

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 [*muraqabah*].

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-qalbi*]. 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 Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi *Mujaddidi*