dört kitabın mânâsı
Bellidir bir elifde
Sen elifi bilmezsin
Bu nice okumaktır

Yigirmi dokuz hece
Okusan ucdan uca
Sen elif dersin hoca
Mânâsı ne demektir

The entire meaning of the Four Holy Books
is clear and complete in a single Alif.

If you don't know what Alif is,
what use is there in your reading?

Twenty-nine syllables,
if you read from end to end
You talk about that Alif, O khoja,
What does it mean, can you tell?...

The main and final purpose of all information
is "marifatullah", that is, to know Allah by the heart.
Without forgetting the fact that the knowledge of the
exoteric sciences is a necessary step to achieve this
goal, it is necessary to become a perfect believer to
comprehend the religion in its material and spiritual



unity and within the balance of its outer and inner aspects. The unity of mind and heart, togetherness of feelings and thoughts, and harmony of spirit and body are essential in the life of servitude.

In this regard, those who are physically in the prayer but preoccupied with worldly thoughts, will have much less reward than those who are absorbed in the prayer. The complete and perfect prayer that Allah expects from us as His servants is described as a prayer performed with “awe and modesty” in the following verse:

“It is the believers who are successful: those who concentrate their attention in humbleness when offering Salāh (prayers).”¹⁵²

The believers who perform their prayers in a heedless manner should reflect on the inner meaning of the prayer and the need to be grateful for this tremendous gift and strive not to neglect it.

On the other hand, those who give importance only to the spirit and inner meanings will be dragged into a similar mistake. Because one cannot perform ritual prayer or fast without a body, as he cannot execute financial acts of worship without wealth and possessions, which are all from the material world. Iman (belief) is something completely from the hid-

den unseen world of meanings and first requires confirmation with the heart, immediately afterwards it becomes necessary to manifest that truth confirmed with the heart with outward actions of the limbs.

The following verse points out to this matter:

“Do people imagine that they will be left to say, “We believe”, and will not be tested?” (al-Ankabut, 29: 2)

Therefore, belief can only be fully confirmed with a combination of the inward and outward. The generation of Companions, who are our criterion in matters of practice, clearly acted on their belief with their famous self-sacrificing acts and behaviors.

In this respect, the word and the essence are both necessary; the spirit as well as form are necessary... The important thing is not to get stuck on one of them and neglect the other...

It is reported that Ibrahim Ibn Adham -May Allah sanctify his secret- one day chanced upon Imam Abu Hanifah. The Imam's students began staring at Ibrahim Ibn Adham -may Allah sanctify his secret-, somewhat disdainfully.

Sensing this, the Imam called out to Ibrahim Ibn Adham, respectfully:

“Please master ... come closer. You have honored our lesson!”



Ibrahim Ibn Adham -may Allah sanctify his secret- timidly greeted him and walked off. Once he disappeared out of sight, his students asked the Imam:

“To what does that man owe such praises? How can someone like you call him master?”

“For he is constantly occupied with Allah,” humbly replied the Imam.

“And we are occupied with Him simply on the level of words.” (al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, p. 126)

Undoubtedly, this situation is valid for many people who have not been able to comprehend the religion through the unity of spirit and form and who have not sufficiently attained a share of *marifatullah*. However, it was a training of manners for the students of Imam Abu Hanifa, and only a statement of modesty of himself.

For, although that great Imam issued fatwas and delivered lectures on the apparent rulings of Islam, he lived in his personal life with a great sense of sincerity and fear of Allah (taqwa). According to a narration, he was one of the four people known recite the whole Qur’an in two cycles throughout the Muslim world. He displayed a noble character with affection and devotion in a state of constant contemplation and sincere faith. Thus, he conveyed through his own life that religion can only be understood fully with both



its outward and inward aspects. Despite all its value, the reason for him to call all his scholarly work as rumors was in order to express its state in comparison to “taqwa.”

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Be like a candle so that your light enlightens others.

Do not be like a candle so that you do not leave yourself in the dark while enlightening others ...”

The candle sacrifices itself and melts away for the sake of enlightening its surroundings. This is the attribute of those who serve on the path of Allah and sacrifice all in order to obtain divine pleasure. They regard all the suffering they experience on that path as happiness.

From the other perspective, the candle unfortunately cannot illuminate itself while illuminating its surroundings. One should also avoid resembling the candle from this aspect as well. Because this is the attribute of those who give advice and try to educate the others with knowledge and wisdom but do not benefit themselves or those around them from the light of that knowledge and wisdom. It is the characteristic of those who do not fear for themselves sufficiently, while telling others about the might and majesty of Allah. It is also the characteristic of the heedless



people who warn others about staying away from the prohibitions while they do not show the same care in this regard in their own lives. In the following verses our Lord's warning is very strong about such people whose words and actions do not match:

“You who believe! Why do you say what you do not do? It is deeply abhorrent to Allah that you should say what you do not do.” (al-Saff, 61: 2-3)

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“To be Muslim means to devote oneself to the rulings of the sharia’, to comply with the standards of taqwa, to act with meticulousness and to avoid applying the concessionary (rukhsa) rulings and stick with the well-known and strict (azima) rulings to the best of one’s ability; it is in its entirety, light, ease and mercy. All of these are means to reach the degrees of the friends of Allah and achieve other great stations. The awliy-aullah (friends of Allah) reach the state of sainthood through the training by these attributes.”¹⁵³

The first condition to enter into a climate of closeness to Allah and friendship with Him is to obey the divine decrees wholeheartedly, with full sincerity and surrender. Without making the Qur’an and the Sunnah, dominate every aspects of his life, without

showing the determination, perseverance and effort to live the divine commands within the highest standards; without applying the orders of the religion not at the level of concessions and fatwa, but at the level of strict rulings and taqwa; and without acquiring the love and fear of Allah as a compass of life, one cannot enter the lodge of Allah's friendship.

