

LETTER TEN
CONCERNING PLEASING OTHERS

With His Glorious Name ﷺ
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 ؒ 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-qalbī*] and maintaining regularity in reflection [*muraqabah*] 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 ma' al-ikrām,

Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī