

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

WISDOM FOR THE SEEKER:
LETTERS OF ADVICE
Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī

VOLUME I

Translated from Urdu by
Mr. and Mrs. Mansoor Sikander

*And those who strive in Us – We will certainly
guide them to Our paths...*

(Surah Al 'Ankabut, Verse Sixty-Nine)

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LETTERS OF ADVICE
Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī

VOLUME I

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PROLOGUE

All praise is due to Allah ﷻ, Creator of the universe. Peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger ﷺ.

When I began my journey on the path of *tasawwuf*,¹ I was unfamiliar with the role of a spiritual guide [*shaykh*]. Over time, both the countless benefits of and the need for an experienced spiritual master became increasingly apparent.

The letters compiled in this book highlight the intimate relationship between a spiritual master and his students. I am fortunate to have met and interacted with many of the recipients of the following letters. While the letters themselves are extraordinary, even more amazing is the effect that they have produced in the hearts of their recipients. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to convey such realities on paper.

I hope that these letters will fall into the hands of those who seek to cleanse their hearts, purify their souls, reform their manners, and deepen their service to the one and only Creator of the universe. These are the goals of *tasawwuf* and

¹ *Tasawwuf* is the traditional Islamic science of the purification of the heart and soul.

their attainment is a sign for those honest enough to judge their true state.

*In the darkness of the night cooed a pigeon
 On a branch, in weakness, while I was asleep.
 I lied; By Allah were I a lover
 The pigeon would not have outpaced me in weeping.
 I assume I am lovesick, love struck
 But I weep not, while animals weep.*

The task of compiling these letters was undertaken by one of the *Shaykh's* students, who first published them in a series of Urdu volumes years ago. Such compilations are part of a longstanding tradition among the people of *tasawwuf*, i.e., publishing the teacher's letters [*maktubā*] of advice for the general benefit of the believers.

Two years ago, Mansoor Sikander of Chicago began the arduous task of translating the *Shaykh's* letters into English. This volume is the fruit of his and his family's labor. In fact, Mansoor's continued devotion and underlying sincerity in this effort became the impetus for the decision to bring this book to print. May Allah ﷻ reward him, his family, and all those who worked diligently on this volume.

Husain Abdul Sattar
 June 2002 – Rabi II 1423

LETTER ONE
**CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE, HUMILITY, AND
ACTION**

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear *Hadrat*² *Mawlānā*³ Abdul Wāhid (may the legacy of our scholars persist):

*As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.*⁴

I received your letter. This *faqīr*⁵ is bound by the principles of our *tariqah*⁶ to pass on what has been transmitted from our predecessors. Note that the further a *salik*⁷ progresses in his spiritual journey [*sulūk*], the more likely it is that he will be caught and reprimanded on seemingly trivial matters. This is reflected in

² *Hadrat* literally means, “venerable” and is a term of respect used for persons of religious authority.

³ *Mawlānā* literally means, “our protector” and is a title used for a religious scholar.

⁴ *As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu* means, “May peace, the blessings of Allah ﷻ, and His mercy be with you.”

⁵ *Faqīr* literally means, “poor, dependent person.” Here it is used by the *Shaykh* to humbly denote his poverty before the Self-Sufficient Lord ﷻ and his perpetual dependence upon Allah’s ﷻ mercy.

⁶ *Tariqah* literally means, “path” and refers to the traditional path of Islamic spiritual development which, derived from the principles of the Holy Quran and the *sunnah*, concentrates on the spiritual development of the heart and soul of a Muslim.

⁷ *Salik* is a term used for a seeker traveling on the spiritual path.

the famous statement, “Many good deeds of the righteous would be considered blameworthy if done by those nearest to Allah.”

I trust that you will read carefully and adhere to my advice. Know that the heart cannot recognize spiritual realities and distinguish between right and wrong unless it refrains from blameworthy intention and sin. Knowledge is not of any benefit without action, just as a lamp is not of any benefit until it is lit.

Prophet Luqmān ؑ advised his son, “I have worked with and carried many heavy stones in my life, but I have not lifted anything as weighty as religion.” No one can become a scholar unless he acts upon his knowledge. Those scholars of the Children of Israel who acted contrary to their knowledge have been compared to donkeys in the Holy Quran: “*The similitude of those who are entrusted with the Law of Moses, yet apply it not, is that of a donkey carrying books.*” (62:5) A person who has the knowledge of a scholar, but the heart of an ignorant man is to be pitied. Such an individual is comparable to a vulture, which soars high but consumes dead meat.

Imām Mālik ؑ advised Imām Shāfiʿī ؑ to make his actions flour and his knowledge salt. What did he mean? Bread is made from much flour, to which only a pinch of salt is added. Such should be the combination of knowledge and action within a scholar.

Knowledge knocks on the door of action: it enters if the door is opened, but leaves if it does not receive a reply. He who fails to

act upon the knowledge that he has gained is forever deprived of the ecstasy of supplications.

Scholars were once the stars of the sky. Today, they are not even the flickering flames of a lamp. The early scholars would not fill their stomachs with lawful earnings. It is a sad irony that today their successors are willing to trade their souls to fill their stomachs with the unlawful. There was a time when wealth was spent to acquire knowledge. Today, knowledge is spent and squandered to acquire wealth. The acquisition of and increase in knowledge are worthless unless they are accompanied by an increased fear of Allah ﷻ in the heart. “*Indeed only the learned (truly) fear Allah,*” states the Holy Quran. (35:28)

In times of heavily overcast skies the Companions ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ, terrified, would go to the mosque [*masjid*] in order to spend time in prayer. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah would remain worried until the clouds cleared. The Noble Companion Abū Bakr’s ﷺ anxiety was such that he would say, “I wish I were a bird....I wish I were a blade of grass.” Other times he would say, “I wish my mother had never bore me.”

The Venerable Attār ﷺ related levels of fear and humility to nearness to Allah ﷻ. It is found in a *hadīth* that the Messenger ﷺ secretly told the Noble Companion Hudhayfah ﷺ the names of the hypocrites of Madinah. The Noble Companion ‘Umar ﷺ summoned Hudhayfah ﷺ during his Caliphate and said, “I know that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah told you the names of the

hypocrites of Madinah and swore you to secrecy. I will not ask you these names, but please tell me if the name of ‘Umar is among them.”

This is the same exemplary Companion about whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “If there was to be a prophet after me, it would have been ‘Umar.” It is related that ‘Umar ؓ used to cry when relieving his thirst. He would say, “Could it be that we are being rewarded here such that there will be nothing for us in the Hereafter?” Allah ﷻ Himself testifies to the faith of the Companions ؓ in the Holy Quran; nonetheless, they would remain fearful and wary of Allah ﷻ.

The Venerable Hasan al-Basrī ؓ would weep so much in fear of Allah ﷻ that people who later passed by would think that somebody had performed ablution at that spot. The Venerable Rābi‘ah Al-Basrīyah ؓ would cry so much that her tears would flow on the ground. The Noble Companion ‘Umar ؓ would weep so severely that his face would be marked with traces of tears just as the route of a river marks a mountainside.

Hasan al-Basrī ؓ would walk with such fear and grief-stricken humility that passers-by would think he was returning from a graveyard after burying his father. Upon hearing him, people would say his speech was that of a man condemned to death.

While teaching a lesson, once Abdullāh ibn Mūbārak’s ؓ face became so white that his students thought he would die right in front of them. He finished the lesson in this state, and his

students asked about his condition. He said, “Didn’t you see? A cloud came over me during the lesson and I feared lest I be showered with stones.”