In this regard, neither the material lineage nor spiritual affiliation of a believer mean any value. What will elevate a person to a high spiritual rank is only his belief, his taqwa and the righteous deeds, which emanate from his belief and taqwa. Whoever has more desire, efforts and service on this path, covers more distance. As we find in the Book of Allah: **“That man can have nothing but what he strives for.”** (al-Najm, 53: 39)

In expressing that all achievements pass through patience and perseverance, it is said that **“The preordaining of Allah is in love with one's effort.”** The gifts and blessings of our Lord are for His sincere servants who constantly strive with a firm will and patience for the pleasure of Allah.

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Not everyone who runs will catch their prey. Only the one who constantly follows their prey will catch it.



*Thus, we need to be upright and continuous in our acts.*¹⁵⁴

Those who enthuse excessively by a moment's enthusiasm often get tired quickly. If they cannot achieve the goal, they may lose their determination and enthusiasm, and may even fall into a worse situation than before.

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) advises us:

"... Go without haste and rush so that you can reach your goal." (al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 18)

Since servitude to Allah is a marathon and not a sprint, one needs to act in moderation in order to keep it up.

Indeed, **Aisha** (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

"... The deeds of the Prophet was like light and continuous rain ..." (al-Bukhari, Sawm 64, Riqaq 18; Muslim, Musafirun 217)

Our Prophet worshiped a lot during his private times, performed prayers until his feet were swollen, especially at dawn, and soaked the place of prostration with tears he shed from his blessed eyes. However, in cases where it would set an example for his ummah, he



would perform acts of worship moderately. Because moderation is what ensures the constancy of a task. When one deviates from moderation, it endangers the task in question. Because the transition from opposite poles happens quickly. For this reason, moderation has been constantly recommended.

In this regard, the following warning of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is significant: *“Those who go to extremes in their words and deeds are destroyed.”* (Muslim, ‘Ilm, 7)

How well the following hadith expresses the necessity of not going to extremes and preserving moderation in acts of worship:

“Do only as much as you can carry on of good deeds because the best of deeds is that which is done consistently, even if it is a little.” (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 28)

Continuity in acts of worship and sincerity in intention must be something that we strive to achieve. When one reaches this state, it is narrated that the good deeds that cannot be performed due to reasons such as sickness or old age will be accepted and rewarded as if they were actually done.

It is stated in a verse:

“Except for those who believe and do right actions: they will have a wage which never fails.”

(al-Tin, 95: 6)



In short, behaving negligently in acts of worships will leave a person in a difficult situation in the hereafter. In this context, the excessive and ambitious action may eventually end up causing fatigue, boredom and deviation to the wrong path. For this reason, it is necessary to keep to the middle path and to do the acts continuously as the basis. Because going to extremes in obligations of worship causes negligence in social obligations such as serving on the path of Allah.

Allah Almighty invites us to be merciful by reminding us of His names “Rahman and Rahim” in many places in the Qur’an. Mercy is the first fruit of believe, and the manifestation of mercy is serving His creatures for the sake of Allah.

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Displaying some kind of an extraordinary feat (karamah) and flying in the air is not something to be proud of. Don’t you see that animals that are inferior to humans can also fly around in the air. Man is the greatest and most perfect work of divine art. Mankind, created according to the most excellent character (ahsan al-taqwim), is surely superior to the birds. For this reason, the flight of a man should not be regarded as a big event and a difficult task. Such merits are not acceptable in the eyes of Allah’s special servants.”

Karamah is a type of supernatural occurrence, which is outside the normal laws of existence, award-



ed by the Almighty to His select friends as a result of the perfected quality of their belief, piety and spiritual knowledge.

Karamah as it transpires in saints are of two kinds:

1) Existential (*Kawni*) and Formal *Karamah*:

These signify the extraordinary occurrences that takes place in the physical world, like relocating from one place to another (*tayy-i makan*), having wild animals see to personal duties and so forth. Displaying a formal *karamah* has not been looked kindly upon by Sufis, unless it be necessary; and exhibiting a *karamah* of the sort is the last thing a saint wishes to do, as it comes with public admiration and applause. Ignorant people then begin to expect everything from the saint. This brings with it the disasters of fame and pride that poison the heart. For this reason, saints do not tend to display such extraordinary feats, but if they have to, they try to hide their state as much as possible.

2) Spiritual *Karamah*: This is to cover a great distance on the way of acquiring of knowledge, both exoteric and spiritual, moral behavior and a quality of worshipping, so as to attain to a spiritual level that ensures a share is received of the inner sense of the



verse, **“Continue then in the right way as you are commanded.”**¹⁵⁵

However much the public may esteem the karamah of the first kind, it is the second kind that is more desirable. It is a consensus among the Sufis that **“The greatest karamah is uprightness.”** The toil of an aspirant, who is not upright, is only in vain.

Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdadi (may Allah sanctify his secret) states:

“Uprightness and toil is superior to countless feats of spiritual insight and karamah. It should also be known that a spiritual insight and karamah that does not bring about a greater loyalty to the commands of the religion is nothing but a disaster and tribulation.”

The important thing is to live under the guidance of the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Because even if a person has shown spiritual inspirations and extraordinary feats, he cannot be sure about his last breath. For this reason, even the Companions lived in great worry about the moment that they would have to leave this world.

According to a narration, two people saluted Salman al-Farisi (may Allah be pleased with him) and asked:

“Are you one of the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)?”

That distinguished Companion, whom the Prophet loved very much and said about him, “*Salman is from me, from my Ahl al-Bayt*”¹⁵⁶ replied with the worry of “the last breath” in his heart:

“I do not know.” Those who asked the question hesitated whether they came to the wrong person. Salman explained his words as follows:

“Yes, I saw the Prophet and attended in his assembly. However, the real companion of the Prophet is the person who can enter Paradise with him.” (al-Haythami, VIII, 40-41; al-Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 549)

Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdadi, who is called the “sun of the sun” in knowledge and wisdom, also asked from his disciples in one of his letters to pray to Allah for him to leave this world in belief.

