

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, *mashāʿAllab*.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 *MashāʿAllab* 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 Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandī Mujaddidī