When fatally ill and dying, the Venerable Abdullāh ؑ asked his students to place him on the ground, which they did with great respect. Once on the ground, Abdullāh ؑ began to rub his forehead in the dust. He said, “O Allah, please have mercy on Abdullāh’s old age.” Such was the humility and fear of a scholar who used to instruct forty thousand students at any given time.

While making the call to prayer [*adhān*], once the Venerable Hasan ibn Sālih ؑ trembled and fainted in fear while calling out, “God is Great [*Allahu Akbar*].” His brother then approached the minaret and completed the call to prayer. The Venerable °Alī ibn Fudayl ؑ would faint with fear upon listening to *sūrah Al-Qāri’ah*⁸ and *sūrah Az-Zalzalah*⁹. The Noble Companion °Umar ibn al-Khattāb ؓ once fell in fear while reading the Holy Quran. The Noble Companion °Uthmān ؓ would weep so much while reflecting on the grave that his beard would be soaked. The Noble Companion °Alī ؓ would tremble when entering the *masjid* such that people would say, “O Commander of the Faithful, you are the lion of Allah ﷻ and the lion of His

⁸ *Sūrah Al-Qāri’ah* is chapter 101 of the Holy Quran.

⁹ *Sūrah Az-Zalzalah* is chapter 99 of the Holy Quran.

Messenger ﷺ, why this look of terror on your face?” ‘Alī ﷺ would reply, “You have no idea whose chambers I am entering.” History is full of examples where our elders have fallen, and in some cases died, from shock when reading or listening to the Holy Quran and the *hadith*.

It is indeed a blessing if we can achieve even a grain of the fear that these people had in their hearts. The Holy Quran states, “*Allah has sent down the most beautiful Message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself (wherein promises of reward are) paired (with threats of punishment), whereat the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble, and then their skins and hearts soften to Allah’s remembrance.*” (39:23) May Allah ﷻ bless us with such a state.

How do I express the ache in my heart when I cannot find inspiration?

The Venerable Abdullāh ibn Mūbārak ﷺ would advise his students as follows:

- (1) Stop your eyes from wandering and you will attain the pleasure of the fear of Allah ﷻ.
- (2) Leave blameworthy pursuits and you will attain wisdom.
- (3) Eat less and you will become steadfast in worship.
- (4) Stop finding faults in others and you will progress.

This *faqīr* advises you likewise. A mere sign is enough for the intelligent.

Given our age, you and I must consider ourselves among the dead. People are given many warnings, but there is no greater warning than old age. The farmer reaps his crop when it is ready for harvest. Undoubtedly, the time for harvest is near.

An old man came to a *shaykh* and said, “Your Honor, I want to repent but I have come too late.” The *shaykh* replied, “To repent before death is not late.”

Both the sun and the moon give light, but nothing illuminates more than a clean, pure heart. The heart is enlightened through remembrance [*dhikr*], reflection [*murāqabah*],¹⁰ and a connection with one’s *shaykh*. It is as the Holy Quran states, “*For this (the blessings of the Garden) let all aspire.*” (83:26)

Currently this *faqīr* is traveling and we are at opposite shores. The time difference between Pakistan and California is twelve hours. Try to understand what I have hurriedly written here. It may be that these words will serve to strengthen your spiritual

¹⁰ *Murāqabah* is a spiritual exercise wherein a seeker [*salik*] clears his mind of all foreign thoughts and reflects on Allah ﷻ, the Merciful and Majestic Lord. For more details see “Letter Two.”

connection. Please convey my greetings to the community [jamā'ah].

Was-salām ma' al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

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

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear Respected Sister:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

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

REMEMBRANCE [DHIKR]

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

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

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

REFLECTION [MURĀQABAH]

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

Drown deep into yourself and find the secret of life.

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

Man's world is but play and waste.

Eternal is the wealth of the Hereafter.

Man's wealth comes and goes like a shadow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To sit lost in thoughts of the Beloved.

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

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

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

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

Desire an insightful heart from Allah;

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

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

Life is the command of Allah; life is a mystery.

The pinnacle of living is for the heart to cry “Allah!”

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

May trials from Allah confront you

For I see no restlessness in your soul.

Reading books leaves you no time to act,

You are indeed a reader but lack action.

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

SALUTATIONS ON THE PROPHET ﷺ

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

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا
مُحَمَّدٍ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

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

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

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

Whose honored name arrives at my lips O Allah?

The name that caresses my tongue as I call?

REPENTANCE [ISTIGHFĀR]

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

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

Astaghfirullāha rabbī min kulli dhambin wa ‘atūbu ilayhi

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

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

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

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

Be he Attār, be he Rāzī, be he Rūmī, be he Ghazālī

No one begets anything without weeping near the dawn.

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

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

Your gatherings have ended, those seeking You have gone.

The cries and tears of the morn are no more.

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

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

My Lord has accepted as diamonds

Two drops of my innermost shame.

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

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

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

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

RECITATION OF THE HOLY QURAN

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

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

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE [SHAYKH]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER THREE
CONCERNING ABSTINENCE

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear *Hadrat Maulānā* Abdul Wāhid (may the legacy of our scholars persist):

Assalāmu °alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I was pleased to read your most recent letter. This *faqīr* is fine and hopes you remain well until the Day when we will be raised before our Creator.

Just as the stars beautify the heavens, the presence of those who abstain enlightens the earth. Abstinence means leaving anything that may produce a negative effect on one's relationship with Allah ﷻ. Our elders have said that abstinence is perfected when nothing shameful would be revealed should the heart's desires be openly displayed in the marketplace.

Whoever abstains from intentional sins is included among the truthful [*siddiqīn*].¹³ Today, the average person has become lazy and satisfied with a lack of steadfastness; hence, insight and perception approach extinction. This is why the heart is void of the excellence embodied in the statement of our Noble

¹³ The *siddiqīn* are those whose heart, speech, and actions are in complete conformity with truth and good.

Prophet ﷺ, “Beware of the insight of the believer, for he sees with the light of Allah.” Where are the heirs of “my eyes sleep but my heart does not”?¹⁴ Fortunate are those blessed with this gift, and fortunate are those who strive to attain it.

I am happy to learn that you are regular in your remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*murāqabah*]. This *faqīr* will continue to pray that this message enters the ear and pierces the heart, that spoken words become clear, and that those acts disliked in the Islamic Law [*sharāʿah*] become naturally distasteful to the inner being.

Our righteous predecessors have said that a seeker [*salik*] cannot become complete unless he annihilates himself in the Beloved ﷻ and that the vast earth should feel restricted until such a state is reached.

(They felt guilty) to such a degree that the earth seemed constrained to them, despite all its vastness, and their own souls seemed straightened to them - and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah (and no refuge) but to Himself. (9:118)

The object of one’s desires is only obtained with deep resolution. There is a famous saying that “Whoever strives,

¹⁴ Statement of our Noble Prophet ﷺ concerning the continuous state of remembrance bestowed upon his blessed heart.

attains.” You now have permission to start the third lesson, *Latif Sīr*¹⁵. This *faqīr* shall remain spiritually attentive.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddidī*

¹⁵ The Naqshbandī *tariqah* gradually develops the seeker’s spiritual connection with Allah ﷻ through a series of lessons in accordance with the Holy Quran and the *sunnah*. Here the *shaykh* has advised his student to now focus on the next step in his spiritual development.

LETTER FOUR
CONCERNING SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear *Hadrat Maulānā* Abdul Wāhid:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

Your letter arrived and I enjoyed reading it. This *faqīr* is well and continues to wish for you the best in the kingdom of Allah ﷻ.

