

January 6, 2010

Wednesday



Title: The Rules of the Order: Restraint (Baz Gasht)

DVD title: The Rules of the Order: Restraint  
and  
Questions on the Practices: Dhikr Khafi

Dinner blessing: O Allah! You shower so many blessings upon us, and we are ever mindful of them only when we take a moment and pause in our hearts and in our day. Take a time pause and a heart pause. When we don't do that, everything we do and say is tainted. I ask Your Forgiveness in my lack of pausing, and I ask that my words in remembrance go to the hearts of everyone. We are grateful for the return of those who were traveling. We ask that Shanti has a safe return, *inshā'a-Llāh*. And for those who are still traveling, Abul Hasan and Dedeh. We also ask You for the continued blessing, *shifāt*, on those who are ill. That You turn our attention more toward the inner way and knowledge. I ask You, Allah swt), for special blessing for this weekend when our guest comes and work needs to be done and clarity is desired. *Amin*.

Suhbat: *Baz gasht*: restraint, restraining, or reverberating, withholding. Generally, the reason why it is also called reverberation is because it is a means of restraining through the echo of hearing your own *dhikr* toward Allah coming back to you. It creates a context. You are making *dhikr*; it is coming naturally, and everything else is contained within it. It is restraining through this discipline of making *dhikr*, remembering of Allah, or the imposition on your own self of some self-discipline through various means. You will come into the habit of framing your life around these rules. These rules, as we have told many times in the last few weeks of talking about them, are not things that you can easily just sit and memorize. It's not about memorizing them. Utilizing them comes in some interesting ways.

This restraint should eventually, or will eventually, manifest in the sincere seeker in one's every day activity, as well as in how you perform your practices within the context of the *tarīqah* or the historical teachings we follow. A cornerstone of *baz gasht* that one doesn't necessarily think of when one thinks of restraint, but as soon as you think about it, it makes perfect sense is patience. Many of us are very impatient, for whatever reason, good or bad, either because of our character or because of circumstance. Restraint doesn't mean that you develop an attitude of limiting yourself. More, it means to avoid wrong thoughts or impulsive actions and reactions. When someone says, "I'm an impulsive type of individual," it means in their consciousness they recognize that there is some imbalance. Or, they recognize they have a form of energy that impels them (or you or me) into a certain type of action.

The action has to be within the context of something that is beneficial or constructive and reflective of the rules or other purifications, filtering. These rules are like filters. If it's in context, what impels you is good. If it's not in context, what impels you is destructive. Restraining from things that are destructive doesn't mean having no impelling forces to what is good. Also, impulsive ideas or impatience in ideas can be problematic. A person can say, "Shaykh Rashid invited me to sit and meditate with him and I did that, but nothing happened so I'm not going to meditate ever again." That's a lack of restraint from one's own self, or ego. Or a person already has some idea of what they want to do, so they are trying to remove any other obstacles to get to do what they want to do.

In this case, restraint doesn't mean don't restrain from doing something just for the sake of restraining, or because you are afraid it might prove to be wrong. Again, this is a combination of understanding and absorbing these different Rules of the Order, so they become natural and are acting automatically in you. In that case, what you will restrain from will be correct. If a circumstance demands patience, we know that patience doesn't

mean inaction. In fact, patience can be a very strong form of action, as in perseverance/*sabr*. It is a tremendous virtue. At the same time, it may be that you are imposing a certain type of restraint upon yourself, and that restraint itself is patience.

*Baz gasht* implies a form of perception, of seeing that allows you to make a reasonable judgment about whether to restrict your actions or thoughts or direct your thoughts so that by directing them you are restraining them from going somewhere else. If we think of *baz gasht*, restraint, as being patience, we have used the recollection to examine the situation, and now we have made this determination. We need to be patient or restrain ourselves in some way. Patience means also being patient with one's errors or misperceptions. If you take the time and recollect, and listen carefully to the guidance you are receiving from the lowest level (the *shaykh*) to the highest level (the Qur'an), if you are in a state of personal remembrance, and are refining yourself with remembrance of Allah, then you are able to look at your errors or weaknesses.

You are using these other means. You can also call it *mahasabat*, or *mushahadah*, (vision). When you are recollecting and seeing, you can say you are using *mushahadah*; when you are recollecting and accounting for it, you can say *mahasabat*. By using these other means, then naturally, your ability to restrain yourself will come. You don't have to put a tremendous amount of effort into it. You can say, "I made this mistake because I wasn't patient enough." You realize that it takes a very sincere commitment to be able to make that kind of judgment about yourself. It's not that anybody can just do it; and it's not that you do it in every circumstance that it is proper to do it in. You may be too vulnerable to say, "I wasn't patient enough and made an error, and now I understand within myself what I should have done. And if I change my way of doing it, the circumstance will change."

