

Eighteen Bandagi Gems

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Researcher's Note

Ya Ali Madad. Eighteen postings for the Bandagi, Dhikr and Girya-u zari project were prepared in the months of March and April 2008. Each posting had the following components: (1) a knowledge section on bandagi; (2) a dhikr section to activate the soul; (3) 5-verses of Giryah-u zâri from Anant Nâ Nav Chhugâ presented sequentially; (4) a prayer card for the well being and health our most beloved NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam and his family, the upliftment the global Jamat, global Muslim community, and humanity at large, and the salvation of all departed souls; and (5) a prayer for the global Jamat.

On the occasion of birthday commemoration of Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah Al-Hussaini (a.s.), SalmanSpiritual.com is pleased to present to the global Jamat "Eighteen Bandagi Gems" in PDF format. Here is the list of the eighteen items and a reflection for this project:

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Peace, light, barakat, tayid, and a Golden Noorani Didar,
Noorallah Juma
November 2, 2008

Eighteen Bandagi Gems

Gem No. 1: Bandagi Requires Time, Will, Conviction and Ability to Perform It

The practice of bandagi, a luminous prayer at a luminous time with a luminous word, is a key to higher spirituality and luminosity in Ismailism. Bandagi requires time, will, conviction and ability to perform it. Therefore, those murids who have the desire to excel in their search for higher spiritual enlightenment continually purify themselves and attend the prayer session every early morning and practice bandagi. Esoterically, the Holy Imam's Light enters into the personal world of the murid provided the murid centers his focus on the supreme word, ism-i azam. This is vividly described in the following gem of knowledge on the topic of bandagi:

The tawil of Habl Allah (Rope of Allah) is the Imam of the time and the mechanism for enlightenment of the personal world is through Ism-i Azam:

God has sent the rope of His holy light from the higher world to the inhabitants of the lower world for the purpose that they may all together hold it fast so that they may be lifted to the higher world (Holy Qur'an 3:103). Externally the luminous rope of Allah is the holy personality of the Imam of the time and internally it is his ever-reaching light. The holy light of the Imam of the time comes to you specially through the ism-i azam (the supreme Name). Thus the Imam within you is the rope of Allah in the position of ism-i azam, to which you have to hold fast in such a way that all faculties of the heart and the mind are turned towards and centered upon it."

(Source: Tawil number 264, A Thousand Wisdoms: An Encyclopaedia of Tawil, pp. 142-143)

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Gem No. 2: Bandagi is a Luminous Prayer at a Luminous Time with a Luminous Word

The practice of bandagi, a luminous prayer at a luminous time with a luminous word, is a key component of a thinking and a spiritual Islam as articulated by NOOR Mowlana Murtaza Ali (a.s.). Murids in search of enlightenment, salvation and eternal existence have always practiced bandagi (Ibadat) in the small watches of the night. This theme appears in all our literature spanning a period of 1400 years. I would like to present two excerpts to support these fundamental concepts:

In his message to students in Bombay, NOOR Mowlana Shah Sultan Muhammad Shah Al-Husayni (a.s.) explained about the fundamental principle of our Holy faith:

"... While the material conditions of life change, the spiritual conditions which are not only limited to this life but go beyond, are based on one fundamental principle, namely search for enlightenment by the right spiritual contact with the light of your holy faith."

(Source: Precious Pearls. No. 43)

In Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi, Imam NOOR Mowlana Shah Mustansir bi'l-lah II (a.s.) teaches us about light and eternal existence:

"Whoever treats himself as something (important) in this world, being sure of his own (important) existence, will become non-existent (non-entity); will be deprived of a share of existence. Man (by himself) is neither extant nor non-existent, neither light or darkness. If the Imam, who possesses association (with God, walayat), helps him, he becomes endowed with being and light. But if he does not recognize (the Imam) from a (false) sense of security, and does not swear allegiance to the Imam of the time, he will become non-existent and dark."

(Source: Pandiyat-i Jawanmardi translated text, pp. 62-63)

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Gem No. 3: Creation of Light Within the Personal World Through Ism-i Azam

Let us begin by reflection upon how the light (sunshine) is created within the personal world (heart) through Ism-i Azam (Supreme Divine Names). The Holy Quran teaches that the sequence in acquiring complete knowledge starts from the outer world and extends into the inner world of human beings:

"We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves (in their souls) until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is Witness over all things?"
(Holy Qur'an 41:53).

The highest form of knowledge is given in the form of Light (NOOR). Our Holy Prophet used to supplicate for Light as follows:

"O Allah, place light in my heart, light in my sight, light in my hearing, light on my right hand, light on my left hand, light above me, light below me, light in front of me, light behind me, and enhance light for me."
(Sahih Muslim Vol. I, p. 368)

The Light is only given to staunch, purified and faithful believers (mumins). The mechanism of enlightenment is through the recitation and meditation on the Supreme Names of God (Ism-i Azam). In the Ismaili Tariqah, the present and living Imam (NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam) plays a central role in illuminating the path of the believers.

