

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 *faqir* will continue to pray for all of you.

Was-salām ma'al-ikrām,

Faqir Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi Mujaddidi