The growth of a spiritual connection with your Lord, together with regular remembrance [*dhikr*], is a great blessing. Unfortunately, nowadays attaining such a state is rare. What can we say about the common people when even the hearts of the steadfast are becoming empty? *Dhikr* of Allah ﷻ begets love of Allah ﷻ, and both the love and the fear of Allah ﷻ are garments for the body.

The true seeker derives pleasure from *wuqūf al-qalbi*¹⁶ when busy in his daily activities, and he derives pleasure from reflection [*murāqabah*] during his free time.

¹⁶ *Wuqūf al-qalbi* is an exercise wherein a *salik* continually watches over his heart to ensure that it is always focused on Allah ﷻ.

The heart searches agonizingly for those free days and nights.

To sit lost in thoughts of the Beloved.

Such enthusiasm and regularity result in attaining the station of extinction [*fanā'*] and the station of subsistence [*baqā'*]¹⁷.

Concentrate more on your *dhikr* and *murāqabah*, while continuing to dedicate time to your studies. Allah ﷻ testifies: “Therefore, when you are free (from your immediate task) still labor hard.” (94:7) You may begin *murāqabah* on the fourth lesson, *Latīf Khafī*. It is located directly opposite of the *Latīf Sīr*.¹⁸ Read the explanation of this lesson in the *Shajarah Tayyibah*.¹⁹

Was-salām ma'al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

¹⁷ The station of extinction [*fanā'*] and the station of subsistence [*baqā'*] are states attained during the spiritual journey of a *sālik*.

¹⁸ *Latīf Khafī* and *Latīf Sīr* are both names of lessons of the Naqshbandī Mujaddadī *tariqah*.

¹⁹ The *Shajarah Tayyibah* is a text compiled by *Shaykh* Zulfiqār Ahmad that describes the lessons of the Naqshbandī Mujaddadī *tariqah*.

LETTER FIVE
CONCERNING THE ENEMY WITHIN

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear honorable student:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I read your letter and was pleased to learn that you are regular in your prayers and other duties.

Life is a test whose success depends upon good deeds and piety. Often man forgets his ultimate purpose and spends his life pursuing the desires of the lower self [*nafs*]. Following the *nafs*' desires in any form is a type of idol worship. The devil [*shaytān*] is man's outer enemy, and the *nafs* is his enemy within. Remember, an enemy within is always more dangerous than any enemy on the outside.

Maintain careful watch and take account of yourself. To forget one's good deeds and to be ever repentant on one's past sins is the practice of our great elders. Carry out your Islamic duties whether you want to or not, and make a habit of concealing your good deeds. Never advertise them. Lying, slander, envy, greed, and arrogance are all spiritual ailments. Seek help from Allah ﷻ through remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*murāqabah*] if you sense any indications of these ailments within you. Save yourself

from hypocrisy, and make the path of good deeds and piety your purpose in life. Fear and love are two wings of a bird, and so keep doing good deeds and remain fearful on account of your sins.

You should read books that contain biographies of our past great elders. Regardless of whether you are right and true, stay away from arguments and consider them harmful for you. Remember that excessive laughter kills the heart so be careful. Be regular in your pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*] because this is the custom of our great elders, both present and past. Keep yourself busy and take heart in your housework: an idle man's brain is the devil's workshop. Make it your habit to respect your elders and be kind to those younger than yourself. Another name for spiritual development [*tasamwuf*] is the establishment of good character and etiquette; those who have no etiquette have no part in *tasamwuf*. This *faqīr* will continue to pray for all of you.

Was-salām ma'al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER SIX
**CONCERNING ISLAMIC LAW [SHARĪAH] AND
THE HEART**

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My dear and honorable *Mufī* Ahmad °Alī (may the legacy of our scholars persist):

Assalāmu °alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

Life is a jewel that man must polish until it shines. The heart is illuminated and purified when we observe Islamic Law [*sharāb*] in every aspect of our life.

The purification of our inner being is directly related to our avoidance of blameworthy acts. Examine and test yourself against this standard. Prostrate with humility in the court of Allah ﷻ. Tears flooding from the eyes purify the heart.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddidī*

LETTER SEVEN
CONCERNING GOODWILL

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear respected *Hadrat Mufti* Rashid Ahmad (may the legacy of our scholars persist):

As-salamu °alaykum wa rahmatullābi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* safely arrived in Washington D.C. twenty days ago after traveling to Moscow and Daghestan. It is snowing very hard here.

By the will of Allah [*māshā'Allah*] many people are entering the *tariqah* and learning both the importance of remembrance [*dhikr*] as well as the science of spirituality [*suluk*]. However, the condition of the Muslim youth is pitiful. Desperately searching for inner calm and peace, they labor in their careers with such fervor. They have white and clean bodies but they carry black stones inside. They grow old yet remain lustful throughout their lives.

*The ears have entangled the senses with romantic tales,
The eyes have caged the heart with base desires.*

Yet some are fortunate enough to have illuminated their hearts. They have established many Islamic centers and hold the Friday prayer regularly along with various weekend programs. In some areas, Muslims rent churches to establish the Friday prayer.

This *faqīr* is trying to wake up the dormant and those who are busy pursuing the false attractions of this world. It is ironic that man only begins to value this life after a majority of it has passed. The purpose of *tasawwuf* and *sulūk* are to remind man: “Refine your manners with the manners of Allah ﷻ.”²⁰

He whose manners are not rectified cannot benefit from *tasawwuf*. Always remain optimistic: the same nectar that the spider turns into poison, the bee turns into honey. Distance yourself from those who are cunning and fraudulent. They are like a small blanket: if one covers the face, then the feet are sure to show. However, always be kind and considerate: “*Religion is goodwill.*”²¹

The beasts of the jungle have not harmed man nearly as much as he has harmed himself. Do not spread thorns before those who spread thorns in your path – otherwise, the entire world will be covered with thorns. Remember that the sandal tree renders fragrant the very axe being used to cut it. Always walk with the flag of humility – otherwise, you will stumble and fall.

²⁰ For example, since Allah ﷻ is the most Merciful, his servants should aim to be merciful towards one another.

²¹ This is a statement of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

Today the children of those scholars who barely consumed lawful [*halāl*] earnings fill themselves with the unlawful [*ḥarām*]. Protect yourself from self-praise and arrogance. Such people have crumbled many mountains of knowledge.

After the first day of school a man asked his son what the teacher had taught. The son replied, “the ‘*alif*²² is void.” A sign is enough for the wise. At times recite these lines of poetry when you are sitting in reflection [*murāqabab*].

*I am ashamed of my inferiority but reflect upon Your
eminence.*

*But what can I do with my heart? It is yet desirous to meet
You.*

Was-salām ma‘al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

²² ‘*Alif* is the only letter of the Arabic alphabet that stands tall without a bend or curve in its written form. Furthermore, it is also the only letter that remains void of the motions of the short vowels. Like the ‘*alif*, he who stands proud remains void of the spiritual states of the heart and the soul.

LETTER EIGHT
CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE [SHAYKH]

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Honored *Hadrat Maulānā* Muhammad Sharīf (may the legacy of our scholars persist):

As-salamu °alaykum wa rahmatullābi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* is well and wishes the same for you. Your detailed letter informed me of your situation.

Know that he who succeeds in the eyes of his spiritual guide [*shaykh*] is successful in the eyes of Allah ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ.²³ Be regular in your remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*murāqabah*], and God willing [*inshā'Allah*], the doors of recognition [*ma'rifa*] will open with time.

Love will itself teach you the etiquettes [ādāb] of love.