Maybe in the circumstance, you don't feel comfortable doing that. That's because you are not practicing everything else; your character has a flaw in it. You are worried about your

vulnerability, so you haven't surrendered. You haven't practiced obedience. You haven't traveled enough in your homeland. We can use the context of the Rules of the Order because we have been talking about them; or we can use a general Islamic context for it. You haven't allowed yourself to submit. You haven't allowed yourself to face your ego, your *nafs ammāra*. You can see you made an error, and you want to restrain yourself from making the error again, but you won't articulate it, because you have fear. That tells you that you have to go back and look again in some other way. That's why we can't just say we are going to use this rule or that rule. You have to know them enough that you move between them. It's not that you are selecting them; but you move between them. You move between them on the wings of *dhikr*/remembrance.

So I talked about *baz gasht*; you understand it. It's not very complicated. When you talk about some of these rules out of context, they don't seem to be very deep. You understand that one of these rules or methods may be very broad based, and another is like a little salt you put in to get the flavor. *Baz gasht* is like that. It's a big thing, restraint; but you don't go out and practice and practice restraint. You see it in the moment and add a little bit. That's why I'm not spending a lot of time on it.

I want to address certain questions that have come up around the practices. Invariably, people ask me about repetition in *dhikr*.

There seems to be a conflict. When we talk about number pause, for example, most of the translators will say to do a certain number of recitations. That's correct, but it's also not exactly correct. For example, I tell you, don't count. If you were the *murīds* of a certain *shaykh*, and I won't give his name, you would be doing 12,000 repetitions every time you sat. This is how some of the Naqshbandī teachings became changed... that doesn't sound right. This was a means for training people how to do silent *dhikr* as opposed to *dhikr jahri*. Whenever they would begin to do *dhikr* aloud, Bahaudin Naqshband would leave and go to his room and make *dhikr khafī*. Some of the students

(of his *shaykh*) were upset about that. They didn't like it. You know the history of this, right? No? All right, let me go over the history of it.

When Bahaudin Naqshband was a child, Sayed Mohammed Baba Samasi used to pass by the village, Qasr al-Arafat, where he was born. When he would pass by, he would say, "I have the scent from this place of a very spiritual personality who is going to come after a period of time and who our Order will be named after." When Bahaudin Naqshband was about 18 years of age, he was sent by his grandfather to serve Baba Samasi. But he didn't live that long. When he passed, Shah Naqshband came back to Bukhara and got married and lived in his village, near to Sayed Amir Kuhlau. He had already been assigned to Bahaudin Naqshband by Baba Samasi, to be his teacher. He was responsible for training him and completing his teaching. Hazrat Shah Naqshband remained serving him for the remainder of his life, and took a lot of care for the spiritual teaching.

He was made Amir Kuhlau's *khalifa*. Just like he was taken care of by his *shaykh*, he took care of his *shaykh's murīds*. At the same time, he received transmission uways from Hazrat Abdel Khaliq Ghujduwani, who had lived 200 years earlier. During that time, from the teachings of Mahmoud Fafnawi, Sayed Amir Kuhlau was doing this loud *dhikr*, *dhikr jahri*. But Bahaudin Naqshband preferred *muraqabah* and silence, *khafī*. So whenever they did the loud *dhikr*, he would go to his room and do silent *dhikr*, *dhikr khafī*. This made Sayed Amir Kuhlau's *murīdīn* jealous and upset. They thought he was being disrespectful. But of course that was all set aside when he made Naqshband his successor, which was an affirmation of his methodology.

After he became the successor and got this instruction or *ijāzah* to guide the people of the *tarīqah*, he started his own way of training and one of those ways was *dhikr khafī*. He said, "I preferred silent *dhikr* because it is stronger and more advisable." Then he said, "*indirāj an-nihāyah fi'l-bidāyah*." He had all kinds of methods. For people who couldn't read, he'd write ALLAH on the wall and have them trace it with their hands. He would

have them say “Allah” while they were tracing it. This was how he trained people to do silent meditation. He said that during his life he never saw anything but the favors/*nai'mah* of Allah. *“I have never in my life seen anything but the favors of Allah, and it is because of that the doors of knowledge have been opened to me.”*

People ask, “When we are doing *muraqabah*, what should we be doing? What should we be doing when we are doing *dhikr khafi*?” Should we just repeat the name of Allah over and over again?

Well, the lips may be repeating it, but the idea is to be conscious toward Allah. How do you do that? You are on your way to your job, and there is no way you can not be there. It's an important day. Maybe you are a lawyer or a surgeon or something; you have to do your work and no one can replace you. But on the way you find out that your brother or sister has been taken for an emergency operation. They tell you that it's nothing terribly serious. Maybe it's not even an emergency; maybe you knew it would happen. So you do your work all day long, but your mind is on your brother or sister. Despite the fact you are carrying out your work, your thoughts are on your brother or sister. You sit at your desk, check your emails, you have an important meeting, or you make a presentation, but your thoughts are somewhere else. At the end of the day, as soon as you can, you leave and go to the hospital, and you see that everything is okay.