As a perfect example to humanity of belief and wisdom even the Prophets, who were under divine assurance regarding their eternal lives, prayed to Allah about their last breath:

156. Ibn Hisham, III, 241; al-Waqidi, II, 446-447; Ibn Sa’d, IV, 83; Ahmad, II, 446-447; al-Haythami, VI, 130.



The intimate friend of Allah Ibrahim (peace be upon him) prayed saying, “(O Lord) **let me not be in disgrace on the Day when (men) will be raised up!**”¹⁵⁷

Yusuf (peace be upon him) prayed saying, “... (O my Lord!) **So take me as a Muslim at my death and join me with the people who are righteous.**”¹⁵⁸

Therefore, the most crucial thing is not to reach high states and stations, but to be able to give our last breath with true believe and trust, and arrive at the presence of Allah as a servant whom He loves and is pleased with.

May Allah Almighty protect us from falling into the trap of all kinds of material and spiritual distractions and fascinations that prevent us from concentrating on our goal. May He give expansion to our breasts, discernment to our hearts, and foresight to our eyes.

Amin!..



157. al-Su'ara, 26: 87.

158. Yusuf, 12: 101.





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i
Naqshiband
(May Allah have mercy on him) 3

Pharaoh, Nimrod, Atilla, Hulagu and others like them became enemies of all humanity with their cruelty. On the other hand, the friends of Allah, such as Rumi, Yunus Emre, Ghazali and Shah-i Naqshiband, who reached the source of friendship in Allah, will remain forever as the friends of all humanity.



WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband ﷺ -3-

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“It is said, “He who works and earns is the beloved of Allah Almighty.” One who is truly beloved by Allah is the one who works and gains the pleasure of Allah. Otherwise, he is not the one who works to accumulate and earns worldly wealth.”

A believer should aim for Allah’s pleasure in every aspect of his life. He should earn his own livelihood and should not open a hand to anyone other than Allah. He must work to become a hand that gives and not be satisfied to stay as a hand that receives. He should give away in charity what he has that is more than he needs. All in the effort to improve his intentions and goals to attract the pleasure of Allah. In fact, this is stated in a hadith as follows:

“Allah likes to see his servant tired of pursuing halal.” (al-Suyuti, *al-Jami‘ al-Saghir*, I, 65)

When verses ordering to spend for the sake of Allah began to be revealed, the poor Companions who



had nothing to give, brought wood from the mountains on their backs, sold it, and gave charity with what they earned. Thus, by their actions they showed that the real capital required to be a person of heart and generosity and they proved their love for Allah and His Messenger with their righteous deeds.

On the other hand, it is imperative that we find and take care of our brothers and sisters who are unable to earn a living despite their best efforts. Because a believer is left to the care of another believer.

How beautifully Shaykh Sadi says:

“O friend! Be a person of mercy and compassion so that you take the path of the righteous! You are standing, grab the hand of the fallen person!”

Finding needy brothers and sisters and helping them is a responsibility of the conscientious believers. It is stated in the verse:

“(Charity is) for those who are held back in the way of Allah, unable to travel in the land. The ignorant consider them rich because of their reticence. You will know them by their mark. They do not ask from people insistently. Whatever good you give away, Allah knows it. Those who give away their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, will have their reward with their Lord. They will feel no fear and will know no sorrow.” (al-Baqara, 2: 273)



Therefore, a believer's heart must become purified and refined and gain such a sense of care and sensitivity that he, like a spiritual x-ray, must recognize the condition of those in need from their stance and take care for their needs.

In short, the beloved servant of Allah is the one who works to earn His pleasure by taking care of his family and those who are in need and supporting the services in the way of Allah, not the selfish and the stingy ones whose whole aim and effort is to accumulate property and wealth and reach physical comfort.

Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (may Allah sanctify his secret) says to encourage charity to the stingy who think that they will rise in ranks by accumulating worldly wealth, as follows:

“The life of this world is just a dream. Having wealth in this world is like finding a treasure in a dream. The wealth of this world remains in this world by being passed down from generation to generation.”

On the other hand, **mercy**, which is the biggest fruit of belief, is not just pitying the weak, the poor and the helpless. What is pitiful is the darkened conscience of the oppressor. Those who really are in a pitiful situation in this world are the cruel bosses who exploit their workers and customers out of their greed and ambition to earn more. Those who really are in a poor situation are the contaminated souls of the



oppressors who have been deceived by their mortal reigns. In the capitalist system, which is a regime of oppression and injustice, one should take pity on the wretched spirits of the wealthy and to take lessons from their end.

Moreover, the duty of the believers is not to fall in love with their temporary splendor, but to work for them to be corrected by guiding and directing them in a soft and appropriate language. Even **Pharaoh** was beautifully advised by the great Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) when Allah commanded him to speak with Pharaoh in a heartfelt and soft manner.

It is the duty of every Muslim to stop oppression and to honor the right of the oppressed. It is a responsibility to direct people, who have lost their way, like logs drifting in the river, with a refreshing language like the flow of water.

It should not be forgotten that the wealthy who violate the divine boundaries in order to attain material mastery of this mortal world will become the bankrupt beggars of the hereafter unless they mend their ways. How severe are the following divine warnings for such covetous ones:

“As for those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it the way of Allah, give them the news of a painful punishment.” (al-Tawbah, 9: 34)

“Woe to every faultfinding backbiter who has amassed wealth and hoarded it! He thinks his wealth will make him live forever. No indeed! He will be flung into the Shatterer. And what will convey to you what the Shatterer is? The kindled Fire of Allah reaching right into the Heart. It is sealed in above them in towering columns.” (al-Humaza, 104: 1-9)]

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

*“The reason why people find themselves distant from Allah, Most High, is that they distance themselves and they willingly burden themselves with the burdens of the world. Otherwise, there is no fault on the part of the blessings of Allah which constantly manifest themselves without interruption.”*¹⁵⁹

Sayyid Emir Kulal used to give the following example:

“As long as you are not freed of love of this world and of its ties, then the pot your body is of no use. In order to make a pot, they put it into the oven whilst it is complete. Some of the pots that go into the spiritual oven of tasawwuf come out sound and some come out broken (That is, they were not cleansed of their faults). We are hopeful yet about those pots that come out broken. We take them out and pound them to dust, mix them up with another clay remake the pot and put it

159. Parsa, *Sohbetler*, p. 36.



back into the oven. We do this until it comes out sound. That is, we continue to train without becoming fed up.”

One of the most important reasons why the servant is unaware of his Lord is that his heart has become captivated to the world and its temporal tastes. Allah gave only us the bounties of this world as the means of gaining the His pleasure by spending them for His sake and turning them into the capital of our eternal bliss. They are not given to us to get caught up in the temporal aspirations of this world and in its carnal passions.

Our life in this world is a journey full of various obstacles that we must overcome as a divine test. A servant who is too concerned with the decoration of the guest house and who is too busy with the ornaments of this life will be unable to make the necessary preparations his eternal journey. He takes great troubles with his own hand. In other words, without thinking about his fate, he keeps himself busy with many occupations that will cause him to be in trouble in the grave and to be in a difficult situation in divine presence.

It is this kind of excess burden that keeps a person behind the most on their way to Allah Almighty. Spiritual distances cannot be crossed with a spirit crushed under such burdens.



During the caliphate of our master **Umar** (may Allah be pleased with him), the regions such as Syria, Palestine and Egypt were conquered and the whole Persian lands were annexed to the borders of the Islam. The rich treasures of Byzantium and Iran started to flow to the treasury (Bayt al-Mal) of the caliphate, and the welfare level of the believers increased significantly. However, Umar, the commander of the believers, was delivering sermons in patched clothes, completely cut off from splendor the level of prosperity that the Muslims achieved. He only accepted to receive an allowance from the treasury just enough to cover his very basic needs.

The prominent ones of the Companions could not stay silent about his condition any longer. They thought of increasing his payment. However because they were afraid to offer this to the caliph, they went to his daughter **Hafsa** (may Allah be pleased with her), who had been one of the blessed wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). They asked her to present this offer to her father on their behalf without giving their names.

Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) presented this offer of the Companions to her father. Umar, who had witnessed the days when the Prophet could not find a single date to satisfy his hunger, asked his daughter Hafsa:



“O My daughter! How was the Prophet’s eating, drinking and clothing?”

“It was barely enough to live.” When she received his reply, he continued his words as follows:

“Two friends (the Prophet and Abu Bakr) and I are like three passengers on the same road. The first of us (the Prophet) reached his destination. The other (Abu Bakr As-Siddiq) travelled the same path and met the first one. As the third one, I would like to meet my friends. If I go with too many burdens, I cannot keep up with them! Or wouldn’t you want me to be the third one on this path?”¹⁶⁰

On the path of spiritual evolution, what is aimed for by *zuhd*, *riyazat* and *mujahada*, is the attainment of this level of spiritual maturity. That is to gain a pure heart that can carry on worldly tasks without neglecting the hereafter, with consciousness and comprehension, away from luxury, wasting and vanity.

According to a narration, one of the rulers built a magnificent palace. He invited one of the friends of Allah and showed him around the palace, and then asked him:

“Sir, how did you find the palace, is there any shortcomings or defects?” The friend of Allah replied:

160. See Ahmed, *Zuhd*, p. 125. Şehbenderzâde Ahmed Hilmi, *Târih-i İslâm*, I, 367.

“The worldly splendor of the palace is truly dazzling. In short, everything is perfect. There is only one shortcoming.”

The ruler, who did not expect this answer at all, became surprised and asked in astonishment what the palace lacked. That friend of Allah then gave the following wise answer:

“It is not eternal!”

He then gave the following advice:

“If you built this palace with your wealth, know that **Allah does not love those who waste**. No, if you have it built at the expense of the state treasury, then remember that **Allah does not like oppressors!**

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“The people say that there is no ascetic discipline in our way. However, would it be a greater ascetic discipline than to dismiss the link with everything other than Allah and to be in the state of huzur ma’allah (that is, the consciousness of being in the presence of Allah at all times)?

Make all your outer and inner states subjected to the Sunnah, and be always in opposition to your lower self! Even though opposition to the lower self is a little deed, the traveler (salik) should deem it great. If the traveler is capable to oppose his lower self, he should



attribute this to Allah's help and be grateful to Allah for it."

The ascetic discipline (riyazat) means to deprive the lower self of the things that it desires so much or to minimize the material pleasures and tastes in order to train it. Because - just like the two panes of a scale - without minimizing the selfish desires in the inner world of man, the spiritual abilities cannot be developed.

The goal aimed to be achieved through apposition to the lower self is to develop and mature spiritual aptitudes, to make the lower self surrender to the servitude of Allah, and to reach the state of peace and confidence in servitude. As a result of this, the servant eliminates heedlessness and always attains the consciousness and perception that he is under constant divine surveillance, that is, he goes from "the state of belief to the state of the internalization of belief." The essence, truth and purpose of ascetic discipline is to make the heart achieve that level of spiritual maturity, as the place of the manifestation of belief.

Achieving the state of internalization of belief (*ihsan*) by disciplining the lower self and keeping that state is the success of servitude. The servant should regard this victory as an exceptional blessing from Allah Almighty, and endeavor to increase his gratitude even more.



