

January 27, 2010

Wednesday

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Title: The Rules of the Order: Wuqufi Adadi (Number Pause)

DVD title: The Rules of the Order: Wuqufi Adadi (Number Pause)

Dinner blessing: *Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm*. I love you. O Allah, ibid from the last prayer. Tonight the leader of this country is going to make a speech, and I ask You to give him the strength and courage to say the things that should be said, and give people the humility and courage to hear what has to be done. We ask You, Allah, to cover the faults of the good people and expose the faults of those who do evil. We ask You, Allah, to protect us not only from the lower parts of our own selves, but from those who would seek to be enemies of Your Haqq. Give us the courage to be truly good Muslims and good Sufis. Freeze their faces and stop them in the midst of their oppression, those people who are oppressing others. Give energy to the people who would like to be free from those oppressors and tyrants in this world. Heal those among us who are ill. Strengthen us, those of us who are well. Give us gratitude in our hearts for all that You have bestowed upon us. We are thankful for the safe trip of Saara to Morocco and her happiness and joy at being there. *Amin*.

Suhbat: *Bismi-Llāhi-r-Rahmāni-r-Rahīm*. *Asalaamu aleikum*. *Wuqufi adadi*, usually translated as number pause, is understood and misunderstood. Often people will be told or think that it just means to do repetitions a certain number of times. Some people would do 120,000 repetitions of *lā ilāha illa-Llāh*. What Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (ra) apparently understood was that there are unique numbers of repetition of dhikr. At a certain point, certain transformational processes took place where, when one reached a certain number of repetitions, certain doorways would open. Then it was also included with breath. This is something like *habsi dam*, holding your breath. It led to certain *shuyukh* having

realizations about the depth of such things as the *shahada*. It wasn't just what it meant, and it wasn't just an affirmation of some religious belief. It had a transformational effect; cleansing and purifying effect, *at-tazakiyat*.

As much as was said and written about it, no one could understand it until they experienced it. It became a question of practice, discipline and guidance. How do you breathe in *pas an fas* with *dhikr*? How do you hold the breath? What are the counts? Why the odd numbers? When you start to say things like that, some people may tend to mystify them, or occultize them. But maybe it was discovered that certain things were implanted in this universe, like the universe hums at 60 hertz. Or we have these breaks at 20 minutes after the hour and 20 minutes before the hour. There are certain inherent numerical patterns in the universe. They are combined with the sounds of creation, because all the celestial bodies turn, and they all have sound. If there was air in space, can you imagine what it would sound like? So Allah didn't put air in space. He made an Air and Space Museum, though.

We can say it represents the breath: *lā ilāha illa-Llāh* (Shaykh demonstrates breathing with *dhikr*). All kinds of these forms were developed. You could count it, but you weren't supposed to count it. Or you were supposed to count it, but you were supposed to get beyond the counting of it. You count it and get beyond the counting of it; or you don't count it because it's not about counting it; it's about getting in resonance. At this rhythm it is in resonance with this, and in this rhythm it is in resonance with that. This *maqam* you were counting was one of *rūh*. (Earlier, the Shaykh played music, and had us count while listening.) I asked you to contemplate it in your *rūh* because it was [in the count of] 8 [beats]. Eight is *rūh*. Why? That's another story.

On the other hand, knowing you are not supposed to count it, people count it. Knowing you are supposed to count it, people get hung up in the numbers. So you have these kinds of polarities. Jami described *wuqufi adadi* as, “*The notice of the number of dhikr itself,*

whether it gives results or not.” What he meant by that was, the number (not the counting) that you achieve at a given moment for a given purpose is more important than the knowledge about it. It goes back to the old saying: knowing *about* something is different than knowing it.

If you diligently do 1001 *dhikr* of *lā ilāha illa-llāh* without knowledge of the effect of it, that’s okay; but there *is* an effect. Eventually, the effect will transcend the number, and it will come to a *maqam*. We didn’t need to count this music to appreciate it or for it to have an effect on us. It has a very profound effect, this group in their recitation and music. But you can know the effect of it. Why did I have you count it? Because in counting it, you pay more attention to it. In counting it, you actually went deeper. It wasn’t the number you were counting, it was the fact that you were counting that went deeper. That’s the subtlety of this counting. We say, do 500 but don’t count. Knowing that you are doing it is fine and sufficient. You tell people not to count so as not to get caught in the numbers. You tell people there is a number, because there is a meaning to the numbers. You are not just doing something with no reason behind it. I grant you, that’s a superficial explanation.