In the same way, because of these practices, this lifestyle, the service that we do to one another and the community; [because of] the fact that you pray next to one another when you do go to pray; [because of] the fact that you sit in meditation together when you do go to meditation; you [will] cook for each other when you are ill; you [will] go to the airport to pick up someone who is coming in tonight, like Arifa is, whatever it may be, without hesitation, and you do the best you can. Because of this, you develop love for one another. In the same way, because of this you develop love for Allah. It's because of

Allah you are doing this. You are not doing this because you have a fixation with Egyptians and that's why you want to help Khaled and his family. You don't just like people who like turquoise colors, and that's why you want to help the Mustafa family. You don't do this because you like to be around and win over complaining people, so that's why you help.... (Oh, no, I don't want to give that example.) These practices develop love for Allah, because they develop respect for this creation.

They develop overwhelming awe of how these interrelated systems operate, how people from diverse backgrounds come together, how houses and communities can be built, and also love of Allah. You begin to see how Allah has saved you from yourself, from illness, or from the worst kind of illness, or saved you from death or terrible errors, or from arrogance. You see that because you have a mature attitude. You only see it because of the practice, and because of the *suhbat*. *Suhbat* is a practice. If you can have this love for a blood brother or sister, then you have love for Allah. When you sit in *muraqabah*, or when you are doing your work in the world, still your mind and your heart are on Allah. In the same way, the *mu'min* takes care of his or her worldly responsibilities during the day, but the heart remains connected with Allah. This is like *wuqufi qalbi*.

It is just like the lover who always thinks of the beloved, not just one time a day, but throughout the day, hundreds of times a day. "I was thinking about you. I was wondering how you are. What is happening?" "Nothing much." "Okay, I just wanted to hear your voice." We brush it off. But just like that, the believer becomes occupied with the thought of Allah. The thought of Allah is not just repeating, "Allah, Allah, Allah" in the heart. You say it three times in the heart, but that is just to remind you of Allah. You are preoccupied with Allah, because whatever you see reminds you of Allah. Because of that, Allah resides in the heart of the believer. "If you want to find Me, you find Me in the heart of the believer." When you focus on the heart, and you place your mind in your heart throughout the day, that's called *wuqufi qalbi*. It's a very healing thing if you do it.

You can, as many of us have, struggle against anger, jealousy, backbiting, or hatred or whatever. You can struggle with it and fight with—and you will, because you are a human being. You’ll try that method on your spiritual journey. There are many diseases. But the *dhikr* I’m talking about, the *dhikr* of Allah is the thing that gets rid of these diseases. It is the courage to remember Allah. It’s a recursive situation: you do the practices that allow you to remember Allah. By remembering Allah, those practices bring out from you and cleanse you of all of these weaknesses or sins, whatever you want to call them. You do it, and it does you.

The underlying intention or meaning of *muraqabah* is just that: with frequent effort, the love of Allah becomes so entrenched in your heart, just like the love of your brother and sister, that it cures us of our spiritual diseases. The darker thoughts are chased away by the *dhikr*. If you remain persevering in your *muraqabah*, then Allah opens the door and makes the way clear to you. It’s not a question anymore. When you sit in *muraqabah*, you don’t hold some image in your mind. You don’t have some picture in your mind. Sometimes at the very beginning, you might do something like that just to set the tone. What you try to do is receive and believe in and perceive the Rahmat of Allah, the Mercy of Allah. [You try to perceive] that Mercy and Love of Allah, while you are sitting, streaming toward you and entering your heart.

As it comes toward you, it comes in a circle and you can see it like this (Shaykh refers to the circle that appears while downloading a video). Then, when it is all downloaded – you’ve all seen that – it stops and lo and behold, it starts to play. This is called YouTube! This is about *you*. This mercy is absorbed in your heart, and your heart begins to express, to play, what it has absorbed. Now, the interesting thing is you can watch it. Tayie (may Allah bless him and reward him for his efforts) re-edited the piece I was unhappy with. He sent it to me. There I was, watching me and judging whether or not I was saying good things. Then I watched some of you. There it was, being played back. What was being played back? A good story about good people trying to do good things to end

difficult things in the world. You should want to play back a good story. You get to the point where you don't want to listen to anything or do anything except listen to this good story. People say, "I liked that movie so much I saw it six times." "That's my favorite song. I could listen to it all the time." Like we play the Ensemble Ibn Araby. I could listen to that all the time. I might have to.