Shah-i Naqshiband says:

*“A person who relies upon Allah should not look at his own nafs and should hide his tawakkul by actions.”*¹⁶¹

A true believer trusts Allah alone, relies upon Him and takes shelter in Him. Such a believer knows that all his precautions and efforts are “nothing” in the face of divine ordination. However, he does not fall short of taking precautions and spending all his effort in order to comply with the rules of the realm of causes. Because when our sincere intentions and efforts coincide with His Divine Will, Allah Almighty helps them to be successful by blessing them.

On the contrary, if an act and intention do not comply with Divine Will, it will not be possible for it to come true or achieve success even if the whole world supports it.

For this reason, what befits a perfect believer is to endeavor patiently by holding on to the means he has been given and leaving the end result to Allah. Even if he cannot achieve his goal in the end, the suitable thing for a mature believer is to not complaint, knowing that everything is predestined by the divine decree and that there may be something better for him, which he is not aware of. When on the other hand, a believer achieves success, he will not become proud or arro-

161. Muhammad Baqir, *Maqamat*, p. 70.



gant because he does not attribute his success to himself but rather sees it as a pure gift from Allah which he would be unable to obtain without Allah's help.

All the hopes and expectations of the devout believers are directed to Allah Almighty. They conceal their *tawakkul* (reliance on Allah) with their determination and efforts in order to preserve their humility and modesty.

In the eyes of mature believers, Allah Almighty is the only authority to be trusted at all times. Otherwise, reliance on Allah, will have no meaning. Allah Almighty says in the Mighty Qur'an,

“Put your trust in the Living who does not die and glorify Him with praise.” (al-Furqan, 25: 58)

The following saying is a wise expression of this truth “Don't lean on a man, he dies, do not lean against a wall, it collapses.”

Allah Almighty points out the fact that He wishes his servants to trust and rely only on His Supreme Being in the verses as follows:

“So let the believers put their trust in Allah.”
(Abraham, 14: 11)

“Whoever puts his trust in Allah – He will be enough for him.” (at-Talaq, 65: 3)



Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“If you were to rely on Allah with the required reliance, then He would provide for you as He provides for the birds; they go out in the morning hungry, and return full.” (al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 33/2344; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 14)

Tawakkul means to rely on Allah but only after all the necessary precautions and efforts have been made, and a *tawakkul* deprived of effort and precautions is not correct.

A Bedouin came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked him,

“O Messenger of Allah! Should I hobble my camel or just put my trust in Allah (have Tawakkul)?”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to him,

“Hobble your camel and then trust in Allah.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 60/2517)

Some Yemenis, who misunderstood the concept of tawakkul, would not take food with them on their way to pilgrimage and say,

“We are going to visit Allah’s house; doesn’t He feed us?” When they arrived in Mecca, they would have to ask from others. Upon this incident, the fol-



lowing verses were revealed “... **And take a provision for the journey...**”¹⁶²

Our master Umar Ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) scolded the people who lazily said “We are people of tawakkul” without working hard,

“You are eaters who trust others’ property, not Allah. The person who truly puts his trust in Allah is **the one who trusts in Allah after planting the seed into the ground.**”¹⁶³

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“There is no good or blessings in food earned and prepared in anger, in heedlessness, grudgingly or by force. For it has become tainted by the whims of the nafs and with Satan. A person who eats such food will certainly experience an unwanted result. Goodness only comes from halal and wholesome food prepared without going into heedlessness and eaten while remembering Allah.

The reason why people cannot accomplish sincere and righteous deeds is that they do not pay enough attention to what they eat and drink and behave recklessly in this matter. At all times, especially during ritual prayer, maintaining the state of awe, peace and

162. Al-Baqara, 2: 197.

163. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, *Jami al-Ulum wa al-Hikam*, Amman 1990, p. 650.

huzur-maallah, performing prayer with pleasure and shedding tears, depends on eating halal food and cooking the food in remembrance of Allah and eating it as if it were in His presence. A person whose body is fed with haram food cannot feel any joy from the prayer.”

According to the reports transmitted in the books, Shah-i Naqshiband often cooked the food and served it at the table himself. While eating, he would advise to his disciples saying,

“When eating at the table, think about yourself in the presence of Allah, do not forget that you are eating the sustenance given by Him ...”

If someone took a bite with heedlessness, Shah-i Naqshiband would sense it and say,

“Eat the food in front of you without forgetting that you are in the presence of Allah, do not think about anything other than Allah, always think of Mawla who is closer to you than yourselves.”

With these warnings, he actually reminded that under any circumstances and at all times one should remember Allah, to think of Him and to be with Him at heart. In a way he would suggest that being unaware of Allah Almighty while eating the sustenance granted by Him would be a greater flaw in the manners of proper servitude. In fact, the recommendation to start eating by mentioning the name of Allah and end it



with sending praises and thanks to Him as part of the table manners in Islam is based on this wisdom.

In like manner, if a meal was cooked with heedlessness, in anger, unwillingly, or by force, Shah-i Naqshiband would not eat that food himself, nor would he let his disciples eat it.

In fact, when one of his friends brought a bread as a gift to Shah-i Naqshiband, He would say:

“Eating this bread is not suitable for us. Because it was kneaded in anger and cooked in anger.”

Some scientific researches carried out in our time have proven that spiritual states have a great influence on matter. In this regard, for example, it was observed during the experiments that beautiful crystals were formed in water particles when nice words had been said to the water, and when bad and ugly words had been said, the crystals took on an ugly form.

Therefore, it is certain that the mental and spiritual state during the preparation and consumption of food has a real effect, either positive or negative. Therefore, one should seriously consider what kind of spiritual problems and heedlessness that consuming haram and suspicious foods will cause in the body and the soul.



Shaykh Abdulqadir al-Jilani (may Allah be pleased with him) expresses the vital effect of what we consume on the inner world of man as follows:

“Eating haram kills the heart, while eating halal revives it. There is food that keeps you busy with this world, there is food which keeps you busy with the Hereafter. There is food that turns you to Allah Almighty.”