Bahaudin Naqshband said to follow the number of *dhikr qalbi* in order to gather up the destructive mind, distraction/*gafla*. That’s the effect of it. If you concentrate on a number, your mind is not going to be wandering as much as if you don’t. But it’s not the number that is important. Allaudin Attar (ra) said, “*In dhikr, the condition is not to say a lot, but whatever is said must come from consciousness and presence in order for it to give you any benefit.*” So, you do it and pay attention, but without counting. He also said, “*In dhikr qalbi, when you reach and pass the number 21, and the effect of that result does not appear, it means that any action past that number is fruitless.*” The result of *dhikr* in this sense of counting, is in the time of negation of human existence. Everything is negated in *lā ilāha*, and everything is affirmed in *illa-llāh*. I don’t know if you are grasping this, but try to grasp it.

The result of the *dhikr* is that in the time of negation, everything in human existence is negated. That's why we call it expiration: everything dies; and in inspiration, everything is inspired. You are reborn. At the time of affirmation and confirmation, *illa-Llāh*, for every ounce of awareness you have, all the results will be amplified many times over in *suhbat*, by the presence of the *shuyukh* and the *shaykh*.

Each of the *shuyukh* is like a bead. Each one amplifies what happens, because you have all of their *dhikr* and all of the amplification of their *dhikr* now coming to you. We make *dhikr* or do these practices of remembrance in the presence of the *shuyukh*. When we do it in the physical presence of the *shaykh*, and in the virtual presence of the *shuyukh*, this is our *suhbat*. The *suhbat* has a power. This is the power of *baraka*. There is a force to it. There are practical reasons also, and mystical reasons that are parallel to the practical ones. If you don't follow the practical format, if you don't do the practice, you don't get the mystical or spiritual benefit. You just don't. It would be like saying, if you don't get in the car, you can't get to your destination.

There is a physical, practical element to something that is not physical; which is arriving at another place. You have to have a physical, practical component to it. This is the physical component to spiritual growth. This body, this *nafas* (breath), the *niyyat* (intention), the *ikhlas* (sincerity), the surrender, the physical purification that takes place and the spiritual purification create a track on the way to a higher dimension of existence beyond this *dunya*. This is the means to that. It's affirmed when we say *durūd sharīf*: that the physical reality of Mohammed (sal) is the means/*wasila* to Allah. It's analogical: this is the physical means to the non-physical transformative state beyond the physical. This is the way we are given. It is the physical means to get to the non-physical. That's why there are a certain number of things that you do, but you have to understand why you are doing it, and not become lax.

The idea is that in this juxtaposition, a person will remain firm with their values and beliefs, but they will always be reaching out to understand more. You will be firm in your practice, but the practice will take you to something that transcends the practice. You will be firm in your faith, but the practice of the faith itself will take you to a deeper understanding of what the faith is. If you settle for only the narrow rules, regulations, and numbers, you don't transcend that state. That becomes your station.

Part of the achievement one can have spiritually is because we have a history. Because we can reach back to a previous time and see the consistency in the *shuyukh* who came before us, the revelations that were given, the insight that they had, the teachings that came out of them, and the inspiration they gave to us in carrying forth this force of the teaching of *tariqah*. When we reach back when we practice, we have a sense of belonging – not just a cultural sense, but yes a cultural sense too. We have a sense of fulfilling some personal spiritual desire or need, and when we look back, we naturally look back with gratitude and love, with a better understanding of where we came from. That in itself catapults us forward.

This linkage, *shejre*, between the past and present can be like a slingshot that sends you off into the future. We use certain methodology and technique in the way I have been talking about *wuqufi adadi*, and we do things that have been done and recommended, but not just for historical reasons. We go back and see that our identity is linked to the very beginning of this journey. Some call that the Nuri Muhammed. Whatever light we see with comes from the originating light. Whatever we do, comes not with just the approval but the proof of its verity, because it still exists. How many things have been forgotten in this world? How many people have no names who lived 500, a thousand years ago, and are not remembered? And why do we remember people who lived a thousand years ago? During most of that time, there were no books, no global system. How do we know these people? But I don't want to get off on that.

