



***Khalwa* : rules**

The spiritual retreat or *Khalwa* is a moment of ripening and deep transformation. It is exactly the opportunity to make the seed of divine light buried deep within us germinate and appear. A very small seed fits in the hand but it can become like a tree with branches spread out on which come to land the birds of the sky. According to the laws of the universe, this seed must remain for a certain time in the matrix of the earth with certain care in order to appear in the day. According to the laws of the universe, even an egg must be incubated in the dark before it can hatch.

The female golden eagle incubates for 40 days before hatching and then both parents will feed the eaglet for some time. Finally, when it is ready to spread its wings, the parents will let it fast to encourage it to fly, which will then become indispensable. The spiritual retreat must be considered in this spirit as the place of our second birth, the one where our spirit detaches itself from the body and takes flight.

The moment when we discover our body of light and its ability to travel beyond the usual limits of our physical body. We believe that we are born or that we are mature, but this is not the case, we are still prisoners of the matrices of the world below, prisoners of our ego, of our habits, of our concepts. We must enter into retreat as into a tomb by accepting the initiatory Death: "Die before you die" (Prophetic Word).

Our intention must therefore be to prepare ourselves for the great LIBERATION to which our soul aspires, starting with the awareness that we are still in our grave. A death for a new birth! The retreat has been practiced and given as an example by all the Divine Envoys and saints, it is the place and the support of this new birth which is the Awakening, the *Fath Rabbani*, or at least the opening of the eye of the heart.

In this path several steps will lead us to stop identifying ourselves with our egotic personality discovering progressively that we can become One with the plants, the animals, the saints, the



human family, the stars until finally discovering that we are fundamentally ONE with this divine light that God has put in us in a unique way and which constitutes our true celestial signature.

This whole process is divine because it is a journey that leads us to divine Love in intimacy. It offers us a face-to-face encounter with our Lord. Nevertheless, it passes first of all by a real fight against our ego which will lead us to discover our interior hell. It is not possible to ignore it on this path towards the light of full consciousness. It is therefore essential to prepare ourselves with great inner determination and sincerity. To prepare to discern the illusions from the Real in everything that will manifest itself to us in the waking state as in the dream state.

The intention must be purified. It must be configured in the spirit of dedication to the divine and in view of helping our human family through spiritual service. It must not be for the purpose of developing powers, satisfaction or intellectual pride.

Technical and practical aspects

Just as all birds choose their nests with care (eagles in the mountains) we must choose a place of retreat according to the best conditions.

External conditions :

- Peaceful place, rather in nature and if possible near the mountains ;
- Place whose geo-biological conditions are in harmony as well as the aspects of Feng Shui (sciences of places and harmony in the circulation of Yin and Yang energy; Example: Mountain at the back, river in front) ;
- The choice of time when one has settled his affairs of the world in order to arrive not with worries but with peace of mind ;
- The duration planned in agreement with the teacher: from 10 to 40 days, starting perhaps by testing, over 10 days, his abilities ;
- The astrological moment (if possible) when we know that a celestial conjunction favors the time of retreat ;
- Physical health conditions checked with your doctor (and balanced psyche) ;



- The place should be restricted to around 12 m² and kept dark during all meditation periods (at least 80% of the time) ;
- The entrance to the retreat will be in the state of ablution (ritual purity by the shower) which will be constantly maintained as much as possible in the retreat ;
- The instructor will have blessed the place and prayed there to support the retreatant.

Internal conditions:

- 4 conditions of asceticism are necessary (in accordance with the 4 elements): Solitude (earth), Silence (water), Fasting (air), Vigil (fire);
- The fast will be either : total during the day with a single vegetable or lentil soup placed in front of the door at sunset and the possibility of drinking water during the night, or water fasting with the possibility of drinking water in the day and evening soup.
- Obviously no outside exit ;
- Very simple inner practices to disconnect the mind as much as possible, such as: invocation of the Name of God, recitation of sacred texts, prayers, silent meditation in full consciousness;
- Sleep: as little as possible, preferably between midnight and 3 a.m. or in the morning after sunrise for 3 hours;
- Possibility to practice yoga or Qi-Gong exercises which are often necessary when you move little (see the teacher on this subject);

It is essential to obtain the authorization and the support of an authorized teacher to lead the retreat with a spirit of confidence in his guidance and to follow a program in agreement with him.

Advice before spiritual retreat

Do not forget that the mind creates divisions and categories where we want unity starting with the unity within us. It is therefore not possible to meet the divine through the mind because the Divine is beyond the mind and its divisions. The first few days you will feel how the mind conditions you and does not stop even when it is not solicited, nevertheless by persevering in the practice of dhikr and meditation you will thus "reconfigure" your inner predisposition.



We must understand that we have been "deformed" by conditioning from which we must free ourselves by changing our inner "form", by restoring our original predisposition in its innocence. This is why the practice consists in repeating the divine names that restore our inner harmony, leading us to silence, to the emptiness in which the divine Presence can settle. But this practice requires constancy and to the extent of our deformation. You can use your intuition, your instinct, your pain, your shame (precious because it leads to repentance which should be the beginning of the practice), your love for Allah, for *Rassul Allah* (*çalat wa salam*), for the masters and saints you have known, everything that is adequate remedy in the moment of your suffering. It is a struggle for the restructuring of yourself, to re-found the axis of the divine within you.

At some times the Qur'an will be the remedy at other times the *istighfar* (asking for forgiveness) at other times the practice of : « *la ilaha illa llah* » like a sword that chases away illusions, then the Name : « *Allah Allah* » (especially when the Presence is established) or the formula : « *la ilaha ila Anta subhanak ini kuntu min ad dhalimin* » in the moments of darkness of the soul.

Then comes meditation once we are well prepared because it is not an exercise but a "state of being", it corresponds to a state of grace where we strip ourselves of our ego, of our knowledge, of all things to present ourselves naked and empty before the Presence.

Practical aspects

You will find that the night is the best time to go down deeply. If you can still practice *dhikr* after the evening prayer, do so without exceeding your capacity, because if you get too torpid, you might as well sleep for an hour or two according to your capacity and your intuition. It is advisable to get up before *fajr* (for example one hour before) and then stay awake until sunrise (*shuruk*) and then do two *rakat*, then you can take a rest if you need it. After this rest, it is advisable to get up and do some exercises, yoga (*kriya yoga*) or Qi Qong or stretching depending on what you know.



After that normally the recitation of the Quran finds its place well which you can do then in the daylight.

Then it is advisable to close the shutters to get into the darkness to practice better. It is up to you to measure the time when you can assume this darkness. For example you could start after the time of "*Sunna Doha*" (mid-morning) or dohr but stay within your limits and capabilities. Of course, you can light for the break time (*iftar*) for your daily soup which will be placed in front of your door with a small signal.

If you have requests do not speak write them down on a paper while resting behind the door your evening tray. In the afternoon, if you feel too torpid, take an hour of sleep unless it is only necessary. At night it is advisable to drink water to hydrate properly to avoid various physical disorders.

Of course the usual prayers have their places as pillars. The *wird* is naturally also done after *fajr* as well as *dhikr* until the time of *shuruk* (sunrise).