May our Lord make us His weak servants join among His righteous, sincere and God-fearing servants, who understand these truths properly and are determined to live accordingly.

Amin!..







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband 4

(May Allah have mercy on him)

If only the dampness of the soil and the strict silence of the tombstones will rise in response to the question “what is life for?”, then what could be more painful than such a heedless life?

Life in this world is a limited capital, granted only once, and is not known when it will end. Even a moment of it is so important that it can be the seed of eternal bliss or disaster. A believer should deem his present day as a great opportunity to prepare for the hereafter, and he should not postpone any good deed to later and unknown tomorrows. It is said about those who procrastinate in their good deeds and show negligence, “those who say they will do it tomorrow are destroyed.”





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

Shah-i Naqshiband ﷺ -4-

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“A servant can feel awe in prayer when the following four things are in place:

1. Eating always halal food and being spiritually awake while eating it.

2. Keeping away from heedlessness during performing wudu (washing for the prayer).

3. Awareness of entering into the presence of Allah while reciting the first takbir.

4. Never forgetting Allah outside the prayer, either.”¹⁶⁴

Allah Almighty says in the Qur’an,

“It is the believers who are successful: those who are humble in their prayers.” (al-Mu’minun, 23: 1-2)

“So woe to those who pray and are forgetful of their prayers.” (al-Ma’un, 107: 4-5)

164. *Anis al-Talibin*, p. 84.



By the prayer performed with awe, in accordance with the physical and spiritual rules and manners, the curtains of *masiwallah* (everything other than Allah) in the heart disappear; as a result of the manifestation of the truth of the saying “*Prayer is the ascension of a believer,*”¹⁶⁵ an unthinkable nearness is experienced in the divine presence. To be able to experience this ascension of the spirit in prayer requires being prepared for it both inwardly and outwardly.

A body that carries the positive energy of halal food becomes ready for a prosperous prayer only after an wudu is performed with the vigilance of the remembrance of Allah. Whereas performing prayers without being physically and spiritually ready, as if getting it out of the way and in a heedless manner, is a great spiritual waste. For this reason, when reciting the first takbir at the beginning of prayer, it is necessary to remove from the mind and heart any thoughts that will distract from Allah. During the performance of the prayer, it is also necessary to be serious, alert and attentive to the manners by concentrating all the attention on Allah, in whose presence one is standing because the qibla of the body in prayer is the Kaaba and the qibla of the heart is God Almighty.

One who stands to pray should be in a state of awe and peace by feeling on the one hand the great-



ness of Allah and on the other hand his own servitude, nothingness and weakness. He should try to increase this state to the level of “**istighraq**”, that is, to the degree of being annihilated in Allah by forgetting his own existence. Undoubtedly, our Prophet is the peak of this state.

In fact, our Mother Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) states the following:

“When the Messenger of Allah started to perform prayer, a sound similar to a boiling cauldron would be heard from his chest. When the adhan was recited, he would not recognize those around him, as he would get ready to be in the presence of Allah.” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 157; al-Nasai, Sahw, 18)

Amir al-Muminun Ali Ibn Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his face), one of the most distinguished of all the Companions who grew up under the spiritual training of the Prophet, is the incommensurable example of this spiritual ascendance and this spiritual state of annihilation in prayer. In fact, once in a war he was hit by an arrow in his calf. The arrow could not be removed due to the great pain it caused. Thereupon, Ali, who immediately started to perform prayer, completed his prayer in peace, without even noticing that the arrow had been removed, thanks to his total absorption in the prayer.



On the other hand, the prayers performed in accordance with the following verses **“except for those who do the Prayer and are constant in it..”** (al-Ma’arij, 22-23) and **“...and safeguard their prayers.”** (al-An’am, 6: 92) by observing its physical and spiritual manners always preparing the servant to gain the awareness that he is in the presence of Allah and his heart is always with Allah.

Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (may Allah be pleased with him) points out this matter as follows:

“Perform such an wudu that would never be nullified. Perform such a prayer that would never end.”

In other words, it is the purest believers who maintain the consciousness of servitude until their last breath and keep up their prayers in a constant state of awareness of being in the presence of Allah, while in the prayer and outside it at all times. From this perspective, the prayers of those who love Allah are continuous and they never end. They live in a spiritual state of prostration both in and outside of the prayer, in short, in a state of continuous remembrance of Allah (dhikr al-daimi) for a lifetime. Because even though the prayer is performed and completed within certain times of the day, belief in Allah and servitude to Him is constant and uninterrupted. There is no question of it ever ending or reaching completion.



“The essence of our path is “khalwat dar anjuman”. That is to be with the people while inwardly one’s heart is with Allah. Indeed, the verse “not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah...”¹⁶⁶ points out to this matter.”¹⁶⁷

“When the salik (traveler of this path) becomes mature enough, there will be no difference left between his heart and his tongue. In other words, worldly occupations do not interfere with his heart and inner affairs. His inner affairs also will not constitute an obstacle to worldly pursuits ...”

On the path of spiritual discipline, to get away from people for a certain period of time and to stay away from worldly occupations has been regarded as a necessary practice in order to purify the heart by deepening in contemplation and devotion, to be revived and refreshed spiritually, to renew and improve the spiritual faculties.

In fact, **the Prophet Musa** (peace be upon him) fasted for forty days continuously before the Torah was revealed to him on Mount of Sinai; **the Prophet Isa Ibn Maryam** (peace be upon him) remained hungry and thirsty for forty days and forty nights on Mount Sair until he received the first divine words of

166. Al-Nur, 24: 37.

167. See *Anis al-Talibin*, p. 67.



the Gospel. Finally, **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) lived in seclusion for a whole month in the Cave Hira on the Mount of Nur, before he received the first revelation of the Qur'an. All these constitute the basis of devotional isolation and seclusion for a certain period of time.

