

January 7, 2010

Thursday

Title: [About Shāh Naqshband \(ra\)](#)DVD title: Practices of the Naqshbandī Khwājagān
Stories of Bahā'uddīn Shāh Naqshband (ra)

When you are sitting in *muraqabah*, you should sit in *muraqabah* just like you are sitting here listening to this music on Thursday night. Don't have anything in your mind, just listen, just like you are listening to this music CD. You should sit in *muraqabah* like you sit during *dars*, attentive, listening. You might say, the music is playing, so there is something to listen to; or I'm listening and there are words being spoken and concepts behind them, so that's easy. Some of you are very good at sitting in the *dars* in *ghunūgi*. You are very sure you are listening, but you are not. You are drifting. It's not great for *dars*, but okay for meditation. But you are sure you are listening, sure you are hearing, right? You spend a lot of time in meditation drifting, until it naturally becomes *adraq*. There's the old story of when I used to live down by the pond, and some of the men were working outside the house. You were talking, and you heard me snoring inside. The window was open, and I was sitting at my desk. You were talking, and then I said something to you. Remember that? I wasn't sleeping; I was drifting. You sit in *muraqabah* in this way, preferably without the snoring.

There is the way you sit, and then there is the regularity with which you sit. When Bahā'uddīn Naqshbandi (ra) was asked, "What are the foundations of your beliefs?" He said, "One should try to live the *sunnah* of the Prophet Mohammed (sal), and study the Qur'an." That's what he said. Follow the way of the Sahaba and the Prophet in their *ijtihad*, in their striving to fulfill the teachings of the Qur'an. He said, "Our way is the strange way. It is the way of the 'unbreakable bond.'" It's *what* you do, and it's the regularity with which you do it. In those times, one had to travel long distances to see the

shaykh. Now you can just text the *shaykh*. We talked about physical distance last night: it has meaning but no meaning.

Some interesting stories: Shāh Naqshband (ra) was a contemporary of Timur the Lame (the Amir of Timur, Tamerlane). The one who conquered. They were actually students of the same teacher. Khwaja Bahā'uddīn Shāh Naqshband (ra) respected him for being a classmate of his, but was not too happy about his behavior. One day Timur came to him and asked to be seated next to him on the carpet. The carpet was black. During the conversation, the topic of Timur's behavior of destruction and plundering came up, and he read a verse of Hafez. *"If the fate of anyone is like a carpet woven by black thread, it would not turn white if it was washed by the water of Zemzem or Kawther."* He was sitting on a black carpet and he quoted this to Bahā'uddīn Naqshband. Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (ra) said, *"It does turn white by the spiritual power of a pious person,"* and he folded his hands on the carpet beneath him, and everyone witnessed the fact that the carpet turned white. After that, Timur stopped pillaging and plundering.

In those days, they weren't as busy. They had a lot of time on their hands. They had to till by hand, and make everything by hand, and go by horseback and wagon. They didn't have any electricity so they had to do everything that needed light before the sun went down, but somehow they had time. The practices a little more stringent than what you have to do. You should sit twice a day and pray five times a day, and make some recitations. But of course you are busy and can't sit twice a day. You can't get up for *tahajjud*. But they had to do that. They had to wake up for *tahajjud* during the last third of the night. Hazrat Abu Bakr said, on the subject of *tahajjud*, *"It's a shame that the cock that crows at dawn has overtaken you."*

Hazrat Junayd Baghdadi appears in a dream to one of his followers, after he had passed away. He said, *"All of the unseen and the miracles have gone, and only a few rak'as of the night proved useful"* after he died. Meaning all the miracles and things he had done

had gone by the wayside, and the only things that survived after death were a few *rak'as* he did in the *tahajjud* prayer. *Alhamdulillah*, we don't believe that. Khwaja Abu Sayed Abu Khairs, in his Rub'ai wrote these quatrains: "*Wake up during the night, for the lovers talk of greatness during the night. Around the door and roof of the friend's house they rise and they hover. Every door except the friend's door is shut at night, which is open at night.*" Under these traditions of the old times of the Naqshbandiyya – some do this still – they wake up to read a *du'ā*. Hadrat Khwajā 'Ubaydullāh Ahrār (ra) said, "*After performing wudu, one should say three times, 'Ya Allah, astaghfiru-Llāh, I seek forgiveness for every sin I have fallen victim to.' Then you are cleansed from inside, as well as you having washed yourself outside in the wudu. Then you begin your worship.*" What is that worship? I'll give you a little of it because it's a lot.

You pray two *rak'as* each time after performing the *wudu*. This comes from the *hadith* of the Prophet where he heard Bilal's footsteps in Paradise. Upon returning from his Miraj, he found out that Hazrat Bilal was regular in praying two *rak'as* after *wudu*. After these *rak'as*, one should read Suratu-l-Kafirūn and Suratu Ikhlas. This is one thing that they did. After that, the *sālik* would stand humbly and attentively for 4, 8, or 12 *rak'as* of *tahajjud*. This was the routine of one of the founders, Yūsuf Hamadānī (ra). He would recite Ayatu-l-Kursi in the last section of Suratu-l-Baqarah. In the 8 *rak'as* he would recite 10 verses of Ya Sīn, and in the last *rak'a* he would recite Suratu Ikhlas. This was for *tahajjud* prayer. It goes through all of the saints. They used to do different things. Hazrat Alī Rāmitni (ra) used to say,

Three hearts unite when you read Surah Ya Sīn at tahajjud. The heart of the night (meaning the final third of the night), the Heart of the Qur'an (meaning Surah Ya Sīn), and the heart of the man reciting it. The gathering of these hearts forms a way for the acceptance of all the prayers that are uttered by Allah.

Ubadaiyya Uhrar said, *“If someone ever misses tahajjud, he should pray nafle before midday. Whoever does not trust himself to wake up at night should pray before sleeping.”*

Khwajā Bahā’uddīn Naqshband used to combine poetry in his *du’ā* at *tahajjud*. This is one of the poems he used to recite.

Waking up, I brought myself to Your Court. Ya Allah, I have brought the weight of my sins to Your Door. I have burdened my back with this weight. I humbly come to the door of One Who gives shelter to the scholars. I don’t say that I was in Your Way sincerely; but I am he who was astray and have come to the door of the shelter. I have brought four things that are not in Your Treasure, O King. I come with waste, desire, mistakes, and sins. As witness of my love, I have brought my wounded heart. Look with a glance of mercy on me and consider my white hair, because I bring a face darkened with shame.

That is what he would recite at *tahajjud*. Who would think about that? Just think about getting ready to do *tahajjud*. You make *wudu*. Maybe you do two *rak’as*. And you get all your energy up to just make 2, 4 or 8 *rak’as*. You’re not going to think about saying some poem. It takes all your energy just to get yourself to do the *rak’as*. *Someone once asked Shaykh Walajam Hazrat Maulana Abul Ghaffur Madani Abbasi,*

“Should we read istighfar or durūd?” And Hazrat Ghaffur answered, “Reciting istighfar is like the washing of clothes. Reciting durūd is like applying perfume. Now tell me, what do you do first? Apply your perfume or wash your clothes?” The questioner said, “One should wash clothes first and then apply perfume.” “That’s why one should first read istighfar with shame and humility, so the heart is washed clean; then read durūd with love and sincerity so that the perfume is applied to the heart, and the love and fragrance of the Prophet emanates from every part of your body.”

You could try that once in your life. Just think if you really planned to do that. You get up, make *wudu* and make two *rak'as*. Then you do the other recitations and then get to this thing where you are ready to make *istighfar*, and you think about this story. When you get to your *durūd*, your *durūd* will be very sweet. After doing this, he says the *sālik* should engage himself in a specific lesson of *muraqabah* (meaning your transmission that I give you), and eliminate negative thoughts. Khwaja Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (ra) advised Hazrat Maulānā Ya'qūb Charkhī, "*Involve yourself in your spiritual lesson before morning.*" Then there are the two *sunnah rak'as* before *fajr*. He always used to say you should do those at home, because discharging them at home is a *sunnah*. Then you should proceed to pray *fajr* in the *masjid* in *jamat*. That's why sometimes I just come in and pray straightaway. Sometimes I do it because I'm rushing; that's true. But sometimes I have already prayed the other two.

