

## December Sunday Tea Presentation

Thank you for coming today. You might not have noticed this yet, but if you stay around the house long enough, or if you visit it again, you'll probably get the sense that rules and ritual are very heavily emphasized here. Rather than to learn about law or ritualized physical practice, people come to this house to meditate. And the central meditative practice is known, in Sufi terminology, as *zeker* or *dhikr*. In this context, the term refers to the focused remembrance of God by repeating His name. While various Sufi orders teach the practice differently, the Nimatullahi Sufi Order teaches a silent form of *zeker* that emphasizes concentrating upon the breath and mentioning God's name on each breath in and each breath out. This concentration upon the breath naturally precludes thinking about anything else. And while I mentioned before that rules don't occupy an especially privileged position here, there are certain guidelines, intended to support everyone's meditative practice, that someone coming here for the sake of that practice ought to obey. Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh speaks to these rules when he writes that "the Sufi's attention must be directed solely towards God in the khaniaqah, and he should not be concerned with anyone or anything else." To this end, "Sufis should be silent in the khaniqah, for by talking they may divert people's attention from God to themselves. If they must talk, they should not speak too loudly..."

So, with that being said, let's now take twenty minutes to follow our breath, sitting silently, with our eyes closed.