However, the generalization of this to live such a life style as a monk has been prohibited. In Islam, it is essential to be in the public and continue to serve Allah. Because there is also danger of fame in retreating and seclusion. The masters of Khawajagan path summarized this principle as "*khalwat dar anjuman*", that is "**to be with the people while inwardly one's heart is with Allah.**" In other words, it is "**unity amongst multiplicity**", that means keeping the heart with Allah even when being busy with various worldly occupations among the crowds. This is the manner of servitude that a believer must observe throughout his life.

One of Shah Naqshibandi's most prominent students, **Muhammad Parisa** was on his way to pilgrimage when he saw a lively young jeweler near Baghdad. He looked so preoccupied with his customers that for a moment Parisa felt bad at how such a young man seemed almost lost in the world. He thought to himself:



“How sad it is that he is caught up in the world at an age where he could be doing better things!” But then he had an epiphany. He was shown how the young man, trading gold and precious stones, was not what he seemed. He then thought and appreciated the young man’s character:

“His hands may have been in the thick of business but his heart was with his Lord.”

When **Muhammad Parisa** eventually reached Mecca, he saw an old man, with a long white beard, bowing his eyes out while tugging away at the cloth of the Kaaba and praying to Allah. He, again, let appearances be the judge and thought to himself,

“I wish I could turn to Allah with so many tears flowing down my cheeks.” But then he realized that the old man was simply praying and crying for a worldly wish. Thereupon, he felt sorry for the old man.

In other words, for a heart that is with Allah, there is no harm in being busy with worldly affairs and being in the public. However, there are many dangers in worshiping with a heedless heart occupied with worldly matters and unaware of Allah Almighty!...

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“It is stated in the hadiths, “Do not do anything that you do not want to be seen by people, even when



you are alone!”¹⁶⁸ “Do not do what Allah does not want to be done even when you are alone!”¹⁶⁹ These hadiths are very necessary for the dervishes. What is meant here is that the traveler on the Sufi path should realize the fact that even the secluded places that he thinks are empty are full. However, he lives in public, in front of everyone, he should live the same in a secret place where he thinks that there is no one there...

A journey from iman to ihsan is essential. Ihsan means to reach the consciousness that Allah sees us at all times and in all places. It means to gain a strong will and consciousness by which we stay aware of the presence of Allah all the time and avoid doing anything which we would be ashamed to do in front of others, at times when we are alone.

The following incident reminds us in a precise manner that this sensitivity is essential for the believing hearts:

One day, **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) went to the place where the sheep collected as zakat were kept. There was a shepherd who took care of the sheep for a wage. When the Prophet saw that the shepherd was wearing shabby

168. Mamar bin Rashid, *Jami*, XI, 144/20151; Ibn Hajar, *al-Matalib*, XI, 440/2575; *Kanz al-Ummal*, III, 5270; Riyad al-Salihin, I, 592, 626.

169. Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, II, 130/403.



clothes and walking around half-naked, he immediately called him and asked:

“How many days have you worked for us? How much do we owe you?”

The shepherd, who realized that he was going to be fired, asked with great concern:

“Why do you ask O Messenger of Allah? Or am I not able to properly care for and maintain the animals?”

Allah’s Messenger replied:

“–No, it is not that! However, I want the people working among us to be people who are ashamed of Allah even when they are alone! I do not want the work of a person who is not ashamed of Allah when he is alone.” (See al-Bayhaki, *Shuab*, X, 196/7370; al-Marwazi, *Tazimu Qadr al-Salah*, II, 836)

How exemplary the following incident about another shepherd, who filled his heart with the love and fear of Allah and lived with the consciousness of *ihsan*:

Once Abdullah Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them) and some of his friends came to a secluded part of Medina for a particular task. On the way they stopped and rested, they laid down a food cloth and began to eat. Whilst they were eating, a



shepherd passed by and greeted them. Abdullah Ibn Umar invited the shepherd:

“Come O Shepherd, eat with us.” The shepherd replied:

“I am fasting.” Abdullah Ibn Umar asked:

“Why are you fasting despite the intense heat and the fact that you are looking after your flock?” He replied,

“I desire to fast in the few days of opportunity I have been given.” Abdullah Ibn Umar wanted to test him, and so he asked,

“Will you give us one sheep from your flock? We will pay its price and offer its meat to you for the breaking of the fast” The shepherd replied:

“These are not my sheep, but they belong to my master.” Ibn Umar continued to test the shepherd:

“You can tell your master that you lost one. How could your master know?” The shepherd turned away whilst pointing to the sky. He replied:

“**Where is Allah?!**” said.

Abdullah ibn Umar was overwhelmed by the shepherd’s level of ihsan and fear of Allah. In these thoughts, for a while he said by himself; “**The Shepherd said: Where is Allah? The shepherd said: Where is Allah?**” When he arrived in Medina, the first thing



he did was to send someone to the shepherd's master and bought the herd and the shepherd. After he freed the shepherd, he gifted the entire flock to him. (Ibn Asir, *Usd al-Ghaba*, III, 341)

One should think about that if the blessing and reward of *ihsan* and conscience in this world is like this, then who knows how wonderful would its reward be in the hereafter?

On the other hand, as the Prophetic saying states, we are in the position of “*a shepherd responsible from his flock.*”¹⁷⁰ First of all, we are the shepherds of ourselves and then of everybody under our authority, starting with our children. A good shepherd picks up the sick and weak sheep that are left behind from the herd and takes them back to the herd in his arms. He does not leave them to be a prey for wild animals.

But unfortunately, today's shepherding is for the herd of self-gratifying goats because capitalism and materialism combined with globalization provoke selfishness and individualism, and praise and encourage the satisfying of the lower self. In this way, the lower selves resemble goats that are difficult to protect from danger and notoriously known for their stubbornness, just as our unruly egos are.

170. See al-Bukhari, *Wasaya*, 9; Muslim, *Imara*, 20.



In order to protect ourselves and those who are under our authority from falling into the destruction, we are obliged to take ourselves and them a desired destination by staying away from the temptations of the lower self and Shaytan.

Because it is stated in a verse:

“You who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones...” (al-Tahrīm, 66: 6)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) interpreted this verse as follows:

“Keep them away from what Allah has prohibited and encourage them to do what He has commanded. This is to protect them from the Fire.” (al-Alusi, XXVIII, 156)

We should never forget that we are always under the gaze of our Lord, that all our states and actions are continuously under divine surveillance.

We should not forget that the ability to avoid forbidden actions and to be on straight path requires us to properly grasp the fact that “Allah sees us at all times and is closer to us than ourselves”, which is the sign of true belief (iman). The friends of Allah have always endeavored to teach this state to their followers.



Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“It is stated in a narration that “those whose two days in the religion are equal are in loss. Anyone whose tomorrow is worse than his today is cursed. Anyone who does not try to improve but maintains his situation is in loss. It is better for a person who loses to die.”¹⁷¹

This statement points out to the state of those who are the right path. Two days of the traveler of the Sufi path who aims to increase his belief should not be equal. In other words, his belief tomorrow must be higher than today.”

It is necessary not to misunderstand the expression “the two equal days” used in this narration. Because this statement does not mean that it is necessary to engage every day in a little more obedience and good deeds than the previous day. If it was like that then we would quickly find it becoming over too difficult.

The meaning of this expression is that the rewards written in the book of deeds of a believer who performs his duties of servitude in a regular and stable manner will be added to the previous ones and consequently will increase more and more each day compared to the previous day.

171. Al-Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, no: 2406.



The cessation of this increase is only possible when the life capital of the believer comes to its end and the book of deeds is closed. For this reason, true believers try to keep their book of deeds open even after their death by leaving behind continuous charities (sadaqa al-jariya).

Also, the duty and responsibility of a believer to progress a little more each day is not exclusive to actions. Iman, which is that belief or trust in the heart that constitutes the essence of religious life, must gain a higher level, reach wider horizons by opening new windows in the believer's heart, and thus his yaqin (certainty) in Allah must be rooted and strengthened more and more every day.

In fact, because his yaqin in Allah increased every day, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon) would ask forgiveness from Allah for the lower level of his yaqin in his previous states. This is the wisdom behind the following saying of the Prophet, who like all Prophets had the attribute of ismah (protection from sins):

"I seek forgiveness from Allah a hundred times a day" (Muslim, Dhikr, 42) was his worry about not being sufficiently thankful to his Lord, and also the regret he felt for having been previously in a lower state.

We, as believers, are obliged to make an effort to get closer to our Lord every day and to seek forgive-



ness from Allah for our inner and outer shortcomings. Otherwise, - God forbid - we will be among those who lose.

Shah-i Naqshiband says:

“Poor dervishes are the people of advance payment, they work in cash; they don’t leave their jobs for tomorrow. This is why it is said “As-sufi ibn al-waqt: which means “The sufi is the son of the moment.”

Life is a limited capital, granted only once, and is it not known when it will end. Even a moment of it is so important that it can be the seed of eternal bliss or disaster.

A believer should deem his present day as gift in terms of give him a chance to prepare for the next world, and he should not postpone or put off any good deed to a later and uncertain tomorrow. It is said about those who procrastinate in their good deeds and show negligence, “those who say they will do something tomorrow are destroyed.”

Allah warns us as follows:

“You who believe! do not let your wealth or children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. Whoever does that is lost.

Give from what We have provided for you before death comes to one of you and he says, ‘My



Lord, if only You would give me a little more time, so that I can give charity and be one of the righteous”.

Allah will not give anyone more time, once their time has come. Allah is aware of what you do.”

(al-Munafiqun, 63: 9-11)

It is narrated that **Prophet Ilyas** (peace be upon him) shuddered in horror when he saw the Angel of Death. Wondering the reason for this, the Archangel asked:

“O Prophet of Allah, is it death you fear?” Prophet Ilyas replied:

“No, it is not that I fear death, but that I should take leave of the life of this world.” He then continued, saying:

“For I strived in this worldly life to serve my Lord, to enjoin the good and prevent evil, I spent my time in worship and performing deeds of righteousness and tried to live with good morals and character. This gave me peace and filled my heart with joy. I fear that I will no longer be able to experience such happiness and that I will be held captive in the grave until the Resurrection.”

For this reason, before death comes, when we still have the opportunity, we should strive with all our efforts to do as many good deeds as possible.



Because today is the day to fill the chest of deeds. When the time of death comes, we will not be able to do righteous deeds neither in the grave nor in the Last Judgment.

Due to this fact, **the Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) said as a warning to us his ummah:

“There is no one who dies but he shall regret.” He was asked:

“What shall he regret over O Messenger of Allah?” He replied:

“If he was a good doer, he regrets that he did not do more, and if he was an evil doer, he regrets that he did not stop.” (al-Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 59/2403)

For this reason, the Messenger of Allah encouraged to compete in charity by appreciating the value of the time we have and frequently said to his companions:

“Have you caressed an orphan’s head today for the sake of Allah? Have you visited a sick person today? Have you joined to a funeral prayer today?” (Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 12)

In short, it is necessary to finish an act of worship or a good deed and start immediately to a new one, not to allow any time to pass without an act of worship



or a good deed and to obey seriously the following instruction of our Lord:

“So when you have finish, work on, and make your Lord your goal!” (al-Inshirah, 7-8)

May Allah Almighty protect us His servants from the heedlessness of being distracted by the glitter of this temporary world. May He grant us the ability to perform each prayer as if it were our last and grant us the consciousness that we are travelers to the hereafter; the ability to revive our days with righteous deeds as if it is our last day; and the discernment of being able to prepare ourselves not according to this world that moves away from us, but according to the afterlife that is rapidly approaching ...

Amin!





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