You want to load up on what you could listen to forever, because eventually you will. If you want to stay in connection, in touch with that state, you have to do the inner practices and be in regular attendance, and in *suhbat*, and you have to make supplication and *du'ā* for your brothers and sisters, for your Shaykh. You have to make this the focal point of your life, while you are doing all this other stuff. The brother's focal point during the day while he was doing all this other stuff was the brother or sister who was in the hospital. Though it's very important to be physically near, the source of the electricity in this room as it comes through a very expensive medium is not on this property. It's not being generated here. It's being generated far, far away. It could be generated in Washington state, or anywhere. Where's it being generated from? (West Virginia, by coal). But we can flip the switch and it's here. We don't have to have the physical presence all the time, though it would be good to have it. It would be good to generate our own electricity, because who owns it? The people who control it, whoever has control over the coal. Who owns the sun? Nobody owns the sun.

We flip a switch and the electricity is here. In the same way, you can flip a switch and the spiritual guidance is here. You don't have to be in the same room with me to get the transmission; I give transmissions to people on the other side of the world. Today I talked to Shems and Zayneb and Ella Nur. They received the transmission, but they write and say, "We've been away too long. This summer we are going to come and spend 2 or 3 months there with you." *Alhamdulillah*. That's exactly right. In our Order, we say that we shouldn't spend more than 40 days without being in contact with the *shaykh*. It's true. It's not that it is absolutely necessary, but we would feel a lot more secure if we

were generating our own electricity here. We would be unindebted politically to someone else. We could use our financial resources in a better way, than supporting the big companies. Maybe we could even contribute and put some electricity out on the grid ourselves. We talked about it many years ago. I understand how expensive that is, and what blocks it, and all that. They are mostly either technological issues or political issues.

There is nothing technological or political about being in *suhbat* in the presence of the *shaykh*—and, by extension, or as a result, being in the company of Allah. Just like the brother was here in his office and there at the hospital at the same time, this is non-locality of the heart. It's not physical non-locality; that's another possible phenomenon. This is spiritual non-locality. That's how we have to be with Allah. But you can't be that way with someone you don't love, or you don't respect. So you have to submit. What you are submitting to often is your ideological bent, your conditioning about religion, or a god that you can't see, or a hierarchical whatever.

It is the same thing with the *shaykh* or the Prophet (sal). If you want to be critical, it will block your ability to receive these kinds of transmissions that allow you refine yourself. You have to restrain yourself from criticism (*baz gasht*), and you have to travel in your homeland within your own self, and you have to recollect, and you have to remember (*dhikr*), and gather together, and you have to understand how this all happens by your love and practice. How do you love Allah? Well, how do you love your brother or sister who is in the hospital? How do you love and respect Allah? Well, how do you love the flower that comes out in the spring? I always know we are being saved because of the daffodils appear in the stores. I saw the first daffodils yesterday in the store. Spring is coming. Wow, daffodils! Of course they didn't smell.

If you allow yourself to appreciate beauty, then you can learn to love Allah. You allow yourself to appreciate effort, or people, or children, or the sea, the ocean, the stars in the

sky tonight. Ah, there's Mars! There's Venus! You name things and they become your friends, as if they always had that name. They have no name, but you give them a name. You can't fly over to Mars and ask, "What's your name?" It has no name. It's like you flip a switch and you love Allah. Then, automatically, your heart becomes cleansed. Automatically, your sins, your conditioning, whatever you want to call them, changes. That's when you are re-writing your history.

If you wish to remain connected, then you have to be regular in your connection, in your listening to the discourses, and to the words of wisdom and to the sincerity. No one is excluded from *du'ā*. Inshallah, if you make *du'ā*, Allah makes everything easy for you. Hazrat used to say that *du'ā* and *darūd* makes everything easy. No one is excluded from physical distance. The relationship of love can be maintained and fulfilled, but it is better when you come into contact. That's why Bahaudin Naqshband was sent by Baba Samasi to Amir Kuhlau. Why did he send him? Why do we have this tradition?

Now that you are reminded of the story, you can begin to think again about *muraqabah*. When you are in *muraqabah*, you forget all this created stuff, and you remember the Creator. In *mushahadah*, in the contraction and expansion of the heart, you see the Majesty and Beauty of Allah. In *mahasabat*, you realize time has passed from that moment to this moment, and what have I accomplished in that? Have I been in the Presence of Allah during this time or have I been neglectful and forgotten?

This is why there are many things we can do to develop that attraction. I guess that's enough. I will tell you about some of the other people and go backwards. They say there are six stars in the Naqshbandi Tariqah, but I'll come to that some other time. When Bahaudin Naqshband died, he asked his students to read Ya Sin. Afterwards he said, "*Ash-hadu an lā 'ilaha wa-ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasūlullāh,*" and he died. He had asked to be buried in the garden there.

