

## The Counsels of Bahaudin Naqshband

You want to be filled. But something which is full has first to be emptied. Empty yourself so that you will fill properly, by observing these counsels, which you can do as duties to your self:

**FIRST** Never follow any impulse to teach, however strong it might be. The command to teach is not felt as an impulsion.

**SECOND** Never rely upon what you believe to be inner experiences because it is only when you get beyond them that you will reach knowledge. They are there to deceive you.

**THIRD** Never travel in search of knowledge unless you are sent. The desire to travel for learning is a test, not a command.

**FOURTH** Never trust a belief that a man or a community is the supreme one, because this feeling is a conviction, not a fact. You must progress beyond conviction, to fact.

**FIFTH** Never allow yourself to be hurt by what you imagine to be criticism by a teacher, nor allow yourself to remain elated because of praise. These feelings are barriers in your way, not conductors of it.

**SIXTH** Never imitate or follow a man of humility who is also mean in material things, for such a man is being proud in material things. If you are mean, practice generosity as a corrective, not as a virtue.

**SEVENTH** Be prepared to realize that all beliefs which were due to your surroundings were minor ones, even though they were once of much use to you. They may become useless and, indeed, pit falls.

**EIGHTH** Be prepared to find that certain beliefs are correct, but that their meaning and interpretation may vary in accordance with your stage of journey, making them seem contradictory to those who are not on the Path.

**NINTH** Remember that perception and illumination will not at first be of such a character that you can say of them 'This is perception' or 'This is illumination.'

**TENTH** Never allow yourself to measure everything by means of the same time measurement. One thing must come before another.

**ELEVENTH** If you think too much of the man, you will think in a disproportionate manner about the activity. If you think too much about yourself, you will think wrongly about the man. If you think too much about the books, you will not be thinking correctly about other things. Use one as a corrective for the others.

**TWELFTH** Do not rely upon your own opinion when you think you need books and not exercises. Rely less upon your belief when you think you need exercises and not books.

**THIRTEENTH** When you regard yourself as a disciple, remember that this is a stage which you take up in order to discover what your true distance is from your teacher. It is not a stage which you can measure, like how far you stand from a building.

**FOURTEENTH** When you feel least interested in following the Way which you have entered, this may be the time when it is most appropriate for you. If you imagine that you should not go on, it is not because you are not convinced or have doubts. It is because you are failing the test. You will always have doubts, but only discover them at a useful time for your weakness to point them out.

**FIFTEENTH** Banish doubt you cannot. Doubt goes when doubt and belief as you have been taught them go. If you forsake a path, it is because you were hoping for conviction from it. You seek conviction, not self-knowledge.

**SIXTEENTH** Do not dwell upon whether you will put yourself into the hands of a teacher. You are always in his hands. It is a question of whether he can help you to help yourself, for you have too little means to do so. Debating whether one trusts or not is a sign that one does not want to trust at all, and therefore is still incapable of it. Believing that one can trust is a false belief. If you wonder, 'Can I trust?' you are really wondering, 'Can I develop a strong enough opinion to please me?'

**SEVENTEENTH** Never mistake training for ability. If you cannot help being what people call 'good' or 'abstemious', you are like the sharpened reed which cannot help writing if it is pushed.

**EIGHTEENTH** When you have observed or felt emotion, correct this by remembering that emotions are felt just as strongly by people with completely different beliefs. If you imagine that this experience - emotion - is therefore noble or sublime, why do you not believe that stomach ache is an elevated state?

**NINETEENTH** If a teacher encourages you, he is not trying to attach you to him. He is trying, rather, to show you how easily you can be attracted. If he discourages you, the lesson is that you are at the mercy of discouragement.

**TWENTIETH** Understanding and knowledge are completely different sensations in the realm of Truth than they are in the realm of society. Anything which you understand in an ordinary manner about the Path is not understanding within the Path, but exterior assumption about the Path, common among unconscious imitators.