

## CHAPTER 8

### THE LESSONS OF THE SILSILAH ALIA NAQSHBANDIA MUJADDIDIA

The purpose of this book and explanation herein of the lessons of the Naqshbandia Tariqah is not to read and implement these lessons according to one's personal understanding, without the guidance of a shaykh. It is essential for those who have a sincere desire to learn, to sit in the company of a shaykh to learn the correct methods and implement them according to the shaykh's instruction. The student should keep his shaykh informed of their progress and condition so that he stays safe from the Nafs and Shaitan.

The explanation herein of the lessons is so that the Salik [student] may read the particulars of a lesson to his satisfaction and understanding. A seeker may read about his current lessons to make sure that he is executing them properly and to realize whether or not he is attaining the proper results. He may evaluate what he is doing to ascertain whether the written material concurs with his actions or experiences and turn to his shaykh for further guidance and prayer.

If a seeker gets tempted by his nafs and tries to implement these lessons merely by reading this book without the guidance of his shaykh, he endangers his progress rather than helping it.

Together, the Mashaikh have established three methods for attaining inner cleanliness and peace. The first method is dhikr, whether the dhikr is only of IsmUllah (Name of Allāh) or Nafi Asbat [the kalima]. The second is Muraqaba, and the third is Rabita with the Shaykh (connection with the shaykh). The road becomes longer or shorter depending on the effort of the Salik.

In the Silsilah Alia Naqshbandia, dhikr is performed by concentrating of the Name of Allāh ﷻ within the Lataaif [focus points in the chest and mind]. These lessons and methods are explained in the material that follows.

#### ***Lesson No. 1: Latif of the Qalb***

The human heart is located at a distance of approximately two fingers' width below the left breast within the human body. The shaykh explains to the murid that this is the opening (or mouth) of the heart, and explains the routine and lesson to the murid.

When freeing himself from his worldly duties, the murid<sup>1</sup> should perform fresh ablution and sit secluded, facing the Qibla. Fixating the tongue to the roof of the mouth so as not to say anything, he should empty his heart of worrying and troublesome thoughts. With humility and respect he should focus his mind's thoughts on his heart, and focus his heart toward Allāh ﷻ: He who is perfect in every way, and is free and pure of all that is negative and on Whom we have testified our faith.

The murid should then imagine that the heart has formed an opening where the shaykh pressed his finger, through which the light (nur) of Allāh's ﷻ faiz is entering and illuminating

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<sup>1</sup> Student seeking to develop his connection with Allāh ﷻ.

the heart. Image that this light is cleansing the heart of all the filth of sin, and the heart is repeating the word “Allāh” in sincere gratitude. With this in mind the murid should try to mentally “pull” this light towards his heart and lose himself in dhikr to the degree that he becomes unaware of his own being and existence. This is called Istighraq, and this is a good state.

However, he should not allow distracting thoughts to enter and he fight them off if they do, concentrating and trying to remain focused on dhikr. This struggle is better than Istighraq.

The murid should sit either with his legs folded under him or as in Tashahud while engaged in dhikr. Breathing through the nose should be normal, and the eyes should be closed. He should do dhikr with rosary beads for some time and thoughts of Allāh ﷻ should pass through his heart. Eyes should remain closed and there should be no sound from the tongue or throat. The neck should be bent in the direction of the heart and if tolerable, the murid should place a cloth or shawl on his head and mouth so as to make concentration easier.

In this way the murid should perform a minimum dhikr of ten bead rosaries of Ism al-Zaat [Name of Allāh ﷻ]<sup>2</sup>. Ten rosaries means repetition of Allāh’s ﷻ name one thousand times. The murid should continue this to the maximum tolerable, or as instructed by his shaykh. He should then put away the rosary beads and sit for approximately the same amount of time<sup>3</sup> in the same position described, concentrating on his heart and faiz in the same way, doing the same dhikr as if his heart were speaking the Name of Allāh ﷻ. This is called Muraqaba.

At the close, the murid should make supplication to Allāh ﷻ. Always perform this by setting aside some time each day. Whether walking, talking, or sleeping, the murid should always be attentive towards his heart which should be attentive towards Allāh ﷻ. The goal is that his heart always be occupied in remembering Allāh ﷻ while his hands work through the routine of daily life.

People usually feel the sensation of the heart remembering Allāh ﷻ as a fast pulse or the ticking of a clock. Hidayat-e-Talibeen says that this activity in the heart is recognized, or “heard” by the mind when it concentrates on the heart. We should work to attain this so that the *hadīth qudsi*, “I am near by servant’s thoughts,” can be realized.

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<sup>2</sup> If such is not possible then the student should establish a set amount and fulfill this each day.

<sup>3</sup> At least five minutes.

The heart is said to come alive when the word “Allāh” is clearly heard by the human ear, along with activity within the Lataif. This poem of Hafiz Shaerazi (raa) points to this activity:

*No one knows of the Friend's House  
all there is is the sound of a bell.*

The Salik should work so hard on the dhikr that the latifa leaves its bodily prison and ascends to its reality in the heavens; an indication of which is that the ruh (spirit) becomes inclined towards what is beyond [the next life], and becomes forgetful of all except Allah, and establishes a connection with Allāh ﷻ. When reaching this state, the qalb [heart] is said to have left its bodily prison and reached its reality. The salik may or may not perceive this state as nowadays kashf (unveiling of realities) is received very rarely because of unlawful earnings.

Even if the Salik is unable to attain the states referred to above, he should always beware of falling into forgetfulness, and must always follow Sharia in everything that he does. If the Salik is careful about correcting his actions daily, then he will notice an improvement in his condition and a love for Sharia, and all his affairs will be settled. This latifa is connected with the human passion of lust, which distracts the Salik and hence keeps him forgetful of his true Lord. Only when this lust is checked and corrected can the Salik begin to become inclined toward the love and pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

Faiz [spiritual benefit] is begotten in different ways because characters and habits of individuals are different. The Salik should not become distracted by all the possible ways and conditions of attaining this, but should keep focused on the dhikr of Allāh ﷻ.

In addition to this, and whenever time allows, the Salik should recite the rosary of one hundred Durood Sharif, and one hundred Istighfar in the morning and evening. This may be done all at once or divided during the day.

A warning to be noted here is that the shaykh does not indicate the qalb to a woman as he would for a man. However, he should tell her through a veil partition, or through the intercession of a mahram or another woman.

The shaykh assigns the next lesson in the suluk to the Salik when he is convinced that the Salik is sincere and that the latifa qalb has become active through dhikr and has reached its reality in the heavens.