²³ This is because the *shaykh* guides the seeker to the path of Islamic law [*shar'ah*] and the example [*sunnah*] of the Messenger ﷺ, which is the accepted path of Allah ﷻ and His beloved Messenger ﷺ.

Remember that he who willfully renounces blameworthy deeds is placed among the truthful [*siddiqīn*]. This blessing is attained only through the love and company of the *shaykh*.

A sign is enough for the wise.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddidī*

LETTER NINE
CONCERNING REMINDING OTHERS

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My dear brother Nasrullāh:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* has reached Australia safely. It is very cold. I trust that you and your family are well.

Devote all your efforts to the school of religious learning [*madrasa*]: may this become a shade for us in the Hereafter. Allah ﷻ says, “*Nor is that any great matter for Allah.*” (14:20) The blessings of the *Khatm Sharif*²⁴ program are beyond our estimation and comprehension, so be diligent towards it.

Continue to advise the people concerning piety, purity, and their connection with Allah ﷻ. It would have been sufficient for Allah ﷻ to order us to observe prayers merely once, but He did so more than seven hundred times. Man is forgetful and needs to be reminded continually.

²⁴ The *Khatm Sharif* is a gathering held for silent recitation of litanies taken from the Holy Quran and *sunnah*.

Very few have the power to survive independently. The majority of people are at the mercy of their environment, and good environments are created by the motivation of the determined. Stay regular and steadfast in your pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*], recitation of the Holy Quran, and remembrance [*dhikr*]. Only those who worship and persevere can outshine the darkness of sin.

Exalt the weak with the strength of love.

Illuminate the whole world with the name Muhammad.

Was-salām ma'al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER TEN
CONCERNING PLEASING OTHERS

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My dear brother Zafar al-Islam:

As-salāmu °alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I am well and trust that you are too. Pay careful attention to what I am writing here and make a permanent place in your heart for it.

Spiritual development [*tasawwuf*] is another name for the cleansing of the heart. The enlightened heart is one that has proper etiquette and the darkened heart is one that has no room for Allah's ﷻ creation. The disease of the heart is the worst disease of all, and the worst disease from the diseases of the heart is to hurt someone so that their heart breaks. *Tasawwuf*'s highest aim is to make others happy and content while bearing a broken heart within oneself. The lowest aim in *tasawwuf* is not to hurt people when one cannot bring them happiness.

The traveler gets sores on his feet from traveling in this world, while the traveler in the spiritual realm gets sores on his heart. *Hadrat* Khawājah Abul Hasan Kharkhānī ﷻ said that the person who lives even a day without hurting another has spent that day

with the Messenger ﷺ of Allah. Always keep yourself in check to see that your words or your actions do not hurt anyone.

Allah ﷻ pardoned a prostitute because she gave water to a thirsty dog. It is impossible that we will not be pardoned if we render the best treatment to Allah's ﷻ creation. Allah ﷻ made *Hadrat* Khawājah Bahāuddīn Naqshband Bukhārī ؒ a great leader [*imām*] of the Naqshbandī *tarīqah* because he cared for a dog when it was sick.

Bright and enlightened eyes are of no benefit if the heart is dark. The Prophet Luqmān ؑ said to his son that although he had enjoyed the brightness of the sun and the moon, he did not find anything more profitable than the enlightenment of the heart. Remember that there are three signs of a darkened heart: conceit [*ʿujub*], pride [*takabbur*], and performing acts in order to impress others.

Considering oneself greater than others is called *ʿujub*. Obstinacy on one's own opinion and refusal of any advice is called *takabbur*. Performance of acts to impress others involves holding others in importance over Allah ﷻ. If you see any one of these within yourself, then consider it a warning sign. Wash away the darkness with repentance.

Allah ﷻ revealed to *Hadrat* Ibrāhīm ؑ, "O my friend, wash your heart." *Hadrat* Ibrāhīm ؑ was amazed because water cannot reach the heart. To this Allah ﷻ said the heart is not cleansed

with ordinary water, but with tears of shame and repentance. This is called *taubah*.

Stubborn pursuit of the fulfillment of lust and base desires is proof of the darkening of the heart. Remember that lust is the sweet taste that tears apart the one who tastes it, and desire traps the inner soul like a bird in its cage. To conquer the desire is to acquire the characteristics of the angels, and to *be* conquered is to fall to the characteristics of animals.

Guarding continual remembrance of Allah ﷻ by the heart [*muqāf al-qalbi*] and maintaining regularity in reflection [*murāqabah*] is the cure for the diseases of the heart. But remember that staying away from sin is equivalent to prevention, and prevention is better than a cure.

Best wishes and greetings of peace to your household.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER ELEVEN
CONCERNING SERVING OTHERS

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My dear brother Muhammad ‘Iqbāl:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* is well and wishes the same for you in the court of Allah ﷻ. *Hadrat Maulānā ‘Ahmad ‘Alī Lahorī* ﷺ used to say, “Please Allah ﷻ with worship, the Messenger ﷺ of Allah with fellowship, and the creation of Allah ﷻ with service. Make service and attendance to Allah’s ﷻ creation your primary focus.” Additionally, our elders have said, “Whoever serves becomes a servant, and whoever stays lost in himself remains lost and deprived.”

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Adham ﷺ once saw a bright light in a dream alongside an angel writing down people’s names. He approached and asked the angel what he was doing, and the angel replied, “I am listing the names of people who love Allah ﷻ.” *Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Adham* ﷺ asked if his name was on the list, but the angel said, “No.” *Hadrat* then said, “The rank of those who love Allah ﷻ is very high, so at least please add my name to the list of people who love the creation of Allah ﷻ.” The angel agreed and at that moment *Hadrat* awoke.

A few days later he again saw a bright light in a dream and saw the same angel compiling a list, and so *Hadrat* asked him what he was doing. The angel said that he was writing down the names of people whom Allah ﷻ loves. *Hadrat* Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Adham ؓ asked if his name was among them, and the angel replied that it was foremost in the list. The angel continued that this was because Allah ﷻ loves those who love His creation.

*Servants of Allah are many, roaming endlessly in the wilderness,
But I will become a servant of him who has love for the creation of Allah.*

Hadrat Mūsā ؑ once asked Allah ﷻ who He liked the most in creation. Allah ﷻ answered, “The person who is saddened by the slightest misfortune of another.”

Hadrat Abū Bakr Siddīq ؓ used to say, “Alms [*zakāh*] of the body is as necessary as alms of one’s wealth, and the body’s alms is to serve others and to make others’ misfortunes one’s own.”

Once *Hadrat* Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Adham ؓ was traveling with two of his attendants in bitter cold weather. At night they came to a mosque [*masjid*] with a broken door that would not close. When his attendants went to sleep, *Hadrat* Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Adham ؓ stood against the door all night so they would be comfortable.

Hadrat °Umar ibn °Aas ؓ was returning from the conquest of Egypt and found that a pigeon had built a nest in his tent. Although the army was leaving, he ordered that his tent not be touched, and so he completed the rest of the journey without a tent so that the pigeon’s house would not be destroyed.

Hadrat Khawājah Bāqībillāh ؓ was once going back to bed after having prayed the pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*]. It was intensely cold and he noticed that a cat had curled up in his bed and was sound asleep. *Hadrat* shivered all night but did not disturb the cat’s sleep.

Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī ؓ was traveling through an area with his followers and attendants. He noticed that a dog was sleeping in the middle of their path, and the path was so narrow that they could not have passed without the dog having to move. So, *Hadrat* and his party waited until the dog woke up and stepped aside.