Progress happens. Progress happens over time and by repetitive actions that prove to be right. Change happens when needed because there is a level of consciousness, awareness, and necessity. So we do a certain number of things. Now, I want to talk about *wuqufi adadi* in a slightly different way. *Wuqufi adadi* are internal practices that are carried out with certain numbers. What Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (ra) knew was that certain numbers had certain meanings. We also know that is true. We know that pi and phi have certain meanings, and they are repeated in nature, like the Golden Mean is found in nature. It's founding the chambered nautilus, and in the flower of the bellis perennis. The leaves on the daisy are in mathematical relationship to the Golden Mean.

There are numbers in the universe. We don't have to know why; just know that there are. We might discover why, metaphorically. By doing a practice with certain numbers in certain resonance with a certain attitude and a certain *niyyat*, we may discover the meaning of that. We may not call it the Golden Mean, but it is the result of the Golden Mean. One of the greatest losses of the Oratory was [the *mihrab*]. When we built the *mihrab* and then measured it, it was almost an exact relationship to pi. We experimented and experimented how to build it, and then we built it, and then we measured it.

Bahā'uddīn Naqshband (ra) knew *abjad*. *Abjad* is every Arabic letter has a numerical value. Some Sufis were able to write poetry according to the *abjad*. When you read it, it was one thing and when you converted it to the *abjad*, it would be something completely different. You couldn't sit with a pencil and piece of paper and figure it out. It was like they absorbed the *abjad*, and the words that came to them had meanings when you converted them to something else. Some of the Naqshbandiyya divided the body into different quadrants. It was determined by how the body moved. If you go back to Gurdjieff, when he was studying with the Khwāja Khwājagān, he saw certain exercises that were done. They were done based on what kind of movements the different parts of the body can and cannot do, and in what sequence they do them. He just did the movements; he never really grasped the real meaning of it.

Under different circumstances, different parts of the body operate. Like if you are scared by something, you run. If you are hungry, the mouth operates and you chew and swallow. If you have to go to the bathroom, the body operates in that way. In very gross ways, we understand that. But there are also subtle ways in which the body operated. The yogis also saw the relationship between the moving of the body and the flowing of prana energy, and the effect that it had on consciousness, and sound that goes along with *bij* mantras that gave rise to something called *kriya* and *sahaja* yoga. It is a very refined type of meditation and breathing. The Sufis do the same thing but we do it with Qur'an, with *niyyat*, and by trying to act appropriately in certain circumstances, putting forward only so much effort that is necessary and not excessive effort. Excessive energy destroys the body. The body is the means. This is why anger is bad, or doing things when you are ill is not good.

Everybody sort of understands this in some way, in some folkloric way or historical or cultural way, or just out of common sense. But the Khwāja Khwājagān also understood that you can reverse that process. You could then have the body do certain things, and it would come to certain events, which is similar to what the *hatha* yogis tried to accomplish. But we knew that *hatha* yoga is not the way to come to a level of supreme knowledge and understanding. What the Sufis do is, we incorporate it into day to day life, not just sitting in a cave and doing some exercise. That's a very, very big step in mysticism when Allah said there is no monkery in Islam. That is a big deal, not a small deal. Everybody knew up to that time that you could remove yourself from the world and accomplish many things, including *karamat*. You could deal with the *shakti* and all that. Many things would be accomplished.

But we are here in this world and applying them to this world. Those people were not able to apply them to the world, because they had been moved out of the world for such a

period of time to accomplish those things. Naturally and understandably, the world become anathematic: there is nothing attractive about the world. That doesn't mean we are attracted to the world. It means we are put in the world, and we have to use numbers and movements to understand it in another way. How do you do that? You can try to do that by telling yourself to do it, but that's not going to work. You have to do practices that make it your way, your default, that transform you so that you become more aware—not just aware of your breath, but aware of what is appropriate to say and not to say, what is appropriate to do or not to do. Appropriate for what? For the time, the place, and the circumstance.

In other words, it's as if the circumstances or the relationships that one finds in the physical world are there only as opportunities to practice, or to reflect certain practices that you do, to give us an opportunity to see the capabilities we have as human beings to be in the world and not of it, to transcend the limitations of this world, but in the transcending of them to achieve a higher level of consciousness. The *shaykh* would tell students in certain exercises for breathing to do 100 of these, or 200, or stand in this position, or do your *dhikr* this way, or put your hand here like that. Because of the relationship of the *shaykh* to the *murīd*, nobody would ask why, which was correct. If you are supposed to understand why, you will understand why.

Then we get into the social world and the way we are today, where everybody demands an explanation for everything. Explanations were created periodically throughout the history of Sufism that were fine explanations, but none of them ever really captured the whole truth. The truth is, you have to experience it. We do this because of that. We burn the incense because it symbolizes taking the prayers up into the sky. Or, in the introduction to our *sama*, there are all the elements. These are pretty good explanations. How do you use it? How do you use the fact that there is water with the flower, that there is air when we are saying Hu in our reciting, and then there is the fire, and the incense which is earth, or the seed I put in it which is earth. We make certain movements

and say certain things. They are either blind rituals or they have some meaning to them. They have meaning to them if you allow them to be meaningful. *Wuqufi adadi* allows you to do certain things that permit meaning to be fuller.

We don't ask why, we don't ask the meaning of it, but of course there are meanings. The important thing with *wuqufi adadi* is you begin somewhere and you end somewhere. The meaning lies in between the two. You begin with one and you end with thirty-three, or ninety-nine. Then you find other things to support it, like the Ninety-Nine Names of Allah. Which came first: the Ninety-Nine Names of Allah, or were ninety-nine names were attached to Him? It doesn't matter. The numerological significance of *abjad* is one thing, but the application or utilization of the numbers is another thing. Metaphorically, it tells you that something has meaning in this form, but if you convert it, it has another meaning beyond it. If it's written *lā ilāha illa-llāh*, or *bismi-llāh*, it's 786. 786 is 21, which is a three. Three is what in the *abjad*? What is the third letter in the Arabic alphabet? *Jim*. Now we have to understand the meaning of *jim*. Do we have to understand it intellectually? No. It is hidden in the *bismi-llāh*. Eventually, you understand the meaning of *jim*.

That was another school of thought, another way of approaching number pause, another way of saying, both in real and metaphorical terms, that there is something hidden behind the obvious. We know what *bismi-llāh* means. It means in the name of Allah. What is in the name of Allah? It's not just in the name of Allah we are doing this, like in the name of our father or mother. It's not just in the name of Allah. What is it that is in the name of Allah? *Jim*. What does it mean? Why? It is like *alif*, *lam*, *mim*. Many words are written with *alif*, *lam*, and *mim*, like *alim*. What's in the name? Some of our predecessors believed and affirmed that by doing *wuqufi adadi* the inner meaning would come forward. It wasn't just to do numbers or to stop the distraction of the mind. It wasn't just because someone said to do it. They said to do it from a knowledge base.

I was talking about the body earlier. There are different quadrants of the body, which can become very interesting, and people want to study this and that, and then it becomes a distraction. There is limited information on this in translation, and if one wanted to look at it you could look at it, but it's not going to really be very revelatory. The different quadrants of the body had different letters attached to them, or sounds attached to them made out of letters. When you concentrated on those quadrants of the body, the internal meaning of those letters (and each refers to a name of Allah) would manifest, or an *sifāt*/attribute of Allah would manifest, and that would be refined. If you were concentrating on 24, the 24th quadrant, it wasn't the number 24 that was important. It's what the number 24 meant that was important. That is a whole other way of looking at *wuqufi adadi*.

It is not just reciting things, but putting your attention to different areas. Aha! Now we are here at the *latā'if*. Each *latīfa* has a name, and there is a numerical equivalent to each: *rūh*, *sirr*, *khafī*, *akhfā* and *nafs*. Some people decided they would do the numerical equivalents, which was questionable, because it takes you away from the intention. *Qalb* is equal to this number, so we do that number in *qalb*. *Rūh* is equal to this number, so we do this number in *rūh*. But an interesting thing to do – and I challenge you to do this – is to look at all the *latā'if*, add them up, and see what you get. Then reduce the *abjad*. There are two ways of using the *abjad*. For example, we say *bismi-Llāh* is 786. You could look at it two say: 700, 80, and 6. There is an equivalent for 700, and for 80, and for 6. Or, you add up 786 like I did and you come to 3. You can play with that if you like with the *latā'if*.

One of the points is this: one of the primary goals of *muraqabah* is *mīzān*/balance. Allah talks about balance and harmony in the Qur'an a lot. In nature and in ourselves, there are things that create balance. One of the manifestations of balance is *sakina*/tranquility. One of the measures of balance is patience. One is justice. We are talking about the most pure state, love in its purest form and compassion in its purest form. There is no

disbalance in it. Using *wuqufi adadi*, sitting in *muraqabah*, counting out or not counting (in the way I told you at the beginning) creates peacefulness, tranquility, and balance. If one achieves this state beyond *ghunūgi*, beyond *adrāq*, to the point where you are aware of your sitting, of your state in sitting, then you are aware that you are in a state of balance. In that state, it's as if you get very, very thin and you can pass through anything.

It's like you can pass through that door. Just like in sleep in a dream, you can pass through time and space. In meditation, you are not encumbered anymore with the physical laws other than the most basic. You are physically encumbered because you are sitting there, but in your meditative state, you are unencumbered. You are in this state that is unencumbered by time and space, so you travel vast distances in the blink of an eye. It is not the astral plane, but like an etheric level. I don't know what you call it in Arabic. There is another dimension where you are not encumbered by time and space. We can talk about it in terms of quantum mechanics and nonlocality; but people have talked about this for centuries, before Islam was known in the world. You achieve that state through certain meditations and practices that take place in time and space, and through certain repetitions.

Wherever you look, yogis, Sufis, whoever, you will find the vast majority of people counting and doing certain numbers of things, but they don't understand what I'm trying very poorly to explain tonight. You achieve a level of *mīzān*, and at that state, it's as if the door is opened and you move. You've heard me say this a thousand times: it happens in your dream state but you have no control over it. It's an example of being in two places at one time. This also has to do with *wuqufi adadi*. Allah has planted inside of us this capability to absorb, generate, and transmit different levels of energy by using things of the physical world to transcend the physical world: using numbers to go beyond numbers, using numbers to represent meaning, and meaning within the meaning. That's why numbers are so important. Please don't call me up or email me and ask, should we count or shouldn't we count?

We have to come to certain agreement with these practices. We have to be able to say to ourselves, or to the *shaykh*, and to understand that I am putting myself in a particular situation with a specific intention, in a certain form (perhaps a sitting position) in order to practice something (call it *muraqabah*) that will allow me to receive and also transmit a kind of energy or force that will up lift me beyond the limitations of this physical world. But we are created to do it through the attributes and qualities Allah gave us. We have already talked about, *wuqufi zamani*. One of the attributes of this is the numerological or mathematical realities we live in, and that make up our bodies: the number of beats of the heart, how the neurons fire, how mitosis and miosis take place. It's very mathematical, and it's common among us all. The other thing that balances it is the heart quality.

The fact that is, in the physical heart you have both things. You have rhythm. You don't have rhythm in the liver; you don't have a rhythm that is unchanging in the stomach. You have peristaltic action, but it depends on what you eat and how much you eat. There is no other organ where you have a set rhythm but the heart. The brain can be dead, and we can still be alive if the heart is beating. But the heart cannot be dead and the brain alive. The heart has a set rhythm and must be kept in that rhythm for the health of the whole body. And we have the numbers: the mathematical reality of the worlds that Allah is Rabbi Ālamīn. Each one has a sound and a rhythm to it that doesn't change. *Wuqufi adadi*, number pause, is not just counting. It reflects the reality of our physical existences. I'm not limiting it to this earth, that's why I'm saying it in plural.

When we can come into understanding and balance with these, they are doorways to the place from whence they came—the initial transmission of creation. What is the initial transmission of creation? “**Kun fayakun. Be and it became.**” The baby is in the womb and the heart is pumping. Is the baby breathing? No. When the baby is born, it takes a breath. Now you get the linkage between the breath and the heart. Now the heart cannot work without the breath. Before that, it could work without the breath. So that's why *pas*

an fas and *hab si dam* are very important. Breath must be treated like life force, just like we treat the heart like irrevocable force of life. Before that, there is no breath. There is oxygen, the mother's breath. Now we have another metaphor. That is there is a higher breath, a higher force feeding us. Just like the mother's breath gives oxygen in the womb, in this world, there is a higher force that is feeding us. And that's what I want to come into with. These are a few little thoughts on *wuqufi adadi*.