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Gem No. 4: Luminous Prayer (bandagi) at a Luminous Time leads to Purity

The mechanism for creating the Light of NOOR Mowlana Murtazâ Ali (a.s.) within oneself is the practice of luminous prayer (bandagi) (with a luminous word (bol) if you are blessed with it) at a luminous time (early hours of the morning). The reward of this practice (and of abundant remembrance (dhikr) during the rest of the day and night) leads to purification of the soul and enlightenment, as described in verse 162 of Kalâmê Mowlâ:

Bad^{ee} fajar jagê nê bandagi karê,
to tu(n) nêkee kamâyâ
jo ees vê^râe jâgyâ,
so bandageesê nêkee pâyâ

The one who remains awake in the early hours of the morning
and performs his special luminous prayer (bandagi),
has indeed earned for himself purity.
If he remains awake at this time,
he has attained purity through luminous prayer (bandagi).

subu sâdak jâgo bhâi,
karo zikr ilâhi
namâz tasbi bandagisêthi,
hovê dil safâee. 162

Remain awake at the early hours of the morning brothers,
and perform the luminous remembrance of God.
Through prayers (namaz, Du'a), divine remembrance
(dhikr, recitation of tasbis), and luminous prayers (bandagi)
the heart is purified. 162

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Gem No. 5: Relationship between Bandagi (Meditation) and Iman (Faith)

Let us reflect on the following teachings of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Jo ibâdatni âdat nahi pa^dsho anê susti karsho to amârâ upar tame te^{flu}(n)
imân majbut hashê to paⁿ tamâru imân astê astê khasi jashê a^{flê} tamâru
imân jatu rahêshê" (Zanzibar, 18-8-1905) (Source: Gawahrê Rahêmat, p. 33)

Literal translation: If you do not develop the practice of ibadat (bandagi)
and become lazy, then in spite of having a strong faith, your faith will slowly
diminish and it will fade away.

"Jê shakhsh ibâdat nathi karto tè hakni roji nathi khâto anê tênga dil upar
shêtân kabu kari tênga(n) imân lu(n) ^{ti} lyê chhê." (Amadâwâd, 14-2-1896)"
(Source: Gawahrê Rahêmat, p. 32)

Literal translation: The person who does not perform ibadat, then whatever
sustenance he gets from God (roji), it is not lawful for him. The devil will have
control over his heart and plunder his faith.

From the above teachings, it is clear that bandagi (luminous prayer, meditation) is the key mechanism to sustain one's faith. Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) has also

taught us that faith is light, therefore enlightenment can only happen if one practices bandagi.

The practice of bandagi is a fundamental pillar of personal search under the guidance of the Holy Imam. Therefore, whenever we hear the word 'enlightenment' in Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam's firmans, he is referring to being regular in the practice of bandagi.

Please reflect deeply upon the following words of Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam from his Irshad Mubarak of July 11, 2007: "... let spiritual enlightenment guide you". In my humble opinion, Mowla has given a tremendous emphasis on the practice of bandagi as this is the key to: (1) survival in this materialistic and turbulent world, and (2) enlightenment and eternal existence in the next world.

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Gem No. 6: The Lofty Status of Bandagi

Let us reflect on the following teachings of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Ek taraf âkhi duniyâno mâ anê biji taraf ibâdat avu(n) ibâdat no jabaru(n) vajan chhê (Zanzibar, 6-4-1900). (Source: Gawahrê Rahêmat, p. 31)

Literal translation: The weight of all material wealth of this world can be counter balanced with ibadat, such is the lofty status of ibadat (bandagi)

"Rât khudâvand shâ mâ tê pêdâ chhê? Râtno badho wakhat suee rahêvâ nathi, ibâdat mâta pan chhê anê ibâdatmâ khushi samâeli chhe." (Vâdhvân Camp, 18-10-1903)" (Source: Gawahrê Rahêmat, p. 32)

Literal translation: Why has God created the night? The time of the night is not only for sleeping, it is also for performing ibadat (bandagi) and true happiness is contained in ibadat.

From the above teachings, it is clear that spiritual wealth generated through bandagi has a much higher status and significance than all the material wealth of this world. However, performing bandagi properly is not an easy matter. Mowlana Hazir Imam has mentioned in his firmans that performing bandagi is difficult and it requires time, effort and conviction. It is quite obvious that those murids who practice bandagi go to bed early so that they can be present and awake at the luminous time to perform it. Peace, happiness and light are all the sweet fruits of bandagi.

Here are a couple of excerpts from the speeches of Mowlana Hazir Imam which I have interpreted in the context of bandagi:

"The day we no longer know how, nor have the time nor the faith to bow in prayer to Allah because the human soul that He has told us is eternal is no longer of sufficient importance to us to be worthy of an hour of our daily working, profit-seeking time, will be a sunless day of despair." — Excerpt from the Peshawar University address, Pakistan, November 30, 1967.

The above speech was made to a general audience. However, the Holy Imam has prescribed an hour of extra prayers for the elevation of our soul in the small watches of the night. He has given us the method, prescribed the time, bestowed the luminous word of the esoteric faith, and has explained that the soul is eternal. The True Guide wants us to reach the Abode of Peace (Daras-Salaam).

"As the demands on his time increase, every Muslim will find it more difficult to seek for himself the answer to the fundamental question of how he should live his life for it to be truly Muslim. It is men such as you who will have to be practical and realistic in the world of today and tomorrow. Rather than let force of circumstance impose upon us through our default in not having suitably prepared ourselves for the future, ways of life which are not, or should not be ours, we must ourselves design the path we should tread." — Excerpt from the Seerat Conference, Karachi, Pakistan, March 12th, 1976.

Each one of us has to set priorities. The Holy Imam brought the issue of time management and priorities in 1976. At the present, life is more hectic and the challenge of practising bandagi is enormous. However, the time **invested** in bandagi has material as well as spiritual benefits. It is a key to our survival and growth!

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Gem No. 7: Does Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam have a Spiritual University?

Let us reflect on the following teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Amê kahie chhie kê jê kaiee chhê tê ruhaj chhê mâtâ tēni tapas karo kê tê shu(n) chhê? Tê kya(n)thi âvyu? Tê nurni nigah karvi joe-a." (Mumbai, 4-4-1908) (Source: Kalame Imame Mubin, p. 309)

Literal translation: We are telling you that whatever there is, it is nothing but the soul. Therefore, search for it and discover what is it? From where did it come from? You should look for this nur (light).

We see the material world with our physical eyes and physical light. However, in the above mentioned teaching of Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.), Mowla is emphatically saying that whatever there is, it is nothing except the soul. This teaching is applicable for all those mu'mins whose inner eye has been opened by the grace of NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam. These mu'mins are experiencing the beauties and presence of soul everywhere and they are also experiencing the light of the Holy Imam in their foreheads. In this context, I would now like to present the concept of the spiritual university of NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam.

In the 2006 progress report of the Aga Khan University, there is a map which shows that the university has the following facilities: (1) main campuses in Karachi and East Africa, (2) a campus in London, England; and (3) four professional development centres which are located in Karachi, Gilgit, Chitral and Dar-es-Salaam. The iconic university of Mowlana Hazir Imam is spanning across three continents and is continually expanding. It is a source of pride the Holy Imam, the Jamat, the Ummah and humanity at large. So a question arises: does Mowlana Hazir Imam have a spiritual university?

In order to answer this question, I would like to present the following ayats from Surah Alaq (96:1-5):

Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth, Createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not.

There are many commentaries on these ayats, however, it is quite clear that these ayats were revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.) when he was practising ibadat

(bandagi) with ism-i azam, the Supreme Name of Allah. It is also quite clear the there was not a written form of the Holy Qur'an at that time, therefore this reading or proclamation was not physical. The Holy Prophet was "reading" the Holy Qur'an which was in a luminous and a spiritual form, i.e., it was in the form of a light and a soul.

It is quite clear through 1400 years of our history that spiritual enlightenment is only possible through the practice of ibadat (bandagi). Our Holy Imams have built Jamat Khanas across the world so that the murids can, if they so choose, practice bandagi daily. In addition to the time for meditation, Jamat Khanas are places to imbibe spiritual knowledge through Holy Ginans, Qasidas and Holy firmans. In my humble opinion, each Jamat Khana is a node of the spiritual university of NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam. It is in these sacred sanctuaries in which the ardent followers of the Holy Imam search for the light of NOOR Mowlana Murtaza Ali (a.s.).

The Jamat Khanas are open for the murids of the Holy Imam and this search for enlightenment is a life-long process which is open for all those who want to discover their spirituality and luminosity. In my humble opinion, the spiritual university of NOOR Mowlana Murtaza Ali (a.s.) is always open and it is more than 1400 years old. Graduates are spread across the world and there is room for new students. Are we up to the challenge of attending this university regularly? If we are, al-hamdulillah. If not, let think deeply about the teaching of the Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) and Mowlana Hazir Imam's wish that we carry Sunshine in our hearts (consciousness)!

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Gem No. 8: Why Should We Perform the "Ya Ali" bandagi?

Let us reflect on the following teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Âgâ Alishâh Dâtârê farmân kahyu hatu(n) kê madrâtê "Yâ Ali" ni bandagi karê tēmâ jê savâb thashê tē tamâro chhê anê pâp yânê gunâh thâya tē amârâ upar chhê." (Manjêvdî, 31-12-1893) (Source: Gawahrê Rahêmat, p. 32)

Literal translation: Imam AliShah Datar made a firman in which he said that anyone who performs the "Ya Ali" bandagi at (and after) midnight will get to keep the full benefit of it and any sins committed during the performance of this bandagi will be forgiven by the Imam.

The first point of the above-mentioned firman is that the "Yâ Ali" bandagi is prescribed by the Holy Imam. The second point is that this bandagi is performed after midnight. The third point is the current amount allocated to performing bandagi has been reduced from two hours to one hour only. Therefore, anyone who wants to elevate his/her soul should perform the "Ya Ali" unless he is given specific instructions to perform bandagi with ism-i azam (bol).

Now let us examine the benefits of practising bandagi. In his firman to students, NOOR Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) said:

Ibadat (Bandagi) reveals our souls. Every student should devote half an hour to **ibadat**. **Ibadat** is the only medium through which our soul can be uplifted. It will also give us courage to endure misfortunes, troubles and illness that are bound to come in later years. Though being unaware of such difficulties with **Ibadat** they can be endured with great joy and without

complaint unlike your elders. Moreover **Ibadat** will always give great confidence and bring success." (London Jamatkhana, 11-6-1951)

Please note that the above firman can be found in Precious Pearls under the heading of Batuni Prayer (Zikr). There is a cross reference for this firman in Gawahrê Rahêmat on pages 30 and 31 in which the word 'Ibadat' has been used. The words "Ibadat" and "bandagi" are synonyms. Keeping this mind, Mowla is talking about Ibadat (bandagi) and not just any other prayer. I have presented the above firman from Precious Pearls by using the word "ibadat (bandagi)" instead of "prayer" so that we can get the precise message of the Holy Imam. The benefits of bandagi are holistic because they cover the physical as well as the spiritual aspects of our lives.

In his firman, NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam said:

"I remind you once again that you must understand that each one of you has a soul and this soul alone is eternal; and it is the duty and the responsibility of each one of you to remember that you have a soul. For this reason, it is necessary for every individual to attend Jamatkhana regularly and to be regular in **your Bandagi** and **your prayers**" (Bombay, November 8, 1967).

Please note the clear distinction between bandagi and other prayers in the above firman. Let us pray to NOOR Mowlana Hazir to empower us to practice bandagi and other prayers with strength and enthusiasm. Ameen.

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Gem No. 9: What are the Principles of Awakening the Inner Eye and Recognizing the Self?

Let us reflect on some advices on awakening the inner eye and recognizing of the self [Source: Coolness of the Eye, Pages 123-131]:

1. The first and foremost requirement for spiritual progress is ethic, then belief, bandagi and the knowledge of certainty.
2. The virtue of taqwa (piety, righteousness) is the essence of the results and fruits of ethic, bandagi and the knowledge of certainty. Therefore, taqwa grants a sublime place to a mu'min.
3. The best place for ibadat is Jamat Khana, because as the Qur'an says it is the place of reward and peace ("Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer)."
Holy Qur'an 2: 125)
4. A mu'min should cultivate the habit of raising hands in His presence and invoking blessings so that the state of his heart may always remain in need (of His mercy) in God's presence, and His mercy may embrace him.
5. Ibadat is the name of the slavery of God, the most High. And slavery demands all kind of services for the master. And the supreme service is that which is according to His will and required most by Him.

6. A true mu'min should struggle to do good every day, spend time in good deeds. Daily, he should acquire some knowledge; he should continue his study of religious books, he should meet good people and obtain happiness from ibadat.
7. These are signs of the beginning of spiritual progress: creation of ardent love for dhikr-u ibadat, to get up for bandagi on time, or in fact before time, softness of heart and readiness for giryah-u zari, continuation of dhikr and creation of seriousness and internal peace.

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Gem No. 10: How to Concentrate in Bandagi?

Let us reflect on the following teachings of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

In one of his teachings, Imam Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) has described the technique to concentrate in bandagi. Mowla has advised us to start by just concentrating for one minute. Then, on the next day, concentrate for two minutes. In the due course, one should be able to concentrate for 30 minutes and then for 60 minutes. Mowla has also said that if you cannot concentrate for one minute in one day, then try to concentrate for one minute over 4 days. Then follow the process outlined above. The key to success in bandagi is to eliminate worldly thoughts and concentrate on name, for example, Ya Ali.

In order to concentrate, it is necessary to say something and listen to it. For example, let us close our eyes and recite Ya Ali 5 times loudly and keep our ears tuned to it. Let us do this together:

Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (5)

The purpose of this exercise is to make sure that you are listening to what you are saying. Could we please try to do this again? For the second time, let us recite Ya Ali 10 times loudly and keep our ears tuned to it. Let us do this together:

Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (5)
Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (10)

Now let us do the same exercise **silently**. With our eyes closed, we will say the word with our inner tongue and listen to it with our inner ear. For example, let us recite Ya Ali 5 times silently and keep our inner ears tuned to it. Let us do this together:

Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (5)

The purpose of this exercise is to make sure that you are listening with your inner ear to what you are saying with your inner tongue. Could we please try to do this again? For the second time, with our eyes closed, let us recite Ya Ali 10 times silently and keep our ears tuned to it. Let us do this together:

Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (5)
Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (10)

I hope you are getting the hang of it. If you try to do this for an extended period, you may still notice that other thoughts are still coming in.

Before, I can explain how to eliminate these thoughts, let me give you a physical example. Supposing you are walking along a street and you notice that somebody is following you. One action that you may take is to increase your pace of walking. If the person following also increases his pace, then you might even consider running. The purpose of your action is to increase the speed so that you may shake off the person who is following you.

Similarly, thoughts come in when the initial pace of reciting the name is slow. Therefore, let us try this exercise by reducing the gap between Ya and Ali, and also between Ali and Ya. With our eyes closed, let us try this and recite Ya Ali 10 times silently by eliminating the gaps in this special dhikr and also keep our ears tuned to it. Let us do this together:

Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (5)
Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali, Ya Ali (10)

Please repeat this exercise with your eyes closed and try to extend this chain to 15 seconds, then to 30 seconds, then to 45 seconds and then to 1 full minute. Even if you say one Ya Ali per second, you will get a count of 60 in one minute. If the thoughts are coming in, then try to increase the pace and to two beads of Ya Ali per second and you will notice that the disturbing thoughts are being reduced. Keep on practising and adjust the rate till you can concentrate on Ya Ali for one full minute. Please note that breathing in and out does not come into play with this exercise.

So now let us do the homework which Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) has given to us. The objective is to sit in concentration and increase the length of the concentration gradually till we can sit in full concentration for 60 minutes!

Finally, with your eyes closed, just look into the area between your eye brows, i.e., your inner eye. Be humble, patient and happy that you are performing bandagi. You have played your part and Mowla will do his part in his own way at his own time. Relax, be happy and search for that light!

Also, study the [curriculum for higher spiritual enlightenment](#) and apply it to yourself. Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 11: What are the benefits of concentrating in bandagi?

Let us reflect on the following teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Jêo das minute ek dhiyânthi ibâdat kari shakê chhê têoni chalis varasni ibâdat kartâ vadhâre ibâdatno faydo ha(n)shal thây chhê anê châlis varas karta vadhu kabul thâya chhê." (Karachi, 3-5-1920)

Literal translation: Those who can concentrate for ten minutes in bandagi will get the benefit of 40 years of bandagi (done without concentration) and will get the acceptance of having performed more than of 40 years of bandagi.

Please refer to to [posting number 10](#) for Mowla's methods of concentrating in bandagi. Concentration is power which leads to enlightenment provided all other actions as described in the [curriculum for higher spiritual enlightenment](#) are met. Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 12: What happens during 60 minutes of bandagi with full concentration?

Let us reflect on the following teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Jêo das minute ek dhiyânthi ibâdat kari shakê chhê têoni chalis varasni ibâdat kartâ vadhâre ibâdatno faydo ha(n)shal thây chhê anê châlis varas karta vadhu kabul thâya chhê. Têthi tamê hamânâ ek kalak ibadat karo, te barâbar ek khayâlthi, to ghanu chhê. Tamo badhânâ dilmâ ekaj umêd hovi joee-ea. Tê kêvi ritê, jêm rasulillah mearaj par gayâ hatâ anê badan â duniyâmâ padyu(n) hatu. Têm tamâro ruh â duniyâmâthi âsman mathê pahonchê anê â badan duniyâmâ(n) hoy anê ruhnê tyâ pahonchâdo. Zikarno ek kalâk jê tamârâ upar faraz chhê tê barâbar khayâlthi karsho to tê kalâkma(n) das minute evi âvshê jê têni andar tamê fanâfi-Allah th-ee shaksho." (Karachi, 3-5-1920)

Literal translation: Those who can concentrate for ten minutes in bandagi will get the benefit of 40 years of bandagi (performed without concentration) and will get the acceptance of having performed more than of 40 years of bandagi. Therefore, at this time, it is enough to perform bandagi with full concentration for one hour. All of you should have only one wish in your heart: How to achieve mi'raj from the example of the Holy Prophet, in which his soul ascended the heavens and his body remained on this earth. Similarly, you should send your soul from this world to the heavens so that your body remains here but your soul goes to the other world. It is your duty to perform bandagi with full concentration for one hour. During this hour, there will be ten minutes in which you will annihilated in Allah, i.e. experience fana-fi-Allah.

Please refer to [posting number 10](#) for Mowla's methods of concentrating in bandagi. Concentration is power which leads to enlightenment provided all other actions as described in the [curriculum for higher spiritual enlightenment](#) are met. Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads and may we all be blessed with 10 minutes of eternal bliss in our bandagi of full concentration! Ameen.

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Gem No. 13: In which form does the Holy Imam appear in bandagi?

Let us reflect on the following teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.)

"Farmâvyu kê jâ kimti chij amo inayat karie chie tâ amâru nâm chhê, jo kharâ yakinthi mârâ farmân pramânê châlô to jê nâm tamnê âpiyo chhê tê rup tamê joee shaksho. Amnê â swarupmâ joee shaksho nahi, jê nâm hashê ej swarup hashê. Darêk nâmnâ swarup judâ chhê. Tamê evo khyal na karo jê tê ruhânimâ amnê â swarupmâ joee shaksho, e to banvânu nathi.(Râjkot, 20-2-1910)

Literal translation: Mowla said that the most precious thing that I have bestowed upon you is my name. If you practice bandagi with certainty and according to my commands, then you will be able to see the Light which corresponds to the name that I have given to you. You will not see my physical form, but you will see the Light which corresponds to my name. Each

name has a different form. You should not think that in the spiritual world you will see me in this physical form because that is never going to happen."(Rajkot, 20-2-1910)

I think it is worthwhile to re-read the outer and inner meaning of the rope of God. The practice of bandagi, a luminous prayer at a luminous time with a luminous word, is a key to higher spirituality and luminosity in Ismailism. Esoterically, the Holy Imam's Light enters into the personal world of the murid provided the murid centers his focus on the supreme word, ism-i azam. This is vividly described in the following gem of knowledge on the topic of bandagi:

The tawil of Habl Allah (Rope of Allah) is the Imam of the time and the mechanism for enlightenment of the personal world is through Ism-i Azam:

"God has sent the rope of His holy light from the higher world to the inhabitants of the lower world for the purpose that they may all together hold it fast so that they may be lifted to the higher world (Holy Qur'an 3:103). Externally the luminous rope of Allah is the holy personality of the Imam of the time and internally it is his ever-reaching light. The holy light of the Imam of the time comes to you specially through the ism-i azam (the supreme Name). Thus the Imam within you is the rope of Allah in the position of ism-i azam, to which you have to hold fast in such a way that all faculties of the heart and the mind are turned towards and centered upon it." (Source: Tawil number 264, A Thousand Wisdoms: An Encyclopaedia of Tawil, pp. 142-143)

Also, please refer to [posting number 10](#) for Mowla's methods of concentrating in bandagi. Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 14: How is the Ism-i Azam bestowed to a pious murid get actualized?

Let us reflect on the following tawil to understand the relationship between Ism-i Azam bestowed upon a pious murid and the Light of the Holy Imam:

Tawil of the word 'Zaraba' (he struck (an example))

"It is said in verse (14:24): "Have you not seen how Allah has set forth a parable? A pure word is like a pure tree, whose root is firmly fixed and whose branch is in heaven." The pure word is the ism-i a'zam, which a pious murid receives from the Imam of the time, and the pure tree is the blessed personality of the Imam of the time himself. Among these, one ism-i a'zam is in the form of a personality and the other is in the form of a word. But the very great miracle of God is that in the personal world both become one. That is, the word becomes the blessed light of the Imam." [Source: Tawil 527: A Thousand Wisdoms] (Pages 280-281).

The ism-i azam (bol) is in its potential form when it is bestowed to a murid by the Holy Imam. When the murid follows all the practices of the faith and practices bandagi, i.e., the luminous prayer with a luminous word at a luminous time in the small watches of the night, the ism-i azam becomes actualized. The enlightened murid witnesses that the ism-i azam (bol) has become the light of Holy Imam in his/her forehead. A murid who achieves this loft status becomes a real **spiritual** and **luminous** child of the Holy Imam! Al-Hamdulillah, all this is possible because it is in the treasury of our Holy Imam, Noor Mowlana Shah Karim Al-

Al-Hussaini Hazir Imam (a.s.)! Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 15: What can be achieved through bandagi and ism-i azam?

The answer to this question, let us study the mechanism of the achievement our beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.):

"From the numerous Qur'anic verses it is an established fact that the Prophet had spiritual relation and the luminous connection with the blessed ism-i azam (Supreme Name) of his Lord. The Prophet used to remember the ism-i azam and its accompanying great names (asma 'uzzam) of God before and after attaining the status of prophethood, and God had made him the treasurer of the spiritualism, luminousness, knowledge and wisdom of all His great names." [Source: Divine Remembrance, page 17]

What is the teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) on the topic of bandagi and dhikr?

The answer is given in the following excerpt of his firman:

"Khudavandtaâlâ tamârâ tarafthi e eechê chhê kê tamê bandagi ibadat karo. Uthtë, bêstâ khudanê yâd karo." (Bâgâmojo, 21-9-1899) (Source: Gawahrê Rahêmat, p. 31)

Literal translation: God desires from you that you perform bandagi and ibadat (luminous prayer). Remember God when you wake up and while you are sitting and walking (i.e., be God conscious at all times).

Please note that Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.) has explicitly stated that we should perform bandagi regularly. He has then commanded us to be God conscious for the remaining of the day and night. God consciousness results in purification which results in much greater happiness and progress during bandagi. Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 16: How can a pious murid enter the luminosity of the Imam and the Qur'an?

The answer to this question, let us study the mechanism of the achievement our beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.):

In order to answer this question, let us study the tawil of word 'Dhikrukum' (Your remembrance)

"See the blessed words of verse (21:10): "Fihî dhikrukum":

- "In it is exhortation for you";
- "In it is the remembrance of ism-i a'zam for you"; and
- "In it is your own remembrance provided you are successful."

When the Imam of the time grants ism-i a'zam to one of his murids, it is certainly from the holy Qur'an. The purpose of the miraculous bridge of special 'ibadat (i.e. 'ibadat of ism-i azam) is that he or she may enter the luminosity of the Imam and the Qur'an." [Source: Tawil 363: A Thousand Wisdoms] (Pages 96-197)

Teaching of Pir Hasan Kabirdin

The Holy Imam elevates his followers by blessing them with Ism-i Azam. The remembrance of this great name leads to enlightenment. In the following verse from *Mo'ti Venti*, Pir Hasan Kabirdin teaches us the Great Name (Ism-i Azam) of the Lord is the key to overcome the tribulations on the road to the Eternal. The Pir also says that the Lord has innumerable names and each name has its own luminosity, power, blessing and mystery.

Eji sâmi ati dukh chhê saragni va **t**mâ(n)
 tê tamârâ nâmthi dukh duraj thâya
 satgur sâheb to ek chhê
 tê nâm bhêdthi **o**rakhâya
 mahêr karo morâ sâ(n)hiyâ
 abarâ sharan **n** tamâri 37

O Lord, Innumerable are the tribulations on the road to the Eternal,
 which will vanish with Your (sacred) name (ism-e azam).
 You are the only True Guide,
 known by different names and mysteries.
 Have mercy on me, my Lord.
 I am helpless and dependent on you. 37

Let us pray for a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 17: What is the state of 'Ajampiya jaamp'?

In the following verses of gnan, Har**d**am karo abhiyaas, Sayyada Imambegum advises us to be engaged in seeking divine knowledge and enlightening our soul by advancing ourselves to the state of 'Ajampiya jaamp', i.e., to a state where our 'bol' or the 'name of Lord' speaks by itself. This state can also be described as continuous silent remembrance within oneself.

Eji Brahm gnan maa(n)he har**d**am rahejo ji
 Karjo aapño abhiyaas
 Karine dekho ji 6

O Brother Always remain engrossed in the divine knowledge
 and contemplate on yourself. 6

Eji Ajampiya jaamp bhai jis ghat bh**i**tar ji
 Sohi ghat hoyshe ujaash
 Karine dekho ji 7

O Brother In the heart which has continuous silent remembrance
(unpronounced zikr), that heart will be enlightened.7

The above concept is also mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

Tawil of the word 'Tannur'

"In verse (11:40) God says; "And the oven gushed forth." That is, the dhikr or remembrance of ism-i a'zam became fast and automatic and the flood of spirituality started. Thus, by the tannur is meant the remembrance of ism-i a'zam." [Source: Tawil 231: A Thousand Wisdoms] (Pages 123)

Tawil of the word 'Ajal' (Haste, speed, hurry)

"It is mentioned in verse (21:37): "Man is created out of haste. Soon I shall show you My signs, so do not ask me to hasten."

The spiritual light and progress of a salik are initially created from the speed of rapid dhikr and strenuous discipline, but when the minor resurrection and its signs (miracles) start to manifest, then many means and causes speak and work automatically." [Source: Tawil 566: A Thousand Wisdoms] (Pages 303-304)

The journey is long. In the beginning, it is difficult but when the luminous dhikr becomes automatic, the real show begins. After attaining the state of 'ajampiya jaamp', the great treasures and secrets of spirituality are bestowed upon the pious mu'min. Let us make an aim for being deserving for this blessing in this extended Golden Jubilee year. May we all be blessed with a Golden Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Gem No. 18: What is the best time to be in the company of the Holy Imam?

I will answer to this question with a couple of verses from Pir Sa**dar**din's Nur ve**la** nur piyo ginan:

Eji Nur ve**la** nur piyo
Aa(n)hi kariyo man aanan**d** ji
Pop ve**la** raakho Shah Pirsu(n) samban**dh** ji

Tame Jaago jaago bhaida
Raiyañ viyaañiya ji
Tame che**to** momanbhaida
Raiyañ viyaañiya ji 1

O brothers! At the time of enlightenment (i.e., at Noorani time),
experience (drink) the Light
and make your heart (soul) joyful.
At the time of the blooming (of the soul),
establish relationship with the Lord
and the Guide through Ism Azam.

O brothers! remain continuously awake
(in knowledge and remembrance) so that
the night of darkness and negligence may pass away.

O momins! be vigilant, so that the night of
darkness and negligence may pass away. 1

Eji Bhañe Pir Sadardin
Hi joog paachhali raheñi
Sa~~t~~ kerī vaat koi virle jaañi

Tame Jaago jaago bhaida
Raiyañ viyaañiya ji
Tame che~~t~~o momanbhaida
Raiyañ viyaañiya ji 5

O brothers! Pir Sadardin teaches: this existence (in the company of the Guide)
is like the last portion of the night (the dawn).
Very few courageous souls have known the True Path.

O brothers! remain continuously awake
(in knowledge and remembrance) so that
the night of darkness and negligence may pass away.
O momins! be vigilant, so that the night of
darkness and negligence may pass away. 5

The way to obtain the Golden Noorani didar of the Holy Imam is described in the following
teaching of Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.):

"Imâmnâ jâhêr nurnê jovani eechhâ râkhtâvo to tê ibadâtmâ hoee shakay
chhê. Ibâdatmâ daroj ek kalak besvu(n) têni badhi samaj tamnê missionario
âpshê." (Mumbai ta. 6-1- 1950)

Literal translation: If you are yearning to see the manifested Light, then it is
possible to achieve this through ibadat (bandagi). You should sit in ibadat for
one hour every day. The missionaries (wazeen) can provide you with the
necessary knowledge on this topic.

All praise is due to NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam for his infinite mercy and tayid to complete
the recitation of Anant Nâ Nav Chhugâ in Baitul Khyal before bandagi and for completing this
18 posting project on the topic of Ibadat (bandagi). May we all be blessed with a Golden
Noorani Didar in our foreheads! Ameen.

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Reflection: Who Was and Will be Present at the Golden Jubilee Darbars?

The short answer to the above question is: 'everybody'. I will now justify this answer based on the concept of Aalm-Dharr (The world of spiritual particles):

1. The Cycle of Subtle and Dense Forms of Human Beings

In the following paragraph I have first presented the Gujrati transliterated text of an excerpt of a firman of Noor Mowlana Sultan Muhammad Shah (a.s.):

"Have khiyal karo ke tamaru(n) asal shu(n) chhe? Koi kahe ke maru(n) asal Aadam thi chhe; to Aadam thi tamara jism thaya chhe, pa(n) teni pahela tamaru(n) asal "aalm zare" arthat zina rajkan jeva (zara) parantu te zara tame "aalme zare" na vakhat thi thaya chho, pa(n) teni pahela shu(n) hata? zara thi pa(n) zina (la) aarthat nirakar kahevay chhe te hata. Ane tyathi tamo utarta utarta a manushay dehima bandhana." [Source: Mombasa 10-11-1905; p. 41; Transliterated by Alwaez Rai Amiraly Amlani]

Literal translation: "Now you should think about your origin, i.e., where is your original abode? Some say that my origin is from Adam; your body is created from Adam but before this your origin was in aalm-i dharr (the world of spiritual particles). In that world, you were in the form of tiny dust-like spiritual particles, but before that you were in even finer spiritual particles than dharr which can be described as being formless in the World of Oneness (nirakar). From that place you have descended in a step wise manner into this human form."

2. What is Alam-i Dharr?

"Alam-i Dharr means the world of spiritual particles, which means the particles of the souls. It can be seen only after the eye of the heart opens, therefore, everybody cannot see it." [Source: What is Soul?, p. 64]

3. What is in Alam-i Dharr?

"In the world of spiritual particles (alam-i dharr), not only do the people of all times exist in form of spiritual particles, but also each and everything of the universe and existents." [Source: What is Soul?, p. 61]

4. What is the Relationship between Imam-i Mubin and the World of Spiritual Particles?

"The world of spiritual particles works throughout time by dwelling in the blessed personaility of the Holy Imam. In reality, the world of spiritual particles is the world of souls and angels, because in the example of Hazrat Adam there were souls as well as angels. Their collective name is light or the Supreme Soul or nafs-i wahidah, in which are gathered all souls. In fact all things of the universe and the existents are there for there is nothing without mercy (rahmat) and knowledge (ilm, 40:7). Allah has encompassed everything in the exalted personality of the Imam-i mubin (36:12) and therefore the world of particles cannot be excluded from this Divine law." [Source: Psalms of Lovers, p. 61]

5. What are our teachings about a Single Soul (Nafs-i Wahida)?

In addition to belonging to the human race, we are in a Single Soul through the mechanism of Alam-i dharr (the World of Spiritual Particles) because the alam-i dhar dwells in the spirituality and luminosity of our Holy Imam. Therefore, in addition to the murids who will be physically present at the four Darbars next week, the global Jamat, humanity at large and all souls will also be present at these occasions. These grand events of the Golden Jubilee will be witnessed by all people, consciously or unconsciously, and by all souls. If we nurture the spiritual bond with our beloved Imam, we will also experience the peace and rays of Light when NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam remembers us at these Darbars even though we may not be physically present at these events.

6. What are practical ways to nurture our spiritual bond with Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam?

To prepare for Golden Noorani and Golden Jubilee Didars and also strengthen our bond with Noor Mowlana Hazir Imam, let us practise our faith with conviction by attending Jamat Khana regularly, submitting dasond, saying three Duas on time, practising bandagi because it is a luminous prayer, reciting angelic salwats, performing abundant dhikr, performing volunteer service, balancing din and duniya, and accumulating material, spiritual and luminous nazranas in our personal worlds. Educational resources for higher spiritual enlightenment are listed on [index page](#) of SalmanSpiritual.com.

Let us pray to NOOR Mowlana Hazir Imam to bestow upon us a life of external and internal peace. May Mowla also grace us with the spiritual enlightenment for continual guidance in our outer and inner dimensions. Ameen.

Global Prayer:

Ya Ali, Ya NOOR Mowlana Shah Karim Al-Hussaini Hazir Imam, make us **One global Jamat** with **One Sound Heart** (Qalb-i Salim), bless us with the **Golden Noorani** and the **Golden Jubilee Didars**, and empower us to present **Material, Spiritual** and **Luminous Nazranas**. Ameen.

Peace, light, barakat, tayid, Golden Jubilee and Golden Noorani Didars,
Noorallah Juma
November 2, 2008