On another occasion, *Hadrat Maulānā Rūmī* ؓ was traveling and came across a narrow path. The surrounding area had become muddy because of heavy rain, and there was no other passage. A dog was coming from the opposite direction on the narrow path. *Hadrat Rūmī* ؓ told him to step aside so that he could pass, and the dog said the same thing to him. *Hadrat Rūmī* ؓ said, “You are a dog so step aside because it will not matter if you get dirty.” The dog replied, “No, by stepping aside your clothes will become dirty, and clothes can be washed. However, if

you force me to step aside, you might feel in your heart that you are better than a dog. Your heart will hence be blackened [with pride] and will not be washable by water.” *Maulānā Rūmī* ﷺ thus stepped aside and let the dog pass.

That night *Maulānā Rūmī* ﷺ wept in the pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*] saying that a dog had helped him realize his true status. Allah ﷻ then told him that this had been the same dog that he had once refused to disturb from its sleep and so through this dog, Allah ﷻ gave *Hadrat Rūmī* ﷺ the wisdom to know his lower self [*nafs*].

These anecdotes contain jewels of guidance for us. Our elders used to take pains for the comfort of animals, and nowadays, we do not even take pains for the comfort of our fellow human beings.

Once *Hadrat ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz* ﷺ was asleep and a slave girl was operating a fan because the weather was very hot. The slave girl fell asleep since she was tired. *Hadrat ʿUmar ʿAbdul ʿAziz* ﷺ woke up, and seeing her asleep, started fanning her instead so that she could enjoy her sleep. When the slave girl woke up and saw this, she became frightened as to what might happen to her. *Hadrat ʿUmar* ﷺ said, “Don’t be frightened, you are human like me and the heat is equal for both of us. There is nothing wrong if I fan for some time since you have been doing it for so long.”

Hadrat Maulānā Mahmūd al-Hasan was imprisoned on the island of Malta with his deputy [*ḵbalīfah*], *Hadrat Maulānā* Husayn Ahmad Madnī رحمته. The weather was severely cold and it was the habit of the *shaykh* to wake up for the pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*]. After praying the night prayer [*ʿishā*], *Hadrat* Husayn used to fill a pail with water and sleep over it in a hunched position all night in order to keep it warm for his *shaykh*. In this way he would help his *shaykh* make ablution with warm water at *tabajjud*.

Hadrat Madnī رحمته taught *hadīth* for eighteen years at the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ. Upon his return to India, he came to *Hadrat Maulānā* Rashid Ahmad Gangohī رحمته. He stayed with him a few days and would go himself to buy groceries for the spiritual lodge [*ḵhānqah*]. *Hadrat* Madnī رحمته used to say that he received the same amount of blessing in the presence of the *shaykh* that he received when teaching in Madinah.

This *faqīr* is pleased that you spend the majority of your time in the service of your *shaykh*, and this *faqīr* makes supplication for you for the time that you cannot be with him. Allah ﷻ is the owner of vast treasures, and He never falls short of giving: “*To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth.*” (39:63) This *faqīr* makes supplication that Allah ﷻ includes you among those

drawn near [*muqarrabīm*] to their Lord. May Allah ﷻ make you content in this world and the next as you please your *shaykh*, amen [*‘āmin*].

Was-salām ma‘ al-ikrām,

Faqir Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER TWELVE
CONCERNING VARYING SPIRITUAL STATES

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My honored and respected brother °Āsif Majīd:

As-salāmu °alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I was pleased with your letter that was filled with anecdotes of our predecessor’s love for the friends [‘*auliyā*’] of Allah ﷻ. May Allah ﷻ increase your burning love for the ‘*auliyā*’ and pull you toward Him ﷻ. May Allah ﷻ awaken us to reality and bring us into His embrace.

Praise be to Allah [‘*Alhamdulillah*’], it seems that you have received a drop from Allah’s ﷻ endless ocean of love. Although the scholars [‘*ulama*’] have detailed the conditions of constriction [*qabdh*] and expansion [*bast*] of spiritual states, and no doubt you have done research on this matter, I will relate some excerpts from the books on this subject.

Often seekers [*sālikīn*] become depressed because they notice a decrease in their spiritual condition. They do not understand the reasons for such ups and downs in their spiritual state. This confuses and depresses them.

The spiritual masters [*mashā’ikb*] have elaborated on this and explained away any misconceptions. A seeker’s [*sālik*’s] spiritual

condition does not remain the same from one point to the next. The *sālik* is constantly immersed in tests from Allah ﷻ. The technical wording for the depression-like change in one's spiritual condition is *qabdh*.

Such a state is described in the collections of Imām Muslim ﷺ and Imām Tirmidhī ﷺ. An example is the story of the Noble Companion Hanzalah ﷺ when he began saying that he had become a hypocrite. There is also the narration that once, in the early days of Islam, the Messenger ﷺ of Allah became depressed when revelation was delayed such that he almost threw himself off a cliff.

The condition opposite to *qabdh* is called *bast*, which is a heightened state of desire in which the heart revels and the spirit [*latā'if*] prospers. In this state the *sālik* must remember to be grateful to Allah ﷻ for giving him this condition--for he himself is weak and must be humble. He should not concentrate on the conditions of *qabdh* or *bast*, but rather on the Creator of those conditions--meaning Allah ﷻ.

Qabdh and *bast* are part of this path, just like prayer [*ṣalāh*] and fasting [*ṣawm*]. Sometimes the *sālik* falls to *qabdh* and at times revels in the spectacles of *bast*. However, this matter of *qabdh* and *bast* is only relevant while the *sālik* is subject to the forces of change within his own lower self [*nafs*]. The heart [*qalb*] and the spirit [*latā'if*] are less affected by *qabdh* and *bast* when the soul graduates from ever changing states to the state of continual

remembrance [*muqāf*]. In this way the spiritual connection [*nisbah*] also graduates from being dim and ever changing to strong and permanent.

If *qabdh* is still manifesting itself, it only affects the outer, but does not root itself in the inner being or the *latā'if*. The *sālik* should always seek repentance as this is the most beneficial route to remove the state of *qabdh*. *Qabdh* can manifest at any time, taking away all the conditions of *bast* and darkening the heart.

*The morning is for repentance, the evening is for
repentance;
Forever is repentance on my lips.
Only You know if my seeking repentance has any effect,
For my only duty is to seek it.*

Although prophets are infallible and above wrongdoing, sometimes a veil can come in front of their hearts, obligating them to seek forgiveness. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that sometimes a veil would come over his heart, and as a result he would seek forgiveness seventy times a day.

Sometimes this [i.e., the *sālik*'s state of *qabdh*] may come about because the spiritual connection is weak [*nisbah*]. These shortcomings may be physical or spiritual depending on the *nisbah*'s strength or weakness. Until such a time that the *nisbah* becomes firm, the *shaykh* may become aware of these weaknesses

through outward signs. The cure for this and all weaknesses that may cause a *sālik* to falter is love for the *shaykh* and gaining the *shaykh's* spiritual attention [*tawajjuh*], so that the *nisbah* may acquire strength and power and reach extinction [*fanā*].

The spiritual attention [*tawajjuh*] of an able *shaykh* can reduce mountains of darkness and impurity from a sincere *sālik's* heart and render that heart pure. The *shaykh's* *tawajjuh* proves very useful in a state of *qabdh* and brings a *sālik* quickly into *bast*, thus opening the way to spiritual enhancement. Prevention and cure for all lays in the company and *tawajjuh* of the *shaykh*.