He said, "*The habit and routine of our elders has been to get to the masjid before the imam begins the prayer. So the salik should take care in this.*" Bahā'uddīn Naqshband would not miss the first *takbir* for months on end. Then he said, "*You should enter the masjid reciting the du'ā associated with entering the masjid, and make the intention of itikāf.* Just like in Ramadān, when you go into the *masjid*, you should make an intention like it is entering *itikāf*. You don't need me to explain that. Then he says, "*And you pray considering that the particular salat might be your last one, and you attend to concentration and oneness. Then you make the tasbih of Fatima. And recite the Four Quls, then Ayatul- Kursi after every 5 salat. Recite (Shaykh recites a particular du'ā) seven times after fajr and maghrib, and (Shaykh recites another particular du'ā) ten times.* Hazrat Murshid used to be regular in this routine it was said.

This was just an example, and it goes on and on. Many, many things they would do. Then after all that was done, then they would study. In their studying, they would study Qur'an and Hadith and make *dhikr*, and do *wuqufi qalbi*. So no matter what they were

doing, their hearts would be busy reciting *dhikr* in their hearts. I used to sit with Hazrat, and he would make two *rak'as* right after sunrise. Then at 11:00 usually he would make either 2 or 4 *rakhas* of *shast* prayer, before the sun hits the nadir. He would recite Suratu Shams and Suratu Layl at that time, or Suratu Duha, or Suratu Inshirah if he did four. Many people can't do that, because you are working and other things, and there are time constraints. Sometimes they would combine that with Suratu Ishraq in the early morning and pray 6 *rak'as*, right after fajr.

These people were very, very pious people, very much following the *sunnah* and the Qur'an. Sometimes when you pick up the books of certain modern Sufis, unfortunately, you see nothing of Qur'an and no quotes from the Prophet (sal)—nothing. Then there are other *sunnah* they would do, which we cannot do so easily. They would take a short nap after lunch. That would be good. That's what we used to do in preschool. Then, it's written that if you do your *tahajjud* regularly, it becomes easier. When the sun starts to go down, you should pray 4 *rak'as* of *sunnah*. Again, they used to pray the four *rak'as* of *sunnah* before *dhuhr* at home, and then go to the *masjid*. Of course the *masjid* was closer. Khwajā 'Ubaydullāh Ahrār (ra) said that one should recite *baz gasht* three times after *salat* as *dhikr*. It's basically the same as *anta maksudi wa ridiqa maglubi*.

The point is not to memorize these things and do them, of course it is nice to do them. But they were always busy doing their work in between their prayers, in between their *du'ā*, in between their *muraqabah*, eating in between their *muraqabah*. If they had the time, they would read Hizb ul Bahr after *dhuhr*. Then if they had some time, they would study some *fiqh*, or the books on Tasawwuf. Many years later, they read the books of *al-alf ath-thānī* Shaykh Ahmad Farūqī Sirhindī. Or they would read the Rusalat of Bahā'uddīn Shāh Naqshband (ra), or Qur'an and other things. Then they would go to work and then stop for *asr*, and read certain recitations during *asr*. During the time when they were sitting in *muraqabah*, they would recite the name of Allah 5,000 times in *qalb*, 1,000 times in *rūh*, 1,000 times in *sirr*, 1,000 time in *khafī*, 1,000 times in *akhfah*, and

2,000 times in *nafs*, and then again 1,000 times in *qalb*. That was their practice: twelve thousand Names of Allah before sitting in *muraqabah*. Try it this week some time. Then after *maghrib* prayer, they would pray 6-12 *rak'as* of “*salat awabin*” it was called, six to twelve *rak'as* in groups of two, after which they would recite Suratu-l-Waqi'ah and Suratu-l-Dukhaan. Then, by that time, it's *isha* time. Then they would pray *isha*, and they would have dinner. Or, in other places, they would eat dinner and pray *isha*.

Then after *isha*, they would make *istighfar* and *durūd sharif* 100 times, and read Suratu-l-Mulk. This was the routine of many of these *shaykhs* and *murīds*. They were very regular in reciting Ayatu-l-Kursi, which we do, and the *tasbih al-Fatima*, and the *fard salat* of course. On *jumah*, they would repeat some of the same things over and over again. They would sit in *itikāf* during Ramadān in the *masjid*. They would stay awake for the nights of the 15th of Shabān, and Laylatul Qadr. On the 13th, 14th and the 15th of every month they would fast. They would do six fasts on Shawwal, the 9 fasts of Dhul Hijjah, the fasts on Yawma Ashura and Muharram, 8 fasts in the beginning of Rajāb, and whenever possible, they would observe as many optional fasts as they could, just for the heck of it. One day, some of them would do the Fast of Dawud (fast every other day).

I don't usually talk like this, because I get, “Oh, how can we do this? I'm no good; I've spent all these years and haven't done any of this.” Well, you have spent many years in service, but you should strive to do a little more, especially building up into the *muraqabah*. The most important thing is *muraqabah*. Allah says to Abu Bakr as-Siddīq... he was the second of the two in the cave. He said to not be afraid.

If you don't help him, Allah has already helped him. When those who covered up the truth had driven him out of Mecca, when these two were hiding in the cave, he said to his companion, “Grieve not, don't worry, truly Allah is with us.” And Allah sent down an inner tranquility upon him and supported him

with soldiers you could not see, and made the word of those who covered up the truth the lowest.

And of Abū Bakr as-Siddiq, the Prophet said, *“If I had taken to myself a beloved friend, I would have taken Abu Bakr as my beloved friend. But he is my brother and he is my companion.”* Of course, you know we come from the line of Abu Bakr in the Naqshbandī line. Then he explains what the meaning of Naqshband is: engraving and suggesting the name of Allah in the heart in a bond, [by] a rope. This indicates a link between the individual and the Creator: engraving the name of Allah in the heart and the bond between holding the rope fast to Allah. That’s how he explains it. Here are some stories about him.

Shah Naqshband was once sitting in a large gathering in Bukhara, speaking about the unveiling of the state of vision. He said, “My best friend Maulana Arif who is in Kwarazam (400 miles from Bukhara) has left Kwarazam for the government building and reached the station of the horse carriages. When he reached that station, he stayed for a moment and now he is going back to his house in Kwarazam. He is not continuing on to Sarai. This is how a saint can see from this state of gnosis.” Everyone was surprised at this story, but we all knew he was a great saint, and we recorded the exact time and very day he said it. One day, Maulana Arif came to Bukhara and we told him about the incident. He said, “In truth, that’s exactly what happened that day.”

Some scholars from Bukhara traveled to Iraq with some followers of El Shah, and when they reached the city of Saman, they heard that there was a blessed man named Sayyed Mahmoud, who was a mureed of the Shaykh. They went to his house and asked him, “How did you become connected with the Shaykh?” And he said, “One night, I saw the Prophet (sal) in a dream, sitting in a very nice place. Beside him sat a man of majestic appearance. I said to the Prophet (sal) with

complete respect and humility, ‘Ya Rasūlullāh, I was not honored to be your companion in your lifetime. What can I do in my lifetime that would approximate that honor?’ He said, ‘O my son, if you want to be honored by being our friend, then sit with us and be blessed. You have to follow my son, Shah Bahā’uddīn Naqshband.’ I then asked, ‘Who is Shah Bahā’uddīn Naqshband?’ He said, ‘Do you see that person sitting next to me? This is the one. Keep company with him.’ I have never seen him before. When I awoke, I wrote his name and description in a book that I have in my library.

Much time passed after that dream. One day, I was standing in a shop, and I saw a man with a luminous and a majestic appearance come into the shop. He sat on a chair. When I saw him, I remembered the dream, strangely, and what had happened in it. Immediately, I asked him if he would honor me by coming to my house and staying with me. He accepted, and began to walk in front of me, and I followed him. I was too shy to walk in front of him, even to lead the way to my own house. He didn’t look at me once, but he took the path directly to my house. I was about to say, ‘This is my house,’ when he said, ‘This is your house.’ He walked inside and went straight to my special room, and said, ‘This is your room.’ He went to the closet, took one book from hundreds of books, and gave me the book and asked me, ‘What did you write in this?’ What I had written was what I had seen in the dream. Immediately, a state of unconsciousness overtook me, and I fainted from the light that poured into my heart. When I awoke, I asked him if he would accept me. He was Shah Bahā’uddīn Naqshband.”

How’s that? This is the lineage that you supposedly come from.

“In the beginning of my traveling,” Shah Mohammed Zahid said, “I was sitting beside him one day in the spring season. A craving for a watermelon entered my heart. He looked at me and said, “Mohammed Zahid, go the river near us and

bring us what you see, and we will eat it.” Immediately, I went to the river, which was very cold. I reached into it and found a watermelon under the water, very fresh. It had just been cut from the vine. I was very happy. I took the watermelon and said, “O my Shaykh, please accept me!”

It was reported that one of his followers was going to visit him, and before the visit he asked Shahadi, one of the senior murīds, to advise him. He said, “O my brother, when you go to visit the Shaykh or you are sitting in the presence of the Shaykh, be careful not to place your legs so that your feet face him.” As soon as I left Ghazarut on the way to the village of the Shaykh, I found a tree and laid down under it with my legs extended. Unfortunately, an animal came and bit me on the leg. Later I fell back asleep in pain, and as I was sleeping, the animal bit me again. Suddenly I realized that I had made a big mistake: I had extended my feet in the direction of the village. I immediately repented and the animal biting me left.

One time he was pushed to show a miraculous power in order to defend one of his successors in Bukhara, Shaykh Mohammed Parsa. This occurred at a time when Shaykh Mohammed Shamsuddin al Jazari came to Samarkand at the time of King Mirza al-Beg, to determine the correctness of the chains of transmission in narrating the Prophetic Traditions. Some of the jealous and corrupt scholars had complained that Shah Mohammed Parsa was giving narrations of hadiths whose chains of transmission were not known. They told Shamsuddin, if you try to correct that problem, Allah will give you a great reward. He asked the Sultan to order Shaykh Mohammed Parsa to appear. The Shaykh of Bukhara was there, along with many scholars and imams from the area. Shaykh Naqshband came with Mohammed Parsa to the meeting, and Shaykh Husmadin asked Mohammed Parsa about a hadith. Mohammed Parsa narrated the hadith along with its chain of transmission. Shaykh Mohammed al Jazari said, “There is no error in this hadith,

but the chain is incorrect.” Upon hearing this, the jealous scholars were happy. They asked Mohammed Parsa to give another hadith and its chain, and it was again said that it was not correct. They asked for another hadith, and he gave it, and they still found fault with it.

Shah Naqshband interfered, because he knew whatever chain he gave they would say it was incorrect. He inspired Mohammed Parsa to direct a question to Shaykh Husamaddin and say, “You are the Shaykh al Islam and the mufti. From what you have learned of external knowledge, Shari’ah and Hadith, what do you say of such and such a narrator? The Shaykh said, “We accept that person, and base much of our knowledge of hadith on his narrations, and his book is accepted by us. His lineage is one all the scholars accept, and there was no argument on that matter.” Mohammed Parsa said, “The book of that person you accept is in your house, in your library, between such and such books. It contains 500 pages, and its color is such and such. The cover looks like such and such a thing. The hadith you just rejected is written by that person on page such and such.”

Shaykh Husamuddin was confused and doubts came into his heart because he did not remember seeing such a book in his library. Everyone was surprised that the Shaykh would know about the book, when the owner didn’t know about it. There was no alternative but to send someone to check. The hadith was found that Mohammed Parsa had mentioned. When the king heard about the story, the scholars were brought up on charges and humiliated, and Shah Naqshband and Mohammed Parsa were raised up.

Then again, about his death. Shaykh Ali Zaman, one of the murīds of the Shaykh said, “The Shaykh ordered me to dig his grave. When I finished it, it came into my heart, ‘Who is going to be his successor?’ He raised his head from the pillow and said to me, ‘O my son, don’t forget what I said to you when you were on your way

to Hejaz. Whoever wants to follow me must follow Shaykh Mohammed Parsa and Shaykh Allaudin Attar.’ In his last days, he stayed in his room. People made pilgrimage to see him. He would give them advice, and when he entered his final moments, he locked himself in his room. Wave after wave of followers began to visit him, and he gave each the advice they needed. At one point, he ordered them to read Surah Ya Sīn. When they had finished, he raised his right finger, recited the Shahada, and as soon as he finished, his soul returned to Allah. He died on Monday night the 3rd of Rabbi al Awwal, and was buried in his garden as requested.

Abdul Wahab as Sharani, the Qutb of the time, said, “When the Shaykh was buried in his grave, a window into paradise was opened for making his grave a paradise from heaven. Two beautiful spiritual beings entered his presence and greeted him and said to him, “From the time Allah created us until now we have awaited this moment to serve you.” He said to these two spiritual beings, “I do not look to anything other than Him. I don’t need you, but I need my Lord.”

These are some of the stories of Shāh Naqshband (ra). *Asalaam aleikum.*