However, this is a two way street and there has to be love and submission from one direction and *tawajjuh* from the other. *Hadrat* Khawājah Naqshband Bukhārī ؒ said that our *tariqah* is closer in lineage²⁵ to the Prophet ﷺ than all other *tariqahs* and that he requested such a *tariqah* from Allah ﷻ that was bound to lead a follower to Him ﷻ. The only obstacle for the *sālik* in this *tariqah* is his laziness. A sincere *sālik* will surely find his way if he submits to a true and able *shaykh*.

You have asked about leading prayers in the mosque [*masjid*], so let me tell you that you should lead the prayers if the people ask you to. However, the desire to step forward should not be present and one should always think of oneself as inadequate.

²⁵ The Naqshbandī *tariqah* stems from *Hadrat* Abū Bakr ؓ who was the closest companion of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. All other *tariqahs* stem from *Hadrat* Ali ؓ.

You should read and memorize the rules and regulations of prayer from books of jurisprudence such as *Umdatul-Fiqh Kitāb-us-Salāh* or *Zubtātul-Fiqh*. Moreover, one should know enough of the science of Quranic recitation [*tajwīd*] that one is able to lead the prayer sufficiently. You should practice with an able reciter [*qārī*] and spend your time in *dhikr* and *murāqabah*. Aside from this, only Allah ﷻ gives the desire and ability [*taṣfīq*]. Regards to the family.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddīdī*

LETTER THIRTEEN
CONCERNING TRUE WEALTH AND POWER

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My honored and respected brother ʿIshrat ʿAlī:

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I learned of your discussion with ʿAyyāz ʿAbbasi from your gracious letter. Hear me: congratulations to the rich on their riches; congratulations to the leaders on their positions – this *faqīr* does not claim religious authority, but he is fortunate enough to have the wealth of serving our spiritual masters [*mashāʾikh*]. It is better to leave this wealth to us, for if we lose it in trying to acquire the wealth of this world [*dunyā*] then we may be left with nothing.

This *faqīr* is well aware of his worth. What does one want with the pulpits of the world when he has been given the pulpit of the Messenger ﷺ of Allah? Hopefully you gentlemen will accept my excuse and regret.²⁶

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

²⁶ After *Mawlānā* Kaūthar Niāzī's death, many members of the Pakistan National Assembly had approached *Hadrat* Zulfiqār Ahmad requesting him to submit his name for Chairman of the Islamic Council. *Hadrat* flatly refused.

LETTER FOURTEEN
CONCERNING BENEFITS OF A COMPANION

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear Muhammad ‘Aslam:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I was pleased to hear that you have met with ‘Ishrat. Surrounding yourself with an atmosphere of remembrance [*dhikr*] will prove beneficial. The devil [*shaytān*] is a wolf for the person who is alone.

Your inner being can be rectified; however, you are not spending enough time in reflection [*murāqabah*]. Remember that the inner self can only be cleansed through *dhikr*. Consider your daily devotions more important than eating and sleeping. Continue to inform me of your circumstances, and make sure to include a self-addressed envelope in the future.

Was-salām ma‘ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER FIFTEEN
CONCERNING ADHERENCE TO THE WAY
[SUNNAH] OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear Muhammad ‘Aslam:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I was pleased to read that you are regular in your remembrance [dbiker] and reflection [muraqabah]. I hope that Allah ﷻ allows you to taste a drop from the wine of His love so that you give up all else in His pursuit. Our lives and outcomes are dependent on a mere glance from Allah ﷻ.

Adhere to the way [sunnah] of the Messenger ﷺ in every circumstance, and consider such adherence mandatory upon yourself. A seeker [sālik] hopes for acceptance in the court of Allah ﷻ by adorning himself in the sunnah just as a wife adorns herself with makeup and jewelry on her wedding night. The heart automatically understands when the veils are lifted. Keep me updated and informed about your condition and circumstances. Convey my greetings to the community [jamā‘ah].

Was-salām ma‘ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER SIXTEEN
CONCERNING LOANED GOODS

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear Muhammad ‘Aslam:

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* is well and hopes the same for you.

Our lives, our wealth, and our belongings have been loaned to us for a short while. If someone becomes obsessed with loaned goods he will be considered a fool. If the eye could truly see, it would notice the greatness and awe of Allah ﷻ in everything. Every little piece of creation bears witness to the greatness of the Creator who makes vegetation grow in barren land and who brings life from death.

Just like blindness robs a person of physical sight and makes him hopeless of sight in the future, all hope of spiritual insight is lost if a veil descends on the heart. Those who discovered electricity have brightened the whole world, but glance into their hearts and one sees only darkness.

Value your time and brighten it with remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*murāqabah*]. Greetings of peace and best regards to the

community [*jamā'ah*] and your household. Convey my special greetings to the college principal and the other faculty.

Was-salām ma' al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER SEVENTEEN
CONCERNING GOOD DEEDS

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear respected Ghulām Rabbānī:

As-salāmu °alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* is well and wishes the same for you. People in this world are often busy accumulating wealth, while others are busy accumulating good deeds. Wealth is temporary and will perish – good deeds and the resulting rewards are eternal. Love of wealth is an unhealthy burden, whereas love for good deeds is healthy. Wealth can buy glasses, but not sight; wealth can buy books, but not knowledge; wealth can buy medicine, but not health. Through wealth one can rule over people’s bodies, but cannot buy the love in their hearts; and wealth can procure physical pleasures, but not spiritual stations. Hence the true scholars [*‘ulamā*] and the spiritual masters [*mashā’ikib*] do not concern themselves with the acquisition of wealth. Instead they focus on performing good deeds. A true spiritual guide [*shaykh*] keeps his eyes on a seeker’s [*murīd*’s] good deeds and not his wealth.

I am hopeful that you are progressing in your remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*murāqabah*] and your adherence to the way [*sunnah*] of the Prophet ﷺ.

*Wager what you will in these games of love, why fear?
The winner cannot imagine his spoils, the loser cannot
imagine defeat.*

*Was-salām ma-al-ikrām,
Faqīr Zulfiqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī*

LETTER EIGHTEEN
CONCERNING TEN SIGNS OF GOOD ETIQUETTE

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear honorable and respected Mahmūd Ghaznavī:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

This *faqīr* is well and wishes the same for you. Abdul Karīm of Samarqand has brought all of us to see Bukhārā. Both of you have met before in Karachi, and he speaks of you fondly.

Good etiquette is the way to attain honor in this life and happiness in the next. It is related from our beloved Prophet ﷺ that the believer with the best character and etiquette is one with the most perfect faith. Remember that good etiquette is the best blessing after having accepted Islam. The elders [*mashā'ikh*] have mentioned ten signs of good etiquette:

- (1) Meeting people with a cheerful attitude
- (2) Empathizing with others
- (3) Helping those in dire need
- (4) Not obstructing people's good actions and intentions
- (5) Not speaking ill of people nor picking out and spreading faults of people
- (6) Noting one's own faults and others' good characteristics
- (7) Treating kindly those who wrong you

- (8) Accepting the apology of someone who has wronged you
- (9) Choosing moderation in everything
- (10) Staying away from worthless pursuits

The gist of the above is to neither cause harm to others nor to cause them pain. Remember that there is no return once milk has spoiled, nor can a jewel be put back together once broken.

Hadrat Junayd al-Baghdādī ؒ used to say that he preferred the company of a wrongdoer who had good etiquette over a scholar [*ʿalīm*] who had bad etiquette. This is why I say that neither the Creator nor His creation is pleased with someone who has bad etiquette. The seeker [*sālik*] who considers spiritual training [*tasawwuf*] to be complete simply with the completion of his litany is ignorant; both the remembrance [*dhikr*] of his heart and the *dhikr* of his tongue are faulty. His outward appearance may coincide with the testimony of faith, but internally he has nothing but darkness. One with a bad attitude and bad manners will never attain anything even if he joins himself with the most able spiritual guide [*shaykh*]. He has lost everything because of his habits. Character should be moderate, but not vile. Such a sufi will never be accepted. Considering all this, thinking about the blessings of Paradise seems like a distant matter.

Was-salām maʿal-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER NINETEEN
CONCERNING WORK

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear honorable Muhammad ʿUsmān:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I was pleased to learn that you have started working, and now you must work steadily with determination. Your working hard is mandatory. Remember that a mountain is a pebble for the hardworking, and a pebble is a mountain for the lazy. To move a mountain you must first learn how to move pebbles.

Just like any journey starts with a first step, you have taken the first step of your practical life when you started work. The lazy keep looking for opportunities, whereas the strong create them. Do not become worried and frustrated by any setbacks; setbacks are what make a person strong. Never lose heart, and always lower yourself in front of people.

Remember this principle well: a large stone can become an obstacle in the way of a weak person, but becomes merely a stepping-stone for the strong willed. Acquire expertise in your field and you will attain honor, and those who follow will value you and your guidance. Just like everyone jumps onto a lazy donkey, everyone takes advantage of a weak individual.

Wind, wealth, and time are ever changing, so value them. These times are being swept by storms of obscenity and shamelessness, so beware of bad company. A bad friend is as unreliable as a snake – one never knows when he can strike. However, reeds also flow along with rivers, and so in the midst of evil are also good and decent people struggling to do what is right. Furthermore, in the midst of these rivers are also cliffs that change the course of the rivers.

The times remember those people

Who stop the rising storms.

Remember that a dead body goes wherever the currents may take it, whereas a living man can cross a raging river. Do not become a dead body. Guard your mandatory legal acts [*farā'id*] and be regular in your remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*murāqabah*].

Today the oppression of staying awake all night and sleeping all day is becoming common. There was a time when average people would pray the pre-dawn prayer [*tabajjud*] between two periods of sleep; today the pious pray the morning prayer [*fajr*] between two periods of sleep. Today if one wakes up for *tabajjud*, the neighborhood is as quiet as a graveyard. Stay away from obscenity and be watchful of your heart's state of continual remembrance

[*wuqūf al-qalbī*]. I am listing a few drastic mistakes that you should avoid at all costs:

- (1) Do not fall into the delusion that you will always remain strong, youthful, and wealthy.
- (2) Do not fall into the delusion that you will stop sinning after doing a sin a few times.
- (3) Never tell people your innermost secrets and then ask them not to tell anyone.
- (4) Do not delude yourself into thinking that your children will attend to you without your having looked after your own parents.
- (5) Do not think that if you cannot do something then it is impossible for everybody else.
- (6) Never delay anything that can be done today.
- (7) Never form an opinion about someone just from his outward appearance.
- (8) Never re-examine what has already been examined.

This *faqīr* supplicates for your success in this world and the next. Keep writing to your parents from time to time.

Was-salām ma'al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER TWENTY
CONCERNING WORKING HARD

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear Munīr Ahmad:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I am well and hope that you are too. This *faqīr* was in Karachi for a limited time and so we could only meet for a short time. Make up for our short physical meeting with a strong spiritual connection.

A person is like a flourmill, which is only useful if it churns wheat into flour. Likewise, a person is useful and worthy in this world only with remembrance [*dhikr*]. Just like stagnant, standing water becomes a breeding ground for filth, an empty and carefree mind becomes a hive for useless and scorned thoughts.

The devil's [*shaytān*'s] first efforts are to make a person neglectful and forgetful of the remembrance of Allah ﷻ. In war, the first thing victors do is to disarm their prisoners of war. Likewise, the first thing that *shaytān* does once he overcomes someone is to make him forgetful of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran: “*The devil got the better of them: So he made them forget the remembrance of Allah.*” (58:19) A *hadīth* tells us that the devil [*shaytān*] says, “I ruined mankind through sin, and mankind ruined

me through the testimony “there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah [*lā ilāha illallah*].”

Sow the seed of good deeds every moment of your life so that one day you will find a garden. Each second of time is like a piece of gold. Just as grains of sand together form a sand dune, seconds of time form a man’s life. You must have learned in your science class that celestial objects are always in motion, and so this is a sign from nature that we too should always be involved in work and not remain stagnant. Those who merely fill their stomachs are animals, those who do no work are without life, and those who have the habit of hard work are true men.

Only if we work hard in this life will we have peace and comfort in the Hereafter. People should work hard and be ill at ease so that they can be in comfort later. Protect yourself from distracting thoughts, and propel yourself forward in remembrance [*dhikr*] and spiritual development [*ṣulūk*] with determination. A man must do one task very well, and not multiple tasks haphazardly. Our elders [*mashā’ikb*] have referred to this as the main route of progress in spiritual development [*ṭasanwuf*]. This *faqīr* will make supplication that Allah ﷻ draw you nearer to Him.

Was-salām ma’ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī

LETTER TWENTY-ONE
CONCERNING TRUE HEARTS

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Highly respected Zulfiqār Ahmad Siddiqī:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

I noticed your letter today and decided to reply right away. This *faqīr* reached Washington D.C. almost twenty days ago after having traveled through Moscow and Daghestan. It is snowing heavily here and everything appears white, but business is operating as usual. People are entering the *tarīqah* and learning remembrance [*dhikr*].

The youth here are to be pitied. To attain peace they work all day in jobs that produce anything but peace. They have shining bodies on the outside but carry dark hearts within. It is sadly amazing that man only realizes the value of life when more than half of it has expired. Many people cannot control their lusts even in old age. Someone once said that the stubborn donkey has become old but still refuses to obey the master.

The inner base desires of a man blind him; he sacrifices eternal pleasures for the immediate and temporal. Our teeth fall out from eating Allah's ﷻ countless blessings, yet our tongues easily become weary of singing His praises. Are we blind that we do not

see the chickens bowing their heads for each morsel of food? Are we so intoxicated by this world that we do not value prayer? Remember that the devil [*shaytān*] refused to bow his head just once and was thrown out of the kingdom of Allah ﷻ. Likewise, the person who does not pray refuses to bow to his Creator forty times everyday!

Our sad state is that we think we are too good to die.

We would not be burdened with the worries of this life if only we lived our life according to Allah's ﷻ laws. You must have observed that racehorses are not put to work in the fields. Save yourself from the hypocrisy of seeming to be Allah's ﷻ friend on the outside while being His enemy within. Cunning is a small blanket, and if you cover your head with it, your feet will be naked. Walk humbly and cautiously otherwise you will trip and fall.

Try and establish the habit of always remaining optimistic. Instead of lamenting that there are thorns among the roses, be grateful that there are roses among the thorns. A honeybee turns the same nectar into honey that a spider turns into venom--to each his own.

If people shower you with undeserving praise, know that tin cannot become gold merely because ignorant people say so. A young man asked an elderly man, "Are you better or my dog?"

The elderly man answered, “There is a dark abyss in front of me – if I successfully cross it, then I am better, otherwise your dog.”
Hadrat Abū ʿImrān ؒ used to say that animals will see the pitiful state of humans on the Day of Judgment and be grateful that Allah ﷻ had not made them human.

Creatures of the jungle have not hurt man nearly as much as man has hurt other men. Hence you should cultivate kindness and etiquette within you. The purpose of spiritual development [*tasammuf*] is mercy towards creation. *Tasammuf* will not benefit anyone whose etiquette and manners are not perfected or improving. Do not spread thorns in the way of someone who spreads thorns in your path, otherwise the whole world will be full of thorns. Remember that the axe that cuts down the sandal tree also becomes fragrant with its scent. Signs are sufficient for the intelligent.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddidī*

LETTER TWENTY-TWO
CONCERNING BEING OPEN AND HONEST

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My dear daughter:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

May Allah ﷻ include you among the pious. I received your complaint filled letter today, and I must say that this letter is very structured. You write very well, *mashāʿAllāh*.²⁷ The desire and enthusiasm with which you have embarked on this journey is very rare.

*Even if you search the worlds far and wide,
Precious are we and rarely found.*

It is written that *Hadrat Shiblī* ﷺ would give sweets to whomever he heard saying “Allah.” He used to say, “What else can I do besides sweeten the mouth that mentions the name of my Beloved?” I am pleased to read that you are sitting in reflection [*murāqabah*] from four o’clock in the morning until eleven.

²⁷ *MashāʿAllāh* literally means, “by the will of Allah.”

Note that my reproaching you is only out of love. Do not consider this poison but bear it. Just like medical doctors sometimes operate on people, the spiritual guide [*shaykh*] likewise must be harsh at times. Often, this proves to be a good preventative remedy.

The seeker [*murīd*] should submit to the *shaykh* and follow his instructions just as a corpse submits completely to the directions of its bathers, turning wherever they position it. Moreover, even if the *shaykh* scolds the *murīd* in front of people, the *murīd* should humbly bear it and request the *shaykh* to continue scolding him, for this is but rectification.

Love, love, we all claim love.

But there is no love without intensity.

Measures of love are numerous and old,

Beware there are no new inventions in the ways of love.

If the *shaykh* uses harsh speech, this in no way means that he has hard feelings towards the seeker [*murīd*]. However, this is only to emphasize a matter's extreme importance. This *faqīr* has sometimes used harsh words only because he cares about you. It may be that this *faqīr* sees something that is beyond you at this time; a *hadīth* says, "Beware the insight of the believer, for he sees with the light [*nūr*] of Allah."

Never think that you have angered or annoyed the *shaykh* by telling him your spiritual condition and faults, or that you have lowered yourself in his eyes. You have only raised your status in this *faqīr*'s heart by being open and truthful. It may be that the devil [*shaytān*] tries to delude you into only writing good points about yourself from now on, but know that this would be fatal for your spiritual progress. I am hopeful that you will not be a hypocrite to yourself in this matter. There is no better judge in this world than one's own conscience. I am hopeful that you will keep me informed of your condition from time to time. It is foolish to conceal one's illness from one's doctor.

You cannot imagine, but sitting far away this *faqīr* gives spiritual attention [*tawajjuh*] to your heart. Was your heart always aching for the love of Allah ﷻ as it does now? Did you sit hours in *murāqabah* before as you do now? Was your heart always as strong as it is now? If you consider your heart to be a flower perfumed with the love of Allah ﷻ, then know that this flower also has a gardener.

*Blood we gave when drought swallowed the garden,
Now they say we are not needed when springtime has
come.*

I was very pleased when I read about your progress. The *hadith* tell us to do so much *dhikr* that people consider us insane. Praise

be to Allah [*‘Alhamdulillah*] you have already achieved this auspicious status, and it may be this very thing that determines your success in the Hereafter.

This *faqīr* is traveling to Moscow as he writes this letter, and so a part of this letter is being written while in the air. The weather is very bad and hence the flight is turbulent: some of my writing may reflect that. I am being so overwhelmed with love for Allah ﷻ, for which there is not enough life in this pen to express. Allah ﷻ is truly the Greatest. There is no other being that so many have desired, for whom so many have sacrificed their lives, and to whom so many have cried, prayed and opened their hearts.

Come into my eyes, stay in my heart.

This *faqīr* supplicates that Allah ﷻ include us among those sinners whom He has forgiven, amen [*‘āmin*].

Was-salām ma’ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddīdī

LETTER TWENTY-THREE
CONCERNING THE EARLY MORNING

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
Allah, Allah, Allah

My dear daughter:

Assalāmu °alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

May Allah ﷻ include you among the pious. I was glad to read that you take special care in observing prayer at its proper time.

You have written that you wake up with the call [*adhān*] of the morning [*fajr*] prayer. If I may suggest something, it would be much better if you could wake up just twenty minutes or so before the *adhān* so that you would be able to offer pre-dawn prayers [*tabajjud*] as well. A *hadīth* reminds us that an angel calls out in the last third of the night on behalf of Allah ﷻ: “Is there anyone to ask so that he may be answered?” Alas the Giver has to repeatedly ask, and the people who should be asking are sound asleep in their beds.

If you make a little bit of effort and try and wake up before *fajr* in order to offer four cycles [*rak'āt*] of *tabajjud*, your name will be included among those who wake up in the last third of the night. A *hadīth* tells us that the person who increases the numbers of a group will be included within it. By arising only a few minutes before *fajr* you will still be counted as one of those who pray

tabajjud. In this day and age this is rare and highly rewarded. After *tabajjud* you should send salutations upon the Messenger ﷺ of Allah most humbly and lovingly.

*Poverty-stricken we indeed are, but may nonetheless be
summoned,
For we have sent presents of salutations before us.*

After this you should be humble and ashamed as you recall your sins and ask for forgiveness from your Lord. It may be that tears of grief and shame sparkle like stars on your eyes and become an excuse for Allah ﷻ to pardon you.

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

Next you should engage in remembrance [*dhikr*] and reflection [*muraqabah*], and after the morning [*fajr*] prayer you should open and read the Holy Quran with the desire and excitement of reading a love letter.

It is the way [*sunnah*] of the Prophet ﷺ to take a short rest/nap after lunch, which in turn makes waking for *tabajjud* easier. You should make all the effort you can, and it may be that Allah ﷻ grants you regularity in *tabajjud*.

*Wake so that your heart may be cleansed,
Why will your Lord not hear the ones who wake for His
sake?*

Regarding your question about background music playing in your mind, do not worry. You will automatically start hating Michael Jackson's music when the music of your heart's remembrance starts playing. Keep me informed from time to time regarding your condition and circumstances.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī *Mujaddidī*

LETTER TWENTY-FOUR
CONCERNING ILL WILL

With His Glorious Name ﷻ
Allah, Allah, Allah

Dear honorable sister:

Assalāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.

Below I have answered some of your questions from your previous two letters.

The *hadīth* tell us that the best thing after having accepted Islam is good etiquette and that the successful believer is one whose etiquettes and character are excellent. Other noble elders have written that Allah ﷻ will hide the faults of one who hides the faults of others. The one who is quick to forgive others will find himself quickly forgiven by Allah ﷻ. Whoever is quick to accept others' apologies, Allah ﷻ will accept his apology just as quickly. Allah ﷻ will be kind on the Day of Judgment to one who is kind to others.

Do not harbor ill will, envy, or hatred in your heart toward anyone, for Allah ﷻ likes the heart that is free of hatred. Through jealousy and hatred one keeps a raging fire in his own heart, so whose house is destroyed in the end?

*Time for love is very short in this world,
Where do people find time to fill it with so much hate?*

If you want to hold enmity towards someone, have enmity with the devil [*shaytān*] and your base desires [*nafs*]. It is ironic that one starts despising others merely on a suspicion of fault, whereas he stays in love with himself despite knowing the evil in his own soul [*nafs*].

*Oblivious to my own faults, I could not see anything but
others' wrongs,
Noticing my own faults, suddenly no one seemed in the
wrong.*

A mere sign is sufficient for the wise.

Was-salām maʿ al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī