معارف مصلح الأمت

The Statements and Lectures of Muslihul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyulāh Sāhib rahimahullāh

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BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews of some famous scholars about this book

Hadrat Maulānā Saʿīd ar-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī Nadwī
(Principal: Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwatul ʿUlamā', Lucknow)

It is most pleasing and satisfying to note that Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāḥib Allāhābādī – a special confidant of Hadrat Shāh Sāḥib and his senior deputy – has started to collate the statements of Hadrat Shāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh. We are convinced that the same manner of education and training, and the Sharīʿah and Tarīqah will be learnt from these statements as were learnt from Shāh Sāḥib's assemblies.

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Wādih Rashīd Hasanī Nadwī raḥimahullāh

There was a need to present the statements, articles and teachings of Hadrat in a clearer manner. After all, if it was difficult for the scholars to understand them, it would certainly not be easy for the laity. The one who could have been most eligible to fulfil this need could only be the one who had the honour of studying directly under him, of being in his service and of remaining in his company. Furthermore, he must also have had enjoyed the confidence of Hadrat. Subsequently, it was his own student, son-in-law and a reformer of this era – Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāḥib – who undertook this responsibility.

The teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat raḥimahullāh which have been simplified and

explained by a close associate and distinguished scholar do not need an introduction or review.

Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Abul Qāsim Nuʿmānī Sāhib
(Principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband)

The lofty position which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh held in the sight of his mentor, Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh can only be fathomed by those insightful people of knowledge and cognition who had the occasion to attend Hadrat's assemblies. However, the succeeding generations can also benefit from their published statements and lectures. This is especially so when the explanation and simplification of these lectures have been done by Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī who had spent such a long time in his company, identified his temperament fully and is himself a senior saint.

Hadrat ʿAllāmah Dr. Khālid Mahmūd Sāhib (R'A) (Islamic Academy, Manchester, U.K.)

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī has done a great favour to his friends and associates by compiling the sciences of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh and presenting them in a simplified and enjoyable manner.

TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Arabic letter	Name of letter	Transliteration
ا	Alif	a
ب	Bā	b
ت	Tā	t
ث	Thā	th
ج	Jīm	j
ح	Ḥā	ḥ
خ	Khā	kh
د	Dāl	d
ذ	Dhāl	dh
ر	Rā	r
ز	Zā	z
س	Sīn	s
ش	Shīn	sh
ص	Ṣād	ṣ
ض	Ḍād	ḍ
ط	Ṭā	ṭ
ظ	Ẓā	ẓ

ع	ʿAyn	ʿ
غ	Ghayn	gh
ف	Fā	f
ق	Qāf	q
ك	Kāf	k
ل	Lām	l
م	Mīm	m
ن	Nūn	n
و	Wāw	w
ه	Hā	h
ي	Yā	y
ء	Hamzah	’

Long vowels

Elongated alif: Ā, ā

Elongated wāw: Ū, ū

Elongated yā: Ī, ī

GLOSSARY

Note: The explanations or definitions given below are meant to merely facilitate an understanding of the words used in the book. They are, by no means, full definitions. Consult the ʿulamā' for detailed explanations.

Ahlullāh: Literally "the people of Allāh". Another name for the Sufis, saints and true servants of Allāh taʿālā.

ʿĀmil: A person who removes the effects of witchcraft, black magic and the influence of evil jinn.

ʿĀlim: An Islamic scholar. One who is well versed in the various Islamic sciences.

ʿĀrif: A person who has acquired the recognition of Allāh taʿālā.

Auliyā': Plural of walī.

Bayʿat: A pledge of allegiance.

Dhikr: The remembrance of Allāh taʿālā.

Dīn: Religion. Islam is referred to as a Dīn because it is not merely a religion but a complete way of life.

Dīnī: Related to Dīn.

Duʿā': A supplication, invocation or prayer.

Fard-e-ʿayn: A compulsory duty on every person.

Farḍ-e-kifāyah: A compulsory duty when fulfilled by a few absolves the rest of the community.

Ḥāfiẓ/ḥuffāẓ: A person who has memorized the Qur'ān.

Ḥakīm: A wise man. A practitioner of alternative medicine.

Ḥarām: Unlawful.

Imām: A leader. The one who leads the congregation in ṣalāh is called an imām. The senior scholars and jurists of Islam are also known as imāms.

Īmān: Faith.

Istidrāj: Conjuring miracles through witchcraft.

Karāmat/karāmāt: A supernatural feat.

Kashf: A spiritual exposition.

Khānqāh: A Sufi lodge/retreat.

Lauḥ-e-Maḥfūẓ: The Preserved Tablet.

Madāris: Plural of madrasah.

Madrasah: A school for higher Islamic education.

Majdhūb: A person who is completely immersed and lost in Allāh's love.

Makātib: Plural of maktab. A school for primary Islamic education.

Mandūb: Desirable.

Masjid: Also known as a mosque. A Muslim place of worship.

Masājid: Plural of masjid.

Mubāḥ: Permissible.

Muḥaddith: A Ḥadīth expert.

Mujāhid/mujāhidīn: One who strives in Allāh's cause.

Muqtadī: A person who follows the imām in ṣalāh.

Murīd: A disciple of a spiritual mentor.

Rukūʿ: The bowing posture in ṣalāh.

Ṣalāh: Literally "a prayer". Ṣalāh is one of the five pillars of Islam performed in a particular manner having certain prerequisites.

Sālik: A person who is treading the spiritual path.

Samāʿ: A special type of music which conveys a person to spiritual ecstasy.

Seḥrī/suḥūr: The predawn meal taken in preparation for a fast.

Shaykh: In Sufi terminology it refers to one's spiritual mentor.

Ṣirāṭ: The bridge which extends over Hell.

Sulūk: The science of treading the spiritual path.

Tahajjud: An optional ṣalāh performed in the latter part of the night.

Taqwā: Piety or Allāh consciousness.

Tarīqah: The Sufi way.

Tauhīd: Belief in the Oneness of Allāh taʿālā.

ʿUlamā': Plural of ʿālim.

Walī: A friend of Allāh taʿālā.

Wazīfah: A devotional practice, e.g. a form of dhikr made at a certain time of the day.

Wilāyat: Friendship with Allāh taʿālā.

Wudū': Ablution. Washing of certain parts before carrying out certain acts of worship, e.g. salāh, reading the Qur'ān.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād and Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat Allāhābād have had the honour of publishing several important books on the themes of reformation, Sufism, academic and religious works, and various biographies. Even at present, a few books covering different topics are either being composed or written. Some books have passed the stages of writing and are on the verge of being printed. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us the honour of conveying these works to your hands as quickly as possible.

From among these books is the first volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* which we have the honour of presenting to you. This book essentially contains the mysteries and wisdoms of the Sharīʿat, and pearls and gems related to the Dīn as presented by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his assemblies. It is a valuable treasure house of the sciences, mysteries and fine points of the Qur'ān and Hadīth. These have been simplified and explained by my honourable father after immense toiling. In this way, he made them equally beneficial for the novice and the expert. May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and kindness – enable my father to complete this important work.

It also pleases me to inform the reader that volume four of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* with many new additions has gone for printing. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to continue presenting our written works to you. Āmīn.

May Allāh *taʿālā* reward all the members of Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul-Ummat who fulfilled their obligations with much hard work and dedication. Finally, we are indebted to Maulānā ʿAbbdu-s-Sattār Sāhib Achoodī through whose financial support, ease was experienced in printing this book.

08 Rajab al-Murajjab 1434 A.H.

19 May 2013

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād and Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat Allāhābād have had the honour of publishing several important books on the themes of reformation, Sufism, academic and religious works, and various biographies. Even at present, a few books covering different topics are either being composed or written. Some books have passed the stages of writing and are on the verge of being printed. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us the honour of conveying these works to your hands as quickly as possible.

From among these books is the second volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* which we have the honour of presenting to you. This book essentially contains the mysteries and wisdoms of the Sharīʿat, and pearls and gems related to the Dīn as presented by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāhib *rahimahullāh* in his assemblies. It is a valuable treasure house of the sciences, mysteries and fine points of the Qurʾān and Hadīth. These have been simplified and explained by my honourable father after immense toiling. In this way, he made them equally beneficial for the novice and the expert. May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and kindness – enable my father to complete this important work. Āmīn.

May Allāh *taʿālā* reward all the members of Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat who fulfilled their obligations with hard work and dedication.

Muhammad ʿAbdullāh Qāmar az-Zamān Qāsimī Allāhābādī

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād and Idārah Muslihul Ummat Allāhābād have been able to publish several important books on rectification, Allāh-consciousness, academic and religious works, and various biographies within a short period of time. Even at this moment, several important works on various topics are either being arranged or written. Others are already on the verge of being printed. May Allāh *taʿālā* honour us by enabling us to present them to you as soon as possible.

From among these important books is the third volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat*. This is actually a valuable treasure-house of the mysteries and wisdoms of the Sharīʿat, pearls of Dīn and sciences of the Qur'ān and Hadīth as explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his assemblies. My honourable father worked untiringly to simplify and expound on them. In this way he has made them equally beneficial to the novice and the expert. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to complete this important work. Āmīn.

Muhammad ʿAbdullāh Qāmar az-Zamān Qāsimī Allāhābādī
Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif
639/B Wasīyābād, Allāhābād, U.P., India

IMPRESSION (1)

Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Abul Qāsim Nuʿmānī Sāhib
(Principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband)

باسمه سبحانه وتعالى

Allāh *taʿālā* has been especially gracious towards Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī *dāmat barakātuhum*. Allāh *taʿālā* enabled him to remain in the company, pledge bayʿat and benefit from two great Sufis of his time. Allāh *taʿālā* combined in him the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh*, and to convey their teachings.

By virtue of the lofty academic position which Allāh *taʿālā* conferred on him, he is a successful teacher, a prolific writer and an excellent orator. He also combines all this with the science of spiritual reformation and rectification. He has written several books on rectification of character, setting right of transactions and dealings, and various other themes. It is out of his humility that although he himself holds a laudable position, he has made it his continued practice to explain, expound and simplify the sciences of the elders; and to collate and arrange the statements of the pious predecessors. Several volumes of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf*, and simplification and explanation of the lectures and statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* have been continuing for quite some time.

Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat is the latest academic and rectificational work of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad

Qamar az-Zamān Ṣāḥib Allāhābādī. It contains the statements and lectures of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* which had been published in the bi-monthly *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq* and *Waṣīyyatul ʿIrfān*. They are now being published in book form with the explanations of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Ṣāḥib. Two volumes have already been published and the third volume is now ready.

Allāh *taʿālā* blessed Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Ṣāḥib Allāhābādī with a pure and lofty academic taste, and is taking phenomenal Dīnī services from him. Books on knowledge, cognition, spiritual purification and rectification are continuously flowing from his prolific pen. In addition to his own writings, he is continuously occupied in collating, arranging, explaining and simplifying the academic and rectificational works of our seniors. The book before you is an important link in this chain.

The lofty position which Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* held in the sight of his mentor, Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *quddisa sirruhu* can only be fathomed by those insightful people of knowledge and cognition who had the occasion to attend Ḥaḍrat's assemblies. However, the succeeding generations can also benefit from their published statements and lectures. This is especially so when the explanation and simplification of these lectures have been done by Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Ṣāḥib Allāhābādī who had spent such a long time in his company, identified his temperament fully and is himself a senior saint.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless Hadrat Maulānā with a long life accompanied with good health and wellness. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable the Muslim community to derive maximum benefit from him. Āmīn.

Abul Qāsim Nuʿmānī
Principal – Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband
20 Shaʿbān 1439 A.H.
7 May 2018

IMPRESSION (2)

Hadrat ʿAllāmah Khālid Mahmūd Sāhib
(Islamic Academy, Manchester, U.K.)

The first lesson of the Qur'ān is that Allāh *taʿālā* alone is worthy of worship.

فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ.

Know, then, that none is worthy of worship but Allāh.[1]

The other lesson which we learn is:

إِنَّ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِيْ تَجْرِيْ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَآ أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ مَّآءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ ص وَّتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيٰحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ.

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the changing of the night and day, in the ships that sail upon the ocean with things of benefit for mankind, in the water which Allah sent down from the sky thereby giving life to the earth after it had been lifeless and dispersed in it all kinds of animals, in the changing of the winds and in the clouds that are subservient to His command between the heaven and earth - surely in all these things are signs for the intelligent.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Muhammad, 47: 19.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 164.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بِيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ.

Did you not see that Allāh sent down water from the sky and then We brought forth therewith fruits of various colours? In the mountains are streaks of white and red of various hues and [others] jet-black.

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ.

He whom We bring to old age, We reverse him in his growth. Do they not understand?[1]

It is from the Messengers that we will learn that there is Allāh, He is one and He alone is worthy of worship. However, the true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* is acquired through those things which Allāh *taʿālā* described in the above three verses and other verses like them. We learn from this that divine guidance descends into the hearts through the teaching of the Messengers and their deputies. Allāh's true recognition is then conferred to those fortunate people who ponder and reflect over these matters. If we were to combine the two we could say that He has been accepted and recognized. In the terminology of the Sufis this is known as īmān and cognition. After having īmān in Allāh *taʿālā*, he goes out searching to recognize Allāh *taʿālā*. He observes the various creations of Allāh *taʿālā*, ponders and reflects over them, and then achieves His recognition which is the objective of creating him. In his *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, ʿAllāmah Sayyid Maḥmūd Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* (d. 1270 A.H.) explains the following verse:

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 68.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ.

I created jinn and man solely for My worship.

As:

ليعرفون[1]

So that they may recognize Me.

This explanation is related from Mujāhid *rahimahullāh* (d. 104 A.H.) who was a student of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

ʿAllāmah Hasan ibn Masʿūd Baghawī *rahimahullāh* refers to this explanation as the best. He writes:

قال مجاهد إلا لعرفوني، وهذا أحسن لأنه لو لم يخلقهم لم يعرف وجوده وتوحيده.[2]

Mujāhid said: So that they may recognize Me. This is the best explanation because if He did not create them they would not have known His existence and His oneness.

Man can progress to such an extent in his recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* that he can be blessed with the joy of His recognition at every step.

Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* heard the following couplet one day:

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ١٤، ص ٢٢.

[2] تفسير البغوي: ج ٤، ص ٢٨٨. تفسير الخازن: ج ٤، ص ١٩٧.

> I went into the garden and looked at every flower. It neither has your colour nor your fragrance.

He commented: What he said is correct, but he was not a gnostic. Had he been a gnostic he would have said:

> I went into the garden and looked at every flower. It has exactly your colour and your fragrance.

Had the poet been a gnostic, every flower and every petal of the flowers would have opened to him a register of Allāh's recognition.

Facts and sciences in the statements of the Sufis are not unfamiliar words. Facts are learnt and sciences are recognized. Facts are not prone to change, but there are many levels of sciences. Ḥakīmul Ummat Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* is – from a certain angle – referred to as Ḥakīmul Ummat because his statements would not change. At the same time, he did have a system of Tarjīḥ ar-Rājiḥ. Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* enjoyed a special position in the rectification of conditions. In the Chishtī Ṣābrī Sufi order of Ḥaḍrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*, the names of Ḥaḍrat Shāh Masīḥullāh Jalālābādī *raḥimahullāh* and Ḥaḍrat Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāḥib Allāhābādī *raḥimahullāh* are well-known. These two saints were engulfed in the gnosticism of Ḥaḍrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. They adopted his sciences and flew so high that an entire world was illuminated by their light of spirituality. At present, the rectificational service of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* in the form of *Ma'ārif Muṣliḥul Ummat* is a light to the eyes and a joy to the heart. The third senior saint with Ḥaḍrat Shāh Masīḥullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*

and Hadrat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* of Hardoi. Included in this line is the other senior khalīfah of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī *rahimahullāh*. His recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* released countless people into the ocean of gnosticism and conveyed countless others in the close proximity of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The writer of these lines has the honour of pledging bayʿat to and becoming a mujāz-e-suhbat of Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hasan Amritsarī *rahimahullāh* (the founder of Jāmiʿah Ashrafīyyah, Lahore), Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Masīhullāh Jalālābādī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib Hardoi *rahimahullāh*. I also had the good fortune of accompanying Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* on a hajj journey.

I observed the blessings and influence of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Masīhullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Mahmūd Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh* (the head muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband and khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib Muhājir Madanī *rahimahullāh*) in South Africa and various other countries. The people of the truth found the general blessings of Mujaddid Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* everywhere. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a confluence of the oceans of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Madanī *rahimahullāh*.

The splendour of India

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and various Islamic conquerors perceived the fragrant and cool breeze of

this region. Muslims from many countries observed the splendour of this land and decided to settle down here. Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates a statement of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. One portion of it is quoted here:

وأطيب أرض في الأرض ريحا الهند هبط بها آدم عليه السلام من الجنة فعلق شجرها من ريح الجنة.[1]

The most pleasant region on earth is where the wind of India blows. Ādam ʿalayhis salām descended from Paradise on this land and so, the trees of this land became attached with the wind of Paradise.

Al-Hākim *rahimahullāh* relates the above statement as follows in his *al-Mustadrak*:

قال علي بن أبي طالب: أطيب ريح في الأرض الهند هبط بها آدم عليه الصلوة والسلام فعلق شجرها من ريح الجنة...هذا حديث صحيح على شرط مسلم ولم يخرجاه.[2]

ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: The most pleasant wind on earth is in India. Ādam ʿalayhis salām descended there and so, the trees of this land became attached with the wind of Paradise…This is an authentic Hadīth based on the prerequisites laid down by Imām Muslim. Imām Muslim and Imām Bukhārī did not relate it.

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[1] التمهيد لابن عبد البر: ج ٦، ص ٣٤.

[2] المستدرك: ج ١، ص ٥٩٢.

The Hindus of this region were immersed in idol-worship. Despite this, the worship of the truth brought ʿĀrif Billāh Hadrat Shaykh Muʿīn ad-Dīn Chishtī Ajmerī *raḥimahullāh* here. It was from the Hindus themselves that Baba Nanak rose up, discarded idolatry and called towards Oneness. The Tartars were a martial nation. They too pitched the tent of peace here. The Arabs left their deserts and settled down here. The soil was extremely fertile and it absorbed new nations within itself. ʿAllāmah Iqbāl rightly said:

> The land in which Chishtī proclaimed the true message. The garden in which Nanak sang the song of monotheism.
>
> The place which the Tartars made their home. The land which prompted the Arabs to leave their deserts.
>
> The place which left the Greeks confounded and gave knowledge and craft to the entire world.
>
> The soil which had the effect of gold and filled the Turks with pearls.
>
> That is my land, that is my land.[1]

The reader has already read about the difference between facts and sciences. Facts are learnt while sciences are recognized. Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was from the saints of cognition. His senior khalīfah, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Ṣāḥib Allāhābādī refers to him as "Quṭb Aʿẓam":

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[1] *Kulliyyāt Iqbāl*, p. 56.

> Such was our Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* the Qutb A'zam. It is solely through Allāh's grace that we are affiliated to a saint of this calibre. This is the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills. Many 'ulamā' of India and Pakistan reverted to him. So much so that even his own teacher, Hadrat 'Allāmah Muhammad Ibrāhīm Balyāwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – a head teacher at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband – had reverted to him and became his khalīfah.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī has done a great favour to his friends and associates by compiling the sciences of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and presenting them in a simplified and enjoyable manner. This book is in two large volumes.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī instructed me to write some lines in the form of a review of this book. It is easy to voice one's opinions on rules and regulations. As for sciences, that is extremely difficult to do. It can only be done by the one who has those sciences; it is not in me. Yes, what I can say is that those who read this book will not find it to be a book but an assembly of rectification and training.

The difference between a book and an assembly

A person who reads a books and listens to it being read to him thinks that he is reading something. The person who sits in an assembly thinks that he is

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[1] *Ma'ārif Muslihul Ummat*, vol. 1, p. 31.

understanding something. In both cases, it is the assembly which takes precedence. Those who understood in the first era of Islam are known as Sahābah. We learn from this that it is companionship which eventually surpasses everything, even if it is for a few moments. The highest ranking people who benefited from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* were those who acquired knowledge from him. Those very same ones then acquired spiritual purification from him. We learn from this that there is no dichotomy between the two. Spiritual purification is the next step in the process of training. Whatever is acquired from the saints is essentially acquired from their assemblies and company.

> A madrasah only teaches the lesson. It is a human who makes one into a human.

Those who strive to acquire Dīn only from literature can never understand the blessings which are acquired from an assembly.

May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate the status of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and enable people to derive maximum benefit from his *Maʿārif*. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer the best rewards to the compiler of the *Maʿārif*. Āmīn.

Khālid Mahmūd
Jāmiʿah Islāmīyyah, Manchester
25 October 2018.

PRELUDE

Maulānā Maḥbūb Aḥmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī

الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, all the writings of Ḥadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* have been published and printed several times. These have been met with approval by not only the ʿulamā' and Sufis, but by the Muslim masses as well. May Allāh *taʿālā* proliferate and perfect the benefit of these works. Āmīn.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the thought came to my heart that if the statements of Ḥadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* which are periodically published in *Maʿrifat Ḥaqq* and *Waṣīyyatul ʿIrfān*, are collated and published, then – by the will of Allāh *taʿālā* – they will most certainly benefit the religious and creedal lives of the scholars and the laity. When I mentioned this to my honourable father, Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Ṣāḥib *dāmat barakātuhum*, he expressed his approval. He then emphasised on Muftī Zayn al-Islam Ṣāḥib and myself to separate the statements from the published periodicals so that the themes can be selected easily.

We undertook this task by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. Subsequently, my honourable father felt that if the statements are explained and simplified, and then published, the benefit will be much more. My father toiled hard to this end, went through the statements several times, and added his explanations wherever he felt the need. They were then noted, went through the publishing and printing processes, and – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – a collection titled *Maʿārif Muslihul*

Ummat is presented to you. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the Lord of the universe.

My honourable father most certainly had the right to undertake this task because Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said to him on several occasions: "Look at my subject matter as though you are looking at the subject matter of someone else. You must then make changes and additions wherever you feel necessary. This is because there is difference in style between the spoken word and the written word."

In fact, he said to him on one occasion: "Listen! No theme of mine must be printed without being checked by you. Be very particular about not printing something which could cause objections later on."

I consider it appropriate to quote a text of the honourable Dr. Hāfiz Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib Siddīqī *rahimahullāh*, a khalīfah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, which he wrote in his evaluation of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* volume two. He writes:

We praise Allāh *taʿālā* and send salutations to His noble Messenger.

> Before I can write anything about this book, I will relate one of my personal incidents. On one occasion, I made a request to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat ʿĀrif Billāh Shāh Wasīyyullāh *quddisa sirruhu* by saying: "I would like my two daughters to become *ʿālimahs*. How should I go about getting them educated?" Hadrat responded spontaneously: "Qamar az-Zamān will teach them. And once they mature, he will teach them from behind a veil."
>
> In addition to this, whenever I asked him for a ruling, Hadrat would explain each

> point himself. But when he used to get up to leave for his house, he would say to me: "Doctor Sāhib! You must also pose this question to Qamar az-Zamān." My heart and mind were immediately filled with respect for his excellent good deeds, knowledge and conviction. A poet says:
>
> "This good fortune is not due to my personal strength. It can only be achieved through the generosity, grace and favour of the affectionate Allāh."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* was a special student of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* and he had given my honourable father permission to relate all his Hadīth narrations. Based on this, after the demise of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*, the Daurah Hadīth commenced at Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm, Allāhābād. My honourable father taught *Bukhārī Sharīf*, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Sāhib Jāmī *raḥimahullāh* taught *Muslim Sharīf* and Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* taught *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. The completion of *Bukhārī Sharīf* was graced by Maulānā Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib and Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Sāhib Ajmerī *raḥimahullāh*.

It is solely through Allāh's grace that my honourable maternal grandfather – Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* – made a duʿā' for deep understanding of Dīn for my father, and gave him a prayer mat and an ink-pot in his dream.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

If the reader ponders over this, it will become clear to him that this dream was realized in the sense that the

themes of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are continually being published in the written word through my honourable father. Furthermore, the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat *rahimahullāh* are being conveyed throughout the world through his lectures.

I heard my honourable father saying that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I am saying these words in this room but Allāh *taʿālā* has the power to convey them to the entire world." Thus, we see his statements being conveyed throughout the world through the lectures, speeches and writings of my honourable father.

Finally, I make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* blesses my honourable father with good health and a long life so that he may continue propagating the teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh* through which we may be tutored and given the inspiration to practice. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī
27 Muharram al-Harām 1434 A.H.
Madrasah ʿArabīyyah Bayt al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād.

INTRODUCTION

Hadrat Maulānā Saʿīd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Aʿzamī Nadwī
Principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwatul ʿUlamā', Lucknow

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على سيد الأنبياء والمرسلين محمد وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين. أما بعد:

India has always enjoyed the pride of producing great scholars and people of righteousness and piety. Its land and skies witnessed immense scholarly and spiritual sultanates. In every era of history one will find true men of Allāh *taʿālā* who bore the responsibilities of rectification and reformation, and who became the means for the guidance of thousands of Allāh's servants. There were countless people whose contact with a pure and wholesome life had been cut off and they were wandering aimlessly in the pitch darkness of deviation and misguidance. The true men of Allāh *taʿālā* apprised these deviated souls of the reality of life and enlightened their hearts with the light of īmān and conviction. The fact of the matter is that these pious personalities of Dīn were a major means for the preservation and continued existence of Islam in India. Large academic and reformational centres were established by virtue of their sincerity and devotion. The fruits of their efforts are to be seen in every corner of India where the light of Islam is shining, and Muslims are in such large numbers.

At present, we refer to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – a personality who was trained in the khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan. He was from among the most senior khulafā' of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and from among his closest and most special deputies. He fulfilled the responsibility of representing his mentor in the true sense of the word. His reformational efforts resulted in thousands of Allāh's servants being blessed with guidance, the ummat had the opportunity of being irrigated by his academic and spiritual blessings, and sincerity and piety became widespread.

A major portion of Shāh Sāhib's life was spent silently in rectificational works. Initially, he settled down in his ancestral hometown of Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā, district A'zamgarh, from where he lit the lamp of rectitude and guidance, showed the light to the deviated travellers and quenched the thirst of those seeking Allāh-recognition. He then settled down for some time in Gorukhpūr, and finally in Allāhābād. Through his efforts, a large khānqāh and madrasah were established. Together with this, he constructed a jāmi' masjid which served as a link between the khānqāh and the madrasah, and a training ground for every student who benefited from him.

However, on account of his ill-health, the recommendations of his doctors and the persistence of the people of Mumbai, he went and settled down in Mumbai for a change in the air and environment. Despite his short stay in a crowded and buzzing city like Mumbai, thousands of Muslims gained the correct understanding of Dīn from Shāh Sāhib. They learnt the lesson of living their lives in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnat. A large number of Muslims who had for

many generations been wandering in the darkness of polytheism and innovations pledged allegiance to him. They developed within themselves the desire to embrace the true Islam and to practise on it. In this way, a powerful change took place in a large and populous city like Mumbai, and associates and disciples of Shāh Sāhib were to be seen everywhere.

The trust of the external and internal knowledge which Shāh Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* received from Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* was fulfilled by him with immense trustworthiness, and his entire life and every moment of his life were spent in fulfilling this trust. Consequently, people from near and distant places would come in droves to this true man of Allāh *taʿālā*, fill themselves [with īmān] and depart. There were very few people who were deprived of the rays of this sun of rectitude and guidance, and were not supported by divine inspiration.

Shāh Sāhib's fundamental mode of training was the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. No assembly was devoid of these teachings. He had a peculiar style for creating an urge to follow the Sunnat and to adopt the lifestyle of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He was always mindful and observant of the lives of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*, the mujtahid Imāms and the 'ulamā' of Islam. Not a single moment of his life was spent in conflict with their lives. The focus of his efforts was that every disciple must become a true manifestation of the true Islamic way of life, he must practise totally on the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and the pure life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* must be before him all the time.

This is why he used to take people to task on the "smallest" of transgressions and never tolerated any action no matter how "small" it was if it entailed the

slightest opposition to the Sunnat. Sometimes he would take a disciple to task for several days, weeks and months; and would not pardon him until he was convinced that the disciple would not make such a mistake again.

This firm approach resulted in the majority of those who were affiliated to him living correct Islamic lives. As for those who remained close to him and had more opportunities of benefiting from him, they are righteous and pious both externally and internally. They are very religious and practising Muslims. The best way of gauging the rank of a mentor is to observe his close disciples and associates. The condition of the close disciples of Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* is undoubtedly excellent and worthy of emulation.

Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* refuted the incorrect belief of disregarding the importance of carrying out obligatory duties for the acquisition of proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* while giving more importance to optional acts. Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* paid special attention to according full importance to the obligatory duties and stressed that they were superior to the optional acts. Likewise, he emphasised teaching the recitation of the Qur'ān. He used to say: "One must read the Qur'ān. Understanding is not essential for reading the Qur'ān. If a person reads it without understanding, he can still acquire proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and His pleasure. It strengthens īmān, creates the urge for action, and develops a spirit of sincerity and piety."

Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was not only a reformer and Sufi shaykh. Rather, he was a powerful scholar of Islam who possessed intricate knowledge of the mysteries and finer points of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. He has many academic works which testify to his scholarly acumen. His academic themes and

assemblies will always show the light to those treading the path. His never-ending blessings will continually prompt the Muslims of India to adopt an Islamic way of life. He is a living example of the following words of Allāh *taʿālā*:

اَلَا اِنَّ اَوْلِيَاءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Listen! The friends of Allāh shall have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.

Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* is not with us today but his great contributions and the fruits of his reformational efforts are present. We can make our lives Islamic and strengthen our īmān in the light of the principles laid down by him. This is how we can fulfil his rights and bring joy to his soul.

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ، اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you.[1]

As per the wishes and efforts of the people of Mumbai, Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* made an intention to perform ḥajj in 1967. It was decided that he would board the first ship to the Ḥijāz because he intended spending Ramaḍān in the Holy Lands. A caravan of Shāh Sāḥib's disciples, associates and relatives was with him. His ship departed from the shores of Mumbai on 22 November 1967. Three days later, he departed from this ephemeral world on the 25th of November. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

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[1] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-28.

How grief-stricken his disciples and associates who were with him on this journey must have been by this sudden tragedy! Only those who were with him can correctly gauge it. No sooner this tragic news reached India, it caused intense grief to the Muslims of this country. Shāh Sāhib's disciples and associates in Mumbai, Allāhābād, Gorukhpūr, Aʿzamgarh and other places were all grief-stricken. Nonetheless, no one complained against the decree of Allāh *taʿālā*. Their tongues uttered words of pain and sorrow while their hearts were immersed in grief. This tragedy appears to be a major calamity, and passing away while on a journey seems to be very painful. However, Allāh's wisdom and His special treatment of His accepted servants are beyond our understanding. It is not for everyone to understand and fathom the divine wisdom behind this tragedy.

It is most pleasing and satisfying to note that Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī – a special confidant of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib and his senior deputy – has started to collate the statements of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and that the first volume of this collection is now ready, and being published under the title *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat*. We are convinced that the same manner of education and training, and the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat will be learnt from these statements as were learnt from Shāh Sāhib's assemblies. Furthermore, the vast regions of this country where his blessings and teachings had proliferated will now be conveyed to the elite and the laity through this collection. A treasure-house of rectitude and guidance containing Allāh's pleasure and obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will now be made available to them. And it will prove to be a means for providing ease and conveying blessings in ones daily practices.

I congratulate Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī from the bottom of my heart on his collation and publishing of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat.*

Inspiration is solely from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Saʿīd ar-Rahmān al-Aʿzamī Nadwī
Nadwatul ʻUlamā', Lucknow
11/5/1434 A.H.
24/3/2013

INTRODUCTION

Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd Ḥasanī Nadwī Sāḥib
(Academic Head at Nadwatul 'Ulamā', Lucknow)

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على سيد المرسلين، وخاتم النبيين، سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين، وبعد.

The work of propagation and rectification of the nation is a distinguished quality of the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. It was this quality which resulted in such an august group coming into existence. Those who did not witness the prophetic era but served the Qur'ān and teachings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a manner which presented the entire system of Dīn and the Sharīʿat, and prepared such personalities from one generation to the next who had been separating from Dīn those influences which were causing a distancing from Dīn and the prophetic era.

The system of propagation and rectification in India was initiated by Ḥaḍrat Khwājah Muʿīn ad-Dīn Chishtī *raḥimahullāh* (d. 632 A.H.). His lofty character and affection caused such a fragrant breeze to blow throughout India that people began entering the fold of Islam in droves. He established himself in Ajmer and seated his khalīfah, Ḥaḍrat Khwājah Bakhtiyār Kākī *raḥimahullāh* (d. 633 A.H.) in Delhi. The two then quenched the thirst of those who were thirsty for īmān and Allāh's love to the extent that the flag of Islam began to flutter in India. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred their lineage with immense blessings and inclusiveness whereby India continued producing men who

combined knowledge, concern and spirituality in every subsequent era. It was by virtue of the following qualities of these men that they strengthened Islam and guaranteed its survival in a manner whose parallel can be found in the early eras of Islam. These qualities were: intensely strong īmān, pain and concern, sincerity and devotion, conviction and reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, high aspirations, valiant character, abstinence and independence, establishing the truth, speaking out the truth during the most challenging times, and refuting falsehood.

The latter era commences with the revivalist works of Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī Imām Sirhindī (d. 1034 A.H.). He combated atheism, apostasy and disbelief on a governmental level. Consequently, people witnessed the greatest defender of Dīn and Sharīʿat on a governmental level in the form of Sultan Muhīyy ad-Dīn Aurangzeb ʿĀlamgīrī *rahimahullāh* when he ascended the throne.

From the same lineage we see Hakīm al-Islam Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and his sons who served knowledge and Dīn. From their lineage there appeared Amīr al-Mu'minīn Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh* who prepared a group of followers who were like the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and revived all the departments of Dīn along the lines of the Khilāfat-e-Rāshidah. These people did their work through propagation and rectification, and then through jihād, and were successful in their objectives.

Through the concern and training of this group, such individuals were trained who educated people and carried out the work of rectification of the selves by getting involved in the fields of education and spiritual rectification. The following names are well known in

the field of education: Maulānā Shāh Muḥammad Isḥāq, Shāh Muḥammad Yaʿqūb, Maulānā ʿAbd al-Qayyūm Budhānwī, Maulānā Saʿādat ʿAlī Sahāranpūrī, Maulānā Aḥmad ʿAlī Sahāranpūrī, Miyā Nadhīr Ḥusayn Muḥaddith Dehlawī, Maulānā Mamlūk ʿAlī Nānautwī, Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Mujaddidī Muhājir Madanī, Maulānā Shāh Luṭfullāh ʿAlīgarhī. It is through them that great scholars like Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautwī, Maulānā Yaʿqūb Nānautwī, Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, Maulānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Maungerī, Maulānā Shiblī Nuʿmānī, Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān Bhopālī, and Maulānā Muḥammad Maẓhar Nānautwī were trained. From them, the following distinguished scholars came onto the scene: Maulānā Maḥmūd Ḥasan Deobandī, Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī, Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ḥasanī, Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī and others.

The most important names in the field of spiritual rectification are those of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī *raḥimahullāh* and Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh Faḍl ar-Raḥmān Ganj Murādābādī *raḥimahullāh*. The same spiritual blessings were conferred in the eastern side of the country by Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Khwājah Aḥmad Ḥasanī Naṣīrābādī and after him, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Amīn Ḥasanī Naṣīrābādī.

Most of the above-mentioned personalities were affiliated to the family of Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* and the group of Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd *raḥimahullāh*. However, the last two [Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Khwājah Aḥmad Ḥasanī Naṣīrābādī and Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Amīn Ḥasanī Naṣīrābādī] were

genealogically and spiritually attached to Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh*, and academically connected to the family of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Hasanī Nasīrābādī was the khalīfah of Hadrat Diyā' an-Nabī Hasanī (d. 1906) who was the maternal grandfather of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Hasanī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*. His works in the fields of propagation and rectification were not confined to Rā'ī Bareilly and Nasīrābād. Rather, major strides in the propagation of knowledge were made in the eastern sections of the country like Jaunpūr, A'zamgarh, Ma'u, Benares and other areas. His rectificational works also extended to the family of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in the A'zamgarh area. This family benefited tremendously from the efforts of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Hasanī Nasīrābādī, and this has been constantly acknowledged by Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, his father and his family members.

Hadrat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Fatahpūrī Allāhābādī went to study in Deoband and benefited tremendously in the field of Hadīth from the distinguished Hadīth expert, 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*. He then attached himself to Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and traversed the stations of Sufism under his tutelage. Subsequently, he became one of his distinguished and senior khulafā'. The qualities of knowledge and research, pain and love, attachment to Allāh *ta'ālā*, rectification and training, propagation and instruction were all combined in him. He took recourse to these qualities in his lectures, statements, Qur'ān and Hadīth

lessons, and written works; and thereby made major contributions. His assembly was a place which, more than the laity, was occupied by scholars. This then became a major means for the guidance of the laity.

Towards the latter part of his life he had to spend summer and winter in Mumbai for the sake of medical treatment. His stay resulted in major changes in the conditions of the people of Mumbai. Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʿAlī Hasanī Nadwī *raḥimahullāh* writes in this regard:

> Had Allāh *taʿālā* willed, and had Maulānā travelled to Mumbai for a few more years, the city, to a large extent, would have developed an Islamic awakening, reformed its ways, had an enthusiasm for emulating the Sunnah, and hundreds and thousands of lives would have changed for the better. But none can fathom Allāh's *taʿālā* wisdom and divine mysteries. This chain of goodness and blessings suddenly came to an end in November 1967 (Shaʿbān 1387). Not only Mumbai, but the whole of India and the Islamic world at large was orphaned from this blessed existence who had refreshed our memories about the Sufis and reformers of the past. This personality proved that sincerity, pain and concern can wield their authority and influence in the most unpleasant situations, and in the most materialistic eras and places. [A poet says]:

> A true lover of Allāh changed an entire world.[1]

The identity of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Fatahpūrī *rahimahullāh* (d. 1967) becomes clear from the above description of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*. He writes about one of his visits to Allāhābād and his meeting with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.

> On this occasion I got the opportunity of observing him from close. He had a trembling and restless disposition. It seemed as though he had no rest for tomorrow. The conditions of the Muslims, the corruption of their character and dealings, a dearth of integrity and sincerity in them, and open hypocrisy in them caused him to become restless and disturbed. The yearning to rectify the situation and summon people to run towards Allāh *taʿālā* had overpowered his heart, mind and veins. His condition had become as described in the following couplet:
>
> > Sparks are emanating from every strand of my hair. There is a possibility of fire dripping from my veins.
>
> On seeing the Maulānā's restlessness and agitation, I spontaneously thought of Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He had the same lean

[1] Maulānā Abūl Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*: *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 1, p. 163.

appearance, informality in speech, independence when addressing someone, stuttering in speech like that of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, predominance of daʿwat, silence which is engrossed in thought, and the same quivering speech. Although there was a definite difference in them on the subject of daʿwat, he was the same as Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* in his love for Allāh *taʿālā* and concern for his responsibilities. I had the opportunity of attending his morning and evening assemblies. There was a captivating feeling, while at the same time, an absolute balance between the intellect and Sufism. He would occasionally hold some of his devoted attendants by their heads and shake them, and direct their attention towards an important and necessary point.

In his assemblies of Allāhābād, Maulānā focussed mainly on reminding about the Hereafter, encouraging towards the pleasures of Paradise, and warning against the torments of the Hell-fire. This Qur'ānic style of admonition is the most beneficial and has the greatest impact. More so when we consider the fact that the 'ulamā' and admonishers have completely disregarded the themes of the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell. They feel ashamed to speak about

these things as though it is unfashionable to mention them. [1]

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* writes further about one of his meetings with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* on his journey to Mumbai in 1967. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away not long after that:

> When I was going to the Hijāz in 1967, I stayed over in Mumbai for a few days. One morning, I went to Kurlā – where Maulānā was staying – and reached at the exact time when he was commencing his morning class. I was given a place near Maulānā's chair. Maulānā appeared, a microphone was placed in front of him, and he began speaking. In the midst of his talk, he asked for some books of tafsīr and Hadīth, read a few texts and continued his speech. I remained attached to the leg of the chair. I was already accustomed to Maulānā's tone and manner of speech, but I could not understand a considerable amount of what he said. Yet I saw a deep effect on the faces and eyes of those who were present. Like many occasions before, I realized that for a person to have an effect on his audience, oratory skills and words are not necessary. [As a saying goes]:
>
> > "The beloveds have many ways for which there are no names and words."

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[1] Maulānā Abūl Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*: *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 1, p. 157.

> After all, many powerful and eloquent orators deliver speeches and lectures, but they neither have any effect on the hearts nor do they bring about any change in the lives. As Jigar [a poet] said:
>
> > "There is no joy of love in the eyes, and
> > no light of conviction on the face."

There was a need to present the statements, articles and teachings of Hadrat in a clearer manner. After all, if it was difficult for the scholars to understand them, it would certainly not be easy for the laity. The one who could have been most eligible to fulfil this need could only be the one who had the honour of studying directly under him, of being in his service and of remaining in his company. Furthermore, he must also have had enjoyed the confidence of Hadrat. Subsequently, it was his own student, son-in-law and a reformer of this era – Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib – who undertook this responsibility. Hadrat Maulānā's series *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* are still continuing. Several volumes and editions have already been published. It has also been translated into English and is widely appreciated by the 'ulamā' and laity. Hadrat Maulānā himself has a deep knowledge of Sufism. In his assemblies he quotes the statements of the reformers, Sufi masters and Allāh-conscious 'ulamā'. These are of immense benefit to his audiences and to those who read his books.

He collated a work of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* titled *Tahārat-e-Qalb*. The themes of this book are read in some spiritual training centres. They are also read during the month of Ramadān in the assemblies of our hometown, Takiyah, Rā'ī Bareilly. Scholars and masses of other areas are also benefiting from this book. Hadrat Maulānā is engaged in other

scholarly and academic works as well. In addition to referring to the books of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, he makes reference to the latter's assemblies and statements which have been published in *Ma'rifat-e-Haq* and *Wasīyyatul 'Irfān*. The book under review, *Ma'ārif Muslihul Ummat*, is an important link in this chain. The first volume has already been published and more work in this regard is still being done.

Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib is undoubtedly rendering sterling and effective services in the field of conveying the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and his khulafā'. I had the good fortune of attending his assemblies. I used to meet Hadrat Maulānā whenever I had the honour of visiting and meeting Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh* in Allāhābād. Hadrat Maulānā is also one of his senior khulafā'. His teachings and blessings are not confined to this country alone. Rather, they extend to distant regions and foreign countries as well. He has a deep and respectful relationship with my elder brother, Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Rābi' Hasanī Nadwī *dāmat barakātuhum* and is also a member of the administrative board of Nadwatul 'Ulamā'. He is particular about attending its annual meetings. In this way, I have many opportunities of meeting him and benefiting from him.

Hadrat Maulānā has honoured me by including me in this written work in which he endeavoured to present the teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which portray his balanced views, rectification system, and the complete religion of Islam to the Muslims. He also successfully tried to explain

and simplify the sciences of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for the benefit of the laity. A special feature of his sciences is that he presents his points in the light of the Qur'ān, Hadīth, and the statements of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* and erudite 'ulamā'. In addition to explaining and simplifying them, Hadrat Maulānā has brief annotations.

Hadrat Maulānā personally read some extracts of this book to me, and then sent me a copy of the entire book for me to study. The teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which have been simplified and explained by a close associate and distinguished scholar do not need an introduction or review. I wrote these few lines after considering it to be an honour and good fortune. May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* combined this world with the Hereafter. After combining the two, he encouraged towards gaining proximity with Allāh *ta'ālā* through his lectures, statements, writings and articles. The difference is that the world must not be made an objective. Rather, it must be used to reach the objective. I quote a paragraph from this very book:

> This world is certainly not disparaged. In other words, as regards the disparagement of the world mentioned in the texts, we have to understand that it has been mentioned out of necessity so that people do not make this world the objective, and their engrossment with it does not cause them to forget the Hereafter. Apart from this reason, this world is an excellent home for a person.

He explains this point further on:

> It is only in this world that a believer gets proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*, īmān, good deeds. This is why the world cannot be entirely disparaged.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was from among those 'ulamā' to whom the following verse of the Qur'ān applies:

اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

It is solely the 'ulamā' who fear Allāh.

And who are seen to be manifestations of the following prediction of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*:

يحمل هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله، ينفون تحريف الغالين، وانتحال المبطلين، وتأويل الجاهلين.

The bearers of this knowledge will be the just and equitable ones from every generation. They are the ones who will protect it against the misinterpretation of extremists, keep it pure from the deviated ones, and preserve it from the incorrect interpretations of the ignoramuses.

I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* that this book will prove to be an aid in understanding and presenting Islam correctly, and people will get help from it for leading correct Islamic lives. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* and He alone guides to the correct path.

Muhammad Wādih Rāshīd Hasanī Nadwī
Academic Head, Nadwatul 'Ulamā', Lucknow
18 Dhū al-Qa'dah 1437 A.H.

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the third volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* is in your hands. People have already written about its benefit and usefulness. The words of appreciation which we periodically hear and read by the 'ulamā' and Sufis are a source of delight and happiness to our hearts and minds, and an encouragement. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them.

I request the reader to pray that this beneficial series continues for at least ten volumes. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, there are many statements and articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which need to be presented. I therefore request my assistants to render this service by working hard, striving and focussing on this task. I have full hopes in Allāh *taʿālā* rewarding them in the Hereafter for this important Dīnī service and the benefit it entails. I make an earnest duʿā' for it.

A point of joy is that the one who made these statements himself encourages us to read them. This is quoted in *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. I feel it appropriate to quote it here.

> People are benefiting tremendously from the *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* which is published from here. They express their impressions regularly via the letters which they write to me.
>
> One person wrote: "Māshā Allāh, *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* is really fulfilling the duty of enabling us to recognize and learn the truth. Although I am deprived of your

close company, I am deriving far more educational blessings through this periodical than what I derive when I occasionally have the opportunity of presenting myself to you." He also wrote: "In the latest issue, I read the article on the reality of inventions. My heart and tongue spontaneously responded with 'Māshā Allāh' and 'Sub-hānallāh'. Allāh *taʿālā* enabled Hadrat to expound this reality so correctly and in a manner which probably no one from the present seniors paid attention to."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* wrote in his reply to this person:

I am overjoyed by the fact that people are deriving many benefits from *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. Those who are far away are also benefiting. I quote from *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* of ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* to support what I just wrote:

فنابت عنهم رسائلهم بعد موتهم في نصح المريدين

The writings of the Ahlullāh serve as their deputies after their death in advising their disciples.

He refers to their writings as their deputies. The blessings and teachings of the Ahlullāh can be proliferated by creating an interest in their writings and books. The blessings which their disciples used to acquire when they were alive can be acquired from their written works after

their death. It is essential to study their writings with full concentration of the heart so that benefits could be derived from them.

In this regard, he says further: It is the responsibility of the seniors to compile and collate their sciences and mysteries. This surpasses all other duties because nothing else can take the place of their explanation of the ailments of the heart and other matters related to the Sharīʿat. Each one of them has a special rank in his affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* which is not shared by anyone else. This is why no one else can explain these things.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* says further on:

When a person's taste buds become spoilt, he has to take some medication to set them in order. I am speaking about the very same medication at present. When a limb is afflicted by a physical ailment, it is treated. You can understand spiritual ailments in the same light. When the heart falls ill and its sense of taste becomes spoilt, there is a need to treat it. This is done to set right its taste. The treatment for it is the same, viz. study the writings of the saints carefully. This is because the speech of the Ahlullāh turns an impotent man into a potent man, and a potent man into a lion. Their speech has a powerful effect which causes the condition of the heart to change.

I constantly receive letters on this subject. People write to me and say that the condition of their heart is changing after reading *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. I am quoting a few letters here:

1. This unworthy fellow is presently studying Hadrat's statements, especially *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*.

Hadrat! I am saying without any exaggeration that – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – I have a keen interest in reading Dīnī books and articles. However, I do not know what your *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* did to me that I have lost interest in reading other books and articles. My heart desires to read your statements and teachings again and again. I continue reading them but I still want to read more.

2. When I sit down to read *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*, I feel as though I am sitting in the largest dār al-ʿulūm of the world, the shaykh of the world is delivering a lecture and my heart is getting closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. My eyes also shed tears when I read certain themes such as Allāh *taʿālā* never wastes away His devoted servants.

3. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the benefit and blessings of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* are almost total and complete in this region.

4. Observe the following letter which a person writes to his friend:

I was at a person's place and my eyes fell on *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. I read it and was

> overjoyed. I became a subscriber to it and also ordered all the back issues. After reading this periodical, I developed a yearning to meet Maulānā Sāḥib. I still am not fully convinced about this shaykh/murīd relationship, but I am desirous of benefiting from the company of a pious ʿālim who is a friend of Allāh *taʿālā*. I try to meet saints and dervishes. I do not know when Allāh *taʿālā* will open my heart and enable me to receive guidance from a qualified mentor. Was salām.
>
> I was speaking on the subject of finding sweet things to be bitter, and vice versa. This happens when one's taste buds are spoilt. There is a need to set them right. This can be done through the company of the Ahlullāh and studying their books. That is all.

Glory to Allāh! These are extremely useful themes which ought to be embedded in our hearts. The statements and articles of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* are generally of this nature. It seems as though they are being cast into his pure heart for the sake of rectification of the Muslim community. When my beloved wife and beloved son, Maulwī Maqbūl Aḥmad Qāsimī, were admitted in P.G.I. Hospital and Sahārā Hospital in Lucknow, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Rābiʿ Ḥasanī Nadwī, his brother, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd Ḥasanī Nadwī *raḥimahullāh* and a few of their associates came to visit. On that occasion, I presented to them the manuscript of the second volume of *Maʿārif Muṣliḥul Ummat*. On reading its subject matter,

Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Wāḍiḥ Rashīd Ḥasanī Nadwī *raḥimahullāh* said: "It is essential reading for the rectification of the Muslim community."

May Allāh *taʿālā* enable this work to continue in the best way and may He accept it. Āmīn. It is my wish that at least ten volumes of this series be printed so that the special academic and spiritual themes of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* may be recorded, and a rich treasure-house of rectification and training may be presented to the Muslim community.

I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to fulfil this wish, accept it and enable everyone to benefit from it. Āmīn.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Rajab al-Murajjab 1439 A.H.
April 2018

INTRODUCTION

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على رسوله الذي بعث معلما للكتاب والحكمة، ومزكي نفوس الناس وعلى آله وأصحابه الذين سلكوا مسلك التوحيد والإخلاص. أما بعد.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* the introduction to *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* volume one was written by Maulānā Sūfī Zahīr ad-Dīn Sāhib. A long introduction to volume two was written by Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Wādih Rashīd Nadwī *rahimahullāh*, and a comprehensive introduction to volume three was written by Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Abul Qāsim Sāhib Nuʿmānī, principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. A further introduction was written by ʿAllāmah Khālid Mahmūd Sāhib which you just read.

My heart desired that I make a brief mention of those who assisted me in compiling the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This will bring additional joy and happiness to me. I now present their contributions in this regard.

Acting under the instruction of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* proceeded to his hometown. He then began delivering lectures there and in the surrounding towns and villages. These were noted.

When I began residing permanently with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, the following three

personalities were already living in Hadrat's company:

1. Hadrat Maulānā Hakīm Bashīr ad-Dīn Sāhib Kaupāganjī, a student of Hadrat ʿAllāmah Muhammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*.
2. Hāfiz Muhammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib Fatahpūrī.
3. Master Muhammad ʿĪsā Sāhib Hamīdpūrī.

Each one was noting Hadrat's statements and writing fatāwā. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would then scrutinize the fatāwā and hand them over to the person who asked for them or send them by post. Immediately after my arrival at the khānqāh in Fatahpūr, Hadrat commenced the work of writing. For example, *Tahdhīr al-ʿUlamā' ʿAn Khisāl as-Sufahā', al-Usūl an-Nādirah*, etc.

The arrival of Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib

I recall Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* arriving in 1950 and residing permanently with Hadrat. He was appointed to the task of recording Hadrat's statements and writing fatāwā. He fulfilled these duties in a beautiful and excellent manner. During this period the writing of *Wasīyyatul Akhlāq* commenced. Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib and I joined in this work. When it was completed, I was ordered to read it in the presence of the ʿulamā'. I did so with much trepidation but it was highly appreciated by the ʿulamā'. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Not long after Hadrat's arrival in Allāhābād, the house at number 23 Bakhshī Bāzār was purchased. Everyone shifted to this place, and the programme of

writing, reading, teaching and studying commenced. Hadrat also conducted many assemblies and people began attending. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* began performing his salāh in the Dhāl Wālī Masjid and Mahalle Wālī Masjid. He would remain for a long time in the latter masjid and would express his peace and contentment here. Subsequently, I established Madrasah ʿArabīyyah Bayt al-Maʿārif here. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, it is well run to this day.

Two contributions of Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib

(1)

In addition to purchasing the house in 23 Bakhshī Bāzār, Dr. Sāhib suggested to Hadrat that if the articles which are being written are published in the form of a periodical, all sections of the Muslim community will benefit tremendously. Hadrat was not too keen but Dr. Sāhib continually apprised Hadrat of the benefit of this work. It was due to Dr. Sāhib's sincerity and genuineness that Hadrat eventually agreed to initiate a periodical. *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* was subsequently published. Despite this, Hadrat - in his humility - would repeatedly say that his articles should not be published. Instead, the statements and teachings of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā Sayyid ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* ought to be published so that people could benefit from them. Articles of these personalities were thus published in the early issues of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. The statements and articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* were published together with these. The masses and the scholars began expressing their verbal and written approval and appreciation of these articles. This encouraged Hadrat to publish more and more of

these articles and statements so that the Muslim community could benefit from them. This resulted in a large number of subscribers and the periodical made great strides.

(2)

The thought then came in the mind of Dr. Sāḥib that if the statements are recorded on tape, then the work of transcribing Ḥaḍrat's statements will increase, many of his statements will reach the Muslim community via *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq*, and more people will benefit from them. Dr. Sāḥib mentioned the tape-recorder to Ḥaḍrat and explained its advantages to it. Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* deferred the matter by saying: "It is the pages of the hearts which are for the recording of sciences and facts, and not these new inventions."

Nonetheless, Dr. Sāḥib was so zealous about it that he spoke about its usefulness time and again to Ḥaḍrat. He eventually agreed and - all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* - a tape recorder was obtained. When Ḥaḍrat was made to listen to a recording, he was quite pleased and agreed to this arrangement. Ḥaḍrat's student, Maulānā ʿAmmār Aḥmad Sāḥib and I were put in charge of it.

When Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* arrived in his assembly on the first day, he spoke on the following verse in line with the capability of the tape-recorder:

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا فِيْهِ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰوَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هٰذَا الْكِتٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيْرَةً وَّلَا كَبِيْرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصٰهَا ۚ وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا ۗ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا.

The book of records will be placed [before them]. You will then see the sinners afraid of what is written therein and they will say: "Woe to us! What is it with this book that it does not leave out anything small nor big without having enumerated it?!" They will find whatever they did placed before them. Your Sustainer will not wrong anyone.[1]

Hadrat then spoke about the rank of the seniors and some supernatural feats. The people enjoyed the talk thoroughly and Hadrat too was quite happy. In fact, it was published separately as a booklet titled *Ījādāt Kī Haqīqat*.

We would preserve his statements daily through the tape recorder, transcribe them the same day, and read them to Hadrat after maghrib. This continued until the very end. In this way, a large treasure of statements was collected. On the other side, the practice of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* of noting Hadrat's statements also continued. In this way, Hadrat's statements were being compiled, published, and people were deriving benefit from them. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Written works

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that Hadrat's programme of writing had commenced from his

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 49.

hometown, Fatahpūr. During his stay in Fatahpūr, *Tahdhīr al-'Ulamā' 'An Khisāl as-Sufahā', al-Usūl an-Nādirah, Wasīyyatul Ihsān*, etc. had already been written. Many other books were written later on, e.g. *Wasīyyatul Ikhlās, I'tirāf-e-Dhunūb*, etc. These have been collated and printed in five volumes under the title *Ta'līfāt-e-Muslihul Ummat.* Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib strove especially hard in its compilation. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

Tilāwat-e-Qur'ān is a summary of Hadrat's talks which were given in the month of Ramadān. I collated this book and presented it to Hadrat. He was overjoyed and said: "This is a book through which many people could become close friends of Allāh *ta'ālā*." Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib collated the talks of another Ramadān and compiled them under the title *I'tirāf-e-Dhunūb*. It was highly appreciated by the masses and the scholars. I wrote a book titled *I'tirāf Qusūr* and published it with *I'tirāf-e-Dhunūb*. I also compiled *Ījādāt Kī Haqīqat* and *Amr bil Ma'rūf Wa Nahy 'Anil Munkar*. I make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to make these a means for my success in the Hereafter and to confer Hadrat with the highest stages in Paradise. After all, he enlightened the Muslim community with such beneficial themes from which we are benefiting to this day. In the course of reading them, I constantly make du'ā' for Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for have noted them and provided us with such a treasure. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

Ma'ārif Muslihul Ummat

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* two volumes of this book have been published and the third book is also ready for printing. I make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to enable not only these three volumes but more to be

printed and be a source of benefit for the Muslim community. Āmīn.

This important work commenced when my son, Maulānā Maḥbūb Aḥmad Nadwī (a grandson of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*) said to me: "If my beloved grandfather's statements which are lying scattered over many years' of periodicals are collated, simplified and rearranged, then-inshā Allāh-the masses and the scholars will benefit from them." What he said made a lot of sense and it was therefore essential to accept it. My friends and associates gladly accepted this advice and Maulānā Maḥbūb Aḥmad and Muftī Zayn al-Islam commenced with it. Several periodicals were collated and specific articles were separated. They had just started the work when Muftī Zayn al-Islam was offered a job at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband in the iftā' department. He left and began serving the iftā' department there. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*.

The work was then undertaken by Maulānā Ṣābir 'Alī Ṣāḥib Qāsimī, Maulānā Kamāl Aḥmad Nadwī and Maulānā Maḥbūb Aḥmad Nadwī. After reading the articles carefully, they would hand them over to me. I would then study them deeply, simplify and rearrange them. I had to put more efforts in doing this than in writing my own work. This is because Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* had clearly stated: "Study my articles carefully and, if you see the need, you have the right to make changes. I do not want my articles to contain anything which would leave room for later peoples to make objections. Points of this nature have crept into the statements of our seniors resulting in people making objections to them."

I make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable me to carry out this task as per Hadrat's good thoughts about me, to crown it with acceptance, and to make it beneficial to the entire Muslim community especially to those who are affiliated to him. Āmīn.

Was salām
Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
25 Rabīʿ ath-Thānī 1440 A.H.

INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā. Salutations to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

By the grace of Allāh taʿālā, you have the fourth volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* in your hands. By Allāh's grace, the first three volumes have reached the readers and they continue benefiting from them. Those who are appreciative of knowledge and the sciences inform me of the benefit of these volumes through their written and spoken words. May Allāh taʿālā reward them, increase their knowledge, and bless them with more cognition. Āmīn.

Maulānā Fīroze ʿĀlam Qāsimī informed me on several occasions that there is a need to write an introduction to this fourth volume, even if it is a short one. I could not think of what to write, but by Allāh's grace, I happened to come across a text of ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah rahimahullāh which is noted in his book, *Safahāt Min Sabr al-'Ulamā'*. I had quoted it previously in the sixth volume of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* under the heading: The Stories And Statements of Allāh's Friends And The Benefit of Their Companionship.

I felt I should quote it here as an introduction. This article serves as an approval of the themes of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh and is a comprehensive elucidation of them. The themes of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh are full of stories and statements of the Auliyā', and the benefits of remaining in their company. I commence with Allāh's name and quote the text of ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Fattāh rahimahullāh for it is fully in line with our objective and the themes of this book.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah rahimahullāh wrote this article in the introduction to his book *Safahāt Min Sabr al-ʿUlamā'*. I am presenting the gist of it here. (compiler)

Benefits of the company of the Auliyā'

الحمد لله حمد الشاكرين، والصلوة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين، وعلى من تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين.

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā. Peace and salutations to His Messenger.

The stories of practising ʿulamā' and well-mannered righteous people are undoubtedly an excellent means for imprinting virtues on the hearts. They pave the way for man to realize his high aspirations and to bear the hardships which he is to face. He develops the zeal to follow in the footsteps of personalities who were endowed with resilience and determination. It then becomes easy for man to reach high ranks and lofty heights.

A scholar of the past said: "Stories are from among the armies of Allāh taʿālā through which He strengthens the hearts of His friends." Someone asked him: "Is there any proof for this?" He replied: "The proof for this is the following verse:

وَكُلاًّ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ.

> All that We relate to you of the accounts of the Messengers whereby We strengthen your heart.[1]

[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 120.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh said: Speaking about the noble qualities of 'ulamā' is more beloved to me than a lot of jurisprudence. This is because these stories are about the mannerisms and characteristics of people. The proof of this is the following verse:

أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ فَبِهُدَاهُمُ اقْتَدِهْ.

> They are the ones whom Allāh guided. So you tread their path.[1]

Allāh taʿālā says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ.

> There is certainly a lesson in their stories for those who possess intelligence.[2]

In the introduction to his book *al-Luqaṭ Fī Ḥikāyāt aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn,* Imām Jauzī raḥimahullāh quotes a statement of Mālik ibn Dīnār raḥimahullāh who said: "Stories of the saints are the gifts of Paradise." He was asked: "Do you have any proof for saying this?" He quoted the following words of Allāh taʿālā:

وَكُلاًّ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ

> All that We relate to you of the accounts of the Messengers whereby We strengthen your heart.[3]

---

[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 90.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 111.

[3] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 120.

Another scholar said: “Relate stories in abundance because they are pearls. Sometimes a unique pearl is found among them.”

In this context, the word “pearls” refers to a point which is clear, succinct and precise; due to which there is no need for a long drawn out explanation.

The word “unique pearl” means that the story is beneficial, effective and has an immediate effect on the heart; leaving no room for anything more to be said.

In the introduction to his book *al-Muntaẓam Fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk Wa al-Umam*, Imām Jauzī raḥimahullāh writes that there are innumerable benefits in the books of history, the biography of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and other biographies. Some of the important benefits are:

A person learns many new and astounding facts. He learns about the changing times, the ups and downs of divine decree and stories. When a person listens to incidents and stories being related to him, he experiences a type of comfort.

Abū ʿAmr ibn ʿAlā’ says that a man from the Bakr ibn Wā’il tribe was asked: “You are gone old. The time to enjoy the pleasures of food, drink and marriage is over. Would you like to die now?” He replied in the negative. He was asked: “Why? What pleasure is there which is making you want to live on?” He replied: “I enjoy listening to new and novel pieces of information.”

I [ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah] say: If you want to revive your enthusiasm, enliven your emotions, enlighten your internal capabilities, awaken your resolve, set right your character peacefully and silently without any order and prohibition, be

beyond insignificant things, take part in lofty works, and emulate the pious predecessors; then the only way to do this is to study the lives and biographies of erudite righteous 'ulamā', to fill your heart with the virtues of Allāh-fearing 'ulamā', and to gain proximity to revivers who were practical and of towering character.

This is why stories are the best means for instilling courage, strengthening resolve and embedding high aspirations. They enlighten the heart and create sincerity and soundness in intentions. They awaken latent capabilities and make it easy to bear forthcoming challenges and to wade through difficult passes. Stories have also proved to be excellent means for enabling man to reach the peaks of honour and greatness, make a good name for himself in this world and enjoy the eternal good of the Hereafter. I am hopeful that the reader of this book will acquire immense benefits from it. All good and rectitude are from Allāh ta'ālā alone.[1]

Note: This is a beneficial and enlightening article. May Allāh ta'ālā enable us to benefit from it and practise on it. Āmīn.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Dār al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmīyyah
Karelī, Allāhābād
13 Rabī' ath-Thānī 1442 A.H.
25 November 2020

[1] *Safaḥāt Min Sabr al-'Ulamā'*, p. 18.

FOREWORD

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

This insignificant servant says to the reader that he has made a firm resolution to publish in book form the reformational, rectificational and academic statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which are being published in parts in the periodicals *Maʿrifat Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. The first volume is now in your hands. Allāh willing, it will be a source of much enlightenment. I make a solemn prayer that by reading it, Allāh *taʿālā* creates such a yearning in the reader's heart that it prompts him towards action. May it develop a determination to acquire Allāh's love, His recognition and His proximity especially in the hearts of those who are associated with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn.

Firstly, I would like to present a brief history of the periodicals *Maʿrifat Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. Allāh willing reading it will bring joy to you.

I got married in 1370 A.H./1950 to the daughter of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and proceeded to live with her at his house in Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā, district Ma'u. On my arrival, my special friend Master Muhammad ʿĪsā Sāhib Hamīdpūrī and the honourable Maulānā Bashīr ad-Dīn Sāhib Kaupāganjī (a student of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Anwar Sāhib Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*) were present in the service of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. These two personalities were considered to be his special

associates and were fulfilling the task of penning Hadrat's statements. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards.

The arrival of Maulānā •Abd ar-Raḥmān Jāmī

During the same period, Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Sāḥib Jāmī *raḥimahullāh* arrived to live permanently in Hadrat's service. He too commenced the task of noting and penning Hadrat's statements and began attending our lessons.

During this period, Hadrat completed writing two of his books, *al-Usūl an-Nādirah* and *Taḥdhīr al-ʿUlamāʾ*. Special attention was given to reading the book *Taḥdhīr al-ʿUlamāʾ* to the senior ʿulamāʾ of Kaupāganj and Maʾu. The ʿulamāʾ were highly impressed by this book and requested Hadrat to have it published. Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Zahūr al-Hasan Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was especially emphatic in expressing the need to publish and print this book. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* granted his permission. The Maulānā then directed his efforts in this regard and the book came into the hands of the students. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards.

Soon thereafter, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Quddūs Sāḥib Rūmī *raḥimahullāh* initiated the periodical *al-Iḥsān* from Allāhābād in Muharram 1374 A.H./1954. In it, he used to publish the statements of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* and the teachings and writings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. However, this series ended after some time.

Subsequently, the ʿulamāʾ expressed their desire to restart the publishing of this periodical but Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* was not happy about it. When Hāfiz Dr. Salāḥ ad-Dīn Sāḥib Siddīqī *raḥimahullāh* eventually presented his request, Hadrat agreed happily and also

wrote a comprehensive paragraph for it. It is quoted below:

> We praise Allāh *taʿālā* and send salutations to His noble Messenger.
>
> A monthly periodical is to be published by Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib and others. My statements and writings will probably be published in it. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable them to carry out this task, to bless them with good intentions, and to accept this work. This is my duʿā'.
>
> Wasīyyullāh, *may Allāh pardon him.*

The periodical began to be published monthly under the editorship and administration of the Dr. Sāhib and it was well received by all sections of the community.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh* had been penning the statements from the very beginning. When the periodical began to be published, the Maulānā paid even more attention to noting Hadrat's assemblies and the statements which he made on other occasions. He would then read them to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Similarly, this insignificant servant and Maulwī ʿAmmār Ahmad Sāhib used to note the statements of the assemblies through a tape recorder, arrange them in sequence and present them to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. He would then study them carefully and they would be published in *Maʿrifat Haqq*.

Hadrat's love for his seniors

Although the periodical began its publication, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "The periodical should contain more themes of our seniors than my own themes. This is because they were sincere and the

special servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. Their statements and writings will prove to be more beneficial."

When a person reads the early issues, he will note that many articles of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and others were published.

Unfortunately, certain unfavourable situations caused *Maʿrifat Haqq* to terminate and it was replaced by *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are continually published in it, and they are most beneficial. Maulānā Mahbūb Ahmad Nadwī – a grandson of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – felt that if the statements are published in book form, they will – Allāh willing – prove to be most useful to all sections of the community. Allāh willing, this series – titled *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* - will continue in several volumes.

The greatness of the statements of the seniors

All people of the heart and scholars agree that the statements of the auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* have a special effect which is perceived by every man of the heart. At times, the person who hears their statements does not even understand them, yet he is affected by them and enjoys them.

I heard this several times from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* that Arab ʿulamā' used to attend the *Mathnawī* of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* lessons which were conducted by Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, and they used to enjoy them thoroughly. Someone asked Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: "Hadrat! These Arab ʿulamā' attend the *Mathnawī* lessons. How do they understand the Persian and Urdu explanations?" He replied: "They understand them fully through their temperament

and emotions." There are other examples of this nature.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was also from among those personalities who made a deep impression on the hearts and through whose company and effective statements the ummat was revived.

In his introduction to *Risālah al-Mustarshidīn*, ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah *rahimahullāh* writes on the effects and benefits of reading and listening to the statements and life conditions of the righteous and pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. He writes in this regard:

> The hearts are naturally disposed to loving to emulate the righteous, to adhere to their ways, to be inclined to be like them, and to follow their actions and statements. You will therefore see that in my commentary [to this book], I included the statements and incidents of the ʿulamā', the righteous, the ardent worshippers, the mujāhidīn, the ascetics and the patient ones. These statements and incidents would urge a believer, together with his īmān, to emulate them, to imitate their lifestyles, to do the deeds which they did, to increase the strength and energy of his Islam, his striving, his patience and his bravery, and to be the best sample for the righteous who preceded him. A poet says
>
> وتَشبَّهوا إن لم تكن مِثلَهم – إنَّ التشبُّه بالكرام فلاحُ
>
> *Imitate [them] if you are not like them. Surely, imitating the honourable [would result in your] success.*

Three reasons for wanting to live in this world

The righteous scholars are of the opinion that being in the company of the righteous, hearing about their life conditions and studying their lives and characteristics are important objectives of this life. This is because an intelligent person loves this world only for the perfection of these qualities and attributes, increase in good deeds and preparations for the Hereafter. This is why Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that had it not been for three things, I would not want to live in this world:

1. To go personally for the sake of jihād in Allāh's cause or to despatch an army for this purpose.
2. To spend the night in worship for the immense rewards that can be accrued through it.
3. To be in the company of such people who select and choose pure and excellent conversations just as the choicest dates are selected [from a heap].

Note: Glory to Allāh! What excellent words which ought to be adopted in our lives. It is especially necessary for the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and Muslims in general to listen to and read the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, make them a part and parcel of their lives, and strive to practise on them. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

The establishment of Idārah Ma•ārif Muslihul Ummat and Dār at-Tazkiyah wa al-Ihsān

It is to this end we established Dār Saʿīd on 12 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1425 A.H./2004. From here, the work of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* is being done and other books

are also being worked on. *Maʿārif Muṣliḥul Ummat* will be published from this centre. Work from Dār at-Tazkiyah wa al-Iḥsān is also continuing. Since 1427 A.H., a khānqāh is conducted here in the first ten days of Ramaḍān. Several hundred seekers especially from Gujarat attend this programme. A few seekers from overseas countries also attend. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, everyone perceives benefit in this. Anyway, all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that seekers and students come throughout the year. We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* that these people derive spiritual benefit and it becomes a means for them to acquire spiritual affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā*. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

A few important points

I read every letter and word of these statements and articles several times; and made changes wherever I felt the need for clarification and simplification. Allāh willing, these changes will be in line with the temperament and approval of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. While he was alive, he said to me on several occasions: "You must study every theme of mine carefully and then make changes wherever you feel appropriate so that there remains no point which is objectionable." May Allāh *taʿālā* accept this effort and make it a source of reward. Āmīn.

Muftī Zayn al-Islām Qāsimī, Maulwī Maqṣūd Aḥmad Qāsimī, Maulwī Maqbūl Aḥmad Qāsimī and Maulwī Maḥbūb Aḥmad Nadwī helped in the printing of this book according to their personal capabilities. Maulwī Miṣbāḥ Aḥmad referenced the Aḥādīth thereby bring more life to the themes.

Maulwī Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh Qāsimī, Maulwī Muḥammad ʿUbaydullāh Nadwī and Maulwī Fīrauz

ʿĀlam Qāsimī displayed much interest and enthusiasm in the composing, editing and printing of the book. This work was then completed through the financial assistance of Maulānā Qārī ʿAbd as-Sattār Sāḥib Āchaudī. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards.

We started reading the articles and statements of Ḥadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* which have already been published in *Maʿrifat Ḥaqq* and which are to be published in the future volumes. Every statement is a testimony to Ḥadrat Muslihul Ummat's distinguished position in the field of reformation and logical reasoning. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to study his teachings and guidelines, and to practise on them. Āmīn.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Qārī Muḥammad Mubīn Sāḥib reads the articles and themes of Ḥadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* in the assembly. People derive much benefit from them. This is another reason why I felt that the statements and themes which are published in parts in *Maʿrifat Ḥaqq* be compiled in one place. In this way, it will become easier to read and listen to them. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to benefit from this golden series. Āmīn.

When I requested Ḥadrat Maulānā Saʿīd ar-Raḥmān Nadwī Aʿẓamī – Principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwatul ʿUlamā' Lucknow – to write an introduction to this collection, he acceded happily to my request. He wrote an excellent and comprehensive introduction and sent it to me. It is included in this book. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

I request all to pray that Allāh *taʿālā* makes *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* beneficial to all sections of the community – the elite and the laity. May He accept it

and honour Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* with the highest stages in Jannatul Firdaus. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Bayt al-Adhkār, Waṣīyābād, Allāhābād
29 Muharram al-Harām 1434 A.H.
13 December 2012

FOREWORD

الحمد لله والواحد القهار، العزيز الغفار، مقدم الأقدار ومصرف الأمور على ما يشاء ويختار، ومكور الليل على النهار.

الواحد الأحد الفرد العليم الحكيم الذي أيقظ من خلقه من اصطفاه فأدخله في جملة الأخيار، ووفق من اختار من عبيده فجعله من الأبرار.

وبصر من أحبه من خلقه للحقائق، فزهدوا في هذا الدار فاجتهدوا في مرضاته والتأهب لدار القرار.

والصلوة والسلام على نبيه المصطفى المختار، وعلى اله الأطهار، وأصحابه الأخيار، والمهاجرين منهم والأنصار رضي الله عنهم.

Respected friends! This insignificant friend of yours presents volume two of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* to you which contains the statements and teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. As before, I had to toil quite a bit in the arrangement and editing of this work. This is because it is not easy to convert a speech to the written word as stated by Shaykh Ahmad Rūmī *rahimahullāh* the compiler of *Majālis al-Abrār*. He writes:

> Acting under the request of the honourable Muhammad Radī ʿUthmānī Sāhib, the owner of Dār al-Ishāʿat Karachi, I commenced revising and renewing the book, *Majālis al-Abrār*. It is easy to make

> something new and to embellish it, but it is difficult to change and decorate something which is old and to put it in line with one's own preferences. I too had to bear many hardships in rearranging this book. A major reason for this is that the themes of the book were not arranged according to a set sequence. Instead, one topic and then another, and then a third topic are discussed without sequence as normally happens in a speech or lecture. The entire discussion may be most appropriate and concurring, but it is difficult to give it a specific theme or topic. Then you find certain themes repeated in different assemblies. While they were necessary in themselves, it becomes difficult for the person who is arranging the different themes. It is also hard to separate one point from another because the themes of each assembly are so strongly interconnected that it is difficult to correctly separate one from the other.

Thus, I had to toil extensively in compiling and arranging this collection. I did this so that it becomes easy for the Muslims in general and the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* in particular to derive benefit from this book.

Many readers expressed their approval and appreciation with respect to the first volume. This was especially the case with Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbdullāh Sāhib Kāpaudrī, a distinguished scholar and a man of action of Gujarat. He expressed his considerable approval and took several copies for his close associates in Canada.

Maulānā Sayyid Najm al-Hasan ibn Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* also expressed the benefit of this book.

The other most pleasing point is that Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Wādih Sāhib Nadwī wrote a most eloquent and lengthy introduction which is most certainly a major academic gift for us. Hadrat Maulānā quoted the statements of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʻAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* which the latter made in his book *Purāne Chirāgh* about Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This is a source of much pride for us. I make duʻā' to Allāh *taʻālā* to bless Hadrat Maulānā, his brother, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Rābiʻ Sāhib (the nāzim of Dār al-ʻUlūm Nadwatul ʻUlamā', Lucknow) and the other family members with good health and wellness, and to inspire them to continue rendering religious and academic services. Āmīn.

I make duʻā' to Allāh *taʻālā* to make this book beneficial to the ummat and to make it easy for us to complete the remaining volumes. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Muharram al-Harām 1438 A.H.
October 2016

A CONCISE INTRODUCTION TO HADRAT MUSLIHUL UMMAT

Maulānā Sūfī Zahīr ad-Dīn Ahmad

To: Maulwī Maqbūl Ahmad, Maulwī Mahbūb Ahmad, Maulwī Muhammad ʿAbdullāh and Maulwī Muhammad ʿUbaydullāh

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

I hope you are well. I am feeling weak and request your prayers for my complete good health.

I learnt via Muhammad Tāhir Khān that you people are publishing the statements and articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which had been published in *Maʿrifat Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. I was overjoyed when I learnt of this because I consider it to be a great glad tiding in my favour. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to instil you with even more inspiration to publish and propagate the knowledge and sciences of your maternal grandfather [Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*] and to make it easy for us to live our lives accordingly. I pray that Allāh *taʿālā* blesses your honourable father with good health and strength, and that Islam spreads through him. Āmīn.

No sooner the discussion hovered around Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm and Khānqāh Wasīyyullāhī, my heart demanded that I pen a few points about my education and training there. Writing about it will bring joy to me and serve as an advice and admonition. It is possible that other readers will also benefit from it.

In the presence of Hadrat Maulānā Wasīyyullāh Sāhib

Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Amīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were teachers at Dār al-ʿUlūm Maʾu Nāth Bhanjan, district Maʾu. I went there in 1954 and commenced my studies. I was completing my qirāʾah studies under Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He said to me: "I will take you to meet a pious personality; you will be most pleased at meeting him." I got ready and accompanied him to Allāhābād in 1960 to meet Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. After staying over for a few days, he said to me: "You must stay here." When I heard this, an intense urge developed in me to remain. I went to Dār al-ʿUlūm Maʾu Nāth Bhānjan, packed all my belongings, returned to Allāhābād and presented myself before Hadrat. He asked me to commence my studies here.

I had already studied up to the *Qudūrī* year at Dār al-ʿUlūm, so I was placed in a class which was in line with this year. Most of the books which I had to study were taught to me by Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *mudda zilluhu*. In this way, I remained in the company of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and studied all the books which are taught up to the final year – *Bukhārī Sharīf, Muslim Sharīf*, etc. – under Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib Machlī Shahrī and Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Hanīf Sāhib Jaunpūrī.

In the course of my studies, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to pay extra attention to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib in the sense that whenever there was any academic or spiritual discussion, he would call for him and relate

it to him. There was no night and day for him. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* would call for him at any time and he used to present himself. Hadrat would sometimes tell us in privacy: "After my departure from this world, Qamar az-Zamān will surpass everyone." We noticed this in the course of our *Bukhārī Sharīf* lessons until the final lesson. Whenever he used to start a topic, he would convey it to completion and there would be more spirituality in it. We used to feel as though he was the appointed and special conveyor of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.

The life conditions of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib were most unique from the very beginning. What can I say about his piety and Allāh-consciousness! Through the blessings of Hadrat's company, points related to Allāh-recognition used to form and emanate from his mind all the time.

When we used to sit in his class, he used to say things which only the Ahlullāh are worthy of. He was fully aware of every branch of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat. Whatever he said used to be presented in the light of the Sharīʿat. He used to demonstrate the difference in levels between the Sharīʿat, Tarīqat and Maʿrifat. He would explain every theme in a most clear manner. He used to spend several days in explaining certain Ahādīth and clarify their internal and external meanings. We had a special affinity with the words of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib which would then affect our hearts.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away on 22 Shaʿbān 1387 A.H./25 November 1967 while on his journey for hajj. This had a major effect on the heart and mind of Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib in

the course of our *Bukhārī Sharīf* lessons. Consequently, he used to teach in a such a manner that we felt as if Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was present in the lesson. Firstly, there was the sorrow over the demise of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*, then the special manner in which Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib taught, and then the feeling that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was present in the lesson. These three factors combined in a manner which caused me to go into an ecstasy in the course of the lessons. I used to read the Arabic text in the class. I heard the explanation of the first Hadīth of *Bukhārī Sharīf* – actions are judged by intentions – by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. I then heard a further explanation of it from Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib. Both these had an immense effect on my heart, and I recall them to this day.

He said in the course of the lesson: The heart is the repository for intention. When the heart is pure of all evils, the intention will be just as pure. If there is filth in the heart, i.e. if the intention is not pure, actions will be likewise filthy. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made intention the centre of actions. We hear people saying: "As the intention is, so will be the blessing."

The excellent manner in which *Bukhārī Sharīf* was completed was due to the perfect Allāh-recognition of Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib. Later on, whenever I used to read any Hadīth, its meaning and message used to become clear to me from Allāh *taʿālā*. This was the effect of the full attention and blessing of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* was a quṭb of his time. A Maulānā from Kaupāganj related an incident to us. There was a majdhūb who lived in an

orchard. Someone asked him: “Can you tell us who is presently the quṭb?” He laughed and replied: “You go to him continually and still you do not know!?” The Maulānā said: “Is it that one from Allāhābād?” The majdhūb replied: “Yes, yes – he is the one.” They asked him: “Who is the quṭb in Pakistan?” He replied: “The same one is the quṭb of both places.” They said: “But Pakistan is a country on its own.” The majdhūb said: “You can continue thinking that these are two countries, but Allāh *taʿālā* considers them to be one.”

Such was the rank of our Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. It is solely through Allāh’s grace that we are affiliated to him. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Many ʿulamā’ of India and Pakistan had reverted to Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. In fact, even his own teacher, Ḥaḍrat ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ṣāḥib Balyāwī *raḥimahullāh* – the head teacher at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband – had reverted to him and received khilāfat from him.

In the assembly of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat

Every conversation of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* used to be in line with the Sharīʿat and Sunnat. If not, he would remain silent. We personally noticed on some occasions when the entire assembly was in absolute silence. The gist of his talks used to be sincerity and good character. He used to stress clarity in dealings. He used to say: “The fundamental excellence of a person lies in the clarity and transparency of his dealings.” He used to emphasize the following Ḥadīth most often:

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده

A true Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe.

When any seeker used to come to Hadrat, he would assess his capabilities and then undertake his rectification accordingly. This is an essential quality for a spiritual guide. His excellence lies in training his disciples according to their capabilities.

In the company of Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib is our shaykh and honourable teacher. I remained in his company from 1960 to 1968. I continued my studies under him during this period. Whenever he used to utter any wise words, I used to note them down in my notebook. There was no big or small assembly in which he did not teach us something from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. I had a natural affinity with him, and this is most essential for a student or disciple. In most cases when he used to speak on a certain topic, it was as if we had requested him to speak on it. In other words, he used to convey the thoughts which were running though our hearts and minds.

Daurah-e-Hadīth

Hadrat used to conduct the *Mishkāt Sharīf* lessons after the 'ishā salāh in the house of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. The honourable Jāweyd 'Abd ash-Shakūr Sāhib who was a special associate of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to attend this class as well. Hakīm Kalīmullāh Sāhib – a close relative of Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – had accompanied him; so he too used to attend this class. Both these personalities were most impressed by Hadrat's lessons and would speak

highly about them. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

When Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was departing for hajj in 1387 A.H./1967, he gave Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib permission to narrate all his narrations. He also instructed him saying: "You must teach *Bukhārī Sharīf*. After all, this is why I taught it to you." Unfortunately, that hajj journey turned out to be his journey to the Hereafter. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib began teaching *Bukhārī Sharīf*. Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib taught *Muslim Sharīf* and Maulānā Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib taught *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

At the time, my Daurah-e-Hadīth classmates were Maulwī Irshād Ahmad, Maulwī Anwār Ahmad, Maulwī Muhammad Arshad Benārsī and others. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless them with good health and wellness. Āmīn.

The concluding lesson of *Bukhārī Sharīf*

Maulānā Sayyid Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib, the superintendent at Thānah Bhawan and khalīfah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, and Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Sāhib Ajmerī, a khalīfah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* were invited for the occasion. These personalities arrived and much preparation was put into the assembly for the conclusion of *Bukhārī Sharīf*. We had the great honour of attending. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

We completed Daurah-e-Hadīth in 1388 A.H./1968 and were honoured as qualifying students. Soon thereafter I was offered jobs in ʿAlīgarh, Orissa and Bastī. I expressed my thoughts to Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib, Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib and Maulānā Hanīf Sāhib and said to them that I am prepared to go wherever they advise me. They all concurred to send me to ʿAlīgarh.

Previously, Hakīm Ifhāmullāh Sāhib came to Allāhābād and suggested that he would take me to ʿAlīgarh. He used to come every Sunday to Allāhābād in order to treat Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and I used to assist him. He used to say to me: "I am going to take you to ʿAlīgarh."

In this way, the advice of my honourable teachers and the Hakīm Sāhib's thoughts concurred. Then came the issue of my certificate and on what basis I will get employment at ʿAlīgarh University. Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib gave me a qualification certificate from Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm, Allāhābād with his own signature on it. When it was presented to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Taqī Amīnī, the head of religious studies at ʿAlīgarh University, he said: "There can be no better certificate than the one issued from the madrasah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*."

Subsequently, I was appointed as a religious education teacher at the City High School at ʿAlīgarh on 13 January 1969. Thirteen years later I was appointed to the Sayf ad-Dīn Tāhir High School. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I taught for 31 years and retired. I was so punctual that people used to set their watches with my time of arrival and departure. This was solely through the affection, love and prayers of my honourable teacher. People generally change their

way of dressing after coming to ʿAlīgarh. Instead of looking like Muslims, they look like Englishmen. Countless thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* that I never changed my dressing. I continued wearing a kurtah. If there was anything which I did add, it was a sherwānī (a long coat worn over a kurtah). I did not even change the style of my topī. All this is solely by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the prayers and special attention of my teachers.

My good fortune

I had developed a friendly relationship with the honourable Ḥakīm Kalīmullāh Ṣāḥib in the course of our *Mishkāt Sharīf* lessons. Consequently, when the issue of proposing to the daughter of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Abrār al-Ḥaqq Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* came up, Ḥakīm Ifhāmullāh Ṣāḥib sent me to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Abrār al-Ḥaqq Ṣāḥib Hardoʾī *raḥimahullāh* and the marriage bond was realized. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Journey to Lucknow

Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* suffered from a stroke in 1965. It was decided to appoint Ḥakīm Khwājah Shams ad-Dīn Ṣāḥib to treat him. Maulwī ʿAmmār Aḥmad Ṣāḥib, Maulwī ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm ʿĪsā Ṣāḥib and myself were appointed to tend to Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. We accompanied him and had the good fortune of tending to him and seeing to his needs. I clearly recall some of the things which he said. For example: "The attendant who assists me to perform wuḍū' and ṣalāh in the beginning of the ṣalāh time is my greatest benefactor." He said on one occasion: "This world is Sunnat while the Hereafter is farḍ."

Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* then proceeded to Mumbai while we left for Allāhābād.

Ẓahīr ad-Dīn Aḥmad
Imām and khaṭīb of Masjid Anwār, Sir Sayyid Nagar
Kīlā Nagar, Dūdhpūr, ʿAlīgarh, U.P.

A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF HADRAT MUSLIHUL UMMAT

Shaykhān - 'Aynān Tajriyān is written by the grandson of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, Maulwī Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī. It is included here as an introduction to the life of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

Family and birth

He was born in 1312 A.H./1895 in Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā, district Mau. His respected father's name was Muhammad Ya'qūb Khān who was a hāfiz of the Qur'ān and a respectable man in the community. His mother was not only a very pious woman but an icon of religiosity and sound character.

Consequently, he was most conscious about piety and purity from a young age. He was regular with tahajjud salāh, accustomed to dhikr and contemplation, and enjoyed doing these actions. As a result, people spoke about his piety and considered him to be a born walī.

Education

His initial education commenced in the maktab of his village. And the honour of memorizing the Qur'ān was under the tutelage of Hāfiz Walī Muhammad Sāhib (who was a pious man in line with his name. Walī means a close friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*). On seeing the capabilities of his righteous student, his teacher was convinced that this child will rise on the horizon of knowledge and religion as a sun whose light will illuminate large numbers of people. It was because of these feelings and emotions that Hāfiz Walī Muhammad Sāhib advised him saying: "Look, my son! You must go and study Arabic."

Journey to Kānpūr and Deoband

With this in mind, Hadrat proceeded to Kānpūr with Maulānā Muhammad ʿUthmān Sāhib Fatahpūrī, and commenced his early studies in Persian and Arabic.

In order to complete his higher studies, he proceeded to the most famous religious institute of India, Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband in 1328 A.H. He completed the Daurah Hadīth (the final year of the ʿālim course) in 1336 A.H. and studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* under the distinguished Hadīth scholar, Hadrat Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*. There were other senior ʿulamā' who, together with being men of great knowledge, were immersed in piety, devotion and love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

For example, Maulānā Sayyid Asghar Husayn Sāhib Deobandī, Hadrat Maulānā Muftī ʿAzīz ar-Rahmān Sāhib ʿUthmānī, Hadrat Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad Sāhib ʿUthmānī, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd as-Samīʿ Sāhib, Hadrat ʿAllāmah Maulānā Ibrāhīm Balyāwī and others. May Allāh *taʿālā* shower His mercy on all of them.

He was extremely cautious in the course of his studies. He would not attend general invitations to meals. He was most respectful of his teachers and remained aloof from the company of students in general.

Early spiritual training and stay in Thānah Bhawan

Hadrat was fully concerned about rectification of character and purification of the self from the very beginning. The ember of yearning and love for Allāh *taʿālā* was firmly embedded in his heart. Thus, during his student days he established a bond of spiritual reformation with Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā

Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan Ṣāḥib Deobandī *raḥimahullāh.* He attended his assemblies and satiated his spiritual yearning in this way. However, Ḥaḍrat Shaykh al-Hind *raḥimahullāh* was apprehended because of his involvement in the movement for the freedom of India [from the British] and imprisoned on the island of Malta. He therefore established a spiritual relationship with Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh,* pledged bayʿat to him, and began frequenting the khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan.

After completing his studies, he focussed on rectification and reformation, and handed himself over to Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan.

He had presented himself before Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīmul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* with a genuine quest and was therefore rewarded with total attention from his erudite mentor. He traversed the stations of sulūk and levels of the path in a short time and was conferred with the garment of khilāfat. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

In the course of his stay, he taught in the madrasah of the khānqāh. He would also be an occasional imām in the masjid. In addition to this, he used to record the statements (*malfūẓāt*) of Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīmul Ummat, transcribe his writings and translate books.

Despite all these academic services, he always remained focussed on his essential and fundamental task of dhikr, spiritual practices, purification of the self and rectification of character. In fact, he would very often walk out of the khānqāh towards the fields and occupy himself in dhikr and contemplation for lengthy periods of time. After all, taṣawwuf is essentially a restlessness. If there are no waves of restlessness in man's ocean of life, his life is totally

devoid of recognition, ecstasy and spiritual intoxication. He used to read this poem very regularly:

> My heart is not attached to the orchard and it recoils from the desert. Now where can we take this mad man to?

Stay in Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā

Once he was filled with conviction and recognition, he settled down in his hometown by the instruction of his mentor. After the departure of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Sāhib Nasīrābādī *rahimahullāh*, the region was thirsty for a practising ʿālim and man of spiritual affiliation through whose excellence, devotion and efforts the dry branches of this land are revived and the orchard of Dīn and the Sunnat becomes green and lush.

Allāh *taʿālā* selected Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for this purpose. On one hand he was most concerned about rectification of the ummat, and on the other side, this deserted land was awaiting him eagerly. Consequently, major changes were noticed in the people by virtue of his rectificational efforts and continuous lectures and talks. Those who were caught up in baseless customs were reformed considerably and an Islamic sentiment and temperament came into their lives. Hadrat's blessings in the field of education and training increased by the day, and his status as a reformer became loftier. As a result, seekers and the spiritually thirsty began coming to him from distant places. They benefited from his teachings and returned after having realized their objective.

The old and new khānqāh

When the number of seekers began increasing, the need for a permanent place was felt. It was probably

in 1946 that a rustic building comprising of four rooms was constructed on a piece of land which was to the west of the masjid. When this too was not enough, a double-storey solid structure was built. Through the blessings of the dhikr and Qur'ān recitation of the seekers, the khānqāh became fully inhabited. This resulted in a unique spiritual atmosphere which caused the heart of every newcomer to be affected and impressed.

At the same time, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* initiated Madrasah Wasīyyatul 'Ulūm in which my eldest uncle, Qārī Muhammad Mubīn Sāhib, my honourable father, and Maulānā Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib were students. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* himself taught 7-8 books which included *Bukhārī Sharīf, Muslim Sharīf* and *Mathnawī Sharīf*.

Expansion of the masjid

When the present masjid became too small to accommodate the number of worshippers, a need was felt to extend it. The old masjid was demolished and the foundation of a new masjid was laid. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* personally oversaw its construction. This masjid is still well-known for its beauty and simplicity. Soon thereafter, the foundation for a large madrasah was laid next to the khānqāh. Plans for its construction were made but this was not realized.

Emigration to Gorukhpūr

An election took place in the village and this resulted in certain differences and disharmony. Hadrat was saddened, left his hometown and proceeded to Gorukhpūr. He stayed over at the house of Maulānā

Nathārullāh Sāhib and Maulānā Amjadullāh Sāhib. He then brought his family over.

Here too, seekers of the truth began arriving in droves and Hadrat's assemblies continued to be conducted. The hearts and minds of those who attended were filled with Hadrat's perfume of knowledge, wisdom, and recognition and love of Allāh *taʿālā*. The confidence and love which the local residents had in Hadrat increased by the day. His work in the fields of rectification and teaching also progressed.

Unfortunately, here too Hadrat had to encounter unpleasant situations which caused him to leave. He proceeded to the house of Hakīm Wasīy Ahmad Khān Sāhib who lived in the same area. As was his norm, Hadrat became occupied in propagating Dīn and purification of the self. He laid the foundation of Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this madrasah is running to this day.

Unfortunately, during Hadrat's stay in the house of Hakīm Sāhib, he suffered from gripes and added to it, hiccups which refused to stop no matter what medication he took. It was decided he should go to Allāhābād for treatment. Arrangements were immediately made and Hadrat departed with a few close associates. He stayed over in Hasan Manzil and some days later, his family was also brought over in the beginning of November 1957 (1377 A.H.). Hadrat then lived in the houses of his very special associates, Hājī Shafīʿullāh Sāhib and Hājī ʿAbd al-Wahīd Sāhib.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat's blessings began to pour forth and he initiated his academic and rectificational assemblies once again. People benefited tremendously. Seekers would listen to Hadrat's talks with full enthusiasm and these would stir in them the desire to practise on Dīn. However, the place was very

small plus the intense heat and shortage of water inconvenienced everyone.

House number 23 Bakhshī Bāzār

Hadrat felt it would be good if he could obtain a more spacious house. He mentioned this to his special confidant, Hāfiz Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib Siddīqī who in turn advised him to purchase the house of Abul Hasan Sāhib. The house appealed to Hadrat so he bought it in the name of his four daughters, Safīyyah, ʿAqīlah, Nabīlah and Shakīlah. The house was registered in their name on 9 July 1958. Hadrat then shifted from Hasan Manzil with his associates and family.

On settling down in his new house, Hadrat found an excellent opportunity to increase his work and to let it flourish and spread. Bearing in mind that Allāhābād is very centrally located, it became easy for people to come and go. The young and old, rich and poor, ʿulamā' and Sufis – everyone began coming in large numbers. Hadrat's work progressed tremendously in this way.

Masjid and madrasah

The Dhāl Wālī Masjid was lying incomplete since quite some time. Hadrat completed its construction and made extensions to it. He then laid the foundation for Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm and gave permission to Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib to initiate the periodical, *Maʿrifat Haqq*. Hadrat's work progressed even more in this way.

Teaching

Hadrat had an academic temperament. Consequently, in addition to his programme of spiritual rectification

and training, he used to fulfil the duties of teaching with full enthusiasm. He used to personally teach the elementary and final year books. He taught *Bukhārī Sharīf* and other books to Maulānā Muḥammad Ḥanīf Ṣāḥib and others. And then he taught *Bukhārī Sharīf* and *Tirmidhī Sharīf* to my father, my eldest uncle, Qārī Mubīn Ṣāḥib, and others. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Ḥaḍrat conferred permission to my father to relate Ḥadīth. In line with this permission, when Ḥaḍrat passed away, my father taught *Bukhārī Sharīf* for one year. This is the favour of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Journey to Fataḥpūr

Once everything was well-established, the people of Ḥaḍrat's hometown requested him to visit. Ḥaḍrat accepted and departed on 19 Shawwāl 1380 A.H. The local residents were overjoyed, and everyone – Muslim and non-Muslim, relatives and close family – treated him with absolute respect and honour. Ḥāfiẓ Munshī Muḥammad ʿAbbās Ṣāḥib and his son, Shams al-Hudā obtained permission from Ḥaḍrat to host all the guests for two weeks. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Ḥaḍrat was able to do a lot of Dīnī work during this period.

After staying over for a few months, Ḥaḍrat left in Muḥarram 1381 A.H. for Allāhābād and reinitiated his work with full force. In addition to this, he used to go every month to Maʾu Nāth Bhanjan where he used to deliver a lecture at the Katrah Masjid. The ʿulamāʾ and general public from the surrounding areas used to attend.

Journey to •Alīgarh

Upon the sincere invitation of Ḥakīm Ifhāmullāh Ṣāḥib, Ḥaḍrat journeyed to ʿAlīgarh on 18 Shawwāl

1382 A.H. with a large group of his associates. He stayed in the house of the Hakīm Sāhib for seven days who excelled in fulfilling the rights of hospitality. Hadrat was most happy with him and made a lot of du'ā' for him. In the course of his stay, Hadrat conducted many assemblies in which he explained most beneficial themes. These have been published in *Ma'rifat Haqq* under the title, *Majālis 'Alīgarh*.

Many seniors and influential people of the city, and the educated class of the university were immensely impressed by Hadrat's personality and his rectificational and educational lectures. They benefited from him, many of them established a spiritual bond with him, and they began visiting him frequently.

Journey to Mumbai

Hadrat's first journey to Mumbai was before his journey to 'Alīgarh on 8 October 1963. Subsequently, he undertook several journeys to Mumbai. The people of the city were most impressed by Hadrat. His going to Mumbai was no less than a rain-laden cloud. Many people benefited from him. Although they were immersed in the busy hustle and bustle of Mumbai, they used to attend Hadrat's assemblies in Kurlā.

Other journeys

Hadrat undertook propagational and rectificational journeys to other places as well, e.g. Jaunpūr, Kaupāganj and Lucknow. The people of these areas were most impressed by him. Hadrat had an intense desire to convey Dīn to the entire world. He used to say: "How far can I travel on my own. You people must learn the work from me and serve Dīn in the whole world, and spread the Sunnat."

Towards the end he used to experience a strange and unique restlessness and worry about how the work could continue. His appointed time eventually arrived and he went to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hajj journey or journey to the Hereafter

My grandfather - Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* - had performed hajj in 1936. However, in 1967 certain causes and reasons made him to intend to go for hajj with his daughters, and their husbands and children. He informed my father [Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib] to come to Mumbai with Maqbūl Ahmad and others. My father took us and proceeded to Mumbai. My grandfather had been saddened over his separation from us [he was in Mumbai while we were in Allāhābād]. However, it was necessary for my father to remain in Allāhābād to maintain the house, the madrasah, the khānqāh and to conduct the assemblies. This is why my grandfather had asked us to remain in Allāhābād. He had even told us: "Later on I will take you all for hajj."

We remained in the blessed company of our grandfather for two weeks. He was overjoyed to have us, but he certainly experienced certain inconveniences which he used to mention to my father. There were also certain private matters which he discussed with him.

My grandfather departed on 19 Shaʿbān 1387 A.H./22 November 1967. We also accompanied him to the harbour. When he boarded the ship and went into his compartment, we noticed that he was considerably saddened over our separation. He had advised my father with reference to us: "You must take special

care of the children." We eventually got off the ship with much grief and stood on the shore.

My grandfather suddenly appeared from his compartment, sat on a chair and raised his hands for duʿā'. Everyone was overcome by emotion and they continued saying "Āmīn" to his duʿā'. I hope that my grandfather's duʿā's are accepted in Allāh's court.

The ship departed and we stood watching it for quite some time. It eventually disappeared from our sight and we returned dejected to Kurlā, where we were staying. We then left on the Bombay Mail on the 24th of November. We reached Allāhābād at 9pm the next day. A large number of people came to receive us at the station. They all appeared sad but we did not know why. As we reached our house, we learnt that my grandfather had passed away and that he was conveyed from this ephemeral world to the everlasting world of the Hereafter.

As per a Ḥadīth, my grandfather will receive the reward for ḥajj every year until the day of Resurrection. This in itself is a tremendous reward. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

We could not stand on our feet when we heard this tragic news and began thinking of ourselves as helpless. My brother, Maulwī Saʿīd Aḥmad Sāḥib, could not contain himself. He only recovered after many days. The fact of the matter was that the tragedy was too much to bear. Nevertheless, Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace – steered us and those who were with my grandfather.

A detailed account of this tragedy is quoted from *Purāne Chirāgh* of Ḥadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Ḥasan ʿAlī Nadwī *raḥimahullāh*:

Maulānā departed by ship on Wednesday 22 November 1967. Just two days passed when on the 24th of November after the *maghrib* salāh he experienced a few bouts of unconsciousness and passed away that same night. Instead of visiting the Baytullāh (House of Allāh), he met Rabb al-Bayt (the Lord of the House). Surely to your Lord is your eventual return.

When this news reached the Hijāz via wireless, Maulānā's associates there, and Mad-hat Kāmil Sāhib himself, the Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, tried to obtain permission to get Hadrat buried in Jannatul Muʿallā. These efforts were successful and, contrary to the norm, official permission was granted to bring the blessed body to al-Balad al-Amīn (Makkah Mukarramah). The grave was prepared at the spot where Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī was buried, and ghusl (bathing the deceased) arrangements were initiated at Madrasah Saulatiyah.

Even here, Allāh's *taʿālā* special will was displayed. Due to some misunderstanding with regard to the permission, Maulānā was hastily bathed, shrouded and janāzah salāh performed, and his blessed body was lowered into the sea, as per the ship's rules. I have heard that Maulānā was reading this couplet repeatedly before his departure from Mumbai:

> Where will you ever place flowers over my grave when you will not even be able to throw soil over it!?

The manner in which this entire story unfolded clearly displays the helplessness of planning and the overwhelming power of divine destiny. This is not the place for details.

وَاللّٰهُ غَالِبٌ عَلٰى أَمْرِهٖ وَلٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ

Allāh prevails over His affairs but most people do not know.[1]

In this way, Maulānā was included in the list of those holy and luminary personalities who, instead of having the honour of being buried in the ground, were handed over into the lap of the ocean. Such personalities include righteous and accepted people like (1) Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muftī ʿInāyat Aḥmad Sāḥib Kākaurwī *raḥimahullāh* – the author of *ʿIlm aṣ-Ṣīghah* and *Tārīkh Ḥabīb Ilāh*, and (2) Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Sāḥib Manṣūrpūrī – the author of *Raḥmatul lil ʿālamīn*. One more spiritual master has now been added and the ocean cannot complain about being totally deprived of the honour which is enjoyed by the ground.[2]

(This is the end of the quotation from *Shaykhān - ʿAynān Tajriyān*. I now quote the sermon from *Kitāb al-Adhkār* of Imām Nawawī *raḥimahullāh* and then commence with the actual book. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 21.

[2] *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 1.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله والواحد القهار، العزيز الغفار، مقدر الأقدار، مصرف الأمور، مكور الليل على النهار، تبصرة لأولي القلوب والأبصار، الذي أيقظ من خلقه من اصطفاه فأدخله في جملة الأخيار، ووفق من اجتباه من عبيده فجعله من المقربين الأبرار، وبصر من أحبه فزهدهم في هذه الدار، فاجتهدوا في مرضاته والتأهب لدار القرار، واجتناب ما يسخطه والحذر من عذاب النار، وأخذوا أنفسهم بالجد في طاعته وملازمة ذكره بالعشي والإبكار، وعند تغاير الأحوال وجميع آناء الليل والنهار، فاستنارت قلوبهم بلوامع الأنوار، أحمده أبلغ الحمد على جميع نعمه، وأسئله المزيد من فضله وكرمه، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله العظيم، الواحد الصمد العزيز الحكيم، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله وصفيه وحبيبه وخليله، أفضل المخلوقين، وأكرم السابقين واللاحقين، صلوات الله وسلامه عليه وعلى سائر النبيين وعلى كل، وسائر الصالحين. (كتاب الأذكار للنووي).

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD INTENTION IN ALL ACTIONS

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* commenced his *Kitāb al-Adhkār* with the chapter: The order to have sincerity and good intentions in all external and internal actions. He then quotes the following verses under this chapter:

وَمَآ اُمِرُوا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ، حُنَفَاءَ

They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone] – turning away (from all false creeds).[1]

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts which reaches Him.[2]

The explanation of the above verse of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is then quoted:

ولكن يناله النيات

Rather it is your intentions which reach Him.[3]

Hadrat ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* included "good intention" with sincerity in this chapter. We learn from this that sincerity is essentially good intention. In other words, when the Sharīʿat speaks of an intention, it is not referring to just a will to do something. It is the philosophers who consider the meaning of a will in

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[1] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

[2] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 37.

[3] *Al-Adhkār*, p. 6.

an intention. They say that the voluntary action of a sound and mature person comes after a will, and this will is known as a nīyyat or intention.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that this is not what the Hadīth intends. Rather, it refers to the final objective of an action. Although it is realized right at the end, it is envisioned at the very beginning.

Take this desk as an example. The purpose and objective behind making it is so that books can be placed on it. This need first comes to the mind. Then the materials such as timber, nails, etc. are obtained (ʿillat-e-māddī), and the carpenter will then make it (ʿillat-e-fāʿilī). Its specific shape and form then comes before us (ʿillat-e-sūrī). After all this, books are placed on it (ʿillat-e-ghāʾī). Although this came at the end, it was envisioned at the very beginning.

In the same way, when man does an action such as salāh, his intention is to obtain reward in the Hereafter and Allāh's pleasure and proximity. This is the final objective of the action and this is what the Sharīʿat refers to as nīyyat and ikhlās. In short, what the philosophers refer to as nīyyat, the Sharīʿat refers to as ikhlās.

I feel I should quote verbatim the explanation of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* on the subject of ikhlās. I have not come across a clearer explanation. He writes:

الإخلاص هو أن يتمثل في عقله نفع العبادة لله تعالى من جهة قرب نفسه من الحق كما قال تبارك وتعالى: "إن رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين". أو من جهة تصديق ما وعد الله تعالى على السنة رسله من ثواب الآخرة فينشأ منه الأعمال بداعية عظيمة لا يشوبها رياء ولا

سمعة ولا موافقة عاده ويصحب هذا الحال على جميع أعماله حتى الأعمال المباحة العادية، قال الله تعالى: "ومآ أمروا إلا ليعبدوا الله مخلصين له الدين". وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات.[1]

Ikhlāṣ means that the benefit of worship for Allāh taʿālā be present in a person's mind. This benefit could be that because of it, the proximity to Allāh taʿālā which he acquires comes before him. As Allāh taʿālā Himself said: "Surely Allāh's mercy is near the doers of good." Alternatively, it could be because the person fully affirms the reward which Allāh taʿālā promised in the Hereafter via His Messengers. Consequently, the person carries out actions with intense devotion which is not tainted by ostentation, causing people to hear about it, nor in fulfilment of a custom. This condition then accompanies all his actions, even those which are merely permissible and habitual. Allāh taʿālā says: "They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone]." Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "All actions are dependent on intentions."

Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* is explaining the meaning of ikhlāṣ as: The benefit of worship must be present in a person's mind, viz. proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* is achieved through it. Thus, after he does an act of worship, he must feel that he is getting closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. Alternatively, he must perceive in his heart the benefit of worship by having full conviction in the promise of reward in the Hereafter as explained by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. When either of these two are found in a believer's heart – i.e. thinking about

[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ٢، ص ٩٢.

proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* or conviction in Allāh's promise – he will not do any action to show off, to make people hear of it, as a custom or merely out of habit. After all, proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and hope for reward in the Hereafter are lofty objectives. Due to his sincerity, a believer will not leave them for low and mean matters. Instead, he will abhor ostentation and custom-following because these are created things while he has established a correct bond and connection with his Creator. From this explanation we learn that there is a world of difference between the Sharʿī nīyyat and what is explained by the philosophers.

It was very difficult for me to explain this issue to the people here. A person said to me: Today I have understood this difference that due to intermixing of rational and traditional sciences, many of the things which came from the philosophers have proliferated among us. This difference now becomes absolutely clear, e.g. the meaning of performing salāh according to the philosophers is that a person must make the intention that he is performing salāh – he is not eating, he is not talking, etc. Rather, he is performing salāh.

On the other hand, the Sharʿī meaning of performing salāh with nīyyat is for a person to think to himself that he is performing salāh for Allāh's pleasure, His proximity and for reward in the Hereafter. Now you too must have fully understood the difference between the two. A philosopher is still trying to get his beginning right while the believer has already reached the end. This is the meaning of the Hadīth: "Actions are gauged by intentions."

After quoting the previously mentioned Qur'ānic verses, ʿAllāmah Nawawī *raḥimahullāh* quotes the very same Ḥadīth. The full text of which reads as follows:

عن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات وإنما لكل امرئ ما نوى، فمن كانت هجرته إلى الله ورسوله فهجرته إلى الله ورسوله، ومن كانت هجرته إلى دنيا يصيبها أو امرأة ينكحها فهجرته إلى ما هاجر إليه.[1]

Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Actions are based on intentions. Each person shall receive what he intended. The one who emigrates to Allāh and His Messenger (i.e. for them), his emigration will certainly be to Allāh and His Messenger. The one who emigrates to acquire of this world or to marry a certain woman, his emigration will be considered for whatever purpose he emigrated.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *raḥimahullāh* writes with reference to the above Ḥadīth:

هذا حديث صحيح متفق على صحته مجمع على عظم موقعه وجلالته، وهو أحد الأحاديث التي عليها مدار الإسلام، وكان السلف وتابعوهم من الخلف رحمهم الله تعالى يستحبون استفتاح المصنفات بهذا الحديث تنبيها للمطالع على حسن النية واهتمامه بذلك والإعتناء به.

This Ḥadīth is unanimously classified as authentic. Everyone concurs on its greatness and importance. It is

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[1] كتاب الأذكار، ص ٦. صحيح البخاري، حديث رقم ١ و ٥٤.

one of the Ahādīth around which Islam revolves. The pious predecessors and the latter scholars who followed them liked to commence their written works with this Hadīth as a reminder to the reader on the need and importance of having a good intention.

He writes further on:

وبلغنا عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أنه قال إنما يحفظ الرجل على قدر نيته، وقال غيره إنما يعطى الناس على قدر نيّاتهم.[1]

We heard that Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: A person remembers in accordance with his intention (i.e. the better his intention the better he will store the information in his memory). Another scholar said: People are given (knowledge of Dīn) in accordance with the level of their intention.

I did not hear this statement of Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* anywhere but look at what a beautiful criterion he provided for the correctness of an intention! That is, a person's intention has an effect on the things which a person remembers. In other words, if his intention is correct, he understands the point and remembers it. If after entering a branch of knowledge a person's understanding does not open or he does not remember what he learnt, then it is an indication that his intention is not correct. Consequently, the other levels which are to follow will remain deficient.

> When a builder places the first brick crookedly, the entire wall will be crooked even if the wall reaches the highest stars.

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[1] كتاب الأذكار، ص ٦.

This is why I say that the assembly of a shaykh, a lesson or a lecture are the places from which a person can take and receive something. If he does not take any effect here, will he be able to take any effect at his house!? If a person is heedless in his shaykh's assembly, how can he be mindful when he is outside?

The importance of sidq

Understand the next point: The correctness of intention which we spoke about is given another name by the Sufis, i.e. sidq (truthfulness). Towards the end of his *Risālah Qushayrīyyah*, the author has a chapter titled "Advice for the murīds". In it he explains the essential requirements for murīds. He writes:

فأول قدم للمريد في هذه الطريقة ينبغي أن يكون على الصدق ليصح له البناء على أصل صحيح، فإن الشيوخ قالوا إنما حرموا الوصول لتضييعهم الأصول.[1]

It is necessary that a murīd's first step in this path be on sidq so that the construction can proceed on a sound foundation. The Sufis said: People are deprived of reaching Allāh taʿālā because they discard the principles.

Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to sidq:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

Give glad tidings to the believers that they have a true footing with their Lord?[2]

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[1] قشيرية، ص ١٩٧.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 2.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to this verse:

أصل الصدق ما يكون في الأقوال ويستعمل كما قال الراغب في الأفعال، فيقال صدق في القتال إذا وفاه حقه، وكذا في ضده يقال كذب فيه فيعبر به عن كل فعل فاضل ظاهرا وباطنا، ويضاف إليه كمقعد صدق ومدخل صدق ومخرج صدق إلى غير ذلك.[1]

The word sidq is essentially used in words and speech. However, according to ar-Rāghib, it is used in actions as well. For example, it is said: "The person was true in his jihād" if he fulfilled the right of jihād correctly. Similarly, the opposite is also applied, e.g. it is said: "He proved to be a liar in his jihād." This word is applied to every virtuous action, whether external or internal. It is also used in an attributive sense. For example, a true place of sitting, a true entry, a true exit, and so on.

Sidq is a condition of the heart. Therefore, if a person's intention is genuine (true), his words, actions and conditions will be genuine. The ranks which the Ahlullāh reached was due to the genuineness of their intention. It was the practice of the pious predecessors to do something in order to acquire something. They were not like the people of today who attribute their excellences to themselves and blame the shaykh for their defects and shortcomings. People write to me and say:

> Of what benefit is a genuine shaykh to a person who is devoid of any treasure?

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[1] روح المعاني، ص ٦٢.

Do you know what they intend by this? What they really want to say is that if you are really a genuine shaykh, then convey us as well. If you cannot do this, we will conclude that you are not a genuine shaykh.

Do you see how sharp these people are! They want to place the blame on others. They do not consider a sound footing, truthfulness, sincerity and good intention to be of any value. Whereas we just quoted the statement of Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* when he said that a person is able to remember and recall knowledge according to the level of his intention. It cannot happen that a person possesses the quality of sidq and is still deprived. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يُضِيْعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely Allāh does not waste the reward of the righteous.[1]

أَنِّيْ لَا أُضِيْعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثٰى

I do not lay to waste the labour of any labourer from among you, be he man or woman.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* is most kind and generous. It can never be imagined that a labourer will not be paid for his labour.

An incident related to sidq comes to mind. I have a friend who himself said to me: Hadrat *rahimahullāh* wrote the following and sent it to me:

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1 Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 120.

2 Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 195.

> I offered my service and servitude, but I could not purchase your bad habit.

He then handed me over to Khwājah Sāhib. He said: "I wrote to Hadrat on one occasion and informed him that my love for him has settled deeply in my heart. I feel restless and I start to cry when I think of him. Hadrat wrote in reply: "Sidq makes an impact and it did the same to me. I permit you to maintain a bond and to continue corresponding."

Did you see! He either removed him from his company or wrote to him giving him permission to correspond. He also said to his honourable wife at home: "This is my friend. He must get a share of whatever comes to our house." He himself used to say: "Allāh *taʿālā* was extremely kind to me. Hadrat became happy with me, and my Dīnī and worldly life was set in order. I am now living happily. Hadrat's honourable wife feeds my children, and when anything comes to the house, I receive a share of it. So much so, if a metre of fabric comes, she cuts off a share for me and sends it to me."

I related this incident to demonstrate the power of sidq and sincerity, and to show that no one's sincerity ever remains concealed. Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī writes:

> The scholars who concentrate on the external always hesitate in understanding the speech of the Sufis. The incident of Imām Ahmad ibn Shurayh is enough for you. He attended the assembly of Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* one day. He was asked: "What did you understand from his speech?" He replied: "I did not understand anything which he said, but I experienced a certain power in my heart which pointed to internal action and spiritual sincerity.

His speech was not the speech of a person who is on falsehood."[1]

Incidents of sincere people

When the Ahlullāh saw the high status of sincerity and good intention in the Qur'ān and Sunnat, they did their utmost to correct their intention. Their life conditions and incidents are testimony to this.

(1)

There is a pious personality by the name of Bishr Ḥāfī. When he passed away, Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Welcome to Bishr." It was said to him: "At the time when I gave you death, there was no better person than you on earth."

Do you know why he received such a great glad tiding? It is because he used to remain barefoot. This is why he was given the name Ḥāfī (barefooted person). I heard from Ḥadrat the reason for this. Bishr Ḥāfī used to say: "The land is Allāh's floor, it is disrespectful to wear shoes and walk on His floor." This is why he remained barefooted throughout his life. I also read in one book that he was not wearing shoes at the time when he pledged bayʿat to his shaykh. He wanted to maintain this form and appearance for the rest of his life. He felt that if he were to wear shoes, he will be changing his appearance. As a result of this respect [for his shaykh], Allāh *taʿālā* ordered the animals to abstain from excreting in his path. After quite some time, someone saw excreta in his path. He concluded from this that Bishr Ḥāfī has passed away. When he made inquiries, his conclusion proved to be correct.

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[1] *At-Tanbīh aṭ-Ṭarabī*, p. 35.

(2)

A group of Sufis was eating food. A person came in and offered salām but no one replied to his salām. They continued eating. When they finished their meal, they explained to him the reason for not replying to his salām. They did not say to him that the ruling in fiqh is that a person should not offer salām to people who are eating and that it is not wājib on those who are eating to reply to the salām. Instead, they said to him: "Brother! We are Sufis. When we do anything we do it for Allāh's pleasure. We were eating with the intention of gaining His pleasure and His proximity. Based on this intention, our eating was also an act of worship; and it is prohibited to reply to a salām when you are engaged in worship. This is why we did not reply to your salām."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful answer which was in line with the Sufi way. These personalities certainly practised [on the Hadīth]: "Actions are based on intentions." And they were indeed very particular about following the Sunnat.

(3)

A person opened the shutter of his house. A saint asked him: "Why did you open the shutter?" He replied: "So that light and air may enter the house." The saint said: "My dear fellow! You should rather have made the intention: 'So that the sound of the adhān enters the house.' If you made such an intention, do you think the light and air would have stopped coming in?" Light and air will enter anyway. This is why I say that there is no Dīnī work in which Allāh *taʿālā* did not place any worldly benefit. However, if you make an intention for Dīn you will receive the reward for a good intention.

(4)

While in the assembly of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*, a suggestion was made to construct a building and start a farm in a certain place. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* asked the people: "What should the intention be?" The people voiced their opinions. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* said: "This is the intention which I made: 'O Allāh! Those who pass by this place must be able to get relief from the hot sun, rain and so on.'" Glory to Allāh! Look at the intention for continuous charity which Hadrat made! After all, the Hadīth refers to this as continuous charity: If a person plants a tree on the path so that travellers can get shade and comfort from it, it will be a source of continuous charity for him.[1]

When a duʿā' was made at the end of the assembly, a person made this duʿā': "O Allāh! Forgive all those who are buried in the graveyard of this orchard." Incidentally, this same person was the first one to pass away and was buried in that very graveyard. May Allāh *taʿālā* forgive him.

These incidents which I am relating to you deal with sincerity and good intention. I had just said to you that sincerity is essential for everyone. The reason why I am saying this is that I am observing that nowadays even Dīnī knowledge is not being studied for Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, it is adulterated by other corrupt objectives. This is why people are deprived of its blessings. It is due to the corruption of intention that both our Dīnī centres have deteriorated: (1) The madāris no longer have teachers and students who are teaching and studying solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. (2)

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[1] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٣، ص ٢٤٨، حديث رقم ٣٤٤٩.

The seekers in the khānqāhs no longer possess sincerity and devotion. Knowledge is now sought merely to increase one's capabilities and to deliver lectures. In fact, it is done for even lower objectives.

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say that if a student studies to increase his capabilities, it is possible that he will come right; but he will not get the inspiration to practise on it. If another student studies for the sake of practising, then – Allāh willing – he will certainly be inspired to practise on it and it is also possible that his capabilities will come right. In other words, in the first case only capabilities will be realized, while in the second case both the inspiration to practise and realization of capabilities will be acquired. Look at the immense benefits in correcting one's intention! Despite this, people are unaware of this or do not want to do it. This is why they fall into loss.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Anwar Sāhib [Kashmīrī] *rahimahullāh* used to say that people make du'ā' when they drink zam zam water because du'ā' is accepted on such an occasion. A person made this du'ā': "O Allāh! Let my memory become like the memory of Hāfiz Dhahabī *rahimahullāh*." (He was a high ranking Hadīth expert and had memorized many Ahādīth). Another person made this du'ā': "O Allāh! Inspire me to follow the Sunnat." Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say that the second du'ā' is more important than the first one because if a person is not inspired to do good actions, what will he do with a strong memory!?

Now listen to another incident. I was going to Thānah Bhawan when a person decided to join me on the journey. Some how or the other he came to know that I am going for hajj. He attended to my needs

throughout the journey. If it was the time of salāh and I was about to get down for water, he would immediately take the jug from my hand and bring water for me. He continued in this way for the entire journey. He got off with me in Sahāranpūr. When he was seeing me off, he said: "You are going to Makkah and Madīnah. When you go there, you must make duʿā' that I am able to deliver speeches and lectures." He didn't say anything about a strong memory or about the ability to follow the Sunnat. All he said was that he must be able to speak clearly. I was quite disappointed but could not refuse because he was my benefactor. I remembered his request and made duʿā' for him. I do not know whether my duʿā' was accepted or not, but not long thereafter I heard that he passed away. Now look! He did not have the time to learn how to deliver talks and also passed away.

Intention is of fundamental importance. If the intention is correct, then even a little action is accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. If the intention is not right, everything else is wasted.

While explaining the Hadīth: "Actions are judged by intentions…" the 'ulamā' say that a person emigrated from Makkah Mukarramah to Madīnah Munawwarah to get married to a certain woman. All the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were emigrating in compliance with Allāh's order and for His pleasure. But this person was emigrating solely to get married to a woman by the name of Umm Qays. Later on, he was referred to as Muhājir Umm Qays (the one who emigrated for Umm Qays). The worldly torment for having an incorrect intention was that while some Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were referred to as Muhājir Ilallāh and others as Muhājir Ilar Rasūl, this person was referred to as Muhājir Umm Qays. He

must have regretted this his entire life that due to a wrong intention, he was tainted with this title and his story became an eternal lesson and admonition for the entire Muslim nation.

When this Hadīth is read before us, it ought to fill us with fear and prompt us to rectify our intentions. On the contrary, we notice that even our students do not have the correct intention for studying. They strive very hard in their student days but their intention is not correct. And so, the same effects are visible. On completing their studies, these students become 'ulamā' and leaders. They then convey the same effects to others. What I just said can be easily confirmed and corroborated from the present day practice of having jalsahs (gatherings). Lectures are delivered throughout the night, but everyone is absent for the fajr salāh.

A person in Gorukhpūr used to say to me: "The masses will never have confidence in an 'ālim who is absent for the fajr salāh." I said: "You have given the correct reason for the peoples' lack of confidence in such an 'ālim. If they see an 'ālim defective in his actions, they will never be able to have confidence in him."

This defect is not from today but from the very beginning of their student days. They did not study for Allāh's pleasure, so now it is very difficult to do anything with sincerity. In today's times we observe a student opposing his own teacher. I am castigating a person who remains in the company of another and still opposes him! This is a most despicable situation. Whereas students are of a higher rank than one's children. After all, it is they who receive knowledge from their teacher and become the means for the proliferation of his spiritual excellences. On the other

hand, it is only one's genealogy which continues from one's children. Despite this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from children who are causes of evil.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ يَّكُوْنُ عَلَيَّ وَبَالًا

I seek refuge in You from children who are a cause of evil to me.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked for a righteous child:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ مِنْ صَالِحِ مَا تُؤْتِي النَّاسَ مِنَ الْمَالِ وَالْاَهْلِ وَالْوَلَدِ غَيْرَ ضَآلٍّ وَّلَا مُضِلٍّ.[1]

O Allāh! I ask You for the good of what You give to the people be it of wealth, a spouse or children. Make it such that they are neither astray nor do they lead others astray.

Just as you get two types of children - righteous and unrighteous - you get two types of students. One is sincere and devoted while the other is insincere and free-minded. When we were studying in Dār al-ʿUlūm, we used to be occasionally affected by the Hadīth lesson and the words of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The effect used to be with us when we returned to our rooms, so we would sit down silently. Some of the roommates would laugh and mock at us, and say: "Look at him! He studied Hadīth and came, so he is silent now. He has been affected."

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[1] سنن الترمذي، كتاب الدعوات، باب ١٢٣، حديث ٣٥٨٦.

I am relating to you the condition in our madāris. Just yesterday I related to you the condition of ʿAlīgarh [University]. The people there were mocking at a student who had a beard. A teacher referred to the poor student as an owl merely because he had a beard. Nonetheless, if the situation in our madāris is as I described, what can be said about ʿAlīgarh!?

One thing is certain – Muslim boys study there and donations from Muslims are received by the institution. Consequently, one has to practise on the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why we are surprised. That student will have to cry before Allāh *taʿālā* and beg Him to take his beard into consideration. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* must change the hearts in such a manner that those who are maligning the beard today must sing its praises tomorrow.

I was studying Islam while some of my own relatives were studying English. I thought to myself that when they get top jobs and positions, they will scorn Dīnī education. So I made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* by saying: O Allāh! Please take my study of Dīn into consideration so that these people do not castigate and mock me, and do not have the opportunity of saying: "He studied Dīn, this is why he is so despicable and low."[1]

I have a friend whose brother studied Western education and has a high post. When my friend

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[1] All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for having blessed Hadrat with immense honour and wealth. This was clearly observed by the world. A very close relative had said to Hadrat's mother: "How will your Maulwī Sāhib earn a living if he studies Dīn?" Hadrat's mother must have certainly been grieved by this and must have made duʿā' for him. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

decided to lead a religious life, his [Western educated] brother said: "Why should I stop a person from choosing a religious life?" When I heard this statement, I valued it immensely because if a person does not do good himself but thinks good of those who do good deeds, then I ask you: What is better, to be like him or to be like a person who does not do good himself and stop others from doing the same? It may well be that through the blessings of this one righteous person, his relatives will also be pardoned. A person should at least have this much of faith.

A person may study English, Hindi or whatever else he wants and wherever he wants – there is no objection. He can study every branch of knowledge. However, does this mean that he must destroy his īmān for it? Student days are days of severe tests and tribulations. This is the period when a person can come onto the straight path or go completely astray. Going astray means he studies the outward words only and causes Allāh's evidence to be established against him. He does not think about where he is, what he is doing and what he ought to be doing. His condition is most astonishing because he is studying Dīn, yet he is living a free life. Neither can his parents see to his training and rectification nor is the madrasah a place of rectification at that time. He has to think about his future himself. A student spends a considerable period of time in a madrasah, so he can make something of himself if he really wants. I have seen these places and am therefore speaking from experience.

I also noticed students returning from class where the teacher explained the differences of the imāms. When these students revise the lesson, they level objections against the seniors and elders. I never approved of

this practice. I used to think to myself: "O Allāh! These personalities are actually from among our teachers. They made extensive research and wrote books. A teacher may have the right to refute a view by presenting proofs, but we [students] have no right to utter anything against them. This is not research; it is disrespect. If this habit settles down in a person, it will remain with him for the rest of his life. He will acquire no knowledge and he will be deprived of the blessings of those pious and righteous personalities. After all, knowledge comes from being respectful and not from disrespect.

The pitiable condition of the madāris and khānqāhs

To sum up, I do not see much good in our madāris of today. there is differentiation between who is capable and who is not. Consequently, even from the biggest of madāris we cannot say with regard to even a handful of graduates that they are examples and true representatives of the pious personalities of the past, and that they want to work in the manner of their senior and elders. The same condition exists among the Sufis. Previously they used to pay special attention to education and spiritual training. Their fundamental principle was:

فأول قدم للمريد في هذه الطريقة ينبغي أن يكون على الصدق

It is essential that a murīd's first step in this path be on sidq.

They used to ensure that the seekers remained on this principle and tested them accordingly. This is why they emerged as people who made valuable contributions. Now they pay no attention to this; so these places have also deteriorated.

Thus, there is no sincerity here nor there. Everything is operating on the level of customs. The absence of a genuine soul has caused the khānqāhs and the madāris to become corrupt. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

RECTIFICATION OF INTENTION

Maulwī Qamar az-Zamān used to relate that a Maulwī Sāḥib was invited to a jalsah in a certain village. The people decided among themselves that they will give him a topic which he will not be able to speak on. Subsequently, they asked him to speak on the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Do you see! This is the type of Dīnī jalsah of today's time – the ignoramuses give the ʿālim the topic and they tell him what to speak on. Very well, give him the topic. However, their intention is to render him incapable and he must fail in delivering the talk. I ask you, how is it to do such a thing? What can I tell you about a jalsah whose objective is to cause an ʿālim to fail? Let's assume the ʿālim is not able to speak on the topic which you gave him, then I ask you: If your ʿulamā' and seniors are going to fail, how will you ever pass?

When that Maulwī Sāḥib delivered his talk on the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the audience was stupefied and the people said: "We have been hosting jalsahs of this nature for the past 25 years but no one ever spoke so well on the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and we never heard anything so beautiful." The Maulwī Sāḥib passed the test by virtue of his capability and excellent speech, while the masses had left no stone unturned to ensure his failure.

I am informing you about the nature of your jalsahs and the intention which the hosts have. Whereas a Ḥadīth states:

اِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

Actions are based on intentions.

The 'ulamā' explain this Hadīth often and the people also know it, but when it is the occasion to rectify their intention, they do not rectify it. Thus, the benefit and blessing are according to the intention. If this is the condition of the intention of the organizers of the jalsah, you can well imagine what type of goodness and blessing will emanate from such a jalsah.

In the same way, those who are listening to the lecture do not have correct intentions. A Maulwī Sāhib was delivering a talk in a certain jalsah. Whenever he happened to stop or pause in-between, the people would say among themselves: "The Maulwī Sāhib has run out of fuel." Did you see the belief which the masses have about their 'ulamā'. They come to listen to his talk, it appears they have come for the sake of Dīn, whereas as it is pure materialism which is lurking inside them. They come to test the speaker. If he can speak continuously for a few hours – irrespective of whether they can understand what he is saying or not – then they are attracted to him and consider him to be a senior scholar. But if a speaker speaks slowly or pauses in-between for whatever reason, the people fail him. I ask you: What is this? People are only worried about the outer word, they pay no attention to the meaning.

Similar is the case of those delivering the lectures. When they realized that the masses are more concerned about words, they too began practising oratory. Acquiring Allāh's pleasure is no longer the objective of delivering a talk, rather it is to please the masses. Whereas the very meaning of nīyyat is to do something solely for Allāh's pleasure. This is also the meaning of ikhlās. Delivering lectures, advising and admonishing the people are undoubtedly the Sunnat

practices of the Prophets ʿ*alayhimus salām*. The rank of a lecturer or speaker is surely a lofty rank, but only when it is done with sincerity. If it is done for other objectives such as wealth and authority, then the ʿulamā' have listed it among the deviations of the Jews and Christians. The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

التذكير على المنابر للوعظ والاتعاظ سنة الأنبياء والمرسلين، ولرياسة ومال وقبول عامة من ضلالة اليهود والنصارى.[1]

To remind and advise people from the pulpits is a Sunnat practice of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. But if it is done for position, wealth and popularity, then it is from among the deviations of the Jews and Christians.

I never used to attend jalsahs and similar gatherings. This is why people removed me from their brotherhood. I happened to go to a certain place where there was a jalsah. Some people were assembled around me after maghrib. I said to them: "Go to the jalsah and listen to the talk." A few of them went while most of them remained. I asked them: "Why are you not going?" They replied: "We do not feel like going." Then they began requesting me to give a talk. Since I do not attend jalsahs, I declined. But when they insisted, I had to give in.

The first thing which I said to them was: "You people are most probably expecting a powerful speech, so I am putting an end to this expectation. You can either cease all your expectations and listen to what I have to say or you can get up and leave."

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[1] شامي، ج ٢، ص ٢٧٩.

I then related this Hadīth in which Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not speak (swiftly) like how you people speak today. Rather, he used to speak at a very slow pace with many pauses in-between.[1] I also said to them: "You people are probably accustomed to the opposite. Now a person [referring to himself] is going to speak like this, so listen."

In short, whenever I have to deliver a talk, I speak as I normally converse with people. Consequently, I noticed that people's inclinations changed and many of them say that they do not enjoy listening to the talks of others.

The fact of the matter is that the spoken word has to descend into the heart – this is the benefit of a talk. If it makes no impression on the hearts of the audience, how can it be referred to as a lecture? However, in order to create an impression in the hearts of others, the speaker himself must first be affected by the themes of the Qur'ān and Hadīth. If he is himself affected, he will be able to affect others. This is the essence. As for speaking flowingly, eloquently and displaying one's oratory skills which are not for Allāh's pleasure – these are of no significance. In fact, the texts speak out against such speeches.

A Hadīth states:

إن أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان.[2]

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[1] الترمذي، أبواب المناقب عن رسول الله، ٤٦، حديث ٣٦٣٩.

[2] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ١، ص ٢٨٩، حديث ١٤٣.

The thing which I fear the most for my ummat is a person who possesses a lot of verbal knowledge while hypocrisy is in his heart (i.e. he has corrupt beliefs).

Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to the hypocrites:

يَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللهِ لَكُمْ لِيُرْضُوْكُمْ ج وَاللهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُّرْضُوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

They swear to you by Allāh in order to please you [O Muslims], while it is imperatively necessary to please Allāh and His Messenger, if they possess īmān.

This is polytheism. In other words, if a certain matter is to be for Allāh *taʿālā* alone and someone/something else is included in it, then it is referred to as polytheism.

If this is the case of the organizers of the jalsah, the audience and the speakers – that there is no sign of sincerity in any of them, then of what value is an action which is devoid of sincerity in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*? We may rejoice over the success of a jalsah and the speaker may be happy over the fact that the people thoroughly enjoyed his speech, but what we have to see is if the jalsah was successful in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The way to make a jalsah successful

When I explain these points to people, they assume that I am against jalsahs. I do not want to stop anyone from having a jalsah, but what I do want is to show people the way to make a jalsah acceptable according to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The fact that you like speeches on the sīrat (life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)*

demonstrates that you have excellent taste. However, it is not right to restrict the sīrat to just a few things. After all, in the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* there is fear and submission as well. Many of his duʿā's contain the theme of begging Allāh *taʿālā* for His fear. Observe a few duʿā's of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا تَحُوْلُ بِهِ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيْكَ.[1]

O Allāh! Give us such a portion of Your fear whereby it would come as a barrier between us and committing acts of disobedience against You.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ اَحَبَّ الْاَشْيَآءِ اِلَيَّ، وَاجْعَلْ خَشْيَتَكَ اَخْوَفَ الْاَشْيَآءِ عِنْدِيْ.[2]

O Allāh! Make Your love the most beloved of things to me and make Your fear the most fearful of things in my sight. Cut off from me the needs of this world.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ اَخْشَاكَ كَاَنِّيْ اَرٰكَ اَبَدًا حَتّٰى اَلْقَاكَ، وَاَسْعِدْنِيْ بِتَقْوَاكَ وَلَا تُشْقِنِيْ بِمَعْصِيَتِكَ.[3]

O Allāh! Make me one who fears You as though I am seeing You all the time until I meet You. Bestow me

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[1] ترمذي، باب ٧٩، حديث ٣٥٠٢.

[2] كنز العمال، ج ٢، ص ١٨٢.

[3] مناجات مقبول. وفي كنز العمال: اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ اَخْشَاكَ حَتّٰى كَاَنِّيْ اَرٰكَ اَبَدًا حَتّٰى اَلْقَاكَ، وَاَسْعِدْنِيْ بِتَقْوَاكَ وَلَا تُشْقِنِيْ بِمَعْصِيَتِكَ

with the good fortune of obedience to You and do not condemn me with disobedience to You.

Fear and submission of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* were in his life because Allāh *taʿālā* said:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* states that Paradise is the abode for His fearing servants. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* surpassed all in this regard. He himself feared Allāh *taʿālā* and taught his followers to do the same.

Now I ask you, if this is also the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, why is it not spoken about? The fact of the matter is that in order to know all these conditions and situations, it is necessary for a person to know his own self, to know Allāh *taʿālā*, to know Paradise and Hell, the accounting of deeds. Only then can he receive a portion of some fear and submission. Fear of Allāh *taʿālā* is no ordinary thing. When Allāh's fear enters a believer's heart, it melts him just as water melts salt. Fear and hope are two essential qualities of a believer.

يَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهُ

Believers are hopeful of Allāh's mercy and fearful of His punishment.[2]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 57.

Fear for the Hereafter

A believer's heart contains fear. A person requested Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* to intercede on a certain matter. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* said: "I consider this intercession to be impermissible because this is the time for me to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, I will not do this."

While on the subject of fear, I recall an incident concerning Hadrat Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *raḥimahullāh*. Khwājah Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* related to Hadrat (i.e. to Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*): I went on an inspection [to a school]. I passed by a class in which the teacher was facing away from the students and explaining something to them on the board. I stood at the door outside the class. When he turned around and saw me, he got terrified and fell down unconscious." After relating this to Hadrat *raḥimahullāh*, Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib said to him: "Hadrat, from this incident my mind went to our state of unconsciousness before Allāh *taʿālā* on the day of Resurrection. If this teacher became so terrified at seeing a human just like himself and fell unconscious, what will the condition of the creation be when it stands before Allāh *taʿālā*?"

When Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* heard this, he said: "You are most certainly correct. A believer undoubtedly fears Allāh *taʿālā*." We see that where Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires,…

He follows it with the words:

فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى

…then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* mentioned Paradise immediately after fear so that it creates a balance in those who fear Him, and the pain of fear is alleviated by hearing about Paradise.

Whatever we see happening around us today, the liberal attitude which people have towards Dīn, their boldness towards it, and their uttering whatever they like – all this is on account of an absence of fear. On the other hand, if fear enters a person's heart, his tongue becomes dumb and he does not even feel like saying anything. A Ḥadīth states:

الحياء والعي (أي قلة الكلام كما في الترمذي) شعبتان من الإيمان

Modesty and speaking less are departments of īmān.

In other words, when a person has modesty in his heart, his īmān increases his concern for the Hereafter, and his tongue remains silent from frivolous and useless conversations.

A Ḥadīth states:

والبذاء والبيان شعبتان من النفاق[2]

Obscene language and smooth-talking are departments of hypocrisy.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] الترمذي، كتاب البر، باب ما جاء في العي، باب ٨٠، حديث ٢٠٢٧.

Both are departments of hypocrisy because they are connected to the tongue. A hypocrite is all words while his heart is empty.

What I am trying to show you is that if you like sīrat as a topic and you like to hear talks on this subject, why are themes on fear and submission not explained? After all, these are also intrinsic parts of the sīrat. I am most grieved by the condition of those 'ulamā' who allow the ignoramuses to become their examiners. The failure and success of an 'ālim is now in the hands of the ignoramuses. They can pass or fail whoever they like. Whereas if one of these ignorant fellows is made to stand up and give a talk, he will not be able to utter even two words. Yet he is ready to supervise the 'ulamā' and test them!

The fact of the matter is that an ignorant person looks at the words only while an 'ālim is concerned about the reality and the meaning. Since the laity cannot fathom the meanings and realities, they remain hungry for words. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say:

> A few villagers went to a certain person. He asked them: *"Tumhāre kasht zār gandam par taqāṭur amṭār huwā yā nahī?"* (which simply means, did rain fall on your wheat farm?). [Bearing in mind that he used such high words in his question] the villagers spoke among themselves and said: "Come, let's go, he is reading the Qur'ān at the moment."

What was the need to speak so high language? If the person was really an 'ārif (intelligent man), he would not have fallen into such vanities. Nowadays people do not acquire understanding so that they could have some affinity with the meanings. They are only

interested in words. It is certainly not easy to be an ʿārif. This is why it is so necessary to remain in the company of an expert ʿārif. But there is no importance given to this at all in our times.

In the course of my stay in Lucknow, I heard a hakīm saying to another hakīm: "Do you know how the art of medicine was destroyed?" He then gave the answer himself: "Medicine was destroyed by the destruction of the clinic." In other words, no importance was given to the clinic. When I heard this, I thought to myself: These people are saying with regard to their field which I have been saying about the Tarīqah. Just as I am crying over the destruction of the Tarīqah, these people are crying over the destruction of their field. I then concluded that the art of medicine was destroyed because it too needs skill and expertise; and this entails a lot of work. This is why people turned away from it and considered mere theoretical knowledge to be sufficient. Whereas, whether it is medicine or any other field, mere books are not enough. The most a person can obtain from books is definitions and terminologies. As for expertise, experience, manner of treatment, etc. these can only be gained by remaining in the company of a doctor in his clinic. When no attention was given to this, the science of medicine disappeared.

The same is the condition with the Tarīqah. People assumed that books alone are sufficient to understand the Tarīqah. They feel that Arabic, Urdu and Persian books are easily accessible; and they can understand Dīn and the Tarīqah by reading them. This is a totally wrong notion. A person may get the knowledge and become conversant with the terms and terminologies of the Tarīqah, but knowledge alone is not enough. The need is to imbibe those qualities. And this cannot

be done from a book. Rather, it needs the company of a qualified shaykh. Nowadays people are not only showing disregard to this need, they are rejecting it. Whereas affinity, tranquillity, spiritual ecstasy and so on can only be obtained in the Tarīqah through the company of the Sufi masters. This is affirmed by the statement of the hakīm sāhib who said that medicine has been destroyed through the disregard which is shown to the clinic.

Prerequisites for acquiring knowledge

You all know fully well that no branch of knowledge can be learnt without a teacher. Knowledge will most certainly be acquired if a qualified teacher is found, the student has a genuine desire to learn, and he also has respect for his teacher and his field of study. The same hakīm sāhib who said that the art of medicine was destroyed by the disregard shown to the clinic was speaking highly of one of his early students who qualified 20 years ago and is employed in a certain place. Despite this, he is so respectful and humble that whenever he gets an opportunity, he comes into the clinic, sits in the rear and writes prescriptions. The hakīm sāhib said: "There are times when I do not even know that he has come in. Only later on I realize that he is sitting in the back."

The hakīm was saying this to show that although his student qualified so many years ago, he does not consider himself to be independent. Furthermore, he shows the same respect as he did when he was a student. These are the qualities which draw the affection and attention of the teacher, and are most beneficial for a student.

It is so sad that the factor which was essential for the acquisition of knowledge has disappeared not only

from the external sciences but from the Tarīqah as well. Showing respect and being mindful of etiquette are of utmost importance.

اَلطُّرُقُ كُلُّهَا آدَابُ – اَدِّبُوا النَّفْسَ اَيُّهَا الْاَصْحَابُ

The Tarīqah is sound etiquette in its entirety. O friends! Teach etiquette to your selves.

The need for etiquette before the mashā'ikh

Nowadays when people go to the mashā'ikh, they go without respect and sincerity, and they consider themselves independent of their knowledge and practice. What benefit and blessings will they acquire in such a situation?

I constantly say that nothing can be achieved by merely making a saint a source of blessings. The things which ought to be made sources of blessings are the Qur'ān and Sunnat. Now if you do not make the knowledge and practice of a person a source of blessing, and only his body, then what type of spirituality is this? And how can this ever be something to be desired? It is merely physical, in fact, it stems from the desires of the carnal self.

Brother! If you go to a person, acquire knowledge, practice and sincerity from him. Only then will your coming and going be of benefit. If not, you will be deluding yourself. You will be thinking to yourself that you have a bond with a certain saint while you are totally devoid of the effects of that bond. Coming and going of this nature is absolutely useless. You are wasting your own time and wasting the time of others.

Listen attentively to what I am saying and ponder over it. If not, you will listen to talks and speeches on the sīrat but its greatness and respect will not have the

slightest effect on you. In this way, you will be totally empty after the talk as you were before it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

THE MEANING OF IKHLĀS

A major difficulty nowadays is that the realities have become concealed and there is no one to teach them. When there is no knowledge of a thing, how will it be possible to put it into practice and to adopt it in one's life? I believe that ikhlās (sincerity) is the most essential need not only in our time but in every era. There is probably no other thing which is so vital. Whatever damage we see in our religious and worldly works is because of a lack of ikhlās or an absence of it. The funny thing about it is that the more essential it is, the further away we are from it and ignorant of it.

I want to speak on this at present. May Allāh *taʿālā* make its reality clear to you people as well.

The first thing you need to understand is that ikhlās is a thing of the heart and is an internal state. However, once this quality forms in a person and he is embellished by it, it does not remain concealed from others. Rather, the sincerity of a sincere person emanates from his heart just as the fragrance of a flower is inhaled by others. Once ikhlās embeds itself in a person's heart, his words, actions and life-situations are of a completely different level. His words, actions and life-situations become signs and indications of his ikhlās.

The different angles of ikhlās

Now try to understand this: People have different conditions, and Allāh *taʿālā* gave them different temperaments. Furthermore, the capabilities of people are also diverse. One person is wealthy, another is eloquent in speech, another is physically strong, while another is hardworking and aloof. Another has strong

relationships, while another is an ardent worshipper, an ascetic and has a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā*.

Consequently, their ikhlāṣ has different hues and colours. In other words, a wealthy person can prove his sincerity by spending his wealth, while an eloquent person can help and assist a person through good and encouraging words – this will be his ikhlāṣ.

A poet rightly said:

لا خيل عندك تهديها ولا مال – فليسعد النطق إن لم يسعد الحال

You neither have a horse nor wealth which you could present as a gift. If your [financial] position cannot bring you joy, let your kind words be a source of joy.

It is also possible for a person to help by running errands for another or – at least – make duʿā' for him in his heart. This is also ikhlāṣ and he will be included among the sincere ones. I wanted to make this point clear because I do not know from where people got this notion that ikhlāṣ means to spend your wealth at times when it is needed. Does ikhlāṣ mean wealth? This is a mistake.

You can help a person by running errands for him, saying kind and consoling words to him or merely saying that you are with him. If ikhlāṣ only means spending your wealth, then only the wealthy people will be the mukhliṣīn (sincere ones) and the poor people will have no way of demonstrating their sincerity. Whereas it is gauged from the texts that Allāh *taʿālā* referred to those people who could not take part in jihād because of poverty as sincere people. The reason for this is that although they could not take part in jihād due to poverty, their condition displayed their sincerity. Their sincerity from within spoke out and showed that they are sincere people.

Although they did not join in the jihād, it caused them much grief and sadness. Their intense grief caused them to cry. Allāh *taʿālā* then revealed the following verses to console them:

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَأْذِنُوْنَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَآءُ

[There is] certainly a way of reproach against those who ask you leave while they are wealthy.[1]

Before this, Allāh *taʿālā* said:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَآءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضٰى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ ط مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ط وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ. وَّلَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ إِذَا مَآ أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَآ أَجِدُ مَآ أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ ص تَوَلَّوْا وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوْا مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ.

There is no sin on the weak, the sick nor on those who do not have anything to spend provided they are sincere to Allāh and His Messenger. There is no way of reproach against the righteous. Allāh is forgiving, merciful. Nor [is there a way of reproach] against those who came to you so that you may provide them with conveyances and you said: "I do not have anything upon which I could convey you." They turned away, their eyes flowing with tears out of sorrow that they do not have that which they could spend.[2]

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 93.

[2] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 91-92.

The difference between a sincere and insincere person is made very clear in these verses. The insincere ones were the wealthy people. They had the material resources coupled with health and strength. Despite this, they were asking for leave from going for jihād. On the other hand, the sincere ones could not join because they did not have the resources. They suffered immense grief and were reduced to tears for not being able to join.

The gist of all this is that a sincere person is always on the look out for occasions when he could join his beloved in his grief. If a person does not have this worry, he is certainly insincere.

Note: What a beautiful proof to differentiate between sincerity and insincerity from these verses. It is indeed the fruit of the knowledge and cognition of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. (Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

THE ORDER FOR IKHLĀS

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهٖ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهٖ أَحَدًا

Whoever hopes to meet his Lord should do righteous deeds and should not ascribe anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord.[1]

Meeting Allāh

This verse teaches us that good deeds and abstaining from polytheism are the means to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. The essence of this is that a person must worship his Lord with full devotion. The words "should do righteous deeds" instruct the doing of good deeds while the words "should not ascribe anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord" instruct ikhlās – sincerity and devotion.

Sometimes Allāh *taʿālā* expresses ikhlās with the very same word. For example:

وَمَا اُمِرُوْا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ

They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone].[2]

In the above verse, Allāh *taʿālā* uses the word *mukhlisīn* which is derived from ikhlās.

At other times He expresses it as follows:

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 110.

[2] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ اَحَدًا

And should not ascribe anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord.

We learn from this that it is actually a tafsīr of khulūs [which is also derived from ikhlās]. The reason for expressing it with this word is obvious, viz. khulūs means khāliṣ (pure). In other words, when something is not adulterated by another substance. For example, milk will be referred to as pure only if water has not been added to it.

In the same way, an act of worship will be khāliṣ if it is free from all apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. If someone or something is included in the worship of Allāh *taʿālā*, there can be no khulūs in it.

This is why the exegists quote many narrations which speak out against ostentation in their commentary to this verse.

عن محمود بن لبيد رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: إن أخوف ما أخاف عليكم الشرك الأصغر، قالوا يا رسول الله، وما الشرك الأصغر. قال الرياء.[1]

وزاد البيهقي في شعب الإيمان يقول الله لهم يوم يجازي العباد بأعمالهم إذهبوا إلى الذين كنتم تراؤن في الدنيا فانظروا هل تجدون عندهم جزاء وخيرا.[2]

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[1] مسند أحمد، ج ٣٩، ص ٣٩، حديث ٢٣٦٣٠.

[2] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٥، ص ٣٣٣، حديث ٦٨٣١.

Hadrat Mahmūd ibn Labīd radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The thing which I fear the most for you is minor polytheism." The Sahābah asked: "What is minor polytheism?" He replied: "Ostentation."

Al-Bayhaqī rahimahullāh adds the following in his narration: On the day when Allāh taʿālā will recompense His servants for their deeds, He will say to them: "Go to those before whom you were showing off your deeds in the world and see if you can find any reward and good from them."

Another Hadīth states:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا جمع الله الأولين والآخرين ببقيع واحد ينفذهم البصر ويسمعهم الداعي، قال أنا خير شريك كل عمل كان عمل لي في دار الدنيا كان لي فيه شريك فأنا أدعه اليوم ولا أقبل اليوم إلا خالصا.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When Allāh taʿālā gathers all the past and latter peoples on a field where every person will be able to see everything and hear the announcement of the announcer, He will say: "I am an excellent partner. Every deed which was done for Me in the world and another partner was joined to Me in it, I distance Myself from it today. Today I will accept nothing but what was done purely for Me.

We learn from this that Allāh *taʿālā* only accepts what is khālis (pure). When the 'ulamā' constantly speak about sincerity in acts of worship and stress its

[1] المعجم الكبير للطبراني، ج ٧، ص ٢٩٠، حديث ٧١٦٨.

adoption, they do it on the basis of the verse which was quoted at the beginning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IKHLĀS AND AKHLĀQ

(1)

The first essential when treading the road to Allāh *taʿālā* is sincerity. Then it is necessary for a person to set right and reform his character and habits. This is because the senior saints have written that without sound character, the person cannot even develop the capability of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* let alone even reaching Him.

Sincerity and devotion are connected to the heart and known best by Allāh *taʿālā*. Aside from this, it means that when a person places his foot on this field, it must be solely for the acquisition of Allāh's pleasure. There must be no worldly motive for it. Rectification of character means that a person needs to purify his heart of the evil qualities which are lurking there, e.g. pride, anger, jealousy, haughtiness, hypocrisy and so on. He must then embellish his heart with noble characteristics such as humility, forbearance, sincerity and so on. Together with all this, he must set right his dealings, purify his transactions and be transparent in the fulfilling of rights.

The gist of this is that he must clear his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*, and set right his dealings and relations with his fellow humans. The perfection of these two is known as tasawwuf. Man must therefore focus on setting right these two at the very beginning.

(2)

When I say these things to you, I do not say them without any good reason. Rather, I think about them carefully after having observed the prevailing conditions and situations, and after seeing the need to

say them to you. I am seeing with my open eyes that the condition of people has become corrupt. In addition to worldly places, even our religious centres are starting to succumb to these evils. A task has not even commenced properly and its end manifests itself in the form of corruption. The reason for this is that people are not prepared to appoint someone as their senior and mentor so that they could all unite under him. Since the temperaments of people differ, it is inevitable for differences to form among them.

The only way to protect ourselves from this is to appoint someone whom we will follow. And when differences arise, people must cast aside their personal temperaments and demands, and adopt the way of their leader. If this is realized, there will be no disharmony.

Look! A shaykh has many murīds and they all obviously differ immensely as regards their temperaments. However, since the shaykh is a qualified shaykh, he is able to bring them together notwithstanding the differences in their temperaments. Just as these people assemble around despite their natural differences, when they part ways, they can assemble on his creed on the basis of their bond with him and their confidence in him. Consequently, if the temperament of a person prompts him to differ with another person, he can suppress it by thinking to himself that both of them are affiliated to the same shaykh and both of them are receiving blessings and benefits from the same person. He must think to himself: "This is the creed of my shaykh in this matter, so I too must adopt the same creed." If people adopt this approach, differences will most certainly come to an end.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a useful piece of advice which is most certainly based on experience. It is a radiant lamp for us – especially those who are affiliated to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – which has to be put into practice. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

There were so many differences in the temperaments of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. A Hadīth states:

أرحم أمتي بأمتي أبو بكر، وأشدهم في أمر الله عمر[1]

The most merciful person towards my ummat is Abū Bakr while the most stern in the matters of Allāh taʿālā is ʿUmar.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* describes one as being most merciful and the other as most stern. Why did he say this? It was solely because of the difference in their temperaments. Despite this, bearing in mind that all the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* loved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* intensely and were – so to speak – dyed in his colour, they were mutually united and mutually one. Each Sahābī would think about the other: "He is drinking from the same fountain which I am drinking from." This is why there was mutual love, affinity and harmony among them. This is the solution to putting an end to our mutual differences.

When this point came to my mind, I was most satisfied and happy with it. It is something to remember and very beneficial and useful.

(3)

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[1] الترمذي، باب ٣٢، حديث ٣٧٩٠، أبواب المناقب، ٤٦.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* wrote in his *Mathnawī* that if a person is caught up in a sin, he must neither take an oath nor make a promise to extricate himself from it because this causes a greater burden on the self. He ends up having to break his promise repeatedly. He must make a firm intention and resolution in his heart that he will not commit that evil, and take courage to abstain from it. By making a promise or taking an oath, the self thinks that the person has imprisoned it completely. It therefore spends all its energies to maintain its freedom by causing the person to break his promise. This is not the manner of rectification. Some people are overtaken by their emotions, take oaths, vows, and so on verbally; but they do not succeed. The reason is what I explained just now. Understand this point well.

(4)

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* wrote in his *Mathnawī* that one cannot rely even on the creed of a foolish person. He added that the one who cannot differentiate between who is Ḥaḍrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* and who is not is a foolish person. In other words, if a person cannot differentiate between who has freed himself from his carnal self and who has not is a foolish person. When a foolish one takes an oath over a certain matter, do not rely on it. If he cannot even differentiate and is absolutely stupid, then whatever he says will most certainly include his stupidity. He will not have the slightest connection with the intellect. How, then, can he ever be relied on or taken into consideration!?

THE BLESSING OF IKHLĀṢ

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* relates an incident of Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* in his *Mathnawī*. I will relate this incident to you and then try to extract a ruling from it. Listen attentively.

Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* was in jihād when he overpowered an unbeliever and was about to kill him. The man spat on the face of Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He released him immediately and abstained from killing him. The unbeliever was astonished and asked: "You had overpowered me and was on the verge of killing me. I then had the audacity of spitting on your face. Instead of being more intent on killing me, you released me. What is the reason for this?"

Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* replied: "I was killing you solely for Allāh's sake, but when you spat on my face, my self urged me to become angry at you. The act which I was doing solely for Allāh's sake now became adulterated by a demand of my carnal self. My anger was reduced to a little for Allāh *taʿālā* and a little for my self. In other words, my self prompted me to exact revenge for this audacity; and partnership in Allāh's worship is not permissible. This is why I restrained myself from killing you. Furthermore, you do not even belong to me whereby I could have done anything I like with you. You are Allāh's creation and belong to Him. I only have the right to do with you as Allāh orders. Partnership in Allāh's worship is not permissible. Since the act which was solely for Allāh's sake became adulterated by a desire of my self, I released you."

When the unbeliever heard these words of Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*, an effulgence appeared in his heart

by virtue of the sincerity of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He broke of his religious band from around his hand and said: "We were under the impression that you people are wronging us, whereas it is we who are wronging you people by coming out to fight you. I thought you were fighting and killing for material riches and authority. But now, the high level of your actions and character has manifested itself. I now cast aside my family and consider myself to be a part of your family. Dictate the kalimah shahādah to me, and illuminate me with that lamp from which you found light."

The man together with about 18 members of his family embraced Islam with much enthusiasm and love. Now look, through the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī's forbearance, an enemy was turned into a friend. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> The sword of forbearance is sharper than
> the sword of steel.

If it was us, we would have been far quicker to kill the unbeliever for his audacious act. We would have revelled over our action and thought to ourselves that we conveyed an unbeliever to Hell for Allāh's sake. Look at the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* that so many people obtained release from Hell, became eligible for Paradise and became true Muslims.

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* releasing an unbeliever at a time when he had overpowered him completely, and that too after he committed such an audacity, is based on absolute and total devotion to Allāh *taʿālā*. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> Learn about sincerity in actions from
> Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

When the unbeliever was released, a person like him would normally take the opportunity to flee and save his life. Where will he ever think of investigating and inquiring? This too was through the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī's sincerity. Instead of fleeing, he asks Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* the reason for his action.

The eternal lesson which we learn from this incident is that when there remains no sincerity in an action, it must be given up. The other point we learn is that he left him out of his sincerity. Thus, just as there are blessings in doing an action with sincerity, there will be blessings in it if it is left out of sincerity. After all, the objective is neither doing the action nor leaving it out. The objective is Allāh's pleasure.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* exposed to the ummat! (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

This incident was not with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* because he was maʿsūm(divinely protected against sin). There is no question of the self influencing him. The incident occurred with a Companion of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* so that it becomes a lesson until the day of Resurrection for the ummat that it is possible for an action to be initiated with sincerity and to become adulterated by the carnal self later on. However, by virtue of their company with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* acquired such effulgence from him that if any personal motive entered an action, they would identify it immediately through that effulgence. In this incident, the self tried to influence, but through the light which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* acquired from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* overpowered it, recognized the

dark impediment and was saved from being adulterated by it.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were not maʿsūm but they enjoyed a strong affiliation with the maʿsūm one, i.e. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Therefore, the blessing of the maʿsūm one would reach them on such occasions and Allāh *taʿālā* used to save them. Someone rightly said:

صل يا رب على من هو من عصمته – يعصمه الحق محبيه من الخناس

O Allāh! Send Your pure mercy to the one through whose innocence you save his beloveds from Shaytān.

A person's sincerity is only recognized when he is confronted by an impediment, and when the self overpowers him, the strength and light of his īmān defeats the demands of the self.

Allāh *taʿālā* describes His devoted and sincere servants as follows:

وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوْآ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوْا لِذُنُوْبِهِمْ

Those who, when they commit an open sin or commit an evil to themselves, they remember Allāh and seek forgiveness for their sins.[1]

People of the past were very particular about ikhlās. They considered it very difficult and always feared its disappearance from their lives.

Now the situation is such that people just go on doing actions without paying any attention to ikhlās

[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 135.

because it is no longer their objective. To make matters worse, they are immersed in compounded ignorance. In other words, they have no ikhlās whatsoever, and when they are told to adopt it, they reply in astonishment: "What! We are doing so many actions from so long, and we have no ikhlās!?"

I say: Yes, this is the fact. Nowadays people are fully occupied in showing off by day and night and are happy with these outward actions. They do not even think about ikhlās and do not want to acquire it. This is why they disregard any discussion about it. Whereas the pious elders were very particular about talking about it. The Qur'ān and Hadīth are filled with themes related to ikhlās.

اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ

Listen! For Allāh alone is absolute devotion.[1]

فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ

So worship Allāh in absolute devotion to Him.[2]

وَمَآ اُمِرُوا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ

They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone].[3]

There are many other verses on this theme.

It is easy to remain sincere from beginning to end when doing a certain action. In the same way, it is

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[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 3.

[2] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 2.

[3] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

easy to assume that one has sincerity from beginning to end when in actual fact he does not. However, commencing an action with sincerity, being faced with an impediment in-between, being able to identify the impediment and discarding it – all this is extremely difficult.

In the incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, it was really his genuine sincerity that the moment he suspected the slightest decrease in it, he discarded that action. He did not even bother about the fact that if he left his enemy it would entail his own humiliation, or that now he has been released, he will overpower him, cause him harm or even kill him.

In short, he did not bother about anything. Instead, just as he was fighting for Allāh's sake, he released the person for Allāh' sake. Just as he was sincere in the doing of the action, he was totally sincere in leaving it aside. Look at the level of his sincerity that despite being such a great and senior personality, he acknowledges to the kāfir that his self was stirred by his spitting on his face and his sincerity waned. The kāfir too recognized the level of his sincerity and Allāh-consciousness. Just look at how excellent the intentions of these people are! They have no hesitance in expressing their shortcoming for Allāh's sake.

We are Muslims from so long but we still do not understand the subject of sincerity. Instead, when I start talking on this subject people who are sitting right in front of me start napping. On the other hand, that man was a kāfir and when Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explained it to him, he gauged the perfect sincerity of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and became a Muslim – not by the sword but when the sword was withheld. Islam did not spread by the sword but by the character of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*.

The kāfir understood this and embraced Islam with insight. This incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* became an example of ikhlās. In other words, it became an idiom on the subject of sincerity. The point which is learnt from this incident is that just as a person does an action with sincerity, there are times when he has to leave it out solely out of sincerity.

This historical incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is well-known, but people only think about how many people became Muslims because of it. This point is certainly very great, but far more important is the basis and cause of this outcome. In other words, the absolute sincerity on account of which all these blessings were manifested. Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* taught the lesson of ikhlās by his actions. Now whoever adopts sincerity until the day of Resurrection, its reward will go to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* as well. Tell me, if the blessings of such great and sincere personalities are displayed, will ours ever be displayed? All blessings are undoubtedly through ikhlās.

The story of Hadrat ʿUmar

When the Muslims laid siege to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) during the caliphate of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, the residents of the city said: "Call for your caliph because his description is found in our scriptures. If he is as described, we will open the gates of the fort without any battle and surrender the city to you."

The Muslim soldiers sent a message to Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and he left for Syria. He was wearing simple patched clothes and riding an ordinary camel. When the Muslim soldiers saw him, they said: "You are the caliph. You should wear more striking

garments and ride a horse." Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* did as suggested. However, after just a few steps, he said to them: "My ego is getting the better of me because of these things. Bring my old clothes and my camel. I will wear them and ride on the camel." He wore the same patched clothes once again and mounted his camel. He added:

نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ أَعَزَّنَا اللهُ بِالْإِسْلَامِ[1]

We are a people whom Allāh taʿālā elevated through Islam.

Look at the level of his ikhlās! Although he was the Leader of the Believers and was proceeding towards the enemy, when the new garments stirred his self, he removed them and cast them aside. Also, look at the extent of his sincerity that he even admitted to his subjects that his ego is getting bloated because of these things.

Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* did this solely for Allāh's sake and out of absolute sincerity. But Allāh *taʿālā* caused the blessings of his action to be displayed. When he reached the fort in that simple appearance, the enemy began comparing his description to what they had read in their scriptures. They found him to be exactly as described. Their scriptures even described the type of clothes he will be wearing and the conveyance which he will be riding. The residents of the city opened the gates of the fort and handed over the city to the Muslims.

Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* did not do all this so that the fort will be conquered; this was the fruit of his

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[1] البداية والنهاية، ج ٧، ص ٤٦.

sincerity. He did not even know what was written in their scriptures. He had done all this solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. Consequently, the blessings of his ikhlāṣ were displayed.

Look at the immense blessings which Allāh *taʿālā* displayed and manifested in these two incidents! Without a doubt, all blessings stem from ikhlāṣ.

Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* wore a kurtah on one occasion and then made it defective by cutting its sleeves. He said: "My ego began to get the better of me after I put on this kurtah. This is why I made it defective."

My dear brothers! These people neither made the kurtah the objective, nor the camel, clothes and horse. Rather, they strengthened their intention with Allāh *taʿālā*. Where they saw or realized the slightest impediment to their sincerity or the influence of the self, they put an end to it and separated it from themselves.

Ḥaḍrat Maʿrūf Karkhī *raḥimahullāh* used to address his self:

أَخْلِصِيْ تَتَخَلَّصِيْ

O my self! Remain sincere and you will attain freedom.

The elders of Dīn used to renew their ikhlāṣ. Nowadays people renew everything but ikhlāṣ. Whereas ikhlāṣ is what is required by Allāh *taʿālā*. It is through ikhlāṣ that everything is realized.

If you people think that we are living in dangerous times, then do something. And the thing you have to do is to have true īmān in Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and cast aside the demands of your

self. Look at this duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

وَلَا تُسَلِّطْ عَلَيْنَا مَنْ لَّا يَرْحَمُنَا[1]

O Allāh! Do not empower over us someone who will show no mercy to us.

We learn from this Hadīth that the one who is given power and authority over us is appointed by Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, as long as we do not please Allāh *taʿālā*, we will not achieve anything. O dear servants of Allāh! Turn your focus towards Allāh *taʿālā* and adopt ikhlās. The five salāhs which you are performing, the Qur'ān which you are reading, the duʿā' which you make to Allāh *taʿālā* – these are not small and insignificant actions. Develop ikhlās in them and then you will see the blessings. You may consider a certain task to be difficult, but nothing is difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*. If He has power over everything, He most certainly has power over your conditions. Allāh's power is not limited.

اَلَا اِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيْطٌ

Allāh most certainly encompasses everything.

We have to continue making duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā*. When Muslims make duʿā' to Him, He accepts it. This is clearly mentioned in the texts. You people engage in so many acts of worship, do you think they are not accepted? If they are not accepted, why do you do them? We conclude from this that they are most certainly accepted. Thus, make duʿā' as well and it too will be accepted. You make duʿā' but only where you

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[1] الترمذي، باب ٧٩، حديث ٣٥٠٢.

see the causes are favourable to you. As for those matters where the causes are not in your favour, you do not make duʿā'. Whereas Allāh *taʿālā* has power over everything.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* was very old and his wife was barren. Despite this, he made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* and it was accepted. For something to be realized without the means is considered to be an extraordinary feat by us. However, Allāh *taʿālā* can create something without the means just as He can with the means. Both are the same to Him. During trying and difficult times, there is nothing better than duʿā' for Muslims. All you have to do is please Allāh *taʿālā* and ask Him. He gives in abundance.

A judge relates: My father was a lawyer and I used to make duʿā' for three things for him: (1) My father must give up his law practice. (2) He must go and perform hajj. (3) He must become a murīd of a certain saint. Allāh *taʿālā* accepted all three duʿā's. That is, my father gave up his law practice, went to perform hajj and became a murīd of a certain saint.

Brothers! The acceptance of duʿā' is not reserved for a judge or lawyer. You too must make duʿā' with all your heart and it will be accepted.

Some Muslims could not emigrate from Makkah and the unbelievers of the city were imposing various types of torments and punishments on them. They too turned to Allāh *taʿālā* and made duʿā' to Him. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes their duʿā' in the Qur'ān:

وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۙ وَّاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ نَصِيْرًا

Appoint for us, from You, a supporter, and appoint for us, from You, a helper.[1]

Their duʿā' was accepted, Allāh *taʿālā* sent Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to them as a helper, and Makkah was conquered.

When a servant makes duʿā', he becomes very close to Allāh *taʿālā*. The more hope he has in the duʿā', the more likely it is to be accepted. If we do not have the power to do anything else, we certainly have the power to make duʿā'. After all, we have to do whatever is within our power.

We must be convinced that the distressing situations we are witnessing are due to Allāh's displeasure and not because of the displeasure of our enemies. The pleasure or displeasure of our enemies is nothing.

Yes, man must not become restless and anxious. He will not be able to acquire the highest level of ikhlās all at once. He has to continue striving and – by the will of Allāh *taʿālā* – he will eventually reach the level of perfection. As long as he cannot differentiate between the presence or absence of ikhlās in an action, he must continue carrying it out. If he realizes that there is no ikhlās in a certain action, he must give it up or strive to develop ikhlās in it. The author of *Akhlāq Muḥsinī* has devoted an entire chapter to ikhlās. He writes that ikhlās means to purify an action from ostentation and other ulterior motives, and to make one's intention solely for Allāh *taʿālā*.

> The one who moves forward with ikhlās,
> he is the ʿĪsā of the era who is talking.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 75.

Whatever one does must be with the intention of pleasing Allāh *taʿālā*. Do not allow the self to interfere because motives of the carnal self destroy the actions which are to be done for Allāh *taʿālā*.

A caliph and a criminal

A caliph of Khurāsān ordered that a certain criminal be punished. While the caliph was still speaking, the criminal began hurling vulgar abuses at the caliph. The caliph ordered that he be released and let free. One of the guards said: "Why did you free him when he was actually deserving of even more punishment for having abused you?" The caliph replied: "I had been disciplining him solely for Allāh's sake, but when he began saying bad things to me, my self was stirred and I developed the urge to exact revenge from him. I did not feel it right to allow my self to interfere in a matter which I had been doing purely for Allāh's sake. Since it contradicts ikhlāṣ, I restrained myself from meting out the punishment to him.

> Once the demand of the self enters any action, how can ikhlāṣ remain in it?
>
> When there is no ikhlāṣ in a deed, it is better to give it up because it is of no benefit when it is devoid of ikhlāṣ.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us with ikhlāṣ. Āmīn.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī

The following is stated in *Maktūbāt Rashīdīyyah*:

The fact of the matter is that the Hereafter is the fundamental objective. Man has been created to worship Allāh *taʿālā* and display his servitude to Him. It is therefore his obligatory responsibility to spend his night and day in doing actions and adopting character

which display his servitude, and the praise of Allāh *taʿālā*. He must spend his entire life in this and depart from this world with it. However, the problem is that this physical body cannot survive without food and drink. It therefore becomes necessary for the adoptions of means. After having eaten, the discharge of excreta, urine and fulfilment of lust become inevitable. Man has to overcome these demands and it becomes obligatory on him to make arrangements for them. These cannot be realized without intermingling with his own kind and species. This resulted in the need for clothes and other necessities. It became necessary to procure these.

Just for one worship he has to do all these things. If we were to calculate the time spent, we will conclude that most of his time is spent on acquiring all these means, while almost no time is spent on his fundamental objective. Allāh *taʿālā*, knowing that man is weak, excused him and laid down only five salāhs in the day. By accepting this little worship, He made it equal to the worship of the entire day and night, and gave him the whole day and night for the fulfilment of his needs.

If a person is intelligent, he will realize that his eating and acquiring of other necessities are the means for his worship. He does all these things while thinking to himself that he will be able to worship Allāh *taʿālā*, then all will be considered to be acts of worship. As for the foolish person, he thinks that whatever he earns is for his comfort. His earning, spending, eating, sleeping and everything else are for worldly pleasures and enjoyment. He considers only his five times salāh to be acts of worship.

This is our condition. The entire day is spent in heedlessness and all activities are for the carnal self.

Only salāh is an act of worship. If there are shortcomings and defects in salāh also, then all our earnings will be futilities. What can be done when the fundamental objective is lost!?[1]

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent theme! This is a special feature of the writings of our seniors. Even if you were to read just a few lines, you will certainly learn something worthy and useful. On the other hand, if you read the writings of other people, you will not be able to understand anything even if you were to read pages upon pages. The benefit that is found in the writings of our seniors is through the blessing of following the Sunnat and the fruit of their ikhlās.

[1] *Maktūbāt Rashīdīyyah*, p. 67.

HONESTY AND SINCERITY

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى حَرْفٍ ۚ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرُ ِۨ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ ۚ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ِۨ انْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهِ ۖ قف خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ۭ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ.

Among people is he who worships Allāh on the borderline: If prosperity reaches him, he remains steadfast on that worship [of Allāh]. But if adversity afflicts him, he turns about on his face. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. This is a clear loss.[1]

According to the exegists, this verse was revealed with reference to those who were uncertain and in doubt. When they found certain situations in Islam to be in line with their motives, they remained on Islam. Their remaining on it was not because they believed in the truthfulness of Islam but for the realization of their objectives and motives. For example, if the person's wife gave birth to a boy, his wealth increased or his horse gave birth to a foal, he would remain on Islam. If not, he would abandon Islam.

Thus, even this remaining on Islam was not based on sincerity. This condition was therefore blameworthy and chargeable on the basis of the filthy intention. Reference to this is made by the words:

فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرُ ِۨ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22: 11.

If prosperity reaches him, he remains steadfast on that worship [of Allāh].

Prosperity in this context refers to worldly prosperity and goodness which he desires. The following is stated in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*:

والمراد من الخير الدنيوي كالرخاء والعافية والولد[1]

The word khayr refers to worldly goodness like prosperity, wellness and children.

The word iṭminān refers to remaining steadfast on his first condition as stated in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*:

اطمئن به أي ثبت على ما كان عليه ظاهرا إلا أنه اطمئن به اطمينان المؤمنين الذين لا يزحزحهم عاصف ولا يثنيهم عاطف.[2]

The iṭminān of believers is so firm that no fierce and strong wind can shake them, and nothing can cause them to turn around (it is because of this iṭminān that the self of a believer is referred to as a nafs muṭma'innah).

Reference to this type of self is mentioned in the following verse:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ، اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

O that soul that has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you.[3]

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[1] روح المعاني، ج ١٧، ص ١٢٤.

[2] أيضا.

[3] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-28.

A supplication for the same tranquillity is mentioned in the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ نَفْسًا بِكَ مُطْمَئِنَّةً، تُؤْمِنُ بِلِقَآئِكَ، وَتَرْضٰى بِقَضَآئِكَ، وَتَقْنَعُ بِعَطَآئِكَ.[1]

O Allāh! I ask You for a self which is satisfied with You, has conviction in meeting You, remains happy with Your decree, and is satisfied with Your gifts.

The Ahlullāh refer to the same tranquillity in the following couplet:

> After 30 years it became clear to Khāqānī (man who is made from clay) that if he acquires the proximity of Allāh *taʿālā* for even a short while, it is better than the kingdom of Hadrat Sulaymān *ʿalayhis salām*.
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> A single moment of focus on Allāh *taʿālā* is better than the power and authority of the kings and nations of the entire world.

The tranquillity which we are talking about is the fruit of ikhlās – sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to His sincere and devoted servants:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ط تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ط اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ط تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ص وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ.

The description of Paradise which the righteous are promised: Rivers flow beneath it, its fruit is eternal, and

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[1] المعجم الكبير، ج ٨، ص ٩٩، حديث ٧٤٩٠.

so is its shade. This is the recompense for those who fear. And the retribution for the rejecters is the Hell-fire.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا. أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِئِيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ ط نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ط وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

Surely those who believed and did good deeds – We do not waste the recompense of he who did good. For such are gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green clothes of fine and course silk, reclining therein on couches. What an excellent recompense and what a lovely resting place![2]

The excellent recompense for īmān and good deeds will be given in the Hereafter.

The other situation was that of tribulation and adversity. Reference is made to it as follows:

وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ِۨ انْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهِ

But if adversity afflicts him, he turns about on his face.

There are some people who, when tested, go to the extent of turning on their heels and becoming apostates. They then level objections against Islam by

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 35.

[2] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 30-31.

claiming that they neither saw any good in it nor did they experience any goodness. It is therefore a bad religion according to them.

The seniors of the path state that this verse also refers to those who worship Allāh *taʿālā* during times of prosperity and abandon His worship totally when they are afflicted by adversity. There are many among us who fit this description.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raḥimahullāh* discusses this issue in his *Muwāfaqāt* under the same verse which is the subject of our discussion. He writes:

إن وصل إلى ما طلب فرح به وصار هو قصده من التعبد فقوي في نفسه مقصوده وضعفت العبادة، وإن لم يصل رمى بالعبادة وربما كذب بنتائج الأعمال التي يهبها الله لعباده المخلصين، وقد روي أن بعض الناس سمع الحديث "من أخلص لله أربعين صباحا ظهرت ينابيع الحكمة من قلبه على لسانه."[1] فتعرض لذلك لينال الحكمة فلم يفتح له بابها فبلغت القصة بعض الفضلاء فقال هذا أخلص للحكمة ولم يخلص لله.[2]

If the worshipper realized his objective in the worship, he is overjoyed (even if it is out of haughtiness), after all, this was the objective of his worship. His objective then strengthens within him while worship becomes weak (i.e. the awe which he has for the act of worship is weak in comparison to his objective). If he does not realize his objective, he discards worship and even goes to the extent of rejecting the consequences of

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[1] حلية الأولياء، ج ٥، ص ٢١٥.

[2] الموافقات، ج ٢، ص ٤٠٣.

actions which Allāh taʿālā confers to His devoted servants (by saying that no one received anything). A person heard the following Hadīth: "The person who worships Allāh taʿālā devotedly for 40 days will experience fountains of wisdom gushing forth from him." After hearing it, he began worshipping Allāh taʿālā to acquire that wisdom but the doors of wisdom were not opened to him. When a distinguished scholar heard about this person, he remarked: "He did the worship to acquire wisdom and not for Allāh's sake." (This is why Allāh taʿālā did not cause the fountains of wisdom to flow from him).

The above Hadīth means that if a person is sincere, Allāh *taʿālā* sends down wisdom in his heart and the person then utters it. Allāh *taʿālā* sends this wisdom to some people and does not send it to many others. Sending it and not sending it is in Allāh's control and not dependent on the worship.

Now listen to another point! To relate the statements of the pious elders with an impure intention and for worldly gain falls under the same ruling.

Hadrat Rūmī *rahimahullāh* said:

> A wretched person steals the words and statements of the dervishes so that he can sway and manipulate the ignorant ones through his mesmerising words.

Note: When a person relates the statements of the pious elders, he should do it for his own good and his own practice; and not to sway other people towards him. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

A sincere and genuine person is conferred with position and esteem

قال بعض العارفين قلما يكون صادق متمسك بعروة الإخلاص ذو قلب عامر إلا ويرزق الجاه وقبول الخلق حتى قال بعضهم أريد الجاه وإقبال الخلق لا لأبلغ نفسي حظها من الهوى حتى لا أبالي أقبلوا أم أدبروا، بل لكون قبول الخلق علامة لصحة الحال.

A Sufi said:

A genuinely devoted person who holds on firmly to ikhlāṣ and his heart is filled with Allāh's love is most certainly conferred with high rank and popularity among people. In fact, someone said: I want high rank and popularity among people not to satisfy the desires of my self – because I am not bothered if people come to me or discard me – but so that popularity among people may be an indication of the correctness of my condition [in the sight of Allāh taʿālā].

Honesty and sincerity are unique attributes:

روي عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن عبدا لو أطاع الله من وراء سبعين حجابا لأظهر الله له ذلك على ألسنة الناس وكذلك المعصية. وروي أن الله أوحى إلى موسى عليه السلام قُل لبني إسرائيل يخفون لي أعمالهم وعلى أن أظهرها.[1]

It is related from Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam that if a servant obeys Allāh taʿālā from behind

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[1] التفسير الكبير للرازي، سورة البقرة، آية ٧٢.

70 veils, Allāh taʿālā will most certainly expose that good deed to the people. The same applies to disobedience.

It is related that Allāh taʿālā sent revelation to Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām saying: Say to the Banī Isrā'īl to conceal their deeds for My sake, and I take it upon Myself to expose them.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how ikhlās is valued by Allāh *taʿālā*. We do not know what ikhlās is, yet we want to reach the high ranks which are received for ikhlās.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with the attributes of honesty and sincerity. May He confer us its fruits in this world as well. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

A statement of kufr after having īmān

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهٖٓ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهٗ مُطْمَئِنٌّۢ بِالْإِيْمَانِ

Whoever rejects Allāh after having brought faith – except him who is forced while his heart is at rest in his faith.[1]

The above verse explains the punishment for apostasy. However, there is an exception to this rule where a person is compelled into apostasy. The circumstances behind the revelation of this verse as mentioned in *Tafsīr Mazharī* reads as follows:

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that this verse was revealed with reference to Hadrat ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. The polytheists had captured him, his father, Hadrat Yāsir *radiyallāhu*

[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 106.

ʿanhu, his mother, Hadrat Sumayyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, and also Hadrat Suhayb, Hadrat Bilāl, Hadrat Khubayb and Hadrat Sālim *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. All of them were put through severe trials and tribulations. Hadrat Sumayyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* was tied between two camels and she was pierced in her private part with a spear. This resulted in her martyrdom. Her husband, Hadrat Yāsir *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, was also killed. These two are the first martyrs in Islam. As for Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, he was compelled by the polytheists and he said – verbally – whatever they demanded.

Hadrat Qatādah relates that the Banū Mughīrah captured Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and suspended him in the Maymūn well. They demanded that he must reject Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He did as they demanded while his heart abhorred this totally. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was then informed that Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* has become a kāfir. He said: ʿAmmār is filled with īmān which is flowing in his blood and entire body.

Subsequently, Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* came crying to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He asked him: "What is the matter?" He replied: "O Rasūlullāh! Something terrible has happened. I spoke bad of you while I spoke good of their gods." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: "What was the condition of your heart at that time?" He replied: "My heart was fully at rest with īmān at that time." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* personally wiped off the tears from his eyes and said: "If the polytheists try to do this again to you, you must say the same thing (in order to save your life)." The above verse was revealed in reference to this incident.

Qāḍī Bayḍāwī *raḥimahullāh* writes:

قلت وهو دليل على جواز التكلم بالكفر عند الإكراه وإن كان الأفضل أن يجتنب عنه إعزازا للدين كما فعله أبواه.

This proves the permissibility of uttering a statement of kufr under compulsion even though it is better to abstain from it for the sake of the honour of Islam, as was done by his parents.

It is preferable for a person who is under compulsion not to utter words of kufr. However, the author of *Mirqāt* states that if the death of a person would cause weakness to Islam, e.g. a scholar or a brave warrior, then it is better for such persons to utter the words of kufr. This, notwithstanding the fact that it is permissible for them to desist from uttering them. This is because the person is confronted with two tribulations, one is to verbally utter the words of kufr and the other is to be killed if he refuses to utter them. Since the death of such a person will cause weakness to Islam, his utterance of kufr will be accommodated after all this is the lesser of the two evils. Also, there is permissibility for it in the Sharīʿat.

The following Ḥadīth is quoted in *Mishkāt Sharīf*:

عن معاذ رضي الله عنه قال أوصاني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعشر كلمات قال لا تشرك بالله شيئا وإن قتلت وحرقت.[1]

Ḥaḍrat Muʿādh raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam advised me with ten

[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٣٦، ص ٣٩٢، حديث ٢٢٠٧٥.

things. (One of them was): Do not ascribe anything with Allāh even if you are killed and burnt.

An explanation of this Hadīth is quoted from *Mirqāt*:

قال ابن حجر شرط للمبالغة باعتبار الأكمل من صبر المكره على الكفر على ما هدد به، وهذا في من لم يحصل بموته وهن الإسلام وإلا كعالم وشجاع يحصل بموته ذلك، فالأولى له أن يأتي بما أكره عليه ولا يصبر على ما هدد به رعاية لأخفّ المفسدتَين، وأما باعتبار أصل الجواز فيجوز له أن يتلفظ وأن يفعل ما يقتضي الكفر كسب الإسلام وسجود الصنم إذا هدد ولو بنحو ضرب شديد أو أخذ مال له وقع وقع كما أفاد ذلك قوله تعالى: مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّۢ بِالْإِيْمَانِ

Hāfiz Ibn Hajar rahimahullāh says that the precondition (even if you are killed and burnt) is hyperbolic. The one who is threatened to utter a statement of kufr must remain firm and abstain from uttering it. This is the better and preferred option. However, this ruling does not apply to all. Rather, it is for the person whose death will not cause any weakness to Islam. As for a scholar and brave warrior whose death can cause weakness to Islam, it is better for him to do what he is compelled to do and not to exercise patience over the threats which are made to him. This is in consideration to the lesser of the two harms. As for the actual ruling of permissibility, it is permissible for him to utter and do what entails kufr, e.g. uttering vulgar words against Islam or prostrating before an idol if he is threatened even if it is by severe beating or taking away his wealth. This is gauged from

the words of Allāh: "Whoever rejects Allāh after having brought faith – except him who is forced while his heart is at rest in his faith."[1]

Qādī Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* explains the words "while his heart is at rest in his faith" as follows:

أي ساكن به لم يتغير عقيدته

His heart is at rest with his īmān, and his belief [or creed] has not changed.

In other words, no doubts and misgivings are troubling him. As was the condition of Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. Bearing in mind the condition of his heart, the words of kufr which he uttered out of compulsion were pardoned. The hypocrites had kufr in their hearts. Based on this, their verbal utterance of the kalimah was not taken into consideration and they were labelled as kāfirs.

One point which must be borne in mind is that the above-quoted verse was revealed for circumstances of absolute necessity. A lot of importance is attached to this verse. Just look at the extent of Allāh's mercy and compassion on man's weakness. The ease provided by the Sharīʿat is clearly visible from it. I wrote on this subject because of a current need.[2]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 106.

[2] The reason for writing on this subject is that when there were certain conflicts between Muslims and Hindus, the non-Muslims wanted to impose on Muslims to utter words of kufr. Some Muslims uttered the words and an ʿālim labelled them as apostates. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* wrote this article with a view to rectifying the situation. However, for some reason or the other, he did not send the article to the ʿālim. Nonetheless, the Muslim

The Sharī'at is the most superior and the easiest

The Sharīʿat is the easiest and the most superior. This is because all Islamic teachings – whether orders or prohibitions, acts of worship or ethics – are from Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the beauty of the injunctions of the Sharīʿat is both Sharʿī and rational. And the believers – just as they are people of īmān, they are also people of intelligence and intellects. If a person discards the injunctions of Islam without thinking bad of them, he is out of Dīn and has lost his intelligence as well.

Obedience, kindness, maintaining ties of kinship, truthfulness and honesty are accepted as good characteristics by all people of intelligence. In like manner, speaking lies, oppression, severing family ties and enmity are accepted as evils by all intelligent people and by every religion.

Take speaking lies as an example. It is considered bad in every religion and by every person. Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

لَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِيْنَ

Allāh's curse be on the liars.[1]

On the other hand, honesty is praiseworthy in all religions, and an honest person is lauded for his honesty. If any nation discards honesty it will become worthless. After all, honesty and purity have been the distinguishing qualities of the righteous.

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community received clarity on this issue. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the Muslims to read these rulings so that they can gauge and appreciate the expansiveness and perfection of Islam. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 61.

Based on this, oppression is an evil which is unanimously considered to be an evil. An oppressor is disliked and castigated by all religions and all people of intelligence; and an oppressed person is worthy of mercy by everyone. If everyone commits oppression, the destruction and desolation of this world will be inevitable. Its opposite is justice. The existence of this world depends on it. If all the people of the world discard justice and no longer possess this quality, the destruction and desolation of the world will be unavoidable.

Maintaining ties of kinship and having the quality of compassion are liked by Allāh *taʿālā*. These are desirable qualities in the eyes of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, people of all religions, and men of intelligence. The existence of the human race depends on these qualities.

Kindness towards idolaters

The following narration is quoted in *as-Siyar al-Kabīr*:

باب صلة المشرك: عن ابن مروان الخزاعي قال قلت لمجاهد رجل من أهل الشرك بيني وبينه قرابة ولي عليه مال أدعه، قال نعم وصله. وبه نأخذ. فنقول لا بأس بأن يصل المسلم الرجل المشرك قريبا أو بعيدا محاربا كان أو ذميا لحديث سلمة بن الأكوع قال صليت الصبح مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فوجدت مس كف بين كتفي فالتفت فإذا هو رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقال أهل أنت واهب لي ابنة أم قرفة، قلت نعم فوهبت له، فبعث بها إلى خاله حزن ابن أبي وهب وهو مشرك وهي مشركة.

وبعث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خمس مأة دينارا إلى مكة حين قحطوا، وأمر بدفع ذلك إلى أبي سفيان بن حرب وصفوان بن أمية ليفرق على فقراء أهل مكة، فقبل ذلك أبو سفيان وأبٰى صفوان، وقال ما يريد محمد بهذا إلا أن يخدع شبانها لأن صلة الرحم عند كل عاقل وفي كل دين وإهداء إلى الغير من مكارم الأخلاق، وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق.[1]

The chapter on maintaining ties with an idolater:

Ibn Marwān Khuzāʿī relates: I said to Mujāhid: "I have a tie of kinship with an idolater and he owes me a debt. Do you think I should waive the debt?" He replied: "Yes, and maintain ties with him." (Imām Muḥammad raḥimahullāh said): This is what we practise. We say: There is nothing wrong in a Muslim maintaining ties of kinship with an idolater irrespective of whether he is a near or distant relative, one who is at war with the Islamic state or under the protection of the Islamic state. This is because a Ḥadīth of Salamah ibn al-Akwaʿ raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu states in a Ḥadīth: I performed the fajr ṣalāh with Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. I felt as if someone placed a hand on my shoulder. When I turned around, I saw that it was Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He said: "Are you prepared to give over the daughter of Umm Qarfah?" I replied: "Yes." I give her over to him. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then sent her to his maternal uncle, Ḥuzn ibn Abī Wahb, who was an idolater, and this girl was an idolatress.

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[1] سير كبير للإمام محمد.

Similarly, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam sent 500 dīnārs to the people of Makkah when they were experiencing a drought. He ordered that the money be handed over to Abū Sufyān ibn Harb and Safwān ibn Umayyah so that they may distribute it among the poor of Makkah. Abū Sufyān accepted the money but Safwān refused it. The latter said: "Muhammad's sole objective is to delude and deceive our youth." This act of kindness [on the part of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam] was because the maintaining of family ties is a praiseworthy quality in the sight of every intelligent person and in every religion. Furthermore, to give a gift to others is from among the noble characteristics. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: I have been commissioned for the perfection of noble characteristics.

Balance and moderation in Islam

I say: Spending and feeding in this manner is from among the noble characteristics and qualities. Another beauty and excellence of Islamic teachings is that an oppressed person has been permitted to exact an equal revenge from his oppressor. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا اَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ

Those whom, when there is an attack against them, they retaliate.[1]

Immediately thereafter Allāh *taʿālā* provides a general principle:

[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 39.

وَجَزٰٓؤُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا، فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللهِ، اِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.

The retaliation for an evil is an evil like it. Then whoever pardons and reconciles, his reward lies with Allāh. Surely He does not like the sinners.[1]

Understand well that the rule of "the retaliation for an evil is an evil like it" does not apply in every situation. Rather, it can only be meted out where the action is not abhorred in itself and is not prohibited by the Sharīʿat. If the action is abhorred by the Sharīʿat, it cannot be committed in retaliation. For example, a person stole Rs. 10.00 from someone's pocket or broke his tooth, Rs. 10.00 can be paid back as compensation or the other person's tooth can be broken. But if, for example, a person committed adultery, it will not be permissible to commit adultery in retaliation because adultery is harām and abhorred by the Sharīʿat.

Pardoning is praiseworthy

You should understand this point as well: Retaliation for an evil with an evil like it is only permissible. Allāh *taʿālā* permitted it in the light of human emotions. Apart from this, it is much better and praiseworthy to pardon and forgive. Allāh *taʿālā* encourages us towards pardon and forgiveness as follows:

[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 40.

وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ. اِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ، اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ. وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ.

Whoever retaliates after being oppressed, then on such too there is no reproach. Reproach is only against those who oppress people and cause corruption in the land without justification. For such people is a painful punishment. However, whoever endures with fortitude and forgives, surely these are acts of courage.[1]

In like manner, Allāh *taʿālā* encourages towards patience and pardon in another verse:

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ. وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ. إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ.

If you take vengeance, take vengeance proportionate to the injury that has been done to you. But if you exercise patience, this is best for those who are patient. Be patient, then. Your patience is possible only by Allāh's help. Do not grieve over them nor be distressed by their scheming. Surely Allāh is with those who are righteous and those who do virtuous deeds.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in yet another place:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 41-43.

[2] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 126-128.

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا ط إِعْدِلُوْا قف هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ز وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ط إِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌ ۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ.

O believers! Forever stand up for the sake of Allāh in order to testify for justice. Never abandon justice on account of enmity with any people. Establish justice. This is closest to piety. Continually fear Allāh. Allāh is fully aware of what you do.[1]

We learn from the above that an oppressed person can exact revenge but he cannot commit oppression for what was committed against him. If he does, he will be transgressing the limit.

The following is stated in *as-Siyar al-Kabīr*:

للمظلوم أن يدفع الظلم عن نفسه بما يقدر عليه، لكن ليس للمظلوم أن يظلم غيره.

An oppressed person may repulse the oppression committed against him according to what is within his power. However, he cannot commit oppression on someone else.

This is because transgressing the limit is not permitted even out of enmity. Just as this is impermissible on the masses in their mutual dealings, it is not permissible for a ruler to oppress his subjects. He will be accountable for whatever he does.

The limits of friendship and enmity

Whether it is friendship or enmity, Islam has laid down limits for each. When enmity transgresses its

[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 8.

limits, it becomes bestiality. When the limits are not considered in enmity, it becomes oppression.

Just as all our other matters have become unprincipled and disorderly, enmity and friendship are no longer within their limits.

There are principles for enmity and friendship. If the principles of enmity are not upheld, life will become disastrous and people will experience "death" even before they die. This is common nowadays.

Enmity is most abhorrent. It does not allow man to remain on the limits. This is why Islam laid down limits for it.

It is most sad that people are succumbing unhesitatingly to the thing which both the Sharīʿat and intellect unanimously consider to be detestable. Let alone the laity, even people of knowledge and understanding are caught up in this. It is difficult to say that they have no intelligence. However, we can certainly say that their selfish and carnal self has the better of them. Consequently, their knowledge and intelligence have been overpowered and left paralysed. The intellect is essential for knowledge to be fruitful. In like manner, the intellect remains incomplete and defective when it is not supported by good character. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* writes in his *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

فينبغي أن يكون فيمن توثر صحبته خمس خصال: أن يكون عاقلا حسن الخلق غير فاسق ولا مبتدع ولا حريص على الدنيا.

In order for a companionship to be effective, the person whose company you choose must have five qualities: (1) he must be intelligent, (2) he must have good sound character, (3) he must not be a flagrant sinner, (4) he

must not commit innovations in religion, (5) he must not hanker after this world.

أما العقل فهو رأس المال وهو الأصل فلا خير في صحبة الأحمق فإلى الوحشة والقطيعة ترجع عاقبتهما وإن طالت، كيف والأحمق قد يضرك وهو يريد نفعك وإعانتك من حيث لا يدري، وقيل مقاطعة الأحمق قربان إلى الله تعالى، وقال الثوري: النظر إلى وجه الأحمق خطيئة مكتوبة، ونعني بالعاقل الذي يفهم الأمور على ما هي عليه إما بنفسه أو إما إذا فهم.

Intelligence is one's capital wealth and the fundamental requirement. There is no good in the company of a foolish person. Their companionship will end in aversion and severance even if it is a very lengthy relationship. Why should this not be the case, after all, even if a foolish person wants to benefit and help you, he will cause you harm without even knowing it. It is said that severing ties from a foolish person is a means of gaining proximity to Allāh taʿālā. Ḥaḍrat Thaurī raḥimahullāh said: "Looking at the face of a foolish person is a mistake which is recorded." By an intelligent person we are referring to the one who is able to understand and fathom matters as they ought to be understood either by himself or after they are explained to him.

وأما حسن الخلق فلا بد منه إذ رب عاقل يدرك الأشياء على ما هي عليه ولكن إذا غلبه غضب أو شهوة أو بخل أو جبن أطاع هواه وخالف ما هو المعلوم عنده لعجزه عن قهر صفاته وتقويم أخلاقه، فلا خير في صحبته.

Good character is essential because it may well be that an intelligent person perceives things as they are, but when he is overcome by anger, passion, miserliness or cowardice, he follows his desires and acts against what he knows. This is because he is unable to overpower those evil qualities and to set right his character. Obviously there is no good in his companionship.

وأما الفاسق المصر على الفسق فلا فائدة في صحبته لأن من يخاف الله لا يصر على كبيرة، ومن لا يخاف الله لا يومن غائلته لا يوثق بصداقته بل يتغير بتغير الأغراض.

As for a flagrant sinner who persists in sin, there is no benefit in his company because a person who fears Allāh taʿālā will not persist in committing major sins. As for the one who has no fear of Allāh taʿālā – how can one feel safe from his plotting and scheming ways? One cannot even rely on his friendship because it will constantly change with the changing of objectives.

وأما المبتدع فصحبته خطر لسراية البدعة وتعدي شؤمها إليه.

As for an innovator in religion, his company is dangerous because innovation has encompassed him and its ill effects will be transferred to the other.

وأما الحريص على الدنيا فصحبته سم قاتل لأن الطباع مجبولة على التشبه والإقتداء بل الطبع يسرق من الطبع من حيث لا يدري صاحبه.[1]

[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٢، ص ١٧٢-١٧٤.

The company of a person who hankers after the world is a fatal poison because temperaments inevitably emulate and follow others. In fact, one temperament steals from another without the person even realizing it.

At this point what I want to demonstrate to you is that the general belief that the intellect alone is enough for the rectification of all matters is incorrect. From the above explanation of Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* we learn that the company of an intelligent person is certainly beneficial, but at the same time it is essential for an intelligent person to have good character and mannerisms. If this will not be the case, the poor intelligence will be a prisoner in the hands of the carnal self.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* labels the company of a foolish person to be harmful. As for an intelligent person, he says that his company will be useful provided he also has good character. The reason he gives is that many intelligent people understand matters correctly, but when they are overcome by anger, passion, cowardice, love for this world, etc. they commit these things. Although they consider them to be contradictory to their knowledge, they are unable to rectify their evil qualities and traits; and they cannot remove them.

From here we learn the definition of an intelligent person, viz. he understands the reality of things as they are. The definition of a foolish person is also learnt, viz. he just cannot understand the reality of things. Thus, if the company of an intelligent person without good character is not enough, how can the company of a foolish person who cannot understand the reality of things be of any benefit!? How can such a person be ever relied upon?

Imām Ghazzālī's explanation of companionship can be applied to the administration and organization of things. Here too, mere intelligence is not enough. Rather, the person has to possess good character as well. This is because without it, even intelligence cannot be relied upon. In such a situation, a person's knowledge changes with regard to even the most important matters. Consequently, he considers the truth to be falsehood, and falsehood to be the truth. He acts against what he knows and what he understood, and resorts to his own choice and preference.

The story of Rustam

It will not be out of place if I relate a story of Rustam. The story is long but I will condense it. The ambassadors of Islam first explained to him in a soft and lenient manner. Their clear and straightforward conversation did not have any effect on him. Instead, he said to them: "We will go to war tomorrow." The two armies began preparations for battle. However, that very night, Rustam saw a dream in which two angels descended from the heavens, took all the quivers of the soldiers, sealed them and took them to the heavens. Rustam was grief-stricken by this dream. Early the next morning he called for his confidants and close associates and said: "Allāh is warning us repeatedly and explaining to us but we are not taking heed." He then put on two armours, a helmet, attached all his weapons to himself, mounted his horse and said: "We will trample them tomorrow." One of his companions said: "Inshā Allāh" – if Allāh wills.

Rustam said: "We will trample them even if He does not will it."[1]

What I want to draw your attention to is that although Rustam was an intelligent man and had concluded through strong indications that divine help is not with them, he was still a rejecter. No sooner his people prompted him to fight, he got ready to do it. This shows that the intellect alone is not enough for success. Rather, it also needs rectification of character. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān Ṣāḥib ʿUthmānī *raḥimahullāh* wrote an excellent piece in *Ishāʿat Islam*. I feel it ought to be quoted verbatim. He writes:

> We are surprised at Rustam's stand because he was convinced that Islam was the true religion and that the Muslims will be victorious. Why, then, did he make such a statement [We will trample them tomorrow]? The historians explain that this was in his heart and he had expressed it on several occasions to his confidants. However, in order to stir the courage of the Persians and to ensure that they are ready to fight, he displayed his bravery. However, I am of a completely different view. Rustam was certainly convinced of Islam's truthfulness, that fighting the Muslims would go in vain, and that they will certainly be victorious. Nonetheless, he was overcome by wretchedness. A person has knowledge of a certain thing but his knowledge changes when he is in a state of anger. He considers the truth to be

[1] *Ishāʿat Islam*, p. 149.

falsehood and vice versa. Consequently, he acts according to what his choice and preference demand.[1]

[1] *Ishā'at Islam*, p. 149.

If people understand what is said, they will benefit. A Maulānā came to me and joined the assembly. He was an intelligent man. When he returned [to his place], people asked him about his stay (because people feel that I am very strict). He replied sarcastically: "Yes, he hit me a lot." When they insisted that he speaks the truth, he quoted my words and statements verbatim. The people were quite impressed. He also said to them: "There is no strictness with him. Even if it appears that he is angry at someone, the person is happy with it and does not feel offended."

Nowadays people are harsh towards each other and they commit many wrongs and excesses against one and another. Thus, when they come here, they see their own harshness. The fact is that they have no faith in anyone. This is why they judge others according to their own traits and think them to be just like them. I see people having faith in salāh, in the masjid and so on. But no sooner they see someone having faith in a saint, their faithlessness comes into action and they develop various types of objections against him without any valid grounds. They are merely proving their faithlessness. The reason for this is that they see everyone in one condition, and then when they see someone who has been blessed by Allāh's grace and is not like them, they – due to their faithlessness – reject him, oppose him and even go to the extent of being fanatical against him. The fact of the matter is that the sickness of rejection has developed in their heart. If this internal sickness was not prevalent, the spiritual doctors would not have spoken about it. The elders explain that a person must go and meet as many saints as he can in his

quest for a spiritual mentor. However, he must never reject anyone nor find fault with him. At the same time, he must not pledge bayʿat to anyone without thinking about it carefully. We learn from this that when searching for a spiritual mentor, the absence of rejection and fault-finding are prerequisites.

The reason for failure nowadays is that the sickness of rejection has become prevalent. Sayyid ʿAbd al-Malik Harbūnī asked Sayyid Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* about having doubts. He said: "The person who is in doubt cannot be successful." If this is the case with doubts, what can be said about rejection!?

A doubt is always with regard to a two-angled matter; where there are two possibilities. A person is sometimes inclined to one side and sometimes to the other side. I say that if you feel that a certain person could be a saint or couldn't be, then look at both possibilities equally and sit in his presence with a clear mind. If you sit there with rejection and fault-finding, you have already decided on one possibility for yourself. How, then, can it be called a doubt? It is most certainly rejection.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality expounded by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

The deplorable condition of the laity

The condition of the masses today is that they have no affinity whatsoever with Dīn. They remain immersed in the world by day and night. But when they sit in their huqqah-smoking assemblies, they start passing decisions about the auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*, give their opinions about senior saints, and find fault with the erudite 'ulamā'. This is a most evil occupation. When the observe the high rank of the auliyā' in Allāh's

court and smell the stink of their rejection and fault-finding, they will really regret their actions.

The ruling of the Sharīʿat is that we have to have noble thoughts about even the general body of Muslims. And when we see good pointers in a certain Muslim, how much more necessary it becomes to have noble thoughts about him! The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that we cannot label any person as a walī with certainty because this is a special relationship between a servant and Allāh *taʿālā*. Nonetheless, it becomes wājib to be respectful and courteous towards the person who apparently has the qualities of the auliyā'. It is not permissible to harm him in any way. For example, to reject him out of obstinacy or jealousy because this is also a cause of harm. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* is not saying this from his own side, rather there is a Ḥadīth Qudsī which states:

مَنْ عَادٰى لِيْ وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ اٰذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ

I declare war on the person who is antagonistic towards My friend.

We learn from this that it is no trivial matter to cause harm to a walī. After all, the one causing the harm is fighting against Allāh *taʿālā*. How, then, can he experience any good!?

How to identify a walī

How are we to identify a walī? The answer is that we are obliged to look at the external. When we see the qualities of the auliyā' in a person, we will desist from causing any harm to him. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* said:

> When you see the garments of a dervish on a person, consider him to be a dervish,

> and believe that he is a pious man. If you are not aware of his internal condition, so what? What is the need for a chief of police to be inside a house?

People display friendship outwardly while they conceal enmity. However, they are quite sharp in convincing people into thinking that they are their friends and not their enemies. I say, very well, you can convince me, but how will you convince Allāh *taʿālā* when there is something else in your heart? What arrangements have you made for the time when you are presented before Him? The sickness of rejection has become so firmly embedded that people refuse to give it up. Some people want to give it up but because it is so deeply embedded, they cannot uproot it and they are destroyed by it.

One type of faith in a person is rational while the other is emulative. Emulative faith is when you see a few people reverting to a certain personality, so you emulate them as well. Rational faith is that you do not something just because you see others doing it. Rather, you do it after having investigated the matter and thought about it carefully. Rational faith is of fundamental importance. Following ones faith is not faith in itself, it is to do with the heart. You can follow another in external actions, but not in internal actions.

An admonitory incident

An ʿālim went to a saint. That night, the thought came to his mind that he surpasses the saint in one aspect [knowledge]. The very next day the saint said to him: "You must go to such and such saint who lives in such and such place." He proceeded to that saint, but due to his habit, the same thought crossed his mind.

The second saint also asked him to go to another saint. On going to the third saint, he was about to have the same thought about him when he experienced a certain condition on account of which he became unconscious. While in this condition he witnesses the day of Resurrection. There is a burning oven in which rats are thrown. While this is carrying on, his hand is also held and he is about to be thrown in that oven. He then sees that saint who says: "Leave him, he is our man." The ʿālim wakes up from his unconscious state and comes to his senses. The saint says to him: "Do you know what that was? The oven was the Hell-fire. Those who reject the auliyā' were in the form of the rats. If you did not come to me, you would have been cast into it as well."

This is why the seniors of the past abhorred rejecting the auliyā'. They used to punish those who did that and expelled them from their company. Ever since the seniors stopped speaking out against this practice, rejection of the auliyā' increased. The rejecters have no proof for their rejection. They neither have knowledge nor practice. They reject merely out of the desires of the carnal self. There was a poet who used to criticize the pious people a lot. Some people said to Khwājah Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*: "That poet is going beyond the limits. You too should say something." Khwājah Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* replied: "Very well." He then composed some lines of poetry against the poet who then came to his senses. He wrote to Khwājah Sāḥib: "Khwājah Sāḥib, please stop. I too will stop."

The easiest path is that of having faith and confidence [in the auliyā']. No sooner a person has faith in a saint and is sincere towards him, his blessings start to flow towards him. Irrespective of whether such a person is awake or asleep, the saint's blessings flow to him all

the time. People certainly strive a bit but they do not adopt the fundamental thing, i.e. they do not choose sincerity and devotion.

Doubts and misgivings, rejection and objection are the qualities of the unbelievers and hypocrites. A believer's heart ought to be filled with īmān and affirmation. There is no room for doubts and misgivings in it. Where Allāh *taʿālā* describes the īmān and good deeds of the believers, He adds that they do not have doubts and misgivings. Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah al-Hujurāt:

اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوْا

The true believers are they who believe in Allāh and in His Messenger, and thereafter have no doubt.[1]

It cannot happen that you sit with sincerity in the assembly of a practising ʿālim and you do not receive Dīn and īmān. Those who reject and raise objections do not come with sincerity, and so, they do not benefit. When they do not derive benefit, they reject and object. Allāh *taʿālā* describes the condition of the unbelievers – when they could not acquire guidance from the Qur'ān due to their ineptitude, they say: This is an ancient fabrication.

وَاِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوْا بِهٖ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ قَدِيْمٌ

Since they have not been guided by it, they will say: "This is a very old lie."[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 15.

[2] Sūrah al-Ahqāf, 46: 11.

As for the believers, they benefited from the Qur'ān and took benefit from it. Their condition is described as follows:

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوْا مَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُوْلِ تَرٰى أَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوْا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ج يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ. وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ لا وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُّدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ.

When they hear that which was revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because they have recognized the truth. They say: "O our Lord! We have believed. Include us, then with those who accept. Why should we not have conviction in Allāh and that which has reached us of the truth? [Why should we not] hope that our Lord admits us with the righteous?"[1]

Īmān is a great treasure

If a person goes with sincerity to the pious elders, he will never leave empty-handed. I say: Do not bother whether you experience spiritual conditions or not; īmān, conviction and affirmation are themselves very great qualities. These are the treasures which a person gets from the saints. A sincere person derives benefit from the very first day even though he may not perceive it. Depending on the capability of each person, the effects of the benefit are manifested very quickly on some people while after some time on others.

All that a person really has to do is to develop a genuine intention. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say: "I know that some of the

[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 83.

people who sit here have no knowledge whatsoever about the world and its happenings." (The writer, Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Ṣāḥib Jāmī says that our mentor, Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*, was from among such people).

It is impossible for a person to come with a genuine intention and to leave empty-handed. People commonly say: "He came empty-handed and left empty-handed." This means that if he comes without sincerity he will leave without blessings. As for the person who comes with a genuine intention, he does not leave empty-handed.

Whatever I am saying at present entails rules and regulations of the Ṭarīqat. It is necessary to know them and to practise on them.

Spiritual proximity with the saints is of essence

Nowadays people have lost their focus to such an extent that they consider physical proximity to be of essence. They feel that they have to be around their shaykh all the time. They do not consider faith and confidence in him to be necessary. Whereas faith is of essence in this path. If a person remains with a shaykh all the time without having any faith in him he will not benefit in any way. In fact, it will be harmful to him. This is similar to a person who is not a saint but claims to be a saint. The seniors refer to such a person as a highway robber. In other words, he leads astray those who come to him. You also get some murīds who want to kill the path of the shaykh by wanting to remain around him even during his special times [of solitude]. They do not allow him to be in solitude with Allāh *taʿālā*. They actually want to lower the shaykh from his lofty position and bring him down to their level of heedlessness. I say: The company of a

shaykh is undoubtedly effective, but there is a limit to companionship, viz. you must not disturb the shaykh in his times of solitude.

Spiritual proximity, not physical proximity, is of essence. Many people remain in the company of the saints for years, but because they have no sincerity and faith, they do not benefit in any way. There was a person who remained with a saint for many years. He occupied himself in many spiritual practices, he would engage in loud dhikr for 2-3 hours at a time. People considered him to be a great walī. A person arrived after the death of the saint while the person's condition had changed for the worse. When people asked him how come his condition changed while he had spent so many years in the company of the saint, he said: "Even for one day I did not stay with the saint for Allāh's sake."

Note: We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. What an admonitory incident! Man should constantly fear because he does not know when his condition can change. We must always make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to keep us on guidance irrespective of whether we are in Makkah, Madīnah or in the company of a saint. (compiler)

Let me add one additional point. Listen attentively. It is an admonitory point. When a person rejects a saint of Allāh *taʿālā* and causes him harm, then in most cases, Allāh *taʿālā* does not seize the person while the saint is alive because the latter will seek pardon for him. The auliyā' are soft-hearted by nature. If they pardon the person, the story will be over. On the other hand, Allāh *taʿālā* has willed to punish the person because he was ill-mannered towards a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* seizes him after the saint's demise and punishes him.

SINCERITY AND EMULATION

A person by the name of ʿAlī went to a saint. The saint said to him: "Go away from here." He left and on the way he thought to himself: "Since I have been expelled from there, what is the benefit of living? It will be better for me to be buried in the ground." The saint came to know of this through kashf (exposition) and sent someone to bring him back. The saint then included him among his close associates (khawāṣ). This is why he came to be known as ʿAlī al-Khawwāṣ.

Did you see! The man passed the test because he was not offended by his expulsion. Rather, he was grieved and lamented over the fact that he was expelled from such a place. He felt he was not worthy of living any longer and it would be better if he died. This desire was based on extreme grief and intense faith and confidence in the saint. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* cast the thought in the saint's mind that the man is sincere, he should be called back and included among his close associates. This is what the saint did. Listen! Proximity in Allāh's path is not acquired with the body alone, but with sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلاَ دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts that reaches Him.[1]

A Ḥadīth states that there are two drops which are accepted even before they fall to the ground. One is the tear-drop which is shed for Allāh *taʿālā*. The other is the drop of blood which is shed in Allāh's cause.

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22: 37.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explains the word taqwā as ikhlās (sincerity). After pondering over it we come to the conclusion that it refers to ikhlās. The seniors of Dīn say that the difference between the past and present peoples is because of ikhlās. It may well happen that a person does a lot of good deeds but they do not reach Allāh *taʿālā*. On the other hand, a person may do very few deeds but they reach Allāh *taʿālā* on account of his sincerity. Actions are accepted on the basis of sincerity.

A sign of sincerity

A man was going to the masjid for salāh. He met a person who had completed his salāh and was coming from the masjid. The first one asked him: "Is the congregation over?" He replied: "Yes." When he heard this, the man exhaled deeply by saying; "Aah." [to show his disappointment]. The man said to him: "You can take the reward of my salāh and give me your "aah". What he meant by this was that the reward which he received for the grief and sadness which he experienced at missing the congregation was far better than the reward which the man received for performing the salāh with congregation because he did not have that level of sincerity.

I say: To come and go, to sit and observe, etc. are very easy actions. It is also easy to make an item as tabarruk – to obtain blessings. However, it is extremely difficult to do an action with sincerity. If there is no sincerity, nothing is achieved.

Some guests arrived at the place of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* at an inopportune time when it was severely hot. I was present at the time. An outsider had come to live there with his wife and children. He proceeded to his house, asked his wife to

prepare some food immediately and to send it to the house of Hadrat Maulānā. The man then went to Hadrat Maulānā and said: "Hadrat, do not make any food arrangements for the guests. I have made arrangements at my house. The food for your guests will be sent to your house." Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* related this incident to us with much praise and said: "At that very moment I said to the man: 'May Allāh reward you well.'"

I say: That man will be pardoned on the day of Resurrection on account of this deed – inshā Allāh. This was absolute and pure ikhlās. When there is ikhlās, a person understands whatever needs to be done. This is what Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* related to us in his assembly. The saints taught us Dīn in various ways. If they did not relate incidents and stories of this nature how would he have learnt about their lives? How would we have learnt the real meaning of sincerity?

Shaykh Sa'dī *rahimahullāh* once went to the king to intercede on behalf of someone. Some Sufis had committed a wrong and so the king stopped their stipends. The doorman prevented Shaykh Sa'dī from going forward. The king somehow came to know of his arrival. He hastened towards Shaykh Sa'dī and took him inside. The Shaykh said: "Leave me, I will sit in the same row as these slaves." Saying this, he went to sit down with them. The king said: "What an excellent thing! Even if you sit on my head and eyes, I will revel in pride because you are my beloved and I have faith in you."

I say: What if the Shaykh began arguing with the doorman and said to him: "I am such and such person, I will not listen to you." He probably would not have been received with such honour.

The reason for having a doorman

People have still not understood the reason for having a doorman. If the truth be told, a doorman is not there to only permit special people. Rather, he is there to protect against the enemies. A policeman who is on patrol does that to protect your life, wealth and honour against thieves and rogues. He is not there to stop special people; he is there to stop enemies. While he is on duty, then in the course of his duty he is there for everyone – friends and foes. In the same way, the doormen which the seniors of Dīn have are not to guard against the seekers and special associates. They are there for outsiders. However, he does not recognize everyone – he does not know who is special and who is not. This is why he stops everyone. If not, he will be considered to be wanting in his duties. It is the right of a doorman to stop a person on the slightest suspicion that the person is an outsider and a stranger. Once the master is informed the person will be treated as ordered by the master. If he is a special person, he will be accorded special treatment. The master will apologize because he did not know – as was the case in the above incident with Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh*. The king accorded him special treatment and honoured him. It is possible that he reprimanded the doorman for not recognizing who had come. He must have informed the doorman that Shaykh Saʿdī was his shaykh and that he must not stop him in future.

Those who are put through the severest tests

A Ḥadīth states:

أشد الناس بلاء الأنبياء ثم الأمثل فالأمثل[1]

The severest tests and tribulations are given to the Prophets, followed by those who are closest to them, then those who are closest to them.

The further away a person is from Dīn, the lesser the hardships he will suffer. The more desire he has for Dīn, the severer the tests he will be put through.

Generally the enemies claim and say: "We are better because we are not suffering those calamities." They do not understand anything. When a lover is put through trials and tribulations by his beloved, he does not even consider them to be trials and tribulations. His condition is expressing the following words of a poet:

> (O beloved)! May Allāh not allow the enemies to be killed by your sword. May the heads of friends remain in tact so that you could work your dagger on them.

Note: The following couplet of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Aḥmad Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* conveys a similar meaning. It was approved by Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Abrār al-Ḥaq Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* as well:

> When any calamity comes from a friend, it is not a calamity; it is munificence.

Do you know the reason for this test? It is to differentiate between the sincere and the insincere. The one who is not sincere will flee. In fact, people like him do not try to do good even after seeing the tests which the beloved and sincere ones go through. Only

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[1] صحيح البخاري، باب أشد الناس بلاء، ٣، كتاب المرض، ٧٥.

the one who is a true lover of Allāh *taʿālā* and is a genuine seeker will set foot on this path. In this way, the path of Allāh *taʿālā* will be purified of false claimants and impostors.

An ʿālim went to a Nawāb Sāhib. At night, he went out for some need. When he returned, the guard stopped him and asked: "Who are you?" He thought to himself: "If I were to use words like "poor", "insignificant", etc. to describe myself, he will probably send me off and refuse me entry." Therefore he immediately retorted: "I am the senior Maulānā Sāhib from Delhi." On hearing this, the guard humbled himself and thought that the Nawāb Sāhib must have said something about his special guests. Nevertheless, he was on guard, it was his job to check, and he was getting paid for this job. If he did not carry out his duty, he would not be eligible for a pay. Another point we learn is that it is the duty of newcomers to inform of their arrival.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

Those who strive in Our cause – We will certainly show them Our paths.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* preconditioned striving for guidance. A person has to make himself "small" in this path, he has to humble and submit himself; only then will he achieve something. There are certain procedures which he has to follow; if he does not, he will not achieve anything. Understand this well. After all, water only flows to a low-lying region.

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[1] Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt, 29: 69.

ʿAllāmah Ibn Qayyim *raḥimahullāh* writes about the peace treaty of Ḥudaybiyah as follows:

The meaning of fatḥ

The linguistic meaning of *fatḥ* is to open something which is locked. The peace treaty which was made with the polytheists was a "locked" treaty until Allāh *taʿālā* referred to it as a *fatḥ*. A major reason for this *fatḥ* (victory) was that the polytheists had prevented Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* from the Kaʿbah. Outwardly this was a defeat and humiliation for the Muslims whereas in reality it was an honour and a victory for them. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked beyond the treaty and saw a major victory in it, and honour and help within it. This is why he accepted all the conditions which the polytheists had laid down notwithstanding the fact that most of the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* could not stomach those conditions. However, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* knew the favourable conditions which were concealed behind the unfavourable ones. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَعَسٰى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

It is possible that you find a thing disagreeable while it may be better for you.[1]

This is why Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* agreed to the peace treaty.[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 216.

[2] *Zād al-Maʿād*, vol. 3, p. 310.

The *Būstān* contains the story of a person who used to repent at night but break it the next morning. He realized the reason for this after a very long time:

> Only if Allāh *taʿālā* confers us with repentance, it will remain intact. If not, our covenants and promises are weak.

If a person repents repeatedly and he does not succeed, then what is the reason for it? Repentance has two affiliations – one is with the person and the other is with Allāh *taʿālā*. When our repentance is coupled with Allāh's mercy, it remains intact. Once a person understands this, his recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* is acquired and he has achieved his objective. This was the secret behind the non-acceptance of his repentance. There was another reason for its non-acceptance, viz. in the beginning, he was proud of his actions, and this is what generally happens in the beginning. A person thinks to himself that if he wants, he can become pious on his own. Since he relies on his own will, the path becomes long. It is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that as long as a person applies his own will and choice, he does not reach his objective. Once he humbles and submits himself, the path is opened before him and Allāh *taʿālā* welcomes him.

An admonitory incident of a saint

A saint was proceeding to some place with his disciples. The king was sitting in his palace and observing him. He recognized who he was. When the saint neared the palace, the king lowered his rope-ladder and asked the saint to come up. When he came up, the king asked him: "How did you reach Allāh *taʿālā*?" He replied: "In the same way as I reached you." In other words, if I wanted to reach you, the guards of the palace would have stopped me. Then I

do not know how long it would take for the information to reach you. In fact, I do not know if the guards will even inform you of my arrival. But when you yourself called me, you lowered the rope-ladder and I came up to you.

Did you see! A person does not reach anywhere by his own choice. Actions do not have so much of power as to reach Allāh *taʿālā* on their own. It is only when Allāh *taʿālā* wills that he lowers the "rope-ladder". Do you know what Allāh's rope-ladder is? It is the Qur'ān. Countless people reached Allāh *taʿālā* through it. If you recite the Qur'ān with firm belief and you recite it from your heart, then you too can reach Allāh *taʿālā* through this rope-ladder.

There was a person who had been frequently going to Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh*. One day, he said to himself: "There is no doubt whatsoever that Hadrat is a walī. At the same time there is absolutely no doubt that I am coming here for so long but let alone reaching lofty stations of spirituality, I have not even been able to give up sins." Hadrat got knowledge of this through exposition or inspiration. From that very day, the man began giving up sins gradually until he said: "Hadrat has drawn me to himself in such a manner that even if I want to commit a sin I cannot do it."

This is something to understand and comprehend. You can allow your personal opinion, intellect and choice to interfere in everything, but it is contrary to obedience to give vent to your intellect and opinions, and to dispute with the Ahlullāh. Obedience is lost on account of this. You must therefore abandon your own choice and opinions in matters related to the Ahlullāh. After all, these personalities who reached Allāh *taʿālā* did so because they abandoned and discarded

disputes and arguments. They were obedient to the texts of Dīn. This is why they teach the same thing to those who frequent them. They instruct them to be obedient and to give up disputing and arguing. You can present your views everywhere else, but this place is different. Here you will achieve nothing from your personal views and argumentative attitude. These personalities themselves are not under their own choice and authority. There are times when they are even reprimanded with regard to their disciples.

An incident related to Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī

Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was a senior saint of expositions and supernatural feats. He expelled a person from his company and personally led him out of the masjid by holding his hand. Then he also removed the man's belongings and placed them outside the masjid. The man went back into the masjid. Hadrat removed him several times but he did the same. Hadrat eventually left him and he remained in the masjid. When it was mealtime, Hadrat sent food for him but he refused to eat it. Hadrat went to him personally and requested him to eat. He replied: "I am not going to eat because it was due to this very food that you had expelled me." Hadrat tried to console him and convince him, and added: "Many worldly people come here, this is why I do this." The man said: "Religious people also come here, why don't you check properly." Hadrat pacified him and eventually convinced him to eat.

Did you see! One is occasionally reprimanded by Allāh *ta'ālā* through a special servant of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

An incident related to Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī

Listen to another similar incident:

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* was in his khānqāh. After performing tahajjud ṣalāh he was occupied in dhikr. Suddenly he heard something which sounded like someone coming and going. Ḥaḍrat asked: "Who is there?" A man came forward and said: "Ḥaḍrat, it is me. I am extremely hungry." Ḥaḍrat got up immediately, went inside and brought some fruit and whatever else he could find. It was a considerable amount. He brought everything and presented it to the person who was overjoyed. From this, Ḥaḍrat must have realized that these things do happen [that people in the khānqāh get hungry at odd hours]. Subsequently, he made considerable arrangements so that no one gets hungry in the future.

The need to obliterate one's will

Obliterating one's will and one's choice are two essentials when in the company of the saints. A person will not succeed as long as he looks at his own good qualities. Action is a prerequisite but not a basis. The only basis is Allāh's grace. Spiritual striving and other similar activities are prerequisites, they are not bases. The only basis is Allāh's mercy and grace. If you consider spiritual striving the basis [for success], you will not succeed. If a person does not strive, he is like a person who performs ṣalāh without wuḍū'. Wuḍū' is a prerequisite for ṣalāh but it is outside ṣalāh. After the wuḍū', the ṣalāh comprises of many obligatory actions.

The gist is that ikhlāṣ is of essence in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what reaches Allāh *taʿālā* and it is what is accepted by Him. When actions are accepted,

it is because they are accompanied by ikhlās. Actions are not considered in the least if they do not contain ikhlās.

The other point is that a person may present his personal view and opinion everywhere but not before the Ahlullāh. When he is in their presence, he must obliterate himself. He must not resort to his choice, intellect and intelligence against them. A poet says:

> There is no room for one's personal views and ideas in the creed of sulūk. Personal views and opinions are kufr in this creed.

The fundamental objective of going to the saints is to follow the texts [Qur'ān and Hadīth], and get freedom from the influences of the carnal self and Shaytān. These personalities have acquired freedom from these influences and made it obligatory on themselves to follow the texts. Thus, they teach the same thing to others. It is through this that a person can acquire proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. Following the texts includes following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

Thus, it is obligatory to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as well. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* understood this text very well. Then look how they followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*! The world cannot produce an example like theirs. In this regard there are unique incidents in the Ahādīth. On one occasion, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* said: "O Rasūlullāh! If you order us, we will dive into

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

the ocean."[1] Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of emulation which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were blessed with!

Fundamental obedience is to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, the Allāh-fearing ʿulamā' and genuine Sufis are the deputies of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. These personalities follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in letter and spirit. They are the practical examples of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Thus, through Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it is necessary to obey them as well. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

Follow the way of the one who has turned to Me.[2]

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality has been explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. (compiler)

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[1] صحيح مسلم، كتاب الجهاد، ٣٢، باب غزوة بدر، حديث ١٧٧٩.

[2] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY

The greatest quality of a believer is sincerity. Its opposite quality is known as hypocrisy. It is used in two meanings in the Sharīʿat. One is when a person rejects Islam from his heart while attesting to it with his tongue. When this meaning is taken, then in the Hereafter there is no difference between a hypocrite and an unbeliever. In fact, hypocrites will be in the lowest level of Hell.

Hypocrisy is one of the ailments of the heart

The other meaning of hypocrisy is when both the heart and tongue attest to Islam, but the person's verbal, carnal and heart sins have encompassed him – he is completely obliterated by them. He too is labelled a hypocrite by the Sharīʿat. This is the type of hypocrisy which the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* used to fear. It is also one of the ailments of the heart. When a person is caught up in it, then he goes to the extent of even ascribing partners with Allāh *taʿālā* in his quest for his needs. When the creation goes astray, it is solely because of its quest for its needs. After all, when a man cannot fulfil his own needs, he starts asking the help of those who are weaker and more incapable than his own self. He will sacrifice animals in their name, make vows for them, and will go to the extent of worshipping them. As long as this person does not reject Allāh *taʿālā*, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Hereafter; he will be referred to as a believer. This, notwithstanding the type of evils he is immersed in. However, this type of hypocrisy requires a lot of attention because people of this nature are not out of the circle of Islam. They will be punished [in Hell] and then admitted into Paradise.

Jealousy, pride and other similar ailments are included among the ailments of the heart, but the subject under discussion – hypocrisy – is a chronic ailment. Evils encompass the heart and the heart's capability to do good is virtually removed. When man reaches this level, he becomes a slave of his carnal self. Consequently, he seeks the help of others apart from Allāh *taʿālā* for the fulfilment of his needs. He has no qualms whatsoever about taking false oaths. It is as though his entire path has changed. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *al-Fauz al-Kabīr*:

> There is no difference between those who heard the teachings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* directly from him (during his lifetime) and opted for hypocrisy, and those who were born after him and adopted ways against the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* despite learning of them with absolute conviction. If you want to see an example of this then go to the assemblies of the wealthy and observe how their associates and friends give preference to their likes [likes of the wealthy] over the likes of Allāh *taʿālā*."[1] In fact, this is the sad condition of the rulers and religious leaders of our times. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Did you see the condition and example of the hypocrites! Now apply the condition of the masses to this and see what is their attitude towards Allāh *taʿālā* and the Sharīʿat. Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* went to great lengths on the subject of

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[1] *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*, p. 9.

hypocrisy. After all, he was the Mujaddid of his time. He did not see any scholar of his era speaking or writing on this subject.

A Hadīth on hypocrisy

One of my associates who is a Maulānā heard me speaking on this subject and conveyed it to the people of his place. When another Maulānā heard it, he was quite displeased. He said: "You are saying that Muslims are hypocrites!?" The Maulānā [my associate] was quite sharp. He opened the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* and showed him a Hadīth in which it is stated:

The hearts of man can be divided into four categories: (1) a heart which is (ajrad) completely barren, in which something like a light is shining, (2) a heart which is (aghlaf) covered by a type of covering, (3) a heart which is mankūs, and (4) a heart which is musaffah. (Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam himself explains each one): (1) An ajrad heart is the heart of a believer, and the light in it is the light of īmān. (2) An aghlaf heart is the heart of an unbeliever. (3) A mankūs heart is the heart of a hypocrite. It recognized the truth, but then rejected it. (4) A musaffah heart has both īmān and hypocrisy in it.

There is a constant conflict between the two. Sometimes, īmān demands that it be acted upon while hypocrisy draws the person towards itself. Whichever of the two qualities gains the upper hand eventually embeds itself in man. He either becomes a perfect believer or a pure hypocrite.

The Maulānā who was making objections fell silent when he saw this Hadīth.

I have concluded that whatever is happening in the world today is because of this hypocrisy. People's relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is not in order. They have included hypocrisy in Dīn as well and displeased Allāh *taʿālā*. When Allāh *taʿālā* is displeased with us, we will obviously lose peace and tranquillity in our Dīnī and worldly lives. It cannot happen that Allāh *taʿālā* is displeased with us and we are still able to live in peace and comfort. When the owner of a house is displeased, the first thing he will say is: "Get out of my house."

This is why I say you can disobey Allāh *taʿālā* if you want – it is your choice – but when disobedience becomes rife, Allāh *taʿālā* causes us to suffer all-encompassing calamities. Allāh *taʿālā* is certainly very forgiving. He Himself says:

وَيَعْفُوْ عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ

He pardons many sins.[1]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make this duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيْمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ

O Allāh! You are most pardoning, most generous. You love to pardon, so pardon me.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to relate this story to us repeatedly. I do not know why he used to relate it to us. A saint passed away. His name was Yahyā ibn Aktham. He was a shaykh of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*. When he was presented before Allāh *taʿālā*, he was asked: "O you old man! Tell

[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 15.

Me why did you do this?" He was left astounded and remained silent. He was asked again: "Why are you not talking?" When he was asked a few times, he said: "I had heard a Hadīth but now find myself in a situation different from it. I am therefore worried as to whether the text of the Hadīth is incorrect or the transmission (sanad) is wrong." He was asked: "Which Hadīth?" He then quoted the entire transmission and read the Hadīth which states that Allāh *taʿālā* feels shy [to punish] Muslims who have turned grey.[1] Allāh *taʿālā* said: "The Hadīth is correct. Go, I have pardoned you on account of it."

There is another incident that when a person was about to depart from this world, he heard this Hadīth. So he requested that when he dies, flour must be dusted on his beard so that it appears white. When he passed away, he was presented before Allāh *taʿālā* who asked: "What is this joke?!" The man said: "O Allāh! It is not a joke. Rather, I did it out of fear for Your punishment. I heard that You feel ashamed to punish a Muslim who has turned grey. I was neither old nor was it in my control to become old. I did this to imitate the form and appearance of old people." Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Very well, you may go. You are pardoned. I like this action of yours."

The lesson we learn from these incidents is that it is solely through Allāh's pardon and generosity that we can be saved – the abstinent and the sinner. A Hadīth states that on the day of Resurrection, a sinner will first try to conceal his sins. But when he sees that people are being paid for their sins, he will start exposing them. He will say: "I committed this sin as well, and that sin as well." A poet rightly said:

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[1] *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 14, p. 206.

> When Allāh *taʿālā* displayed His mercy on the day of Resurrection, I shouted out: "I am also a sinner."

There was an old man in our village. He was older than my father. It was well known that he speaks a lot of lies. It was also well known that at night he cries profusely out of fear of the Hereafter and of Allāh's punishment. Inshā Allāh, he will be saved on account of this action because a Hadīth states that the eye which cries out of Allāh's fear is prohibited to the Hell-fire.[1]

If a person commits a sin out of human constraints, he should at least have the fear of Allāh *taʿālā* by virtue of his īmān.

Listen! We are made to fear hypocrisy so that people may develop affirmation in their hearts. It is most terrible if a person's outer self is good while his inner self is evil. It is far better for a person to appear to be like a free and liberated person outwardly, while his inner self is good. A poet says:

> The ascetic could not cross the path safely because of his pride and arrogance. On the other hand, the sinner reached Paradise safely by virtue of his submission and humility.

The need for a guide

Nowadays there is a real need to work and strive. I see Muslims are now understanding the need for Dīn. I am noticing this in all sections of the community. However, the fact of the matter is that nothing can be

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[1] سنن ابن ماجه، كتاب الزهد، ٣٧، باب الحزن والبكاء، ١٩، حديث ٤١٩٧.

achieved without a teacher and mentor. And this is the path of Allāh *taʿālā* which is thinner than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword. The community may have turned for the better, but it needs a teacher so that it gets knowledge of the path. Man must be able to recognize his own worth, learn about the self, and save himself from sins. After all this, it is very easy to reach Allāh *taʿālā*. If you recognize Allāh *taʿālā* you will achieve much.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to quote the following couplets with much emotion, causing all those who were present in the assembly to be affected. He used to say:

> Desist and abstain from the evil conditions in which you are. If you are a kāfir or idol worshipper, desist from that as well. This court of ours is not a court of despondency and hopelessness. Even if you have broken your repentance a hundred times, desist from now on.

Glory to Allāh! These are most effective couplets which can make a man stand up in Allāh's cause. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

ADVICE WITH REGARD TO RECITATION OF THE QUR'ĀN

By Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*

Note: When the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to be published, he – out of his humility - used to say to us: "What is the need to publish them? The articles of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* are such that if they are published, they will be more beneficial to the ummat." Hadrat would then show us which articles he was referring to. This is why we were in the practice of publishing articles from *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah*. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Tafhīmāt*:

My first advice is to ensure that one's beliefs and practices are in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnat. After that, a person must occupy himself in both [Qur'ān and Sunnat] with tadabbur – pondering and reflection.[1]

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[1] This applies to the person who has the capability to ponder. It is not right to say that recitation without pondering is not valid. Rather, benefits can be accrued even without pondering. In other words, a person's īmān increases. Yes, it is certainly correct to say that the texts instruct us to ponder over the Qur'ān. This is an order on its own. Nonetheless, what I want to say is that recitation without understanding and pondering is also considered by Allāh *ta'ālā,* is desired by the Sharī'at and guarantees many blessings. In order to prove my point, I quote an incident about Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* as related in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm*. The Imām saw Allāh *ta'ālā* in a dream and

asked Him: "O Allāh! Which is the most superior way of gaining proximity to You?" Allāh *taʿālā* replied: "O Aḥmad! It is through the recitation of My speech [the Qur'ān]." Imām Aḥmad asked: "With understanding or without understanding?" Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Either way – with understanding or without understanding."

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* quotes this incident in his *aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* with additional explanations:

كان رضي الله عنه يقول في معنى قول الإمام أحمد بن حنبل رضي الله عنه حين رأى رب العزة جل جلاله في منامه، فقال يا رب بما يتقرب إليك المتقربون. قال بكلامي يا أحمد. قال: قلت: يا رب بفهم أو بغير فهم. قال: بفهم أو بغير بفهم. المراد بفهم ما يتعلق بعلماء الشريعة وبغير فهم ما يتعلق بعلماء الحقيقة. فإن العلماء ما لهم آلة لفهم كلام الله تعالى إلا بالفكر. وأما العارفون فطريقتهم إلى فهمه الكشف والتعريف الإلهي، وذلك لا يحتاج إلى تفهم.

Sayyid ʿAlī Damīrī raḥimahullāh explains the statement of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal raḥimahullāh that when he saw Allāh taʿālā in a dream and asked: "O Allāh! How do the close servants gain proximity to you?" Allāh taʿālā said: "O Aḥmad! By (reciting) My speech." He asked: "O Allāh! With understanding or without understanding?" Allāh taʿālā said: "Either way – with understanding or without understanding." Reading the Qur'ān with understanding applies to the ʿulamā' of the Sharīʿat. Reading it without understanding applies to the ʿulamā' of the Ḥaqīqat. This is because the ʿulamā' of the Sharīʿat have no tool for understanding the Qur'ān except for pondering and reflecting. As for the ʿārifīn, their way of understanding the Qur'ān is through kashf (exposition) and divine explanation. This does not require any understanding.

فقيل له فما تقول فيمن يقرأ من العوام من غير فهم، فقال قد صح أن له بكل حرف عشر حسنات. فتحت قوله وبغير فهم مسئلتان. (الطبقات الكبرى للشعراني، ج ٢، ص ١٣٧).

Someone then asked him: "Okay, what do you have to say about the Qur'ān recitation of the laity who read it without understanding?" He replied: "An authentic Ḥadīth states that

such a person will be given ten rewards for every letter." Thus, the words "without understanding" of Imām Aḥmad raḥimahullāh contain two issues (one is the recitation of the laity and the other of the ʿārifīn).

This dream of Imām Aḥmad *raḥimahullāh* has been quoted by Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* and ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* in *aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Many ʿulamā' and Sufis have been relating it ever since and no one has ever rejected or refuted it. Thus, it is as though they are all unanimous with regard to its authenticity. We could therefore present it to state that even if the Qur'ān is recited without pondering and understanding, it is one of the highest means of gaining proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the Sufis of every era paid particular attention to it and advised those who came after them. Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* himself says that a person must make it a habit to read a certain portion of the Qur'ān on a daily basis.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *raḥimahullāh* writes as follows in *Kitāb al-Adhkār* on this subject:

والمختار أن ذلك يختلف باختلاف الأشخاص، فمن كان يظهر له بدقيق الفكر لطائف ومعارف فليقتصر على قدر يحصل له معه كمال فهم ما يقرأ، وكذلك من كان مشغولا بنشر العلم أو فصل الحكومات بين المسلمين أو غير ذلك من مهمات الدين والمصالح العامة للمسلمين. فليقتصر على قدر لا يحصل بسببه إخلال بما هو مرصد له ولا فوت كماله.

ومن لم يكن من هولاء المذكورين فليستكثر ما أمكنه من غير خروج إلى حد الملل أو الهذرمة في القراءة. (كتاب الأذكار، ص ٩٩)

The extent of the recitation will differ on account of the different conditions of people. For example, the person to whom the subtle and intricate sciences of the Qur'ān are exposed after deep pondering will suffice with reading only that much through which he can clearly understand whatever he reads. Similarly, the person who is occupied in resolving the disputes of Muslims, or other important matters

Furthermore, a person must read some portion of both everyday without missing out on any day. If he cannot read them, he should at least listen to one page of the translation of each. As regards beliefs, he must tread the creed and beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnat wa al-Jamāʿat of the past.

He must abstain from investigating matters which have not been established and related by the seniors

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of Dīn and general wellbeing of Muslims – he should confine to only that amount of Qur'ān recitation which would not interfere with the fulfilment of his duties and cause him to miss out their completion.

As for the one who is free from the above-mentioned occupations, he must read as much as he can provided it does not cause him to become weary and bored, and does not prompt him to read too fast.

The 'ulamā' say that from among the essential etiquette at the time of recitation, the most important is sincerity. 'Allāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Kitāb al-Adhkār* in this regard:

فأول ما يومر به الإخلاص في قراءته وأن يريد بها الله سبحانه وتعالى، وأن لا يقصد بها توصلا إلى شيء سوى ذلك، وأن يتأدب مع القرآن ويستحضر في ذهنه أن يناجي الله سبحانه وتعالى، ويتلو كتابه، فيقرأ على حال من يرى الله فإنه إن لم يره فإن الله تعالى يراه. (الفتوحات الربانية على الأذكار النووية، ج ٤، ص ٢٣٤).

The first order at the time of reciting the Qur'ān is that of sincerity, that he must be doing it solely for Allāh taʿālā and he must not use it as a means for the acquisition of anything else. Furthermore, he must be most respectful towards the Qur'ān, and be conscious of the fact that he is conversing with Allāh taʿālā and reading His Book. He must therefore read like a person who is seeing Allāh taʿālā. If he is not on this level, he must at least think to himself that Allāh taʿālā is watching him.

of the past. He must not pay any attention to the rational objections which the philosophers have made against almost everything. He must follow the Hadīth scholars in subsidiary issues because they combine fiqh and Hadīth. He must always gauge juridical issues with the Qur'ān and Sunnat. If an issue is in line with them, he must act on it; if not, he must reject it. Understand well that the ummat can never be independent of presenting its mujtahdāt (juridical issues) before the Qur'ān and Sunnat and acting accordingly. Do not pay any attention to fanatical jurists who consider the taqlīd of a scholar to be a decree and totally abandon investigation and research. Instead, search for proximity with Allāh *ta'ālā* by remaining distant from them.

ETIQUETTE FOR THE MASHĀ'IKH

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes on the etiquette to be observed by the Sufis and those occupied in inviting towards Allāh *ta'ālā*. He states:

If a person expresses his desire to pledge bay'at, do not delay in accepting it. If a person would like to start dhikr and other devotional practices, do not delay in prescribing a programme for him because it is said that there is a tribulation for everything, and there are many tribulations for knowledge. It is essential for you to set aside some time at night in which you can focus on your self. You must force yourself to take out a certain amount of time from your daily occupations of meeting people, speaking to them and so on. (What this means is that do not wait for free time because then you will never find it and you will not be able to do anything. Rather, you will have to make it a point to take out this time). In this time, you must focus yourself totally to do your work. You must also set aside another time wherein you teach and pass on knowledge. Then you must have another time wherein you cast spiritual ecstasy into the hearts of those who are desirous of it. reserve another time in which you meet and greet those who come to meet you.

A propagator must adopt five qualities

If a person is occupied in calling people towards Allāh *ta'ālā* and they too turn to him, then he will have to do what the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* did because he is emulating them and following in their footsteps.

It is essential for him to adopt five qualities. If he leaves out just one of them, he will be considered to be defective in that regard. The five qualities are:

(1) To study and acquire the religious sciences.

(2) To enjoin good and forbid evil in a soft and affectionate manner; not with harshness and severity.

(3) To show equal affection to everyone irrespective of whether he is learned or ignorant. Anyway, he will have to assess and gauge the rank of each person and treat him accordingly. It is not very difficult to do this because an ignorant person will only be pleased with a soft approach. On the other hand, 'ulamā' need to be shown a bit of respect.

(4) To cut off all hopes and desires from the wealth and belongings of people, and to abstain completely from interfering in their affairs.

(5) If he has the means, he must personally see to the needs and hospitality of guests, students, seekers and so on. If he does not have the means, he must encourage his close associates to see to their comfort. After all, the one who points to a good deed receives the same reward as the one who does it.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* keep you firm on the upright Dīn and the straight path. Āmīn.[1]

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[1] *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 103.

THREE IMPORTANT POINTS TOWARDS WHICH THE PROPHETS INVITED

أم بعد. فيقول خادم العلماء والصوفية والمتمسك بأذيالهم العلية ولي الله بن عبد الرحيم عاملهما الله بفضله العظيم، إن من أجل نعم الله تعالى التي لا يستطيع العباد شكرها أن بعث الأنبياء مترجمين عن الغيب هادين إلى طرق التقرب إلى الله تعالى ليهلك من هلك عن بينة ويحي من حي عن بينة، ثم جعل لهم ورثة يقومون بعلمهم بين الناس ويحيون سننهم ويدعون إلى رشدهم.

This servant of the ʻulamā' and Sufis who holds on to their lofty ways, Walī Allāh ibn ʻAbd ar-Raḥīm – may Allāh taʻālā treat both of them with His mighty grace – says: The greatest favour which man cannot thank Allāh taʻālā for is the fact that He sent Prophets who conveyed the unseen and guided towards the paths which would take one closer to Allāh taʻālā so that whoever dies thereafter will die with clear knowledge, and the one who lives will live with clear knowledge. Allāh taʻālā then appointed heirs for the Prophets ʻalayhimus salām who would spread their knowledge among people, revive their ways and invite them towards their rectitude.

ومعظم ما دعت إلى إقامته الرسل أمور ثلاثة.

From among the things towards whose establishment the Messengers ʻalayhimus salām invited towards, three are of paramount importance:

١. تصحيح العقائد في المبدأ والمعاد والمجازاة وغيرها، وقد تكفل بهذا الفن أهل الأصول من علماء الأمة شكر الله تعالى مساعيهم.

1. Rectification of beliefs with regard to man's beginning, the Hereafter, recompense of deeds, and so on. The scholastic theologians from the 'ulamā' of the Muslim nation undertook to fulfil this responsibility. May Allāh ta'ālā reward them for their efforts.

تصحيح العمل في الطاعات المقربة والارتفاقات الضرورية على وفق السنة، وقد تكفل هذا الفن فقهاء الأمة فهدى الله بهم كثيرين وأقام بهم فرقة عوجاء.

2. Rectifying one's actions in acts of obedience which take one closer to Allāh ta'ālā. Also, to take benefit from the necessities of life in accordance with the Sunnat. The jurists of the Muslim nation took care of this department. Consequently, Allāh ta'ālā guided many through them, and set right many deviated sects through them.

وتصحيح الإخلاص والإحسان الذين هما أصلا الدين الحنيفي الذي ارتضاه الله لعباده، قال تبارك وتعالى: وَمَآ اُمِرُوا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ، حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَذٰلِكَ دِيْنُ الْقَيِّمَةِ.

2. Rectifying one's sincerity and Allāh-consciousness both of which are the fundamentals of this pure religion which Allāh ta'ālā chose for His servants. Allāh ta'ālā says: They were solely ordered to worship Allāh,

devotedly worshipping Him [alone] – turning away (from all false creeds).[1]

وقال:اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ. اٰخِذِيْنَ مَا اٰتٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ. اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَبْلَ ذٰلِكَ مُحْسِنِيْنَ. كَانُوْا قَلِيْلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُوْنَ. وَبِالْاَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ. وَفِيْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ. وَفِي الْاَرْضِ اٰيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوْقِنِيْنَ. وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ.

Allāh ta'ālā says: The righteous ones are in gardens and fountains. Taking what their Lord gave them. They were doers of good before this [day]. They used to sleep but little at night. And in the hours of dawn they used to seek forgiveness. In their wealth there was a share for the beggar and the defeated. In the earth are signs for those who have conviction. And within your own selves [as well]. Will you not then see?[2]

وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات. وقال في جواب جبرئيل عليه السلام: "الإحسان أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك." والذي نفسي بيده هذا الثالث أدق المقاصد الشرعية مأخذا وأعمقها محتدا، وهو بالنسبة إلى سائر الشرائع بمنزلة الروح من الجسد، وبمنزلة المعنى من اللفظ، وقد تكفل به الصوفية رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين، فاهتدوا وهدوا، واستقوا وسقوا، وفازوا

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[1] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

[2] Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 15-21.

بالسعادة القصوٰى وحازوا السهم الأعلى، فللّٰه درهم ما أعم نفعهم وأتم نورهم.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Actions are based on intentions." He said in reply to the question of Jibraʾīl ʿalayhis salām: "Ihsān means that you must worship Allāh as though you are seeing Him. If you cannot imagine this, then understand well that He is seeing you." I take an oath by the Being in whose control is my life, this third category is the most intricate and deepest of the objectives of the Sharīʿah as regards the source. When compared to all other Sharīʿahs, it is like the soul in the body, and essence of a word. The Sufis – may Allāh taʿālā be pleased with them – undertook to uphold this science. Subsequently, they were guided by it and they guided others, they "drank" from its fountain and satiated the thirst of others. They acquired the highest level of good-fortune and took the greatest share of it. For Allāh alone is their excellence. Look at how all-encompassing their benefit is, and how perfect their light is!

ولما كان رضاء الحق أن علماء الأمة إن يسعوا في بقاء النور المأخوذ من الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم وإشاعته وحمل الناس على الإهتداء به كما قال: "فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ" الآية. وقال: "وَلٰكِنْ كُوْنُوْا رَبَّانِيِّيْنَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُوْنَ." توارثوا نصب الخلفاء وبعث الدعاة عصرا بعد عصر وطبقة بعد طبقة لتكون كلمة الله هي العليا وليتحقق على أيديهم ما وعد الله في محكم كتابه حيث قال" وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ.

Allāh's pleasure demanded that the ʿulamā' of the ummat strive to uphold the light which was derived from the Prophets, to proliferate it, and to encourage people to obtain guidance through it. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard: "Why should it not be that a small group from every large group goes out..." Allāh taʿālā says: "Become true servants of Allāh by virtue of the fact that you teach the Book and you study it." Consequently, the practice of appointing caliphs and sending propagators was established in every era and every level of society. This was done so that the word of Allāh taʿālā may reign supreme and so that what Allāh taʿālā promised in His Book will be realized at their hands, viz. "We alone are its protectors."

والخلافة ظاهرة وباطنة، فالخلافة الظاهرة إقامة الجهاد والقضاء والحدود وجباية العشور والخراج وقسمتها على مستحقيها، وقد حمل أعباءها العادلون من ملوك الإسلام.

Caliphate is of two types, one is external and the other is internal. The external caliphate entails the establishment of jihād, a judiciary, the penal code, the collection of ʿushr and kharāj, their distribution to those who are eligible, and so on. This responsibility was borne by those Muslim rulers who were just.

والخلافة الباطنة تعليم الكتاب والحكمة وتزكيتهم بالنور الباطن بقوارع الوعظ وجواذب الصحبة، كما قال عز من قائل: لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ، وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ.

The internal caliphate entails teaching the Book and wisdom, purifying the hearts of people with internal

light through heart-rending lectures and good companionship which attracts the people to it. Allāh ta'ālā says in this regard: "Allāh bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent in their midst a Messenger from among themselves - he recites to them His verses and purifies them [from polytheism and other evils], and teaches them the Book and things of benefit. Previously they were in manifest error."[1]

وفيهم قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: العلماء ورثة الأنبياء. وقال: فضل العالم على العابد كفضلي على أدناكم. ولا يكون الخلية إلا من جمع المقاصد الثلاثة التي ذكرناها، وحفظ الكتاب السنة، وتدرب في قوانين السلوك وتربية السالكين.[2]

It is with reference to such people that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "The 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets." He said: "The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like my superiority over the lowest of you." Only the person who combines three objectives which we mentioned previously can be eligible to be a caliph. Furthermore, he must be one who preserves the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and has experience in the laws of Sufism and the training of those treading the Sufi path.

Note: These are extremely important points which the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh must read. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for having included these important themes which are

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 164.

[2] تفهيمات إلهية، ج ١، ص ١٢.

sources of admonishment for us. (Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī, Rajab 1432 A.H.)

THE VALUE OF A BOND WITH ALLĀH (1)

Just before the assembly could commence, Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Gangohī Ajmerī Sāhib said: "The greatest benefit of coming here in the service of Hadrat is that as long as I am here, I feel a special type of peace and tranquillity in my heart. If I did not have any other responsibilities, I would have remained here permanently. My brother, Muhammad Ahmad, predicted that there will come a time when I will remain permanently in Allāhābād." This much was spoken before the assembly. It was then the time for the assembly to commence and all the people came in.

Hadrat Wālā spoke in support of what Hakīm Sāhib said by saying: I heard Hadrat *rahimahullāh* saying repeatedly that if the kings only came to know of the treasure which we have with us, they would muster their armies and attack us. But this treasure cannot be acquired through armies. It is acquired through humility and submission, and by humbling one's self before a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. This quality is disappearing in our times. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً

Whoever did good, be it man or woman, and is a believer, to him We will give a good life.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* has not reserved His rewards and generosity for Paradise alone. Rather, He confers them to His righteous servants in this world as well. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this verse that whoever does good – whether man or woman – he will receive a good life

[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 97.

provided he or she is a believer. The commentators of the Qur'ān have gone into much detail in explaining what a "good life" is.

Hadrat Jaʿfar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says that it refers to the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*, true consciousness of Allāh's presence, and total presence of mind as regards Allāh's orders.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAtā' *rahimahullāh* says that a "good life" refers to living with Allāh *taʿālā* and turning away from everything apart from Him. In other words, man lives his life in the light of Allāh's orders, and carries out all his affairs in the shade of Allāh's pleasure in the sense that his heart is empty of all except Allāh *taʿālā*.

We learn from this verse that a good life in this world is not the reserve of men only. Rather, if anyone – whether man or woman – does good deeds, then Allāh *taʿālā* blesses them with a good life. I say: A good life refers to that internal treasure which surpasses external physical sultanates. We just said previously that if the sultans were to learn of it, they would come and attack with their armies. There are countless stories of the saints whom, by virtue of their sincerity and devotion, Allāh *taʿālā* honoured with His bounties and excellences.

Admonitory lessons of women

(1)

A woman was informed that her child drowned in a lake. On hearing this, she went to the edge of the lake and called out her child's name. The child answered from inside: "Yes mother!" The mother said: "Come here." The child emerged immediately. This is known as an extraordinary or supernatural event which is

also enjoyed by the Auliyā'. The people asked the woman: "How did you know that he is alive?" She replied: "I have a special bond with Allāh *taʿālā* through which He informs me before hand of what is to happen. He did not inform me about this, so I concluded that my child is alive. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* does not do contrary to His norm even though we may do."

Allāh *taʿālā* displayed one supernatural feat of this woman so that people may ask her and it may come out into the open. Allāh *taʿālā* sometimes displays supernatural events like these through the women of Islam.

(2)

A saint was proceeding towards Madīnah. On the way he slapped the son of a Bedouin. Subsequently, the daily visit of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which he used to enjoy came to an end. People like this are known as *hudūrī* (a person who enjoys the presence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*). This saint enjoyed a lofty position which was now taken away from him. He was travelling towards Madīnah and respect has to be shown to the residents of the city and surrounding areas of the beloved. Even if the boy had erred, the saint ought to have restrained himself solely on the basis that the boy was a neighbour of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, he hit the boy. Allāh *taʿālā* disliked his action and therefore took away that bounty which he enjoyed. The saint sought the boy's pardon, gave him some money, pacified his parents but the visit of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was still shut off from him.

He went to the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh of Madīnah and sought their help and intercession but they all replied

by saying that the matter is beyond them. They then referred him to a certain woman and said that she will be able to do what he wants. The saint went to her and related the situation to her. She pointed her finger towards the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: "Look!" When he looked up, he saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He thus saw him in a state of wakefulness. Previously he used to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a dream but now, through this woman, he saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a state of wakefulness.

You people are enjoying what I am saying, but learn the lessons from these stories. These orators do not teach you practical things. If they related to you incidents and discussed themes which prompted you towards action, then your power of action would be awakened and you would also understand the spiritual conditions of the saints. However, to deliver a lecture one will have to be a practising person himself. Before he can practise, he will have to have knowledge, and this is difficult.

This incident is also of a woman. I related it while on the subject that Allāh *taʿālā* honours His righteous servants in this world as well, irrespective of whether they are males or females. Men have reached great heights, and so did women. Listen to another story.

(3)

A saint was sitting in meditation. A person passed by him. It was dark, so he walked into the saint. The latter said: "Are you blind!?" The moment he said this, the man became blind. Sometimes it happens that when a saint says something, it occurs as he says. This is a genuine occurrence. A Hadīth states: "A person continues getting closer to Me through optional

acts (after having fulfilled the obligatory acts) until he becomes My beloved. Once he becomes My beloved, I become his eyes through which he sees, his hands with which he holds, and his tongue with which he speaks."[1]

When a saint reaches this level, then whatever he says happens accordingly. This saint was also on this level. When he said: "Are you blind?", the man became blind. The man went to his shaykh and related the entire incident to him. The shaykh called for this saint and said to him: "It is now your responsibility to see to his daily needs such as going and leaving the toilet, feeding him and so on. You must take him to the toilet and render all other services to him." The poor saint's supernatural feat now became a major inconvenience for his own self. When six months passed in this way, the shaykh said to his blind disciple: "When you come to know that the saint is in meditation at night, you must go and knock into him wittingly."

The man found an opportunity and did as he was told. The saint said to him: "You must look where you are walking, you must look." The man's eyesight was restored. The saint had already experienced the misfortune of his previous statement, this is why he was cautious with the words which he uttered. By virtue of the shaykh's prescription, this saint was also rectified and people too became afraid and realized that they have to be very careful when dealing with him.

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[1] صحيح البخاري، باب التواضع، ٣٨، كتاب الرقاق حديث ٦٥٠٢، مجمع الزوائد، ص ج ١٠، ص ٣٤٤، كتاب الزهد.

We will have to believe in incidents of this nature. Just as the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have miracles, the auliyā' have karāmāt – supernatural feats. A karāmat is a branch of the miracles of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and is received by total emulation of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

(4)

When I was in Gorukhpūr, the people related to me that there was a lion in the nearby jungle. A saint lived nearby. Whenever he wanted to go anywhere, he would summon the lion and hold it by its ear. He would stand up and sit on the lion. It would then take him wherever he wanted, and bring him back at exactly the same spot. The lion used to live in that one place, would not harm anyone and would not go anywhere. Glory to Allāh! What a strange story!

(5)

A man from the royal family used to receive a monthly stipend. On the other hand, when he needed to cook, he would place rice, pulse and water in a pot and place it over the fireplace. He would not light any fire. All he would do is sit next to the pot and say: "Get cooked, get cooked." He would say this a few times and the food would get cooked.

(6)

A saint sat on a lion and went to a certain person who was sitting on a wall. The man said to the wall: "You too walk." The wall began walking. The saint who approached on the lion realized that this man is on a higher level than him.

Hakīm Ajmerī Sāhib spoke about peace and tranquillity [as related at the beginning of this chapter]. What can we say about the peace and

tranquillity enjoyed by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and auliyā'!? These personalities enjoy the highest station of reliance on Allāh's pleasure and tranquillity.

(7)

A Qārī Sāḥib went to a saint who used to live in a jungle. A river was flowing nearby. The Qārī Sāḥib went to the edge of the river to relieve himself. A lion lived not far away and chased the man. He came running to the saint, and the lion also came near. The saint scolded the lion by saying: "Did I not prohibit you from troubling my guests?" The lion went away wagging its tail. The saint then turned to the man and said: "We have purified our hearts, this is why the lion fears us. On the other hand, you have purified your tongue only, this is why you fear the lion."

> When you are in the presence of spiritual masters, focus on your heart so that you do not have to suffer embarrassment in their presence.

All these things are known as karāmāt, and the karāmāt of the auliyā' are true. A karāmat is only given to a person who believes in it from the beginning. If a person does not even believe in it, he cannot expect to receive it.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* said:

وإنما أنكرها أكثر المعتزلة بعدمها فيما بينهم

Most of the Muʿtazilah rejected karāmāt because they received no share of it.

I say that the reason for not receiving a share of it was because of their rejection.

I was saying: The auliyā' are given karāmāt just as the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are given muʿjizāt or miracles. Just as wilāyat is a branch of prophet-hood, karāmat is a branch of muʿjizah. Allāh *taʿālā* honours His righteous servants through karāmāt. A believer will certainly be honoured in the Hereafter. However, Allāh *taʿālā* confers many bounties and favours to His righteous servants even in this world. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَسْئَلُكَ نَعِيْمًا لَّا يَنْفَدُ، وَقُرَّةَ عَيْنٍ لَّا تَنْقَطِعُ، وَاَسْئَلُكَ الرِّضَا بِالْقَضَاءِ.[1]

O Allāh! I ask You for a favour which does not end, delight of the eyes which is not severed, and I ask You that I be pleased with Your decree.

Another Hadīth states:

اعددت لعبادي الصالحين ما لا عين رأت، ولا أذن سمعت، ولا خطر على قلب بشر.[2]

[Allāh taʿālā says]: I have prepared for My righteous servants such things which no eye has beheld, no ear has heard about, and which did not cross the heart of any human.

Obviously if a person did not see something, how will he describe it? If no one can describe it, how will anyone hear it? We can only describe Paradise and its

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[1] سنن النسائي، ١٣٠٧، باب ٦٢، نوع آخر كتاب السهو،

[2] صحيح البخاري حديث ٣٢٤٤، باب ما جاء في صفة الجنة أنها مخلوقة.

bounties to the extent described by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. We cannot use our intellects in this regard. This is why I say that the 'ulamā' cannot speak about Paradise and Hell to you. They cannot describe anything with their intellects. As for what Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard, the 'ulamā' do not have the time to remember them.

(8)

The time for the jumu'ah salāh was approaching. The mu'adhdhin was gone to the riverside to wash the mats and other items of the masjid. He dived into the river and ended up a far distance from where he originally was. He came out of the water, went to the inhabitancy nearby and found that it was a totally different place, with very different people. He began living there, got married there and got children as well. One day he went to the river to take a bath. When he dived in, he emerged near his original place of residence. He noticed the mats and other items which he had brought lying on the riverbank as they had been. He picked them up and went towards the inhabitancy. He found the people assembled in the masjid, waiting for him. When they saw him they said: "Come quickly, Mu'adhdhin Sāhib! Call out the adhān because it is getting late."

Now I ask you to apply your minds to this incident. Will you be able to apply your minds?! The mu'adhdhin then related the entire incident to a saint who said:

وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ

A single day by your Lord is equal to a thousand years which you count.[1]

"Did you ever ponder over this verse?" He replied: "I did ponder over it." The saint said: "You have been given an answer to it through this incident."

I say: We will have to accept these things. We can progress only through īmān and affirmation.

Those who are known as intellectuals will have to cast aside their intellects, while the believers will go to Paradise. Of what benefit is an intellect if it cannot save a person from Hell? Many of the great self-proclaimed intellectuals will be seen in Hell.

Now listen to this anecdote: An Englishman got very angry at his cook, scolded him profusely and said: "Go away from here?" The man replied: "Sir, where should I go?" The Englishman replied furiously: "Go to Hell." The man left, walked around a bit and came back. The moment the Englishman's eyes fell on him, he scolded him and asked: "You didn't go as yet!?" The man replied: "Sir, you asked me to go to Hell, but there was no place there. It was filled with sirs, this is why I came back." The Englishman was amused by his reply and pardoned him.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a silencing and mind-straightening reply!

(9)

There was a Miyā Jī who used to be with Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *raḥimahullāh*. He used to teach Qur'ān to the children. Sometimes he would hit a student with a twig. The next time he

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22: 47.

would give the twig to the student and say: “Here, you must now hit me. Take your revenge in this world, do not demand it in the Hereafter.”

Some people came from Murādābād and expressed their desire to take the Miyā Jī with them. Ḥadrat Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* said: “There is just this one Muslim here and you want to take him away as well!?”

Just think! There were many great and erudite ʻulamā’ there, yet Ḥadrat is saying there is just this one Muslim here. The reason he said this was because of the Miyā Jī’s fear for the Hereafter. It is through this fear that taqwā comes into a person and he establishes a correct relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. Consequently, he recognizes and fulfils the rights of the Creator and the creation. This is what the Muslims of today need to develop. This will develop through simple lectures on the Qur’ān, describing the themes of encouragement and fear from the Aḥādīth, and studying the lives and stories of the righteous. Mere philosophical lectures will not help. Do not interpolate Islam and the Sharīʿat with philosophy. There will certainly be rational and intellectual enjoyment, but the power of practical application will be completely destroyed. This is what we see nowadays. Powerful speeches are delivered but the practical application is absent. People of the past used to pay more attention to clarity of the heart over clarity of the tongue. Following the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and his noble characteristics are enough for this.

(10)

An Englishman embraced Islam. He used to join the Muslims in performing ṣalāh in the masjid. One day he remarked: “The drain where the wuḍū’ water flows is getting very dirty; it ought to be cleaned.” Instead of

agreeing with him and cleaning it, the people felt offended. They said to him: "Your Englishness hasn't left you as yet. It seems you did not become a Muslim with your heart." This new Muslim listened to what they said silently. He did not say anything and left. The chiefs of the city came to know of what transpired. They thought to themselves that he is still a new Muslim, and the people were quite harsh towards him. It must not happen that he reneges from Islam. They went to his house and said: "We have heard about the altercation which took place between you and those people in the masjid. We are most saddened." He replied: "What are you people saying? You are probably thinking that my heart has become disinclined to Islam because of what they said. This is not the case because I did not become a Muslim after observing the lives and character of the Muslims. After all, there was nothing in them which attracted me. I became a Muslim after observing the pure characteristics and simple teachings of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*."

"I know that Islam lays a lot of stress on purity and cleanliness, and this is what prompted me to tell them [to clean the drain]. But when they replied as they did, I concluded that these people have no knowledge of the teachings of their own religion. This is why whatever they said did not affect me in any way. You people can be rest assured that I am not going to give up Islam."

Look! He was a new Muslim but he was aware of Islamic teachings. On the other hand, the people were old Muslims but did not know even the basic teachings of Islam.

(11)

Just as the Englishman said that he became a Muslim on account of the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, a woman made a similar statement. She belonged to a royal family. A bidʿatī ʿālim tried to humiliate and disgrace an Allāh-fearing ʿālim in a public gathering. He said bad things about this ʿālim to the woman. The Allāh-fearing ʿālim was to deliver a talk at the woman's house. Coincidentally, he was delayed in arriving. The opposition found an opportunity to take advantage of the situation and instilled even more evil thoughts about him to the woman. The Allāh-fearing ʿālim (Hadrat Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd Sāhib *rahimahullāh*) then arrived. The moment he entered, he gauged and surmised the nature of the assembly and realized that it was something else. The woman was behind a curtain. She took the name of the Maulānā by saying: "Has such and such Maulānā arrived?" The Maulānā replied: "I see, our respected mother is also here! Salām to you, respected mother." Women are generally pleased when they are addressed in this manner. She felt quite ashamed. She then said: "I heard that you stop people from such and such actions." The Maulānā replied: "Certainly not." She said: "But this is what people are saying." The Maulānā said: "They are wrong." He then said: "I do not stop them, but Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly prohibits such actions." He then quoted this Hadīth:

كل بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار[1]

Every innovation is deviation, and every deviation conveys to the Hell-fire.

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[1] سنن النسائي، عيدين، ١٦، باب كيف الخطبة، ٢٢، حديث ١٥٧٩.

Hadrat Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* then delivered a talk which left a deep mark on the audience. When the talk ended, the senior woman addressed all the women saying: "Listen! Our īmān is on Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and not on anyone else. We used to do these things [innovations] because we assumed that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is pleased with them and approves of them. Now that we have learnt that he is displeased by them, we will abstain from them. If anyone does any of those actions here it will not bode well for them."

I related this incident to demonstrate that not very long ago, the beliefs of the women were so firm that they were convinced that Dīn entails following the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Thus, no sooner they learnt that a certain action is not the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, they abstained from it immediately.

(12)

Some people complained about the Sufis before a king. The king issued the death sentence, and ordered that they all be sent to the executioner. Each one of them went forward and asked the executioner to execute him first. The executioner was surprised and said: "People generally try to save their lives. Why are you coming forward to be executed?" They replied: "We are Sufis and it is our teaching to give preference to others over one's own self. This is why we desired for our fellow brothers to live longer." The executioner was amazed by their reply. He sent them back to the judge with a message stating that these people appear to be pious and he should review their case. When the judge spoke to them they replied in a manner which reduced him to tears. He sent a message to the king

stating that these people are internally pure, and someone must have complained incorrectly about them. If these people are not Muslims, then there are no other Muslims in the entire world.

(13)

Some people got hold of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* and took him to the king. When the king heard his speech, he began crying and asked: "Who imprisoned you?" He then addressed the people saying: "Take him with full honour and dignity to where you brought him from." The king added: "When the saints are spoken about in an assembly and Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī is not mentioned, then it is as if no mention of the saints was made."

(14)

Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says with reference to tranquillity of the heart:

> The enmity of the creation is to become my guide. The hand which is seeking [to harm me] is to make duʿā' for me. You desired my harm but I am to progress. The sharpness of the dagger on my throat is to become the water of eternal life in my favour.

Enmity towards the saints of Allāh undoubtedly becomes a source of guidance. This is because when the creation becomes their enemies, they sever their ties from the creation and turn completely to Allāh *taʿālā* who then gives them success.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was conducting a Hadīth lesson when he quoted a Hindi poem. He then screamed so loudly that everyone fell unconscious.

When they recovered, he said: "This is how I normally teach Hadīth." What he meant was that when a person studies Hadīth, it conveys him to the one to whom the Hadīth is attributed [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*]. Other teachers only convey the words of the Hadīth to the ears, while Hadrat Maulānā Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* conveys it to the hearts. Since we are talking about him, listen to the following incident:

A person saw a book of the Aryans in which objections against Islam were levelled. The man lost confidence in Islam. It was the month of Ramadān and he was fasting. He thought to himself that if Islam itself is – Allāh forbid – not genuine, how can I practise on its injunctions? Saying this he broke his fast. In the evening he went to visit a friend. The food for iftārī (opening the fast) was placed in front. When his friend saw him, he was overjoyed and said: "Come in, come in! Today you will make iftārī with me." The man replied: "If you were to learn about my condition you will not tolerate speaking to me." His friend was quite sharp and realized that the man was having some bad thoughts, so he said: "The worst thing that may have happened is that you may have become a kāfir. So listen, īmān and kufr is a matter with Allāh *taʿālā*. Our friendship continues. First join me for the iftārī. Then the next thing I want you to do first thing in the morning is to go to Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib in Ganj Murādābād."

The man proceeded the next day. The moment Hadrat set eyes on him, he jumped from his place, went to the man, began striking him repeatedly on his chest, and said: "Tell me, what doubts do you have about Islam?" Hadrat did not give the man any chance to ask any questions. Each time he thought of some doubt, an

answer to it came to his mind. Subsequently, his heart became totally pure towards Islam and he was convinced about its authenticity and truthfulness. He then repented at the hands of Hadrat and became a man of pure heart. He did not experience any doubt or misgiving about Islam for the rest of his life.

Glory to Allāh! This is what you call blessings of the saints and the effects of their company. These luminaries are blessed with these qualities by virtue of their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and correct affiliation with Him.

A Khān Sāhib was an attendant to Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā had a lot of time for him. Whenever he received a gift, he would certainly give a portion to the Khān Sāhib. If he was not around, Hadrat Maulānā would keep his share aside for him. The two were so close that they used to bath together on Fridays [obviously with their satr covered]. The Khān Sāhib would rub Hadrat's back and Hadrat would rub his back.

One day Hadrat said to Khān Sāhib: "O Khān Sāhib! We are very good friends. It doesn't seem appropriate that my appearance and your appearance are different. I will therefore remove my beard, and you must give me a set of your clothes which I will wear. We will then go together to perform salāh." Khān Sāhib said: "Hadrat! What are you saying!? Here, I am not going to shave my beard from today, and you must give me a set of your clothes. I will wear them and we will go together for salāh." The Khān Sāhib was rectified from that day. The people realized that Hadrat had been working on him from the inside from a long time but did not say anything to him because he was waiting for the opportune moment.

These are true stories of the saints. Believe them with your heart and affirm them, and you will be successful.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are most beautiful stories which we must listen to and convey to others. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following couplet in *al-Qaul al-Jamīl*:

> People have discarded the fundamental work. Rather, they believe more in the subsidiary matters than they do in the fundamentals.

In other words, people are embroiled more in subsidiary matters than they are in beliefs concerning tauhīd and messenger-ship. They are more attached to the Sharīʿat than they are with Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look at what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying. More people are attached to the subsidiary matters while fewer have any interest in the fundamentals. It may be very difficult for you to understand this, but he is correct in what he said. People in the past used to take as long as 20 years to rectify their salāh. Now there is no value for Dīn; this is why they write notes to us saying that their hearts are not in order. They are immersed in all types of fabricated customs and practices, yet they want to seize the rank of the auliyā'. They are foolish people; they have no intelligence at all. It is difficult to straighten the internal self. And there is no specific time-span for it. It is a matter related to Allāh *taʿālā*; so who knows better, you or Allāh?

All we can say is that you must continue doing what you have to do. It may well be that the matter will be corrected today. It is also possible that it will take a long time. Each person's capability is different. Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows who is to receive His grace and when.

A man came to a shaykh, remained with him for one week, received khilāfat and departed. Many people who were in his company for a long period of time thought to themselves that this man came just now and he has already been honoured with khilāfat!? On the other hand, we are here for years and haven't succeeded as yet? Success is in Allāh's hands. This path is not one that is inherited from one's forefathers. A person succeeds in this path on the basis of his sincerity.

The shaykh came to know of the thoughts which were going through the minds of his disciples with regard to the one who received khilāfat in just one week. He learnt of their objections. He did not say or do anything immediately. After some time he asked them to go into the forest and bring fresh moist twigs. They all presented them before the shaykh. He asked them to burn the twigs. They tried their utmost but could not get the twigs to burn. He eventually asked them: "What is the matter?" They replied: "Hadrat, the twigs are fresh and moist, this is why the fire is not catching on them." They must have assumed that the shaykh does not know of such things. He asked: "O I see, so fire does not catch on fresh and moist twigs?" They replied: "Certainly not." He said: "The man to whom I conferred khilāfat was like a dry twig. All he needed was to be ignited. As for you, you are moist twigs. I have been blowing on the fire to ignite you for so long that I now have a headache. And you are just as you were when you came here."

Be pleased with every decision of the shaykh

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* related that a murīd complained to his shaykh that he was not deriving any benefit from him. The shaykh replied: "What must I do if you are not benefiting? Go and

strike your head against the wall." The murīd thought that the shaykh was serious and that he does not speak in riddles and allusions. So he got up and proceeded towards a wall. A voice from the unseen said: "Are you going to allow My friend to strike his head against a wall?" This voice was heard by both, the shaykh and the murīd. The shaykh said to him: "Did you hear? Allāh *taʿālā* is referring to you as a friend, now what more do you want?"

A Ḥadīth in *Bukhārī Sharīf* states that Ḥaḍrat ʿUbādah ibn Ṣāmit *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: We pledged allegiance to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* on *manshaṭ* and *makrah*.[1] In other words, we pledged allegiance to him over the fact that we will obey his orders irrespective of whether they are to our liking or not; and that if anyone else is given preference over us for a certain position, we will not feel offended.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* distributed some wealth on one occasion, and he did not give anything to a certain Ṣaḥābī. Another Ṣaḥābī interceded on his behalf to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: "O Rasūlullāh! He is a believer." Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: "A Muslim or a believer?" He asked this question three times. He then said: "Sometimes I do not give a certain person even though I know he is eligible so that I may save him from the Hell-fire. And a sincere person is nevertheless protected by virtue of his sincerity."

A man in Kānpūr used to frequently visit a saintly person. This man was a bit liberal and did not adhere to the Sharīʿat. Someone asked the saint: "Do you still

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[1] صحيح البخاري، الأحكام، ٩٢، باب كيف يبايع الإمام الناس، ٤٣، حديث ٧١٩٩.

accommodate him!?" He replied: "His outer self is certainly not good but his heart is sound. This is why he comes to me." I say, this is what is known as reconciling the heart. It was a practice of the saints to treat a person kindly and with affection when they felt that such an approach will have an effect on the person.

Training methodology

A non-Muslim used to visit Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He would fill water from a well, take a bath, and sprinkle water towards the sun. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would not stop him. The man was a great friend of Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was from the same family and he used to think to himself: "Why is my nānā (maternal grandfather) accommodating him in this way?" The man continued coming regularly even after the demise of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Although Hadrat Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was now in charge, he too could not stop the man. The man finally fell ill. Forty days before he fell ill, he felt an intense urge in his heart to become a Muslim. He became a Muslim and passed away after forty days.

Did you see! Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was not unmindful of him. He was waiting for the right time. It is not far-fetched to assume that Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* must have received information from the unseen that the man will become a Muslim, and this is why he did not say anything to him.

A woman came to Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and said: "Hadrat, I have a shop where I

sell hemp-leaves.[1] I want a taʿwīdh so that my business does well." Hadrat Shāh Sāhib said: "Very well." He wrote a taʿwīdh, gave it to her and said: "You must return this taʿwīdh to me once your business establishes itself."

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said this to repulse the objections of those who said: "How can he give a taʿwīdh for something which is harām?" The woman returned the taʿwīdh after some days. Hadrat gave it to a person and asked him to read it. It contained the following words: "O Allāh! Whoever is destined to consume hemp-leaves must purchase it from this shop." All those who had been making objections felt most ashamed.

Subsequently, the woman presented two trays of sweetmeats. Hadrat indicated that it should be left in a certain place. Now the people had another whispering – they wanted to know what Shāh Sāhib is going to do with the sweetmeats. Just then two yogis came to visit him. Shāh Sāhib had laid out two straw mats outside the masjid from beforehand. He pointed to the straw mats and they sat down there. He then said to the people: "Take the two trays of sweetmeats and give them to those two yogis." They took the sweetmeats and left. When they disappeared from their sight, Shāh Sāhib said: "It was harām wealth which reached a harām place."

This was also the order of the Sharīʿat. There are countless incidents about the kashf (expositions) of the saints. It is a great thing to have faith in the genuine Sufis. Instead of remaining in the company of the saints and affirming their actions, people go there

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[1] An intoxicant similar to marijuana.

to make objections. I ask you, how is it to do this? Obviously it is not a good attitude.

An evil condition can be changed into a good one

I had a relative regarding whom our family women said that before he could pass away, he used to cry so much and so intensely as though he was a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. After he passed away I saw him in a dream. He was wearing white garments. I concluded from this that – inshā Allāh – he is to go to Paradise because the garments of the people of Paradise will be pure white. There was an ʿālim who used to help and support Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* a lot. He saw him in a dream dressed in pure white garments. Another Maulānā was seen in white garments, but they were less white than the previous person's.

We are required to win over the hearts of people. In other words, to treat them with love and affection so that they develop an inclination towards Dīn. A person's condition may be something in a certain period of his life and completely different in another period of his life. His bad habits can change to good ones.

There was a wealthy person who used to come to Hadrat [Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*]. Hadrat used to receive him very warmly. Hadrat said to us on one occasion: "You people have accepted me only now while he accepted me at a time when I had no one else." Only then did the people understand the reason for Hadrat's warmth towards the person.

Hadrat went to Lucknow on one occasion. When his assembly ended one day, someone informed him that Khān Sāhib from Kānpūr is here. Hadrat said: "It is the time of salāh now. Must I perform salāh or meet

Khān Sāḥib?" When the Khān Sāḥib heard this, he left immediately for Kānpūr. When we emerged from the masjid the next day, we saw the Khān Sāḥib waiting outside. He went inside and clasped Ḥaḍrat's feet. When the man came outside after the assembly, he said to us: "Ḥaḍrat was angry at me yesterday. I am used to it because I had to hear much more from him in the past. I am not worried about it as long as he does not expel and banish me." I thought to myself: "Just look at this man's faith and confidence in Ḥaḍrat! This is how a man succeeds."

Faith [in the shaykh] is a great quality in this path. Nowadays people do not even understand what this faith and confidence is all about. If something makes rational sense to you, then your intellect will compel you to accept it. This cannot be referred to as faith and confidence. Faith and confidence mean that something does not make sense to your intelligence but you still accept it, and you think to yourself that there must be some good in it which you cannot fathom at present, and will be understood later on.

Note: Yes, if something is in total opposition of the Sharīʿat then he is not required to obey it because:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

There is to be no obedience to the creation if it entails disobedience to the Creator.

(compiler)

NOBLE THOUGHTS ABOUT ALLĀH

A Hadīth states:

أكبر الكبائر سوء الظن بالله[1]

Having bad thoughts about Allāh taʿālā is the worst of the major sins.

Another Hadīth states:

أكبر الكبائر الإشراك بالله، وقتل النفس، وعقوق الوالدين، وشهادة الزور.[2]

The worst of the major sins are: Ascribing partners with Allāh taʿālā, murder, disobedience to parents and false testimony.

Listen to one other point which you probably did not hear in these words:

أكبر الكبائر حب الدنيا[3]

Love for this world is the worst of the major sins.

Nowadays it has become a crime to speak the truth. The Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is present, but an ʿālim cannot say that love for this world is the worst of the major sins. There are many people who frequent this place, but there is probably

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٨.

[2] صحيح البخاري، الديات، ٧٨، باب ومن أحياها، حديث ٦٨٧١.

[3] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٧.

just a handful who understand what I say and who come with the correct intention, viz. for rectification. This system has been carrying on for a long time.

So many Ramaḏāns have passed but people live in Ramaḏān as they do before it. They come here as well. I say to them: After having corrupted your homes, you people come here to spread your "blessings". You already know about the corruption in your homes. You know how you corrupted them with your bad character. Each one has corrupted his house separately, and now you all assemble in a certain place. Is it possible for that place not to be corrupted? You are already corrupt, now you want to corrupt another place and become a corrupter. This is your condition, yet you think that you are righteous and you can rectify others. This is the norm with corruption. It spreads gradually in the beginning and eventually envelops the entire world – the elite and the laity.

وَاتَّقُوْا فِتْنَةً لَّا تُصِيْبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً

Fear a corruption which will not afflict the wrongdoers among you alone.[1]

Rather, it will certainly afflict both the wrongdoers and those who do not do wrong. And everyone is affected by it.

Consequently, if these people [described above] go to a madrasah, they corrupt it. If they penetrate a khānqāh, its corruption is inevitable. This is why I see corruption everywhere. There is much in-fighting everywhere, and there is no sign of noble character.

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[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 25.

There is no such a thing as righteousness and rectification. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

I quoted the following Ḥadīth in the beginning:

أكبر الكبائر حب الدنيا[1]

Love for this world is the worst of the major sins.

The ʿulamā' say that the reason for this is that:

حب الدنيا رأس كل خطيئة[2]

Love for the world is the basis for every sin.

Love for the world is the root of all evils and corruptions. Another reason why it is the worst of the major sins is that the world is a co-wife of the Hereafter; if you please one, the other will be displeased. The two are like the East and the West. The closer you go to one, the further away you will get from the other.

Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī *raḥimahullāh* said: "We met such people regarding whom, if you were to see, you will say that they are insane. And if they were to see you, they will say you are Shayāṭīn." The people used to say that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are insane. If the people refer to the followers of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* as insane, it will not be too surprising. But we did not know what they would have said if they saw us. The statement of Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣrī *raḥimahullāh* makes it clear to us that they will consider us to be Shayāṭīn.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٧.

[2] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٧، ص ٣٣٨، حديث ١٠٥٠١.

Worldly and Dīnī intelligentsia

Listen to one other point! When a worldly-minded person hears something strange about Dīn, he rejects it. It is the hallmark of such people to reject Dīn and people of Dīn. A Hadīth states:

أكثر أهل الجنة البله[1]

The majority of the inhabitants of Paradise will be those who were considered to be *ablah*. In other words, they were oblivious to evil while goodness was their nature.

It is a fact that those who are pure from fabrications, ruses, deception, trickery, etc. will be the people of Paradise. It is also a fact that they are the truly intelligent ones. It does not mean that those who are brainless and foolish will all be in Paradise. We learn from this explanation that the people of Paradise are those who are intelligent, bright and religious. Their hearts are totally clean, their words and actions are upright, and they are pure from plotting and scheming. People in general consider them to be stupid and foolish on account of their simplicity and honesty. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that an *ablah* person is one whose mind does not work in matters related to this world. The intellect is not enough to encompass the sciences of both this world and the Hereafter because these are two conflicting sciences. The one who directs his attention to one, then in most cases his understanding of the other will be lacking. This is why Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explained

[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٩.

three examples for this world and the Hereafter. He said that the two are like the two pans of a scale, like the East and West, or like two co-wives. If you please one, you will displease the other. Those who are sharp in matters related to this world are generally ignorant in matters related to the Hereafter. For example, medicine, accounting, philosophy and so on. These people are totally ignorant in matters of the Hereafter. Those who are experts in the intricate matters of the Hereafter are by and large ignorant of worldly sciences. The reason for this is that the intellect is not enough for both sciences. Each one is an obstacle to becoming an expert in the other. It is therefore difficult for a person to be totally proficient in worldly and Dīnī matters unless Allāh *taʿālā* has selected a person for the arrangement of both like the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who are supported by Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. As for the rest of the people, when they become occupied with worldly matters, they lose focus on the Hereafter; and when they focus on the Hereafter, they become negligent of worldly matters. This is the meaning of the following couplet:

> It is a fantasy to find Allāh *taʿālā* and obtain of this world as well. In fact, it is impossible and insanity.

I had quoted the following Hadīth in the beginning:

أكبر الكبائر سوء الظن بالله[1]

Having bad thoughts about Allāh taʿālā is the worst of the major sins.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٨.

Bad thoughts include bad thoughts about one's livelihood. For example, a person's condition changes for the worse so he says: "Up to now Allāh *taʿālā* had maintained me with respect and dignity, but I now feel that He is going to change my condition for the worse." This is a major sin. In other words, it is a creedal sin after unbelief. It is referred to as the worst of the major sins because it be a prelude to kufr. The Qur'ān states:

وَذٰلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِيْ ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ

This is that very assumption of yours which you made about your Lord. He has ruined you.[1]

It is your evil thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* which have caused you to witness this evil day of destruction. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* treats His servants according to their thoughts about Him. The prohibition of evil thoughts does not mean that we should not fear Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, just as it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Him, it is obligatory to fear His punishment and wrath. What this means is that it is unlawful to have bad thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*; this is a creedal sin which is the worst of major sins. From this we also learn that it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Him. Together with īmān, we have to believe in our hearts that it is one of the demands of īmān to have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make this duʿā':

[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm Sajdah, 41: 23.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ التَّوْفِيْقَ لِمَحَآبِّكَ مِنَ الْاَعْمَالِ، وَصِدْقَ التَّوَكُّلِ عَلَيْكَ، وَحُسْنَ الظَّنِّ بِكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You for inspiration to do good actions which are liked by You, to have genuine trust in You, and to have noble thoughts about You.

A person said to me: "The time of my death is approaching. When I think about the constriction and darkness of the grave I get extremely frightened. Kindly write something in this regard." I wrote back: "Just as you heard about the constriction and darkness of the grave, mention is also made about its expansiveness and brightness. Why have you taken just one thing? There is absolute expansiveness in the grave for a true believer."

I then quoted a narration of *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm* which stated that a person was pardoned solely because of his noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*. The man was consoled.

The Qur'ān mentions both fear and hope with regard to Allāh *taʿālā*. We are instructed to have noble thoughts and are told that it is an act of worship. It is an internal obedience which far outweighs external obedience. The noble thoughts which we have to have with regard to our fellow believers is because of the noble thoughts which we have to have with Allāh *taʿālā*. If it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*, it becomes essential to have noble thoughts about those who believe in Allāh *taʿālā*. Together with fear and hope, a believer has noble thoughts about Allāh's righteous servants. This is obligatory. I say that it is not only obligatory but the most obligatory of all obligations. This is based on the fact that evil thoughts are the worst of all major sins.

Thus, their opposite will be the most obligatory of all obligations.

We will only learn about Allāh's pleasure or displeasure after we die. However, noble thoughts are the means for consolation of a believer in this world. Understand this well. It is an internal action on its own. Many major things are realized by virtue of it. This is why we have to pay particular attention to develop it.

The benefits of going to a saint are not external only. Rather, its benefit is that the bond of the heart with Allāh *taʿālā* is corrected and a person acquires affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say that Hadrat Imām Bukhārī *raḥimahullāh* had a teacher by the name of Yaḥyā ibn Aktham *raḥimahullāh*. When he was presented before Allāh *taʿālā* after his death, he was asked: "O you old man! Tell Me why did you do this?" He was left astounded and remained silent. He was asked again: "Why are you not talking?" When he was asked a few times, he said: "I had heard a Hadīth but now find myself in a situation different from it. I am therefore worried as to whether the text of the Hadīth is incorrect or the transmission (sanad) is wrong." He was asked: "Which Hadīth?" He then quoted the entire transmission and read the Hadīth which states that Allāh *taʿālā* feels shy [to punish] Muslims who have turned grey.[1] Allāh *taʿālā* said: "The transmission is correct, all the narrators are okay, and the Hadīth too is authentic. Go, I have pardoned you on account of it."

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[1] *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 14, p. 206.

In short, it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* in all matters – Dīnī and worldly. We must have noble thoughts about ourselves and our children as well – that Allāh *taʿālā* will not allow them to be wasted. Let it not be that we have noble thoughts in Dīnī matters only and not in worldly matters. This is not right. We must have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* in worldly matters and about our sustenance as well. We must think that whatever He decrees will be for the better. Our good lies in this alone.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to have noble thoughts. Āmīn.

RECTIFY YOUR INTENTION AND YOU WILL REACH ALLĀH

In his *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*, Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* quotes a statement of Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

In his commentary to Sūrah ash-Shams, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that Allāh *taʿālā* took an oath by the day and by the night as well. We learn from this that the times and moments of casualness and rest also contain sanctity. This is because an oath is taken in the name of something which is great and respected. Shāh Sāhib's words in this regard read as follows:

> We learn from here that moments of casualness and rest also contain sanctity because they help a person for future spiritual practices and acts of obedience. Furthermore, they are means for those acts of worship which are related to the rights of fellow humans. Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says that he is hopeful of reward from his sleep just as he is hopeful of it from tahajjud salāh. This is because when the rights of the Creator are fulfilled through tahajjud salāh, the rights of the self are fulfilled from sleeping. Both these rights have been made obligatory by Allāh *taʿālā* Himself. Yes, the rest which does not aid a person in obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*, which is not permitted by the

> Sharīʿat and is not in compliance with Allāh's orders certainly has no sanctity in Allāh's sight. Instead, it is absolutely harām.[1]

The gist of what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said is that times of casualness and rest have two statuses. (1) Tiredness and fatigue are removed, and they help a person for future devotional practices. They become means for the fulfilment of acts of worship which are related to the rights of fellow humans. When viewed in this manner, they [times of casualness and rest] are also sanctified and blessed. (2) However, if this casualness does not help a person for acts of obedience, it is not in compliance to an order of the Sharīʿat, and it is not done with the intention of carrying out Allāh's order; then it carries no weight whatsoever. Instead, it is harām.

With regard to one type of rest Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that it is sanctified. This will only be when Allāh's orders are carried out in both cases. If this is the case, then these orders will be worthy of sanctity just like our body parts when they carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions. A Sufi rightly said:

> I am proud of my eyes because it beheld Your beauty. I am falling at my own feet because they have reached Your alley. I kiss my hand a thousand times because they held Your side and drew me towards You.

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[1] *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*, p. 189 – in the commentary to Sūrah ash-Shams.

Look at how these couplets mention the sanctity of these external body parts. This is because the poet has realized that we reach Allāh *taʿālā* through them. We can say that they have two statuses also. (1) If they disobey their Master, they have no sanctity and no value at all. (2) If they obey their Master, they become worthy of sanctity and respect. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "When I apply oil to my head, I think to myself that my head is an official machine whose protection is our responsibility, and that it is a trust given to us by Allāh *taʿālā*. If we do not value it and let it go to waste, we will be taken to task."

The same can be said of our time. If it is spent in sin – that is, it does not help us toward obedience, it is not line with the Sharīʿat, and not spent with the intention of carrying Allāh's orders – then it has no sanctity. If it is spent in obedience or helps one towards obedience, and is a means for fulfilling the rights of fellow humans, then it is sanctified and worthy of respect. It is in this sense that Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* explains the reason for this by saying that if tahajjud salāh entails fulfilling the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* then sleeping entails fulfilling the rights of the self. And these two rights – the right of Allāh *taʿālā* and the right of the servant – have been made obligatory by Allāh *taʿālā* making them such. Furthermore, just as Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered us to suppress the self when it is not subservient to the Sharīʿat, he ordered us to fulfil its

rights like he ordered us to fulfil the other rights of fellow humans. Fulfilling the rights of fellow humans includes fulfilling the rights of one's own self. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

وَإِنَّ لِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا[1]

Your self also has a right over you.

Since it is obligatory to fulfil the rights of both, who are you to differentiate between the two? This is what is known as deviation and misguidance. Both are equally Allāh's orders. How, then, can you choose which one to carry out and which one to leave out? How can you allow your views to interfere? Once there is an explicit text with regard to a certain ruling, there remains no room for any person's view or opinion. Thus, we see many people advising, not themselves but others, by saying to them that there is no need to fulfil the rights of the self. A poet rightly said:

> Every person is ever ready to advise others, but there are very few in the world who advise their own selves.

They learn nothing from the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh but they are ready to advise them and voice their opinions before them. They only want to be physically close to them and consider this to be the fundamental objective. They do not want to learn anything from them.

I believe that their incorrect beliefs have something to do with this. They feel that the closer they get physically to the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh, the happier they will be with them and they [ʿulamā' and

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[1] أبو داؤد، كتاب التطوع، حديث ١٣٦٩.

mashā'ikh] will think that they are their true followers and associates. By virtue of their happiness with us, they will absolve us of Dīn itself. On the other hand, if their objective was to practise, they would really succeed.

Take the moments of casualness and rest as an example. They appear to be blameworthy. The aspect of praiseworthiness and goodness is not understood at first glance. Yet, look at how Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* explained it. Because it prepares man for future devotional practices and worship, and removes tiredness and fatigue from him, taking a rest is not a worldly activity but a Dīnī one. It is not harām, but wājib. If you do not take a rest you will not be able to fulfil the rights of the creation. As for casualness, it is not totally harām. Rather, if it is a prelude to the fulfilment of an obligation, it will be wājib to choose it.

The need for knowledge of Dīn

There is nothing but benefit for a man who has knowledge of Dīn, and there is nothing but loss for the one who is ignorant of it. If a person goes to the saints and acquires no knowledge and understanding, then this is a very rueful situation. Look at what an excellent statement made by Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

By just this one statement, this great Sahābī opened an entire chapter of knowledge. He says that he hopes for reward even in sleeping even though it is a time of total heedlessness. If such a heedlessness-causing

action can become a source of reward, why will rewards not be accrued from Allāh *taʿālā* through other means in which there is less heedlessness, e.g. eating. It is also a cause of rest and casualness. But if man has a correct intention when eating, he can accrue rewards. When he commences eating he says *Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm*. When he completes eating, he says:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā who feds us, gave us to drink and made us Muslims.

All this entails Allāh's remembrance; not negligence. Thus, if a person eats in order to gain strength to carry out acts of worship, his eating will certainly be a source of reward for him. But those who made their sleeping and eating acts of worship were people who were on a different level. Our level is such that even our acts of worship are not in order, and our Dīnī activities have become like worldly activities. Those people turned their moments of casualness into acts of worship, while we turned our worship into negligence. If the 'ulamā' did not explain to us, we would have considered the only worship to be the one in which Allāh's rights are fulfilled. We would have given no rank of worship to the fulfilment of rights of fellow humans. Whereas the latter is also worship. In fact, it surpasses the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* in certain situations. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says:

> If I see a blind man walking towards a well
> and I remain silent (and do not catch him
> by his hand), I will be committing a sin.

Included under this general rule is that if a person is occupied in an act of obedience and he comes to know

of a person who wants to fall into destruction, it will be necessary to cast aside that act of obedience and go to rescue that man. I have personally witnessed this when I was in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. All these aspects of Dīn were practised there. Listen to one example.

An incident related to Hadrat Thānwī

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had completed the fard salāh and was occupied in performing the Sunnat salāh. Suddenly a man came rushing to the masjid, stood at the entrance, and shouted: "Bājī[1] has fallen from the upper storey." The moment Hadrat heard this, he broke his salāh, rushed to his house and rendered whatever help was needed. If it was us, we would have first discussed the matter to see what course of action we should follow. If not, we would have at least completed our salāh first. However, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was fully proficient with the Sharīʿat and he understood the limits very well. He therefore concluded that this is not the time for worship. Rather, another right related to the creation takes precedence at present, and it is wājib to fulfil it immediately. Allāh *taʿālā* is not in need of our worship, but a special female servant of Allāh *taʿālā* is need of our help. This is why he rushed without any delay.

From this incident I am showing you that this is also Dīn. In fact, it is an essential part of Dīn which we have discarded. We are frequenting the mashā'ikh for years and years, yet we are not filling this vacuum in our Dīn. Listen further:

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[1] Hadrat Thānwī's senior wife [he had two wives] was referred to as Bājī Sāhibah.

Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* said that if you are hungry and the food is present, and it is the time of salāh; then eat first and then perform your salāh. Look at the beautiful proof which he furnished for this ruling. He said that it is far better for our entire meal to be turned into salāh then for our entire salāh to be turned into a meal. What this means is that throughout his meal, the person will be thinking that he has to perform his salāh. This is far better than the case where he performs his salāh while thinking all the time that he is going to eat just now.

A person said to his friends: "Come, let's perform our salāh and then we can eat with tranquillity." Another person said: "Tranquillity is in salāh or in food? Come, let's eat first and then perform salāh with tranquillity."

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* generally understood the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* but did not give so much of importance to their selves. However, once they learnt about Rasūlullāh's instructions in this regard, they used to give full attention to it. A Hadīth relates the story of a Sahābiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* who used to keep fast continuously and spend the entire night in worship. She had a rope suspended from the ceiling which she used to hold on to in order to keep her from falling asleep. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* heard about it, he disapproved of her action and said:

إن لأهلك عليك حقًّا، وإن لضيفك عليك حقا، وإن لنفسك عليك حقا

Your family has a right over you, your guest has a right over you, and your own self has a right over you.

Thus, we have to be obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*; and at the same time we have to spend time with our wives and children, and we have to spend some time for the hospitality and comfort of our guests. Allāh *taʿālā* loves these actions and there is reward for them if they are carried out within the limits of the Sharīʿat. To this point you learnt about the rewards in sleeping and eating. Now listen to a story about clothing.

People were performing salāh when it started to rain heavily. Due to their concern for their clothes getting wet, they completed their salāh quickly and ran inside. One person who was wearing very expensive clothing continued with his salāh with absolute calm and humility. His clothes got wet but he did not bother about it. He then went home and wore another set of clothing which was just as expensive. Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* said: "Such a person has a right to beautification and it is permissible for him to beautify himself because he did not give precedence to his clothes over salāh. He maintained the greatness and honour of salāh, and did not bother in the least about his clothes. When worldly things have not embedded themselves in a person's heart, and beautification does not keep him occupied from Allāh *taʿālā*, then there is no harm in beautification for such a person."

Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* understood this from the person's condition. Although he had chosen to beautify and embellish himself, his heart was free from such attachments, and beautification is not totally forbidden by the Sharīʿat. Rather, it is prohibited when it shifts his heart from Allāh *taʿālā* and gets him occupied with itself. If a person opts for beautification and adornment while remaining within the limits of the Sharīʿat then there is no harm in that.

In fact, let alone there being any harm, we learn from the Ḥadīth that if Allāh *taʿālā* blessed a person with wealth and worldly bounties, then gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* demands that he shows the effects of those bounties so that the poor may come to know of his status and they may be able to present their needs to him. Furthermore, the Qur'ān itself permits good food, good clothes and different types of adornment. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللهِ الَّتِيْ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ط قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ.

Say: "Who has forbidden the beauty of Allāh which He created for His servants, and the good things of food?" Say: "These bounties are originally for the believers in this world, exclusively for them on the day of Resurrection."[1]

The permissibility of good food and clothes

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that it is proven from this verse that there is fundamental permissibility in having good clothes, good food and other types of adornment. Ḥaḍrat Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn *raḥimahullāh* bought a sheet for 50 dīnārs (gold coins), wore it and then gave it in charity. He did not consider anything wrong in doing this on the basis of this verse. When Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* sent Ḥaḍrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* towards the Khawārij, he wore most expensive clothes, applied the best perfume, and travelled on the best conveyance. They said to him: "O Ibn ʿAbbās! You are the best of people, how come you are wearing the

[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 32.

garments of tyrants and riding their type of conveyance?" He responded by reading this verse to them:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللهِ الَّتِيْ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

Say: "Who has forbidden the beauty of Allāh which He created for His servants, and the good things of food?"

It is related that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* emerged from his house one day while he was wearing a sheet whose price was 1 000 dirhams (silver coins).

Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* would sometimes wear a sheet whose value used to be 400 dīnārs and he used to order his companions to dress in a similar manner. Imām Muhammad *raḥimahullāh* used to wear very expensive clothes and say: "I dress up like this so that my wives and slave-women do not look at anyone else." The jurists state that beautification is mustahab (desirable) because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that when Allāh *taʿālā* confers His favours on a servant, He likes to see the effects of those favours.[1] I say, this is how gratitude is shown for those favours.

We learn from the above statements of the 'ulamā' that clothing is the fundamental way of adornment and it is a favour of Allāh *taʿālā*. However, it is necessary to rectify the evil self. If it is rectified, there is no harm in wearing such clothes. During the rule of Shāh Jahān, the people asked if it was permissible for the king to wear silk. The 'ulamā' of the time passed a fatwā that it was permissible for him. Mullā Jīyūn

[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٢٥، ص ٢٢٧، حديث ١٥٨٩٢.

raḥimahullāh was a teacher of ʿĀlamgīr [King Aurangzeb] *raḥimahullāh*. Someone asked him about this fatwā. He replied: "I will give you the answer on Friday in the jāmiʿ masjid. You must ask me the question there." Subsequently, when the ṣalāh was performed – and the masjid was filled to capacity, and Shāh Jahān was also present – the person posed this question to Mullā Jīyūn: "The ʿulamā' say that it is permissible for the king to wear silk. What do you have to say in this regard?" He replied: "The one who issued the fatwā (the muftī) and the one who asked for it are both kāfirs." What he meant was that it is absolutely ḥarām and its prohibition is established from explicit texts. Therefore, the one who said that it is permissible is a kāfir, and the one who knowingly asked the question is also a kāfir."

Shāh Jahān heard this conversation but did not say anything in the masjid. When he returned to his palace he issued an order for the execution of Mullā Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. The latter was informed that the king has ordered that he be executed. He said: "Very well. Bring me a jug of water so that I could perform wuḍū' and get ready, because a Ḥadīth states:

اَلْوُضُوْءُ سِلَاحُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

Wuḍū' is the weapon of a believer.

The king was informed that Mullā Ṣāḥib is getting ready and performing wuḍū'. Shāh Jahān got frightened (he did have faith in Mullā Ṣāḥib and realized that if he curses him, he will lose his entire kingdom). He consulted the people with regard to what he should do and how Mullā Ṣāḥib could be won over. When ʿĀlamgīr heard this, he came forward and said: "O father! Give me the royal garment and I will go to Mullā Ṣāḥib." He took the royal garment and

presented himself before Mullā Sāhib. The latter was, after all, his teacher and liked him a lot. He presented the royal garment to him and said: “My father sent this to you.” Mullā Sāhib concluded that this was an expression of regret. This is how a royal pardon used to be expressed. He accepted.

Be that as it may, I was saying to you that there are limits for clothing as well. They must not be harām according to the Sharīʿat, they must not smack of pride, and they must not cause a person to become famous because of them. If these limits are considered, a person may wear what he likes. These limits apply to food as well. That is, they must not be harām, they must not be obtained through harām earnings and they must not amount to extravagance and wastage. In such a case they will be permissible.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* related to us that a man was cleaning his shoes with his shawl. It was an expensive shawl yet he was using it to clean his shoes. Someone asked him in astonishment: “What are you doing!?” He replied: “The shawl was bought with my father’s money while the shoes were bought with my money.” In other words, he received the shawl for free as inheritance, this is why he did not value it. On the other hand, he bought the shoes with his hard-earned money, so he valued them. I say to you, do not do that. It is against the teachings of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and amounts to ungratefulness. Maintain each thing within its limits.

Nowadays I see people either reading the newspaper first thing in the morning or polishing their shoes. They will rub them intensely to bring out a shine. They are so worried about shining their shoes but not bothered in the least to check whether their hearts are

polished or not. There is no constraint in Dīn, but Dīn is obtained through learning. However, if it is not taught or those who teach the original Dīn are no longer present, then the masses will obviously not be able to learn it on their own. Dīn is learnt solely from the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh. But the situation today is that people go to extremes in praising the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh, and getting them to pardon them from practising on Dīn. No sooner a scholar goes to a place and people gain control over him through their false praises, his mouth becomes shut and he cannot reprimand them for any defect in them. Consequently, rectification comes to an end.

Many mashā'ikh were spoilt by the praises of their murīds

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* related a story in his *Mathnawī*: A boy said to his fellow classmates: "Today we will have to convince the teacher to give us early leave." He said to them: "I've got a plan, you must support it. I will go and tell the teacher: 'Hadrat, you appear to be sick today.' He will scold me by saying: 'Go and learn, you want to get early leave!' I will return to my place and start learning. One of you must then go and tell him the same thing. Then a third one and then a fourth one. All of us will have to do this. You will see, he will fall ill and give us early leave."

The boys did as planned. The initiator of the scheme went first and said to the teacher: "Hadrat, you appear to be sick today." He replied: "Certainly not. I am feeling very well. Go and sit down and learn your work." The second boy went and said the same thing. The teacher scolded him but his tone was a bit softer. The third boy went, the teacher scolded him and chased him away as well, but his tone was softer than with the first two. In this way, all the boys went and

said the same thing. The teacher eventually began gasping for breath and thought to himself that he is certainly sick. When he went home, his wife asked in surprise: "How come you returned so quickly today?" He replied: "Woe to you! All the boys are saying that I am sick, while you are asking me why I returned so early. You want me to die so that you can get a new husband." On seeing his anger, the wife called her neighbours and said: "Look at him, see what has happened to him. He was very well when he woke up in the morning. He was very well when he left for madrasah. Now he is saying that he is sick. To me he seems to be looking well. Tell me what do you think because when I am saying it to him he is getting angry at me."

I heard this story from Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* and it is related in the *Mathnawī*. The reason for relating it to you today is to show you how the masses have made the mashā'ikh sick. They constantly praise and applaud the mashā'ikh, and consequently they have fallen into deception. They are immersed in love for wealth and position. Whereas it is essential for the mashā'ikh to supervise their carnal selves all the time and check that they are not getting spoilt due to intermingling with people, and not taking a bad influence from them.

Rectificational points from Khānqāh Thānah Bhawan

The mashā'ikh check on their own selves just as they see to the rectification of others. An ʿālim was delivering a lecture in a certain place but stopped when another ʿālim walked in. Some people said to him: "Hadrat, this was an opportune time to continue talking. You were speaking on excellent themes which that other Maulwī Sāhib would have heard." The ʿālim replied: "The same thought crossed my mind as well,

but then I thought to myself that up to now, my lecture was for Allāh's pleasure; and now it will be for the sake of the Maulwī Sāhib."

He did not want his Dīnī work to be adulterated by anything or anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, this is why he stopped his lecture. I heard these things from Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. He explained them to me this is why I am relating them to you. I did not learn these things in the madrasah but by going to the khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan. If we don't teach these things to the people and do not popularize them, we too will retrogress. The 'ulamā' of the past had established a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh forbid, they were not negligent and heedless. They fully understood this world and its reality. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* very rightly said:

> What does this world entail? It entails becoming unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā*. Beautiful clothes, gold, silver, a wife and children do not make one worldly.

Look at how clear the 'ulamā' made this issue. Just as the times of casualness and rest are of two types – one obligatory and the other unlawful – in like manner Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* is saying that the world entails becoming unmindful. Wealth and possessions are not the world. It is not necessary that a person who has a lot of wealth and possessions is a worldly person. In like manner, a person who has no wealth and possessions is not necessarily a non-worldly person. It can well happen that a person is extremely wealthy but he does not have the slightest love for wealth in his heart. In fact, man is not required to be totally devoid of love for wealth in his heart.

Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* spoke on this subject in one of his lectures in such a manner that the

audience was overjoyed. He said that the following is stated in the Qur'ān:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيْرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالُ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوْهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِيْ سَبِيْلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا حَتّٰى يَأْتِيَ اللهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ط وَاللهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ.

Say: If your fathers, sons, brothers, wives, family, the wealth which you have acquired, the business whose closure you fear, and the homes which you love are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and fighting in His path, then wait till Allāh sends His command. Allāh does not guide the disobedient people.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* said: We learn from this verse that we are prohibited from loving these things more, but we are not prohibited from loving them in themselves.

Bearing in mind that we are not prohibited from loving wealth, if a person loves it so that he could spend it in places and on occasions which would earn Allāh's pleasure, then there can be doubt about the nobility of his intention.

A person went to meet a saint. When he reached his house and saw the guards and doormen there, he thought to himself that this is a wealthy man; he is not a saint. He read the following couplet and left:

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 24.

A person who loves this world cannot be a man of Allāh.

The saint heard him saying this. In the meantime, the man went to a masjid. He was quite tired, so he fell asleep. He saw a dream in which the field of Resurrection was before him and the reckoning of people was taking place. He relates: "I was also apprehended for certain rights. A demand was made to me but I had nothing with which I could fulfil it. Just then I saw a conveyance with that saint who stopped by me and asked: 'What is the matter, why is this man restrained?' The claimant mentioned his demand. The saint said: 'Take the amount [which he is owing you] from me and release him; he is my man.' My eyes then opened. I became very worried and realized that my wellness lies with that saint. I was most disrespectful to him. I ought to go and seek his pardon. I went and presented myself to him and requested him to accept my pledge of bay'at. He replied: 'The bay'at will come later on, first read that couplet to me which you had read.' I said: 'Hadrat, please forgive me for my audaciousness, I was most disrespectful.' He said: 'No, I am ordering you to quote that couplet to me.' I said: 'I had said:

A person who loves this world cannot be a man of Allāh.

He said: 'You are right. Now join the following to it:

If he does have wealth, he has it for his friend.

If the saint did not own worldly things, how would he have released the man [when he was restrained as per his account in the dream]?

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says:

> If your heart constantly wanders towards something, then even if you are in solitude you will not find any purity in your heart. This solitude is devoid of benefit for you. If you have wealth, authority, a farm, business and whatever else; but your heart is occupied with Allāh *taʿālā* and attached to Him, then despite all these preoccupations, you are really in solitude.

These couplets are considered to be most excellent. This was the exact condition of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Despite being everything, they were in solitude. They were manifestations of the saying: Solitude in public.

Do not be quick to judge anyone

A saint was going to the market place. He saw a trader at a shop. Through his insightful [spiritual] gaze, he saw that the man was engaging in business amounting to thousands and thousands, but his heart was not unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā* for even a single moment. Just look! A man is in the market place, yet this is the level of his connection with Allāh *taʿālā*! This is what you call solitude in public. It is far better than the solitude which is in name – where a person appears to be in solitude while his heart is wandering everywhere. Another is where a person is intermingling with people, engaging in business, people assume him to be a worldly person, while he is connected to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why we must not be hasty in making objections against anyone and being judgemental towards them. It may well be that you have a certain view about a person by looking at his external self while it is completely different to his internal self.

Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* stood on the pulpit to deliver a sermon. He said: "O people! Listen and obey." A man stood up and said: "I will neither listen nor obey." The man had said this to Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* himself, this is why he was not offended. Instead, he asked him: "Brother, what is the matter? Why will you not listen?" The man said: "When the shawls from the booty were distributed, you gave one to each Muslim. Why did you take two for yourself?" Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked: "Is that the only objection?" Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* then turned to his son, ʿAbdullāh *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and said: "You reply to him." He said: "My father also received just one shawl. As for the second shawl which is on his body, it belongs to me. It was the time of salāh and he had nothing else to wear, so I gave him my shawl." The man was satisfied with the answer and said: "You may deliver your sermon; we will hear and obey."

There was a saint in Delhi who would constantly say: "You are not my God and I am not Your servant. Why, then, should I obey you?" People used to hear him saying this, curse him and proceed on their way. One day a person took the courage to go and ask him. He said: "Hadrat, what is the meaning of what you say?" He replied: "May Allāh reward you. From the entire population of Delhi, you are the only one who came forward to ask me its meaning. Listen! The fact is that my carnal self demands me to fulfil certain desires, so I address it and say: 'I am not your servant and you are not my God. Why, then, should I obey you?' Now tell me, is there anything wrong in what I am saying? People do not understand and they do not even ask me. All they do is curse me and proceed on their way."

I am relating this incident to prove the point that we must not be hasty in judging anyone. Sometimes when a person expresses an opinion about another, then it is actually his own condition. He assumes others to be as he is.

I heard this from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and also read it in *Bahjah an-Nufūs* – a commentary of *Bukhārī Sharīf* – that a person went to a saint to traverse the path of Sufism. The saint instructed him to go into solitude for a few days and to remain there. The saint then went to him and asked: "Tell me, how do you view me?" The man replied: "Like a pig." The saint said: "You are right." The saint left the man in solitude. (If it was in our times, the saint will get offended and expel the person from the khānqāh. But that saint knew the reason for saying this. This is why he left the man to strive further). He went back after a few days and asked the man: "How do you view me now?" The man said: "Like a dog." The saint asked him to remain in solitude in the room. He went to him again after a few days and posed the same question. The man said something else. The saint continued in this manner, and on each occasion the man would give a different reply. Eventually he said: "You appear like a 14th moon." The saint said: "You are right. I was like this from the very first day. All these changes were taking place within you. You were seeing me as you yourself were. Now that you yourself have become a full moon, you are seeing me like that as well."

We learn from this that when a person is on a level of excellence himself, only then does he recognize others. As long as he is deficient, he continues raising objections against men of excellence.

The punishment for audaciousness

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* was a quṭb of his time. He used to listen to samāʿ. An ʿālim who lived in a nearby town objected to this action of the Shaykh. When the people of his town used to go to the Shaykh and return, he would ask them: "How is your dancing shaykh?" The people would feel offended but they exercised patience. One day someone said to the Shaykh: "Ḥaḍrat, we have a Maulānā Ṣāḥib who says this about you" Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs *raḥimahullāh* said: "Next time he asks you, you must say to him: 'He dances and he also makes others to dance.'"

When the people returned, the Maulānā Ṣāḥib – as was his habit – asked the same question: "How is your dancing shaykh?" Someone replied: "He dances and he also makes others to dance." The moment he heard this, he went into a trance-like condition, and went dancing towards Gangoh. When people saw him on the way wearing his overcoat and turban, and dancing, they realized that he must have said something about the Shaykh who in turn did something to him. He reached Gangoh in the same manner, presented himself before the Shaykh and sought his pardon. Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* said: "First tell me why you are dancing?" He replied: "Do you think I am dancing on my own accord? Someone is making me dance; this is why I am dancing." The Shaykh *raḥimahullāh* said: "In the same way, we do not dance of our own accord. When someone makes us dance, we dance."

I am relating these stories of the saints so that you may become fully aware of the abhorrence and wretchedness of rejection and objection. And so that you may understand well that the statement of

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*: "A rejecter does not reach any rank. He achieves nothing except disgrace and humiliation" is absolutely correct. To this day, no one was ever successful through rejection and objection. Rather, anyone who achieved anything did so on account of showing respect.

Three people went to a saint. One of them was a senior saint himself. On the way, the three began speaking about what their objective was on going to the saint. One said: "I am going to acquire of the world. I will ask Hadrat to make duʿā' that I receive of the world." The second one said: "I am going to pose a few academic questions to Hadrat and see what answers he gives." The senior saint said: "I am neither going to acquire the world nor am I going to pose any academic questions to him. Rather, he is a saint and I am going with the intention of meeting a man of Allāh *taʿālā*."

When they eventually reached and met the saint, he said to the one who came with a worldly motive: "I see gold and silver bubbling from under your feet." He said to the one who intended posing academic questions: "Listen, this is your question and here is the answer for it. This is your next question and here is the answer for it." In this way, without the person even posing any question, the saint listed all the questions which he had in his mind and gave answers to them. The saint then said to him: "You will not have a good end." Subsequently, it happened as foretold by the saint. When he passed away and the people turned his face towards the qiblah, it turned in the other direction. The saint said to the saint who came to visit him: "I see a time coming when you will be sitting on the pulpit of the jāmiʿ masjid of Baghdad, and you will be saying: 'My feet are on the necks of all

the auliyā'.' But they will all say: 'Rather, it is our heads which are on your eyes.'"

Did you see the punishment for showing disrespect. The mashā'ikh say with regard to respect:

> Respect is a crown of Allāh's special kindness. Place it on your head and go wherever you want.

I feel that the reason why people are disrespectful towards the mashā'ikh is that they haven't recognized them. Another reason is that they want to view them and the things associated to them through their own views and opinions.

A statement of 'Allāmah Balyāwī

A person said something about me in the presence of Ḥaḍrat 'Allāmah Ibrāhīm Ṣāḥib Balyāwī *raḥimahullāh*. The 'Allāmah reprimanded the man severely and said: "You want to recognize him through your own views and opinions. Of what value are your views and opinions? We know him very well and these are our thoughts about him." The 'Allāmah then uttered a few words in my praise. I say, if you want to truly recognize a person, acquire some light in your heart. If the heart is filled with blackness, obviously it will see nothing but blackness. If you acquire and develop some light, you will even see the 'Arsh (the Grand Throne of Allāh *ta'ālā*). At present there is nothing in your heart, yet you want to raise objections against the seniors! Do you know how you will acquire this light in your heart? By remaining in the company of those very same saints. Those who remain in their company with full sincerity become most respectful and sensible.

There was an attendant with Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* who used to think of such things which used to leave us astounded. The fact of the matter is that when there is sincerity in the heart, a person develops sound understanding and the ability to say and do the correct thing for each occasion.

A few special guests came to meet Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* but it was not the time to meet him. This attendant rushed to his own house and asked his wife to prepare a meal quickly for the guests who had just arrived. He then went to Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* and informed him that he has already made the food arrangements for the guests. The food will be served from inside Hadrat's house. It was a most appropriate arrangement and brought immense comfort to Hadrat's family. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* was therefore most pleased by his arrangement and said: "May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you well." I feel that this attendant must have achieved his objective [Allāh's pleasure and Paradise] through this duʿā' of Hadrat *raḥimahullāh*.

When it was the day of ʿīd, the same attendant went to Hadrat's house and said to him: "Hadrat I want some ʿīdī."[1] Immediately thereafter he added: "Hadrat, I don't want any money or sweetmeats. I want something else." Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* smiled at him. He brought joy to Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* in this way.

If a person lives in the company of saints or meets them, then if he cannot acquire any spiritual treasure from them, he should at least bring joy to them and take their duʿā's. He must never take their curses. He must correct his beliefs about them. He must not steal

[1] A gift which is given on the day of ʿīd.

from them. When a person does not have correct beliefs about them, he steals from them.

Risālah Qushayrīyyah contains a story about a man who suspended a bird over an oven (this was probably how they grilled a whole bird). He then went to meet a saint. His intention was to meet him and return home for supper. Incidentally, the saint said to him: "I would like you stay over tonight." But the man's heart was attached to the bird which was waiting suspended for him, so he offered some excuse and went home. He asked his attendant to bring his supper, and she presented the bird to him. He hadn't started eating as yet when a dog entered and snatched the bird away. He rued over the fact that he had made an excuse to his shaykh for the sake of this bird, and now he did not get the bird also. He then thought to himself that never mind, he will eat the gravy in which the bird was cooked. His maid happened to walk buy and mistakenly toppled the bowl containing the gravy. Now the man was deprived of everything. He went to the shaykh the next morning. The moment the latter set eyes on him, he said:

من لم يحفظ قلوب المشائخ سلّط عليه كلب يؤذيه

When a person does not preserve the hearts of the mashā'ikh, a dog is empowered over him which then harms him.

The saint came to know through kashf (exposition) that the man did not remain with him last night for this reason, and this is what happened to him.

There are many stories of this nature about the saints. We learn from them that it is most essential to keep them happy and to show respect to them. It is not permissible to make objections against them and to

reject them. This is a cause of severe loss and deprivation. Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* said: "A rejecter does not reach any rank. He achieves nothing except disgrace and humiliation."

The author of *ʿAwārif* states:

من أنكرهم ضل واعتدى

The one who rejects them is astray and has transgressed the limit.

As for the one who believes and affirms them, even though he may not reach their rank, there is hope that his affirmation coupled with remaining in their company will convey him to the level of the Ahlullāh.

I have spoken quite a bit about showing respect to the saints. Before that I was saying to you that it is permissible to eat good foods and wear good clothes provided it is within the limits of the Sharīʿat. The saints also did this, but only when the carnal self was freed from delights and pleasures. The story of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* is well known. A woman handed over her son to him so that Hadrat could train and educate him. The woman went to visit her son one day and saw him sitting in a room eating chickpeas. Then she looked at the Shaykh and saw him eating chicken and rice. The woman was quite disappointed by this scene and said: "You are eating chicken and rice while my son has to chew on chickpeas!?" The Shaykh gathered the bones of the chicken immediately and said to them: "Stand up by the order of Allāh." The chicken came to life and ran out. He turned to the woman and said: "When your son reaches this rank, he will eat chicken and rice. Until that time, he will have to eat chickpeas."

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> It is permissible for an expert shaykh to explain the fine points of Sufism and eat exotic foods. You are not an expert, so you must not eat and you must keep your mouth shut.

Talking about that chicken which was brought to life made me think of another incident. A saint was a guest at someone's house. The host said to his wife: "Such and such saint is in the area. Slaughter a fowl and we will invite him." The wife was not too happy about slaughtering the fowl but she did it and the meal was presented to the saint. He learnt through kashf that the man's wife was not happy about slaughtering the fowl. He directed his mouth towards the food and blew onto it. All the pieces of chicken came together, became a fowl which then made a sound and went into the house. The host was quite perturbed when he saw this and realized that his wife's bad intention was exposed to the saint. The saint too realized the man's embarrassment so he said: "The bread can be eaten with the gravy alone."

This is the situation with women – they can embarrass whoever they want. When a person decides to accept an invitation, he must first enquire about the nature and temperament of the people of that house.

I related these incidents to you while saying to you that when a person recognizes the saints as he ought to, he becomes very perceptive, considerate and fearful. And as long as he does not recognize them, then many impudent and disrespectful acts are committed against them.

I had commenced this talk with the following statement of Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

The points which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* derived from this statement are most excellent. Through their blessings, I will add one more point. When he set right his intention for night worship and did it solely for Allāh *taʿālā*, will his intention not have an effect on his sleep? In other words, will his sleep not become for Allāh's sake? It most certainly will. Not only just one sleep, it will also have an effect on his eating. In other words, just as he considered reward in his tahajjud salāh, he and people like him consider a reward in their eating and in the fulfilment of all other human needs. This is what is known as *wusūl* (reaching Allāh *taʿālā*).

I think that the Sufis came to believe in the rank of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* from this because they are the ones who are referred to as *wāsil ilallāh* (the one who has reached Allāh *taʿālā*) and *ahlullāh*. Those whose external and internal selves, and their knowledge and practice are all in order. In other words, their intention is of such a level that whatever is connected to Allāh *taʿālā* is nevertheless done for His pleasure. In addition to this, actions which are connected to a person's habits and temperament – they too become solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. And this is the real excellence. Standing up for night salāh is an angelic quality while sleeping is a human need. If a person rectifies his night worship, it is as if he acquired angelic qualities. This too is an excellent trait. However, the highest

excellence of a human is to progress while remaining a human. In other words, to make one's night worship for Allāh *taʿālā* is not as great an achievement as making one's sleep – which is a human necessity – solely for Allāh *taʿālā* through a correct intention.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained and expounded on the statement of Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in a most beautiful manner. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

HYPOCRISY

Hypocrisy or rejection with the heart is an internal ailment which has become quite common nowadays. People have always been suffering from ailments of the heart. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ

In their hearts is a sickness.[1]

This is why we must not be deceived by people's appearances and sweet tongues. Do not consider these to be any more than cosmetics and external embellishments. Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* went into much detail on this subject in his *al-Fauz al-Kabīr* and *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*. He refers to it as practical hypocrisy or hypocrisy in actions. He writes:

> Allāh *taʿālā* clearly describes the characteristics and actions of the hypocrites in the Qur'ān. He mentions many conditions about both types of hypocrites (i.e. creedal and practical hypocrites) so that the entire Muslim nation may desist from such conditions.

Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* says further on:

> If you want to see an example of the hypocrites during the blessed era of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in our times, then go to the assemblies of the wealthy and see how preference is given to

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 10.

pleasing them over the pleasure of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

If we look at it with an equitable eye, there is no difference between the hypocrites who heard the speech of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* directly and chose hypocrisy, and the hypocrites who were born today. They know the orders of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with absolute certainty but they still act against them.

Look at how beautifully he explains further on:

In short, when you read the Qur'ān you must never think that the dispute was with a nation which existed in those days and which does not exist today (so there is no need for us to apply our condition to theirs). Rather, we will have to firmly believe in the existence of such a group in the light of the following Hadīth:

لتتبعن سنن من قبلكم[1]

You will most certainly follow the ways of those who were before you.

There is no tribulation of those days which is not to be found today.

Previously I used to quote the above texts. But now I found a Hadīth in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* so no can even think of rejecting it. Everyone believes in the Hadīth, how can it be

[1] صحيح البخاري، كتاب أحاديث الأنبياء، باب ما ذكر عن بني إسرائيل، حديث ٣٤٥٦.

rejected? One of my associates was speaking about hypocrisy so an ʿālim became angry at him and said: "You are calling people hypocrites?!" He immediately showed him the Ḥadīth from the *Musnad* in which Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself speaks about the different types of hypocrisy. Included among them is a heart which has īmān and hypocrisy. The Ḥadīth reads as follows:

عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: القلوب أربعة، قلب أجرد فيه مثل السراج يزهر، وقلب أغلف مربوط على غلافه، وقلب منكوس، وقلب مصفح. فأما القلب الأجرد فقلب المؤمن سراجه فيه نوره. وأما القلب الأغلف فقلب الكافر. وأما المنكوس فقلب المنافق عرف ثم أنكر. وأما القلب المصفح فقلب فيه إيمان ونفاق. فمثل الإيمان فيه كمثل البقلة يمدها الماء الطيب ومثل النفاق فيه كمثل القرحة يمدها القيح والدم. فأي المدتين غلبت على الأخرى غلبت عليه.[1]

Abū Saʿīd raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: The hearts of man can be divided into four categories: (1) a heart which is (ajrad) completely barren, in which something like a light is shining, (2) a heart which is (aghlaf) covered by a type of covering, (3) a heart which is mankūs, and (4) a heart which is muṣaffaḥ. (Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam himself explains each one): (1) An ajrad heart is the heart of a believer, and the light in it is the light of īmān. (2) An aghlaf heart is the heart of

[1] مسند أحمد، ج ١٧، ص ٢٠٨.

an unbeliever. (3) A mankūs heart is the heart of a hypocrite. It recognized the truth but rejected it. (4) A musaffah heart has both īmān and hypocrisy in it. The īmān in it is like greenery which grows lush with wholesome water. And the hypocrisy in it is like a boil which grows with blood and pus. Whichever of the two overpowers the other, that is the condition which will overpower the person's heart.

This is my fundamental argument with people. They refer to everyone as sincere believers and consider them to be Muslims like those of the past, having nothing whatsoever to do with hypocrisy. I say that when I evaluate their conditions, I find that they are not in line with the conditions of past Muslims. Rather, their conditions are like those of the hypocrites. How, then, can I say that they are sincere believers!? Obviously they are included among those regarding whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said there is īmān and hypocrisy in their hearts. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* foretold that there will come a time when there will be 100 camels but not a single person will be worthy of riding them. I say that the era which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was making reference to is this era.

When the marks of hypocrisy are so glaring, we can speak about it and we can say that people are suffering from the illness of hypocrisy. Nowadays people think that if a person is wearing good clothes, his īmān is good. The one whose speech is good, his heart is good. Deception is considered to be an art, whereas Allāh *taʿālā* said with regard to the hypocrites:

هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ

They are the real enemies, so beware of them.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to the above verse:

(هم العدو) استيناف أي هم الكاملون في العداوة والراسخون فيها، فإن أعدى الأعادي العدو المداجي الذي يكاشرك وتحت ضلوعه الداء الدوي ككثير من أبناء الزمان.[2]

They are complete in their enmity and firmly resolute in it. The worst enemy is the hidden one who smiles in your presence while beneath his ribs is a destructive ailment, like many of our people today.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* was an erudite scholar. Look at what he is writing about the people of his era. I say that this is also the condition of our people. In fact, they are worse. You yourself ponder over the conditions of the Muslims and decide whether I am right or wrong. You people know fully well that every other day such incidents occur through which we learn that these types of conditions are experienced by the elite and the laity. For example, two people went to court. Money from the pocket of one of them disappeared. When he went home he said that his companion took his money. Just look! They went together, they remained together, but this is how he fulfilled the right of his friend!

Listen to another story: I noticed a man going to a certain person and sitting with him. One day he

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[1] Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 4.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٨، ص ٩٨.

uttered vulgar words about him and said: "If I had the opportunity I would have throttled him."

This is the type of friendship today. These are thoughts he had about the person in whose company he was sitting everyday.

Allāh *taʿālā* abhors these actions and they are totally against sincerity. How, then, can we progress? Sincerity has departed from the Muslims, this is why there are problems and corruption everywhere.

There was a man who spent Ramaḍān here. I said to him: "Go home, you will experience comfort." He replied: "I have no problems with the food here. If I go home, then although I will get food there, I will also have to suffer a beating. There is no beating here and I am living a life of peace. If I was not with you, I would go mad with the evil manners of my house people." This is the condition in general. Those who have experienced these conditions will understand well what I am saying.

An incident related to Shaykh Sa'dī

Ḥaḍrat Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* relates his own story in his *Gulistān*. A group of Sufis refused to allow him to remain in their company and the reason they gave was: "Just as you are making this request to us now, another person made a similar request in the past. We accepted and he began living with us. On one occasion, we stopped beneath a fort to spend the night there. He took our water jug and left. We thought that he was going for some need so we kept silent. He went into the fort, stole a container filled with pearls and left. There was a clamour in the fort, the guards came out, apprehended us, took us into the fort, locked us up and began beating us. Subsequently we decided

that we are not going to allow anyone to remain in our company."

Hadrat Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says that he said to them: "Although I have been deprived of your company, I have still not been deprived of the benefit of the company of the Sufis. Because I now learnt one point from this incident, viz. when a stranger comes to you, you must not trust him without first investigating his condition. It is most essential to differentiate between friend and foe."

Note: This incident contains a great lesson and admonition for us. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Let me relate an incident which took place in Allāhābād.

There was an elderly man who used to come frequently to my place. He used to quote many poems. He then asked me permission to attend my classes. His brother-in-law and son used to come to me as well and had a lot of faith in me. I related to them his request to attend my classes. Their response was soft and hesitant which gave me the impression that they were not interceding on his behalf. They said: "You can do as you like." I granted him permission and he began attending my assemblies and classes. He then went and told his brother-in-law and son that he attends my classes to learn my secrets. The two came and conveyed this information to me. I called for him and asked him about it. Another Maulwī Sāhib was present. He asked: "Do you accept such and such Maulānā Sāhib? He also wrote on the prohibition of hypocrisy in his book. I used to consider it permissible. Now you will hear certain incidents which you will not remember, but I am able to remember

such incidents very well because I use them to my advantage."

It is difficult to rectify one's bad habits. It is easy to perform hajj. It is easy to perform salāh and keep fast. But it is very difficult to rectify and correct one's evil traits.

There was a woman who used to remain displeased with her daughter-in-law. The reason was that the other daughters-in-law used to complain about her, and she too used to complain about them. Just think with what hopes women get their sons married. But no sooner the daughter-in-law comes into the house, the mother becomes an enemy of her son and her daughter-in-law.

I am trying to make this assembly into a special one but am not succeeding. People neither listen to nor understand what I say. This is why they go elsewhere and relate it incorrectly. This results in disputes and disharmony. A proper system is therefore essential. People come here for years but remain deprived of the fundamental progress. In fact, they retrogress. The reason is because there is no truthfulness. There is no quest and no sincerity. Despite all this, they seek blessings and high levels. Their ailment of hypocrisy becomes apparent after many days. This is why it is difficult to understand it. A poet says:

> From the different conditions of a person, the level of his knowledge can be gauged within one day. But one must not be deceived by his internal self because it cannot be fathomed even after several years.

There was a worshipper who lived not very far away from our town. He built a temple, had a wife and

children, and he used to engage in worship in his own way. He had his previous house in a nearby village which he had left because of the villagers' irreligiousness and bad mannerisms. He used to go to this house occasionally. Whenever he went there, the locals would come to him and talk about rioting against the Muslims. He would say to them: "Although they are Muslims, they are at least firm on their religion and are keeping to their own work. What harm are they doing to you? Let them carry on."

What excellent words of advice he used to give them! The people would fall silent. This story became well-known that a worshipper left his village because of the irreligiousness of his people, and built a house for himself outside the village. The point which we have to learn from this is that he was a kāfir, yet he did not want any rioting against the Muslims. The condition of us – Muslims – today is the opposite.

It is most saddening! Like the hypocrites, those people like rioting and sedition. Brother, do what you want but do not corrupt this place. There is a special procedure here. Only those who want to rectify themselves and save themselves from corruption must come here. You have already corrupted your houses, business places, courts, etc.; at least allow this place to remain protected. If you do not like the system here, why do you come in the first place? What is the benefit in your coming here? We will most certainly speak about these matters because it is essential for us to preserve and protect the Tarīqah. If not, our Tarīqah will come to an end. How unfortunate that will be!

The condition nowadays is that people do search for the mashā'ikh but there is no truthfulness and

sincerity. Whereas the first step of a murīd ought to be on truthfulness.

> O Farīd! Remain true to your belief so that you acquire the key to Allāh-recognition. If you do not have truthfulness, how will you benefit.
>
> If a builder places the first brick crookedly, the wall will go crooked up to the stars.

Truthfulness is essential for both the mashā'ikh and the seekers. In other words, just as it is necessary for the shaykh, the seekers too must be genuine and true in their quest. If truthfulness is absent, there will be no success. Nowadays people feel that the shaykh has to be truthful while they consider themselves to be totally free. Whether they have a quest or not, whether they are genuine or not – they feel that any situation and condition is acceptable for them.

There was a saint in our area. He was an ʿālim, a man of kashf (spiritual exposition) and one who followed the Sunnat. His name was Maulānā ʿAlī Aḥmad Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. People in our area used to speak very highly of him, but he did not have good opinions about them and would express them as well.

I used to say to my relatives: "The person whom you praise so much and have so much of confidence in has a different view about you. Will you accept what he says: he used to say: 'The food is ready and prepared but there is no one to eat it.' He also said: 'These people come here and start crying before I can even speak. (i.e. they have no intelligence).'"

Note: In this way the shaykh was saying that they have neither Dīn nor intelligence. May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and the blessings of Ḥaḍrat

Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – confer us with both these bounties. Āmīn.

There are many incidents of this nature. I related these few so that you people may develop some insight and understand the conditions of our times. If not, you will be caught up in calamities due to inexperience. Just today I learnt that a person deceived one of my associates into signing a document which resulted in his imprisonment; and he has no one to stand as surety for him. When the person came to him for the signature, he should have first inquired and asked, and then decided whether he wants to sign the document or not. Because he has no intelligence and is a simpleton, he considers everyone else to be like him. This is why he gets caught in their trap. I relate incidents like this repeatedly so that even religious people may wake up and understand the workings of this world. I say that you must not cause harm to anyone. At the same time, you must never be so naïve that anyone and everyone deceives you. Instead, you must be vigilant. You must understand the tricks and deceptions of our times so that you can safeguard yourself from harm. Where is the wisdom in being intelligent and experienced before religiousness comes into your life, and you become stupid and foolish after you become religious!? This cannot be tolerated and is most inappropriate.

Incidents of this nature used to take place quite often in my hometown. This had an effect on my heart and mind, and my health used to remain bad. However, ever since I came here (Allāhābād), my health is good. The reason is that I experience fewer unpleasant incidents here. I therefore feel an increase in my strength with each passing day. This is why I prefer the people of this city over the people of other places.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What glad tidings for the people of Allāhābād. We consider it an honour that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* publicly announced that he considers the city of Allāhābād as his hometown. This is the very city which was inhabited by Hadrat Shāh Muḥibbullāh Sāḥib Allāhābādī *raḥimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Husayn Sāḥib Allāhābādī *raḥimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Liyāqat ʿAlī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* who had fought for Indian independence. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to be religious and to serve Dīn as heirs of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* from one generation to the next. And may Allāh *taʿālā* preserve the love and attachment of the residents of Allāhābād. Āmīn.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān
Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islāmīyyah, Karelī, Allāhābād
28 Rajab 1432 A.H.

THE NEED TO FOLLOW A QUALIFIED MENTOR

Do you know from where our work got spoilt? It got spoilt when our juniors and seniors became equals. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had foretold this situation:

لن يزال الناس بخير ما تباينوا، فإذا تساووا هلكوا

People will continue enjoying goodness as long as they uphold differences in ranks. Once they all become equals, they will be destroyed.

Now I ask you, is this era of ours not an affirmation of that prediction? It is no hidden fact. It is openly observed that no senior is considered to be a senior, and no junior considers himself to be a junior. Rather, every junior person is ready to be a senior. Similarly you will get an ignorant person who is not prepared to accept an ʿālim as his senior. People in general have no value whatsoever for an ʿālim, and they appointed ignoramuses as their leaders. A poet rightly said:

لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم – ولا سراة إذا جهالهم سادوا

When people become equal in the sense that every person is their officer and chief, their condition will never be rectified. And if they appoint an ignorant person as their leader, then he is certainly non-existent.

Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* conveys the same theme as follows:

> The condition of the world has become very strange: The Arab horse is left wounded beneath the pack saddle, while a gold band is placed around the neck of a donkey.

Do you know where this ruin has come from? The main cause of it is bad character. People have become proud and arrogant. This is why following another person, emulating him, submitting before him have become like death to them. Whereas these are the qualities wherein lies our progress, and these were the distinguishing hallmarks of our people of the past.

Three pre-requisites for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim

There are three pre-requisites which are considered to be essentials for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim.

(1) He must practise on his knowledge. If he is not like this, people will not consider him eligible to become a leader. In our times we see that practising on his knowledge is no more considered to be necessary. Instead, they feel it is essential for him to speak clearly and eloquently, to speak profusely and to deliver dynamic speeches. When an ʿālim is able to do this, people conclude that he is a very senior ʿālim. Whereas the following Ḥadīth is quoted in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad *raḥimahullāh*:

إن أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان[1]

The thing which I fear the most for my ummat is an articulate hypocrite.

A comprehensive explanation of "an articulate hypocrite"

ʿAllāmah Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī *raḥimahullāh* quoted this Ḥadīth in his *al-Jāmiʿ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*. There are four commentaries to this book. I will quote the explanation to this Ḥadīth from each of the

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[1] مسند أحمد، ص ٢٨٩، حديث ١٤٣، فيض القدير، ج ١، ص ٢٢١، باب الهمزة.

commentaries. ʻAllāmah Shaykh Muhammad Hafnī writes:

قوله أخوف أي من أشد ما أخاف. قوله كل منافق عليم أي طلق اللسان في العلوم والفصاحة خالي القلب من العمل به، إنما خاف صلى الله عليه وسلم على أمته منه لأنه لفهمه العلم يقتدي به الناس فيضلهم.

The thing which I fear the most for my ummat is an articulate hypocrite. In other words, he is fluent in the sciences and eloquent in speech, while his heart is devoid of practising on it. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam feared such a person for his ummat because the person's understanding of knowledge will cause people to follow him and he will lead them astray.

He caused people to become his followers and did not tell them about the other scholars who are practising ʻulamā'.

The following explanation is from *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*, a commentary of *al-Jāmiʻ as-Saghīr*:

أخوف ما أخاف أي من أخوف ما أخافه على أمتي كل منافق أي نفاقا عمليا عليم اللسان قال مناوي أي عالم بالعلم منطق اللسان له لكنه جاهل القلب والعمل فاسد العقيدة مغر للناس بشقاشقه وتفصحه وتعقره في الكلام.

The thing which I fear most for my ummat is a practical hypocrite. Munāwī said: It refers to an ʻālim who speaks profusely on matters of knowledge while he is an ignoramus as regards his heart and actions, and of

corrupt beliefs. He deludes people through his flowing speech, eloquence, and in-depth discussions.

وقال العلقمي أخرج الطبراني عن علي رضي الله عنه قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إني لا أتخوف على أمتي مؤمنا ولا مشركا، فأما المؤمن فيحجزه إيمانه، وأما المشرك فيقمعه كفره، ولكن أتخوف عليكم منافقا عليم اللسان يقول ما تعرفون ويعمل ما تنكرون.[1]

Al-ʿAlqamī said that aṭ-Ṭabarānī narrated from Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: I do not fear any believer nor any polytheist for my ummat because a believer will be prevented by his īmān from saying or doings things which are contrary to Islam. As for a polytheist, his unbelief is enough to uproot him. The one whom I really fear for you is an articulate hypocrite. He say things which are known to you but does things which are alien to you.

The third commentator, ʿAllāmah ʿAbd ar-Raʾūf Munāwī *raḥimahullāh*, explains this Ḥadīth in *Kitāb at-Taysīr* which you already read above from the text of *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*. ʿAllāmah ʿAzīzī *raḥimahullāh* quoted his statement by saying, "Munāwī said…" There is no need to mention it again. However, the same ʿAllāmah Munāwī has another detailed explanation of it. He writes in *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*:

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[1] السراج المنير، ص ٧٠.

كل منافق عليم اللسان أي عالم للعلم منطلق اللسان به لكنه جاهل القلب والعمل، فاسد العقيدة، يغر الناس شقشقة لسانه فيقع بسبب اتباعه خلق كثير في الزلل.

An articulate hypocrite refers to the one who has knowledge, and is fluent in speaking about it, but he is ignorant in his heart and actions, and corrupt in his beliefs. His flowing tongue deceives the people. Consequently, many people follow him and fall into errors and mistakes.

The author of *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* then writes:

وقد كان بعض العارفين لا يظهر لتلميذه إلا على أشرف أحواله خوفا أن يقتدى به فيها أو يسوء ظنه به فيها فلا ينتفع.

Some Sufis would only expose their best conditions to their students lest they follow them in what is not best or they have bad thoughts about them. If this were to happen, the students will not benefit from them.

قال الحراني والخوف حذر النفس من أمور ظاهرة تضرها. قال صاحب الهداية فساد كبير عالم متهتك وأكبر منه جاهل يتنسك، هما فتنة للعالمين عظيمة لمن بهما في دينه يتمسك وسبب تحديث عمر بذلك أن الأحنف سيد أهل البصر كان فاضلا فصيحا مفوها فقدم على عمر فحبسه عنده سنة يأتيه كل يوم وليلة فلا يأتيه عنه إلا ما يحب، ثم دعاه فقال تدري لم حبستك عني، قال لا، قال إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه

وسلم حدثنا فذكره ثم قال خشيت أن تكون منهم، فالحمد لله يا أحنف.

Al-Ḥarrānī said: Khauf refers to the fear of the self from external things which would be harmful to it. The author of al-Hidāyah said: The scholar who tramples the Sharīʿat through his evil actions is a major tribulation in this world. And worse than him is an ignorant person who is a worshipper. Both these are major tribulations for the people – those of whom follow and emulate them in their Dīnī matters. The reason why Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu related this Ḥadīth is that Aḥnaf, the chief of the people of Basra, was a very eloquent and articulate speaker. When he came to Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu, the latter restrained him for one year. He would go to him every morning and evening to check on him and was impressed by whatever he said and did. After one year, he called him and said: "Do you know why I restrained you?" He replied: "No." Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to us..." He then quoted the Ḥadīth under discussion and said: "I feared that you might be one of them. However, all praise is due to Allāh taʿālā, O Aḥnaf, that you are not of them."

وفي رواية لابن عساكر أنه قدم عليه فخطبه فأعجبه منطقه فحبسه سنة يختبره، ثم قال كنت أخشى أن تكون منافقا عليم اللسان وإن

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حذرنا منه، وأرجو أن تكون مؤمنا فانحدر إلى مصرك.[1]

A narration of Ibn ʿAsākir raḥimahullāh states that when Aḥnaf came [to Madīnah] and delivered a sermon, Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu was impressed. So he restrained him for one year to test him. At the end of one year, he said: "I feared that you might be an articulate hypocrite regarding whom Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had warned us. I hope you are a true believer. You may now go to your city.

Now what crime have I committed if I quote this Ḥadīth from the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad *raḥimahullāh* or its commentary from the reliable commentaries of the ʿulamā'? This is a statement of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*; it is not my own words. If the theme of this Ḥadīth applies to you, to me, to any ʿālim or to any ignorant person; then let it be so. We are not responsible for that. The Ḥadīth is totally authentic in its place. It cannot happen that we stop quoting and explaining the Ḥadīth out of fear for you, out of fear for your objections, out of concern that you will get angry or because your rank will be reduced. If this subject is against you and this is why you are displeased with me, then you can certainly be as angry as you want with me, but do not get angry with the Ḥadīth. It will be a major evil which will cause you to lose your īmān.

In the narration of Ṭabarānī which ʿAllāmah ʿAzīzī Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* quoted in *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*,

[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٢٢١، باب الهمزة.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not fear tribulation from any believer from his ummat because since he is a believer, his īmān will restrain him from committing evils. Similarly, he did not fear tribulation from a polytheist. He said that since a polytheist already has a thing as cursed as polytheism around his neck, that will be enough to destroy him. Thus, he is himself immersed in tribulation so he will not be able to test and try his ummat. However, the thing which he feared for his ummat was a hypocrite who is very articulate in his speech. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then explains it himself by saying that he will say things which are known to you but his actions will be contrary to that. Therefore, instead of guiding people, he will lead them astray.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥafnī *raḥimahullāh* says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* explained the reason for his fear. He feared the articulate hypocrite because when people listen to his academic talks and discussions, they will assume him to be an ʿālim of Dīn and follow him, while he will lead them astray. He was already astray because of his hypocrisy; he will now be a deviator because he will be leading others astray.

The difference between ʿulamā of the Hereafter and evil ʿulamā

I quoted the meaning of "an articulate hypocrite" from four commentaries of *al-Jāmiʿ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, i.e. from the author of *Taysīr*, the author of *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* and from ʿAllāmah Ḥafnī *raḥimahullāh*. Each one explained this Ḥadīth with very minor variations. Ḥaḍrat Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* also has a chapter in his *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm* titled *al-Bāb as-Sādis Fī Āfāt al-ʿIlm Wa Bayān ʿAlāmāt ʿUlamā' al-Ākhirah Wa ʿUlamā' as-Sū'* (Chapter Six on the Obstacles to Knowledge and an Explanation on the ʿUlamā' of the

Hereafter and Evil ʿUlamā'). In this chapter he quotes the statement of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

قال عمر رضي الله عنه إن أخوف ما أخاف على هذه الأمة المنافق العليم، فقالوا وكيف يكون منافقا عليما، قال عليم اللسان جاهل القلب والعمل.[1]

Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "The thing which I fear the most for this ummat is a knowledgeable hypocrite." The people asked: "How can a hypocrite be knowledgeable?" He said: "He will be knowledgeable with his tongue and ignorant in his heart and actions."

The Ahādīth in this regard teach us one point, but the explanation given by Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* must have been heard from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as is the case of Rasūlullāh's statement which we quoted previously:

يقول ما تعرفون ويعمل ما تنكرون

He says things which are known to you but does things which are alien to you.

Be that as it may, after reading the Hadīth of the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and its commentary, the point which we learn is that oratory, gift of the gab, eloquence and mere articulation are things to be feared. A Hadīth states:

الحياء والعي شعبتان من الإيمان، والبذاء والبيان شعبتان من النفاق.[2]

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ٦٤.

[2] سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر، باب ما جاء في العي، باب ٨٠، حديث ٢٠٢٧.

Modesty and the inability to express one's self are from īmān while obscenity and articulation are from hypocrisy.

Nowadays we see that the speakers and the audiences – everyone – are focused on eloquence and rhetoric. A lecturer is considered to be distinguished only if he is eloquent and articulate. And the audiences only enjoy a lecture in which the speaker is fluent, uses rhyming words and well-balanced sentences and paragraphs; and the assembly is further embellished with poetry.

I am not saying that eloquence and articulation are not desirable or that they have no effect on the hearts. However, the ears can certainly obtain enjoyment from words but spirituality cannot be developed from them. This is because you already heard what has been said about such a person – he is not guided himself, how will he guide others?

This is why the 'ulamā' of the various eras warned the people of their times in the light of the above-quoted Ḥadīth and tried to save them from falling into this trap. In fact, Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* said that one of the obstacles and calamities of knowledge is when it is only on the tongue and has no effect on the hearts and body parts. He uses this as a basis to differentiate between the 'ulamā' of the Hereafter and the evil 'ulamā'.

I feel I should quote some portions from *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm* on this subject.

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: العلم علمان، علم على اللسان فذلك حجة الله تعالى على خلقه، وعلم في القلب، فذلك العلم النافع، وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا تتعلموا العلم لتباهوا به العلماء، ولتجاروا به السفهاء،

ولتصرفوا به وجوه الناس إليكم، فمن فعل ذلك فهو في النار. وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: لأنا من غير الدجال أخوف عليكم من الدجال، فقيل وما ذلك، فقال: من الأئمة المضلين.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Knowledge is of two types: (1) Knowledge on the tongue. That is Allāh's evidence against the creation. (2) Knowledge in the heart. That is beneficial knowledge." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Do not study knowledge to vex pride over the ʿulamā', to dispute with the ignoramuses, and to sway people towards you. Whoever does this shall go into the Hell-fire." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "I fear non-Dajjāl's more for you than I fear Dajjāl." He was asked: "Who is non-Dajjāl?" He replied: "Imāms who mislead people."

Since we find excessive practices against this condition [the first condition of an Allāh-fearing ʿālim], I went into some detail on this subject.

The second prerequisite for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim

The second condition as explained by the ʿulamā' is that the ʿālim must have been under the training of the mashā'ikh and remained in their company for a considerable period of time. From this we will be able to conclude that he possesses the qualities of his elders and seniors. This has been the practice of the pious predecessors.

The first group was that of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Their continued companionship with

[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ٦٤.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is well-known. In fact, the word "Saḥābī" is derived from *suḥbat* – companionship. The manner in which they adopted and absorbed the words, actions and life-situations of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is also well-known. Furthermore, they believed fully in whatever emanated from him and the manner in which it emanated from him. This is irrespective of whether they understood it or not. They had full conviction in the fact that everything from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is so true and genuine that it can never be opposed or contradicted. It is so full of wisdom that its law cannot be broken. And it is so perfect, that no defect and loss can even come near it.

This knowledge, conviction and firm faith of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* was the fruit of their lengthy companionship with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Their emulation and submission to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can be gauged from the incident which occurred with Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* on the occasion of the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. When the treaty was being written under the pressure of the unbelievers, it was an occasion to raise objections. Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* also had points to object on. He came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: "O Rasūlullāh! Are we not on the truth while these unbelievers are on falsehood?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Indeed." Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "If we are martyred, will we not go to Paradise? And if they are killed will they not go to Hell?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Yes." Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked: "Why, then, should we demonstrate weakness in our religion? Why should we return without showing Allāh's decision between us and them?"

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "O son of Khaṭṭāb! I am Allāh's Messenger and you must believe that He will never abandon me." On hearing this, Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* left but he was still not full satisfied. He was filled with rage towards the unbelievers. He went to Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* and posed the same questions to him. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is Allāh's Messenger and He will never abandon him."

I say, just look at the level of affinity and affiliation which Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* had with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* gave exactly the same answers which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had given to Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* although Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* was not present in the conversation between the two. Thereafter, Sūrah al-Fatḥ was revealed to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Its first verse reads as follows:

اِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِيْنًا

We have passed for you a clear decision.[1]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* called for Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* and read these verses to him. Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Is this the victory?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Yes." Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* was satisfied and left happily.[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Fatḥ, 48: 1.

[2] صحيح مسلم، كتاب الجهاد، باب صلح الحديبية، حديث ٤٦٣٣.

Look at an objection which was stirred in Hadrat ʿUmar's heart on the basis of his intense love for Islam. He presented it to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but when he learnt the reality of the situation and the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* referred to it as a clear victory, and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself pointed in that direction, then Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* accepted without any hesitation, this notwithstanding the fact that a rational reason for referring to it as a victory was not demonstrated as yet. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had full faith in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and believed that total obedience to him is essential, this is why he set aside his rational reasoning. This was solely due to the benefit of remaining in his company and the effect of submission. Furthermore, he knew that one has to exercise patience on occasions where there could be an objection because proofs and evidences for it will certainly come to the fore.

The glad tidings mentioned in Sūrah al-Fath were not revealed just by chance. Rather, this sūrah was revealed when the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were swallowing the bitter drink of grief and worry, and there was confusion about the actual situation. When they opted for the path of submission and cast aside their personal opinions, all objections were removed completely. It is related that Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was so remorseful that he was shy to go in front of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He used to say: "What happened to me that I went and argued with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*?!" He used to say this repeatedly and express his remorse.

Now listen to how the objection was removed. Allāh *taʿālā* said in the same sūrah:

لَوْ لَا رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ وَنِسَآءٌ مُّؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوْهُمْ اَنْ تَطَئُوْهُمْ فَتُصِيْبَكُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، لِّيُدْخِلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ، لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوْا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا.

Had it not been for the fear of your trampling so many believing men and believing women (presently in Makkah) unknown to you, and on whose account misery would have afflicted you unknowingly, so that Allāh may admit into His mercy whom He wills. Had they [believers] stood aside, We would have inflicted a painful punishment on the unbelievers (of Makkah, at the hands of Muslims).[1]

The essence of this verse is that Allāh *taʿālā* gives two reasons for not permitting battle on this occasion. One is that some Muslim men and women were still residing in Makkah, regarding whom the Muslims had no knowledge. Thus, if a battle took place, these innocent Muslims would have been trampled with the unbelievers. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* said that if they moved out of Makkah and it was inhabited by unbelievers only, the latter would have certainly been punished. The second reason is that Allāh *taʿālā* – in His knowledge – has decreed Islam for some of them. In other words, either they were to embrace Islam or their progenies. If this is the situation, how could permission be given to uproot them completely? When these verses were revealed, the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* lost their senses and the evidence was clearly demonstrated to them. They then realized that the thing which they assumed to be unfavourable was most appropriate.

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[1] Sūrah al-Fatḥ, 48: 25.

This became an example and a principle for latter peoples. In other words, just as the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* cast aside their personal opinions and submitted before Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the same was done by the Tābiʿīn in the presence of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. In other words, they did not apply their opinions and intellects against the statements and teachings of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. The result of this was that they became jurists in religion and reached the peak in the sciences of the Sharīʿat. This is an affirmation of the correctness of our principle that you will not find an ʿālim who is famous and whose knowledge and blessings are widely accepted who does not have someone whom he looks up to and whom he follows. In other words, no person ever reached the level of perfection without following someone above him, and no one can ever reach such a level in the future as well.

On the other hand, study any deviated sect and group which acts against the Sunnat, and you will see that it does not possess the quality of submission and emulation.

Ibn Ḥazm Ẓāhirī was a senior scholar of his time. However, the reason why he was criticized was that he did not consider himself in need of deriving benefit from a shaykh and did not adopt the mannerisms of the mashā'ikh. He felt there was no need to follow anyone or to remain in anyone's company. He considered himself sufficient for his own self in the acquisition of knowledge. This is why he slipped at every step and became a target of criticism and condemnation.

I say, there is not just one Ibn Ḥazm like this. Rather, there have been both types of people in every era. One

group considered it essential to follow the pious predecessors while the other group felt that its own knowledge was enough. Thus, each group was treated by its successors as it had treated its predecessors.

The third prerequisite for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim

The third prerequisite laid down by the ʿulamā' is that of following and emulating. Just as the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* followed Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – as explained above – the Tābiʿīn followed the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* in similar fashion. This practice continued in every era. Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* distinguished himself in this quality over his contemporaries. Almost all the seniors of Dīn possessed this quality but Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* possessed it to the limit.

When this quality was abandoned, bidʿat raised its head. This is because when the way of the pious predecessors is not followed on a certain issue, it is proof that something new has developed in the person who discarded their way. That new way is following of one's desires. In other words, a person discards following the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh on account of following his desires.

The point which I wanted to make is that the religious spirit which was found in us stemmed from following and emulating. Because this spirit has departed from the entire community, the power of the ummat has dissipated and we are suffering every type of Dīnī and worldly loss. Start following and emulating today and you will see its blessings.

Note: You have read that just as it is necessary to be in the company of the mashā'ikh to be an Allāh-fearing ʿālim, it is essential to follow them. This is listed as the third prerequisite. I recall a statement of

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which I take the courage to quote here:

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* noticed that a certain person had fallen into loss so he said to Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*: "Hadrat! That person was in the company of such and such saint, yet he is in this condition!?" Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said: "What benefit is there in merely being in someone's company? A person will only be rectified and reformed when he remains in the company of a saint with the intention of rectification and reformation."

We learn from this that mere companionship with a saint is not enough. Rather, when the person who remains in his company has the intention of rectification, he will be rectified. Mere company is not sufficient.

I quoted this statement for the general benefit of people. If we remain in the company of a saint with the intention of rectification, we will benefit. If not, we will not gain anything even if we remain with him for years, or visit him frequently. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

(Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

READING THE BOOKS OF THE SUFIS

In the course of my stay in Lucknow, I heard a hakīm saying to another hakīm: "Do you know how the art of medicine was destroyed?" He then gave the answer himself: "Medicine was destroyed by the destruction of the clinic." Medicine is practised in a clinic, and when a science or craft is not practised, it will be destroyed. In other words, that science will no longer exist. Nowadays no need is felt for a clinic. Students feel that it is enough for them to merely read medical books. Consequently, despite learning and studying, the science is neither mastered nor does a student develop any experience. This is because expertise in medicine can only be acquired by remaining under the tutelage of an expert physician.

I very much liked this statement of the hakīm sāhib and it opened an entire chapter of knowledge for me. The hakīm sāhib was crying over only the science of medicine while I was crying over the fact that the absence of genuine Sufis and erudite 'ulamā' – and their training and teaching – has put an end to the science of ethics, i.e. the science of tasawwuf. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that the soul of tasawwuf – teaching and training – has died at the mashā'ikh; only dhikr and other outer devotional practices remain. Obviously, when the teaching of a certain science is given up, its knowledge will also disappear. When its knowledge disappears, practising on it will vanish. When actions no longer remain, how will spiritual conditions be developed?

This is the reason for the present condition of all our sciences. People pay no attention to remaining in the company of expert teachers. This is why they do not acquire genuine knowledge. This was also the cause of

the destruction of tasawwuf, i.e. no attention was paid to the companionship of the mashā'ikh. Whereas this was the means of acquiring this science. After all, tasawwuf is a sentimental thing which is acquired through the companionship, teaching and training of the mashā'ikh. It cannot be acquired from books. To develop a taste for something, one has to remain in the company of the one who has already acquired that taste.

The erudite Sufis explicitly state that the books of tasawwuf are certainly not intended to pass on the sciences, nor can proximity with Allāh *taʿālā* and His friendship be acquired by studying these books. In his *at-Tanbīh at-Tarabī*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following statement of Qādī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh*:

قال القاضي ثناء الله رحمه الله تعالى في تفسيره تحت آية كما أرسلنا فيكم رسولا منكم يتلو عليكم اياته الآية، من أراد أن ينطق بتلك المعارف فلا بد له من إيراد مجازاة واستعارات لا يهتدي إلى مرامها العوام فيفسقونه ويكفرونه.

فإن قيل فأي ضرورة في تكلم بها وما بال القوم يصنفون فيها مجلدات. قلت ليس الغرض من تلك التصنيفات إعطاء تلك العلوم ولا يحصل بمطالعة تلك الكتب شيء من القرب والولاية، بل الغرض منها تنبيه العارفين المحصلين لتلك العلوم بالجذب والسلوك على بعض تفاصيلها

وتطبيق أحوال المريدين ومواجيدهم على أحوال الأكابر ومواجيدهم كي يظهر صحة أحوالهم وتطمئن به قلوبهم.[1]

In his commentary to the verse: "Just as We sent to you a Messenger from among you reciting to you His verses…" Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh raḥimahullāh said: The one who wants to speak on these sciences will have to resort to such allusions which the laity cannot fathom because they will label him a flagrant sinner and an unbeliever.

If someone asks: Then what is the need to speak on these sciences and to write books on them? I will say: The object of writing on those sciences is not to pass them on to the masses, nor can proximity to Allāh ta'ālā be acquired by reading them. Rather, the object is to draw the attention of the 'ārifīn who have acquired those sciences through absorption (jadhb) and by treading the path to some details; and to apply the spiritual conditions and ecstasies of the disciples to the spiritual conditions and ecstasies of the seniors so that the correctness of their conditions may be displayed and their hearts may be satisfied and convinced by them.

We learn from the above statement of Qāḍī Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* that it is not the object of the books of taṣawwuf to pass on and convey those sciences. How, then, can a person become a Sufi merely by reading those books? If he cannot even acquire knowledge from them, how will he acquire spiritual conditions through them!? Studying the books of the mashā'ikh will result in a person learning their words and

[1] التنبيه الطربي، ص ٤١.

terminologies, and then vexing pride. In this way, he will go astray and lead others astray as well. This is why the mashā'ikh strictly forbade unqualified people from reading their books. They said:

نحن قوم يحرم النظر في كتبنا

If a person is not on our path, it is forbidden for him to look at our books.

وكذلك لا يجوز لأحد أن ينقل كلامنا إلا لمن يؤمن به، فمن نقله إلى من لا يؤمن به دخل هو والمنقول إليه جهنم الإنكار. وقد صرح بذلك أهل الله تعالى على رؤوس الأشهاد وقالوا من باح بالسر يستحق القتل، ومع ذلك فلم يسمع أهل الغفلة والحجاب بل تعدوا حدود القوم وأظهروا كلامهم لغير أهله.[1]

Similarly it is not permissible for a person to quote our speech except to the one who believes it. If a person quotes our speech to someone who does not believe in it, then both – the one who quoted it and the one who does not believe in it - will be cast into the fire of rejection. The Ahlullāh have openly announced that the one who discloses our secret is eligible to be killed. Despite this, the heedless ones and those over whom is a veil paid no heed to this. Instead, they transgressed the limits of the Sufis and conveyed their speech to unqualified people.

Look at the severe reprimand which is issued to those who study the books of the Sufis despite having no qualification to do so. These personalities made these

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[1] اليواقيت والجواهر، ص ٢١.

announcements out of self-respect and with a view to preserving the Tarīqah. They also prohibited unqualified people and outsiders from studying their books so that the qualified and unqualified are not intermixed, causing the Tarīqah to become corrupted. Unfortunately they were not successful in their efforts. In other words, outsiders could not restrain themselves from studying their books. They studied them, adopted their words, and became self-proclaimed Sufis. Consequently, they went astray and led others astray. They did all this solely out of a quest for power and authority.

Hadrat Rūmī *raḥimahullāh* said:

> A wretched person steals the words and statements of the dervishes so that he can sway and manipulate the ignorant ones through his mesmerising words.

Prerequisites for mashā'ikh

This is the condition which I am observing in the Tarīqah today. In other words, there is no sign of education, training, focus on spiritual conditions, insight and affinity. Nor is it discussed anywhere. Tasawwuf is only in name and the customs of the Sufis remain. The reason for this is that the prerequisites which had been laid down for the shaykh and the murīd are not found in either of the two. For example, a major prerequisite for a shaykh is that he must be a man of spiritual conditions, and must not have acquired the Tarīqah from mere books of people and by word of mouth. If this is the case, he will not know the ups and downs of the Tarīqah, and he will not be aware of the conditions and causes which the seeker is to face in the path. Consequently, he will not be able to rectify him and will prove to be

dangerous for the seeker. The erudite Sufis say that a qualified shaykh is like a physician. If a physician cannot identify the primary organs and their peculiarities, and the components of medicines, he will be destructive to the patient. This is because knowledge of the peculiarities without being able to identify the organs themselves is not enough. The same theme is very importantly explained by Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh*:

ومتى لم يكن الطبيب يميز أعيان الأعشاب والعقاقير ولم يكن عارفا بتركيب الأدوية فإنه مهلك للمريض، فإن العلم من غير العين لا يفيد فلا بد من عين اليقين وحينئذ ألا ترى لو كان للعشاب غرض في إهلاك المريض فإذا وصف الطبيب الدواء فأعطاه اللعشاب ما فيه هلاك العليل ويقول هذا مطلوبك فيسقيه الطبيب المريض فيهلك وإثمه في عنق الطبيب والعشاب، فإن الطبيب كان الواجب عليه أن لا يداويه إلا بما يعرف عينه وشخصه.

If a physician does not know the essence and form of the medicines, and is also ignorant of their composition, he will be destructive to a patient. This is because knowledge without physically seeing is of no benefit. Rather, it is necessary for him to be able to identify medicines with the eye of certainty. Look! If the pharmacist has a motive to kill the patient, and the physician prescribes a medicine for the patient without recognizing it himself, and the pharmacist gives him something which will be destructive to the patient, and says to the physician: "This the medicine which you asked for", and the physician gives it to the patient who then dies because of it, the crime will be on the physician and the pharmacist. This is because it was

the duty of the physician not to give the patient any medicine whose form and composition he does not know.

After presenting the example of a physician, he writes:

فكذلك الشيخ إذا لم يكن صاحب ذوق وأخذ الطريق من الكتب وأفواه الرجال، وقعد يربي به المريد طلبا للمرتبة والرياسة، فإنه مهلك لمن تبعه لأنه لا يعرف مورد الطالب ولا مصدره.[1]

Similar is the case with a shaykh. If he is not a man of spiritual conditions and acquired the Ṯarīqah from books and by word of mouth, and seated himself to train murīds in his quest for authority and power, then he will be most destructive to the one who follows him because in such a case he will not understand the changing conditions of a seeker (how, then, will he be able to rectify and reform him)?

Rectification is done on character, and this refers to the internal conditions of a person. These internal conditions are the catalysts for external actions. It is not possible to identify the catalysts merely by looking at external actions – this requires a taste and sentiment. This is why the past Sufis paid a lot of attention to all this. Consequently, when these prerequisites were fulfilled, those who went to the mashā'ikh left as great Sufis themselves. This resulted in massive strides in the field of Sufism. Now that these factors have been removed from taṣawwuf, the retrogression is clearly visible.

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[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٩.

Similarly, when the mashā'ikh said that it is not permissible for outsiders to study their books, how offended these people must have felt! It is not far fetched to assume that they must have labelled the mashā'ikh as extremists. However, if we observe the results and consequences, we will see that as long as people adhered to this prohibition of the Sufis, Sufism remained preserved and protected. Later on when people went against their order and studied their books despite this prohibition, and discussed Sufi themes in their assemblies without having an affinity with this science, then see how Sufism retrogressed. Look at how a science which was connected to the heart and emotions was reduced to an academic science!

I used to think to myself that why do the mashā'ikh say that it is ḥarām for outsiders to study their books? Ḥalāl and ḥarām are juridical terms, what Sharʿī crime did the person commit that his action has been labelled ḥarām? The answer to this can be understood from the very same text of Shaykh Akbar in the sense that he says that affinity is a prerequisite for the mashā'ikh. If a person studies the books of the Ṭarīqah or of the Sufis, and then seats himself to train murīds solely for the sake of power and authority, then it will be most destructive for him. This is because the desire for name and fame is ḥarām. Therefore, the thing which is a prelude and means for it will also be ḥarām. Thus, it is ḥarām to study the books of Sufism without an affinity with this science.

Affinity is acquired from those who already have it. Consequently, when the mashā'ikh observe affinity in a person they consider him to be worthy and grant him permission just as they refuse permission to a

person who is unworthy. Now when a worthy person reads their books, it will be beneficial to him.

The Sufis stress affinity and companionship because the spiritual conditions which develop in a person through affinity and companionship are very strong and productive. As for the person who learns a few things merely by reading books and appears to have acquired some spiritual conditions, his conditions are temporary. It cannot be said when and at which point they will leave him.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that taqwā is of two types. One is genuine taqwā which is acquired by remaining in the service of the saints. The other is text-book taqwā. In other words, a person reads a few books and develops a few good conditions within him. These conditions are temporary and superficial; they cannot be relied upon.

Knowledge must be coupled with affinity

It is one thing for a person to have only text-book knowledge, and another thing for him to be embellished by that knowledge and to have affinity with it in his heart. There is a world of difference between the two. However, there is no doubt that many seniors erred in this regard and assumed that mere knowledge of a thing means that one is embellished by it. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā was a great scholar. I came across his story in a certain book. He went to visit a saint. When he was about to depart, he left behind one of his friends with the following instruction: "When I leave, you must see what the shaykh says about me, and inform me." After some days, Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wrote to his friend and asked: "Did the shaykh say anything about me?" He replied that he did not say anything. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wrote back:

"Okay, you must ask the shaykh about me. Ask him what he thinks of Bū ʿAlī Sīnā." When he was asked, the shaykh said: "Bū ʿAlī Sīnā is a scholarly person but he does not have good character." The man wrote to Bū ʿAlī Sīnā and quoted the shaykh's words to him. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā then wrote a voluminous book on the science of character, sent it to his friend and asked him to present it to the shaykh. The shaykh concluded that this was in response to his previous statement, so he said: "I did not say that Bū ʿAlī Sīnā does not have knowledge of character; I said he does not have good character. In other words, he is not embellished with good character."

Did you see! Even a senior scholar like Bū ʿAlī Sīnā could not differentiate between knowledge and practice. I related this incident to demonstrate that it is one thing to have knowledge of character and ethics, and something else to be embellished by character. Understand well that to be embellished one will have to remain in the company of the saints. This is the major difference between now and past times. Previously full importance was given to the company of the mashā'ikh. Now, the scholars feel that mere study of their books is enough, while the laity think that merely visiting the mashā'ikh and having physical proximity with them without any insight is enough. The consequences are before you to see.

Just look at how great and insightful the saints of the past used to be. Have people of today reached any great heights solely by reading books? They feel that the madrasah is enough and there is no need for the mashā'ikh. Whereas, if the madrasah is the place to acquire knowledge, the mashā'ikh are there to teach you how to embellish yourself with that knowledge. The mashā'ikh are like clinics. Just as that hakīm

sāhib [mentioned at the beginning of this discussion] had said that medicine was destroyed by the disappearance of clinics, in the same manner, the science of tasawwuf and the Tarīqah have been destroyed by the destruction of spiritual clinics.

The steps to acquiring knowledge

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* quotes a statement of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* which really appeals to me. He said:

أول العلم الاستماع، ثم الإنصات، ثم الحفظ، ثم العمل، ثم النشر

Knowledge commences with listening to what the teacher is saying, to remain silent while he is speaking – i.e. do not interrupt his speech – then to memorize what he said or to discuss and revise it with fellow classmates, then to practise on it, and finally to convey it to others.

The reason why this statement appealed to me is that it caused an entire chapter of knowledge to be opened to me. People constantly come to me, and the thought comes to me that I speak on various themes to them, I read the Qur'ān to them, I read the Ahādīth, I relate the stories of the saints. Despite all this, I do not see it having any effect on them. In the light of the statement of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* I understood the reason for this. The reason why they are not practising is that knowledge itself is not reaching them. And this is because the first step (listening to the teacher and shaykh with full attention and focus) is not present in them. When people come across a lecturer and assemble around him, they do not do it because they firmly believe in him and have faith in him. It is never easy to have full conviction and faith in a person. In today's times it is even more

difficult because when you accept someone, you have to do it with your heart and mind. In other words, there has to be insight and recognition in the heart, and understanding and intelligence in the mind. It is through these qualities that a person can recognize another and then accept him and have faith in him. Today there is neither understanding, conviction and insight. How, then, can such acceptance be of any use? In this world of cause and effect, insight and understanding are acquired through the company of the mashā'ikh. A person remains in the company of intelligent people, observes their life-conditions, and listens to and understands their words. In this way, he gradually becomes a man of intelligence and insight himself. This is not confined to Dīn but to every branch of knowledge. That is, when a person remains in the company of an expert, he imbibes some of his expertise.

The meaning of "we hear and we obey"

In Dīn, "we hear and we obey" is the fundamental. In fact, even "we obey" is a branch of "we hear" because if a person does not hear in the first place, how will he obey? It is probably for this reason that Ḥadrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* said that a shaykh has to have a tongue and a murīd has to have ears. Allāh *taʿālā* too maintained this natural sequence where a child first hears and speaks later on. Doctors say that the one who is dumb is also deaf. He cannot hear the sounds and voices because of his deafness, and cannot learn words. This is why he does not speak as well. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes a statement of the unbelievers which they will make when they are in the Hell-fire:

وَقَالُوْا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِيْ أَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ

They will say: "Had we listened or understood, we would not have been among the inmates of Hell."[1]

In other words, had we listened to the teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* with the ears of acceptance, and understood as was done by people of proper understanding, we would not have been with the inmates of Hell today. Since these are the qualities of the people of knowledge, this would mean: If we were also people of knowledge, we would have understood whatever we were required to understand, and practised on them. In this way we would have gained salvation from the Hell-fire.

See how the unbelievers will express remorse for not having listened to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*! Nowadays we see students of the madāris going to acquire knowledge and frequenting the mashā'ikh but do not listen when they go there. I am not saying this just like that but after experiencing and seeing it for myself. A major cause for the destruction of knowledge and practice nowadays is not listening. I present a letter of a student to prove my claim. He writes:

> I am presently studying *Bukhārī Sharīf*. However, Hadrat I have to say that when the teacher completes his lesson, I forget what he said. The same thing happens to me for the other books as well. When I open my book, I feel sleepy. I am at a loss as to how study

He adds:

> I read in a certain book that Hadrat Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh* complained to his

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[1] Sūrah al-Mulk, 67: 10.

teacher, Hadrat Wakīʿ *rahimahullāh*, about his bad memory. Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh* wrote the following couplets in this regard:

شكوت إلى وكيع سوء حفظي – فأوصاني إلى ترك المعاصي

فإن العلم نور من الٰه – ونور الله لا يُعطى لعاصي

I complained to my teacher, Hadrat Wakīʿ rahimahullāh, about my bad memory. He advised me to stay away from sins because knowledge is a light from Allāh taʿālā, and Allāh's light is not given to a sinner.

Now in order to give up sins, what actions should I choose so that my bad memory comes to an end and I develop other capabilities?

I wrote back and said:

Many people quote the couplets of Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh*. I feel that they write it without understanding it completely. Can there be any comparison between the conditions of Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh* and ours? Is it necessary that we do the same actions which Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh* did? Those were the internal spiritual conditions of the seniors and saints. We must not vie with them. As for the forgetfulness which you experience, it is an external and bodily illness. It is caused by a weak mind, and the treatment for it is taking care of your health, eating

> healthy foods, and consuming fortifying medicines. The same weakness of the mind is a cause of sleep. Sleep is undoubtedly an obstacle to knowledge, especially so when lessons are in progress. It is essential to treat this or else it will result in deprivation of knowledge. After all, if a student sleeps while the lessons are carrying on, what will he hear? If he does not hear anything, he will not understand. How, then, will knowledge come to him? Therefore, instead of pondering over the conditions of Imām Shāfiʿī *raḥimahullāh*, you should refer to a good doctor and have your weak mind treated. I too am making duʿā' for your good health. Was salām.

This is the condition of our students. He is not the only one. There will be many others like him. This is the condition of the madāris. The condition of other places is no different. We see people frequenting the mashā'ikh but learning nothing from them. In other words, they do not change their ways despite going to the mashā'ikh for years upon years. They are ready to attend to the saints and serve them, but do not want to acquire anything from them. I feel this also has to do with their incorrect beliefs. They think that the mashā'ikh are only interested in their services. Therefore, no sooner they massage their feet, the mashā'ikh will be pleased with them and they will become their close associates. And once they do this a few times, they will be eligible for khilāfat.

Nowadays people believe the mashā'ikh to be the objectives. They do not want the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* but the pleasure of the mashā'ikh. After

understanding these conditions of the people, I say very often, if you want to listen and understand, then sit in the assembly. If not, do not waste your time unnecessarily. But the people do not listen to even this. They neither move away, nor do they listen and practise. In fact, I go to the extent of saying: I am teaching you a ruling of the Sharīʿat and fiqh that a person must only go to such places with the intention of listening and practising.

How unfortunate that a person is able to find such places but still does not attach himself to Dīn, and does not take the work for which these places have been established. This is the destruction of such a place. I also say to them occasionally: You have already corrupted all other places, now you want to corrupt this place as well! I noticed some benefit in saying these things, but because the temperaments have become so corrupt, this is why they are unable to understand even that which is correct and true. It is the coming and going of this nature which I refer to "falling on the body" [without benefiting spiritually]. There are many people of this nature nowadays. The entire loss and damage is due to lack of knowledge. Knowledge is obtained through listening. The situation with regard to listening is as I already described to you. The sad thing is that there is no one to tell the people of the ailments which they are suffering from. Obviously, when people are not informed about an ailment, how will they know what it is?

People come here to learn tasawwuf. But I see that things like spiritual conditions and stations, affinity and tranquillity, love and recognition, spiritual ecstasy, etc. are far beyond them. They do not even know the basics. A long period of time passes in teaching them the basics. For example, take this

subject of "listening and understanding", did you hear anyone speaking about it? After speaking about it for so long, you must have realized its importance by now.

Concern for rectification of the ummat

What can I tell you? Do you know how much of fatigue and discomfort I have to endure to teach these basics? Especially when I see a person causing harm to himself because of his own lack of understanding. During my stay in Mumbai, there were two Maulwī Sāḥib's who were associated with me for quite some time. I came to know that they are slightly deaf. I said to them: "If you cannot hear what I say, what will you understand? If you do not understand, what are you going to put into action? If you are not going to practise, what is the benefit of coming to me?" I also said to them: "You have been frequenting me for so long. Leave aside acquiring Dīnī benefits and spiritual excellences, you could not even acquire worldly benefits through me. So many ḥakīms and doctors come to me. You could have informed me about your deafness and I would have spoken to them to have you treated."

I took both of them to task. Subsequently, one of them wrote to a ḥakīm in which he described his condition and asked him for *iṭrīfal*[1]. The other one obtained some medicine from Dr. Is-ḥāq Sāḥib. When the doctor asked him if there is any improvement, he replied: "I am now able to hear a bit."

There was another man from Kānpūr who said: "My son is deaf, and is therefore dumb. I want to call him

[1] A compound medicine comprising of a few herbs.

here [Mumbai] to have him operated." I said: "Call for him." When he came to Mumbai, the doctor checked him and said that he still has a certain power of hearing. There is no need for him to have an operation. All he needs is a hearing aid, and he will be able to hear clearly. Subsequently, the hearing aid was bought and attached to his ear. He sat in front of me and I spoke to him. When I asked him if he heard what I said, he smiled and said: "I can hear."

There are many incidents of this nature. I related a few examples to show you that the reason why people are not benefiting from the Tarīqah is to be found within themselves. It is not because of a defect in the Tarīqah or the mashā'ikh. Listen to one more story.

There was a person who used to be in my company and from whom I used to take services. He was sitting with me one day when the qārī sāhib's small child came in and said: "I came to take the grapes which are in the cupboard." I thought to myself that I should tell this man to give it to the child. But I immediately thought that he might do something wrong, so I asked the child to take the grapes himself. However, the cupboard was a bit high and he could not reach. Just then the man said that he will give it to the child. I thought to myself that since he is offering himself, he must be knowing what to give. So I said, "Okay, give it to him." He got up, went to the cupboard and began looking at everything from one side. I realized that he did not understand what he had to give, and therefore did not even hear what the child said. Furthermore, his pride did not permit him to ask me what to give to the child. I eventually had to get up myself, go to the cupboard and give the grapes to the child. I then asked the man to leave.

You people are listening to these stories and laughing, and probably thinking that they are insignificant. They may appear insignificant, but they stem from internal ailments and are quite serious. Not hearing something is not so serious because it could stem from deafness. When I questioned some of them, they acknowledged their ailment. Some of them said they can hear with one ear and not the other. I placed my hand on the head of some of them and asked: "Can you hear with this?" In other words, you are saying that you cannot hear properly, but what about your level of understanding? If a person has a hearing deficiency, he must get it treated because the first step is to be able to hear.

There is a spiritual ailment in this regard as well. A person does not listen attentively because of negligence and disregard. This is extremely serious. What is the benefit of coming here? Now I have to explain so simple things to people. If a person does not hear a point properly, he must request for it to be repeated. But people are not prepared to do even this much. This stems from their internal pride. They feel that if they ask for a point to be repeated, they will be reprimanded for not listening the first time. The carnal self feels humiliated by this. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

You people must be thinking that I am living very comfortably, while I am immersed in this quandary by night and day. It is very easy to become a saint or to make someone a saint. But it is extremely difficult to become a man and to teach character to a person. The lofty objectives of the Ṯarīqah – i.e. genuine affinity and tranquillity with Allāh *taʿālā*, spiritual stations, etc. – these will come much later. All my time is spent in teaching things which are not only considered

essential by the Sharīʿat but by ordinary intelligence as well.

Educating and training is difficult

From this entire discussion you must have learnt this much that teaching and training is a difficult job. It is much more difficult to direct people's attention towards character and ethics. We have to teach them simple and basic things about the etiquette of living at home. Each person has to be continuously supervised. When many people frequent a place, they will obviously be of various temperaments and capabilities. There will be wealthy and influential people among them. There will also be poor people. There will be students and 'ulamā' as well. There will be those who have acquired western education and those who are ignorant villagers. Each person develops his own temperament according to the environment in which he lives. You can therefore well imagine how difficult it is to understand each one separately and to treat each one on an individual basis.

Only a person who is ordered by Allāh *taʿālā* will be able to accomplish this task. Anyone else cannot do it. Therefore, as long as a person is not taught and trained according to his temperament, advising him will not be of any benefit. In fact, it may well happen that because it is not in line with his temperament, it will be harmful to him. In short, rectification and training is no play; it requires acumen. It is essential for a mentor to be affectionate and concerned; and he must be forever worried about the rectification of his associates. This will most certainly result in mental fatigue. After all, he will always be thinking about how to treat a certain person's ailment, what should be said to him, how he should be approached, how his

self must be instilled towards rectification, and so on. A lot of time and effort have to be spent on each person. Who has the time for this, and the courage to put his heart and mind into such inconvenience? And who has the worry about the sorrow of others? This is why this task is becoming difficult nowadays. You will see that even the places which were established exclusively for rectification no longer have rectification in them. They have now become centres of trials and tribulations. Show me just one spiritual clinic which is fulfilling its duties. When the clinic itself became corrupt, the science of tasawwuf departed.

Tasawwuf was destroyed by the destruction of spiritual clinics

This is exactly what that hakīm sāhib [mentioned in the beginning] had said, viz. medicine was destroyed by the destruction of the clinic. And I am saying that the science of tasawwuf has been destroyed by inattention to companionship. Or, to put it in another way, by the destruction of the spiritual clinic (the khānqāh). You have seen in the light of conditions and incidents that the khānqāh was destroyed when people paid no attention to its principles and prerequisites. And worst of all, the most fundamental prerequisite – listening, understanding and accepting – has disappeared. The following statement of the mashā'ikh is most applicable:

حرموا الوصول لتضييعهم الأصول

People have been deprived from reaching Allāh ta'ālā because they disregarded the principles.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* mentioned most important and essential points on the subject of rectification and training. These ought to be considered by not only every seeker but by every

Muslim. We must constantly make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* enables us to practise according to the principles shown to us by Ḥadrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*, and that He blesses us with rectitude, rectification and affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. Āmīn.

(Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

FOLLOWING THE SUNNAT RESULTS IN ALLĀH'S LOVE

While on the subject of the need to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, Hadrat Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following verse in his *Futūh al-Ghayb*:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ

Say (O Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam): If you love Allāh (and you want Allāh taʿālā to confer you with His proximity) then follow me, Allāh will love you.[1]

Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* then provides a most beautiful explanation. Listen with your heart. Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* is the shaykh of the mashā'ikh and one of the seniors in our spiritual lineage. Countless people reached Allāh *taʿālā* through him and are still doing so. The statements of seniors of this nature are worthy of emulation and acceptance. He says:

فبين أن طريق المحبة اتباعه قولا وفعلا

Allāh *taʿālā* explained in this verse that the manner of acquiring the love of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is to follow the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in words and actions.

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* goes into an excellent explanation of this statement of the shaykh. He says that if a person can achieve following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa*

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

sallam in his words and actions, he will be able to realize following him in his conditions as well. Hadrat does not speak about conditions, this is why it was necessary to mention it. After all, the fundamental thing to do is to emulate Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in his conditions. However, this is not possible without first following him in his words and actions. Shaykh ʿĀrif Muslih ad-Dīn Saʿdī Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

> O Saʿdī! Never think that you will acquire guidance without following Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Anyone who treads a path which is different from the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never reach the destination.

A spiritual condition is the result of emulation. Spiritual conditions are bestowals [from Allāh *taʿālā*] and are the fruits of actions. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا، وَاِنَّ اللهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Those who strive in Our cause – We will certainly show them Our paths. Allāh is most certainly with the doers of good.[1]

The reason for love is either beauty or kindness

Love refers to the inclination and attraction of the self towards something which is believed to be perfect, and which becomes a catalyst for closeness to it. The reason for love is either beauty or kindness. Both these qualities are confined to Allāh *taʿālā*. If they are found anywhere else, then they are bestowals from Allāh *taʿālā* Himself.

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[1] Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt, 29: 69.

The greatest and most glittering manifestation of Allāh's beauty and kindness is none other than Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. After him, it is to be found in other Auliyā' according to the extent of their emulation and steadfastness.

Love is another name for that inclination and attraction which was mentioned above. Obedience and compliance which are the causes of closeness are essential for love. Without them love is defective, and claims to perfection in this regard are wrong. Yes, love in itself cannot be rejected because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

لا تلعنوه فإنه يحب الله ورسوله

Do not curse him (because of his sin) because he loves Allāh and His Messenger.

This is why the ʿulamā' explain the love which a servant has for Allāh *taʿālā* as "a will to obey Him". And the love which Allāh *taʿālā* has for His servant as "pleasure" which is manifested as Allāh's kindness, affection and inspiration. This is because we cannot attribute inclination and attraction – which are effects – to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a cause of Allāh' love because the one who follows him will certainly reach the level and rank of love and being beloved. A Hadīth makes reference to this:

المرء مع من أحبّ

A person will be with the one whom he loves.

No one can reach the station on which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is because his station is the highest and most superior, but its extent is wide.

There are many levels and ranks in this station. It is the bond of love which takes and conveys a person. A poet says:

> We can never reach the level on which you are. Our conveyance too has fallen down on the path of our search. However we are with you by day and night. We are at your door while you are in our hearts.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the absolute human who is to be followed and obeyed. Obedience to him is obligatory as stated by Allāh *taʿālā*:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say (O Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam): If you love Allāh (and you want Allāh taʿālā to confer you with His proximity) then follow me.[1]

In like manner, Allāh *taʿālā* said:

اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ

Obey Allāh and His Messenger.[2]

We learn the obligation of obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from this verse as well. This is because the word "obey" is an order, and an order shows obligation. There are many other similar verses from which the obligation of obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is learnt. It is this very same obedience which Allāh *taʿālā* lays down as the criterion of His love. The idolaters, Jews and

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

[2] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 20.

Christians all claimed to love Allāh *taʿālā*, but Allāh *taʿālā* rejected their claims and laid down such a criterion which none of them could fulfil. The criterion was: If you claim to love Allāh *taʿālā* then follow and obey Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This clearly shows that love is the cause of obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. And following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a clear proof of Allāh's love. Thus, the one who blows the trumpet of love without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a mere claimant whose claim is wrong, and whose case is defeated by Allāh's order: "then follow me." This is why the seniors of every era laid down the need to follow the Sharīʿat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, made it obligatory on themselves and their associates to follow and obey Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and encouraged towards it. Shaykh Maulānā ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* says:

> The one who does not tread the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will not reach even the outskirts of this court.

Look at the importance and need for following and obeying Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as learnt from this couplet. No matter how high ranking a person may be, he cannot do without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In fact, no one can even reach any rank and position without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. All the saints and elders of Dīn were able to reach Allāh *taʿālā* solely through emulating and following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If a person tries to reach Allāh's court without this, he will not

gain the slightest entry. He will be pushed aside and expelled.

The level and rank which a person will enjoy in the Hereafter will depend on his level of following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this world. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the most. He loved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and had a bond with him even before Islam. He never belied Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* on any occasion. He bore untold miseries and hardships for him. This is why he was given the title of "Siddīq" in this world. As for the position which he will be honoured with in the Hereafter, it is beyond description. The differences in rank which we see among the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* is also based on the differences in emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Understand this well.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, the head teacher at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, describes the need for following the Sunnat in the following words:

> The path of acceptance is confined to following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* externally, internally and in beliefs. Turning away from bidʿāt and customs in today's times is the essence of following the Sunnat.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the comprehensive and concise manner in which he conveyed this theme. It encompasses everything and leaves out nothing. However, intelligence and equity are prerequisites.

Incidents related to following the Sunnat

I now quote a few incidents related to following the Sunnat which are established from our seniors. Inshā Allāh they will make it easy for you to understand the reality of following the Sunnat.

There was a saint who was always overcome by the greatness of Allāh *taʿālā*. People felt intimidated by him so they abstained from going to him. On one occasion his moustache had grown quite a bit and it is against the Sharīʿat and Sunnat to have a big moustache. Another saint who was strict in following the Sunnat took the courage to go to him with a scissor. He held his beard with one hand and clipped his moustache with the other. When he came to his senses and saw what happened, he expressed joy, and repeatedly held his beard and kissed it. And he said out of genuine pride: "This beard was held once in the path of the Sharīʿat of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*."

Look at the extent of his following the Sunnat. He did not feel offended in the least. Instead, he expressed his joy as described above. We too ought to emulate him in this regard. That is, we must accept the truth. There is always good and benefit in it.

All I want to do is make clear to you the importance of following the Sunnat. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable you to understand it. A person performed ṣalāh with much humility and humbleness. That night he saw a dream in which his ṣalāh appeared in the form of a beautiful woman, but she had no eyes. He went and related this dream to a saint.[1] The saint asked: "Did you by

[1] The saint referred to was most probably Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*.

chance perform your salāh with your eyes closed?" The man replied: "Yes, I performed it like that so that there is more humility in my salāh." The saint said: "This is why she had no eyes. It is Sunnat to perform salāh with your eyes open. You performed it against the Sunnat, this is why you saw what you saw."

Just think! He left out one Sunnat but was deprived in this manner!

The virtues and benefits of practising on the Sunnat

Marāqī al-Falāh, a well-known book of jurisprudence contains the following Hadīth:

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم من صلى ركعتي الفجر أي سنته في بيته يوسع له في رزقه، يقل المنازع بينه وبين أهله، ويختتم له بالإيمان.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: The person who performs two rakʿats Sunnat of the fajr salāh in his house will experience expansion in his sustenance, arguments between him and his family will decrease, and he will depart from this world with īmān.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the immense benefits of performing just the Sunnat salāh at home. How much more benefits and virtues there must be for performing both the Sunnat salāh [at home] and the fard salāh in the masjid! Just ponder over these three benefits. Which of our Dīnī and worldly needs can be considered to be small? There will be expansion in one's sustenance. Mutual disputes and arguments will decrease. This is because even if a person has sustenance but there are constant arguments at home, then life will be quite bitter. There will be enjoyment in life. A person will not enjoy peace and tranquillity even if he has some wealth and riches.

Our master Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that by reading the Sunnat of fajr salāh at home, mutual arguments and disputes will decrease. Look at the arrangement which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made for our worldly livelihood, and what a simple way he showed to us. As for success in the Hereafter, he explained that as well. That if we do this, we will depart from this world with īmān. After that there will be nothing but comfort. In this way, success in this world and in the Hereafter will be achieved. This is the result of practising on just one Sunnat.

O Muslims! If you practise on all the Sunnats of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, just think of how many virtues you will acquire, and what success you will enjoy in this world and in the Hereafter.

Now listen to one more Hadīth which ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* quotes in *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

عن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: مَنْ دَخَلَ السُّوْقَ فَقَالَ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ، وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمُوْتُ، بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ، وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ، كتب الله له ألف ألف حسنة، ومحا عنه ألف ألف سيئة، ورفع ألف ألف درجة.[1]

Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When a person enters a market place/ shopping area and reads the following supplication, Allāh taʿālā records one

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[1] مستدرك حاكم، ج ١، ص ٧٢٢، حديث ١٩٧٤، الفتوحات الربانية على الأذكار النووية، ج ٦، ص ١٢٦، باب ما يقول إذا دخل السوق.

million rewards for him, wipes out one million sins from him, and raises his rank by one million.

The duʿā' is:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ، وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمُوْتُ، بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ، وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ.

There is none worthy of worship except Allāh, He is alone. He has no partner. His is the kingdom and for Him is all praise. He gives life and causes death. He is ever-living and does not die. All good is in His control, and He has power over everything.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the virtue of this kalimah as proven from this Hadīth! It will be most astonishing if we still do not practise on it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

There are many Aḥādīth of this nature. If you were to listen and understand, you will fall in love with Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. The manner of achieving this is to ponder over the injunctions of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. You will then realize the immense reward which Allāh *taʿālā* has awarded to the ummat of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for even the smallest deeds. Understand further that the hardships which were imposed on the previous nations have been cancelled and abrogated for the ummat of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Moreover, since Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the chief of all the Prophets, you are the best of all nations. Can this virtue be considered to be insignificant? Should we not be prepared to sacrifice ourselves for Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and his pure Sharīʿat?

We brought a lot of misfortune upon ourselves by disobeying Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and acting against his injunctions. We discarded his injunctions related to our social relationships and caused destruction to our worldly life. Mutual harmony and unity have departed. Tranquillity of the heart is no longer found. These things are clearly known and visible to all. What, then, can be said about the Hereafter?

Let's get together and follow the Messenger

Now let's get together and follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* so that we obtain the blessings of the Sunnat and we acquire the comfort and tranquillity of our Dīnī and worldly life. Whatever worldly and religious good we can obtain can only be done through Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is therefore essential for us to please Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and acquire his recognition.

When we make someone our shaykh and mentor, it is so that he can enable us to truly recognize Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A shaykh is followed because he has followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he knows the ways of following him.

When the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* visited Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it was not just a physical visit. Rather, they recognized his knowledge and spirituality, and acted accordingly. This is why they acquired such noble virtues. The unbelievers and hypocrites also visited and met Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* physically, but they did not affirm him and did not believe in him. This is why their visit did not provide them with any

benefit. Instead, they became even more eligible for castigation and punishment.

The type of emulation and obedience displayed by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* is unparalleled. Study the lives of the auliyā' who came after them and see how they followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in every matter. It has been the continuous practice of the saints to give permission for the continuation of their work only to those who were most conscious of following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The auliyā' are the deputies of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In fact, they are the deputies of Allāh *taʿālā*. The author of *Tarsīʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* says:

الشيوخ نُوَّاب الله

The mashā'ikh are Allāh's deputies on earth.

One cannot be independent of the speech of Allāh and Rasūlullāh

The speech of any person or the poetry of any poet – no matter how excellent it may be – cannot make a person independent of the speech of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Even if you develop a taste for the writings of linguists and poets, and you become an expert in this field, you can never be independent of pondering over the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The demand to ponder and reflect over their words will remain. You can traverse the path of Allāh *taʿālā* only by following and obeying Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* set His seal on this fact and made it obligatory until the day of Resurrection. This is why it is essential to follow him in every matter. If we are to follow anyone else, it will be solely on the

basis that he follows Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In other words, that person must have obliterated his own views and opinions for those of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If he allows his own views to interfere, it is not permissible to follow such a person.

This topic is quite long. How much more can we speak on it or write on it. Even voluminous books will not suffice. Nevertheless, you must have understood this much from this short speech that it is essential for every Muslim to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. There is no alternative to it.

We quoted the statement of Hadrat Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *raḥimahullāh* when he said that it is obligatory to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* if we want to reach the level of acceptance and close proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*, and that all other paths are sealed.

Hadrat Junayd *raḥimahullāh* said:

الطرق كلها مسدودة إلا من اقتفى أثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.

All paths are sealed except the path of the one who follows in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Without this, no one can reach Allāh's court. Hadrat Muslih ad-Dīn Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says in his *Būstān*:

> The one who follows a path which is against the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never be able to reach the destination.

Was salām.

RECTIFICATION OF THE SELF

A Maulānā Sāḥib from a large institution wrote to me saying: "I heard Ḥaḍrat Wālā quoting the following text from *Maktūbāt Maʿṣūmīyyah* on several occasions. I happened to read it myself, and when I did, my love for Ḥaḍrat Wālā increased and the greatness of your teachings became clear to me." The text reads as follows:

> Be fully convinced of this fact that if a person possesses thousands of virtues and performs countless supernatural feats, but is lax in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then the love and company of such a person is a most toxic poison. If a person does not possess any virtue and cannot perform a single supernatural act, but is firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then his love and company will be a most beneficial panacea.[1]

The Maulānā Sāḥib also wrote that the mashā'ikh of today seem to be lax in their adherence to the Sunnat and following of the Sharīʿat. This is why we cannot benefit from their company as we should.

I replied to him saying: Bearing in mind what you wrote, the reason why people are not benefiting is that true and genuine benefit is when a person is able to free himself from the influences of his carnal self. However, I see that let alone freeing themselves from

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[1] Translation of maktūb number 67, vol. 2, addressed to Khwājah Dīnār.

the self and rectifying it, people do not even speak on the subject of the carnal self. This, despite the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* makes mention of it in the Qur'ān. He says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his self from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[2]

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ، اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌ ۢ بِالسُّوْءِ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[3]

These were the statements of the Qur'ān. Now observe what the Aḥādīth say in this regard:

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

We learn from the above that the self is something which exists and which a person has to be careful of. However, we see nowadays that let alone the laity, even the elite seem to deny the self through their

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

[3] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

actions. If it is disregarded to such an extent, how will people understand the tricks and plots of the self? And how will they save themselves from it? Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* states in *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm* that it is obligatory to be wary of it. He writes:

وأغمض أنواع علوم المعاملة الوقوف على خدع النفس ومكائد الشيطان، وذلك فرض عين على كل عبد، وقد أهمله الخلق واشتغلوا بعلوم تستجر إليهم الوسواس، وتسلط عليهم الشيطان، وتنسيهم عدواته وطريق الإحتراز عنه.[1]

The most intricate of the sciences of interactions is the deceptions of the carnal self and the traps of Shayṭān. This is obligatory on every person, but people have disregarded it and become occupied with sciences which create whisperings in their hearts, enable Shayṭān to take control of them, and cause them to forget his enmity and the manner of safeguarding them from him.

We learn from the above that the science of deceptions of the self and traps of Shayṭān is the most intricate, subtle and complex of sciences. This is why it is generally disregarded. After all, it is easy for anyone and everyone to understand things which are glaring and clear. On the other hand, complex and intricate matters can be understood only the one who has perfect insight and a genuine quest. As for the one who has no insight at all or there is a defect in his quest, he will not be inspired to save himself from the traps of Shayṭān and the deceptions of the carnal self.

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٣٣.

Whether it is difficult or easy, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that it is compulsory for every person, just as the compulsion of salāh and zakāh. If man does not know this, he will succumb to whisperings. Shaytān will overpower him, he will not be aware of Shaytān's enmity, and will not know how to save himself from him. Consequently, he will suffer losses in this world and in the Hereafter. The following verse will apply to him:

خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ

He loses both this world and the Hereafter. This is a clear loss.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوْا بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَّبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَّبِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ لا وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ط إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُوْرًا.

Worship Allāh and do not associate anything with Him. Do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is a relative, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the traveller, and what your hands possess, i.e. your slave-girls. Surely Allāh does not like the self-conceited and boastful.[2]

In keeping with the temperament of the Sufis, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the words "the

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 11.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 36.

companion by your side" to refer to the carnal self. He presents the Hadīth quoted previously as proof, i.e.

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Since the verse instructs us to do good to all those mentioned, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that the good which one has to do by one's self is:

أن تحبسها في سجن العبودية وتحرقها بنيران المحبة[1]

To confine it in the prison of servitude and burn it with the fire of love.

Fulfilling the duties of servitude

Confining the carnal self in the prison of servitude means that it must be made to adhere to the duties of servitude. In other words, it must follow the Sharīʿat and adopt the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, this is not easily achieved; it will need a catalyst and that catalyst is love. Love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will have to be developed in the heart, and a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* will have to be established. This is known as nisbat or affinity. After this it will become easy for the person to fulfil the duties of servitude. In other words, he will be able to imprison himself in the prison of servitude. The company of the mashā'ikh is the tried and tested way of acquiring that catalyst and affinity. A person remains in their service and acquires internal excellence. The ʿulamā' and

[1] روح المعاني، سورة النساء، آية ٣٦ (من باب الإشارة).

mashā'ikh presented proofs and evidences for this. A major proof which everyone can understand is as explained by Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* in *Irshād at-Tālibīn*:

> An extremely large group of people (regarding whom it is considered impossible that it could have fabricated a lie, and whose every member is of such a level of piety and knowledge that it is not permissible to accuse him of lying) states both verbally and in writing: By virtue of the company of the mashā'ikh – whose companionship goes from one generation to the next until it reaches Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – they developed a new internal condition. This new condition caused them to develop a love for Allāh *taʿālā* and His friends, an enthusiasm for good deeds, inspiration for righteous actions, and firmness in true beliefs. This is that condition which ought to be referred to as an excellence, which in turn is a cause of many other excellences.[1]

The objective of the company of the mashā'ikh

Companionship results in love, and love enables a person to fulfil the duties of servitude. When man progresses in this regard, he acquires maʿrifat. In other words, he is able to show kindness to his carnal self by removing it from its deceptions and arrogance, and enabling it to recognize Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what I was referring to when I said that you neither know the prison of servitude nor do you understand the scale of

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[1] *Tuhfatus Sālikīn*, p. 6.

love. Instead, in today's times you consider kindness to the carnal self to mean giving it a full share of authority and wealth, and shower it with the joys of the self. All benefit came to an end ever since this became the condition of the Tarīqah.

Claims have replaced the reality

Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* cried over this in his time, and it was the proliferation of such conditions which prompted him to write a book titled *al-Amr al-Muhkam al-Marbūt Fī Mā Yalzam Ahl Tarīqillāh Ta'ālā Min ash-Shurut* (the decisive and established order on the prerequisites which the people of the Tarīqah must adhere to). He writes in the introduction to this book:

فإن الزمان مشحون بالدعاوى الكاذبة العريضة فلا مريد صادق ثابت القدم في سلوكه، ولا شيخ محقق ينصحه فيخرجه من رعونة نفسه وإعجابه برأيه ويعرب له عن طريق الحق، فالمريد يدعي شيخوخة الرياسة، وهذا كله تخبيط وتلبيس.[1]

The times are filled with extensive false claims. There is no murīd who is genuinely firm on his path, and there is no erudite shaykh who can advise the murīd by removing him from the deception of his carnal self and the arrogance of his views; and expounding to him the true path. Consequently, the murīd makes claims to leadership and authority. All this has corrupted the Tarīqah and reduced it to a medley of confusion.

Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* is speaking about the condition in his era. What expectations can we then

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[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٨.

have of the people of the Tarīqah of today in following the Sunnat and adhering to the Sharīʿat!?

The repugnance and prohibition of false claims

I came across a few teachings of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* in a certain book. I find that the points which he was warning his people against are to be found in the people of the Tarīqah of today. He said:

يا بني صحح حالك مع الله لا يشغلك عنه شاغل. ولا تشتغل بما يقول الخلق منك فإنهم لن يغنوا عنك من الله شيئا. وإذا صحت حالتك مع الله أرشدك للطريق إليه. واقتد بسنة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وظاهر العلم، وإياك أن تدعي في ما ليس لك، فما أهلك عامة المريدين إلا الدعاوى. وقال إياك وهذا الأوراد المتصلة فإن النفس تألفها والنظر ما فيه مخالفة نفسك من صيام أو صدقة، فاعملها فإن في متابعة النفس فما ألفت النفس شيئا إلا فيه بلاء وخطر.

Yūsuf ibn Husayn relates: I presented myself before Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī rahimahullāh on one occasion. He said to me: "O son! Set right your condition with Allāh taʿālā and nothing will be able to divert you from it. Do not bother about what people say about you because they will not be of any avail to you before Allāh taʿālā. When your condition with Allāh taʿālā is set right, He will guide you to His path. Follow the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the outward Sharīʿat. Save yourself against false claims because the murīds in general were destroyed by false claims." He added: "Be wary of the wazīfahs which have been related by the mashā'ikh because the carnal self is inclined to them. Look at those things in

which there is opposition to your self, e.g. fasting or charity, and then do them because submitting to the self in whatever it is inclined to is most certainly a test and a tribulation, because the self only likes the things which put man into danger and tribulation."

وقال له أيضا لا تسكن إلى مدح الناس، ولا تجزع عن قبولهم وردهم، فإنهم قطاع الطريق، واسكن إلى ما يتحققه من أحوالك سرًّا لا علنًا.

He said: "Do not become inclined to the praises of people, and do not be agitated by their acceptance and rejection of you, because they are all highway robbers. You should rather incline to the conditions with which your heart is inclined and experiences tranquillity from, and that too, in privacy, not in public."

Yūsuf adds: He also said:

الخير كله في بيت مفتاحه التواضع، والشر كله في بيت مفتاحه الكبر.

There is nothing but goodness in a house whose key is humility, and there is nothing but evil in a house whose key is pride.

Such were the people of the Ṭarīqah of the past and this was their path. That is, they used to make a few simple statements which would be firmly embedded in the hearts of the their audience. Subsequently, this would result in disinclination to the creation, abhorrence of bad character, and an internal spiritual bond with the Creator.

The importance of the pieces of advice of Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn

The words of advice which Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn Miṣrī *raḥimahullāh* gave to Yūsuf ibn Ḥusayn are worthy of being imprinted on the hearts with gold.

When people were embellished by these qualities and practised on those principles – i.e. when they subjugated the carnal self and dyed themselves in the love of Allāh *taʿālā* – they were considered to be spiritual masters and their company was beneficial. Ever since discussions about the carnal self were discarded and a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* was regarded to be unnecessary, the Ṭarīqah was destroyed. Thus, how can the company of such people benefit others in the path of rectification of the self!?

You are most correct when you wrote that the company of people is not beneficial.[1] People have actually put a complete end to the methodology on whose basis companionship is beneficial, viz. obliteration of the carnal self. The carnal self has to be overpowered, a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* has to be established, the self which orders a person towards evil has to be converted to the tranquil self – the self which is at peace with Allāh *taʿālā*. This had been the programme of the seekers. When a person resolved to do this, he received help and assistance from Allāh *taʿālā*, and he would succeed solely out of Allāh's grace and inspiration. Ḥaḍrat Khwājah Muḥammad Maʿṣūm *raḥimahullāh* conveys this theme in a most beautiful manner. He writes in *Maktūbāt Maʿṣūmīyyah*:

> Man has forgotten his own self because of his absolute immaturity. He has turned a blind eye to his own defects and mischief, and considered himself to be an expert on the basis of his temporary and borrowed capabilities. He feels he is a source of all

[1] Reference is made to what was said at the beginning of this article. Refer to it. (Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān)

goodness. He has laid lengthy and extensive foundations on the basis of these unstable conditions and alleged capabilities, and then made claims to equality with his Master [Allāh *taʿālā*] through this path. Consequently, deception, arrogance and selfishness in his carnal self were born from this.

The astonishing thing is that the source which is embellished by every type of excellence and beauty is concealed and hidden from the eyes. And the possibilities, of which man is just one member, and which are the sources of every type of defect and mischief are clearly visible and before all to see. When I saw all this, I lost my mind and said: O Allāh! What is this spectacle!?

Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* discussed man's misguidance to this point. He now explains how the door of guidance opens to him.

Based on Allāh's eternal grace and kindness, when a seeker reflects on his own defect – i.e. over the fact that he was non-existent and that his existence is the result of the existence of someone else – and comes to this realization, he realizes that all his capabilities were conferred to him by Allāh *taʿālā*, attributes all his temporary capabilities completely to Allāh *taʿālā*, believes himself to be totally devoid of anything, has full conviction that he was merely a mirror for those excellences, i.e. he was a manifestation of those excellences, while they are intrinsically

found in Allāh *taʿālā*. When he considers himself to be totally empty and non-existent, he is conferred with true self-obliteration and is freed from the selfishness and evil of his carnal self. In other words, his carnal self which had been ordering him towards evil is gradually converted to the tranquil self. This happens when it moves from the carnal self which prompts him towards evil (*nafs ammārah*) to the self which reprimands him (*nafs lawwāmah*) and then progresses until it becomes the tranquil self (*nafs muṭma'innah*). When this happens, Allāh's favours and bounties are showered on him to the maximum. In other words, he completes the task for which he had come into this world.[1]

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says that once you have realized whose shadow you are, you have completed your task. Now you can either die or continue to live.

Man's deterioration stems from his carnal self

Look at how clearly Khwājah Maʿsūm *raḥimahullāh* explains that the deterioration of man stems from his carnal self. Man can only succeed when he recognizes his self through Allāh's inspiration. Do you see any discussions about the carnal self today? Did the people of the past succumb to the carnal self as is the case today? Now that you have learnt that those who became saints in the past did so by discarding the self, how can this divine principle change today? How did people come to this conclusion that they can

[1] *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah*, vol. 3, p. 272.

become saints while giving vent to the demands of the self? When sainthood was not sought from the manner in which it ought to have been sought, people were deprived of it. So what is there to be so surprised about!?

Allāh does not regard the sincere and the insincere to be equal

I always tell people that they do not think about the actions and sincerity of the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Yet, they certainly hope to receive the same blessings and favours as them. They ask, why don't we get those blessings and favours when we are also Muslims? Now you too must have understood that it is not enough to be merely a Muslim to obtain those things. Rather, it is essential to be a sincere Muslim. Sincerity will only be developed when no action or statement of man is adulterated by the carnal self.

It is essential to understand the carnal self and to protect one's self against its traps – for the murīd and for the shaykh as well. In fact, a shaykh cannot be a shaykh without first obliterating the carnal self. This is the actual reason for not deriving benefit, regarding which you complained. Since you wrote to me in this regard, I explained what I thought to be correct.[1] This is not the era for such discussions – there is no one to speak about this subject and no one is prepared to listen to it.

Affinity with Allāh is the basis for all excellences

Affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* is the basis for all excellences. However, the condition of people today is most astonishing because they do not turn their

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[1] Reference is made to a letter quoted at the beginning. (Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān).

attention in the least towards acquiring it. They are immersed in searching for other things. One person asked me to teach him the waẓīfah of *pās anfās*. Another person said to me that when he engages in dhikr and focuses on one *laṭifah*, the other one comes to a standstill. When he turns to the third one, the first one comes to a standstill.

Ḥadrat Ḥājī Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* used to say that you should not worry about focussing on the *laṭā'if-e-sittah* because there is much difficulty in it. Just focus on the heart and the other *laṭā'if* will come automatically. He used to present the following Ḥadīth as proof:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله، ألا وهي القلب.[1]

Listen! There is a piece of flesh in the body – if it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is unsound, the entire body will be unsound. Listen! It is the heart.

Note: Māshā Allāh! These are most useful and beneficial themes. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire us who are associated with Ḥadrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* to keep them in mind. Āmīn.

While reading these themes, the thought came to my mind that in their presence, it is useless for us to speak about them. We ought to read them repeatedly and rectify ourselves, and to continue refreshing our īmān. We must also relate them again and again to others so that they can also benefit from them. It is most unfortunate that even those who are associated

[1] صحيح مسلم، كتاب المساقات، ٢٢، باب أخذ الحلال وترك الشبهات، ٣٠، حديث ١٥٩٩.

to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* neither pay attention to these themes nor value them, even though we all claim that we love him and have faith in him. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā*. (compiler)

THE ʿĀRIF AND AN EXAMPLE OF HIS SPIRITUAL CONDITION

The spiritual condition of the ʿārifīn

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* gives an example of an ʿārif in his *Mathnawī*:

> When people are asleep, they are disconnected from this world and unaware of their surroundings. An ʿārif experiences this condition while he is awake. He is disconnected from everything physical. His condition is like that of (As-ḥāb al-Kahf) - the youth in the cave:
>
> وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ اَيْقَاظًا وَّهُمْ رُقُوْدٌ
>
> *You assume that they are awake while they are asleep.*[1]

What this means is that the condition of an ʿārif is similar to what is described in the above verse. Do not reject this claim of ours because this is exactly what the condition of the ʿārifīn is, i.e. they are perpetually unmindful of the conditions and situations of this world. In other words, these personalities are not inclined towards and do not pay attention to the things which are obstacles from Allāh *taʿālā*, and the words and actions which cause a person to become negligent of Allāh *taʿālā* and distant from Him. They do not do anything which is against Allāh's pleasure because they are so obedient to Him like a pen in the hand of a writer – he causes it to write as he wants.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 18.

This does not mean that their power of choice has been taken away from them. Rather, they have obliterated their own choice and pleasures for Allāh's pleasure to the extent that although they do and say things by their own choice, the injunctions of the Sharīʿat have become so natural to them that it is as though they have no choice. This is why Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* compared their movements to that of a pen which is under the control of a writer. It is as though their submission is by their own will.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* then describes the condition of the laity. He says that the one who cannot see the fingers and thumb of the hand will consider the movement of the pen to be its own movement. In like manner, the laity did not submit themselves to the injunctions in matters which are within their choice. Instead, they followed the path of self opinions. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* explains practical tauḥīd in these couplets. After a few more couplets, he writes:

It is as though the person who heard all this is saying: "Where are the people whom you have just described? Show them to us." He replies by saying that thousands of auliyā' who are similar to the Aṣ-ḥāb al-Kahf in the quality of being outwardly awake while they are unmindful of the world, are to be found in this world. There are those who – in these times – are like the companions of the cave, who interact and converse with you, but since a seal has been set on your eyes, you cannot see them.

He asks further on: Do you know the reason for these barriers on account of which you cannot recognize the auliyā'? He answers this question himself by saying that Allāh *taʿālā* set a seal on your hearts and eyes. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* then describes the seal so

that people can make efforts to remove it. He does this in the midst of a story:

> The caliph said to Laylā: "Are you the one because of whom Majnūn is distressed and lost his mind? You are not more beautiful than other woman, so what is it that he saw in you?" She replied: "You are not Majnūn, so you rather keep quiet. If you had the eyes of Majnūn, you would have regarded both the worlds to be of no value. The difference between you and Majnūn is that you are still immersed in your self while Majnūn has passed it. This is why you cannot perceive any goodness and beauty. Majnūn's eyes are not on anyone except me; and vigilance and intelligence are evil qualities in the path of love."

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* identifies that seal and barrier for us – it is vigilance and attentiveness to this world which results in excessive thoughts about all except Allāh *taʿālā*. When a person is occupied by thoughts of everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, how will he think of Allāh *taʿālā*, how will he seek Allāh *taʿālā*, and how will he search for the means of finding Him, i.e. how will he search for the Ahlullāh?

The condition of this world and the seekers of this world

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* then goes into a lot of detail on the reprehensibility of attentiveness to this world and to worldly thoughts. When a person is engrossed in them, he cannot acquire selflessness. A person cannot come out of those veils and barriers on whose removal the recognition of the ʿārifīn is dependent. After speaking about the ills of this world,

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* explains the foolishness of a materialistic person through an example. He says:

> The unproductive and fleeting existence of this world and the eternal existence of the Hereafter is like the existence of a shadow and the object which is casting the shadow. A person who discards the Hereafter and runs behind this world is like a bird flying in the sky, and a foolish person running behind its shadow which is falling on the ground in an attempt to hunt the shadow. No matter how much he runs behind the shadow, he will remain empty handed. He does not know that this is a reflection of the bird which is flying in the air, nor does he know where the source of that shadow is. He continues shooting arrows at the shadow until his quiver is empty. In the same way, the quiver of life of the seeker of this world becomes empty very quickly in his quest for the prey of this world.

After his discussion on worldly thoughts and the reprehensibility of hankering after this world, Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* describes the manner of saving one's self from it. He says that it is through the focus and training of a qualified shaykh, while the seeker remains obedient to the shaykh. He writes:

> If a (shadow of Allāh) perfect human becomes this person's mentor, he will get salvation from this world and worldly thoughts. This perfect human is dead to this world and fully conscious with regard to Allāh *taʿālā*. Hold on to such a person without any delay and without any doubts

> and misgivings so that you are saved from the tribulation of death, i.e. when efforts are made to snatch your īmān away at the time of your death. This happens mostly when love for this world has overwhelmed a person.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* then provides an identity of the spiritual masters of his time from whom the treasure of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* can be acquired. He says:

> Hold on to Shāh Shams ad-Dīn Tabrezī and obtain the sun from the shadow. If you cannot acquire those general blessings and enjoyment from him, then ask for Maulānā Diyā' al-Haq Hussām ad-Dīn who is his deputy.

Maulānā Diyā' al-Haq was first aligned to Shāh Shams ad-Dīn and then to Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh*. He is thus Maulānā Rūm's spiritual brother (*pīr bhāi*) and khalīfah. In his humility, Maulānā Rum *raḥimahullāh* mentioned the name of Shāh Shams ad-Dīn, but reference is also made to the fact that if the person cannot derive benefit from him, he can revert to his deputy (i.e. to himself) because he too is his deputy like Shaykh Hussām ad-Dīn.

The evil of jealousy

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* states further:

> If you feel it below you to follow Shaykh Shams Tabrezī *raḥimahullāh* or Maulānā Diyā' al-Haq *raḥimahullāh* then understand well that this stems from jealousy. And if jealousy overwhelms you in Allāh's path then know that jealousy is

> the path of Shaytān who was an expert in this. It was due to his jealousy towards Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* that he felt it beneath him to prostrate to him. He harmed no one but himself because of this jealousy. There is no bigger obstacle than jealousy in the path of tasawwuf. It is because of jealousy that the defective ones were deprived of reaching perfection. To consider it below you to follow someone who has reached perfection, especially to desist from reverting to a khalīfah of your shaykh, is in most cases against the temperaments of people. They feel that since we are co-murīds, we are equals, so we cannot revert to them. On the other hand, perfection cannot be realized without following the one who is perfect. Fortunate indeed is the one in whom there is no jealousy.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* is explaining one of the obstacles in this path, viz. jealousy. Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* was Allāh's khalīfah. Shaytān was jealous of this. Subsequently, people in every era felt it beneath them to follow someone else. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* spoke to one of the Jewish scholars in privacy and asked him: "Take an oath in Allāh's name and tell me what you think of me?" He replied: "Everyone believes you to be a genuine person." Despite this, neither did he become a Muslim nor did he tell the other Jews what he thought of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This was the attitude of the Jews of Madīnah. Now listen to what people from other places had to say. When a monk of Syria heard about Rasūlullāh's commission as a Prophet, he took a bath, changed his clothes,

emerged from his monastery and said to the people: "I am becoming a Muslim. This is the true Prophet." He then read the kalimah. The people disapproved of this and beat him up until he died.

Jealousy among co-murīds

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says that jealousy is also found among co-murīds. Ḥadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* says that most people are averse to reverting to a khalīfah of their shaykh. Such a person did not acquire perfection from his shaykh and is now also desisting from reverting to his shaykh's khalīfah. He is thus deprived from both. I am relating all these things to you but I do not think you people will pay heed. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* used to speak so much about matters related to guidance but the unbelievers would not pay heed. The reason for this was that they claimed equality with the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and felt that they were the same as them.

They used to say: "He is a human and we are also humans. What difference is there between him and us? He eats and sleeps, and we also eat and sleep." Jealousy was the reason for these statements. This is why they refused to submit and did not acquire blessings from such perfect human beings. I say, the seeker who has jealousy in him cannot succeed. He will realize his objective only if he gives up jealousy. It is certainly a difficult thing. Fortunate indeed is the one who has no jealousy. The defective ones failed to reach perfection because of it. A person spoke to Abū Jahal in privacy and said: "Look here, I am here and you are here. There is no third person. Tell me if he [Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] is a Prophet or not." He replied: "He never spoke a lie." What he meant was that if he never spoke a lie in matters

related to the creation, how is it possible for him to ever speak a lie with regard to Allāh *taʿālā*!? He acknowledged this but still refused to embrace īmān.

One of my friends who was a khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* had pledged bayʿat to another saint before this. He related to us that his first shaykh said to him: "Go and study, and when you complete you must come to me." I said: "What if you are not alive until then?" He replied: "Allāh *taʿālā* will enable you to find someone." This friend of mine said to me that that saint used to say: "The reason why these Maulwīs do not reach spiritual heights is that they do not engage in dhikr and other spiritual devotions." I was a junior at the time and I still am, this is why I say that the carnal self is one's worst enemy.

The carnal self is the worst enemy

The worst enemy on the path to Allāh *taʿālā* is one's carnal self. People do not subdue it; so they cannot reach their destination. What can I say to you? I have seen some people who used to sit with absolute submission before Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* but they retrogressed so badly later on that I could not understand how they went against Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*. After that I realized that they hadn't rectified their carnal self. I am stressing this point to you so that you realize that it is the carnal self which destroys us.

However, let alone subduing it, it is difficult for us to even recognize it. If you try to overpower your self, it will try to fight back. It has already defeated many people.

One Maulwī Sāhib used to say to me when we were in Thānah Bhawan: "How is it that those scholars who are very capable and distinguished do not come here –

i.e. on this path of Allāh *taʿālā*. Only those who are not so capable and learned come here." I said to him: "It is not their academic scholarship which is preventing them from coming here. Rather it is their incapability in this regard which his stopping them." I then pointed towards Hadrat Maulānā's room and asked: "Is that senior person who is sitting there not a distinguished scholar? Was Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* not an erudite scholar? Why are such distinguished scholars on this path?" He fell silent when I said this. I said: "If a person of little intelligence was to remain in your company, will he not understand and realize this much?" He was attacking us and he thought we did not understand what he was saying.

There was a saint who used to point towards his chest and say: "O people! Kill this; only then will you reach Allāh *taʿālā*." It is compulsory to kill the self, if not, it will not allow a person to go towards Allāh *taʿālā*. It is compulsory for a seeker to recognize the self and recognize its tricks and plots.

I am originally from a village and I used to speak to my fellow villagers about the carnal self. I used to find it quite difficult because it is not easy to explain. On one occasion, an example came to my mind so I related it to them. I am relating it to you as well.

There was a buffalo which ate a lot and became extremely fat. It used to move around freely and would sometimes come into the village as well. Whenever it entered the village, it used to cause a havoc. It would attack a cow or fling a goat aside, etc. It used to cause a lot of damage. One day the people managed to get hold of it and they cut off its horns. It stopped eating ever since that day. This caused it to lose weight and it became extremely weak. The people began loading

dung on it, and then used it to scatter the dung in their farms. This became its work. Anyone who needed it would catch hold of it and use it for whatever work he wanted to be done. On seeing it, we used to feel sorry for it because we would think about its past life and its present condition. I too observed both parts of its life. I then addressed the people and said: "We speak to you about Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but no one asks us about why we went to the villagers, and now that we have come, we will have to suffer the consequences. In the same way, the Ahlullāh subdue their carnal selves. In other words, they engage in spiritual exercises and paralyse the self so that its strength and power is broken and it becomes obedient.

A saint by the name of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAlī Ahmad Sāhib used to say: "The cooked food is available but there is no one to eat it." He also used to say: "We have had experiences with those villagers. They are like a buffalo which the villagers tied to an idol which was placed firmly in the ground. The buffalo was very strong. It jerked its head once and the idol was uprooted from its place. The buffalo began running and the idol which was tied to the rope was being dragged by the buffalo."

The saint continues: "The seeker [the buffalo] was strong while the quest [the idol] was weak. This is why it could uproot the idol. In the same way, these people will remove us from our places and we will not be able to convey them to Allāh *taʿālā*."

The carnal self is not easy to deal with. The more you recognize it the further away you will get from the Hell-fire and the closer you will go towards Paradise.

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى، وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the live of this world, Hell alone is his abode. Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Those who fail to realize their objective do so because of these evils. And these are the things which prevented people of the past from going to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. A poet says:

> The one who has a true sight is able to differentiate between good and evil, a friend of Allāh and His enemy, a Prophet and a non-Prophet. If a person cannot differentiate between them, you can conclude that he is blind.

This is why the main focus of the spiritual masters is to check if a murīd's carnal self has been subdued or not. Because if it is not subdued while they are present, how will it be subdued in their absence? It will be most difficult.

After many days we came to understand that education and training are of paramount importance, and that the discussion on the carnal self is most essential. Understanding this topic is difficult, and even more difficult to explain. It is, nonetheless, necessary so we have to speak about it. I related to you earlier on that people go to the saints but still remain deficient. The reason for it is their own

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

defective beliefs. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* was a distinguished scholar. Listen to what he has to say:

> The Maulwī [referring to himself] did not become Maulānā Rūm until he came into the service of Ḥaḍrat Shams Tabrezī *raḥimahullāh*.

He is actually advising the scholars and ʿulamā' that if they want to become scholars in the true sense of the word, and pass on their knowledge in the correct places, they will have to hold on to a shaykh-e-kāmil. Without this, their knowledge will remain incomplete and they will be scholars and nothing else. They will not be an ʿārif. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says that a seeker without maʿrifat (i.e. he does not recognize his own self, his shaykh and the path) is like a bird without wings. In other words, it is in constant danger until an animal eventually kills it. In the same way, if a seeker is devoid of maʿrifat, Shayṭān is lying in wait for him and it will not be surprising when he attacks him at some point along the way.

The valley of the carnal self is the most difficult

There was a person in whom many people had faith and confidence, but one man did not. When this man found an opportunity, he went into his room without the other knowing. When he woke up at night for tahajjud he went towards him. The person asked: "Who is it?" He replied: "I am the brother of Jibraʾīl." He asked: "Why have you come here?" The man said: "Allāh *taʿālā* is very pleased with your worship so He sent me to tell you that there is no need for you to engage in so much of worship. He has absolved you of all worship." Just before this man could enter, the person had placed his hand on the water jug to perform wuḍū'. But when he heard this, he removed

his hand and went back to sleep. (It did not even cross his mind to perform two rakʿats of salāh to show his appreciation. Due to his ignorance, his carnal self caused him to gloat over his worship and he thought to himself that he is certainly a very ardent worshipper). The next morning he did not even go for the fajr salāh. The people knocked on his door but he did not respond. They feared that he has probably passed away. They unlocked the door and went in. They saw him sitting and asked: "What is the matter? Why did you not come for the fajr salāh today?" He replied: "The brother of Jibraʾīl came to me in the night and said these things to me." One of those who were present began to laugh. The people realized that he must have done this.

This is why I say that the most difficult valley is that of the carnal self. And so, it is essential to recognize it. It is the same carnal self which deceived Shaytān. It is easy to grasp the plotting of Shaytān, but most difficult to understand the plotting and deception of the carnal self.

Recognition of the self

There was a saint who used to live alone and engage in Allāh's worship. One day the thought crossed his mind that he ought to go out for jihād. Subsequently, this thought troubled him to the point of making him restless. He finally made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* and asked Him the reason for this urge. He received the following reply: "You are engaged in spiritual striving which is a 24-hour activity. Your self has become fed up because of it. It wants you to fight the unbelievers so that it is put to an end within a few minutes and is saved from this continuous spiritual striving of yours." He said: "If that is the case I will not go for jihād. I will

continue worshipping Allāh *taʿālā* in this way and continue making Him happy."

Note: Jihād becomes wājib in certain situations. A person ought to consult a muftī when situations demand it. (compiler)

Piety and good character – the means to Paradise

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* about the thing which will be most effective in admitting people into Paradise. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that it is good character and piety.[1] By virtue of good character a person's interactions with people will be good. In other words, he will fulfil the rights of fellow humans to the full. And piety will enable him to fulfil the rights of Allāh *taʿālā*.

A Hadīth states that the rank of good character surpasses that of salāh and fasting.[2] In other words, one person has good character but does not engage in a lot of optional acts of worship, while another engages in excessive worship but is not of sound character. The first is better than the latter person. Those who engage in excessive acts of worship generally experience a deterioration in their character. Firstly because they gloat over their worship and scorn others because of it. Secondly, because they remain awake for lengthy periods of time, they become temperamental. I had quoted the following couplet to you yesterday. Listen to it again:

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[1] سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر، باب حسن الخلق، ٦٢، حديث ٢٠٠٤.

[2] أيضا، حديث ٢٠٠٣.

> The ascetic could not cross the path safely because of his pride and arrogance. On the other hand, the sinner reached Paradise safely by virtue of his submission and humility.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Būstān* that as a rule, the advice of intelligent people is generally remembered. So listen to my advice as well:

> The sinner who is fearful of Allāh's questioning is better than the worshipper who is engaged in ostentatious worship.

In other words, instead of being a worshipper of Allāh *taʿālā* he worships his own worship.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with sound character together with sound worship. Āmīn. (compiler)

IT IS OBLIGATORY TO SUBJUGATE THE SELF

Baydāwī Sharīf is a well-known book of tafsīr. The author, ʿAllāmah Qādī Baydāwī *raḥimahullāh*, is from among the senior scholars. He repeatedly states in his tafsīr that a Ḥadīth states that if a person practises on the things which he knows, Allāh *taʿālā* confers him with knowledge of the things which are unknown to him. The words of this Ḥadīth are:

مَنْ عَمِلَ بِمَا عَلِمَ، أَوْرَثَهُ اللهُ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

We learn from this that if a person continues practising on his knowledge, it will continue increasing. If he gives up practising, his knowledge will decrease and there will be no blessings in it.

Note: This shows the immense need and importance of knowledge. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to practise to the utmost. Āmīn. (compiler)

There was a saint who used to frequent a certain place. A large number of people used to assemble for his programmes. The town did not have a venue which could accommodate everyone. This is why he used to deliver his lecture in a park. However, when he was put through a test, all the people became opposed to him. I thought to myself: O Allāh! Neither can their confidence be relied upon nor is there any basis for their scepticism.

I spoke about this on one occasion and a person was greatly impressed by it. He said: "You are absolutely correct. Our faith is like water in an earthen jar which gets filled quickly and gets empty quickly. The other is a goblet which takes long to fill and long to get empty." There is no doubt that while faith is most essential, it

is also very difficult. It is easy to acknowledge a person's excellence verbally, but difficult to have the same level of faith in the heart.

It was not easy to understand what Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say. He was a distinguished scholar and also possessed an impeccable intelligence. He conveyed knowledge and understanding to an entire world. On the other hand, you cannot even drive your own vehicle properly. Now I ask you, how is it for such people to compete with an ʿālim? People now say that each and everything which Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said is being realized. Do you know what is the easiest thing? The easiest thing is to make objections against an ʿālim and a shaykh. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Nowadays people consider physical closeness to the mashā'ikh to be the means to spiritual closeness. They remain in their company but do not rectify their carnal self whose rectification is obligatory. Frequenting the saints must be with the objective of reformation. If a person wants to rectify his self, he must have full confidence and faith in the one whom he is going to. He must have full respect for him in his heart. This is essential. If there is no faith at all and the saint is not recognized as he ought to, how will a person rectify himself through him?

A supernatural feat of a saint

A saint was travelling by ship. A wealthy person was also travelling on the same ship. These wealthy people like to do something to pass their time. He asked his companions to make arrangements to pass the time. They got hold of the saint whose head was cleanly shaven, and presented him to the rich man. The saint

was certainly a saint and a man of close affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā*. Those who were seated there would tap his [bald] head which caused a certain type of sound. They would all laugh at the sound. When they carried on in this manner for quite some time, the saint received inspiration [from Allāh *taʿālā*] saying: "These people have been most disrespectful towards you for too long now. I disapprove of it. If you wish, I will cause this ship to sink." The saint said: "O Allāh! You have the power to drown them all and You also have the power to enable them to recognize who I am, and to create in their hearts the eyes with which they can recognize me." Allāh *taʿālā* immediately caused all of them to have the true eyes to recognize the saint and they all sat respectfully before him.

It sometimes happens that a person does not recognize a true friend of Allāh *taʿālā* even though he may be right next to him. He could have acquired spiritual blessings from him but is deprived of that because of his inability to recognize him. Sometimes a person does not recognize even his own self.

I was having a discussion with an ʿālim from Allāhābād. He wanted to establish a spiritual bond with me although he was already connected to the saints. In the course of our discussion I said to him: "You already have a bond with the saints, what is the need to establish one with me?" He gave a beautiful reply. He said: "I have certainly frequented the saints and maintained a bond with them. However, after presenting myself in your company I realized that I haven't recognized my own self up to now nor have I recognized Dīn. I had interactions and attachments with people of Dīn but I was not focussed towards Dīn. Furthermore, I did not recognize my carnal self on account of which people will be cast into the Hell-

fire. I want to establish a bond with you so that my self will be rectified."

I said: "You are correct in whatever you said. I continually speak about the carnal self and expound its evils. You yourself said that you did not recognize your carnal self up to now, and that you recognized it after remaining in my company."

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

A Sufi Sāḥib was sitting alone and reading this couplet:

> I have already sacrificed my heart for Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. And I have fulfilled my obligations to Allāh *taʿālā*.

I was still studying in the madrasah and happened to go to the masjid in which the Sufi Sāḥib was sitting and reading the above couplet. I thought to myself: "He is a really successful man because he has fulfilled his obligations to Allāh *taʿālā*." I gauged from the manner in which he was reading the couplet that he is saying the truth, and he is saying it from his heart. It had such an effect on me that I addressed my own self saying: "You are studying in a madrasah yet you do not enjoy a spiritual condition like his!? Look at how pure his conditions are."

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40-41.

Without doubt, the love of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which the Sufi Sāhib referred to as "sacrificing of the heart" is a most important obligation and very difficult to acquire because once you place your foot in the path of Rasūlullāh's love, you will have to give up the demands of your carnal self and abandon your desires. This is no mean feat. If it is not easy to recognize the self, how can it be easy to give it up?!

A person had a spiritual bond with some other shaykh and he used to frequent me as well. I asked him: "You have a bond with such and such shaykh, and now you are coming to me. Tell me what have you understood?" He replied: "I certainly had spiritual bonds with other saints, but I only understood true Dīn after coming here."

The previous person said that he learnt to recognize the self by coming here, and this person said that he understood Dīn after coming here. I now ask you that if a person goes to the saints and does not understand Dīn nor does he recognize his self, then can his going to them be considered? In the same way I say to you that if a person enters the Tarīqah and still does not recognize his self, then can such a Tarīqah be considered to be valid in which the self cannot be recognized? The following couplet applies to such a situation:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

The one who composed this couplet is most correct. This is the condition of many of those who go for hajj. The same has become of the people of the Tarīqah of

today: “They seek Allāh *taʿālā* but unfortunately they have succumbed to their carnal self.”

A lecturer went to a certain place. A man said to his friend: “Come, let’s go listen to his lecture.” His friend asked: “First tell me, he may be an ʿālim and a great scholar, but is he also a human being? I am searching for the perfect human being.”

He must have been observing knowledge and practice in the educated ones but could not find noble character and manners in them. He was probably searching for noble character and saintly qualities in the ʿulamā’, and this is what he expressed as “a human being”. The same person then went to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* and found what he was searching for.

I went to my village on one occasion and asked the people by pointing with my fingers: “Is one better or two?” An intelligent man was present there and understood what I was meaning and said: “I have fully understood that a man needs Dīn together with this world.” I asked: “Is it obligatory to acquire Dīn together with the world? If ṣalāh is obligatory, wuḍū’ is obligatory with it. If you want to perform ṣalāh you will have to perform wuḍū’ as well. If the soul is purified through ṣalāh, the external body parts are purified through wuḍū’.”

There was a saint who had so much of belief in the left over water of wuḍū’ that whenever he fell ill, he would drink that left over water and he would recover from his illness. To perform wuḍū’ is an order of the Sharīʿat. It is an order from Allāh *taʿālā*. What then can be said of its blessings! And when wuḍū’ is followed by ṣalāh, then glory to Allāh – it is a miʿrāj of a believer.

I am explaining these fundamentals to you and want to show you how you lost the way. The Qur'ān is read to you, the Hadīth is quoted before you, yet I do not see any effect on you. The fact of the matter is that genuine knowledge of Dīn which could affect the heart and propel you towards action is not being presented to you. This is why people do not even develop a taste for Dīn. A lot of time and effort are needed to teach Dīn. You will not be able to learn much by just one or two days of superficial lectures.

I used to go to a certain place and the people there would want me to stay over until Friday so that I could deliver a talk to them. But I would not stay until then and leave before Friday. One day, the people imposed on me and did not give me an opportunity to leave until it was the time of jumu'ah. After the salāh, they made an announcement that I will be addressing them. They did this without asking me. All the people were now waiting for me. I thought to myself: What should I do now? If I do not speak, they will feel offended and they will say that these Maulwīs are too proud. At the same time, I did not feel like delivering a talk because the announcement was made without following the correct procedure – they did not ask me. Anyway, I gave a talk and said:

Listen! Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* did not speak continuously as you people do.[1] This is known as *sard* in Arabic. In other words, he did not speak non-stop. Instead, he would pause in-between. I said to the people: "Look, this is what the Hadīth says but you

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[1] سنن الترمذي، كتاب المناقب، باب قول عائشة رضي الله عنها ما كان يتكلم بكلام يبينه فصل حديث ٣٦٣٩.

people most probably expect to listen to a *sard* talk. I am therefore removing this expectation of yours from the beginning. It is you – the public – who have spoilt the Maulwīs. You are the ones who pass or fail them. When the Maulwīs saw that this is how they can become popular among the masses, they chose this method of speaking." I then explained this a bit and noticed that no one got up to leave. They were all sitting and listening silently. Some 'ulamā' were also present. Everyone approved of what I was saying and even the masses were quite impressed. Subsequently, the lectures of other speakers did not appeal to them and they would not invite anyone else from outside.

Delivering a lecture is also an act of worship

Just as salāh is an act of worship and there has to be a good intention for it, delivering a lecture is part of Dīn and an act of worship. The intention for it must also be good – the speaker's intention and the intention of the audience. If you have no faith and confidence in an 'ālim or shaykh, you will not benefit from him. A Maulwī Sāhib was delivering a talk at some place. As he was coming to an end, one fellow said to his friend: "The Maulwī Sāhib's fuel is finished now."

Did you see! If this is the type of respect for the 'ulamā', how will a person benefit from his talk? People requested me to give a talk on one occasion. I refused initially but when they persisted, I agreed. After the talk, a man came up to me and said something from his heart. He said: "I did not think you will deliver such a good talk." Did you see! I was requested to give a talk so that they could test me. It was not to learn Dīn and to hear the words of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. It was to see how I speak. When he said this, I said: "I

see, my examinations haven't come to an end as yet. I wrote examinations when I was in madrasah. I then gave an examination before Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. My self is still being tested all the time. And now you have come to test me." I added: "Dear brothers! What is all this which you are doing? Choose a religious life. The least you can do is start performing your salāh regularly because it is an obligation from Allāh *taʿālā*, it is the miʿrāj of a believer, and it is the first thing you will be questioned about on the day of Resurrection.

A poet rightly says:

> The day of Resurrection will be an extremely difficult day. Salāh will be the first thing to be questioned about.

The man was most impressed by this explanation as well and said: "You are certainly correct. You put an end to all my arguments."

I am saying all this while on the subject that if something is said solely for Allāh's sake, it will certainly have an effect. If you speak to the people for Allāh's sake, and they listen for Allāh's sake, it will certainly have an effect. If you listen with the intention of taking an effect, it will have an effect on you. You should at least make this intention. If your intention is to please the audience alone, then obviously the blessing will be according to your intention. Why, then, are you looking for an effect in your talk?

BAD CHARACTER IS THE CAUSE OF ALL EVIL

If a person has undertaken a deep study of the character of the pious predecessors – in fact, of the Prophets *ʿalayhis salām* as well – and after observing the conditions of people and compared them to the character of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, it will become clear to him that the entire destruction of Dīn and one's worldly life is on account of people's bad character. The one who has not experienced this or does not have knowledge of it is not addressed in this discussion of mine.

Some Muslims consider themselves to be totally free and independent as regards their dealings and interactions. They have virtually removed these from Dīn. As for character, everyone has expelled it from Dīn. They all consider the character which they learnt from their forefathers to be the original one.

The worshippers are not progressing because although they are worshipping, they are paying no attention whatsoever to character and ethics. The 'ulamā' complain that the worshippers have no manners. The worshippers have the same complaint about the 'ulamā'. In the same way, the 'ulamā' have this complaint about the laity, and the laity have the same complaint about the 'ulamā' – that there is no good character in them.

I believe that the worldly retrogression of Muslims is caused by the same bad character. In other words, it is because of their base and mean character that they do not have the ability to do even a minor worldly task properly. As for major worldly tasks, do not even ask about them. They do not even have the ability to take care of their houses. Their bad character has resulted

in the complete destruction of their homes. We see this openly by day and night. Even if a well wisher was to shed tears of blood, it will not suffice. The unfortunate thing about this is that people do not even perceive it. If the matter is brought to their attention, it still does not awaken their consciousness. The community is dead and its feelings and emotions are dead. In fact, they are wiped out and obliterated.

إنما الأمم بالأخلاق ما بقيت – فإن هم، ذهبت أخلاقهم ذهبوا

Nations will exist for as long as good character exists in them. When their good character ceases to exist, they too will cease to exist (as a nation).

There is a battle between the juniors and seniors in their houses. Father and son are at war. Their houses have become examples of Hell. There is no peace and comfort in them; there is only war and disputes. There is intense malice in their hearts. The following couplets of Shaykh Shīrāzī are most appropriate to this discussion:

> What is all this noise and clamour which I am observing? I am seeing the entire world filled with corruption and evil. Daughters are fighting with their mothers, and I see sons wishing for evil for their fathers. There remains no mercy and love between brothers. In the same way, the father no longer has any affection towards his son. Every person wants the next day to be better than the previous one, but the problem is that I am seeing every coming day to be worse than the previous one.

I feel that their can be no better description of an evil situation than the one portrayed by Shaykh Shīrāzī

rahimahullāh. The wise sages of the Muslim nation have always been expressing their sorrow when they observed situations of this nature. This is an explanation of the effect of bad character on their worldly lives. Consequently, they cannot earn a livelihood. Even if they do, they cannot sit and consume it peacefully. The rich and the poor are distressed. The masses are worried and so are the elite. The world has reverted to the bad character which existed before the commissioning of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as a Messenger of Allāh *taʿālā*. The days of ignorance have come back. The villages are wasted, the towns are desolate, and region after region is destroyed. A poet rightly said:

> O that blessed soul – *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – which is resting in the blessed land of Madīnah Munawwarah. Please wake up because the East and the West – the whole world – has been destroyed. Fill it and illuminate it with your effulgence and blessings.

We have no principles in our lives. We are most free and liberal in whatever we do. We are free from Dīn, free from worldly matters, free from our intellects, free from prudence, free from our fathers, free from our mothers – we are free from every thing that is correct and right. But we are not free from our slavery to our carnal selves. I do not know where this freedom will convey us to and what evil day it will show to us!

> Major changes and revolutions took place over the course of time. The skies changed and the earth changed, but friends and relatives have not changed.

Note: This is a most beneficial and effective theme. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE NEED TO CORRECT ONE'S INTENTION AND RECTIFY THE SELF

A person may go to a certain place with the wrong objective. This is why when going to a saint, one must go with the correct objective. He must clearly express the objective for which he came. We are not here to increase the number of people. If the objective is going to be wrong, of what benefit will a large gathering be?

Differences are so common nowadays that you even see differences between the shaykh and murīd. The murīd considers his view to be correct and the view of his shaykh to be wrong. Even if the murīd is convinced through proofs, he is not prepared to accept.

A man used to be in the service of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. He used to stand at the entrance and if any person intended to go in, he would say to him: "What do you want here? Go to such and such shaykh, go to such and such shaykh." Some people asked him: "Why do you do this? You ought to be encouraging people to come to a place like this so that they can derive benefit." He replied: "Those who come here are in one of two conditions. If a person is intelligent, he will not leave such a place even after I asked him to leave. If a person is stupid, it will be better for him to leave because what is the benefit of having an assembly of foolish and stupid people? Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Ṣāḥib will be disturbed by such people."

If a person is able to rectify his relationship with the creation and with Allāh *taʿālā* in today's times, then I will consider it to be a karāmat of that person because

these are most corrupt times; it is not easy to join two hearts.

The basis of rectification is that if a person's word or action is insincere, he must be apprised of it. The reason why people are not benefiting from the places of rectification is that they are filled with insincere people. They have harmed their own paths and are now causing harm to others.

Just as it is an obligatory duty of a shaykh to correct a person's relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*, it is his duty to correct the murīd's mutual relationships with people. Nowadays people think that a shaykh is there only to teach them waẕīfahs. If an expert and affectionate shaykh tries to resolve the mutual disputes of people and to set right their relationships, they think that this is beyond the duty of the shaykh. In fact, they think he is doing something which is opposed to his position. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

As long as a shaykh teaches them waẕīfahs and how to connect with Allāh *taʿālā*, the people are happy. But if he turns their attention to setting right their dealings and relationships, they disregard and scorn him. They become angry at him. I say, you can become angry if you want but I cannot see you getting destroyed and not showing you the path to success. Those who work for Allāh's pleasure do not bother about large crowds of followers. Instead, we focus on teaching you to maintain good and transparent relationships. A poet says:

> It is kufr to harbour mutual malice on the path of the Ṭarīqah. It is our principal to maintain the heart pure and clear like a mirror.

The mark of a true Muslim is that he makes the following du'ā' as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

O Allāh! Let there not be malice in our hearts towards the believers.[1]

A really excellent quality of a believer is that he has no ill-feeling towards his fellow Muslim.

A snake-catcher came into the town on one occasion. There was a snake which was inhabiting the house of a Hāfiz Sāhib. The snake-catcher went to his house and I joined him so that I could observe how he catches it and removes it from the house. The man stood at the entrance, uttered a few words, and the snake emerged angrily. He then carried it with a stick and placed it in a sack. Just as this snake-catcher removed the snake from the house, the saints remove a far more poisonous snake, i.e. the snake which is harboured in the carnal self. The carnal self is a very powerful and poisonous snake. A poet says:

> The carnal self is a poisonous snake. Do not think it is dead; it is just lying in hibernation because it cannot exercise its influence.

It is very difficult to gain control of the self. It is easy to engage in dhikr, spiritual meditation, etc. but most difficult to subdue the carnal self.

Whatever fights, disputes and corruption we see today are due to the carnal self. The greatest service a person can render today is to pay attention to

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[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 10.

removing and subduing the carnal self. Whichever person has a following must direct the attention of his followers to the rectification of the self. It is a very volatile issue; so no talk or lecture should be devoid of this subject. This is the real work for our times, and Allāh's pleasure lies in it. This is the demand of īmān. The reason why people are not being rectified today is that many people do not regard evil as evil. Those who consider it to be evil do not express it. Consequently, its evilness is gradually leaving the hearts of people. On the other hand, if these evils were vehemently disapproved, those who commit them will also develop an abhorrence for them and give them up.

Listen! I am speaking about a most essential matter. Listen to it, understand it and practise on it. This is not the time to suffice with listening. This is the time for action. You have been hearing for too long now.

Note: Māshā Allāh! Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* discussed most beneficial themes which ought to be practised. (compiler)

LEAVE THE CARNAL SELF AND YOU WILL FIND ALLĀH

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* people are beginning to understand matters related to the self. Our ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh have been continually discussing this topic. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* considers it to be farḍ-e-ʿayn. He wanted people to recognize the self because this is the way to rectify it and from here a person can progress. If a task is not done in the manner prescribed for it, how can it ever be completed? People are doing everything else but they have disregarded the self. I have examined my own self and observed the selves of people. This is why I say that the selves of the ʿulamā' are just like those of the masses. The only difference is that we have a tongue in our mouths through which we cast a veil over it while the masses cannot do this. This is how I subdue the self: I say to it that there are many evils which are not in the masses. The masses are therefore better than us as regards the self. I embarrass the self in this way and silence it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just look at the concern which Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* had for the rectification of his self. He also showed us the way to rectify it. We are very far away from this. How, then, can our rectification succeed? (compiler)

I said to one person: "Just look at that man who is your friend and see how he is talking. Is it that he does not understand the self at all or is it something else with him?" He replied: "No, he understands it very well but his self does not allow him to proceed." Look! A man has the knowledge and his friend say that he understands. But it does not necessarily mean that if a person has knowledge he will practise on it as well.

In the beginning I said that people are beginning to understand matters related to the self. The reason why I said it is that I received a letter in which a person wrote: "Thinking about the Hell-fire and picturing Allāh's displeasure have shaken my heart, but I am not able to do good actions. I have become extremely lazy. My practices are restricted to the five salāhs with congregation, a little bit of Qur'ān recitation and duʿā'. However, even when doing these few things I have to do battle with my self. I am constantly in fear because I do not know when this enemy at my side [my self] will overpower me. Now I do not even feel like laughing. I feel I am walking on a wall and I am about to fall."

This person is not a Maulwī Sāhib but he wrote quite well. I gauged that he is beginning to understand some of the points about the self. After all, once a person has the worry to rectify his self, then what more does he need? He will experience success after success. The same person wrote: "Show me a way through which it becomes easy for me to combat my self." I wrote that he must repeat the following duʿā' excessively:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ الْيُسْرَ وَالْمُعَافَاةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

O Allāh! I beg You for ease and pardon in this world and in the Hereafter.

What I meant was that a person ought to beg from Allāh *taʿālā* alone for ease and pardon. As long as Allāh *taʿālā* does not provide ease, a person will not be able to progress. If you want a task to be accomplished just by listening to a lecture then this will not happen. Many lecturers and speakers came and went, yet we did not take anything from them. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say that there was a saint who used to speak a lot. He received inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* to remain silent. He stopped talking. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* said: "I wrote a book on this subject, and on that subject, and so on. However, when I wrote on the virtues of Allāh's remembrance I realized that my previous books were not beneficial."

What do you think? Do you think that after that saint stopped talking he fell from grace in the sight of the people? Certainly not. In fact, I believe that his murīds must have started benefiting even more from him. They were not benefiting so much when he was talking. Man must first cast aside his self. Some people recognized the self after 30 years. They used to spend eons in the company of the saints; only then were they able to recognize the self. Whoever goes into the Hell-fire will go on account of the evils of the self.

Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says that people think that after a person is lowered in his grave, he becomes soil. We have become soil even before we died. The truth of the matter is that a person must obliterate himself long before he dies. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said on one occasion: Look at Abū Bakr! He is walking on earth but he is a Jannatī (a person of Paradise). In other words, he has freed himself from all the evils on account of which a person is deprived of Paradise. It is obligatory on us to establish a bond of love with Allāh *taʿālā* while we are in this world. We could rephrase the statement of Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* [quoted previously] and say: It is obligatory to have knowledge of the tricks of the self and to get rid off it. In other words, there are two obligations at one and the same time. One is to have

love for Allāh *taʿālā* and the other is to remove one's evils.

The issue concerning the self is not easy. Nevertheless, what we have to do from our side is that we must make efforts to rectify it even though it will not die if we try to kill it. It can only die if Allāh *taʿālā* showers His grace on us. Subsequently, it becomes like a bullet which disappears. It can no longer influence a person. Instead, it becomes a nafs-e-muṭma'innah – an obedient and compliant self.

Many of those who used to come to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* were people who could not give up their evil habits and actions. Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* used to rectify them. Many people would also be banished and expelled from there. When I was at the khānqāh at Thānah Bhawan, I used to get up in the latter part of the night and perform wuḍū' in the pond. I used to observe a man waking up and sitting up. One of my responsibilities was to copy the letters for Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh*. In this way, I used to learn about the condition of the people there. I therefore knew this man's conditions. He was a very old man but he was caught up in a certain sin which I cannot even speak about because I feared it immensely. I feared it coming to me. I am saying this to you to show you that when the self becomes accustomed to bad habits, it is very difficult to remove them. It is extremely difficult to rectify the self in such a situation.

This is why I am discussing the self with you. It is very easy to read waẓīfahs but most difficult to take control of the evils of the self. I consider taking control of the self to be the fundamental of sainthood. The saints spoke about the self, this is why I am speaking about it. If we do not speak about it, knowledge about it will

disappear. How will a person be able to practise if there is no knowledge?

Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* was put through a tribulation but Allāh *taʿālā* freed him. An infant bore testimony in his favour and Zulaykhā herself said:

اَلْئٰنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ، اَنَا رَاوَدْتُّهُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهِ

The truth has now been exposed: It was I who had tried to seduce him.[1]

Despite all this, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* said:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ، اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌ ۢ بِالسُّوْءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil except those upon whom my Lord has mercy.[2]

The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are among those on whom Allāh's mercy descends. Look at this statement of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* which Allāh *taʿālā* quoted. We learn from this that there is a nafs-e-ammārah as well. The Sufis undertake its rectification. Sometimes it takes a person a very long period of time to gain control over it.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that when a man becomes old and his hairs turn white, his heart ought to become white as well. What he meant was that if he was heedless during his young days, then although it is bad, a cause for heedlessness is found in him [he is young]. But once he becomes old and he still does not think of death, and is heedless of his presentation before Allāh *taʿālā*,

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 51.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

then this is a most evil situation. If the heart is black while the hairs are black, we can say that the internal and external selves are the same. But when the hairs turn white and the heart still remains black, then there is a contradiction between the internal and external selves. If the external is praiseworthy and the internal self is blameworthy, then it is similar to hypocrisy.

I just told you that people will go into the Hell-fire because of their carnal self. Now listen to a Ḥadīth in this regard:

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* quotes from Muḥammad ibn Wāsiʿ who said: Some of the people of Paradise will look at the inmates of Hell and they will converse with each other. The people of Paradise will ask them: "What happened to you? You had ordered us to do certain things which we did and on account of which we were admitted into Paradise. Yet we are seeing you in Hell?!" They will reply: "You are right. We certainly asked you to do certain things but we did not do them ourselves."

Another Ḥadīth states that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw certain people in the Hell-fire whose tongues were being cut off with scissors. When he asked about the identity of these people he was told: "They are the orators from your ummat whose tongues used to move like scissors in the world." In other words, they were very swift with their tongues but very lazy as regards actions.

A person asked me: "Show me a book from which I could learn about the self." I said: "I can certainly show you because there are books on this subject. However, let me tell you one more thing – save your tongue from backbiting. If you do this, you will be able to do many actions. On the other hand, books only

contain knowledge and sciences; you will not necessarily practise what you read. What, then, will you do with only knowledge? First practise on the things you know and then search for other knowledge. Save your tongue from backbiting. Save your stomach from harām food. If you do these two things, you will see how much of light develops in your heart." The man said: "I have learnt something extremely beneficial."

The prohibition of backbiting is mentioned in the Qur'ān:

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا، اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ.

O believers! Abstain from much suspicion. Surely some suspicions amount to sin. Neither spy on one another nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? You abhor it.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* prohibits three things in the above verse: (1) suspicion, (2) spying, (3) backbiting. The 'ulamā' state that this is the sequence which is normally followed. A person first has bad thoughts and suspicions about another. He is not satisfied and fully convinced with the suspicions so he starts to spy on him. After obtaining some knowledge about him, he speaks ill of him to others. This is known as backbiting

It is stated in the Aḥādīth that a backbiter will be told on the day of Resurrection to eat the flesh of his

[1] Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49: 12.

brother. He will make a funny face, so it will be said to him: "But you used to eat his flesh in the world." Reference is made to his backbiting. All the person's sins will be brought before him on the day of Resurrection and he will realize that it was his carnal self which caused him to witness this bad day.

The friendship of a righteous friend

The one whom you consider to be your friend in this world will be your enemy in the Hereafter except the one who is righteous. In other words, only the friendship of a person who is righteous and is freed from the dictates of his self is a worthy friendship. He is a sincere friend in this world and will prove his sincerity in the Hereafter as well.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَلْاَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ

On that day, friends will be enemies of each other except those who fear.[1]

A Hadīth states:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعِنِّيْ عَلٰى دِيْنِيْ بِالدُّنْيَا وَعَلٰى آخِرَتِيْ بِالتَّقْوٰى

O Allāh! Help me in my Dīnī matters through worldly means, and in the affairs of the Hereafter through piety.

وَاحْفَظْنِيْ فِيْمَا غِبْتُ عَنْهُ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ اِلٰى نَفْسِيْ فِيْمَا حَضَرْتُهُ

[1] Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43: 67.

Safeguard me from the things which are hidden from me, and do not cause me to rely on my self in matters which are before me.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked Allāh *taʿālā* for piety and to be saved from his self. The greatest enemy of man is his carnal self and it can be removed through piety. It encourages man to get occupied in unnecessary things. One of my friends used to read this couplet:

> O self! Give up all actions which are unnecessary, and do what will be necessary for you on the day of Resurrection.

The reason for the importance of taqwā

Taqwā is important because there can be no ostentation in it, while there can be ostentation in outward actions. If a person gives up suspicion, spying and backbiting; does anyone know that he is giving these things up? Similarly, when a person rectifies his character and moves towards piety, others cannot understand it. It is said with regard to Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* that he abstained from backbiting anyone although others used to backbite about him. He used to say: "If I have to backbite anyone, I rather backbite about my mother so that she can receive the rewards. I am not so foolish as to bear the difficulties of doing good deeds and to waste them away through backbiting." Tahajjud salāh is not compulsory but it is compulsory to abstain from backbiting. When I was in my village, I noticed the people remaining awake the entire night of Laylatul Qadr, but fighting against each other the next morning.

A mentor must himself abstain from sins

Those who are occupied in the work of rectification must ensure that they themselves abstain from sins so that the benefit can be passed on to others. I notice people are particular about certain acts of worship while neglecting others which are more important. It is desirable to perform optional salāh but it is obligatory to remove the evils of the carnal self. Yet, people are not paying attention to this. This is a major tribulation. When a person abstains from sins, a special light develops in his heart. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "Resolve to abstain from backbiting for one week and then see if the condition of the heart changes or not. You will certainly experience some light."

Going back to the person who asked me the names of books from which he could learn about the carnal self, I directed him towards good actions. I did this so that he realizes that knowledge is not the objective; action is. We have embraced knowledge and disregarded actions. If the importance of actions was in our minds, we would certainly act on the knowledge which we have. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to those who have knowledge but do not follow it with actions:

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَاةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوْهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ اَسْفَارًا

The similitude of those upon whom the burden of the Taurāh was laid, then did not bear it, is like that of an ass bearing a load of books on its back.[1]

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* explains the same theme in his *Gulistān*:

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[1] Sūrah al-Jumuʿah, 62: 5.

> No matter how much knowledge you acquire, if there is no practical application of it in your life, you are an ignoramus. You will neither be referred to as an erudite scholar nor a learned person. Instead, you will be regarded like an animal which is loaded with books.

In other words, if a donkey is loaded with some books, can it benefit from them in any way? Similarly, if a person knows several books by heart, but is devoid of action, then he and the donkey are the same in the sense that both did not benefit from those books. Allāh *taʿālā* presented this similitude to instil some shame in an ʿālim and to prompt him towards action. The ʿulamā' must take a lesson from it. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

A SEEKER MUST POSSESS INSIGHT

The reason why people are not benefiting from the Tarīqah today is that they are not observing the etiquette and prerequisites of the Tarīqah. Just as there are etiquette for everything else, there are etiquette for the Tarīqah. Bearing in mind that this is Allāh's path, just imagine the type of etiquette it will have and how important it will be to observe them. The erudite 'ulamā' say in this regard:

حرموا الوصول لتضييعهم الأصول.

People are deprived of reaching Allāh ta'ālā because they discard the principles.

The books of tasawwuf contain etiquette which must be observed by both the shaykh and the murīd. The mashā'ikh say with regard to admitting a person in the Tarīqah or refusing him admission:

على الشيخ أن لا يقبل المريد حتى يختبره وينظر قابليته، فإن وجده غير قابل ردّه. وإذا وجده قابلا للسلوك فليأخذه بطريق المجاهدة وليحاسبه على أنفاسه وحركاته، ويضيق عليه على قدر صدقه.[1]

A shaykh must not accept a murīd without first testing him and assessing his capabilities. If he finds him incapable, he must refuse him. If he finds him capable for the path, he must accept him by placing him on the path of spiritual striving and exertion, and by supervising his every breath and movement. He must also impose on him based on his sincerity (so that

[1] ترصيع، ص ٢٨.

when he bears the impositions, he may complete his journey on this path. Without this, a person cannot reach any station).

Did you see the strict pre-admission test in the Ṯarīqah! Nowadays no one ever bothers about this. In other words, differentiating between those who are capable and those who are not has disappeared. Consequently, the original Ṯarīqah has also departed. If this level of quest and dedication was not found in a seeker, the mashā'ikh did not deprive him completely. Instead, they established the system of bayʿat-e-tabarruk (a pledge for the acquisition of blessings) so that these people can at least acquire the blessings of the Ahlullāh.

The author of *Tarṯīʿ* writes:

وأما غالب مشايخ الزمن فإنما يلقون الذكر بقصد التبرّك حتى يدخل المريد في سلسلة القوم ومحبيهم والتسليم والاعتقاد لمقالتهم.

Most of the mashā'ikh of today teach and instruct dhikr to their murīds for the sake of acquiring blessings so that the murīd may enter the spiritual lineage of the mashā'ikh, and so that he is included among those who love them, accept them and believe in their statements.

ولا يجوز لهم التلقين على غير هذا الوجه وكذلك لباس الخرقة وإرخاء العذبة، إنما هو لمحض التبرك بزعم القوم، ومع هذا فلا يعدون من اتباعهم إلا إذا كانوا على طريقتهم التي كانوا عليها من الزهد والورع وترك الفضول، وخوف الله تعالى.

It is not permissible for the mashā'ikh to teach dhikr in any other way. Similarly, the practices of making a

murīd wear a garment and a turban are also for blessings (so that the murīd will at least emulate the mashā'ikh externally). Despite all this, the mashā'ikh do not consider such murīds to be their followers until and unless they also follow them on the path of abstention, asceticism, abstaining from futilities, and fear of Allāh taʿālā.

ومن هنا قيل إن الطريق من النصف الثاني في القرن العاشر صارت إسما لا رسما، لا الخيام كخيامهم ولا نساء الحي نساوه.

In the light of these conditions, it is said that the Ṯarīqah was reduced to the Ṯarīqah only in name from the second half of the tenth century. In other words, its reality no longer existed. This is why even their tents are no longer like theirs, nor have any other indications remained.

This clearly shows that an unworthy murīd can be kept but not for the path of sulūk. Rather, merely for blessings. The author explains this further in the footnotes. Those who are unworthy are not maintained on the path of sulūk because they are not capable for it. Their shaykh/murīd relationship is only in appearance. Despite this, the benefit of it is that it is a means for establishing a bond with the Sufis and having love for them. This results in the hearts becoming attached to each other. In other words, the murīd's heart with that of his shaykh's, the shaykh's with his own shaykh's, until this link reaches Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Consequently, the murīd receives internal and spiritual benefits from Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This benefit is certainly not small.

However, when the time comes for others to revert to these murīds, then it is not permissible for them to

instruct them in this path because they did not learn this work, and they neither went to the mashā'ikh with this in mind nor remained in their company for this purpose. It is therefore wājib on them that if anyone comes to learn the Tarīqah from them, they must say: "We are only externally attached to the Tarīqah; we do not have the internal qualities of the mashā'īkh."

Ponder over these conditions of the mashā'ikh and see their level of integrity. Nowadays neither is such integrity found in the shaykh nor in the murīd. How, then, can they benefit from the Tarīqah? The prerequisite for accepting a murīd as stated in *Tarsīʿ* is explained in another way in *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl*. I am quoting it here to clarify the point further.

ومنها أن يجب على الشيخ أن لا يقبل مريدا حتى يختبر بأن يعلم أنه من طلاب الدنيا أو الآخرة، أو طالب الله أو هل هو من أهل الغفلة أو التيقظ، أو هو محقق على بصيرة في الإرادة، أو مقلد تابع لرسوم الخلق.[1]

From among the etiquette which are applicable to the shaykh is that he must not accept a murīd until he ascertains whether the latter is desirous of this world or of the Hereafter, or he is seeking Allāh taʿālā. Moreover, he must check whether he is from the negligent or the vigilant. Also, is he merely following the customs of people or is his desire to become a murīd based on a genuine insightful intention.

The author of *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl* is also saying that it is necessary for a shaykh to test a murīd before admitting him into the Tarīqah. He then provides

[1] منهج العمال، أز بياض حضرت والا.

details about this test. That is, he must check whether he is desirous of this world or of the Hereafter. Is he a negligent person or a vigilant one. Is he merely following customs or does he have full insight as regards his intention.

I would like to add something about insight. The author made a most valuable and essential statement. In other words, just as it is essential for a murīd to commence his journey in this path on sincerity, as stated by the mashā'ikh:

فأول قدم للمريد في هذه الطريقة ينبغي أن يكون على الصدق

It is necessary that a murīd's first step in this path be on sincerity.

In like manner, when he intends entering the Ṯarīqah, the shaykh must check whether the murīd is doing it with insight or not.

The definition of baṣīrat

It is generally assumed that baṣīrat (insight) is a quality of the shaykh and is acquired by the experts and masters only. The ʿulamā' define baṣīrat as follows:

هي قوة للقلب المنور بنور القدس يرى بها حقائق الأشياء وبواطنها بمثابة البصر للنفس كما في التعريفات للسيد.

Baṣīrat is a power within the heart of a person which is illuminated by the light of Allāh taʿālā. Through it, a person can see the reality of things and their internal points. This is exactly like how the self has the power of sight through which he can see the external forms of things.

It is true that only the mashā'ikh enjoy the highest level of baṣīrat, but it has different levels. One such level is enjoyed by a novice. In the previous quotation it was stated that the shaykh must check if the murīd has insight or not. The baṣīrat in this context refers to this level which a novice enjoys. In other words, the shaykh must see if the murīd has insight which is in line with his condition. This means he must have that level of insight through which he can decide on following this path and in the selection of a shaykh. Insight as regards following the path means that he must think about it carefully before he can tread it. He must realize that it is Allāh's path and it will have tests and tribulations which he will have to bear.

The 'ulamā' state that a person will have to enter the Ṭarīqah with this intention and resolution that no matter how much his self dislikes obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, how much loss he suffers as regards his wealth and life, no matter how much personal or worldly benefit he loses, and no matter how much the people criticize him; he will not give up his obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Obviously, such a strong resolution cannot be realized without baṣīrat. The reason why baṣīrat is so important for a seeker is that without it, his entry into the Ṭarīqah is not considered. If he does not have baṣīrat, a small push or shove will be enough to remove him from this path.

The murīd also needs baṣīrat as regards his selection of a shaykh. When he makes someone his shaykh, he must have faith and confidence in him. He must realize that he is a shaykh who has Allāh's recognition, and who knows the ups and downs of the path. The shaykh himself has reached Allāh *taʿālā*

and has the ability to convey others to Allāh *taʿālā*. The reason why this much of baṣīrat is necessary is that many difficulties are encountered in this path.

The shaykh will test his murīd. In fact, the Sufi masters say that if a shaykh observes a genuine quest in the seeker, he must put him on the path of striving and scrutinize all his movements with a sharp eye. Furthermore, he must impose restrictions on him in proportion to his genuineness.

If a murīd's selection of a shaykh is not based on baṣīrat – i.e. not after thinking about it carefully – it is possible he will consider an instruction of the shaykh to be too strict and harsh which will then result in bad thoughts about the shaykh, and he may even raise objections against him. It has been observed that when a murīd has baṣīrat, he does not leave his shaykh under any condition. How can he leave him when the blessings of his shaykh have reached him by virtue of his sincerity? If a murīd leaves the court of a genuine shaykh, it will be proof that he did not have baṣīrat and confidence in the shaykh from the very beginning. Listen to the following incident on this subject:

A shaykh said to his murīds: "You are aware of the fact that the ʿurs which takes place here was initiated and popularized by me. However, I was in the wrong and I was doing something which is against the Sharīʿat. Allāh *taʿālā* guided me so I am now telling you that there will no longer be an ʿurs or any similar custom."

On hearing this, all the murīds became angry with him, stood up and left his assembly saying: "He is not a hājī; he is a pājī (a scoundrel)." (We seek forgiveness from Allāh *taʿālā*)

The shaykh was not bothered about how many people attend his assembly and how many do not. However, when he turned around and looked, he saw one murīd sitting in his place. The shaykh asked him: "Brother, why didn't you leave?" He replied: "Why should I go? I selected you as my shaykh and I will follow you." The murīd then pointed towards a nearby grave and said: "Even if the shaykh from this grave emerges from it and asks me to leave you I will not leave."

This was the level of his baṣīrat in the sense that he held on to the shaykh after thinking and pondering over the matter carefully. Therefore there is no question of being displeased with the shaykh and losing confidence in him over trivial matters.

People of the past used to work with principles; this is why they succeeded. The situation was not like how it is today where people know nothing about faith and confidence in the shaykh, and they have no baṣīrat. They feel that mere physical closeness is everything and sufficient.

This is a spiritual path; not a physical one

I constantly explain to people that this path is not a physical path; it is a spiritual one. It is to do with the heart. But people do not understand. Instead, they think that we desire large crowds and physical services. This is why they are happy with large crowds and physical proximity. They feel that if they make us happy – i.e. they fulfil our expectations – then they will receive khilāfat very quickly.

I say that this is most shameful for the mashā'ikh but sadly, the murīds are to a certain extent correct in their thoughts. Study the etiquette for the shaykh, murīds and the Ṭarīqah in the books; and then look at the practices of the people. You will find no similarity

between the two. For example, baṣīrat was an important prerequisite for a murīd. Yet how many people today revert to a shaykh on the basis of baṣīrat? And how many mashā'ikh are there who demand this baṣīrat from their murīds? In fact, not very long ago, if a shaykh practised on these principles – i.e. accepted or rejected a murīd on the basis of his baṣīrat – then instead of listing this among the shaykh's salient qualities, people raise objections against him. Not only that, they even went to the extent of rejecting him. The more surprising thing about this is that the 'ulamā' are more vociferous than the masses in their objections against such a shaykh. In other words, those of whom it was expected that they would recognize the true worth of such a shaykh and support him did the opposite by being even more opposed to him.

A khalīfah calls his shaykh a Christian

I saw this with my own eyes. A shaykh conferred khilāfat to one of his murīds and appointed him as his confidant. But when he began having bad thoughts about his shaykh, then the very same shaykh whom he used to refer to as an 'allāmah and a quṭb, he now referred to as a Christian.

Do you know the cause of this deterioration? It is the same absence of baṣīrat. The evil in the man did not develop in him today; rather from the very beginning he had no baṣīrat when he appointed the shaykh as his shaykh and he had no confidence in him. If not, he would not have done this.

What a sad state of affairs. On one hand you have an ordinary person saying that even if you, your shaykh or his shaykh ask me to leave you I will not leave. And on the other hand you have an 'ālim stooping to such

a level. This is a most admonitory incident. An ordinary murīd has baṣīrat while an ʿālim doesn't?! It is most astonishing.

It is observed that an ignorant person who has full faith and confidence in his shaykh does not change; he remains constant. But there are many ʿulamā' who changed. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Investigate before selecting a shaykh

We learn from the statements of the mashā'ikh that a murīd must first be certain in his intention. In other words, taqlīd is not required at the exact time of wanting to become a murīd. For example, a certain shaykh is popular so he runs behind him. Instead, he must appoint a shaykh as his guide after full investigation and with baṣīrat.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say that if you want to pledge bayʿat to anyone, you must think about it carefully even if it takes you ten years. He pledged bayʿat to Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* after many years of investigation and inquiry. Once you choose someone as your shaykh, it is not permissible for you to make objections because the slightest slip up will result in your eternal misguidance. When a shaykh is chosen after investigation and with baṣīrat, the murīd must follow him and make his taqlīd in matters related to his rectification. But today the people do the opposite. In other words, when it is the time to investigate, they make taqlīd; and when they have to make taqlīd, they start making investigations.

An ʿālim personally said to me: "We pledged bayʿat to such and such shaykh." I said: "Ḥaḍrat Maulānā [Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī] *raḥimahullāh* had a high regard

for your father, and you yourself used to go to Thānah Bhawan. Did you not derive any benefit from Hadrat Maulānā?" He replied: "Yes. I was studying in Deoband. I took one of my father's letters and went to Thānah Bhawan. Hadrat Maulānā was most affectionate towards me and I also had the honour of being in his service. But I did not turn my attention towards rectification even though my father constantly advised me to go to Thānah Bhawan. At that time, I did not understand these things. Then one day while I was in Deoband, I saw many students pledging bayʿat to a certain shaykh, so I followed suite."

This is an example of making taqlīd at a time when a person ought to have investigated first. He is just one example; there are countless others like him – they don't investigate. How will they ever investigate when they don't even know that they are supposed to investigate!? Sometimes when a person pledges bayʿat to someone without investigation, he ends up regretting it. What is the benefit of regretting now?

TWO IMPORTANT THEMES FROM THE MATHNAWĪ

A major portion of Maulānā Rūm's words centre around two themes: (1) the objective, i.e. the oneness of Allāh *taʿālā*, (2) the method, i.e. following a Sufi master. Furthermore, the Maulānā is an expert in explaining major realities through stories and anecdotes. The story of the unseen physician is related at the beginning of his book. He titles it as follows:

The story of a king who falls in love with a slave-girl. He purchases her, while she remains in eternal grief because she was in love with a goldsmith. The king tries to treat her but because pseudo-physicians treat her, her illness increases. The king finally finds an unseen physician whose plan works out for the better. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* writes in this regard:

Now that you have learnt the cause of lightness and darkness, it is your duty to rid your heart of the rust. Only then will you perceive the light of Allāh *taʿālā*. You can learn the method of getting rid of the rust from this example. You will have to listen to this story because it is in line with our condition. The similarity between the two is that just as the king fell in love with the slave-girl, the soul (the king) fell in love with the carnal self (the slave-girl) and became obedient to it. Just as the slave-girl was in love with the goldsmith, the carnal self is in love with worldly pleasures. The king reverted to unqualified physicians so he did not benefit from them. In the same way, if a person reverts to unqualified mashā'ikh, he will not benefit from them. The physician from the unseen treated this condition by giving the goldsmith a medicine which caused him to appear extremely ugly. This resulted in the slave-girl disliking him. In the

same way, an expert shaykh separates worldly pleasures gradually from the carnal self. The self eventually gives them up completely and it gains salvation from carnal illnesses. The king (the soul) also benefits from this. The gist of this is that if you want to free yourself from the goldsmith, you must revert to an expert shaykh and act on his instructions. He will rectify you in a manner which is suited to you. I said "gradually" because if you try to give up worldly pleasures all at once, you will not be able to give them up. Only an expert shaykh can understand this. He is an expert in his field and is also extremely affectionate towards his patients. This is why they become healthy at his hands.

On the other hand, an unqualified shaykh will leave you confused throughout your life and you will derive no benefit whatsoever from him. I am telling you that this is not easy. It is neither easy for a physician to be an expert, proficient and affectionate; nor is it easy for a patient to identify an expert.

Do you know how this entire effort became spoilt? When we go anywhere, the masses adulate us but we do not bother about them. Our bother for them entails teaching them Dīn. I am speaking clearly and frankly. If you understand it, well and good. When we see people of a certain place following us, coming to the station to meet us, coming in large crowds to shake hands with us, then we think that we have achieved our objective. What objective? That people must accept us. If this is achieved, then the original objective of conveying Dīn to them is lost.

The difference between an unqualified shaykh and a qualified one

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* made reference to an unqualified shaykh, so listen in this regard. Nowadays no one speaks about this. Do you think that unqualified shaykh's existed only in his era and that they are not found today? Why do people not speak about them? There is certainly a difference between a qualified shaykh and an unqualified one. A qualified shaykh does not focus on his personal profit and loss. Instead, he is most affectionate and concerned, and through his words and actions he is saying in the words of a poet:

> I am swallowing your grief, there is no need for you to worry. I am more affectionate to you than 100 fathers.

An unqualified or pseudo-shaykh worries about his own benefits. This is the criterion as explained by Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh*. I am not saying it, so you people cannot get angry at me.

It is not easy for a person to be concerned and worried about another, and to bear his grief for him.

An expert physician is one who has concern for the sick, and he himself becomes concerned and sick by their illness. In the same way, an expert shaykh is one who has the pain of the people in his heart, and is always grieved and sick over their pitiable condition. This is why I am saying that it is not easy to be on such a level. It is very easy to sit, talk and converse; just as it is very easy for you people to assemble before a person. However, nothing can be accomplished by that alone. Rectification requires something much more. The seniors of Dīn of every era did their utmost to understand this, and they delved

on the topic of who is qualified and who is not. They say that the most harmful thing is the company of an unqualified or pseudo-shaykh. And an unqualified shaykh is one who has no concern about his perfection. As for the one who has some concern about his perfection, he is not qualified but he is heading in that direction. The company of the one who is aware of his defects is not harmful. This worry and concern of his will develop the concern for perfection in others. If not Dīn, he will at least acquire a concern for Dīn and will express remorse over the fact that he is not religious. A grief of this nature is not to be disregarded. Even if the pain of failure develops in a seeker, it is a boon. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Ṣāḥib Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* writes to a seeker as follows:

> If you acquire remorse and the pain of failure after striving for a thousand years, you have acquired everything. If you do not get the light from the sun, you will certainly receive its heat.

An unqualified shaykh is harmful

In the previously quoted incident, Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* said that the king first sought treatment for the slave-girl from unqualified physicians and did not benefit in any way. In fact, the more they treated her the more her ailment increased. The treatment which eventually proved to be beneficial was from the physician of the unseen. An expert physician has no need for fees and he does not keep a stock of medicines. He merely writes a prescription and asks the patient to obtain the medication from wherever he wants. His main concern is the wellbeing and good health of his patient. In fact, his concern and affection are of such a level that he himself falls ill on account

of his patient. And he feels better when his patient feels better. This is why I said that it is not easy to be like this; and this is the meaning of affection.

There was a doctor who used to say that he benefits from the poor people. When I heard this, I thought to myself that this is a real doctor. An expert is always selfless. In fact, he considers even a taint of selfishness to be an insult to him. In the same way, a qualified shaykh falls ill on behalf of everyone. He bears the grief of all his murīds and is constantly worried about how to rectify them. He has no personal motives. This is why he does not even desire the praises of people. Whether someone praises him or not, speaks highly of him or disparages him – everyone is equal in his sight. The objective of his work is Allāh's pleasure and being of use to Allāh's creation. Of what use is there if someone praises his talk? What personal benefit does he get from it? The most he can do is obtain the praises of people; but there is no real benefit. On the contrary, when people praise him verbally, see to his needs, invite him for meals, and so on; then these things certainly damage his body and soul. Eating too much will cause physical damage. And when he is praised, his carnal self will feel bloated – this will cause him spiritual damage.

What I am trying to explain to you is that eloquence and articulacy are adjectives for words, they are not adjectives for the heart and soul. This issue has been very well understood by a poet of your city, Allāhābād. He is Akbar Husayn. He said:

> Dīn is not born out of books, lectures and riches. It is born from the gaze of the saints.

You take so much of joy in quoting this couplet yet when we say the same thing you feel offended. There is no denying the benefit of eloquence and articulacy. Nonetheless, what I want to show you is that the point which your poet understood has not been understood by your speakers and orators. It is so unfortunate. The effect of rhetoric is accepted, but it is not possible to acquire spirituality through it. A poet may select the best words and arrange them in a most beautiful manner, but it is not possible for his own self to come to life in the same manner and to turn his focus on it while he can stir on others through it. This is because a genuine spiritual condition will not develop merely from words. Rather, there is a need to create spirituality in them. I am trying to make you understand the same point which the poet of your city understood.

He knows that people cannot succeed by mere words nor from listening only. Instead, if the speakers and listeners want to be successful, they will need spirituality as well. Even now if a few people were to speak on this subject, we can succeed. In other words, we say to them that we are not in need of the respect and admiration which you give to us. We want you to learn Dīn. There is no benefit in falling at someone's feet without forethought and understanding. How shameful it will be for us when people assemble around us after thinking that we are religious, yet we do not make this a means for connecting them to Allāh *taʿālā*! Instead, we make their adoration and admiration our objectives! This is such a terrible thing to do.

People accepted the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh of every era. However, because they were sincere, they were not satisfied with a mere bond. Instead, they used

that bond as a means to create a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Man cannot learn this of his own accord. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* came into this world to teach this to us. The seniors of Dīn strove in this regard and sacrificed their lives for it. Only then where they able to teach the people, and the people were able to understand.

Nowadays we feel that if we invite outside scholars once or twice a year, and have them to deliver dynamic speeches, then the entire community will be rectified and reformed. Listen! You will not achieve much by doing just that. You will have to search for qualified people. In fact, people in every town and village will have to revert to qualified people from whom they must learn Dīn. If a person is not qualified himself and does not know the path himself, how will he be able to guide and steer others? A poet says:

> If you haven't seen the path yourself, how can you be a guide for others? O you who does not know! Strive so that you come to know.
>
> O son! Strive and work hard before the teacher and litterateur so that you can become a teacher and litterateur in the future.

Rectification is done through local ʿulamā

Rectification is always done by local ʿulamā'. If people do not learn from their local ʿulamā', their rectification can never be realized. Yes, if the local ʿulamā' are not able, an outside ʿālim must be invited. But he must be given sufficient opportunities to serve and do work. In other words, he must be invited regularly. The benefit of this is that he too will realize that the people want

to learn from him; and so he will take it as a responsibility and serve them with all his heart.

As for the present practice of inviting one scholar today and another one tomorrow, this will cause each scholar to assume that the basis for the Dīnī work in this area does not revolve around him. Instead, others also come here. Consequently, his focus will certainly decrease and he will not perceive it as his responsibility. There is nothing but harm for you. Every task can be accomplished when its procedure is followed. And the procedure is as I described above. That is, if the people of an area learn Dīn from their local 'ulamā', much more will be achieved. Yes, if there is no 'ālim in the town, then you have no alternative. It is still necessary for you to learn Dīn. You will have to emigrate to another place and study Dīn there.

This is my view in this regard. If you understood it, well and good, and accept it. If not, you can do as you want. However, if we are also present in your times, why should our views not be relied upon? If you accept the views of everyone else, why should you not accept ours? Nowadays everyone has the right to vote. We also have that right and so do our murīds. So this is our view in this regard. If it appeals to your understanding then accept it and act accordingly. If not, do as you like.

When a person does something according to the procedure which is laid down for it, he will certainly see its fruits according to his efforts. If he strives more, he will receive more. If he strives less, he will see less. He will not be deprived totally.

Understand what the procedure is. It is sincerity. In other words, if a person is a lecturer, there must be sincerity in his lecture. Just as sincerity is essential for him, so is it for the audience. The speaker must

speak for Allāh's sake, and the audience must listen for Allāh's sake.

Let me tell you something – you will find very few people really understanding those dynamic and forceful speeches which you hear, and talks which are filled with eloquence and rhetoric. This is because a person has to have some intelligence to understand a thing; and people do not have it nowadays. If they do not understand a talk, what benefit will they gain from it?

There was a grammarian by the name of Akhfash. He had a goat which he had domesticated. He would hold the goat by its ear and explain one grammar rule to it. He would then release its ear and ask: "Did you understand?" As per its habit, the goat would shake its head. Akhfash would conclude from this that it did not understand. So he would repeat the lesson a second and a third time. By doing this, he became a well known grammarian. In the same way, the lecturers and orators continually deliver talks to the masses who do not understand anything. The lecturers and orators become experts in their field while the masses remain as they were. They neither have any affinity with knowledge nor with practice. The orator thus reaches a high rank while the masses remain as they were. I am saying this from experience. You people cannot object in the least to it.

I also notice that a lot of money is spent on a jalsah. Several hundred rupees are spent on small flags alone. These things neither bring any Dīnī benefit to the people nor any worldly benefit. If they were to spend the same amount on the poor, I don't know how many stomachs would get filled with it. You will not understand all these things so at least listen to this much – there is no benefit in merely assembling like

this. I see the same condition in the madāris. A class will have a hundred students but not a single one understands the teacher's lesson. In the same way, people assemble around the mashā'ikh and want to take all their time away, but they do not understand a single point. What action will they do? The fact of the matter is that the ʿulamā' are frightened of you. This is why they do not teach you Dīn. I am saying these things to you because I have removed that fear from me. For how long can a person continue fearing you people?

I told you previously that work can only be achieved when the correct procedure is followed. And that is for an ʿālim to be an expert in the external and internal sciences. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لِيَنْفِرُوْا كَآفَّةً ط فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوْآ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ.

It is not [proper] for the Muslims to go forth all together. Why, then, did a section from each group not go forth so that the remaining ones may acquire an understanding of religion and inform their people when they return to them so that they might be on their guard?[1]

There are several benefits in a group remaining behind. A major benefit is a Dīnī benefit which is mentioned in the verse itself. There are also worldly benefits in this. For example if everyone goes out, it is not far fetched for the Islamic state itself to lose its control. Acquiring an understanding of religion is specifically reserved for the "remaining ones" because

[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122.

knowledge is generally acquired within a town or city, or when a person is not travelling. (*Bayān al-Qur'ān*)

Did you see what the seniors of Dīn are saying! Yet, you feel that if you invite a scholar from outside – and that too, just once or twice a year – it is enough. You do not see the need for an ʿālim in every residential area. I say that there is a need for ʿulamā' to work in every area or else the entire nation will go astray. It will then become extremely difficult to teach Dīn. When an entire nation is affected by something, it is very difficult to remove. In order for the work to succeed, it is essential for you to hold on to an ʿālim. As long as you do not hold on to someone, the work will not be done.

What I am saying to you is the fact, but you are probably thinking to yourself that these words are not appealing, and the speech is not dynamic. So my answer to you is that take this subject matter from me and present it to an ʿālim who will rephrase it with appealing words.

Unity of purpose is a most important issue which has been discussed for many centuries. The ʿulamā' say that just as there is one Allāh for the entire universe, and just as a woman has only one husband, in the same way a person has only one shaykh. When the objective is one, the path is one. If you are going to hold on to several shaykhs, it will result in confusion. In the same way, if you decide on one speaker or orator, you will benefit to a certain extent. When you have one teacher, it becomes easy for you to develop an affinity with him. But if you study something under one teacher, then leave him for another teacher, and then go on to a third; you will not develop an affinity with any of them. You will not learn anything because it is possible that one is religious while the other is

not, or one is a distinguished scholar while the other is not. In such a case, the student will not know who to turn to.

I have noticed that when a student remains devoted to one teacher, he is successful. As for the one whose focus is constantly moving, he is never successful.

I said previously that sincerity is essential – both for the shaykh and the murīd. In the same way, it is essential for the speaker and the listeners. When a person maintains a bond with one person, he acquires his affection and special attention. You can understand this through the following example. If a person invites just you to a meal, you will perceive some special treatment. But if he has an open invitation for a large number of people and you are also invited, you will not perceive that much of special treatment.

When a sincere person speaks to people about Dīn, they will most certainly pay heed. I am a Muslim and you are Muslims. If we speak about Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then how can we not accept it and pay heed? Yes, if someone identifies an ulterior motive, he will not accept. But if he realizes that the shaykh wants to make him a strict follower of the Sunnat and that whatever he is saying is solely for his wellbeing, he will certainly pay heed. Many people of the past accepted the mashā'ikh and sacrificed their lives in this path.

The essential point is to make people understand. If they are not made to understand, their condition will go from bad to worse. The seniors noted all these things down, and said that personal taqlīd is necessary for the preservation of these teachings. In our times this is the means of preserving Dīn. If permission was given to follow the views of all the

Imāms, people will follow the desires of the carnal self. If the view of a certain Imām is in line with a person's desire, he will adopt that view. This will entail following of one's desires, and not following of Dīn. The same rule has been laid down by the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh in the field of rectification and reformation. They say that one can gain maximum benefit from just one shaykh.

The 'ulamā' explained detailed rules about taking benefit from several mashā'ikh. The seniors write in the books of the Tarīqat that situations and conditions differ. Does a person want to acquire blessings from several people or does he want to receive training from each of them? If the objective is blessings, he may acquire from whomever he wants. There are no restrictions in this regard. A person can find many blessed people. He can go to several people for blessings – there is no kingship in this in the sense that one is antagonistic towards the other.

However, if a person desires training, then the principles for it are laid down by the mashā'ikh. They say that training must be from one person. The mashā'ikh who laid down this principle are pure from evil and castigation, and they are most honest and selfless people. They unanimously state that a person must have just one shaykh towards whom a murīd is drawn, and before whom he submits. The murīd is so subdued by the shaykh that his self becomes absorbed by him, and he complies with him as regards his orders and prohibitions as though he is a corpse in the hand of the one who is bathing him.

If a person cannot find a shaykh whose spiritual condition draws him to himself, he must check who from the present mashā'ikh is most abstinent, and

has recognized the rules of the Sharīʿat and Ṯarīqat the most. He must then include himself as his murīd.

The mashā'ikh also state that when a person finds the first or second type of shaykh, it is not permissible for him to leave him and go to someone else. If his self tries to deceive him into thinking that a certain shaykh is more qualified than his own, he must not act on it in the least. In other words, he must not go to meet him with the intention of training. As for going to him for blessings, duʿā', to serve him, etc. no one has prohibited this. If a murīd is so overwhelmed by his own shaykh that he does not pay the least attention to another shaykh, then this is another matter which stems from his intense love and affection for his shaykh. He cannot be reprimanded for this.

I was saying to you that once a person finds a qualified shaykh, it is not permissible for him to flee from him and go to someone else. The reason for this is that it sometimes stems from following the desires of the self. In other words, he is probably falling short in fulfilling the rights of his shaykh and feels frustrated, so he wants to flee from him. It is not permissible for him to do this. Assuming he does go to another shaykh, and the latter comes to know that he has fled from a certain shaykh who is qualified, then it is not permissible for the second shaykh to accept him. He must return him to the first shaykh.

There are many whose ability has been taken away from them when they see severity in the training programme of a shaykh. They turn away from such a shaykh and start accusing him of defects and evils which he is totally free from in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. Now this person who has been deprived wants to deprive others as well. The carnal self is a person's

enemy which wants to destroy the person. He must never follow his self especially in matters related to objections against one's shaykh. Even if he sees him on the lowest of conditions, he must find a suitable explanation for it, try to give a good reason for it, and consider it to be an acceptable objective.

Understand well that when a person finds suitable explanations for the doings of the mashā'ikh, disregards their conditions, refers their matter to Allāh *taʿālā*, devotes himself to worrying about his own self, and strives to this end according to his ability; then there is hope that such a person will realize his internal and external objectives in a very short time. On the other hand, the one who opens the door of objections against the mashā'ikh, and looks at the actions and statements with a critical eye – then it is a sign of deprivation and a bad death. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. Such a person can never find success.

Nowadays I see that people really agree about making objections about a qualified shaykh when they come across one. Even the educated people have made peace with the laity – both get together to criticize the mashā'ikh. Is this what you call knowledge? Real knowledge means that a person is able to recognize the good and evil in beliefs – this is acquired through the science of *ʿilm al-kalām* (scholastic theology). In the same way, he must be able to differentiate between good and bad character. This is the responsibility of the science of tasawwuf. Furthermore, he must know about good and bad actions. This is taken care of by the science of fiqh or jurisprudence. Now if a person cannot differentiate between good and bad even after studying and teaching, and he cannot distinguish the qualified from

the unqualified, then of what benefit was his knowledge?

If he objects to a saint because he saw a most insignificant condition in him, it means that his knowledge did not benefit him in any way. You probably did not understand what "a most insignificant condition" means, so listen in this regard. Just yesterday I hit a student because of some of his unacceptable actions. You people saw it and you must have thought that it is "a most insignificant condition" while I felt that it was essential to hit him at that time. He was given a punishment in line with his crime.

جَزَآءً وِّفَاقًا

A full recompense.[1]

Now listen, the student has come right. You are considering it to be "a most insignificant condition" while it resulted in "a most significant condition" in him. This is what you call tarbīyyat – training – which is needed occasionally.

Someone said to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* that he is experiencing evil whisperings which are urging him to renounce Islam and become a Christian. Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* gave him a hard slap and said: "Go, go far away. Islam is offended at having a shameless man like you." The person relates himself: "When Ḥaḍrat struck me, the thought crossed my mind that if I left here, there is no good for me. I will have to confine myself within these four walls. The whispering came to an end."

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[1] Sūrah an-Naba', 78: 26.

Now I ask you, if a person is protected from becoming a renegade by giving him one slap, can it considered to be a bad thing? This is my explanation on "an insignificant condition".

The other principle which the mashā'ikh laid down [as mentioned previously] is that you must select a shaykh whose condition attracts the murīd to him, and makes him submissive before him. Now listen to an explanation of this principle.

It is stated in the book of jurisprudence, *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*, that if people pledge bayʿat to an imām and he is unable to exercise his authority over them – and is in fact, lacking and incapable in this regard – then he will not remain an imām notwithstanding the pledge which was given to him. I say, the same applies to a shaykh. In fact, it applies to an ʿālim and a lecturer/speaker as well. In other words, if he cannot have an effect on them, then what kind of ʿālim is he? And what kind of shaykh is he if the seekers cannot benefit from him?

These are rules and regulations as laid down by the ʿulamā'. There is no issue of Dīn regarding which full details are not found. This is why we have to convey Dīn to the people clearly and frankly whether anyone accepts or not.

A liberal attitude has crept into the temperaments of people. Consequently, they don't understand when they are spoken to in a soft manner. This is why a shaykh has to resort to sternness occasionally. However, when he resorts to strictness in the field of training and rectification, people consider it to be a defect in him. With reference to this the mashā'ikh say that those whose abilities have been taken away from them will do this, but those who abilities are still

intact must not resort to this. They must abstain from it and understand the reality.

A blind man went to pledge bayʿat to a shaykh. The shaykh declined. The man began to cry. After some time, a few people saw him in an ʿurs. They asked him: "You had come to pledge bayʿat to Hadrat, how come you are here?" He replied: "I had left home early and there was still time for the ʿurs to take place. So I thought to myself, let me pledge bayʿat so that my meals will be sorted out [by remaining in the khānqāh of the shaykh]."

A man went to a shaykh and requested him to accept his bayʿat. The shaykh declined. A man took him to his house and spoke to him for a long period of time, keeping him awake. When he eventually fell into a deep sleep, he removed his purse from around his neck and found governmental documents there. He was a secret police who had come to pledge bayʿat!? If the shaykh did not have insight, he would have fallen into many problems.

You are answerable for your knowledge and he is answerable for his. If you do not have knowledge about something then submit yourself before it, and convince your self that it could be something which you can learn later on. If you are still not able to learn about it and you are quite confused, then go to the person and ask him why he did what he did. He will explain the reason.

To sum up, if you want your rectification then revert to a qualified shaykh because you will not find a solution without reverting to a qualified shaykh. Even if it takes long for you to find a qualified shaykh, let it be so. But once you find him, you must follow him completely without any ifs and buts. You must hand yourself over to him like a corpse in the hands of the

one bathing him. Only then can you succeed. Understand this well.

FOLLOWING THE SUNNAT IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS

Following the Sunnat is most essential. The Qur'ān says in this regard:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

This verse shows the obligation of following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Another verse proves the necessity of following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* together with those believers who turn to Allāh *taʿālā*.

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

Follow the way of the one who has turned to Me.[2]

However, the order to follow the believers applies only to those believers who follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and do not turn away from him in the least. Following them entails following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Nothing can be achieved without following someone – neither in matters of Dīn nor in worldly matters. There is an uproar at the moment, and no one is prepared to listen to anyone. There is no junior and no senior. The intelligent and unintelligent have all become equal. Each one has become an authority. Hadrat Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib ʿUthmānī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following Hadīth in *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

[2] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

لن يزال الناس بخير ما تباينوا، فإذا تساووا هلكوا

People will continue enjoying goodness as long as they uphold differences in ranks. Once they all become equals, they will be destroyed.

He also quotes a couplet of a poet:

لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم – ولا سراة إذا جهالهم سادوا

When people become equal in the sense that every person is their officer and chief, their condition will never be rectified. And if they appoint an ignorant person as their leader, then he is certainly non-existent.[1]

A person reaches high levels solely by following. This is the rational proof for the need and virtue of following. A poet says:

> Every person who submits before the order
> (of his senior) will soon become worthy of
> issuing orders himself.

Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* received the caliphate by virtue of his following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He did not bother about his life and wealth for Rasūlullāh's sake. The unbelievers used to tug at his beard but he bore their taunts patiently. He was a friend of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from pre-Islamic times. It was by virtue of his following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered him to lead the people in salāh in his very life.

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[1] *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*, p. 438.

When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* departed from this world, the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* differed as to who should become the caliph. The Anṣār expressed the desire to have someone from them. Thereafter a suggestion was made that there should be two caliphs; one from the Anṣār and one from the Muhājirūn. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* quoted this Ḥadīth:

الأئمة من قريش[1]

The leaders are to be from the Quraysh.

The Anṣār fell silent. Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* stood up and said: "Who can ever be a leader of a group in which there is Abū Bakr?" He then addressed Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*: "Give me your hand." Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* extended his hand and he pledged allegiance to him. All those who were present followed suite.

This is the result of following. Shaykh Saʿdī relates a story in his *Būstān*: I was going somewhere on one occasion when I saw a saint approaching on a lion. I was astonished at this sight, so he asked me: "Why are you astonished?"

> If you do not turn away from the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* no one will refuse to obey you.

The rights of dhimmīs[2]

Everything is written in the books but no one is interested in reading them. The rules and regulations

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ١٩، ص ٣١٨، حديث ١٢٣٠٧.

[2] Non Muslims living in an Islamic state.

are explained for the Muslims. The rights of dhimmīs are explained. The ʿulamā' have written everything in detail but you people have moved away from the path of the Sharīʿat. You neither accept the Traditions nor do you accept the intellect. You have the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth with you but you understand nothing. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ḥabīb ar-Raḥmān ʿUthmānī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* who had been a principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband writes in *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*:

> The same is the condition of non-Muslims living in a Muslim country under their [Muslims'] protection and covenant. It is a major sin to kill them. Let alone killing them, it is even forbidden to backbite them. It is not permissible to commit any wrong against them. In fact, the books of jurisprudence say that it is more serious to wrong a dhimmī. There can be differences in the severity or lightness of a sin on the basis of Islam and kufr, but there can be no doubt about a major sin.[1]

Backbiting a believer

I am not relating these things just like that, but after thinking and pondering over them. Just imagine! It is ḥarām to backbite a dhimmī yet we are fully occupied in backbiting and complaining about our own Muslim brothers. This is more so if a person is an ʿālim or a righteous person. We then feel it necessary to backbite him and "embellish" our gatherings and assemblies by backbiting them. I observed this wherever I went. In fact, it seems as though people consider backbiting the ʿulamā' to be an act of worship. From their

[1] *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*, p. 422.

statements it feels that they have a lot of concern and pain for Islam. They do not perform salāh themselves but they are always looking for opportunities to "rectify" those who are regular with their salāh. The seriousness of hurting the heart of a Muslim no longer remains. Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* explains the despicability of offending or hurting a believer – either verbally or through one's actions. He then quotes the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: أذية المؤمن أعظم عند الله من نقض الكعبة والبيت المعمور خمس عشرة مرة.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Hurting a believer is worse in the sight of Allāh taʿālā than destroying the Kaʿbah and the Bayt al-Maʿmūr[1] fifteen times.

اسمع ويلكم يا من لم يزل يؤذي فقراء الله تعالى عز وجل وهم المؤمنون الصالحون له العارفون به المتوكلون عليه.

Listen! May you be destroyed! You who constantly harms the poor servants of Allāh taʿālā. They are the believers who are righteous to Him, have fully recognized Him, and place their trust in Him.

Did you hear! There were people like this in those times as well, and this has been the norm – that some people are constantly looking for opportunities and occasions to criticize and harm the servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. Such people never succeeded. No one ever reached Allāh *taʿālā* through backbiting and

[1] The Kaʿbah of the angels in the heavens.

complaining about fellow Muslims. Abstain from this for in it lies your success. It is because of these immoralities and evil characteristics that the land has become constricted upon us. Follow Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and abstain from mutual differences. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَأَطِيْعُوا اللهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوْا فَتَفْشَلُوْا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيْحُكُمْ

Obey the order of Allāh and of His Messenger and do not dispute with each other or else you will lose courage and your strength will depart.[1]

Despite this, people do not pay heed. One Maulwī Sāhib lost in the elections. The one in the opposing party who was also a Muslim announced: "The bearded-fellow lost." I ask you, is it permissible to say such a thing? The beard is a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Does this announcement not entail mockery at the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*? Will the honour and dignity of Muslims be protected by such statements? I am asking you people for a fatwā – what is the ruling of the Sharīʿat for such a statement? It is most sad at how low the Muslims have stooped.

This is synonymous to personal suicide. In fact, it is suicide of a nation. People can never succeed if they say such things. They want to learn politics and Dīn from the newspapers, but they are not prepared to study the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A poet says:

> O you! For how long are you going to continue studying the wisdom of the

[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 46.

> Greeks? At least devote some time to studying the wisdom of the believers, and see how much you will learn.

Nowadays every person says: "This is my view and my opinion." I say, a view and an opinion comes from observing and thinking. You do not even have the capability of observing and thinking, so how did you get those views and opinions!? If there was any view and opinion which was worth its salt, would he have been in such a terrible condition? Listen! When any work is done under a correct and genuine view, it is rectitude. If not, it is corruption. Allāh *taʿālā* put a seal to this by the words:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

If you follow correctly, you will succeed.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَّارْزُقْنَا اتِّبَاعَهُ، وَاَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَّارْزُقْنَا اجْتِنَابَهُ

O Allāh! Enable us to identify the truth and inspire us to follow it. Enable us to see falsehood as falsehood and inspire us to abstain from it.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

THE QUALITIES OF HUMANS AND MUSLIMS

I am now going to give you a definition of man. I will read the verses of the Qur'ān to you in which Allāh *taʿālā* defines man. In other words, He makes mention of some of man's qualities. Whose definition can be greater than Allāh's?

Allāh *taʿālā* provides us with a detailed description of man. He then gives a separate description of believers, and a separate one of unbelievers. In other words, He lists the qualities of believers and unbelievers so that people can recognize the qualities of believers and embellish themselves with them, and recognize the qualities of unbelievers and abstain from them. Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah al-Maʿārij:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوْعًا. إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوْعًا. وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوْعًا. إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّيْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُوْمٌ. لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ. وَالَّذِيْنَ يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ. إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُوْنٍ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حَافِظُوْنَ. إِلَّا عَلٰى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ. فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَاءَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ. أُولٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُكْرَمُوْنَ.

Surely man is created with a restless disposition. When misfortune befalls him, he is impatient. When good fortune comes to him, he is niggardly. Except those who are observant of salāh, who remain constant in their salāh. And those in whose wealth there is a due

portion for the beggar and the dispossessed. And those who truly believe in the day of Judgement. And those who fear the punishment of their Lord. Surely none should feel secure from the punishment of his Lord. And those who guard their private parts. Except from their spouses and their slave-girls, for then, they are free of all blame. But whoever seeks beyond that, it is they who are the transgressors. And those who are faithful to their trusts and promises. And those who stand firm in their testimonies. And those who are mindful of their salāh. It is they who are in gardens, with full honour.[1]

The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

الهلع سرعة الجزع عند مس المكروه وسرعة المنع عند مس الخير[2]

The word halaʿ means to be very quick in impatience and restlessness when a disagreeable situation is experienced, and to be quick in refusing people when a good situation is experienced.

This is how man is created. However, there are exceptions. They are explained further on in the verse.

After making the exception, Allāh *taʿālā* lists various qualities but the distinguishing quality and hallmark of a believer is that he is regular and punctual with his salāh. A few other qualities are then listed. They are collectively referred to as "a believer".

What this means is that the evil trait mentioned in the beginning is not to be found in a perfect believer. The reason for this is that the crux of the qualities of a

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[1] Sūrah al-Maʿārij, 70: 19-35.

[2] روح المعاني، ج

perfect believer is that he changes his bad qualities with good ones. This is why the exception which is made in this verse is made as regards their qualities which are catalysts for being protected from the evil traits.

I said that the qualities are collectively referred to as "a believer". This is because Allāh *taʿālā* describes the believers with the very same qualities in another place in the Qur'ān:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ

Successful indeed are the believers.

الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ

Who are humble in their salāh.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ

Who do not pay heed to futile talk.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ

Who continually pay the zakāh.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ

Who guard their private parts.

إِلاَّ عَلٰى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ

Except from their wives or the slave girls that they posses. For then, they are free from blame.

فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ

Then whoever seeks beyond that, it is they who are the transgressors.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِأَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ

[Successful also are those] who are observant of their trusts and pledges.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ

Those who are watchful of their salāh.

أُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ

It is they who are the inheritors.

الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ ط هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ

Who shall inherit the Paradise of Cool Shade. They shall abide therein forever.[1]

This is a clarification of the group which is excluded – which is the exception. Allāh *taʿālā* gives another description of man and excludes the perfect believers from it – they are the righteous and patient believers.

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنٰهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَئُوْسٌ كَفُوْرٌ. وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنٰهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّاٰتُ عَنِّيْ، إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُوْرٌ. إِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ، أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّأَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ.

If We were to give man a taste of mercy from Us, and then take it away from him – he becomes despondent, ungrateful. If We give him a taste of comfort after hardship had befallen him, he will surely exclaim:

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 1-11.

"Evils have departed from me." He is elated, boastful. Except those who are patient and do good deeds. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.[1]

In the above verse the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* explains the word "mercy" as "bounty". He takes it to mean good health, affluence, etc. What this means is that if We [Allāh *taʿālā*] bless him with good health, wealth, etc. and he gets a taste of them, and We then take them away from him, he becomes totally despondent and begins to show ungratefulness for these favours. And if We allow him to taste some favour after hardship had befallen him, he will say: "All my pains and worries have left me." He becomes boastful and falls into pride. He then display his arrogance to others. Once he becomes engrossed in these bounties he becomes totally negligent in the fulfilment of his duties.

In this verse also Allāh *taʿālā* describes man as despondent and ungrateful; and then as elated and boastful. Thereafter Allāh *taʿālā* excludes certain people. They are the ones who are resolute and righteous.

The essence of the above is that when man is put through trials and tribulations, then one quality in him is that he is very quick in becoming fearless and despondent. In other words, when a harmful episode passes, he forgets about its occurrence. This is why he becomes fearless and dauntless. This becomes the catalyst for his statement: "Evils have departed from me." In other words, he says: "Whatever was meant to happen has happened. Now this evil will never return to me." (This statement is possible in respect to all the

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 9-11.

unbelievers through their actions, and others even say it verbally). Similarly, when a favourable episode passes, he feels that it is not possible for such good to return. This is the reason behind his despondency.

Here too Allāh *taʿālā* excludes certain people and certain human qualities, but in a different way. He says: "Except those who are patient and do good deeds." Previously He said: "Except those who believe and do good deeds." This is because good deeds include all those which are mentioned in the verses: "Except those who are observant of salāh…Those who are watchful of their salāh."

In the above verses Allāh *taʿālā* describes few qualities of man, and then excludes the perfect believers from them. The exclusion is either conveyed by the words: "Except those who are observant of salāh" or the words "Except those who are patient and do good deeds."

The words may be different but the meaning of both is one. Allāh *taʿālā* is excluding the perfect believers from the previously mentioned qualities. Allāh *taʿālā* explains these points to us in order to rectify their character. He wants to direct their attention to the fact that it is possible for man to naturally turn his attention in that direction, but if he chooses īmān and good deeds; and fulfils both with their prerequisites, then Allāh *taʿālā* has placed a special effect in these actions whereby even his natural inclinations can be changed. In other words, his evil powers can be changed into good ones. We learn from this that the divine manner of rectifying character are these very same good deeds of the Sharīʿat. If a person adheres strictly to them, he can even change his own inclinations.

By virtue of his īmān and good deeds, a perfect believer saves himself from the wickedness of these evils. On the other hand, because an unbeliever does not choose īmān and good deeds, then when these human demands overwhelm him, he does and says as he is dictated. Allāh *taʿālā* depicts this scene of man as follows:

لَا يَسْأَمُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوْسٌ قَنُوْطٌ. وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَّاءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ هٰذَا لِيْ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَّلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلٰى رَبِّيْ إِنَّ لِيْ عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنٰى. فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ. وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوْ دُعَاءٍ عَرِيْضٍ.

Man does not tire in asking for good. But if any adversity afflicts him, he becomes despondent, loses all hope. Were We to make him taste some of Our mercy after some adversity had afflicted him, he will say: 'This is worthy of me. And I do not think that Resurrection is to come. Even if I am returned to my Lord, for me is the supreme good by Him." We will certainly inform the unbelievers of what they did. And We will make them taste a severe punishment. When We shower Our bounties on man, he evades and turns aside. And when misery afflicts him, he engages in prolonged supplication.[1]

The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 49-51.

هذا لي أي حقي استحقه لما لي من الفضل والعمل لا تفضل من الله تعالى عز وجل، أو هو لي دائما لا يزول.[1]

When he receives a bounty he says: "This is after all my right. I am eligible for it by virtue of my excellence, knowledge and practice. It is not a favour and gift from Allāh." Alternatively he says: "This goodness is for me and will remain forever. It will never decline."

He says further: "I do not believe in the coming of the Resurrection. Even if I am conveyed to my Lord, I will receive the best." Allāh *taʿālā* says: "We will inform the rejecters of all their sayings and doings, and We will make them taste a severe punishment. When We confer bounties to man, he turns away. When misery afflicts him, he engages in lengthy supplications. The same attitude of turning to Allāh *taʿālā* at the time of adversity and disregarding Him at the time of prosperity is conveyed as follows:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَآئِمًا ج فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَنْ لَّمْ يَدْعُنَآ إِلٰى ضُرٍّ مَّسَّهُ ط كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ.

When affliction befalls man, he calls out to Us, [while] lying on his side, sitting or standing. But once We remove from him his affliction, he goes on as though he had never called out to Us upon the affliction which befell him. In this way, it seems pleasing to the fearless persons whatever they are doing.[2]

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[1] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٥، ص ٤.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 12.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* writes in his commentary to the above verse:

> The theme of this verse is to be found in a few other verses of the Qur'ān but expressed differently. The gist of all is that when man experiences a good condition, then the following qualities are found in him: turning away, forgetting, abandoning duʿā', rejoicing and exulting. All these qualities can be found collectively in a person. When he experiences a bad condition, these qualities are found in him: despair, ingratitude and duʿā'.
>
> Despair and ingratitude can be found collectively in a person. However, duʿā' and despair seem to be unlikely. After all, duʿā' is made in hope. We could say that the person is making duʿā' with his tongue while his heart is filled with despair. Or, he engages in a lot of duʿā' in the beginning but then becomes despondent and gives it up. A third answer could be that the duʿā' which the person is making is not as an entreaty to Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, it is like the noise and clamour made by materialists when they experience the slightest unfavourable condition. For example, they say: "O Allāh! What can I do?" "O Allāh! What is going to happen now?"[1]

To sum up, Allāh *taʿālā* listed certain human qualities and excluded the believers from them. These qualities

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[1] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, pārā 11.

are mentioned in several places in the Qur'ān, but exceptions are not made in each and every one of these places. Based on the principle of:

القرآن يفسر بعضه بعضا

The Qur'ān explains itself.

We can say that the unbelievers are intended and addressed wherever these human qualities are mentioned, while Allāh *taʿālā* safeguarded the believers from these evils by virtue of their īmān and good actions.

Believers are patient at the time of adversity and grateful for Allāh's favours and bounties. When they are faced with adversity they are neither despondent, ungrateful nor pessimistic. And when they experience prosperity, they are neither proud, haughty nor arrogant. Instead, they are happy with the Master's decree under every situation. Just as they turn to Allāh *taʿālā* and beseech Him at times of difficulty and adversity, they are grateful to Him at times of wellness and bounties. They are appreciative of Allāh's grace.

In his explanation to the verse:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَآئِمًا

When affliction befalls man, he calls out to Us, [while] lying on his side, sitting or standing.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes:

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 12.

وفي الآية ذم لمن يترك الدعاء في الرخاء ويهرع إليه في الشدة، والائق بحال الكامل التضرع إلى مولاه في السراء والضراء، فإن ذلك أرجى للإجابة، ففي الحديث تعرف إلى الله في الرخاء يعرفك في الشدة. وأخرج أبو الشيخ عن أبي الدرداء رضي الله عنه قال: أدع الله تعالى يوم سرائك يستجب لك يوم ضرائك، وفي حديث للترمذي عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه ورواه الحاكم عن سفيان وقال صحيح الإسناد من سره أن يستجيب الله تعالى له عند الشدائد والكروب فليكثر الدعاء في الرخاء.[1]

The present verse castigates those who abandon duʿā' at the time of prosperity and hasten to it at the time of adversity. Whereas a perfect human ought to submit before his Master during prosperity and adversity, for then his duʿā' is more likely to be answered. A Ḥadīth states: "Present yourself before Allāh during prosperity and He will acknowledge you during adversity." Abū ad-Dardā' raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "Pray to Allāh and beseech Him during your days of prosperity and He will accept your supplications during your days of adversity." Abū Hurayrah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: "Whoever would like Allāh taʿālā to accept his supplications during times of hardship and calamities must engage in abundant supplications during times of prosperity."

We learn from this that a believer is never heedless. The enjoyment and comfort of this world cannot cause him to forget Allāh *taʿālā*. In fact, humaneness and nobility demand that man recognizes his benefactor

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[1] روح المعاني، جزء ١١، ص ٨٠.

and appreciates his favours. The intelligentsia say that the person who is devoid of this quality is not a human.

Bahādur Shāh Zafar Dehlawī said:

> No matter how intelligent and sharp-witted a person may be, Zafar will not consider him to be a human if he does not remember Allāh *taʿālā* in prosperity and fear Him in adversity.

This shows that man does forget Allāh *taʿālā* in prosperity except the one who is a genuine slave. He recognizes his master and fulfils his rights. If he is not a genuine slave, it will be very easy for the effects of this worldly life to make him negligent.

The genuine and sincere servants of Allāh *taʿālā* obliterated themselves completely and melted their pleasures for the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā*. We observe the true servants in this world regarding their own opinions and likes to be nothing before the opinions and likes of their master. Consequently, they enjoy closeness and proximity to their master.

A perfect believer is submissive under every condition

I will relate two stories which are in line with this theme:

There was a master who was slicing cucumbers and feeding his slave. While he was doing this, the thought crossed his mind to taste the cucumber. The moment he placed a slice on his tongue, he spat it out and said: “How are you eating such a bitter cucumber without even complaining!?”

The slave replied: “Sir! I was also finding it bitter but I thought to myself that I had always been receiving

sweet things from this hand [of yours]. If I were to complain about something bitter on this one occasion it will negate my love for you." The master was most pleased by this answer and freed him because of it.

Did you see the reply of the slave? Look at your relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. Look at the countless favours which He is showering you with! Yet, if people experience just one small incident which is against their likes, they complain and whine. This is a defective trait. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that a perfect believer is one who submits before Allāh *taʿālā* in every situation – in comfort and discomfort, prosperity and adversity, pain and joy.

Now listen to the second story.

While explaining the meaning of *ʿubūdīyyat* (servitude), the author of *Tarsīʿ* writes:

هي عبارة عن امتثال الأوامر واجتناب النواهي امتثالا لأمر الله تعالى لا لعلة، وأن تكون راضيا عن الله تعالى على كل حال وليس لك معه اختيار.

It means that you must carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions solely out of believing this to be His order and not for any other motive. And that you be pleased with Allāh taʿālā in every situation to the extent that you have no choice before Him.

He then writes that it is related in *Fatḥ ar-Rabbānī* that a person bought a slave and asked him: "What kind of clothes would you like to wear?" He replied: "Whatever the master gives me to wear." The master asked: "Okay, what type of work do you want to do?" He replied: "Whatever the master orders." The master asked: "In which part of the house do you want to

live?" He replied: "Wherever you order me." On hearing this, the master said: "You are a strange person, you have no opinion about anything!?"

The slave said: "O my master! Can a slave ever have any opinion of his own in the presence of his master?" When the master heard this, he said: "O I wish I was before my own master [Allāh *taʿālā*] as you are before me. You have made me see the reality and you have become my benefactor. I therefore free you for Allāh's sake. I request you to live here so that I can be of service to you."

Glory to Allāh! This is a unique incident to turn an ordinary human into an ʿārif, and a heedless person into a dhākir. Relationships of this nature occur between worldly masters and slaves. From this you can gauge the relationship which the Ahlullāh have with Allāh *taʿālā*. These relationships are the reserve of the true believers. As for unbelievers, because they do not even believe in Allāh *taʿālā* and the Hereafter, they make this world their sole objective and confine their focus to it. They neither believe in the Hereafter nor do they believe in any rewards in the Hereafter. This is why they have the evil qualities which were mentioned in the previously-quoted verses. Now listen to one more verse:

فَاَمَّا الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَاَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّيْ اَكْرَمَنِ، وَاَمَّا اِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّيْ اَهَانَنِ.

As for man, when his Lord tests him by giving him honour and bounties, he says: "My Lord has honoured

me." But when He tests him by restricting his sustenance, he says: "My Lord has disgraced me."[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī *rahimahullāh* explains the above as follows:

> It means that an unbeliever considers the world to be his sole objective. He believes his prosperous condition to be a proof of acceptance in Allāh's sight and feels that he is eligible for it. He believes that poverty is a proof of rejection and he is not eligible. This entails two prohibitions. One is to consider the world to be the sole objective. This results in rejection of the Hereafter. The second prohibition is the claim to eligibility which results in pride over bounties, ingratitude, complaining at the time of calamities, and abandoning patience. All these actions make one eligible for punishment.[2]

I quoted a few verses to you wherein Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to man in general and describes the qualities of an unbeliever. In some of these verses Allāh *taʿālā* excludes the believers through words and in other verses through meanings. A large section of the Qur'ān contains conditions and incidents related to those who are sincerely obedient and those who are disobedient and hypocrites. In some places Allāh *taʿālā* mentions their qualities alone while in other places He sheds light on the qualities of both groups in the midst of a story. Sūrah al-Kahf contains one

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[1] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 15-16.

[2] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, vol. 12, p. 96.

such story. It is a most unique story which we are quoting to you.

The instability of this world and stability of the Hereafter

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ

Set forth for them the parable of two men.[1]

In other words, in order to demonstrate to them the instability of this world and the permanence of the Hereafter, relate to them the condition of two men. Ḥadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* writes that through a story, Allāh *taʿālā* demonstrates the denigration of wealth and the superiority of īmān and good deeds, and shows that the basis for the unbelievers' demanding Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remove the believers when they come to meet him is their pride and exultance over worldly wealth and possessions. This is also the basis for the scorn and disregard which they show towards the poor Muslims.

While this story demonstrates the error of the unbelievers, it provides comfort and solace to the believers in the sense that they must not grieve over poverty and be grateful over acquiring the treasures of the Hereafter.[2]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* also explains this verse along similar lines. He writes:

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 32.

[2] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, pārā 15.

واضرب لهم أي للمؤمنين الذين يدعون ربهم بالغداة والعشي والكفرة الذين طلبوا طردهم.

In other words, relate the story of these two men to the believers who call on their Lord in the morning and evening and to the unbelievers who are asking for the removal of the believers.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that the parable is for both groups – the believers and the unbelievers, but not in the sense that this is the reward for believers in the Hereafter and this is the punishment for the unbelievers. Rather, in the sense that although the unbelievers enjoy the bounties of Allāh *taʿālā*, they are rebels against Him. On the other hand, although the believers endure hardships, they are obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* – as was the case with the two persons mentioned in this story. One of them received bounties but was disobedient, while the other was in poverty but was obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*.[1]

There are different opinions with regard to who the two men were. Ḥaḍrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* is of the view that they were two brothers from the Banī Isrāʾīl. One whose name was Qarṭūs or Qaṭfar was an unbeliever. The other whose name was Yahūdhā or Yamīlīkhā was a believer. Another view is that the two were princes from the Banī Isrāʾīl. One of them spent his wealth in Allāh's cause while the other disbelieved and became immersed in worldly pleasures.

Yet another view is that the two were ironmongers. They either earned a lot of wealth or inherited it from

[1] *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol. 15, p. 373.

their father. Each one received 4 000 of the currency of that time. The unbeliever bought a piece of land for 1 000. The believer said: "O Allāh! I am buying a piece of land in Paradise for 1 000. He then gave this amount in charity." The unbeliever then constructed a house for 1 000. The believer said: "O Allāh! I request a fully constructed house in Paradise." Saying this, he gave 1 000 in charity. The unbeliever then married a woman in lieu for 1 000. The believer said: "O Allāh! I am setting aside 1 000 as dowry for a damsel of Paradise." He then gave the third 1 000 in charity. His brother spent the last 1 000 in decorating his house and employing servants and maids. The believer said: "O Allāh! I am purchasing the eternal youth of Paradise for 1 000." And he gave the fourth 1 000 in charity.

Later on, the believer needed some financial assistance so he sat on the path which his brother normally takes. The brother approached with much pomp and ceremony. The believing brother was about to say something, and the unbeliever realized what it was, so he scolded and reprimanded him; and castigated him for spending all his wealth in Allāh's cause. The believer responded to his bad character with noble character, and his atheistic statements with statements of īmān. Allāh *taʿālā* relates their statements in these verses, the purpose of which is for both groups (believers and unbelievers) to take a lesson and an admonition.

Believers must have full faith and conviction in Allāh's help and power. They must understand that when a person helps Allāh's Dīn against the unbelievers, he will succeed in both worlds. On the other hand, the unbeliever must realize that he will have to suffer evil

consequences for his unbelief in this world – before he can suffer for it in the Hereafter.

The purpose of this entire discussion is for people to become desirous of īmān, good deeds, serving the Dīn and relying on Allāh *taʿālā*; and they must fear unbelief, disobedience, pride, haughtiness and transgression on account wealth.

The story of the two brothers reads as follows:

جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا

We made for one of them two orchards of vines, and surrounded them with date-palms, and placed between them a cornfield.[1]

كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا. وَّكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ ۚ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا. وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ ۚ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهِ أَبَدًا. وَّمَآ أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ إِلٰى رَبِّيْ لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا.

Each of the two orchards yields its produce and does not decrease anything from it. We caused a river to flow between the two [orchards]. He received the fruit. So he said to his brother when he was conversing with him: "I have more wealth than you and [more] people of respect." He entered his orchard having wronged himself. He said: "I don't think that this orchard will ever be destroyed. And I do not think that Resurrection

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 32.

will take place. If I am ever conveyed to my Lord, I will find something better than this upon reaching there."[1]

The error of the unbeliever

In his intoxication with wealth, the unbeliever made four claims. One is that an unbeliever is not blameworthy. He tried to prove this with the words:

> I have more wealth than you and [more] people of respect.

The second is that he rejected tauhīd. The following statement makes reference to this:

> I don't think that this orchard will ever be destroyed.

He said to his brother: I do not understand how the Creator of the universe and His power which you believe in can render all these natural means to nothing. How is it possible for this orchard which has all the means for its existence - it has a river, labourers, I have the wealth to spend on it, and the means to safeguard the wealth – ever be destroyed!?

His third claim is his rejection of the Resurrection. He clearly said:

> And I do not think that Resurrection will take place.

His fourth claim is that he considered himself to be honourable and distinguished in Allāh's sight. He said:

> If I am ever conveyed to my Lord, I will find something better than this upon reaching there.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 33-36.

The fourth claim is not a separate claim on its own but an offshoot of his first claim.

His believing brother responded to each of his claims. He defended the truth and tried to cleanse his brother's mind and to prompt him towards belief in Allāh *taʿālā* and the Resurrection. However, when inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* is not with a person, he loses his intelligence and this world becomes a tribulation for him. The believer explained to him and removed his misunderstandings but he refused to accept. Consequently his destruction was bound to come.

The believer's reply

Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the believer's reply as follows:

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰكَ رَجُلاً. لٰكِنَّا۠ هُوَ اللّٰهُ رَبِّيْ وَلَآ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا. وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۚ إِنْ تَرَنِ أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا. فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ أَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا. أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا.

His friend said to him while conversing with him: "Do you reject the One who created you from soil, then from a drop of sperm, then fashioned you into a man? I still maintain that He is Allāh, my Lord and I associate no one with my Lord. When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: 'Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh.' If you see me less than you in wealth and offspring, it may well be that my Lord will give me an orchard better than yours and send upon your orchard a whirlwind from the sky reducing it to a barren field the next morning.

Or that its water dries up the next morning and you are unable to seek it."[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes:

والمعنى إن ترني أفقر منك فأنا أتوقع من صنيع الله تعالى أن يقلب ما بي وما بك من الفقر والغنى فيرزقني لإيماني جنة خيرا من جنتك ويسلبك بكفرك نعمته ويخرب جنتك.[2]

If you see me less than you as regards wealth and children, then I have full hopes in Allāh's grace that He will change my poverty into affluence, and your affluence into poverty. He will thus give me an orchard better than yours by virtue of my īmān and take away His bounties from you and destroy your orchard because of your unbelief.

The gist of the above is that the reason for your misunderstanding is the wealth and affluence which you have and I do not have. Your reasoning is incorrect because the opposite could happen. Even if it does not happen, there will certainly come a time when it will be destroyed or come to an end. On the other hand, the bounties of the Hereafter will not come to an end. Consideration of the Hereafter is taken and not of this world.

وَأُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهٖ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

[2] روح المعاني، ج ١٥، ص ٣٢.

All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord."[1]

Subsequent to this conversation, a major disaster befell the man's orchard. The nature of the disaster is not mentioned but it is gauged that it was extremely disastrous. It is not far-fetched to assume that it was a supernatural calamity. *Tafsīr Khāzin* states that it was a fire which descended from the skies, burnt the orchard and turned the water-source dry. "All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord." (This means: "I wish I did not disbelieve." This includes rejection of the Hereafter. We learn from this that the man realized that the calamity which struck him was in vengeance for his unbelief. This is why he expresses remorse, and says that had he not disbelieved, the calamity would not have afflicted him; and if it did, he would have received its recompense in the Hereafter. But now he has lost in this world and in the Hereafter. These statements may have been overheard by the believer. It does not necessarily mean that he became a believer after this because his remorse is over the loss which he suffered and not over the reprehensibility of unbelief.

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا. هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ط هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 42.

He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh nor could he take revenge himself. It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.[1]

Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* provides consolation to a believer by relating this story in the Qur'ān. The story also demonstrates the condition of the wealthy who become proud and arrogant over their wealth. The destiny of such a person is most certainly heavy in the Hereafter and he even suffers in this world. The unbeliever himself says that his suffering is on account of his polytheism and that if there is anything which could console him in this time of calamity and misery, then it is establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Those who maintain a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and place their trust in Him then, first of all, they do not suffer such miseries. Even if they do, then because of their love for Allāh *taʿālā* they consider anything which comes from Him to be good – even if it appears bad. Their patience and conviction in Allāh's promises make everything easy for them.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* explains the outcome and end-result of this story in *Masā'il as-Sulūk* as follows:

فيه تسلية الفقراء المتوكلين على الله تعالى وتنبيه الأغنياء المغرورين.[2]

This story contains a consolation for the poor who place their trust in Allāh taʿālā and serves as a warning to the arrogant wealthy people.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 43-44.

[2] بيان القرآن، جزء ١٥.

Glory to Allāh! Hadrat *rahimahullāh* explained a most excellent result from this story. If the 'ulamā' of today relate these stories of the Qur'ān instead of their own stories in their lectures, it will have a great effect on the masses.

The virtue of Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh

I related this story to you so that you may learn the conditions and ranks of the righteous and the sinful. This story quotes a statement of the righteous believer which he made to his brother:

وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh."[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Ma'ānī* quotes a few traditions under this verse. They are connected with actions. Since there is a dire need for actions today, I feel it essential to quote them here; perhaps they will prove beneficial to some people.

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* narrates from Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu 'anhu* who said: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said to me: "Would you like to know about a treasure of Allāh *ta'ālā* which lies under His Throne?" I replied: "Indeed, O Rasūlullāh!" He said: "Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh." (I say, it most probably refers to the entire sentence - Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh).

Hadrat 'Umar ibn Maymūn says: I asked Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu 'anhu*: "What did you say? Is it

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh or is it Lā Ḥaula Wa Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh?" He replied: "It is what is mentioned in Sūrah al-Kahf." That is, Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh.

Ḥaḍrat ʿAmr ibn Murrah says that the most superior supplication of a person is Māshā Allāh.

Ḥaḍrat Anas *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "When Allāh *taʿālā* confers a bounty to a person – whether with respect to his family, wealth or children – and he says: 'Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh' with regard to that bounty, then Allāh *taʿālā* repulses all calamities from that bounty until death." After relating this Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Anas *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* quoted the above-quoted verse.

Ḥaḍrat Anas *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "If a person looks at any of his wealth and it pleases him, and he then says 'Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh', then no calamity will ever afflict that wealth." He then read the same verse.

Abū Ḥātim narrates from Muṭraf who said that when Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* used to enter a house, he used to say: Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh. Muṭraf said: "I asked him the reason for saying this, so he said: 'Did you not hear this verse of Allāh *taʿālā*:

وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ

When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh."[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

Ibn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh* says that Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* used to present the above verse as a proof to say that it is desirable for anyone who enters a house to say "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh".

Imām Bayhaqī *raḥimahullāh* relates in *Shuʿab al-Īmān* that whenever Ḥaḍrat ʿUrwah used to look at any of his belongings which pleased him or entered any of his orchards, he used to say "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh". He used to then present the above verse as proof for saying this.

It is gauged from certain traditions that if a person's eyes fall on anything which he likes – whether it belongs to him or to someone else – and he reads "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh" – then that thing will not be afflicted by the evil eye. Furthermore, it is desirable (mustaḥab) to make this supplication.[1]

It is related that when Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* spoke on the virtues of "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh" in a lecture which he delivered in Mumbai, the people there practised on it a lot. They began reading it at the time of entering their houses, shops, factories, orchards, etc. In fact, some people had beautiful posters printed which were then displayed at the entrances of their homes and business places so that whenever their eyes fall on the supplication, they will be reminded to read it. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

Allāh does not waste the rewards of the righteous

Merely frequenting a saint is not enough. The 'ulamā' have laid down prerequisites for this. The most important perquisite which they laid down is sincerity.

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[1] *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol. 15.

It is not possible for a person doing work for Allāh *taʿālā* and it going to waste. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

We do not waste the reward of the righteous.[1]

The above verse comes after what the minister of Egypt said to Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* when the latter requested to be entrusted with the treasury of Egypt. The minister said:

قَالَ اِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِيْنٌ اَمِيْنٌ

Surely, from today you have acquired a high rank with us, entrusted.[2]

The king then conferred all types of authority to Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. It was as though he had become the real king while the king was a king only in name. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ج يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ط نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ.

In this way We gave power to Yūsuf in the land; he could take possession therein wherever he liked. We convey Our mercy to whomever We will and We do not waste the reward of the righteous.[3]

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* promises the believers that if they adopt īmān and piety, and become righteous,

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 54.

[3] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56.

then in addition to what they will definitely receive in the Hereafter, He will reward them in this world for their good deeds.

In his commentary to the following verse, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* quotes a statement of Ḥadrat Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah *raḥimahullāh*.

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ؕ نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ. وَلَاَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ.

In this way We gave power to Yūsuf in the land; he could take possession therein wherever he liked. We convey Our mercy to whomever We will and We do not waste the reward of the righteous. The reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believed and remained righteous.[1]

He said:

المؤمن يثاب على حسناته في الدنيا والآخرة، والفاجر يعجل له الخير في الدنيا، وما له في الآخرة من خلاق.[2]

A believer is rewarded for his good deeds in this world and in the Hereafter while a sinner is given his rewards in this world while he has no share of it at all in the Hereafter.

The words "We convey Our mercy" refer to worldly favours, bounties, wealth and riches. As for the words

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56-57.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ١٣.

"We do not waste the reward of the righteous", some commentators say that they refer to īmān and steadfastness on piety. They say that the reward which Allāh *taʿālā* has in store for Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* in the Hereafter is far more and much better than the sultanate and authority which he was given in this world. The story of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* as related in the Qur'ān is undoubtedly a very admonitory story. It revives a person's faith in Allāh *taʿālā* and increases his conviction in Allāh's promises.

The admonitory story of Hadrat Yūsuf

Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* conveyed Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* from the depths of a well in Kanʿān to the throne of Egypt! Then look at the end result of those who bore enmity towards him! It is a most admonitory story. If people were to read just this one story with understanding, their hearts will be filled with īmān. It is a long story. One part of it is related here. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَجَآءَ اِخْوَةُ يُوْسُفَ فَدَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكِرُوْنَ

The brothers of Yūsuf came and they went to him. He recognized them whereas they did not recognize him.[1]

After taking control of the treasury, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* began harvesting and collecting the grain. The region then experienced a drought after seven years. People from far off regions heard that the Egyptian government was distributing grain, so they began coming to Egypt in large numbers. Kanʿān was also experiencing a drought. The brothers of Hadrat

[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 58.

Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* – excluding Binyāmīn – came to Egypt and proceeded to Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. The latter recognized them but they did not recognize him. It was his practice to give each person an amount of grain which he needed. When they received one camel's load for each person, they said that they have a brother whom their father kept behind because he had already lost one son. They requested Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* to give them one load for their brother. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* replied that it is against the law. If they want his share, they will have to bring him.

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِاَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَبِيْكُمْ ۚ اَلَا تَرَوْنَ اَنِّيْٓ اُوْفِي الْكَيْلَ وَاَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِيْنَ. فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَاْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْنِ. قَالُوْا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ اَبَاهُ وَاِنَّا لَفٰعِلُوْنَ.

When he provided them with their provision, he said: "Bring to me a brother of yours who is from your father. Do you not see that I give the measure in full and that I entertain guests very well? If you do not bring him to me, there will be no measure for you, nor should you approach me." They said: "We will request this from his father, and we will certainly do this."[1]

When Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* prepared their load and they were about to leave, he said: "If you intend coming back after finishing this grain, you must bring your brother with. Don't you see that I give in full measure and that I am very hospitable to guests? If you come back without bringing him, I will conclude that you tried to deceive me and wanted to take extra

[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 59-61.

grain. In such a case, you will not get anything from me."

They replied: "We will try our utmost to convince our father to send him. After that, it is left to our father to decide whether he should come or not."

وَقَالَ لِفِتْيٰنِهِ اجْعَلُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِيْ رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُوْنَهَآ اِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ.

He said to his servants: "Place their merchandise among their provisions so that they may recognize them when they go back to their family, and that they may return."[1]

When the brothers were on the verge of leaving, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* instructed his workers to conceal their merchandise with which they had bought the grain among their provisions so that when they reach home and find it, they will think of this favour and come back. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* wanted them to come back with their brother, this is why he resorted to several means to do this. The first thing he did was he promised them that if they bring him, they will receive a share for him. Then he warned them that if they do not bring him, they will not get anything – even for themselves. Thirdly, he returned whatever they had given as payment so that they would use it as proof of his kindness and generosity, and also because if they did not have sufficient money they would not come back. But now that it has been given to them, they will be able to come back with it.

When they returned to their father, they said: "O father! Arrangements for the grain have been made, so

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 62.

send our brother with us. In this way, we will obtain the grain and we will also protect our brother." Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Do you want me to entrust him to you as I had entrusted his brother, Yūsuf, to you? Allāh *taʿālā* is the best Protector and the most Merciful of those who show mercy. I have hope in Allāh *taʿālā* that He will keep Binyāmīn in His care and protection, show mercy to me, and not put me through two calamities at once."

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes that this statement of Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* demonstrates permission to take Binyāmīn because prudence and need necessitated his going. It also shows his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. It is mentioned in a Hadīth that Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Bearing in mind that you placed your trust in Me, then I take an oath by My honour and power, that I will certainly return both brothers to you." Subsequently this is what happened and Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* also returned to his father.

When the brothers persisted and convinced their father, Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* permitted them to take Binyāmīn on this second journey. They all presented themselves before Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. The incidents which followed are most admonitory and are sufficient to shake the heart. They affirm the words of Allāh *taʿālā* when He said:

اِنَّهُ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لاَ يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 90.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰى اِلَيْهِ اَخَاهُ قَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا اَخُوْكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ. فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِيْ رَحْلِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ اَيَّتُهَا الْعِيْرُ اِنَّكُمْ لَسٰرِقُوْنَ. قَالُوْا وَاَقْبَلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقِدُوْنَ قَالُوْا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَآءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيْرٍ وَّاَنَا بِهِ زَعِيْمٌ.

When they presented themselves before Yūsuf, he kept his brother [Binyāmīn] with him, [and] said: "I am your brother. Do not grieve, then, over whatever they did." Then when he prepared their provisions for them, he placed the drinking cup in his brother's provisions. An announcer then announced: "O you people of the caravan! You are certainly thieves." They said, turning towards them: "What is it that you have lost?" They said: "We cannot find the king's cup. Whoever produces it will receive one camel's load, and I guarantee that."[1]

قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سٰرِقِيْنَ. قَالُوْا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهٗٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ. قَالُوْا جَزَآؤُهٗ مَنْ وُّجِدَ فِيْ رَحْلِهٖ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ. فَبَدَاَ بِاَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِّعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوْسُفَ ؕ مَا كَانَ لِيَاْخُذَ اَخَاهُ فِيْ دِيْنِ الْمَلِكِ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِيْ عِلْمٍ عَلِيْمٌ.

They said: "By Allāh! You know that we did not come to make mischief in the land, and never were we thieves." They said: "Then what is the punishment thereof if you turn out to be liars?" They said: "The punishment

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 69-72.

thereof is that the one in whose possessions it is found – he shall be the requital thereof. This is the punishment we mete out to the wrong doers." Yūsuf then began searching their bags before his brother's bag. Eventually he took out the cup from his brother's bag. This stratagem did We suggest to Yūsuf. He would never have been able to detain his brother under the king's law, except if Allāh wills. We raise the ranks of whom We will. Above every knowledgeable person, there is one more knowledgeable.[1]

The brothers tried to obtain their brother's release and went to the extent of saying: "He has a very old father, so take one of us in his place. We see that you are a very noble and kind-hearted person." Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "May Allāh *taʿālā* save me from apprehending someone other than the one with whom we found the cup. If I did such a thing, I will be most unjust. You are saying that I am kind-hearted, yet you are asking me to commit an injustice!? A benefactor has to be just, he cannot be oppressive."

The brothers lost hope and left. They came home and apologized to Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām*. He replied: "You have concocted this entire thing, I will exercise patience. I will not complain in the least. I have hope that Allāh *taʿālā* will return all of them to me. He is all-aware and all-wise." He also said: "O my sons! Go and search for Yūsuf and his brother. Do not lose hope in Allāh's mercy. It is only the unbelievers who have no hope in His mercy."

Acting under their father's order, the brothers left for Egypt once again to search for Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and his brother. They had left Binyāmīn in Egypt, so

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 73-76.

they thought to themselves that since they already know his whereabouts, they will start there and they will try and convince the king to release him. After that, they will search for Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*.

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ مَسَّنَا وَاَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰىةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ. قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوْسُفَ وَاَخِيْهِ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ جٰهِلُوْنَ. قَالُوْٓا ءَاِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ يُوْسُفُ ؕ قَالَ اَنَا يُوْسُفُ وَهٰذَآ اَخِيْ ۙ قَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ. قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اٰثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَاِنْ كُنَّا لَخٰطِئِيْنَ. قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ؕ يَغْفِرُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۙ وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ.

When they presented themselves before him, they said: "O ʿAzīz! Hardship has afflicted us and our family. We have brought merchandise of low value. Give us in full the measure, and be charitable to us. Surely Allāh rewards the charitable." He said: "Do you know what you had done to Yūsuf and his brother when you lacked understanding?" They said: "Are you really Yūsuf?" He replied: "I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has been kind to us. Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous." They said: "By Allāh! Allāh has indeed chosen you above us, and we were certainly in error." He said: "There is no reproach on you this day. May Allāh forgive you. He is the most merciful of those who show mercy."

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes that the brothers of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* were quite distressed on

this occasion. This is why they addressed him with utmost respect and expressed their poverty. They said:

> *O ʿAzīz! Hardship has afflicted us and our family.*

What they meant was that they have become helpless on account of poverty. They added:

> *We have brought merchandise of low value.*

In other words, traders will consider our merchandise of very low value and reject it.

They adopted this approach to stir the mercy and kindness of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and added:

> *Give us in full the measure.*

In other words, do not give us less by looking at the poor quality of our merchandise. They did not suffice with this. Instead, they added:

> *…and be charitable to us.*

In other words, we need you to give us in full, to be lenient to us and to accept our defective merchandise. If you do all this, it will be like a charity from you.

However, Daḥḥāk *raḥimahullāh* and Ibn Jurayj *raḥimahullāh* are of the view that their request to be charitable was a reference to the fact that they wanted him to return Binyāmīn to them. That is, in addition to giving us the grain, we request you to be so kind as to return Binyāmīn to us.

Naqqāsh states that the brothers said at the end:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ

Surely Allāh rewards the charitable.

They did not say:

إن الله تعالى يجزيك بصدقتك

Allāh taʿālā will reward you for your charity.

This is because they were under the assumption that the minister [Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*] was not a believer, and to say that Allāh *taʿālā* will reward you is not an honest statement. This is why they resorted to a general statement. They did not present this request at the beginning because they wanted to prepare him and stir him towards kindness first, and then to finally fulfil the objective of their father, viz. to request the return of Binyāmīn.

Bearing in mind that the words "and be charitable to us" could refer to their request for the release of Binyāmīn, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* replied by saying that you are asking for Binyāmīn, but "Do you know what you had done to Yūsuf and his brother when you lacked understanding?" Here the question was not about the action itself because when a mature thinking person does something, he does it after understanding and knowing what he is doing. They already knew what they had done. Why, then, did he pose this question? What he meant was that in your days of ignorance, you had done something to Yūsuf and his brother. Has the reprehensibility of your action dawned upon you or not? We gauge from this that the question was posed as a castigation. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* wanted to convey to them that the manner in which they had treated Yūsuf and his brother was a very serious thing; it was not an ordinary matter.

The brothers were most surprised and astonished when the minister [Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*] posed this question. They asked in their bewilderment: "Are you really Yūsuf?"

It is stated in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* that the ʿulamā' have various views on pinpointing the reason for their wanting to know his identity.

1. Based on his excellent treatment and good qualities, they concluded that he was Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. On this occasion, Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* had brought them very close to him.

2. Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* had been speaking to them from behind a curtain, but when they wanted to know his identity, he removed the curtain.

3. In the course of their conversation with him, Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* smiled. This caused his front teeth to be exposed, and they recognized him through this because his teeth were like pearls and when he smiled, a type of light used to emanate from them.

4. Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* removed the crown which was on his head. And on his head he had certain signs which were also found on Ḥaḍrat Yaʿqūb, Ḥaḍrat Is-ḥāq and Sārah *ʿalayhimus salām*. When they saw those signs, they concluded that this was Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*.

5. Through their entire interaction with Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and his manner of speech, they gauged that this person was a Muslim and from the progeny of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām*.

6. The brothers hadn't recognized him with certainty as yet; rather they guessed it, and only recognized him when he said: "I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has been kind to us. Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous."

They only asked: "Are you really Yūsuf?" but he replied with an additional answer. This is known as

the answer of a wise-man. In other words, when they asked "Are you really Yūsuf?", he replied: "Is this something to ask about? It is most obvious that I am Yūsuf. What you ought to have asked was, what are the favours which Allāh *taʿālā* conferred on you and your brother." The additional answer of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* is also a completion of the question: "Do you know what you had done to Yūsuf and his brother?" This would mean: "You ought to remember how you ill-treated me and my brother and how you caused our separation. Now see, here I am and here is my brother. Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* favoured us. Look at how He removed us from that tribulation. Look at how He rejoined us. Look at how He replaced our suppression with honour. And look at how He replaced our distance with closeness and affinity."

Taqwā and patience

Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* says that all this happened because Allāh *taʿālā* laid down this principle:

اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.

In other words, when a person chooses piety under all conditions, saves his self from the things which earn Allāh's wrath, is patient over hardships and calamities, is patient in carrying out good actions, and is patient in abstaining from sins which the carnal self enjoys; then Allāh *taʿālā* most certainly does not waste the reward of such righteous people.

Hadrat Mujāhid *rahimahullāh* says that the words "whoever is fearful and patient" refer to abstaining from sins and being patient in prison. Hadrat Nakhaʿī

rahimahullāh says it refers to abstaining from adultery and being patient on abstinence. It is also said that it refers to abstaining from sins and being patient over the taunts of people. Zamakhsharī *rahimahullāh* says that it refers to fearing Allāh *taʿālā* and being patient in abstaining from sins. In other words, the person abstains from sins and remains steadfast on obedience. Some 'ulamā' say that it means that the person is cautious about leaving out good deeds and committing evils, and is patient over hardships. A person has a choice as regards the first two [i.e. doing good deeds and abstaining from evils], and has no choice over hardships [he cannot control when they will come to him and when they will not]. Such a person is termed a righteous person.

The word patience could also refer to remaining firm on piety. We could therefore rephrase the verse by saying: "whoever is fearful and remains firm on Allāh's fear". Such a person is righteous in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*, and Allāh *taʿālā* does not allow the reward of the righteous to go to waste.

This is the point which I want to speak to you at present. That is:

المؤمن يثاب على حسناته في الدنيا والآخرة

A believer is rewarded for his good deeds in this world and in the Hereafter.

Allāh *taʿālā* made reference to this previously:

نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

We convey Our mercy to whomever We will and We do not waste the reward of the righteous.[1]

And here Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah Āl ʿImrān:

فَاٰتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. Allāh loves the doers of good.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* conveys the same theme as follows in Sūrah az-Zumar:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِ الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَّاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Say: O My servants who believe! Fear your Lord. Those who did good in this world, for them is goodness. The earth of Allāh is vast. It is the patient alone who receive their reward without measure.[3]

The commentators explain this verse in two ways: (1) Reward in this world is preconditioned by the doing of good. (2) The words “this world” are connected to “goodness”. This would mean that the righteous are

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56-57.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 148.

[3] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 10.

rewarded in this world as well, e.g. with good health, well-being. This is the minor reward while the full reward will be given in the Hereafter.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the consolation for those who are put through hardships. By saying this, Allāh *taʿālā* removes the difficulty of worship from His servants, creates enthusiasm in them, and makes it easy for them to remain steadfast on worship.

Now listen further! In addition to rewards in the Hereafter, Allāh *taʿālā* makes mention of worldly reward for His sincere servants. He says:

وَكَأَيِّنْ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ قٰتَلَ ۙ مَعَهٗ رِبِّيُّوْنَ كَثِيْرٌ ۚ فَمَا وَهَنُوْا لِمَآ أَصَابَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوْا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ.

There are many Prophets beside whom many seekers of Allāh fought. They did not lose heart upon being afflicted by any difficulty in the path of Allāh. Neither did they weaken nor did they become submissive [before the enemy]. Allāh loves the steadfast.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that one of the meanings of "neither did they weaken" is that they did not become weak in Dīn. For example, if they did not receive help, their faith and conviction did not waver. He states that the words "nor did they become submissive [before the enemy]" mean that they remained firm on the insight which they had. If they did not turn away from this, how will they ever turn away from Dīn! This verse makes reference to their excellent qualities in actions. The following verse makes reference to their excellent qualities as regards their words and statements:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 146.

وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِيْ اَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ.

They did not utter a thing except that they said: "O our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our excesses in our affairs, and make firm our feet, and give us help against the unbelieving people.[1]

فَاٰتٰهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ ط وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. Allāh loves the doers of good.[2]

In other words, by virtue of their resoluteness and this supplication, Allāh *taʿālā* rewarded them in this world by helping them, giving them booty, victory, authority and power. And the excellent reward of the Hereafter – i.e. Allāh's pleasure, His mercy, or Paradise. Allāh's love is the basis for every type of goodness and fortune.

These verses encourage the believers to develop these qualities within them so that they can become eligible for these bounties and favours.

An obedient and a disobedient believer

Now listen further! Allāh *taʿālā* explains the difference between an obedient believer and a disobedient one. He says:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 147.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 148.

اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ.

Do those who have earned evils think that We will make them equal to those who believed and did good deeds, so that their living and their dying will be the same? It is an evil claim which they make.[1]

In other words, do you think We will make the life and death of Muslims equal in the sense that just as they are less than the unbelievers as regards worldly possessions, they will be less than them in the Hereafter as well? Do you think that the life and death of the unbelievers will also be the same in the sense the unbelievers have more worldly possessions and so they will be the same in the Hereafter as well?

ʿUtbah, Shaybah and Walīd said to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Hamzah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and to other Muslims:

والله ما انتم على شيء، ولئن كان ما تقولون حقا، لنا أفضل من حالكم في الآخرة كما هو أفضل في الدنيا.[2]

First of Allāh, you people are not on any religion. Even if what you say is true, we will be in a better position than you in the Hereafter as we are in this world.

The above-quoted verse was revealed in response to this claim of the unbelievers. It is a refutation of their statement. This verse clearly demonstrates the difference between an obedient believer and a

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 21.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٥، ص ١٥١.

disobedient one. It distinguishes one from the other. This is why many ardent worshippers used to cry when they used to read this verse. Consequently, it came to be known as:

مبكاة العابدين

The verse which makes the worshippers to cry.

Hadrat Tamīm Dārī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* read Sūrah al-Jāthiyah on one occasion. When he came to the above-quoted verse, he continued reading it and cried over it until the next morning. He was standing near the Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm at the time.

Bashīr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* the freed slave of Rabīʿ ibn Khaytham says that Rabīʿ was performing salāh when he came to this verse. He read it repeatedly until the next morning.

When Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* used to read this verse, he used to address his self: "If only I knew with certainty which group I belong to."

Ibn ʿAtīyyah *rahimahullāh* says that we learn from the words "earned evils" that they refer to unbelief because īmān is mentioned as its opposite. This is why those who read this verse, they are overtaken by fear and they cry profusely. This was the condition of the Ahlullāh in their respective times.

The flagrant sinners and immoral people

Now see what the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes about the flagrant sinners and immoral ones:

ورأيت كثيرا من المغرورين المستغرقين ليلهم ونهارهم بالفسق الفجور يقولون بلسان القال والحال نحن يوم القيامة أفضل حالا من كثير من

العابدين. وهذا منهم العياذ بالله تعالى ضلال بعيد وغرور ما عليه مزيد.[1]

I saw many of the arrogant ones whose nights and days are filled with flagrant sinning and immoral acts saying both verbally and through their actions: "We will be in a better condition on the day of Resurrection than many of the worshippers." This – and we seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā – is an extreme blasphemy from them and a deception beyond which there is no worse deception.

All we can do is read the Qur'ān and Hadīth to you, and you can then decide whether you want to understand or not, and put into practise or not. Allāh *taʿālā* explained such themes in the Qur'ān that just one verse can be enough to stir the īmān of a believer. Allāh *taʿālā* says while castigating the hypocrites:

بَشِّرِ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيْمَا ۙ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَّخِذُوْنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ط أَيَبْتَغُوْنَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا.

Give glad tidings to the hypocrites that for them is a painful punishment. They who take the unbelievers as their friends to the exclusion of Muslims. Do they seek honour from them? Surely all honour belongs to Allāh alone.[2]

The hypocrites met with the unbelievers because they felt they could not overpower the Muslims, they have to live with them, so they should not spoil the relationship with them. Allāh *taʿālā* refuted their

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[1] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٥، ص ١٥١.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 138-139.

thoughts by saying: “Surely all honour belongs to Allāh alone.”

In other words, power and honour are in Allāh’s control; He gives them to whomever He wills. This also tells us that He has reserved honour for His Auliyā’. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهٖ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers.

Power and honour are for every such person for whom Allāh wills. The honour which Allāh *taʿālā* has is His own, the honour which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* enjoys is from Allāh *taʿālā*, and the honour which believers enjoy is by virtue of their īmān in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. There is no honour for anyone else.

This verse was revealed in reference to those hypocrites who were deluded by their wealth and authority, and therefore considered themselves to be the ones who spend on the Muslims, and felt that they were honourable while the Muslims were ignoble. These beliefs which were in their hearts came out and were expressed by their tongues. Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to this in Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn as follows:

هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَا تُنْفِقُوْا عَلٰى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ حَتّٰى يَنْفَضُّوْا، وَلِلّٰهِ خَزَآئِنُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ.

It is they who say: “Do not spend on those who remain with the Messenger of Allāh till they disperse.” To Allāh

belongs the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.[1]

They do not understand because they assumed that the sustenance of the city was dependent on the spending of its people.

يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَئِنْ رَّجَعْنَآ اِلَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْاَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْاَذَلَّ، وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهٖ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

They say: "If we return to Madīnah, the powerful ones will expel there-from those who are weak." Power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers. But the hypocrites do not know.[2]

The above-quoted statement of the hypocrites is based on absolute ignorance.

Man seeks only two things in this world, either wealth or position. Allāh *taʿālā* says that the keys to both are in His hands. He says: "To Allāh belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth." He says thereafter: "Power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers."

These verses are recited to us to teach us that if we desire honour, wealth or power; we must seek it from Allāh *taʿālā* alone because He alone has the keys to all these treasures. Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and thereby presents an example of this to the believers and righteous – look at how Allāh *taʿālā* confers His bounties to His righteous servants in this world and in the Hereafter.

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[1] Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 7.

[2] Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 8.

Relating these stories in the Qur'ān is with a view to strengthening the īmān of people, and so that they affirm His promises and believe them with all their heart. If we hold on to the Qur'ān and study Sūrah Yūsuf alone, it will suffice to revive our īmān and to develop conviction in Allāh's promises. It is a unique and most interesting Sūrah. It contains most effective and admonitory themes. Allāh *ta'ālā* refers to it as the most beautiful of stories.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ

We narrate to you a very beautiful narrative, the reason for which We sent to you this Qur'ān.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Ma'ānī* explains the reason why it is the most beautiful of stories. He writes:

وانما كان ذلك أحسن القصص لتضمنه ذكر العاشق والمعشوق، وذلك مما ترتاح له النفوس أو لما فيه من بيان حقائق محبة المحبين وصفاء سر العارفين والتنبيه على حسن عواقب الصادقين والحث على سلوك سبيل المتوكلين والإقتداء بزهد الزاهدين والدلالة على الانقطاع إلى الله تعالى والاعتماد عليه عند نزول الشدائد والكشف عن أحوال الخائنين وقبح طرائق الكاذبين وابتلاء الخواص بأنواع المحن وتبديليها بأنواع الألطاف والمنن مع ذكر ما يدل على سياسة الملوك وحالهم مع رعيتهم إلى غير ذلك.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 3.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ١٣.

The story of Hadrat Yūsuf ʿalayhis salām is referred to as a most beautiful story because it makes mention of a lover and his beloved; and this is something which is enjoyed by the self. Or, because it describes the realities of the love of the lovers and the internal purity of those who truly recognized Allāh taʿālā. It draws attention to the beautiful end of the truthful ones, and encourages a person to tread the path of those who rely on Allāh taʿālā and to emulate the ascetics. It shows them the way to cut one's self from all and turn to Allāh taʿālā alone, and to rely solely on Him at the time of hardships and difficulties. It exposes the conditions of the treacherous and the evil ways of the liars. It shows how the selected servants of Allāh taʿālā are put through various tribulations and how they are then changed into various favours and bounties. This story also gives us an insight into how kings rule and their interactions with their subjects.

In short, this Sūrah is a great admonition for the believer.

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ؕ مَا كَانَ حَدِيْثًا يُّفْتَرٰى وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ.

There is certainly a lesson in their stories for those who possess intelligence. This is no fabricated tale. Rather it is in accordance with the Book which is before it, an exposition of everything, a guidance, and a mercy for those people who believe.[1]

If a Book contains so many admonitory lessons, it is inevitable for a person to derive admonition from it.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 111.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just look at the academic and scholarly discussion of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It demonstrates his expertise in the field of rectification and his affinity with the Qur'ān. (compiler)

A DEFINITION OF CHARACTER

A Maulānā Sāḥib had come here. I explained the definition of good character and bad character in one of my assemblies. When he went back to his house, he wrote a letter to me: "I constantly repeat whatever I heard from you. However, I cannot recall the definition of good character and bad character which you had quoted from *Tarsīʿ*. Kindly have someone to write it and send it to me."

I had said to him that the author of *Tarsīʿ* writes:

إعلم أن ضبط قوتي الشهوة والغضب على ما يقتضيه الشرع والعقل هو حسن الخلق المحمود.

Good praiseworthy character entails restraining the carnal and wrathful powers according to the demands of the Sharīʿah and the intellect.

Abstaining from the above, i.e. not restraining the carnal and wrathful powers according to the demands of the Sharīʿat and intellect will be evil or bad character. This is indeed an excellent and comprehensive definition of good and bad character. I did not see it explained in this way in any other book. It was with regard to this definition that the Maulānā Sāḥib wrote the letter and said that he cannot recall it.

Nowadays people think that good character entails speaking sweetly, and that if a person says something in total contradiction to what is in his heart then it is good character. This is not the case. I said to someone: "Nowadays there is everything, but the noble character of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is nowhere to be seen. Waẓīfahs and other spiritual

practices are to be seen everywhere, but the spark of the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* cannot be seen anywhere."

Note: Hadrat is absolutely correct. Let alone the laity, this quality is not found among the 'ulamā' also. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

Are you listening to the definition of good and bad character as explained by the author? Intellect also demands that these things not be abandoned completely. Rather, they should be subjugated to the Sharīʿah and the intellect. Distinguished scholars are writing this while some of our Sufis feel that mere reading of wazīfahs is enough. Do you know why they don't discuss rectification of character? Because it is very difficult to put into practice. People find it difficult to merely learn about it and acquire correct knowledge of it. People adopt what is easy and leave aside what is difficult. They do not have even this much intelligence to learn it from someone and understand it. I am now talking on this subject but people are probably thinking that people did not perform tahajjud, this is why I am so angry.

Nowadays ignorance has encompassed every level of society. This is what is preventing us from moving forward. Even if a distinguished shaykh wants to remove them from this ignorance, they are not ready to leave it. Their carnal self is saying to them: "This way has been coming down to us from our forefathers, so we cannot give it up."

The above-quoted definition is most beautiful. That Maulānā Sāhib liked it and appreciated it.

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Hadrat looked towards a lawyer and said: When you came to me the first time you said: "I read 200

lectures of Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh*." I said: "When you sit before such great personalities, you must be very careful because the rectification of such people is very difficult." If a person goes with an open mind, it is easy to teach and explain to him, but very difficult to teach the one who makes claims to knowledge. It is inevitable for a defective person to make claims to perfection. A defective person is defined as a person who makes claims to perfection in a manner which you did not hear. Similarly, a person should not make claims of equality with one who is a qualified shaykh because the latter always considers himself to be defective. As for the one who is defective, he does not look at his defects; he thinks that he is perfect. This is why he does not get the inspiration to strive for and reach perfection.

Hadrat Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* said: "I said to Sayyid ʿAbd al-Malik Harbūnī *raḥimahullāh*: 'Please give me some advice.' He said: 'O Ahmad! The one who looks here and there cannot reach his objective. (A person reaches his objective when he shifts his gaze from everything else and focuses on his objective alone.) The person who has doubts cannot be successful. The one who does not see any faults and defects within him is spending all his time in loss.'"[1]

This has been said by all the distinguished mashā'ikh of the past. The same point is made in the *Mathnawī*, i.e. it is essential for a qualified shaykh to focus on his defects and faults all the time.

Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* used to say that Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh* said that when a person is in the initial stages of sulūk, he sees

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[1] *Al-Bunyān al-Mushayyad*, p. 91.

many good dreams. On the other hand, the one who is at the end of his spiritual journey sees very few dreams. The reason for this is that a novice engages in many waẓīfahs in the beginning. He sees the effects of them in the form of good dreams. As for the expert, because he has more recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*, he does not focus on anything personal. Instead, he is constantly fearful of Allāh *taʿālā*. He considers all his actions to be worthless before the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. When he is in this condition, he sees defects even in his dreams.

Restraining one's desires and anger

Look at the beautiful definition of good character as given by the author [mentioned previously]. That is, good character entails restraining one's carnal and wrathful powers and subjugating them to the Sharīʿat and the intellect. And giving free reign to them entails bad character. You are probably thinking that there are many categories of good character and bad character; how, then, can good character develop in a person by restraining only his carnal and wrathful powers? In the same way, there are many categories of bad character, and following one's carnal desires and giving vent to one's wrathful powers are just two of them.

The answer to this is that the carnal and wrathful powers are the foundations. When they are rectified, many good qualities will develop. For example, if the carnal power is subjugated to the Sharīʿat and the intellect, noble attributes like chastity, contentment, abstinence, modesty, etc. will develop in a person. Similarly, when the wrathful power is restrained and subjugated to the Sharīʿat and intellect, the attributes of bravery, generosity, courage, patience, forbearance, pardon, etc. will develop in a person.

On the other hand, if these two powers are not restrained, then the opposites of the above-mentioned good qualities will develop in man. Thus, if the carnal power is not restrained, it will result in greed, avarice, extravagance, miserliness, flattery, jealousy, malice, rejoicing over a calamity which has afflicted another, and so on. In the same way, when the wrathful power is not restrained, it will result in anger, pride, scorn, belittling others, despising people, oppression, etc.

When these two powers are given a leeway and not made subservient to the intellect and the Sharīʿat, thoughts of obedience to Shaytān settle in a person's mind. Once he obeys Shaytān, then man adopts the various Satanic qualities such as evil plotting, deception, cunningness, trickery, cheating, etc. These qualities are most toxic poisons which will take the form of serpents and scorpions in the grave as stated by Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*.

When man does not subjugate his carnal and wrathful powers to the Sharīʿat and intellect, he starts wronging his own self in the sense that this noble element which was entitled to be appointed as his leader is now being used as a servant of these three wretched things – viz. carnal and wrathful powers, and Shaytān. It is inevitable for him to now wrong his heart which is then made into a hard heart to the extent that advice and admonitions do not benefit it, and it cannot absorb any wisdom. This is known as a sealed heart. It is a serious injustice in the sense that the king has been made to obey the carnal self which can be equated to a pig, anger which is like an animal of prey has been subjugated, and the worst enemy – Shaytān – has been made the ruler.

Man – so to speak – has turned the entire system upside down and changed the scheme of Allāh *taʿālā*.

These elements were the kings and the body parts were to be subjugated under their orders. The rectitude of the entire body is dependent on their rectitude, while their corruption results in the corruption of the entire body. Man has turned the ruler into the subject, and the subject into the ruler.[1]

Listen! Tasawwuf is an academic thing so must you acquire knowledge of it. Only then will you be able to do the work in the correct manner. In addition to this, if you desire excellence and want to acquire the qualities of true men, it will be necessary for you to search for a qualified shaykh, hand your self over to him, and enter under his training completely. Although no era was ever devoid of a qualified shaykh, he was a rare find. Most of the mashā'ikh used to teach and instruct dhikr for the sake of blessings. They used to do this so that the murīd may attach himself to the Sufi lineage, develop love for the Sufis, accept their saintliness and have conviction in their words. Anyway, it was not permissible for them to teach them anything else. Making them to wear the garment of the Sufis or tying a turban on their heads were also done so that they may obtain blessings from the outer appearance of the Sufis. These personalities did not consider such people to be their true followers except those who followed their ways. That is, who adopted the qualities which they possessed.

On the point of "blessings", the commentator states that this means that all these practices were for the sake of blessings and not for actual sulūk – treading of the Sufi path. This is because they were not even eligible for it, and the sheikdom was only in appearance. One benefit of this was that people could

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[1] *Tarsīʿ*, p. 8.

develop love for the Sufis and so that some hearts may become attached to others until this lineage goes up to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

On the point of "it was not permissible for them to teach them anything else" the commentator writes that not only was it not permissible for them, it was obligatory on them to inform those who wanted to tread the path by saying to them: "We are only imitating the people of the Sufi path, we are not experts in it."[1]

This is what I have always been telling you – that people want to make the Sufis a source of blessings. You people must have understood by now that learning the path is one thing, and making someone a source of blessings is something else.

The prerequisites and etiquette of servitude and the path

One of the etiquette of servitude is that the seeker must not seek to achieve victory because such a quest negates servitude. If a seeker seeks victory first, he will lose far more than what he gains. Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* highlights this point in *Lawāqiḥ Asrār*. The reason is that Allāh *taʿālā* created man and appointed this world as the place of imposition. That is, he is commanded to carry out certain orders and abstain from certain prohibitions. It is now his job to keep away from the prohibitions and seek the inspiration of Allāh *taʿālā*. Man must also prepare his heart in such a way that the divinity of anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* must not enter it. Furthermore, he must sever all ties which will be harmful to this servitude.

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[1] *Tarṣīʿ*, p. 12.

As for the fruits of actions, it is not appropriate to seek them because they are connected to Allāh *taʿālā* and are from Him. He had the right to confer them in this world or to defer them for the Hereafter. If a servant seeks the fruits and results of actions in this world of imposition, it will be most disrespectful for two reasons. One is that he interfered in a matter which concerns Allāh *taʿālā*. The other is that he acted in this world in a manner which is not in line with its reality. After all, this world is a place of action, not a place of recompense. Furthermore, he sought the recompense of his actions in this world; and this is most disrespectful. Yes, if Allāh *taʿālā* confers anything, he must accept it respectfully. He must not feel smug over it, and if he feels happy about it, it must be because it is a gift from Allāh *taʿālā* which is an indication of His pleasure. In other words, he must not be happy over the favour but be happy over the pleasure of the One who conferred it. And if it is taken away, he must not be saddened. Instead, he must firmly believe that he has no right over anything.

مرادي منك نسيان المراد – إذا رمت السبيل إلى الرشاد

When I tread the path to rectitude and success, then my objective must be to forget my objective.

A true servant is pleased with Allāh *taʿālā* in every condition and situation – irrespective of whether he enjoys prosperity or suffers adversity, or is inspired with abundant worship or is given a small share of it. This is because they do not know in what there is good.

An incident related to Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham

The following story of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* supports the above theme. He relates:

One night I was engaged in dhikr and fell asleep. I was quite disturbed by this. In those days, I used to rely on my actions. I was therefore punished by causing me to fall asleep and miss some of my obligations. I then heard a voice within me saying: "O Ibrāhīm! Become Our servant and you will find comfort. If We cause you to sleep, you must sleep. If We cause you to get up, you must get up. There is nothing in-between for you."

We said previously that "they do not know in what there is good". Sometimes Allāh *taʿālā* causes His servants to fall into sin while it is for their own good. He causes them to do this so that they cannot vex pride over their good actions. This is why it is said that sin which causes submission and servitude is better than obedience which becomes a cause of pride and arrogance. A Hadīth states that sometimes a person commits a sin but is admitted into Paradise on account of it. What this means is that he seeks forgiveness for having committed it and repents to Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* pardons him. The person then remains fearful, and whenever he thinks of the sin he feels ashamed. These are obviously good things.

To sum up, servitude refers to carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions. This is done solely because it is Allāh's order and not for any other reason. One etiquette in this regard is that the person must be pleased with Allāh *taʿālā* in every condition and never think that he has his own choice in any matter. Nowadays these Sufis are smug over their actions and are also focusing on the fruits of their actions. They are just like Shaykh Challī.

The story of Shaykh Challī

You must have heard the story of Shaykh Challī. A soldier hired him to carry a container of ghee in return for a payment. He placed the container on his head and proceeded. As he was walking, he thought to himself: When I receive the money for carrying this ghee, I will buy a hen and eggs. I will place the eggs under the hen. When the eggs hatch, I will sell the chicks and buy a goat. When the goat gives birth to kids, I will sell them and buy a cow. In this way, the money which I get from the hen, goat and cow, I will buy a house, get married and have children. If they come to me and say: "Father, give us some money", I will say: "No."

He shook his head when he said no, and the container of ghee fell off his head. The container broke and all the ghee flowed away. The soldier got angry when he saw this. Shaykh Challī said: "All that you lost was a few rupees' worth of ghee, while I lost my entire estate and family."

Did you see! He hadn't received his payment as yet and he was already building castles in the air. This is the condition of people today – they do not do anything and want to receive saintliness.

Now listen further! It is related in *Fatḥ ar-Rabbānī* that a person bought a slave and asked him: "What kind of clothes would you like to wear?" He replied: "Whatever the master gives me to wear." The master asked: "Okay, what type of work do you want to do?" He replied: "Whatever the master orders." The master asked: "In which part of the house do you want to live?" He replied: "Wherever you order me." On hearing this, the master said: "You are a strange person, you have no opinion about anything!?"

The slave said: "O my master! Can a slave ever have any opinion of his own in the presence of his master?" When the master heard this, he said: "O I wish I was before my own master [Allāh *taʿālā*] as you are before me. You have made me see the reality and you have become my benefactor. I therefore free you for Allāh's sake. I request you to live here so that I can be of service to you."

This is what you call a slave. Servitude means that you only carry out the orders of your master and do not seek any recompense for it. Now if someone doesn't follow this basic procedure and still wants to realize success, then how can it be possible? A task is only achieved when the correct procedure is followed. If a person is a labourer, his focus must be solely on his work and not on the fruits of the labour. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* conveys this theme in the following couplet:

> Do not be a servant like a poor person who does work on condition he receives payment. This is because your Master is fully aware of the way of servitude.

This is an excellent couplet on Allāh-recognition. If Ḥaḍrat Maulānā's lectures contained nothing else, this couplet would have sufficed.

Focus on the work

The mashā'ikh say that the quest for victory negates servitude, and that it does not behove a true servant to seek the fruits of actions. It is disrespectful for him to do this. I agree with this and add one point to it, viz. in addition to it being disrespectful, one harm is that when the focus is on the results and fruits, the work will not be done totally and completely. If you

focus on the results, you will not be able to do the work properly.

Hadrat addressed a person saying: You work in the court and you have to do some reading and writing. Now if you think about your salary and become engrossed in thoughts about it, you will not be able to focus on your work and will not complete it. In fact, it is not far-fetched that you will write down the thoughts which are running through your mind on the official papers. You will certainly receive your salary on the appointed day. At present it is your duty to do your work and carry out your tasks with full concentration, and to abstain from thinking about your salary.

We observe that only the person who does his work correctly is the one who progresses. Those who work well are the ones who are selected and chosen. Although he is chosen by someone else, the basis is his work. In this world, the work is looked at. Unfortunately, these same people become foolish and stupid in Dīnī matters.

The rule is that focus must be on the work; not on the results. If a person worries about the results, the work will not be done. Now listen to a story related to the value of work. I happened to go to a village in the surrounding areas of Jaunpūr. I noticed a large and imposing building in this small village. I was surprised to see such a grand building in such a small village. When I enquired I was informed that a man from that family went for some work to Hyderabad. On one occasion, he was at a place where the Nawāb and his minister were having a discussion and they had different opinions on a certain matter. The man heard both their arguments and addressed the minister: "You are wrong while the Nawāb Sāhib is right. And

this is the proof for it." The man's explanation made a lot of sense plus it was supported by proof. The Nawāb Sāhib was most impressed and employed him. In this way, the man became wealthy and had this imposing house built in his village. We learn from this that a person is chosen and selected by someone else, but it is based on his work.

This is what that [previously mentioned] saint is saying. That is, a servant has no right to ask Allāh *taʿālā* for victory. He is merely a servant; he must do his work. It is the Master's work to pay and reward him as and when He wills. The other point which we learn is that this is a matter with a Being who is most generous and most merciful. He is fully aware of the ways of servitude. There is no need for a servant to work on the condition of payment. His favours and bounties are continually showered in various ways.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that there was a murīd who used to constantly say certain things to his shaykh. The shaykh got fed up one day and said: "Get out and knock your head against the wall." The murīd got up to do just that. A voice from the unseen said: "Are you asking My friend to knock his head against a wall?" On hearing this voice, both the shaykh and the murīd were overjoyed. The shaykh experienced the joy of divine inspiration because when they receive inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā*, they experience intense joy. The murīd was overjoyed because Allāh *taʿālā* referred to him as "My friend". There can be no greater joyous occasion than this for the one who is seeking Allāh *taʿālā*.

Listen further! He said: The self is more inclined towards optional devotions because whatever the person does, he does out of his own will and volition. The self experiences the enjoyment of personal will

and volition. As for the obligatory acts of worship, the self is overpowered. When something is done as an obligation, the self has no personal will and volition. Rather, it has to follow the Sharīʿat. It is probably for this reason that the rewards for obligatory acts are more. After all, the self finds them more difficult. This is probably one of the many reasons why it is necessary for a person to go under the training of a qualified shaykh. When he does this, the self will become subjugated to his orders and prohibitions. The self will have no control over the person's actions and he will not be able to follow the demands of his desires. This is such an important and essential matter that the ʿulamā' have went to the extent of saying that it is better for a person to be under the rule of a cat than to be under the dictates of his self.[1]

The author refers to optional devotions because when man has something of his own, he attributes it to himself. He has full freedom and choice to put it into action or not to. He experiences a type of enjoyment in this freedom. This is why the self is more inclined towards optional acts of worship. As for the obligations imposed by Allāh *taʿālā*, the self has no choice in them. The rewards for obligatory acts is more than for optional acts because obligatory acts are difficult on the self. They are more difficult because they are devoid of the enjoyment of the self.

I say, this happens in the beginning because if you look at the Ahlullāh, they thoroughly enjoy carrying out the obligatory duties.

The author takes this one step further by saying that just as it is difficult to carry out obligatory actions, it

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[1] *Tarṣīʿ*, p. 28.

is difficult to follow a shaykh. It is difficult for a person to hand himself over to the training of a mentor and to put an end to his own will. The reason for this is that it also entails following and obeying someone else, and because the enjoyment of the self is wiped out completely. This notwithstanding the fact that the results are excellent. The self which is an obstacle from developing a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is put to an end, and the person is able to reach Allāh *taʿālā* easily. On the other hand, as long as he is under the subjugation of his self, it will be impossible for him to reach Allāh *taʿālā*. In such a case, it will be far better for a person to obey an animal – like a cat – because since he will not be able to reach Allāh *taʿālā*, he will at least be saved from following his self and being destroyed.

THE MEANS FOR SAFEGUARDING DĪN

In his *at-Tanbīh aṯ-Ṯarabī*, Ḥaḏrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* quotes the following statement of Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh*:

واعلم أن تقديم الكشف على النص ليس بشيء عندنا لكثرة اللبس على أهله، وإلا فالكشف الصحيح لا يأتي قط إلا موافقا لظاهر الشريعة.[1]

To give preference to kashf (exposition) over an explicit text is absolutely baseless according to us. This is because those who experience kashf are very often confused. On the other hand, genuine kashf (which is devoid of confusion) is always in line with the Sharīʿah.

Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* makes reference to a most important and essential principle. He shows the status of kashf by saying that it is subservient to the Sharīʿat and that the Sharīʿat is always given preference over it. The reason he gives is that the person who experiences kashf is, in most cases, confused.

I say, this is the condition with other means of knowledge as well. For example, a person can be confused when he witnesses something or resorts to his intelligence. An observation is sometimes wrong, and the intelligentsia also have severe differences among themselves. This is why the basis is the Sharīʿat and not the intellect. Kashf and other similar phenomena cannot be relied upon because they are

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[1] التنبيه الطربي، ص ٨.

not solely divine; they could also be satanic. However, because the external form of both is the same, the person who experiences kashf sometimes considers satanic kashf to be divine. He is then deceived and falls from grace. An example of how this confusion can take place is given by Shaykh Akbar himself. ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* quotes it in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

قال الشيخ عبد القادر الجيلاني قد ترائ لي مرة نور عظيم ملأ الأفق، ثم بدت لي فيه صورة تنادي با عبد القادر، أنا ربك وقد اسقطت عنك التكاليف، فإن شئت فاعبدني وإن شئت فاترك. فقلت له: اخسأ يا لعين، فإذا ذلك النور صار ظلاما، وتلك الصورة صارت دخانا. ثم خاطبني اللعين فقال لي: يا عبد القادر، نجوت مني بعلمك بأحكام ربكك وفقهك في أحوال منازلاتك، ولقد أضللت بمثل هذه الواقعة سبعين من أهل الطريق.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī said: On one occasion I saw a grand light which covered the horizon. I then saw a shape inside which called out to me saying: "O Abd al-Qādir! I am your lord. I have absolved you of all the obligations of the Sharīʿah. If you want, you may worship me, and if you wish, you can give up worshipping me." I said: "Get away you cursed one." The moment I said this, the light turned into darkness and that shape turned into smoke. The cursed one then addressed me saying: "O ʿAbd al-Qādir! You saved yourself from my deception by virtue of your knowledge of the injunctions of your Lord and understanding of your ranks. I have already led astray 70 mashā'ikh from the path in similar ways.

فقيل للشيخ عبد القادر من أين عرفت أنه شيطان، فقال بإحلاله لي ما حرمه الله على لسان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فإنه تعالى لا يحرم شيئا على ألسنة رسله ثم يبيحه لأحد في السر أبدًا.

Someone asked Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir: "How did you recognize that he was Shaytān?" He replied: "When he made lawful for me what Allāh had made unlawful on the tongue of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Allāh taʿālā will never make something unlawful on the tongues of His Messengers and then permit it to someone else in secrecy."

What a unique story! The cursed Shaytān did not even leave a great Sufi like Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* and did his utmost to confuse him. Hadrat Shaykh was a man who belonged to the Sufi lineage. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* enabled him to catch the thief. Furthermore, it will serve as a proof for latter generations and so that they could take guidance from it.

He was an expert in the Sharīʿat and was firm on it, this is why he was not deceived by him. This, notwithstanding the fact that Shaytān did his utmost to delude him and appeared in the form of kashf. Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* weighed his kashf on the scale of the Sharīʿat. He thought to himself that when Allāh *taʿālā* made something unlawful through Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, how can it become lawful later on? It is never the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to make something unlawful through His Prophets and Messengers, and then make it secretly lawful to someone else. This can never happen. Based on this principle, Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* immediately understood that this kashf is not from Allāh *taʿālā* but from Shaytān. This is why he asked

him to get away. The moment he said this, the light changed to darkness and the shape which he saw turned to smoke. Shaytān frankly admitted that the Shaykh was able to save himself by virtue of his knowledge of the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and his understanding of his ranks and levels. This is why he could not deceive him.

As for the 70 people whom he deluded through similar incidents, they must have been people who used to engage in different acts of worship but were devoid of knowledge of the Sharīʿat. This enabled Shaytān to deceive them.

I now say that we clearly learn from this incident that Shaytān is able to delude and deceive the saints and Sufis when they do not cling to the Sharīʿat. The further away a Sufi is from the Sharīʿat, the quicker he will be deceived by Shaytān. The more he is steadfast on the Sharīʿat, the more he will be protected from Shaytān.

Look at how Shaytān tried to deceive a great personality like Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*. However, the Shaykh had knowledge of the Sharīʿat, and so he was protected on account of it although Shaytān left no stone unturned in trying to deceive him.

The fact of the matter is that some people consider themselves to be people of divine affinity and light, and believe that it is due to their own blessings. This is why they get caught up in such incidents. Whereas it is not necessary for every light to be divine light; it could also be from Shaytān. This is how they get deluded. As for those Sufis who have knowledge of the Sharīʿat, they are able to differentiate between the two immediately and act accordingly. We learn from this that the only way to preserve divine affinity and

spirituality is by holding on firmly to the Sharīʿat. It is only through the Sharīʿat that man can save himself from such tribulations. There is no other way. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with knowledge of the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat. Āmīn.

COMPASSION IS ESSENTIAL FOR RECTIFICATION

I feel that whatever evils have crept into worldly and religious people are due to evil qualities and traits. And the worst of these qualities is anger. Anger causes an evil temperament in a person which replaces his original temperament. When I was in my hometown I used to observe my family people venting their anger on each other. When I tried to correct and rectify them in this regard, they used to say that I was ill-mannered. This notwithstanding the fact that I lived in Thānah Bhawan and was trained there. I used to keep the Qur'ān and Sunnat before me and gauge my conditions and characteristics against them. Despite this, they felt that I was a very angry person and they were very good. Whereas they were ignorant, and their ignorance was coming down to them from their forefathers. When I realized that they are offended despite my affection and kindness which I displayed to them, I decided to change my approach and became extremely lenient and compassionate. In today's times, leniency is essential. When I adopted this approach, I experienced good results in my own self. My heart and mind experienced peace, and this had a good effect on my health.

Note: I wish we showed concern for our rectification so that the soul of Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would become pleased and our end would become good. (compiler)

After having experience with my people in the field of rectification, I realized that leniency and compassion are essential for a reformer. In other words, if you want to see any benefit and good results, it will only be through leniency and not through severity. This is why I am saying to you people that you must adopt a soft approach with your associates and family

members. Success is guaranteed in this approach. I say to people: Brother! If you find your family members to be bad-mannered, irresponsible and disorganized; you must adopt good manners, be responsible and organized; and set right your affairs in this way. If you are going to be bad-mannered, irresponsible and disorganized like them, your house will be destroyed.

OPENING THE DOOR OF THE UNSEEN

The author of *Tarsīʿ* says: Previously we mentioned to you that opening the door to the unseen is dependent on giving up all disobediences, acting on all acts of obedience, and cleansing the heart of all reprehensible qualities and characteristics.

Since you are seated here, I will say a few words to you. If you listen to them, they will be of use to you and to others. However, I notice that most people do not listen to what I say. Look! These personalities are the mashā'ikh of their time. They collated their sciences in these books. If they are not studied, you will remain ignorant of many things and the door will be closed to you. Now look at what a beautiful point they made: Opening the door to the unseen is dependent on giving up all disobediences, acting on all acts of obedience, and cleansing the heart of all reprehensible qualities and characteristics.

I explained previously that one of my friends quoted to me the statement of someone else who said: "The Maulwīs do not become saints because they do not engage in spiritual practices." When I heard this, I kept silent but later on I came to the conclusion that this statement is not right. Firstly because it is wrong to say that the 'ulamā' do not become saints because there are many 'ulamā' who became saints. Assuming a Maulwī does not become a saint, then it is not because he does not engage in spiritual practices. Rather, sainthood is dependent on discarding the carnal self. Thus, the Maulwī who discards the carnal self, carries out acts of obedience and gives up sins becomes a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. The one who does not do these things does not become a walī.

In the same way, if a non-ʿālim acts against the demands of his carnal self and follows Allāh's injunctions, then he too will become a walī. And if he does not do these things, he will not become a walī. We cannot make a general rule that Maulwīs do not become saints nor can we say that the laity cannot become saints. There are all types of people in this world. Some Maulwīs do not discard the carnal self and do not adopt the injunctions of the Sharīʿat, and some common people also do not do the same. Such people do not reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* made this a general rule without specifying any particular person or group. Whether he is an ʿālim or a non-ʿālim, as long as a person carries out acts of obedience and abstains from sins, the door of the unseen which was closed will be opened to him. This is in line with the Sharīʿat because the Sharīʿat instructs us to carry out acts of obedience.

Allāh *taʿālā* said:

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Do good deeds. He also instructed us to abstain from evils. This is why the Sufis embraced the Sharīʿat and were practical manifestations of it.

Sayyid Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* says: Adhere to the injunctions of Islam, and Islam means following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's self.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful definition! The essence of this is that the person who follows the Sharīʿat and chooses to turn away from the demands of his self is in fact the one who is a Muslim, and this ought to be the mark of a Muslim.

I say, opening the door to the unseen is dependent on just one thing, viz. cleansing the heart of reprehensible characteristics. When a person cleanses his heart of all evil and his heart opens up, he gets the inspiration to carry out acts of obedience and to give up disobediences. After all, it is the reprehensible characteristics which do not allow him to move forward. The biggest obstacle to moving towards Allāh *taʿālā* is the carnal self. It is the same self which takes him towards sins and stops him from acts of obedience. All reprehensible characteristics are the attributes of the self. Thus, when a person is cleansed of reprehensible characteristics, the obstacle will be removed. This is because when blessings from Allāh *taʿālā* descend, they descend onto the heart first.

He says further on:

فاعلم الآن العبادة شطران شطر الاكتساب للطاعة وشطر الاجتناب للمعصية التي منها الأخلاق الذميمة، وأن شطر الاجتناب أفضل وأشرف للعبد من شطر الاكتساب، فإن ترك المضار مقدم على جلب المصالح.

Worship is divided into two: one entails acts of obedience and the other entails abstaining from sins. Reprehensible characteristics are from here as well. The part which comprises of abstention is the better and superior of the two because abstaining from harmful things is given preference over earning and acquiring beneficial things.

This is a most excellent statement made by the author of *Tarsīʿ*. Abstaining from sins is undoubtedly superior to and more necessary than doing good deeds. This theme is supported by the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ

Then whoever is drawn far away from the Hell-fire and entered into Paradise - he has succeeded.[1]

We learn from this that there is the Hell-fire on one side and Paradise on the other side. The one who commits sins goes to the Hell-fire while the one who does acts of obedience becomes eligible for Paradise. However, from these two, it is more important to save oneself from the Hell-fire. This is why it is mentioned first in the above verse. Even a single minute in the Hell-fire will be unbearable. All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* sought refuge from the Hell-fire and from Allāh's punishment. The Auliyā' who came after them followed them in this regard as well.

A saint makes duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* as follows:

> I am not saying You must accept my obedience, all I want is for You to cross the pen of pardon over my sins.

In other words, pardon me my sins and save me from the Hell-fire. This is enough for me. Whether I receive the different levels of Paradise or not, that is immaterial, but I certainly want salvation from the Hell-fire.

I have understood the conditions of today and am speaking to you accordingly. People think that we speak whatever our heart desires. Rather, we have observed the world and are still observing it. This is why we speak according to the conditions that are prevailing in our time.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 185.

People of insight abstain from sins

The author of *Tarsīʿ* says further on:

This is why you will see people of insight abstaining from sins and their full focus is on safeguarding their heart from inclining towards anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. This is because if the heart becomes occupied in other things, so will the rest of the body parts. It is for this reason that they consider the worst sin to be the heart inclining to anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. They also focus on safeguarding their stomachs from unnecessary foods, their tongues from futile talks and their eyes from unlawful things. All this is the fruit of setting right the heart.

A Ḥadīth states that when the heart is rectified, it develops the capability of accepting rectitude. When the heart starts accepting this, the rest of the body parts – which are subservient to the heart – also start accepting rectitude. Consequently, it becomes easy to carry out acts of obedience and to abstain from sins.

When I was in Mumbai, I quoted the following couplet of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*:

> I was constantly making objections against others, but when my eyes opened, I found that my own heart was dense with defects.[1]

When the people in Mumbai heard it, they were overjoyed. One person said to me: "You diagnosed the illness of my entire life."

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[1] Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Aḥmad Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* explains this couplet through another couplet:

When our eyes opened, we fell in rank from our own eyes.

Some people think that such and such person – in fact, the whole world – is nothing while they are everything. I ask such people: "What prove do you have that you are perfect? Have you reached the level of perfection by looking down on Allāh's servants?" Listen! This is not a thing of perfection; it is an ailment.

The man said that I diagnosed the illness of his entire life. This is what the poet is saying – that as long as his eyes remained shut, he was looking at the faults of others. But when his eyes opened, he found a large heap of his own faults. He realized that the most faults are found within himself.

When the people [of Mumbai] were impressed by the couplet which I quoted, I said to them the next day: "You heard a couplet yesterday, now let me quote another couplet on the same theme:

> As long as we did not know our own selves, we continued looking at the faults and excellences of others. But once our eyes fell on our sins, we saw no other bad person. (Bahādur Shāh Ẓafar)

In other words, as long as I hadn't recognized my own self, I continued looking at the faults of others. But once my eyes opened and I realized my own self, I did not see anyone worse than me. Once I acquired this quality, I acquired total humility. It is by virtue of this humility that Allāh *taʿālā* pardons.

This couplet is one of absolute humility. The humility of Shāh Ẓafar *raḥimahullāh* will – inshā Allāh – be a cause of additional value in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*.

When I quoted this couplet, a person asked me: "How did you come to know of this couplet?" I replied: "Brother! We are living in this world just as you are.

We came across it by reading books, so what is so astonishing about it? Furthermore, this couplet is on the subject of rectification of the self, so we ought to know about. If we do not know such things, what will we teach you." He then said: "Very well, there is another couplet which is also filled with spirituality."

> No matter how intelligent and sharp-witted a person may be, Zafar will not consider him to be a human if he does not remember Allāh *taʿālā* in prosperity and fear Him in adversity.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* says that excessive wealth results in transgression, while excessive actions results in conceit. In other words, when a person has a lot of wealth, his self does not remain within its boundaries. This is why we see the wealthy ones who used to oppose the Prophets and Messengers *ʿalayhimus salām*. On one side we have the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who are the friends of Allāh *taʿālā* and on the other side are the wealthy ones who oppose them with their wealth. A person can only oppose another with what he has, so they oppose the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* with their wealth, but they are never successful in this opposition.

The story of Qārūn

Qārūn opposed Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* solely on the basis of his wealth. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* began collecting zakāh from the Banī Isrāʾīl. Qārūn was from the Banī Isrāʾīl and possessed vast treasures of wealth – even more than Pharaoh. He thought to himself that if one fortieth of his wealth is taken out as zakāh, it will be a very large amount. Subsequently, he trained a certain woman to make some accusations

against Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* when he delivers a lecture.

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was delivering a lecture and speaking about the ills of adultery. Qārūn indicated to the woman, so she stood up and asked: "Does the ruling against adultery which you are speaking about apply to us only or does it apply to everyone?"

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said that it applies to everyone. The woman then said what she was taught by Qārūn. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* became angry and asked her: "Are you saying this from your own self or were you taught by someone to say it?" The women became terrified and said that it was Qārūn who had taught her. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* fell in prostration to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* said: "O Mūsā! Raise your head. The ground is at your beck and call. It will do as you order." Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* ordered the ground to seize Qārūn. When he was about to be swallowed by the ground, he said: "This is my relative. He is treating me in this way because he wants to seize all my wealth." When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* heard this, he instructed the ground to swallow him together with his wealth. All his wealth was gathered and he was swallowed by the ground with his wealth.[1]

In the same way anyone who opposed a Prophet was never successful. These people want to compete against the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* through their wealth and physical strength. I see the same condition

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[1] قصص الأنبياء لابن كثير، ص ٣٩٧.

in people today. You have heard the story of Qārūn. The wealthy people in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did the same to him.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was performing salāh in the Kaʿbah on one occasion. When he went into prostration, some unbelievers brought the entrails of a camel and threw it on the back of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The weight of it prevented him from getting up from prostration. When Hadrat Fāṭimah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* was informed of it, she rushed to him and removed the entrails. The unbelievers were close by in Dār an-Nadwah. They were watching the scene and virtually falling over each other out of laughter. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* raised his hand, called each one by name and said: "May Allāh destroy such and such person." They were terrified when they heard this and were convinced about their own destruction because they knew that Rasūlullāh's prayers are answered. They were all destroyed in the Battle of Badr. The manner in which they were destroyed is well-known to you.

The above discussion was on the subject of transgression because of excessive wealth. The author of *Tarsīʿ* said that excessive actions results in conceit. Transgression in actions is known as conceit. The special servants of Allāh *taʿālā* gain proximity to Him through good actions. The more the actions, the closer they get to Him. But there are some people who develop conceit on account of their actions. They are the ones whose *taufīq* (inspiration) is taken away by Allāh *taʿālā*. The actions which are normally the means for closeness to Allāh *taʿālā* become the causes of distance from Him. Conceit sometimes causes them to fall into sin so that they can come out of their conceit. This is why the Sufis say that the sin which

creates humility and submission is better than the obedience which causes pride and conceit. Although the sin is bad in itself, the condition of remorse and submission which follows it becomes a means of closeness to Allāh *taʿālā*, and He is pleased by it.

There was a person who used to experience many spiritual conditions by virtue of serving his shaykh. He relates his condition as follows: When I went to my hometown, I proceeded to the graveyard and addressed my family members out of pride: "I have brought the thing which had left this place." The moment I said this, all my spiritual conditions were taken away from me. I noticed that the basis on which I had been vexing pride was taken away, nothing remained. Previously when I used to read the Qur'ān, I myself and those who used to listen to me used to go into an ecstasy. Now my condition is that I myself do not like my own recitation, what, then can be said about those who listen to me!? How will they ever like it?

I am relating this incident to show you how lofty spiritual conditions are taken away because of conceit. It is not possible to safeguard one's self from it without inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* and His help. This is the most difficult terrain in this path. When a person starts treading this path, he receives certain spiritual conditions and he assumes that he is now perfect and that these conditions cannot leave him. It is from that very point that he is destroyed in this path. The moment he thinks in this way, inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* is taken away from him. A person can only be saved if Allāh *taʿālā* protects him. This is why he has to turn to Allāh *taʿālā* constantly and beg Him for inspiration. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ التَّوْفِيْقَ لِمَحَآبِّكَ مِنَ الْاَعْمَالِ، وَصِدْقَ التَّوَكُّلِ عَلَيْكَ، وَحُسْنَ الظَّنِّ بِكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You for inspiration to do good actions which are liked by You, to have genuine trust in You, and to have good thoughts about You.

I delved on this topic because people have been conferred with spiritual conditions and suffered losses on account of them. It is necessary to know the causes so that a person can be safeguarded from them.

Sin in itself is bad, but the sin which causes submission is better than that act of obedience which results in pride and conceit. When submission develops in a heart, the person will repent and disobedience will no longer remain. But when obedience causes an evil quality, the obedience no longer remains an obedience.

These personalities treaded the path themselves and were fully aware of it. They recorded their conditions in books so that others can learn the path from them, tread it, and reach the destination.

THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING IN THIS PATH

This path requires understanding more than it does physical efforts and striving. There was a saint who cut his leg so the seniors said that this is an imposition on the self.

I say it was imposition on the body and not on the self because after cutting the leg, the self is still in existence. This act is an excess which is prohibited. Actions of this nature were common in nations of the past. The Sharīʿat of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* cancelled them. Listen! The Sharīʿat is best and easiest. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited a woman from taking support from a rope and said that there is no need for such extremism. Engage in worship, and when you are overcome by sleep, you must go to sleep.

THE NEED TO LOOK AT ONE'S OWN FAULTS

Whenever a person starts Dīnī work in a place, the masses have objections to it. They start fomenting trouble and fabricate various lies against the person. The same treatment was meted out to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. These people do not have the ability to listen to the truth nor do they allow others to listen. Their full-time occupation is to cause trouble. This has become the religion of the masses and they are happy about it. When I look at these people, I see that they are neither good in Dīnī matters nor in worldly affairs, yet they think that they are doing very well. Nowadays there is no one to tell them that they are causing corruption. Corruption has become their mattress and their duvet. It has become a natural trait in them. Corruption has become their special skill. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

There was a person who was opposed to me and caused many problems but he could not succeed. Instead, he was disgraced in a terrible way. When anyone advised him, he would say: "Why are you advising me? I have already become a devil. And not only me, anyone who leaves that place will be in the same condition."

There was another person who used to talk bad about me every day in front of a person who was associated with me. The latter listened patiently to whatever he had to say for a few days and eventually asked: "Did you ever go there?" He replied in the negative. He asked: "If you never went there and never observed what is happening there, why are you saying such things? You should at least go once and observe the situation there." My associate then brought him one day. He then asked him: "Now tell me, what are your

impressions?" He replied: "I knew from before hand that this is a very good place. I used to say those things merely to irk you."

Did you see how crooked a person he was! He was compelled into saying such things by his temperament. A poet says:

> When a scorpion bites, it is not out of malice. Rather, it is due to the demand of its temperament.

This is the condition of people. Neither is their Dīn in them nor do they have any intelligence. The intellect was created so that man could differentiate between good and bad. But when he goes astray, his intelligence also goes astray and it cannot do the correct thing.

These corrupt people slander the religious people. They know fully well that they are not doing any good and that it is against integrity. But what else can they do? They do not have knowledge with which they could speak on academic issues, nor do they have intelligence with which they could speak on rational issues. The only thing they can do is to express what remains in them [corruption]. As the saying goes:

كل إناء يترشح بما فيه

Each utensil will give off only that which is in it.

When an ʿālim speaks, he will speak on issues related to knowledge. As for an ignorant person whose self has become corrupt, he can only swear someone, slander another, and so on. What else can the poor fellow do!

These people do not suffice with committing sins on their own. Instead, they direct their attention to

religious people and try to harm them. No sooner a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* starts some work of Dīn, they will focus on him and try to harm him in every possible way. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to such people:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيٰطِيْنَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

In this way We made for every Prophet enemies, mischievous humans and jinn.[1]

If these people were confined to committing sins themselves, there was a possibility of getting the inspiration to repent and having their sins pardoned. However, Shayṭān led them so astray that worse than their evil deeds, he got them occupied in trying to harm religious people and they became focussed on harming Muslims. This entails trampling on the rights of fellow humans which cannot be pardoned by mere repentance. They will have to obtain the pardon of those whom they wronged.

Read the Qur'ān and see how severely Allāh *taʿālā* prohibits corruption and fomenting of trouble. See how displeased He is with those who cause corruption.

فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ

Allāh is fully aware of those who cause corruption.[2]

These people will only desist when Allāh *taʿālā* treats them according to His knowledge. Consequently, we seem being destroyed from all sides. This is the

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 112.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 63.

consequence of their corruption and their causing pain to the hearts of righteous people. Destruction has encompassed them from all sides. A poet says:

> Allāh *taʿālā* did not humiliate a nation for as long it did not cause pain to the heart of a man of Allāh.

The thing which is disliked most by Allāh *taʿālā* is to oppress and wrong someone. He says:

وَمَا اَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ

I do not commit the slightest wrong against My servants.[1]

This, not withstanding the fact that even if Allāh *taʿālā* did wrong His servants, it will not be considered to be a wrong in reality. It will be a wrong in appearance only. The reason for saying this is that oppression or wrong is defined as follows:

وضع الشيء في غير محله

Placing a thing in the wrong place.

When a person exercises his influence on something which belongs to him, it is considered to be done in the rightful and correct manner and place. Man belongs to Allāh *taʿālā*. Despite this, Allāh *taʿālā* abhors even the outward appearance of oppression. Thus, when people commit wrongs against each other – and that too, wrongs which are genuine wrongs and not in appearance – then how much more they will be disliked by Allāh *taʿālā*!

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[1] Sūrah Qāf, verse 29.

The hearts of these people are sick and so are their selves. It is a very dangerous condition. But they are not aware of their sickness. They will sit in restaurants, drink tea and while away their time in speaking about things which do not concern them. Speaking about the evils of religious people and fabricating lies against them has become their main occupation. I say, very well, you can do as you like in this world. When you go to the next world and you find your book of deeds completely black, you will regret and rue, but it will be of no avail to you.

The best treatment for troublemakers

Understand well whatever I am saying to you. The only treatment for such people is that just as troublemaking and corruption are in their nature, discarding and distancing yourself from trouble and corruption must become your nature. There can be no better and stronger evidence than this. The more corruption and impiety you see in them, the more piety and abstaining from troublemaking must be found in you to the extent that you overwhelm and overpower them. Corruption cannot be combated by anything other than abstaining from corruption.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent treatment shown to us by Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

The good end is for the righteous

I believe that this is the best treatment for every type of corruption. That is, you yourself abstain from corruption. If you desire a good end, practise strictly on the Sharīʿat and give up following the demands of the carnal self. If you do this, you will see its benefits. The benefits will not be confined to you alone. Rather, they will be enjoyed by others as well. Thus, carry on

with your work and do not get embroiled with others. Success is always for the truthful ones – even if it is late in coming. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* also had to bear hardships and challenges in the beginning. But the final end was in their favour. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

The good end is for the righteous.

ĪMĀN AND GOOD ACTIONS

People over here address me as Pīr Sāḥib. I said to them that this causes me much discomfort. When they address me as Maulwī Sāḥib I am not so discomforted. But when they call me Pīr Sāḥib, I feel as though an arrow has struck me. What is the reason for this?

Someone said to me: "You probably think of something when someone addresses you like that." I replied: "Yes, you are right." The actual meaning of Pīr is "an expert guide", "a qualified mentor". But this meaning is not applied nowadays. In other words, people do not take it to mean "a qualified mentor" but take the opposite meaning. When they address me in this way, I feel they are probably thinking me to be that. This is why it causes me discomfort.

Listen! In the beginning, I had to face opposition wherever I went. Subsequently, people began saying: "He quotes the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth to us. He relates the stories of the pious predecessors to us. Why should we object to him?" I do not know why people become scared of places like this. I think Shayṭān deceives them.

When I was in my hometown, a person from a certain place used to come to me. He used to say: "I conceal myself from the gazes of people and come to you. When they see me, they point fingers at me." In other words, they consider my place to be an evil place, and make objections to the person for coming to me. Later on, the situation changed and when they see anyone coming to me, they look up to him with high regard and say: "He goes there." In other words, they look up to the person and also to my place.

If a person disregards what people have to say and continues with his work, Shaytān loses hope. When the reality is exposed, they give up their opposition.

Bahjah an-Nufūs is a commentary of *Bukhārī Sharīf*. It relates the story of a person who went to a saint to traverse the path of Sufism. The saint instructed him to go into solitude for a few days and to remain there. The saint then went to him and asked: "Tell me, how do you view me?" The man replied: "Like a pig." The saint said: "You are right." The saint left the man in solitude. (If it was in our times, the saint will get offended and expel the person from the khānqāh. But that saint knew the reason for saying this. This is why he left the man to strive further). He went back after a few days and asked the man: "How do you view me now?" The man said: "Like a dog." The saint asked him to remain in solitude in the room. He went to him again after a few days and posed the same question. The man said something else. The saint continued in this manner, and on each occasion the man would give a different reply. Eventually he said: "You appear like a 14th moon." The saint said: "You are right. I was like this from the very first day. All these changes were taking place within you. You were seeing me as you yourself were. Now that you yourself have become a full moon, you are seeing me like that as well. You different answers were reflections of your changing conditions. You have reached the level of perfection. Congratulations to you. You may now leave."

I related this incident to show you that no matter how perfect a person may be, if you want to be able to recognize him correctly you will have to have a pure heart. If a heart is devoid of respect for someone, he will see nothing but faults in him.

The wife of a saint had no faith in his saintliness. He began flying one day and flew over his house. All the people saw him flying and his wife also saw it [but did not know it was her husband]. When he came to his house, his wife said to him: "You are making baseless claims to saintliness. Today I saw a real saint who was flying in the air." He asked: "Was he really a saint?" She replied: "Can there any doubt in it?" When he obtained her affirmation and confirmation, he said: "That was actually me." When she heard this she said: "Oh it was you! That's why you were flying crookedly!"

Did you see! One is to fly straight and the other is to fly crooked. The one who had faith in him saw his flying to be straight while the one who had no faith in him saw his flying to be crooked.

When you experience such things in your heart, you must realize that the shaykh is a mirror who is showing you your actual condition. In other words, you are seeing yourself in his mirror. When you experience doubts, objections and whisperings; you must conclude that it is your own condition and not of the shaykh. A person used to say to me: "When I attend your assembly, I see all my sins before me from beginning to end." I replied: "You are right. The shaykh is a mirror."

An incident related to rectification

There was a shaykh in whose service people used to remain. A man came and stayed over for one week. The shaykh conferred him with khilāfat within one week and bid him farewell. Those who had been in the company of the shaykh thought to themselves: "We have been here for so long but we did not receive anything, while this man came here, received khilāfat within one week and departed." The shaykh came to

know of what was running through the peoples' minds, so he wanted to give them a rational answer. He asked them to go into the forest and bring fresh moist twigs. They all presented them before the shaykh. He asked them to burn the twigs. They tried their utmost but could not get the twigs to burn. He eventually asked them: "What is the matter?" They replied: "Hadrat, the twigs are fresh and moist, this is why the fire is not catching on them." They must have assumed that the shaykh does not know of such things. He asked: "O I see, so fire does not catch on fresh and moist twigs?" They replied: "Certainly not." He said: "The man to whom I conferred khilāfat was like a dry twig. All he needed was to be ignited. As for you, you are moist twigs. I have been blowing on the fire to ignite you for so long that I now have a headache. And you are just as you were when you came here." They were most remorseful and abandoned their bad thoughts about the shaykh.

Did you see! This is what also takes place here. The moist twigs are first dried. Only then can they be ignited.

The statement of a shaykh is one just as the lesson of a teacher is one. The lecture of a lecturer is one. Despite this, some people benefit while others do not. In the same way, the one who continues absorbing the teachings of the mashā'ikh will one day reach the level of perfection. As for the other person, he will remain where he was. A person benefits according to his capability. If a person's capabilities are perfect, he will derive full benefit. If a person's capabilities are defective, the benefit which he derives will be defective. And if he has no capabilities, he will not benefit in the least. The blessings of the saints are like the sun. In fact, the blessings of the sun are within

one's choice while the blessings of the saints are not within one's choice. Their blessings therefore surpass those of the sun.

A prescription for entry into Paradise

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a distinguished Jewish scholar. He was walking by when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was delivering a sermon from his pulpit. He was saying:

أيها الناس، أطعموا الطعام، وصلوا الأرحام، وأفشوا السلام، وصلُّوا والناس نيام، تدخلوا الجنة بسلام.[1]

O people! Give food to people, maintain ties of kinship, make the salām common, and perform salāh while people are asleep – you will enter Paradise peacefully.

The moment Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām heard these words, he stood still and thought to himself: This is undoubtedly a Messenger of Allāh, and his speech is the speech of a Prophet because it teaches noble characteristics, and none but a Prophet can teach such things.

He came to this conclusion by just this one teaching. A person can be recognized from his teachings. Īmān entered the heart of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said that he wants to become a Muslim.

He then said: "O Rasūlullāh! The people of the Book know you fully well and recognize you [as Allāh's Prophet] but they are not embracing īmān because of

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٣٩، ص ٤٠١.

the depravity of their selves. Let me demonstrate their wickedness to you. I will conceal myself and you must call a group of Jews. You must then ask them what they think of me."

He concealed himself, a group of Jews arrived and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked them: "Tell me, what do you think of ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām?" They replied: "He is the best one from among us. He is an excellent person, and so is his father and grandfather." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: "What will you do if he becomes a Muslim?" They replied: "It is impossible for him to become a Muslim." The moment he heard this, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām emerged from his hiding place and said:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh and I testify that Muhammad is Allāh's Messenger.

When they heard him uttering these words, they said: "He is the worst among us. His father is just like him and so is his grandfather."[1]

Did you see how they made two contradictory statements in one assembly! As long as he was according to their wishes, he was a good man. No sooner he did something against their wishes, he became a terrible man.

I was saying to you that Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a scholar and he knew what entailed noble character. This is why he was greatly affected by the statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu*

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[1] *Siyar A'lām an-Nubalā'*, vol. 2, p. 415.

ʿalayhi wa sallam. There is no doubt whatsoever that just this one statement encompasses all noble characteristics. Feeding people is also from among the excellent characteristics and noble actions. The same can be said about offering salām because it demonstrates consideration and regard for others. These characteristics are part of the rights of fellow humans. On the other hand, performing salāh at night while people are asleep is a right of Allāh *taʿālā*. The essence of this Hadīth is that the person who fulfils the rights of fellow humans and the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* will enter Paradise.

Ponder over this: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "make the salām common". The Arabic word *ifshā'* is used. This word is used when something has to become very common among everyone. We learn from this that we must offer salām to everyone – those whom we know and those whom we do not know. In fact, the salām of Islam is really the one which is offered to a person whom you do not know because then the catalyst for offering it is Islam. On the other hand, the reason for offering salām to someone you know could well be the fact that you know him and not on the basis of Islam itself.

A Hadīth states that the person who initiates the salām has removed himself from pride.[1] One person used to say: "I don't offer salām to such and such person because he waits for my salām." I replied: "Yes, many people consider the salām to be a tribal right. Are you going to do the same?" It is a practice in our area to invite to a meal only that person who has invited you for a meal to his house. If he does not

[1] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٦، ص ٤٣٣، حديث ٨٧٨٦.

invite you, then you too do not invite him. They apply the same rule to salām – they offer it to those whom they know and abstain from offering it to those whom they do not know. Or, they will offer it to the one with whom they are friendly and abstain from offering it to those with whom they are displeased. Whereas the Hadīth uses the word *ifshā'* which is all-encompassing.

One person said to me: "Look at those two, they are not on speaking terms for quite some time." I said: "This is not permissible." They were educated people but had succumbed to their egos and were discarding a Sunnat. Egotism has reached such a level that you will see people on a hajj journey, yet they are fighting with each other. Whereas Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ

There is to be no quarrelling in hajj.[1]

People have really reached the limits – you will see them pushing and shoving each other in the Haram Sharīf. I would look at them and think to myself: "O Allāh! These people have come for hajj, yet they are behaving in this manner!?" I decided there and then that if I happen to come again, I must take such companions who are considerate and who have rectified their selves. Never travel with uncouth and bad-mannered people.

The benefit of salām

These Sunnats which you consider to be insignificant are means to rectifying many ills. Also on the subject of salām, a Hadīth states that the person on a

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 197.

conveyance must offer salām to the one who is on foot, the one who is on foot must offer salām to the one who is sitting, a small group must offer salām to a large group. The 'ulamā' say that the reason for this is to create mutual love and put an end to discord. The condition of a person on a conveyance is better than the one who is on foot. If he offers salām first, it will be proof of his humility because although he was in a superior condition, he offered salām to one who was lower than him. This will increase the bond of love between the two and the objective of salām will be realized in a most beautiful manner.

Thus we see that as regards salām alone there are so many rules. When we study them we conclude that they are most certainly divine principles. Just this one Sunnat combines many Dīnī and worldly benefits. There was a person who used to say that when a person offers salām, one can gauge from it that he is saying it with his heart. This results in drawing the heart of the other. He used to say that after studying the manner of salām, he gauged that it is indeed a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*.

The commissioning of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was for the perfection of noble character, and salām is part of it. When you find that you have to strive too much, then it is because you have abandoned the Sunnat. If you adopt the Sunnat, your striving will get less and you will reach your objective [Allāh *ta'ālā*] easily.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an easy way to reach Allāh *ta'ālā*! (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

A person went to a certain place and performed lengthy salāhs and ate very little food so that his host will be impressed by him and become his follower. When he returned to his house, he asked for food. His

son asked him: “You just returned from an invitation. Did you not eat there?” He replied: “Son, I did eat but I ate very little so that it comes to my aid (i.e. the rich person becomes impressed by me and thinks that I am a great saint because I eat very little).” His son said: “Father, then you will have to make up for your salāh as well so that it comes to your aid (in other words, the lengthy salāhs which you performed there were also for show. Repeat them so that they come to your aid in the Hereafter).”

Did you see! The world had become so beloved to him and he was so concerned about what people thought about him that he did something which was totally opposed to the Sharīʿat. The Islamic teaching is that if a guest eats a few extra morsels of food to make his host happy, then there is no harm in it. But for a person to eat less so that his guest is impressed by him! We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such actions. It is most detestable to do such a thing and it is also against the teachings of the Tarīqat. There is no problem if I come to your house and eat. It is not harām for me to eat extra at sehrī time in order to get strength for fasting. But to eat less to impress others is nothing but ostentation and materialism. Outwardly the person is abstaining from food but internally he is seeking more.

There was a Maulwī Sāhib who used to say to his students: “Come, let’s do the work of Paradise.” He used to say this to them when it was time to have a meal after their lessons. The students would say: “Hadrat! How can eating be a work of Paradise!?” He would reply: “What else is there to do in Paradise apart from eating and drinking?” Allāh *taʿālā* says:

كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ

Eat and drink with relish in return for what you had done.[1]

I say, just as Allāh *taʿālā* says that the people of Paradise will get every type of food and drink, He says that the inmates of Hell will also get to eat and drink, but it will be of a different kind. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ وَالْآخِرِيْنَ. لَمَجْمُوْعُوْنَ ۙ إِلٰى مِيْقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ. ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّآلُّوْنَ الْمُكَذِّبُوْنَ. لَآكِلُوْنَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زَقُّوْمٍ. فَمَالِئُوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُوْنَ. فَشٰرِبُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيْمِ. فَشٰرِبُوْنَ شُرْبَ الْهِيْمِ. هٰذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ.

Say: The past generations and the latter generations, all are to be gathered at the time of an appointed day. Then, O you who have gone astray, who are the rejecters, you shall certainly eat of the zaqqūm tree. You will fill your bellies with it. You will then drink boiling water over it. You will drink just as thirsty camels drink. This is their entertainment on the day of Judgement.[2]

We learn from this that the inmates of Hell will also feel hungry and thirsty, but they will get zaqqūm to eat and boiling water to drink

The actual act of eating and drinking is done both in this world and in Paradise, but the foods and drinks of Paradise are not available to us in this world. The students were very happy with the Maulwī Sāḥib's point. I say that the real work of Paradise which we have to do in this world is īmān and good actions.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 43.

[2] Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah, 56: 49-56.

Affirming Paradise entails affirming the bounties of Paradise, and that is by īmān and good actions.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and then all the seniors – in emulation of him – made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* in this world to bless them with Paradise.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ[1]

O Allāh! I beg You for Paradise and whatever word or action which will take me closer to it.

There is no similarity between the food of this world and the food of Paradise. When a person eats the food of this world, he has to relieve himself, whereas when he will eat the food of Paradise, he will merely burp. The thing which is specifically for this world is īmān and good deeds. Included in this is the above-quoted duʿā'. This duʿā' must not be made just once and then abandoned. Instead, it must be made regularly.

The Saḥābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were most desirous of Paradise. Sometimes they would be eating something and then leave it aside, and say: "We are getting the fragrance of Paradise." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said on one occasion: "If you want to see a person of Paradise in this world then look at Abū Bakr."

An important action which we have left out in this world is asking for Paradise. The Ahlullāh asked Allāh *taʿālā* for Paradise in various ways. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā':

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٤١، ص ٤٨٤.

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ عَيْنَيْنِ هَطَّالَتَيْنِ تَسْقِيَانِ الْقَلْبَ بِذُرُوْفِ الدَّمْعِ مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ الدُّمُوْعُ دَمًا وَّالْاَضْرَاسُ جَمْرًا

O Allāh! Endow me with eyes which tear profusely and thereby drench the heart with flowing tears out of Your fear; before the arrival of the time when tears turn into blood and jaws turn into embers.

اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ قُدْرَتِكَ، وَاَدْخِلْنِيْ فِيْ رَحْمَتِكَ، وَاقْضِ اَجَلِيْ فِيْ طَاعَتِكَ، وَاخْتِمْ لِيْ بِخَيْرِ عَمَلِيْ، وَاجْعَلْ ثَوَابَهُ الْجَنَّةَ.[1]

O Allāh! Grant me peace in Your power, admit me into Your mercy, let my life-span pass in Your obedience, let my end be with the best of my deeds, and make Paradise the reward of this.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in praise of His righteous servants:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا

Who say: O our Lord! Avert from us the punishment of Hell. Surely its punishment is inseparable.[2]

إِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَّمُقَامًا

It is an evil resting place and an evil dwelling place.[3]

When Allāh *taʿālā* refers to a place as being evil, we cannot even imagine how evil it must be.

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[1] فیض القدیر، ج ۲، ص ۱۴۳.

[2] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 65.

[3] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 66.

The Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* had as much fear of Hell as they had the yearning for Paradise. When they used to think of Hell and its punishments, the effects of fear used to be seen on their faces. Today we neither have a desire for Paradise nor any fear of Hell. Consequently, a person said that if the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* had to come in our times and observe us, they would refer to us as unbelievers and say that these people have no fear whatsoever of Hell. On the other hand, we will consider them to be mad [because of their intense fear].

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَآ أَنْفَقُوْا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوْا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوْا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ قَوَامًا

[The servants of the Merciful are they] who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly; but are on a middle way between the two [extremes].[1]

Bearing in mind that spending in Allāh's cause is one of the ways in which a person can save himself from the Hell-fire, Allāh *taʿālā* spoke about how one's wealth should be spent. There is great virtue in spending Allāh's path. Whatever a person spends for Allāh's sake will never go to waste. The smallest good action and the weakest bond with Allāh *taʿālā* are not devoid of benefit.

It is recorded that a person who used to frequent a certain shaykh passed away. The shaykh made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā*: "O Allāh! He used to come frequently to me. Admit him into Paradise and give him salvation from Hell. He was my friend. If I were to go to Paradise

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[1] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 67.

and he goes to Hell, what would the benefit of his bond with me be?"

Listen! I am relating these stories to you and will continue relating them so that you will change yourselves and we too will change ourselves. My purpose in saying this is that there is no benefit in futile and useless talks. Talks must be useful and must be about sincerity, following the Sunnat, īmān and good actions.

Only when a person severs his relationships from outward and superficial beloveds will he truly understand the mysteries of Allāh-recognition.

Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

EMULATING MAKES ACTIONS EASY

As long as a person doesn't have a quest and an aspiration, he finds it difficult to emulate and follow someone. No sooner he develops a quest, he takes comfort from the fact that it is not difficult at all to follow in the footsteps of another. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

Follow the way of the one who has turned to Me.[1]

The order to follow someone is not laid down to make things difficult for a person. Rather, it is to make it easy for him. Subsequently, whatever a person is ordered to do becomes easy for him. People reached great ranks by virtue of following. The more a person followed another, the greater the rank he achieved. The high ranks in Dīn enjoyed by Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* were solely due to their following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

I am astonished at those who make objections against following. If you are not going to follow the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, you will have to follow the village chiefs. When the unbelievers of Makkah refused to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* they were forced to follow Abū Jahal. The difference is that if you follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* you will be successful. If you refuse to follow him and follow deviated people, you will go to Hell.

It is most paradoxical that the deviated ones stopped the people from following the Prophets *ʿalayhimus*

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[1] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

salām but imposed them to follow themselves. These chiefs were never desirous of the wellbeing of their people, they were more concerned about their own benefits. Those who did not follow the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* did not refuse because they had no proof for following them. In fact, they themselves had the proof for it because they were imposing the masses to follow them. If following someone was an evil, then no one at all should be followed. Where, then, is the sense in stopping the masses from following pious, righteous and affectionate people like the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and imposing on them to follow their own selves? So it is not because following is an evil. Their reason for not following is explained in the Qur'ān. They will say on the day of Resurrection:

غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَآلِّيْنَ

Our wretchedness overwhelmed us and we remained a deviated people.[1]

To follow and emulate is a most excellent thing. Perfection in Dīn and worldly matters can only be realized through following another. Any type of work in this world – no matter how small it may seem – cannot be done without first following someone. Even cutting a length of material which is to be sewn into a garment cannot be done without learning from someone. In fact, cutting it is more difficult than sewing and stitching it. We see that everything in this world is achieved by following someone. Why should it be any different in Dīnī matters? Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*, the founder

[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 106.

of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband used to say: "I really enjoy eating a meal to which I am invited and to be a muqtadī in salāh." The reason why he liked this is that the burden is placed on the shoulders of others. This demonstrates Hadrat's deep insight. Another proof that following someone makes things easy can be understood from the following story which I will relate to you.

A wedding party was going for a wedding. The bride's family laid down two conditions on the groom's family: (1) Each person will have to eat one goat. (2) The groom's family must not bring any old person. Before departing they consulted an old family member who said: "Accept the two conditions but conceal me among the luggage. We will see what happens."

When they reached, the bride's family counted each person and presented the same number of goats to them, and said to them that they will have to eat those goats. They consulted the old man. He said: "First slaughter one goat, and everyone must get together and eat it." They were a large number. Each person received one or two pieces and the goat was eaten up without anyone realizing it. The second goat was slaughtered and distributed in the same way and they ate it. The third, fourth, etc. were consumed one after the other until they finished all the goats which were given to them. They then asked for more. The people were astonished and said: "There is certainly an old man with you." On hearing this, the old man said: "I came here for this very moment."

Look at how they followed an old experienced man and a complex situation was solved.

There was an ʿālim in Deoband who wrote an article whose tone was a bit harsh. It caused an uproar in the country. When Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī

rahimahullāh heard of it, he said: "He is a young man that is why he wrote in such a harsh tone. If an old man wrote it, he would not have adopted such a tone. He would have been moderate and balanced. The knowledge of an old ʿālim is solid and he also has considerable experience. Consequently, a person is able to remain on the correct path."

The work got spoilt ever since people gave up following the elders of Dīn. If not, there is no easier and simpler work. There is neither humiliation nor degradation in it. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he received khilāfat. He also led the people in salāh when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had fallen ill. It is stated in a Hadīth that when Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was asked to lead the people in salāh, Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* felt that if this was Rasūlullāh's final illness and he passed away after it, people will take a bad omen and say that because Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* became the imām, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* could not recover. In order to prevent this accusation, Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* said to Hadrat Hafsah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* that Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is weak-hearted and will not be able to bear the responsibility of standing in Rasūlullāh's place. Hadrat Hafsah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* should therefore ask her father, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, to lead the people in salāh. The latter got ready for this responsibility. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* came to know that Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is going to lead the salāh and not Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, he announced from his room: "Allāh *taʿālā*, His Messenger and the believers do not approve of the imāmat of anyone apart from Abū Bakr." When he heard this, Hadrat

ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* stepped back and Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* led the congregation in salāh.[1]

Now look at this virtue and rank of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. Allāh *taʿālā*, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the believers were not happy with the imāmat of anyone else. The reason for this is that he followed and emulated Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the most. This is how he got the title of Siddīq. Abū Jahal did not follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* so he was addressed as Abū Jahal, was killed in a battle, and succumbed to absolute disgrace.

A major blessing of following another is that the follower is eventually accorded the place of the one whom he followed. It is recorded that kings used to have slaves who used to attend to them to the extent of cleaning up their excreta. When the kings had to go on a journey, they would seat the same slaves in their place and appoint them as their deputies. Europeans generally object to slavery but there were certain kings who accorded greater ranks to their slaves that they did to their own sons. This is a distinguishing feature of Islam.

Some ʿulamā' say that the ʿulamā' did not follow their seniors because of the conceit of their selves. I also say this. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* delivered a lecture in Jaunpūr on one occasion. He said: "I ask the ʿulamā', do they not feel it below them to go to the mashā'ikh? If they do not, there is no need for them to go to the mashā'ikh because their rectification has

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[1] There are different narrations on this subject. Refer to *Subul al-Hudā wa ar-Rashād*, vol. 12 for details.

been completed. But if they consider it below their dignity, then in the presence of such an evil their rectification has certainly not been completed."

On hearing this, Maulānā Abū Bakr Sāḥib who was present remarked: "Well said, Maulānā! You hit the nail on the head." He also said: "Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not follow his self. Rather, he followed Allāh *taʿālā*. Why, then, do the 'ulamā' follow their selves?" He added: "Following a deputy of the Messenger actually entails following the Messenger himself."

I was saying to you that following is a very easy, simple and enjoyable thing. The carnal self enjoys being in control. In the same way, when a person carries out obligations – which requires obliterating his own will – he experiences a special joy in this obliteration which greatly surpasses the joy of the self-control and freedom of the self. The reason is that the enjoyment of the self is a carnal enjoyment while the other is a spiritual enjoyment. Similarly, a seeker and a lover gets enjoyment from following his beloved. As for those who consider following to be difficult, it is because of their own depravation. Following in itself is certainly not an evil – whether in worldly matters or Dīnī matters. After all, there is nothing easier than following in the footsteps of another. You will become successful.

This is what Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāḥib Nānautwī *raḥimahullāh* meant when he used to say: "I thoroughly enjoy performing ṣalāh in congregation as a muqtadī (follower). All you have to do is make your intention of following the imām and continue following him. You do not have to do anything. The entire responsibility rests with the

imām. Once a muqtadī enters the imām's rule, he frees himself."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation. This demonstrates the wisdom and acumen of our seniors.

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We now conclude this volume. We tried to simplify and explain wherever we could. Inshā Allāh, the next volume will also contain most important themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless me with good health and strength. May He confer me with the perception to be able to render this important service of simplifying and collating these themes. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
28 Muḥarram al-Ḥarām 1434 A.H.
Madrasah ʿArabīyyah, Bayt al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād

REFLECTING AND PONDERING OVER THE QUR'ĀN

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ. بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ. لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَّاَرْضُ اللهِ وَاسِعَةٌ. اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Those who did good in this world, for them is goodness. The earth of Allāh is vast. It is only the patient ones who receive their reward without measure.[1]

We learn from the above that the righteous believers are rewarded in this world as well. I heard this on many occasions from our seniors. They used to say that those who did good, there is goodness for them in this world as well. The word *hasanah* (goodness) in this context refers to good health and wellbeing. We do not know the nature and extent of favours and bounties which Allāh *taʿālā* has in store for them.

It is only in this world that we get īmān and good deeds. Do you think these are insignificant and trivial treasures!? Furthermore, whatever favours and bounties we receive in Paradise will be recompenses for these worldly treasures. After all, the Hereafter is the abode of recompense. This is why a believer will receive the full reward and recompense for his good

[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 10.

deeds in the Hereafter. However, he will get a little as a sample in this world.

In-between the two parts of this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* says: "The earth of Allāh is vast." The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* explains this parenthetical clause. He says that it is brought to remove uncertainty because Allāh *taʿālā* first says that there is goodness (good health and wellness) for the doers of good in this world. No one should harbour the misgiving that many of the righteous people in this world experience a condition which is contradictory to this. In other words, they do not enjoy good health, etc. despite being righteous and pious. So the answer is given that sometimes the reason is the non-conduciveness of the weather and environment. Or it could be some other similar reason which causes physical ailments. We therefore have to understand in this regard that "The earth of Allāh is vast." Thus, there will certainly be some part or region of the world where the weather and environment will be conducive. A person should therefore go there for the sake of his health and wellness.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَفِي الْاَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَّجَنّٰتٌ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّزَرْعٌ وَّنَخِيْلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَّغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُّسْقٰى بِمَآءٍ وَّاحِدٍ قف وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلٰى بَعْضٍ فِي الْاُكُلِ ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ.

In the land are different plots, adjacent to each other. And there are vineyards, fields, date-palms growing in clusters and un-clustered, watered with the same

water. It is We who make one excel over the other in the fruit. In these are signs for those who reflect.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that Allāh *taʿālā* referred to such a large and vast land as "different plots", and He placed different and special effects in each plot so that people of different temperaments may live their lives with sound health and wellness. The Being who is described in such a manner ought to be thanked so that man can be included among the righteous.

I showed this tafsīr to the people and said to them: "I am not saying this. Rather, it is a very senior scholar of the Qur'ān who is saying it." That is, if the weather and other conditions in a place are not conducive to a person, he must emigrate to a place where he can enjoy good health and live a full life. Once he does this and experiences sound health and wellness, he must express his gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* and he will then be included among the righteous.

I constantly show this tafsīr to the people and say to them: "This is a very senior scholar who is saying this. You should now pay heed." This verse shows that a believer receives goodness in this world as well. Another explanation is that it refers to sustenance. If a believer is to receive Paradise and its bounties, then it is not far-fetched for him to receive sustenance in this world.

I quoted the Ḥadīth to you in which Allāh *taʿālā* announces in the latter part of the night: "Is there anyone seeking forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone seeking wellness and sustenance that I may confer these to him?"

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 4.

When the Ahlullāh hear this announcement, they go into a special trance-like condition. Normal people do not feel this at all. Just look at Allāh's grace! We will need sustenance in the morning, yet He is making arrangements for it from the night. Similarly, because we need good health and wellness in this world, Allāh *taʿālā* created different environments and weather patterns for different regions of this world. In this way, He made arrangements for man's physical protection.

The land is divided into pieces of plots which, despite being next to each other, have different effects. This is a most unique phenomenon. There are vineyards, various orchards, and date-palms. Some of them are such that two trunks develop from one trunk. Others do not have two trunks. Despite this, they are all irrigated with one type of water. Some fruits surpass others. This means that their shape, size, fragrance and taste are different; but they have been irrigated by the same water. Glory to Allāh! Look at the magnificent power of Allāh *taʿālā*! Plots of land are lying next to each other as though they are one and the water too is the same. Despite this, various types of fruits are produced from it. In this there is proof that there is certainly a Creator who is all-wise, all-powerful and a great planner who cannot be subdued by anyone.

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* enables us to traverse the earth by speaking about the various plots of land and their different qualities. Some plots of land have fertile soil which are cultivable. Other plots have soil which is brackish. Some plots are soft while others are hard. Agriculture can be practised on some plots of land but fruit orchards cannot be established there. Others are of an opposite nature. The purpose of all this is to demonstrate that although plots of land are lying next

to each other, their components are of various qualities. In the same way, the weather conditions of each plot are different from the other. If a person does not experience good health in one place, he may go to another place. The land of Allāh *taʿālā* is vast.

Allāh *taʿālā* enabled us to traverse the heavens as He did with the earth. Allāh *taʿālā* also took us on a tour of our own bodies. He says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ق ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ط فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

We created man from the essence of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe enclosure. Then We made the drop of sperm into a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We made out of that piece of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with meat, then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* introduced man to his own self. And through it, He introduced man to Himself. After all, if He took us on a tour of our own bodies, why should He deprive us from His recognition?

I accompanied a few people to the house of a certain person. The owner of the house had decorated his house with flowers and creepers. The next day he requested me to deliver a lecture. I read the following verse:

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[1] Sūrah al-Muʾminūn, 23: 12-14.

اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَآءِ. تُؤْتِيْ اُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍم بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ط وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ. وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيْثَةِنِ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْاَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ. يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ج وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لا وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ.

Have you not seen how Allāh set forth a parable? A good word like a good tree whose root is firmly established and whose branches are in the sky. It produces its fruit in every season by the order of its Lord. Allāh sets forth the parables for the people so that they may reflect. The parable of a foul word is like that of a foul tree uprooted from the surface of the earth, having no permanence whatsoever. Allāh strengthens the believers with the firm word in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. Allāh leads astray the wrongdoers. Allāh does as He wills.[1]

When I explained these verses, the people said to me that I spoke in line with the condition of the owner of the house. I said to them: "You can assume as you like. In these verses Allāh *taʿālā* compare a good word to a good tree whose roots are firm in the ground and branches are so high in the sky as though they are conversing with the heavens. In other words, this is the nature of a good word. Its roots are firmly embedded in the heart of a believer, and whatever emanates from him – i.e. by virtue of his īmān – they are numerous.

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[1] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 24-27.

We learn from this that the actions of a believer which are accepted and reach Allāh *taʿālā* are like this because they are the fruits of īmān. The roots of that īmān are in the heart. A narration of *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī* states:

عن رفاعة بن رافع قال كنا نصلي وراء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فلما رفع رأسه من الركعة قال سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ، فقال رجل ورائه: رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيْرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيْهِ. فلما انصرف قال من المتكلم انفا. قال أنا. قال رأيت بضعة وثلاثين ملكا يبتدرونها أيهم يكتبها أولا.[1]

Hadrat Rifāʿah ibn Rāfiʿ radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: We were performing salāh behind Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. When he raised his head from the rukūʿ, he said: سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ. A person behind him said: رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيْرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيْهِ. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam completed his salāh and turned around, he asked: "Who said these words just now?" The man said: "It was me." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "I saw over 30 angels rushing and trying to outdo each other in an effort to record what you said."

These words of the man were accepted in Allāh's court because they emanated from a heart which was filled with sincerity. This is why they reached the heavens immediately.

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[1] رواه البخاري. معارف الحديث، ج ٣، ص ٢٨٥.

The good word referred to in the verse is described as a tree which bears fruit in every season. In other words, on account of it, a believer is inspired to do good deeds at every moment. This world is the world of action while the Hereafter is the world of recompense. Whatever a believer receives in the Hereafter will be the fruit of his actions of this world. Thus, the fruits of īmān with relation to the Hereafter are referred to as *ukul* (in the above verse). This word is used to refer to food items. When a believer says *Sub-hānallāh, al-Hamdulillāh*, etc. in this world, they will be presented as fruit-bearing trees to him in the Hereafter. In other words, it will be said to him: You had said *Sub-hānallāh* at such and such time, now this is its tree. You had said *al-Hamdulillāh* at such and such time, and this is its tree." In addition to this, a believer will receive many other bounties of Paradise by virtue of his īmān and good actions. Allāh *taʿālā* describes some of the bounties of Paradise as follows:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ط تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ط اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ط تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا صلى وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ.

The description of Paradise which the righteous are promised: Rivers flow beneath it, its fruit is eternal, and so is its shade. This is the recompense for those who fear. And the retribution for the rejecters is the fire.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* goes into detailed descriptions of Paradise and its bounties just as He described Himself in detail in the Qur'ān. In the above verse Allāh *taʿālā* says that the fruits of Paradise will be eternal. The 'ulamā' explain this by saying that when a person breaks off a

[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 35.

fruit from a tree, Allāh *taʿālā* will immediately place another fruit in its place. However, some mashā'ikh say that the fruit will not move from its place because this negates the quality of being "eternal". Therefore, that very fruit will remain in its place while the person is eating of it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a most astonishing point which the people of this ephemeral world cannot fathom. Imagine a person is eating a fruit and while he is eating it, that same fruit is growing on the tree. (compiler)

People constantly ask me to teach them wazīfahs. I say to them: "Read the verses of the Qur'ān which describe Paradise, there are no better wazīfahs." There was a man in Thānah Bhawan who used to lead us in salāh. I used to thoroughly enjoy it when he used to read this verse (quoted above). On one occasion we went to see a fort. We noticed streams of water flowing beneath the walls of the fort. I said: "These people have copied Paradise because Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to Paradise:

تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ

Rivers flow beneath it.

Allāh *taʿālā* went into much detail in describing Paradise. The 'ulamā' say that Allāh *taʿālā* described it in such a manner that He made us fall in love with it. Allāh *taʿālā* described Himself and made us fall in love with Him. In the same way, He described the bounties of Paradise and caused us to fall in love with it.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with the treasure of His love and His recognition.

I was explaining to you that the source of "a good word" is in the heart of a believer, while its branches – i.e. good deeds – emanate from his different body parts. Since the Hereafter is the place of recompense, he will receive the recompense for his good deeds in the Hereafter. However, this world is the only place for actions and deeds. The progress of a believer is therefore confined to this world only. Whatever progress a person wants to make in this regard, he will have to do it in this world. The Hereafter is not the place for it. The Hereafter is for recompense and nothing else. If we look at the world from this angle, we can say that it is worthy of praise. It is also for this reason that a long life is desirable. A narration states:

عن أبي بكرة أن رجلا قال: يا رسول الله أي الناس خير؟ قال: من طال عمره وحسن عمله. قال: فأي الناس شر؟ قال: من طال عمره وساء عمله.[1]

Abu Bakrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that a man said: "O Rasūlullāh! Who is the best among people?" He replied: "The one who has a long life coupled with good deeds." The man asked: "Who is the worst of people?" He replied: "The one who has a long life but his actions are evil."

The insignificance of this world

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] باب استحباب المال والعمر بالطاعة، مشكوة، ج ٢، ص ٤٥٠.

أَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ.

Are you pleased with the life of this world forsaking the Hereafter? The enjoyment of the worldly life is but little compared to the Hereafter.[1]

In his commentary to the above verse, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* quotes the following Ḥadīth:

عن المستورد بن شداد قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول والله ما الدنيا في الآخرة إلا مثل ما يجعل أحدكم أصبعه في اليم، فلينظر بم يرجع.[2]

…Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: By Allāh! This world in comparison to the Hereafter is no more than the amount of moisture which comes onto the finger of one of you after he dipped it in the ocean. (There is no comparison between the water on a person's finger and the vast amount of water of an ocean).

The author quotes another narration in this regard. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed by the place called Dhul Ḥulayfah and saw a goat stumbling and falling – on the verge of dying. He said to the Ṣaḥābah: "Just look at how valueless this goat is to its owner!" The Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* said: "Most certainly." Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I take an oath in the name of the Being in

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 38.

[2] رواه مسلم. مشكوة، كتاب الرقاق، ج ٢، ص ٤٣٩.

whose control is my life. This world is far more valueless and worthless in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* than this goat is to its owner. Had the value of this world been equal to the wing of a mosquito in Allāh's sight, He would not have given even a single sip of water to an unbeliever."[1]

This world is not entirely disparaged

After quoting these narrations, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes:

ولا أرى الاستدلال على رداءة الدنيا إلا استدلالا في مقام الضرورة، نعم هي نعمة الدار لمن تزود منها لآخرته.

The disparagement of this world as mentioned in the texts must be understood out of necessity so that people do not make this world the objective and their engrossment with it does not become a cause of forgetting the Hereafter. Apart from this reason, this world is an excellent home for a person who takes provisions for it for the Hereafter.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *al-Muwāfaqāt*:

فذم الدنيا إنما هو لأجل أنها تصير ذريعة إلى تعطيل التكاليف. (الموافقات)

The only reason for disparaging this world is that it becomes a means of disregarding the impositions of the Sharīʿat. (impositions such as ṣalāh, zakāh, dhikr, Qur'ān recitation, etc.).

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[1] الجامع الصغير، بحوالة ترمذي، حديث ٧٤٨٠.

This is what the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* is saying. That is, this world is disparaged only out of necessity. Apart from this, it is an excellent abode for the person who uses it as a place to prepare his provisions for the Hereafter. When looked at from this angle, the world is not eligible for disparagement. Rather, it is worthy of praise.

I explained this theme to the people and said to them: "Look, such a senior scholar is saying this. It is only in this world that a believer gets proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*, īmān, good deeds. This is why the world cannot be entirely disparaged."

It is related in a Ḥadīth that after a Ṣaḥābī passed away, Allāh *taʿālā* asked him: "What do you want? If you have any wish, then express it." He said: "O Allāh! I have no wish apart from the wish of returning to the world so that I may be martyred in Your cause again, and be presented before You again in the same bloody and injured state as I presented myself before You." Allāh *taʿālā* said: "This cannot happen."

We learn from this that a believer will have the desire to do good deeds in this world because the Hereafter is not the place for good deeds. It is only this world which is the place for actions.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* related this incident to the son of this Ṣaḥābī and informed him of this conversation between his father and Allāh *taʿālā*. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* added: "Allāh *taʿālā* informed me of it because when your father learnt that he cannot return to this world, he said to

Allāh *taʿālā*: 'Very well. Inform the people of my condition.' And this has been done now."[1]

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Jāmī *raḥimahullāh* was a very senior saint. When it was his final moments in this world, he expressed the following:

> Jāmī is not satisfied with this two-day life.
> If only I could be blessed with eternal life.

Bearing in mind that we receive īmān and the inspiration to do good deeds in this world, the seniors gave preference to living in this world and expressed the desire for long lives. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was asked, who is the best of people, he replied:

من طال عمره وحسن عمله

The one who has a long life coupled with good deeds.

A person asked me about hoping for death. I said to him that it is not permissible to hope for death after being distressed by worldly miseries and hardships. Yes, a person can hope for it out of love for Allāh *taʿālā* and a desire to meet Him. I then opened *Tafsīr Mazharī* and showed him that it is those who are overcome by ecstasy who express the desire for death. On the other hand, the spiritual masters of every era have always given preference to living and having long lives.

This is because they have understood that:

الدنيا مزرعة الآخرة

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح، كتاب الجهاد، ص ٣٣٠.

This world is the tilling ground for the Hereafter.

Recognition of the self is a bounty

I say, if this is the case, then value the life of this world. Since you have come into this world, bring īmān and do good deeds. The greatest bounty for a believer in this world is the ability to recognize his self. He must examine himself and take care of his self.

من عرف نفسه عرف ربّه

The one who recognizes his self has in fact recognized his Lord.

Allāh *taʿālā* has placed proofs of His recognition within man. He says in this regard:

وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ

Don't you look within your own selves!?

The 'ulamā' have many explanations to the above verse. However, I say to you that you must read what Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard and understand it. He says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ق ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ط فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

We created man from the essence of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe enclosure. Then We made the drop of sperm into a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We made out of that piece of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We brought him forth

in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

In this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us about our own selves, and He made it a means to recognize Him. We must therefore acquire His recognition. Ponder and reflect over these verses; there are no differences of opinion about them. Ponder over your birth, understand the translation of these verses, ponder over their objective, and practise on them. These are enough to acquire Allāh's pleasure.

Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us about Him in another way:

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ رَفَعَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوْقِنُوْنَ.

Allāh is He who raised the heavens without any supports that you can see. He then established Himself on the throne. He subjected the sun and the moon [to run their course]. Each one runs its course at an appointed time. He regulates all matters. He expounds the signs, perhaps you may be convinced with the meeting of your Lord.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* is that Being who raised the skies without any pillars. You can see the skies high above you. He then established Himself on the throne which can be likened to a royal throne. He established Himself on it in a manner which is in line with His greatness. He caused the sun and moon to fulfil their tasks. Each

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[1] Sūrah al-Muʾminūn, 23: 12-14.

[2] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 2.

one is moving in its own orbit and will continue until an appointed time. The sun completes its circuit in one year, while the moon does it in a month. Allāh *taʿālā* supervises everything that takes place in this universe. He clearly expounds His conceptual and legislative proofs so that you may be convinced about your resurrection before your Lord. If Allāh *taʿālā* can create such massive creations, why will He not have the power to bring the dead back to life? Conviction in this is on the basis that the true informer [Allāh *taʿālā*] informed us of the occurrence of a thing so it will most definitely take place.

Allāh *taʿālā* explains another proof of His Oneness. After speaking about raising the heavens, He speaks about spreading out the earth. He says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ مَدَّ الْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْهٰرًا ؕ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ جَعَلَ فِيْهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ.

It is He who spread out the earth and placed mountains and rivers therein. Of every fruit, He placed therein pairs of two types. He covers the day with the night. In this are signs for those who contemplate.[1]

A point of Allāh-recognition

There was a saint who had a dark complexion. The king summoned him to his court. When the kings eyes fell on him, the king began laughing. The saint realized that the king was laughing after seeing his dark complexion and dishevelled condition. He said to the king: “Respected king! What are you laughing at? Are you laughing at the pot or the potter?” He then

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 3.

quoted a couplet the essence of which is that whether a person is white or black – both are created by Allāh *taʿālā*. It is He who made the night dark and the day bright. Therefore no one can make any objections.

The saint was a spiritual master, so he gave an explanation which was filled with Allāh-recognition. This had an effect on the king. He got up from his throne and fell at the feet of the saint. Despite this, the saint said to his attendants: "Come, let's go. We will not remain here." He left the court angrily. However, bearing in mind that he was a spiritual master, he left his mark of Allāh-recognition on the king and all the courtiers.

I say to you that the greatest asset of a believer in this world is the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. Acquire it and be hasty in acquiring it. If you delay, you will harm your own self. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* created us for the acquisition of His recognition.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ. اَلَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَّالسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً ص وَّأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ج فَلَا تَجْعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ أَنْدَادًا وَّأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ.

O mankind! Worship your Lord who created you and those before you so that you may become pious. He (who) has made for you the earth a carpet and the sky a canopy and sent down water from the sky. He brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. So

do not set up anyone as a rival to Allāh, while you know.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* first described the condition of believers, then unbelievers and finally the hypocrites. After describing the condition of these three groups separately, He made a general address to everyone by saying: "O mankind! Worship your Lord." He asks all groups to worship Him and recognize Him. Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about His recognition. How can it be possible for Allāh *taʿālā* to reveal the Qur'ān and not speak about Himself in it!? The Ahlullāh acquired the most recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* from the Qur'ān itself. It is that same Qur'ān which powerful mountains could not bear, but the heart of man was given the power to bear.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَاَيْتَهٗ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ.

Had We revealed this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, rendered asunder by the fear of Allāh.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* says elsewhere:

اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَّحْمِلْنَهَا وَاَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا جَهُوْلًا.

We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and they were

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 21-22.

[2] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 21.

afraid of it. Man undertook to bear it; he is very merciless, immature.[1]

Look! The thing which the heavens, earth and mountains could not bear was given to man to bear. This certainly does not mean that you must become totally numb and insensitive to the extent that you are not affected by it. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was a very beloved Prophet to Allāh *taʿālā*. He requested on one occasion: "O Allāh! Show Yourself to me." Allāh *taʿālā* did not refuse. Instead, He said: "Very well, look at the mountain." Allāh *taʿālā* caused all the animals and birds in that area to move away because they would not be able to bear His appearance. They would all be reduced to ash.

When Allāh *taʿālā* manifested Himself on the mountain, the mountain disintegrated and Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he recalled the joy of Allāh's manifestation and conversation with Him. Subsequently, he did not enjoy looking at anyone nor listening to anyone's voice.

I am saying to you that too many days have passed. Hold on to the Qur'ān and see how quickly and easily you will traverse the path. When a believer establishes a bond with the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān establishes a bond with him. After that, just one verse grasps him and conveys him beyond what he can ever imagine.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّنْ مَّنِيٍّ يُّمْنٰى. ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى. فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْاُنْثٰى. اَلَيْسَ ذٰلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلٰى اَنْ يُّحْيِيَ الْمَوْتٰى.

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[1] Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33: 72.

Was he not a mere drop of sperm that had been spilt? Then he was a clot of blood. Then He created him and moulded him in proportion. Then He made of him a pair: the male and the female. What! Is He unable to bring the dead back to life?[1]

There was a man who was reading the Qur'ān in the masjid of Thānah Bhawan. He held onto just one verse of the Qur'ān, and came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* where he was sitting. He came and said:

خُذْ يَا شَيْخ

Take this, O shaykh!

He said this although he did not know Arabic. He was overcome by a spiritual ecstasy. Hadrat took the Qur'ān from his hands, asked for water, read something and blew into it, and gave it to the man to drink. When the man calmed down, Hadrat asked him: "What happened?" He replied: "This verse grasped me, due to which I could not read further."

All the progress of a believer is from this Qur'ān. The rank which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* received was due to the Qur'ān. If you choose any other path, you will not find anything. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

They are the ones who are on guidance from their Lord, and they are the truly successful ones.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75: 37-40.

Guidance is confined to the Qur'ān. Being on guidance is a cause of peace and tranquillity in this world.

We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to confer us with complete guidance and to bless us with rectitude and success. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE SPEECH OF ALLĀH

The famous poet, Akbar Ḥusayn Allāhābādī, said the following couplet:

> There are only two reasons for the popularity of Allāhābād. One is because of its guavas and the other is Akbar Ḥusayn.

What he is trying to say is that the actual reason why Allāhābād is so well-known is the high quality guavas which grow there. Allāhābād became popular by the way. Similarly, the writing of Akbar became popular. Thereafter, Akbar became well-known and then Allāhābād.

I say that the original reason for the popularity of Allāhābād is just one because the spiritual masters do not consider guavas to be of real worth nor do they hold any noteworthy importance. Yes, the wise writings of Akbar Ḥusayn Allāhābādī are most certainly valued by people who have a taste for such writings. This is why people turned their attention to his writings and embraced them. When Akbar Ḥusayn saw this, he was overjoyed and compiled this couplet as a way of displaying his pride. He says that there is nothing apart from Akbar in Allāhābād. This couplet is also said as a way of displaying his favour in the sense that the honour and popularity enjoyed by Allāhābād is because of him.

If a poet can say about himself that there is nothing apart from him in Allāhābād, then why can Allāh *taʿālā* not say with regard to His speech that there is no speech like His among the creation? Can anyone say that Allāh *taʿālā* is wrong in making such a claim?

When a poet wants to draw attention towards his compilation and people turn to it, he is overjoyed. An author is overjoyed when he sees people showing an interest in his written work. Do you think Allāh *taʿālā* will not be happy when He sees people turning their attention towards His Book? He most certainly does and most certainly will.

Unfortunately, the creation today is only worried about its own things. People publish their own books and promote them by turning the attention of people towards them. Attention to the Qur'ān has been severed and it has been cast aside.

I have personally seen and heard on numerous occasions of a lecturer speaking for several hours on the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth but the masses are not impressed in the least. But when poems are quoted, then everyone expresses his approval and goes into an ecstasy. I ask you, will Allāh *taʿālā* not be displeased when He sees people not being impressed by His speech while they are so entranced by the speech of the creation!? Is this not a sign of weak īmān? The fact of the matter is that people nowadays have become accustomed to the pleasures of the carnal self. They desire carnal pleasure in their sleep and food, so now they want carnal pleasure in everything else. They find lectures and words of advice to be very bland. But when un-bearded young boys sing in melodious tones, they thoroughly enjoy it. When the 'ulamā' saw the inclination of the public, they too adopted this approach and are smug with it. They abandoned lectures on the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, and reduced themselves to quoting poetry. Whereas Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ

We did not teach him poetry nor does it behove him.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to the above verse:

(وما علمناه) بتعليم الكتاب المشتمل على هذا البيان والتلخيص في أمر المبدأ والمعاد (الشعر) إذ لا يخفى على من به أدنى مسكة أن هذا الكتاب الحكيم المتضمن لجميع المنافع الدينية والدنيوية على أسلوب أفحم كل منطق يباين الشعر ولا مثل الثريا للثرى.

We did not teach him poetry because We taught him a Book which contains this explanation (mentioned above) and which comprises the gist of the beginning and end [of the creation]. the person who has the slightest affinity will realize that this wise Book contains all religious and worldly benefits expressed in a most eloquent manner which silences the greatest of speakers. It is the total opposite of poetry. There can be no comparison between the Thurayyā (Pleiades) and what lies beneath the soil.

أما لفظا فلعدم وزنه وتقفيته. وأما معنًا فلأن الشعر تخيلاتٌ مرغبة ومُنَفِّرَةٌ أو نحو ذلك، وهو مقر الأكاذيب ولهذا قيل أعذبه أكذبه والقرآن حكم وعقائد وشرائع. هذا رد لما كانوا يقولونه من أن القرآن شعر والنبي عليه السلام شاعر وغرضهم من ذلك أن ما جاء به عليه السلام من القرآن افتراء وتخيل وحاشاه ثم حاشاه من ذلك.

The Qur'ān is not like poetry because the [poetic] scales of the Qur'ān are not like those of poetry. It is also not

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

like poetry as regards its meanings because poetry by and large contains imageries which either create desire or dislike, or other similar sentiments. Furthermore, poetry is the place where lies and falsehood are to be found. This is why it is said that the more falsehood poetry contains, the sweeter it is. On the other hand, the Qur'ān contains wisdoms, beliefs and rules and regulations. (How, then, can there be any similarity between the two)? This verse is a refutation of those who claim that the Qur'ān is poetry and that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is a poet. The objective in saying this was to show that the Qur'ān which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam brought is a fabrication and imagery, whereas the Qur'ān is completely and totally pure from such accusations.

(وما ينبغي له) أي لا يليق ولا يصلح له صلى الله عليه وسلم الشعر لأنه يدعو إلى تغيير المعنى لمراعاة اللفظ والوزن ولأن أحسنه المبالغة والمجازفة والإغراق في الوصف، وأكثره تحسين ما ليس بحسن وتقبيح ما ليس بقبيح، وكل ذلك يستدعي الكذب أو يحاكيه الكذب وجلَّ جناب الشارع عن ذلك.[1]

The words "it does not behove him" mean that poetry is not suited to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam because poetry requires changes in meaning in order to give consideration to the words and scales. Another reason is that only that poetry is considered to be good which contains many hyperboles, imageries, and in-depth descriptions. Most poetry beautifies that which is not beautiful, and makes ugly what is not ugly. All this

[1] روح المعاني، ج ١٢، ص ٤٦.

requires untruths or whatever is similar to untruths. And Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is far beyond all this.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said a few lines of poetry on one occasion and intentionally said it incorrectly. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "You are most certainly a Prophet. Allāh *taʿālā* rightly said:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ

We did not teach him poetry nor does it behove him.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* did not give Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the capability to say poetry.

Now listen! We (the ʿulamā') do not even feel ashamed over the fact that outsiders who are apparently very far from Dīn and knowledge of Dīn are composing lines which even the ʿulamā' cannot do. Observe the following excellent couplet which Akbar said with reference to the Qur'ān:

> Fasting comes from īmān. When īmān disappears so does fasting. The nation's strength lies in the Qur'ān. When the Qur'ān departs from the nation, the nation will dissolve.

Iqbāl also made a beautiful statement which a person from Ma'u quoted to me. Someone asked Iqbāl is there is anyone who was more wronged than Hadrat Sayyidunā Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*? He replied: "Yes, the Qur'ān."

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

Another person quoted the following couplet of ʿAllāmah Iqbāl Sāhib to me with reference to the Qur'ān:

> As long as the Qur'ān does not settle in your emotions, the knot will be lose and cannot be tightened either by Rāzī nor by the author of *Kashshāf*.

What a beautiful statement! It really pleases the heart and it spontaneously makes duʿā' for these two poets for Allāh *taʿālā* to fill their graves with light. Āmīn.

Every person cannot compose such a couplet unless Allāh *taʿālā* creates an īmānī enthusiasm and yearning in his heart.

Listen! I say to you that the sole reason for the misfortune which the Muslims are experiencing today is their disregard for the Qur'ān. O people! Listen! As long as you do not turn your attention to the Qur'ān and do not believe in it, you cannot progress. Can you imagine this! We abandoned the means of success and yet we desire success like the Sahābah!?

O Muslims! Establish a bond with the Qur'ān, recite it, and practise on the injunctions of Islam with sincerity. If you do this, Allāh *taʿālā* will – by His grace and kindness – confer you with success.

Listen! There is a Maulānā Sāhib who is a good orator. I was sitting here when he came to me and asked: "Why is it that there is no benefit from lectures nowadays?" I replied: "We have no sincerity. This is why our lectures are not effective and beneficial." The Maulānā Sāhib agreed with me and said: "More work is certainly being done today but the benefit which is missing is because there is no sincerity in us, the workers." We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Now listen further! Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* quoted the following text in his *Taʿlīm ad-Dīn*. All the seniors used to practise on it and this is why they were successful. He writes:

> O dervish! The criterion for this work is the Qur'ān, Sunnat and lives of the pious predecessors who were not leaders merely by virtue of being granted permission or because they were the children of pious personalities and have therefore occupied their places. Anything which contradicts the status of a shaykh is false and baseless.

As for understanding the Qur'ān, our poor Indian masses do not understand a thing. It is only the Arabs who understood the Qur'ān and valued it. No matter how much people try, they cannot reach the Arab level of Qur'ānic understanding. Just try to imagine the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed. The Arabs at that time were most eloquent in their language. They could quote 300 poems in a single assembly. Nonetheless, the Qur'ān challenged them to produce the like of the Qur'ān, then ten sūrahs like it, and eventually just one sūrah like it. Despite their eloquence and mastery over the Arabic language, they were left astounded. The entire Sūrah al-Kauthar was written and hung on the Kaʿbah. People would come and read it. No one could produce anything similar to it. When they realized that this was not the speech of the creation, they began valuing it and appreciating it. They learnt it and then taught it to others.

When Hadrat ʿIkramah ibn Abī Jahal embraced Islam and would read the Qur'ān, he would say:

هذا كلام ربي، هذا كلام ربي

This is the speech of my Lord. This is the speech of my Lord.

He would say this repeatedly and fall unconscious.

My honourable teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Anwar Shāh Sāhib Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*, used to say: "The services which the Muslim ummat rendered to the Qur'ān have not been surpassed by anything else." The scholars most certainly went into great detail in explaining its meanings. Read just one verse, understand it and you will be guided. But you do not take out the time to do this. How, then, will you establish an affinity with it?

Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى

Successful indeed is he who purifies [himself]. And remembers the name of his Lord, then offers the salāh.[1]

قوله تعالى (قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى) أي طهر نفسه من الأخلاق الرذيلة وتابع ما أنزل الله على الرسول. صلوت الله وسلامه عليه. (وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى) أي أقام الصلوة في أوقاتها ابتغاء رضوان الله وطاعة لأمر الله وامتثالا لشرع الله. وقال قتادة في هذه الآية (قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى) زكى ماله، وأرضى خالقه.

Successful indeed is the person who purified his self from blameworthy characteristics and followed

[1] Sūrah al-A'lā, 87: 14-15.

whatever Allāh taʿālā revealed to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He remembers the name of his Lord and offers salāh. In other words, he performs salāh solely for Allāh's pleasure, in obedience to His order, and in emulation of His Sharīʿat. Hadrat Qatādah radiyallāhu ʿanhu says with reference to these two verses: In other words, the person purifies his wealth and pleases his Lord.

Now I ask you, can you people come to these meanings on your own? Certainly not.

Listen further!

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللهِ

Had We revealed this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, rendered asunder by the fear of Allāh.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* revealed this verse so that we may value the Qur'ān, develop respect for it in the depths of our hearts, and express gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* for having given us such a great Book. O people! On the contrary, you dishonoured it and merely cast it one side in your homes. It is now of a lesser value than your wealth and possessions. The fact of the matter is:

> O man! You considered me insignificant
> because you bought me for a cheap price.

What do you know of its value!

> You never saw Sulaymān *ʿalayhis salām*,
> so how will you ever understand the
> speech of ants!

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[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 21.

The Qur'ān explains everything. It contains refutations of the polytheists, unbelievers, hypocrites, Christians and Jews. It has rendered every statement and belief of theirs baseless and false. However, a person has to be in this field to explain these things; it is not the work of every person to explain the Qur'ān to the laity.

You people have come here to learn about tasawwuf, so listen. Tasawwuf is not in contradiction to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* said that a Sufi is one who knows the Qur'ān and Hadīth. He refers to the Sunnat as the distinguisher [between truth and falsehood]. There was a person who used to reject tasawwuf. So I said to him that the Qur'ān states:

يَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهُ

They [believers] hope for His mercy.

Do you have hope in your heart? The Qur'ān states:

يَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهُ

They [believers] fear His punishment..

Do you have fear in your heart? Tasawwuf is another name for developing these qualities; it is not any different from the Qur'ān and Hadīth.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation of tasawwuf which could have been given by none other than Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. (compiler)

Listen! I am sitting in a place where it is not permissible for me to make concessions to anyone or to show respect to anyone. I have to show respect only to Allāh *taʿālā*, His Messenger *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the Qur'ān and the Sunnat. This is why I am

not worried about what anyone has to say. Yes, once I get down from here, you and I will be equal. Now tell me, am I being too harsh and unmannerly? Or are these the emotions of īmān which I am expressing?

Those who were present said that whatever he said most certainly stemmed from emotions and feelings of īmān. Hadrat then said:

Even today Muslims are prepared to bear harshness, but it is most unfortunate that we have abandoned our responsibilities. Consequently, we are disgraced and humiliated. History testifies to the fact that the seniors of Dīn and the sincere reformers used to say very harsh things and the people used to tolerate them. The people were prepared to shed their blood for them. But when did this happen? Only when they gauged and recognized the sincerity of these personalities. Even today if the work is done with sincerity and in emulation of the Sunnat, there will certainly be benefit, and people will recognize the value of knowledge and the people of knowledge.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a most useful and beneficial theme which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is explaining with much sincerity and pain. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to choose sincerity, and to work in line with the Qur'ān, the Sunnat and the ways of the pious predecessors. Āmīn. (compiler)

The purpose of revealing the Qur'ān

Hadrat Muslih ad-Dīn Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says in his *Gulistān*:

> The purpose of revealing the Qur'ān is to acquire excellent habits and mannerisms. To be affected by it and to practise on it. It

has not been revealed to recite it with the tongue alone and to suffice with that.

Therefore, the person who suffices with verbal recitation is not fulfilling the objective of the Qur'ān; he is very far from it. A Hadīth compares it to a basil – it has a beautiful fragrance but a bad taste. In the same way, a person who is merely reading the Qur'ān is like the fragrance of basil while his heart is devoid of the effect of the Qur'ān. In fact, there are times when such a reader of the Qur'ān has qualities which are in opposition to the Qur'ān. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a most īmān-enlightening theme. Look at how Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* rectifies this situation. We learn how much these personalities used to practise on the texts. They understood the import of the verses, practised on them and encouraged others as well. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to take benefit from the Qur'ān and to practise on it. Āmīn. (compiler)

The same theme is expressed in the following Hadīth which describes Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

كان خلقه القرآن

His character was a manifestation of the Qur'ān.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was himself a Sufi of spiritual conditions who had a special affinity with the themes of the Qur'ān. This is why he continually related the stories of Sufi masters in his general assemblies. He did this so that it may have an effect on the audience and the people may develop an urge to develop such conditions. He used to be overcome by ecstasy when listening to the Qur'ān and

there were times when a scream would emanate from him. After a painful tragedy in Fatahpūr, he emigrated to Gorukhpūr around the year 1955. He was living in the house of Maulānā Nathārullāh Sāhib and Maulānā Amjadullāh Sāhib. A short time after this, he suffered from severe colic to the extent that there was no hope for his survival. However, Allāh *taʿālā* had willed for him to render more services to Dīn and the Sunnat, so He blessed him with recovery and good health.

Once he gained sufficient strength to go to the masjid, he began frequenting the masjid of Maulānā Nathārullāh Sāhib for the fajr salāh and would join the congregation. Maulānā Mubīn Sāhib was leading the congregation. He read the following verse of Sūrah al-Burūj:

اِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ

Surely the grip of your Lord is severe.[1]

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was so overcome that a scream emanated from him. On another occasion, the imām read the following verse from Sūrah an-Naba':

اِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا لِّلطّٰغِيْنَ مَاٰبًا

Surely Hell is lying in wait. An abode for the transgressors.[2]

I heard from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* that Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Muhammad Tāhir Sāhib – the brother of Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Muhammad

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[1] Sūrah al-Burūj, 85: 12.

[2] Sūrah an-Naba', 78: 21-22.

Tayyib Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* – was leading the congregation in the masjid of Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Ashrafīyyah. When he reached the following verse, he moved back, returned to his place, and then completed the rakʿat.

وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ.

We have brought merchandise of low value. Give us in full, then, the measure and be charitable to us. Surely Allāh rewards the charitable.[1]

Glory to Allāh! Such was the level of spiritual ecstasy of our latter day seniors. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with similar conditions by virtue of our affiliation with them and our spiritual bond with them. Āmīn. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 88.

THE EFFECTS AND FRUITS OF ALLĀH'S LOVE

That amount of love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory which enables a person to carry out His orders, abstain from His prohibitions and be happy with His decree. In other words, just as salāh and fasting are compulsory, love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. What this means is that just as salāh and fasting are taught, and a person is habituated into fulfilling them, love for Allāh *taʿālā* will have to be developed in the heart. This is so that His orders can be carried out, and man is happy with the fate which Allāh *taʿālā* decreed for him – whether good or bad. This love is essential because a person has to face many things in this world which are against his temperament. If he has love for Allāh *taʿālā* within him, his tongue of complaint will remain shut.

This is what I want to explain to you. That is, if a person has love for Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be able to practise on His injunctions and he will also be happy with his destiny. Predestination is also under Allāh's order and His decree. When a person loves Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be pleased with His order.

Listen! If you already know about this subject of Allāh's love which I am speaking on, then you will enjoy it even more. If you do not know anything about this subject, you will learn something new. You must realize that this is what is going to be of help to you.

The seniors of Dīn are forever happy with Allāh's decree, and no matter how painful a tragedy they

experience, they enjoy it thoroughly after considering it to be in line with the pleasure of the Beloved.

The manner in which you people offend each other actually amounts to bad character. When a shaykh reprimands a person for the sake of his rectification, it certainly hurts the heart, but the person must not be distressed by it. Instead, he must think to himself that he is inhabiting his heart. When a point is inhabited in the heart, then even if it causes pain, the person must think to himself that his shaykh is inhabiting his heart. He must think that Allāh *taʿālā* is inhabiting his heart. Pain of this nature is therefore a blessed pain.

The son of a saint fell ill. The saint was busy speaking to the people about Allāh *taʿālā* and other Dīnī matters. While he was occupied in this, someone announced from inside the house that the son has passed away. The people noticed that the manner and tone of the saint's speech did not change in the least. He continued speaking as he was. Only when he completed his talk did he say to them: "Brothers! Come, let's go and make his burial arrangements."

He must have certainly been grieved by the death of his child. However, because he was speaking about Allāh *taʿālā* and calling the people towards Him, there was no change in the tone and manner of his speech. If he had love for his child, he most certainly had love for Allāh *taʿālā* as well. This is why he demonstrated his love for Allāh *taʿālā* first and then turned his attention to his child.

Love of wealth

There was a Hāfiz Sāhib who used to teach a few children. He used to receive a weekly or monthly payment for this, and place the money in an earthen

pot. The boys saw this. One day, one of the boys removed all the money from the earthen pot and said: "Hāfizjī neither uses the money for himself nor does he feed us anything with it." The boys went with the money to the shops, bought several expensive food items and invited the Hāfiz Sāhib. When he arrived, he asked them: "What is the occasion for this invitation?" The boys replied: "Hadrat, it is by virtue of your company." One of the boys giggled when he heard this. The Hāfiz Sāhib paused and then hastened towards his earthen pot. When he found it empty, he fell down and died. The people of the locality were most disappointed and realized that he was deeply attached to his money. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

The people of that time learnt an admonitory lesson from this incident and realized the consequence of love for wealth. A person is certainly permitted to have love for wealth but not so much that he kills himself in the process.[1]

The *Mathnawī* contains the story of a shaykh who had an associate who was miserly and had intense love for wealth. The treatment which the shaykh prescribed for him is that he instructed him to cast one dirham daily into a river. He did not ask him to spend a certain amount of money or to give a certain amount in charity. When the man used to remove the money

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[1] On one occasion I went to the Jāmiʿ Masjid of Dammām for the jumuʿah salāh. The sermon of the imām revolved around Qur'ānic verses and Ahādīth on the despicability of worldly love for wealth. He said that this is what the Qur'ān and Ahādīth say about worldly love. It is most astonishing that so many Arabs suffered from heart attacks when the stock market fell. Just look at the extent of love for this world! It is most astonishing. (compiler)

from his money-bag, he used to place his hand on his heart. However, because it was the order of his shaykh and he was a true disciple, he carried it out until his money-bag was empty. His miserliness was also treated by then.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* writes that the 'ulamā' object and say that this was a futile act and how can it be permissible to throw away Allāh's bounty in such a way? He should have rather spent the money in Allāh's cause. However, Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says that if this action removes love for wealth from the heart and the person acquires love for Allāh *taʿālā* instead, then this action can certainly not be referred to as futile or wastage. The shaykh had realized that spending the money in Allāh's cause would not have treated the man's ailment. Only when the heart feels pain daily [by throwing the dirham in a river] will it be cured. In other words, his illness was chronic; therefore a mere plaster would not suffice. There was a need for an operation.

Look at how that Ḥāfiz Ṣāḥib had love for this world although he was teaching the Qur'ān. He was taking the money for teaching the Qur'ān while he did not believe in the Qur'ānic teaching that sustenance is from Allāh *taʿālā*. He should not have become so distressed to the extent that he died. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* writes:

> If the minister feared Allāh *taʿālā* as much as he fears the king, he will become an angel.

I say, if people love Allāh *taʿālā* as much as they love their wealth, they will reach great heights. In other words, they will receive the wealth and also gain proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Now observe the following about the fruits of love. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ. لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ط لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve. Those who believed and continued fearing. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that before this Allāh *taʿālā* made promises to His obedient servants and issued warnings to the disobedient ones. He follows it by describing the conditions of His friends:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* said that this is an explanation of the results of the deeds of the believers. It is done in a manner which contains glad tidings and promises. In other words, they are given glad tidings for both worlds.

Did you hear? The believers also receive the results and fruits of their actions. The reward which a believer receives for his good actions is that he becomes a close friend of Allāh *taʿālā*. You may be

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62-64.

thinking to yourself that ʿīd is drawing near, a person will wear beautiful clothes and that this is enough as a result and fruit of his actions. It is not like that. Rather, the greatest thing which Allāh *taʿālā* gives to His devoted believers is His love, His affinity, His protection and His friendship. Allāh *taʿālā* says before the previously quoted verse:

وَمَا تَكُوْنُ فِيْ شَأْنٍ وَّمَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْاٰنٍ وَّلَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوْدًا إِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ.

You are not in any situation, neither do you recite any portion of the Qur'ān, nor do you people do any act but that We are present with you when you are engaged in it.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says with reference to the above verse:

The first part of this verse is addressed specifically to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, while the words "nor do you people do any act…" are general and include everyone – the pious and the wicked. Allāh *taʿālā* commences this verse with the word *sha'n* because it is with reference to a most august personality [Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] and the actions of a great person are also great. One meaning of this word is "a matter to which much attention is given". In the second part of the address, Allāh *taʿālā* uses the word *ʿamal* (action). Allāh *taʿālā* then says that no matter what you [Muḥammad Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] do – whether it is reciting the Qur'ān or something else – and you too, O believers! No matter what you do, Allāh *taʿālā* is

[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 61.

present and is protecting you. It does not mean that when you have done an action, We turn away from you and look at your action. Rather, We turn Our attention to you from the time you commence the action.

Glory to Allāh! Had these great scholars not explained the Qur'ān to us, we would not have understood anything. What a unique point he explained. That is, every action of a believer is under Allāh's watchful eye at every moment. The believer himself remains in Allāh's protection at every single moment.

A personal experience

When I was a student in the madrasah and occasionally requested the teacher to re-explain the meaning of a verse in the tafsīr class, he used to think I was making an objection. He would give a reproachful answer and continue with the lesson. This, despite the fact that all I wanted was to understand the actual import of the verse.

When I went to the khānqāh in Thānah Bhawan, there was an old man who was affiliated to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* who used to teach *Tafsīr Jalālayn* after the zuhr salāh. I used to attend his class. Incidentally, he explained the following verse of Sūrah al-Baqarah:

يٰاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ.

O mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may become pious.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 21.

When Hadrat *rahimahullāh* explained this verse, I realized that this is really what you call a tafsīr of the Qur'ān. Previously I used to say to myself: "O Allāh! This Qur'ān is Your speech, is this the only meaning of it?" In short, whatever tafsīr and explanation which my heart desired, I found it with Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*.

Listen! Allāh *ta'ālā* is saying:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve.

The word Auliyā'ullāh refers to the sincere servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is only His sincere servants who acquire spiritual proximity to Him. What this means is that they will never fear any evil afflicting them nor will they grieve over the departure of any beloved. This does not mean that they will not experience these things, and that if they do, they will not experience fear and grieve. Rather, what it means is that no condition will affect their enthusiasm and happiness. This is because after having full conviction in the greatness and power of Allāh *ta'ālā,* considering their own efforts to be insignificant and seeing themselves falling short in fulfilling the rights submission, they will fear being taken to task. This special type of fear is experienced only by the special and close servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is what every person must strive for.

The closer a person gets to Allāh *ta'ālā*, the more his fear of Allāh *ta'ālā* increases. The following statement of Allāh *ta'ālā* is further evidence of this:

اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

From among His servants, it is those who have understanding that fear Allāh.[1]

As for the negation of fear and grief in the previously quoted verse, the reason for it is that their objective in this world was to acquire Allāh's closeness and His pleasure through their actions. The acquisition of this is certain and – as per Allāh's promise – there is no possibility of losing it. As for other worldly matters and bounties, their acquisition and losing them are of no significance to these special servants. In fact, all worldly things are like corpses in their eyes. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

الدنيا جيفة وطلابها كلاب[2]

The world is a corpse and those who seek it are dogs.

If this is the status of the world in their eyes, it is far fetched for its acquisition or loss to influence their objective in any way. How, then, can there ever be the question of fear over its harm or grief over its loss!?

In short, whatever treasure a believer receives from Allāh *taʿālā* in exchange for Allāh's love, it is a source of internal and spiritual peace and joy. This is incomparable even to ownership of the seven continents.

> By Allāh! You will not be able to understand this wine of love until you taste it yourself.

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[1] Sūrah Fāṭir, 35: 28.

[2] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الإلباس،ج ١، ص ٣٦٢.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with a drop from His ocean of love and recognition through the blessings of our seniors. Āmīn.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (1)

A Maulānā Sāḥib from a major city wrote to me saying that he happened to come across the following quotation from *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah* which he heard me quoting and explaining on several occasions. He added that the effulgence of love for me and respect for my teachings engulfed his heart. The text reads thus:

> Be fully convinced of this fact that if a person possesses thousands of virtues and performs countless supernatural feats, but is lax in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then the love and company of such a person is a most toxic poison. If a person does not possess any virtue and cannot perform a single supernatural act, but is firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then his love and company will be a most beneficial panacea.[1]

The Maulānā Sāḥib also wrote that the mashā'ikh of today seem to be lax in their adherence to the Sunnat and following of the Sharīʿat. This is why we cannot benefit from their company as we should.

The above statement is that of Hadrat Khwājah Maʿsūm *raḥimahullāh* who is the son of Hadrat

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[1] Translation of maktūb number 67, vol. 2, addressed to Khwājah Dīnār.

Mujaddid Alf Thānī *raḥimahullāh*; I am not saying it. The words "the company of such a person is a most toxic poison" mean that a person cannot reach Allāh *taʿālā* through the company of such a person. Let alone not reaching Allāh *taʿālā*, his company will result in his deviation. It will remove him from the path of the truth and cause his destruction. The words "If a person does not possess any virtue and cannot perform a single supernatural act" mean that he cannot do the things which are generally assumed to be virtuous and supernatural feats. Apart from this, there can be no greater virtue and supernatural feat than following Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. What, then, can be said of the person who is firmly embedded in his emulation of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*!

I replied to the Maulānā by saying: Because you wrote this, I am telling you that people are not benefiting because true benefit in the path is when a person frees himself from his carnal self. I notice that let alone wanting to free themselves from it and rectifying it, people do not want to even discuss it.

The reason why I wrote this to him is that from the quotation from *Maktūbāt Maʿṣūmīyyah* "is firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then his love and company will be a most beneficial panacea" a person must realize that the thing which prevents a person from being firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is man's carnal self. Because he is firm in his obedience to his carnal self, he is far from following the Sunnat.

I wanted to show the Maulānā Ṣāḥib that the means to firmness in obedience to the Sunnat is to be free from the demands of the carnal self. A poet rightly said:

> Allāh *taʿālā* knows that the path to reaching the beloved is no more than two steps – one foot is to be placed on the carnal self and the other is to be placed with Allāh's friend.

I say that it is not even two steps. The distance is just one step. A person must place one foot over his carnal self, and the other will fall by a beloved of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is most difficult for a person to place a foot on his carnal self. When a seeker of Allāh *taʿālā* takes the courage to place a foot on his carnal self through Allāh's inspiration, he does not have to wilfully stretch out his other foot. Rather, it is drawn towards Allāh *taʿālā* – He pulls the person towards Himself. Even if you pluck the courage and place your foot on your carnal self, He will draw you towards Himself and you will reach Him.

Who today is prepared to subdue his carnal self? Who is there to antagonize it? Today, a person finds a shaykh and feels that mere physical proximity to him is enough. Only blessings from him are considered sufficient. He is not prepared to imbibe the teachings of the shaykh.

I say that the Qur'ān and Sunnat really need to be made sources of blessings. The only time we will be blessed is when we cling to the Qur'ān and Sunnat. After all, the original blessings are from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. How can a person who does not adopt them for blessings ever be blessed? Adopting the blessings of the Qur'ān and Hadīth entails accepting their instructions and injunctions, and practising on them.

Listen to what Allāh *taʿālā* says about the carnal self which you have cast aside:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰىهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰىهَا

He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the following statement of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ، اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْٓءِ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[3]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك[4]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

We learn from the above-quoted texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth that the carnal self is something which one needs to be wary of.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

[3] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

[4] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

This is what I mean when I say that when a person is not firm in following the Sunnat, it is because of his carnal self. When man understands this and begins acting against the demands of his self, he receives help from Allāh *taʿālā* who then draws him to Himself.

A convincing reply of a saint

A king was sitting in his palace when a saint happened to pass by. The king lowered his rope-ladder and asked the saint to come up. When he came up, the king asked him: "How did you reach Allāh *taʿālā*?" He replied: "In the same way as I reached you." In other words, if I wanted to reach you, the guards of the palace would have stopped me. Then I do not know how long it would take for the information to reach you. In fact, I do not know if the guards will even inform you of my arrival. But when you yourself called me, you lowered the rope-ladder and I came up to you.

In the same way, if a person wants to reach Allāh *taʿālā* through his own efforts, he will find it quite difficult. But if Allāh *taʿālā* draws the person to Himself, it will be very easy. However, it is Allāh's norm to only draw a person towards Himself when He sees a genuine quest and sincerity in the person. When he places a foot on his carnal self, Allāh *taʿālā* draws the person to Himself.

Treading the path is essential before being drawn by Allāh

Look! Even in this case, the king drew the saint up when the latter came close to his palace. When the saint left his house and came towards the palace, this was his sulūk. The jadhb [being drawn up] was based

on his sulūk. We learn from this that before jadhb, sulūk is essential.

The path is closed to us because our feet are not firmly placed on our carnal selves. Firmness against the carnal self is not possible without following the Sunnat. This is why following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is essential.

Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* says: All the paths are shut to the creation except to the one who follows in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The carnal self is most harmful. It prevents a person from the path to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why it ought to be trampled.

I ask you, how much have you trampled your carnal self? To what extent did you obliterate it? The saints bore many hardships in trying to subjugate the nafs-e-ammārah (the self which prompts a person towards evil). Only then did they defeat it. Striving is therefore essential.

Spiritual exercises to dream of Rasūlullāh

There was a saint who used to enable people to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in their dream. His wife said to him one day: "Enable me to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as well." He replied: "Very well, but I take 1 000 rupees from those who want to do this. This rule will apply to you as well. Go and bring 1 000 rupees." She asked: "From where am I going to bring such an amount?" He said: "If you do not have the money, I cannot enable you to do this." His wife was severely distressed and thought to herself that he enables everyone to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* while she is deprived just

because she doesn't have the money. On seeing her grief, he said to her: "Okay, there is one way to achieve this. Go take a bath, wear clean clothes, apply antimony to your eyes, perfume yourself, and so on." The wife thought she will be able to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, therefore, no matter how much she adorns herself it will not be enough. She went and did as she was told. In the meantime, the saint went and summoned his wife's brother and said to him: "Go and have a look at your sister. She is so old, yet she desires to look like a bride."

Her brother made a few disparaging remarks which caused her to feel quite embarrassed. She then said to her husband: "You did all this in order to humiliate me." Saying this, she began crying. As she continued crying, she fell into a slumber. The saint directed his focus on her and she saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in her dream.

The mystery behind this is that the money which the saint used to take from the people was not for himself. Rather, by asking them to give such a large amount of money, he wanted them to go through some striving and thereby purify their hearts. Once the heart is purified, it would develop the capability to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

He was a qualified shaykh and knew that he could not purify his wife's heart in the manner in which the hearts of the others were purified. This is why he used a different approach.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the wisdom-filled incident related by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. We ought to bear it in mind. Spending our wealth results in the cleansing and purification of our hearts. This enables us to acquire spiritual qualities. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Whether it is the wife of a walī or anyone else, it is incumbent on every person to purify his self. Īmān is not complete unless the carnal self is subdued. A person is not able to develop vigilance without this. Uprightness in one's consciousness is required when following orders. When there is vigilance and consciousness, a person will be able to understand the orders and prohibitions, and he will be able to practise on them. How can an unconscious person follow the Sunnat!?

Hadrat Mansūr *rahimahullāh* was overwhelmed by unconsciousness. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haq Radaulwī *rahimahullāh* (d. 837 A.H.) says with reference to him: "Mansūr was an infant when he got up screaming with just a single drop. Here there are men who are drinking oceans after oceans and have not burped as yet."

Actions are needed for spiritual ecstasy

We are attracted to the spiritual conditions of the saints but we do not look at their complete focus and following of the Sharīʿat. While proceeding from his house to the masjid, a saint's attendant was repeatedly saying, "Haqq, haqq." The saint was not conscious at all, but he was proceeding by the sound. There are countless incidents related to how the saints adhered strictly to the Sharīʿat. If you were to hear them, you will be left astounded. However, you considered their spiritual conditions to be sweet and embraced them, and felt their actions to be bitter, so you cast them aside.

Listen! The moustache of Shaykh Sharaf ad-Dīn Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* was gone quite long, but no one had the courage to tell him to clip it. Qādī Diyā' ad-Dīn Sināmī was quite vociferous in matters of the

Sharīʿat. One day he took a scissor in one hand, held the shaykh's beard with his other hand, and clipped his moustache.

It is said that ever since that day, the Shaykh would repeatedly kiss his beard and say: "This beard was held for the sake of the Sharīʿat so it has become valuable."

Look at their bond with the Sharīʿat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Anything which became affiliated to the Sharīʿat became beloved in their eyes. The Dīn and Sharīʿat of Allāh *taʿālā* are most certainly blessed. This is a trust which we received from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. No matter how much consideration and respect we show to it, and no matter how much we safeguard it, it will not be enough.

I recall another incident so I will relate it to you. There was a saint who used to listen to samāʿ. On one occasion he was overcome by such an intense ecstasy that he remained unconscious for three days. Despite this, when it was the time of salāh, he would perform wudū' and perform his salāh exactly as prescribed by the Sharīʿat. When he regained consciousness, his attendants said to him that three days had passed since he lost consciousness. He asked them: "Did I perform my salāhs?" They replied in the affirmative. He then sent someone to Shaykh Muhammad ʿĪsā who was his khalīfah to ask him if the salāhs he had performed were valid or not. He replied: "It was the same salāh which Hadrat performed while his heart had left this world. Out of consideration to the Sharīʿat you will have to repeat them."

Did you see their adherence to and consideration of the Sharīʿat! People are thinking that the shaykh is unconscious, but at the approach of a salāh time, he

is performing wuḍū', performing his ṣalāh in the exact number of rakʿats as prescribed, and fulfilling all other etiquette of ṣalāh. When these people are not conscious, then it is as regards us and worldly matters. As for matters related to Allāh *taʿālā* and the Hereafter, they are fully conscious. They are firm in their adherence to the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat. They consider themselves to be nothing because they have cast aside the enjoyment of the carnal self.

I mentioned these few points as explanations to the point of "being firm" as quoted in *Maktūbāt Maʿṣūmīyyah*. I had no intention of saying anything today. The Ḥakīm Ṣāḥib also advised me not to speak today because I will get fatigued. Now listen to the remainder of what Maulānā Jāmī Ṣāḥib was saying.

Nowadays we see that in addition to the laity, the elite – through their actions - seem to be rejecting the rectification of the self. If they are going to disregard it in such a way, how will they ever understand the plotting of the self and how will they save themselves from it? Whereas Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* states in *Iḥyā'* that it is farḍ-e-ʿayn to rectify the self. Farḍ-e-ʿayn means that it is compulsory on every single person.

> The most intricate of the sciences of interactions is the deceptions of the carnal self and the traps of Shayṭān. This is obligatory on every person, but people have disregarded it and become occupied with sciences which create whisperings in their hearts, enable Shayṭān to take control of them, and cause them to forget his enmity and the manner of safeguarding them from him.

We learn from the above that the science of deceptions of the self and traps of Shaytān is the most intricate, subtle and complex of sciences. This is why it is generally disregarded. After all, it is easy for anyone and everyone to understand things which are glaring and clear, e.g. performing salāh, fasting; the evils of stealing and speaking lies, etc. On the other hand, complex and intricate matters can be understood only by the one who has perfect insight and a genuine quest. As for the one who has no insight at all or there is a defect in his quest, he will not be inspired to save himself from the traps of Shaytān and the deceptions of the carnal self.

Whether it is difficult or easy, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that it is compulsory for every person, just as the compulsion of salāh and zakāh. If man does not know this, he will succumb to whisperings. Shaytān will overpower him, he will not be aware of Shaytān's enmity, and will not know how to save himself from him. Consequently, he will suffer losses in this world and in the Hereafter. The following verse will apply to him:

خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ

He loses both this world and the Hereafter. This is a clear loss.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوْا بِهٖ شَيْئًا وَّبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَّبِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ

[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 11.

وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُوْرًا.

Worship Allāh and do not associate anything with Him. Do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is a relative, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the traveller, and what your hands possess, i.e. your slave-girls. Surely Allāh does not like the self-conceited and boastful.[1]

In keeping with the temperament of the Sufis, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* explains the words "the companion by your side" to refer to the carnal self. He presents the following Ḥadīth as proof, i.e.

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Since the verse instructs us to do good to all those mentioned, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that the good which one has to do by one's self is:

أن تحبسها في سجن العبودية وتحرقها بنيران المحبة[2]

To confine it in the prison of servitude and burn it with the fire of love.

Nowadays no one knows what is servitude nor does anyone understand love. To be imprisoned in the prison of servitude means to ensure that the carnal self adheres to the duties of worship and servitude,

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 36.

[2] روح المعاني، سورة النساء، آية ٣٦ (من باب الإشارة).

and to cling to the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, this is not achieved with ease. It needs a catalyst, and that catalyst is love. Love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will have to be developed in the heart, and a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* will have to be established. This is known as nisbat or affinity. After this it will become easy for the person to fulfil the duties of servitude. In other words, he will be able to imprison himself in the prison of servitude. The company of the mashā'ikh is the tried and tested way of acquiring that catalyst and affinity. A person remains in their service, acquires love, and through love he will be able to fulfil the duties of servitude. As man progresses in this path, he will reach the level of Allāh-recognition.

Note: We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to remain in the company of His true servants, and to bless us with His love and recognition through them. Āmīn. (compiler)

I quoted the following couplet one day:

> Allāh *taʿālā* knows that the path to reaching the beloved is no more than two steps – one foot is to be placed on the carnal self and the other is to be placed with Allāh's friend.

You people really liked the subject matter of this couplet. I had said to you that the saint who compiled the couplet is talking about two steps. He is correct to a certain extent, but in reality it is just one step, viz. placing one's foot on one's carnal self. In other words, curtailing its desires because this is the obstacle in the path to the Beloved.

Shaykh Shīrāzī *raḥimahullāh* says:

> There is no external obstacle between the lover and the Beloved. O Ḥāfiẓ! You yourself are the obstacle. You should therefore move away.

In other words, obliterate your self so that you can reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

Once this foot has been placed correctly, then as per the words of Shaykh Shīrāzī *raḥimahullāh*:

> Traverse the path to this point with the feet of a genuine quest. After that you can fly with the wings of love.

The second step which is referred to is the step of jadhb which comes from the Beloved out of His grace.

However, because it is dependent on the first step, it is referred to as a step by way of similarity. This path is made up of sulūk (treading) and jadhb (drawing or pulling).

The couplet in which the saint said this makes reference to placing the first foot on the carnal self. In the words of Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh*, it refers to acquiring knowledge of the evils and traps of the carnal self. This knowledge is compulsory. The second step is that of love. The love of Allāh *taʿālā* is also compulsory. Its acquisition is also essential because it is a means for the fulfilment of other obligations.

Yesterday I wanted to speak about the second step, but people came to meet me and I didn't get the time. I thought I should speak about it today, but what can I say when people are neither prepared to listen nor to learn. The laity are after all the laity. I expected the ʿulamā' to listen and understand, but they have no time from their occupations. Even when they come to us, we do not know what they are seeking because they do not have the time to listen and understand correctly.

Now listen! The Ahlullāh themselves are left confused about the first foot. I will therefore explain to them first and then to you people. Try and understand the second step. Allāh willing, I will explain that first because I see that the laity do have some inclination towards Dīn. There is a need to work, but there is a defect in the workers. This is why the work is not accomplished.

I am not using the word "step" or any other similar word. Rather, I am quoting what Allāh *taʿālā* is saying:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

In this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* is saying that if you want admission into Paradise, you will have to stop the carnal self from its desires, and be fearful after being mindful of the fact that you are going to be presented before Allāh *taʿālā*. The essence of all this is to place a foot on the carnal self. Now that you have got the fear of standing before Allāh *taʿālā*, listen to one Ḥadīth in this regard.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that there will be three presentations on the day of Resurrection. One will be of disputation, the other of apologies, and in the third presentation, the books of deeds will be flung aside.[2]

In his explanation to this Ḥadīth, Ḥakīm Tirmidhī says that the first presentation [of disputation] will be for the unbelievers. They will not have the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* so they will dispute even there. They will assume that they will be freed in this way. The second presentation will be that of apologies. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* will establish His proof against the unbelievers, and an apology will be presented before all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. The third presentation will be of the believers. They will be reprimanded in privacy so that they may feel ashamed. This will be their punishment. They will then be forgiven and Allāh *taʿālā* will be pleased with them.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] *Mishkāt Sharīf*, p. 435.

It is mentioned in certain narrations that many of the believers will be so ashamed by this reprimand that they will fall unconscious.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* presents a scene of that presentation:

> On the day of Resurrection people will be presented before Allāh *taʿālā* as an army is presented before a king. A person will be made to stand before Allāh *taʿālā* in a way which is in line with the might and power of Allāh *taʿālā*. The person will then be questioned as Allāh *taʿālā* wills. What can be said about the condition of a person who, due to his intense bashfulness, will find that the flesh from his face will fall off!?[1]

Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that when people stand before Allāh *taʿālā* on the day of Resurrection, their books of deeds will be beneath the Throne. Allāh *taʿālā* will send a wind which will convey the books of deeds to the people – in the right hand of some and in the left hand of others. The first thing which will be written in the books of deeds will be:

اِقْرَأْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا

Read your book! You yourself are sufficient today to take your own account.[2]

This is a small glimpse of the presentation before Allāh *taʿālā* which I explained to you. Just try and

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[1] *Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir.*

[2] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 14.

imagine what it will be like. It is because of this presentation that all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, and their deputies, the Auliyā' and the righteous believers are worried.

Now listen to another verse:

Allāh *taʿālā* is addressing Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*:

يَا دَاوُدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ.

O Dāwūd! We made you a vicegerent on earth, so rule with justice among the people and do not follow the desire of the self or else it would lead you astray from the path of Allāh.[1]

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* issues one order to Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* and one prohibition. He is ordered to rule with justice among people. When man does not act on injunctions of this nature, then it is because of the carnal self. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* issues a prohibition by saying, do not follow the desire of the self or else it will move you away from the straight path and cause you to fall into severe punishment. Man follows his carnal self when he becomes unmindful of the interrogation on the day of Resurrection.

This is why I refer to this as the first step. I speak a lot about it and can continue speaking extensively on this subject.

Listen! When I returned to my hometown after spending time with my shaykh, Hadrat Maulānā

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[1] Sūrah Sād, 38: 26.

Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*, I began speaking about the carnal self. Bearing in mind that hypocrisy is one of the evils which stems from the carnal self, I began speaking on the subject of hypocrisy as well. I said to the people that you probably do not like me to speak on this subject but I am not bothered about your likes and dislikes. We will speak about whatever Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* explained. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

الم. ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ صلى فِيْهِ ج هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ. اَلَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ج وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ. أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ق وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ.

Alif Lām Mīm. There is no doubt in this book. (It) guides those who fear. Who believe in the unseen, and establish salāh, and what We provided them as sustenance, they spend (thereof). And those who believe in what has been sent down to you and in what was sent down before you. And of the Hereafter they are convinced. These people are on guidance from their Lord, and they are the ones who shall reach their goal.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* then describes the condition of the unbelievers:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَ أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ. خَتَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَعَلٰى سَمْعِهِمْ ط وَعَلٰى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ ز وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ.

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 1-5.

Surely those who have disbelieved, the same it is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allāh has set a seal on their hearts and on their ears; and on their eyes is a veil. And for them is a mighty punishment.[1]

These are the traits of the unbelievers. They are completely opposite to those of the believers. The believers obey while the unbelievers reject. The believers are on guidance while the unbelievers are devoid of it. The believers will be successful while the unbelievers will receive a mighty punishment.

Allāh *taʿālā* describes the condition of the hypocrites as follows:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّقُوْلُ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Of people are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day", yet they are definitely not believers.[2]

From this verse to the end of the section, Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about the hypocrites. So you see how Allāh *taʿālā* describes the hypocrites after speaking about the believers and unbelievers. This is why the 'ulamā' and reformers spoke on these subjects in their respective eras. Why, then, should we not speak about these subjects? You see Maulānā 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ṣāḥib sitting here. He brought me *al-Fauz al-Kabīr* and presented it to me. In this book, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* goes at length in discussing the hypocrites. I also spoke on the same subject. Some 'ulamā' were quite offended by this. They could not say anything to me, but they began opposing my

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 6-7.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 8.

associates. Many educated people are suffering from this ailment [of hypocrisy]. This is why I refer to it as the currency of today.

I used to say to my self: Be ashamed of Allāh *taʿālā*. These masses are better than you. They do not even have an iota of the evil traits which are within you.

When I returned to my hometown, I initially related the themes of Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. But then I myself did not feel any satisfaction in relating them to the people. I realized that these themes were beyond their understanding, and so, they will not really benefit. I then began speaking about the carnal self. I myself felt satisfied and realized that I was saying something which was useful to them as well.

The subject of the carnal self is not a very interesting subject, so in the beginning, people did not pay much attention to it. But I said to myself that I am going to speak about it irrespective of whether anyone listens or not.

Subsequently, a Maulānā Sāhib said to me: "As you continued speaking on this subject and said that you will carry on irrespective of whether anyone listens or not, it became appealing to us."

I perceived a certain type of energy within me after speaking on this subject. I realized that because it relates to piety and purity, Allāh *taʿālā* approves of it and people too are benefiting from it.

In this regard, I also quoted the following Hadīth to the people:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

In this Hadīth, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is begging Allāh *taʿālā* for piety of the self. On one hand we learn that piety of the self is something to be sought. On the other hand, we also learn that this is not acquirable by our own selves – we cannot purify it by ourselves. It requires the grace and kindness of Allāh *taʿālā*. I asked the people: "What do you think of this Hadīth?" They replied: "It is excellent and most worthy of practising on." In other words, every Muslim must continually make this duʿā' with earnestness until he is embellished by the garment of piety so that the path to success becomes easy. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

One of the reasons why people are negligent towards the carnal self is that they have given up studying it totally. If the ʿulamā' were to study this field and teach it to the laity, they will learn it as they learn other aspects of Dīn such as salāh and fasting.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْهُدٰى، وَالتُّقٰى، وَالْعَفَافَ، وَالْغِنٰى

O Allāh! I ask You for guidance, righteousness, chastity, and contentment

Since Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* uttered these words with his blessed tongue, this becomes a verbal Sunnat. It becomes necessary for us to say it, memorize it and practise on it.

If Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* did not exert so much of effort in compiling these duʿā's in *Munājāt-e-Maqbūl*, we would have been totally deprived of them.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ رِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَّعِلْمًا نَّافِعًا، وَّعَمَلًا مُّتَقَبَّلًا

O Allāh! I ask You for wholesome sustenance, useful knowledge, and actions which are accepted [by You].

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* says that if I do not receive any wealth or point of knowledge on any day, I consider that day to have been wasted.

Listen! These are the Sunnats of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Is it not necessary for us to practise on them? Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is making a duʿā' and asking Allāh *taʿālā* for wholesome sustenance – this is a physical food. He is asking for beneficial knowledge which is a spiritual food. And he is asking for actions which are accepted – this is a provision for the Hereafter, this is what will help us there.

The other reason why I feel it is necessary to study the carnal self is that piety is necessary for the life of the Hereafter. It has been learnt through experience and observation that even this worldly life is only set right when the carnal self is rectified and character is put right. As for those who discarded Allāh's path for the sake of worldly pleasures and comforts, we do not see them enjoying any worldly comforts. Instead, every house has succumbed to problems and every person is complaining about the other who interfered with his worldly wellbeing.

Listen! If we were to ask Allāh *taʿālā* for our needs through our intellects and sought refuge from evil, it would have been very difficult for us to encompass everything. However, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* mentioned all your needs, necessities and the things from which you are supposed to seek refuge in these duʿā's. For example, he says:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ سُوْءِ الْعُمْرِ وَفِتْنَةِ الصَّدْرِ، اَعُوْذُ بِعِزَّتِكَ، لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ اَنْ تُضِلَّنِيْ، وَمِنْ جُهْدِ الْبَلَآءِ، وَدَرْكِ الشِّقَآءِ، وَسُوْءِ الْقَضَآءِ، وَشَمَاتَةِ الْاَعْدَآءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from an ill-fated age and from the trials of the chest. I seek refuge in Your honour

- there is none worthy of worship but You - that You lead me astray, and [I seek refuge in You] from adverse calamities, the experiencing of misfortune, an evil decree, and the malice of enemies.

After this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said something which includes everything:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَمِلْتُ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا لَمْ اَعْمَلْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَلِمْتُ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا لَمْ اَعْلَمْ. وَمِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ، وَتَحَوُّلِ عَافِيَتِكَ، وَفُجَآءَةِ نِقْمَتِكَ، وَجَمِيْعِ سَخَطِكَ

And from the evil which I committed and the evil which I did not commit, from the evil which I am aware of and the evil which I am unaware of. [I seek refuge in You] from the cessation of Your bounties, the turning away of Your peace, Your sudden punishment, and all which would warrant Your wrath.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then mentions each body part from which evil could emanate:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ سَمْعِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ بَصَرِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ لِسَانِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ قَلْبِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَنِيِّيْ.

[I seek refuge in You] from the evil of my hearing, the evil of my eyesight, the evil of my tongue, the evil of my heart, and the evil of my semen.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from the evil of all these things so that a pure and wholesome life may be experienced. In addition to seeking refuge from his ears, eyes and heart; he sought refuge from his semen.

To this day I have never heard any ʿālim teaching anyone to seek refuge from his semen. Consequently,

if you were to mention this word in any assembly, people will remove you from the pulpit and say: "O Maulānā Sāḥib! What are these things which you are saying!?" Whereas since Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this duʿā', it becomes his Sunnat.

It is the duty of teachers to teach their students about the repugnance of semen, and teach them piety and purity. I notice the madrasah authorities wanting to bring new and young teachers to teach and train students. I ask them: "What are you doing? What training will they be able to impart? When did they learn to train others? They themselves are in need of training! It is essential for a murabbī (mentor) to have himself mentored first. Only then will he be able to train others."

Listen! When you do not discuss these matters out of piety, your youth are getting spoilt. You are sitting back with your shamefulness, while the carnal self and Shaytān are making the youth shameless.

You are not teaching them but Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught it because he was most affectionate to his ummat. He was a Messenger for the youth as well. This is why he said to them: "O youth! Seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from your semen as well."

I am openly saying that the piety which we do not see in our youth today is because we do not teach them piety. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* relates that his father advised him thus during his final moments in this world:

> O son! Abstain from desires and passions. Passion is a fire. Do not increase the heat of the fire of Hell upon yourself by becoming immersed in passion.

The need for piety and purity

The first thing to do is for a person to acquire piety and purity in this world. As for the other levels of saintliness, they will come later on. The more you imbibe piety, the more you will progress and acquire the levels of saintliness.

The topic of piety reminded me of something. There was a man who used to come to me frequently. One of his friends asked him: "Do you also go there?" (his friend was on a different line of thinking) He replied: "Yes, I go there and I will certainly go because he only teaches us about piety and purity. He reads the Qur'ān and teaches us piety and purity. He relates Aḥādīth to us and teaches us the same things. He does not speak on other matters. If piety and purity are bad things, then consider me to be a member of that group in which I am – I am with them."

We learn from this that just as piety and purity are liked by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, they are liked by people of sound minds and sound dispositions. When a person speaks about piety and purity in their presence, they listen to him attentively and enthusiastically. Subsequently, many people affiliate themselves to him solely on the basis of piety and purity.

Love for the pious is a sign of goodness

In these times of evil and tribulations, it is no small thing for a person to be attracted to piety and purity, and to like those who have these qualities. In fact, piety actually commences when a person likes piety and has good thoughts about pious people. Through the blessings of this, he will – inshā Allāh – be included among the pious. He will then progress gradually and become firmly embedded in piety and

purity. He too will reach a certain level of proximity and closeness with Allāh *taʿālā*.

I therefore say to all of you in general and to the youth in particular that you must give full attention to piety, and also beg Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire you towards it. Memorize the duʿā's which I read to you today and make them in the exact words said by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The duʿā' is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

The other duʿā' is:

(اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ) مِنْ شَرِّ سَمْعِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ بَصَرِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ لِسَانِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ قَلْبِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَنِيِّيْ.

[I seek refuge in You] from the evil of my hearing, the evil of my eyesight, the evil of my tongue, the evil of my heart, and the evil of my semen.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* accept these duʿā's in our favour. Āmīn. (compiler)

For several days I have been speaking about love for Allāh *taʿālā* and establishing a bond with Him, but it is difficult to explain and make you understand. I will therefore explain it to you in a different way which is both concise and easy to understand. The speech of people of insight and spiritual ecstasy is a bit difficult to comprehend. This is why I would like to explain it according to my understanding but in the words of the ʿulamā'.

The ʿulamā' say that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory just as salāh and fasting are compulsory. The author of *Fath al-Bārī* writes:

محبة الله على قسمين، فرض وندب، فالفرض المحبة التي تبعث على امتثال أوامره والانتهاء عن معاصيه، والرضاء بما يقدر، فمن وقع في معصية من فعل محرم أو ترك واجبٍ، فلتقصيره في محبة الله حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب، قدم الهوى على المحبة. والندب أن يواظب على النوافل ويجتنب الوقوع في الشبهات، والمتصف عموما بذلك نادر.[1]

Love for Allāh taʿālā is of two types: compulsory and desirable. Compulsory love must prompt a person towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from

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[1] فتح الباري، ج ١.

His disobedience and being pleased with His decree. If a person commits an act of disobedience by committing a prohibited act or leaving out an obligation, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh taʿālā. This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved. He gave preference to desire over love. Desirable love means that a person must regularly perform optional acts and abstain from falling into doubtful actions. Generally there are very few people who have this type of love.

We learn from the above that actions become easy on account of love, and that a person acquires pleasure with divine decree. It is obligatory to acquire this much of love because if divine injunctions are obligatory, then acquiring love for them will be obligatory on every person.

The acquisition of love is essential because it is obligatory in itself and also a means to fulfilling other obligations. When the mashā'ikh speak on this type of love, they do it in a manner which is enjoyable to others, has an effect on them, but is not understood by them. For example, I had quoted this couplet to you previously:

> Allāh *taʿālā* knows that the path to reaching the beloved is no more than two steps – one foot is to be placed on the carnal self and the other is to be placed with Allāh's friend.

You enjoy listening to this couplet but what does it mean? What is the meaning of two steps? Are they exactly two steps or could they be more or less? The mashā'ikh themselves have different views in explaining it. Some of them say it refers to two steps, others say four, and yet others say ten.

And when I explained it to you [in a previous lecture] I had told you that it refers to just one step. You people too may be thinking to yourselves what does two steps mean. What type of steps are they through which a person reaches Allāh *taʿālā*? We have already taken so many steps in going to the masjid, going to the Kaʿbah, etc. but we haven't reached as yet.

The saints made this statement when in a certain spiritual condition and as regards a specific station, and we are having difficulties in understanding it. It is also difficult to explain.

This is what I was referring to when I said that whatever the mashāʾikh said with regard to love is difficult to understand. When the ʿulamāʾ explain the same thing, they do it in a manner which is understood by all because they [ʿulamāʾ] are the heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

They say that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. In other words, that amount of love which enables a person to carry out His orders. Furthermore, he must be so pleased with divine decree that no matter what hardships, pains and tragedies he experiences, he is able to bear them patiently, the dislikes become acceptable because of that love, and bitter things feel sweet. A poet says:

> Bitter things become sweet on account of love.

There is an Arabic saying:

ضَرْبُ الْحَبِيْبِ زَبِيْبٌ

Even the strike of a beloved is a [sweet] raisin.

Some people were lashing a man but he did not utter a single word of complaint. He finally screamed out.

The people wanted to know why he did not say a single word when he was lashed so many times, and yet he screamed out now. They learnt that his beloved was before him all along. He was so engrossed in looking at his beloved that he did not feel any of the pain from the lashes. At the time when he had screamed, his beloved had moved away. This is why he felt the pain of that one lash.

This is the condition of pseudo lovers. From this you can gauge that if a person is in love with the True Beloved, how much more pains he will be ready to bear!

Not long ago, Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hasan Sāhib Amritsarī *rahimahullāh* who is a khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was suffering from some pain in his legs. The doctors advised that they will have to be amputated. When it was the time to amputate his legs, all the doctors informed him that they will anesthetize him first. He said that there is no need to do that; they must merely amputate his legs. They did as told. The operation took several hours, but when he was brought out of the operation room, he was smiling and joyful.

The people asked him: "Hadrat, you went through such a painful experience but you did not utter a single word of complaint!?" He replied: "What actually happened is that I turned my focus on Allāh *taʿālā*. The rewards which I was to receive in the Hereafter were brought in front of me. I became so engrossed in looking at them that I did not feel any discomfort." You can rephrase this and refer to it as love. In other words, the love of Allāh *taʿālā* which was in his heart did its work – he became so immersed with Allāh *taʿālā* that the joy which he was experiencing caused him to completely disregard the discomfort.

I am explaining all this in line with your understanding. If I were to speak the language of the Sufis, you will get astounded and confused.

There was a wealthy man who had a slave. He was slicing cucumbers and giving his slave to eat. The master decided to have one slice as well. When he took a bite he found it to be extremely bitter. He said to the slave: "This cucumber is so bitter, yet you are eating it all this while!? You did not even tell me that it is bitter!?" The reply of the slave is something to be remembered.

He said: "I have always been eating sweet things from your hands. If I receive something bitter one day, should I make a face and complain? It is totally against the demand and nature of love."

The Sufis really approve of this reply. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* related it to us on many occasions, but we would experience a new joy each time he related it to us.

Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* used to relate this incident to us when talking about the countless bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* which we use at every moment. Therefore, if we experience any discomfort from Him, we must welcome it with a smiling face and exercise patience. It must not be that we constantly rejoice over bounties but complain over the slightest discomfort.

This world is a place of discomfort. It has afflictions, pains and grief. There is no solution apart from love for them. There is nothing but discomfort here. The place of real comfort is Paradise.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says in one of his supplications:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا عَيْشَ اِلَّا عَيْشُ الْآخِرَةِ

O Allāh! There is no life except the life of the Hereafter.

Discomfort and pain are inevitable in this world. There is only one way to save ourselves from them, and that is to love Allāh *taʿālā*. When that happens, there will be no discomfort and inconvenience.

Some people asked a saint: "Hadrat, how are you feeling?" He replied: "Of what use is there in asking such a person how he is feeling who does not experience anything of this world which is against his likes?" They asked: "What do you mean?" He replied: "Brothers, the fact of the matter is that nothing in this world happens without Allāh's pleasure, and we have obliterated our own pleasure in His pleasure. Therefore, no matter what happens, it is as though it is in line with my pleasure. How, then, can there be any question of feeling offended or expressing disapproval?"

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ الصِّحَّةَ وَالْعِفَّةَ وَالْاَمَانَةَ وَحُسْنَ الْخُلُقِ وَالرِّضَا بِالْقَدْرِ[1]

O Allāh! I beg You for good health, chastity, trustworthiness, good character and to be pleased with Your decree.

Look! In this supplication Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also asked Allāh *taʿālā* for the ability to be pleased with His decree. The reason for this is that this world is a world of discomforts. Man faces tragedies and pains here. It is not possible to

[1] فيض القدير شرح الجامع الصغير، ج ٢، ص ١٣٩.

bear them and be pleased with them without having love for Allāh *taʿālā*. When faced with situations of this nature, man is generally terrified and grief-stricken. It is only when he is pleased with Allāh's decree can he experience peace and tranquillity.

The 'ulamā' say that the first part of a tragedy is what has to be made bearable and that is the time of the real test. After that, everyone has patience. This is the meaning of the Hadīth:

اَلصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُوْلٰى

The time of patience is at the beginning of the tragedy.

When a person has Allāh's love in him, he thinks to himself that whatever comes from my Friend is best.

In other words, a person must think that this tragedy is from Allāh *taʿālā*. When he does this, he enjoys it. When Hadrat Rābiʿah Basrīyyah *rahimahallāh* used to get a fever she would be overjoyed and would say: "This is a gift from my Beloved."

Just as you welcome and receive your honourable guest, the Ahlullāh welcome tragedies with patience.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that if a husband troubles his wife, there is only one treatment for it. She must create love for her husband in her heart to such an extent that he must perceive her intense love for him. When he learns that she loves him intensely, he will never humiliate her. This is because the reflection of love falls on the heart of the beloved.

If you people love me, I will respond by loving you. This is an inevitable response. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* explained this point very well. If you

people understand it, you will be able to live with much comfort.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَجَعَل بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً

He placed between you affection and mercy.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* placed affection and mercy between husband and wife. The fruit of this is that you have love for each other.

We noticed that when a shaykh becomes displeased, some people feel offended. But those who have love for the shaykh do not feel offended. In any case, love is put to a test at times of displeasure and anger.

If a seeker truly loves his shaykh, then his love for him increases when his shaykh is displeased with him or takes him to task. This is because he understands that the reason why his shaykh is treating him in this way is for the sake of his reformation. His displeasure is actually an act of real affection. If the person did not love the shaykh, he would have fled from there.

Hadrat used to say: "Not of 100 goldsmiths nor of one ironmonger." He would then say that this means that you may be doing many external actions, but these will not be enough, and you will find the path very long. But if you develop just one love, it will outweigh all those actions. Love is also essential to carry out Allāh's orders. If love is absent, even obligatory actions will not be fulfilled. Even if they are fulfilled, they will be done superficially and as customs.

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[1] Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30: 21.

Dear brothers! The issue of love is a difficult issue, but it is necessary. This is why I am trying to explain it to you. If I am not going to flow in my explanation, you will get scared. I explained it to you in the language of the ʿulamā' so that I can make you understand. The language of the Sufis is difficult.

Furthermore, these themes are generally not discussed, so they will appear new to you. It will not be understood in just one sitting. Only when I explain it to you repeatedly will you be able to understand it.

If you understand this theme which I am explaining to you, it will be by Allāh's grace and your kindness in the sense that you listened attentively and understood it. Over and above this, teaching and training are difficult tasks. We make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* makes it ease for all of us.

The Ahlullāh obliterate their selves

The Ahlullāh obliterate their selves and reach Allāh *taʿālā* in this way. After subduing the carnal self, they make it obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*. Subsequently, based on the self not opposing them – in fact, based on making their body parts subservient to Allāh *taʿālā* – they develop love for Him.

A lover says:

> People say that I am proud of my eyes. It is because I have beheld Your beauty. I am falling over my feet because they have conveyed me to Your alley. I am kissing my hands repeatedly because they held on to You and pulled me towards You.

When he said "I am proud", then you must understand that these true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* have submitted themselves totally before Him; there is no

need for them to vex pride. However, when they see that when these body parts were, until now, disobedient to Allāh *taʿālā*, and they have become totally obedient to Him after striving to this end and making many sacrifices to the extent of putting a complete end to their rebelliousness –they become extremely happy and give thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* for this favour. The poet expressed all this by saying "I am proud".

These are most beautiful couplets. If you read them, they will develop a pain and a pining [for Allāh *taʿālā*] in your heart.

Love is not confined to losses and scarcity. Rather, it also entails enjoyment and pleasure. A poet says:

> If a true lover were to express the joy of love, Masīh and Khidr would also wish for it.

Another poet says:

> Although there are calamities and tragedies on the path of love, they are not bad. This pain is most enjoyable.

However, because people do not know the joy of love, they do not give attention to it. Furthermore, it is necessary to subjugate the carnal self and desires; and this is difficult. This is why they do not adopt it.

I spoke on the subject of love in one place and a person was highly affected by it. He went around saying to people: "O brother! You must listen to his lecture; it is most beneficial and thoroughly enjoyable."

In that talk I had related the story of Hadrat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām*. I heard from Hadrat *rahimahullāh* that when Hadrat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām* was put through a

test, he fell ill and his entire body had wounds. Worms began living and breeding in those wounds, so he made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* saying: "O Allāh! Protect my tongue from this illness so that I could engage in Your remembrance."

He was really in pain and discomfort. Allāh *taʿālā* used to ask him every morning and evening: "O Ayyūb! How are you?" On hearing the affectionate inquiry about his health from his true Beloved, Hadrat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām* used to go into an ecstasy. The joy which he experienced at hearing the morning call would continue until the evening. And the joy of the evening call would continue until the next morning. All the pain which he was experiencing would be forgotten on account of this joy.

The bounties which Allāh *taʿālā* is to give His righteous and pious servants in the Hereafter are bound to be given. Nonetheless, what He gives to them in this world is not much less. For example, I just related how Allāh *taʿālā* used to ask Hadrat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām* about his health. Imagine how enjoyable and pleasant that question is!

The seniors say that patience is limited in every situation and place, except when it comes to the Beloved – one cannot exercise patience at not having Him.

الصبر يحمد في مواطن كلها – إلا عليك فإنه مذموم

Patience is laudable everywhere, but not when it comes to You O Beloved, because then it is blameworthy.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Gulistān*:

> Wealth does not remain in the hands of free-minded people just as patience in the

heart of a lover and water in a sieve do not remain.

It is correct to say that the most enjoyable thing in this world is love. If it is for the Creator, then what more can we say! Allāh *taʿālā* created this world so that people love their Creator and Master.

The ʿulamā' relate the following Hadīth:

كُنْتُ كَنْزًا مَخْفِيًّا فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أُعْرَفَ فَخَلَقْتُ الْخَلْقَ[1]

[Allāh taʿālā said]: I was a hidden treasure. I wanted to be recognized, so I created the creation.

The scholars say that a Hadīth with the above words is not verified but its meaning is correct because Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ

I created jinn and man solely for My worship.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explains the words "My worship" as "so that they may recognize Me". And the word *ahbabtu* (I wanted, loved) is from the word *mahabbah* (love). We learn from this that love is initiated from Allāh's side.

All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were sent to this world to teach people how to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* and to enable them to love Him.

Love for Allāh *taʿālā* is in itself compulsory and all other obligations are on account of this love because through it, it becomes easy to fulfil them. The

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[1] كشف الخفا ومزيل الالباس، ۱۴۱.

influences of the carnal self are put to an end, this is why it becomes even more necessary to acquire love.

The injunctions which Allāh *taʿālā* sent to this world contain orders and prohibitions. It was difficult on the self to carry out His orders and abstain from whatever He prohibited. This is why it interferes with man and tries to influence him. Allāh *taʿālā* created love to put an end to the interference of the self and to overpower it. When love gains the upper hand, the opposition and interference of the self come to an end. Allāh *taʿālā* has placed so much of power in love that if just one splash of it falls on the self, its rebelliousness is removed. Once the obstacle of the path is removed, worship becomes easy. Thus, the greatest benefit of love is that the rebellious self is made subservient.

Note: Glory to Allāh! It is a most beneficial theme which ought to be remembered. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Allāh confers high ranks through patience

The *Mathnawī Sharīf* relates the incident of a person who went to meet a saint. When he enquired at his house he was informed that he was not at home. In the process of informing him, the saint's wife was hurling verbal abuses at her husband. The person heard what she said. He became angry and said: "Are you speaking badly of our shaykh in our presence? If you are not benefiting from him, let it be. We are certainly benefiting from him, so we are not prepared to hear anything bad about him. Man has a carnal self within him which prompts him towards evil. I see you in the same light – you are living in the house of a saint but you haven't benefited from him in any way. You have bad thoughts about him."

The man responded to her verbal abuses in this way and left. He went out into the forest in search of the saint. He saw him approaching while sitting on a lion with a snake in his hand which he was using as a whip (this was a supernatural feat performed by him). The man thought to himself: "He is such a great saint yet look at what kind of wife he has!?" The saint was informed of the person's thoughts, so he said from a distance: "You must not entertain any thoughts in your heart." When he came near, the saint said to him: "Brother! This rank which you see in me is actually through her blessings. When I remained patient over her bad manners, Allāh *taʿālā* blessed me with this."

It is solely due to Allāh's wisdom that he brings together such spouses that the spiritual progress is dependent on the other. It takes true recognition to understand this and can only be fathomed by an ʿārif. An ignorant person falls into destruction on such occasions.

The wife of Hadrat Mirzā Jān Jānā *rahimahullāh* was extremely hot-tempered. On one occasion, Hadrat sent one of his Kābulī disciples to his house to ask how she was. He came to the house and inquired about her wellbeing. She responded by hurling abuses at Hadrat. The disciple returned to Hadrat who asked him: "Brother, what happened?" He replied: "She was saying many bad things about you. I became very angry. If she was not your wife I would have stabbed her with a dagger." Hadrat said: "You are my disciple and you must be thinking that I have reached a certain rank [of spirituality]. Now listen! This rank which I received is because of my wife. I exercised patience over her harshness, so Allāh *taʿālā* conveyed me to this rank."

There are many incidents of this nature – of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and the Auliyā'. These personalities make this the means to establish a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Just as gratitude over favours is a means of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*, so is patience over hardships and tragedies.

Patience and gratitude – two parts of īmān

Īmān is made up of two parts – patience and gratitude. It is a great feat to reach Allāh *taʿālā* through the path of gratitude, but it is much greater to reach Him through patience. This is because a person has to exercise patience over matters which are against his carnal self.

This is why we see that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were tested more through patience. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أشد الناس بلاء الأنبياء ثم الأولياء ثم الأمثل فالأمثل[1]

The Prophets are tested the most with hardships. Thereafter it is the Auliyā' and then those who are closest to them in rank.

A Hadīth of *Tirmidhī Sharīf* states that a man is tested according to the level of his īmān.

The more the īmān the more the tests and tribulations. When a person's īmān is weak, he is put through minor tests. The tests could be as regards a person's sustenance, health or children. They could come in the form of a person's wife as well.

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير، ج ١، ص ٥١٨.

There was a man who had a bond with Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. It seemed that his wife was ill-mannered. He wrote to Hadrat *rahimahullāh* on one occasion:

> I am neither permitted to cry nor beg. It is my wish to lose my breath and die.

He was a pious man who bore his wife's torments patiently. The carnal self of a pious man becomes suppressed and comes in line with him. However, his wife and children are generally not in line with him. Although his self is dead, his family is alive with its bad manners and intolerance.

The man who wrote to Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was not harsh to his family. He must have considered Allāh's statement that there are many rewards in store for those who are patient. This is why he bore her torments.

Listen! If you have a relative living close by and he constantly torments and harms you, but you tolerate everything and do not become angry, then it is a sign of perfection in character. You will be rewarded tremendously in the Hereafter.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in his *Mathnawī*:

> There is nothing more bitter than being separated from You. Without Your refuge, there are challenges everywhere. Our possessions (body parts) are themselves the thieves of our possessions. Our own bodies are snatching away the garments of our life. In other words, our desires are the enemies of our spiritual treasure, and our hands and feet are eating us away. How can anyone protect his life (īmān) without Your sanctuary.

The actual enemy of man is his carnal self. A Hadīth states:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك[1]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

As long as a person's self is not rectified, all his body parts will be subservient to it. In other words, it takes man on the very path which will lead to his destruction.

This is what Maulānā is referring to when he says: O Allāh! Turn me away from my evil destiny and evil orders. In other words, make my carnal self obedient to You. If it is going to be disobedient to me, it will separate me from You. It will cause me to act against Your orders, the consequence of which will be the Hell-fire. Just as there is Paradise for those who good, there is the Hell-fire for those who do bad. Entry into the Hell-fire will cause me to be far from You. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from it.

The Auliyā' aim to get close to Allāh *taʿālā*, this is why they become enemies of the carnal self. They strive to make their body parts subservient to Allāh *taʿālā*. Once they become obedient – i.e. instead of disobeying the Beloved they carry out His orders and abstain from His prohibitions – then the same body parts become beloved to the Auliyā'. It is only then that they chant [the couplets which were quoted previously]:

> People say that I am proud of my eyes. It is because I have beheld Your beauty. I am falling over my feet because they have

[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

conveyed me to Your alley. I am kissing my hands repeatedly because they held on to You and pulled me towards You.

These personalities only feel proud after they have realized that they have made their body parts obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* and subservient to the Sunnat and Sharīʿat. In other words, the tongue has given up impermissible speaking, the eyes have given up looking at impermissible things, the ears are no longer listening to unlawful words, etc. In short, everything has become obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*. There can be no greater bounty in this abode of the world.

In the same vein I say to you that what can be a worse calamity then having a wife who is opposed to us? Having children who are opposed to us? And our own selves are opposed to us? May Allāh *taʿālā* give us refuge from this.

It is stated in a Hadīth that when it is the time for accounting of deeds on the day of Resurrection, a seal will be placed on the tongue. It will remain silent while the other body parts will speak. Each part with which a sin was committed will admit to that sin. The person will become astounded and ask: "What is happening!? Our own body parts are testifying against us!?" We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

A Hadīth states that there will be three presentations on the day of Resurrection. One will be of disputation which will be for the unbelievers. The other will be for offering excuses.[1] And the third in which the books of deeds will be cast aside.

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[1] In other words, a person will try to present his case before Allāh *taʿālā*, and offer excuses in the presence of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says that something will be whispered into the ears of some people. When they hear it, they will fall down out of regret. The reason for whispering it in their ears is so that they are not humiliated in the presence of everyone. As for those who are bound to be humiliated, they will be interrogated publicly. Everyone will hear the interrogation.

Another scene of embarrassment will be when everyone will be standing before Allāh *taʿālā* and all their body parts will be testifying against them. They will feel so ashamed that they will fall down unconscious. The same unconsciousness will be a treatment for the removal of their regret. When they come back to their senses, their hearts and minds will be totally clear. Had they not fallen unconscious, the regret would have remained with them forever and ever.

There is life after this worldly life

I am relating all this to you to show you that the present life is not the only life. The Hereafter is bound to come, so be concerned about it.

If we have to die one day and the life of this world is bound to come to an end, we ought to fear the Hereafter and be worried about it. The hearts of the saints are also overwhelmed by fear. Consequently, they do not experience real enjoyment in the enjoyments of the world.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* related about a saint who was going somewhere. On the way he saw a few young boys playing and laughing. He stopped and said: “O children! Listen! You are to die. You will be questioned in the grave. The accounting of deeds is yet to come. You will have

to cross the Pul Sirāṭ. You still have to be presented before Allāh *taʿālā*. Yet you are laughing!?"

The boys must have certainly been affected by this admonishment. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* was most impressed by this admonishment of the saint and spoke highly of it.

This is the difference between the speech of the external 'ulamā' and the Sufis. If they were to give you a lengthy speech about the Hereafter it will not have so much of effect on you as these few words of the above-mentioned saint.

One saint was feeling thirsty so he asked for water. When the water was brought to him he refused it. The people asked him: "Hadrat, why are you not drinking the water when you yourself had asked for it?" He replied: "When the unbelievers ask for water in the Hell-fire, they will be given boiling water. This scene came to my mind, caused me to shudder, and my thirst and everything else disappeared."

The verse which came to his mind is the following:

وَنَادٰى أَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ أَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَفِيْضُوْا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ط قَالُوْٓا إِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَّلَعِبًا وَّغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ج فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوْا لِقَآءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هٰذَا لا وَمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ.

The inhabitants of Hell will call out to the inhabitants of Paradise: "Pour a little water upon us or some of the sustenance which Allāh has given you." They will reply: "Allāh has barred both things from the unbelievers...Who made their religion [an object of] amusement and play, and whom the life of this world

deluded." And so We shall forget them as they forgot the meeting of this day and as they rejected Our verses.[1]

Note: Hadrat Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad ʿUthmānī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* explains the above verses in a very concise and clear manner. I quote his explanation here:

> Upon being rendered senseless and completely perturbed, the inmates of Hell will ask the inhabitants of Paradise thus: "We are burning [in Hell], please pour some water on us or give us some of the bounties which Allāh has set aside for you." An answer will be given that these things are forbidden to the unbelievers. It is these very unbelievers who used to make the religion an object of play and amusement and used to exult in the pleasures of this world. Just as they did not even think about the Hereafter on account of their falling into the pleasures of the world, We will not even bother about them today. Just as they had rejected Our verses, We will refuse to accede to their requests today.[2]

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said that one of his friends used to read these lines quite often:

> O self! Discard all those actions which are unnecessary. Only do what you will need on the day of Resurrection.

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 50-51.

[2] *Tafsīr-e-ʿUthmānī*, p. 209.

Note: This is known as muḥāsabah or introspection. It is essential on the path of rectification. The Sufis accord much importance to it.

A statement of Ḥadrat Ḥakīmul Ummat

Ḥadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to relate this incident quite often. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed by a house of a Ṣaḥābī which was solidly built. His eyes fell on the house and he asked those around him as to whose house it was. The people informed him that it belongs to a certain person. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* continued silently. The next day the Ṣaḥābī came to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and offered him salām. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* turned away without replying. The Ṣaḥābī noticed his change in attitude so he asked someone: "Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appears to be silent, what is the matter?" He replied: "I don't know anything apart from the fact that he passed by your house yesterday, looked at it and asked whose house it was."

The Ṣaḥābī immediately realized that his solidly built house was the cause of Rasūlullāh's displeasure. He got up immediately without asking Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, proceeded to his house and had it demolished. He did not go back to inform Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* of what he did. When Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed that way after some days and asked: "What happened to the house which was here?" The people informed him that the Ṣaḥābī whose house it was perceived Rasūlullāh's displeasure so he demolished it.

This is the type of love which I am speaking about. That is, a lover cannot bear the displeasure of his beloved. That Sahābī had total and absolute love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He must have thought to himself that what is the use of a house on account of which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* has turned away from me? A thousand similar houses can be sacrificed for the pleasure of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The condition of a true lover is as described in the following couplet:

> You are asking for separation which is most bitter. So let me say this much, you can ask for anything else but don't ask for separation.

I am speaking on a most essential theme to you people. Listen to it attentively and consider this to be an ideal occasion. We might not get such a time again. Do whatever needs to be done now.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the amount of pain and affection with which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* is advising us. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us who are associated to him to practise so that his soul may be pleased. Āmīn. (compiler)

A scholar related to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* an incident about a pious ʿālim of Gujarat. He was asked to go to Gujarat through divine inspiration. He proceeded and settled down in an orchard outside a city. He was a good flute player, and this is what he used to do. People from all over used to assemble to listen to him (people are generally attracted to these things very quickly). He continued in this way and the love of the people towards him began increasing by the day. He too realized that they

now love him so much that they will not be prepared to leave him. He then exposed who he really was and began speaking from the Qur'ān and Hadīth to them. Only then did they realize who he really was.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said that Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* listened attentively to this incident and did not make any objections to it. In fact, he was quite impressed. (compiler)

I am relating to you the methods of the Sufis. Look at how they preserved Dīn and bore severe hardships for it. They understood that if the internal self is not protected, Dīn will wither away and the original thing will disappear.

The period up to the time of the Tābiʿīn was a good one. But after that, these personalities realized that Dīn is in danger. This is why they bore intense hardships and dangers for its preservation. They went to the extent of sacrificing their lives for it.

There has always been a group for the preservation of Dīn

In every era there was a group which took care of the Dīn. When misguidance increased, they combated it with all their force. However, in our times, misguidance has gone to such a level that if there is an ʿālim who appears like one, worships Allāh *taʿālā* and does not do anything against the Sharīʿat, people do not consider him to be a saint. But if a person removes his clothing and does not have even a distant relationship with the Sharīʿat, they feel he is a saint. Just look at the level of deviation! Whereas the Sufis respected the Sharīʿat themselves and made others to do the same so that people understand the sanctity of the Sharīʿat. Even if their deeds are less, as long as their īmān is set right it will be to their advantage.

The Sufis felt that people would not go to the level of discarding salāh, fasting and other external acts of worship. Yes, they understood that people will certainly be lethargic towards matters of the heart which were brought by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why they focussed on the internal self and strove to preserve it. But now we see that in addition to people's disregard for the internal self, they are increasingly discarding the external acts of Dīn. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Listen! The basis of Sufism revolves around upholding the sanctity of the Sharīʿat. The actions, spiritual conditions and statements of the Sufis all testify to the high regard which they had for the Sharīʿat.

A woman asked Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *raḥimahullāh* the following question: "The government has lamps on the roads [so that people can see the way]. Is it permissible to spin cotton in the light of those lamps?" When Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *raḥimahullāh* heard this question, he sat up attentively and thought to himself that this woman appears to be from a respectable family. He asked: "Who are you?" She replied: "I am the sister of Bishr Hāfī." He replied: "It is not permissible for the sister of Bishr Hāfī to do this." What he meant was that it was against taqwā and piety for a woman whose brother was such a great saint. The sister must live on the level of her brother as regards piety.

Note: We learn from this that a different rule applies to the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh. Together with the fatwā, they must take due consideration of taqwā. (compiler)

An incident

Hadrat Bishr Hāfī *raḥimahullāh* was a very great Sufi. He used to walk barefooted out of respect for Allāh

taʿālā. Allāh *taʿālā* sent inspiration to him saying: "At present there is no one more beloved to Me than you." Allāh *taʿālā* had instructed the birds not to sit in his path. Consequently, when he walked on any path, it was clean. The reason for doing this is that because he was so particular about walking barefooted for Allāh's sake, Allāh *taʿālā* did not want his feet to get dirty with impurities.

On one occasion, a person saw some excreta on the path which Hadrat Bishr Hāfī *raḥimahullāh* normally took. The man concluded that he has passed away. When he inquired, his conclusion proved to be correct.

People accepted the Sufis on account of their work. In other words, they filled their hearts with affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*, developed His love in their hearts and remained engrossed in His remembrance. This is why people had faith in them and obeyed them.

A saint came across a watch. He took it in his hand and continued looking at it until the next morning. He had truly recognized Allāh *taʿālā* so his mind went to the Creator or the thought must have crossed his mind thus: Look at how meticulous this watch is in carrying out its job. It is doing the work which it is supposed to do with full focus. Allāh *taʿālā* also created a watch of the heart within us. How sad that it is negligent in carrying out its work. He continued observing the watch and carried on thinking in this way.

On one occasion, Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* read the following verse in the ʿishā salāh.

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهُ، وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهُ.

Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it. Whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it.[1]

He was overcome by a special spiritual condition. All the people completed their salāh and left, but Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* was holding his beard and crying. He continued repeating those verses the entire night, and was saying: "O Allāh! Have mercy on Your servant, Nuʿmān, and pardon him."

These are incidents from the lives of true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. When I related these points in some other place, the people there said to me that I have explained to them the fundamental reality. I said to them: "Brothers! This is a very difficult subject, but it becomes easy through examples."

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Raḥmān Sāḥib Ganj Murādābādī *raḥimahullāh* was teaching Hadīth and the subject was on aspects of Rasūlullāh's life. Hadrat quoted a Hindi couplet and screamed loudly. All the students went unconscious, their books got closed, and Hadrat remained sitting silently. When the students recovered, he said: "This is how we teach Hadīth." In other words, with feeling and emotion. In this way we convey the students to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

There is another incident about Hadrat Shāh Fadl ar-Raḥmān Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* which I heard from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. He said: I went from Kānpūr to Ganj Murādābād to meet Hadrat. He received me with much love and ordered food from his house. There was a bowl of pulse and rotīs. Hadrat came close and asked: "What is this?" I replied: "Hadrat, it is pulse and rotīs." He struck me

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[1] Sūrah az-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8.

on my shoulders and screamed out aloud. He then said: "O how wonderful! It is pulse and rotīs! Glory to Allāh!" He added: "You are a Maulwī! You must be knowing that the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* used to stay hungry for several meals at a time." In this way, Hadrat created the value of Allāh's favours and bounties in my heart.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* must have thought to himself that this is an 'ālim who must be in the habit of eating more fancy foods, and would probably not like the pulse and rotīs. He created in Hadrat Thānwī's heart respect and value for this food by adopting this approach.

We cannot create any impression on the Muslims. If there is any way of doing it, it is by relating to them incidents from the lives of the senior saints. Relate to them the stories of the Sufis and see how Allāh's love develops in their hearts. Every person is not on the same level in Dīn. Some are higher than others. Even then, whatever little you get will be from this path.

The scholars have made a great contribution by collating the statements of the saints. The benefit of this has become widespread and common. It is therefore necessary to read the statements of the saints and to listen to them. The more they are proliferated, the more Allāh's mercy will descend.

I have been talking about love for Allāh *taʿālā* for several days. The ʿulamā' say that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is of two types. One is compulsory and the other is desirable.

Compulsory love is what prompts a person to carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions, and enables him to be content with Allāh's decree. If a person is involved in disobedience by committing a harām act or by leaving out an obligation, it will be ~~b~~because he has a defect in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why he gave preference to the desires of his carnal self over the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is the explanation of ʿulamā', and they are explaining it very cautiously. Look at what a clear and sensible explanation it is which can be understood by the learned and the laity. It is their right to explain it like this because they are the heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is compulsory to carry ~~o~~ut Allāh's orders. For example, Allāh *taʿālā* said:

اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ

Establish salāh and pay zakāh.

To have that much of love which enables you to carry out this order is also compulsory. In the same way, it is compulsory for you to be happy with Allāh's decree for you. If a person does not have love, he will be displeased with many of Allāh's decrees and will start complaining.

I am trying to explain this point but people are not paying heed. Let me explain an example to you. After Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* departed from this world, Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* expressed his grief as follows: "Love for you demands that I cry so much that the fat of my entire body melts and flows out from my eyes. At the same time, you taught us the lesson of patience. This is why I will give preference to your order over my desire, and I will remain patient."

He conveyed the message in a most unique and unprecedented way. Sometimes we experience certain situations where it is most difficult to exercise patience. However, a person is able to do it on account of love. Up to now we had been assuming that compulsory duties refer to compulsory acts of worship only. In other words, we know that it is compulsory to perform ṣalāh, to fast, and so on. Despite knowing all this, we are negligent of the thing which is the essence of everything. That is, Allāh's love. Although it is compulsory, it is generally not in our minds. If we do not even think about it, how will we ever bother about acquiring it? This is what is happening nowadays.

Now listen to what I have to say to you.

If a person carries out Allāh's orders and abstains from His prohibitions, we will say that he has love for Allāh *taʿālā*. This is also one level of love. A jurist will pass a verdict that this person has love, he affirms Allāh *taʿālā*; and that he has love even though the special condition and zeal of a lover may not be seen in him.

Those who practise on the Sharīʿat, carry out its orders and abstain from its prohibitions are lovers and saints in the sight of the Sharīʿat. But we notice that people do not regard them as saints. If they see a liberal thinking naked person, they follow him and

think he is a saint. They will say about him: “He performs his salāh in Makkah.” One man gave a good answer to such a claim. He asked: “Then why does he defecate here in India? Is India the place for his backside?”

Let me use an example to explain the point that carrying out an order is a proof of love. There is a very cold wind blowing. A person gets up from his warm bed, performs wudū’ with cold water and fulfils Allāh’s obligation [of salāh]. All this could not have been done without love. It is love alone which made these difficulties easy.

There was a saint who would go and perform wudū’ in the ocean when it was bitterly cold.

When it was winter and raining, Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to pay even more attention to his wudū’ and salāh. This is why it is said that performing the fajr and ʿishā salāhs is an indication of sincerity. There are certain actions which indicate to a person’s internal self. The ʿulamā’ have delved into this theme and they say:

الظاهر عنوان الباطن

The internal self is fathomed from the external self.

A Hadīth states that the fajr and ʿishā salāhs are very difficult for the hypocrites. Thus, not performing these two salāhs is a sign of hypocrisy. Understand this well. If you feel that you can discard acting on the Sharīʿat and still make progress, then this is not going to happen. Any believer who progressed spiritually did it solely by acting on the orders of the Sharīʿat.

An incident of Hadrat Uways

Hadrat Uways experienced the era of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but did not get to meet him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had sent an overcoat for him. He sent a message to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informing him: "My heart is restless and yearning to meet you but my mother is old and weak; she needs me to attend to her. And I received this order from you that we have to serve our parents. This is why I am subjugating my love to the Sharīʿat."

This was true love. He gave preference to following the order of his beloved over the desire of his heart. (May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with this quality. Āmīn)

I see you people inviting 'ulamā', asking them to deliver talks, conducting assemblies and so on. It shows that you cannot get enough of the 'ulamā', that is why you invite them. This Dīn belongs to Allāh *taʿālā*. Anyone who helps His Dīn will receive the help of Allāh *taʿālā*.

لا تزال طائفة من أمتي منصورين، لا يضرهم من خذلهم، حتى تقوم الساعة.

A group from my ummat will always be helped. Those who try to disgrace them will not be able to harm them in any way. This will continue until the day of Resurrection. (Tirmidhī)

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* writes:

> If a person tries to blow off a lamp which Allāh *taʿālā* lit, he will burn his beard. Thus, even if this world is raged by a

tempest, the lamps of the close servants of Allāh *taʿālā* will not get extinguished.

There is no era which will be devoid of the Ahlullāh and people of the Sharīʿat. Because it is not easy to practise on the Sharīʿat, people keep away from the people of the Sharīʿat. A youngster came to me and said: "Do you know why people do not come to you?" I replied: "Tell me, why don't they come?" He said: "The fact of the matter is that people are immersed in harām actions. They feel that if they come to you, you will cause them to give up those sins, and it is not easy for them to give them up. This is why they don't come. They feel that if they don't want to go to a certain village, why should they ask for directions to it?" I said: "I also know why they don't come. What are you going to teach me? They are people of the carnal self, they want to live a free life. Following their desires has seized them. This is why they don't want to come towards Dīn. However, in this same world there are many seekers of Allāh *taʿālā* who are searching for places like this and go to them."

The fate of a king and a worshipper

It is mentioned in the *Gulistān* that people saw a king in Paradise and a worshipper in Hell. They were surprised because their destinies are different from what their external selves portrayed. They learnt that in his quest for Allāh *taʿālā*, the king used to go to meet the saints. He was therefore treated according to his internal self. On the other hand, the dervish was a dervish externally but a seeker of this world in reality. He was also treated according to his internal self.

There are many injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* whose fulfilment is obligatory. In the same way, there are many sins. Some are major and others are minor.

Man has to be mindful of everything. In other words, he must carry out the orders and abstain from the prohibitions. This is the Dīn which has to be practised upon.

A Hadīth states that when you see a person frequenting the masjid then testify to his īmān. After all, there must be something in him which is causing him to be so punctual. That thing can be nothing other than the love of Allāh *taʿālā*.

I am demonstrating to you that carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions is also a type of love; and it is a major level of love. If we are able to take care of this throughout our lives, it is called istiqāmat – steadfastness. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ اَنْ لَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ.

Surely those who said: "Our Lord is Allāh", and then remain steadfast on this, angels descend upon them [saying]: "Do not fear, nor grieve! Listen to the glad tiding of Paradise which you were promised."[1]

They reached this level of steadfastness because they used to carry out the orders and abstain from the prohibitions to the extent that it became their second nature. Consequently, they generally cannot do anything against this. This is another level of love.

Another level of love is when a person occasionally fails in carrying out obligations or misses them, or commits some of the prohibitions but he is remorseful, he is not pleased with this condition, he

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 30.

earnestly wants this condition not to prevail, he strives in this regard but is not able to come out of it as yet.

This is also a level of love although it is lower than the first one. We will refer to him as a mujāhid (one who is striving) and affirm that he has love as well. His displeasure at committing a sin and his internal disapproval of it is, after all, because of love.

A Hadīth states that a believer can commit a sin and so does a hypocrite. But there is a difference between the two. The example of a hypocrite committing a sin is like a fly sitting on his nose and he waves it away. In other words, he doesn't bother much about it and it does not weigh heavily on his heart. But when a believer commits a sin, he feels as though a mountain has fallen on him. He feels a very heavy burden on him. He has carnal desires in him, this is why he committed the sin. But because he also has īmān, he is displeased with himself. Sometimes a believer experiences so much of anguish over a sin that it becomes a means for elevation of his status.

A man was going to the masjid for salāh, while people were leaving the masjid after having performed the salāh. He asked: "Is the congregation over?" When they replied in the affirmative, he took a deep breath. In other words, he expressed his sorrow at missing the congregation. A man heard this deep breath of his and said: "You can take my salāh and all my other salāhs, and give me this one breath of sorrow which you took." The man refused and said: "Let us continue in this way, I am not ready to make any exchange."

Did you see the extent of his disappointment at having missed one salāh with congregation! This was on account of love for Allāh *taʿālā*. If he did not have any

love for Allāh's worship – i.e. the congregational salāh – he would not have expressed such disappointment.

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* was from among the senior Auliyā'. He had a man who lived in his neighbourhood. When Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* passed away, some people saw him in their dream and asked him how he fared. He replied: "I have been forgiven, but a certain man who was my neighbour is higher than me in rank." When he was asked how this happened, he replied: "He was a family man with a wife and children. He used to be busy earning for them, but would always say: 'O Allāh! If I too had the opportunity I would have worshipped You like Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham.' Allāh *taʿālā* loved this wish of his." He was given rewards equal to the actions of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh*, and a separate reward for his own actions. This is why he was on a higher rank.

Did you see! This is another level of love – that a person is never happy with the sins which he commits. He will also be included among the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* even though he will not be on the same level as the others. A sinner is not maʿsūm (divinely protected from sin) but at the same time he is not pleased with sinning. When a believer who has Allāh's love in his heart sees that his carnal self is interfering in his demands to act on Allāh's love, he becomes an enemy of his self. When he finds that his self is becoming lazy in Allāh's path, he punishes it and discards the wants and desires of the self.

This is why I said that this man is a mujāhid and he is included among those who love Allāh *taʿālā*. After all, the real path is that of carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions. And it is necessary to remove obstacles that come on the path to Allāh

taʿālā. When the Ahlullāh have to bear hardships, they find them most enjoyable.

The carnal self is subdued by love for Allāh *taʿālā*. The carnal self is also rectified through anger. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says that if a person has excessive anger in him, it is necessary for him to treat it. In the same way, if there is a dearth of anger in a person, it is necessary for him to develop some anger in him. This is because many tasks are accomplished through anger. If a person cannot get angry at his carnal self, he will not be able to rectify it. When a person seeks his rectification, he is sorrowed by his evil condition. In fact, he gets angry at his carnal self and the latter is rectified through his anger.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* gives the example of a hunting dog. When a hunter indicates to his dog in the direction of a hunt, the dog runs towards it. In the same way, when the self carries out its desires, the Ahlullāh impose anger on it. This anger is for Allāh's sake and is therefore not prohibited. If you were not able to be angry at your self, how will it be rectified!?

Ignorant people are destroyed by continuous anger. In the process, they have destroyed their worldly peace and tranquillity. They will stomach this anger but if we have to scold or reprimand them for their own rectification, they immediately tell us that anger is ḥarām. Whereas you have already learnt that Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* said that anger is necessary for the rectification of the self. Now this could be for your own self or the self of others.

I was saying to you that those who have not freed themselves totally from the demands of the carnal self are also included among the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is because they are sorrowful over the defect

which is in the self and they are worried about its rectification.

The company of a defective person

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* said that the most harmful thing is the company of a defective person. A defective person is one who has no worry about his perfection. If a person is worried about his perfection, then even if he hasn't reached perfection as yet, he is focussed in that direction. The company of such a person is not harmful because when he has this sorrow in his heart, he will create the same sorrow and concern in the hearts of others. The fundamental thing is to have that sorrow and concern. Through it man can be rectified and through it he can succeed. A poet rightly said:

> O sorrow! Why are you standing at the door? O my brother and friend! Come in because your place is in my heart.

A person used to say that when he sees the word "love" written anywhere, he thinks to himself: Why is it written there? It ought to be inside my heart.

Love makes the path easy

Love makes the path easy and hardships become bearable. A person does not bother about the criticism of people because his sole objective and desire is to obey the order of the Creator and to please Him.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* used to listen to samāʿ. A muḥtasib (a government appointed official who ensures people are following the Sharīʿat) wrote from Delhi to say that he is going to come soon. The Shaykh stopped listening to samāʿ. The people began speaking among themselves and

said that the Shaykh stopped samāʿ because he is scared of the muḥtasib. Someone informed the Shaykh that people are criticizing him. He said: "Brother! We are Muslims and our forefathers were Muslims. We heard one order of the Sharīʿat and we accepted it. What is there to criticize?"

Do not consider this to be a "dry" topic. You will experience a few difficulties in the beginning, but once a person continues in his efforts to acquire knowledge and practice, he will experience "freshness". The difficulty which is experienced remains for as long as there is no love in the self. The self will fight him and he will continue fighting back until he is victorious.

I told you just now that such a person is referred to as a mujāhid. If he continues in his battle against his carnal self and dies in the process, he will die as a mujāhid in Allāh's cause.

This is what the Sufis teach and they strive to teach their disciples to practise on their knowledge so that a person reaches Allāh *taʿālā* and receives salvation.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* said in a lecture that there was a man who used to live in Makkah Mukarramah for six months and in Madīnah Munawwarah for six months. When he used to come to Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* [in Makkah], Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* used to quote this couplet to him:

> How fortunate is that person who lives in the house of Allāh for some time and in the house of Rasūlullāh for some time!

On one occasion, the Dār al-Ḥadīth of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband was being constructed so Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* was invited to deliver a lecture. In his lecture, he quoted the above couplet

and said to the students that sometimes they will go to the masjid to perform salāh and sometimes they will go to the Dār al-Hadīth to study Hadīth. When Hadrat applied the words "house of Rasūlullāh" to the Dār al-Hadīth, the 'ulamā' who were present were most impressed and expressed their approval.

I am explaining to you the topic of love in the language of the 'ulamā'. The 'ulamā' are the heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and they will be standing in the front row on the day of Resurrection. They will arrive like rain with their followers. The reason why I am saying these things to you is that if you do not regard knowledge of the Sharī'at as sanctified, then the Sharī'at will be discarded and cast aside. If a person cannot practise, he should at least acquire īmān. That is, he must at least believe that the Sharī'at is the truth. This too is a great bounty.

The ʿulamā' say that like salāh and fasting, love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. Previously I quoted a text from *Fath al-Bārī* to you:

محبة الله على قسمين، فرض وندب، فالفرض المحبة التي تبعث على امتثال أوامره والانتهاء عن معاصيه، والرضاء بما يقدره.

Love for Allāh taʿālā is of two types: compulsory and desirable. Compulsory love must prompt a person towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from His disobedience and being pleased with His decree.

The author says further on:

فمن وقع في معصية من فعل محرم أو ترك واجبٍ، فتقصيره في محبة الله حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب، أو قدم الهوى على المحبوب الحقيقي فهو دليل غلبة النفس وعدم غلبة الحب الإلهي.

If a person commits an act of disobedience by committing a prohibited act or leaving out an obligation, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh taʿālā. This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved. He gave preference to desire over the Real Beloved. This is proof that the carnal self has overpowered him and that Allāh's love is not overpowering him.

I say that if you give preference to the order of your self over the order of the Beloved, then we can

rephrase it and say that carnal desire has been given preference over Allāh's love. The person has given victory to his carnal self and carnal desire, and defeated the love of Allāh *taʿālā*. This happened because he fell short in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. He left out an obligatory order – love for Allāh *taʿālā* – and chose to do a harām act according to the demand of his carnal self. In the process, he disobeyed the injunctions of the Beloved. This is undoubtedly proof that the carnal self is victorious while love for Allāh *taʿālā* is defeated.

The 'ulamā' are saying that the love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. You people know that salāh and fasting are compulsory, but you probably do not consider love for Allāh *taʿālā* to be compulsory whereas it is also compulsory. You will be questioned about it in the Hereafter just as you will be questioned about salāh and fasting.

People perform salāh and fast, but they have no knowledge about the fundamental thing. So listen! You will be questioned about it on the day of Resurrection. We love our wealth, we love our wives and children; but we do not love Allāh *taʿālā*! How is that!

This is a beautiful explanation given by the 'ulamā'. This is really the greatness of the 'ulamā'. The Auliyā' also explain it. You enjoy their explanation but you probably do not understand it. The fact is that the Auliyā' have a more ecstatic effect which you enjoy. They do not explain it like the 'ulamā' because the latter are the heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. They have the responsibility of conveying and preserving the Sharīʿat. The Hadīth mention lofty ranks and merits for the 'ulamā' who preserve the

Sharīʿat. This is why they speak in a manner which is understood by all, and easy to practise.

Listen! The ʿulamā' are saying that compulsory love has that rank which prompts a person towards carrying out orders. Allāh *taʿālā* made salāh, fasting, piety, purity, etc. compulsory. Love is the thing which prompts a person to carry out all these acts and to abstain from sins. It is also made compulsory because it is what leads a person on this path. Furthermore, it is the same love which destroys the worst thief on the path, viz. the carnal self. It is called a thief because it stops a person from performing salāh, paying zakāh, listening to the ʿulamā', and every other type of good. If there is anything which can kill the carnal self, it is love. All the Ahlullāh are unanimous in this regard. The fact that the self takes a person to a place where he does not even want to go to is enough to label the self as evil. At such a time, it makes man to commit an evil which itself considers to be evil at other times. When Allāh *taʿālā* created desires in man and laid down this test that the one who abstains from them will be rewarded, He also created a certain thing in man through which he can combat it, and that thing is love.

A creation devoid of desires was already present, that is the angels. Allāh *taʿālā* willed to create a creation from which the test of piety is taken in this world. As long as the self is victorious and love is vanquished, man is at the hands of his self. But when, through Allāh's inspiration, drops of love fall on the self, love gradually gains the upper-hand. Subsequently, the self acts on the mere indications of love.

The carnal self was so rebellious that it used to rationalize the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and offer various types of excuses. It would not allow man to

continue on the right path. However, when the same self becomes obedient, it becomes so obedient as though someone has placed a nose-ring in its nose. In other words, it becomes totally obedient and submissive. A poet says:

> Even if you fasten me down with 200 chains, I will break them unless you tie me down with the lock of hair of my beloved (I will remain tied down with even a single strand of hair of my beloved).

The poet is explaining the effect of love. Love has such a powerful effect that the lover does not have the power to do anything against the beloved.

People come and ask me, how should we explain to our fellow Muslims so that it can have some impact on them? I give only one reply. I say, you must speak on themes which create yearning for Allāh's love and fear of the Hereafter. If you do this, you can hope for their rectification.

Listen! Another reason why love is compulsory is that it is a right of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Real Beloved. He possesses excellence, beauty and gifting. This is why it is right to love Him. If a person has shortcomings in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be accountable on the day of Resurrection. He will be asked: "You loved everyone else, but you did not love Me!?" Just as it is necessary to love Allāh's creation – e.g. one's children, wife, relatives, etc. – it is necessary to love Allāh *taʿālā* who is the Creator, Master and Nourisher. I am speaking to you in the language of the 'ulamā'. The 'ulamā' have explained all these things but the people who come here frequently do not learn anything.

Now listen to the explanation of the Sufis. One of them says:

> I am proud of my eyes because they beheld Your beauty. I am falling over my feet because they have conveyed me to Your alley. I am kissing my hands repeatedly because they held on to You and pulled me towards You.

Look! First of all these personalities safeguard their hands, feet, ears, eyes, etc. from all matters which are against the Sharīʿat so that they do not become attached to the non-beloved. If they do commit anything against the Sharīʿat, they express anger over it. However, once they make them obedient, and all these body parts become subservient, these personalities start loving their body parts as well. They think to themselves that it is these body parts which conveyed them to the house of the Beloved and became the means to His proximity. This is why they are proud of their body parts. Had their body parts not been obedient to them, then instead of leading them to Allāh *taʿālā*, they would have attacked and misled them. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says:

> Our possessions (body parts) are themselves the thieves of our possessions. Our own bodies are snatching away the garments of our life.

It is these very body parts through which the Ahlullāh reach Allāh *taʿālā* and the flagrant and immoral sinners are conveyed to the Hell-fire. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from the Hell-fire. Āmīn.

Love is a right of Allāh

People have rights and responsibilities towards each other. You people come here to me. You are Muslims and I am a Muslim. We therefore have rights over each other. In the same way, there are certain rights which are due to Allāh *taʿālā*. We have to worry about fulfilling them.

Knowledge of the plots of the self

Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* said that it is obligatory to know the plots of the carnal self. In the same way, it is obligatory to subjugate it. The love of Allāh *taʿālā* becomes obligatory for the fulfilment of this obligation because the self is subjugated by love. The more the love, the more the self will be subjugated. If love is perfect, rectification of the self will become perfect. If it is less, it will decrease accordingly to the extent that it can become non-existent. The essence of love is to get lost in the beloved. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* writes in his *Maktūbāt*:

> The essence of love is to obliterate yourself in the presence of the Beloved, and to lose all desires. If not, the love will be defective.[1]

I related an incident to you and I am relating it again. There is no harm in repetition. Themes which are necessary have to be repeated. Those who did not hear it will hear it now, those who heard it will hear it again.

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[1] *Maktūbāt Yaʿqūbīyyah*, p. 14.

I was sitting in some place with several people, when a man who was quite jovial read the following couplet in a very beautiful tone:

> If I sacrificed myself for Him, then what is so great about that! I had just one transaction with Him, and no transaction with the rest of the world.

Another person who was sitting there was so overcome by this couplet that he went into an ecstasy and screamed out in a loud voice. It seemed as though the roof will fall. He had obliterated himself completely for Allāh *taʿālā* and this couplet applied to him. This is why it had this effect on him and he screamed.

When Allāh's love is embedded in a person's heart, it prompts him to carry out His orders and abstain from His prohibitions. It overpowers Shayṭān and the carnal self. It seizes them in such a way that it does not allow the person to do anything against the Beloved. It is not possible for love for Allāh *taʿālā* to be in the heart and a person disobeys Him at the same time. This is what the 'ulamā' of Dīn are saying. But the situation has changed. In other words, there is love but no compliance.

A person was reading the following couplet and swaying from side to side:

> I am a slave of love, I have nothing to do with servitude.

When I asked him what it meant, he could not explain it to me. Thus, he was merely emulating people of spiritual ecstasy while he was totally devoid of it. This is nothing but ostentation.

When Allāh's love enters a person's heart and he fulfils His orders and practises on the Sharīʿat brought

by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he cannot be devoid of love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

A person meets Allāh through salāh

Listen! This is not a dry topic. There was a man in Allāhābād who was misguided. Allāh *taʿālā* guided him, he chose Dīn and went to perform salāh in a masjid. His friend went to his house in the meantime and asked for him. His children informed the friend that their father was gone to the masjid. The friend waited for him. When he returned, the friend mocked at him and asked: "What is all this that you have started?" He replied: "Do not get into those matters. If you want to understand anything, I am prepared to exchange views with you. Either I will convince you or you will convince me." The friend said: "Brother, I also performed many salāhs but I did not get anything."

One of my associates related this incident to me because he knew the man. I said, his friend is wrong when he says that you do not get anything in salāh and fasting. I have received. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* received, Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* received, Hadrat Khwājah Muʿīn ad-Dīn Ajmerī *rahimahullāh* received, Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* received. But what you are referring to about not receiving (i.e. wealth and riches), they received that as well. Just today a person came and gave me so many gifts. People used to constantly send gifts to Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*. These things are very little [compared to the vast spiritual treasures which they receive].

The Ahlullāh get Allāh's pleasure

The Ahlullāh get Allāh's pleasure by virtue of their love for Him. They get His pleasure and proximity. They receive Paradise. They experience tranquillity. Allāh *taʿālā* enables them to perform supernatural feats. How can you say they get nothing? If you did not get anything then you should ask yourself why you did not get it? But you cannot negate the fact that others received. I do not know what he means when he says that you do not receive anything from obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*. A person receives the treasure of salāh from salāh. Can this be regarded as insignificant? May Allāh *taʿālā* give us understanding. Āmīn.

A Deputy Sāhib used to say to his wife: "Why do you perform salāh? What do you get from salāh?" The poor woman could not give him an answer. When Hadrat Maulānā heard about it he said: If I was in her place I would have said: "I get salāh." The reason for saying this is that a person can only ask for a thing when he chooses the means for asking for it, and the means is not the objective. For example, if you are walking to a certain place, your walking is not the objective; your objective is your destination to which you are walking. A person can ask: "What will you get from your walking?" You can reply to him: "I am going to a certain place to listen to a lecture, or I will reach home." On the other hand, eating food which is an objective in itself, you cannot ask about it: Why are you eating? What will you get from it? In the same way, Allāh's worship is compulsory and Allāh's love is compulsory. The fulfilment of this obligation is the objective. It is therefore most foolish to ask, what do you get from salāh? However, because you have no value and appreciation for this point, you will not

understand it. Therefore listen to what you consider to be "receiving".

There was a youngster who used to go frequently to Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*. When his mother noticed him spending a lot of time with him, she brought him to Hadrat and requested that he keep him in the khānqāh. He is doing nothing at home, at least he will learn something in Hadrat's company. The boy began living with Hadrat. His mother would come to visit him occasionally. One day she noticed that her son had become quite thin, and he was eating chickpeas. When she looked on the other side, she saw Hadrat eating chicken and rice. She complained and said: "Do you think I left my son with you so that he eats chickpeas while you eat chicken and rice!?"

It was a tricky situation. In order to make her understand, Hadrat brought together the chicken bones which were lying in his plate and said: "Come to life with the permission of Allāh." The chicken came to life, made a cackling sound and ran off. Hadrat turned to the woman and said: "When your son reaches this rank, he will eat chicken and rice. For now, he will have to continue eating chickpeas."

Note: This was a karāmat of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*. We know that the supernatural feats of the Auliyā' are genuine. *Sharh al-ʿAqā'id* states:

كرامات الأولياء حقّ

The supernatural feats of the Auliyā' are true.

(compiler)

Now listen further! Another thing which a believer receives in this world is peace and tranquillity of the

heart. In the very beginning of the Qur'ān Allāh *taʿālā* speaks of good actions, and then says:

أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

These people are on guidance from their Lord and they are the ones who will be successful.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* mentions two favours for those who have the qualities as described in the verses before. One favour is for this world and the other is for the Hereafter. The favour for the Hereafter is success in the Hereafter. The worldly favour is to be on guidance, due to which a person receives peace and tranquillity. Tranquillity of the heart is undoubtedly a great bounty of this world.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said that he understood the tafsīr of this verse while on a journey. He relates: I boarded a train from Sahāranpūr to go to Lucknow. There was another person in the same coach whom I knew but could not speak to because of the crowd. When the train left and the crowd lessened, I asked him: "Where are you going?" He replied: "I am going to Meerut." I said to him: "It is possible for you to go to Meerut but this train is going to Lucknow." He said: "O I see, are you going to Lucknow?" I replied: "Yes." The man became quite distressed. I said: "There is nothing to worry. The train does not stop before Rarkī station. When it stops there, you must get off, take a train to Sahāranpūr and proceed to Meerut from there."

This is how I understood the words "on guidance from the Lord" from this incident: I was still very far from

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 5.

Lucknow, but I was at peace with myself because I knew that the train which I have boarded is going to Lucknow. On the other hand, although my acquaintance was near to Meerut, he was worried because he realized that the train in which he is, is taking him further away from Meerut. From this we learn that to be on guidance is in itself a source of immense tranquillity. And when man is not on guidance, he remains uneasy and distressed.

A saint used to say that if the kings only came to know of the [spiritual] treasure which we have, they would have attacked us. A person who is guided by Allāh *taʿālā* continually receives peace and tranquillity in his heart. No matter what condition he may be in, because he is on guidance he feels as though someone is constantly consoling him.

To be content with the decree of Allāh *taʿālā* is one of the things which love for Allāh *taʿālā* creates. In this world we experience good things and bad conditions. If a person is pleased under all conditions and does not complain even in his heart, then this is a great bounty. However, this too cannot be obtained without love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

فمن وقع في معصية من فعل محرم أو ترك واجبٍ، فلتقصيره في محبة الله حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب

If a person commits an act of disobedience by committing a prohibited act or leaving out an obligation, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh taʿālā. This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved.

I say that the committing of an unlawful act or leaving out of an obligation is a defect according to the

Sharīʿat, and it stems from a defect in love. The first error of man is that he abandoned love. When he discards love, he commits sins. This is when he gives preference to the desire of the carnal self over love of the Beloved.

When the author of *Fath al-Bārī* said: "If a person commits an act of disobedience..." he is using it as a basis to show that it is love which prompts a person to fulfil orders and abstain from prohibitions. If a person commits an unlawful action or leaves out an obligation, it will be a proof that he is not a true lover. This is because he gave preference to the desires of his self. The author explains this by saying:

حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب، أو قدم الهوى على المحبوب الحقيقي فهو دليل غلبة النفس وعدم غلبة الحب الإلهي.

This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved. He gave preference to desire over the Real Beloved. This is proof that the carnal self has overpowered him and that Allāh's loves is not overpowering him.

When love establishes itself in the heart, the īmān of a believer helps him and says: "Carry out the orders." The carnal self says: "Discard the orders, and do such and such act." Thus, when a person commits the prohibited, it is as though he gave preference to the demand of his self over the order of Allāh *taʿālā*. The Sharīʿat orders that man must obliterate his desires. When man gains control of his desires, he overwhelms them gradually until they come to an end and the carnal self is obliterated. On the other hand, if the carnal self controls him just once, its strength increases until it eventually takes complete control and love is defeated. It is as though there is a

continuous battle between the self and love until one vanquishes the other.

Intrusion of the carnal self

I will relate a few examples which demonstrate the intrusion of the self.

(1)

One Maulānā Sāhib was travelling by train. He needed to take a compulsory bath in the morning. He was quite worried when the time of salāh arrived. It was a cold and windy day. There was no place to take a bath. You can well imagine how much of laziness the self displays at such a time. He thinks to himself that he will make qadā of the salāh. We see our youngsters today finding it more difficult to perform wudū' and ghusl than to perform salāh. This is why they don't perform salāh. There are very few people who will prove their mettle in situations like this. The Maulānā Sāhib must have experienced a similar intrusion. However, the love for Allāh *ta'ālā* and consequently, the concern to carry out His order, overpowered him. When the train stopped at a station where it normally stops for some time, he said to a water-carrier that he will sit on the platform and he must pour water on him. The water-carrier did as requested. He was wearing his lūngī (loin cloth). He came into the train, changed into his clothes and performed his salāh. That Maulānā Sāhib related personally to Hadrat that he cannot describe the immense pleasure and satisfaction which he experienced in that salāh.

I say, the pleasure and satisfaction which he experienced is on account of carrying out the order of the Beloved. It was his love that prompted him to carry out the order and he got the courage to perform the ghusl in the manner in which he did. Hadrat

Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to quote the following on similar occasions:

> All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that we haven't died and we reached our Beloved. Congratulations to this courage of ours.

The instruction of love is always carried out and there is nothing that can stop it.

(2)

A murīd asked his shaykh: "Hadrat! What is my status?" He replied: "Do not perform the ʿishā salāh today." The murīd was strict in his adherence to the Sunnat and so was his shaykh. He must have rationalized something about his shaykh's order about not performing the ʿishā that night, but he himself could find no comfort. He was lying down in his bed and tossing and turning around. He couldn't fall asleep. His love for Allāh *taʿālā* was urging him to perform the salāh but when he thought of his shaykh's order, he would desist. Eventually, his bond with Allāh *taʿālā* overpowered him and he resolved to get up and perform the fard salāh so that Allāh's order is carried out, and he will leave the other [Sunnat] salāhs so that at least the shaykh's order is fulfilled to a certain extent. He got up, performed the fard salāh and went back to bed. He went into a slumber and saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a dream who asked him: "You fulfilled Allāh's obligation but what wrong did my Sunnat do to you that you left it out?" This immediately pricked his heart, his eyes opened, he got up and performed the remainder of his salāh. When he went to his shaykh the next morning the shaykh said: "Did you see your status? Had you not woken up to perform the fard salāh, Allāh *taʿālā* would have awakened you and made you to perform your salāh."

What the shaykh meant was that his murīd had reached a level of excellence, and anyone who reaches that level is divinely protected. While on this subject of reaching a level of excellence, I recall another incident. Listen to it!

There was a very pious woman. She was informed that her child drowned in a lake. On hearing this, she went to the edge of the lake and called out her child's name. The child answered from inside: "Yes mother!" The mother said: "Come here." The child emerged immediately. This is known as an extraordinary or supernatural event which is also enjoyed by the Auliyā'. The people asked the woman: "How did you know that he is alive?" She replied: "I have a special bond with Allāh *taʿālā* through which He informs me before hand of what is to happen. He did not inform me about this, so I concluded that my child is alive. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* does not do contrary to His norm even though we may do."

I was saying to you that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. In other words, just as you will be questioned for leaving out other obligations, you will be questioned for discarding this love. However, man can only acquire something when he makes an effort to acquire it. If love is compulsory and you have it in you, then well and good. But if there is a lack of it and you feel that your love is defective, then you will have to acquire it.

> Understand well that success comes with work, not with beautiful words. It comes with showing concern and it comes with adhering to the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The work which needs to be done is to subjugate the carnal self which is the obstacle on the path. The

subjugation of the self is realized through love and striving. When this is realized, man changes completely – his words, actions and conditions – everything changes.

Note: We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable us to subjugate the carnal self as outlined by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* said that obligatory love is the one which prompts a person towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from His prohibitions, and enabling a person to be pleased with divine decree. He says further on that when a person commits an evil, it is because of a deficiency in his love. If the person who is committing an unlawful act rejects its impermissibility, then he is a kāfir. If he does not reject its impermissibility, he is a fāsiq (a flagrant sinner).

No matter what, once a person acquires Allāh's love, he is able to traverse the path very easily. Those who do not have this love experience many difficulties. A person gives preference to the desires of his carnal self over the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* because of a deficiency in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. It is now the task of the Ahlullāh to create in the heart of this person a desire for Allāh's love. When he does this, it becomes easy for him to fight his carnal self. The Ahlullāh sometimes focus on the person's heart, and this makes obedience and worship easy for him. In fact, obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* becomes beloved to him.

A question is posed to Hadrat Junayd

Someone asked Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh*:

هَلِ الْعَارِفُ يَزْنِيْ

Can an ʿārif commit adultery?

This question weighed heavily on Hadrat and he lowered his head for a long period of time. He then raised his head and said:

وَكَانَ اَمْرُ اللهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُوْرًا

In other words, yes. If Allāh decrees such a thing for a person, he will certainly do it.

The 'ulamā' say that the 'ārif's recognition and love of Allāh *ta'ālā* becomes hidden at that time. Consequently, he commits the act. A few Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* committed similar acts, and people castigated them with harsh words. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was informed, he said: Do not do that. The person has repented in such a manner that if it is distributed among all the people of Madīnah it will suffice them for their salvation.[1]

The fundamental issue is that of divine decree, but the lovers of Allāh *ta'ālā* cannot disobey Him while having that love and recognition with them. This is why I tell you that if you acquire love, you will acquire immense good. If not, you will remain distressed throughout your lives. This is what the Ahlullāh did – they embedded Allāh's love in their hearts and submitted completely before His orders. Love eases difficulties, but love in itself is not easy.

All you have to do is devote yourself to acquiring love. Even if you do not acquire perfect love, defective love will come to your help. Every sinner has some level of love in his heart. This is why a believer is disturbed when he commits a sin. When a sinner turns to Allāh

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[1] *Mishkāt*, vol. 2, p. 312.

taʿālā, he is very remorseful over his disobedience and feels much anguish when he thinks about it.

There was a man who used to frequent Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh*. One day he sat at the rear of the assembly and said: "There is no doubt that Hadrat is a Walī, but there is also no doubt about our misfortune because let alone not reaching the high stations of the Tarīqat, we are not even able to give up sinning." Hadrat received some inspiration and he must have focussed on the man. Later on that same man used to say: "Hadrat has drawn me in such a way that even if I want to commit a sin, I cannot."

A poet says:

> Love itself will teach you the etiquette of love. All you have to do is develop an inclination in this direction.

This is the path of Allāh *taʿālā* which people tread solely with love. Love for the shaykh is a cause of love for Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the Ahlullāh attach a lot of value to love for the shaykh.

A man related to me that there was a person who tied his hands and legs, and threw himself into a river. One wave would convey him from one side to the other, and another wave would convey him from that side to this side. Then a large wave came and cast him completely onto the shore. I say, this is the condition of the Ahlullāh. They too cast themselves into Allāh's ocean of love. They are then pleased with whatever condition they experience until a wave of mercy comes and conveys them across. They have to bear difficulties but they do it because it is for Allāh *taʿālā*. Eventually it is they who are the successful ones. Others cannot even understand what the Ahlullāh

have to bear on the path of love. Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* says:

> The night is dark. The danger of the wave is lurking, and a whirlpool is a separate obstacle on its own. What do those who are relaxing on the shore know about our condition?

Salvation will be realized through love, and through the grace and mercy of Allāh *taʿālā*. If just one wave of mercy rises, it will convey us across. Salvation is not dependent on actions. Many people of actions will be kept behind. Many others who had no actions – in fact, whom you considered to be flagrant sinners – will be victorious by virtue of their īmān and love.

These are points related to Dīn and the Sharīʿat as explained by the 'ulamā'. This is why we are relating them to you and trying to explain them to you. Perhaps a certain servant of Allāh *taʿālā* will understand these points.

Listen, brothers! I am not saying anything from my side. I am relating to you the statement of the author of *Fath al-Bārī*. He is saying the love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory, so you will have to acquire it. If you see that you have it in you, well and good. If not, you will have to acquire it from the true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look! I found a quotation regarding which neither you nor I can say anything. I am saying this to you because if I said anything from my side, you people would object and say: "We never heard such a thing before this." Now that I quoted the statement of the author of *Fath al-Bārī*, you cannot say anything against him. He is saying that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. He explains it and says: That amount of love is compulsory which prompts a person to carry

out Allāh's orders, abstain from His prohibitions and be pleased with His decree (taqdīr). Any person who is caught up in disobedience either by committing an unlawful act or leaving out an obligatory act, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. He gave preference to the desires of his self over the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*.

A definition of rational love

Before defining love, the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* quotes a statement of Qāḍī Bayḍāwī *raḥimahullāh*.

> Love in this context refers to rational love. This means that the thing which a sound intellect is inclined towards must be chosen even if it is against the desire of the self. Like a sick person who is naturally averse to taking a medicine and does not want to take it, but he rationally becomes inclined towards it and takes it. In the same way, man will have to ponder over the fact that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is ordering us to do certain things and abstain from certain things which are for the wellbeing of our worldly life and for success in the Hereafter. At the same time, his intellect inclines in that direction. Man will therefore do it in emulation of the order of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He will do this by subjugating his desire to that order. He will experience a rational joy in doing it. Rational joy means that a

person's mind is fully aware of the advantage and good of a certain thing.[1]

This is a very delicate issue. I saw a man in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan who enjoyed major spiritual conditions. He used to engage in a lot of dhikr and people thought that he was a great man of spiritual ecstasy. When I went back to Thānah Bhawan after some time, the people there asked me if I heard about him. He changed completely [in the opposite direction] to the extent of discarding his topī and his Islamic attire. We learn from this that we should not pay too much of attention to spiritual ecstasy, trance, etc. The fundamental thing is that of a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. This is known as love. There is much confusion about it. Nonetheless, the 'ulamā' have made major a contribution by directing us in the direction of love. They say that Allāh's love and acquiring that love is compulsory on every Muslim so that, through it, a person can carry out the orders of the Sharīʿat and abstain from its prohibitions. After all, the Sharīʿat is the fundamental; if it is not understood, it will result in defects in our Dīn. Normally there is a type of intoxication in love, but there is no intoxication in the explanation of the 'ulamā' – it is filled with awareness and perception. All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and genuine Auliyā' were people who possessed awareness, perception and presence of mind.

It is the duty of the 'ulamā' to teach the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. If they do not do it, ignorance will pervade. There was a saint who forgetfully entered the masjid with his left foot. He fell down unconscious immediately. He tried to find the reason in himself for

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[1] *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 1 p. 46.

forgetting. He concluded that it was probably some sin which distanced him from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look at the level of following the Sunnat of that saint. He misplaced just one foot, and he fell down unconscious. These are etiquette in Allāh's court which we learnt from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He taught us external etiquette and internal etiquette. It is necessary for us to practise on both. A person cannot be accepted in Allāh's court without this. It is easier to observe the external etiquette, while the internal etiquette are very difficult. They can be practised only through Allāh's inspiration.

I am astonished at you people that when you see a person who is very particular about carrying out Allāh's orders and abstaining from His prohibitions, you do not consider him to be a saint although sainthood refers to love for Allāh *taʿālā* and affinity with Him. Love and affinity are internal matters, while carrying out Allāh's orders are signs of that love and affinity. When love for Allāh *taʿālā* becomes embedded in the heart, a person is able to do things which others cannot. There was a saint who was so weak that he could not get up to go and perform salāh. People had to give him support so that he could get up. However, once he commenced his salāh, he would perform a most beautiful salāh. The moment he made salām to complete his salāh, he would summon a few people to hold him or else he would fall. What was that thing which enabled him to stand before Allāh *taʿālā* and made it easy for him to be obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*? It was really love for Allāh *taʿālā* by virtue of which Allāh *taʿālā* conferred this special favour to him. A poet says:

> Although I am gone very old and weak, I become young the moment I see your face.

Proof of Allāh's friendship

The teachings of a saint are normally proof of his friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*. It is through his teachings that people learn the Sharīʿat and recognize Allāh *taʿālā*. Since it is through love that Dīn and the Sharīʿat become easy, it is the duty of the ʿulamā' to create that love in the people. There has to be personalities for this purpose everywhere, or else misguidance and deviation will proliferate. You now see people searching for a pious servant of Allāh *taʿālā*. The reason is that no one is devoid of Allāh's quest. When a person has a genuine quest, he will certainly find a pious servant of Allāh *taʿālā* through whose prayers and attention he follows the straight path. Once he gets onto the straight path, he starts realizing his past evils. He expresses remorse over that condition and progresses in this way.

Idol-worship was most common among the Arabs. They had idols in their homes and idols which they used to carry with them on journeys. On one occasion, a Sahābī who was sitting in an assembly of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "O Rasūlullāh! Idols benefited me." Everyone was aghast when they heard this. The Sahābī then explained his statement by saying: "I was on a journey in pre-Islamic times. I had carried an idol with me which was made of barley-paste. At one point of the journey I felt extremely hungry and could find nothing to eat, so I ate that idol and satiated my hunger with it. This is the benefit I got from an idol." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* smiled and laughed.

Look! There was a time when a thing was part and parcel of their religion and creed, but once they

received guidance, that same thing appeared to them as an object of play and foolishness.

Now listen to another incident:

I had a friend in Deoband who was a very pious man. He was affiliated to one shaykh. People used to address my friend as Sufījī. All the students held him in high regard and they used to run errands for him. He used to cut pieces of paper into the shape of coins, give them to poor students, and tell them to use them in the shops. Those pieces of paper used to turn into real coins. But he never used them for himself. One day he said to me: "Your shaykh combines the internal and external." In other words, he has a genuine internal bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and externally too he follows the Sunnat. "Therefore take me to Hadrat so that I could pledge bayʿat to him." I agreed. Subsequently, Hadrat happened to go to Muzaffar Nagar, so I took this Sufījī with me and we went to Muzaffar Nagar. I presented him to Hadrat and informed him of his intention to pledge bayʿat to him. Hadrat looked at him from head to toe and accepted his bayʿat. Hadrat must have gauged that he is a worthy person. Khwājah Sāhib [one of Hadrat khulafā'] said: "Hadrat, you don't normally accept a person's bayʿat in your first meeting with him!?" Hadrat replied: "Everyone does not have to be treated the same."

I related this incident to show you that when a person's affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* is correct and His love penetrates his heart, then it is as if the line becomes straight. Subsequently, the heart does not like anything which is against the Sharīʿat and against the Sunnat.

Look at the high level which that Sufi Sāhib enjoyed! If Allāh's guidance was not with him, he could have

used that power of his [of causing paper money to turn into real coins] as a means to acquire wealth and authority. However, because his bond with Allāh *taʿālā* was correct and he had a strong affiliation with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he was searching for a shaykh who follows the Sunnat. After affiliating himself with Hadrat, he gave up turning paper money into real coins. He used to say: "Hadrat Maulānā does not consider it permissible so I will most certainly abstain from doing it." What an excellent example of following one's shaykh. The same Sufījī said to me: "I shook hands with Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. I don't know what he did to me that I remained sitting here in the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* from zuhr time until ʿasr time."

The Sufījī had so much of love for following the Sunnat that he left his previous shaykh because he found the latter lacking in following the Sunnat. Thus we see that it is those personalities who combined the internal and external who were able to achieve much more. The worst of atheists and deviates went to them, made blasphemous statements in their presence, but those personalities treated them with their Allāh-bestowed insight in a manner which caused them to change for the better.

Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz and Nasīm Shāh

The following incident about Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* is recorded.

A person by the name of Nasīm Shāh was affiliated to the Imām Shāhī pseudo-Sufi lineage [this was a deviated Sufi sect]. He travelled to Delhi on one occasion and went to meet Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Bearing in mind that many people used to revert to him, he developed a superiority attitude.

He showed no regard whatsoever to Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. Instead, he just walked in freely, greeted him according to his colloquial way of greeting, and said: "Shāh Sāḥib! For how much longer are you going to remain in the shackles of the Sharīʿat? Get out of that prison and leave the Sharīʿat."

Ḥadrat Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* responded with absolute decorum: "Come in Shāh Sāḥib! Come and have a seat." He seated him near him and spoke to him at length about normal day to day issues. In the midst of the conversation, Ḥadrat Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* asked him a few questions:

Shāh Sāḥib: Miyā Sāḥib! Have you studied the Qur'ān?

Nasīm Khān: Yes.

Shāh Sāḥib: Did you study Persian?

Nasīm Khān: Yes.

Shāh Sāḥib: Did you study any Arabic?

Nasīm Khān: Yes, I studied *Mīr Quṭbī*.

Shāh Sāḥib: Did you learn horse riding?

Nasīm Khān: Yes.

Shāh Sāḥib: Did you learn any of the martial arts?

Nasīm Khān: Yes. I learnt dagger-fighting, stick-fighting, archery, etc.

Shāh Sāḥib: What was your occupation in the beginning?

Nasīm Khān: I was an officer in the army.

Shāh Sāḥib: How long did it take you to study the Qur'ān? How long did it take you to study Persian?

How long did it take you to study Arabic? How long did it take you to study the martial arts? For how long did you work as an officer?

Nasīm Sāḥib replied to all these questions and Ḥaḍrat Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* got him to affirm all his answers. Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* then challenged him by saying:

O you poor fellow! Sit up and listen carefully. You remained in the womb of your mother for nine months and you could not come out of it by your own choice. Then you were in the prison of your mother's lap which you could not leave out of your own choice. You were then restricted to having to hold her hand. Then you were in the prison of being carried on her shoulders. For a certain period of time you were confined to learning the Qur'ān. During that period, your teacher must have slapped you and caned you, but you could not come out of that prison. Then you were confined to learning Persian for a certain period of time, and then Arabic. You spent a certain number of days in the prison of dagger-fighting, stick-fighting, horse-riding, and archery. Then you were in the prison of the British for some time [when you were employed as an officer in their army]. At present you are in the prison of having to shave off your eyebrows. How, then, can you claim to be a free man? In short, there is no one in this world who is not restricted to something or someone or the other. We are restricted by the Sharīʿat. However, you must remember that your prison is like raw silver. If you were to ask for its price, it will first be heated. Without it, no one will buy it from you. On the other hand, our "prison" [the Sharīʿat] is like a coin which has been minted in the royal mint. We can sell it or exchange it wherever we like.

The poor fellow was extremely embarrassed. He got up and left. From this one incident we can gauge with what sharp-wittedness Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* preserved Dīn in those days.

The seniors of Dīn contributed immensely in the field of reformation and rectification. Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is the brother of Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Both of them were Auliyā'. On one occasion a person said to a raʾīs[1] that if any Sayyid[2] goes to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib, he accords him respect even if he belongs to the Shīʿah sect. The raʾīs was a Shīʿah and decided to go and test Hadrat Shāh Sāhib. When he approached Hadrat Shāh Sāhib, the latter stood up out of respect for him. The raʾīs said: "Hadrat, I am a Shīʿah, how come you stood up out of respect for me!?" Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* replied: "If a calligrapher makes a mistake while writing the Qur'ān, we will still show respect to that Qur'ān because it is the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*." The raʾīs was overjoyed by the treatment and by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib's reply, and began distributing free sweetmeats in Delhi (he was overjoyed because as per Hadrat Shāh Sāhib's treatment of him, it was learnt that he was really a Sayyid).

There is a similar incident with regard to the same Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He used to sit in his exterior lounge which faced the street. Anyone who passed by – whether Sunnī or Shīʿah – used to offer salām to him. Hadrat Shāh

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[1] A leader, wealthy person, man of authority in the community.

[2] A descendent of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Sāhib used to reply to the salām of a Sunnī with his right hand, and to the salām of a Shīʿah with his left hand. He was never found wrong in his assumption even though many of those who greeted him were not known to him. He used to see with the light of Allāh *taʿālā*. People like this effect a lot of reformation and rectification. Nowadays the hearts are devoid of these things. The light of the heart has been replaced by the light of electricity. This is why religious and creedal benefit have disappeared.

The self-obliteration of a saint

A person said to a saint: "I want to get my daughter married. I request you to write a letter of intercession to such and such wealthy person to help me." The saint wrote the letter. The man went to the wealthy person, presented the letter to him and he read it. The wealthy person had some bad thoughts about the saint, so he replied angrily: "Go and give this letter to him and tell him to place it in his backside." The man was quite embarrassed at being the cause for such verbal abuses to be hurled against the saint. When he returned, he remained silent in the presence of the saint. The saint asked: "Brother, what happened with regard to your request?" The man maintained his silence. The saint repeated the question: "Tell me what happened?" He replied: "Hadrat, let the matter pass. It is not worth speaking about." The saint persisted. The man had no alternative but to relate what transpired and what the wealthy man said. The saint said: "Go back to him and tell him that if this action of mine [of placing the letter in my backside] can enable any Muslim's need to be fulfilled, then I am prepared to do even that."

The man went back and informed the wealthy person. The latter got up immediately, dragged himself to the

saint's place and begged for his pardon. He added: "Hadrat, pardon me, I did not know you. Here, take the key to my safe-box and give him whatever amount he wants."

What caused the wealthy man to change so quickly? The fact of the matter is that noble character can make a very strong impact. This is why the man was so impressed by the saint.

The juridical acumen of Hadrat Thānwī

I related the explanation of a ruling given by Hadrat *rahimahullāh* to a person. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say that if anyone sends food as a gift to you, you must empty it into your own utensil and it eat from there. However, *fīrnī*[1] is excluded from this ruling because it is made and solidified in a bowl. If you transfer it into another utensil, it gets upset [it does not remain set]. This is why the jurists say that it is permissible to eat it directly from the utensil which was sent by the one who sent it as a gift. This rule does not apply to other foods. When I related this ruling to the man, he was overjoyed.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was an eminent jurist. Juridical rulings were always present in his mind but he insisted on referring to himself as a student. He was a distinguished spiritual master but he concealed himself behind the veil of knowledge. He used to quote this couplet quite often:

> If a friend fulfils some of the rights of love,
> it will be his kindness. Apart from this, a
> poor lover gets happy with even a little
> attention.

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[1] A sweet dessert which has to set in a bowl.

I am relating some incidents of the pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā* to show you how they developed a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and how they obliterated themselves. They were always focused on the Hereafter and thought about death.

Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *rahimahullāh* was in Lucknow so I went to meet him. He was about to leave for his office so he asked me to join him. I accompanied him to his office. He kept himself occupied in his work and sat there. I noticed him repeating the following couplet:

> How can the inevitable ever be deferred?
> The life that is withheld will also have to depart.

When someone heard this couplet, he said: "You don't ever forget Allāh." Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* did not say anything.

He has another couplet:

> Where will you ever place flowers over my grave when you will not even be able to throw soil over it!?

I quoted this couplet in one of my lectures. A police officer who was present jumped up when he heard it and was most affected by it.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away on a sea journey and was handed over to the ocean. When people thought about how often he used to quote the above couplet, they said that he received divine inspiration that he is going to die at sea. (compiler)

Hadrat Muftī Nizām ad-Dīn Sāhib, the muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, said that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

rahimahullāh used to quote the following couplet quite often:

> We are disgraced when we die. We should rather drown in the sea so that neither would our body be carried nor would we have a grave.

This couplet shows the selflessness and self-obliteration of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This was certainly not only his spiritual condition but his spiritual rank. (compiler)

The integrity of a leprous woman

A woman who suffered from leprosy in the time of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* began performing tawāf of the Kaʿbah. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said to her: "O servant-maid of Allāh. Do not cause offence to people." The woman left. When Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* passed away, some people went to her and said: "The person who stopped you from tawāf is no longer around, so you can go and perform tawāf." She replied: "He was not such a man that he must be obeyed while he is alive and disobeyed when he dies. It contradicts confidence in and love for a person."

A sign of acceptance of dhikr

A man was engaged in dhikr. Shaytān came to him one day and tried to lead him astray. He said: "You are shooting arrows in the dark." The man too thought to himself that when he is not getting anything in return – no salām, no messages, etc. – then what is the use of this dhikr?

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* related this incident in his *Mathnawī*.

The man was, nonetheless, sincere and devoted, so Allāh *taʿālā* could not tolerate that he be led astray. Allāh *taʿālā* sent an angel with this message: "You are wrong to think that We do not send salām or any message to you. Rather, your saying "Allāh, Allāh" is in fact Our reply. As for the pain and pining which has developed in your heart, that is really Our messenger."

What this means is that when you say "Allāh" once, and are then able to say it again, it is actually Our salām and greeting to you. If the "Allāh" which you said the first time was not accepted, you would not have got the inspiration to say it a second time. Since you were able to say it a second time, it is because We have turned Our attention towards you.

The man realized his mistake and repented.

There was a saint who, no matter where he passed by, the young boys of that area would throw stones at him. He would say: "O boys! Don't use so large stones because my body gets soiled with blood and I have to perform salāh in the same clothes. If you really want to pelt me, then pelt pebbles at me."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how affectionate and selfless these people were! It was this impeccable character of theirs which used to have an effect on others. It was a practical teaching and propagation of sound character. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

I have been talking to you about love for several days. I would like to explain it further today. Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says in *Qasd as-Sabīl* that the reality of sulūk - which is commonly known as tasawwuf [Sufism] - is to develop the internal and external selves. The external self with obligatory bodily actions (e.g. salāh, fasting, zakāh, hajj, recitation of the Qur'ān, dhikr, etc.) and the internal self with true beliefs (īmān and Allāh consciousness) and internal characteristics such as sincerity, gratefulness, patience, abstinence, humility, etc. This is one level.

The next level involves having the first level and accompanying it with external non-obligatory acts of obedience and continuous internal dhikr. The acquisition of the first level is fard-e-ʿayn - compulsory on every Muslim. This is known as the Sharīʿat which comprises the internal and external. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَذَرُوْا ظَاهِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ

Give up external and internal sins.

Perfection in Sufism and the Tarīqat means that a person must go one step further by acquiring the next level. It entails leaving aside non-obligatory acts of obedience and occupying the internal self with continuous dhikr. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

Much further on in the book, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* says:

There are two points which are indications that internal affinity has been acquired. (1) One is that the person has such a high level of dhikr and such a powerful memory that at no time does he experience negligence and forgetfulness, and he does not have to make too much of effort in this regard. (2) The other is obedience to the truth. In other words, when it comes to the injunctions of the Sharīʿat – in worship, character, words and speech – he has such an intense desire to carry them out and such a hatred for the prohibitions of the Sharīʿat as he has for natural likes and dislikes. Together with this, greed for this world must leave his heart.

The person must become:

كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ

His character was the Qur'ān.

It should be borne in mind that temporary laziness or whisperings which are not acted upon do not negate this liking and aversion.

The above-mentioned level of remembrance and obedience – which is a sign of spiritual affinity – when acquired entails love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* writes:

محبة الله على قسمين، فرض وندب، فالفرض المحبة التي تبعث على امتثال أوامره والانتهاء عن معاصيه، والرضاء بما يقدره.

Love for Allāh taʿālā is of two types: compulsory and desirable. Compulsory love must prompt a person

towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from His disobedience and being pleased with His decree.

Just as the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* said that love is of two types, Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* says that one level of Sufism is farḍ-e-ʿayn on every Muslim. It involves carrying out the obligatory actions of the Sharīʿat with the body parts, and embellishing the internal self with correct beliefs and good characteristics.

From the statement of the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* we learn that love is compulsory because it becomes the catalyst for carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions. In the same way, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* is saying that there are two signs of spiritual affinity. One is that the person develops a desire to obey the truth. In other words, he wants to follow the injunctions of the Sharīʿat whether it be in acts of worship, interactions with people, character and mannerisms, words and actions; and he develops an aversion towards prohibitions. When a person's worship, dealings, character, etc. will be in order, it will be proof that he has acquired spiritual affinity. We learn from this that what the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* referred to as love, Ḥaḍrat Thānwī refers to it as spiritual affinity. In fact, he also refers to it as love. He says: "The above-mentioned level of remembrance and obedience – which is a sign of spiritual affinity – when acquired entails love for Allāh *taʿālā*."

Love and spiritual affinity are one and the same. Through them obedience is realized, and a person is totally obedient on account of them [love and spiritual affinity].

Now let me explain this. Listen attentively. Whether you call it spiritual affinity or the ability to remember,

both are same but expressed differently. They refer to the same condition which is found in a person's heart, and they influence all matters. This is the very same thing which is acquired from serving the saints. It is obtained from the company of the people of spiritual affinity and spiritual love. If you want to become a man of spiritual affinity by studying a book, then I will say that it is most difficult.

A person asked me to suggest a book on good character. I said to him: "There are books on this subject, but let me tell you just one thing, listen to it – do not backbite. If you practise on this, Allāh *taʿālā* will open other things to you."

ʿAllāmah Bayḍāwī *raḥimahullāh* writes:

مَنْ عَمِلَ بِمَا عَلِمَ عَلَّمَهُ اللهُ عِلْمَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

When a person practises on the knowledge which he has, Allāh taʿālā teaches him what he does not know.

Ḥaḍrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say: When it comes to other fields, one has to have knowledge first and then practise on it. But in the Ṭarīqat, action comes first and knowledge thereafter.

Ḥaḍrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say a most beautiful thing in this regard: "The books on taṣawwuf are for the shaykh; not for the murīd. Just as the books on medicine are for the doctor and not the patient." Ḥaḍrat used to say this quite often. The ʿulamā' who were present used to listen to it and shake their heads happily.

Now that I mentioned the shaking of heads, I recall an incident. A youngster came to Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh*. When Ḥaḍrat asked him something, he did not reply verbally; he merely shook his head. Ḥaḍrat

raḥimahullāh said: "You were able to shake such a big head but you could not move your tongue!?" Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* then explained this point himself. He said: The reason why it is easier to shake the head is that the head is un-compounded. On the other hand, the tongue is compounded[1] thing in the sense that you will have to think of words and then construct a sentence. An un-compounded thing is easier than something which is compounded." When the 'ulamā' used to hear these academic discussions of Ḥaḍrat, they used to express their admiration and say that Ḥaḍrat explained philosophy.

I was saying to you that the point which was made by the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* was also made by Ḥaḍrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. Just as love prompts a person to carry out orders, the power of his memory enables him to remember all those things. You may say to me that you never heard that love is compulsory. I say to you that when do you ever hear anything? And if the truth be told, every Maulānā too does not know these things. How will the laity know them?

Now listen further:

In his *al-Qaul al-Jamīl*, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* notes certain prerequisites for the mashā'ikh. One of the prerequisites are:

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[1] The words compounded (*murakkab*) and un-compounded (*basīṭ*) are philosophical terms.

الشرط الثالث أن يكون زاهدا في الدنيا راغبا في الآخرة، مواظبا على الطاعات المؤكدة والأذكار المأثورة المذكورة في صحاح الأحاديث، مواظبا على تعلق القلب بالله سبحانه، وكان له ملكة راسخة.

The third condition is that he must disregard this world and be desirous of the Hereafter. He must be particular about fulfilling the emphasised acts of obedience, and the different forms of dhikr as related in the authentic Aḥādīth. He must maintain a strong bond with Allāh ta'ālā with his heart, and a deeply embedded ability to remember.[1]

Look! Ḥadrat Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* is saying that a shaykh to whom one is pledging bay'at must have a strong ability to remember because through it, it becomes easy to carry out orders and abstain from prohibitions. Another name for this is love and spiritual affinity, which you are probably getting restless about because you are thinking that this is the first time you heard such a thing. You may have not heard it, but I heard it from Ḥadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* and he heard it from Ḥadrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. Ḥadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* is saying that this spiritual affinity has been coming down continuously.

I established this point in my book *Nisbat-e-Ṣūfīyyah*. I said: Do you think that ṣalāh, fasting, etc. have been coming down from Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in a totally "dry" form? Do you think there is no freshness in them? That freshness is known as love and spiritual affinity. Those who fulfil orders and abstain from prohibitions experience this spiritual

[1] *Al-Qaul al-Jamīl*, p. 20.

affinity. It is through the same love that a person is pleased with divine decree. Because we have discarded it, spiritual affinity and love have become strangers to us. Previously people used to go to the Sufis to acquire this; even the ʿulamā' used to go to them. From this we learn that love is something which has to be acquired.

Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to explain to us that we should never be offended by Hadrat Thānwī's method of rectification. Instead, we must think that his love is establishing itself in our hearts. Obviously, if something establishes itself in the heart, it will cause some sort of pain. But this pain is a blessed pain because it eventually results in love being embedded in the heart.

I say that the same thing can be said about a Muslim who carries out the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. Many injunctions are difficult for him, but the reality is that this is not really a difficulty. Instead, he must think to himself and become happy over it that the love of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is becoming embedded in his heart. Based on this love, a believer develops love for the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*.

A Hadīth states that when Munkar and Nakīr come to a person in his grave and awaken him, he will feel as though it is the time of ʿasr, so he will say to them: "Let me perform my ʿasr salāh first, I will speak to you after that." They will say: "We considered you to be a pious person from before, and now we have seen it for ourselves."

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* mentioned [previously] the power of remembering. Let me say something in this regard. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِيْ

Establish salāh for My remembrance.

We learn from this that salāh is also a form of remembrance. When there is a defect in it, a man discards an obligatory act or commits a prohibited act. The ʿulamā' of the past used to acquire these qualities. But now the situation has changed. A Maulānā Sāhib came to me and we spoke about my book, *Nisbat-e-Sūfiyyah*. He said: "It is a most essential and beneficial topic." He then expressed his sadness by saying: "Nowadays the ʿulamā' have forgotten these things." To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to relate that there was an ʿālim in Bhopal who had been a student of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh*. He was seated one day when a fakir came by. The latter focussed his attention on the ʿālim in an attempt to impress him. The ʿālim also focussed his attention on the fakir, and the latter fell down immediately. The ʿālim then said: "If you need to ask for anything then ask. There is no need for you to resort to all these things [efforts to impress me with your spiritual powers]. You assume that we cannot do such things. This is not the case, we certainly can."

I say to you people, are you really paying any attention? You cannot achieve much by mere listening. You will have to pluck some courage and do something.

During the days for the freedom of India, a man in ʿAlī Garh thought to himself that Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* must be very worried by the opposition of people towards him, and his worry must have caused him to become thin and weak. He left ʿAlī

Garh and came to Thānah Bhawan solely to check if he was correct in his thinking. He observed Hadrat joking and speaking casually with people. He expressed his thoughts to Hadrat. Hadrat said: "Why should I be worried? There are two types of benefits; one worldly and the other for the Dīn. I am experiencing both. The Dīnī benefit is that people are backbiting me and speaking ill of me. Because of this, I will receive their good actions on the day of Resurrection. Just as I am eating here for free, I will enter Paradise for free. The worldly benefit is that my income has increased. Why, then, should I be worried, and why should I be concerned?"

During the same period, a man from Meerut quoted the following couplet to Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib:

> Although the entire world has become my enemy, what I really need to know is that my Beloved is not angry at me.

The man said: "This is the condition of Hadrat Maulānā." Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib quoted this couplet to Hadrat. Because it was in line with Hadrat's present condition, he was overcome by a type of ecstasy. I say, this is what you call spiritual affinity. The only concern of a man of spiritual affinity is that his Beloved must not be angry with him.

This Maulānā Irshād Ahmad Sāhib (from Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband who had a special bond with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*) is seated here. He says that when he is here and the words:

اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

Are said in the adhān, his heart experiences a unique feeling. I said: "From this we can gauge that you have love in your heart in the sense that when the name of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is mentioned, it creates some type of movement in your heart."

I came across this incident in a book: When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed away, Hadrat Bilāl *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* went to Syria. When he came to Madīnah after a long period of time, the people requested him to call out the adhān. When he came to the words:

اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

It made a deep impact on the people to the extent that women came out of their homes. Everyone felt as if Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had arrived.

Going back to our topic – remembrance, affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* and love are all the same. They are the signs and effects of internal spiritual affinity. You people perform salāh, keep fast etc. It cannot happen that you pay particular attention to these acts and your hearts remain devoid of Allāh's love. It is really love which is prompting you to do these actions. Look! You people come here, so how can it be said that you do not have love?! A person from Meerut came to me in Allāhābād. When he met me, he fell down and started to cry. I deduced from this that he has love for me. However, mere crying is not proof of love. There are many other effects of love. Just as your love for a person is proved in different ways, there are different effects of Allāh's love. The greatest effect is that a person carries out His orders, abstains from His prohibitions, and is pleased with divine decree. He carries out acts of obedience and abstains from sins.

A person related the following incident to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*: A police officer who was a very religious person was taking a prisoner to some place.

On the way the time of maghrib salāh arrived. He said to the prisoner: "You sit here while I perform my salāh." The moment he commenced his salāh, the prisoner escaped. The man did not become too concerned and continued with his salāh at ease. He then went to his senior officer and related what happened. There is most probably a rule that if a prisoner escapes while being under the care of a police officer, the latter will have to be imprisoned in the prisoner's place. The seniors at the police station had full faith in this police officer's piety, so they said to him that they will not record anything in their books for now. He must go and look for the prisoner.

When he was told this, he began performing salāh after thinking to himself, where am I going to search for him now? I will be wasting my time. I rather perform salāh in the meantime. At midnight someone knocked on the door. He asked: "Who is it?" A person replied: "It is me, your prisoner." He opened the door and asked the prisoner: "Tell me, why did you come back of your own accord?" The prisoner said: "Hadrat, if I did not come back to you I would not have been able to go anywhere, because whenever I turned in a direction which was away from you, I became blind. And when I turned in your direction, I was able to see. So I thought to myself, I rather come back to you. I will bear imprisonment for a few days. At least my eyesight will remain secure. If I escaped, then although I would have saved myself from punishment and imprisonment, I will be blind for the rest of my life. I felt I could bear imprisonment but not to remain blind. This is why I came back."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This was due to the blessing of salāh. If we perform our salāh properly, we too can

enjoy its blessings. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

I say, it was a karāmat (supernatural feat) of that police officer, the blessing of his obedience, the fruit of the spiritual affinity which he had with Allāh *taʿālā*, and a reward for the love which he had for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Just as we classify obedient people as lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*, we will examine the obedience of those who claim to love Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, if there is no obedience in their lives, we will say they are lying in their claims. In fact, if the absence of obedience is due to rejection, then let alone not being a lover, he will not even be a believer. He will be a kāfir. If he does not reject an act of obedience, but his not carrying it out is due to laziness, then he can be a lover but one whose love is defective. He is also a fāsiq (flagrant sinner) for the absence of obedience.

We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with perfect love coupled with perfect obedience. (compiler)

Love means that the heart must remain attached to Allāh *taʿālā*. The rights which a servant fulfils to Allāh *taʿālā* are corrected by virtue of love. It is through this love that a person becomes a man of true affiliation. Love constantly steers a person and informs him that he has done a certain act correctly or a certain act was not right. It is love which maintains a correct relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* through acts of worship. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ[1]

I created man and jinn solely for My worship.

In his tafsīr of the above verse, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* interprets لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ to mean لِيَعْرِفُوْنِ.

I created man and jinn so that they may recognize Me. In other words, it is through love that man recognizes his Creator and the rights which He has over him. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to love:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيْرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالُ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوْهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ

[1] Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 56.

إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِيْ سَبِيْلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا حَتّٰى يَأْتِيَ اللهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ط وَاللهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ.

Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your family, the wealth which you have acquired, the business whose closure you fear, and the homes which you love are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and fighting in His path, then wait till Allāh sends His command. Allāh does not guide the disobedient people.[1]

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say that in the above verse, Allāh *taʿālā* does not prohibit love for the persons and things mentioned, but prohibits having more love for them. In other words, it is forbidden to have love for them which surpasses love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is a most beautiful explanation which has made things very easy for us – that love in itself is not prohibited, but more love is prohibited. If there is more love for these things compared to the love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it will cause a difference in carrying out Allāh's orders. If love for these things do not prevent a person from carrying out Allāh's orders, there will be no harm in loving them. Anyway, if a person acquires love for Allāh *taʿālā*, he will not consider anything equal to Him.

Take the following example of carrying out Allāh's orders: A person was hosting a function at his place. It was his responsibility to provide the various ingredients to the cook. He was passing the ingredient

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 24.

to him. He raised the beam of the scale to weigh the ghee when he heard the adhān. He placed the scale one side and said: "I will weigh it after salāh." People said to him: "You already have the beam in your hand, at least weigh that much." He replied: "No, I will do it after the salāh."

Look! His friends and relatives were present for that function, the food and drink were also there, but the bond which he had with Allāh *taʿālā* was given first preference. This is the spirit of Dīn.

Love for Allāh *taʿālā* is explained by the Sufis and by the 'ulamā' as well, but the latter are more guarded in their explanation. Listen to what Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* has to say about a genuine seeker of the truth. He writes in his famous work, *Qasd as-Sabīl*:

> Together with repentance, a person must make a firm resolution that no matter how disgruntled his carnal self becomes, no matter how much harm his wealth and life have suffer, how much worldly advantages he misses, and how much people chastise him – he will bear everything in obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and will never disobey them. If a person cannot resolve to do this much, he is not a seeker of the truth because a true seeker is as described by a poet:
>
> O heart! It is better for you to drink the wine of love and become intoxicated. And without having wealth and treasures, you become as wealthy as Qārūn. Listen! The greatest prerequisite for placing your foot on the path to the Beloved – a path which

> is fraught with major dangers and obstacles – is that you become a madman (i.e. a genuine lover).[1]

I say, as long as the carnal self is not subdued, dangers will continue coming. Once loves enters, everything else will come to an end.

Love for Allāh is compulsory

This proves that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory, and that carrying out His orders and abstaining from His prohibitions are essential. Thus, whenever a person commits a sin, it will be because of a defect in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

A couplet which was loved by Hadrat Thānwī

The following couplet of Khwājah Majdhūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was most loved by Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat used to say: "If I had 100 000 rupees, I would have bought this couplet from Khwājah Sāhib."

> Every desire has departed from my heart.
> Now You enter my heart because I have achieved solitude.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* loved this couplet because it expressed the condition of his heart.

I was going to Pānīpat on one occasion when I met an old man. He said: "I attended his lectures. He stops us from samāʿ (a special type of Sufi music) while he himself has a drum and fiddle." The man said this out of love and not by way of an objection. What he meant

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[1] *Qasd as-Sabīl*.

was that Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was a man of spiritual ecstasy. When he quotes poetry in his lectures, the poems enchant us just as people are enchanted by the playing of musical instruments.

Qutb ʿAlī Shāh was a dervish who was spiritually affiliated with Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and a friend of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*. He used to go to Gangoh for the ʿurs. As was his norm, he went for the ʿurs on one occasion and went to meet Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. When he returned, he said to Maulānā Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*: "I went to Gangoh and I met your pīr bhāi.[1] He is an embodiment of light and effulgence." Maulānā Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* said: "Brother, you are right. It is the light of following the Sunnat."

The importance of following the Sunnat

I am presenting the Sunnat to you – not of my father's and grandfather's but of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I am relating to you the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If his Sunnat is not adopted, misguidance will spread and Dīn and non-Dīn will not be differentiated. After all, it is the Sunnat which differentiates between these two. When the Sunnat departs, the distinguisher will be removed. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* I am now observing a general interest for Dīn in the people. I am hopeful of Allāh's grace to be included in this enthusiasm.

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[1] When two or more people are khulafā' of the same shaykh they are known as pīr bhāi/s.

It is difficult to turn heedless people to heedful ones

When I described the condition of the Muslims to certain seniors, they said that the masses have certainly shown an interest but there is a dearth of workers. The reason for this shortage is that the work itself is difficult. The 'ulamā' who are teaching in the madāris are undoubtedly fulfilling a very difficult responsibility. However, it is not any less difficult to turn heedless people to heedful ones, and to turn their focus towards Allāh *taʿālā*. It is a most difficult task. Worship in times of tribulation is most lofty.

وَعِبَادَةُ الْهَرَجِ كَهِجْرَةٍ إِلَيَّ

The reward for worship in times of tribulation is similar to emigrating to Madīnah.

I have seen nothing but benefit in speaking about the Qur'ān and Hadīth. I have never seen any harm in presenting the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Nonetheless, this work is not one of hastiness. A person may be residing in one part of a city. He commences the work and it gradually spreads to the rest of the city and has an effect on the people. All we have to do is initiate the work and present an example. When an example is presented, the work becomes easy. People are able to emulate when an example is presented to them. The work is becoming difficult in the absence of an example.

A youngster was travelling by train and he continued performing salāh whenever it was the time of salāh. A man said to him: "I have been watching you for some time. You are still a young man and you are already so particular about salāh and other acts of obedience. What is the reason?" The youngster did not reply but

when the man persisted, he said: "I go frequently to such and such shaykh. This is its effect."

I say to you people, don't worry about drawing large numbers of people because that is of no importance in Allāh's sight. Start with yourself and Allāh *taʿālā* will provide you with helpers and supporters. This has been the norm with the Ahlullāh. I heard Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* saying that there was a saint who always performed his salāh with congregation. He happened to be on a journey and he was all alone. When the time of salāh arrived, he expressed his sorrow thus: "O Allāh! I am going to be deprived from performing salāh with congregation today." Just then an ox-cart driver came to him and said: "Make me a Muslim." He made him embrace Islam and the two performed salāh with congregation.

Note: Look at the pain with which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is directing the attention of the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh towards rectification of the ummat. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him, and may He create within us the concern for our rectification and the rectification of the ummat. Āmīn. (compiler)

There was a Khān Sāhib to whom Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to be very considerate. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say: "This Khān Sāhib accepted me at a time when there was no one else."

The same Khān Sāhib used to present many gifts to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would say to him: "Khān Sāhib! Enough now, this is too much." The Khān Sāhib would clasp his hands, stand up and say: "Hadrat, I remember my early days when I used to wander about in the marketplaces. Allāh *taʿālā* enabled me to progress through the blessings of your duʿā's. So all this really belongs to you." (This is a sign of sincerity and love).

There was another Khān Sāḥib who was very close to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Qāsim Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā had a lot of time for him. Some people must have found it objectionable and must have thought to themselves, how does Ḥaḍrat Maulānā allow a person who does not comply with the Sharīʿat to be so close to him? But Ḥaḍrat was focussed on the man's heart and he knew that he is having an effect on him. He was waiting for the right moment. One when Ḥaḍrat was making preparations for jumuʿah, he held his hand and said: "O Khān Sāḥib! We are very good friends. It doesn't seem appropriate that my appearance and your appearance be different. I will therefore remove my beard, and you must give me a set of your clothes which I will wear. We will then go together to perform ṣalāh." Khān Sāḥib said: "Ḥaḍrat! What are you saying!? How can I allow you to wear my clothes!? Here, I am not going to shave my beard from today, and you must give me a set of your clothes. I will wear them and we will go together for ṣalāh." The Khān Sāḥib was rectified from that day. The people realized that Ḥaḍrat had been working on him from the inside from a long time but did not say anything to him because he was waiting for the right moment.

I say, can a person ever be destroyed if he holds on to the hands of the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*? They will also hold our hands on the day of Resurrection. The Auliyā' – the righteous believers – will intercede. The Sufis contributed immensely. No sooner they saw weakness in Dīn in any part of the world, they went to that place.

Ḥaḍrat Zakarīyyā Multānī *raḥimahullāh* came here from Baghdad after receiving an indication from the unseen from Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. When he came to Multān and settled down there, the

mashā'ikh of the city got together and sent him a cup which was filled to the brim with milk. Hadrat placed a flower on the top of the milk and sent the same cup back with the attendant who brought it. Those who were present were astonished and did not understand what was happening. Why did he return the gift? And that too by placing a flower on it!? Someone took the courage and asked him: "Hadrat, what is the meaning of all this? We do not understand." He said: "The mashā'ikh sent me a message that just as this cup is filled with milk [and there is no place for more], this land is filled with mashā'ikh. There is no place here for me, I should therefore go back [to Baghdad]. I replied by saying that there is certainly no place for more milk or water in this cup, but there is a place for a flower to be placed on it. I demonstrated this to them by placing a flower, and indirectly informed them that I will live like a flower among them – i.e. they will experience no harm or loss because of me."

The mashā'ikh were most happy with this subtle reply. They acknowledged Hadrat's knowledge and virtue, and developed confidence in him. Allāh *taʿālā* then enabled him to be of immense benefit to this country.

There are many incidents of this nature about the mashā'ikh. There is a need to continue relating such incidents and listening to them. Inshā Allāh, the ummat will benefit.

Love for Allāh *taʿālā* is of two types: compulsory and desirable.

Shaykh Ibn Hajar ʿAsqalānī *raḥimahullāh* – the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* – says that compulsory love is the one which prompts a person to carry out Allāh's orders, abstain from His prohibitions, and be pleased with divine decree. We learn from this that if a person does all these things then the element of love is certainly found in him because in their absence, it is not possible for a person to carry out orders and abstain from prohibitions. The author adopted a most easy definition which can be understood by all. If a person is seen to be pleased with divine decree, is abstaining from disobediences and carrying out orders; it will be concluded that he has love for Allāh *taʿālā* within him. It is impossible for him to do all this without love.

You probably did not hear before this that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. You love your children, you love your wife, you love your wealth, you may also be frequenting the mashā'ikh, but you have no concern about the fundamental (i.e. love for Allāh *taʿālā*). When people are cut off from the fundamental thing, they remain deprived even after frequenting the mashā'ikh. This is because they consider frequenting the mashā'ikh to be the fundamental, while the love of Allāh *taʿālā* which is compulsory, they have no knowledge of it nor do they want to learn anything about it. It would have been better for such people to remain at home. What was

the need for them to come here?

In my student days I observed that there were only a handful of students who really studied with understanding. The majority of them understood nothing, and the time which was for real work was whiled away heedlessly. In the same way, people remain heedless even after coming onto this path. In other words, they neither come with any quest nor does it seem that they have a concern to develop it. The rule is that a person without a quest remains deprived.

A person used to complain to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* about his deplorable condition by saying that he has no love within him. (This shows that the man was worried about this loss in him, this is why he mentioned it to his shaykh. Now the situation is such that people will remain with the mashā'ikh but they do not worry about their bad condition nor do they show any concern). The man also said: "Hadrat, when I think to myself that I have not acquired love for Allāh *taʿālā*, it has an effect on me and I think of the following description given by Allāh *taʿālā*:

نَارُ اللهِ الْمُوْقَدَةُ الَّتِيْ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْئِدَةِ

It is a fire kindled by Allāh. Which leaps over the hearts.[1]

Look at how the man expressed his quest and thirst to Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*, and said that he is lying in the fire of separation [from Allāh *taʿālā*], and is at a loss over the fact that his heart is devoid of Allāh's

[1] Sūrah al-Humazah, 104: 6-7.

love. He added: “When everyone falls asleep, I walk about with worry and concern.”

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* asked him: “How did you conclude that you have no love in you? Have you seen anyone acquiring love?” He replied: “Yes, I did have that love and I got it from you. But I lost it because of my evil actions.” The man added: “Love is an emotional thing; when it is in a person, he perceives it. It is like hunger and thirst.” When the man said that he did have love, he had acquired it from Hadrat, and lost it because of his evil actions; Hadrat *rahimahullāh* remained silent.

A genuine seeker experiences pain when he finds that he has no love; and this is how it ought to be. After all, the greatest divine gift in this world is the love for Allāh *taʿālā*. When He confers the slightest bit of it to a person, the man has triumphed. Now you people must not get alarmed, I am explaining this subject very carefully to you, even though it is a difficult subject. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* states in *Qasd as-Sabīl* that as long as such a person about whom we are discussing does not become firm and resolute, he must not occupy himself in teaching the internal and external aspects of the Tarīqat. Instead, he must remain anonymous and unknown.

I have been explaining this subject to you for several days now – that just as there are other compulsory actions, love for Allāh *taʿālā* is also compulsory. Speaking about Allāh *taʿālā* and reaching Allāh *taʿālā* is done by the Ahlullāh, and it is only they who can really speak about these things. If any other person wants to do this, he will not be able to do it. Even if he does it through the power of his knowledge, it will not have any effect. It is the Ahlullāh who know these

matters through which a quest is created and developed. If others try it, they will not succeed.

This is similar to a person who wants to teach in a madrasah. He will have to study, and study with understanding, he will have to develop the necessary capabilities within him; only then can he become a teacher. The same applies here. A person will have to develop the necessary capabilities to acquire the sciences of this place. The experts of the Ṯarīqat say that as long as a person does not acquire spiritual affinity, he must neither occupy himself in spiritual nor external teaching. In other words, he must not even deliver talks and lectures. This is because before he can even acquire spiritual affinity, he will be focusing on these things [talks, lectures, assemblies, etc.]. Once position, wealth, popularity, etc. become his objectives, the acquisition of Allāh's pleasure and rewards in the Hereafter will no longer be the goals.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* said in his *Mathnawī* that certain qualities and attributes are reserved for Allāh *taʿālā* alone while others are for the creation. However, love is that one quality which is found in both.

يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّوْنَهُ

Allāh loves them and they love Him.

The masses and laity are better than us. We study the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth but we still have not freed ourselves from the desires of our carnal selves. The fact of the matter is that every task is accomplished by a catalyst, and the catalyst here is love. When it is found, the Qur'ān will have an effect on him, the Ḥadīth will have an effect on him, and he will be able to free himself from the dictates of his carnal self. If

not, it will be very difficult for him. If these points are taught to Muslims, they will certainly learn them. Many people know that salāh and fasting are necessary actions. If we stress on them that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is also necessary, they will learn it and acquire it.

Heedlessness is the fundamental ailment

In order for Allāh's love to be realized, it is necessary that there be no heedlessness. Heedlessness is a major obstacle, in fact, the fundamental ailment. Heedlessness with regard to Allāh *taʿālā* is forbidden under every condition. Allāh *taʿālā* disapproves of it. He says:

اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ

The time of their reckoning has drawn near to the people, yet they are slinking away heedlessly.[1]

I believe that heedlessness has enveloped the people, and it is the Ahlullāh alone who can remove it. It has always been their programme and system to first remove heedlessness from the heart while they themselves keep away from the causes of heedlessness. This is why they intermingle and interact with worldly people only when necessary. There was a king who had a lot of faith and confidence in a certain saint. He said to him one day: "Hadrat, you must come to my fort occasionally and perform salāh there so that we will acquire some blessings." The saint became angry at this and said: "I have just salāh left and you want to buy that as well!? I will not perform salāh there."

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[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 1.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to speak a lot about love, abstaining from heedlessness and so on. These are things which we used to hear there, and that is why seekers used to go to him. Now it is not possible for every person to reach that level. Only the one who is chosen by Allāh *taʿālā* can acquire it. The one whom Allāh *taʿālā* chose for His love is His special friend.

Just as disobedience is forbidden, so is heedlessness. As for love – whose other name is spiritual affinity – its acquisition is compulsory. An indication of it is obedience. It is not possible for a person to have love and still be disobedient. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

رِجَالٌ ۙ لَّا تُلْهِيْهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ

Men whom neither trade nor sale can divert from the remembrance of Allāh.[1]

They are engaged in trade but they are still remembering Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what the Sufis refer to as solitude in public. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* related that a certain saint observed a man engaged in business amounting to 50-60 thousand rupees, while his heart was not unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā* for a single moment. Do you know what that is? When a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is created in the heart, it is not possible for trade, wife and children to cause him to become heedless.

A poet says:

> How can someone else enter my heart
> when my thoughts are focused on my
> Beloved all the time!?

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[1] Sūrah an-Nūr, 24: 37.

A sign of spiritual affiliation

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says that there are two signs of spiritual affiliation. One is remembrance and the other is obedience. This spiritual affiliation is also known as love. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* is trying to make us understand that we cannot move forward without love – whether it be worldly or Dīnī. It is through love alone that one will be able to train and rectify one's wife and children, and fulfil their rights. You can see the effects of the absence of love – no one bothers about anyone. Even children do not bother about their parents. There is constant arguing and bickering between husband and wife. In the same way, the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* can only be fulfilled through love. Without it, it is not possible to carry out His orders and to abstain from His prohibitions. The absence of love results in evil actions and disobediences.

I now conclude this topic of love with the following duʿā's of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ الْمَسَاكِيْنِ، وَاَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِيْ وَتَرْحَمَنِيْ، وَاِذَا اَرَدْتَّ بِقَوْمٍ فِتْنَةً فَتَوَفَّنِيْ غَيْرَ مَفْتُوْنٍ، وَّاَسْاَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُّحِبُّكَ، وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُّقَرِّبُ اِلٰى حُبِّكَ

O Allāh! I ask You the ability to do good deeds and to abandon evil deeds. [I ask You] love for the poor and that You forgive me and have mercy on me. If You decide to send a calamity to a people, cause me to die before I fall into that calamity. I ask You for Your love, the love of the person who loves You, and the love of a deed which would draw me closer to Your love.

THE QUR'ĀN WAS REVEALED FOR GUIDANCE

Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the Qur'ān for guidance and He sent Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. Allāh *taʿālā* left out nothing in His Book. He explained to us fully about His Being, His attributes and His actions. He also explained to us who we are, what we were created from, and what changes took place in us. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ق ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ط فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

We created man from the essence of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe enclosure. Then We made the drop of sperm into a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We made out of that piece of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with meat, then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* also explained in full the difference between guidance and misguidance. He left no room for confusion and doubts. He refers to the Qur'ān as:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 12-14.

A guidance for those who fear Allāh.

In another place He says:

وَكَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِيْنَ سَبِيْلُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ

In this way We expound the verses in detail so that the way of the sinners may be exposed.[1]

In short, the conditions of the obedient servants and the sinners are described in the Qur'ān so that the way of both may be made clear. In this way, the path of the obedient servants can be followed and the path of the disobedient ones discarded.

Since Allāh *taʿālā* has clearly explained both paths, there remains no need for any speech after the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*. However, when a nation is headed for misguidance, it discards the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* and of its Messenger, and chooses to follow the speech of people who are just like it. I am observing at present that people are not paying even one hundredth attention to the word of Allāh *taʿālā* when compared to the attention and interest which they are showing to the compositions of poets and the literati. They are prepared to furnish the writings of these people as proofs and evidences, but not the word of Allāh *taʿālā*.

I say, the person who has the slightest affinity with the Qur'ān and has some sort of intelligence will be able to conclude that poems are nothing in comparison to the Qur'ān. One of the objective of sending the Qur'ān was because of the passionate interest which Arabs had in poetry. They were experts in this field and they used to devote all their strength to it. They used to express their false imaginations

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 55.

and misguidance in poetry. They were proud about their eloquence to the extent that they referred to non-Arabs and ʿajam (a person who is dumb). The Qur'ān was revealed to shift their focus from poetry. Consequently, they turned their attention away from poetry within a short time and became enamoured by the Qur'ān. They spent their intellectual and mental capabilities in pondering and reflecting over the Qur'ān. Subsequently, their power of thinking, reflection, understanding and their intelligence progressed by leaps and bounds. This happened because the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* had full īmān in the Qur'ān and affirmed it totally. Allāh *taʿālā* encourages us to think and reflect over the Qur'ān, and reprimands us for not doing this. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُوْنَ الْقُرْآنَ اَمْ عَلٰى قُلُوْبٍ اَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not ponder over the Qur'ān, or are there locks on their hearts?[1]

اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

Surely in this are signs for a people who reflect.

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ط أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

Say: How can the blind and the seeing be equal? Do you not ponder?[2]

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[1] Sūrah Muhammad, 47: 24.

[2] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 50.

Contemplating on the Qur'ān

Just as the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* followed the injunctions of the Qur'ān with heart and soul, they pondered and reflected over it. Consequently, they enjoyed worldly and Dīnī success. What an unfortunate situation that Allāh *ta'ālā* is instructing us to ponder and contemplate over His speech but we are caught up with its words only. This marked the fall of our nation. The Qur'ān is the sole means and guarantor of guidance. When guidance is sought from others, we can never be guided. Instead, it will result in Allāh's severe displeasure.

No dhikr is superior to Allāh's speech

It is the duty of all the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh to guide the Muslim nation and rectify it through the Qur'ān and Sunnat. They must teach people the Qur'ān and created an affinity and interest for it in their hearts. If they do not do this, the nation will deviate from the path. It will then become very difficult to bring it back onto the path, as is experienced nowadays. We have to encourage the masses to read the Qur'ān. Our past scholars did a lot to encourage people to read the Qur'ān. Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* compiled the statements of Hadrat Khwājah Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar *rahimahullāh*. One of his statements are:

> No dhikr is superior to Allāh's speech. It ought to be recited, and the results which it brings are superior to all others acts of obedience.

Just look at this statement of Hadrat Khwājah Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar *rahimahullāh* as quoted by Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* then quoted it in one

of his writings. This shows that these seniors unanimously agree on this statement. The point I am making is that all the senior saints turned our focus on reading the Qur'ān. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* repeatedly speaks of fear and hope. Just by reading the verses of fear and hope without understanding those verses, a person develops fear and hope. Fear and hope are the most superior states of the heart. It is now the job of the 'ulamā' and it ought to be their job to encourage people towards the Qur'ān. They must present the Qur'ān and Sunnat to them because Muslims unanimously accept these two and believe in them. They cannot object to these two sources.

However, the Qur'ān and Sunnat have to be presented in the correct manner. The way of doing this is for the 'ulamā' to first develop an affinity and interest in the Qur'ān and Sunnat. Only then can they achieve anything. There is no dearth in the Qur'ān, but when do we ever turn our attention to it? The absence of this interest has resulted in our failure despite making so many efforts. There is a dire need for 'ulamā' to first follow the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and then direct the attention of others to them. As for following the desires of the carnal self – which is essentially a trait of the unbelievers – the 'ulamā' must first remove it from themselves and then make efforts to remove it from others. Allāh *taʿālā* disparages the quality of following desires as follows:

اَفَرَاَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ عَلٰى سَمْعِهٖ وَقَلْبِهٖ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰى بَصَرِهٖ غِشَاوَةً.

Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity. And Allāh, knowing him as such, led him astray and

set a seal upon his ears and his heart, and cast darkness over his eyes.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ

Who can be more astray than he who follows his desires without any guidance from Allāh?[2]

There are many verses of this type in the Qur'ān. They demonstrate the extreme reprehensibility of following the carnal self. Allāh *taʿālā* has full knowledge of the self and its desires and inclinations (after all, He created it). Therefore no speech can explain it better than Him. Even a hundred thousand poets cannot reach there. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* would often quote the following couplet in praise of the Qur'ān and the Sharīʿat:

> Whenever I look at anyone or anything from head to toe, my heart tugs at me and says that this is what you ought to look at [i.e. the Qur'ān and the Sharīʿat].

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful couplet! Hadrat fully understood the application of this couplet; there can be nothing better to apply it to. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand the Qur'ān. Āmīn. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 23.

[2] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 50.

THE QUR'ĀN IS THE GREATEST ADMONISHER

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

O people! An admonition has come to you from your Lord, and a cure for the disease that is in the hearts, and a guidance and a mercy for the Muslims.[1]

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* first read the above verse, then placed tafsīr *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* in front of him and commenced his talk. He said:

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* addresses mankind in general and says to them: O mankind! There has come to you a Book which is an admonishment from among the many admonishments of your Lord. This admonition is for your training and rectification – it has come as a rectifier to you. The Qur'ān is after all the greatest guide, mentor, reminder and admonisher. When Allāh *taʿālā* is Himself delivering a lecture, there can be no greater lecture than it. Look at the powerful themes which Allāh *taʿālā* combined in this one verse. And look at the attributes of the Qur'ān which it mentions – this Qur'ān is an admonisher and a cure for the ailments of the heart, it is a guide, and it is a conveyor to Allāh's close proximity.

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 57.

Look at the excellent manner in which the exegetes are explaining this verse. They certainly fathom the intent of Allāh *taʿālā*. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* (ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh*) says that the guidance mentioned in this verse means that there has come to you a Book from your Lord which combines these benefits. It fully explains evil and good actions, encourages you towards good actions and stops you from evil actions. It expounds true sciences, removes the ailments of doubts and misgivings, and corrects erroneous beliefs. It steers a person towards the path of truth and conviction, and guides him towards proofs and evidences from the universe and from within man himself. It is a source of mercy for the believers. Through it, they gain salvation from the darkness of unbelief and misguidance, and they move towards the light of īmān. Also because of it, they gain salvation from the different levels of Hell and reach the lofty ranks of Paradise.

To sum up, the Qur'ān is an admonisher because it contains themes of encouragement and warnings, and reprimands against sins. It is a cure because the ailments which people have in their chests – ailments like ignorance, doubts, polytheism, hypocrisy, etc. – are cured through it. It is a guide and mentor because it clearly expounded what is appropriate and what is not, what is permissible and what is not, what is ḥalāl and what is ḥarām. In this way, it made the path of truth absolutely clear. It is a conveyor to the level of proximity because salvation is obtained through it, and reaching Paradise is possible via it.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* then quotes the statements of some of the erudite scholars who say that this verse makes reference to the fact that there are several levels through which man can reach

perfect as regards his self. The one who holds on firmly to the Qur'ān reaches those levels. The first point in this regard is that the external self must be cultured by abstaining from inappropriate actions. The word *mauʿiẓah* (admonition) makes reference to this aspect because it contains a warning against sins. In other words, the Qur'ān contains statements which state what man should not be doing with his hands and legs, eyes and tongue, etc. A believer is fearful of doing them and casts them aside. This results in a culturing of his external self. This is also one level of piety or taqwā.

The second point is that the internal self is cultured and cleared from corrupt beliefs and wicked capabilities. Reference to this point is made in the words: "a cure for the disease that is in the hearts".

The third point is that the self is embellished with true beliefs and virtuous character. This cannot be acquired without guidance. The words "and a guidance" make reference to this.

The fourth is the manifestation of Allāh's mercy. This is mentioned in the words "and a mercy for the believers". This is specifically for those perfect selves who, after acquiring internal and external perfection, are ready and prepared for it. In short, the Qur'ān encompasses all the levels of perfection for the human self.

Imām Rāzī *raḥimahullāh* says that the word *mauʿiẓah* makes reference to the purification of the inappropriate external actions of people and conveying them to purification. This is known as the Sharīʿat because it explains what is appropriate and what is not, what is permissible and what is not, and what is ḥalāl and what is not. The word *shifā'* (cure) alludes to the purification of the souls from false beliefs and

deplorable characteristics. This is known as the Tarīqat. The word *hudā* (guidance) makes reference to the emergence of the truth in the hearts of the siddīqīn (the truthful ones). In other words, when a person reaches the level of sīddīqīyyat (truthfulness), the truth emanates from his heart and this is the reality. The word *raḥmat* (mercy) means that the person has reached such a lofty level of perfection and excellence, that he is able to perfect others and convey his blessings to them. This is the rank of prophet-hood and khilāfat. It refers to acceptance which is linked to Allāh-recognition.

ʿAllāmah Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī *raḥimahullāh* says that this verse shows that just as the Qur'ān is a cure for spiritual ailments of the heart, it is a cure for physical and bodily ailments. Hadrat Abū Saʿīd Khudrī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that a person came to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and complained of a pain in his chest. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to him:

إقرأ القرآن، يقول الله تعالى وشفاء لما في الصدور.

Read the Qur'ān. Allāh taʿālā says: "and a cure for a disease which is in the hearts".

Another narration states that a man came to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and complained about a pain in his throat. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to him:

عليك بقراءة القرآن

Be regular in reading the Qur'ān.

After quoting the above, ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* says that we certainly cannot deny the blessing of the

Qur'ān because it is possible for Allāh *taʿālā* to remove physical ailments and bodily pains through the Qur'ān. However, it is not correct to furnish this verse as a proof to show that the Qur'ān is a cure for physical ailments. The previously quoted Hadīth can be explained as follows: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was informed via divine revelation that this person has a spiritual malady in his heart which has become the cause of the physical ailment which he is experiencing. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered him to read the Qur'ān. In this way, once the spiritual ailment of his heart is removed, the physical ailment which was because of the former will also be removed.

Spiritual maladies sometimes cause physical ailments

It is not far-fetched to assume that spiritual maladies sometimes become the causes of physical ailments. We see jealousy and malice sometimes becoming the causes of physical ailments. There is an Arabic saying:

لله تعالى درُّ الحسد، ما أَعْدَلَهُ بدأ بصاحبه فقتله

It is due solely to the jealousy for Allāh's sake. Look at how just and equitable He is in the sense that it was born from the person, and it killed him.

Let me give you another example. A person said to me: "I am angry because I have a weak mind." I said: "No, you have a weak mind because of anger." In other words, you become angry and this has caused your mind to get weak. Anger is like a fire. When it exceeds the bounds, a person can neither eat nor drink. Consequently, the body itself becomes weak on one side, and the mind and heart become weak on the

other side. This results in various types of physical illnesses and ailments.

The above is the reply of ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* to the explanation of ʿAllāmah Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī *raḥimahullāh*. Let me give you another reply to it. It is possible that physical ailments were cured through the Qur'ān in the time of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, while this is not the case nowadays. What I mean is that because of weakness in īmān and corrupt beliefs, physical ailments are not cured by reading the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

A person came to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* and asked him about a certain Ḥadīth, and said that he does not understand it. The man was a scholar. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā asked him: "What did you not understand? The meaning of the Ḥadīth or its basis?" He said: "I do not understand the basis of the Ḥadīth." Ḥaḍrat Maulānā said: "I can present many injunctions which you know but probably do not know their basis. So apply the same to this Ḥadīth, and do not worry about it." He said: "*Li Yaṭma'innah Qalbī* – I want to know so that my heart may be satisfied." Ḥaḍrat immediately responded: "It is possible that the thing which was a cause for the satisfaction of the heart of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* may not satisfy your heart." He fell silent.

In the same way I said it is possible that the thing which was a cure in the time of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is not a cure in our times.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ

Say: By the grace of Allāh and His beneficence – in this, then, they should rejoice. This is better than all that they amass.[1]

The previous verse was a general address. Here it is directed specifically to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he is ordered to say to the people that they must value the grace and mercy of Allāh *taʿālā* which are in the Qur'ān. If they want to rejoice over anything, then this is most worthy of rejoicing over, and not anything else.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* quotes several explanations for the words *faḍl* and *raḥmah* (grace and beneficence). Ḥaḍrat Mujāhid *raḥimahullāh* says that these two words refer to the Qur'ān. Ḥaḍrat Anas *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فضل الله القرآن ورحمته أن جعلكم من أهله.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said that Allāh's grace refers to the Qur'ān, and His mercy [or beneficence] refers to the fact that He made you from the people of the Qur'ān.

وجاء عن جمع أن الفضل القرآن ورحمته الإسلام.

A large number of narrators say that grace refers to the Qur'ān, and mercy refers to Islam.

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أن الفضل العلم والرحمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 58.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu says that grace refers to knowledge, and mercy refers to Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

هو خير مما يجمعون من الأموال والحرث والأنعام وسائر حطام الدنيا، فإنها سائرة الزوال مشرفة عليه.

It is better than the wealth, agriculture, cattle and all other possessions of this world which they accumulate. This is because all these things are to come to an end. They are on the verge of destruction.

On the other hand, this is the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* [the Qur'ān] which is eternal. Obviously, there can be no comparison between something which is fleeting and something which is eternal.

Now listen further: Allāh *taʿālā* is saying to us that we ought to experience joy and happiness over his grace and mercy, and we must consider them to be superior to this entire world and whatever it contains. However, the people who come to us have such a seal on their hearts that the advice of Allāh *taʿālā* does not have any effect on them. They experience no joy from the Qur'ān. They do not experience any ecstasy at its recitation. But when poems are rendered in a beautiful tone to them, they go into a trance and feel ecstatic. I am telling you that Allāh *taʿālā* is most displeased at this. He is watching us and saying: "I sent My Qur'ān to them, but they experience no ecstasy from it. They do not make it a source of blessings. They do not purify their internal and external selves through it. But they thoroughly enjoy the speech and writings of people." We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

It is most unfortunate that the Book of Allāh *taʿālā* is with us yet there is so much of deviation, and so much of disregard for the Qur'ān.

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

In other words, a person went to the Kaʿbah but his love for his idols remained in his heart. In the same way, the Qur'ān is present with us but we did not purify our beliefs, our character, our thinking, and all the deplorable qualities of our carnal self through it. We have not tasted the sweetness of the recitation of the Qur'ān, and we did not experience ecstasy at its recitation. It is on such occasions that I quote this couplet:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

The Ahlullāh experienced the most ecstasy and elation from the Qur'ān, had the most belief and conviction in it, and considered it to be most effective for success in both worlds. They will certainly receive the blessings, fruits and lofty levels in the Hereafter because of their bond with the Qur'ān. Nonetheless, they will be blessed with a pure and wholesome life in this world as well.

THE STORY OF HADRAT MŪSĀ

Allāh *taʿālā* addresses Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* as follows:

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرٰى. إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلٰى أُمِّكَ مَا يُوْحٰى. أَنِ اقْذِفِيْهِ فِي التَّابُوْتِ فَاقْذِفِيْهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّيْ وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُ ط وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّيْ ج وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلٰى عَيْنِيْ.

We had conferred a favour upon you at another time as well. When We sent Our order to your mother which We describe further on: "Place him into a chest and put it into the river. The river will then cast him ashore. An enemy of Mine and an enemy of his will then take him." I have endowed you with love from Me and so that you may be reared before My eyes.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

إِذْ تَمْشِيْ أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُوْلُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّكْفُلُهُ ط فَرَجَعْنٰكَ إِلٰى أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ.

When your sister began walking and saying: "Should I show you a person who will nurse him?" We then returned you to your mother so that her eyes may be cooled and she may not grieve.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Tā Hā, 20: 37-39.

[2] Sūrah Tā Hā, 20: 40.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh*, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, quotes a lengthy narration under this verse. I am quoting its translation verbatim:

Ḥaḍrat Ibn ʿAbbās *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates in a lengthy Ḥadīth that when Ḥaḍrat Āsiyah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā* removed Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* from the box, and brought him into the house of Pharaoh, she summoned all the wet-nurses who lived nearby so that one of them could be selected as the wet-nurse for Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. (Those women arrived) but he refused to drink the milk of any of them to the extent that Ḥaḍrat Āsiyah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā* began to fear that he might die out of hunger. She ordered for him to be taken into the city where there are large crowds of people, and where they might find a wet-nurse whose milk he will drink. This order was carried out but here too he did not accept the milk of any woman.

While this was carrying on, the mother of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was becoming restless. She forgot the promise which Allāh *taʿālā* had made to her (i.e. do not worry about the child, We will return him to you). She wanted to know if anyone is talking about him, if he has been found, or if he has been eaten by an animal of prey. She sent her daughter to go out and search for him. She must have went some distance when she saw some people searching for a wet-nurse for Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. She went happily to them and said: "I can show you a family which will take care of him and will always desire his wellbeing." When the people heard her, they apprehended her immediately and said: "How do you know that that family will desire his wellbeing? It seems that you know the child, that is why you are saying this."

They took her to Pharaoh and laid a complaint against her. She then explained herself by saying: "What I meant is that the family will desire the wellbeing of the king. In their efforts to earn the king's pleasure and payment from him, the family members will treat the child really well." When she said this, the people released her and said: "Very well, tell us where that woman lives?" She went to her mother and related the entire incident to her. When she heard it, she herself went to the palace. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was placed in her lap. The moment he was placed there, he clung to his mother and began drinking her milk until he was fully satisfied.

The people went and conveyed the good news to Hadrat Āsiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* and informed her that they had found a wet-nurse for the child. She called for the wet-nurse. She and Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* were brought and presented before her. When she personally saw whatever information was conveyed to her, she said to the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*: "You must live here with me and breast-feed this child because I love him intensely (I cannot tolerate being separated from him)."

The mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "I too have children and other domestic responsibilities. I cannot leave my children and allow them to be neglected. If I feed your child, I will do it with the best of my abilities. I will not hold back from doing whatever good I can do for him. If you accept, you can let me take this child to my house. If not, I will leave because I cannot desert my children who are at home."

At the time when she was conversing with Hadrat Āsiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* remembered Allāh's promise to her (of

returning her child to her). She was fully convinced that Allāh *taʿālā* will certainly fulfil His promise. This is why she did not adopt a soft and lenient approach in her conversation. Instead, she spoke to Pharaoh's wife with self-confidence. Consequently, Hadrat Āsiyah had no alternative but to agree to handing over Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to her. His mother took him and left for her house there and then.

Allāh *taʿālā* caused him to grow up excellently and protected him fully because Allāh *taʿālā* had already decreed prophet-hood for him. When he grew up a little, Pharaoh's wife requested the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to see him. His mother promised to bring him some day. Hadrat Āsiyah said to her representatives and treasurers: "When he arrives, you must receive him with gifts and presents. I am going to observe how you welcome him. In fact, I will appoint a supervisor who will watch how each one of you receives him and welcomes him."

The moment Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* emerged from his house, gifts and presents were sent to him. People received him with full honour and respect until he reached the palace and presented himself before Hadrat Āsiyah. She too received him honourably, presented gifts to him, and was overjoyed. His mother also received many gifts because she had rendered her services in a most excellent manner. Hadrat Āsiyah then took Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to Pharaoh so that he too may pay his respects to him and present him with gifts. This is when that incident occurred which was mentioned previously.

The author is referring to the incident which he had related in his commentary to the verse: "Loosen the knot from my tongue." The incident is as follows:

It is said that Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* had an impediment in his speech and the reason for it was that he had placed an ember in his mouth when he was a child. What had happened was that Pharaoh had placed him in his lap. Pharaoh had jewels and gem stones placed in his beard. These were glittering. A child is normally attracted to such things, so Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* extended his hands and held Pharaoh's beard. Another narration says that he struck Pharaoh with his hand. Yet another narration states that he had a knife in his hand and he used it to strike Pharaoh on his head.

Pharaoh took a bad omen from this action and thought to himself that he is going to be humiliated at his hands. He became angry and summoned his executioner. When Hadrat Āsiyah observed what was happening, she became terrified because she loved Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. She said to Pharaoh: "Have you become so carried away by a child's action!? He is a small child who cannot even differentiate between a sapphire and an ember. How will he ever humiliate you?" She brought a red ember and a red sapphire and placed it before him. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was about to strike his hand on the sapphire but Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* turned his hand towards the ember. He grabbed it and put it into his mouth. His tongue got burnt and a blister developed on that spot.

One question which crops up here is that how come the hand with which he grabbed the ember did not get burnt, yet his tongue got burnt with it? The ʿulamāʾ explain Allāh's wisdom in this regard and say that the same hand was to become the means of Pharaoh's humiliation. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* protected it from getting burnt. Not only that, Allāh gave him the

miracle of the glittering hand. And the reason why the tongue was affected is that – as is the norm with children – he had addressed Pharaoh as "dear father" or some other similar manner of addressing him.

According to another narration, Hadrat Mūsā's hand also got burnt. Pharaoh did his utmost to treat and cure it but he did not succeed. The probable wisdom behind this was so that he will eat on his own and not join him in eating from the same utensil. Subsequently, when Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* invited him to Allāh *taʿālā*, Pharaoh asked: "Which God are you inviting me to?" Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "To the one Allāh who cured my hand while you had failed to cure it."[1]

No matter what, everything happens through divine decree.

لِيَقْضِيَ اللّٰهُ اَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُوْلًا

So that a matter which Allāh decreed may come to pass.

Incidents from the life of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* are related in several places in the Qur'ān. The beginning of Sūrah al-Qasas contains some incidents from his life. These cover many verses:

نَتْلُوْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَّبَاِ مُوْسٰى وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ. اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ اَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَّسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ اَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيٖ نِسَآءَهُمْ، اِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ. وَنُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ

[1] *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, p. 166.

اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ اَئِمَّةً وَّنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ. وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ.

We relate to you some incidents about Mūsā and Pharaoh, setting forth the truth for those people who have conviction. Pharaoh had exalted himself in the land and had made its people into sects. He had suppressed one group of them: slaughtering their sons and keeping alive their women. Surely he was of those who spread corruption. It is Our will to favour those who were suppressed in the land and to make them leaders and to make them heirs. And to establish them in the land and to show to Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies that which they feared at their [Banī Isrā'īl's] hands.[1]

It is mentioned in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* that Pharaoh massacred the sons of the Banī Isrā'īl because an astrologer had informed him that soon a child from the Banī Isrā'īl will be born through whom his kingdom will collapse, and the Banī Isrā'īl will take possession of the land. It is also said that Pharaoh saw a dream in which a fire came from the direction of Bayt al-Maqdis and reduced Egypt to ashes. In this fire, only the Copts got burnt while the Banī Isrā'īl were safe and sound. Pharaoh consulted his scholars and asked them for an interpretation of the dream. They said that a person will be born in the city at whose hands Egypt will be destroyed. This is when Pharaoh began massacring the new-borns of the Banī Isrā'īl.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 3-6

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī says: Look at the foolishness of Pharaoh! If what the astrologers said was true, it would have certainly happened. Of what benefit would there be in killing the children? And if they were lying, then what was the need to kill the children? Another point we learn from this verse is that massacring children for the sake of preserving the country is a Pharaonic trait.

وَاَوْحَيْنَا اِلٰى اُمِّ مُوْسٰى اَنْ اَرْضِعِيْهِ، فَاِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَاَلْقِيْهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِيْ وَلَا تَحْزَنِيْ، اِنَّا رَآدُّوْهُ اِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ. فَالْتَقَطَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ لِيَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَّحَزَنًا، اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا كَانُوْا خٰطِئِيْنَ. وَقَالَتْ امْرَاَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتُ عَيْنٍ لِّيْ وَلَكَ لَا تَقْتُلُوْهُ. عَسٰى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ.

We sent an order to Mūsā's mother saying: "Continue breast-feeding him. Then when you fear over his life, cast him into the river, and have no fear and do not grieve. We will return him to you and make him one of the Messengers." Pharaoh's family then picked him up so that he may be their enemy and a source of their grief. Surely Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies were in error. Pharaoh's wife said: "This [child] is a joy to the eye for me and you. Do not kill him, perhaps he may be of use to us or we may adopt him as a son." And they knew nothing [of what he was to become].[1]

It is mentioned in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* that when the mother of Ḥadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* began experiencing labour pains, she called one of the mid-wives who were appointed by the government to keep watch over

[1] Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 7-9.

the pregnant women of the Banī Isrā'īl. The mid-wife commenced her work and the moment Hadrat Mūsā *'alayhis salām* was born and fell to the ground, the mid-wife saw a light emanating from between his eyes. This caused her to tremble from head to toe and she immediately fell in love with the infant. Her love for him prevented her from informing the king of the birth of this child. She said to the mother that she must protect the child. However, this was a royal decree so when she was about to leave the house, the spies of Pharaoh surrounded the house. The mid-wife was terrified. She quickly wrapped the child in some rags, placed him in the oven, and left the house. She was so terrified and frightened that she didn't know what else to do. The police entered, searched the house, found nothing and were forced to leave.

After they left, the mother became worried about her child and did not know where he was. Then from the oven she heard the sound of her child crying. She went to the oven and found Hadrat Mūsā *'alayhis salām* lying there. Allāh *ta'ālā* had caused the fire to become cool and peaceful for him. She removed him from the oven and began taking care of him. Several months passed in this way.

In the meantime, this was the period which the astrologers had predicted for the birth of the child. When no such child could be found, Pharaoh intensified the search and the rules for the search were made more stringent. Now the mother too feared that her child will be found and seized. She made a box, placed Hadrat Mūsā *'alayhis salām* in it, and put the box in the River Nile. The slave girls of Hadrat Āsiyah had gone to take a bath in the river, and they saw the box. They carried it out and brought it to Āsiyah thinking that there is some treasure in it.

When the box was opened and Hadrat Āsiyah set her eyes on Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, she was immediately overtaken by love for him. When Pharaoh was informed, he wanted to kill the child but Hadrat Āsiyah convinced him not to kill him.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Pharaoh had a daughter. Another reason why Pharaoh showed affection towards Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was that he suffered from chronic leprosy which the doctors failed to treat. Someone said to him: Something similar to a human will emerge from the river on a certain day at a certain time, and come to you. If you take its saliva and apply it to the white spots on your body, they will be cleared. Pharaoh's daughter overheard this. Pharaoh was waiting for that day. When it arrived, Pharaoh together with his troops and wife, Hadrat Āsiyah, went to the river. They noticed a box approaching which flowed towards the bank and got stuck against a tree. Pharaoh ordered for it to be brought to him. They tried to open it but failed. They tried to break it but couldn't. Hadrat Āsiyah said: "Bring it here, let me have a look." She noticed a hole and through it she could see something glittering inside. She tried opening it from that hole, and it opened. She saw a small child sucking his thumb from which milk was flowing. A light was shining from between the child's eyes. Allāh *taʿālā* placed love for the child in not only her heart, but in the heart of everyone who beheld him. He became the beloved of everyone. Pharaoh's daughter remembered the reason why they were waiting for this child. She took the child's saliva and

rubbed it on Pharaoh's white spots. He was cured immediately.[1]

[1] *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī.*

THE ADMONITORY STORY OF HADRAT YŪNUS

Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* and his people in the Qur'ān. It is a most admonitory story. Allāh's punishment had come to his people but they repented with utmost sincerity and devotion. Allāh *taʿālā* was merciful to them and lifted the punishment from them.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ اٰمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَآ إِيْمَانُهَآ إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُوْنُسَ ط لَمَّآ اٰمَنُوْا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ إِلٰى حِيْنٍ.

Why, then, was there not a town which believed, so that its belief may have been of use to it, except the people of Yūnus? When they believed, We raised from them the humiliating punishment in this worldly life and profited them for a while.[1]

The story of the people of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* as related by ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh* is that Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* was sent to the land of Mosul, to the people of Nīnawā. The people of this place were polytheists and unbelievers. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* invited them towards belief in Allāh *taʿālā* and he himself refused to worship their idols. This is why they rejected and belied Hadrat

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 98.

We learn from this that after they repented and embraced īmān, they also received worldly progress. (compiler)

Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*. He informed them that Allāh's punishment will befall them after three days. In the middle of the third night, he separated himself from these people. The next morning, Allāh's punishment encompassed them and was hovering above their heads.

Another narration states that a pitch black cloud covered the sky, a fierce smoke blew and surrounded the entire town. The roofs of the buildings turned black. When the people were convinced of Allāh's punishment, they went to look for their Prophet but could not find him.

They eventually took their women, children and animals out to the desert. They wore sack-like clothes [to demonstrate their submission] and repented. They separated the offspring from the mothers of both humans and animals. This caused an intense yearning from both sides – the mothers for their offspring, and the offspring for their mothers. Their voices were raised due to crying profusely and they began screaming. They turned to Allāh *taʿālā* with full devotion, submission and sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* felt sorry for them and accepted their invocations. The punishment which had come to them was removed. That day was the day of 'Āshūrā', and a Friday.

Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says that their repentance was of such a high level that they even set right the wrongs which they had committed against each other. To the extent that if they built buildings with rocks which belonged to someone else, they dug those rocks and returned them to their rightful owners.

According to one narration of Hadrat Qatādah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* these people continued crying and

repenting before Allāh *taʿālā* for 40 days until the punishment was removed.

Imām Aḥmad *raḥimahullāh* relates in *Kitāb az-Zuhd* and Ibn Jarīr *raḥimahullāh* and others relate from Ghaylān that when the punishment enveloped the people of Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*, then from their remaining ʿulamā', they went to one shaykh and asked him for his advice with regard to what they should do. He said to them: "You must read this duʿā':

يَا حَيُّ حِيْنَ لَا حَيَّ، وَيَا حَيُّ مُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى، وَيَا حَيُّ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ

O the Living when there is no one else living. O the Living, the one who gives life to the dead. O the Living! There is none worthy of worship except You.

When the people read this duʿā', Allāh *taʿālā* removed the punishment from them. Ḥaḍrat Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ *raḥimahullāh* said that the people of Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* read the following duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ ذُنُوْبَنَا عَظُمَتْ وَجَلَّتْ، وَاَنْتَ اَعْظَمُ وَاَجَلُّ، فَافْعَلْ بِنَا مَا اَنْتَ اَهْلُهُ، وَلَا تَفْعَلْ بِنَا مَا نَحْنُ اَهْلُهُ.

O Allāh! Our sins are many and too serious, but You are much greater and more almighty. Treat us in a manner which is in line with Your status and do not treat us in a manner which we deserve.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* goes on to say that the obvious meaning of the verse informs us that the people had witnessed the punishment, this is why Allāh *taʿālā* used the word *kashafnā* (We raised). Most of the narrations point to this and the majority of the exegetes are also inclined to this meaning. Īmān benefiting a people after observing Allāh's punishment is from among the peculiarities of the people of Ḥaḍrat

Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*. Normally when unbelievers embrace īmān after observing Allāh's punishment, then this īmān is referred to as īmān-e-ba's (īmān out of fear) and it is of no use because the element of accountability has now been removed. It is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that after the arrival of His punishment, people are destroyed without being given a respite. The destruction of Pharaoh is an example of this.[1]

To embrace īmān after the arrival of Allāh's punishment, and for the punishment to be removed after a genuine repentance – these are from among the peculiarities of the people of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*. Undoubtedly, the manner in which they cried before Allāh *taʿālā* and repented to him was a special feature of this nation. They repented in a manner which was prescribed by the Sharīʿat. The terror which they experienced was not only a natural response but it was due to genuine īmān which had entered their hearts. That īmān demanded that they repent in this manner.

From the previously quoted narrations, we learnt how they undid all their wrongs and acts of oppression, to the extent of digging out the rocks from their buildings and returning them to their rightful owners. This was certainly not a small matter. All the people put on sack-like garments and went out onto the field. They took their wives, children and animals with them. In order to increase their crying and submission, they separated the mothers from their offspring. In this way, the mothers and offspring will cry even more because of the pain of separation. The entire scene would be one of crying and beseeching to Allāh *taʿālā*. They took their animals with them because when

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[1] *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, p. 170.

Allāh *taʿālā* sees their innocence and blamelessness, He will feel mercy towards them and remove His punishment from them. In this way, the punishment will be removed from the people as well.

Thus, humans, animals, children and offspring – all cried profusely. According to one narration, they cried continuously for 40 days until Allāh *taʿālā* showed His mercy to them, accepted their repentance and removed the punishment.

This is no trivial incident. This story where the punishment was averted is related in the Qur'ān. It is a most unique story. The commentator of *Qaṣīdah Burdah* related the story of Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* and his people in great detail. I am quoting it verbatim.

Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* was sent to the city of Nīnawā which is near Moṣul. The Tigris River flows between these two cities. The residents of this place were idol worshippers. Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* spent a long time inviting them towards guidance and the worship of Allāh *taʿālā*, but they did not come onto the straight path. They asked him to produce a fire from water and to keep it burning without any fuel. Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* did as they asked but they did not embrace īmān. When he lost hope in their īmān, Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* came to him and said that he must go to his people and inform them that Allāh's punishment is going to descend soon. They still did not believe. That night, Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*, his wife and his two sons left the city.

Allāh *taʿālā* caused a pitch black cloud to hover above them and black smoke to envelope them. When they saw this, they went in search of Ḥaḍrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* but could not find him. They were now convinced of the punishment and began crying before

Allāh *taʿālā,* beseeching Him, and repented from their idol-worship.

In order to attract Allāh's mercy, they separated the mothers from their children, and wore sack-like clothes. They returned to the rightful owners whatever they had seized wrongfully to the extent that they dug out the rocks from the buildings and returned them to their owners. The people went out of the city and began begging and crying to Allāh *taʿālā*.

They said: "O Allāh! We believe in You, in Your Prophet Yūnus and in all the Prophets. Pardon us our sins and remove this punishment from us." Saying this, they all fell into prostration. Allāh ordered the angels of punishment: "Enough. I do not send punishment on monotheists." The people then returned safely to the city as believers. The 'ulamā' differ as to whether a punishment really fell on the people of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* or not.

The authentic view is that it did not really befall them.[1] Rather, the effects of the punishment became apparent to them. When they saw this, they repented. Had the punishment really descended, their repentance would not have been accepted. All they saw was a terrifying cloud accompanied by a lot of smoke. The smoke enveloped their city and caused the roofs of their buildings to turn black. Hadrat wanted to see the condition of his people and learn the nature of the punishment. He met Shaytān who was in the form of an old dervish. He asked him: "Where are you coming from?" He replied: "From the city of Nīnawā." He asked: "What have the people of the city

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[1] According to the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* the punishment did descend, as quoted previously.

experienced today?" He replied: "Yūnus informed us of the coming of a punishment, but nothing appeared. We concluded that he lied to us." Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* became angry and said: "I do not want to go to a city whose people consider me to be a liar." His wife and two sons were with him. When they reached the Tigris River, he took his elder son across. He returned to take his younger son. When they reached mid-stream, the water was too much and the boy drowned. In the meantime, the elder son who was already across was seized by a wolf. Hadrat got out of the water and ran to free his son from the wolf. The wolf – speaking under the order of Allāh *taʿālā* – said: "O Yūnus! Go back, you will not be able to free your son."

When he went back, he realized that his wife was not there. He was very saddened and began to cry. He began walking until he reached the ocean. He saw a ship which was about to set sail. The people of the ship felt sorry for him and allowed him to board. When the ship sailed for some distance, it became caught in a storm and was on the verge of sinking. The people got together and said that it seems that there is a criminal on this ship. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* said: "There is a slave on this ship who fled from his master. You cannot be saved unless you cast him into the sea." Just then a large fish with its mouth wide open was approaching the ship with the intention of swallowing the ship. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* said: "You are suffering these calamities because of me. Cast me into the sea and you will experience calm once again."

They said: "We cannot do this without drawing a lot. The one whose name appears will have to be cast into the sea.. They drew a lot three times, and the name of

Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* appeared each time. The Qur'ān makes reference to this as follows:

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِيْنَ

He cast lots and was among the losers.[1]

He was eventually cast into the sea, and a large fish swallowed him immediately. This happened at midnight. He was thus trapped in three forms of darkness: the darkness of the night, the darkness of the sea and the darkness of the belly of the fish. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* beseeched Allāh *taʿālā* from the pits of darkness and said:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ صلى إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

There is no deity but You. You are pure of all deficiency. I was of the sinners.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* instructed the fish thus: "You must protect and safeguard Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* because he is not your food. Your belly is his prison." According to authentic traditions, he remained in it for 40 days. The fish swam around and reached the place where it had swallowed him. It then swam towards the coast and spewed him out. His condition at the time was like a new born chick which is only bones and flesh. Allāh *taʿālā* caused a pumpkin tree to grow and provide him sustenance. The date was the 7th of Muharram when he emerged from the belly of the fish. Allāh *taʿālā* then ordered a female deer to provide him with milk. He drank of its milk for 40 days and his strength was restored.

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[1] Sūrah as-Sāffāt, 37: 141.

[2] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 87.

He woke up from a dream one day and noticed that the pumpkin tree had turned dry and the deer had fled. He became sad and began to cry. Allāh *taʿālā* said to him: You are crying over a deer which you did not create and a pumpkin tree whose seed you did not plant. Yet you did not cry over the destruction of countless people who were from the progeny of Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām*.

An angel then came with two garments, made him wear them, and said: "O Yūnus! Go to your people. They are eager to see you." On his way he came to a village and noticed a man announcing: "I will give 100 gold coins to whoever will take this woman to Nīnawā and convey her to Yūnus ibn Muttā."

Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* looked at the woman and realized that it was his wife. He asked the man about the background to the woman. He said that she was sitting on the bank of the river waiting for her husband when a king passed and took her away to his palace. He wanted to commit adultery with her but Allāh *taʿālā* caused his hands and legs to get paralysed. He asked the woman to pray for him to be cured and he will never try to commit evil with her. She prayed and he was cured. The king handed the woman over to me and gave me 100 gold coins for the task of conveying her to Yūnus in Nīnawā. He gave the 100 coins to Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* and handed over the woman to him.

They must have walked a few miles when they came to another village. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* saw a man on a conveyance with a young boy sitting behind him. When he looked properly, he realized that it was his younger son who had drowned. He took his son, embraced him and cried profusely. The rider asked: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am Yūnus ibn Muttā

and this is my son." He handed the boy over to him. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* asked him the story about the boy. He said: "I am a fisherman. I cast my net in the Tigris River one day and this boy emerged. He was alive. I heard a voice from the unseen saying: 'You must take care of the boy. When his father, Yūnus ibn Muttā, comes to you, you must hand the boy over to him."

They continued on their way and reached the outskirts of the city of Nīnawā. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* saw a boy herding goats on the main road. The boy was praying thus: "O Allāh! Convey my father to me." Hadrat looked carefully and saw that it was his elder son. The two embraced each other and cried profusely. The son then said: "O my beloved father! These goats belong to a person in this village. Come with me so that I could hand over these goats to him." They went into the village. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* saw an old man sitting at the door of his house. The boy said: "This is my father." The man got up and kissed the hand of Hadrat Yūnus who then asked him: "Do you know the story of this boy?" The old man replied: "Yes. I was grazing these goats when I saw this boy riding on a wolf. The animal brought him to me, placed him down, and spoke – by the order of Allāh – saying: "O shepherd! You must take care of this boy. You must hand him over to Yūnus ibn Muttā when he comes to you because this boy is his son."

Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* continued on his way. He met a goatherd who was grazing his goats. He asked him for some milk. He replied: "We have not tasted a drop of milk ever since our Prophet Yūnus disappeared from us." Hadrat Yūnus said: "Bring one goat to me." He brought it to him, he passed his hands over its udders, and – by the permission of

Allāh *taʿālā* – it filled with milk. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* milked the goat. The goatherd was astonished and said: "If Hadrat Yūnus is alive, then it has to be you." He said: "I am certainly him." The goatherd fell to his feet and began kissing him. Hadrat Yūnus said to him: "Go into the city and inform the people that you saw me." He said: "Hadrat, they will not believe me." Hadrat Yūnus said: "Take these goats with you, they will affirm what you say." The goatherd left with his goats, and when he reached the city centre, he announced in a loud voice: "O people! Rejoice because our Prophet Yūnus has returned. I have just seen him." The people did not believe him. He said: "I am speaking the truth. These goats are my witnesses." The goats – acting under the order of Allāh *taʿālā* – testified to what he said. The people were surprised. The news reached the king. He got off immediately from his throne, all the people of the city accompanied him, they went out and saw Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* approaching.

Hadrat Yūnus cried profusely when he saw them. The people took him into the city. The king seated him on his throne and stood respectfully next to him. The people of the city were overjoyed. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* lived among them for some time. He continued enjoining good and forbidding evil. When the king died, he called for the son of the goatherd and appointed him as the king.[1]

The subject matter which is contained in this story is not found in the Qur'ān. The punishment arrived and stopped. It had come because of their polytheism and unbelief. The people were convinced that it came

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[1] هكذا في أخبار الدول وآثار الأول.

because of their polytheism and unbelief, so they became monotheists and believers. Allāh's punishment does not befall believers and monotheists. The other point which is mentioned is the people's sincerity and repentance. It was a pure and perfect repentance. It was accepted because of their sincerity. This entire story is filled with the theme of sincerity. There is a need to ponder over it. That is all.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to relate this terrifying story with a special feeling and emotion in his general assemblies. The people would be reduced to tears. Towards the end of his life, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to emphasise the repetition of:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ صلى إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

There is no deity but You. You are pure of all deficiency. I was of the sinners.[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 87.

THE ADMONITORY STORY OF HADRAT HŪD

Allāh *taʿālā* relates the stories of several Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* in the Qur'ān. Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām* and his people are mentioned as follows:

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ

We sent Nūh to his people..

Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about the Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* and his people as follows:

وَإِلٰى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ط قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ط أَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ.

To the people of ʿĀd, We sent their brother, Hūd. He said: "O my people! Worship Allāh. You have no deity other than Him. Do you not fear?"[1]

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* is referred to as "their brother" because he was from that nation. A person of the same community is sent so that it becomes easy for people to follow him. He said to them: "O my people! Worship Allāh, you have no deity other than Him."

يٰقَوْمِ لَا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ط اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ط اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 65.

O people! I do not ask you for any wage for this [message]. My wage is only on Him who created me. Will you not, then, understand?"[1]

O my people, from among the proofs of my prophet-hood one additional proof is that I do not ask you for any recompense for conveying this message to you. My compensation is only with Allāh *taʿālā* who brought me from non-existence into existence. Will you still not understand? When a proof is present and I am pure from the obstacle of personal motives, what doubt can there be about my prophet-hood?

Absence of personal motives is essential for advice to be beneficial

It is mentioned in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* that every Prophet said this to his respective nation. In other words, each Prophet did not ask for any wage or remuneration for conveying Allāh's message. This was so that the evil thoughts which the people could have had about the Messenger is removed, and it was considered to be a pure and unadulterated advice. When a piece of advice is given for personal or other motives, it has no effect. Another point which is learnt from this statement of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* is that they are saying to their people: We are not in need of you even for our livelihood and day to day living. The Allāh who brought us from non-existence into existence is also the guarantor of our sustenance just as He provides sustenance to the animals and birds.

If this has been the way of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, it becomes a Sunnat for the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh who come after them – they must say to

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 51.

their people: “We do not ask you for a wage for conveying Allāh’s message to you.” They must do this so that the people become aware that their advising and admonishing them is not for personal or material benefits. This is a clear-cut issue.

وَيٰقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا وَّيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً اِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ.

O people! Ask your Lord to forgive you your sins, then turn towards Him. He will send torrents of rain upon you from the sky, and add strength to your strength. Do not turn away as sinners.[1]

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said to his people: O my people! Ask Allāh *taʿālā* to pardon you your sins. In other words, embrace īmān and then remain devoted to Him in worship. Through the blessing of īmān and good deeds, He will send torrents of rain upon you. He will add to your present strength by giving you more strength. Thus, embrace īmān and do not turn away as criminals.

It is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī* that the words “and add strength to your strength” mean: the first strength refers to the strength of īmān. The second strength refers to physical strength. In other words, He will give strength to your īmān and strengthen your bodies as well. Moreover, he will strengthen you as a nation. He will confer you with honour upon honour. This is similar to what Allāh *taʿālā* says elsewhere:

يُمْدِدْكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ

[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 52.

Allāh taʿālā will help you through wealth and children.

Hadrat Dahhāk says that the word "strength" in this context refers to prosperity. Hadrat ʿIkramah *rahimahullāh* says that it refers to increase in one's progeny – children and grandchildren. According to one explanation it refers to physical strength. Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* mentioned rain and strength because they were a people who owned farms, orchards and buildings. Rain and physical strength are obviously needed to do these things. According to some narrations they did not receive rains for three years and their women were not falling pregnant. Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* promised them that if they repent and seek forgiveness, they will receive rains, and their offspring will increase, resulting in an increase in their strength.

قَالُوْا يَا هُوْدُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ

They said: O Hūd! You have not brought to us any evidence.[1]

We are not going to give up our gods just by your telling us. We cannot believe you.

Rūh al-Maʿānī explains it thus: "You did not produce any clear evidence to prove the authenticity of your claims." They said this out of extreme obstinacy and severe turning away from the truth. The reason for saying this is that they did not really ponder over the verse because they could not even identify a verse as a verse or a sign as a sign. After all, Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* and the other Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* came with clear signs and glaring miracles,

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 53.

even though we may not know specifically what some of them were.

A Hadīth states that every Prophet was given such a number of signs and miracles which were enough for people to embrace īmān.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the people of Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* also went beyond the limits in rejecting the message and call of Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām*. Firstly they rejected his prophet-hood by saying: "We are not going to give up our gods just by your telling us." They did not stop there. They said something which conveys the meaning of their previous statement:

وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

And we are not going to be believers in you.[1]

The grammatical construction of this sentence conveys the message that Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* must have no hope whatsoever of their embracing īmān.

They then claimed that Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* is a madman and that their gods have cast a spell on him. They said:

اِنْ نَّقُوْلُ اِلَّا اعْتَرٰىكَ بَعْضُ اٰلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْٓءٍ

All we say is that some of our gods have seized you with an evil spirit in a terrible way.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 53.

[2] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 54.

In other words, since you are speaking ill of our gods and do not worship them, and you do not accept them to be worthy of worship, some of them caused your brains to be corrupted. To put it in another way: Because you were so audaciously against them, they turned you into a madman. This is why you are making foolish and idiotic statements such as: Allāh is one and you are His Messenger.

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* was most angered by their response. And why should he not be angered!? He was a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā*, how could their idols have any effect on him!? Those ignoramuses even said that their idols turned him into a lunatic. This obviously ignited his self-respect.

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said: "You are claiming that your idols turned me into a lunatic. Well, listen! I am openly making Allāh my witness, and you too listen and be witness to what I am saying: I am totally aloof from whatever you ascribe as partners to Allāh *taʿālā*. (If your idols have any power) you and your idols can get together and do whatever you want to harm me. You must leave no stone unturned in this regard, and give me no respite whatsoever. We will see what you and they can do. If both you and your idols can do nothing to me, what can they alone do to me? I am making this open claim because those idols are completely and totally helpless. This is why I do not fear them in the least. As for you, although you have some power, I do not fear you also because:

اِنِّيْ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ رَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ ؕ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌ ۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ؕ
اِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ.

I have placed my trust in Allāh, who is my Lord and your Lord. There is not a moving creature except that its

forelock is in the grasp of Allāh. Surely my Lord is on the straight path.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that he negated their harm as a substantiation. In other words, the reason for making this open challenge to you is that I have placed my trust in Allāh *taʿālā*, I rely on His promises, and I hold the belief that my and your true Master is Allāh *taʿālā*. You cannot do anything without His order. And you can cause me no harm unless He wills it. Therefore, even if you empty all your arrows from your quiver, and spend all your energies in trying to harm me, you will not be able to do anything without the order of Allāh *taʿālā*.

From this speech, a new miracle was displayed, viz. one person singly makes an inciting speech before such powerful and mighty people, but they still cannot do anything to him. His speech was also an answer to their claim when they said: "You haven't produced any miracle to prove your prophet-hood." Even if we disregard his previous miracles, this is another miracle. His claim to prophet-hood is therefore not without a proof.

The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have full faith and conviction in Allāh *taʿālā*. Therefore, when they make statements of this nature, they receive the full support of Allāh *taʿālā*. They place their full reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, so He sees to them. When Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* gave them an ultimatum, they did not have the courage to respond and humiliate themselves. In fact, Allāh *taʿālā* casts fear and dread in the hearts of the opposition in situations like these. This causes them to become totally awe-struck. They lose their senses

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 56.

and powers, their hands and feet become swollen, and their intellect is taken away from them. When a man is in such a situation, he obviously cannot think nor do anything. This is that divine help which the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and their true followers receive at the time when they are facing those who are on falsehood.

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Surely my Lord is on the straight path." What this means is that because Allāh *taʿālā* is fully aware of the conditions of His servants and He alone rewards or punishes them for their actions, He will suffice the person who holds on to Him. Like a person sitting on a road – he is protecting the road and saving the passers-by from its harms.

In this last statement Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said "my Lord" while previously he said: "my Lord and your Lord". The reason for this is that previously the discussion concerned reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. In order to demonstrate His greatness, he said to them: I have placed my trust in such a Being who is my Lord and your Lord as well. I am obedient to Him while you are not. Thus, He will never allow those who rely on Him to be vanquished. He will most certainly help me. And since He protects His sincere servants only, he said: "my Lord is on the straight path". Our relationship with Him is stronger than yours. He is also your Lord in the sense that He is eligible for worship by you, but honour belongs to us only because we are the ones who are worshipping Him while you are not. This is why you are deprived of His mercy and kindness, while we are enjoying both.

Glory to Allāh! What knowledge and sciences! They are not only enlightening but inspiring. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand them Āmīn.

DIVINE TEACHINGS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the following verses in much detail. His explanation is most beneficial and admonitory. It is quoted in four parts.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا.

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance. Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life. Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose case exceeds all bounds.[1]

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ ط مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَّمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.

Do not repulse those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure alone. You are in no way accountable for their reckoning nor are they in any

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

way accountable for your reckoning, which could cause you to repulse them and thus become of the unjust.[1]

The circumstances behind the revelation of these two verses according to different narrations of the exegetes is that some Quraysh leaders of Makkah came to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They saw a few poor Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* such as Ḥaḍrat Bilāl *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Ḥaḍrat ʿAmmār *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Ḥaḍrat Ṣuhayb *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Ḥaḍrat Salmān *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* sitting around Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The Quraysh leaders looked at them with contempt and made some derogatory statements about them to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They added: "If you remove these people from your company, we will come to your assembly and discuss with you. We will also benefit from your words."

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not accede to their request. They then said: "Okay, you must ask them to leave for the duration of our meeting with you. When we leave, you may sit with them if you wish. The Arabs recognize our honour and high standing. You receive delegations from everywhere, and we will feel ashamed if those delegations see us sitting with these slaves and servants who are with you." They added: "We are disturbed and offended by the stink which emanates from them because of the woollen garments which they are wearing."

On seeing their persistence, Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* also said: "O Rasūlullāh! Let's try what they are suggesting and we will see what they do." In other

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 52.

words, will they come onto the straight path or not. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Very well." The Quraysh leaders said: "You must write down a covenant in this regard." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* agreed to this as well, and asked for pen and paper. He then called for Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to write the covenant.

This verse was then revealed:

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

Do not repulse those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure alone.

In other words, their sole objective is Allāh's pleasure. They have no desire for wealth, authority and so on. They worship Allāh *taʿālā* solely for His pleasure. They have no other objective. This is known as true sincerity. What this means is that together with worship, they have the quality of sincerity.

The prisoners of war after the Battle of Badr

Quite often verses used to be revealed in support of the views of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. It was his view that the prisoners of war after the Battle of Badr should be killed. He was also of the view that the janāzah salāh of ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl – the leader of the hypocrites – should not be performed. Subsequently verses in support of these views were revealed.

However, in the topic which we are discussing, his view was the opposite. On other occasions he was against the unbelievers but here he felt that their request should be acceded to. The order of Allāh *taʿālā* was not in line with his view.

After this verse was revealed, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and apologized. Allāh *taʿālā* then revealed the following verse:

وَإِذَا جَآءَكَ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ۙ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوْءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ ۙ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

When those who believe in Our verses come to you, say: Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed mercy upon Himself - that whoever among you does any evil out of ignorance, and thereafter repents and becomes virtuous, then He is forgiving, merciful.[1]

Furthermore, after these verses were revealed, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* called for those poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and said:

سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed mercy upon Himself.

Subsequently, it became the practice of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remain seated with the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. When it was time for him to leave, he would get up and go while the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* would remain seated. The following verse was revealed:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 54.

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord.[1]

Subsequently, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would remain seated with the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. When it was time for him to leave, the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* would leave first, and then Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would get up from his place.

Look at these teachings of Allāh *taʿālā*! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* is ordering Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to take the poor Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* into consideration. Also try and gauge how much importance Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gave to practising on these verses after they were revealed.

Now listen to the meaning of these verses:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance.

They desire nothing but Allāh's pleasure. They have no worldly objectives.

Allāh *taʿālā* mentions two qualities of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* here: (1) they invoke Allāh *taʿālā* morning and evening, (2) they seek His pleasure. Allāh *taʿālā* loved these two qualities of theirs so much that He could not tolerate their feelings getting hurt, and expressed His extreme displeasure at the scorn and derision with which the unbelievers of Makkah treated them. Allāh *taʿālā* disapproved of their attitude severely.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا

Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life.

In other words, do not think that if these leaders and wealthy people become Muslims it will bring beauty and glory to Islam, and that Islam will progress a lot. This is because Islam's beauty and glory does not lie in external material things. It is based on sincerity and total obedience, even if it is by poor people. Therefore, do not turn your eyes away from these poor Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* by directing your attention towards the worldly people. Do not look down on the poor Muslims on account of their dishevelled state and poverty. The beauty of Islam lies with them, they are a sincere and devoted group. They are the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*. They are the ones who enjoy close proximity in His court. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself approves of embracing and welcoming them.

Look at the level of the īmān of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* and the extent of sincerity in every action of theirs that Allāh *taʿālā* revealed verses in praise of their obedience and sincerity. The Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* must have been really overjoyed by this.

The Quraysh unbelievers were saying: "Remove these poor people from your company and we will attend your assemblies. We may even become your followers." This was a scheme which they had plotted. They thought that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* now has a group of followers who should be removed on this pretext. There was no sense in what they were suggesting because how can any sensible person remove a group of sincere and devoted people solely on the assumption that those who are his enemies will

become attracted to him!? Furthermore, we do not even know whether these enemies will become friends or not. Since Allāh *taʿālā* was fully aware of their plot, He said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا.

Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose case exceeds all bounds.[1]

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes beneath this verse:

وفيه تنبيه على أن الباعث لهم إلى استدعاء الطرد غفلة قلوبهم عن جناب الله تعالى شأنه وملاحظة المعقولات وانهماكهم في الحسيات حتى خفي عليهم ان الشرف بحلية النفس لا بزينة الجسد.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the thing which prompted them to ask for the removal of the poor Ṣaḥābah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum was the heedlessness of their hearts towards Allāh taʿālā, inattention towards rationalities, and engrossment with the external to the extent that it remained concealed to them that honour and greatness are acquired through embellishing the inner self and not by beautifying the external body.

Look at what a beautiful point ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *raḥimahullāh* made! First of all they were heedless of Allāh *taʿālā*. To make matters worse they were totally heedless of rationalities. Had they pondered over them they would have realized that when a person receives honour and dignity, it is because of the excellence and virtue which is within him; not because of his external

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

appearance and beauty. No intelligent person can ever accept external appearance to be the basis for honour.

The negligence of these unbelievers in using their common sense was that they hoped and wanted the poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* to be removed because of their own wealth and authority. This was based on extreme foolishness and stupidity because they did not have this much sense to realize that if the truthfulness and genuineness of some people has been established with certainty and through experience, how can they be removed in favour of those whose friendship is assumed and imaginary? Could it ever be expected of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remove his loyal Companions who had borne every type of hardship and misery for his sake and who remained firm with him?

The fact of the matter is that the Quraysh leaders were unbelievers, and were heedless of Allāh *taʿālā* because of the darkness of unbelief. This is why they said things against Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, kufr brings such bad luck that it takes away a person's sound thinking. Consequently, he can only understand things which are irrational.

The difference between prophet-hood and sultanate

This is why Allāh *taʿālā* openly rejected the request of the Quraysh leaders and refuted the view of the wealthy and affluent people. Had this not been done, they would have even made prophet-hood a point of discussion and debate. Divine revelation is coming to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, injunctions are being sent to him and these people want to make all this a point of debate and consultation! They want to express their views against divine revelation!?

This is, after all, the difference between prophet-hood and sultanate. In a sultanate the king has many helpers and advisors who advise him. The sultanate runs by relying on their advice. They can change the sultanate whenever they like and cause the government to topple. But this is not the case with prophet-hood. A Prophet enjoys the divine help of Allāh *taʿālā*. Since Allāh *taʿālā* is the one who appoints him to this position, He takes it upon Himself to help and support him. In the beginning, a Prophet commences his call towards Allāh *taʿālā* by himself. Gradually he develops a following. The numbers increase to the extent that a powerful group of truth-lovers join him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also started inviting the Arabs to Islam all by himself. People began embracing Islam gradually until a powerful group of Saḥābah was formed. Islam acquired strength and power in this way. How could Allāh *taʿālā* ever tolerate the removal of this group for the sake of a few Quraysh leaders!? Allāh *taʿālā* showed special consideration for His sincere and devoted servants and clearly announced that the group of poor Companions can never be removed from the company of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If you [unbelievers] want, you may join the assembly and embrace Islam; or leave.

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ق فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَّمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ

Say: The truth is from your Lord. Then whoever wills, let him believe; and whoever wills, let him disbelieve.[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 29.

In other words, it is not going to benefit or harm Us in any way. Rather, you will be harming yourself if you do not embrace īmān. And it will be to your advantage if you embrace īmān. But if you are going to remain unbelievers, then listen to the punishment for it:

إِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ نَارًا ۙ أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا ۭ وَإِنْ يَّسْتَغِيْثُوْا يُغَاثُوْا بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوْهَ ۭ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ ۭ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

We have prepared for the sinners a fire, the awnings of which will encompass them. If they ask for help, they will be given water like pus which would scald the faces. What a dreadful drink and what an evil resting place![1]

To this point, the discussion was around Hell and the people of Hell. The people of Paradise are described as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا. أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِئِيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ ۭ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ۭ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

Surely those who believed and did good deeds – We do not waste the recompense of he who did good. For such are gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green clothes of fine and coarse silk, reclining

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 29.

therein on couches. What an excellent recompense and what a lovely resting place![1]

Glory to Allāh! Allāh *taʿālā* captured for us an entire scene of Paradise and Hell, and displayed to us the conditions of the poor and rich, the good fortune of the poor Muslims and the wretchedness of the wealthy unbelievers. Allāh *taʿālā* illustrated Paradise and Hell separately, and described the residents of Paradise and the inmates of Hell. The clothing of the people of Paradise is specifically described because the rich unbelievers had said that a stink is emanating from the clothing of the poor Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Allāh *taʿālā* disapproved of this and therefore said that they are His beloveds and His friends. Allāh *taʿālā* is saying: "First of all, the stink which emanates from their clothes is not disliked by Me. Secondly, no matter in what condition they live in this world, they consider everything apart from Allāh's pleasure to be insignificant. Their original place of residence is the Hereafter where every type of comfort has been prepared for them. They will have palatial homes, exotic foods and expensive garments.

نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ط وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

What an excellent recompense and what a lovely resting place!

Honouring the poor and needy

Glory to Allāh! Look at the lofty levels to which Allāh *taʿālā* conveyed the poor and needy. Look at the honour which He conferred to them – He brought them to His court and seated them on thrones, while

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 30-31.

the wealthy unbelievers were dropped to the pits. When these verses were revealed, the mighty unbelievers fell down in shame while the poor believers advanced and progressed.

No one can describe a thing in a manner done by Allāh *taʿālā*. In the Qur'ān Allāh *taʿālā* admonishes in a way which, if a person were to ponder over just one verse, his īmān will be refreshed and reinvigorated. I take an oath and say that there is nothing like the Qur'ān to impress the hearts of people. If the hearts can be instilled with life, then it is solely through the Qur'ān. If the spirit can be blown into them, then it is from the Qur'ān alone. If just one rukūʿ, in fact, just one verse settles in the heart, a person can realize his objective. Just read the Qur'ān and see if your īmān develops or not. Provided you read with sincerity and for Allāh's pleasure – neither for wealth nor for name and fame. When we see people not benefiting from the Qur'ān, then it is because they are reading it for worldly motives. Students are engaging in dhikr, Qur'ān recitation and everything else. They are striving hard – but all this is for worldly motives. Look at the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Allāh *taʿālā* says about them:

يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

They desire His countenance [His pleasure].

It is most sad that the Dīn is used to acquire of the world. If this is what you really want to do, why don't you get into trade and agriculture? People's beliefs have become corrupted; they do not value anything.

Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

من أوتي القرآن فرأى أن أحدا أوتي من الدنيا أفضل مما أوتي، فقد صغر عظيما وعظم صغيرا.

If a person is blessed with the Qur'ān and he thinks that someone has been given something better of this world than him, then he has belittled a great thing, and considered a small thing to be great.

Comparison between the Saḥābah and us

Now let us compare our conditions with those of the Saḥābah's. Look at how much difference there is between the two. The level of the Saḥābah's obedience, sincerity and seeking of Allāh's pleasure was such that Allāh *taʿālā* is saying to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that he must confine himself to sitting in the company of those who engage in the worship of their Lord solely for His pleasure, and he must not turn his attention away from them.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes:

عن سلمنا أنها لما نزلت قام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يلتمسهم حتى أصابهم في موخر المسجد يذكرون الله تعالى، فقال الحمد لله الذي لم يمتني حتى أمرني أن أصبر نفسي مع رجال من أمتي معكم الحيوة الممات.

Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu says that when this verse was revealed, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam went out in search of the poor Saḥābah. He found them in the rear of the masjid engaging in the remembrance of Allāh taʿālā. On seeing this, he said: All praise is due to Allāh who did not cause me to die before ordering me to keep myself with those poor

people of my ummat. O people! My living and my dying is with you.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the greatness of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He is teaching a lesson to the ummat until the day of Resurrection. Look at the affection which Allāh *taʿālā* showed for the poor Sahābah and how He strengthened them! Also look at how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* practised on these teachings and instructions. Observe the consideration which he showed to them. No one else could have done this. There were instances when even Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was reprimanded against the poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following Hadīth in *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

عن عائذ بن عمرو المزني وهو من أهل بيعة الرضوان رضي الله عنه أن أبا سفيان أتى على سلمان وصهيب وبلال في نفر، فقالوا ما أخذت سيوف الله من عدو الله مآخذها، فقال أبو بكر رضي الله عنه أتقولون هذا لشيخ قريش وسيدهم، وأتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فأخبره، فقال يا أبا بكر لعلك أغضبتهم، لإن كنت أغضبتهم لقد أغضبت ربك، فأتاهم فقال يا إخوتاه، أغضبتكم، قالوا لا، يغفر الله لك يا أخي. (رواه مسلم)

Hadrat ʿĀʾidh ibn ʿAmr al-Muzanī radiyallāhu ʿanhu who was one of the participants in the Bayʿah ar-Ridwān relates that Abū Sufyān [who was not a Muslim at the time] and a group of his friends passed by Salmān, Suhayb and Bilāl radiyallāhu ʿanhum. These three Sahābah said [to Abū Sufyān]: "The swords of Allāh are yet to take their full due from the

enemy [Abū Sufyān] of Allāh." Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu said to them: "How can you say such a thing to a senior and leader of the Quraysh?" He then went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and related the incident to him. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "O Abū Bakr! You probably angered them [the three Sahābah]. If you angered them, then you have angered Allāh taʿālā." Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu went to the three and said: "O brothers! I probably angered you." They replied: "No. May Allāh forgive you, brother."

The status of poor Sahābah

Think of the high status which Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* enjoyed and how intensely Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* loved him. But when he demonstrated the slightest unpleasantness towards the poor Sahābah, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to him: "O Abū Bakr! If you made them angry then you have made Allāh *taʿālā* angry." What a serious warning!

This was the rank and status of these poor Sahābah in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* has no value whatsoever for wealth, authority and power. After all, these are things which are given by Allāh *taʿālā* Himself. He can take them away whenever He wills. Why, then, should Allāh consider a person to be great if he owns these things. A person becomes beloved and accepted in Allāh's court through obedience to Him. But the unbelievers did not understand even this much. They used to go to the assemblies of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and make such demands – that he must remove the poor Sahābah completely, or at least ask them to leave when they arrive.

I am speaking on the following verse:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance.[1]

In his *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* explains the correlation of this verse with those before it. He says: Before this, the discussion was on messenger-ship. Further on, the rights and etiquette which have to be observed with respect to the position of messenger-ship are outlined. The essence is that the duty of propagation must continue independently, and the believers (despite their poverty) must be given preference over the unbelievers (notwithstanding their affluence and prosperity). The circumstances behind the revelation of these verses is also the same. That is, a few polytheist leaders asked Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remove the poor Ṣaḥābah when they arrive. Details in this regard were given previously.

We learn from this that just as Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was conferred with the mantle of messenger-ship, specific verses were revealed with reference to how he should uphold this position. This verse is among those verses. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* adhered to those duties and etiquette to the full, and left a perfect example whose

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

parallel cannot be found until the day of Resurrection. He taught the same to the ummat. Thus, it will be necessary and essential for any person who is on the pedestal of propagation to adhere to these rules and etiquette. It will be necessary for him to follow the Sunnat in this regard as well. After all, he is not independent in this position. Rather, he is a deputy of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why it is essential for him to follow the Sunnat in every matter. Whatever rank and acceptance he enjoys in Allāh's court will be based on this obedience and emulation.

A word of warning to the mashā'ikh

Ḥadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *Masā'il as-Sulūk*:

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ

Let not your eyes overlook them.

This is an order to the mashā'ikh to remain focused on the seekers and not to get fed up with them.

The Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*, the Tābiʿīn and the true heirs who came after them understood this teaching fully and practised accordingly. They presented practical examples of this Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The poor people used to take the place of the wealthy ones in the assemblies of Ḥadrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh*. What this means is that it is the norm to have the wealthy and influential people to be seated near and in special places. But Ḥadrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh* used to do the opposite. The poor people used to sit closest to him. He used to allocate special

seats for them, and would not bother about the wealthy ones.

It is related that when the wealthy people used to come to the assembly of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh*, they used to express the desire in their hearts that if only they were also poor so that they could sit close to him.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the sentiments of the wealthy people of those days. They did not feel offended. Instead, they gave preference to Dīn over this world. This is proof of their sincerity and genuine quest. If this was the condition of the people who used to attend the assemblies of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh*, what can be said about him!? How much of sincerity and devotion he must have had! To what extent he must have been following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*! Just look at this one point – that he gave preference to the poor people over the wealthy ones. This is no ordinary matter. Every person is not in a position to do this. Only he can do it who has a very strong urge to follow the Sunnat and gives full attention to it. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh* understood that Allāh *taʿālā* wants due attention to be paid to the poor people. This is why He revealed verses in this regard and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* practised on them and showed the way to the ummat. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would not get up from his assembly until the poor people got up themselves and left. How, then, can a follower of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* disregard this teaching and pay not attention to the poor? Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh* fully understood the Qur'ān and

Sunnat, and how he practised on them! May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to do the same. Āmīn.

An admonitory incident

Anyway, that was a great imām [Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*]. Now listen to the story of a recent ʿālim. A person who belonged to a minor tribe came to him and invited him to a function which they were hosting. The ʿālim accepted the invitation. Incidentally, a western educated person was sitting near the ʿālim. He said: "Maulānā! You people accept the invitation of even lowly people!?" The ʿālim said to the man who invited him: "Listen brother, this is what this person is saying, so I now excuse myself from accepting your invitation." The man and his family had a lot of faith and confidence in the ʿālim, so he was quite disturbed by his refusal, and said: "As long as you do not join, we cannot go forward with the wedding." When he persisted, he said: "Brother, there is one way out. Invite this man and speak to him in a very humble manner so that he accepts the invitation. If he comes, I will also come and join in the function." The family people went to the man and extended an invitation to him. They insisted and said to him: "You will have to come because Hadrat Maulānā has accepted on the condition that you join him. And if Hadrat Maulānā does not come, we will not enjoy our food at all."

When these people persisted in this way, others who were observing the scene and saw their sincerity, they said to the man: "Brother, you appear to be very proud. These poor people are displaying so much of affection towards you and begging you, but your heart is not relenting and you are not accepting their invitation." Eventually he had to accept the invitation. The ʿālim also agreed and the two went together. When

they approached, all the people stood up and received the two with genuine warmth. As the people were going to embrace the ʿālim, the one who had extended the invitation said to the people: "You must embrace this man as well because he is Hadrat Maulānā's companion." In this way, all those who embraced Hadrat Maulānā embraced this man as well. In short, there was all round respect and honour shown to the two. Excellent arrangements for the meal were made. When the man saw all this, he was highly impressed and said: "Maulānā, today I have seen real respect and honour. This is what you call respect and honour."

Fundamental honour lies in following the Sunnat

I related this story to you to show you how much this ʿālim followed the Sunnat. He accepted the invitation of poor people and showed concern for their feelings. Had he refused, it would have broken their hearts.

The point is that if everyone accepts the invitation of wealthy people only, where will the poor people go to? This is why that ʿālim accepted the invitation of those poor people and did not bother about what worldly people say. After all, fundamental honour lies in following the Sunnat and in searching for ways to acquire Allāh's pleasure. Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are pleased when concern is shown for the poor. Why, then, should we not be considerate of them?

Furthermore, poor people are by and large humble. They express their love and affection. They don't have too many formalities. They are simple people. This is why there is enjoyment in their food and the heart experiences joy in their company. On the other hand,

the rich have many formalities. They do not have the sincerity and love like the poor people. How, then, can you experience real enjoyment in their food? The fundamental things are love and a bond. If these are not found, there is nothing.

This is why that ʿālim did not reply to the objection made by his western educated friend. Instead, he refused the invitation. He knew that the people who extended the invitation to him were so sincere that they will not take no for an answer. This is why he adopted a plan which compelled his friend to join him. His friend had to witness everything and then acknowledge that true honour was what he experienced on that day. His thinking was rectified in this way.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the manner in which he was rectified! If he was made to understand the situation verbally, he would not have understood it even with a thousand explanations. But when he followed the ʿālim, he understood it fully. There are many incidents of this nature. This one was related to you to serve as an example.

Now listen to the discussion on the previously-quoted verse. After the verse which we explained to you, Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of two people so that it may serve as a consolation for the believers and a refutation of the baseless claims of the unbelievers. In this way, the believers must not be saddened by their poverty. Instead, they must be grateful for the treasures of the Hereafter which they are accruing. At the same time, the unbelievers must not scorn and look down on the poor on the basis of their pride and haughtiness.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* links this story with the verses before it by saying:

While explaining the etiquette of propagation, Allāh *taʿālā* refuted the request of the unbelievers who wanted the poor Muslims to be removed when they came into the assembly of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In order to demonstrate the despicability of wealth and the superiority of īmān and good deeds, a story is related to show that the basis for this request [of removing the poor Muslims] was pride over worldly riches, and scorn and contempt for poor Muslims. This story destroys this attitude of the unbelievers.

While this story refutes the unbelievers on one hand, it is a source of consolation and comfort for the believers – they must not be grieved by poverty and they must be grateful when they acquire riches. Now listen to this story. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا. كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا. وَّكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ.

Set forth for them the parable of two men: We made for one of them two orchards of vines, and surrounded them with date-palms, and placed between them a cornfield. Each of the two orchards yields its produce and does not decrease anything from it. And We caused a river to flow between the two [orchards]. He received the fruit.[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 32-34.

فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا. وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ ۚ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهِ أَبَدًا. وَّمَآ أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ إِلٰى رَبِّيْ لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا.

So he said to his friend when he was conversing with him: "I have more wealth than you and [more] people of respect." He entered his orchard having wronged himself. He said: "I don't think that this orchard will ever be destroyed. And I do not think that the Resurrection will take place. If I am ever conveyed to my Lord, I will find something better than this upon reaching there."[1]

In other words, you are always speaking about the orchards of the Hereafter and saying that they are better than the orchards of this world. And that they are for the accepted servants. The proof of my acceptance is that look at the comfort, luxuries and honour which I am experiencing here. If the Resurrection takes place, then too I will receive Paradise there.

On hearing all this, his friend who was a religious and poor man, said:

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰكَ رَجُلًا. لٰكِنَّا۠ هُوَ اللهُ رَبِّيْ وَلَآ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا. وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ ۚ إِنْ تَرَنِ أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 34-36.

وَّوَلَدًا. فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ أَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا. أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا.

His friend said to him while conversing with him: "Do you reject the One who created you from soil, then from a drop of sperm, then fashioned you into a man? I still maintain that He is Allāh, my Lord and I associate no one with my Lord. When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh. If you see me less than you in wealth and offspring, it may well be that my Lord will give me an orchard better than yours and send upon your orchard a whirlwind from the sky reducing it to a barren field the next morning. Or that its water dries up the next morning and you are unable to seek it."[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

His friend advises him and says: When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh." Allāh *taʿālā* will keep the orchard to exist for as long as He wills., and He can destroy it whenever He wills. All means are useless in the face of His will. None of the means can come to your assistance if He does not will it. If you see me less than you in wealth and children (and therefore have the misgiving that you and your ways are not disapproved by Allāh *taʿālā*) , then I see the time approaching when my Lord will give me an orchard better than yours (either in this world or after I die, which will have every type of comfort and luxury) . On the other hand, He will send a disaster from above on your orchard which will reduce it to a barren field. Or, he will cause the water which is flowing from a river to your land to go deep into the bowels of the earth and you will not be able to draw it out no matter what efforts you make.

The believer did not make any reference to the unbeliever's children. The simple explanation which comes to my mind for not mentioning them is that the comfort of children is coupled with that of wealth. When a person has no wealth, the children become a cause of torment and punishment.

In essence, the reason behind your misgiving is your wealth which you have and which I do not have. It is totally wrong for you to think in this way because – first of all – it is highly possible for the opposite to happen. Secondly, it is bound to perish at some time or the other. On the other hand, the bounties of the

Hereafter are everlasting. Consideration is therefore given to the Hereafter and not this world.

After this conversation, the thing which the believer predicted actually happened. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَأُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهٖ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا. وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا. هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ط هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا.

All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord." He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh nor could he take revenge himself. It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.[1]

What calamity descended on his orchard is not mentioned. However, the passive "was encompassed" suggests that it was a most destructive calamity.

Tafsīr Khāzin states that it was a fire which descended from the skies, burnt the orchard and farm, and caused the water to dry up. Ibn Ḥibbān also mentions a fire (as related by Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Abī Ḥātim on the authority of aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk).

Subsequently, he began wringing his hands over whatever he had spent on his orchard. It was now

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 42-44.

fallen on its trellises. The orchard is mentioned specifically because he had spent most of his money on it, and it was also the most beloved of his wealth. His remorse over its destruction is not mentioned because it is obvious. The money which he spent on it is mentioned because it was a cause of double remorse – over the present and the past, directly and indirectly. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord." This includes rejection of the Hereafter. Rejection of tauḥīd is mentioned because it is the greatest.

What we can gauge from this is that he realized that the calamity descended because of his kufr. He expressed his remorse that if he did not commit kufr, the calamity would not have come to him. And if it came, he would have received a recompense for it in the Hereafter. But now he has lost both in this world and in the Hereafter.

The believer must have learnt of all these things which he said and thought. It does not necessarily mean that he too became a believer because his remorse was over the loss which he suffered and not over the reprehensibility of kufr.

Allāh *taʿālā* says thereafter:

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا

He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh in preventing the calamity from coming down or repulsing it after it came down. All the pride which he previously had about his group and followers disappeared. At the same time, he could not exact any revenge from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* concludes by saying:

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا

It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.

In other words, it is at this point that it is only Allāh *taʿālā* who can help, and (in the Hereafter), His reward is the best. Even in this world, His result is the best. That is, if His close servants experience any loss in this world, they receive a good recompense for it in both worlds. On the other hand, an unbeliever is in total and absolute loss.

This story demonstrates the fleeting and despicable nature of worldly goods and possessions, and the eternal and honourable nature of good deeds. This story must have really consoled the Muslims and brought tranquillity to them. If so much of consideration is shown to the poor Muslims in this world and they are accorded so much of respect, what can be said of the gifts which they will receive in the Hereafter – the place which is especially reserved for Allāh's righteous and pious servants! Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows what bounties they will receive there. We can get the slightest hint of those bounties by studying the Aḥādīth.

A believer must never be grieved by worldly poverty in this fleeting and temporary world. He must concentrate on acquiring the wealth and treasures of the Hereafter.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent piece of advice from Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* which out to be imprinted on our hearts. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise and may He confer us with the bounties of the Hereafter. Āmīn. (compiler)

اَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ. بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰى. أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمٰى. وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكّٰى. أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى. أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى. فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدّٰى. وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى. وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعٰى. وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى. فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهّٰى. كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ. فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ.

He frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man. What do you know? Perhaps he will purify himself. Or he may have pondered and the pondering may have benefited him. As for he who could not bother, you are concerned about him. You are not to be blamed in any way if he does not reform. As for he who came running towards you, and he fears, you pay no attention to him. It should not be so. This is an admonition. Whoso wills, should read it.[1]

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* writes:

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was sitting in Masjid-e-Ḥarām when a few Quraysh leaders and nobles (such as ʿUtbah, Rabīʿah, Shaybah, Abu Jahal and others) were present with him. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was explaining to them the beauty of Islam and the harms of idol-worship. He was fully focussed in his address to them when a

[1] Sūrah ʿAbasa, 80: 1-12.

blind Sahābī by the name of ʿAbdullāh ibn Shuray*h* *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* who was also known as Ibn Umm Maktūm came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not too pleased by his arrival because he felt that since he was a blind person, he might say things which would interrupt him and his conversation with the Quraysh leaders will be disrupted. Consequently, the task of inviting them to Islam will remain incomplete. The blind Sahābī entered the assembly, sat down behind Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: "Teach me such and such sūrah of the Qur'ān, and show some attention to me because I bore many difficulties in inquiring about your whereabouts and eventually came here."

Out of consideration for the Quraysh leaders, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* remained silent and then asked the blind man to wait a bit. After a little while, he made his request again and expressed his hurry. His inappropriate actions caused the Quraysh leaders to be offended and disturbed. The effects of displeasure were visible on the face of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he turned his face away from the blind man, and turned his attention towards the Quraysh leaders. This sūrah was then sent down wherein a severe reprimand about this treatment was revealed.

Allāh *taʿālā* sends the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* for the guidance and rectitude of people. This is why He directly undertakes their training and education. In this way, they can imbibe the character of Allāh *taʿālā* and be embellished with the highest level of characteristics and mannerisms. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

أدّبني ربّي فأحسن تأديبي، وعلّمني ربّي فاحسن تعليمي[1]

My Lord taught me manners, this is why my manners became the best. My Lord taught me, this is why my education is the best.

In this sūrah, Allāh *taʿālā* teaches and trains Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a very special and lofty manner. From the circumstances behind the revelation of this sūrah we learn that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was explaining the beauty of Islam and the reprehensibility of idol-worship to the Quraysh leaders. He was doing this with full focus and attention. It was obviously a most important matter. The blind Sahābī became an obstacle to it and began distracting Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* repeatedly, and was expressing his hurry. The effects of displeasure became apparent on the face of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he turned his face away from him. Allāh *taʿālā* was not pleased by this so He revealed this sūrah.

Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that the commentators faced a serious objection over this reprimand because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not break any rules of the Sharīʿat. Why, then, was he reprimanded so severely? The rule of the Sharīʿat is that general benefit takes precedence over specific benefit. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gave preference to addressing the Quraysh leaders over teaching a sūrah to the blind Sahābī because if the Quraysh leaders embraced Islam, it was highly expected for the rest of the people of Makkah to

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[1] فيض القدير، حديث ٣١٠.

embrace it. After all, people generally follow the religion of their rulers. On the other hand, teaching this one blind person would have benefited him alone.

Furthermore, inviting towards Islam is given preference over teaching the Qur'ān because inviting is the fundamental, while teaching is a branch of it. The jurists have laid down the rule that if a person comes and says: "Teach me Islam and make me a Muslim", and another person comes and says: "Teach me the Qur'ān" or he asks for some advice, then teaching Islam has to be given precedence. This is because delaying the teaching of Islam is more harmful than delaying the other things [such as teaching the Qur'ān]. The spiritual condition of a kāfir on account of the spiritual ailment of kufr which is within him is similar to a person who has been bitten by a venomous snake. The slightest inattention or delay in his treatment will result in a failure in his treatment [and he will die]. On the other hand, the condition of a person who is ignorant of the rules of the Sharī'at or cannot read the Qur'ān is like a person who has an ailment which is not dangerous at all. It can be treated easily and slowly.

Rasūlullāh's blessed facial expression changed on account of the inappropriate questions of the blind Saḥābī. There are two reasons why Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is not eligible for reprimand in this regard. (1) It is a natural change in facial expression which is beyond one's control. If a person were to be taken to task for such things, it would entail imposing something which is beyond his power. (2) If a person frowns at a blind person, turns his attention away from him, does not pay attention to him – then all these things are the same to him

because he cannot see. He can therefore not be harmed or offended by them.

Furthermore, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not aware that his action was disliked by Allāh *taʿālā* because no prohibition in this regard was revealed as yet. How, then, can he be reprimanded so severely right at the beginning?

The answer to the above objection is as follows:

A poet says:

> Do not gauge the actions of the pure ones against your own because although the words *sher* and *sher* appear to be exactly the same, the meaning of each one is different.

The first one means "a lion" and the second means "milk". There is a major difference between the two. This is an excellent answer which leaves no room for objection.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says further on that although the blind person could not see the changes in facial expression, others could see those changes. They would have regarded it as partiality towards the wealthy and disregard for the poor. Allāh *taʿālā* disliked this possible allegation against Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* wanted the internal and external selves of His beloved [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] to be devoted to Allāh's pleasure and devotion to Him. There must be no assertion whatsoever of the slightest ostentation against Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Consideration to the capability of the seeker

Furthermore, pure souls must take into consideration the capabilities of the seekers when teaching and guiding them, and they must focus on the end result. There were many humble fakirs who became guiding lamps for entire countries and continents by virtue of their lofty capabilities. The expectation of general benefit must be based on the capability of the seeker. Looking at the large numbers of wealthy people at present and being deceived by this is the work of short-sighted people. It is the work of those who do not have any knowledge of the different ranks of the souls and their capabilities. The blind person benefiting from the company of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was certain and definitive, while the wealthy leaders benefiting from the call of Islam and from them the residents of the city benefiting from it was a matter which is supposed. It is not good to give precedence to something which is supposed over something which is definitive and certain.

The fact of the matter is that although there can be no possibility whatsoever of the action of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* being unlawful and a sin, Allāh *taʿālā* does not suffice with merely saving His beloveds from sin. Rather, He wants them to imbibe His characteristics. Like an affectionate father who, when he sees his sons adopting the appearance and ways which are different from his, he will reprimand them even if the appearance and ways which they adopt are lawful and correct. A king will not approve of his sons earning a living by becoming ordinary labourers and soldiers even if they are occupied in lawful means of earning.

Thus, this reprimand was not on the basis of reprimanding against a sin or an act of disobedience,

which would make it difficult to explain its meaning and reason. Rather, it is a reprimand like that of a father to his children.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has noted some very excellent points which deserve to be written in gold.

No commentator has explained this sūrah in the manner explained by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Look at what a beautiful couplet he quoted:

> Do not gauge the actions of the pure ones against your own because although the words *sher* and *sher* appear to be exactly the same, the meaning of each one is different.[1]

This couplet alone is enough to answer the objection. Despite this, look at what a beautiful point he made when he said that although the blind Sahābī could not see the changes in the facial expressions of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, others were seeing the changes. They would have assumed that this shows partiality towards the wealthy and disregard for the poor. Allāh *taʿālā* wanted that even the inkling of an accusation must not be levelled against His beloved [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*]. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed these verses to teach Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that he must abstain from situations of doubt and misgiving as well. Subsequently this is exactly what happened. For the rest of his blessed life he never looked frowningly at

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[1] The first one means "a lion" and the second means "milk". There is a major difference between the two. This is an excellent answer which leaves no room for objection.

any poor person, and he never acquiesced before the wealthy.

However, by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, I say that the partiality towards the wealthy and the disregard for the poor which people were seeing, they wouldn't have regarded them as such. Those who were seeing it were either unbelievers of believers. The unbelievers would not have regarded it as such because they themselves were thirsty for that preferential treatment and they wanted Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to disregard the poor. Why, then, should they accuse him of it? As for the sincere believers, their faith in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not so weak that they would lose it over trivial matters. They were devoted and loyal followers. They had remained firm and resolute in major situations and slippery circumstances. They would never have brought such ignoble thoughts about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* over this one manner of treatment. They were very far from such thoughts. They understood that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was explaining the truthfulness of tauhīd, and the despicability of unbelief and polytheism. It was obviously a most important matter. The blind Sahābī's interjection neither made sense nor was it in line with the principles of the Sharīʿat. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* frowned and expressed his disapproval. In this way he taught the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* to desist in situations of this nature and they must not interject.

Nonetheless, Allāh's training of His beloved was far loftier – that he must not adopt such a mannerism in situations of this nature. Instead, he must explain to the seekers in a soft manner, and he must not hurt

the feelings of the poor seekers in favour of the wealthy non-seekers. After all, you [Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] are on the highest pedestal of sound character and you have imbibed the character of Allāh *taʿālā*. No one can ever imagine and allege from your treatment, that you are being partial towards the wealthy and disregarding the poor. However, when your followers see this, they will not be able to remain within the limits. They will make it their norm to see to the wealthy and disregard the poor totally. This will obviously hurt the feelings of the poor.

Generally the majority of the seekers are the poor people. If they lose hope and give up learning and teaching, the entire system will collapse. This is why when that blind Ṣaḥābī came to you, you should have addressed the wealthy and said: "Although it will mean stopping my conversation with you, you will have to wait a little. I will speak to him quickly and dispense with him." You should have then turned to the blind Ṣaḥābī and said: "I am presently speaking to the Quraysh leaders on important aspects of Islam. They have been sitting here from the beginning and I am still conversing with them. You can come at some other time and I will teach you. If you permit, I will continue my conversation with them." The blind Ṣaḥābī would have obviously agreed with the suggestion and given his permission.

I am explaining this solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. After all, I am nothing. I hope you enjoyed this explanation and approve of it.

No matter what, this sūrah contains a powerful teaching. That is, never ever give preferential treatment to the wealthy to the extent that it breaks

the heart of the poor. It is most reprehensible to do this.

Rasūlullāh's beautiful treatment of the blind Saḥābī

Another objective of this sūrah is to convey to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that there is no need for him to hanker after the wealthy people. He should rather remain independent. Just as he has poor followers, he will have wealthy followers who will be loyal to him. It is in Our power to turn them towards you. There is no need for you to pursue them nor do you have to flatter them. All you have to do is teach and train the seeker who comes to you. This is the method of training and this is your responsibility.

Rasūlullāh's interaction with this Saḥābī changed completely after the revelation of these verses. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went personally to his house and apologized to him. He then took him to his own house, laid out his blessed shawl for him, and seated him on it. Later on, whenever he attended Rasūlullāh's assembly, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would receive him warmly and say:

مرحبا بمن عاتبني فيه ربي

Welcome to the one about whom my Allāh reprimanded me.

Whenever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* met him anywhere, he would say to him: "You must let me know if you need anything." In fact, there were two occasions when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went on a journey and appointed him as the imām for salāh in his place. This was his treatment of

the blind Sahābī. As for the other poor people, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became extremely soft and lenient towards them. It is related that after the revelation of these verses, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* never became angry at any poor person, and he never pursued any wealthy person.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and see how he carried out Allāh's orders.

A word of caution to the 'ulamā and mashā'ikh

What right do the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh have to act contrary to this? This is the beautiful example shown by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Without it no ʿālim is a true ʿālim and no shaykh is a genuine shaykh. It is necessary for everyone to follow this Sunnat. The genuine ʿulamā' of this ummat adopted this way and practised on it.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes:

تأدب الناس أدبًا حسنًا

The people learnt beautiful character from this incident.

I related to you the story of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* and how the wealthy people in his assembly used to hope that they were poor so that they could get the opportunity to sit close to him. That is how much he practised on the verses of the Qur'ān and the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib

Our Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had very pleasant character and he would receive everyone with genuine warmth. When wealthy people came to him, he would receive them warmly and honourably, and say: "I am not honouring them because they are wealthy, but because of *niʿma*. Because a Hadīth states:

نعم الأمير على باب الفقير

Excellent indeed is the wealthy person at the door of a poor person.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how he adhered to the Sunnat and how knowledge of Hadīth was present before him. This is known as *ʿilm ladunnī* (Allāh bestowed knowledge)

An important investigative decision

Abstaining from pursuing the wealthy most certainly does not mean that one must pay no attention to them and that one must be ill-mannered towards them. Rather, what it means is that when the wealthy and poor assemble in one place, the poor must not get the impression that they are being looked down upon because of their poorness. This will obviously hurt their feelings. A person must be guarded in situations of this nature.

If wealthy people come as seekers of Allāh *taʿālā* and present themselves for rectification, attention must be paid to them. Their quest and capabilities will be observed, and they will not be disregarded because of their affluence. Thus, the basis for paying attention to a person is his capability and quest. If a person comes with genuine quest and yearning, full attention will be

paid to him, even if his is poor and downtrodden. As stated previously by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* that many poor people become guiding lamps for entire countries and continents by virtue of their capabilities. Thus, the expectation of all-encompassing benefit [to the creation] must be according to the power of capability in the seeker. It will be most short-sighted to be deceived by the large number of wealthy people who are devoid of capabilities.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes a very pertinent point. It is really these personalities who understand the meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān.

We learn from the above that excellence in a shaykh lies in his ability to consider the capabilities of the seekers, and to train them according to the level of their capabilities. If they possess lofty capabilities, full attention and focus must be given to their training. It must not happen that attention is given to incapable people while the genuine seekers lose out in the process. When compared to the time which is spent on a non-seeker to develop a quest in him, a person who already has the capabilities and quest will have received his training by then, and will start benefiting others.

Look at that blind Sahābī and what capabilities he possessed! Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that he saw him in the Battle of Qādisīyyah clad in an armour, sitting on a horse with a black flag in front of him, and attacking the ranks of the unbelievers despite his blindness.

This is indeed a great piece of information. To be near the flag is a most important position in the battlefield. That is where arrows from all sides descend and swords work the most. It is no easy task – especially

for a blind man – to withstand all that, defend himself, and still attack the unbelievers.

Listen! The fact of the matter is that he was a devoted Companion of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He acquired internal eyesight by virtue of his companionship with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He could see just as those who have external eyes. In fact, more than the external eyes, he had a special internal light with which he was able to see everything, defend himself and attack the enemy. Allāh *taʿālā* most certainly confers these eyes to the Ahlullāh by His grace. Consequently, they are able to perceive internal things which a person with external eyes cannot perceive.

Whatever the blind Saḥābī had was because of his capability – after all, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appointed him as the imām for salāh in Madīnah Munawwarah on two occasions. Appointing a blind Saḥābī to this position despite there being so many Saḥābah who had eyesight was obviously because of certain special qualities which he possessed.

Noble character surpasses the miracle of splitting the moon

Now listen to another point. It was no small matter that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* abstained from frowning at a poor person after the revelation of these verses. There may have been many incidents with poor people which could have disturbed his blessed temperament. Yet, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* controlled himself to the extent that the effects of displeasure were never visible on his face is indeed a great miracle. In fact, I can take an oath and say that it is a miracle which is superior to his

miracle of splitting the moon. The laity consider the splitting of the moon to be a major miracle, but the scholars are of the view that the noble character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is far more superior. This is because it is beyond a human to have such noble characteristics. It is a supernatural feat, and this is what you call a miracle.

Note: Those who have some knowledge of the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can fully understand the significant point which is made by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It ought to be written in gold. In fact, it ought to be imprinted in our hearts. (compiler)

Now listen to another point: This sūrah is a clear proof of the prophet-hood of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and an obvious testimony to his being a true Prophet. He is being reprimanded over a specific matter and the incident is described in detail. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* presents it in its totality without withholding anything to the ummat. This is a glittering proof of his genuineness and truthfulness. A false claimant will only mention things which are in praise of him and in his favour. He will never ever disclose those aspects of his life from which wrong results can be deduced.

Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* has explained a very beautiful correlation between this sūrah and the one before it. I am relating the gist of it. In the previous sūrah (Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt), Allāh *taʿālā* taught the principles and rules of propagation to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. In the present sūrah Allāh *taʿālā* teaches Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* an important principle in the field of spiritual purification and training. Both were Prophets who were endowed with resoluteness,

and so both were taught according to their individual conditions and eras. Pharaoh was an unjust tyrant who wielded immense power. He had the power to use whatever he wanted. Allāh *taʿālā* ordered Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to adopt a lenient approach. Allāh *taʿālā* even taught him what words he should utter. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اِذْهَبْ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّهٗ طَغٰى. فَقُلْ هَلْ لَّكَ اِلٰى اَنْ تَزَكّٰى. وَاَهْدِيَكَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشٰى.

Go to Pharaoh, for he has certainly transgressed. Then say to him: "Are you desirous of being purified? And that I show you the path to your Lord so that you may then fear [Him]?"[1]

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* derives a most important principle from this verse. He writes:

> O Mūsā! You must speak softly to the Pharaoh of the time (because) if boiling water is poured over oil, it will burn the cauldron and the cook. Speak leniently but not incorrectly. Do not cause whisperings in speaking leniently.

The commentator to the above couplets says that the address must not be so soft and lenient that the addressee experiences whisperings about the falseness of your religion.[2]

Now listen to the gist of the above discussion. This sūrah teaches very lofty characteristics. Disregarding the poor, especially for mashā'ikh and teachers to

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 17-19.

[2] *Mathnawī Sharīf*, vol. 4, p. 92.

disregard them, can never be tolerated. It is necessary to teach them according to their capabilities. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that the reason for naming this sūrah "Sūrah 'Abasa" is so that teachers and guides will always bear in mind the condition of the seekers and students. By merely hearing the name of this sūrah, they will be reminded of this incident and they will take admonition from it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just admire the knowledge and sciences of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*! We ought to imprint them in our hearts. O Allāh! Inspire us towards goodness and rectitude. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE CHIEF OF THE MESSENGERS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* placed the *Gulistān* and *Būstān* in front of him and said:

These are no ordinary books. Countless people practised on their teachings and adopted the etiquette described in them and became walīs. The speaker is recognized by his speech. It is from his speech that we can gauge the level of his expertise and excellence. A *mukammal* person is one from whose teachings people acquire the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and closeness to Him; and they themselves become people of erudition. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* [the author of *Gulistān* and *Būstān*] is the disciple of Shaykh Hadrat Shihāb ad-Dīn Sahrawardī *rahimahullāh* who is from among the Sufi masters. Hadrat Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* makes reference to him in the following couplets:

> My blessed and intelligent shaykh, Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Sahrawardī gave me two words of advice while travelling by ship: (1) Do not look at yourself with self-conceit. (2) Do not look at others with an evil eye.

He quotes two pieces of advice of his shaykh. (1) Do not look approvingly at your own excellences. If a person looks at his own excellences he will be destroyed. (2) Do not have bad thoughts about another person because he may well be a righteous man. By focussing on his faults, you will be deprived of his blessings.

Glory to Allāh! What excellent pieces of advice which ought to be written in gold. These were the teachings of our seniors. Many people acquired spirituality

through them and reached Allāh *taʿālā*. Unfortunately, people of today have discarded these teachings but still want to acquire Allāh's proximity and are desirous of meeting the saints of Dīn. How can this happen?! After all, this is a spiritual path, it is not a physical one. It cannot be traversed through physical strength. Rather, it can be traversed by following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes:

> The one who follows a path which is against that of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never reach the destination.

In the above couplet, Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* is actually explaining the following instruction of Allāh *taʿālā*:

اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

It is therefore essential to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Those who traversed this path and were successful did so solely by emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In the same way, it is necessary to follow the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* when praising him. It is not permissible to go beyond the bounds in praising him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says:

لا تطروني كما اطرت النصارى ابن مريم (البخاري)

Do not transgress the limits in praising me as was done by the Christians with Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

The Christians went to the extent of claiming that Hadrat ʿIsā *ʿalayhis salām* was the son of God. Similarly, the Jews believed that Hadrat ʿUzayr *ʿalayhis salām* was the son of God. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to this:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُوْدُ عُزَيْرُ ۨ ابْنُ اللهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصٰرَى الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ اللهِ

The Jews said: "Uzayr is the son of Allāh." The Christians said: "Masīh is the son of Allāh".[1]

This is the transgressing of limits which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited. Writing couplets in praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a very tricky, intricate and difficult science. The ʿulamā' say that if a person becomes madly in love with Allāh *taʿālā* and in his intoxication, he says something against Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be pardoned because it was said in a state of intoxication. On the other hand, if anyone says something against Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a state of intoxication, he will be taken to task immediately. This is why we see the Sufis are very cautious in saying anything about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They were fully conscious of the respect and honour which he deserves. They feared saying anything disrespectful and were restricted in their poetical compositions. If they slipped in the least, they will be taken to task. In other words, they will be seized by Allāh *taʿālā*.

A saint said something about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which was inappropriate. However, because he was a qualified shaykh, he came to his senses and realized that he uttered an incorrect

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 30.

statement. He made up for his mistake by waking up at 2am on cold winter nights, standing in cold water, and saying: "May the Sharīʿat of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* remain strong and eternal." He used to repeat these words and continued doing this for six months. Once he was convinced that he has been pardoned, he stopped this action.

Selflessness is necessary for Allāh's love, but there must be no selflessness in praising Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Rather, it requires vigilance, consciousness and full understanding. Although the two are total opposites, if they are not present, a person will be deficient. A perfect person is one who combines love and recognition. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* combined both. That is, he possessed perfect love and perfect recognition. He also had a very high level of intelligence. The *naʿt* which he composed in praise of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes mention of his excellent qualities. Shaykh Saʿdī does not transgress the limits at any point. He writes the following in his *Gulistān* in his description of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

> The chief of the universe and the pride of the world. The mercy to the world, the most superior among all humans, the one who perfected time.[1]

Glory to Allāh! What beautiful words! Who can write anything better than this!? This couplet encompasses everything. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the chief of the universe, the pride of the creation, the mercy to the world, this chief of the Messengers and the seal of the Prophets.

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[1] *Gulistān*, p. 6.

These people have guided many people and conveyed many others to the highest levels of spirituality. Now if you don't understand it or do not listen to it, what can I do? He says thereafter:

شفيع مطاع نبي كريم – قسيم جسيم نسيم وسيم

He is an intercessor. He is one who is obeyed. He is a noble Prophet. He is the distributor who is handsome, fragrant and beautiful.[1]

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is an intercessor in the Hereafter and obeyed in this world. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ

We did not send any Messenger except for the purpose that his order be obeyed by the decree of Allāh.[2]

In the Hereafter he will be the *shafīʿ al-mudhnibīn* – the one who will intercede on behalf of the sinners. The intercession of everyone else will be dependent on his intercession. In other words, when everyone will be terrified by the severities of the day of Resurrection, they will say: "It will be better if the decision is passed as quickly as possible – whether for reward or punishment." The people will go to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and request them to intercede on their behalf so that the accounting of deeds may commence. No one will have the courage to go before Allāh *taʿālā* with this request. All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and Auliyā' will decline. People will go to *Shafīʿ al-mudhnibīn ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*

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[1] *Gulistān*, p. 7.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 64.

and ask him to intercede. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will say: "Yes, today is the day when I will intercede." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will present himself in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*, fall into prostration, and praise Him in a manner which – as per the words of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – he does not know how much he will praise Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* will say: "O Muhammad! Raise your head and ask whatever you wish. Your request will be accepted." The accounting of deeds for the entire creation will commence. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will then intercede on behalf of the sinners. The manner and extent in which he will intercede cannot be imagined. Just imagine the kindness and affection of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for the sinners of his ummat. My heart desires to quote the following couplet:

> Why should the wall of the ummat worry when it has someone like you as its guardian? Why should the ship fear the waves of the ocean whose captain is Nūh *ʿalayhis salām*?

بلغ العلى بكماله – كشف الدجى بجماله

حسنت جميع خصاله – صلّوا عليه وآله

He reached lofty heights through his excellence. He removed darkness through his beauty. All the qualities of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam are excellent. Send salutations to him and his family.[1]

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[1] *Gulistān*, p. 7.

In other words, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reached lofty heights through his excellence and perfection. He reached a position which no other Messenger or angel reached. The light of his beauty removed the pitch darkness of unbelief and misguidance. All his qualities are exceptional. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ

You are certainly on a lofty pedestal of sound character.

If Allāh *taʿālā* testifies to the loftiness of his character and qualities, what can we say?

Send salutations to him and his family because Allāh *taʿālā* and all the angels constantly send salutations to him. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا.

Allāh and His angels send mercy to the Prophet. O believers! Send mercy to him and salute him with salutations of peace.[1]

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes a concise *naʿt* (praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*) in the introduction to his *Gulistān* and then explains it in detail in his *Būstān*. My heart desires to present some of it to you. He says:

كريم السجايا جميل الشيم – نبي البرايا شفيع الأمم

[1] Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 56.

He has excellent qualities and beautiful characteristics. He is the Prophet of all creations and the intercessor for all nations.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says further on:

> He is the imām of all the Prophets and the guide on the path. He is the trusted one of Allāh *taʿālā* and the one to whom Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* descended.
>
> He is the intercessor for the nations and the chief of the Resurrection. He is the imām of guidance and the chief of the court of the Resurrection.
>
> He is the *kalīm* whose Tur is the heavens. All other lights are reflections of his light.

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* is known as *Kalīmullāh* because he used to converse a lot with Allāh *taʿālā*. He spoke to Allāh *taʿālā* on Mt. Tūr while Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* spoke to Allāh *taʿālā* in the heavens.

> He is such an orphan that although the Qurʾān hadn't been revealed in its entirety as yet, he abrogated the libraries of all other religions.
>
> When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* merely intended to unsheathe the sword of fear, the moon was miraculously split into two.

Reference is made to the miracle of splitting the moon into two. There is so much of power in the resolution of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that by his mere intention, the moon was split into two.

> When the people of the world began speaking about the birth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the palace of Kisrā experienced an earthquake.

Reference is made to the night when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was born. The palace of Nausherwā experienced an earthquake and 14 of its parapets collapsed.

> Through the *Lā* of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reduced Lāt to bits. He gave power to Islam and reduced ʿUzzā to dust.
>
> He did not suffice with putting an end to the power of Lāt and ʿUzzā. Rather, he abrogated the Taurāh and Injīl as well.[1]

The word *Lā* refers to the kalimah tauhīd (*Lā Ilāha Illallāh*). What this means is that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* elevated this kalimah to such a level that Lāt, ʿUzzā and all idols collapsed and their honour was reduced to dust.

Hadrat Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* undoubtedly explained every single quality of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a most beautiful manner. In-between all this, I just recalled a couplet of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* in which he praises Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a most eloquent manner. In it, he maintained the creed of tauhīd while praising Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a manner which suited him. He says:

> The words *Lā Ilāha* negate everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, thus, he is also

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[1] *Būstān*, p. 6.

negated. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became a *Lā*. However, he is residing in the side of the word *Illā*. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* affirms the messenger-ship of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the kalimah tauhīd.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* then speaks about the Miʿrāj.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* journeyed one night and went past the heavens as well. He even went beyond the great and close angels. The Burāq galloped so fast on the field of Allāh's proximity that on reaching Sidratul Muntahā, Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* had to halt there. The chief of Bayt al-Harām [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] said to Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*: "O bearer of divine revelation, come up. When you have found Me to be a sincere friend, why are you turning your reins away from my companionship? Why are you leaving me alone?" Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "It is totally beyond me to go further because I am absolutely weak and there is no strength in my wings. If I were to fly up for the distance of even the breadth of a hair, the divine lights will reduce my wings to ash." The manifestation of Allāh's light is beyond this point, and Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* does not have the power and strength to bear it. It was only for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* who was given the ability to bear Allāh's special light.

The Mi'rāj was a physical journey

There are various narrations about the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Was it a physical Miʿrāj or a spiritual one. The majority of the narrations and the most authentic ones demonstrate that it was a physical journey, and that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* personally went up with his physical body. However, the body had taken the order of the soul in such a way that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was able to go beyond the point which Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* could go.

The spiritual strength of Rasūlullāh

On one occasion Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* to show himself in his original form. He replied: "You will probably not be able to bear it." When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* persisted, he showed himself in his original form and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became unconscious.

It is related that when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time, he became terrified and restless, and he came to Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* asking her to cover him with a blanket.

Now when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reached Sidratul Muntahā and Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* said to him: "O bearer of divine revelation, you may now proceed further [because I cannot go beyond this point]", then Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reminded him of the time when he had asked him to show him his original form and how he became terrified when he saw him.

We could say that the angelic qualities of Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* had overpowered the human qualities of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. And on the occasion of Miʿrāj, a similar condition was experienced by Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. The angelic qualities of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had become extremely powerful which Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* himself acknowledged. Hadrat Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* expresses the same theme in the following couplet:

> Now only you can proceed beyond this point. It is not within me to proceed further.

It is mentioned in *Amīr ar-Riwāyāt* that Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* states towards the end of the fourth register of his *Mathnawī* (in his explanation of the Hadīth wherein Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* goes to Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* and asks her to cover him) that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was certainly affected by Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* but the effect was not experienced by the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but by his physical body. On the other hand, the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is such that Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* could not bear it. This is the crux of his explanation.

A few emotional couplets

At this point I feel it appropriate to quote a few couplets of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh*.

When Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* unconscious due to his fear, he immediately took him into his lap. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* lost consciousness

because the acceptance of a change is from among the qualities of the body (and not of the soul). The soul which is glittering like the sun remains forever. Bearing in mind that the body of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also has physical qualities, this change (of external unconsciousness) occurred in compliance with the body. Understand this well.

The reason why Rasūlullāh's blessed body fell unconscious when it saw Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* is that his soul went into a type of frenzy when it saw Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. This is because in Jibraʾīl it visualized the effulgence of Allāh *taʿālā* and got drowned in the ocean of visualization. This affected the physical body and unconsciousness overcame him. Whereas the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is such that if he where to expose his spirituality and angelic qualities, Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* would have remained unconscious forever. Thus, we see that when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* advanced beyond Sidratul Muntahā, he asked Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* to join him. To which Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* said that he may continue but it is not within him to advance any further.

A beautiful explanation given by Hājī Imdādullāh

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* quoted a most beautiful explanation to the Hadīth[1] wherein Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went to Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* and asked her to cover him. If you were to read it with understanding,

[1] This Hadīth is hereafter referred to as the Hadīth of *zammilūnī zammilūnī*.

you will be overcome by ecstasy. The following is mentioned in *Amīr ar-Riwāyāt*.

Khān Ṣāḥib said that the Ḥadīth of *zammilūnī zammilūnī* was mentioned in the presence of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. When Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time, and he returned trembling to Ḥaḍrat Khadījah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā*, he asked her to cover him with a blanket. Someone asked Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*: "Did Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* become scared of Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*?" He replied in the negative. Rather, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* could not bear his reality all at once when it was exposed to him when he looked at Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. There is a principle that when you live among those who are not of your own species then your own reality becomes hidden. It is only exposed when you see someone from your own species. Like the famous story of a person who domesticated a lion cub and left it among his goats. The lion was not aware of its reality while living among the goats. It also behaved like them. Incidentally, it saw its reflection while it was drinking water. When it saw its face, its bravery and pluck came before its eyes.

When it looked at the goats around it, it realized that it is not a goat; it is something else. When the reality dawned upon it, it went among the goats and gave vent to its lion-ness. It ate some of the goats and tore open others.

Ḥaḍrat then said: Imagine there is an island on which all ugly people live. One most beautiful fairy-like woman is then born there. Because she is living among them, she will consider herself to be just like them. The reality of her beauty will not be known to

her. Therefore, she will neither display any pride nor coquetry. But if she coincidentally comes across another person who is as beautiful as her, and who shows off her beauty, etc. her reality will dawn upon her and she too will become proud and coquettish.

In the same way, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was like that lion and that beautiful woman among the ignorant people of Makkah, and his reality hadn't dawned upon him. But no sooner he set eyes on Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* who was from his species – in the sense that Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* is directly trained by Allāh *taʿālā* because he has the responsibility of bringing down divine revelation and the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are also directly trained by Allāh *taʿālā* and they receive divine revelation – Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw his own reality in the face of Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. However, it was so great and majestic that he could not bear it all at once. He trembled and shivered, and said *zammilūnī zammilūnī*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly did not become frightened of Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*.

Khān Sāhib used to say that Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Mahmūd al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to relate the above incident to me again and again, and he would sway in ecstasy.[1]

Each of these two seniors [Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*] explained this Hadīth according to his own inclination and taste. Hadrat Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* said that the body of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was affected by Hadrat

[1] *Amīr ar-Riwāyāt*, p. 136.

Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* and said that the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was not affected. The essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is so great that Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* cannot bear it. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was not affected by Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām*. Rather, his reality dawned upon him when he saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām*, and it was so great and majestic that he could not bear it all at once. He became restless and said *zammilūnī zammilūnī*. He did not become scared of Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* in the least.

I would like to explain this topic to you in some detail. *Bukhārī Sharīf* contains a Hadīth narrated by Hadrat 'A'ishah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* which explains how revelation commenced. It reads as follows:

أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لاَ يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلاَّ جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبِّبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلاَءُ، وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بِغَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّثُ فِيهِ ـ وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ ـ اللَّيَالِيَ ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ، فَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قَالَ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. قَالَ: فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّالِثَةَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ. خَلَقَ الإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ. اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الأَكْرَمُ. فَرَجَعَ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَرْجُفُ فُؤَادُهُ،

فَدَخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ بِنْتِ خُوَيْلِدٍ رضى الله عنها فَقَالَ " زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي ". فَزَمَّلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ، فَقَالَ لِخَدِيجَةَ وَأَخْبَرَهَا الْخَبَرَ " لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي ". فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلاَّ وَاللهِ مَا يُخْزِيكَ اللهُ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ، وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ، وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ. فَانْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْفَلِ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعُزَّى ابْنَ عَمِّ خَدِيجَةَ ـ وَكَانَ امْرَأً تَنَصَّرَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكِتَابَ الْعِبْرَانِيَّ، فَيَكْتُبُ مِنَ الإِنْجِيلِ بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ مَا شَاءَ اللهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ، وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ ـ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ اسْمَعْ مِنَ ابْنِ أَخِيكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَبَرَ مَا رَأَى. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا النَّامُوسُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ اللهُ عَلَى مُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَذَعًا، لَيْتَنِي أَكُونُ حَيًّا إِذْ يُخْرِجُكَ قَوْمُكَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " أَوَمُخْرِجِيَّ هُمْ ". قَالَ نَعَمْ، لَمْ يَأْتِ رَجُلٌ قَطُّ بِمِثْلِ مَا جِئْتَ بِهِ إِلاَّ عُودِيَ، وَإِنْ يُدْرِكْنِي يَوْمُكَ أَنْصُرْكَ نَصْرًا مُؤَزَّرًا. ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْشَبْ وَرَقَةُ أَنْ تُوُفِّيَ.

The commencement of divine revelation to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hirā' where he used to worship (Allāh alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him food for the duration of his stay and then come back to his wife Hadrat Khadījah to take his food like-wise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him

while he was in the cave of Ḥirā'. The angel came to him and asked him to read. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam replied: "I do not know how to read." The Prophet added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied: "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, "Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous."

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam returned from there with his heart beating severely. He went straight to Khadījah bint Khuwaylid and said: "Cover me! Cover me!" The people covered him till that condition was over. He then told her everything that had happened and said: "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadījah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā replied: "Never! By Allāh, Allāh will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."

Khadījah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqah ibn Naufal ibn Asad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā, who, during the pre-Islamic, period became a Christian. He knew how to write the ʿIbrānī language and he would write from the Injīl as much as Allāh wished him to write. He was an old man who had lost his eyesight. Khadījah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā said to Waraqah: "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqah asked: "O my nephew! What have

you seen?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam described whatever he had seen. Waraqah said: "This is the same angel who used to bring divine revelation to Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would drive you out." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked: "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah replied in the affirmative and said: "Anyone who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqah passed away.

This Hadīth clearly states that revelation to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* commenced in the form of true dreams. Before receiving prophet-hood, the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* first see things in their dreams so that they develop a gradual affinity with that world and they are able to bear it. Once revelation starts coming to them in a state of wakefulness, they are able to bear it easily and also bear the weight of prophet-hood. Another point which we learn from this Hadīth is that after seeing the true dreams, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became inclined towards solitude. It is necessary to remember this much that even here, those who are to receive something will first see good dreams, they will become inclined towards solitude, and their affinity with it will increase. The reason for this is that since the prophet-hood of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* commenced with true dreams, wilāyat also commences in this way. After all, wilāyat is subservient to prophet-hood. Thus, whatever took place in prophet-hood will necessarily take place in wilāyat. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became inclined towards solitude in the beginning,

you find the righteous personalities also becoming inclined to it. The fact of the matter is that when the quest for Allāh *taʿālā* supersedes everything, the person likes nothing better than solitude. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became inclined to solitude and began frequenting the cave of Hirā' where he used to engage in worship, perform salāh, engage in Allāh's remembrance, and so on.

A poet says:

> When I choose separation from the entire creation, Allāh *taʿālā* becomes my companion in the cave.

Now we notice that people have no affinity whatsoever with the things which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* loved but we are ready to claim that we love him.

وكل يدعي وصلًا بليلىٰ – وليلىٰ لا تقر لهم بذات

Everyone claims to have a bond with Laylā, but Laylā does not affirm it in respect of anyone.

What I am saying is that these things cannot be acquired by mere claims. Rather, a person must obliterate himself in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. You cannot reach Allāh *taʿālā* without Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as your intermediary.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* was a mentor of his time. He taught us many things and explained many things to us. (I am saying these things in-between so that you people remain attentive. I now return to the original topic).

From the previously-quoted Hadīth, we learn the status of a dream. Prophet-hood commences with true

dreams. It is a glad-tiding from Allāh *taʿālā*. He says in this regard:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ. لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ط لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve. Those who believed and continued fearing. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

We learn from this verse that the Auliyā' are those who have perfect īmān and perfect taqwā. These may appear to be just two words [īmān and taqwā], but to adopt them is more difficult than carrying a mountain. It has become even more difficult in our times.

It is stated in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* that Ḥaḍrat ʿUbādah ibn Sāmit *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates: I asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for an explanation of the words: "For them are glad tidings in the worldly life." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

هي الرؤيا الصالحة يراها المؤمن أو ترٰى له.

The glad tidings are true dreams which a believer sees or people see in his favour.

Another narration states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62-64.

أما قوله تعالى لهم البشرى في الحيوة الدنيا، فهي الرؤيا الحسنة ترى للمؤمن فبشر بها في دنياه، وأما قوله سبحانه وفي الآخرة، فإنها بشارة المؤمن عند الموت أن الله قد غفر لك ولمن حملك إلى قبر.

As for Allāh taʿālā saying: "For them are glad tidings in this worldly life", they refer to good dreams which a believer sees and through which he receives glad tidings in his worldly life. As for Allāh taʿālā saying: "And in the Hereafter", it refers to the glad tiding which a believer receives at the time of death – that Allāh taʿālā has forgiven you and whoever carries you to the grave.

Hadrat ʿAṭā' *rahimahullāh* says that glad tidings in this world is that when a believer is about to die, the angels of mercy come to him and give him the glad tidings of Paradise. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ اَلَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ.

Angels descend upon them [saying]: "Do not fear, nor grieve! Listen to the glad tiding of Paradise which you were promised."[1]

The glad tidings in the Hereafter will be that the angels will meet the believers by offering salām to them, giving them the glad tiding of success, they will see the glitter on their faces, they will be given their book of deeds in their right hands, and they will rejoice when they read the record of their deeds.

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 30.

Another view is that glad tidings of this world include: help and assistance from Allāh *taʿālā*, victory, booty, good praises from people, people speaking good of a person, people loving the person, and so on. As for the glad tidings of the Hereafter, there is no need to even speak about them. (That is all).

My sole objective was to show you that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* explained the words: "For them are glad tidings in this worldly life" as true dreams. However, in order to complete the benefit, I quoted other narrations which are related with respect to this verse. I now return to my previous topic.

Fath al-Bārī – a commentary of *Sahīh Bukhārī* relates from Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* who said that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to see dreams in the beginning. He first beheld Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* at Ajyād. Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* called out: "O Muhammad!" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked around but did not see anybody. He then looked up towards the sky and he saw Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* who then said to him: "O Muhammad! I am Jibraʾīl." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ran in his direction and went through the people. Then when he saw nothing, he went out. Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* called out again and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ran in his direction. Subsequently, Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* appeared before him at the cave of Hirā' and the story of "Read" which is related in the Hadīth took place.

Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* had two wings of sapphires at the time when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* beheld him. They were glittering to the extent that they were dazzling the eyes. (Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Hadrat

Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* in his original form on one occasion) and he saw him again in his original form on the occasion of Miʿrāj. This narration clearly shows that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw him in his original form on two occasions and he was able to bear seeing him. He heard and understood his speech. When Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was going on Miʿrāj, Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* was with him from the very beginning and he was in his original form. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* too was looking at him from the point of a human, and was able to bear him. When they reached that world, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was in an angelic world and so was Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. When they reached Sidratul Muntahā, there was a conflict between Rasūlullāh's angelic and spiritual powers, and Jibraʾīl's angelic power. Rasūlullāh's angelic power overwhelmed it, this is why he could proceed beyond Sidratul Muntahā. He met Allāh *taʿālā*, went especially close to Him, and conversed with Him. We do not know what they spoke about.

Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* had to stop at Sidratul Muntahā and he said: "If I move the slightest bit forward, I will burn to ash." The rank of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can be gauged from this, and also his spiritual power. We know how powerful Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* was. When the punishment was to be meted out to the people of Ḥaḍrat Lūṭ *ʿalayhis salām*, he lifted all their villages with his finger, raised them up to the heavens, turned them upside down, and flung them down to earth. Despite all this power he could not go beyond Sidratul Muntahā, but Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went much further. From this you can gauge how

powerful Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was and what spiritual strength he possessed.

As for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* experiencing a certain condition when he beheld Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time, that is from among the essentials of this world. This world cannot bear the things of that world. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred so much of power to the angels that if any one of them was to expose just a portion of his power to this world, it will be destroyed. A Hadīth states that if just one corner of the scarf of a damsel (hūr) of Paradise was to be exposed to this world, the sun and moon will go into eclipse. Therefore, when anything of that world displays itself in this world, it is not easy to bear it. When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* requested to see Allāh *taʿālā*, and He manifested Himself before a mountain, it could not bear Him and broke into smithereens. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ مُوْسٰى لِمِيْقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِيْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ط قَالَ لَنْ تَرٰنِيْ وَلٰكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرٰنِيْ ج فَلَمَّا تَجَلّٰى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَّخَرَّ مُوْسٰى صَعِقًا ج فَلَمَّآ أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحٰنَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

When Mūsā came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "O my Lord! Show Yourself to me so that I may look upon You." He replied: "You will never see Me. However, keep looking towards the mountain, if it remains in its place, you will see Me. Then when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust and Mūsā fell down unconscious. When he regained consciousness,

he said: "Glory be to You! I have repented to You and I am the first to have conviction."[1]

When Mūsā came at Our appointed time (after the expiry of 40 days) and his Lord spoke to him. The conversation was so enjoyable and sweet that when Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* heard it, he lost control of himself. He fell in love with it and became desirous of seeing Allāh *taʿālā*. In this restless state he said: "O my Lord! Show Yourself to me so that I may look upon You." He replied: "You will never see Me." In other words, you do not have the ability to see Me while you are in your present state. That is, a human does not have the ability to see Allāh *taʿālā*. In fact, a human cannot even see an angel in his original form, no matter how high his rank. This is because this world cannot bear it. However, because Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was in a state of lovingness, Allāh *taʿālā* said to him as a consolation to him: "However, keep looking towards the mountain, if it remains in its place, you will see Me." Then when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust and Mūsā fell down unconscious.

The ʿulamā' say that the manifestation on the mountain took place but visualization did not take place. There is a difference between manifestation and visualization. You can understand it in this way: One is when you see a person directly and the other is when you see him in a mirror. What you see in the mirror is a reflection of the person but not the person himself. We will therefore not refer to it as *ru'yat* – sighting or visualization. In the same way, the manifestation of Allāh *taʿālā* was on the mountain and which the mountain could not bear. This is why it

[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 143.

broke into smithereens and fell into the rivers and oceans. The manifestation of Allāh *taʿālā* on the mountain which Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* observed was so terrifying that if any non-Prophet saw it, he would have most likely died. But look at the strength of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* that even after seeing such a terrifying scene, he only lost consciousness and regained it after some time. His spiritual strength and power can be gauged from this. The slight effect which he experienced [by falling unconscious] does not affect his excellence in any way because when such a majestic scene which caused the mountain to crumble and him to only fall unconscious cannot be really referred to as an effect.

Allāh *taʿālā* blesses these personalities with the highest physical strength together with spiritual strength. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time and was affected by his sight, the reason for it was that Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* had come from the upper heavens to this lowly world with a most weighty thing – the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* – whose greatness and majesty can never be estimated. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself says with reference to the Qurʾān:

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ

Had We revealed this Qurʾān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, rendered asunder by the fear of Allāh.[1]

It is mentioned in the traditions that if Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was incidentally sitting on a camel while revelation came down to him, the

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[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 21.

camel would sit down because it could not bear the weight of the revelation. Furthermore, when revelation used to come to him on the coldest of days, he would break out into perspiration. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* used to gauge from this that revelation is coming to him.

It was really the mark of Rasūlullāh's strength and his high status that the speech on account of which a mountain crumbled; and which the heavens, earth and mountains refused to bear, was borne by him. And the sight which Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* could not bear, was borne by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Whatever effect he experienced was on account of the greatness of the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*.

When a thing has the ability to effect, it will most certainly show its effect. For example, when a person is made to inhale chloroform, his brains stop functioning for some time. His senses become paralysed and he loses consciousness. In the same way, medicines have their respective effects. If someone strikes you, it will result in an injury or wound. If a person has a fever, it will show its effect. If a cold wind blows, you will feel cold. If a hot wind blows, you will feel the warmth. Whether the person is a walī or someone higher than him, each one will experience the effects of different things. Nonetheless, being affected by these things does not necessarily mean that there is a defect in the person because this is from among the essentials of our humanness and is unavoidable in this world. In fact, we should not even refer to these effects as effects. Because the real effect is what the mountain experienced when it crumbled and fell into the rivers and oceans. The condition which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*

experienced when he saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* for the first time was because he was still in a state of humanness, and suddenly a majestic thing with all its force and power from the angelic world came to him. This resulted in a conflict between the human and angelic worlds. However, because Allāh *ta'ālā* had blessed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* with the highest levels of spiritual and physical powers, he came to his senses immediately. If it was someone else, he would have been destroyed there and then. After all, it is certainly not easy to bear something as great as this in a sudden moment.

If there is any example which we could present in this regard then it is that of the cook of Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh*. A few guests came to Hadrat on one occasion. Coincidentally, there was no food which could be presented to the guests. There was a cook who lived nearby. He cooked some food from his side and presented it to Hadrat. Hadrat was overjoyed and said to the cook: "Ask me whatever you want." The cook asked: "Will I get whatever I ask for?" Hadrat replied in the affirmative. The cook said: "Will I really get whatever I ask for?" Hadrat replied in the affirmative. The cook asked the same question a third time and Hadrat gave the same reply. The cook said: "Make me like you." Hadrat said: "Don't ask for such a thing."

Hadrat Khwājah *rahimahullāh* must have assumed that he is a poor man, and the most he will ask for is probably a kingdom and he will give it to him. But he asked for something which he did not have the ability to bear as yet. When he persisted, Hadrat took him into a room, closed the door and focussed on him. When the door was opened and the two emerged from the room, the appearance of the cook had changed

and he looked exactly like Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh. No one could differentiate between the two. However, the cook departed from this worldly abode within a few days.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say that the thing which Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh* took to acquire gradually over a period of 60 years, the cook acquired it in a short period of time. This is why he could not bear it.

I am saying to you that even the body of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not affected. The light and weak effect which he experienced was really from among the essentials of this world. And this is no defect at all which could affect the status of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in any way. In fact, it is proof of even more excellence in him in the sense that such a powerful thing caused such a small effect on him. An effect of this nature occurs when a person sees anything that is new to him. Take the case of a new clay pot. When water is poured in it in the beginning, a hissing sound is heard. Once it absorbs the water fully and accepts its effect, that sound is no longer heard. Just as the hissing sound of the clay pot does not prove its defectiveness, in the same way, the slight effect which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* felt on seeing Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* is most certainly not a sign of defectiveness, and it does not affect his status in any way.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has undoubtedly explained a most beneficial and enlightening subject in a manner which was suited for a distinguished scholar like him. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us who are affiliated to him with a major share of his knowledge and sciences. This subject ought to

be published as a booklet on its own. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE MI'RĀJ

Since we mentioned the Miʿrāj [in our previous discussion], I feel I should explain to you the verse in which Allāh *taʿālā* Himself makes mention of the Miʿrāj. My explanation is in the light of what the exegetes said.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ أَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهٖ لَيْلاً مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِيْ بٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهٗ لِنُرِيَهٗ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا ط إِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ.

Exalted is He who took His servant by night from the Sacred Masjid to the Aqsā Masjid - the precincts of which We have blessed – so that We may show him some signs of Our power. He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this verse. The correlation between this verse and the sūrah before it is that at the end of the previous sūrah Allāh *taʿālā* ordered Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remain patient, and not to grieve over the kufr and scheming nature of the unbelievers. Allāh *taʿālā* also mentions the virtue of those who have piety and Allāh-consciousness, and promises them His proximity. The last two verses of the previous sūrah read as follows:

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 1.

وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ. إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ.

Be patient, then. And your patience is possible only by Allāh's help. Do not grieve over them nor be distressed by their scheming. Surely Allāh is with those who are righteous and those who do virtuous deeds.[1]

Relating the incident of the Miʿrāj after these verses makes reference to the fact that the fruit of Rasūlullāh's patience and piety is that Allāh *taʿālā* blessed him with the Isrā' and Miʿrāj in this worldly life, conferred him with the honour of conversing with Him, and showed him His unique signs.

Bearing in mind that this incident is most unique and extraordinary, and displays Allāh's immense power, Allāh *taʿālā* commences the verse with the word "Subḥāna". This word negates all defects and evils from Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, the unbelievers' rejection of the Miʿrāj and their considering it to be far-fetched is – so to say – a rejection of Allāh's absolute power and attributing weakness and defectiveness in Him. By bringing this word at the very beginning, Allāh *taʿālā* is teaching us that while the Miʿrāj is a most extraordinary and astounding event, it is certainly not far-fetched from Allāh's absolute power, and He is most definitely not incapable of it.

ʿAllāmah Ṭībī *raḥimahullāh* says that the word "Subḥāna" makes reference to the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* is totally and absolutely pure from all the defects and evils which Allāh's enemies attribute to Him. Ḥaḍrat Ṭalḥah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates: "I asked

[1] Sūrah an-Naḥl, 16: 127-128.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for an explanation of the word 'Sub-hāna' and he said:

تنزيه الله تعالى عن كل سوء

It refers to Allāh taʿālā absolving Himself from every type of evil.

Abul Qāsim Sulaymān Ansārī *rahimahullāh* writes in his commentary to the words: "who took His servant by night": When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reached lofty and elevated heights, Allāh *taʿālā* sent revelation to him asking:

يا محمد، بم نشرفك

O Muhammad! How would you like Us to honour you?

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

بنسبتي إليك بالعبودية

By attributing my servitude to You.

Allāh *taʿālā* then revealed the words: "who took His servant by night". Furthermore, Allāh *taʿālā* said: "His servant" and not "His beloved" in order to seal the door to extremism and fanaticism with regard to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. So that Muslims may not become like the Christians who went to the extreme of claiming that Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* is the son of Allāh.

The words:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ أَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهٖ

Make reference to the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The words:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوْسٰى لِمِيْقَاتِنَا

When Mūsā came at Our appointed time.

So to say or to a certain extent, make reference to a Miʿrāj of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*.

After pondering over the different styles of expression in both these verses, the difference in rank between Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* becomes quite clear. Allāh *taʿālā* attributed the act of taking Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to Himself, and made reference to the fact that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is "His servant". This demonstrates the special relationship which he had with Allāh *taʿālā*. On the other hand, when Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, He attributes his coming to Allāh *taʿālā* to him [and not to Himself. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* did not take or bring him, he came to Allāh *taʿālā*]. Furthermore, Allāh *taʿālā* mentions him by name [and not by referring to him as His servant].

The word *laylan* is in the indefinite case to show that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* travelled in small portion of the night from Masjid al-Harām to Masjid al-Aqsā, from there to the seven heavens, and from there to wherever Allāh *taʿālā* willed. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went close to his Beloved and reached the level of observing the objective. Masjid al-Aqsā refers to Bayt al-Maqdis. The word "Aqsā" is intended to show how far it is because this word means "very far away". Masjid al-Harām to Masjid al-Aqsā is a journey of 40 days. And according

to one narration, the distance from there to Sidratul Muntahā is a journey of 300 000 years.[1]

"The precincts of which We have blessed."

This is an attribute of Masjid al-Aqsā. In other words, We have placed Dīnī and worldly blessings around this masjid. The Dīnī blessing is that it has been the place of worship and the qiblah of all the past Prophets. It is also their resting place and the place at which the angels descend. Furthermore, many Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are buried here. The worldly blessing is that this area has rivers, many trees and a lot of produce.

The incident of Miʿrāj in brief took place as follows:

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was lying down one night in the Kaʿbah when Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Mīkāʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* came to him and said: "Come with us." They seated him on the Burāq which was so fast that its feet would land at the place where its eyes fell. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was first taken to Masjid al-Aqsā in Syria. Allāh *taʿālā* assembled all the past Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* as a way of showing tribute to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. On reaching here, Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* called out the adhān. The rows of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were then arranged. There were seven rows in total with the Messengers taking up three rows. The angels joined them in the salāh. Everyone was standing in the rows waiting for the one who would lead them in salāh. Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* held the hand of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and took him forward. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi*

[1] *Rūh al-Maʿānī*.

wa sallam led the salāh with all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, Messengers *ʿalayhimus salām* and angels as his followers. He performed two rakʿats of salāh. He read Sūrah al-Kāfirūn in the first rakʿat and Sūrah al-Ikhlās in the second rakʿat.

لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا

So that We may show him some signs of Our power.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* explains the above words as:

أي لنرفعه إلى السماء حتى يرى ما يرى من العجائب العظيمة

We took him from Masjid al-Ḥarām to Masjid al-Aqsā in a most unique way so that We may raise him to the heavens in order to show him extraordinary and majestic creations.

The Aḥādīth state that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* met the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* on the different levels of the heavens. He met Ḥaḍrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* on the first heaven, Ḥaḍrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* and Ḥaḍrat Yaḥyā *ʿalayhis salām* on the second heaven, Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* on the third heaven, Ḥaḍrat Idrīs *ʿalayhis salām* on the fourth heaven, Ḥaḍrat Hārūn *ʿalayhis salām* on the fifth heaven, Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* on the sixth heaven, and Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* on the seventh heaven. He also observed the scenes of Paradise and Hell and saw countless angels.

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ

He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.

There are two possibilities with regard to the pronoun "He". The more obvious explanation is that it refers to

Allāh *taʿālā*. Most exegetes are of this view and they say that this sentence is a proof for the Isrā' and Miʿrāj. It would therefore mean that Allāh *taʿālā* brought Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* close, honoured him and enabled him to observe the various scenes so that he may know that Allāh *taʿālā* is fully aware of his conditions and knows well that he is eligible for this high rank.

ʿAllāmah Ṭībī *raḥimahullāh* says:

إنه هو السميع لأقوال ذلك العبد البصير بأفعاله بكونها مهذبة خالصة عن شوائب الهوى مقرونة بالصدق والصفا مستأهلة للقرب والزلفى.

Allāh taʿālā is listening to the words of His special servant and watching his actions – that they are cultured, pure from any taint of desires, accompanied with honesty and purity, and suited for the near and close position.

The other possibility is that the pronoun refers to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In such a case, it will mean:

السميع بكلامنا البصير لذاتنا

He listens to Our speech and he sees Us.

Allāh *taʿālā* is explaining to us that this servant to whom I conferred this honour is fully eligible for it because he listens to My orders and prohibitions, and practises accordingly. He is seeing because he looks at My creation with consideration and takes lessons and admonishments from them. Alternatively, it could mean: He observes and ponders over the signs which I showed him in the course of the Miʿrāj.

Reference to this is made elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغٰى. لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى

The sight neither went astray nor did it go beyond the limit. Without doubt, he saw some of the great signs of his Lord.[1]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked at the things which he was ordered to look at; he did not shift his gaze from them. And he did not turn to look at other things until he was given the order to look at them. This is a proof of the high level of his self-control. Normally when a person is astounded at seeing extraordinary things, he does not look at what he is asked to look at, but he will stare at the things which he was not supposed to look at. In other words, such a person cannot control himself.

Ibn ʿAṭīyyah *raḥimahullāh* says that the words:

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ

He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.

Are a warning for the unbelievers in the sense that they rejected the incident of the Miʿrāj when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informed them. This would mean that Allāh *taʿālā* is listening to whatever they are saying, and watching whatever they are doing. They will therefore be punished accordingly.

In the next verse Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about giving the Book to Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and then about two forms of corruption committed by the Banī Isrāʾīl. This resulted in the demolition and violation of Masjid al-Aqṣā. This is the original object of Allāh *taʿālā* but He first made reference to the Miʿrāj because the

[1] Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 17-18.

blessed feet of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are entering Masjid al-Aqsā. It is a prelude to the eternal inhabitancy of this masjid. In other words, through the blessings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* this masjid will remain inhabited by the followers of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* until the day of Resurrection. Even today, the number of Auliyā' and pious servants who are in that vicinity cannot be seen anywhere else. Although the enemies have taken control of the area, Bayt al-Maqdis has always been in the hands of the Muslims and salāh with congregation is performed there. We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* that this continues until eternity.

Note: At present, the Jews are controlling it and are plotting to take full and absolute control of it. Muslims are suffering untold oppressions at their hands. There is a genuine need for duʿā'. May Allāh *taʿālā* make the efforts of the Jews unsuccessful. Āmīn. (compiler)

وَاٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِيْٓ إِسْرَآءِيْلَ أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَكِيْلًا.

We gave to Mūsā the Book and We made it a guide for the Banī Isrā'īl [saying]: "Do not assign anyone apart from Me as a protector."[1]

The exegetes says that this verse is conjunctively joined to the previous verse:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْٓ أَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهٖ

Exalted is He who took His servant…

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 2.

They say that the two are interconnected in the sense that the first verse makes reference to the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He was first taken to Bayt al-Maqdis, taken to the heavens, Allāh *taʿālā* showed him His signs, and conferred to him whatever He was to give him. The present verse makes reference to the Miʿrāj of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* who was from among the senior Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* of Allāh *taʿālā*. He was called to Mt. Tūr where he was given the Taurāh. If there could be any other similar incident after Rasūlullāh's incident of Miʿrāj, then it is this incident. This is why it is related here. Even though there is a major difference between the two.

In his commentary to this verse, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes: If you want, you can compare between the words "who took His servant" and "We gave to Mūsā", and the words "We made it a guide for the Banī Isrāʾīl" and "it guides to the path which is most upright". If you do this, you will realize the difference in rank between these two Books [the Qur'ān and the Taurāh] and those to whom these Books were revealed. Similarly, Allāh *taʿālā* attributed the act of taking Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to Himself and referred to him as "His servant". On the other hand, he referred to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* by name. Also, the Taurāh is described as a guide for the Banī Isrāʾīl while the Qur'ān is not specified for any particular group or nation; it is for the entire mankind.

أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَكِيْلًا

Do not assign anyone apart from Me as a protector.

In his commentary to the above words, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the word "wakīl" is applied to

a being to whom all affairs in their entirety are delegated. Obviously it can be none apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. He explains the word *wakīl* as:

ربًّا تكلون إليه أموركم غيري.

A Lord apart from Me to whom you delegate your matters.

This would mean: We said in the Taurāh that you must not make anyone apart from Me as a Lord in the sense that you delegate all your matters to him.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ

O you who are the progeny of those whom We carried with Nūh.

Allāh *taʿālā* is saying: O you who are the progeny of those whom We carried with Nūh on the ship! Do not make any Lord apart from Me to whom you delegate your matters.

Allāh *taʿālā* then praises Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām*:

إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا

Surely he was a grateful servant.

Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām* was a most grateful servant of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is stated that when he used to eat, he used to make this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَطْعَمَنِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَجَاعَنِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who fed me. He could have kept me hungry had He willed.

When he used to drink water, he used to make this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَسْقَانِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَظْمَأَنِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who gave me to drink. He could have kept me thirsty had He willed.

When he used to wear clothes, he used to make this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ كَسَانِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَعْرَانِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who clothed me. He could have kept me unclothed had He willed.

When he used to wear shoes, he used to make this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ حَذَانِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَحْفَانِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who gave me shoes to wear. He could have left me barefooted had He willed.

When he used to relieve himself, he used to make this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَخْرَجَ عَنِّيْ اَذَاهُ فِيْ عَافِيَةٍ وَلَوْ شَاءَ حَبَسَهُ.

All praise is due to Allāh who removed the discomfort from my body in a comfortable manner. Had He willed, He could have held it back.

The correlation between the present verse and the one before it is that previously Allāh *taʿālā* said: Do not take a protector apart from Me, and do not ascribe any partner to Me.

Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām* was a grateful servant, and no one can be a grateful servant until he is a

monotheist. He must consider all the favours of Allāh *taʿālā* as His grace and kindness. Since you [Banī Isrāʾīl] are from the progeny of Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām*, you must follow his way as did your forefathers. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَقَضَيْنَآ إِلٰى بَنِيْٓ إِسْرَآءِيْلَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا.

We openly declared to the Banī Isrāʾīl in the Book [saying]: "You will cause corruption in the land two times and you will commit great transgression."[1]

Imām Rāzī *rahimahullāh* explains the correlation of this verse with those before it as follows:

Allāh *taʿālā* first stated that He conferred a great favour to the Banī Isrāʾīl by sending the Taurāh to them and making it a guide for them. Allāh *taʿālā* is now saying that they did not take guidance from the Taurāh. Instead, they caused corruption. The corruption is detailed in the present verse. Allāh *taʿālā* is saying: We had informed them and sent revelation to them stating that they will certainly cause corruption and commit transgression.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that the words "You will cause corruption in the land two times" is an answer to an omitted oath. It means, "By Allāh, you will certainly cause corruption…"

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 4.

فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ أُوْلٰهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَآ أُولِيْ بَأْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ فَجَاسُوْا خِلٰلَ الدِّيَارِ ؕ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُوْلًا.

Then when the first promise came, We sent to you Our servants endued with mighty aggression. They then spread within the cities. And it was a promise fulfilled.

(They will get into the houses. It is a promise which will certainly be fulfilled). In other words, it is an absolute decree of Allāh *taʿālā* which cannot be abrogated. The words:

بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ

Mean:

أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ وَخَلَيْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ خَاذِلِيْنَ

We will empower them over you, and we will leave you and them in a state of forsakenness.

The exegetes have differing opinions with regard to who these people are. Imām Rāzī *raḥimahullāh* says that there is no real purpose in trying to ascertain who they are. Instead, these incidents are related solely to demonstrate that when these people indulged in excessive acts of disobedience, Allāh *taʿālā* empowered such nations over them who killed and massacred them.

I say that this punishment was not imposed on them solely because of excessive sinning, but because they killed the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*; and the blasphemy of this is obvious. Imām Rāzī *raḥimahullāh* says that the first act of corruption of the Banī Isrāʾīl is that they began vexing pride. Then they considered the unlawful to be lawful, they killed Prophets

ʿalayhimus salām and they shed innocent blood. Punishment therefore came to them, and unbelievers were imposed on unbelievers, because punishment does not befall the believers. The form which this punishment took is that the awe which the Mageans had for the Banī Isrāʾīl was removed and Bukht Naṣr was empowered over them. The latter massacred 40 000 readers of the Taurāh. Ḥaḍrat Ibn ʿAbbās *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that the armies of Bukht Naṣr would get into the houses and search for people who may have escaped the massacre. They would then take the remaining people and keep them under most humiliating conditions.

Allāh *taʿālā* then appointed another king over them who attacked the people of Babylon, and he married a woman from the Banī Isrāʾīl. She asked the king to return the remaining Banī Isrāʾīl to Bayt al-Maqdis. He acceded to her request. Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were sent to them after some time and their condition improved. The ʿulamā' say that the period of humiliation and degradation lasted for about 100 years and their wealth and honour returned to them. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيْرًا.

We then gave back to you the turn against them and strengthened you with wealth and offspring, and made you more numerous in troops.[1]

In other words, We will return to you your wealth and give you power over those who did whatever they did

[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 6.

to you. This means that your enemies will be destroyed. We will help you with a lot of wealth so that it may be a recompense for the wealth which was stolen from you previously. We will also help you with offspring so that it will make up for your children who were imprisoned and killed.

The word *nafīr* refers to armies of men. What this means is that We will make your men in the majority. This is exactly what happened.

The Banī Isrā'īl were people of the Book and the offspring of Prophets *'alayhimus salām*. They bore the Book of Allāh *ta'ālā*. But when they disobeyed and spread corruption, disregarded the Taurāh completely, committed unlawful actions, and went to the extent of massacring the righteous people and the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*; punishment from Allāh *ta'ālā* descended upon them. The enemy was imposed upon them and they were disgraced and subjugated. They spent a considerable period of time in this way. Once they expressed remorse and repented, Allāh's grace – as promised – came back to them. They were given wealth, children and armies; and awe and fear was placed in the hearts of their enemies. At the same time, they were addressed thus:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

If you did good, you did good for your own selves. And if you did evil, you did it for your own selves.[1]

In other words, if you are obedient and do good actions, you will be doing them for your own benefit. Through the blessings of your obedience, Allāh *ta'ālā*

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 7.

will open upon you the doors of blessings and prosperity.

وإن أسأتم بفعل المحرمات أسأتم إلى أنفسكم

If you do evil by committing prohibited actions, you will be wronging your own selves because Allāh *taʿālā* will open the doors of punishment and torment through the misfortune of those evil actions.

This verse makes reference to the fact that Allāh's mercy on them surpasses His wrath because when He spoke of His kindness to His servants, He mentioned it twice:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ

If you did good, you did good for your own selves.

But when He made reference to the evil of mankind, He mentioned it once:

وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

And if you did evil, you did it for your own selves.

If Allāh's mercy did not surpass His wrath, Allāh *taʿālā* would not have expressed it in this way.

I say that the words:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ

If you did good, you did good for your own selves.

Could also make reference to the fact that if you do good actions, the greatest benefit will be that your carnal self will become good. It will gradually move from being a self which instructs evil to a self which reaches the point of tranquillity with Allāh *taʿālā*, after

which it will be perfected. It will develop within itself the ability to do good. The fruits and blessings of this which will be experienced in the Hereafter is beyond imagination. Even in this world the person will enjoy a wholesome life and additional generosity from Allāh *taʿālā*. He will treat him in a manner which will result in people considering him to be great and honourable. Everyone will include him among the righteous.

On the other hand, the person who does evil actions – his carnal self will remain evil and it will continue prompting him towards evil actions. The person will be disgraced in this world and everyone will include him among the evildoers.

Allāh *taʿālā* then informs us of the second corruption of the Banī Isrāʾīl:

فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوْءا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوْا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّلِيُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيْرًا.

Then when the second promise came, [We sent other servants] to sadden your faces and to break into the Masjid as they had broken into it the first time. And to destroy with utter destruction whatever they conquer.[1]

The exegetes say that their second corruption came when they transgressed a second time. This entailed the murder of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Yahyā *ʿalayhis salām*. Constantine, the Roman emperor, was empowered over them. The effects of sorrow, pain and grief were visible on the faces of the Banī Isrāʾīl. This is because in addition to their killing, degradation and other physical torments; they suffered spiritual torment in the sense that apart from

[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 7.

entering their homes, their enemies entered their masājid and places of worship, desecrated and destroyed them.

عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ

It may well be that your Lord may have mercy on you.[1]

It is not far fetched for your Lord to have mercy for you. That is, when you repent and desist from sinning. If not:

وَإِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا

But if you do the same [sins], We will do the same [in punishment].[2]

In other words, if you return to corruption, We will return to punishing you.

We then punished you in this world again. This is because you committed evils once again by rejecting Muḥammad Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and tried to murder him.

Allāh *taʿālā* punished them for it and empowered Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* over them. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had the Banū Qurayẓah killed, expelled that Banū Naḍīr, and imposed the jizyah on the remaining Jews. They were vanquished and overpowered to the extent that they had neither a country nor any authority.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that the word "if" makes reference to the point that you ought not to go

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 8.

[2] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 8.

back to your evil ways. But if you do, then remember that We too can go back to punishing you.

وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ حَصِيْرًا

We have made Hell the prison of the unbelievers.

In other words, We made Hell such a prison for the unbelievers that they will not be able to escape from it.

One meaning of the word *ḥaṣīr* is a bed. In other words, just as a bed is laid out, these people will be laid out in the Hell-fire without being able to escape. It is stated in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* that the word *ḥaṣīr* refers to a prison from which there is no escape.

Imām Rāzī *raḥimahullāh* says that this means that even if the punishment of this world is severe, a person can escape it. He will either die or escape in some way or the other. But the punishment of the Hereafter will encompass him completely from all sides. There will be no hope of escape. The nations which are mentioned here – their worldly punishment was what was related. That is, getting killed, attacked, invaded, humiliation, degradation, and so on. In the Hereafter they will have to face an even more powerful punishment which will encompass them from all sides and from which there will be no escape. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from it. Āmīn.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

إِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا. وَأَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْآخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيْمًا.

This Qur'ān shows the way that is the straightest and it gives glad tidings to the believers who do good deeds that for them is a great reward. And those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful punishment.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that this verse is connected to the beginning of the sūrah wherein Allāh *taʿālā* says: "We gave to Mūsā the Book". It makes mention of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* receiving a Book. The present verse makes mention of a Book which Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was given. Undoubtedly, this Qur'ān is such a great Book which We gave to you that it guides to a path which is the straightest.

Imām Rāzī *raḥimahullāh* says:

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* mentions three types of attributes of the Qur'ān:

1. It shows the way which is straightest. This was explained above.
2. It gives glad tidings of immense rewards for the believers who do good works. The first attribute of the Qur'ān points to the fact that it guides towards beliefs which are most correct and actions which are most righteous. It is now inevitable for the effect of this to manifest itself, and that effect is "a great reward". After all, the straightest path has to result in the hugest profit and the greatest benefit.
3. "Those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful punishment." In other words, the Qur'ān teaches us that those who do not believe in the Hereafter have a most terrifying punishment in store for them. After all, just as correct beliefs and righteous

actions result in the greatest rewards, abandoning them have to result in the worst of punishments.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes further on:

قوله: إِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ أَقْوَمُ أي إن هذا القرآن يعرف أهله بنوره أقوم الطريق إلى الله تعالى وهو طريق الطاعة والإقتداء بمن أنزل عليه عليه الصلواة والسلام، فإنه لا طريق يوصل إلا ذلك، ولله در من قال:

وأنت باب الله أي إمرئ – اتاه من غيرك لا يدخل

The Qur'ān – through its light – is undoubtedly the straightest way of conveying people to Allāh taʿālā. It is through the path of obedience. It entails following the one on whom this Qur'ān was revealed, i.e. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. There is no other way which will convey a person to Allāh taʿālā. A poet beautifully says: You are the door of Allāh. Anyone who tries to enter by circumventing you will not be able to enter.

I originally intended speaking about the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, since the verses were interconnected and they contain several benefits and intricate points, I related to you their explanation in short. I hope the reader will benefit from them.

I had commenced with a couplet of Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh*. A discussion on the Miʿrāj came in-between and so my speech turned out to be quite long. I will now quote the remaining couplets and conclude.

The person who has such a person as his leader will never be caught in disobedience.

What kind of eulogy can I select in your praise! O Messenger of the universe! Peace and salutations to you.[1]

He says further on:

Allāh *taʿālā* praised you and extolled your greatness. Your high status caused Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* to kiss the ground.

The lofty heavens are abashed by your status. When you were created, Ādam was still between water and soil.

You are the foundation of existence from the beginning. Anyone who came into existence is a branch of you.

I cannot think of what I can say in your praise because you are far beyond whatever I will say.

The pride of *Laulāka* (were it not for you) is enough to demonstrate your rank and status. The titles of Tā Hā and Yā Sīn are enough as your titles.

How can a mentally-defective Saʿdī praise you!? O Prophet! Peace and salutations to you.[2]

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[1] *Būstān*, p. 5.

[2] *Būstān*, p. 6.

فالحمد لله تعالى أولا وآخرا وظاهرا وباطنا ما دامت السموات والأرضين، والصلوة والسلام على خاتم النبيين. وسيد الأنبياء والمرسلين. وعلى اٰله الطيبين، وأصحابه الطاهرين، وما توفيقي إلا بالله.

THE CORRECT TEACHING AND TRAINING METHODOLOGY

At present I would like to speak about teaching and training according to the Sunnat method. As long as the correct methodology is not adopted, the work of reformation and rectification cannot be realized. Even if today the work is done according to the correct methodology, it will be achieved and people will turn to Dīn. They will accept divine injunctions and teachings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with enthusiasm. The correct methodology is the one which Allāh *taʿālā* taught to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and which he adopted in his teachings. It is the same methodology which was then chosen by the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*, Tābiʿīn, Imāms and pious predecessors.

Ease and simplicity in training

Easiness is the most essential ingredient when training and teaching. It must be taken into consideration in every situation. In his *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* has devoted a chapter titled *Bāb at-Taysīr* (the chapter on easiness). He quotes the following verse of the Qur'ān:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ.

It is the mercy of Allāh alone that they found you to be soft-hearted. Had you been harsh, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.[1]

We learn from this that the special quality of soft-heartedness which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had was by virtue of Allāh's mercy. Had Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* been stern and hard-hearted in his teaching methodology, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* would have found it difficult to learn rules and regulations from him, and from deriving blessings from him.

By making Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* soft-hearted and kind, Allāh *taʿālā* willed ease for us. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself says in this regard:

يُرِيْدُ اللهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

Allāh wills ease for you and He does not will difficulty for you.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَلدِّيْنُ يُسْرٌ

Religion is easy.

He also said:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ مُيَسِّرِيْنَ وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوْا مُعَسِّرِيْنَ

You have been sent to provide ease and not to make things difficult.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 159.

[2] *Fayd al-Qadīr*, vol. 2, p. 573.

When Allāh *taʿālā* Himself willed ease, sent an easy religion, and appointed a Prophet who is a mercy to the worlds; we see Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taking due consideration of ease in every matter and ordered it to his followers especially in the field of education and training. After all this, how can a person ever not choose this methodology? Anyone who intends teaching Dīn will have to adopt ease and soft-heartedness. Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* went into much details on this subject and went into a detailed discussion on the causes for ease and providing ease. He says that among these causes is for a person to make duʿā' for his people that Allāh *taʿālā* perfects them, cultures them and reforms them.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful point! Those who are active in the field of propagation and rectification must turn to Allāh *taʿālā*. Only if Allāh *taʿālā* rectifies and reforms them will it be achieved. If not, the people will remain uncultured.

He writes further on:

ومنها أن لا يشرع لهم ما فيه مشقة الأشياء فشيئا، وهو قول عائشة رضي الله عنها إنما أنزل أول ما نزل منه سور من المفصل فيها ذكر الجنة والنار، حتى إذا ثاب الناس إلى الإسلام، نزل الحلال والحرام. ولو نزل أول شيء لا تشربوا الخمر لقالوا لا ندعُ الخمر أبدا، ولو نزل لا تَزِنُوا، لقالوا لا ندع الزنا أبدا.[1]

Among the ways of providing ease is for a person to abstain from commencing with things which will cause

[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ١، ص ١١٢.

difficulty. Instead, these must be introduced gradually. Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said that the first sūrahs of the Qur'ān to be revealed were the mufassal sūrahs in which Paradise and Hell were discussed. When people began turning to Islam, verses on the lawful and unlawful were revealed. If this injunction was revealed at the very beginning: "Do not consume alcohol", (people would not have accepted) and they would have said: "We cannot give up alcohol." Similarly, if they were told: "Do not commit adultery", they would have said: "We can never abstain from adultery."

We learn from this that the first thing to be discussed to the laity is Paradise and Hell, whereby they develop a yearning for Paradise and a dread for Hell. Discussions on Paradise and Hell are the most effective for changing conditions. We cannot bring the Muslims onto the path in any other way. This is why verses dealing with Paradise and Hell were revealed first. And Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* chose them for his propagation. The Saḥābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and Tābiʿīn adopted the same methodology. The conditions of peoples in every era changed through descriptions of Paradise and Hell. The theme which was effective in the past will be just as effective today. It cannot be replaced by anything else. If a person develops the slightest concern for the Hereafter, it will not allow him to remain free. A poet says:

> Even if you shackle me in 200 chains, I will break them. Yes, unless you imprison me with the hair-lock of my beloved.

In fact, reminders about the Hereafter cause a person to disregard this world and whatever it contains. And it will uproot everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* from

the heart. Verses dealing with Paradise and Hell do not allow many people to sleep peacefully.

There was a saint who did not sleep the entire night. His wife said to him: "At least sleep for a little while." He replied: "This verse is not allowing me to sleep:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا قُوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا وَّقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ.

O believers! Save yourselves and your house people from the fire whose fuel is humans and stones.[1]

Those who are teaching Dīn must adopt a methodology which causes Dīn to become beloved in the eyes of people, and the love of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* settles in their hearts. It is difficult to act on the injunctions without love. Once love enters the heart, everything becomes easy.

> Love will itself teach you the etiquette of love. But you should at least develop some inclination towards it.

It is the same love which will turn the bitterness of actions into sweetness.

Once the love of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* settles in the hearts of people, they become conscious of the Hereafter, their īmān is strengthened, they are desirous of good actions, abhor evil actions; you can then present injunctions and actions to them. However, all this requires intense pondering, perfect understanding and insight. Therefore, before delivering a talk, ponder over what is necessary to

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[1] Sūrah at-Taḥrīm, 66: 6.

speak, and what should be avoided. In what situations it may be said and in what situations it must be avoided. To whom it must be said and to whom it must not. This is because sometimes even the truth becomes a source of tribulation in certain situations and with certain people. Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to say:

حَدِّثُوا النَّاسَ بِمَا يَعْرِفُوْنَ، أَتُرِيْدُوْنَ أَنْ يُكَذَّبَ اللهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ.

Speak to people about things which they can understand. Do you want Allāh and His Messenger to be rejected?

We learn from this that it is necessary to take the addressees into consideration, and to speak according to their level of understanding. We also learn that it is not the objective to propagate and proliferate every branch of knowledge even if it is the truth. The author of *Muwāfaqāt* makes a very pertinent point in this regard. I am quoting it below:

ومن هنا يعلم أنه ليس كل ما يعلم مما هو حق يطلب نشره، وإن كان من علم الشريعة ومما يفيد علما بالأحكام، بل ذلك ينقسم.

فمنه ما هو مطلوب النشر وهو غالب علم الشريعة، ومنه ما لا يطلب نشره باطلاق أو لا يطلب نشره بالنسبة إلى حال أو وقت أو شخص.[1]

Every truth which is known does not need to be propagated even if it is knowledge of the Sharīʿah which provides knowledge of the injunctions. Rather, it is of different categories.

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٤، ص ١٨٩.

One category is which has to be propagated and proliferated, and this applies to the major portion of knowledge of the Sharīʿah. Another is which is not to be propagated at all. Yet another is the one which is not to be propagated in certain situations, times or with respect to certain persons (while it needs to be propagated in other situations, times and persons).

The author then says further on:

ومنه أن لا يذكر للمبتدي من العلم ما هو حظ المنتهي، بل يربي بصغار العلم قبل كباره. وقد فرض العلماء مسائل مما لا يجوز الفتيا بها وإن كانت صحيحة في نظر الفقه.[1]

Another category is the one which must not be taught to a novice but to an expert. The novice must first be taught minor things before being taught the major things. The scholars have laid down many rules and regulations which cannot be issued as fatāwā even though they may be correct in the light of jurisprudence.

Similarly, when the masses pose questions about the underlying reasons and rationale behind juridical rulings, their questions must not be answered even if the reasons, rationale and wisdoms for those rulings are found.[2] We find Ḥaḍrat ʿĀ'ishah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā* severely reprimanding a woman who asked why a menstruating woman has to make up for her missed fasts but not her missed ṣalāhs? Ḥaḍrat ʿĀ'ishah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā* asked her:

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٤، ص ١٩٠.

[2] This was also the practice of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*.

أحروريّة أنت؟

Are you a Harūrīyyah?

In the same manner, Hadrat ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* beat, reprimanded and chased Sibbīgh who used to ask many questions about sciences of the Qur'ān which were not related to actions.

Certain correct things must not be mentioned when corruption is feared

Sometimes, although correct knowledge is the truth, it becomes a cause of tribulation. Apart from the above-quoted proofs, there are several other proofs which support the statement that every knowledge does not have to be proliferated and propagated, even if it is the truth. Hadrat Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* said that he has several Aḥādīth and knows certain facts which he never spoke about and never explained. He considered it makrūh (reprehensible) to speak about knowledge under which there is no action. He used to say: Our predecessors also considered it makrūh to speak about knowledge under which there is no action.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *raḥimahullāh* notes a principle in this regard.

وضابطه أنك تعرض مسألتك على الشريعة، فإن صحت في ميزانها فانظر في مآلها بالنسبة إلى حال الزمان وأهله، فإن لم يؤد ذكرها إلى مفسدة فأعرضها في ذهنك على العقول، فإن قبلتها فلك أن تتكلم فيها إما على العموم إن كانت مما تقبلها العقول على العموم، وإما على الخصوص إن كانت غير لائقة بالعموم، وإن لم يكن لمسألتك هذا

المساغ فالسكوت عنها هو الجاري على وفق المصلحة الشرعية والعقلية.[1]

Before you can present an issue to people, present it to the Sharīʿah. If it is correct in the scale of the Sharīʿah, ponder over its outcome and consequence with relation to conditions of the time and the people. If mentioning it is not going to be a tribulation, you may present it in your mind to people of intelligence. (In other words, imagine that intelligent people are sitting before you and you are presenting this issue to them. Will they accept it or reject it?) If they all accept it, you may present it to the public (but if people in general will not accept it) and only specific people will accept it, then present it in a special assembly. If your issue has no room for this also (i.e. neither the laity nor the special people will accept it), then the Sharʿī and rational thing to do will be to remain silent.

We learn from the above that if we want to speak about an issue or ruling, we will first have to ponder over its compliance with the Sharīʿat. We must then assess the condition in which we are living and the condition of the people, and think whether what we want to speak about is going to cause a tribulation. If it is, then never ever speak about it. If there is no fear of tribulation, we will have to think whether the intelligent people of the time – in general or specific people – will accept it. If no intelligent person will accept it, do not mention it. If only a specific group can understand it and will accept it, then mention it to that group alone. If all the intelligent people will

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٤، ص ١٩١.

accept it, you may present it to them in a general assembly.

As long as this principle is not applied and these limits and restrictions are not abided, and you do not speak in line with the prevailing conditions and the condition of people, nothing will be of any benefit.

It is essential to consider training

The methodology of the seniors was to take full consideration of training and differences in ranks. A true reformer and teacher is one who commences teaching the basics first. He teaches the fundamentals before delving into intricate matters. When it comes to rectification, it is necessary to first set right the external self of people. He must first teach them purity, salāh, zakāh and other acts of worship. He may then explore internal spiritual reformation.

The need is to teach the basics and fundamentals to people. If we were to start relating to you the lives, sincerity, striving and virtues of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*, and telling you how great our forefathers were, it will not be so beneficial. People will listen to these stories and enjoy them as well, but rectification will not be achieved. The method of rectification to start with the absolute basics and to explain matters which we have to encounter and experience on a daily basis. If these are explained, there is hope of benefit. We notice that people nowadays do not even know the rules and regulations of wudū', salāh, purity, etc. Yet no attention is given to these things. Instead, such issues are discussed which are causing new problems and tribulations. What I am explaining to you at present is that it is not an easy task to teach and train people. It is a major responsibility.

Before teaching the Qur'ān, the *Qā'idah Baghdādī* is taught. If a person does not know how to read the individual letters and joined letters, he will not be able to read the Qur'ān. Once he learns to identify and recognize the individual and joined letters, he will be able to develop fluency in his Qur'ān reading. In the same way, before studying tafsīr, Hadīth, jurisprudence and other higher sciences; it is necessary for a person to study Arabic grammar, etymology, language, vocabulary, literature and so on. If he does not know these fundamentals, he cannot understand tafsīr, Hadīth, etc.

In the same way, rectification and training have to commence with the basics. A novice is then gradually conveyed to the higher levels. It is certainly difficult to adopt this methodology of gradual and incremental teaching, but it will prove to be more beneficial. The other method is to quickly relate to the public as many things as possible. They will certainly enjoy it but it will not have the required benefit. This is why when addressing people, we have to first see if it is in line with the condition of the addressees so that they can benefit from it. If a scholar or lecturer speaks according to his level and rank without giving consideration to the level and condition of the people, how will they benefit? Worse than that, he may say something which results in tribulation; and instead of rectification, it may cause corruption. A poet rightly said:

> That nation is most oppressive which shut its eyes and said things which caused the entire world to be set on fire.

In other words, it put people into tribulation.

The Muslim home ought to be the first madrasah

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* states in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* that during the eras of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and the Tābiʿūn, every Muslim home was a madrasah. The primary education of children was given by parents within the home. This practice has left us now, although there are a few exceptions. The general trend is that matters which were supposed to be taught at home are now being taught by teachers in the madāris. In fact, even the mashā'ikh have to teach these things now.

After observing your conditions, I too started speaking on these subjects. You are probably astonished at the fact that themes of this nature are being discussed in a tasawwuf assembly. You may continue being astonished; I am not bothered. Whether you pay heed or not, and whether you realize or not. I consider these subjects to be essential; this is why I am speaking about them. I believe they are exactly in line with the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If the Qur'ān and Hadīth speaks about these things, and the 'ulamā' have delved into these topics, why should we not speak about them?

External purity is essential

Internal and spiritual purity – also known as tasawwuf – cannot be acquired until and unless external purity is acquired. Furthermore, external purity has an effect on internal purity as well. It is most sad that you do not even know these things. This is why I say that when there is a need to teach the

basics, it cannot be achieved by delivering these talks for 2-3 days. Time will have to be devoted for this and the teaching will have to continue for a long period of time. The sequence for doing this is that you must initiate the work from your house and from your own locality. Work hard and strive in this regard, and you will find it to be productive. This is the method which is prescribed for the proliferation of Dīn. This is how people used to teach in the past. Even the women were taught knowledge and a Dīnī interest was created in them.

The following incident is recorded in the books: Some women gave testimony before a judge. One of the women commenced but forgot some part of her speech. Another woman reminded her what it was. The judge stopped her and asked: "Why are you telling her?" The woman replied by saying that the Qur'ān contains this order:

فَتُذَكِّرَ اِحْدٰهُمَا الْاُخْرٰى

In other words, the testimony of two women equals the testimony of one man because a woman is defective in her intelligence. She may err. The second woman can then remind her. The judge fell silent when he heard her reply. That was how sharp the women were in those days.

Shaykh Abū Bakr ibn Masʿūd ibn Aḥmad Kāsānī *raḥimahullāh* is the author of *al-Badā'iʿ wa aṣ-Ṣanā'iʿ*. When he presented this work to his shaykh, Shaykh ʿAlā' ad-Dīn Samarqandī *raḥimahullāh*, the latter was so overjoyed that he gave his daughter, Fāṭimah, in marriage to him. This, notwithstanding the fact that she was receiving proposals from powerful rulers and sultans. Shaykh Samarqandī *raḥimahullāh* refused those proposals. Subsequently, when any fatwā was

issued from that house, it contained the signatures of three people: Shaykh ʻAlā' ad-Dīn Samarqandī [the father of the woman], Shaykh Abū Bakr [the husband of the woman], and the woman herself [Fāṯimah]. Only then was the fatwā considered to be authentic and reliable.

I related these incidents to you to demonstrate to you that there was a time when women were highly educated and proficient. I am relating to you incidents of past peoples and you are thoroughly enjoying listening to them. You are probably considering this to be in praise of your selves. You may be thinking to yourself: Just look at how great our women were! Of what benefit is it in saying this? It is actually a reprimand against you and proves your unworthiness because the women of those days were so intelligent, possessed so much of knowledge and practice which the men of today do not possess. We all have to be ashamed.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the methodology of teaching and training in a most clear manner. May Allāh *taʻālā* reward him. May Allāh *taʻālā* enable us to understand this methodology and to adopt it. Āmīn. (compiler)

YOU ARE THE BEST OF NATIONS

The book *Zād al-Maʿād* (of ʿAllāmah Ibn Qayyim *rahimahullāh*) really appealed to me. Whichever topic the author delved into, he wrote exceptionally well on it. In the introduction to his book, after praising Allāh *taʿālā* and sending salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he commences by saying that Allāh *taʿālā* alone is the Creator and the possessor of absolute will. In other words, He alone is the Creator of everything. And whatever He created, He exercises His choice, selection and right over it.

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ

Your Lord creates whatever He wills and chooses whomever He likes.[1]

He says thereafter that if you observe the creations of Allāh *taʿālā* and His choice and selection, you will find glaring proofs of Allāh's divinity. Moreover, the conditions and situations which He apportioned to whichever of His creations, they bear testimony to His Oneness, absolute knowledge, wisdom and power. After observing these things, a person concludes that Allāh *taʿālā* is undoubtedly One, and He has no partner. In other words, there is no one who can create as He does, who can join in His creation, select and choose as He does, partner Him in this regard, plan and regulate as He does, or partner Him in this regard. This selection, regulation and specification which is witnessed in this world is a major sign of

[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 68.

Allāh's divinity. It is also one of the greatest testimonies to His oneness, His perfect attributes and the truthfulness of His Messengers. Some of these will be explained here so that you will be able to gauge all that is apart from Him.

Allāh *taʿālā* created seven heavens and selected the uppermost one. He made it the abode for His angels, and selected it for His Throne, His Kursī and His proximity. And He made it an abode for whichever of His creations He willed. Based on these facts, the uppermost heaven enjoys superiority and virtue over the other heavens. Its close proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* is sufficient to demonstrate its superiority. For this heaven to enjoy this superiority and speciality – although it is elementally the same as the other heavens – is a most clear proof of Allāh's absolute power and wisdom, and that He creates as He wills and gives special preference to whomever and whatever He wills.

The same can be said of the superiority which is enjoyed by Jannatul Firdaus over the other jannats. He made His Throne the roof for Paradise. According to some narrations, Allāh *taʿālā* planted its seedlings with His own hands, and selected and reserved them for His special servants.

Among the selections of Allāh *taʿālā* is that He selected certain angels from among His many angels. For example, Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*, Mīkāʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*, Isrāfīl *ʿalayhis salām* who are superior to all other angels. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say: "O Allāh! O You who are the Lord of Jibraʾīl, Mīkāʾīl and Isrāfīl. The Lord of the earths and the heavens. The knower of the unseen and the seen. The one who passes decision in matters which people

differ. Guide me to what is correct. Surely You alone guide to the straight path whomever You will."

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* mentioned only these three angels because they enjoyed a special status. Also, they were from the selected angels and they enjoyed special proximity with Allāh *taʿālā*. There are many other angels in the heavens, yet Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* took the names of these three. Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* used to bring down revelation – that revelation which is a means for life in the hearts and souls. Hadrat Mīkāʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* is in charge of the rains – rains which are the causes of the survival of the earth, animals and plants. Hadrat Isrāfīl *ʿalayhis salām* is in charge of the trumpet. When he blows it, Allāh *taʿālā* will permit the dead to come to life and remove them from their graves.

Included in the special selection of Allāh *taʿālā* is the selection of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* from the entire progeny of Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām*. These number about 124 000. From them 313 were selected for messenger-ship as gauged from the narration of Hadrat Abū Dharr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* which is quoted by Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and Ibn Hibbān *rahimahullāh*. From the Messengers, five are known as *ulu al-ʿazm* (those endowed with firmness and determination). Reference is made to them in Sūrah al-Ahzāb and Sūrah ash-Shūrā.

وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ.

We took from the Prophets their covenant and from you, from Nūh, Ibrāhīm Mūsā and ʿĪsā, the son of Maryam. We took a firm covenant from them.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah ash-Shūrā:

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا وَصّٰى بِهٖ نُوْحًا وَّالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهٖٓ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسٰٓى اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الدِّيْنَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِيْهِ.

He has placed a path for you in the religion - the very same path towards which He had ordered Nūh, and the order of which We sent to you, and the path towards which We had ordered Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and ʿĪsā - uphold the religion and do not cause divisions therein.[2]

From these five, two were conferred with a very special and deep friendship, viz. Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Also in the special selection of Allāh *taʿālā* is His selection of the progeny of Ismāʿīl *ʿalayhis salām*, from them the Banū Kinānah which was a branch of the Khuzaymah, and from the Banū Kinānah the Quraysh were chosen. From the Quraysh, the Banū Hāshim tribe was given a special status, and from it, the chief of the human race, the pride of the Prophets and Messengers, and the leader of past and future generations – Hadrat Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was chosen.

Another example of Allāh's special selection is that He gave superiority to the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* of

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[1] Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 7.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 13.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* over all the people of the world. From them, the early pioneers (*as-sābiqīn al-awwalīn)* were selected. Then it was those who took part in the Battle of Badr and then those who were present at Bayʿah ar-Ridwān. The most perfect one in Dīn was chosen for all of them. The one who was most superior as regards the Sharīʿat and who surpassed all in noble character was selected.

The ummat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was given superiority over all other nations. The *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and other books relate that Hadrat Nahr ibn Hakīm ibn Muʿāwiyah ibn Jundah relates from his father who relates from his father that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: From among the nations, you are the one which is to complete the number seventy. And you are the best and noblest of them.

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī *rahimahullāh* say that this narration of Nahr ibn Hakīm is authentic. The effect of Allāh's selection is clearly seen in the actions, character, tauhīd, ranks in Paradise, position on the day of Resurrection, etc. of this ummat. This ummat will be separated from all the other nations and made to stand on a hill. It will distinguish itself over the other nations in its loftiness.

Tirmidhī Sharīf relates from Hadrat Buraydah ibn al-Hasīb Aslamī that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: The inhabitants of Paradise will comprise of 120 rows, of which 80 rows will be of this ummat. The remaining 40 rows will belong to the other nations. Imām Tirmidhī classifies this narration as a sound Hadīth.

Sahīh Bukhārī contains a Hadīth of Hadrat Abū Saʿīd Khudrī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I take an oath in the name of

the Being in whose control is my life, I hope that you people will make up half the inhabitants of Paradise." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also prayed for a larger number. We could correlate the two narrations by saying that the latter is more authentic. Or, when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* expressed the desire that his ummat should make up half of the people of Paradise, Allāh *taʿālā* informed him that they will make up 80 out of the 120 rows of people. There is therefore no contradiction between the two. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

The ummat of Rasūlullāh is conferred with knowledge and forbearance

From among the points of superiority and virtue which this ummat enjoys, one is that Allāh *taʿālā* blessed it with knowledge and forbearance which was not given to such an extent to other nations. The *Musnad* of Bazzār and others relate from Hadrat Abū ad-Dardā' *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* who said: I heard Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saying: Allāh *taʿālā* said to ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*: "I am going to create a nation after you which will praise and thank Me when favourable conditions come to it. When it experiences unfavourable conditions, it will exercise patience and hope for reward for it." Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* said: "How will they be able to achieve all this without knowledge and forbearance?" Allāh *taʿālā* said: "I will give them a share of My knowledge and forbearance."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the virtue and honour which have been conferred to this ummat! It is even given the title of "the best of nations". Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللهِ.

You are the best of all nations which has been sent into the world - you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in Allāh.[1]

In this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* says you were the best of nations. In other words, this was in your destiny and you were destined to become the best of nations. If the ummat is the best of nations, it is inevitable that the Messenger has to be the best of Messengers, its Dīn to be the best of all religions, its Sharīʿat to be the best of all, its Book to be the best of all Books, and its morals and actions to be the best.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent conclusion Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has drawn!

Further on Allāh *taʿālā* says "which has been sent for the people". You enjoin good and forbid evil. This shows that this attribute is from among the special attributes of this ummat and it is its hallmark.

The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

وقيل أن المراد كنتم في علم الله تعالى أو في اللوح المحفوظ، أو فيما بين الأمم، أي في علمهم كذلك أخرجت أي أظهرت.[2]

One view is that "you are the best of nations" means that you are the best of nations in Allāh's knowledge or in the Preserved Tablet. Or you are the best nation

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 110.

[2] روح المعاني، ج ٤، ص ٢٥ز

according to all nations. In other words, they too know that you are the best. You have been appointed, i.e. brought into the open.

Allāh *taʿālā* – in His knowledge – had predestined for this nation to be the best. He therefore appointed it in this world to prove it. This nation will therefore carry out the work for which it was appointed until the day of Resurrection. In every era it will certainly have some people who will be practising on this Dīn. This will be the proof that they are perfect. The will encourage others to do the same. They will guide and steer people towards the straight path. This will be the proof that they are perfecting others. In short, the honour and virtue of this ummat lies in enjoining good and forbidding evil. As long as this quality is found in it, it will be the best. A group will continue enjoining good and forbidding evil until the day of Resurrection.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and kindness – include us in such a group, and enable us to support and help it. Āmīn. (compiler)

TWO ATTRIBUTES OF THE ONE INVITING TO ALLĀH

If an ʿālim takes up the work of rectifying and training for the wellness of the Muslims, and presents the correct teachings of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to them, they will most certainly pay heed. They will surely listen because they are, after all, Muslims. However, he must bear in mind that he is not referred to as being harsh, nor does he treat them harshly.

This is why you see that I am very soft. Harshness spoils the work. There was a Maulānā who accompanied me. When he returned home, he wrote to me thus: "When we were in ʿAlīgarh, Hadrat was most humble, yet everyone was over-awed by Hadrat." I replied: "This is solely by Allāh's grace."

Allāh *taʿālā* addressed Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Hārūn *ʿalayhis salām* as follows:

اَنْتُمَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغَالِبُوْنَ

You two and whoever follows you will remain dominant.

It is therefore Allāh's grace that He casts awe in the hearts of the people. Even if one person goes to a place, he will start conveying benefit to the people. We do not need large numbers of people to convey benefit. If there is just one person who understands the work well, he will be of benefit to the people. The path for others will be opened. Obviously, if a person goes with a worldly motive, there will be no benefit.

When the pre-Islamic Arabs were out at sea and the ship was in danger of sinking, they used to beseech Allāh *taʿālā*. Once they were saved, they would return to their idol-worship.

If a person does the work according to the principles and with sincerity, then even if he is a bit harsh, people will tolerate it. Ḥadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* laid down two conditions for a person who is in the company of people. One is that a person must have no monetary motive from people. The other is that he must have sound character and mannerisms when interacting with them. He writes thereafter that if Allāh *taʿālā* decrees, He will enable the person to receive [material things] from the very same people. Why, then, should you include yourself among covetous people. When a person severs all hopes from people, Allāh *taʿālā* casts the thought in their hearts to help him. Ḥadrat Maulānā used to say that when a non-Muslim gives me anything, I accept it because I think to myself that I have no dealing or interaction with him. So if he is giving me something, it is really Allāh *taʿālā* who is causing him to give it to me.

Further on Ḥadrat Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* writes that if you have no greed towards people and you possess sound character, and they still oppose you, then you must conclude that they are wretched souls; you must not have any hopes in them.

وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ

The wrongdoers shall soon learn by what kind of turning they will turn.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā', 26: 227.

I sent a message to one Maulānā Sāḥib via a person. The message was: I undertake the rectification of people in total conformity with the Sunnat. I do not flatter or cajole anyone in the least. I do not overlook anything in matters related to rectification. Together with this, I am extremely lenient and easy-going in my interaction. I refrain totally from harshness. This is after all the Sunnat way. If I happen to say something harsh to a person for the sake of his reformation, then I treat him with kindness and affection the next time.

Note: This was certainly Hadrat's practice, and this is how he interacted with everyone. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us who are his associates to do the same. Āmīn. (compiler)

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became angry at a Saḥābī on one occasion. After a while, the person got up from the assembly and left. He must not have gone very far when someone sent some milk as a gift to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He immediately called for the Saḥābī and gave him the milk to drink. This was the level of mercy and kindness of the mercy to the worlds *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and this is the method of rectification which is in line with the Sunnat.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to follow the Sunnat in this regard. Āmīn. (compiler)

After I sent my message to that Maulānā Sāḥib, the latter replied: "Hadrat is absolutely correct. It is due to Hadrat's emulation of the Sunnat and his extreme leniency and soft-heartedness that people in large numbers are attracted to Hadrat."

I also asked that Maulānā Sāḥib: "Do you think I will be able to do any work in the field of spiritual

rectification? Do you have any hopes in this regard?"[1] He replied: "Hadrat has already done a lot of work and is still doing a lot. Inshā Allāh, Hadrat will do much more in the future as well. Hadrat is doing purely Dīnī work. As regards Hadrat's work, I can say that I present myself in Hadrat's service, but sometimes I do not get the opportunity. Despite this, I find it has a great effect on me. I find my internal condition changing. What then can be said about the condition of those who are always in Hadrat's service, and are acquiring Hadrat's noble words, blessings and effulgence by night and day!? What great spiritual progress they must be making! Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone."

Note: Māshā Allāh, the Maulānā Sāhib gave a most appropriate reply to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's question. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire Hadrat's associates to rectify their spiritual condition as best as possible. Āmīn. (compiler)

[1] We learn from this that a question of this nature can be posed to one's special and close associates. (compiler)

ETIQUETTE TO BE OBSERVED IN AN INVITATION TO A MEAL

The person who extends an invitation to a meal must have the following objectives in mind:

ولتسنن بسنة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في إطعام الطعام.

He is feeding people in emulation of the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

اشتمالة قلوب الإخوان.

To incline the hearts of his fellow brothers through the meal.

إدخال السرور على قلوب المؤمنين بسبب من الإسباب.

To bring joy to the hearts of the believers.

From the second two objectives we learn that feeding is one of the important means of reconciling hearts. We can also conclude from the above that other intentions are neither correct nor valid.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَّكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ

Eat and drink but do not spend extravagantly. He is not pleased with those who spend extravagantly.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 31.

If Allāh *taʿālā* prohibited extravagance in one's own wealth as regards eating and drinking, it will be prohibited to be extravagant in the wealth of others. The administrators of religious institutes must be very particular in this regard. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Additional etiquette

Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* noted some points which, if considered, an invitation will be in line with the Sunnat and Sharīʿat. He quoted these from *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm* of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*. We are now quoting a few more points to complete the benefit of this topic.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that there are many narrations on the virtues of hospitality and feeding people. We will mention the etiquette only. Some of these relate to the inviter and others to the invited.

1. The inviter must make an effort to invite pious and righteous people, and not flagrant sinners. A person had invited Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He then made this duʿā' for the person:

أكل طعامك الأبرار

May righteous people eat your food.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also said:

لا تأكل إلا طعام تقي، ولا يأكل طعامك إلا تقي

When you eat, ensure you eat the food of a pious person. And when you feed, ensure you feed a pious person.

Explanation: The instruction to invite pious people does not mean that it is prohibited to invite flagrant sinners and unbelievers. What it means is that the objective of an invitation must be the pious and righteous people. Others can also join in.

The ʻulamā' state that just as we are ordered to be hospitable to our guests, so is the order with our neighbours. This bond with the neighbour means that we may invite a neighbour just as we can accept his invitation. He is a neighbour just as we are his neighbour. Muslims are more eligible to adopt sound character and noble mannerisms than others.

The following is stated in *al-Fatāwā al-Hindīyyah*:

وفي التفاريق لا بأس بأن يضيف كافرا لقرابةٍ أو لحاجةٍ

There is no harm in hosting an unbeliever on the basis of kinship or due to some need.

Fulfilling the rights of the neighbour is an order of the Sharīʻat.

2. The inviter must also invite poor people. He must not invite wealthy and affluent people only. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam* said that the worst meal is the walīmah to which only the wealthy are invited.

There are a few other etiquette which an inviter must observe. For example:

1. He must not deprive his close relatives from the invitation. Inviting outsiders while leaving out close relatives entails severing family ties and will cause them to become distant.
2. Observe a sequence for friends and associates. In other words, preference should be given to older friends first. Inviting some of them and

leaving out others will result in the latter becoming distant from you. It is necessary to avoid such a situation. The way to do this is to invite everyone. If this is not possible due to the number becoming too large, extend several invitations over a period of time and invite few people at a time. But here too, observe the necessary sequence.

3. The objective of the invitation must not be pride, ostentation and competition. Rather, the previously-mentioned three objectives should be considered.

Now understand well that it is not necessary to accept every invitation. There are certain etiquette and prerequisites for accepting an invitation.

1. Do not differentiate between rich and poor. In other words, abstain from accepting the invitations of the wealthy while declining the invitations of the poor. This is because pride is prohibited by the Sharīʿat. Some pious people of the past declined all invitations for fear of this. They used to say: "It is a shameful thing to wait for curry." Another saint said: "Placing my hand in the cup of another is synonymous to lowering my neck before him." In other words, it will mean that I disgraced myself and made myself subservient to him. There are many proud people of the past who used to accept the invitations of the wealthy and decline the invitations of the poor. This is against the Sunnat. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to accept the invitations of the poor, the slaves and everyone else.

We quoted the statement of a saint who said: "Placing my hand in the cup of another is synonymous to lowering my neck before him." Some 'ulamā' say that it is against the Sunnat, but this is not the case

because when an inviter is not pleased by the acceptance of an invitation and is not thankful of the one who accepted his invitation, and instead, considers it a favour on the one to whom he extended the invitation – then this is undoubtedly a matter of disgrace and humiliation. As for Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* accepting the invitation of everyone, it was because he understood that the inviter will be most grateful for the acceptance of the invitation. He will consider Rasūlullāh's acceptance to be a source of honour, pride and reward in this world and the Hereafter. Therefore, different rulings are given for different situations.

If you suspect that the invitation extended by a certain person is a burden for him, i.e. he is not doing it out of sincerity and love, but for show and competition, then it will not be Sunnat to accept that invitation. Instead, it will be most appropriate to defer your attendance in a subtle manner. This is why some Sufis say: Do not go to an invitation except of the person who believes that you are eating your sustenance, and that he is merely conveying the trust to you which he had been safeguarding. Furthermore, he must be grateful over your acceptance of his invitation; he must not count it as a favour on his part.

2. One of the etiquette of accepting an invitation is that it must not be declined merely because it is far away. In the same way, it must not be declined just because the inviter is a poor person. It is not permissible to do this.

3. Do not accept the invitation if the food is doubtful, if the arrangements [such as catering] were made from impermissible income, or evil is committed at the place. For example, the carpet is made of silk, the

utensils are of silver, the roof or walls has pictures of animate objects, there is singing and music or any other type of play and amusement, backbiting is committed there, lies are spoken, false accusations are made, etc. Similarly, do not accept an invitation if the inviter is a bidʿatī, flagrant sinner, mischief-maker, or desirous of pomp and ostentation.

4. The objective of accepting an invitation must not be solely to fill the stomach. In such a case, the invitation will become a worldly event. You should rather have a good intention so that when you do accept it, you will receive the reward of the Hereafter. The intention should be following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I will accept an invitation even if it is for a meal of trotters."

Another intention should be that you want to bring joy to the heart of a believer. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "When a person makes a believer happy, he has made Allāh *taʿālā* happy."

Another intention should be that you are going to visit a believer so that you are included among those who meet each other for Allāh's sake. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* mentions two reasons: (1) to visit each other for Allāh's sake, (2) to spend on each other for Allāh's sake. The act of spending has been fulfilled, now make the intention of visiting for Allāh's sake.

Also make the intention that you will save yourself from people having evil thoughts about you. If you do not accept the invitation, it may well be that people will think that you are proud, ill-mannered or that you are scorning them. But if you accept the invitation, these thoughts will come to an end.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What excellent etiquette for the inviter and the invited! We ought to put them into practice. (compiler)

COMPREHENSIVE INVOCATIONS

Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* is the leader of the Prophets. He makes the following duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā*:

فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيْ إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ. الَّذِيْ خَلَقَنِيْ فَهُوَ يَهْدِيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْ هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِيْ وَيَسْقِيْنِ. وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْ يُمِيْتُنِيْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْ أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لِيْ خَطِيْئَتِيْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ. رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ حُكْمًا وَّأَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ.

They are my enemies, except the Lord of the worlds. He who created me. So it is He who shows me the way. And it is He who feeds me and gives me to drink. When I fall ill, it is He who cures me. It is He who will cause me to die and then give me life again. It is He of whom I hope that He will forgive me my faults on the day of judgement. "O my Lord! Bestow on me wisdom and include me among the righteous."[1]

If the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* did not make duʿā' and teach us, we would not know how to make duʿā'. Do you think the teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are ordinary and insignificant teachings? They are all proven through divine revelation. Why, then, should there be no benefit in them? There will definitely be benefit in them. If man adopts these teachings, they will certainly have an effect according to the level and capability of each person.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā', 26: 77-83.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيْمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ.

O Allāh! You are most pardoning and generous. You love to pardon, so pardon me.

This is a duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* who was sinless. Since divine revelation from Allāh *taʿālā* comes to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, the words which they use come to them from Allāh *taʿālā*. The Auliyā' also teach duʿā' and dhikr, but the teachings of non-Prophets can never compare with those of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

I say to the people, all of you are surrounded by illnesses and ailments. Anyone you look at has some sort of illness. Why, then, do you not make the following duʿā' which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ عِيْشَةً نَّقِيَّةً، وَّمِيْتَةً سَوِيَّةً، وَّمَرَدًّا غَيْرَ مُخْزِيٍّ وَّلَا فَاضِحٍ

O Allāh! I ask You for a pure life, a peaceful death, and a passing away which is neither disgraceful nor dishonourable.

In other words, I must not become so old that I fall into the hardships and difficulties of old-age. I ask You for a death which is neither disgraceful nor dishonourable. A death which does not cast me into disgrace, does not cause me to fall into tribulation, and does not expose my faults and evils.

Look at what a short but comprehensive duʿā' Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made – it encompasses all the good of Dīn and this world. He made duʿā' for a good life, death in a good condition, and to be saved from disgrace in the Hereafter. Do you think there is no lesson for the ummat in this duʿā'?

People say that the laity are not affected. They are wrong. There are many servants of Allāh *taʿālā* who perform tahajjud salāh and cry to Allāh *taʿālā* at night. What do you know about them? If you want to see the laity affected, then speak to them about things which will affect them. Relate to them the stories of the saints.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* asked us to make this duʿā' specifically for him. Its importance can be gauged from this. (compiler)

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* related a story of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* in his *Gulistān*. He was lying on the pebbles of the Haram Sharīf and making this duʿā': "O Allāh! Pardon me. If I am eligible for punishment, then raise me as a blind person on the day of Resurrection so that I am not embarrassed in the presence of pious people."

I ask you, if this is the level of fear of the Hereafter of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and Auliyā', will you not adopt this way? The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* will be fearful, the Auliyā' will be fearful, and when you hear all this, will you respond by laughing? After hearing these incidents, can a person have the courage to say that he was not affected by them?

The 'ulamā' have to be spiritual

The ʿulamā' deliver talks, many people attend and listen. How, then, can we say that the people are not desirous of Dīn? They are presenting themselves for Dīn according to the level on which they are. It is now the work of an ʿālim to create the correct and true quest for Dīn in them, and to teach them the real Dīn. In other words, remove them from customs and bring them towards the reality. Convey them from the external to the internal. This is only possible if the

'ulamā' themselves are people of spirituality – a quality which is extremely rare in our times. The 'ulamā' have abandoned these things. How, then, can they demand them from others? No sooner the 'ulamā' give up speaking on a certain subject, misguidance is bound to enter that subject. If people of a certain area give it up, deviation and misguidance will creep into that area. If people in general give it up, general and all-encompassing misguidance will creep in.

It is necessary to speak about the Hereafter

Nowadays no one speaks about the Hereafter. This is why a vacuum has developed in Dīn. The Hereafter is one of the fundamentals which has an effect on everything else. If fear of the Hereafter develops in your heart, will it be possible for you not to be affected by a lecture? Just as lectures on salāh, fasting, etc. are delivered; and these have some effect in the sense that a few people are affected and they practise – in the same way if the Hereafter is discussed, people will listen. Even if a few people listen, it will be good enough. It is not possible that no one will pay heed. After all, the Hereafter is the original abode of a believer. If it is not discussed, it will result in hard-heartedness and the spread of misguidance. Subsequently, it will be very difficult to remove people from that level. Now even if an 'ālim speaks on this subject, the people will not accept it readily. This is what I refer to as misguidance and deviation. I have seen people becoming affected very quickly. This is why the Ahlullāh do not concentrate too much on the external. They pay more attention to the heart.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say that rectification of internal abilities take a bit longer. As for external actions, these can be rectified

in a minute. The greatest work of the Auliyā' is to rectify internal capabilities and sentiments.

There was a person who used to come frequently to me, and people used to ask him why he keeps on coming to me. Those very same people used to perform salāh behind me, but none of them were interested in a special relationship. They used to think that if a person frequented my place, he will leave their family and tribe. If people start leaving it one by one, there will be no tribe left. They would not stop anyone from performing salāh behind me because they themselves used to perform it behind me. But they would vex a person when he performed tahajjud and engaged in dhikr, and they would castigate him. I am saying this while speaking on the fact that when a person places a foot in real Dīn, people try to stop him. However, the dhikr eventually has an effect and they become affected and impressed. I used to say to those people: "Why do you malign dhikr? It is better than your backbiting and complaining. A person repeats the name of Allāh *ta'ālā* thousands of times." I continued speaking on this subject, and then asked that man [whom the people were castigating]: "How's the situation now?" He replied: "Everything is fine; no one is saying anything." Do you want to know what the matter was? Their entire line of thought had changed. They were devoid of concern and desire for Dīn; and they were caught up in corrupt thoughts. Once their line of thought was corrected, they abstained from castigating and criticizing the person.

Muslims are coming towards Dīn

I have been observing the Muslims for some time and I noticed them making a turn in the right direction. I noticed the condition of the laity improving, and the western educated Muslims also showing more interest

in Dīn. While I was travelling from Allāhābād, a person said to me that he is going to teach his son the Qur'ān. I said to him: "Now that you are saying this, we too will make du'ā' for him that Allāh *ta'ālā* blesses him with sustenance and keeps him happy in this world."

A son who was in London wrote to his father saying: "Teach the boys Arabic, impart Dīnī knowledge to them, make them Maulānās, because these are things which will be of benefit." I said to the father: "Look! You were angry over this very same Dīnī education. Now your own son is writing the same thing." Do you think America and London can stop people from Dīn. There are many servants of Allāh *ta'ālā* living in these places who are extremely pious. Religiosity does not stop you from acquiring of this world. Even the Sharī'at does not stop you. Have you not heard the phrase "success in both worlds"? Does it mean that a man must go around begging in this world, and not earn of it?

Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

فَاٰتٰهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. Allāh loves the doers of good.[1]

Does this verse not make mention of success and wellness in both worlds?

Yes, what is prohibited of this world is that which makes a person heedless of Dīn. The very same people who are pious in this world and believe in the unseen

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 148.

have been referred to as the "successful ones" in the Qur'ān.

أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

These people are on guidance from their Lord, and they are the ones who shall reach their goal.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* mentions two rewards – one is that they are on guidance, and the other is that they will be successful. Success means achieving one's objective. What this means is that these are the people who are successful in this world and in Dīn as well.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* progressed in Dīn to the extent that no one can equal them. In the same way they progressed materially. The pious people receive everything in this world – they receive īmān and they are not less in wealth. Another prize which they receive in this world is that they are on guidance – they remain on the straight path.

The sincerity of a wealthy person

A wealthy man came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* but Hadrat Maulānā was not present at the time. Despite this, the man rolled out a carpet at the spot where Hadrat Maulānā used to sit. When Hadrat arrived and saw this, he did not say anything. He guessed that it must be the same man who brought it. Because the man was religious and sincere, Hadrat did not say anything. He did not ask him why he laid out the carpet without obtaining permission. Why did he act against Hadrat's principles? Normally, no one would dare do anything like this without permission.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 5.

The same man took permission from Hadrat and took a Maulānā Sāhib to his house. He made the Maulānā Sāhib to calculate the inheritance for several generations, allocated the shares, and distributed them. It took several months to complete this task. During this entire period, he hosted the Maulānā Sāhib, saw to his meals and all other necessities. When the calculation and distribution was completed, the man came to Hadrat Maulānā who asked him: "Has anything remained?" The man replied: "Hadrat, a large amount has remained. I am still better off than my brothers." I am relating this story to demonstrate to you that with Dīn, a person also receives of this world. Allāh *taʿālā* gives a lot to His righteous servants in this worldly life. He does not deprive them.

The karāmāt of the Auliyā'

(1)

Some people went into a masjid and saw a rope lying on the floor on the spot where the imām stands. They were astonished to see a rope there and wondered where it had come from. On inquiring, they learnt that there was a saint who performed salāh there the previous night. A snake approached the spot where he was performing salāh. The saint was in some special spiritual condition at the time. It was dark and he could not make out the snake. He took it in his hand and asked: "What is this? Is this a rope?" The snake turned into a rope.

The Ahlullāh sometimes receive such powers from Allāh *taʿālā* on account of Dīn. When they utter something, it becomes the reality. It was the saint's karāmat (supernatural feat). We cannot object because the karāmāt of the Auliyā' is affirmed in the Sharīʿat. They receive great powers from Allāh *taʿālā*

by virtue of their spiritual efforts and striving. Allāh *taʿālā* does not deprive His special servants. The fact of the matter is that they give up their own will, so Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils all their wants. Hadrat Maulānā used to quote the following couplet in his talks:

> Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils your desires. It is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to fulfil the wants of His pious servants.

The karāmāt of the Auliyā' are from Allāh *taʿālā* and we must not reject them. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ. لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ط لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve. Those who believed and continued fearing. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

How can you reject this? Whether a person is a walī or not, the least he can do is to affirm the friendship of the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*. How can it be that you are not one yourself, and you reject it for others? This is against the quality of a believer. Rejection is the quality of unbelievers.

(2)

When in any year the Nile River did not rise sufficiently and its water did not reach the farms, the

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62-64.

people used to become extremely worried. There was a saint to whom the people would go and complain about the shortage of water. They would say to him that people are dying because of it. The saint would take his water-jug and lower it into the river to fill it. The moment he did this, the water level would rise and irrigate all the farms. The water would fill the farms so much, that it would become difficult for the farmers to plant their seeds and carry out other tasks. They would come back to the saint and say: "Hadrat, the abundance of water is making it difficult for us to farm." He would raise his water-jug, go to the same spot, and gargle his mouth. The river would draw its water back, and the farms would become cultivable.

(3)

There is a certain place about which it is said that the poison of scorpions does not have an effect. The entire area became like this through the karāmat of a certain saint. If a scorpion is brought from another region into this region, it too loses its poisonous effect. Now what will you say about this? It is a matter with Allāh *taʿālā* – He does as He wills. There is nothing to be astonished, nor are we permitted to reject.

(4)

Shāh ʿAbd ar-Rahīm Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is the father of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. As he was walking one day, he was singing the following quadruplet of Shaykh Saʿdī Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* with much enjoyment. However, he read only three lines, and could not remember the fourth. This caused a break in the enjoyment which he was experiencing.

> You are wasting away your life when you think of anyone apart from the Beloved.

> It is a waste of time to read anything apart from the secrets of love.
>
> O Saʿdī! Wash off the surface of your heart from all apart from Allāh.

As he got stuck at the third line, an elderly man passed by and read the fourth line for him:

> Knowledge which does not show the correct path is ignorance.

Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was overjoyed like a person who found his lost item. He addressed the elderly man: "Tell me, who are you?" He replied: "I am known as Muṣliḥ ad-Dīn Shīrāzī." Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* wanted to step forward and shake hands with him, but his feet became so heavy that he could not move from his place. He could not shake hands with him.

Books are filled with incidents of this nature. They can neither be rejected nor disregarded. Rather, we have to believe them.

WHEN IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Jāmī *raḥimahullāh* related:

There is a man who is employed in the police department. He related the following incident to me. It was the practice of Ḥaḍrat Wālā [Ḥaḍrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*] to go outdoors in the evening. I accompanied Ḥaḍrat Wālā's rickshaw one evening. On the way, one of my fellow policemen offered salām to me and asked: "Is everything okay?" I replied: "Yes, everything is okay." When the rickshaw proceeded, Ḥaḍrat Wālā called me by pointing with his fingers. It was Ḥaḍrat Wālā's practice to recite the Qur'ān along the way, so if he wanted to say anything, he would make gestures. The attendants were aware of Ḥaḍrat Wālā's habit, so anyone who accompanied him would remain alert. It should not happen that Ḥaḍrat Wālā indicates to something and they are looking in another direction.

Thus, I went to Ḥaḍrat Wālā the moment he pointed for me to come to him. He asked: "What was that policeman saying?" I replied: "He is my associate and was asking about my wellbeing." Ḥaḍrat Wālā asked: "What did you say?" I got scared when Ḥaḍrat Wālā asked this question because I realized I must have given a foolish answer. With much trepidation, I said: "I told him that everything is okay." Ḥaḍrat Wālā asked: "Do you know when everything will be okay for you?" I replied: "Ḥaḍrat, please tell me." He said: "Brother, the wellbeing of a policeman will only be realized when the lives, wealth and honour of people is protected." Ḥaḍrat Wālā then asked: "Do you know when everything will be okay for a Maulānā?" I

replied: "Hadrat, please tell me." He said: "The wellbeing of a Maulānā will only be realized when the Dīn and īmān of people are protected." He then asked: "Did you understand?" I replied: "Yes Hadrat, I understood."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* expounded on the responsibilities of both groups – the police and the 'ulamā'. Each group ought to imprint this in the heart. Inspiration is from Allāh *ta'ālā* alone. (compiler)

ALLĀH'S GUIDANCE AND CARNAL DESIRES

The following Ḥadīth is quoted in *Mishkāt Sharīf*:

عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به.[1]

Ḥaḍrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the Sharīʿat which I came with.

Mullā ʿAlī Qārī *raḥimahullāh* explains this Ḥadīth as follows:

يجوز أن يحمل هذا على نفي أصل الإيمان، أي حتى يكون تابعا مقتديا لما جئت به من الشرع عن اعتقاد لا عن إكراه وخوف سيف كالمنافقين. وقيل المراد به نفي الكمال أي لا يكمل إيمان أحدكم حتى يكون ميل نفسه اي ما تشتهيه تبعا لما جئت به من الأحكام الشرعية، فإن وافقها هواه اشتغل بها لشرعيتها لا لانها هوى، وإن خالفها اجتنب هواه فحييئذ يكون مؤمنا كاملا.[2]

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[1] مشكوة ثاني، باب الاعتصام، ص ٣٠، حديث ٦.

[2] مرقاة المفاتيح، ١٦٨.

This Hadīth could refer to the negation of īmān itself. This would mean that none of you can be a believer until he follows the Sharīʿat which I brought with firm conviction, and not under compulsion or fear of the sword like the hypocrites. Another view is that it refers to the negation of perfection of īmān. In other words, the īmān of none of you can be perfect until the desires of his self are subservient to the injunctions of the Sharīʿat which I have come with. Even if the injunctions are in line with the desires of his self, he practises on them because they have been promulgated by the Sharīʿat and not because they are the desires of his self. If the injunctions are against his carnal self, he desists from the desires of his self. If he does this, he will be a perfect believer.

The crux of the above is that the Hadīth could have two meanings. One is that the person does not even believe that his order has been sent by Allāh *taʿālā* and brought by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Disregarding these injunctions will mean that he is a rejecter. He will therefore not have īmān. The words *Lā Yu'minu* are thus in their actual meaning – the person is not a believer.

The other meaning could be that the person believes in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and also believes that these injunctions are from Allāh *taʿālā*. However, he has shortcomings in his actions. He is not observing the internal or external requisites of this īmān. This person is a believer but his īmān will be defective. He will not have perfect īmān. The first meaning is related to beliefs while the second is related to actions.

From this statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* we learn that one is the Sharīʿat and its opposite is the desires of the self. They are totally

opposite to each other. The person who is a slave of his carnal self cannot be obedient to the Sharīʿat and cannot be a slave of Allāh *taʿālā*. The person who is obedient to the Sharīʿat can never be a slave of his desires.

In every era, the biggest obstacle to accepting the truth has been man's carnal self and its desires. Sometimes even the hearts of obstinate people accept the truthfulness of the call of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, but their carnal selves interject and prevent them from accepting the truth. This is why the Qur'ān and Hadīth emphasise discarding the desires of the self and to protect one's self from its schemes and plots. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَفَرَاَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ عَلٰى سَمْعِهٖ وَقَلْبِهٖ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰى بَصَرِهٖ غِشَاوَةً. فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللّٰهِ، اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ.

Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity. And Allāh, knowing him as such, led him astray and set a seal upon his ears and his heart, and cast darkness over his eyes. So now who will bring him onto the path beside Allāh? Do you not ponder?1

This verse clearly states that the person who makes his self his deity, and instead of following Allāh's order he obeys the desires of his self, then Allāh *taʿālā* never guides him. We learn from this that a person who follows the orders and prohibitions of his self and not of Allāh *taʿālā*, then it is as though he has made his self his deity. He gives it the same status which he ought to have given to Allāh *taʿālā*. In this way, he becomes – by his actions and his choice – a slave of

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 23.

his carnal self and slave of his desires instead of being a slave of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى، وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the live of this world, Hell alone is his abode. Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

This verse shows that success - admission into Paradise – and failure – admission into Hell – is based on the condition of the carnal self.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ

Who can be more astray than he who follows his desires without any guidance from Allāh?[2]

Man's excellence lies in subjugating his carnal self to the Sharī'at

Another point which we learn is that the opposite of guidance (hudā) is lust or desire (hawā). Man's excellence lies in making the carnal self in line with the Sharīʿat, subjugating it, imposing on it to be obedient to the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

[2] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 50.

وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا. فَاَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰهَا. قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا.

By the self and as He proportioned it. He then inspired it with the understanding of evil and righteousness. He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يَا دَاوُدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ.

O Dā'ūd! We made you a vicegerent on earth, so rule with justice among the people and do not follow the desire of the self or else it would lead you astray from the path of Allāh.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* issued one order to Hadrat Dā'ūd *ʿalayhis salām*: "rule with justice among the people", and one prohibition: "do not follow the desire of the self". This was related to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Based on this, it is obligatory on the ummat to follow the Sharīʿat and harām for it to follow the carnal self. Allāh *taʿālā* addresses Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* directly in another verse:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَاءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 7-10.

[2] Sūrah Sād, 38: 26.

We then placed you on a path concerning matters of religion. So follow this path and do not follow the desires of the ignorant.[1]

We learn from this that desire is the thing which stops a person from Allāh's path. It is because of it that a person disregards the Qur'ān, discards the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and gives up following the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh. Subsequently, he follows his self and whatever he does not do is too little.

The Qur'ān is filled with discussions on the carnal self and its rebelliousness. The statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which I quoted at the beginning is in fact a commentary of the Qur'ān. I am referring to the Hadīth: "None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the Sharīʿat which I came with."

In the light of these texts the Sufis perceived the importance of the carnal self and made it the subject of their science. The ʿulamā' say that the actual objective of the Sharīʿat is to remove man from the desires of his self. ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *raḥimahullāh*[2] writes in *al-Iʿtiṣām*:

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 18.

[2] He is an esteemed scholar of the Mālikī madh-hab who wrote a scholarly work on the principles of jurisprudence titled *al-Muwāfaqāt*, and another on the wisdom of the Sharīʿat, titled *al-Iʿtiṣām*. Both books enjoy wide acceptance in academic circles.

ان الشريعة موضوعةٌ لاخراج المكلَّف عن داعية هواه حتّى يكون عبدًا لله.[1]

The Sharīʿat has been laid down to remove accountable man from the demands of his desires so that he becomes a true slave of Allāh.

He writes in *al-Muwāfaqāt*:

قصد الشارع من وضع الشرائع إخراج النفوس عن أهوائها وعوائدها.[2]

Allāh taʿālā laid down the Sharīʿat to remove the selves from their desires and customs.

He writes in another place:

نعم وضعُ الشريعة على أن تكون أهواءُ النفوس تابعةً لمقصود الشارع فيها.

Yes, the Sharīʿat is laid down so that the desires of the carnal selves are subservient to the objective of the promulgator [Allāh taʿālā].

In the first quotation he uses the word *ikhrāj* (to remove). This probably makes reference to the fact that man is naturally caught up with his carnal self. His desires do not want to leave him. Once he acts on the injunctions of the Sharīʿat, his desires leave him – like when something has to be removed by shoving it aside or giving it a push.

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[1] الإعتصام، ج ١، ص ٣٣٧.

[2] الموافقات، ص ٣٣٦.

We learn from this that there is a conflict struggle between the Sharīʿat and the desire. When man strives to come out of its influence, the evils of the carnal self are removed.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raḥimahullāh* delves into this subject in both books, but to a more detailed extent in *al-Muwāfaqāt*.

The purpose of sending down the Sharī'at

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raḥimahullāh* writes:

المقصد الشرعي من وضع الشريعة إخراج المكلف عن داعية هواه حتى يكون عبد الله اختيارا كما هو عبد الله اضطرارا.[1]

The Sharīʿat has been laid down to remove accountable man from the demands of his desires so that he who until now was a slave of Allāh by compulsion [through his conceptual creation] becomes a true slave of Allāh by choice [by practising on the orders of Allāh taʿālā].

I just said to you that ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raḥimahullāh* was an esteemed scholar whose writings have been widely appreciated by the ʿulamā'. He says that following the desire of the self is from among the innovations while its opposite, viz. giving up one's desires and following the texts is a Sunnat. ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī's words "so that he becomes a true slave of Allāh by choice" mean:

يكون عبد الله اختيارا أي طوعا ورغبة تشريعا عن هواه وفانيا عن سوء اختيار نفسه وباقيا بأمر ربه ونهيه وباقيا بشريعته وبحسن اختياره.

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٢، ص ١٦٨.

In other words, in addition to being a slave of Allāh taʿālā by compulsion, he practises on the Sharīʿat and enters His servitude by his own choice and enthusiasm. He does this by obliterating (separating) himself from the evil desires of his self, remains steadfast on the orders and prohibitions of Allāh taʿālā, and steadfast on Allāh's Sharīʿat through his sound choice.

This means that no one in this world is out of the obedience of Allāh *taʿālā*. Every action of man takes place under Allāh's knowledge and will. When it comes to conceptual matters, man is compelled to obey Allāh's orders. In other words, if Allāh *taʿālā* causes him to fall ill, he will have to fall ill. If He constricts his livelihood, he will have to bear poverty. In these matters and others like them, man will have to obey Allāh *taʿālā*, even if he is an unbeliever.

However, the Sharīʿat has come so that as regards matters in which man has the choice – e.g. good and evil, lawful and unlawful, and all other matters in which he can choose one over the other – then it is necessary for him to act on what the Sharīʿat instructed him to act on, and to discard the desires of the self. By doing this, he will be wilfully presenting himself for Allāh's obedience and servitude, and becoming a slave of Allāh *taʿālā* by choice in accordance with Allāh's will. The system which man has been given in this world for living his life – the Sharīʿat – man must follow it and not follow his carnal self. If he follows his self, he will be disgraced. He will be distanced from Allāh's mercy and help. Even though He is still a slave of Allāh *taʿālā*, his servitude and slavery is by compulsion and force; and this is not considered. On the other hand, if he follows the Sharīʿat, he will be honoured and accepted. He will

acquire the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In such a case, he will be a true servant of Allāh *taʿālā* by his own choice, will, enthusiasm and in line with the Sharīʿat. This is what is required by the Sharīʿat, and this is its objective.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What unique themes we are reading by virtue of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. How else would we have got an opportunity to read such themes? When I met Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Hasanī Nadwī *raḥimahullāh* on one occasion, he said: "Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib is a unique person. From so many books, he quotes extracts from *Muwāfaqāt* and other similar books." (compiler)

You have heard what the scholars of the external self had to say about the carnal self and the Sharīʿat. Now listen to what the Sufis and scholars of the internal self have to say.

In his commentary to the previously-quoted Hadīth, Hadrat Mullā ʿAlī Qārī *raḥimahullāh* quotes the statements of a few Sufis. Some are quoted below:

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that a person cannot be a believer unless his desires are subservient to his Sharīʿat. This means that as long as his desire – which is the source of all evils, in fact, it is a false deity to which the desire is obedient – does not become subservient to my [Rasūlullāh's] glittering Sunnat and clear religion, the person cannot be a believer. An indication of this is that his various worries and thoughts which stem from the desires of the self and inclination of the temperament must all become one single worry. That worry is what is connected to the order of Allāh *taʿālā* and following His Sharīʿat. That Sharīʿat whose objective is to pay homage to Allāh *taʿālā* on one hand, and to show

mercy to His creation on the other hand. A person rightly said:

كَانَتْ لِقَلْبِيْ أَهْوَاءٌ مُفَرِّقَةٌ – فَاسْتَجْمَعَتْ إِذْ رَأَتْكَ الْعَيْنُ أَهْوَائِيْ

وَصَارَ يَحْسُدُنِيْ مَنْ كُنْتُ اَحْسُدُهُ – وَصِرْتُ مَوْلَى الْوَرٰى إِذْ صِرْتَ مَوْلَائِيْ

تَرَكْتُ لِلْخَلْقِ دُنْيَاهُمْ وَدِيْنَهُمْ – شُغْلًا بِحُبِّكَ يَا دِيْنِيْ وَدُنْيَائِيْ

My heart had various desires but they all gathered [and became one] when my eyes beheld You. The one whom I was envious of now became envious of me because I became popular among the creation. This happened when You become my master and beloved. I left the creation to their world and religion, while I became occupied in Your love. I realized that You alone are my Dīn and my world.

When the different worries of the person became one – and that is following the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* and the Sharīʿat – he does not turn from Dīn except by the order of Dīn, and does not turn around unless the Sharīʿat orders him to do so. This is a perfect believer and a unique individual whose tauḥīd is accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. As for the one who turns away, follows his carnal self, is desirous of the self and wants to please it, he is an unbeliever. In other words, he is a loser as regards Dīn and his worldly life. The one who follows the Sharīʿat but does not carry out its subsidiary matters is a fāsiq – a flagrant sinner. The one who does the opposite, i.e. follows the subsidiary matters but rejects its fundamentals is a hypocrite. When man's desire turns to guidance, then it is like butter and honey getting mixed. It is like light being added to light, and happiness to happiness.[1]

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[1] *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, p. 376.

The author of *Mirqāt* quotes an objection and a reply to it. I believe it is also beneficial.

Objection:

You say that the Sharīʿat which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* came with is an embodiment of light and effulgence. On the other hand, the desire of the self is an internal darkness which stems from man's nature. How, then, can the carnal darkness become subservient to Dīnī effulgence?

Answer:

The self (nafs) is an element within the body which is born from the mixing of the body and soul. The soul is delicate and spiritual, while the body is dense and dark. The self is between the two. In other words, it accepts the delicateness of spirituality and the density of the body. This is the same self whose setting right and balancing Allāh *taʿālā* is referring to when He says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا

By the self and as He proportioned it.[1]

It must be proportioned in such a way that the animalistic and dark soul is established in the spiritual soul like the light on the pupil of the eye. Based on the proportioning and balancing of the self, it has the ability to accept good and bad, evil and piety. When matters related to piety have the upper hand, it is cleansed of filth and turns towards Dīn and accepts conviction. When matters related to sin and iniquity have the upper hand, the same self becomes a

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 7.

slave of desires and leads man towards the path of destruction. An Arab poet portrays this theme in a very fine and delicate manner. He says:

نُوْنُ الْهَوَانِ مِنَ الْهَوٰى مَسْرُوْقَة – فَصَرِيْعُ كُلِّ هَوًى صَرِيْعُ هَوَانِ

The words *hawān* and *hawā* are one and the same. The letters of both are the same except that *hawān* has an additional letter *nūn*. We can – so to speak – say that the *nūn* was stolen from *hawā*. This is why the person who is struck by *hawā* (desire) is actually struck by *hawān* (humiliation).

What this means is that the person who is caught up by his desires will inevitably suffer humiliation in both worlds. There is no doubt that it is this very same desire of the self which causes man to go astray. Actions can be rectified very quickly. Problems and difficulties are faced when the rectification of the self is done. Once man understands this and takes control of his self, his rectification becomes easy. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that as long as a person's desire is not subservient to what I came with, he cannot be a true believer. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made specific mention of *hawā* because mans good fortune or wretchedness lies in its subservience or non-subservience.

The author of *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* writes:

إِعْلَمْ أَنَّ مُخَالَفَةَ النَّفْسِ رَأْسُ الْعِبَادَةِ

Know well that acting against the carnal self is the peak of all worship. (In fact, it is the fundamental of worship).

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent statement. We had always been hearing

اَلدُّعَاءُ مُخُّ الْعِبَادَةِ

Du'ā' is the essence of worship.

Now we have learnt:

مُخَالَفَةُ النَّفْسِ رَأْسُ الْعِبَادَةِ

A most important reality has been exposed. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* alone. (compiler)

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* says:

Mental thinking is the key to worship. A sign of man's correctness is his opposition of his self and desire. The opposition of both entails opposing their desires. They must not be followed.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* discusses the self repeatedly in his *Mathnawī*. He warns against the desire of the self as follows:

> Never ever befriend the desires of the self, your wishes, and your enjoyable thoughts because they will lead you astray from Allāh's path.

He writes in another place while creating fear about the desire of the self:

> Revive your īmān with honesty of the heart, mere verbal utterances are not enough. You have kept the desires of the self revived inside you. Know well that as long as desires remain alive, īmān cannot be revived. (As stated in a Hadīth:
>
> لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به
>
> None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the

Sharīʿat which I came with. This is because the desire of the self is a lock to this door (of sciences and realities). This is why the realities are not being exposed.

You are rationalizing the authentic and well-preserved words of the Qur'ān and Hadīth. You ought to rationalize your own self, i.e. change yourself from within. Do not rationalize the words of the Qur'ān, i.e. do not change them from their original meanings. Your mental powers are rationalizing the words of the Qur'ān, while you ought to leave them in their original meanings. You should rather change your way of thinking so that it is changed from a corrupt one to a correct one. You are rationalizing the Qur'ān merely on the basis of the desires of your self. Consequently, the brilliant and clear meanings of the Qur'ān have become crooked and changed.

Note: This practice is very common nowadays. Incorrect meanings and explanations are given to the Qur'ān, resulting in numerous deviated sects which are leading astray people of little intelligence. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

Look at how Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* speaks out against the carnal self, and how he warns the ummat against it. The Sufis in every era not only warned us against it, they even saved us. However, because the people of desires follow their desires so ardently – like how the people on the truth follow the texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth – it is not easy for them to leave it. There is no doubt that following the self is abhorrently despicable. Its despicability is sufficiently

demonstrated from the fact that the person who is obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* is known as an Allāh-worshipper, while the one who does not adhere to His orders and follows his desires instead is known as a self-worshipper and desire-worshipper.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are most beautiful facts which our shaykh, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, is steering us towards. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him.

Hadrat Khwājah Maʿsūm Sirhindī Mujaddidī *rahimahullāh* explains this subject in one of his letters. He writes:

> You must know that just as the outward form of īmān is dependent on rejecting the idols and other gods of the kāfirs, the reality of īmān is dependent on rejecting the carnal self. In other words, it is dependent on saving yourself from the desires of the self and from attaching the heart from all apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. The desire is also like a deity. Allāh *taʿālā* says: "Have you seen the person who made the desire of his self his deity?" This verse makes reference to this angle. Based on this, the saints say: "Your objective is your deity."

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* said:

فالعبادة كل العبادة في مخالفة نفسك وهواك، قال الله تعالى ولا تتبع الهوى فيضلك عن سبيل الله، وقال لداؤد اهجر هواك فإنما لا منازع ينازعني في ملكي غير الهوى، والحكاية المشهورة عن ابي يزيد البسطامي

لما رأى رب العزة في المنام فقال له كيف الطريق إليك قال أترك نفسك وتعال فقال فانسلخت من نفسي كما تنسلخ الحية من جلده.[1]

Worship in its entirety lies in opposing your self and your desire. Allāh taʿālā says: "Do not follow the desire or else it will lead you astray from Allāh's path." He said to Dā'ūd ʿalayhis salām: Keep away from your desire because there is no one in My kingdom to dispute with Me except the desire of the self. There is a well-known incident about Hadrat Bā Yazīd Bustāmī rahimahullāh that when he saw Allāh taʿālā in a dream, he asked: "What is the path to reach You?" Allāh taʿālā said: "Discard your self and come towards Me." Hadrat Bā Yazīd says: "I extricated myself from my self as a snake sheds its skin."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how our seniors paid so much of attention to discarding the carnal self. Consequently, they came out of it and reached Allāh *taʿālā*. Unfortunately this is not our condition. We are proud to take their names and even go to the extent of affiliating ourselves to them. Someone calls himself a Qādrī, another a Mujaddidī, another a Chishtī, and yet another a Sahrawardī, and so on. (compiler)

Have you seen the great seekers of Allāh *taʿālā* of the past! Once they understood that the self is the obstacle to establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, they cast it aside just as a snake sheds its skin. It is undoubtedly the fruit of the sincerity and Allāh-devotion of these personalities that they are able to subdue such a rebellious and insubordinate thing like the self. Had it not been for this, the self which is

[1] فتوح الغيب، ص ٦٧.

man's worst enemy would have certainly left them astray.

This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* too warned us against it and said:

إِنَّ أَعْدٰى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِيْ بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ[1]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Furthermore, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that subjugating the desires of the self to the Sharīʿat is a sign of īmān. He said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ اَحَدُكُمْ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنَ هَوَاهُ تَبْعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهٖ[2]

None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the Sharīʿat which I came with.

Nonetheless, we have to understand that coming out of and leaving the carnal is dependent solely on the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. Based on the level of servitude which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had and also to teach his followers, he made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* in various ways for help in subduing the self. Take the following duʿā' as an example:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِمَّنْ تَوَكَّلَ عَلَيْكَ فَكَفَيْتَهُ، وَاسْتَهْدٰكَ فَهَدَيْتَهُ، وَاسْتَنْصَرَكَ فَنَصَرْتَهُ.

O Allāh! Make me of those who placed his trust in You, so You sufficed him; who sought guidance from You, so

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

[2] كنز العمال، ص ٢١٧، حديث ١٠٨.

You guided him; who sought Your help, so You helped him.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says thereafter:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ وَسَاوِسَ قَلْبِيْ خَشْيَتَكَ وَذِكْرَكَ، وَاجْعَلْ هِمَّتِيْ وَهَوَايَ فِيْمَا تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضٰى.

O Allāh! Turn the whisperings of my heart into Your fear and Your remembrance. Utilize my courage and desire for what You love and are pleased with.

He says in another duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا.

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

In the above duʿā' Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* begs Allāh *taʿālā* for the piety of his self and its purification. Allāh *taʿālā* is the One who created the self and its desires. He gives wealth to man and confers various other bounties and favours to him. In the same way, why should it be difficult for Him to give a person piety of the self!? If a person acquires piety of his self or, to rephrase it, if the desire of his self becomes subservient to the Sharīʿat, then this self will not be referred to as blameworthy. Rather, it is praiseworthy and totally in line with the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Through the above-quoted duʿā's Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches his followers that saving one's self from the self and its desires is not easy

without the protection of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself quotes the following statement of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* in this regard:

ذٰلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّيْ لَمْ اَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ كَيْدَ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ

Yūsuf said: This is so that the ʿAzīz may know that I did not betray him in secret and that Allāh does not allow the plot of the treacherous to succeed.[1]

He says thereafter:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌ ۢ بِالسُّوْٓءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil except those upon whom my Lord has mercy. Surely my Lord is forgiving, merciful.[2]

Did you see the view of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* with regard to the self despite being divinely protected from sin! Did you see how they feared it, and how they continually sought Allāh's refuge from its mischief. The fact of the matter is that man cannot subdue the self through his own strength. The easy way is for man to subjugate himself before Allāh *taʿālā* who created the self and placed desires in it. Man must acknowledge his weakness, and beg and beseech Allāh *taʿālā*. He must say: O Allāh! I am weak and incapable. Remove me from the trappings of the self solely through Your grace and kindness, and change its evils into virtues.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 52.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

Glory to Allāh! What an easy prescription taught to us by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If we practise on it, the path will become very easy and near. It was the noble practice of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to read the following duʿā' before every sermon and speech:

وَنَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ اَعْمَالِنَا

We seek refuge in Allāh from the mischief of our selves and from the evils of our actions.

We learn from this that the self has mischief in it, and we ought to seek refuge from its mischief.

Now listen to another duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ قِنِيْ شَرَّ نَفْسِيْ

O Allāh! Protect me from the evil of my self

Another duʿā' is made in the tone of seeking refuge:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِيْ، وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطٰنِ وَشِرْكِهِ

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from the evil of my self, from the evil of Satan and associating with him

The following is a part of a lengthy duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ اَسْتَغِيْثُ، اَصْلِحْ لِيْ شَأْنِيْ كُلَّهُ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ اِلٰى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

O the Living! O the Self-subsisting! It is through Your mercy that I am seeking help. Set right all my affairs and do not make me rely on my self even for a single moment

Did you see how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from the mischief of the self. The object is to teach his followers – that if the sinless Messenger of Allāh *taʿālā* can seek refuge from the self in this way, how much more the non-sinless ummat has to fear the self and save itself from its desires!?

You also learnt how the Sufis strove to save themselves from this enemy and what efforts they made to keep themselves protected from it. All the efforts of the Sufis are for the subjugation of the self. Their associates ought to emulate them.

What I want to show you at this point is that the easiest way of achieving this is to follow the Sunnat especially as regards making duʿā'. In other words, if we beg of Allāh *taʿālā* for whatever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* begged him, and seek His refuge from whatever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge, we will achieve a lot. We will be able to free ourselves from the influences of the self and remain attached to the Sunnat path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. We will then be able to acquire true īmān. After acquiring true īmān, we can be eligible for every type of success and victory in Dīn and in this world. After all, the source of every progress is īmān. We learnt from the Hadīth which we quoted in the beginning that the acquisition of real īmān is dependent on giving up the desires of the self. And the way to do it is to follow the Sunnat.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us. Amīn.

THE REASON FOR OUR DĪNĪ RETROGRESSION

We notice that the condition of our madāris and Islamic centres of today is destroyed. In other words, places which were set up for reformation and rectification have become centres of mischief and corruption. I would like to speak on this subject at this time. My entire discussion is directed to my beloveds and not for outsiders. It is for a seeker, not for a non-seeker.

This discussion is important because the serious level of retrogression which has developed is because of an absence of such discussions. The source of all mischief is the carnal self, and the cause of all evils is bad character. Today people have swept the discussion on the carnal self and morals under the carpet. This is why you will not hear an ʿālim saying: "a backbiter is a flagrant sinner", "spying is harām", "ostentation is polytheism", "coming out of the love for authority is obligatory" as often as he says: "salāh is obligatory" or "alcohol is harām".

Consequently, because we practise a little on the external injunctions, we do have some knowledge of them. But because we do not consider internal actions to be necessary, we do not have any concern to learn about them. There is a famous saying: "Why ask the directions to a place when you do not even have an intention of going there?"

If this shortcoming is found in the teachers and seniors, it is passed on to the students and juniors. Another thing which I am observing nowadays is that

there is some interest in learning the rules and regulations, but there is no attention whatsoever to the rectifying the evils of the carnal self and acquiring its virtues. The following couplet applies to the people of today:

> They consider ostentation to be lawful and consuming alcohol to be unlawful. What an excellent Tarīqat and what a beautiful Sharīʿat!

This deficiency in us is increasing by the day because if we are not going to discuss it, how will people learn of the good and bad of these things? If they don't have knowledge of them, how will they practise? Consequently, the condition today is that there is no one to speak about the evils of the carnal self and the virtues of noble character. If there were such people today, our deplorable condition would not have reached such a level. When a certain branch of knowledge is not even spoken about and discussed, that branch of knowledge will disappear. If the evil of a thing is at least mentioned verbally, people will abstain from having that evil quality.

Discussions on the carnal self and its harms are found in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. The Sufis have written books on this subject. But neither do the madāris discuss it nor do the khānqāhs. Instead, this subject has been shunned everywhere. Discussions on this subject have become so rare and foreign, that if a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* speaks on it, then people oppose it.

The saints of every era strove arduously to remove the evils of the carnal self from within them, and discarded it. Today the worshippers of the self consider it to be death to discard the self. This is why they found the easiest thing to do is to give up talking

about it completely. I would like to speak to you about the carnal self today. Perhaps a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* will benefit from it. Allāh *taʿālā* has issued warnings against following the self and giving preference to it. At the same time, He promised Paradise for the one who does not act on the desires of his self. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى، وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the live of this world, Hell alone is his abode. Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[2]

Here too Allāh *taʿālā* says that success and failure are attached to the carnal self. In other words, the one who rectified the self and purified it of evils, he is successful. The one who maintained it with its filth, he has failed.

This has been the work and achievement of the Sufis. In every era they removed people from the pride of the self and rescued them from destructive qualities. After

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

all, the self is the worst enemy on the path to Allāh *taʿālā*. A Ḥadīth states:

إِنَّ أَعْدٰى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِيْ بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ[1]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Those who were seeking Allāh *taʿālā* listened to this warning of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with the ears of their hearts, and became enemies of their carnal selves in consideration of this Ḥadīth. They fought against it with all their might until they overpowered it. Once they overpowered the self which was the obstacle on the path, the path to Allāh *taʿālā* became absolutely clear. Their spiritual condition with Allāh *taʿālā* and their affinity with Him became correct and complete.

The same carnal self made the creation the means for the acquisition of many of its desires. This is why the creation also became a major obstacle on the path. Ḥaḍrat Junayd *raḥimahullāh* says in this regard:

اتصالك بالخالق بقدر انفصالك عن المخلوق

The strength of your bond with the Creator will depend on the extent of your distance from the creation.

Pieces of advice from Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn Miṣrī

The Sufis of every era strove arduously to save the seekers of the path from the creation and from evil characteristics. We present to you the teachings of

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* to serve as an example. You will be able to gauge what the Tarīqat is and how the people of the Tarīqat of the past used to rectify those who frequented them – a practice which has disappeared from us. I have a hand-written book comprising themes of tasawwuf. Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* writes therein:

Yūsuf ibn Husayn relates: I went to Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī on one occasion and he said to me:

يا بني صحح حالك مع الله لا يشغلك عنه شاغل، ولا تشتعل بما يقول الخلق منك فإنهم لن يغنوا عنك من الله شيئا، وإذا صحت حالك مع الله أرشدك للطريق إليه.

O son! Set right your condition with Allāh, and nothing will be able to keep you away from Him. Do not become infuriated by anything which people say about you because they can be of no avail to you from Allāh taʿālā. If your affair with Allāh taʿālā comes right, He will steer you to the path which leads to Him.

The advice to stay away from false claims:

واقتد لسنة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وظاهر العمل، وإياك أن تدعي في ما ليس لك، فما أهلك عامة المريد إلا الدعاوى.

Follow the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, and practise on external knowledge. Beware of making claims about things which are not in you. This is because false claims have been the general reason for the destruction of murīds.

طلبت يوما من ذي النون وصيته قال إياك وهذه الأوراد المتصلة فإن النفس تألفها وانظر ما فيه مخالفة نفسك من صيام أو صدقة فاعملها فإن في متابعة النفس طاعة كانت أو معصية فتنة مما ألفت النفس شيئا إلا فيه بلاء وخطر.

Yūsuf ibn Husayn says: I asked Dhun Nūn for some advice. He said: Beware of the harms of these incantations because the carnal self is attracted to them. In other words, they are in line with the desires of the self. You should rather do the things which your self dislikes, e.g. fasting or charity. Following the desires of the self – whether in acts of obedience or disobedience – entails a tribulation. The self is only attracted to things which have the element of calamity and danger.

وقال له أيضا لا تسكن إلى مدح الناس ولا تجزع عن قبولهم وردهم فإنهم قطاع الطريق، واسكن إلى ما يتحققه من أحوالك سرًّا لا علنًا.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn also said to him: Never take solace from the praises of people (do not be happy over their praises). You should neither be terrified by their acceptance and rejection because they are highway robbers. You must take solace from your internal conditions which you really posses. And that too, only in your heart, not in public.

الخير كله في بيت مفتاحه التواضع، والشر كله في بيت مفتاحه الكبر.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn also said to him: When the key to a house is humility, you can conclude that every type of goodness has entered it. When the key to a house is

pride, you can conclude that every type of evil has entered it.

Glory to Allāh! What knowledge and what sciences! These were the real people of the Ṯarīqat. They neither went into detailed lectures, nor did they resort to eloquent words. They would merely make a few simple statements which used to get embedded in the hearts of the audience. This resulted in feeling uncomfortable with the creation and abhorring bad characteristics; and establishing an internal bond with the Creator.

An explanation of the words of advice of Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn Miṣrī

The pieces of advice which Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn Miṣrī *raḥimahullāh* gave to Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf ibn Ḥusayn *raḥimahullāh* are worthy of being written in gold and being embedded in the hearts.

1. The first point which he made was that he should correct his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. Once he does this, nothing will be able to shift him from that. We learn from this that when people move away from the right path, the reason is that their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* was not correct.

2. The second piece of advice was that he must never become infuriated by what people say about him because they can cause him no harm against Allāh *taʿālā*. What a beautiful piece of advice. Everyone has friends and enemies in this world. However, we see pious people having more opponents, and they have to hear many things from them. This would obviously cause them grief. Now look how he lightened the grief through this piece of advice! We notice that when a person has a strong bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, he does not bother in the least about the creation. This is because his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* is in order.

He seeks Allāh's pleasure alone. Once he acquires His pleasure, the enmity of people is of no consequence in his sight. He is – so to speak – saying what a poet said:

> Although the entire world has become my enemy, what I really need to know is that my Beloved is not angry at me.

3. The third piece of advice which Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* gave was that he must follow the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, practise on the external Sharī'at, and save himself from false claims. In other words, do not make claims about having certain internal spiritual conditions when you do not have them. It is false claims which have destroyed the murīds in general.

Since the seniors of Dīn gave this piece of advice, it will be necessary for us to understand the meaning of claims. I am not saying this, Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* is. He was from among the most senior Auliyā' of the past.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* was a unique personality of his time. Someone complained about him to Mutawakkil [the caliph]. He was summoned from Egypt. When he was presented in the court, he spoke to Mutawakkil and admonished him in such a manner that he began crying. Mutawakkil then conveyed him to Egypt with absolute respect and honour. Subsequently, when people of abstinence used to be mentioned in the presence of Mutawakkil, he would be reduced to tears. He used to say: "When the people of abstinence are mentioned in an

assembly, it is essential to make mention of Hadrat Dhun Nūn."[1]

The same Hadrat Dhun Nūn is saying that you must never make claims because it becomes a cause of destruction.

The following statement of Shaykh ʿAdīyy ibn Musāfir al-Umawī is quoted in *aṭ-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*:

أول ما يجب على سالك طريقتنا هذه ترك الدعاوى الكاذبة وإخفاء المعاني الصادقة.

The first thing which is obligatory on the one who is treading our path is to give up false claims and to conceal true meanings (i.e. his true conditions, proximity with Allāh taʿālā, love for Him, etc.).

Hadrat ʿAdīyy *raḥimahullāh* is saying the same thing which Hadrat Dhun Nūn *raḥimahullāh* said. We learn from this that making false claims is very far from the path. It is therefore the first duty of a seeker to give them up, and then enter the path. Entering the path without giving them up is synonymous to entering salāh without purity.

The era is filled with false claims

Hadrat Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* wrote a book titled *al-Amr al-Muḥkam al-Marbūṭ Fī Mā Yalzam Ahl Ṭarīqillāh Taʿālā Min ash-Shuruṭ* (the decisive and established order on the prerequisites which the people of the Ṭarīqat must adhere to). He writes in the introduction to this book: My objective in writing this book is to explain the rank of a shaykh and a murīd,

[1] *Qushayrīyyah.*

and the essentials of both." He goes on further to give the reason for it. He writes:

فإن الزمان مشحون بالدعاوى الكاذبة العريضة فلا مريد صادق ثابت القدم في سلوكه، ولا شيخ محقق ينصحه فيخرجه من رعونة نفسه وإعجابه برأيه ويعرب له عن طريق الحق، فالمريد يدعي شيخوخة الرياسة، وهذا كله تخبيط وتلبيس.[1]

The times are filled with extensive false claims. There is no murīd who is genuinely firm on his path, and there is no erudite shaykh who can advise the murīd by removing him from the deception of his carnal self and the arrogance of his views; and expound to him the true path. Consequently, the murīd makes claims to leadership and authority. All this has corrupted the Ṯarīqat and reduced it to a medley of confusion.

Look, Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* is also saying the same thing about his time – that it is filled with false claims. There is neither a genuine murīd nor an erudite shaykh. I ask you, if that was the condition of people of that time, do you think that all the shaykhs and murīds of today are true and genuine? Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* is saying that the times are filled with false claims. From that you can gauge the condition of our times. The fact of the matter is that everyone desires name and fame, and it is very difficult to reach a certain rank with genuine honesty. On the other hand, it is very easy to make false claims to positions and ranks. When honesty and sincerity left the people, it was replaced by false claims. In the

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[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٨.

absence of integrity, the goodness of honesty and the wretchedness of falsehood are no longer considered.

On the other hand, if a person just took into consideration the following words of Allāh *taʿālā* and statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he would have realized that honesty is what saves a man, and dishonesty is what destroys him.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصَّادِقِيْنَ.

O believers! Fear Allāh and remain with the truthful ones.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

عليكم بالصدق فإن الصدق ينجي والكذب يهلك.[1]

Hold on firmly to honesty because honesty protects a person while dishonesty destroys him.

The Sufis warn against false claims in order to save people from destruction. However, it is not an easy station, and it is no play to give up desires and pleasures. This is why the Sufis continue speaking against it and people too continue getting caught up with it. The basis for the warnings of the Sufis are the very texts which are quoted above. However, people do not pay heed. This is why all that we see today is people making claims, and no one can say anything to anyone. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* and complain to Him alone.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج٤، ص ٣٤٤.

4. The next piece of advice of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* is for him to abstain from incantations. This refers to the incantations (wazīfahs) taught by a shaykh. He is advising him against becoming too engrossed with them and from having false hopes in their effects. I explained this advice of Hadrat Shaykh because the words *iyyāka wa hādhihil awrād* (Beware of the harms of these incantations) are similar to when you say to someone: *iyyāka wa at-tarīq* (beware of the path). What this means is that now that you are on the path, the danger of falling and slipping is there, so you must be wary of the dangers. It is not intended to remove the person from the path, but to warn him of its dangers. In the same way, when he said that he must beware of incantations, it meant that: Generally there can be two errors in this regard. One is when a person adheres so strictly to them to the extent that he does not show as much importance to the fard and wājib actions. He gives preference to incantations over the obligations. The evil of this is obvious. The other is that it smacks of pride, haughtiness and claims. Consequently, we see that when people start occupying themselves in wazīfahs, a type of pride over their worship develops within them and they begin to look down on those who do not read wazīfahs. This is most evil because it is a cause of destruction for a seeker. The following couplet applies to a person of this nature:

> The proud ascetic could not traverse the path safely, while a free-thinker reached Paradise through his submission and humility.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* then explains the reason himself. He says that the carnal self is pleased with these things, and the result could be

boastfulness. You should therefore do things which are against the self, viz. the acts of worship prescribed by the Sharīʿat, e.g. salāh, fasting, charity and so on. This is because falling into tribulation is certain when the self is obeyed – whether in acts of obedience or disobedience. After all, the self loves the thing which is dangerous to the self and a tribulation for it. And the tribulation of disobedience is well known and obvious. However, the obedience from which the carnal self takes a share – that too is a tribulation for the seeker because when the objective of obedience has been achieved, it is most certainly a tribulation for him. The person thinks that he did an act of obedience, but it is not accepted by Allāh *taʿālā* because the carnal self took a share of it. In the meantime, the person's share was nothing but fatigue and difficulty.

When Hadrat Dhun Nūn *raḥimahullāh* advised his disciple to save himself from incantations, then while the obvious reason was because this results in pride and haughtiness, the other reason is that fulfilling them generally results in the waning of sincerity. People's focus is only on completing the prescribed number. This is what I am observing in our times. Very few of those who engage in Allāh's dhikr really have the intention of gaining proximity to Him and establishing a bond with him. The majority of them are more focussed on completing the prescribed number because they have made this the objective. In other words, they treat the waẓīfahs prescribed by the shaykh like a prescription written by a doctor. A prescription contains the names of medicines, the dosage, times when the medicine is to be taken, etc. If there are any shortcomings in following the prescription strictly, then the desired benefit of those medicines is not acquired. In the same way, sincerity has been left one side, and people are restricting

themselves to the prescribed number. It is obviously a serious misguidance and deviation. This is what Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* wants to stop his disciple from. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* looks at a person's sincerity and devotion; He does not look at the number.

A person commented with regard to a poetry collection of a certain poet in which he wrote in praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: "If just one couplet of this entire collection is accepted in the court of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the person would have realized his objective."

When I heard this comment, I thought to myself: Look at how he values honesty and sincerity. However, people are generally not bothered about these qualities. Acceptance and rejection have become equal in our circles. You must have heard the statement of the Sufis that a perfect person is the one who considers the acceptance and rejection of people to be the same. [In other words, he is not bothered if people accept him or reject him]. This can be correct, but every acceptance and rejection is not praiseworthy. Praiseworthy is what is with respect to the creation. That is, the person is not bothered whether people accept or reject him. As for Allāh *taʿālā*, it is only acceptance which is praiseworthy; His rejection is most disliked.

This is why we have to have this concern that the wazīfahs and incantations which we are engaging in must be accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. And the way of achieving this is to fulfil them with sincerity. After that, it may well be that the duʿā' or dhikr of just one occasion will be accepted and the person would have achieved his objective. It can also happen that a person repeats a dhikr 100 000 times or occupies

himself in it for the entire day, but it has no value in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* because there was no sincerity or because the person was heedless. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

The meaning of sincerity

Since we are speaking about sincerity, I think we ought to explain it a bit. This is an era of ignorance and people no longer have knowledge of these things. The situation is so bad that they do not even know the reality of things which they have been doing repeatedly. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* explains sincerity in his *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*:

ومنها الإخلاص هو أن يتمثل في عقله نفع العبادة لله تعالى من جهة قرب نفسه من الحق كما قال تبارك وتعالى: "إن رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين". أو من جهة تصديق ما وعد الله تعالى على السنة رسله من ثواب الآخرة فينشأ منه الأعمال بداعية عظيمة لا يشوبها رياء ولا سمعة ولا موافقة عاده ويصحب هذا الحال على جميع أعماله حتى الأعمال المباحة العادية، قال الله تعالى: "ومآ أمروا إلا ليعبدوا الله مخلصين له الدين". وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات.[1]

Ikhlās means that the benefit of worship for Allāh taʿālā be present in a person's mind. This benefit could be that because of it, the proximity to Allāh taʿālā which he acquires comes before him. As Allāh taʿālā Himself said: "Surely Allāh's mercy is near the doers of good."

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[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ٢، ص ٩٢.

Alternatively, it could be because the person fully affirms the reward which Allāh taʿālā promised in the Hereafter via His Messengers. Consequently, the person carries out actions with intense devotion which is not tainted by ostentation, causing people to hear about it, nor in fulfilment of a custom. This condition then accompanies all his actions, even those which are merely permissible and habitual. Allāh taʿālā says: "They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone]." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "All actions are dependent on intentions."

Look at what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying: Ikhlās means that when a person does an action for Allāh *taʿālā*, he envisages its benefit in his mind. And what is that benefit? When he does the worship, his mind must rationally perceive closeness with Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, he must feel that he is getting close to Allāh *taʿālā*. This theme is to be found in the verse in which Allāh *taʿālā* says: Surely Allāh's mercy is close to those who do good.

The other way of perceiving the benefit is for a person to experience full affirmation in his heart of the promises of reward which Allāh *taʿālā* made via the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. In other words, when he does the worship, his heart must have full conviction that he will most certainly receive the rewards as promised by Allāh *taʿālā* via the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

If either of the two is found in the heart – i.e. proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* or conviction in Allāh's promises – the action will be carried out with such earnestness that it will not be tainted in the least by any ostentation, showing off, or following of baseless customs. This is an obvious result because when the

benefit of proximity with Allāh *taʿālā* and belief in reward settle in the heart of a believer, why should he disregard these lofty ideals for base and ignoble objectives like ostentation, showing off, and baseless customs!?

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look how beautifully Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the statement of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. In addition to embedding it in our hearts, we ought to proliferate and propagate it because there is general ignorance about the subject of sincerity and other related subjects. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

Ikhlāṣ is that element which is deeply embedded in the heart of a believer which – with a firm resoluteness – becomes a catalyst for a particular action and for the repetition of that action. When ikhlāṣ settles in the heart of a believer, he severely abhors ostentation, showing off, and so on. This is because these are creations while he has established a firm bond with the Creator. When a heart has developed the sole objective of pleasing the Creator, why should it ever think of the creation!?

When a person engages in dhikr and acts of obedience with sincerity, his objective becomes the quality of the obedience and not its quantity. And when a person's objective is quantity and not quality (sincerity and yearning), you can well imagine how far away he is from the path. This is why we see that those who follow customs have this objective [of quantity and not quality]. These follies were committed in the past as well. This is why Hadrat Ḏhuṉ Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* saiḏ: "Save yourself from these incantations". In other words, do not focus on merely uttering them verbally and completing the prescribed number because this negates sincerity. Instead, carry out the different wazīfahs and incantaṯions with sincerity and for Allāh's pleasure. Whether they are many or few in number, sincerity is essential. Understand this well.

The two levels of ikhlās

As per the statement of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, ikhlās refers to the urge which develops in the heart of a person after envisaging the closeness of Allāh *taʿālā* in the heart or having conviction in the reward which is promised in the Hereafter. It prompts a person towards action and gives him the enthusiasm to carry out the action again. I will explain an example in this regard.

People go to the Sufis and choose to be in their company. Subsequently, a seeker develops a desire to tread the path either after his first visit or after several visits. The Sufis refer to this desire or enthusiasm as a *hāl* (a spiritual condition). Consequently, the seeker's frequenting of the shaykh, his dhikr and other acts of obedience are now carried out under a special type of emotion and feeling. He perceives sweetness and enjoyment in obedience and an abhorrence for disobedience. This condition is known as ikhlās. Once ikhlās is realized, the condition of his heart causes all his acts of worship to be carried out correctly. The Sufis pay particular attention to creating this condition in a seeker. This was the tasawwuf of the past. Unfortunately, today there are many superficial things but the actual soul of all – ikhlās – is not to be found. People are certainly frequenting the Sufis, and the system of shaykh/murīd is also continuing; but ikhlās has disappeared. In the present situation, my heart desires to quote this couplet:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

The following couplet will also apply to such people:

He looked here and he looked there. He looked at him and he looked at her, but he did not look at the Beloved. If he looked at others, then what did he really see?

Note: In other words, he ought to turn his gaze away from others and focus his gaze on the Beloved. This is ikhlās. O Allāh bless us with this quality. Āmīn. (compiler)

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* gave another piece of advice to Yūsuf ibn Husayn *rahimahullāh*. It is undoubtedly a most beautiful advice, viz. do not pay attention to the praises of people and do not acquire internal happiness and joy from their praises. Furthermore, do not be affected by the approval and rejection of people. You should rather keep your relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* in order and be worried about not doing anything against Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. As for whether people accept or reject you, do not bother in the least about it. On occasions of this nature, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to quote the following couplet from the *Būstān*. Because it was a reflection of the spiritual condition of Hadrat himself, he used to read it with much emotion. The audience too would enjoy listening to it. It is undoubtedly a beautiful couplet:

These people do not even expect any acceptance and approval from the creation because they are accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. This is enough for them.

They are intoxicated in these thoughts and thereafter do not turn their gazes to the creation – whether they consider them to be good or bad, whether they accept them or not. Some people published pamphlets and posters against Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī

raḥimahullāh. When a person in ʿAlīgarh saw them, he thought to himself that Ḥaḍrat must be greatly disturbed and saddened by them, and is probably completely incapacitated. Out of his concern he travelled to Thānah Bhawan and noticed that Ḥaḍrat is absolutely happy, jolly and cheerful. He was very surprised and expressed his thoughts to Ḥaḍrat. Ḥaḍrat said: "Brother! Why should I be disturbed? What harm did it cause me? On the contrary, I see some benefit in it. There can be only two benefits, worldly and Dīnī. The Dīnī benefit is that I do not have any good actions of my own. The people who are speaking ill of me today will have their good deeds given to me on the day of Resurrection. The worldly benefit is that my income has increased. The gifts and presents which people used to send to me previously have now increased in number. Since I have suffered no loss at all, why should I be grieved?" The man realized that Ḥaḍrat Maulānā is focussed on a totally different treasure which is causing him to not bother in the least about who is saying what.

People are highway robbers

Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn *raḥimahullāh* says further: Do not be bothered by the acceptance and rejection of people because they are highway robbers. If you are going to turn your attention to what they say, you will become engrossed with them and your path will become obscure. This is why you ought to stay far from them and from their statements.

Look! Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn Miṣrī *raḥimahullāh* is referring to the laity as highway robbers. Normally, an ignorant shaykh who has no knowledge of the Ṭarīqat, who assumes the position of a shaykh and leads people astray is referred to as a highway robber. However, from his statement we learn that just as a

shaykh is sometimes a highway robber, minor disciples and the ignoramuses prove to be highway robbers with respect to a shaykh.

An ostentatious worshipper

The *Gulistān* relates the story of a worshipper. He kept aloof from people and began living in a forest. He used to live by eating the leaves of trees. The king went to visit him one day and requested: "If Hadrat feels it appropriate, Hadrat can permit me to make arrangements for a place for Hadrat in the city. Hadrat can live there. It is hoped that Hadrat will be able to engage in even more worship there and remain more focussed. Another benefit will be that more people will have the opportunity of benefiting from Hadrat's sanctified company. People will observe your righteous actions and emulate you."

The worshipper did not approve of this request from the king and turned his face away from him. One of the ministers who was with the king said: "We have to consider the request of the king. What harm is there if Hadrat came to the city for a few days and inspected the place which is arranged for Hadrat? If, in Hadrat's pure and beloved time, Hadrat experiences any discomfort and uneasiness in the company of outsiders, Hadrat can certainly leave and come back here."

People say that the worshipper was somewhat satisfied by the explanation of the minister. I say, he was not satisfied by the explanation; rather he got trapped by his sweet words. He was a defective worshipper so he could not safeguard himself.

He accompanied the king to the city. A royal palace and a special garden were chosen for his stay. It was a most attractive and comforting place. At the same

time, the king appointed a most beautiful young lady and a handsome young boy to attend to him. The worshipper began eating the exotic and elaborately prepared foods, wearing classy and exclusive clothes, eating various types of fruit and applying expensive perfumes. He began enjoying all these things thoroughly. He also observed the beauty of the young boy and woman. The sages say: The hair-locks of beautiful people are the fetters for the feet of the intelligence, and very cunning traps. Consequently, he became attracted to them and whatever spiritual treasures he had were all taken away from him. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* relates further about him but the objective of relating this incident is to demonstrate to you that those who frequent the saints sometimes prove to be highway robbers for them. Look at this dervish who was living quite well in solitude, but the carnal self and Shaytān destroyed him. Those who came to him tempted him and got him trapped in desires of the carnal self. When man receives things which were liked by his self and he becomes engrossed in them, it becomes very difficult to save himself. Only a qualified shaykh and a person who is inspired by Allāh *taʿālā* can be saved.

After observing similar conditions, Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* said:

قد رأينا شيوخا سقطوا

We personally saw several Sufis falling from grace.

From the story of the ostentatious worshipper we learn that a shaykh must not listen to everything which someone says to him, even if it is from his murīd. A murīd is deficient himself and he will say

anything and everything. It is the duty of the shaykh to ponder over what he says and his own conditions, and think whether it will cause any worldly or Dīnī harm to him. If he sees the slightest taint of harm, he must never do it. This is how the saint [in the above story] slipped. He did not look at the condition of his self. He did not gauge its weakness and strength. Although he refused the king's request, he gave in to the request of the minister. We also learn from this that the saint was not genuine in his refusal to the king. His refusal was also based on ostentation and pretension. After all, why did he change his stand?

The other lesson which we learn is that worldly people are very far from the lives of the saints, but they are fully aware of their terminologies and interests. They adopt an approach which causes the saint to misjudge and think that they are fully aware of the path, and include them among their followers. While in reality they are strangers and highway robbers. Look at some of the words which the minister used: "Hadrat's pure and beloved time, Hadrat experiences any discomfort and uneasiness in the company of outsiders". These are words which are related to the saints. This is why he was deceived and thought to himself: "he likes my pure and beloved time and he dislikes the discomfort which I could experience in the company of outsiders". Thus, he considered him to be a sincere advisor and got carried away by his words.

Although the minister became the cause, the actual defect was in the worshipper himself, and this is why he slipped. We can gauge from this that he was not sincere and genuine from the very beginning because Allāh *taʿālā* does not allow His sincere servants to be destroyed. He was ostentatious, and so the blessing of it manifested itself accordingly.

My heart feels like relating the remainder of the story of the ostentatious worshipper so that we may learn the reason for his downfall. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says that after a few days, the king developed a desire to visit the worshipper so he went to him. He noticed that the worshipper's condition was not as it was before. In fact, he had changed completely. His complexion changed towards a reddish and fair complexion, and he had picked up quite a bit of weight. He was lying down with a pillow under his head, while a slave was fanning him with peacock feathers. The king was happy to see his peaceful condition. They then spoke on various subjects. The king eventually said to him: "The love which I have for the 'ulamā' and Sufis is unsurpassed. I don't think I love any other group more than these two groups." A well-travelled and experienced minister had accompanied the king. (It could be the same minister whose request the worshipper had acceded to and been deluded by). When he realized that the internal spiritual condition of the worshipper has been taken away, and that the king is overjoyed merely by looking at his external condition, he said: "O honourable king! The prerequisite of friendship is that you have good relations with both groups ['ulamā' and Sufis]. You should do this by giving wealth to the 'ulamā' so that others will develop the zeal to acquire knowledge and they too will acquire it. As for the worshippers, you should give them nothing so that they remain firm on their abstinence."

Did you see! It is more difficult to preserve one's spiritual condition than acquiring it. If there are shortcomings in its preservation, not only the murīd but even the shaykh will falter and fall. This is why the erudite Sufis advised their murīds to abstain from things which could result in their downfall. The

author of *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* has devoted a chapter on advice to the murīd. He writes:

ومن شأن المريد التباعد عن أبناء الدنيا، فإن صحبتهم سم مجرب، لأنهم ينتفعون به وهو ينتقص بهم، قال الله تعالى: ولا تطع من اغفلنا قلبه عن ذكرنا.[1]

It is the mark of a murīd to remain aloof from worldly people because their company is a tried and tested poison. They will certainly derive some benefit from him, but the murīd will lose his identity. Allāh taʿālā says: Do not obey the one whose heart We made heedless of Our remembrance.

This clearly states that a murīd must stay away from worldly people. They are outsiders and their company is a toxic poison. Here too the cause of the harm is the weakness in the murīd himself. When he intermingles with worldly people, his intention becomes adulterated and he too becomes a worldly person. As for worldly people, they meet him because of his religiosity, they certainly benefit from him. But a deficient murīd experiences harm because he falls from his position, and he falls from grace in the eyes of the Creator and the creation.

The reasons why Sufis falter and fall

At this point you must understand that there are different reasons for the downfall of a Sufi. The following is stated in *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*:

Whatever a person has acquired is lost because of: (1) his showing no importance to it in the sense that he

[1] رسالة قشيرية، ص ٢٠٣.

does not safeguard and preserve it, (2) the misfortune of committing sin, (3) expansion and diversity in food. If after examination, he realizes that it is the third reason, he must exercise caution and restraint. If it is the second reason, he must seek forgiveness and desist. If it is the first reason, he must beseech Allāh *taʿālā*, express his submission and servitude in His court, and reprimand his self for its heedlessness. This is the treatment in a gist. No matter what, excessive seeking of forgiveness and remorse are essential.[1]

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the reasons for a Sufi's downfall as explained by Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *raḥimahullāh*. Every seeker on the path – whether a shaykh or a murīd – ought to imprint these in his heart. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Falling from grace

Look! The Sufis have also explained the causes of downfall by saying these are the reasons why even a shaykh can fall from his position. I now ask you, are these causes only for a shaykh and not for a murīd? Are all the murīds perfect? Were these points for people of the past only, and not for the people of our times? If we examine the conditions, we can conclude that the Tarīqat does not really exist today. How many people do you really see entering this path? Therefore, if you take it in this sense and say that the murīds do not falter and fall, you could be right because for someone to fall, he has to enter into it first. If a person has not even entered the path, how will he ever fall? Anyway, those who do enter the path, inevitably fall

[1] *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*, p. 39.

either in the beginning, in the middle or towards the end. The experts consider such people to have left the path even though they may consider themselves to be on it.

From the above statements of the Sufis you learnt that the shaykh and the murīd can falter and fall. The reason is that the fall is due to certain causes, and whoever chooses a cause, he will experience its result and outcome. From the story which we quoted from the *Gulistān* we learn about how a shaykh fell from grace. And from the explanation in *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* we learnt about a murīd – the company of worldly people is a toxic poison for him.

Giving up wealth and position is essential in the path

ʿAllāmah Qushayrī *raḥimahullāh* says that it is obligatory on a seeker to cast aside wealth and position. He says that these things are also toxic poisons for him. In other words, we could say that wealth and position are also highway robbers for a seeker. He writes:

إذا أراد الخروج عن العلائق فأولها الخروج عن المال...فإذا خرج عن المال فالواجب عليه الخروح عن الجاه، فإن ملاحظة الجاه تقطعة عظيمة، وما لم يستو عند المريد قبول الخلق وردهم لا يجئ منه شيء، بل أضر الأشياء له ملاحظة الناس إياه بعين الإثبات والتبرك به لإفلاس

الناس عن هذا الحديث، وهو يعد لم يصحح إلا لإرادة فكيف يصح أن يتبرك به فخروجهم من الجاه واجب عليهم لأن ذلك سم قاتل لهم.[1]

If a seeker wants to sever contacts and ties, he must first extricate himself from wealth. Once he does that, it becomes obligatory on him to extricate himself from position. The reason for this is that the love for position is also a dangerous highway robber. As long as a murīd does not consider the approval and rejection of people to be equal, he cannot achieve anything. Instead, the most dangerous thing for him is when people look at him as a source of blessings and consider him to be blessed. This is because the people are ignorant about these internal matters. They merely look at a person externally and consider him to be a saint, while he has not even rectified his intent as yet. How, then, can it be correct to consider him to be blessed? It is obligatory for a seeker to extricate himself from the love of position because it is a toxic poison for him.

Look! He is saying that it is obligatory on a murīd to come out of the love for position because it is also a highway robber. As long as the approval and rejection of people is not the same in the eyes of a seeker, he cannot achieve anything. This is the same piece of advice which you just heard from the statement of Ḥaḍrat Dhun Nūn Miṣrī *raḥimahullāh*.

He says further on that the most dangerous thing for a seeker is when people think that he has reached a level of perfection, and due to which they consider him to be a source of blessings. The masses are ignorant

[1] رسالة قشيرية، ص ١٩٩.

about internal matters. They do not know what is love for position and what its harms are. Thus, if a seeker is caught up in this evil characteristic while his intention is not even correct, then how can it be permissible to look at him as a source of blessings?

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* defines ostentation as follows:

هو طلب الجاه بواسطة العبادات

It entails seeking rank and position through acts of worship.

According to this definition, a seeker of position is an ostentatious person. He is not sincere, he is a polytheist because a Hadīth refers to ostentation as subtle polytheism. If a person is so far from the path, how can he ever be considered to be on the path. In fact, it will be most astonishing to believe that he is a source of blessings and eligible for reverence. This is what corrupts the path. Nowadays it is observed that people of this nature are at the helm of tasawwuf, while, according to the Sufis – in fact, in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* – they have not acquired even a miniscule share of it.

Therefore the most essential thing for a seeker is to extricate himself from unnecessary ties and bonds. This is because the structure of the Tarīqat is founded on emptying the heart. The heart which contains anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* – whether it is love for wealth or desire for name and fame – cannot establish a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. A poet says:

> If you desire Allāh *taʿālā* together with this base and vile world, then understand that this thought is impossible and madness.

Another poet says:

> Unnecessary relationships are obstacles and causes of deprivation. Once you sever them, you will reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

In short, bearing in mind that the love for position, wealth, etc. are destructive to man, the Sufis and murīds who fall from grace do so because of this. It will be correct to say the following:

من هنا سقط من المشائخ والمريدين

It is from here that the Sufis and murīds fall.

The way to save one's self from falling

Since we are speaking about the fall of the shaykh and murīd and we explained the causes for it, I think it will be necessary to speak about the way to save one's self from falling. Now listen in this regard:

While on the subject of the etiquette which a shaykh must follow, the author of *Tars̲īʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* writes:

لا بد للشيخ أيضا من وقت مع ربه

A shaykh must have some time for himself when he is in solitude with Allāh taʿālā.

This means that he must pay particular attention to solitude. In other words, just as he progressed from a novice on account of his hours of solitude, he must not forget and discard this practice. After all, the self acquired strength in its affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* through this practice. Therefore, if he discards it, his self will return towards its original condition. The author of *Tars̲īʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* explains the same reason for the importance of solitude. He writes:

وذلك أن النفس إنما حصلت لها القوة باستمرار العادة في الحضور مع الحق سبحانه وتعالى وترك ما سواه في الظاهر والباطن، فإذا ترك الحضور رجعت النفس لطبيعتها وعادتها، فإن ما لم تنفطر النفس عليه سريع الذهاب ومتى لم يتفقد الشيخ حاله في كل يوم بالأمر الذي حصل له هذا التمكين كان مخدوعا فتفقد الأنس ويجد الوحشة.

The self received strength by continuing in its practice of presence with Allāh taʿālā and discarding all that is apart from him internally and externally. If the person gives up this practice, the self will return to its original temperament and habit. When a condition is not natural to the self – and is temporary and acquired – it disappears very quickly. When a shaykh does not constantly examine his condition with respect to the matters through which he reached this level of expertise, then understand that he is deceived. He will lose the affinity and experience detachment.

We learn from the above that even a shaykh – after having qualified as one – has to continually check and evaluate his condition. In other words, he must continually choose those causes through which he reached his level of erudition. He must not allow any relapse in this regard. It may well happen that after becoming a shaykh, he may display shortcomings in these matters. If he allows this to continue, he will gradually fall from the path. If this is the case, we can see how important continuous evaluation is. This is why the saints continue their spiritual exercises even after qualification. Someone asked Hadrat Junayd *raḥimahullāh*: "You have already reached Allāh *taʿālā*, why do you still engage in dhikr?" He replied: "How

can I leave the thing through which I reached this level?"

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful reply which serves as an admonition for us. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm*. When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was going to Mt. Tūr, he passed by a rock which was crying profusely. When he asked it the reason for crying, it replied: "I heard that Allāh *taʿālā* said with reference to the Hell-fire:

وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

Its fuel will be people and rocks.

I fear that I might be its fuel. You are going to meet Allāh *taʿālā* so you must intercede in my favour for salvation from the Hell-fire."

When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* went to the mountain, he forgot the request of the rock because he was thoroughly enjoying his conversation with Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself reminded him by asking: "Have you brought any message from anyone?" He replied: "Yes. I came across a rock which was crying and it said such and such things." Allāh *taʿālā* said: "You must say to it that by virtue of its crying and fear, I have excluded it from becoming the fuel of the Hell-fire." On his return, Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* conveyed the good news to the rock. After some days he happened to pass by that place and found the rock crying. He asked: "Now what is the reason for your crying?" You have been saved from the Hell-fire." The rock replied: "How can I give up the crying on account of which I was given salvation!?"

We learn from these incidents that when a person receives a certain type of treasure through a certain means, then in addition to valuing the treasure, he must value and appreciate the means which enabled him to acquire it. In the same way, a qualified shaykh continually evaluates his condition and completes his daily waẕīfahs and different forms of dhikr. This is why it is said that if a shaykh does not take stock of himself in the light of the spiritual practices through which he reached the level of qualification, you can conclude that he has fallen into deception. Nowadays we observe that not only the murīd but even the shaykh pays no important to this. A shaykh has to practise on the following principle:

لا بد للشيخ أيضا من وقت مع ربه

A shaykh must have some time for himself when he is in solitude with Allāh taʿālā.

When the murīd gets his shaykh occupied and busy with him [the murīd], he becomes a cause for the spiritual treasure of the shaykh to be taken away. This is what the author of *Tarṣīʿ* is saying:

من هذا المكان سقط من سقط من الشيوخ

It is from this position that we saw many Sufis falling.

And regarding whom Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* said:

قد رأينا شيوخا سقطوا

We saw many Sufis falling.

Murīds assembling and crowding around a shaykh, and devoting themselves to him is most dangerous for the shaykh. It is undoubtedly a major test and

tribulation for him. It is a most difficult pass on the path from which he cannot leave if he does not have sincerity and devotion. It becomes very difficult to maintain a correct intention in situations of this nature. It is because of the adulteration of his intention that a person falls into self-centredness and egotism. This is why the esteemed and senior Sufis of every era considered the creation to be a tribulation. They saved themselves from it and paid due attention to saving their murīds as well.

The fundamental objective of sulūk

Hadrat Khwājah Muhammad Maʿsūm *rahimahullāh* is the distinguished son and khalīfah of Imām Rabbānī Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*. He writes in his *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah*:

> Becoming a shaykh and inducting murīds is not the objective of sulūk. Rather, it is to fulfil the duties of servitude in such a way that the interference and opposition of the self does not remain.
>
> In other words, it entails acquiring obliteration and anonymity, and removing the rebelliousness and conceit of the self. This is because the acquisition of cognition is connected to this.
>
> If this is the case, the person who reverts to such a person and expresses his bond with him, then it is as though he is diverting him from Allāh *taʿālā* and occupying him with himself. As for the one who does not revert to him, he is giving him an opportunity to continue in his focus with Allāh *taʿālā*. He must therefore be grateful to him.

> O Allāh! Make me totally aloof from the creation in such a manner that they do not even turn towards me. Make me independent of the entire world, and turn my heart away from everyone. Make me focussed on Your love all the time. Was salām.[1]

Look at how Hadrat Khwājah Muhammad Maʿsūm *rahimahullāh* is writing to his disciple. It seems that he too complained about his lack of reverting to his shaykh. This is when Hadrat explained to him the difference between the objective and non-objective. He then removed him from that pass which could have become a tribulation for him. While it is a difficult pass, the true servants of Allāh *taʿālā* have passed through it, and did not allow highway robbers to cause their journey to be disrupted.

Similarly, I just explained to you that love for wealth and position sometimes causes a person to lose the path. Therefore, it will not be wrong to refer to these two and all other evils of the self which can cause a seeker to fall as highway robbers. We learn from this that when the Sufis focussed on the carnal self as the object of rectification, they were totally correct. Unfortunately, the subject of the carnal self has been disregarded today. The masses are anyway the masses, I am surprised at the scholars and elite who have given up this discussion completely. To Allāh *taʿālā* we belong and to Him is our return.

I believe that these people have not forgotten this subject but are wilfully disregarding it because it is most difficult for worshippers of the carnal self to give

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[1] *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah.*

up the pleasures of the self for the sake of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why it has been removed and expelled from the tasawwuf of today, whereas this was the basis of tasawwuf. Now people have come down to just a few customs. In fact, this has been the situation for quite some time. Sayyidunā Shaykh Ahmad Kabīr Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* writes about the Sufis of his time:

> O Sufi! What foolishness is this! Become a Sufi first so that we too can call you a Sufi. My beloved! Do you think that this Tarīqat is your inheritance from your forefathers? Do you think it has come down from your forefathers? Do you think you will get it just because you have the name Bakr and ʿUmar? Do you think it will just come into your lineage? Do you think it will become embedded in your garments just like that? Do you think this Tarīqat is made up of a woollen garment, a coat, a walking stick, and sack and a large turban? Do you think you must only have the outward appearance of the saints? Certainly not. I take an oath and say that Allāh *taʿālā* does not look at these things. He looks at your heart. How can the mysteries of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of His proximity be placed in you when you are entrapped in the barriers of a coat, tasbīh, walking stick and sack; and you are heedless of Allāh *taʿālā*?! Of what benefit is this intellect when it is devoid of Allāh-recognition? Of what benefit is this head when it is devoid of brains? O you poor fellow! You haven't done the work which is done by this group [of genuine Sufis] yet you are wearing their clothes!? My dear

> one! Had you subdued your heart and worn the garment of fear, and embellished your outward garments with the garment of good character, made your carnal self wear the garment of submission, and your ego the garment of self-obliteration, and your tongue the garment of dhikr, and escaped from all the obstacles which you are entrapped in, and then wore this garment, it would have been better for you.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the powerful admonition of Hadrat Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* to the Sufis of his time. Every Sufi ought to read it periodically and take a stock of his conditions so that he becomes a Sufi in the true sense of the word. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

He says further on:

> O you poor fellow! You are presently acting according to your wishes. You are traversing the path through your own thinking. You are walking with your lies, pride and deception. You are carrying the impurities of egotism and pride, and you are thinking that you are somebody. How can this be? In the presence of pride, you cannot take even a single step in this path. Acquire the knowledge of humility, learn the lesson of perplexity, and acquire the knowledge of submission and servitude. (Only then can you reach a certain level).

Look at how Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* takes ignorant Sufis to account! They are the ones who adopted the customs of the Sufis but disregarded the reality of tasawwuf. It has been the work of the genuine Sufis of every era to remove people from

baseless customs and call them towards the reality. The same Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* puts an end to the mutual disputes of the ʿulamā' and Sufis by saying:

> The Ṭarīqat is the Sharīʿat and the Sharīʿat is the Ṭarīqat. The only difference between the two is in words. The basis, objective and result of both is the same. I believe that the Sufi who criticizes the jurist is certainly eligible for divine punishment, and the jurist who criticizes the Sufi is eligible for the same punishment. Yes, if a scholar issues orders from his own self and does not explain the Sharīʿat, or a Sufi traverses the path on his own without treading according to the Sharīʿat, then neither of the two will be sinning if they criticize each other.

He writes further on:

> What will a Sufi do when a scholar asks him: Can you say to your murīds: "Don't perform ṣalāh, do not keep fast, do not abstain from sins, do not remain on the limits set by Allāh *taʿālā*?" Can he give a reply other than: "Never, Allāh forbid! We seek refuge in Allāh"?
>
> In the same way, what will a jurist say if a Sufi says to him: Can you say to your students: "Do not engage in a lot of dhikr of Allāh *taʿālā*. Do not fight your carnal self through spiritual striving. Do not try to acquire genuine sincerity for Allāh's sake." Can the jurist respond in any way apart from saying: "Never, Allāh forbid! We seek refuge in Allāh"?

> We can conclude from this that the basis, objective and result of both is the same. It is only a matter of different words.

(In other words, both concur on the obligation of salāh, zakāh, fasting, etc. and the prohibition of sins. In the same way, both concur on the need for Allāh's remembrance, opposing the carnal self, and the acquisition of sincerity. The only difference is that fulfilling the obligations of salāh, fasting, etc. and abstaining from sins has been termed the Sharīʿat by people, and abundant dhikr, opposition of the carnal self, acquisition of sincerity, etc. is known as tasawwuf. However, the changing of names does not change the reality.)

> Thus, if the veil of words prevent a Sufi from understanding the fundamental and the objective, then he is an ignorant person. And Allāh *taʿālā* never made any ignorant person into His walī (special friend). If the veil of words prevents a jurist from understanding this reality, then he too is deprived. O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from knowledge which is not beneficial.[1]

Genuine and real tasawwuf

Did you see! This is real tasawwuf and these were the genuine Sufis who presented genuine and correct teachings, and kept the Dīn pure from what was not Dīn. The misguidance and deviation which we see today is because there is no one to show the correct way. There is no one to reprimand the mashā'ikh and

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[1] *Al-Bunyān al-Mushayyad*, p. 158.

their murīds for their shortcomings. This was not the situation in the past. Rather there were erudite Sufis who combined the Sharīʿat and the Ṯarīqat. They used to rectify and correct the ʿulamā' and the Sufis because these are the sources of deviation. After all:

زلة العالِم زلة العالَم

When an ʿālim falters, the world falters because of him.

In the same way, if a shaykh slips and falls because he did not adhere to the etiquette of the path, he will be a tribulation for the murīd.

You just now heard the words of Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* and how he castigated the superficial Sufis. He did this so that people do not fall into misguidance and are saved from the highway robbers. Reformers of every era undertook this task. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* severely reprimanded such people and labelled most of the Sufis of his era as superficial Sufis. He writes on the etiquette of a journey in his *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

Etiquette of a journey

The internal selves of the majority of the pseudo-Sufis (they are not genuine Sufis but have adopted the external appearance of Sufis) of today are devoid of the intricacies of internal reflection and actions. They have no affinity whatsoever with remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* in solitude. Moreover, they are lazy and idle. They have no work and no occupation. This is why begging has become attractive to their temperament. They find it very difficult to work, and easy to go around begging from people. They are attracted to the traveller's lodges which have been constructed in the towns and cities for normal travellers. They also trap those attendants who are at

the service of genuine Sufis and compel them to serve them, while they themselves belittle their Dīn and intelligence. This is because their serving of the public is solely for show and ostentation, so that they become popular, and by attracting a large following, they can acquire wealth from the people by asking them for it.

When jokers of this nature cannot exercise any authority in the khānqāhs, when their discipline cannot benefit the murīds, and their reprimanding does not have enough power to stop people from evils; they adopt the garments of Sufis and provide the means for entertainment in the khānqāhs. Consequently, the khānqāh becomes a place of entertainment and enjoyment. Sometimes they learn the terminologies of the genuine Sufis and then think to themselves that since we look like the Sufis and speak like them, we are doing good works like them. (This obviously contradicts sincerity and amounts to egotism). They feel that everything which is black in colour is a date [sweet], and that outward similarity necessitates equality in realities. Whereas this notion of theirs is very far from the truth. A person who cannot differentiate between fat and a tumour is most foolish. In other words, he cannot fathom the reason why a person's body is large – is it because of fat or because of a tumour. Such people have earned the wrath of Allāh *taʿālā*. (May Allāh *taʿālā* have mercy on us. Āmīn).[1]

Did you see! Ḥaḍrat Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* said that people want to become saints merely by wearing a hat, rags, a turban and a walking stick. In the same way, Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* is saying that the saints

[1] *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm*, vol. 2, p. 248.

of today only have the outward similarity with Sufis. They adopted their terminologies and outward mannerisms, while the reality of tasawwuf which is the subjugation of the carnal self and establishing a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is nowhere to be found. Obviously, how will Dīn remain if people have turned the khānqāh into a business place and the customs of the Sufis as means to acquire of this world?

You have observed the statements of Hadrat Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* and Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh*, and how they exposed the pseudo and materialist Sufis.

Now listen to what Hadrat Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* has to say:

> If the creation is your objective, then all you have to do is wear the rags of the Sufis. Man can wear that and become a saint in the eyes of the people. Whereas the correct course of action is to strive in doing good actions and wear what you like. You may wear a crown on your head and place a flag on your shoulder. Saintliness is not merely the giving up of a type of clothing. Rather, it entails the giving up of this world, desires and greed. If silk clothes are worn on the battlefield so that a sword cannot cut through them, it is fine provided the one wearing them is a brave warrior. Beyond that, what is the benefit of arming a hermaphrodite?

He says in another place:

> What benefit can rags, a tasbīh and patched clothes bring in Allāh's path? You have to keep your self pure from ignoble

> characteristics and despicable actions. There is no need for you to wear a topī, you really need to adopt the character of the dervishes. You can even wear a Turkish hat if you want.

All this happens when there is no one to teach the true Dīn and the real Ṯarīqat, or there are very few. When this situation prevails, the worldly people get an opportunity to mislead and confuse. It is only a genuine shaykh who can differentiate between a custom and the reality, who explains the difference between sincerity and ostentation to them, and removes the seekers from the evils of the self and from egotism. But when there is no genuine shaykh, defective people occupy their place. Because they are not genuine in reality, all they can do is make claims to saintliness and authority. Consequently, the era gets filled with false claims, and there remains no sincere murīd and no genuine shaykh. Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* expresses his sorrow over this pitiable condition in the following words (which were quoted previously):

فإن الزمان مشحون بالدعاوى الكاذبة العريضة فلا مريد صادق ثابت القدم في سلوكه، ولا شيخ محقق ينصحه

The times are filled with extensive false claims. There is no murīd who is genuinely firm on his path, and there is no erudite shaykh who can advise the murīd.

Obviously, once these people make claims to perfection, how will they ever see defects within themselves? When will they ever turn their attention to rectifying their carnal selves? As a result, they will remain in their haughtiness, egotism, selfishness, pride and claims to perfection. There is no worse evil

in the Tarīqat because the Sufis have labelled this to be synonymous to kufr. A poet says in this regard:

> There is no room for personal views and opinions in the world of sulūk. Personal view and opinions are kufr in this path.

The reason why it is called kufr is that when a person rejects the Being and attributes of Allāh *taʿālā*, he becomes a kāfir. In the same way, when a person is treading the Tarīqat according to his whims and fancies, he will not be following the Sharīʿat. If he does not follow the Sharīʿat, he will not have removed himself from following Shaytān and the carnal self. And this is the total opposite of the Tarīqat just as kufr is the opposite of Islam.

In his *Mathnawī*, Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says that the key to success if for a person to focus on his shortcomings and to consider himself to be defective. He says:

> The one who recognizes his own shortcomings and defects will move very swiftly towards his perfection.
>
> The reason why a person is unable to climb spiritually towards Allāh *taʿālā* is that he considers himself to be perfect.
>
> The fact of the matter is that there is no worse ailment than imaginary perfection. And it is no play to come out of pride and arrogance.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says further on that egotism leaves the mind only when a lot of blood flows from the heart and eyes. In other words, it requires intense striving, especially subjugation of the carnal self. It was the very same ailment which caused the

downfall of Shaytān. This ailment is found in every person – a little in some, a lot in others. This makes it necessary for him to go into the service of a qualified shaykh and to offer himself like a corpse in the hands of the one who is bathing him. This too is not easy. It is not easy to become an enemy of one's own self. It is not easy to restrain the carnal self for the sake of Allāh *taʿālā*. Only the one who is sincere and inspired by Allāh *taʿālā* is able to place a foot in this dangerous valley.

These factors were found in the past. The murīds used to go to have their selves rectified. The mashā'ikh too were very particular about education and training. Consequently, they did not remove these evils from their murīds alone, but followed this course of action with their children and associates as well. This is why the murīds and the children were rectified.

Let me present an example of this to you. A person went to the khānqāh of a saint in Delhi and began distributing one rupee to each of the seekers. The son of the saint was also present. The man was about to give him one rupee as well, but the son withdrew his hand. The shaykh was observing this. He called both of them and asked his son: "Why did you not take the money? Why did you withdraw your hand? Is it because it is charity? Had he given 100 rupees, you would have taken it and it would not have been charity in such a case?" The shaykh then turned to the man who was distributing the money, extended his hand towards him and said: "Give me the money." The shaykh turned to his son and said: "Your father was brought up with charity."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of training and the supervision of one's associates! From just this one

treatment, pride, arrogance and haughtiness were uprooted from the mind of his son.

Unfortunately these practices are not found in us. The Sufis themselves do not follow the principles of the Tarīqat. What, then, can be said about their murīds and associates? The reason for it is the same, viz. disregard to the carnal self. Instead of giving up its demands, its desires are being fulfilled. Whereas the Sufis unanimously say that the rights of the self will be given, but it will be saved from pleasures. (In other words, a balance will be created in it). Do you see any importance being given to this nowadays? I believe that pleasures have been given the status of rights. In other words, people have become so engrossed in pleasures of the self and pay so much of attention to their acquisition as ought to be given to rights and duties. Whereas this is most detrimental to the novice and the expert. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd *rahimahullāh* writes:

> It should be known that although listening to poetry without musical instruments or intermingling with young boys without having any desire is not from among he prohibitions of the Sharīʿat it is certainly not devoid of harm for the seekers of the truth, especially for the seekers of the path of prophet-hood.
>
> All the spiritual physicians – i.e. the genuine Sufis – unanimously state that it is harmful for the seekers of the truth to follow the pleasures of the self. Especially that desire of the self which has become firmly embedded in the self itself, whose sweetness has established itself in the depths of the heart, and the self is lost in

> its search and its acquisition. These are certainly not from among the rights of the self, so giving them up will not cause any weakness or debility in the body as normally happens when a person gives up eating and drinking.[1]

Look! It is clearly stated here that the Sufis state that the rights of the self will be fulfilled but it will be restrained from its pleasures. This is why when anyone acted against this principle, it ended in bad consequences. You just observed this from the story of the ostentatious worshipper – where his downfall was caused by his engrossment in pleasures and desires. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. May Allāh *taʿālā* safeguard all the seekers from downfall.

Note: Māshā Allāh, this is a most beneficial and enlightening subject. We ought to read it carefully and act on it. And we must make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us towards action. (compiler)

[1] *Sirāṭ-e-Mustaqīm*, p. 97.

UNITY LEADS TO SUCCESS WHILE DISUNITY LEADS TO CORRUPTION

Mutual unity and harmony is from among the causes of success while disunity is the opposite of success, i.e. it leads to corruption and failure. Nowadays I am seeing a lot of disunity among the Muslims. Consequently, there is a lot of bickering in almost every family. Even two people cannot live in harmony. If in a family a certain person experiences worldly prosperity by virtue of divine decree and his sound planning, most of his relatives become jealous of his progress and they find it difficult to come to terms with his affluence. They will think to themselves in their hearts: "Why does he not include us in his world?" In order to prove that this demand of theirs is correct, their carnal self will beautify a proof for them and cause them to think: "We are his close relatives and we have blood ties with him. Coincidentally he became rich while we are paupers. In such a case, it was his duty to take care of us."

If the person happens to be a bit religious, this proof is made even more stronger, and then they do not restrict their thoughts to their hearts. Instead, they will utter them verbally as well. They will then speak behind his back, complain about him and mention various evils about him. Whereas his only fault is that he did not realize their needs by himself and without their expressing their needs to him. And after realizing it, he did not give them according to their needs. It is solely for this "crime" that people are displeased with him in their hearts and are angry with him. In fact, they go to the extent of hating him and becoming his

enemies. To make matters worse, they are so much in need of him internally and are so desirous of his wealth, but they will portray themselves as though they are totally independent of him and they do not need him in the least. They will even go to the extent of saying to him: "We are not bothered about you nor are we interested in your wealth."

From this statement it is gauged that they have the highest level of reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. The 'ulamā' say that greed and reliance (tawakkul) cannot get together. Yet, these people are able to combine the two. Their condition is that they want to acquire benefit from a person but not by following the correct procedure. They want to do it in a disorderly and disruptive manner. Not by making him happy but by displeasing him. They want to benefit from him by fighting with him. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

This ailment is not peculiar to a specific nation or place. It is the condition of worldly people in general. The same attitude exists in the subject with respect to his leader, the murīd with respect to his shaykh, the student with his teacher, and the son with his father. In fact, I can go one step further and say that this is the attitude of the creation with respect to its Creator. People are demanding sustenance from Allāh *taʿālā*, they are demanding good health and wellbeing from Him, and they are asking Him for peace and good fortune in this world. It is our belief that whatever profit and loss we experience in this world can only be by the will of Allāh *taʿālā*. On one hand we have this belief, yet we do not abstain from disobeying Allāh *taʿālā*. This is exactly the point I am making when I say that the creation wants to derive benefit from its Creator but by following the course of disobedience.

This is where the mistake starts from because our affair with Allāh *taʿālā* demanded that we fulfil it in the correct manner. But we want to take sustenance from Allāh *taʿālā* by disobeying Him. Since this is our attitude with our Creator, we have adopted the same procedure with the creation. We want to fulfil a certain objective from a person and acquire our benefit from him, but we want to do it by displeasing him. When a person is earning in a certain family, the rest of the family are displeased with him but they also want to benefit from him. They want the person to understand all their needs on his own, and to then fulfil them without their asking. They feel they must not tell him anything so that their pride remains intact. When it comes to outsiders, they are prepared to ask them for the most insignificant of things without feeling any shame or indignity. But when it comes to their own family member, they feel that it is synonymous to death to ask him even if they are in extreme need and most dire circumstances. The reason is their impoliteness and pride. To make matters worse, these people are proud themselves, yet they will sit in public and speak about their wealthy relative in a manner to prove that he is impolite and proud. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

We accept that if a person experiences affluence and prosperity he must be considerate of his relatives. If a person does not have this much fellow-feeling then this is a major defect in his character. I accept that this is bad-mannered. However your attitude of having a need in your heart while portraying yourself as independent, and not expressing your need to him although he is your relative is also an evil because you nurtured pride and jealousy in your heart. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

If you want to acquire any benefit from a person, the way of doing it is to keep him happy and to create a place for yourself in his heart. I have observed that when a person pleases his seniors and creates a place for himself in their heart, then the seniors reciprocate with kindness and affection. The person's worldly and Dīnī life come in order.

An attendant of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to relate his own story to me. He said: "My worldly life and Dīnī life have both been sorted out. This is how it happened. Hadrat Maulānā sent a message to Pīrānī Sāḥibah [Hadrat Thānwī's wife] saying: 'He is my friend. I will eat half rotī and I will give the other half to him.' Subsequently, I receive a share of anything which comes as a gift to Hadrat. Whether it is fruit, sweetmeats or whatever else, I get half of it. In fact, if someone sends a length of fabric, half of it will come to me. Can there be any better arrangement for my worldly and Dīnī life?"

All praises are due to Allāh *taʿālā* for His kindness.

TWO IMPORTANT OBLIGATIONS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* read a letter of a very senior scholar in an assembly. In that letter, the scholar wrote in praise of Hadrat Maulānā. In the course of the assembly, Hadrat addressed everyone and said: I did not read this letter to you in order to praise my self. Rather, I want to direct your attention to a specific objective. This is not the time to expect praises from you people and to consider it to be the work of the Tarīqat."

The fact of the matter is that the nation – as regards Islam or as a nation – has died. There are one or two people, though in the minority, who still have life in them. It is because of them that some feeling remains. Those who have feelings know very well that the nation has died and that it is not easy to revive it. The present era is one of severe tests and tribulations for Muslims. There are all types of tests and tribulations. The greatest test is that of īmān. It is essential for every person who is tested to perceive the test. If not, it will cast him into the valley of death. Some people do perceive the test, but is the perception correct or not? Correct perception is perceived by only certain people, although everyone has some type of perception or the other. It is the duty of those who have correct perception to strive to develop it in others.

The other point is that what must they do after developing that perception. Life has to come into them and they all must get attached to the work. After perception and realization, comes the stage of action. I would like to say something in this regard. Understand it well. If you do not understand it from

my explanation, need will teach it to you. If you understand it from the beginning and die after having understood it, it will cause you no harm. There will be nothing but benefit for you.

Now listen. You have to do two things:

One is to establish a correct bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and a correct relationship with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I mentioned previously that the greatest test is that of īmān. Īmān is connected to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The level of your bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will indicate the level of your īmān. If you have correct īmān and a genuine bond, you will receive assistance from the One in whom you have īmān. Muslims have always been successful through Allāh's help. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنْ يَّنْصُرْكُمُ اللّٰهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ يَّخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

If Allāh helps you, no one will be able to overcome you. If He does not help you, who is there that can help you after Him? It is in Allāh alone that the Muslims should place their trust.[1]

In every era, when Muslims experienced a situation of this nature, they strengthened their īmān and turned towards Allāh *taʿālā*.

The second thing which you have to do is set right your relationship with Allāh's servants. If we can practise on this today, we will become very strong and

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 160.

powerful. Unfortunately, there is no limit to our weakness today. This is what has weakened us further. Our mutual fighting and disputing have scattered our power. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلاَ تَنَازَعُوْا فَتَفْشَلُوْا

And do not dispute with each other or else you will lose courage.[1]

We have two types of relationship. One is with Allāh *taʿālā*. We have to be so strong and firm in this relationship that the greatest of powers must not be able to shake us. The other relationship is with the servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. This too has to be strong and firm. The reason for the weakness in our mutual relationships is the weakness of our īmān. It is because of this that our relationship with people of īmān is weak. Our bond with people of īmān is essentially on the basis of īmān. The stronger our īmān, the stronger and more fruitful will be our relationship with the people of īmān. Weakness in that īmān is known as hypocrisy.

We do not have to say anything to outsiders. We have to speak to our own people. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught the noblest character and people received success on account of it. Unfortunately, let alone the laity, even the elite do not pay attention to it.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went to the extent of saying:

بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق

[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 46.

I have been sent for the perfection of noble character.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اُدْعُ إِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ.

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and with kind admonition. And argue with them in a way that is best.[1]

Even if there is a need to argue with someone, it must be done in a manner which is best. This is an explicit order of the Qur'ān which can never be abrogated.

Allāh *taʿālā* also says:

اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ، فَاِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ.

Reply with that which is best. You will then see that he, between whom and you there was enmity, shall be as though he is your close friend.[2]

Before this Allāh *taʿālā* explained injunctions which are related to Him, and whose carrying out will set right the bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. He is now explaining matters which will set right the mutual relationships of the creation. Included in this is to respond to evil with kindness. If you do this, your enemy will become like a very close friend. If not, he will at least become similar to a friend. There are times when enmity is changed into genuine friendship, and an enemy becomes a sincere friend.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 125.

[2] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 34.

Listen! Hasanah (piety) is good in itself and brings good results. And sayyi'ah (evil) is bad in itself and its results are bad. The effects of piety are totally different from those of evil. Piety produces good results and good effects, while evil does the opposite. But now evil in itself is considered to be a great feat, and people rejoice when they see its bad effects. It is so sad that the temperament itself has become corrupt.

Allāh *taʿālā* orders us to repulse evil with good. One way of doing it is that if someone does bad to you, you remain silent and do not respond in any way. This is a good response. Another better way is to respond to his evil by doing good to him. This is best. A poet says:

> It is easy to respond to evil with evil. However, true valour is to do good to the one who does you harm.

This is the instruction of Allāh *taʿālā* and this is what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* learnt it from him and demonstrated it practically. Hadrat Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib ʿUthmānī *rahimahullāh*, a former rector of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband writes in his well-known book, *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*:

> The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* stood up as true and practical ambassadors for the spread of Islam. Their life conditions and transactions were like proofs for the Islamic creed. When the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were observed after hearing about the beliefs and injunctions of Islam, they used to be more firm than the claims to the genuineness of Islam and other obvious proofs. Every person was compelled to consider it to be the truth. This is the secret behind the astounding

> and swift progress and spread of Islam. Although stories about the bravery, valour, war preparations of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* are unparalleled in history and it cannot present even a slight similarity, we will not relate those incidents at this point. Nor will we take you on an exploration of their victories on the various battlefields, but will demonstrate to you why nations after nations entered the fold of Islam. What were the causes for their ready and enthusiastic acceptance of Islam?[1]

In short, the force of noble character is so powerful that it must inevitably leave its mark. The nations which were subjugated were done through character. Even now, if they are to be influenced, it will have to be through character. Leave aside outsiders, even if your own children, your own murīds and your own students see the character of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in you, they will have faith and confidence in you. In fact, I can say that if your near ones see the slightest wavering from the character of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in you, they will immediately lose their confidence in you. This is why you have to be even more careful with your close associates. It is essential for a shaykh to portray the best and noblest character among his associates so that the confidence of the murīd remains intact and he derives benefit from him.

I was saying to you that there are two types of relationships; one is with Allāh *taʿālā* and the other is with the creation. It is most difficult to combine the

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[1] *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*, p. 78.

two. There are many obstacles when developing a relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. One major obstacle is a person's carnal self. It will have to be subjugated and subdued. It is even more difficult to set right your relationship with people. People consider establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* to be easy and they did it by remaining aloof from people and living in the jungles. However, to live among people and to maintain a correct relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* and with people – very few were successful in this regard. This is because it is a very difficult stage to combine both relationships. When a person perfects his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* and develops affinity with Him, it is inevitable for him to experience aloofness and detachment from people. Sometimes the aloofness reaches such a level that a person chooses total solitude. He becomes a manifestation of the following couplet:

> His heart is not attached to the orchard
> and he feels restless in the desert. Now
> where will we take this madman to?

This is also a level of wilāyat (close friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*), but a level higher than that is to be internally attached to Allāh *taʿālā* while his relations and interactions with people are in order, and he continues fulfilling their rights. This is the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and this is what the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* did. Their total bond was with Allāh *taʿālā*, and they interacted with people in such a manner that they could not even perceive the level of attachment with Allāh *taʿālā*. There was a Tābiʿī who used to wear a set of clothes which cost 1 000 dīnārs, but his spiritual condition was such that he would spend the entire night reading just one verse of the Qur'ān. He used to cry so much

and enjoy reading that verse so greatly that he would continue repeating it until the next morning.

Now we see that there is some inclination towards establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, and when we teach people something about it, they are happy with it. But when they are told to set right their relationships with Allāh's servants, they are not successful. This is because they do not even consider it to be part of Dīn. Whereas noble character is an important part of Dīn. Dīn cannot be complete without it. There can be no success without adopting the character of Allāh *taʿālā*. Make Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the link and then see whether you succeed or not.

Make a habit of reading the Sunnat du'ās

We must make it a point of constantly reading the duʿā's which have been reported in the Aḥādīth. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā' at every moment and occasion, why should we not do it? Allāh *taʿālā* quotes many duʿā's of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* in the Qur'ān. Do you think He quoted them without any purpose? Do you think there is no benefit in them? Listen! He quoted them so that we read them and practise on them. Listen to the following as an example. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the following duʿā' of Ḥadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and his companions:

رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ اَنَبْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ. رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا، وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ.

O our Lord! We have placed our trust in You. Towards You have we turned. And to You alone is the final return. O our Lord! Make us not a trial for the

unbelievers. And forgive us, O our Lord! You alone are mighty, wise.[1]

Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and his companions made this duʿā' when they separated themselves from their people. They took refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* and cried to Him.

رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ اَنَبْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ

O our Lord! We have placed our trust in You. Towards You have we turned. And to You alone is the final return.

In other words, we placed our trust in You for all our affairs and handed over everything to You. We will eventually be returned to You.

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا

O our Lord! Make us not a trial for the unbelievers.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says: This means: O Allāh! Do not empower the unbelievers over us whereupon they will imprison us and torture us.

Hadrat Mujāhid *rahimahullāh* says it means: O our Allāh! Do not punish us at their hands. Or, do not send any punishment to us on account of which the unbelievers will assume that they are on the truth while we are on falsehood. Consequently, they will fall into tribulation (and abstain from embracing īmān). Another meaning is: Do not give them expansion in their sustenance due to which they will believe that they are on the truth and accepted in Allāh's sight.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 4-5.

Subjugation by the unbelievers because of sinning

وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا

And forgive us.

In other words, forgive us for any shortcomings.

The reason for seeking forgiveness on this occasion is explained by Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Sāḥib Pānīpattī *raḥimahullāh*. He says: Muslims are sometimes subjugated by the unbelievers because of their [Muslims'] sins. This is a most important point which is worthy of consideration.

رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ

O our Lord! You alone are mighty, wise.

In other words, You are so mighty that when any person comes in Your refuge and places his trust in You, no one will be able to harm him in any way.

Rūḥ al-Maʿānī states: You are so mighty that anyone who comes into Your refuge can never be subjugated, and his hopes can never be lost.

You are all wise as regards Your words, actions and promulgations.

Look at how powerful this duʿā' is, and how beautifully the exegetes explained it! I explained only this much so that when we make this duʿā' we should at least have the reason behind making it in our mind. If not, we will be repeating these words for the rest of our lives like parrots without understanding what they mean.

After quoting this duʿā' of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and his companions, Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْهِمْ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ فَاِنَ اللهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ.

There is an excellent example in them for whoever hopes in [meeting] Allāh and the Last Day. But whoever turns away, Allāh alone is independent, worthy of all praise.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says thereafter:

عَسَى اللهُ اَنْ يَّجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّاللهُ قَدِيْرٌ وَاللهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

It is hoped that Allāh will place friendship between you and those of them who are your enemies. Allāh has power over everything. Allāh is forgiving, merciful.[2]

It is stated in *Tafsīr Kabīr* that when Allāh *taʿālā* ordered the believers to go against the unbelievers, they became very firm in their enmity towards their fathers, children and other relatives; and they severed ties completely from them. Allāh *taʿālā* therefore revealed this verse.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that when Allāh *taʿālā* saw the firmness of the believers in their Dīn, and their resoluteness in severing ties from their fathers, children and relatives, Allāh *taʿālā* made this promise for the satisfaction of their hearts that there is hope from Allāh *taʿālā* that He will place friendship

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[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 6.

[2] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 7.

in the hearts of those towards whom you are antagonistic. Allāh *taʿālā* is all powerful, and He is most forgiving and merciful.

Allāh *taʿālā* fulfilled this promise by honouring them with victory. Subsequently, their people embraced Islam and intense love and affection was established.

The fact of the matter is that how can Allāh *taʿālā* ever tolerate a mutual break in ties among His servants? The initial severance of ties and enmity was promulgated so that the believers become firm in their Dīn, and their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* becomes strong. When the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* demonstrated this on the highest level and they proved to be successful in this objective, Allāh *taʿālā* encouraged them to strike a balance in their enmity by hoping that Allāh *taʿālā* creates love between the two. You will then regret your severity and enmity. This is why you should be balanced in your enmity.

Islam came to put an end to enmity

Islam came to put an end to enmity; not to increase it. Islam came to create peace and harmony; not to create war and disharmony. There was no peace and harmony in the world. Islam came and created peace and harmony. In order for wealth and affluence to prevail, it is inevitable for it to oppress and subjugate those who are its subjects, and to look at them with scorn. But the amazing feat of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* was that they conquered region upon region, but they did not change in the least. The fact of the matter is that īmān was firmly embedded in their hearts. Their relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* prevailed over all other relationships. Thus, despite amassing worldly authority and wealth, they did not allow humility, humbleness and the noble character of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to leave them. This was their excellent feat. This is why nations began embracing Islam enthusiastically and without any compulsion.

It is therefore necessary for us to adopt Islamic character. We must recognize Allāh's workings and be conscious of His power and might. Allāh *taʿālā* will help us by virtue of His absolute power. We will have to cry before Him. He will listen to us and accept our invocations. Duʿā's are accepted just as different acts of worship are accepted. The stronger our hopes, the more likely that our duʿā's will be accepted even if the means may not appear to be in our favour. Allāh *taʿālā* is not in need of means. The presence of means or their absence, strength and weakness – all these things mean nothing to Him. What is so difficult for the Being who can bring from non-existence into existence to give strength to the weak!? However, we need to realize this.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are most comprehensive pieces of advice. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us the inspiration to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

Listen to a few incidents which demonstrate how duʿā's are accepted.

A king fell ill and the treatment was not helping. A saint happened to pass by. The king sent one of his men to call him. When the saint came in, the king said: "Make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* cures me from this illness." The saint said: "There are countless people who are unjustly lying in prisons because of you. How can I make duʿā' for you?" The king issued an order for all prisoners to be released. The saint then made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā*: "O Allāh! You have already shown to this king the misfortune of disobedience. Now let

him taste the joy of obedience." The king was cured immediately.

A person's relative was ill. He made this duʿā': "O Allāh! Cure him and give me the illness instead." This is exactly what happened. The relative recovered while the person fell ill and died.

Note: There is no need to make such a duʿā'. Allāh *taʿālā* has absolute power; there is no need for any condition or prerequisite. (compiler)

Incidents where duʿā's have been accepted are so many and witnessed daily that there can be no doubt in them. Why, then, do we not emulate Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as regards duʿā'? Do you think the duʿā's which are in the Qur'ān and Hadīth are there for nothing? Do you think there is no benefit in them? Make duʿā' with full conviction. The extent of Allāh's help depends on the strength of your īmān. The same can be said about the acceptance of duʿā's.

وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهٖ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Honour is for Allāh and His Messenger, and for the believers.[1]

The following duʿā' is also mentioned in the Qur'ān:

رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَّقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

O our Lord! Give us good in the world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of Hell.

You probably do not value this duʿā'. You probably read it but do not know its importance whereas it is a most powerful duʿā'. It encompasses all Dīnī and

[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 8.

worldly needs. You must certainly make it a habit to make this duʿā'. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has explained its virtues in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* and says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make it the most.

Now listen to the following duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ اَوَّلَ هٰذَا النَّهَارِ صَلَاحًا، وَّاَوْسَطَهُ فَلَاحًا، وَّاٰخِرَهُ نَجَاحًا

O Allāh! Make the first portion of this day into righteousness, the middle portion of it into prosperity, and the last portion of it into success.

Make it a habit of making this duʿā' as well – not only in the morning, but in the afternoon and evening as well. You will experience peace throughout the day and night.

Listen to the following duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْفَوْزَ فِي الْقَضَآءِ، وَنُزُلَ الشُّهَدَآءِ، وَعَيْشَ السُّعَدَآءِ، وَمُرَافَقَةَ الْاَنْبِيَآءِ، وَالنَّصْرَ عَلَى الْاَعْدَآءِ، اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ.

O Allāh! I ask You for success in what is destined, hospitality which will be extended to martyrs, the life of fortunate persons, the companionship of the Prophets, and victory against the enemies. Surely You hear all invocations.

Māshā Allāh! What a beautiful duʿā'! It ends with: "Surely You hear all invocations." These words acts as catalysts for the acceptance of duʿā's. When Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* made duʿā', he concluded it with the same words:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَاءِ.

O Allāh! Bless me with pure children from You. Surely You hear all invocations.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made thousands of similar duʿā's. We are required to make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* and to beg of Him, this is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* opened the door to invocations. He began presenting his requests in the court of the Giver with absolute humbleness and servitude by using the words "I ask You". He continued in this way throughout his life and all his duʿā's were accepted. What right does his ummat have not to emulate him in this regard? Why should it deprive itself of this honour? We all must make duʿā', and in the words which were used by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is because those words were liked and accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. In the same way, we must make it a habit of making those duʿā's of the other Prophets *ʿalayhis salām* and righteous people which are mentioned in the Qur'ān. Your duʿā's will be accepted as they were accepted in favour of the past peoples. Understand this well.

THE PROPHETIC SYSTEM AND DIFFERENCES IN RANK

I am going to relate a Hadīth to you in which there is success in both worlds.

عن العرباض بن سارية قال صلى بنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم أقبل علينا بوجهه فوعظنا موعظة بليغة ذرفت منها العيون ووجلت منها القلوب، فقال رجل: يا رسول الله كأن هذه موعظة مودع فأوصنا. فقال أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة وإن كان عبدا حبشيا فإنه من يعش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ، واياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة.[1]

Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam led us in salāh and then turned to us and delivered a very comprehensive lecture. Our hearts trembled by it and our eyes shed tears. A man said: "O Rasūlullāh! This seems to be the admonition of a person bidding farewell, so advise us." He said: "I advise you to constantly fear Allāh, and to listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave were to rule over you. Whoever remains alive from among you [after me], will witness many differences. You should therefore hold on firmly

[1] رواه أحمد، وابو داؤد، والترمذي، وابن ماجه.

to my Sunnat and the way of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold on to it firmly. Beware of introducing new things into the religion. Surely every innovation is deviation."

This pure Hadīth contains an alchemic prescription for the ummat during trying and difficult times like the present.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* provides a system to the ummat for the rectification of its world. And that is "obedience". In other words, every junior is ordered to obey his senior whether he is a ruler, a leader, parents, a teacher or a shaykh. The system of this world exists on obedience. When it is non-existent, there is tribulation and corruption. If you look around today, you will realize that we are not practising on the order to obey. Every junior – despite being a junior – is behaving as though he is a senior. Every senior – despite being a senior – is treated like a junior.

Whereas we learn from the Hadīth that there has to be differences in rank. In other words, a junior has to behave like a junior and a senior has to behave like a senior. A father must be looked up as a father, a teacher must be given his rank, and a shaykh must be placed on his position.

The same theme is explained in a Hadīth as follows:

من لم يرحم صغيرنا ولم يوقر كبيرنا ولم يُبَجِّلْ عالمينا فليس منا.[1]

The one who is not merciful to our juniors, does not show respect to our seniors, and does not revere our scholars is not of us.

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[1] نور الأنوار.

He has done something which is different from our way and our Dīn, this is why we have nothing to do with him.

From here too we learn the need for differences in rank. The Sufis too say that this is essential. Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* say that it is necessary for people to consider each other's ranks. If this is not done, then the most certain outcome will be corruption. It will first result in corruption in our worldly life and then our Dīn.

Success in this world is dependent on preserving the differences in rank. Juniors must be respectful to their seniors, while seniors must be considerate towards their juniors. They must treat them with mercy. In the same way, the laity must respect their 'ulamā'. No one must be able to complain about the other, and no one must need to demand his rights from the other. If this is realized, there will be absolute and total peace in the world. Corruption will cease completely.

One of the reasons for the absence of obedience today is that every person feels that he has the right to voice his opinion and believes his opinion to be the best. He is not prepared to accept the opinion of another, and therefore not ready to follow him. There is a deluge of views, and divergent views are causing a deluge of tribulations.

A Ḥadīth refers to this (i.e. when every person is bent on his own view) as one of the signs of Resurrection. It is also referred to as the most destructive of the three destructive things. The Ḥadīth reads as follows:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: ثلاث منجيات وثلاث مهلكات. فالمنجيات فتقوى الله في السر والعلانية، والقول بالحق في الرضا والسخط، والقصد في الغنى والفقر. وأما المهلكات فهوى متبع، وشح مطاع، وإعجاب المرء بنفسه وهي أشدهن.[1]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: There are three things which are salvations and three are destroyers. The salvations are: (1) Allāh consciousness in private and public. (2) Speaking the truth whether in a state of happiness or anger. (3) Moderation in one's spending whether in a state of prosperity or poverty. The destroyers are: (1) A desire which is followed. (2) Miserliness which is obeyed. (3) When a person is conceited by his views, and this is the worst of the three.

The order to consult

This is the situation today. In order to put an end to it, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered us to consult (to make mashwarah). He said:

مَا هَلَكَ قَوْمٌ عَنِ الْمَشْوَرَةِ

A nation which consults is not destroyed.

Allāh *taʿālā* also instructed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to consult:

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح، ج ٢، ص ١٤٥.

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

Consult them in matters.

When there is consultation, each person no longer relies on his own view. In this way, the thing which could cause corruption is terminated. This is how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* put an end to it and neutralized the poison of personal opinions.

The importance of piety and obedience

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* guaranteed us our Hereafter by ordering us towards piety. And by instructing us to hear and obey, he prepared the way for our worldly success. It is therefore essential for the Muslim nation to pay attention to this prophetic system. In other words, it must choose piety and obey the person who is appointed as its ruler even if he is an Abyssinian slave. In other words, we will not look at the rank and lineage of the leader. Rather, obedience to the one who is appointed as a leader becomes obligatory.

The issue of obedience is a very important one in Islam. The saints say:

> The one who submits himself before another will soon become one before whom others submit.

The Sufis say that the one who is capable becomes accepted at some time in the future. In other words, his capability conveys him to the level of being accepted in the eyes of people. In the same way, the one who is a seeker will soon become the one who is sought. The one who is a murīd (an aspirant) will soon become one who is aspired. These are the fruits of obedience. Obedience is the fruit of īmān. The more

īmān a person has, the more obedient he will be. The special attribute of a believer – in fact, the hallmark of a believer – is obedience. This is the attribute which the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* possessed. On one occasion when they said: "We have heard and accepted", Allāh *taʿālā* praised them for it and mentioned it in the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ؕ كُلٌّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ قف لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ قف وَقَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ز غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ.

The Messenger accepted whatever was sent down to him from his Lord, and the Muslims (accepted it) as well. All of them believed in Allāh, His angels, His Books, and in His Messengers. They say: "We do not differentiate between any of His Messengers." And they said: "We have heard and accepted! We seek Your pardon, O our Lord! To You alone is our return.[1]

On the other hand, the Jews used to say: We heard (with our ears) and we disobey (with our hearts). Whereas the actual hearing is when one hears with his ears and his heart. Allāh *taʿālā* relates the statement of the Jews as follows:

مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا يُحَرِّفُوْنَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَّوَاضِعِهٖ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ وَّرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِاَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنًا فِي الدِّيْنِ ؕ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا وَاسْمَعْ وَانْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاَقْوَمَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 285.

Some Jews distort the word from its context and say: "We heard and disobeyed" and they say: "Hear without being made to hear" and they say: "Rāʿinā" twisting their tongues and defaming the religion. Had they said: "We heard and obeyed, and hear and look towards us" it would have been better for them and more upright.[1]

From these explicit texts we learn the high status of obedience. I will add one more point. I said that each person must recognize the right of the other. The junior must recognize the right of the senior. The student must recognize the right of the teacher. A son must recognize the right of his father. The murīd must recognize the right of his shaykh. The ruled must recognize the right of the ruler. The subjects must recognize the right of the king. If each one recognizes the right of the other, it will be a means of success in this world. What this means is that the temperaments in general are such that if their rights are fulfilled and they are treated well, they will appreciate the kindness and value the benefactor.

It is also possible to come across a person who, no matter how kind and affectionate you are to him, it has no effect on him. Such a person is internally depraved. Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *Tafhīmāt*:

> Befriend people while observing two prerequisites. One is you must sever all desire from them and what they posses because if Allāh *taʿālā* wills, you will get a share of their wealth without waiting for it

[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 46

and expecting it. (If this is the case, why should you hanker after it?)

The other is to desire the wellbeing of everyone, meet them with a smiling mien and treat them kindly irrespective of whether a person is rich or poor, a person of authority and position or one who is unknown. Be considerate of each one's position and treat him accordingly. (If you do this, you have fulfilled his right and absolved yourself of your duty). If any person is antagonistic towards you after this, he is internally depraved. Those who have been oppressive will soon come to know by what kind of turning they will turn.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* stressed the need and importance of obedience. If people follow, they will experience success in both worlds. There is an evil which is quite common among us. It too becomes a cause of differences, disputes, hatred and enmity. I feel I ought to speak about it as well. The Sharīʿat speaks about the prohibition of backbiting and carrying tales.

The despicability of backbiting and carrying tales

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *raḥimahullāh* writes in his well-known book, *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

These two traits are from among the most repugnant evil characteristics, and they are very common among people. You would rarely find someone who is not

[1] *Tafhīmāt*, vol. 2, p. 104.

caught up in it. There is a need to speak a lot on this subject in order to save people from it. I will first explain backbiting.

Backbiting refers to saying anything about your brother which he will find offensive. This includes his body, Dīn, sincerity, wealth, children, wife, workers, slaves, turban, clothes, manner of walking and movements, happiness, strictness, fluent speech, or anything else about him. Anything in this regard will be considered to be backbiting whether you say it verbally, in writing, or through signs and gestures. Whether the gestures are with your eyes, hands, head, or any other part of your body.

Examples of backbiting about the body is when you refer to a person as being blind, lame, dim-sighted, bald, short, tall, black, etc.

Included in backbiting about Dīnī matters of a person is when you refer to him as a fāsiq, a treacherous person, an oppressor, lazy in performing salāh, careless about purity, disobedient to his parents, he does not give his zakāh to the rightful recipients, or you say that he does not abstain from backbiting. (All these matters entail finding fault with the Dīnī life of a person and are therefore included in backbiting).

As for discussing worldly matters which may offend people and are therefore classified as backbiting would include the following: to refer to a person as being uncouth, lacking in good mannerisms, he scorns other people, he does not fulfil the rights of others, he speaks too much, he eats a lot, he sleeps a lot, he sleeps at the wrong times, he sits in the place which is reserved for someone else, and so on.

Speaking about a person's parents in a manner which could offend him would include the following: you say

to a person: Your father is a fāsiq, your father is an Indian, your father is an African, your father is a cobbler, your father is a fabric merchant, your father is a tinker, your father is a carpenter, your father is an ironmonger, your father is a weaver.

Speaking about a person's character in a manner which he may find offensive includes the following: you say that he is unmannerly, he is proud, he likes to argue, he is a tyrant, he is incapable, he is cowardly, he gets angry very quickly, he is harsh, etc.

Finding fault with a person's clothing would include: he is the one who has broad sleeves, or lengthy clothes, dirty clothes, etc.

These were examples of speaking about a person's body, Dīn, parents, character and clothing. The same can be applied when speaking about a person's slaves, workers and so on. The principle is that if you say anything about a person in his absence which he finds offensive, it will be classified as backbiting.[1]

I say that it is essential to bear in mind the details given by Imām Nawawī *raḥimahullāh* on the subject of backbiting. This is because it is a serious sin while people are most inconsiderate in this regard.

Additional details on backbiting

Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا

Nor backbite one another.[2]

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[1] *Kitāb al-Adhkār*, p. 429.

[2] Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49: 12.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to this verse:

Do not speak about each other in the other's absence in a manner which the other will find offensive because Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Do you know what is backbiting?" The Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* replied: "Allāh and His Messenger know best." Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "It is when you speak about your brother in a manner which he finds offensive." Someone asked: "What if my brother really has what I say about him?" Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "If that quality is really found in him then you have backbitten him. And if that quality is not in him then you have slandered him."[1]

He writes further on:

The meaning of what he finds offensive is general – it could refer to matters related to his Dīn or his worldly life, his character, his wealth, his children, his wife, his slaves, his servants, his clothing or anything else which is related to him.

He then writes much further on:

It could well include things which are considered to be minor sins. For example, backbiting about things which will not offend a person too much, e.g. finding fault with his clothing or his animal. Then there is backbiting which is the worst of the major sins, e.g. backbiting the Auliyā' and ʿulamā' by referring to them as fāsiq and fājirs (flagrant sinners and immoral

[1] Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasaʾī.

people), or other similar words which are most offensive and distasteful.

The preferred view is that if a person hears backbiting and remains silent despite being able to stop it, he will be included in the sin of backbiting.[1]

Note: Ponder over the important decision passed by ʿAllāmah ʿĀlūsī *raḥimahullāh* [the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*]. He says that backbiting about people in general is a major sin, while backbiting about the Auliyā' and ʿulamā' is the worst of the major sins. I say, in the same way, disobedience and disrespect to every respectable person is a major sin, while disrespect to one's parents is the worst of the major sins. In his list of the worst major sins, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* coupled ascribing partners with Allāh *taʿālā* with disobedience to parents.

Obedience of the Ṣaḥābah

I was speaking on the subject of obedience and said that in order to rectify relations among people, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered obedience, and advised the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* to listen and obey. He also advised that seniors must be merciful to juniors. This is his Sunnat and the way which is liked by Allāh *taʿālā*. He then instructed seniors and juniors to respect and honour the ʿulamā' because respecting them entails respecting Dīn, and belittling them entails belittling the Sharīʿat. And there can no worse corruption than this. In every era, the Dīn which was conveyed to the laity was conveyed by the ʿulamā'. If the laity in a

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[1] *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*, vol. 24, p. 160.

nation are going to oppose their ʿulamā' and respect for them is not found in their hearts, there can be no way that the laity can be reformed and rectified. Thus, while bearing in mind the differences in ranks, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches us to be merciful, affectionate, kind, respectful, and obedient. It is essential to act in line with this teaching in every era, especially in our times.

Every teaching of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is such that if we put it into practice, we will undoubtedly experience success in this world and in the Hereafter. However, the problem we face today is that people are looking for solutions from places where solutions cannot be found. As for the place where the solution is present (i.e. the Qur'ān and Sunnat), we are not turning our attention to it. How, then, can our problems and challenges be solved?

Islam has become an alien entity in the eyes of worldly people, and it has been reduced to a stranger. Islamic teachings are suppressed and people are becoming disinclined to the bearers of the Sunnat (the ʿulamā'). Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

بدأ الإسلام غريبا وسيعود غريبا كما بدأ، فطوبى للغرباء من أمتي. قيل يا رسول الله، ومن الغرباء من أمتك. قال الذين يصلحون ما أفسد الناس من بعدي من سنتي.[1]

"Islam commenced as a stranger and will return as a stranger . Glad-tidings to the strangers of my community." He was asked: "Who are the strangers of

[1] كشف الخفاء، ج ١، ص ٢٥٢.

your community?" He replied: "They are the ones who will rectify of my Sunnat what people disfigured."

The author of *al-Madkhal* writes in his commentary to this Ḥadīth: Look at the theme of this Ḥadīth, and the one who wants to cry must cry over his self. He must cry over the estrangement of Muslims, and over the subjugation of those who practise on the Sunnat.

An Allāh-fearing and Allāh-conscious ʿālim holds a high rank in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Now who is an Allāh-fearing ʿālim? Listen to the statement of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this regard. He said: Do not sit in the company of every ʿālim. Rather, sit in the company of the ʿālim who orders you to give up five things and to do five things: (1) He orders you to give up doubts and to adopt conviction. (2) He orders you to give up ostentation and to adopt sincerity. (3) He removes you from love for this world and directs you towards abstinence. (4) He removes you from pride and haughtiness and calls you towards humility. (5) He removes you from enmity and calls you towards advising and admonishing.[1]

In this Ḥadīth Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches us how to identify an Allāh-fearing ʿālim. He is saying that we must recognize him through his speech and manner of conversing with people. In other words, check if he is calling you towards conviction, sincerity, abstinence, humility, and love and good counsel. In the same way, check if he is removing you from doubts, ostentation, inclination towards the world, pride and enmity. If these encouragements and discouragements are found in his speech, you can

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[1] *Fātiḥah al-ʿUlūm*, p. 18.

conclude that he is an Allāh-fearing ʿālim. You should remain in his company. If not, stay aloof from him. Understand well that the worst thing which causes ʿulamā' to fall from grace is love for the world.

The despicability of worldly love

It is mentioned in *Fātiḥah al-ʿUlūm* that when the hearts of ʿulamā' become inclined to the world – i.e. they give preference to the world over Dīn – Allāh *taʿālā* snatches away the fountains of wisdom from them and extinguishes the light of guidance from their hearts. When you meet such an ʿālim, he will say to you that he fears Allāh *taʿālā* while his actions are clearly immoral. At such a time you will see how moist and fresh the tongues will be, and how dry and arid the hearts are.

I take an oath in the name of the Being apart from whom there is none worthy of worship, that this condition which I described is solely because of the teachers who did not teach solely for Allāh *taʿālā* and students who did not study solely for Allāh *taʿālā* (in other words, both were devoid of sincerity).

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Shaytān has certainly overpowered you through knowledge." He was asked: "How is that O Rasūlullāh?" He replied: "He says to you: 'Acquire knowledge and do not worry about practising on it until you acquire all knowledge.' Consequently, man becomes desirous of knowledge and strives in acquiring it, while he continues deferring practising on it (by saying, I will do it tomorrow). He even dies in the process but is not inspired towards practice."[1]

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[1] *Fātiḥah al-ʿUlūm*, p. 19.

An advice to beloveds and associates

In the beginning I quoted the Hadīth of Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* advised the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* to listen and obey. Because Rasūlullāh's instruction is most appropriate to our present situation, I related it to you. It is not my objective to merely relate it to you but to advise you and make it a bequest to you. Although there is no need for a bequest after that of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, I am advising my people in emulation of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that they must bear in mind all the injunctions of the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and practise on them – especially these two Ahādīth (the Hadīth of Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and the Hadīth which mentions showing mercy to the juniors and respecting the seniors…). Special attention must be given to the subject of obedience which is learnt from them because success in this world and in the Hereafter is dependent on it.

Note: Māshā Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained and expounded on these two Ahādīth in a most beautiful manner. Only an expert mentor and skilled physician can explain it in this way. Look at how he concluded with a bequest which can only be made by a well-wishing father and mentor. We must make it a point of practising on all this so that we can enjoy success in both worlds. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

PRINCIPLES AND SYSTEMS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said:

Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has most appropriate principles for journeys.

There was a wealthy man in Delhi who used to invite students for meals. On one occasion, he extended an invitation to a few very senior teachers. He must have said to them to come on a certain day by a certain train to Delhi, and he will send someone to the station to receive them. Based on this information, these personalities did not even ask him where in Delhi his house is situated. On the appointed date, they all reached Delhi but there was no one to receive them at the station. The man who had invited them forgot. In the meantime, these seniors got off the train and continued walking up and down the platform. They did not even have a large sheet which they could have spread on the ground and sat down. The man eventually remembered, came to the station and took them to his house. It was at this point that these elders spoke among themselves and said: "The principle which is laid down by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is totally correct. Anyone who extends an invitation to him must send a person to accompany him to the place where he has been invited."

An ʿālim was invited by a Maulānā Sāhib. He went to his madrasah and waited there. Those who were opposed to the Maulānā surrounded the madrasah. The madrasah authorities shut the doors from inside. The opposition began hurling verbal abuses from

outside. An associate of Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* used to live in that city. He was an influential person. He was informed that a certain Maulānā Sāḥib is under siege in the madrasah. He arrived immediately with his carriage and called from outside. The Maulānā Sāḥib came out and the man took him to his house. The Maulānā Sāḥib stayed with the man for three days. He then acknowledged and said: "The principle which is laid down by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* is absolutely correct. When he goes to any place, he stays over at the house of senior and distinguished people." That Maulānā Sāḥib must have objected to this principle previously, but realized its wisdom now.

Religious people also have enemies

The fact of the matter is that senior people have even more enemies. If a person is senior in Dīn, he too has enemies. Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيٰطِيْنَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

In this way We made for every Prophet enemies, mischievous humans and jinn.[1]

Hadrat Thānwī's principles

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* was returning from Delhi and stopped over at a place (he must have promised someone that he will stop over there for some time). When he got off, he saw a poster which stated that Hadrat Maulānā will be delivering a lecture. He said: "I never said anything about delivering a lecture. How was this announcement

[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 112.

made, and who made it?" It was learnt that a western-educated person instructed for this announcement to be made. Hadrat said to him: "You have caused inconvenience to so many Muslims. I am leaving." Everyone begged Hadrat to stay and the man too apologized. Hadrat said: "You must now make a poster informing that you made this announcement without my permission." The man went around and made the announcement. Hadrat used to say: "When he made the announcement, I felt sorry for him because he had to belittle himself. I then said that I will deliver a lecture. Everyone was happy and the man too was overjoyed." Hadrat then delivered an excellent lecture.

There was a Maulānā Sāhib in Delhi. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* went to his place. He too made an announcement for Hadrat's lecture without obtaining permission from him. Hadrat said: "I did not come here to deliver a lecture, and people in their thousands have assembled." Because the Maulānā Sāhib had already made the announcement, he stood up to give the lecture but could not continue. Hadrat too noticed that the Maulānā Sāhib is failing to speak. Hadrat felt sorry for him and delivered the lecture.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* went to Shimlah on one occasion. Many senior people assembled. One wealthy person said to his friend: "These are 'ulamā', but when you look at their clothes it seems as though they have just emerged from the toilet." Hadrat overheard this. When he stood up to deliver his talk, he said: "We have always been hearing that the length of the tail of a turban is according to the extent of a person's knowledge, but today we learnt that it is according to the extent of a person's ignorance." He then said: "How can the Maulwī's afford classy and exclusive clothes!? They do not earn so much that they can

dress to your standards. However, if you are ashamed by the fact that your ʿulamā' are wearing garments which are beneath your status, I can give you a solution for it. You must tailor a few exclusive sets and keep them aside. When any ʿālim or lecturer comes here, you must say to him: 'Hadrat, wear these clothes and deliver the lecture.' When he completes his lecture, you must ask him to remove those clothes and keep them aside. If you really desire the honour of ʿulamā', then you yourself must honour them. If not, you can drown yourselves." Hadrat Maulānā was not normally harsh, but he was highly offended by the man's words that day, this is why he spoke harshly.

Note: Sometimes there is a need to speak harshly to haughty people. This is why Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* spoke as he did on that day. It was exactly what was required for that occasion. A man in Allāhābād had a wedding in his family. He said with regard to our students: "They must come with their broken utensils and take the food from here, we will not send any food for them." When Hadrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* heard this, he was severely displeased and said: "We will not tolerate our students being humiliated in this way." He said very harsh words which we could not imagine. (compiler)

Hadrat Hakimul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* went to a place on one occasion. He was not feeling well. He had a flu. The people began speaking among themselves: "The task of noting and publishing his lectures is done by Deputy Sāhib (Hadrat Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *raḥimahullāh*). He does not know how to deliver lectures." The next day when Hadrat's condition improved, he delivered a lecture and put the people to shame. He said that these masses attend with their bodies while their hearts are absent. In

other words, they accept outwardly while they have no faith and confidence in their hearts.

One Maulānā Ṣāḥib was newly appointed in the Department of Arabic at ʿAlīgarh University. Coincidentally, an influential and wealthy person was hosting a function on that day. Many people had gathered, including senior members of the madrasah because the wealthy man was affiliated with the madrasah. He said to the newly-appointed Maulānā Ṣāḥib: "Maulānā, you have arrived recently and many people have assembled here. We would like you to deliver a talk. It will serve as an opening to the function and we will be able to test you at the same time." The Maulānā Ṣāḥib said: "Who is going to take my exam?! Do you think you people even have the ability to understand my speech?!" Saying this, the Maulānā called for his attendant, instructed him to pack their luggage, and said: "We are not going to stay here. They have insulted us." When the people saw this, they all apologized and tried to convince him to remain. All the while, the Maulānā Ṣāḥib expressed his anger and said that he in not going to stay there. They eventually managed to convince him. Subsequently, the Maulānā Ṣāḥib inspired so much of awe and respect in the minds of the wealthy and affluent people, that several vehicles would be parked outside his house to take him wherever he wanted.

There was a jalsah in one place where many senior people attended. People from ʿAlīgarh were also in attendance. People with top government positions were there. One Maulānā Ṣāḥib delivered a talk in which he said: "Our madāris produce people who are *marḥūmīn* (on whom mercy is shown) while ʿAlīgarh produces people who are *malʿūnīn* (those who are cursed)." All those who were in attendance were most

offended and thought to themselves that he is coming to our very own jalsah and speaking bad about us. The mood of the jalsah was spoilt. When one of the organizers observed the change in mood, he went to Hadrat Hakimul Ummat *rahimahullāh* who was the head and said: "Hadrat, you will have to set right the mood." Hadrat said: "Why don't you say something?" The man did as instructed but it was not easy for him to change the mood of the audience.

Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* then addressed them: "Various types of people have assembled here. Some of you are judges, while others hold senior positions. I ask you, how many criminals did you let go on the basis of their good intentions? [You certainly released many]. If this is the case, then I ask you, what do you think of this Maulānā Ibrāhīm Sāhib? Does he have good intentions or not?" The people realized their folly from this one sentence and were satisfied. They were saying among themselves: "Look at what a beautiful thing he said! (he is labelling the Maulānā Sāhib a criminal and saying that we are the ones who released him)." The mood of the audience changed.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then said: "You people talk a lot about *fitrat* (temperament) but you do not understand it. One was the *fitrat* of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the other was the *fitrat* of Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Yet another was the *fitrat* of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Each one had a different temperament. If this is the case, why don't you liken the temperament of Maulānā Ibrāhīm Sāhib to that of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*?" When they heard this, the people began smiling while Maulānā Ibrāhīm Sāhib began crying (he was probably thinking that he

was not worthy of being compared to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*).

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* added: "You people always talk about 'new light'. What does it mean? Doesn't it mean that old things must be seen in a new light? Based on this rule, we will not use the word 'cursed' [as was said by the Maulānā Sāhib with reference to the graduates of 'Alīgarh]. Instead, we will say 'far from mercy'."

The people were overjoyed with Hadrat's speech. The fact of the matter is that he used to say things which these western educated people were ready to accept and they acknowledged that Hadrat has the full right of being accepted as a mentor and an educator.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* adds:

From these incidents you can gauge the extent of Hadrat Maulānā's affection and soft-heartedness. People are wrong in claiming that he is harsh. If he did reprimand any person, it was for the person's own rectification. On the whole he was very soft-hearted. He was harsh at the times of necessity. Was salām.

LEVELS OF WORK

If work is done in the correct manner, it will certainly be fruitful. If you do work in the manner done by the Auliyā', you will receive ranks accordingly. What this means is that you will have to subjugate your desires to the Sharīʿat.

But listen! It is very easy to say that you will have to subjugate your desires, but when a person tries to do it, he realizes that it is extremely difficult. It is not for everyone. Yes, if Allāh's grace is directed at a person, it becomes easy for him. Therefore each person, no matter of what level he is, must work according to his level. This is what I constantly say to people – they must do as much as they can, and they must not get embroiled in what they cannot do. There will be some other servant of Allāh *taʿālā* who will convey the work to the next level. A person has to do what is within his capacity. If a person wants to do the work which the Auliyā' did without learning it, how will he ever be able to achieve this? This is why I said to the people of this place to do the work in the correct manner. I also showed them the way to do the work. Those who do the work in the prescribed manner will be conferred ranks in line with the level of the work which they did.

A word of advice for the shaykh

I say, the murīds have a certain amount of faith and conviction in their shaykhs. If the shaykhs have the same amount of faith and conviction in their murīds, the latter will reach Allāh *taʿālā*. What this means is that we see the murīds sacrificing everything for us – their time, their occupations, eating and drinking,

sleeping and waking up, rest and comfort, and so on. Now if we too pay a little attention to them, they will reach their goal. The shaykh has to be concerned about the condition of his murīd. Is he progressing spiritually or not. If he is, well and good. If he is not, the shaykh must remove the obstacles which are preventing him from progressing. He must clear the way for him. This is what I mean by the attention of the shaykh to his murīd.

There was a very senior and distinguished ʿālim by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. On one occasion, Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* mentioned him by name and said: "Our Maulwī Sāhib talks a lot." Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* then said: "Inshā Allāh, now he will not talk." Subsequently, we noticed him remaining silent all the time and he began benefiting from Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* and was successful in this regard. After this, he used to say: "Even if I want to speak, I feel as if someone is holding my tongue." I say, it was not only his tongue which was held but his heart was held by someone. Consequently, his tongue stopped saying useless and futile things."

Some tasks are easy while others are difficult. External knowledge is easy while internal knowledge is difficult. The evils of the carnal self are exposed after a long time. There was a saint who always performed his salāh in the first row. One day he got delayed. He was able to join the congregation but he got place in the second row. He felt ashamed about it with respect to the people. In other words, they will say: "Today the shaykh missed the first row and the first takbīr." From this thought he realized that whatever salāhs he performed to this day were performed for people, and not for Allāh *taʿālā*. He then began making qadā of all his past salāhs. Just

imagine what intention he must have made! I related this incident to show you that the plots and schemes of the carnal self are exposed after a long time. Hadrat Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says in this regard:

> From the qualities of a person, the level of his knowledge can be ascertained in just one day. However, one must never be satisfied by his internal self and must never be deceived by it. This is because the depravity of the carnal self cannot be fathomed even after many years.

The importance of subjugating the self

Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *raḥimahullāh* suffered from an ailment whose intensity would cause him to fall unconscious. In those days there was a yogi who used to extract the ailment. Hadrat suffered from a severe bout on one occasion, so his murīds wanted to take him to the yogi. On the way, Hadrat regained consciousness. He asked: "Where are you taking me?" They replied: "To such and such yogi." He said: "No. Let's go back." The people took him back. He then suffered another attack which was severer than the previous one. The people decided that they will have to take him to the yogi because he is in real discomfort. They took him and reached the place of the yogi. The yogi extracted the ailment and Hadrat woke up and sat up. Hadrat asked the yogi: "How did you acquire this skill?" He replied: "Our guru had advised us to act against our carnal self. I practised on his advice and acquired this skill in this way."

Hadrat asked: "Tell me, does your self want you to embrace Islam or not?" The yogi was terrified by this question because how can a kāfir say that he likes Islam. This is why he replied in the negative. Hadrat

asked: “Your guru taught you to act against your self. Now is this included in his instruction or not?” The yogi was stunned but because he was true to his principles, he acknowledged and said: “This is undoubtedly included.” He read the kalimah and became a Muslim. Once īmān entered his heart and he looked at Hadrat, he saw and realized that Hadrat was on a very lofty level. So he sat respectfully in front of him.

The story spread throughout Delhi that Hadrat used his powers to overpower the yogi and caused a very senior kāfir to become a Muslim. Now there were other personalities and saints in Delhi but they could not cause “small” kāfirs to become Muslims, yet Allāh *taʿālā* enabled Hadrat to accomplish this.

This is what I meant when I said that there are different levels of work. A person can only do as much as is equal to his rank and level. If a junior person wants to accomplish the works of seniors, he will not be able to do it.

Now listen further! All types of people – the rich and the poor – used to go to Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā’ *rahimahullāh*. There was a man who was sitting at the rear of Hadrat’s assembly. He said: “There is no question about Hadrat being a Walī. At the same time there is no question about us being wretched people. Let alone reaching high levels of Dīn, we cannot even give up sins.” The man’s condition began to change after that. He himself used to relate: “Hadrat pulled me [towards Allāh *taʿālā*] in such a manner that even if I want to commit a sin I cannot.” Hadrat must have focussed on him, which then caused the condition of his heart to change.

Work has to be done in the prescribed manner. One way of doing it is to take a region and initiate a

programme of reformation and rectification. After working there for some time, form a group [which is capable of doing the work] so that in your absence, those who learnt the work from you will be able to continue it and give it progress. Let it not happen that you go to one place for two days, then you go to another place, and so on. How will anyone benefit in this way? The Sufis did a lot of work during periods of retrogression of the ummat. And wherever they did the work, they did it with resoluteness and fortitude. They did not deliver half a lecture today and said that they will deliver the remaining half tomorrow. Then when he stood up to deliver the second half the next day, the people forgot what he had said the previous day. The work must be so well established, that when you go back to a place, you must find it having progressed. In this way, it will be easy to convey the work to the next level.

If work is done with sincerity, people will pay heed

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* said on one occasion: "Continue doing the work and people will pay heed." Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāḥib and I were present at the time when he gave this piece of advice. What he meant was that the essential thing is work and sincerity. When a person does the work and does it with sincerity, people are bound to turn to him. You will therefore see that those who did the work were widely accepted by the Muslims. People were prepared to shed their blood at the spot where their perspiration fell. This is because they taught them Dīn with utmost sincerity and love. They taught them in a manner which caused them to become true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Muslims made a major contribution in India. The work was done by the 'ulamā' and the Sufis. You see Maulwī Muḥammad Fārūq Sāḥib sitting here. He came from Allāhābāh Utrā'u. On one occasion I went to his village, and he took me to a nearby village[1] where there was a most imposing masjid, a graveyard, and a solidly built khānqāh. I asked him: "How come this small village has such a beautiful and imposing masjid?!"

He replied that there is a background to it. An accountant from Lucknow used to come and stay here. He asked the saint whose grave this is to make du'ā' for him. The saint extended his ink-stand to him. This was an indication that he was giving him the ink-stand for the ministry, and he will become a minister. Subsequently he became a minister. He is the one who had this masjid and graveyard constructed. From here we can see that the Sufis even gave the world to people. As for the Dīn and īmān which they give and convey, that is beyond description. If you want sainthood, you will have to do some work. Sainthood is a good thing, but do you know what you have to do to acquire it? It comes with blood and sweat, and intense toiling.

What I want to say is that if you want to see real Dīn in people, you will have to do the work in the prescribed manner. You will have to teach, instruct and train. Do you think the work will be done just like that on its own!?

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[1] This village is called Dumgarhā, and the saint's name is Shāh Bāsiṭ 'Alī Qalandar.

In order to teach it to others you will have to learn it yourself under someone. Now that we are talking about learning and teaching, I recall an incident:

There was a saint who was an eminent scholar. A Nawāb Sāhib used to study under him. When, as per his schedule, he came to study one day, he observed some debility on his teacher's face, so he said: "Hadrat, I do not feel like studying today." Saying this, he went to his house, had several exotic and fortifying meals prepared, placed them on his head, and brought them personally to his teacher. The scholar smiled and said: "You brought it at the time of need but I am not going to eat it because the thing which is obtained after waiting expectantly for it and hankering after it is unlawful. When you left here, the thought crossed my mind that you went to bring food. Since this food came after I waited expectantly for it, I will not eat it."

The Nawāb Sāhib did not insist. He picked up the tray and left. When he was out of sight, he turned back and returned. He said: "Hadrat, you will have to accept it now because there is no hankering or waiting expectantly now." The scholar accepted. He was most pleased by his student's intelligence and made a lot of du'ā' for him.

Did you see how the student saved his teacher from hankering while making him to eat the food as well. If it was anyone from today, he would have either insisted on the teacher to accept or he would have taken it and left. Look at his intelligence – he took the food and left, but returned. And when he returned, he made a most valid point which the teacher had to acknowledge. This is true intelligence which we are not learning.

THE NEED FOR SYSTEM AND ORGANIZATION

Whether a task is big or small, it cannot be done without a system. A system is essential for every type of work. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had a system for everything, and would teach the same to us. He used to say: "When a person writes to me with a request for bayʿat, I call for him and say: 'Your request is accepted, but you must come to me after zuhr salāh when I am sitting in the exterior lounge, and present this letter to me." A person would then go and present it. Hadrat used to say: "If I happened to ask a person to come and meet me at some other time, I would tie a knot in my handkerchief to serve as a reminder. I carry it with me all the time, and when my hand falls on the knot, I think to myself: 'Why did I tie this knot?' I then recall that I had called a certain person for bayʿat."

I related this incident to demonstrate to you that even if it is the smallest of tasks, if attention is not paid to it and a system is not adopted for it, it will not be done. I say further, a system will develop through salāh. If you are particular about salāh, then all your work – whether of this world or the Hereafter – will be set right. A person can become a totally organized person solely through salāh. Those who are particular about their salāh and punctual about it become punctual about all other tasks.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to pay attention to salāh one hour

before its time. A person obtains īmān from salāh. the Qur'ān refers to salāh as īmān:

وَمَا كَانَ اللهُ لِيُضِيْعَ اِيْمَانَكُمْ

Allāh is not such as to allow your īmān to go to waste.

The exegetes state that it means:

أَيْ صَلَاتَكُمْ

In other words, your salāh.

The background to this is that when the qiblah was changed, the thought crossed the minds of the Muslims that the salāhs which they had performed in the direction of the qiblah which has now been abrogated are probably lost [in other words, they have lost the rewards for those salāhs]. Allāh *taʿālā* sent this verse stating that Allāh will not allow your salāhs to go to waste. Rather, He will reward you for them.

Do not consider salāh to be insignificant

You consider salāh to be insignificant while it is an obligation to Allāh *taʿālā*. You are deprived of its blessings today because you have wrong thoughts about it. You should develop full conviction in it and perform it with conviction, and then see what benefits you experience. If you have no faith and confidence in a thing, what benefit will you ever derive from it!

Salāh is the miʿrāj of the believers. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* received it on the occasion of Miʿrāj. Initially, 50 salāhs were made compulsory. On his return, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* met Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*

who asked him: “What did you get?” He replied: “50 times salāh has been made compulsory.”[1]

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said: “This is too much, your ummat will not be able to fulfil this. Go back to Allāh *taʿālā* and ask for a reduction.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went back and requested a reduction. Allāh *taʿālā* reduced it by five. On his return, he met Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* again. He asked: “What happened?” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informed him that the number of salāhs was reduced by five. He said: “Go back and ask for a further reduction.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went back and requested a reduction. It was reduced by another five. He continued in this way – going to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and then back to Allāh *taʿālā* for a further reduction, and it was reduced by five on each request. Eventually only ten remained. When he went to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and informed him that the number is now ten, Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said: “It is still too much. Go back and ask for a reduction.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went back. Allāh *taʿālā* reduced it by another five, and so only five remained. Allāh *taʿālā* said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: “Although it is only five, I will give the reward for fifty.” In other words, one salāh will be recorded as ten. From this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gauged that a further reduction does not have Allāh’s approval. When he went to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and informed him of what transpired, he said: “It is still too much. I have experience with the Banī Isrāʾīl. They could not perform just two salāhs – one in the morning and one in the evening.

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[1] *Tafsīr Mazharī*, Sūrah al-Isrā’.

How will your ummat perform five salāhs?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "No matter what, I am not going back for a further reduction. I went too many times with these requests for a reduction. I am now feeling ashamed to go back."

People do not believe in the sanctity and saintliness of salāh

This is the history of your salāh. What a magnificent worship! Despite this, you do not believe in its saintliness. I do not know what people consider to be saintliness. The Sharīʿat has been brought to us by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The 'ulamā' are its protectors and they understand it. The Sufis revert to the 'ulamā' to learn matters about Dīn and the Sharīʿat. It is nothing but the thievery of Shaytān that has decreased the greatness of the Sharīʿat, salāh, fasting, etc. from your hearts. You probably consider saintliness to be when a person flies in the air. So listen to what the erudite Sufis have to say in this regard.

How to look for a qualified shaykh

The method of searching for a qualified shaykh is to continue meeting different mashā'ikh without rejecting or finding fault with anyone. At the same time, do not pledge bayʿat without investigating. First observe the shaykh's steadfastness on the Sharīʿat. If you find one who does not adhere to the Sharīʿat, never pledge bayʿat to him even if he performs supernatural feats because the performance of supernatural feats is not from among the essentials of being a walī. There were some Auliyā' who did not perform a single supernatural act. There are no reports of supernatural feats from the majority of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Whereas the lowest

Saḥābī is superior to all the Auliyā'. We learn from this that the superiority of one walī over another is not on the basis of supernatural feats but on servitude and worship. Supernatural feats are performed by yogis as well. Thus, supernatural feats cannot be made proofs for wilāyat (true and close friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*).

There is a well-known story in this regard and you probably heard it. A yogi was flying in the air. When a saint saw this, he feared that the beliefs of many people will become corrupted. They will think that the yogi is a saint who has reached Allāh *taʿālā*, whereas he is not even a believer. The saint removed his sandal and caused it to fly in the air. It went to the yogi and began striking him on his head. It continued doing this until it forced him to come down. When the people saw this, they realized that he was not a genuine saint.

The Sufis who were on the true path followed the Sunnat and encouraged those who frequented them to do the same. They said that the real supernatural act is to remain steadfast on the Sharīʿat. As for what the people consider to be supernatural feats, they disregarded them totally and did not allow their murīds to think anything of them. The author of *ʿAwārif* writes:

> Allāh *taʿālā* confers supernatural feats to some saints and not to others, while the latter are superior to the former. Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh* writes that some of the Auliyā' who performed many supernatural feats expressed the wish at the end of their lives: "If only so many supernatural feats were not performed through us."

> The saints in every era endeavoured – through their actions and words - to make the people realize that the Sharīʿat is the fundamental thing, and that they should not focus on kashf (exposition) and karāmāt (supernatural feats). If they make supernatural feats the criteria for saintliness, they will fall into severe deviation and misguidance. One saint said: "To fly in the air and walk on water is of no consequence." He expresses this in a most beautiful way. He says: "If you fly in the air you will be like a fly because it too flies in the air. And if you walk on water, you will be no better than straw and dry grass because these too float on water. If you want to become a man of Allāh, you will have to take your heart in your hand, i.e. set right your heart and rectify it so that you become a perfect human."

Did you see how beautifully our 'ulamā' and Sufis cleansed our minds of these things (supernatural feats and expositions) which have been misleading people in every era.

The difference between mesmerizing and karāmat

Similarly, a saint fully exposed the difference between mesmerism and karāmat through his actions. This is how he did it: There was a person who used to mesmerize people by dissolving while he was sitting in front of them. In other words, he would disappear right before their eyes. A few drops of water would be seen on the spot where he had been sitting. When one saint saw him do this, he thought to himself that this

man is going to lead astray many people through his mesmerism. He said to the people: "When this man turns into water, you must take a cloth and absorb those drops of water and absorb my drops as well. You must then smell both." The people did as they were told. When they inhaled the drops of the man, they got the stench of urine. When they inhaled the drops of the saint, they got the fragrance of perfume. He wanted to demonstrate to them that although the two appear to be the same, there is a world of difference in the reality of the two. Urine and rose water are both liquids yet one is impure and the other is pure. If there is an impurity on some clothes, it can be washed off with rose water and with urine. However, when it is washed with rose water, the garment will become clean and pure. When it is washed with urine, the impurity may be removed but it will not be purified.

The 'ulamā' have gone at length in speaking on these subjects, and they did it solely because of a Dīnī need. Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Sāḥib Pānīpattī *raḥimahullāh* has quoted a question and answer on this subject in *Irshād aṭ-Ṭālibīn*. He writes:

Someone may ask the question that if a supernatural feat is not a prerequisite for being a walī, how will we know that the person is in fact a walī?

Ḥaḍrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *raḥimahullāh* has given two answers.

First of all there is no need to find out the wilāyat of a walī. Wilāyat is a special affiliation with Allāh *ta'ālā* irrespective of whether anyone knows about it or not. Most Auliyā' are not even aware of their own wilāyat, what can be said of outsiders! They will see the fruits of their wilāyat after they die. Supernatural feats and miracles are actually needed by Prophets *'alayhimus*

salām. When they invite people towards Allāh *taʿālā*, they have to prove that they are Prophets. On the other hand, when Auliyā invite towards Allāh *taʿālā*, they invite to the Sharīʿat of the Prophet. Therefore, the miracle of the Prophet is enough for the walī when he invites. The ʿulamā' and jurists invite to the external Sharīʿat. The Auliyā' first invite their murīds to adopt the external Sharīʿat. After that they say to them: Spend your time in Allāh's remembrance so that His remembrance takes precedence and thoughts about anyone else do not enter the heart. There is absolutely no need for a karāmat for this invitation.

The second answer is that as a murīd continues experiencing changes in his condition, he observes and sees the karāmat of his shaykh in these changes. It is the shaykh who revived his dead heart and exposed so many things to him. The masses consider the reviving of dead people to be a great feat, whereas the elite say that reviving the soul and heart is of essence. Thus, in the sight of the murīd, the karāmat is there before him, while the masses have no need for it.[1]

Did you see what a beautiful explanation he gave! But people in general only understand the external things. This is what is of value to them. What do they know about the life of the heart and soul. Just think for yourselves that if the body comes to life, of what benefit is it? But if the heart comes to life, then that is the real thing. The heart coming to life means that Allāh's remembrance and love becomes embedded in it. The effect of this is that a man is alive even after he dies. A poet says:

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[1] *Tuḥfah as-Sālikīn*, p. 13.

> The heart which has come to life because of Allāh's love never dies. Eternity and continuity are recorded for it.

It is not easy to explain these subjects in our times. I started speaking on these things here in Mumbai, so I will explain them to you. If even two people understand what I say, I will conclude that my coming here was productive. The reason why it is difficult to understand these subjects is that this is an era of rejection. I do not know what people think is the criterion for saintliness, but the true scholars say that following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the criterion for saintliness.

Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says:

> O Saʿdī! Do not think that the path can be traversed without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Understand well that anyone who treads a path different from that of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never reach the destination.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* says:

> If a person hasn't found the path to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and has not chosen it, then even if he continues walking until the day of Resurrection, then let alone reaching Allāh *taʿālā,* he will not even get the dust of His path.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *Maktūbāt Quddūsīyyah*:

> By following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, every walī acquires a special

> position which another person cannot acquire. In fact, the latter cannot even understand it.

He says further on:

> If this is the case, no one should reject because rejecting the mashā'ikh results in deprivation. A rejecter cannot reach any rank. He experiences nothing but humiliation and disgrace.

Rejecting the Sufis causes deprivation

The author of *ʿAwārif* says that any person who rejects has gone astray and transgressed the limit. As for the one who affirms, then even if he does not reach the rank of the Auliyā', the affirmation which brought him into the service of the Auliyā' will convey him to the excellences of the Auliyā' and make him an ʿārif (a true recognizer) of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look at how much the senior scholars feared rejection. Despite this, rejection has become the most beloved occupation today. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* has written extensively on this subject. He says that it is the rule with worldly people that if a sweeper takes a drum and announces: "This is the order of the king…", then people accept it without any hesitation and complaint. No one will say to him: "You claim to bring this order from the king, where is the proof for it?" But if the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh say something about the Dīn to a person, he is not prepared to accept it. They will make countless objections against the person and ask him to present a proof for his saintliness. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says: "This is a most strange and absurd thing! People will accept something which is related to

this world with their eyes closed, but present countless excuses to accept something related to Dīn."

Note: Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* also wrote that if Muhammad ibn Zakarīyyā (who was a hakīm, a physician) were to speak about the effects and benefits of a certain herbal plant, people accept his words without hesitation. But when Hadrat Muhammad ibn ʿAbdillāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says something, people demand a proof and are not prepared to accept it. It is most unfortunate. (compiler)

Qādī Thanāʾullāh Sāhib Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Irshād at-Tālibīn* that these people say: If the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* were His beloved servants, they would have known the unseen. And because they do not have knowledge of worldly things, how can they ever have knowledge of the celestial world!? The hypocrites used to say similar things about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

As a result of their corrupt thoughts (objections and rejections), these people are deprived of the blessings of the friends of Allāh *taʿālā*. They haven't realized this much that Allāh *taʿālā* is most protective of His friends in the sense that He does not allow them to be occupied in anyone apart from Him.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says:

> I do not know the prescribed scales of poetry. Despite this, my poems are superior to the elixir of life. When I think of composing a couplet, my Beloved says to me: Do not focus your mind on anything apart from Me (I will put your couplet in order). All you have to do is focus entirely on Me.

Listen to this story in this regard:

Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Qaswā – the camel of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – walked away from the other camels and disappeared out of sight. The Muslims went in all directions looking for it. Zayd ibn Silah, a hypocrite, was sitting with a group of Anṣār which included ʿUbādah ibn Bishr ibn Waqs *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Huḍayr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He asked: "Where are these people running around?" Some people informed him that the camel of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is gone missing and they are searching for it. He said: "He is a Prophet of Allāh, why does Allāh *taʿālā* not inform him of the whereabouts of his camel?" The Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* were offended by this statement. They said: "O enemy of Allāh! May Allāh destroy you. You have become a hypocrite." Ḥaḍrat Usayd ibn Huḍayr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* went towards him and said: "By Allāh, I would have pierced your stomach with this spear, but the only thing which is stopping me is that I do not know if my action will meet Rasūlullāh's approval. Nonetheless, I will say this much to you: If such filth is filled in your self, why did you come with us in the first place?"

He replied: "I came for the sake of booty." He continued making other objectionable statements. The Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "May Allāh *taʿālā* make it such that we are never together and may He not gather us under the same shade. Had we known what is in your heart, we would never have brought you with us." He fled from there when he heard this. He feared they will kill him and seize all his possessions. He proceeded directly to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and sought his refuge. In the meantime, Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* came with divine revelation to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi*

wa sallam. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said (while the hypocrite was listening to him): "A man from the hypocrites has said that the camel of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is gone missing but Allāh *taʿālā* did not inform him of its whereabouts. By Allāh! Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informs of things which are far superior to a camel. None but Allāh *taʿālā* has knowledge of the unseen, but Allāh *taʿālā* has informed me of its whereabouts. It is in a certain mountain pass which is not far from where you are. Its bridle got stuck to a tree."

The people went to that spot, found the camel there and brought it back.

A hypocrite becomes a sincere Muslim

The hypocrite was quite remorseful when he saw this. He got up quickly and went to his companions while he was staggering. They were all sitting as they had been; no one had moved from his place. When he approached them they said: "Don't you dare come near us." He said: "I have something to say." Saying this, he went closer to them and said: "I take an oath in Allāh's name and ask you if any of you went to Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and informed him of anything about me?" They replied: "By Allāh, we did not even get up from our places." He said: "(It is most surprising) that what I said had remained here among us and was not conveyed to anyone else. Yet Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made mention of it." He added: "I had been in doubt about Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* up until now, but now I testify that Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the Messenger of Allāh, and you can conclude from this that I have become a Muslim today."

The people said to him: “Go to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and seek his pardon, and he will seek forgiveness for you.” He presented himself before Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, sought his forgiveness and acknowledged his sins.”

Although this hypocrite acknowledged his errant ways and became a Muslim, there have always been people making objections against the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and then against the Auliyā’ who came after them. They hurt these personalities but the latter remained patient, while those who made objections died without repenting.

When I was in my hometown, I advised the youngsters and said to them: “I am not asking you for anything else. All I want you to do is hold on to salāh and be particular about its performance. Then see if your condition changes or not.” And so, some people of a very nearby inhabitancy started performing salāh. But then they came to me and said that people were laughing and mocking at them. I said to them that they must exercise patience. At the same time I sent a message to the ringleader [who was mocking at these people] that there is now war between him and me until the day of Resurrection. Someone went and conveyed this message to him and he became scared. He came with another person to me and sought pardon. He came on foot. He said to his companion: “Because we are going to seek pardon, we will have to go on foot.”

When he came to me, I treated him with softness. He acknowledged and said: “It is correct that I mock at them but I am not the only one; there are many others.” I said: “You are right and I am aware of it. This has become the condition of Muslims today.” When Muslims will put an end to their occupations of

salāh, fasting, Allāh's remembrance, Qur'ān recitation, reading about the conditions of the saints, reading their statements and teachings, disregarding the Hereafter and so on; they will devote their time to backbiting, complaining about and maligning the seniors of Dīn. This will become their occupation and they will succumb to destruction, as his happening at present.

The saints have written that when the hearts become accustomed to turning away from Allāh *taʿālā*, backbiting about the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* becomes their inseparable condition. We learn from this that when a person's affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* is correct, speaking about the Auliyā' becomes beloved to him. If not, the opposite will happen. That is, he thoroughly enjoys backbiting them.

The condition in a certain village

ʿUlamā' used to go to the same village but the people would not even perform salāh. After I started frequenting that place, they began performing salāh. Subsequently, many of them became regular performers of tahajjud salāh. An incident occurred in that village. I sent a message to the people that I am astonished that such an incident occurred there. They apologized and said: "You already know what type of people we were. It is because of you that the people developed some concern for Dīn. It was you who came and taught us Dīn. Before this, no one came and spoke of such things. The people have immense faith and confidence in you, they did not have such faith and confidence for anyone before you." I said: "These people are right. When Dīn and its fundamentals will not be taught, how will people learn it on their own? They will neither know the Sharīʿat nor will they

recognize Wilāyat. They will not understand the greatness of salāh and fasting."

I will explain all these things to you people as well. I commenced with salāh, so now I am saying to you to commence with salāh and to be punctual about it. Salāh itself will demonstrate its rank to you. People in the past were very particular about salāh. Stories of even kings and their adherence to salāh will leave you astounded.

King Shujā'

Shāh Shujā' Kirmānī was a very religious king. He had resolved to get his daughter married to a religious man.

He was travelling to some place on one occasion and his gaze fell on a youngster who was performing salāh. The king was attracted to his salāh, so he stood there watching him. When he completed his salāh, he called him and asked: "If Shāh Kirmānī offers his daughter in marriage to you will you accept?" He replied: "Keep silent, what you are saying!? Do you want me to get beaten?" He said: "I am Shujā' Kirmānī. I am attracted to your salāh. I want to get you married to my daughter in exchange for your salāh."

The youngster fell silent. Shāh Shujā' confirmed the marriage of his daughter to the young man there and then.

I related this incident to demonstrate to you that salāh and fasting are not ordinary things. People accomplished much through them. They accumulated of the world and Dīn through them.

Note: We make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to enable us to develop full confidence in this teaching of Hadrat

Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, and to bless us with the good of Dīn and the world. Āmīn. (compiler)

The blessing of worship

Now listen to another incident:

A person went to a masjid and began performing salāh with the sole intention that people will consider him to be pious and he will be able to get married to the daughter of a wealthy man. But no one bothered about him. He thought to himself: I am striving so much just for this world, but no one is even asking about me. Why, then, should I not do all this for Allāh's sake. He rectified his intention after this. No sooner he rectified his intention, the following day a wealthy man offered his daughter in marriage to him by saying: "You seem to be a pious and righteous man, and an ardent worshipper and ascetic. I therefore want to offer my daughter in marriage to you."

Now that honesty had entered his heart, he said: "O people! listen! I am speaking frankly to you. I came to this masjid and adhered to worship in the hope that I will be able to marry the daughter of a wealthy man. As long as this was my intention, no one even bothered about me. When I received inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* and I rectified my intention, began worshipping Him solely for His pleasure and established a bond with Him, you too turned your attention to me. I am saying to you: Now that I have found Allāh *taʿālā*, I have no desire to establish any other relationship. So please excuse me."

A person refuses trusteeship of Bayt al-Maqdis

A person went into iʿtikāf (seclusion) so that he could become a trustee of Bayt al-Maqdis. No one even turned in his direction. With this corrupt intention, the man continued in his ostentatious worship but could not realize his objective. One day the thought crossed his mind that he is bearing so much for this worship but no one is bothering to even ask about him. Why, then, should he not engage in worship for Allāh *taʿālā* so that he could acquire His pleasure. No sooner he changed his intention, people came and requested him to become a trustee of Bayt al-Maqdis. He replied: "I had been waiting for the day when you people would come and offer me this trusteeship, but when you did not pay any attention to me, I emptied my heart and focussed on Allāh *taʿālā*. When I removed this thought from my heart, you people came to me to offer the trusteeship to me. Please excuse me and appoint someone else as a trustee."

You learnt from these incidents that there are differences in the actions of a sincere person and one who is ostentatious. An ostentatious person does the same action for the world while the world turns away from him. On the other hand, a sincere person does it for Allāh *taʿālā*, the creation turns to him and is desirous of him, while he has already acquired Allāh's pleasure.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us all with the treasure of sincerity, and protect us against ostentation and haughtiness. Āmīn.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DU'Ā

I received a phone call from my sons, Maulwī Saʿīd Aḥmad Nadwī and Maulwī ʿAzīz Aḥmad Qāsmī, who said that the situation in Syria is quite volatile. There is a need for special duʿā'. My heart became restless and anxious, and I commenced making duʿā'.

I am presenting an article of Maulānā Asrār al-Ḥaqq Sāḥib Qāsmī which sheds light on the situation.

Ever since the Syrian civil war commenced in 2011, over 300 000 lives were lost in a period of six years. About 17½ million people – which is more than half the total population – have been forced to leave their homes. Hundreds of thousands have left the country to seek asylum in different parts of the world where they are facing countless difficulties and hardships. The tyrant Syrian despot, Bashshār al-Asad, has resorted to chemical weapons which he rained down on the innocent children, women and old people of Aleppo, in the name of putting an end to the rebels. All sound-minded people of the world are left aghast by the atrocities. Tears are flowing from their eyes and they are left speechless. The bombs and chlorine gases did not only snatch away the lives of the residents of the city, rather thousands of poverty-stricken citizens have succumbed to their death. If they did not die immediately, they had to face their death in hospitals. In the city which has been reduced to ruins, the soldiers of Asad went on a wide scale rampage of raping women. The present catastrophe and tragedy must be putting to shame the souls of tyrants and despots like Hulaku Khān, Chengis Khān, Hitler and Mussolini.

Even if it may be out of a consideration to international demands, the eternal enemy of Islam and Muslims – the Israeli state – also labelled Asad a despot and tyrant after witnessing the devastation of Syrian cities. It added that by using chemical weapons against his own people, this despot must not only be removed from office but expelled from his country.

Maulānā Asrār al-Haqq Sāhib Qāsmī then related some terrifying incidents which let alone quoting here, we do not have the courage to read them.

During the same period, I was reading a most important article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which was written in 1966. It is most appropriate to the present situation. In it, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* provides a treatment for this pain. My heart desires to include it at the end of volume two of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* so that the Muslim community may be immediately directed towards this treatment. Read it attentively, and adopt the treatment and medication. He said:

Listen! The Muslims were controlling the entire world. There was no power to combat them. The Christians were subjugated with the exception of just one Christian king who wielded his authority. On one occasion, the caliph left the capital with only 20 000 soldiers when the Christian king suddenly advanced with an army of 100 000. When the caliph spoke about making peace with him, he replied with all his pride and haughtiness: "Leave aside all talks of peace. We will only talk when we reach the capital." The caliph consulted the ʿulamā'. One senior ʿālim said: "You are our leader. You must lead us in the jumuʿah salāh, after which we will all turn to Allāh *taʿālā* and make duʿā' to Him. We have an army of 20 000 and a Hadīth states that 12 000 Muslims will not be

defeated on account of being lesser in number. Fight the enemy and Allāh *taʿālā* will help us."

The caliph led the people in the jumuʿah salāh. He then made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* with such devotion and submission that all the soldiers were left sobbing. A horse was prepared for the caliph. After the duʿā', he mounted his horse and advanced towards the enemy. He was at the front while his army followed. The Muslims attacked with such force that the enemy was left scattered. The Christian king was captured and the Muslims received immense booty.

Did you see! An army of just 20 000 vanquished an enemy of 100 000. This was solely the blessing of the duʿā'. Even today the Muslims are not less in number. They must turn to Allāh *taʿālā* and cry and beg before Him. His mercy can be showered on them today as well.

Note: If only the Muslims of today could develop firm faith and total reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. If they can do this, they will succeed. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

When the torments of the Quraysh of Makkah had reached the peak and they also refused the Muslims to emigrate to Madīnah Munawwarah, the Muslims resorted to duʿā'. The Qur'ān relates the duʿā' which they made:

رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا ۚ وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۙ وَّاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ نَصِيْرًا

O our Lord! Remove us from this village whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us, from You, a supporter, and appoint for us, from You, a helper."[1]

You must then see how Allāh *taʿālā* sends His help from the unseen as He helped those who were before you. You should at least cry and beg before Allāh *taʿālā* as your predecessors did. Allāh *taʿālā* sent a magnificent bounty for us Muslims – when we are worried and helpless, we must make duʿā' to Him.

There is no battle before which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not make duʿā'. When he experienced any painful situation, he used to resort to duʿā'.

Muslims can never be victorious through their strength alone. They have to make duʿā'. When the Muslims looked at their large numbers, they had to suffer defeat. On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud, it was Rasūlullāh's view to remain within Madīnah and face the enemy. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* said: "We are big in number. We will go out and stop the enemy." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* put on his weapons and went out, but the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* thought to themselves that since Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was inclined to remain in Madīnah, we should not have expressed a view contrary to his. They expressed these thoughts to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but he said that once a Prophet wears his weapons, it is not permissible for him to remove them. Subsequently, the Muslims had to suffer some loss.

On the occasion of the Battle of Hunayn, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* thought about their large number,

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 75.

so they had to suffer an initial setback, although they were victorious after that. We learn from this that whenever Muslims left aside their reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and focused on the means, they suffered defeat. The means are nothing; Muslims have to focus on Allāh *taʿālā*.

Even now we have immense treasures – we have Allāh's Book and we have the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Even if we are nothing, we can accomplish a lot through Allāh's help.

I feel that the way forward for Muslims is to turn to Allāh *taʿālā* with honesty and sincerity, and to become true believers. Furthermore, we must have full conviction in the promises which Allāh *taʿālā* made in favour of the believers. Now is not the time to suffice with listening to superficial lectures. There is a need to listen to lectures for the sake of īmān and actions. Can there be a worse situation than this? If Muslims still do not turn towards good actions, when will they ever do?

Note: The Muslims are presently (2016) faced with a far worse situation than what Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* is making reference to (1966). Muslims are suffering everywhere. The situation in places like Egypt and Syria is getting from bad to worse. This is why we all have to make special duʿā', give in charity, and be particular about good actions. There is also a need to pay special attention to reading the *qunūt-e-nāzilah*. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* says further:

Muslims are suffering everywhere. Neither is their wealth, honour, dignity nor their life safe. Even their masājid are being desecrated. People are speaking out

against their pious predecessors. They are seeing their own humiliation and degradation daily. They are also crying out and screaming out of pain. But it is most unfortunate that they are not focussing on the causes of their destruction. They are not searching for the correct path from the Qur'ān – Allāh's Book – which is in their homes and which is a guide for eternity. If the Muslims study the Qur'ān and compare their condition with the reasons for the destruction of past nations, they will realize that their condition is the same as that of nations of the past.

Note: We have to read the prescribed morning and evening du'ā's with full sincerity. For example:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الَّذِيْ لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

On one special occasion, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* emphasised reading the du'ā' of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *'alayhis salām* and the following du'ā':

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ

O our Lord! Make us not a trial for the unbelievers. And forgive us, O our Lord! You alone are mighty, wise.[1]

In fact, he used to emphasise this in every assembly.

At this point I would like to take the good fortune of quoting the following couplets of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh*:

> Become a cloud of mercy and pervade the entire world. This world is burning, rain

[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 4-5.

down on it and extinguish its fire. Display the character of the Prophet and embrace strangers as well.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise on the teachings of the saints. Āmīn.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1438 A.H.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE[1]

There has been a constant battle between knowledge and ignorance. It was on the basis of knowledge and ignorance that battles were fought between the knowledgeable and the ignorant. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are the bearers of knowledge, while the rejecters have been the flag bearers of ignorance. The Prophets' sole objective was to proliferate knowledge. They were given this responsibility by Allāh *taʿālā*, and so, they carried it out. The unbelievers - acting under the dictates of their carnal self – opposed them. Their own ignorance prevented them from giving up their ancestral ignorance, self-worship and ignorant customs. The conflict between knowledge and ignorance sometimes took a very dangerous turn. If you were to think about it, you will find that this conflict always existed in this world; not only with the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* but with their deputies as well. The thing which is intrinsic to the original will be intrinsic to the deputy as well.

If you were to ponder about it, you will notice that even though some people have been Muslims for centuries, when the 'ulamā' present the Sharīʿat to them, they become antagonistic towards them. They display their total ignorance in their treatment of the 'ulamā'. This is why very few people are free from this conflict.

We conclude from this that the propagation of knowledge is no easy task. People of every era have

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[1] A very important article which ought to be studied carefully by 'ulamā'. (compiler)

been saying the same thing. The author of *Mirqāt* writes:

في شرح السنة عن الثوري ما أعلم اليوم شيئا أفضل من طلب العلم، قيل ليس لهم نية، قال طلبهم له نية، أي سببها، ولذا قال بعضهم: طلبنا العلم لغير الله فأبى أن يكون إلا لله.

The following statement of Hadrat Sufyān ath-Thaurī rahimahullāh is quoted in Sharh as-Sunnah: "At present, I do not know of anything which is superior to seeking knowledge." Someone said to him: "The intention of students is not correct." He replied: "Their mere seeking of knowledge is a good intention." In other words, it is the cause of the intention. This is why someone said: "We sought knowledge for reasons other than Allāh, but knowledge ensured that it is solely for Allāh." (It refused to be for any reason other than Allāh).

وعن الشافعي طلب العلم أفضل من الصلوة النافلة.

Hadrat Imām Shāfi'ī rahimahullāh said: Seeking knowledge is superior to optional salāh.

This clearly demonstrates the superiority of knowledge. Another reason for its superiority is that the pain and striving needed for its acquisition are more than the action itself. Acquisition of knowledge is essential because its benefit is more.

Nowadays people think that knowledge is easy while action is difficult. You know that the propagation, proliferation, teaching and acquiring of knowledge have been extremely difficult in every era. This is why I can frankly announce that knowledge is difficult while acting on it is easy. There is more mental

striving and fatigue in the acquisition of knowledge, and mental fatigue is not removed easily. This is why everyone cannot bear this strain. On the other hand, there is no mental fatigue in actions. It is only a physical fatigue which disappears quickly. This is why it is easy.

Yes, if enjoyment develops in seeking knowledge, it becomes easy. The same can be said of worship. When a person enjoys it, it becomes easy for him.

Action is the result of correct knowledge. Correct knowledge certainly brings about action. If any knowledge does not produce action, it is customary knowledge which does not deserve any consideration. Correct knowledge invariably results in action. Action is preceded by knowledge. If there is a deficiency in action, one can conclude that there is a deficiency in the fundamental, i.e. in knowledge. After all, action is a corollary of knowledge. If knowledge is complete, so will the action. If knowledge is deficient, so will be the action. In short, the level of action will be reciprocal to the level of knowledge. This is why I said that action is easy while knowledge is difficult. Observe the following example which demonstrates how knowledge is difficult while action is easy.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, all those who are sitting here at the moment are people of action. They have performed the ishrāq salāh and come here. There may also be those who performed tahajjud salāh. However, there will be very few who will be understanding this lecture of mine. If you went outside and asked them: "What did he (Hadrat) say?" I don't think there will be anyone who will be able to repeat my lecture correctly. This is because it is difficult to preserve knowledge. Preserving knowledge, understanding it, enabling others to

understand and conveying it correctly requires experience and constant practice.

The disharmony which we presently see in the madāris is essentially a battle between knowledge and ignorance. I made reference to this previously. This is why students too are not particularly affected by knowledge.

The favour of knowledge is not any less than the favour of wealth

The favour of knowledge is not any less than the favour of wealth. When wealth is given to a person, he becomes indebted. However, we cannot understand how a student does not accept the favour of knowledge. We find people according the same respect to their teachers as they do to the spiritual mentors. This is because they acquired knowledge from them, and there is no wealth greater than knowledge. Knowledge has turned them into their slaves. Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

من علمني حرفا صيّرني عبدا.

The one who teaches me a single letter turns me into his slave.

This is my proof for what I said.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *raḥimahullāh* says with reference to knowledge and the people of knowledge:

إن الله سبحانه شرف أهل العلم ورفع أقدارهم وعظم مقدارهم ودل على ذلك الكتاب والسنة والإجماع، بل قد اتفق العقلاء على فضيلة

العلم وأهله وأنهم المستحقون شرف المنازل، وهو مما لا ينازع فيه عاقل.[1]

Allāh taʿālā honoured the people of knowledge, raised their value and elevated their ranks. The Qur'ān, Sunnah and Ijmāʿ - all – make reference to it. In fact, the intelligentsia concur on the superiority of knowledge and those who possess it. They are certainly eligible for the noble ranks regarding which no intelligent person can dispute.

I feel it appropriate to present a few Aḥādīth on the virtues of knowledge.

عن أبي هريرة أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: أفضل الصدقة أن يتعلم المرء المسلم علما ثم يعلمه أخاه المسلم.[2]

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurayrah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: The most superior form of charity is for a person to learn something and then teach it to his Muslim brother.

عَنْ أَيُّوْبَ بْنِ مُوْسَى عَنْ أَبِيْهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدَهُ مِنْ نَحْلٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ.[3]

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "No parent gave his children anything better than sound etiquette (in other words, Islamic knowledge)."

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ٣٢٠.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٢، ص ٣٧.

[3] سنن الترمذي: ص ٣، ٥٠٣، ١٩٥٢. السنن الكبرى للبيهقي: ٣: ٨٤.

قال الشامي وروى البيهقي عن ابن عمر ما عبد الله بشيء أفضل من فقه في دين.

ʿAllāmah Shāmī raḥimahullāh said that al-Bayhaqī narrated from Ḥaḍrat Ibn ʿUmar raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu who said: No one worshipped Allāh taʿālā in a way better than by deep understanding of Dīn.

وفي البزازية طلب العلم والفقه إذا صحت النية أفضل من جميع أعمال البر. وكذا الاشتغال بزيادة العلم إذا صحت النية لأنه أعم نفعا لكن بشرط أن لا يدخل النقصان في فرائضه.

It is stated in al-Bazzāzīyyah that seeking knowledge and fiqh is superior to all good actions provided the intention is correct. The same can be said with regard to increasing one's knowledge if the intention is correct. The reason for this is that knowledge has a more all-embracing benefit. However, the precondition is that there must be no shortcoming in carrying out obligatory actions.

وصحة النية أن يقصد بها وجه الله تعالى لا يطلب المال والجاه.

Correctness of intention means that the person must desire Allāh's pleasure and not seek wealth and position.

It is farḍ-e-ʿayn to learn the essentials of fiqh

ولو أراد الخروخ من الجهل ومنفعة الخلق وإحياء العلم فقيل تصح نيته أيضا. من تعلم بعض القرآن ووجد فراغا فالأفضل الاشتغال

بالفقه لأن حفظ القرآن فرض كفاية وتعلم ما لا بد من الفقه فرض عين.

If a person has the intention of coming out of ignorance, benefiting the creation and reviving knowledge, it will be said that his intention is also correct. When a person learns a portion of the Qur'ān and finds the spare time, then it will be preferable for him to occupy himself with fiqh because memorization of the Qur'ān is farḍ-e-kifāyah while learning the essential rules of fiqh is farḍ-e-ʿayn.

قال في الخزانة وجميع الفقه لا بد منه. قال في المناقب عمل محمد بن الحسن مأتي ألف مسئلا في الحلال والحرام لا بد للناس من حفظها.[1]

It is stated in al-Khazānah that it is essential to learn all aspects of fiqh. It is said in al-Manāqib that Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan wrote 200 000 rules related to ḥalāl and ḥarām. It is essential for people to learn them.

Another Ḥadīth is now related:

قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ، لَأَنْ تَغْدُوَ فَتُعَلِّمَ آيَةً مِنْ كِتَابِ اللهِ خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ مِائَةَ رَكْعَةٍ. وَلَأَنْ تَغْدُوَ فَتُعَلِّمَ بَابًا مِنَ الْعِلْمِ – عُمِلَ بِهِ أَوْ لَمْ يُعْمَلْ – خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ أَلْفَ رَكْعَةٍ.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: O Abū Dharr! Learning a single verse of the Qur'ān is better for you than performing 100 rakʿats of [optional] ṣalāh. If you go to learn just one chapter of [Islamic]

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[1] الشامي: ج ٥، ص ٢٧٠.

knowledge – whether you practise on it or not – is better for you than performing 1 000 rakʿats of [optional] salāh.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* established two levels of learning in this Hadīth. One is to learn a verse of the Qur'ān. This is necessary because the preservation of the Qur'ān is necessary. Allāh *taʿālā* has taken the responsibility for it and makes reference to it as follows:

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهُ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ

It is We Ourselves who revealed this admonition and We are its protectors.[1]

Furthermore, salāh is dependent on the recitation of the Qur'ān. Learning the Qur'ān thus becomes a department of knowledge and it has its own virtue. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* encouraged towards it by saying that learning a single verse is superior to 100 rakʿats of optional salāh. However, the sciences and injunctions which are derived from these verses are far more superior to memorizing the Qur'ān. This is because these sciences and injunctions are the foundations of Dīn. Knowledge of the salient features of Dīn are related to them. Occupying one's self in them is therefore superior. Learning one chapter of knowledge is superior to 100 rakʿats of optional salāh so that people develop an interest in learning the sciences of the Qur'ān and they pay more attention to it.

The difference in the two levels was not clearly understood from the words "If you go to learn just

[1] Sūrah al-Hijr, 15: 9.

one chapter of [Islamic] knowledge…" We therefore referred to the commentaries and explanations to see what the commentators say about it, and how they differentiate the two levels. However, we could not find a complete elucidation in any book. Incidentally, I looked at *ash-Shāmī* today and came across an exceptional investigation on the subject of backbiting. It fully explains the rules and regulations related to backbiting, and the meaning of the present Ḥadīth becomes totally clear.

Take the following instruction of Allāh *taʿālā* as an example:

وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا

Do not backbite each other.

There are two levels of learning this verse of the Qur'ān. One is you memorize it. This is a branch of knowledge in itself. For it, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that it is superior to 100 rakʿats of optional ṣalāh. Then we come to actually understanding the theme of this verse and what backbiting means. What are its limits? When is it permissible? When is it not? What are the different types of backbiting? To learn the detailed rulings in this regard is a chapter of knowledge in itself. Mere memorizing of the verse will not suffice for this. Rather, a person will have to understand its meaning, refer to the writings of the jurists and see what their verdicts are in this regard.

You people must have known this verse for a long time but you probably know nothing about the detailed injunctions of backbiting and what it really means. After reading what ʿAllāmah Shāmī *raḥimahullāh* wrote, a new chapter of knowledge has

been opened and we learnt that understanding a verse is superior to memorizing it. This is why the reward for the former is multiplied by ten.

You can understand the following verse in the same way. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ

Establish salāh and pay zakāh.

If you memorize this verse, you would have acquired some knowledge and it equals 100 rakʿats of optional salāh. However, there is another knowledge related to it. That is, the pillars of salāh and zakāh, the prerequisites, the obligatory actions, etc. You learnt and memorized all these. You obviously bore many difficulties in learning all this. The reward is therefore more than what you would receive for only memorizing it. It is on this basis that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that it is superior to 1 000 rakʿats of optional salāh.

The explanation of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* is now quoted with its translation:

قال المحشي: الحديث يدل على أن تعلم العلم خير من كثرة الأعمال لأن تعلم آية خير من مائة ركعة، ولهذا قال صلى الله عليه وسلم العلماء ورثة الأنبياء. وقال أحمد الجامي للشيخ المودود الجستي الصوفي الجاهل مسخرة للشياطين فاذهب تعلم العلم أولا ثم أرشد الناس إلى سبيل الرشاد كما كان آباءك يفعلون.

This Hadīth shows that acquiring knowledge is superior to many actions. This is because learning a

single verse is superior to 100 rakʿats of salāh. This is why Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets." Ahmad al-Jāmī said to Shaykh al-Maudūd al-Chishtī: "An ignorant Sufi is a toy in the hands of the devils. You should therefore go and acquire knowledge first and then guide people towards the right path as your forefathers had been doing."

ودل الحديث أيضا على أن العالم إن لم يعمل بعلمه بحيث جاءه الموت بغتة أو اشتغل في تعليم الناس بحيث فاته الأعمال جوزي بمثل ما جوزي العامل.

This Hadīth also makes reference to the fact that if a scholar could not practise on his knowledge and death comes upon him suddenly, or he was so immersed in teaching people that he left out many (optional) good actions, then he will be rewarded with the same reward given to the one who was doing those good actions.

ولذا قال فقهاؤنا إن العالم إذا صار مرجعا للناس وسعه ترك السنن الرواتب ولم يجز له أن يخرج إلى الغزوة والجهاد إذا لم يكن في البلد عالم غيره.

This is why our jurists say that if a scholar becomes a reverting point for the masses, he is given the concession of leaving out the supererogatory exercises of devotion. And it is not permissible for him to go out in jihād if there is no other scholar in his town.

وفي الحديث دليل أيضا على أن تعلم العلم خير من تعلم القرآن إذا قرأ ما يصح به الصلوة بعشرة درجة، ولذا قال الفقهاء الحنفية يؤم القوم أقرأهم.[1]

In this Hadīth there is also proof that learning knowledge is superior to learning the Qur'ān by ten times provided the person already knows that amount of the Qur'ān with which salāh is valid. This is why our Hanafī jurists say that (the one who has most knowledge of the Qur'ān should lead the people in salāh) and then the one who reads the best.

Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* stated that when a scholar is a reverting point for the masses, he is given the concession of leaving out the supererogatory practices of devotion. This does not apply to leaving out all the Sunan. Rather, the Sunnat of fajr is excluded. Furthermore, leaving out the others will only be permitted when he has such a large number of students and people posing questions to him that he has no time to do anything else. Leaving out the Sunnat of fajr and congregational salāh will not be permitted even in such a situation. The statements of the jurists are now presented:

في البحر الرائق وفي النهاية قال مشائخنا العالم إذا صار مرجعا في الفتوى يجوز له ترك سائر السنن لحاجة الناس إلى فتواه إلا سنة

[1] إنجاح الحاجة حاشية ابن ماجه: ٢٠.

الفجر.[1] وفي در المختار ولا يجوز تركها لعالم صار مرجعا في الفتاوى بخلاف باقي السنن.

قال الشامي (قوله فله تركها الخ) الظاهر أن معناه أنه يترك وقت اشتغاله بالإفتاء لأجل حاجة الناس المجتمعين عليه وينبغي أن يصليها إذا فرغ في الوقت، وظاهر التفرقة بين سنة الفجر وغيرها أنه ليس له ترك الجماعة لأنها من الشعائر فهي آكد من سنة الفجر، ولذا يتركها لو خاف فوت الجماعة، وأفاد أنه ينبغي أن يكون القاضي وطالب العلم كذلك لا سيما المدرس نظر بخلاف الطالب إذا خاف فوت المدرس أو بعضه تأمل.[2]

Note: This is an immensely beneficial and comprehensive quotation. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* for having drawn our attention to many such texts. Āmīn. (compiler)

Now that you have understood the nobility and virtue of knowledge, you must understand that knowledge is to be obtained solely from those who possess it. Every person is not of a level whereby knowledge could be acquired from him.

ʿAllāmah Hāfiz Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṭī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *Isʿāf al-Mubaṭṭa'*:

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[1] البحر الرائق: ج ٢، ص ٥١. وهكذا في الفتاوى العالمكيرية: ج ١، ص ٨٨.

[2] الشامي: ج ١، ص ٤٥٤.

قال معن بن عيسى كان مالك يقول لا يؤخذ العلم من أربعة، ويؤخذ من سوى ذلك. لا يؤخذ من سفيه، ولا يؤخذ من صاحب هوى يدعو الناس إلى هواه، ولا من كذاب يكذب في أحاديث الناس وإن كان لا يتهم على أحاديث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، ولا من شيخ له فضل وصلاح وعبادة إذا كان لا يعرف ما يحدث.

Maʿn ibn ʿĪsā raḥimahullāh said that Imām Mālik raḥimahullāh used to say: Knowledge should not be acquired from four types of people, but it could be acquired from others. (1) A foolish person. (2) A person who follows his desires and invites people towards them. (3) A liar who speaks lies about the conversations of people even if he is not accused of speaking lies against the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. (4) An old man who does not know what he is saying even if he is a man of virtue, rectitude and worship.

Look at the general principle which Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* laid down as regards from whom you should acquire knowledge and from whom you should not.

The greatness of Ḥaḍrat Ibn Shihāb

During the era of Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* there were many personalities who used to relate the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Despite this, Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* said that knowledge of Ḥadīth should not be acquired from all and sundry. Rather, it should be acquired from specific people. The following is stated in *Isʿāf al-Mubaṭṭa'*:

قال إسماعيل بن أبي أويس سمعت خالي مالكا يقول: إن هذا العلم دين فانظروا عمن تأخذوا دينكم. لقد أدركت سبعين ممن يقول قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عند هذا الأساطين. فما أخذت عنهم شيئا وإن أحدهم لو ائتمن على بيت مال لكان به أمينا لأنهم لم يكونوا من أهل هذا الشأن. فقدم علينا ابن شهاب فكنا نزدحم على بابه.

Ismāʻīl ibn Abī Uways said: I heard my uncle, Imām Mālik raḥimahullāh, saying: This knowledge (of the Qur'ān and Sunnat) is Dīn. You should therefore check carefully from whom you are acquiring your Dīn. I came across 70 such persons who were at these pillars (of Masjid-e-Nabawī) saying: 'Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam said…' but I did not take anything from them (even though their trustworthiness was of such a level) that if any of them was entrusted with the public treasury he would have proved to be trustworthy (he would not have acted treacherously in the least). However, I did not take knowledge from them because they were not of this lofty field. Yes, when Ibn Shihāb arrived, we used to crowd at his door.

Did you see what Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* said!? He came across 70 scholars relating Aḥādīth near the pillars of Masjid-e-Nabawī but he did not take knowledge from them because the greatness of knowledge is much higher; every person cannot be worthy of it. Every person cannot be relied upon to convey exactly the Dīn which Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam* came with. It requires deep understanding and a strong memory. In addition to

this, the person must possess the qualities of justice and integrity. Very few people possess these qualities collectively. Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* observed trustworthiness in them in the sense that if they were entrusted with the public treasury, they would certainly prove their trustworthiness and would not act treacherously at all. However, he did not trust them to relate Ahādīth correctly.

I don't think Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* came to this view from the very beginning. Rather, he must have presented himself before them and attended their classes. When he realized the absence of deep understanding in them, he concluded that they were not worthy enough for the taking of knowledge from them. This, notwithstanding the fact that they were righteous, honest and ardent worshippers.

The fact of the matter is that Allāh *taʿālā* had willed for Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* to become a leader and an Imām, and for his madh-hab to remain until the day of Resurrection. He needed teachers who combined the sciences of Hadīth and fiqh, and who had the ability to derive and extract rulings from Ahādīth. This is why he was not fully satisfied with every teacher. Ibn Shihāb *rahimahullāh* eventually arrived on the scene. He was a man who combined several sciences. He was a master of Hadīth and fiqh. Imām Mālik's thirst was quenched at his stream and he acquired knowledge from him.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* continues:

Look at the virtue and excellence of Ibn Shihāb *rahimahullāh*! It was so well-accepted that there used to be crowds of students at his door.

Note: We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to produce such scholars of virtue and excellence from whom the

people of this world can learn the sciences and knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and be showered by their blessings. Āmīn. (compiler)

Is everyone qualified today?

Just ponder! There were many people narrating Ḥadīth in the time of Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh*, but there were a select few who were fully qualified for it. Now what do you think about today? Is everyone qualified and worthy? Is there no one who is not qualified? Can you go and acquire knowledge from anyone you like without any prerequisites?

Knowledge is not spread like this in the world. It has to be sifted. There have to be tests and examinations. Those who are worthy and qualified are appointed as teachers and lecturers. Why, then, are no rules and principles applied when it comes to knowledge of Dīn? Whereas you ought to be even more cautious in Dīnī knowledge. After all, Imām Mālik *raḥimahullāh* said that this knowledge is Dīn in itself. You should therefore check from whom you are acquiring this knowledge.

The fact of the matter is that a student will turn out to be like his teacher. If a teacher is a fastidious scholar, his students will also be somewhat like him. Furthermore, the religiosity, piety and purity of the teacher certainly have an effect on his students. You should therefore acquire knowledge from a fully qualified and pious teacher. Study under a person who is worthy. Every Tom, Dick and Harry is not qualified and worthy.

In line with the above theme, I quote a text from *al-I'tiṣām* which is a comprehensive book written by ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī Garnāṭī *raḥimahullāh*.

قال مالك بن أنس: بكى ربيع يوما بكاء شديدا، فقيل له: مصيبة نزلت بك؟ فقال: لا. ولكن استفتي من لا علم عنده.[1]

Hadrat Mālik ibn Anas rahimahullāh relates: Hadrat Rabīʿ cried profusely one day. When someone asked him if a severe calamity had befallen him, he replied: "No. Rather, a question has been posed to a person who has no knowledge."

Note: This is quite common nowadays. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The origin of bid'at

Imām Rabīʿah *rahimahullāh* cried so profusely that people assumed that a major calamity had befallen him. There is no doubt that when a pious scholar has so much of concern for Dīn, then there can be no worse calamity for him. This is why he thought that qualified scholars no longer existed. If there were, people would not ask for fatwās from unqualified and unworthy people who would then give answers on the basis of their own assumptions and views. They would not refer to the authentic and reliable reference books. They would cast aside the Qur'ān and Sunnat. The inevitable consequence of this will be the proliferation and spread of misguidance and innovations. The fact of the matter is that if the ignoramuses assume the posts of the 'ulamā', then this is in itself a bidʿat. In fact, it is the source of all innovations. Understand this well.

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٣.

وفي البخاري عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: قبل الساعة سنون خداعا يصدق فيهن الكاذب ويكذب فيهن الصادق، ويخون فيهن الأمين ويؤتمن الخائن، وينطق فيهن الرويبضة، قالوا هو الرجل التافه الحقير ينطق في أمور العامة كأنه ليس بأهل أن يتكلم في أمور العامة فيتكلم.[1]

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurayrah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Before the Resurrection there will be some years of deceit. The liar will be trusted while the honest one will be belied. The trustworthy person will be considered treacherous while the treacherous one will be trusted. The ignoble and despicable person will speak on matters related to the masses, as though there is no one else to speak about them, so he will speak.

Knowledge to unworthy people is destructive

وعن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه قال قد علمت من يهلك الناس إذا جاء الفقه من قبل الصغير استعصى عليه الكبير، وإذا جاء الفقه من قبل الكبير تابعه الصغير فاهتديا.[2]

Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "I know who will destroy people." He then said: "When knowledge of Dīn comes from a junior, it will weigh heavily on the seniors. When it comes from the

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

[2] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

seniors, the juniors will follow them. In this way, both will be guided."

We learn from this that when understanding of Dīn goes away to the juniors, it will weigh heavily on the seniors and they will feel it below them to learn it. People will be destroyed in this way. But when seniors are people of knowledge and understanding, the juniors will obey and follow them. In this way, both will be guided.

قال ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه: لا يزال الناس بخير ما أخذوا العلم من أكابرهم، فإذا أخذه عن أصاغرهم وشرارهم هلكوا.[1]

Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: People will remain on goodness as long as they acquire knowledge from their seniors. Once they acquire it from their juniors and mischief makers, they will be destroyed.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *raḥimahullāh* goes on to write that the ʿulamā' differ with regard to what Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* meant when he mentioned juniors. Ibn Mubārak *raḥimahullāh* said that it refers to the people of bidʿat. This is correct because the people of bidʿat are deficient in knowledge and are juniors in it. The fact of the matter is that a person commits a bidʿat because of his deficiency in knowledge. (In other words, if he was an expert in knowledge he would not even have any inclination towards bidʿat). Bājī *raḥimahullāh* said that juniors refer to those who have no knowledge at all. He also said that Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to consult youngsters. His consultative assembly consisted of those who

[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

were old and young. It is also possible that the word "juniors" refers to those who are of no value and status. And a person loses his value and status when he discards Dīn and integrity. On the other hand, when a person possesses Dīn and integrity, his status increases.

You can understand from the above that an ʿālim should not impart knowledge to all and sundry. Rather, it must be to the one who is worthy of it, who is noble and who has high aspirations. Ever since these points were not taken into consideration and knowledge of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth was imparted to everyone without distinction, the entire work of Dīn became spoilt and messed up. Ignoble people acquired incomplete knowledge and destroyed Dīn. They are neither worthy of doing any work nor do they allow worthy people to carry it out. They are like the desert which neither absorbs water nor provides it to others. The only benefit which they derive from their sub-standard knowledge is that they don the garb of the 'ulamā' and include themselves among them; and nothing else. Their main objective is to be addressed as "Maulānā". Once they realize this objective, they become smug with it. How will Dīn be served by such contemptible and apathetic people!? How will such a noble thing like knowledge be preserved by them? Imparting knowledge to such people is synonymous to giving a sword to thieves and hijackers. In fact, it is worse than that.

The following is stated in *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

قال عيسى عليه الصلوة والسلام: لا تعلقوا الجواهر في أعناق الخنازير فإن الحكمة خير من الجواهر ومن كرهها فهو شر من الخنازير.

ولذلك قيل كل لكل عبد بمعيار عقله وزن له بميزان فهمه حتى تسلم منه وينتفع بك والا وقع الإنكار لتفاوت المعيار.

Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām said: Do not hang jewels around the necks of pigs because knowledge is superior to jewels. The one who dislikes it is worse than a pig.

This is why it is said: Measure each person according to his intellect and give him after weighing him according to his understanding. You must do this so that you are safe from him and he benefits from you. If not, it will result in rejection because of a difference in standards.

Note: This is a point of real wisdom. When you address a person according to his understanding and intelligence, he will benefit. If you speak to him in a manner which is beyond his capabilities and understanding, he will not understand you. This will cause him to reject because as the saying goes: "People are enemies of what they do not know." (compiler)

The following is stated in *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

وسئل بعض العلماء عن شيء فلم يجب. فقال السائل: أما سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: من كتم علما نافعا جاء ملجما يوم القيامة من نار. فقال: أترك اللجام واذهب فإن جاء من يفقه وكتمته فيلجمني، فقد قال الله تعالى: ولا تؤتوا السفهاء أموالكم تنبيها على أن حفظ العلم ممن يفسده ويضره أولى، وليس الظلم في إعطاء غير المستحق بأقل من الظلم في منع المستحق.

An ʿālim was asked about a certain ruling but he did not give an answer. The questioner said to him: "Did you not hear Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam saying: 'The person who conceals beneficial knowledge will come on the day of Resurrection bridled with a bridle of fire'?" The ʿālim replied: "Leave the bridle here and go. When a person of sound understanding comes to me and I still conceal knowledge from him, he may bridle me. Because Allāh taʿālā says: 'Do not give your wealth to foolish people.' In it is a warning that knowledge has more right to be safeguarded from a person who will spoil it and cause harm to it. The wrong in giving knowledge to someone who is not worthy of it is not any less than refusing to give it to the one who is worthy of it."

Look at the beautiful reply given by this scholar: If I conceal knowledge from a man of sound understanding, then in the light of this Hadīth I will be eligible for that bridle of fire. As for you, you cannot even understand what I have to say. Of what benefit, then, is there in imparting it to you. In fact, imparting it to you will entail destroying knowledge and wronging it.

Glory to Allāh! He supported his statement with a verse of the Qur'ān. We are prohibited from handing over wealth to orphans until they are of sound understanding. Knowledge is more worthy of protection and preservation. The prohibition of giving it to unworthy people is therefore more emphasised.

The preservation of knowledge

It is essential to preserve knowledge. When knowledge remains, the honour and dignity of the people of knowledge will remain. If not, the people of knowledge will become disgraced and downtrodden.

The only way of preserving it is to keep it away from unworthy people. The following is stated in *Sunan Ibn Mājah*:

عن ابن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال: لو أن أهل العلم صانوا العلم ووضعوه عند أهله لسادوا به أهل زمانهم لكنهم بذلوه لأهل الدنيا لينالوا به من دنياهم فهانوا عليهم.[1]

Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: Had the people of knowledge preserved knowledge and given it to those who were worthy of it, they would have ruled over the people of their time through it. Unfortunately, they gave it to worldly people so that they may acquire of their material possessions. Consequently, they became disgraced and downtrodden by the worldly people.

Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* makes reference to excellent points. He encourages the ʿulamā' towards the preservation of knowledge and shows them how to preserve it. That is, for it to be imparted to those who are worthy of it. He states further that as long as ʿulamā' preserve their knowledge, their leadership will remain intact. If not, it will cease and they will be humiliated and disgraced. If an ʿālim's student is unworthy and materialistic, then instead of being a source of pride for the ʿālim, he will cause his disgrace. An ʿālim occupies a certain rank. However, the popularity of his knowledge and virtue in this world is dependent on worthy students who spread out to different corners of the world and become engrossed in the

[1] سنن ابن ماجه: ۴۳.

work of Dīn. This results in praises for his teacher, all sections of the community speak highly of him, his popularity spreads far and wide, and he becomes beloved and appreciated in the sight of people. They then start following him and he becomes their leader.

The way to preserve knowledge

The annotator to *Sunan Ibn Mājah* states that the manner of preserving knowledge is for 'ulamā' to save themselves from the employ of tyrants and the company of materialists. I say, although he is right, it is for the preservation of the carnal selves of the 'ulamā'. And this is also necessary. However, Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd *radiyallāhu 'anhu* is referring to the preservation of knowledge which has to be done by keeping it away from unworthy people. This is why after saying "preserved knowledge" he said, "and given it to those who were worthy of it". The manner of preserving knowledge is explained in the second part of the sentence. After all, unworthy people cannot preserve and safeguard anything.

The story of a falcon

There is a famous story of a king who had a falcon which he loved dearly. It flew away one day and went near an old woman who caught hold of it. The woman looked at its crooked beak and thought to herself that it must be quite difficult for the falcon to peck at grains and seeds. She therefore cut off its beak. She then looked at its claws and noticed that they too were curved. She clipped them as well. She continued cutting and clipping at it until she rendered it useless. In the meantime, the workers of the king were searching for his falcon. In the course of their search, they reached the house of the old woman. They caught the falcon and took it to the

king. The king was grief-stricken when he saw the condition in which it was. He instructed for it to be taken outside and an announcement be made: "The person who hands himself over to unworthy people will end up like this falcon."

Did you see! The old woman did not know the value of the falcon so she could not appreciate it. This is why she rendered it useless.

Now can knowledge which is so intricate and deep be preserved by ordinary people? Will it not need capability and proficiency? Will it be preserved by all and sundry? Certainly not.

The Sufis conceal secrets and mysteries

Listen! The Sufis were always particular about concealing their sciences and mysteries from unworthy people. Despite this, some reckless people caused their sciences to become exposed, and this resulted in rejection.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

> Some gnostics state that it is ḥarām for those who are not on our path to read our books. Similarly, it is not permissible for anyone to quote our speech to anyone. He may quote it to the one in whom he has confidence. If a person quotes the speech of the Sufis to one who does not believe in Sufism, the one who quotes it and the one to whom it is quoted will both be cast into the Hell-fire. The Ahlullāh have very vociferously expressed this. They say that the person who exposes their secrets is eligible to be killed. Despite this, the unmindful and heedless ones did not pay

heed, and quoted their speech to unworthy and unqualified people.

Despite all these precautions, heedless people did not desist and conveyed the words of the Sufis to unworthy people. The reason why the Sufis prohibited quoting their words and reading their books is that if people do not understand what they say, they will reject it and they themselves will suffer. Another major reason for this prohibition is that those who are unqualified and have not reached the stations of the Sufis will memorize their words and consider themselves to be qualified. They will then claim to be the equals of the true masters. They will vex pride by relating these things to the masses and convince them to become their followers.

A contemptible person presents the words of the dervishes in an incorrect manner so that he may relate tales to the ignoramuses.

This is why there remains no distinction between the genuine and the counterfeit, and the honest ones have become mixed with the liars. And so, misguidance is spreading. Such claimants are deviated and are misleading others. People are merely learning meaningless things from them. They are adopting the outward while there is no sign of the inward. Consequently, the Dīn is confined to the outward and the Ṯarīqat is becoming obliterated.

I say, the Sufis went into pains in trying to preserve their speech from unworthy people but the latter still conveyed them, and this resulted in harm. Outer knowledge and Dīn will also have to be protected from unworthy people. A lot of importance will have to be given to this. Unfortunately, people did not apply this rule. They conveyed it to unworthy people

for worldly motives. Consequently, they wasted knowledge and disgraced their own selves. As stated by Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the Muslim community to adopt this instruction. Āmīn. (compiler)

The need for correct intention

A correct intention for knowledge and practice is essential for leadership. In other words, there must be no intention for wealth and fame. It was on this basis that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* acquired leadership over the people. And so did the seniors of Dīn. If wealth of worldly people is made the motive, the person will become disgraced and despicable in their sight. We observe this in our times. In addition to having a correct intention, it is essential to accord to knowledge the rank which it deserves and to never consider it inferior to wealth and riches. Furthermore, a man of knowledge is an heir of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. This is no small rank. It must never be considered to be inferior to the rank of wealthy people. If not, this leadership cannot be maintained.

'Ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets

According to a Hadīth, the 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. This is why they ought to follow the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* in everything they do. When people observe this in them, they will accept their leadership. Without this, if they want the people to follow them, it will not happen because the masses too know who has sound character and prophetic mannerisms and who does not. As long as they are not satisfied by their internal character, they will generally not follow them solely on the basis of

their knowledge. This attitude of the masses is correct and proper.

Listen! Leadership is no ordinary thing. It comes with much difficulty. It requires a lot of patience and forbearance.

The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

لا يسود سيد بدون ودود يمدح وحسود يقدح.[1]

A person cannot acquire leadership without having followers who praise him and some envious people who speak ill of him.

ʿAllāmah Shāmī *raḥimahullāh* explains the reason for this. He says that leadership due to praises is obvious and clearly understood. However, criticism is also essential so that the leader can display the qualities of forbearance and pardon. People emulate him in these qualities, and this results in his leadership.[2]

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent point! Patience, forbearance and pardon are qualities through which a person receives leadership. These are the very same qualities through which the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* received leadership. The 'ulamā' are their deputies, they do not act on their own. This is why they too will receive criticisms from the people and

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[1] الدر المختار: ج ١، ص ١٠٠.

[2] A point comes to my mind. When a leader has people who love and praise him, it brings joy to his heart and energizes him. When people criticize him, it straightens his mind and he becomes purified from pride, deception and other base qualities. He acquires the rank of leadership in this way. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best. (compiler)

they too will have to exercise patience and forbearance during such occasions.

From among the characteristics of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* is their independence, severing all types of expectation from the public and relying solely on Allāh *taʿālā*. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* never sought any reward from the public for inviting towards Allāh *taʿālā* and conveying His injunctions. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اِتَّبِعُوْا مَنْ لَّا يَسْئَلُكُمْ اَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ.

Follow those who do not ask you for any wage and are themselves guided.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

قُلْ لَّا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبٰى.

Say: I do not ask you for any wage for this except friendship with relatives.[1]

Every Prophet *ʿalayhis salām* said:

اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللهِ.

My reward is solely with Allāh.

If the work is for Allāh *taʿālā*, He alone will give the reward and wage for it. It cannot happen that you do some work for one person and someone else pays you for it. Those who are serving Dīn must also have hopes of reward from Allāh *taʿālā* alone; not from the creation.

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 23.

The ʿulamā' too must develop this quality within them. That is, they must sever all expectation and greed from the creation, and place their trust in Allāh *taʿālā* alone. When inviting towards Allāh *taʿālā* and conveying knowledge are done for worldly gain, the person will not differentiate between who is worthy and who is not. He will convey his knowledge without any hesitation wherever he expects worldly gain. How will unworthy worldly people value knowledge!? And how will they preserve it!? In this way, knowledge will be wasted.

When worldly people realize that this ʿālim is the seeker and we are the ones who are sought, he is the follower and we are followed, knowledge is imparted in order to acquire wealth from us; they will have no regard whatsoever for such ʿulamā'. When the ʿulamā' fall in their sight, then no matter how noble a thing they receive, they will not appreciate it. This is what Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* meant when he said:

لكنهم بذلوه لأهل الدنيا لينالوا به من دنياهم

Unfortunately, they gave it to worldly people so that they may acquire of their material possessions.

In other words, it was out of their greed and avarice that they gave knowledge to worldly people so that they could acquire of their worldly possessions. Because they [ʿulamā'] did not value their knowledge, they themselves became disvalued. This is the inevitable consequence of greed. An avaricious person is always disgraced.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

شرف المؤمن صلاته بالليل، وعزه استغناؤه عما في أيدي الناس.

The nobility of a believer lies in his night salāh, and his honour lies in his independence from whatever people own.

If he is not independent of people and is, instead avaricious, how can he enjoy any virtue? He discarded Allāh *taʿālā* for the sake of this world, conveyed Dīn to the wrong people, and made the Dīn a means for acquiring of this dead world; then in addition to displeasing Allāh *taʿālā*, he made the creation unhappy with him. He thus became despicable in their sight.

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من التمس رضى الناس بسخط الله سخط الله عليه وأسخط عليه الناس. وأخرج الطبراني بسند جيد عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله من أسخط الله في رضى الناس سخط الله عليه، وأسخط عليه من أرضاه في سخطه، ومن أرضى الله في سخط الناس رضي الله عنه وأرضى عنه من أسخطه في رضاه حتى يزين قوله وعمله في عينه.[1]

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "When a person seeks the pleasure of people at the expense of Allāh's displeasure, Allāh taʿālā becomes displeased with him and causes people to be displeased with him." At-Tabarānī rahimahullāh related with a sound chain on the authority of Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi

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[1] طحاوي على المراقي: ٨.

wa sallam said: "The person who displeases Allāh taʿālā to gain the pleasure of people, Allāh taʿālā becomes displeased with him and causes those whom he tried to please at the expense of His displeasure to become displeased with him. The person who pleases Allāh taʿālā at the expense of people's displeasure, Allāh taʿālā becomes pleased with him and causes those whom he displeased for Allāh's pleasure to become pleased with him. He does this to the extent that his speech and actions become pleasing in their eyes.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* wrote a letter to Hadrat Muʿāwiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in which she said that the person who displeases Allāh *taʿālā* in order to please someone else, then the very same someone else will be empowered over him to cause him harm.[1]

The Ahlullāh serve Dīn for the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā*. They do it with sincerity and devotion. Their gaze is not on people. Subsequently, Allāh *taʿālā* – out of His grace and kindness – confers them with honour and appreciation in the sight of people. People in general begin honouring them.

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الله إذا أحب عبدا دعا جبرئيل فقال إني أحب فلانا فأحبه، قال فيحبه جبرئيل ثم ينادي في السماء فيقول إن الله يحب فلانا فاحبوه، فيحبه أهل السماء، ثم يوضع له القبول في الأرض، وإذا أبغض عبدا دعا جبرئيل فيقول إني أبغض فلانا فأبغضه، قال فيبغضه جبرئيل ثم

[1] *Tirmidhī.*

ينادي في أهل السماء إن الله يبغض فلانا فأبغضوه، قال فيبغضونه ثم يوضع له البغضاء في الأرض. رواه مسلم.[1]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When Allāh taʿālā loves a certain servant, He summons Jibra'īl and says: "I love such and such person, so you too must love him." Jibra'īl begins loving him and then announces in the heavens: "Allāh loves such and such person, you too must love him." Those dwelling in the heavens start loving him. His acceptance is then placed on earth…

Glory to Allāh! Just look at this lofty position! A servant's honour and acceptance are sent down from the heavens, and he acquires fame and virtue from Allāh *taʿālā*. How can man's quest for fame and wealth from the creation ever compare with what Allāh *taʿālā* sends down!? We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

The Ahlullāh do their utmost to conceal their knowledge and virtue, but Allāh *taʿālā* brings it out into the open and spreads their popularity in a manner which is beyond their imagination.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *quddisa sirruhu* says in a couplet:

> I tried to obliterate myself and leave no trace of me. Who caused me to become so popular!?

The fact of the matter is that these personalities set right their affair with their Master and established a bond with such an affectionate one from whom there

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[1] مشكوة: ج ٢، ص ٤٢٥.

is no hint of any harm. It was a very profitable business. The man had cut off his ties with the creation and turned away from people. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* – out of His kindness – conferred him with His special favours in this world and brought into the open whatever he was trying to conceal. There are many incidents of this nature. The one who knows about the lives of the saints will understand it.

Imām Abū Bakr Jassās Rāzī *raḥimahullāh* quotes the following Ḥadīth under the commentary of the verse:

وَاللّٰهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا تَكْتُمُوْنَ

Allāh was to disclose what you were concealing.[1]

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن عبدا لو أطاع الله من وراء سبعين حجابا لأظهر الله له ذلك على ألسنة الناس، وكذلك المعصية. وروي أن الله تعالى أوحى على موسى عليه السلام قل لبني إسرائيل يخفوا أعمالهم وعليّ أن أظهرها.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: If a person worships Allāh taʿālā behind 70 veils, Allāh taʿālā will certainly bring it out into the open on the tongues of people [they will speak about it]. The same can be said of sinning (He will expose it as well). It is related that Allāh taʿālā said to Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām: "Tell the Banī Isrā'īl to conceal their actions. It is My responsibility to bring them out into the open."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful Ḥadīth. If Allāh *taʿālā* has taken the responsibility of exposing our

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 72.

actions, why should we not choose sincerity and devotion? Why should we worship Him to earn the praises of people? We seek refuge in Allāh! What a false and foolish thing to do! That we worship Allāh *taʿālā* but our focus is on the creation. It becomes even more strange because when the creation comes to know that we are engaging in worship to earn their praises and that we are not sincere in it, they will cast us aside and never believe us to be truly devoted servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. The only time the creation accepts a person is when he worships Allāh *taʿālā* in total devotion to Him alone and he does not focus on the creation in the least. Just look! Those for whom we are striving so much and bearing so many hardships are actually causing our own destruction. To make matters worse, they are not impressed by us. This is solely because we lack sincerity. We already severed our bond with Allāh *taʿālā* [by our lack of sincerity], and now we have fallen from grace in the sight of people! What foolishness!

Choose to be sincere because Allāh *taʿālā* does not allow the sincere ones to be wasted. Sincerity is highly appreciated in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*. Understand this well.

There is one objection at this point. Let me remove it. Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that place knowledge by those who are worthy of it. It obviously refers to knowledge of Dīn. We learn from this that there are two types of people. Some are worthy of Dīnī knowledge while others are not. On the other hand, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم[1]

Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.

This shows that it is obligatory on every person to seek knowledge. If every Muslim male and female is obligated to seek knowledge, it shows that worthiness is found in everyone. And Allāh *taʿālā* does not impose on someone anything which is beyond his capacity.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

The answer is this: There are two levels of knowledge. One level is the one which has to be acquired by every person. For example, the rules of ablution, taking a bath, salāh, fasting, etc. Since these actions are obligatory and carrying them out without knowledge is not possible, acquiring knowledge of their rules becomes obligatory. This is known as fard-e-ʿayn – no one is excused in this regard. It is with regard to this level of knowledge that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم[2]

Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.

The other level of knowledge is this: After learning the essentials of Dīn [in the first level of knowledge], a person studies further so that he becomes an expert in the sciences of the Sharīʿat. He learns the principles of Dīn and jurisprudence, he extracts

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[1] مشكوة، كتاب العلم: ٣٤.

[2] مشكوة، كتاب العلم: ٣٤.

rulings, derives general principles from specific incidents, and so on. This level is fard-e-kifāyah. In other words, there has to be some people who become experts in the various sciences so that they can inform the rest of the Muslim community on rulings of the Sharīʿat at every occasion.

The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

واعلم أن تعلم العلم يكون فرض عين وهو بقدر ما يحتاج لدينه، وفرض كفاية وهو ما زاد عليه لنفع غيره، ومندوبا وهو التبحر في الفقه.

If someone comes to an ʿālim to learn or asks him a question about knowledge which is obligatory on the person to learn, it is the duty of the ʿālim to teach him or answer his question. It is not permissible for him to conceal that knowledge. But if the knowledge is not of that level, i.e. it is beyond the level of fard-e-ʿayn, the ʿālim has the choice to teach it to whomever he wants and decline whomever he wants. In other words, if he feels that a person is worthy of it, he may teach it to him. If not, he may refuse.

The following is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Bihār*:

من سئل عن علم فكتمه ألجمه الله أي ما يلزم تعليمه ويتعين عليه كمن يريد الإسلام أو تعليم الصلوة أو فتوى الحل والحرمة فالممتنع منه يستحق جزاء وفاقا لأنه أمسك نفسه بالسكوت عن العلم فيعاقب بالإلجام بالنار، وأما نوافل العلم فهو مخير في تعليمها.[1]

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[1] مجمع البحار: ٤٢٠.

Dīnī knowledge must be protected from a mean person

It is with reference to the second level that Hadrat Ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that it must be given to the one who is worthy of it. It must be protected from a mean person because if it is given to him, he will neither value it nor preserve it. Furthermore, he will not develop within himself the qualities and characteristics which are suited to it. To make matters worse, he will demand of people to follow and emulate him. In this way, he will be deviated and will misguide others as well. In reality, such a person is not an ʿālim even if he may claim to be one or people – due to their ignorance – consider him to be from among the ʿulamā'. He is not a genuine ʿālim in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Instead, he is astray and leading others astray. He is an ignoramus. It is through such people that differences and innovations came about. When knowledge reaches the level of perfection, its effects are seen accordingly. When knowledge is imperfect and ignorance remains, the evil effects of that ignorance also manifest themselves.

I now quote a few texts from *al-Iʿtisām* in line with the above discussion:

واعلموا أن الإختلاف في بعض القواعد الكلية لا يقع في العاديات الجارية بين المتبحرين في علم الشريعة الخائضين في لجتها العظمى، العالمين مواردها ومصادرها.

Generally a difference of opinion does not occur in general principles among those who have deep knowledge of the Sharīʿat, who have dived in its

depths, and who have knowledge of the circumstances and sources of those principles.

This is why we do not see many differences in the first era of Islam and in the major portion of the second era. They occurred later on. There are many reasons for it. One of them is:

(أحدها) أن يعتقد الإنسان في نفسه أو يعتقد فيه أنه من أهل العلم والإجتهاد في الدين (ولم يبلغ تلك الدرجة) فيحمل على ذلك ويعد رأيه رأيا وخلافه خلافا.

A person feels or others believe that he is an ʿālim and a mujtahid in Dīn (whereas he has not reached that level). Consequently, he acts accordingly. His view is considered to be the correct view, and so is his disagreement.

In other words, as regards matters of Dīn, he considers his view to be the correct one and feels that he is correct in differing with the ʿulamā'. Those who follow him also believe the same whereas he is not even worthy of such a position. In this way many unqualified people consider themselves to be qualified, establish a following for themselves, and this results in many splinter groups and differences.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raḥimahullāh* writes further:

وعليه نبه الحديث الصحيح أنه صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا يقبض الله العلم انتزاعا ينتزعه من الناس، ولكن يقبض العلم بقبض العلماء

حتى إذا لم يبق عالم اتخذ الناس رؤسا جهالا فسئلوا فافتوا بغير علم فضلوا وأضلوا.[1]

An authentic Hadīth draws our attention to this. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Allāh taʿālā does not take away knowledge by snatching it completely from people. Rather, He takes it away by causing ʿulamā' to die one after the other until there remains no ʿālim. People then appoint ignoramuses as their leaders who, when they are posed questions, issue verdicts without knowledge. They are astray and they lead others astray.

قال بعض أهل العلم تقدير هذا الحديث يدل على أنه لا يؤتى الناس قط من قبل علماءهم وإنما يؤتون من قبل أنه إذا مات علماءهم أفتى من ليس بعالم فيوتى الناس من قبله وقد صرف هذا المعنى تصريفا فقيل ما خان أمين قط ولكنه ائتمن غير أمين فخان.

قال ونحن نقول ما ابتدع عالم قط ولكن استفتى من ليس بعالم.[2]

A scholar said: This Hadīth shows that people are never put into misery by their 'ulamā'. Rather, they are put into misery when their 'ulamā' pass away. This results in non-'ulamā' issuing verdicts and thereby putting the masses into misery. The same meaning is reversed and it is said: A trustworthy person never acted treacherously. Rather, a

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٣.

[2] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٣.

treacherous person was entrusted, and so he committed treachery.

The same scholar said: No ʿālim ever committed a bidʿat. Rather, a person who was not an ʿālim was asked for a verdict.

Observe these noteworthy points. Misguidance did not come from the ʿulamā'. Rather, it came from those who are listed among the ʿulamā' while they are not ʿulamā' in reality. They are the ones who issue verdicts against the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth which cause people to do things against the Sharīʿat. This is why when an unqualified person was asked for a fatwā, Ḥaḍrat Rabīʿah *raḥimahullāh* cried profusely [this incident was related previously] and exclaimed: "A person who is not qualified is being asked for a fatwā! A person who does not have knowledge is asked a question! This shows that qualified people no longer exist; this is why their places have been occupied by unqualified people. There is no good for the Muslims now. These unworthy fellows separate Dīn from the people and immerse them in irreligiousness; they remove them from the Sunnat and drown them in bidʿat. They will destroy Dīn and the people of Dīn. Nothing will be preserved and protected." Ḥaḍrat Rabīʿah *raḥimahullāh* thought of all these things and cried as though a major calamity had befallen him.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī *raḥimahullāh* goes on to say that if you observe carefully, you will realize that those who committed bidʿat from among the theologians were either the offspring of prisoners or non-Arabs. They were neither from Arab progenies nor was Arabic their language. This is why they could not understand the Qur'ān correctly nor could they fathom the import of what Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu*

ʿalayhi wa sallam said. They took meanings which were different from what he intended. Consequently, there was a proliferation of innovations. The masses considered the very same innovations to be part of Dīn and of the Sunnat. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

The text of what ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raḥimahullāh* said above reads as follows:

ولعلك إذا استقررت أهل البدع من المتكلمين أو أكثرهم وجدتهم من أبناء سبايا الأمم ومن ليس لهم إصالة في اللسان العربي. فعما قريب يفهم كتاب الله على غير وجهه كما أن من لم يتفقه في مقاصد الشريعة فهمها على غير وجهها.[1]

These are the statements of our seniors. Look at the wisdom and insight on which they are based! If these statements are borne in mind today and practised upon, the task at hand will be accomplished. This is especially so with the statement of Ḥaḍrat Ibn Masʿūd *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* which he made with regard to the preservation of knowledge and giving it to those who are worthy of it. The ʿulamā' in particular should keep it in mind and practise on it. Allāh willing, they will observe a marked difference.

Because these teachings are not applied today, we find students neither acquiring knowledge nor rectifying their character and mannerisms. Furthermore, because they are mean, then let alone obeying and accepting their teachers, they emerge as their antagonists. On the other hand, because

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[1] الإعتصام: ج ٢، ص ١٧٤.

students of the past were worthy students, they used to love their teachers from whom they acquired knowledge and practice, and were prepared to lay their lives for them. Just look at the deplorable situation today! To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

When our seniors differentiated between those who were worthy and those who were not and emphasised this point, they did it because the students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. If they are deficient in practice and beliefs, they will lead others astray. If they are devoid of correct knowledge and practice, what benefit will they convey to others?

The corruption of 'ulamā' is not self-contained; it is infectious. When their evil actions are observed, how many more will commit evil actions! In fact, how many more will adopt corrupt beliefs! There are people who said: "I lost confidence in Islam after observing the actions of such and such person. I learnt that this is Dīn and this is Islam." This is why Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* severely castigated deviated 'ulamā' and warned us against them. He said:

أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان.

The one whom I fear the most for my community is the hypocrite who is eloquent in his language.

The one who is eloquent in his speech and has oratory skills is able to deceive people through his eloquence. This is what Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* feared because it will result in people following him after considering him to be an 'ālim. It will cause their falling into misguidance.

Note: This is generally the norm. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The effect of the rectitude and corruption of ʿulamā' and rulers

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "There are two groups of my ummat; if they are in order everyone else will come into order. When they are corrupted, everyone else will become corrupted. They are the rulers and the ʿulamā'."[1]

The ʿulamā' are like salt

Hadrat Qatādah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that ʿulamā' are likened to salt. When something is about to get spoilt, it is set right with salt. However, if the salt is in itself spoilt, how will it be set right?[2]

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful example! There can be no better example than it. Undoubtedly, if the ʿulamā' are upright, it is impossible for the masses not be the same. The fault lies with us. Sometimes we become the causes of misguidance just as the ʿulamā' of the past were the causes of guidance. The reason is that they adhered strictly to Dīn and followed the Sharīʿat. This is why people received guidance from them. The author of *al-Kashshāf* writes:

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[1] الجامع الصغير: حديث: ٥٠٣٠.

[2] إقتضاء العلم والعمل: ص ١١٤.

ألا ترى أن المتقدمين من العلماء والكبراء إذا كانوا على السداد كيف يتسببون لسداد من ورائهم.[1]

Do you not see how when the ʿulamā' and seniors of the past were upright, they became the causes of uprightness of those who came after them?

The gist of the discussion is that ʿulamā' must practise on their knowledge. When the laymen see the ʿulamā' practising, it will become a cause of their rectification and religiosity. If they see a conflict between the words and actions of the ʿulamā', the actual greatness and value of Dīn will leave their hearts. They will give up actions completely and become irreligious.

The misdeeds of the ʿulamā' befalls their own selves and is also contagious. This shows how essential it is for ʿulamā' to be wary of misdeeds. It is hoped that the reader will benefit from these points. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Note: By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, these are most enlightening and admonitory words of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It is necessary for all of us, especially the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, to practise on them. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

[1] الكشاف: ج ١، ص ٩٤.

THE ULAMĀ' ARE THE HEIRS OF THE PROPHETS (1)

I received a letter from a person; I am reading it to you:

> It is difficult for me to describe whatever I received from Hadrat's service. What I do know is that I received a lot. Also, it is something which cannot be seen, cannot be written down nor be given a name. There is no way of fathoming it apart from tearing open the heart. It is only a spiritual physician who can understand it. My eyes were so hungry to see Hadrat that they used to gaze at you surreptitiously. When Hadrat would be hidden away from my eyes, my heart would become even more restless. It would seem as though these eyes hadn't set eyes on Hadrat as yet. Whenever I set eyes on Hadrat, my heart would experience immense joy and my eyes would experience a coolness and an effulgence. There was no end to the restlessness and anxiety of the heart. My heart and mind were at a loss and perplexed. I am now really learning what is to be found in the service of the saints.
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> As for whatever sincerity I obtained, that is beyond description. Every part of my body was thinking of Hadrat. The same emotions were experienced when I was travelling. The heart is now feeling

desolate, as though it has left the spring season and entered autumn.

Allāhu Akbar! If these are the effects of merely looking at Hadrat's blessed body, what can be said of the effects of Hadrat's speech, practices and īmān! How unfortunate! In the presence of an ocean, one is trying to quench one's thirst from a drop of water. Our condition is beyond the limits. If this is not misguidance, what else can it be!

After believing in Hadrat to be from the Ahlullāh, people are falling like moths at his feet; and their number is increasing by the day. Why should this not be so when the gazes always fall on the special servants of Allāh!?

May Allāh *taʿālā* enable Hadrat's shadow to remain for a long time over us so that we can continue deriving external and spiritual bounties for as long as we live. I request Hadrat to make duʿā' for mad men like me so that spiritual bounties may shower on us and we are able to follow in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with absolute devotion.

May we obtain a portion of Hadrat's spiritual effulgence. I hope that Hadrat will not deprive mad beggars like myself. I make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* makes me a true lover of Hadrat in the true sense of the word and that I am able to fulfil the spiritual practices as prescribed by Hadrat.

I always abstained from informing my wife about Hadrat because, being a woman, I do not know what she would construe or misconstrue. She somehow came to know that I will be coming to Hadrat. I do not know from where this thought came to her mind, and she repeatedly asked me to write to Hadrat to make her a murīd. She said she does not know for how long she is going to live. Just as she has everything else, she would like to become a murīd as well. She asked me persistently to write to Hadrat. Hadrat! I was overjoyed when I heard her, and I thought to myself that Allāh *taʿālā* placed such a great thing in her heart. All thanks are due solely to Allāh *taʿālā*.

I therefore beg before Hadrat to accept the bayʿat of my wife Jamīlah Begum and to admit her in the spiritual family. She too may become attached to this work and we both may become your true disciples. I beg Hadrat to make duʿā' for success in both worlds for the two of us, and for Allāh *taʿālā* to confer us with religiosity. I also request Hadrat to make duʿā' that we are able to take care of each other. We have none apart from you.

Was salām.

Whatever he wrote in this letter and the conditions which he described are all factual, they cannot be denied. When we speak out against anything, it is against customs and those who follow customs. Those who learn something from us, they are devoted to the work at hand as per the rules which are laid

down. They do not do anything which offends us and which is against the Sunnat. We say to them: Do you think we cannot understand the spiritual conditions which you acquire? Unfortunately, the situation today is that instead of spiritual conditions, they want to present customs to us. This is what annoys us.

Speaking out against customs is the most essential thing in these times. As long as customs are not wiped out, the reality cannot be realized. This is why the genuine Sufis of every era spoke out against customs.

Hadrat 'Alā' ad-Dīn Sanjarī *rahimahullāh* compiled the statements of Hadrat Sultān Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh*. The following is stated therein:

> He then spoke about the Haydarīyyah sect. He said: There was a Turkish child and a dervish. When Genghis Khan attacked and took control of India, he came to his friends and said: "Friends! What are you doing!? Flee from here. These people will vanquish us because they have brought a dervish with them. I fought him and he defeated me. I gauged from this that these people will certainly vanquish us. You should therefore flee." The dervish then disappeared in a cave, never to be seen again. However, what followed was as predicted.
>
> I asked: "Why do the followers of this Haydarīyyah sect wear necklaces and bangles of steel? Do they do this in emulation of them?"

> Hadrat replied: Yes! Previously they were of such a level that they used to heat the steel, hold it with their hands and make it into necklaces and bangles. They would then hang them around their necks and wear them on their hands. What I mean is that steel was like wax in their hands [they could mould it as they liked]. The present generation merely place these necklaces and bangles of steel around their necks and hands. How can they do as their predecessors did?

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* says:

Just as these personalities consider people who are in a state of ecstasy to be excused, they castigate those who merely suffice with customs. Look at how they follow the Sharīʿat in both matters. In other words, the one in a state of ecstasy is considered to be excused while the one who emulates him while being devoid of that condition [of ecstasy] is reprimanded.

He then related a story about the death of the Auliyā'. He said: I had a friend in Budāyūn by the name of Ahmad. He was a pious and righteous man. Although he was uneducated, he would inquire about the rulings of the Sharīʿat every day, and apply them in his life. He would continue learning from whomever he could.

Look at how he praised the one who inquires about the rulings of the Sharīʿat and practises on them! The respect for the Sharīʿat and showing importance to it can be gauged from this.

As-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah Fī Chishtīyyah al-ʿAlīyyah is a book written by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī

raḥimahullāh on the lives of the Auliyā'. In it he proves that they adhered strictly to the Sunnat and paid particular attention to the Sharīʿat. They reached a level of perfection from which we can conclude that they [the Auliyā'] are really the heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. Just as the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* combined words with practical application, the Sufis were blessed with a share of it. Thus, they are the true heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. A Ḥadīth states:

العلماء ورثة الأنبياء.

The 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets.

The word 'ulamā' will therefore refer to those who combine words with actions.

The 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets

Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh* states just as ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* said in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

إعلم أن ورثة الأنبياء هم العلماء والأولياء حفاظ الأحوال والأحكام الباطنة التي تدق على الأفهام. والعلماء حفاظ الأحكام الظاهرة التي تفهم بباد الرأي.

The 'ulamā' and the auliyā' are the heirs of the Prophets ʿalayhis salām. The auliyā' preserve internal conditions and injunctions which are not clearly understood. The 'ulamā' preserve external injunctions which are easily understood.

Shaykh Akbar *raḥimahullāh* says further on: If you ask me about the Ḥadīth which states that the 'ulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus*

salām, and if it refers to the auliyā' or the jurists, then the answer is that it refers to those 'ulamā' who practise on their knowledge. This is because they combine their words with actions just as the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* combined knowledge with actions. In the same way, those who will be their heirs will have to combine both. Their heirs cannot be those who only have words but are totally devoid of actions.

Many 'ulamā' study the books of Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn ibn 'Arabī *raḥimahullāh* but they do not pay attention to the fact that they are devoid of actions and practice, and that they should therefore develop these. Our pious predecessors combined both. In reality, the Sufis are those 'ulamā' who practised on their knowledge and followed the character of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Character does not refer to superficial character but genuine character. The Sufis explicitly reject superficial character.

The detestability of turning away from the qiblah

On one occasion I entered the masjid and there was no place in the first row. There was an empty spot in the second row so I sat down there. There were two persons in front of me. They turned around and began looking at me. This irked me because they were turning away from the qiblah and looking at me. If I were to reprimand them for this, people will not support me. Instead, they will support them.

The masjid is a place to occupy one's self with Allāh *ta'ālā* and to turn one's attention to Him. Why, then, did they turn and look at me? The fact of the matter is that they do not possess that practical application. If not, it would not have permitted them to turn their

attention towards me. When a person focuses his attention on Allāh *taʿālā*, it is not possible for him to turn to anyone or anything else; especially if he has gone to the masjid to perform salāh.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* encourages us towards tauhīd. When we are in a masjid, we must accord our respect to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. Unfortunately, even the elite do not pay attention to such matters. (compiler)

Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* made a significant statement when he said that the inheritance of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* entails words and actions. And a true heir is the one who combines both. However, the subsequent generations found words to be easy so they adopted them. They found sound characteristics to be difficult, so they discarded them. Consequently, they remained deficient. These defective people who are themselves devoid of sound character also make objections against those who have it.

There was a scholar who was sitting in an assembly of his close associates and making objections against Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. He was saying many things against him. Just then, one of Hadrat Thānwī's attendants entered. He heard whatever the scholar said. Later on when the scholar saw him, he asked: "How is Hadrat Maulānā? Is he well?"

The attendant returned to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and related whatever the scholar had said. When Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* heard this, he said: "He knows fully well the reality of what he said." What Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* meant was that the scholar knows the answers to the objections which he is levelling against me. It is not that he does

not know. He fully understands the reality but is wittingly making objections against me.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* possessed a special unique characteristic which the auliyā' possess. (compiler)

Qādī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* says that the supernatural feats (karāmāt) of the auliyā' are the fruits of their practising on the Qur'ān and Sunnat. A karāmat is a branch of miracle - mu'jizah. Mu'jizāt are given to Prophets *'alayhimus salām* while karāmāt are given to auliyā'.

Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* says:

فإن الأنبياء يحتجون بالمعجزات على المشركين والأولياء يحتجون بالكرامات على نفوسهم لتصلح ولنفوسهم لتطمئن.

The Prophets establish their proof against polytheists through miracles. The auliyā' establish a proof over their selves through supernatural feats so that they acquire rectitude, and for the selves of others to acquire tranquillity.

In other words, just as miracles are evidences against the polytheists, karāmāt are proofs over the selves of the saints themselves. We learn from this that karāmāt are not to influence others into becoming their followers. Rather, they are for the rectification of their own selves. The words "over their selves" mean that their own selves are rectified. And the words "for the selves of others" refer to convincing the selves of those who reject.

A karāmat is only acceptable when it is coupled with following the Sunnat. If supernatural feats are displayed independently of the Sunnat, they are not

considered. The Sharīʿat is a supreme thing whose rules have to be obeyed. This is from among the essentials of wilāyat – friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*.

It is related in *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* that Abū Yazīd Busṯāmī *raḥimahullāh* said to his friend: "Come let's go and visit that man regarding whose wilāyat and asceticism we heard so much." The two proceeded to the man's place. They observed him emerging from his house and entering the masjid. They then saw him spitting in the direction of the qiblah. On seeing this disrespectful behaviour of his, Abū Yazīd Busṯāmī *raḥimahullāh* turned back and returned without even offering salām to the man. Abū Yazīd *raḥimahullāh* said: "If he cannot uphold one etiquette of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* by not observing the sanctity of the masjid, how can he be worthy enough to know the mysteries of the truth?"

It is essential to uphold the etiquette of the Sharīʿat

What this means is that if he could not observe the external etiquette of the Sharīʿat, how can we believe that he is a saint who bears the mysteries of the truth? He could only be a bearer of the truth if he observed the etiquette of the Sharīʿat. The mysteries of the truth are conferred only to the one who adheres strictly to the Sharīʿat. If a walī does not adhere to them, who will? Knowing the mysteries of Dīn is dependent on observing the etiquette of the Sharīʿat. Nowadays, a person who is totally devoid of the Sharīʿat and walks around naked is considered to be a saint. As for those who adhere to the Sharīʿat, carry out the obligatory actions and uphold the etiquette of the Sharīʿat are not considered to be even worthy of being auliyā'. Yet they firmly believe in the

wilāyat of a person who is totally devoid of the Sharīʿat!

A large section of the Muslim community is immersed in this misguided belief. The Sharīʿat is not of much importance in their sight. Whereas the true saints observed every minor etiquette. These are noted in the books.

On one occasion a saint entered a masjid. Instead of entering with the right foot, he entered with his left foot. He immediately became terrified and fell unconscious. He was thinking to himself: "How could I have done something against the Sunnat?"

It is desirable to enter the masjid with the right foot and it is an etiquette of the masjid. Look at how he was pained by leaving out this act that he fell unconscious. From this we can gauge how much more particular he must have been about carrying out the obligatory actions and injunctions of the Sharīʿat.

The importance of following the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat

There was a person who was studying with us. He used to take pieces of paper, cut them into the size of coins, and they used to turn into real coins. He would then give the coins to his fellow students who would use them to purchase whatever they wanted. However, this person himself would never use them for himself. One day he said to me: "Take me to Hadrat Maulānā so that I could become his murīd. I have a shaykh who is a man of spiritual excellence but Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī combines the external and internal sciences."

I took him to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī who was in Muzaffar Nagar at the time. When I presented the person's request to Hadrat Maulānā, he looked at him carefully from head to toe and then accepted his bayʿat. Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was present at the time. He said: "Hadrat, you don't normally accept bayʿat in the first meeting!?" Hadrat replied: "We do not interact with everyone in the same manner."

The person then said to me: "Maulānā [Thānwī] considers these things [e.g. turning paper into coins] to be impermissible. I am not going to do this anymore." In the first place, he never used those coins for himself; he used to give them to others. However, after pledging bayʿat, he gave up doing this as well. His karāmat which was superior to the making of coins was that he gave this up because of the Sharīʿat and because Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* considered it to be impermissible.

External actions are rectified first

In the Tarīqat, external actions are rectified first and then internal actions. Our Tarīqat is not the one of those who do not follow the Sharīʿat. Instead, we will look at what the Sharīʿat says and give preference to it. Those who come to us do not think about this and demand of us to show them meditation and observation [of unseen things], etc. and feel that if we do not show these things to them, the entire training will take too long. We say to them, we cannot follow the ways which you want. We will follow the way which was taught to us, and the programme which is laid down. We will teach *Qā'idah Baghdādī* (a primer for learning to identify the letters of the Arabic language) first and then we will teach you the Qur'ān. Only then can we progress.

As for meditation and observation which you are demanding of us, what is that? Real meditation is when you think constantly of Allāh *taʿālā*. When a person follows the prescribed way, he will be able to acquire and achieve something. The fact of the matter is that whatever is achieved is done solely through Allāh *taʿālā*; not by the shaykh. It is Allāh *taʿālā* alone who enables a person to experience spiritual ecstasy. We will therefore teach you our system; we cannot follow your way. In fact, we will make you to follow our system because there has to be obedience at every step of the way. The Ahlullāh have done such a great favour to us that they compiled the statements and spiritual conditions of the saints of every era and presented them to us. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them.

I said the same thing in Mumbai. The life conditions of the saints are with us, we can present them to you and show exactly what was said by which saint. We can relate to you the life stories of each of them and what their spiritual rank was. However, time is required for it. You will have to follow the saints because they followed the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat.[1]

Anger is sometimes needed for the sake of rectification

A person sought permission to come to Hadrat Maulānā. He must have written a letter containing

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[1] All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, through the blessing of remaining in the company of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* we have been inspired to collate and compile the statements and teachings of the past scholars and Sufis in a book titled *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* which is in several volumes. The scholars and Sufis have expressed their approval of it. (compiler)

some points related to rectification. Hadrat Maulānā wrote to him to come. The man wrote back: "Very well, I will come but I have two preconditions. One is that I will not eat your food. The other is that you must not get angry at me."

Maulānā replied: "Both conditions are accepted. You may come." When the man arrived, Maulānā said to him: "Look, if there is a need to become angry, I will become angry. If you do not accept, I will give you the amount which you spent to travel here and you may leave." The man agreed and said: "Since you went back on one condition, I will go back on one condition and eat your food." Subsequently, he never did anything which earned Hadrat's anger nor did Hadrat become angry at him. He returned home happily.

Hadrat Thānwī combined words with actions

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī was a man of great spiritual conditions. However, he always placed following the Sunnat first. He was an imām in jurisprudence. The fatāwā which were issued used to be signed by him. Together with this, he was an imām in spiritual conditions. He was an expert in external jurisprudence and internal jurisprudence. He combined the Sharī'at and the Tarīqat. He combined words with actions. You all know that he was a great lecturer. At the same time, he was on the highest level of spirituality. I don't know the countless number of people whom he raised to high levels of spirituality just by his lectures. Those who have been to him and attended his lectures can attest to this.

Note: Just look at the exceptional confidence which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had in his shaykh, Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh*! This

is why he received khilāfat from his shaykh and was blessed with spiritual wealth. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

THE ULAMĀ' ARE THE HEIRS OF THE PROPHETS (2)

Yesterday I explained to you that our pious predecessors combined words with actions. An incident in this regard is related about Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh*. The imām in the ʿishā ṣalāh read Sūrah az-Zilzāl. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* was present in the congregation. When all the people left after the ṣalāh, Imām Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* stood up, held his beard and said: "O Allāh! You said:

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهُ.

Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it. Whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it.[1]

"O that Being who recompenses for an atom's weight of good and for an atom's weight of evil, protect your servant, Nuʿmān, from the Hell-fire." Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* continued saying this until the next morning.

These verses are constantly read in our ṣalāhs but they have no effect on our hearts. Look at the condition of Imām Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh*! See how these verses affected him that he remained standing from ʿishā time and continued crying until the time of fajr. This shows that he was not an Imām of words only; but of spiritual conditions as well. This incident is a proof against all the ʿulamā'.

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[1] Sūrah az-Zilzāl, 99: 7-8.

Proof for supernatural feats

The scholars and Sufis concur that when a person engages in extraordinary acts of worship and spiritual striving, Allāh *taʿālā* certainly confers him with extraordinary and supernatural feats. When he engages in extraordinary worship, Allāh *taʿālā* confers him with extraordinary favours and bounties.

The books which deal with Islamic beliefs contain discussions on miracles and supernatural feats. We learn from this that this is also an issue related to beliefs. This book explains beliefs and discusses each of the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah. It states that supernatural feats have been performed by the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah alone. As for the Muʿtazilah, although they had scholars, because they rejected the supernatural feats of the Sufis, they were not manifested by them. They were included among the deviated sects and innovators because of their rejection of beliefs of this nature.

Supernatural feats are true proofs in favour of the genuineness of the Sufi path and the sincerity of their actions. So many supernatural feats have been performed by the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*, the Tābiʿīn and the righteous after them that they cannot be rejected. Someone asked Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal *raḥimahullāh*: "Why have so many supernatural feats not been performed by the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* as they have by the Sufis who came later on?" One reply could be the same as explained above. That is, it has reached such a large number that it cannot be denied (this is known as *tawātur*). Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal *raḥimahullāh* said that the īmān of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* was extremely strong as opposed to those who came after them. When there is

weakness in īmān in a people, their auliyā' are made to perform more supernatural feats.

The strong īmān of the Saḥābah

The īmān of all the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* was strong even though there were different levels among them. A supernatural feat is needed when the īmān of a people is weak. In order to strengthen it, the auliyā' of that time are made to display many supernatural feats. Since the īmān of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* was strong, there was no need for supernatural feats to be displayed. The following statement of Hadrat Abul Hasan Shādhilī *raḥimahullāh* is quoted in this regard:

> Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* used to receive out-of-season fruits as sustenance. This was a supernatural feat to strengthen her īmān and conviction. Once her īmān and conviction became strong, she was made to revert to the normal means of sustenance. This is because once īmān is strengthened, preoccupation with the means does not make one unmindful of the True Provider.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation. (compiler)

The two categories of tawakkul

It is from here that it is said that having tawakkul (reliance on Allāh) while possessing the means is superior to tawakkul in the absence of the means. This is because when a person does not have the means, it is easy for him to focus on the True Provider. On the other hand, it is difficult to focus on

Him while having the means. This is real tawakkul, viz. to focus on Allāh *taʿālā* while having the means.

The scholars say that tawakkul does not mean you must discard the means. Rather, you must turn your focus away from the means.

Someone said to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Ṣāḥib Maungerī *raḥimahullāh*: "Supernatural feats are intended to strengthen the īmān of those who have weak īmān. The īmān of the people of today is much weaker than those of the past. This is why we ought to see more supernatural feats in our time. But we find that this is not the case." Maulānā Maungerī *raḥimahullāh* replied: "This is an era of misguidance. Previous eras wherein supernatural feats were displayed were eras of guidance."

Maulānā Murtaḍā Ḥasan Ṣāḥib Chāndpūrī *raḥimahullāh* and I were sitting in the presence of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* said: "If supernatural feats were displayed today and people did not believe them and rejected them; then Allāh's punishment will descend. If a general punishment does not descend, it will certainly descend specifically on those who reject." Maulānā Murtaḍā Ḥasan Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was overjoyed when he heard this.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* writes:

من عاشر الصالحين بالصدق رأى كراماتهم عيانا

The person who lives sincerely with the righteous people will observe their supernatural feats with his own eyes.

We learn from this that supernatural feats are still displayed but there has to be genuine sincerity to

observe them. Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Pānīpattī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *Irshād aṭ-Ṭālibīn* that if someone says that a karāmat is not a prerequisite for wilāyat, how are we going to ascertain that a particular person is a walī? Ḥaḍrat Mujaddid Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* gave two answers to this. The first is: What is the need to come to know of the wilāyat of a walī? Wilāyat is a special bond with Allāh *ta'ālā* irrespective of whether anyone comes to know of it or not. Most of the auliyā' did not know of their own wilāyat, what can be said of others? They will only see the fruits of it after the walī dies.

Miracles are essentially needed by the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* who invite the creation. It is necessary for them to display their prophet-hood to the people and provide proof for it. As for the invitation by the auliyā', they are inviting towards the Sharī'at of their Prophet. The miracles of that Prophet are enough for this invitation [of the auliyā']. The scholars and jurists invite towards the external Sharī'at. The auliyā' first call their disciples towards applying the external Sharī'at in their lives. After that, they teach them about dhikr, meditation and so on.

From this we learn that the programme of Sufis is to first teach the external Sharī'at and then occupy the disciple towards the internal self. Those who come to us nowadays want us to teach them meditation from the very beginning. This demand of theirs stems from ignorance about the Ṭarīqat. I produce books to them and show them so that the Ṭarīqat may become clear to them.

Spend your time in Allāh's remembrance so that His remembrance may overwhelm the heart and thoughts about anyone else may not remain in it.

The second answer of Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is that with each change in condition which a disciple witnesses within himself, he observes the karāmat of his shaykh in him.

Listen further! The difference between magic and karāmat is that the former is performed at the hands of sinners, atheists and unbelievers who do not follow the Sharīʿat. On the other hand, a karāmat is manifested by a person who is extremely particular about following the Sharīʿat. This is the difference between the two. I say, what are you going to do with a karāmat? Why don't you adopt the fundamental thing and why do you not turn your attention to it? Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Kalīd Mathnawī*:

Now that you have learnt that a qualified shaykh has reached Allāh *taʿālā*, you must try to acquire Allāh *taʿālā* through him. He then identifies the qualified Sufi masters of his time from whom this treasure [of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*] can be acquired. He says, hold on to Shāh Shams ad-Dīn Tabrezī *rahimahullāh*. If you cannot acquire the general blessings from him, go to Maulānā Diyā' al-Haqq Husām ad-Dīn who is his deputy. The latter first derived blessings from Shams Tabrezī *rahimahullāh* and then from Maulānā [Rumī *rahimahullāh*]. He is Maulānā's co-khalīfah and khalīfah as well. At this point, Maulānā – out of his humility – states that he benefited from Hadrat Shams Tabrezī *rahimahullāh*. He writes further on:

If jealousy has taken hold of you in this path, understand well that it is a satanic act. It was Iblīs's jealousy towards Ādām *ʿalayhis salām* which caused him to refuse to prostrate before him. He hated Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* solely out of jealousy. In so doing, he waged war against his own success. There is no pass

on this path which is as difficult as jealousy. Excellent indeed is the person who has no jealousy.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in his explanation of the above:

There is no obstacle in this path which is worse than jealousy. It is because of this that the novice was deprived of acquiring expertise. The novice considered it below him to follow the expert, especially the khalīfah of his shaykh. It is against the temperament of the majority of people to revert to their co-murīd/co-khalīfah. A person thinks to himself: "We are both murīds of the same shaykh. We are therefore equal. How, then, can I revert to him." Expertise cannot be acquired without following an expert.

This is what I intended speaking about, viz. this is the type of deficiency which is found in people. It is such a serious obstacle that it refuses to enable a person to lower himself before an expert. Consequently, the defective ones are deprived of acquiring proficiency.

He explains the reason for this. It is because of the dominance of physical qualities such as lust and anger. They create selfishness and egotism, and egotism causes jealousy. You should therefore give up jealousy and follow the experts.

He says further on: Jealousy towards the auliyā' results in misery and destruction. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* has concealed most of the auliyā'. If not, people will oppose them and cause their own destruction.

The dhikr of the auliyā'

Now that we are speaking about the auliyā' and their karāmāt, this entire time of ours is being spent in

dhikr. If you listen to it, your time will not go to waste. When I mentioned this in one place, some people came and said to me: "This point struck a note in my heart and really appealed to me."

Listen! Here I am speaking about the auliyā' and their karāmāt. Many people have reached Allāh *taʿālā* in this way and became people of high spiritual levels. Speaking about the auliyā' does not go to waste. Rather, it has a certain effect and changes many people.

Note: It is solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* that our time is continuously being spent in His remembrance. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer us with their spirituality through His grace and kindness. Āmīn. (compiler)

The books of the auliyā'

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* said that after the auliyā', their books and written works are their deputies. What this means is that the benefit which people were deriving from them while they were alive is derived from reading their teachings and statements. These too have an effect on the people. The saints paid particular attention to studying the *Mathnawī* and remained fully occupied with it. This is because the written word creates a bond between the reader and the one who wrote it. The focus of the writer is directed on the reader. Through this bond between the reader and writer, a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is established. It brings life to the hearts of people.

Just as the hearts of these auliyā' are alive, so is their speech. Thus, wherever their speech reaches, it provides life. Far more than external and physical karāmāt is this karāmat of reviving the hearts. After

all, this is certainly not inferior to bringing the dead back to life. The speech of the one who is living is also alive. If you were to engage in dhikr on your own, you will not benefit as much as you would when you speak about these auliyā'. This is because their dhikr results in affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. If you remain with them, you will be blessed with an affinity similar to theirs.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* said with reference to a very senior scholar: "Such and such Maulānā Sāḥib speaks a lot. However, inshā Allāh, now he will not speak." Subsequently, we personally heard that Maulānā saying: "I really do want to speak but I feel as though someone is holding my tongue." He was a great orator but after Hadrat [Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*] said this, he stopped talking completely.

Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*] had sealed his speech in order to create a special spiritual condition within him. This is because there is a vast difference between the spoken word and a spiritual condition. The true heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are those who combine words with spiritual conditions. They are the ones who are referred to as auliyā'.

When I came to Allāhābād the first time, the blessing which I received is that I heard someone saying: "There will come a time when words will be like those of the Prophets but actions will be like the Pharaohs." I cannot describe the immense benefit I got from this statement. What a unique statement!

If you understand it, you would have understood something really great. If you do not understand it, then the greatest of statements will be nothing for you.

Note: I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to bless us with understanding and insightfulness so that we can understand and appreciate the words of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*, practise on them, and become eligible for Allāh's grace. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE ʿULAMĀ' ARE THE PROTECTORS OF THE SHARĪʿAT

This voice recorder makes it easy to transcribe the lecture. This is why it is placed here. Those who are in-charge of it will transcribe the lecture later on. It had stopped working so we took it to someone who knows how to repair such items. After examining it he said: "Several parts have become weak. They will work for some time, but two parts are totally useless. They will have to be replaced although they will work for a few days." We gave him some money for the repairs. When he completed the job, he said that the money which we gave him was more than what the parts cost. He therefore returned the extra money. Had he kept the extra money for himself, we would not have known anything. Despite this, he returned the money. From this I concluded that he is an honest man.

I was travelling by rickshaw on one occasion when it stopped suddenly. When I asked what the matter was, the rickshaw driver informed me that the tyre had become punctured. I thought to myself that since the tyre has lost its air, the driver will fill it immediately. But he took it to some place where they fill air. He said to the man there: "The tyre is punctured, kindly fill it with air." The man inflated the tyre and the rickshaw continued on its way.

I concluded the following from this incident: When a tyre of a rickshaw loses air, it cannot move. When it is filled with air, it will move once again. It requires someone to fill the air in the tyre. In the same way, we have lost our air and we are in need of someone to fill it. As long as we do not go to the person who can

fill the air, this defect will remain in us. The air which we need is īmān, and we can only obtain it from those who are filled with īmān. Everyone is in need of such people.

Listen! Directly across this house assemblies are held wherein Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* are denigrated and criticized. The people there claim that these two personalities went against their mentor, Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. They produce books to back their claims. However, look at the honorific manner in which Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* addresses Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. He writes in one letter:

> The fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat, the Muhaddith Gangohī…

If Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* himself says that Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is the fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat, and a Muhaddith, how can anyone claim that he differed with his mentor!? Furthermore, there is no limit to how much Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to respect Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

I say, your views with regard to such great personalities hold no weight at all. As for the one whose view we can take into consideration, he refers to him as:

> The fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat, the Muhaddith Gangohī…

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a decisive verdict which silences the opposition! (compiler)

On one occasion, the very same people across the road were saying to the public about me: "Do not go to him; your Dīn will get spoilt." They said many other things. I thought to myself, after hearing all these things about me, very few people will come to me in the morning. However, when it was the time to conduct my morning assembly, I noticed that there were even more than normal people. I then explained to them that these personalities [Ḥaḍrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* and Ḥaḍrat Gangohī *raḥimahullāh*] did not go against their mentor. Ḥaḍrat Gangohī was an erudite scholar. Every murīd has the right to say to his shaykh if he sees in the latter something which is against the Sharīʿat. Even when he does this, it does not mean that the murīd no longer remains his murīd. I also said to them that there is one singular thing which will expel a murīd from his shaykh, and that is when he has evil beliefs about his shaykh. This is a matter of the Sharīʿat. Go to the madāris and look at the books of jurisprudence. You will find Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* holding a view on a certain issue while Imām Abū Yūsuf *raḥimahullāh* and Imām Muḥammad *raḥimahullāh* who were his students having a different view on the same issue. Despite this, they are not removed from the body of Ḥanafīs. Instead, they are collectively known as Ḥanafīs.

The following rule can be extracted from the above: If a murīd differs with his shaykh on a certain issue, he does not leave the circle of being a murīd as long as his beliefs are in order. This applies even if the shaykh becomes angry with him and expels him. Because he has no evil beliefs about his shaykh, he will not leave his circle. The shaykh too will become pleased with him. If he is not pleased with him in

this world, he will certainly be pleased with him in the Hereafter.

I am explaining this point to show that Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* is a murīd of Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* and has full confidence in him. Why, then, are you discussing these issues? After all, even Imām Abū Yūsuf *raḥimahullāh* and Imām Muhammad *raḥimahullāh* differed with Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* on certain issues.

Take *Tirmidhī Sharīf* as another example. Imām Tirmidhī *raḥimahullāh* was a student of Imām Bukhārī *raḥimahullāh*. He was no ordinary student. Imām Bukhārī *raḥimahullāh* said to him: "I benefited more from you than what you did from me." Despite this, we find Imām Tirmidhī *raḥimahullāh* differing with Imām Bukhārī *raḥimahullāh* on certain issues. We learn from this that a student can differ with his teacher, and so can a murīd with his shaykh.

If a shaykh does not know a ruling of the Sharīʿat, he will revert to his murīd. I personally observed this in Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. 'Ulamā' such as Maulānā ʿAbd al-Karīm Sāhib used to be with him. He would say to them: "Look for this ruling in the books." They would find the ruling and present it to Hadrat. He would say to them: "Brother, I am gone old now. This is why I need people like you."

A shaykh also needs to know certain rulings. If his eyesight is gone weak or cannot refer to books himself due to some reason, he will ask others. In fact, it is his duty to ask. We constantly see our seniors reverting to their murīds for certain rulings. Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* also used to ask rulings from his murīds. And look at how he addresses Hadrat Gangohī *raḥimahullāh*:

> The fountain of the sciences of the Sharīʿat and Ṯarīqat, the Muḥaddith Gangohī…

There was a saint who listened to samāʿ. He became so entranced that he lost his perception for three days. Despite this, when it was the time of ṣalāh, he would perform wuḍū' and perform his ṣalāh while paying careful attention to the number of rakʿats. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā used to say with reference to him: "He was slightly unconscious from this side, but not unconscious in the least as regards his ṣalāh. He was particular about performing the correct number of rakʿats and performed each ṣalāh at its appointed time."

The condition of people in those times was really amazing. They were so much immersed in Allāh's love that they appeared to be unconscious. At the same time, they were so vigilant about following the Sharīʿat that they did not allow themselves to miss a single ṣalāh. This was really their remarkable achievement in being able to combine love for the Sharīʿat, and recognition of the injunctions of the Sharīʿat.

I had quoted a couplet on this subject. Subsequently, a person came to me and said: "You quoted a couplet. I remember the first half of it but not the second. Tell me what it is." [It translates as follows]:

> To have the goblet of the Sharīʿat in one hand and the anvil of love in the other, and to play with both is not the work of every curious person.

The man said to me: "I remember the words 'To have the goblet of the Sharīʿat in one hand and the anvil of

love in the other,' but not the second part. I then quoted it to him.

An anvil is made of iron. It is so tough that other strong metals are placed on it and straightened. On the other hand, a goblet is extremely delicate because it is made of glass. If it slips and falls, it breaks into smithereens. The Sharīʿat is compared to a goblet while love is compared to an anvil. To play with these two is certainly no easy task and cannot be done by anyone and everyone.

Note: Māshā Allāh, our ʿulamā' of Deoband possess this comprehensiveness on the level of perfection. May Allāh *taʿālā* increase it. Āmīn. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that saintliness is tough like steel while the Sharīʿat is extremely delicate. What this means is that if a saint is overtaken by his emotions and says "I am the truth," "Glory to me! Look at how great I am!" or statements of this nature, his saintliness will remain intact. On the other hand, when it comes to matters of the Sharīʿat, a person has to worry about what is lawful and what is not at every step of the way. If he merely steps out of the limits of the Sharīʿat, the ʿulamā' will issue fatāwā against him. It is their responsibility to issue verdicts against a person who transgresses the Sharīʿat even in the least. This is because the ʿulamā' are the protectors of the Sharīʿat. If they do not carry out this responsibility, they will be questioned about it.

Note: It is the responsibility of the masses to pay heed to the ʿulamā'. If not they will lose in this world and in the Hereafter. We are observing this nowadays. To Allāh alone is our complaint. (compiler)

In our times, there was no one greater than Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī *rahimahullāh*] as regards the sciences of the Sharīʿat. All the fatāwā which used to come were not considered to be reliable without his signature. He had all the rulings in his memory. It is ʿulamā' like this who are the protectors of the Sharīʿat.

This point was mentioned by the way. I was speaking about that saint who had listened to samāʿ and lost consciousness for three days. Everyone also concluded that he lost consciousness. When he came to his senses after three days, he asked his murīds: "Did I perform my salāhs?" They informed him that he did. He did not suffice with this answer. He wrote to one of his khulafā' and asked: "I performed my salāhs in this condition. Are they valid?"

He wrote back: "The fact of the matter is that the salāhs which Hadrat performed in that condition are valid because Hadrat's heart was completely cut off from this world. The presence of heart and proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* which Hadrat must have experienced at that time is beyond doubt. Hadrat's salāhs are therefore valid. However, out of consideration to the Sharīʿat, I think they should be repeated."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful reply! The Sufis were really impressed by his reply because the respect of his shaykh was given full consideration and the order of the Sharīʿat was also explained. He asked him to repeat his salāhs because his condition was similar to a condition of unconsciousness. Salāhs which are performed while in a state of unconsciousness are not fulfilled. They have to be repeated.

The Sharīʿat rules over everyone

We learn from this that an order of the Sharīʿat can be taught to one's shaykh. This is because the Sharīʿat rules over everyone. The murīd needs it and so does the shaykh. Thus, if Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* or Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* said something [to Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*], they explained a ruling of the Sharīʿat. Their objective was to preserve the Sharīʿat and not to differ with Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*.

It is stated in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* that when Ḥaḍrat Manṣūr *raḥimahullāh* was to be arrested, he was in a room. It was through his karāmat that the room became so narrow and constricted that his arrestors wanted to pull him out of the room but they couldn't. Ḥaḍrat Junayd *raḥimahullāh* happened to come there and said to him: "You will have to accept the divine decree which has been written for you and come out." He came out of his room and was then put to the gallows.

I was reading to you a letter of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* from the *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*. Ḥaḍrat Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* must have written something about certain Sufis to which Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* wrote:

> The shaykh is a pious and reliable scholar and dervish. There is no doubt about his statement. However, when a seeker experiences a spiritual condition through the manifestation of Allāh *taʿālā*, he considers himself to be the promised Mahdī. This is why many saints made claims to being the Mahdī. The reality is

that they erred in this regard. In such a situation, he is rescued from this error through the focus of his shaykh and progresses to the next station. If a seeker is a qualified scholar, he must measure his conditions against the Sharīʿat and continue on his path. It is possible that one of these saints experienced this condition and therefore assumed that he was the promised Mahdī. And his followers, because of their sincerity and devotion, believe him to be such. No matter what, there is certainly truthfulness in him even though he committed an error due to human constraints. When man reaches a certain level, it is inevitable for him to err. Nonetheless, I will ask that saint to make duʿā' for you and your associates. I am quite weak at present and also ill, I will therefore not be able to go to ʿArafāt for the hajj this year. However, I will – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – not be deprived of spiritual presence. I thanked Allāh *taʿālā* profusely after hearing about your internal spiritual conditions. May Allāh *taʿālā* elevate your rank, take you closer to Him and make it a means for the salvation of unworthy people like us.[1]

Look! Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* is saying that if a person is a qualified ʿālim, he must measure his conditions against the Sharīʿat. We learn from this that it is essential to weigh ourselves against the

[1] *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*, vol. 1, p. 8.

Sharīʿat in every condition. Every word, action and condition will have to be presented to the Sharīʿat. If it is in line with the Sharīʿat, it will be accepted. If not, it will be rejected.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent clarification by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This demonstrates his affinity with the Tarīqat. (compiler)

I wrote an article on the theme of progressing from the path of humaneness. The people were quite impressed by it. Maulānā Muhammad Miyā Fārūqī Allāhābādī Sāhib was also speaking about it yesterday. Let me relate an incident which is connected to this subject.

It is written in *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm* that a person used to get angry and wanted to have this ailment treated. To do this, he employed an uncouth man who was always prone to anger. He used to pay him so that he may display his rudeness and anger. In turn, he will become angry at him, suppress his emotions, and warn his carnal self saying: "Others must be offended by your anger just as you are offended by his anger. Others must also be inconvenienced and pained by you." The man rectified his anger in this way.

Look at how he rectified his anger and reached Allāh *taʿālā* in this way. He made his own anger a means to reaching Allāh *taʿālā*. This was no ordinary feat. This too is included in the progress of humaneness because anger is intrinsic to humans. If a person maintains it within the limits of the Sharīʿat and rectifies it, it is also a high form of worship. Eating and drinking are, nonetheless, from among the intrinsic requirements of mankind. I spoke something about this as well. I related the following Hadīth in this regard:

وأخرج أبو داؤد في السنن بإسناد حسن عن سعد بن معاذ عن ابن أنس عن أبيه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: من أكل طعاما ثم قال اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِّنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ، غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.[1]

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When a person completes eating and says:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِّنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā for having fed me this food and provided it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

Then his past sins are forgiven.

The person who wears a garment and makes this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ كَسَانِيْ هٰذَا الّلِبَاسَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِّنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā for having clothed me this garment and provided it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

Then his past sins are forgiven.

ʿAllāmah Shāmī *raḥimahullāh* relates that Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan said: I noticed Anas ibn Mālik *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* eating various types of food in large amounts, and then vomiting it. He used to benefit from it and say:

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[1] سنن أبي داؤد: ص ٥٥٨.

واتخاذ الأطعمة سرف إلا إذا قصد قوة الطاعة أو دعوة الأضياف قوما بعد قوم.

It is extravagance to prepare several types of dishes unless they are consumed to gain strength for Allāh's obedience or for the feeding of guests one after the other.

A person should therefore make the intention of gaining strength for worship when he eats. He will be classified as an obedient servant. He says further on:

ولا يقصد به التلذذ والتنعم، فإن الله تعالى ذم الكافرين بأكلهم للتمتع والتنعم.

A servant should not eat with the intention of enjoyment and gratification because Allāh taʿālā castigates the unbelievers for eating in this way.

We learn from this that eating must be for the sake of obtaining strength to worship Allāh *taʿālā*. It must not be for enjoyment and self-gratification. Allāh *taʿālā* castigates the unbelievers for eating with this intention. I recall Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* quoting this couplet:

> The one who was brought up in the lap of luxury cannot reach the Beloved. Only a person who bore hardships and difficulties can remain firm on the path of love.

The Qur'ān repeatedly speaks out against revelling in luxuries and comforts. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

ذَرْهُمْ يَاْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ

Leave them to eat and enjoy themselves, and to be preoccupied by hope. Soon they shall come to know.[1]

كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ.

Eat and enjoy [yourselves] for a short while. You are certainly sinners.[2]

قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوْا فَاِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ اِلَى النَّارِ

Say: Enjoy yourselves. You will then have to return to the fire.[3]

وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَتَمَتَّعُوْنَ وَيَاْكُلُوْنَ كَمَا تَاْكُلُ الْاَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ.

As for those who are unbelievers, they are enjoying themselves and eating as animals eat. And the fire is their abode.[4]

Look how severely Allāh *taʿālā* reprimands the unbelievers for revelling in luxuries and comforts. This is because enjoyment was the objective of their life. If a believer too does not have the intention of gaining strength for worship from his eating and drinking, he will also be reprimanded. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says:

> Food is provided so that man may live and engage in Allāh's remembrance. While you have this belief that this life is solely for eating and drinking.

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[1] Sūrah al-Hijr, 15: 3.

[2] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 46.

[3] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 30.

[4] Sūrah Muhammad, 47: 12.

This is a very powerful theme. Try to understand it if you can. When an unbeliever eats, he does it to obtain enjoyment. His eating is therefore included in his unbelief. Because unbelief is his aim, he is giving strength to his unbelief through his pleasures and enjoyments. On the other hand, īmān is the aim for all the actions of a Muslim. By eating and drinking to obtain strength for worship, he is actually increasing his īmān. There is obviously a glaring difference between the two.

Let me tell you one more thing in order to make you understand. If you eat with the intention of worship, then whatever enjoyment you experience in the food will not come to an end. Whether you intend it or not, it will be acquired by you. Why, then, do you not make it your objective? Enjoyment and pleasure should not be your objective. This is an excellent theme to create cognition. If you ponder over it, you will certainly acquire Allāh-recognition.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* advises us to ponder over this subject. (compiler)

It is stated in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm* that if accumulating wealth is for the sake of contentment of the heart, then it is not necessary for tawakkul (reliance on Allāh *ta'ālā*) to remain. He then quotes an incident of Hadrat Bishr *rahimahullāh*. One of his companions, Husayn Maghāzilī, relates: "I was sitting with him one afternoon. A middle-aged man entered. He had a wheat complexion and hollow cheeks. Hadrat Bishr stood up to receive the man. I never saw him standing up for anyone before this. He then gave me a handful of dirhams and said to me: 'Go and buy the best food which you can with this money.' This

too was the first time I saw him asking anyone to buy food."

"I brought the food and Bishr sat with the man and partook of the meal. I never saw Bishr sitting with anyone before this. When everyone finished eating, there was still a considerable amount of food left over. The man gathered all the food, packed it, wrapped it in a cloth, carried it and departed."

"I was astonished at this and was not happy by his action. Hadrat Bishr said to me: 'You probably dislike this action of his.' I said: 'He took the left over food without permission and left!? This is obviously an offensive action.'"

"Hadrat Bishr said: 'That was my brother Fath Mosulī who came today from Mosul to visit me. (Mosul was very far from where they were. The man arrived in a supernatural way). He came to teach us that when there is true reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, there is no harm in storing anything.'"

Glory to Allāh! Look at how subtle and intricate their teachings are! Deep understanding and insight are needed to understand them correctly. Hadrat Fath Mosulī took the left over food with him to teach Hadrat Bishr this ruling of the Tarīqat that after acquiring firmness in reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, there is no harm in storing things and it does not negate tawakkul. This is because when such people's gaze turns away from the means and focuses on the Creator of the means, then even when they adopt the means, their focus does not shift away in the least from Allāh *taʿālā*.

The saints say that the highest level of tawakkul is to have total reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* despite adopting the means. This was the nature of the tawakkul of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He used to adopt the means while having his focus and gaze completely on Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained most enlightening and beneficial themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand them and put them into practice. Āmīn. (compiler)

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* says: The Hadīth states:

العلماء ورثة الأنبياء.

The ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets.

Who does it refer to; the auliyā' or the jurists? The answer is that it refers to practising ʿulamā',

لجمعهم في الإرث بين القال والحال.

Because they combine words with actions.

Now when we talk about practical application, the masses get angry at us and want to know why we speak about this. Whereas I am actually quoting the words of Shaykh Akbar Muhīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī to you. The real heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are these very ʿulamā' who combine words with actions. Their inheritance is not restricted to words but extends to actions and conditions as well. This is how the ʿulamā' of the past were. That is, they combined words with actions. They also emulated Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in his character and mannerisms. Later on, the majority of people lagged behind in actions and conditions. They had knowledge but not actions. Such ʿulamā' are not worthy of being referred to as heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

We learn from the above that if there are only words without actions, then this is misguidance. The ʿulamā' and Sufis noticed that this special quality of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was disappearing from the people. If nothing was done to preserve it, the very essence of Dīn will cease to exist and misguidance will become common. They went into deep discussions on this issue. Today words are considered to be everything, while people know nothing about actions and conditions.

I was going from my hometown to Thānah Bhawan, and intended proceeding for hajj from there. I met a student along the way. Whenever we stopped at a station and I needed water, he would run and bring it for me. He did his utmost to help and serve me in whatever way he could. I asked him: "Where are you going to?" He replied: "I am going to Madrasah Mazāhir al-ʿUlūm, Sahāranpūr." When we reached the Sahāranpūr station and he was about to bid me farewell, he said: "I am fully aware of the condition of your journey. When you go there [Makkah], you must make duʿā' that I become an expert orator."

I thought to myself, he is asking me to make duʿā' that he becomes an orator, but not for the acquisition of knowledge and practice. Nonetheless, I made duʿā' for him.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Anwar Shāh Sāhib Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* used to speak about an illustrious Muhaddith. When he reached there [Makkah], he made duʿā' that he must be able to follow the Sunnat. There were others with him. They made duʿā' that they become hāfiz, but he only made duʿā' to be able to follow the Sunnat. Anyway, that student requested me to make duʿā' for him. I remembered him when I reached Makkah and made this duʿā' for him. I was still astonished that at a place where duʿā's are accepted, he did not ask me to make duʿā' that he dies on īmān. He ought to have

asked me to make duʿā' for the acquisition of knowledge and steadfastness on the Sharīʿat.

When I returned from hajj, I learnt that the student passed away not long after that and could not even reach the time when he could deliver lectures. Had he remained alive, he probably would have learnt to deliver lectures. Nonetheless, I ask, even if someone did become an expert orator, of what benefit would that be? A mere lecture which is devoid of action has no benefit apart from making the masses your followers. You will derive no benefit from this in the Hereafter. Understand this well.

If you are irked by what I said, you may continue being so. The fact remains that for you to be an heir of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, words alone are not enough. It is essential for you to couple your words with action as was the case with our pious predecessors. That is, they combined words with actions.

Shaykh Yāfiʿī *raḥimahullāh* was an erudite scholar. He was asked: "Is a karāmat similar to magic? What is the distinguishing point between the two?" He replied: "The difference between the two is that magic can be performed by flagrant sinners, atheists and unbelievers. A karāmat can only be performed by a person who is steeped in his adherence to the Sharīʿat.

أما الكرامات فلا يظهر إلا على يد من بالغ في اتباع الشريعة حتى يبلغ الغاية. فهذا هو الفارق بينهما.

Look! This is what your scholars and Sufis are saying. A person who is at the peak in his strict adherence to the Sharīʿat is the only one who can

perform a karāmat. In other words, it is a prerequisite for a walī to adhere strictly to the Sharīʿat. Despite this, we see that let alone following the Sharīʿat, a person who goes around naked is believed to be a walī. On the other hand, if there is an ʿālim who follows the Sharīʿat and does not transgress its limits is not even thought of being a walī. In fact, people believe that such a person can never be a walī. The scholars have gone into powerful discussions and investigations on the issue of wilāyat and karāmat. This is why we are speaking about this topic to you. If these things are not even mentioned to you, knowledge of them will come to an end.

Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh* was an esteemed scholar. He displayed the greatness of the Sharīʿat. He said that the most essential thing after Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the most blessed thing for those who come after him is that it is the responsibility of the ʿulamā' to preserve the Sharīʿat. It is really scholars like these who preserve the Sharīʿat.

I say to you, it is necessary for everyone to practise on the Sharīʿat – the ʿulamā' and the masses. However, preserving the knowledge of the Sharīʿat is the responsibility of the ʿulamā'. Just as *tabarrukāt* (items of blessings of the pious) are preserved, the Sharīʿat ought to be considered to be a *tabarruk* and be preserved and protected. If the ʿulamā' do not preserve it, knowledge of the Sharīʿat will depart and their names will be struck off from the register of ʿulamā'.

A man from Jaunpūr was invited by some people to a certain place. He was extremely happy with them and said: "Go, I have pardoned all of you – the living and the dead." When I heard about this, I said: "How can

you pardon the sins of the living and the dead? You can have only your own sins pardoned. Who are you to pardon the sins which they committed against Allāh *taʿālā*? Their flagrant sinning and immorality can only be pardoned through repentance. You do not have the power to pardon them. Of what benefit, then, is the pardon which you extended to them?" The masses were overjoyed that he pardoned them their sins. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such statements and beliefs.

The sign of an unaccepted seeker

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said:

> The sign of an unaccepted seeker is that he does not give even one percent importance to the obligatory salāhs as he does to the different forms of dhikr taught by the Sufis.

When the accursed Shaytān takes control of this cursed group and moves it very far away from the straight path, these people consider the obligatory salāh to be like a tax which is given to the ruler. They feel that the time which was spent in performing salāh went to waste. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

He says further on, this is the condition of those who claim to be Muslims. I am not even talking about those who are out of the circle of Islam. It is most astonishing that these claimants to Islam consider the obligatory salāh to be like a tax which is given to the ruler, and the time which is spent in performing it to have gone to waste. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Note: The proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* which is realized through obligatory actions is superior to the one

which is achieved through optional actions. Obligatory actions play a major role in the acquisition of wilāyat. Yes, one has to be particular about optional actions as well so that he gains proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and reaches a special level of wilāyat. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ حَصِّنْ فَرْجِيْ وَيَسِّرْ لِيْ اَمْرِيْ.

O Allāh! Safeguard my private part [from shameful things] and make easy for me all my matters.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ تَمَامَ الْوُضُوْءِ وَتَمَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَتَمَامَ رِضْوَانِكَ وَتَمَامَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You for perfection in wudū', perfection in salāh, Your absolute pleasure and Your total forgiveness.

The order to perform salāh is in the Qur'ān, and so is the order to perform wudū'. Just as verses were revealed with reference to salāh, so were they revealed with reference to wudū'. Therefore, the importance which is shown to salāh will have to be shown to wudū' as well. Wudū' is a Sunnat of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. Wudū' is a purification for salāh. It is through wudū' that we enter salāh. The level of the wudū' will dictate the level of a person's salāh. If the wudū' is perfect, the salāh will be perfect. If the wudū' is defective, so will be the salāh. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* first asked for perfection in wudū':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ تَمَامَ الْوُضُوْءِ

O Allāh! I ask You for perfection in wudū'.

He then followed it by:

وَتَمَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ

…perfection in salāh.

After asking for perfection in wudū' and salāh, he said:

وَتَمَامَ رِضْوَانِكَ

Your absolute pleasure…

And:

وَتَمَامَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ

Your total forgiveness.

Look at how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is asking for perfection in everything – forgiveness, pleasure, salāh and wudū'. We learn from this that perfection in wudū' is required just as perfection in salāh is required. We will therefore have to give the same importance to wudū' as we do to salāh. We will also order the performance of both in the same way.

There are some people who are rejecting wudū'. They claim that there was a need for wudū' in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* because the Arabs were shepherds. They used to live in dusty and dirty conditions, so they had to perform wudū'. On the other hand, we live in palatial homes, we do not become dusty and dirty; so there is no need to perform wudū'. These people want to express their own views in opposition to the Qur'ān. There are explicit verses of the Qur'ān on the obligation of wudū'. These cannot be abrogated or cancelled by your own opinions. Yes, when a person cannot

perform wudū' [for certain reasons as explained in the books of jurisprudence], he is required to perform tayammum. The same level of purity is acquired through tayammum as from wudū'. How, then, can you exercise your own logic!?

Total purity is achieved through tayammum

A saint fell ill. It was permissible for him to perform tayammum. He didn't have to perform wudū' but he continued doing so. He said to the doctor: "I will agree to your treatment on two conditions: (1) I will not consume bitter and awful-tasting medicines. (2) I will not give up performing wudū'." The doctor replied: "I will prescribe very light and tasty medicines for you." After some time, the doctor said to him: "When does the verse which makes reference to the performance of tayammum apply, and in which situations?" The doctor had posed this question in a very respectful manner to the saint. He therefore began performing tayammum.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were overjoyed when the verse on tayammum was revealed. They said to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*: "O family of Abū Bakr! Your blessings are immense." The verse which makes reference to tayammum was revealed when Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* had lost her necklace. Searching for it resulted in the salāh being delayed. The order to perform tayammum was revealed. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* realized the value of tayammum, expressed their happiness and said to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*: "O Abū Bakr! Allāh *taʿālā* has made things easy for us because of you and your family."

It is not right to decrease the value of anything. One should neither have doubts about wudū' nor

tayammum. Both are the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* and purity is acquired from both.

There was a saint who used to perform wuḍū' but not tayammum. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* went to him and said: "You consider tayammum to be a defective form of acquiring purity. You do not believe it to be equal to wuḍū'. If you think about it, you will come to this conclusion." What he meant was that tayammum is a complete purity just as wuḍū' is. When you cannot perform wuḍū' then perform tayammum. The saint then began performing tayammum.

We perform wuḍū' and tayammum after believing both to be the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*. When we perform wuḍū', we experience a type of purity in our heart. The same can be said of tayammum.

Look at the extent of importance Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is giving to wuḍū':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ تَمَامَ الْوُضُوْءِ

O Allāh! I ask You for perfection in wuḍū'.

In the same duʿā' Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is asking for total forgiveness, perfect pleasure, perfect ṣalāh and perfect wuḍū'. This also demonstrates the importance of wuḍū' and ṣalāh. The scholars explained the importance of these acts in their respective eras.

سألني رجل شيخ في المنام فقال أي شيء يتقرب به العبد إلى الله. فقلت لذلك ابتداء وانتهاء. فابتداؤه الورع. وانتهاؤه الرضاء التسليم والتوكل.

A person asked me in a dream: "What is the thing through which a person can get close to Allāh ta'ālā?" I replied: "There is a beginning and an end for that. The beginning is asceticism and piety (which is another name for abstention from prohibited and disliked actions). Its end is accepting the decree of Allāh ta'ālā and placing one's trust in Him.

I now explain what comes after that.

The importance of obligatory actions

A believer must first occupy himself in the obligatory actions. When he completes them, he may carry out the Sunnat actions and then the supererogatory actions. He adds:

فلما لم يفرغ من الفرائض فالاشتغال بالسنن حمق ورعونة، والنوافل قبل الفرائض لم يقبل منه وأهين.

If he has not completed the obligatory actions and occupies himself in the Sunnat actions, then this is foolishness and stupidity. Supererogatory actions before the obligatory ones will not be accepted. Instead, the person will be disgraced (because supererogatory actions are for the completion and perfection of obligatory actions; they are not the actual actions).

Giving up the unlawful is also obligatory

He writes further:

فمن الفرائض ترك الحرام والشرك بالله عز وجل في خلقه والاعتراض عليه في قدره وقضاءه.

Giving up the unlawful is from among the obligatory actions. The same can be said of ascribing partners

with Allāh taʿālā, and making objections against His decrees.

وإجابة الخلق وطاعته والاعتراض عن أمر الله وطاعته قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الله.[1]

Obeying the creation and turning away from the order of Allāh taʿālā and His obedience also entails disobedience to Allāh taʿālā. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Obedience to the creation is not permitted if it entails disobedience to Allāh taʿālā.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* says:

ما كان معجزة لنبي جاز أن يكون كرامة لولي بحكم التبع لا بحكم الاستقلال.

A miracle of a Prophet can be a karāmat for a walī, but this will be subservient to the miracle and not independent of it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an essential condition he attached to it! May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. Āmīn. (compiler)

He then states:

وبالجملة فمن عاشر الصالحين بالصدق وخالطهم رأى كراماتهم عيانا.

To sum up, the person who lives with the righteous and intermingles with them with sincerity and devotion will see their karāmāt with his own eyes.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٤٣٢.

Note: Although people remain in the company of the righteous, they are deprived of the promised benefits because they are generally not sincere in it. A poet says:

> O Farīd! Have a genuine and sincere intention, and you will acquire the key to cognition.

People reject the karāmāt of the saints of their time

Some people accept the karāmāt of the saints of the past but not of the saints of their time. These people are like the Jews of the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They believed in the miracles of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* because they did not see him, but rejected the miracles of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* because they saw him. They rejected him out of jealousy and enmity. There are times when people reject because of jealousy and enmity. Then there are some who believe that there are auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* in this time but they do not believe in any specific person because if they do, they will have to submit before him. This is why people in general do not believe in a specific walī. He says in this regard:

هذا محروم من جميع الإمداد في عصره.

Such a person is deprived of all help in his time.

What this means is that he is already deprived of the blessings of those whom he does not attest to or believe in. He is also deprived of the blessings of those whom he believes in the sense that he is deprived completely of Allāh's help. Just think about what he is saying! Rejecting a certain walī causes one

to be deprived of the blessings of all the auliyā'. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Bāyazīd Busṭāmī *raḥimahullāh* said: "Even if you see a person flying you must not be deceived by him until you see him firm in carrying out orders, abstaining from prohibitions and remaining within the boundaries of the Sharīʿat."

It is stated in *Futūḥāt*: "If a person comes to you in your dream and informs you that you have reached Allāh *taʿālā* so there is no need for you to do any good actions anymore, you must never believe him."

Shaykh states in *Futūḥāt* that the person who strives to understand the mysteries of the Sharīʿat and solve the terminologies of the Sharʿī sciences must leave his intelligence and personal opinions aside, and make the Sharīʿat of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* his guide.

Kashf which is against the Sharīʿat has to be cast aside

He states further: If a person experiences a kashf (exposition) which makes lawful something which unlawful in the Sharīʿat of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then he must cast aside his kashf. It is obligatory on him not to act on it and obligatory to revert to the ruling of the Sharīʿat in that regard. All those who experience kashf concur that after the end of prophet-hood with Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, no one has the right to proclaim anything as lawful or unlawful. The author goes at length in explaining this theme.

He then says: "O my brothers! You must be vigilant and safeguard yourself against the evils of kashf. I have desired your wellbeing and fulfilled my duty."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful piece of advice! Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

An incident related to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī

Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* relates his personal incident. He says: "A brilliant light appeared before me. It had covered the entire horizon. I then saw an image within that light. It addressed me saying: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! I am your lord. I have withdrawn all obligations from you. If you want, you may worship me. If you do not want, you do not have to worship me. The choice is yours.'"

"When I heard this, I said: 'Get away from me, you cursed one!' The moment I said this, the light turned into darkness and the image turned to smoke and disappeared. The cursed one then addressed me: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! You saved yourself from me because you have knowledge of the injunctions of your Sustainer, and you are fully aware of your conditions. I had deluded 70 people of the Tarīqat through a similar incident.'"

Someone asked Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir *rahimahullāh*: "How did you recognize that this was Shaytān?" He replied: "He was making lawful something which Allāh *taʿālā* had made unlawful through Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is not the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to make something prohibited to His Prophets and then to secretly make it lawful to a specific servant. Allāh *taʿālā* never does this; it is against His norm."

Saintliness cannot be acquired by discarding the Sharīʿat

Did you see!? This was the blessing of following the Sharīʿat. Hadrat Shaykh Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* had

acquired a correct understand of Dīn and was on an upright spiritual condition. This is why Shaytān could not influence him in any way. The Sharīʿat came from Allāh *taʿālā* and was revealed to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If you cast it aside and search for saintliness you will never find it. Allāh *taʿālā* can only be reached through the Sharīʿat and salvation in the Hereafter will be gained by following it alone. The Sharīʿat is the most essential thing. If you hold on to the Sharīʿat you will find the Tarīqat as well. After all, the Tarīqat refers to a spiritual condition. If you do good actions, you will develop that spiritual condition.

We learn from the above incident that because the belief of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* was firm and he was always conscious of the Sharīʿat, he identified the confusion which Shaytān tried to cause. If something has been made unlawful by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, how can it become lawful after him? For example, salāh is obligatory. If someone claims that this obligation has fallen off, his claim will not be considered. Belief in the obligation of salāh and carrying it out will apply to every person until the day of Resurrection.

As for the 70 people whom Shaytān had misled, they did not know that the right to make something lawful or unlawful is not enjoyed by anyone after the Prophet *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The obligations of the Sharīʿat will not fall off the shoulders of any person. Because those 70 persons were not firm in their belief, they succumbed to the trap of Shaytān. They assumed that they have reached perfection, so they do not have to do anything now. Consequently, they are destined for the Hell-fire.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* would repeatedly relate the following incident. There was a "saint" in whom all people except one believed. When he woke up for tahajjud and placed his hand on the water-jug to perform wudū', the man [who did not believe in him] stood before him. He asked: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am Jibraʾīl's brother. I have come to you to inform you that Allāh *taʿālā* has accepted your worship. He has now absolved you of all acts of worship. Now there is no need for you to perform salāh."

The moment he heard this, he moved his hand away from the water-jug and went back to sleep without even performing two rakʿats in gratitude [for this glad tiding]. He used to lead the people in salāh in the masjid. At fajr time, the congregation waited for quite some time but he did not turn up. The people eventually performed their salāh. They then proceeded to his house, called out to him but he did not reply. They removed the door and went inside. They found him sitting. They asked him: "Hadrat, why didn't you come for the fajr salāh today?" He replied after much hesitation: "The brother of Jibraʾīl came to me in the course of the night and informed me that all my acts of worship have been accepted; there is no need for me to perform salāh."

Those who had believed in him remained silent, but the man who had done this burst out laughing. The people concluded that he was behind this mischief and they realized that the "saint" was a foolish worshipper and nothing more. A poet rightly said:

> The end of an ignorant person is the Hell-fire because you will rarely find an ignorant person having a good end.

A LECTURE OF RASŪLULLĀH ﷺ

عن العرباض بن سارية رضي الله عنه قال صلى بنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم ثم أقبل علينا بوجهه فوعظنا موعظة بليغة زرفت منها العيون ووجلت منها القلوب. فقال رجل يا رسول الله، كأن هذه موعظة مودع فأوصنا. فقال أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة وإن كان عبدا حبشيا، فإنه من يعش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا، فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين. تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ، وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة. رواه أحمد.[1]

Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam delivered a very comprehensive lecture to us. Our hearts trembled by it and our eyes shed tears. We said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! This seems to be the admonition of a person bidding farewell. So advise us.' He said: 'I advise you to constantly fear Allāh, and to listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave were to rule over you. Whoever remains alive from among you [after me], will witness many differences of opinion. You should therefore hold on firmly to my Sunnat and the way of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold on to it with the molars. Beware of introducing new things into the religion. Surely every innovation is deviation."

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٠.

A treatment for protection against tribulations

While explaining the above Hadīth, some scholars say that it means: The person who accepts my advice of holding on firmly to Allāh-consciousness, obedience to the ruler and abstaining from corruption and sedition; he will remain in peace notwithstanding the severe differences, many conflicting views and the proliferation of tribulations after me.

Another scholar by the name of Sayyid Jalāl ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh* says that the essence of this Hadīth is this: Listen attentively to my advice and practise on it with a genuine heart. Major tribulations will come after me. The one who is alive at that time will witness them. There is no way for him to protect himself against them apart from paying heed to my advice.

I say, it is probably for this reason that after saying: "hold on firmly", Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "hold on to it with the molars". This is the only way to escape tribulations, viz. holding on to the Sunnat.

Note: Unfortunately no one is told this nor is anyone – the public and the elite – prepared to pay heed. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The ʿulamā' mention some other points. They are certainly correct in this regard. The author of *Mirqāt* writes that the emphasis on following the Sunnat is absolutely correct because:

تحصيل السعادات الحقيقية بعد مجانبة كل صاحب يفسد الوقت، وكل سبب يفتن القلب منوط باتباع السنة.

The acquisition of true happiness is attached to following the Sunnat provided two other points are given due importance. One is to keep away from every such person who will waste your time. The other is to abstain from every cause which would tempt the heart.

I say, the two are one. In other words, an evil friend who wastes your time is one of the major causes of tempting the heart. Just as a bad friend corrupts your time, he corrupts your heart as well.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a very useful piece of advice. (compiler)

The gist of the above is that this friend and companion is from among the temptations of the heart. It is extremely important to keep away from him so that success can be achieved. This entails total adherence to the Sunnat.

Before going into any further explanation of the previously-quoted Hadīth and the explanations which have been given by the scholars, I will present the gist of them. I will then explain the Hadīth further. The following principles are derived from the explanations:

1. Pious company is essential for every type of success and righteousness.
2. A pious person is he who follows the Sunnat. His friendship and enmity are both for Allāh's sake. The nucleus of this is the Sunnat and following the Sunnat.
3. On the other hand, evil company is the cause of every evil characteristic.

4. An evil person is one whose life revolves around his carnal self and following his carnal self.

The Hadīth mentions three points

The Hadīth instructs three things:

1. Choose Allāh-consciousness.
2. Obey the ruler.
3. Hold on firmly to the Sunnat at the time of disputes and differences.

Each one is extremely important, and the one which combines all is following the Sunnat. This is because Allāh-consciousness and obedience to the leader are instructions given by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. These two are thus included in his verbal Sunnats. However, they have been mentioned separately because of their importance. The fear of Allāh *taʿālā* guarantees success in the Hereafter. Obedience to the leader ensures the peaceful running of this world. The person who practises on these two pieces of advice will acquire success in both worlds.

A person will only choose Allāh-consciousness when he listens to the words of Allāh *taʿālā* and understands the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. We could rephrase this by saying: When he listens to the Qur'ān and reads it, Allāh-consciousness will develop in his heart. When Allāh-consciousness is developed in the heart, a person undoubtedly saves himself from many evils. And as per the words of the author of *Mirqāt*, the tongue of such a person now wears the reins of the Sharīʿat. This is why I say to you people, wear these reins and see how much you will be able to practise on the Sharīʿat.

An important advice of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

I have been reading this Hadīth to you for several days and explaining its themes to you. When a matter presents itself, how can a person become senseless to it? I read themes of this nature from the Qur'ān and Hadīth so that you could be consoled by them. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* referred to these pieces of advice with the word *wasīyyat*. Allāh *taʿālā* also says:

ذٰلِكُمْ وَصّٰكُمْ بِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ.

Allāh taʿālā gives you this wasīyyat so that you may understand.

When piety enters the heart, many blessings are acquired. One blessing is that man's mouth becomes shut and he is saved from many calamities. I recall an incident in this regard. A prince could not speak. The king took him on a hunting expedition. Everyone was looking for a prey. The boy's eyes suddenly fell on a buck. In his joy he spoke and said: "There it is." The king and his companions were overjoyed that the boy's speech had been restored. However, when the king returned home, he beat his son and said: "We had been begging you from so many days but you refused to speak. And when you did speak, you did it on seeing an animal!?" Consequently, the boy fell silent once again. He addressed his self: "Did you see? You uttered just three words and you were punished. If you desire your wellbeing, you better remain silent." It seems as though he was a man of Allāh *taʿālā* and was destined to become a great person.

The second point which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught us is obedience to the leader even

if he is an Abyssinian slave. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* obviously obeyed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. At the same time, they obeyed the leader whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appointed over them. They demonstrated their faultlessness in this regard. When Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was removed from the post of commander and one of his juniors was appointed, he fulfilled the duty of obedience to him.

Incidents which display obedience to the leader

There are many unique incidents from the lives of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* on this subject. They were going on jihād. They came to a river. The leader said *Bismillāh* and advanced on his horse. The entire army followed suit. The īmān of the leader was so strong and he had so much of conviction in Allāh's help that he thought to himself that since we have come for the sake of Allāh's Dīn, Allāh alone will help and protect us. After this conviction, he did not consider any difficulty to be an obstacle. The rest of the army also thought that since our leader has fulfilled his duty, we ought to follow him. The īmān of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and their obedience to the leader were matchless.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said that a certain saint used to say: When my conveyance refuses to be bridled or my wife and children do not obey my orders, I conclude that I committed an offence against Allāh's orders. A Hadīth states:

أعمالكم عمالكم

Your actions are your leaders.

This means that the nature of your actions will decide what type of people will rule over you. This is why I say, what are you going to do by becoming a senior when even juniors do not obey you? If juniors refuse to obey their seniors, and in fact, demand of the seniors to obey them, it means that the juniors have become seniors and vice versa. This is known as a reversal of roles. How, then, can rectification be realized?

There was a saint in Thānah Bhawan who used to live in a masjid. He had domesticated a few goats but they never soiled the masjid with their urine and excreta. If a goat needed to relieve itself, it would go out of the masjid.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related the incident of a man who had a horse. When he used to release it, it would go and graze on the land of the saint and nowhere else.

Piety has its effects on animals as well

Look at the level of these saints! When they adopted Allāh-consciousness then even their animals adopted clean and pure habits. From this you can gauge how pious their family members must have been. This is what we say to our people. Come and adopt piety. If we become pious, follow the Sunnat and obey the Sharīʿat; it is impossible for our children and subordinates to disobey us and not become pious. When people followed the Sunnat, their animals used to obey them.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related the story of a man who used to breed dogs. An ʿālim reprimanded him by saying that it is not permissible to breed dogs. Although there is no outright prohibition in this regard. There are instances when it is

permissible as per certain Ahādīth. The man did not argue with him. He addressed his dog: "My dear one, go away from here. Nabī Sāhib has prohibited us from breeding dogs." The moment the dog heard this, it got up and headed in a certain direction. No one ever saw it after that. Whether it went to some other place or fell and drowned – no one knew what happened to it.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that there was a saint who was sitting among his people. He was explaining to them as an example: "There are certain special servants of Allāh *taʿālā* who, if they order this mountain it will come to them (he pointed to a mountain which was in front of him)." The moment he said this, the mountain quivered and began coming towards him. When the saint saw this, he addressed it: "Stop right there! I did not call you. I am merely explaining an example to these people." Allāh *taʿālā* showed to them that it was this special servant.

Let alone animals, even inanimate things become obedient to those who are obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* and follow the Sunnat. Allāh *taʿālā* subjugates animals and inanimate things to them by virtue of their obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: There is nothing to be astonished about. This can be done as a karāmat because:

كرامة الأولياء حق

The karāmat of the auliyā' is true.

(compiler)

These were the incidents of the saints. Sometimes it happens that a person is nothing but is included

among the saints. If he says something while relying on his pious predecessors, Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils it for him. There was a man in Punjab who used to go around saying: "If I want, I can turn Lahore upside down." When a saint heard this, he said: "He is making such a weighty claim. Let me check if he is worthy of anything or not." The saint checked through his mystical gaze and concluded that he was nothing. He then said: "At least check the status of his shaykh." When he checked, he realized that the shaykh was of that level. He concluded that the man made the claim while relying on his shaykh.

I say, if a person can achieve something by placing his reliance on his shaykh, why will he not achieve it by placing his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*? Allāh *taʿālā* will certainly enable him to fulfil it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how appropriately Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* directed our focus on the power of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is certainly the rank of the men of Allāh. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

To sum up, if a Muslim reads or listens to the Qur'ān, he will acquire piety. He will then acquire many blessings through it, be saved from many evils, and then receive success and wellness in both worlds. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

I received a letter from a person who is employed in a large madrasah. He showered many praises on me. Because he has an affinity with me, he said that this place [referring to Hadrat's khānqāh] is better. However, it is not right to say such a thing because a person ought to search for a thing in the place for which it was meant to be. You cannot compare that madrasah to this place. This place was set up for the sake of rectification and people come here for this reason. Furthermore, the number of people who come here are few, so it is easy to supervise them and see to their needs. Obviously the control which we will be able to exercise here will not be possible there. His comparison of this place with that big madrasah is therefore wrong. Also, he is comparing a place with a large number of students to this place which has so few people. The students there go to seek knowledge. Where will they get the time to become occupied in dhikr and other spiritual practices!? If just their external character and habits are set right, it will be a great achievement. This is an era when people want to be free. The task of training and rectification is not so easy. This is especially so when there is such a large number of students. It is no easy task to supervise them and bring them under one's control. As long as there is no senior person who is inspired by Allāh *taʿālā*, the task or training and rectification cannot be done.

Note: Māshā Allāh, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* exposed the reality in a frank and

straightforward manner. He advised the person in an appropriate manner to abstain from comparing the two places. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. Āmīn. (compiler)

Rectification of the community is difficult

Dīn is extremely important. In today's times, it is only an expert with insight who is helped by Allāh *taʿālā* that can fulfil this task. This is provided people accept him and have the intention to learn from him. If there is an expert in this field but people have no desire whatsoever of learning from him, how will they acquire excellence and how will total rectification be realized? Just look at our times and see how delicate and fragile everything is! Look at the free-thinking of people! People are totally liberal – in their minds, knowledge and practices; in their Dīn and their worldly matters; in their character and habits and in their actions. There is freedom in everything. It is therefore not easy to convince people to adhere to rules and regulations. It is easy to collect money, it is easy to construct a madrasah; but it is extremely difficult to teach the correct Dīn to people in line with the Sharīʿat. In today's times, if even a little Dīn comes into the lives of people, it will be a great achievement. In fact, if a person just develops this much in his mind that Dīn is something which is very good, then it is a boon and we will say that at least he has īmān. If not today, there is hope for his rectification tomorrow.

Some people want the work of saints to take place in the madāris. This is very difficult. This was possible in the past when the spiritual strength of people was strong and powerful. They could work with it, the public used to pay heed to them and accept their views. That spiritual strength is not found today.

How, then, can the work be done? Whatever work is done at present and however it is done, let it continue. Those who are doing the work know fully well how difficult it is. May Allāh *taʿālā* make it easy for them. Āmīn.

Note: This is a very useful piece of advice. (compiler)

The manner of working in madāris and religious organizations

An office has several supervisors. One is superior to the other. When there are many workers to do the job, it can be supervised properly and systemized. In the same way, an organization which has many people and a lot of work will require many workers. Only then will the work be completed. A single person cannot control the entire organization. Furthermore, all the workers will have to be united to the task.

A madrasah has many teachers and employees. Each one has his own view and opinion. How, then, can unity and harmony be established? How can the work be accomplished in the correct manner? Therefore, as long as there isn't an expert who is followed, acknowledged as the senior, and whatever he says accepted; the work which people are expecting to be accomplished will not be accomplished. Even the intelligentsia of today have realized that as long as a single person is not followed, the work will not be done. This is not because I am saying it. Rather, incidents and experiences have convinced them into accepting this reality. These people consider their intelligence to be sufficient. However, they too are now realizing that they cannot progress without following someone.

I see mutual perplexity. No one has tranquillity of the heart. They consider the manufacture of aeroplanes and other similar inventions to be major successes. But if there is no tranquillity in the heart, what is the benefit of all this? As long as personal opinions are not set aside and a knowledgeable and expert person is not followed in every matter, the work will not progress.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

إذا رأيت شحا مطاعا، وهوى متبعا، ودنياه مؤثرة، وإعجاب كل ذي رأي برأيه، ورأيت أمرا لا بد لك منه فعليك نفسك ودع أمر العوام.[1]

When you see miserliness being obeyed, carnal desires followed, each person considering his own view to be the best then adhere to yourself and worry about its own rectification.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had spoken against this very long ago. People are realizing it only now that the man of intelligence must be followed. There is no alternative to it. Because these people have discarded religion and opposed it, where will they ever have the courage to admit their folly!?

I was speaking on the subject of the person who wrote a letter in which he complained about the absence of practice and sincerity in the madrasah. It is because of this that the Ahlullāh separated their work from it a long time ago. That is, they separated the work of knowledge from the work of action and practice. This is why the practice now is that after acquiring knowledge in a madrasah, students

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[1] مشكوة: ج ٢، ص ٤٣٧.

proceed to a khānqāh. The saints have realized that confining one's self to studying and imparting knowledge results in action coming to an end. The person remains confined to the circle of knowledge. The real treasure of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and spiritual affiliation which has been coming down from heart to heart and regarding which Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* said: "The affiliation of the Sufis is the greatest boon" was gradually decreasing and coming to an end. They saw the need and established a place [khānqāh] which was separate from the madrasah. They devoted this place for action and practice. They taught dhikr and other spiritual practices so that people may choose to live practical lives and acquire the fundamental treasure.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* himself went to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He felt the need, that is why he went to him. He must have felt something lacking within him which prompted him to go. Someone asked him about Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* if he was an ʿālim. He replied: "He was a producer of ʿulamā'." He also used to say: "People have confidence in Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* because of his actions, but I have confidence in him because of his knowledge."

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were studying under Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. They were discussing among themselves and someone from them

suggested that they should pledge bayʿat to Maulānā [Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*]. Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* said: "No. I am going to pledge bayʿat to Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib."

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* was a student of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh*. The latter himself was a saint. Despite this, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* pledged bayʿat to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. There must have been something in Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for these senior personalities to pledge bayʿat at his hands.

The fact of the matter is that whatever the saints did, they did with sincerity. They used to practise on what was established from the Qur'ān and Sunnat. They presented practical examples of the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. People used to go to them and learn this. They used to acquire the habits and character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* by virtue of remaining in their company.

A madrasah is a place of knowledge. The Dīnī sciences are served there. The Qur'ān and Sunnat is taught. After all, it is essential to preserve the Islamic sciences such as tafsīr and Hadīth, and it is necessary to know what is lawful and what is not. Therefore, do not be opposed to the madrasah. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I had given the suggestion of establishing Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. And I made duʿā' for it. It came into existence after that."

Did you see! On one hand he established a madrasah, and on the other side he produced

Ahlullāh and rendered spiritual services. This is because Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* understood that there is a need for both. It is necessary to go and acquire knowledge from the madrasah. If you do not see the teachings and character of the saints in the madrasah, do not complain about it. Confine yourself to your work. Yes, if you are a real man, then develop people who are able to render spiritual services.

To sum up, there is a need for the madrasah because that is where you acquire knowledge of the lawful and unlawful. There is also a need for the company of the saints so that you can acquire spiritual benefits from them, and create Allāh's love in your heart. Both are necessary, and each require a time of its own. There is no contradiction between the two. If there is, then it is like performing salāh and not giving zakāh. Performing salāh will not make up for the obligation of zakāh. Both will have to be fulfilled independently. This is why we see that most of the senior 'ulamā' of the past had went and presented themselves before a shaykh and acquired spiritual treasures from him. The Sufis too reverted to the 'ulamā' to learn rules and regulations. We conclude that there is a need for both. Understand this well.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a very comprehensive subject. It proves the comprehensiveness of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *ta'ālā* enable all Muslims, especially his associates, to appreciate this and inspire them to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SHARĪʿAT AND THE REALITY OF DREAMS

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *al-Khayr al-Kathīr*:

أوصيكم بالاهتمام في الاقتراب بالله تعالى والاجتهاد في طاعته فانها جماع الخير وملاك الأمر وكن حنيفا لا تشرك بالله شيئا لا جليا ولا خفيا، وإياك ومحدثات الأمور فإنها ضلالة، وإياك والالتفات إلى أقوام يسمون بالمتفلسفة وأولئك قد أضلهم الله على علم وحبسهم في مدركتهم فلا يستطيعون عنها محيصا.

فإن شئت تحقيق الأمر وتدقيق السر فليس علمهم بذلك ولكن علم يوخذ من منبع الشريعة بعد الطاعات والاقترابات، قال الله تعالى: فاتبعوني أهدكم سبيل الرشاد.

I advise you to pay particular attention to gaining proximity to Allāh taʿālā and to strive hard in His obedience. These are the things which combine all good and are most useful. Remain a hanīf – i.e. do not ascribe any partner to Allāh taʿālā, neither obvious nor subtle. Keep away from innovations in Dīn because they are misguidance. Beware of paying any attention to those who call themselves philosophers. Allāh taʿālā led them astray despite their knowledge, confined them to their own theories; and so, they cannot escape them.

If you want to investigate this matter further and to fathom its mysteries, know well that their knowledge is not really knowledge. Real knowledge is the one

which is acquired from the fountainhead of the Sharīʿat after having obeyed Allāh taʿālā and sought His proximity. Allāh taʿālā says: Follow me and I will show you the path of rectitude.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* sends out a very powerful message. If you want to become an erudite scholar, you can never realize this by studying the books of the philosophers. They are very far away from the path. Deep knowledge and fathoming of mysteries can only be acquired from knowledge whose fountainhead is the Sharīʿat. The philosophers have no affinity whatsoever with this. They haven't even passed by the alley of the Sharīʿat. They do not accept the teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who are the fountainheads of the Sharīʿat. On the contrary, they follow the dictates of their intelligence and have made it their ruler. Their every opinion is against the Sharīʿat and in conflict with it. The ʿulamā' should therefore seek knowledge from the fountainhead of the Sharīʿat. They must hold on to the Qur'ān and Sunnat in every matter. Unfortunately, the condition of scholars today is extremely strange. They submit before the philosophers without realizing what they really are.

There was a Maulānā in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan who used to teach *Mebdhī*. He used to remain fully engrossed and attached with this book. He used to join us for the after-ʿasr walks. On one of the days, a senior man who was most probably employed in a school joined us for our walk. The Maulānā asked him: "How does the rain come down?" The man read the following verse of the Qur'ān:

وَاللهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَاهُ إِلٰى بَلَدٍ مَيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا كَذٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ.

It is Allāh who sends the winds which then raise up the cloud. We then drive it towards a dead land and thereby give life to the land after it had been lifeless. In like manner shall be the Resurrection.[1]

The Maulānā Sāhib was stunned when he heard this reply and did not utter a word until maghrib. Look! That Maulānā used to be with Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* but he had no affinity with the Qur'ān. On the other hand, a man who was employed in a school answered his question by quoting a verse from the Qur'ān. The Maulānā ought to have quoted the verse. There were many who were attached to schools who used to come to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, learn from him and depart. On the other hand, many of those who were employed in madāris and others living nearby remained as they were [without benefiting from Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*]. What a sad state of affairs!

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* pointed to a very important point. We ought to take it as an admonishment. (compiler)

In his *Tafhīmāt* and other similar books, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* discusses the issues of the philosophers and logicians as though they are nothing. You just read what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said – that the knowledge of the philosophers will not avail you. Rather, the

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[1] Sūrah al-Fātir, 35: 9.

knowledge which you acquire after worship and obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* will raise you to the level of erudition. Now read what Shaykh Muḥīyy ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī *raḥimahullāh* has to say in this regard:

> If a person wants to understand the mysteries of the Sharīʿat and solve the difficult sciences of monotheism he must cast aside his intellect and personal opinions, and make the Sharīʿat of Allāh *taʿālā* his guide.

This contains an explicit order to put the Sharīʿat before your own opinion. Now look at what you are doing. You are giving preference to your own opinion in every matter. A man passed away in a certain place. His wife said: "The essential thing about the ʿiddat is to mourn the husband's death. What is the need to observe the ʿiddat in the same house? One can mourn and express grief anywhere." Did you see! This woman is presenting the underlying reason for the ʿiddat [according to her own understanding]. I said: "The order to observe the ʿiddat is laid down in the Qur'ān. There is no need for you to explain the reason for it. You have to merely follow the order of the Sharīʿat. You do not have the right to find underlying reasons."

Note: Nowadays many men also make statements of this nature. It is a clear sign of their lack of intelligence and misunderstanding. (compiler)

When kashf is given preference over the Sharīʿat

The Shaykh also said: Giving preference to kashf over an explicit text [of the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth] is absolute falsehood. Many of those who experience kashf become confused. The fact of the matter is that genuine kashf is generally in line with the Sharīʿat

(kashf which is against the Sharīʿat will therefore be incorrect). A person who gives preference to his kashf over the Sharīʿat will be expelled from the group of the Ahlullāh and included among those who are in total loss as regards their actions. This is a clear indication that the Sharīʿat is given preference over kashf. If giving preference to kashf over an explicit text is so severely prohibited, what can be said of the poor intellect!? How can it be given preference over the Sharīʿat?

Sunan Ibn Mājah contains a Ḥadīth which states that Ḥadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* saw a man stealing. However, when he asked the man about it, he took an oath and said that he did not steal. Ḥadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* said:

آمَنْتُ بِاللهِ كَذَبَتْ بَصَرِيْ

I believe in Allāh. It is my eyes which have erred.

He said this because a person cannot take an oath in Allāh's name and then speak a lie. This incident is a practical demonstration of the Ḥadīth which was quoted previously:

من حلف بالله فليرض

When a person takes an oath in Allāh's name, he should be accepted and believed.[1]

Ḥadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* is a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā*. He is saying to the man: Since you are taking an oath and denying it, I cannot say anything to you. I am saying to my self that my eyes erred.

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[1] *Ḥāshiyah Ibn Mājah*, p. 153.

The Shaykh (Shaykh Akbar) also said: When a person experiences a kashf which makes lawful something which is clearly unlawful in the Sharīʿat of Muḥammad *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then it is obligatory on him to discard his kashf and practise on the Sharīʿat. All the people of kashf concur that after the end of prophet-hood and messenger-ship, no one has the right to make the lawful unlawful and vice versa. He goes at length in explaining this subject. He then says: "O my brothers! You must be forever vigilant and safeguard yourselves from the evils of kashf (which occur occasionally). I desired your wellbeing and fulfilled my responsibility. If you still do this, you will be from among those who are the worst losers as regards their actions and be expelled from the group of Ahlullāh."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's special address to the intelligentsia

The Shaykh addressed the people of kashf and said: "O my brothers! You must be forever vigilant and safeguard yourselves from the evils of kashf (which occur occasionally)."

I address the intelligentsia of today: O my brothers! O you intelligent ones! Be on your guard and protect yourself against the harms and evils of your intelligence and self-opinions. Never give precedence to your intelligence over the Sharīʿat. This is downright misguidance and deviation. The Ahlullāh are prohibiting the giving of precedence to kashf over the Sharīʿat. What, then, can be said of your intelligence? Nowadays you don't even see kashf and other similar phenomena. There are just dreams. I continually receive letters in which people relate their dreams to me. I just received a letter of this nature. I wrote to the person that dreams are not to be relied

on because every dream is not a true dream. There are many types of dreams. The following Ḥadīth is related in *Muwaṭṭā Imām Mālik*:

عن يحي بن سعيد عن أبي سلمة بن عبد الرحمن أنه قال سمعت أبا قتادة بن ربعي يقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول الرؤيا الصالحة من الله والحلم من الشيطان. فإذا رأى أحدكم الشيء يكره فلينفث عن يساره ثلاث مرات، وليتعوذ بالله من شرها فإنه لن تضره إن شاء الله تعالى. قال أبو سلمة إن كنت لأرى الرؤيا وهي أثقل علي من الجبل، فلما سمعت هذا الحديث فما كنت أباليها.

…Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: A good dream is from Allāh taʿālā while a disturbing dream is from Shayṭān. If any of you sees something which disturbs him, he should spit three times on his left side and seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā from its evil. If Allāh wills, it will never harm him. Abū Salamah [the narrator of the Ḥadīth] said: "I used to see dreams which used to be weightier than a mountain for me. Once I heard this Ḥadīth, I stopped bothering about dreams.

Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* writes in his commentary to this Ḥadīth:

فيه بيان أنه ليس كل ما يراه الإنسان في منامه يكون صحيحا، إنما الصحيح منه ما كان من الله يأتيك ملك الرؤيا من نسخة أم الكتاب وما سوى ذلك أضغاث أحلام لا تأويل لها، وهي على أنواع. قد تكون من فعل الشيطان يلعب بالإنسان أو يريد ما يحزنه. وأمر النبي صلى

الله عليه وسلم في ذلك بأن يبصق عن يساره ويتعوذ بالله منه كأنه يقصد به طرده وأحزانه. وقد تكون من حديث النفس كمن يكون في أمر أو حرفة ترى نفسه في ذلك الأمر والعاشق يرى معشوقه.

وقد يكون ذلك من مزاج الطبيعة كمن غلب عليه الدم يرى الفصد والرعاف والحمرة، ومن غلب عليه الصفراء يرى النار والأشياء الصفر، ومن غلب عليه السوداء يرى الظلمة الأشياء أسود والأهوال والموت، ومن غلب عليه البلغم يرى البياض والمياه الثلج، ولا تأويل لشيء من هذه الأقسام.

We learn from this that everything which a person sees in a dream is not necessarily true. A true dream is the one which is from Allāh taʿālā. The angel of dreams comes with it from the Preserved Tablet. Anything apart from this are imaginary dreams for which there is no interpretation. There are several types of dreams which fall under this category. Sometimes it is an act of Shaytān who is playing around with the person and wanting to cause him worry. It is with reference to such a dream that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam ordered us to spit three times on our left side and to seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā. In so doing, the person is – so to speak – driving Shaytān away and causing him grief and worry. Sometimes a dream is a result of what a person was constantly thinking about [in the course of the day or in the recent past]. Like a person is engrossed in a certain matter or some job; he sees himself in that situation. The same can be said of a lover who dreams of his beloved.

Sometimes a dream is a result of a person's temperament. For example, a person's body is overwhelmed by blood, so he will see bloodletting, nose-bleeding, and redness. A person's body may be overwhelmed by yellow bile, so he will see the fire or yellow things. Another may be overwhelmed by black bile, so he sees darkness, black things, terrifying things and death. Yet another may be overwhelmed by phlegm, so he sees whiteness, water, ice and so on. There is no interpretation for dreams of this nature.

We learn from the explanation of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* that every dream is not a true dream, and every dream is not to be interpreted. Sometimes it is from Shaytān and sometimes it is dictated by one's temperament.

When anyone used to write to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* about dreams, he would reply: "Write about things related to wakefulness. Dreams cannot be trusted." The fact of the matter is that a dream is influenced by what happens when a person is awake. When his wakefulness is good, he will see good dreams. The opposite is also true. The dreams of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are always true. The dreams of the laity are mostly false. Qādī Thanāʾullāh Sāhib Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Irshād at-Tālibīn*:

> The purer one's mirror of thoughts, the more genuine will be one's kashf and dreams. The dreams of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are classified as absolute revelation. This is because they are divinely protected from error, their thoughts are totally pure and so is their

internal self.[1] The dreams of the auliyā' are mostly true because they have acquired purity of thoughts and internal effulgence by virtue of their direct or indirect companionship with the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and their practising on the Sharīʿat.

Dreams should not be related to all and sundry

Now understand one more point. When relating your dream, ensure you relate it to a person who is an expert in the interpretation of dreams. Never relate it to an ignorant person or someone who intends evil. Sometimes a person sees a terrifying dream but it has a very good interpretation.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was an expert in this field. A person saw a dream in which he was urinating on the Qur'ān. The man became terrified and worried, and thought that he has gone astray. He came to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and related the dream to him. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "Your son will be a hāfiz of the Qur'ān." Another man saw a dream in which he was standing on the tongue of Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said to him: "There is a verse of the Qur'ān under your musallā (prayer mat)." When the man checked, there was in fact a verse of the Qur'ān

[1] If the dreams of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are classified as absolute revelation, is it possible for them to commit an error in a state of wakefulness? Certainly not. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from having blasphemous beliefs about the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. (compiler)

under his musallā. Just look at the interpretation of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*!

This is why I say, a dream should only be related to an expert. If not, the [unqualified] person will give a wrong interpretation. And generally, a dream is realized according to its interpretation. One has to be extremely cautious in this regard and abstain from relating it to all and sundry. Understand this well. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

A TREATMENT FOR A CORRUPT TEMPERAMENT

An ʿālim from a central institute wrote: "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder. I am finding bitter things to be sweet and vice versa."

The fact of the matter is that our temperaments and "taste buds" are getting spoilt. Our sense of taste is changing, so no food appears to be tasty no matter how exotic it may be. When a person falls ills, his mouth becomes bitter so he finds everything to be bitter. It is not the fault of the food but his taste buds. Once their health is restored, he will perceive sweet things to be sweet. The way to do this is for the patient to go to a doctor and have his ailment treated. Once it is treated, his sense of taste will be restored and he will get the correct taste of each thing.

In the same way, the temperaments of everyone – the masses and the elite – have become spoilt. Their hearts are totally corrupted. There is a need to rectify the internal self and the taste of the heart needs to be restored. It will be corrected when īmān becomes firmly embedded in it. This is not the work of the tongue, a talk or lecture; it is through the rectification of the heart. What is the benefit in merely writing that sweet things are tasting bitter and vice versa? You should rather worry about rectifying the internal self and embedding the heart with īmān. Then you will see how conditions will change.

It is true that this is an era of rejection. No one is prepared to pay heed to another. This is why difficulty is experienced in the task. How should the

task be accomplished? Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says:

> If there are thousands who are seekers and just one is a non-seeker, then the Messenger too desists from the messenger-ship.

At the same time, he adds:

> Mysteries are known to the knower of mysteries alone. The rejecter does not even consider them to be mysteries. In other words, he does not listen to them with value with which he ought to. Actually, mysteries should not even be mentioned to him.
>
> However, (we did not take this obstacle into consideration. Rather, we acted on the norm of Allāh *taʿālā*). A call was made by Allāh *taʿālā*, so there is no question of accepting it or not accepting it.
>
> Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ *ʿalayhis salām* invited to Allāh *taʿālā* for 900 years but his people's rejection increased by the day.
>
> Did he stop inviting towards Allāh? Did he go into solitude in the cave of silence?
>
> Has any caravan turned back merely because of the noise and barking of dogs?
>
> Did the speed of the moon drop just because of the howling dogs?
>
> The moon continues dispersing its light while the dog continues howling. Each one remains resolute on its nature.

> This is because Allāh *taʿālā* decreed a certain task for each one. Each one is therefore put to a test according to his personal capability.

The essence is that man must set right his īmān. He must develop honesty and sincerity within him, and remain devoted to his work. It is in Allāh's hands to make the conditions conducive and favourable. We have to continue doing the work and conveying the truth. The one with true ears will pay heed and make the intention to reform his internal self. Allāh *taʿālā* will embed īmān in his heart and reform his internal self.

Note: By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this is a very beautiful teaching. We ought to engrave it on our hearts. This is especially so in the present unfavourable conditions where governments which are antagonistic towards Islam are holding sway. It becomes essential to practise on these teachings. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related that there was a man who was slicing cucumbers and feeding them to his attendant. The thought occurred to him that he should also taste one slice. The moment he placed it in his mouth, he found it so bitter that he spat it out immediately. He asked his attendant: "You are eating these cucumbers but you are not complaining that they are bitter!?" The attendant replied: "It will be so unjust to complain about this one occasion of feeding me bitter cucumbers when you have been feeding me so many sweet things for so long."

The benefit of love for Allāh

I related this incident while discussing the point that something bitter can be made sweet. The love and affinity of Allāh *taʿālā* sometimes causes the bitter accusations and opposition of people. The ʿulamā' and the laymen must bear this. This is why I said at the beginning that you must set right your "taste buds". There are many things of this world which are bitter but the Prophets *ʿalayhis salām* and auliyā' made them sweet. You too should follow in their path so that you start finding bitter things to be sweet. What I mean by this is that you must develop love for the Ahlullāh and connect your heart to Allāh *taʿālā*. You should also read the writings of the Ahlullāh. These are things which you have to do. You should pay particular attention to the duʿā' of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām*:

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا، وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ.

O our Sustainer! Make us not a trial for the unbelievers. Forgive us, O our Sustainer! You alone are almighty, wise.[1]

An enlightening point on temptations

The other point which the person had written in his letter is that "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught us how to save ourselves from tribulations and temptations. He made this duʿā':

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[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 5.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ. وَمِنْ يَوْمِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ لَيْلَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ سَاعَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ صَاحِبِ السُّوْءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from all temptations, be they external or internal; from an evil day, an evil night, an evil hour and an evil companion.

Tribulations are deferred through duʿā'

Just imagine with what emotion Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this duʿā'! Can a tribulation descend after such a duʿā'? When any tribulation descends, it descends from Allāh *taʿālā*. A duʿā' too is made to Allāh *taʿālā*. The duʿā' climbs up to the heavens while divine decree descends. The duʿā' clashes with it and stops it from descending further. In this way, the duʿā' prevents the tribulation from coming down.

A Hadīth states:

لا يرد القضاء إلا الدعاء.

Only duʿā' repulses divine decree.

The duʿā' which I quoted above is also from a Hadīth. When we teach duʿā's of this nature and show people the way to protect themselves against tribulations, they want to stop coming here. This is why I say, if you have no intention of learning anything and do not want to do anything, then just remain in your homes and continue to be inundated by tribulations. Why do you come here to us and waste our time? Listen to one other point. You are already witnessing the consequences of tribulations and paying the price for them. You should prepare for the punishment of the Hereafter which will be much more severe. I am speaking to you in line with your conditions; do not

feel offended. I am forced to say these things because someone felt helpless and wrote to me saying: "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder."

Unfortunately, people from different places invite me even though I am so ill. Now how many places can I go to? This is why it is necessary for people to come here, learn the work and then continue the work. Only then can something be achieved – inshā Allāh.

A treatment for tribulations

If tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder, does it mean that they cannot be rectified? Does it mean that the hearts cannot come right? They certainly can because Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā' for refuge from external and internal tribulations and temptations. You should therefore make this duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* your practice. Allāh willing, the hearts will be rectified and they will be protected against tribulations.

You have just heard this. Now together with this we read the Qur'ān, and the Qur'ān has rendered tribulations and temptations into smithereens. They can never approach a believer [provided he is a true believer]. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 41.

The evil consequences of tribulations are worse in the Hereafter

The above was a description of the condition of a believer. The following is a description of the condition of an unbeliever:

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the life of this world, Hell alone is his abode.

We learn from this that an unbeliever rebels and transgresses, and gives preference to this worldly life over the Hereafter. Consequently, he will be cast into the Hell-fire.

The true mark of a believer is that he does not transgress and does not give preference to this worldly life over the Hereafter. He constantly fears the Hell-fire.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said: "When man fears standing before Allāh *taʿālā*, he melts out of fear of Him just as salt melts in water." The fear of standing before Allāh *taʿālā* is no small thing. To be constantly aware of standing before Allāh *taʿālā* is a very powerful treatment for removing the heart from tribulations and temptations. However, this will only happen when attention is paid to it. You strive to have your children educated and to become hāfiz and ʿālim. In the same way, the sciences of the Ahlullāh can be conveyed to them. Unfortunately, these same sciences are considered to be bitter and no sweetness is perceived in them. I have already explained the reason for this, viz. your taste buds have been corrupted. You will have to set them right and take the medication which is needed for them. In other

words, study the words and life-conditions of the Ahlullāh. Your taste buds will then come right.

The unbelievers find discussions about īmān to be bitter

Listen! The unbelievers find īmān and everything related to īmān to be bitter. On the other hand, a believer finds them sweet and enjoyable. The Ahlullāh find the most sweetness in obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and occupying their selves with Him.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* states that the supernatural feats (karāmāt) which are manifested at the hands of the Sufis are as a result of their total enjoyment of obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* in private and public. In other words, the most enjoyable thing in their sight is obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*. They enjoy it in privacy and in public. Their enjoyment in public is when they speak about Allāh *taʿālā* and advise people about Him. Their enjoyment in private is when they occupy themselves in Allāh's remembrance. Now the people of our time find this to be very bitter. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

I am not saying these things merely to make you happy. Rather, I am saying them to make Allāh *taʿālā* happy and to please Him. Whether you are happy or unhappy does not bother me. I do not desire your pleasure or displeasure. The letter which I read to you in which the person wrote, "temptations have rendered the hearts asunder" came from a person of a large madrasah. He is describing the condition of the people of the madrasah. It is extremely sorrowful. May Allāh *taʿālā* rectify all of us.

I received a letter from America in which it is stated that a man wrote to his friend saying:

> I received two issues of *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq*...I cannot describe the joy which I experienced. I stopped reading everything else and spent two nights reading these two issues. I made duʿā' for Ḥaḍrat. May Allāh *taʿālā* keep his shadow for a long time over us. May our actions be rectified through the blessings of his presence. Āmīn.

Now look! Here is a man in America and this is his condition. He spent several hours of the night reading *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq*. He says that Ḥaḍrat is supervising him and he cannot describe his condition because it is connected to the heart. Look at his condition and think about your own condition. He is enjoying a certain spiritual condition while you have no condition at all. You have merely words and you want to compete with those who have a special spiritual condition! We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Listen! Many of those who come here have already been to senior saints who were men of great spiritual conditions. However, those who went to them did not acquire their conditions. This is the general condition of people even though they go to the saints frequently. On the other hand, we have a man in America who has reached a high spiritual condition. Together with that he has become a teacher and tutor to the Americans. He translates our articles and reads them to the Americans. Here we are deprived of a spiritual condition and yet we are holding on to words which contradict spiritual conditions. If you go in this way to a man of spiritual conditions for a thousand years, you will not acquire a spiritual condition. I generally quote the following couplet to describe this deplorable condition:

He went to the Kaʿbah but the love of idols did not leave him. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

This Dīn has been sent by Allāh *taʿālā* to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* will make arrangements for its preservation. Had you become the means for its preservation, it would have been to your advantage. If you are not going to do this, Allāh *taʿālā* will create others for it and preserve the Dīn through them.

A duʿā' for treating tribulations and temptations

Listen! The way to protect yourself from tribulations is to make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* Himself. I already taught you one duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ. وَمِنْ يَوْمِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ لَيْلَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ سَاعَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ صَاحِبِ السُّوْءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from all temptations, be they external or internal; from an evil day, an evil night, an evil hour and an evil companion.

The other duʿā' is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ اَوَّلَ هٰذَا النَّهَارِ صَلَاحًا، وَّاَوْسَطَهُ فَلَاحًا، وَّاٰخِرَهُ نَجَاحًا.

O Allāh! Make the first portion of this day into righteousness, the middle portion into prosperity, and the last portion into success.

Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I read this duʿā' the moment I wake up in the morning. I am then in the protection of Allāh *taʿālā* for the rest of the day and I am convinced that no one can harm me in any way."

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to emphasise this duʿā' on us. In fact, he used to say that we should make it several times during the day. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

The Ahlullāh read these duʿā's and come under the protection of Allāh *taʿālā*. They read them punctually in the morning and evening. Consequently, Allāh's help is with them all the time. We ought to make a habit of reading duʿā's of this nature.

There are many people who come to us, but they come here with their bodies only. They leave their souls at home. Even when they go for hajj, they leave their souls behind. They have no souls, only their bodies remain. We are complaining about you while our own condition is the same. Just as you are devoid of spiritual conditions, so are we. Even our madāris are devoid of souls. They have strayed very far away.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at what pain and concern he is encouraging us towards spirituality. It is essential for us to focus on it. (compiler)

مالك بلغه أن عيسى بن مريم كان يقول لا تكثروا الكلام بغير ذكر الله فتقسوا قلوبكم. فإن القلب القاسي بعيد من الله ولكن لا تعلمون. ولا تنظروا في ذنوب الناس كأنكم أرباب وانظروا في ذنوبكم كأنكم عبيد، فإنما الناس مبتلى ومعافى، فارحموا على أهل البلاء واحمدوا الله على العافية.[1]

[1] جمع الفوائد: ج ٢، ص ٢٧٨.

Hadrat Imām Mālik rahimahullāh relates that Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām used to say: Do not engage in too much of speech except for Allāh's remembrance or else your hearts will become hard. A hard heart is very far from Allāh taʿālā but because this distance is a metaphysical distance, you do not perceive it. Do not look at the sins of people as though you are lords over them. Rather, look at your own sins as though you are sinful servants. After all, there are people who are caught up in sins and those who are safe from them. Therefore show mercy to those who are caught up in sins, and praise Allāh taʿālā for those who are safe from them.

This is a point which can only be made by a Prophet. This Hadīth not only prohibits pride over those who are sinners, but proves the virtue of showing mercy to them. This is the salient characteristic of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. What right, then, do those who follow the Prophets have to deviate from their path? In other words, if the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are saying this, those who believe and follow them ought to do the same.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* quotes this Hadīth in *Wasīyyatul Akhlāq* and he used to read it to us. We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to practise on these teachings. Āmīn. (compiler)

Two types of karāmat

Yesterday I explained to you that there are two types of karāmat. One is the creed of the Ahl as-Sunnat wa al-Jamāʿat and the other is steadfastness on acts of obedience. In this regard, I present to you the conditions of the Ahlullāh. Their statements, teachings, actions and conditions have been preserved in books so that people do not deviate from

the straight path. If you do not read them, misguidance will creep in. If you are not going to know the conditions of the Ahlullāh, how will you be able to speak like them? How will you be able to act like them?

I just made to you the point that the greatest karāmat in this worldly life is to remain steadfast on the straight path and to acquire Allāh's pleasure under all conditions. Had it not been recorded in the books, how would it have reached us? People in the past heard these things and conveyed them until they reached us through their books. If you are not going to listen to these things, how will you understand them and how will you practise on them?

Note: There is a pressing need for writing and compiling books. This is also an important department of Dīn. The blasphemous writings of those who are on falsehood can only be rebutted by the Islamic writings of those who are on the truth. This is why 'ulamā' have to continue rendering this service with sincerity, devotion, concern and worry. (compiler)

I remind you once again of what that scholar wrote: "Tribulations have rendered the hearts asunder." I say, there are countless people whose torn-apart hearts were mended by studying the books of the saints. Why do you not pick up their books and study them? This is how conditions can be changed. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* wrote a book devoted to the life-conditions of the saints. It is titled *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah Fī al-Chishtīyyah al-'Alīyyah*. He writes:

> Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* relates the story of Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn Ganj Shakkar

raḥimahullāh in *Akhbār al-Akhyār*. On one occasion, his attendant bought salt for him on account. When the food was presented to the Shaykh at the time of iftār, the Shaykh perceived through his internal effulgence and said: "I am getting the smell of unnecessary expenses in this food. It is not permissible for me to eat it." He did not eat the food.

Shaykh Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *raḥimahullāh* fell extremely ill on the night of the 5th of Muharram. He performed the 'ishā salāh with congregation and lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness after one hour, he asked: "Did I perform the 'ishā salāh?" The people replied in the affirmative. He said: "Okay, let me perform it again. No one knows what is to happen." He performed the salāh again and lost consciousness. This time he remained unconscious for two hours. When he regained consciousness he asked: "Did I perform the 'ishā salāh?" The people replied: "You have performed it two times." He said: "Okay, let me perform it one more time." He performed it a third time and passed away while repeating the words:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ اَسْتَغِيْثُ

O the ever-living! The maintainer of all. I beg for Your mercy.

To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Are the stories of the auliyā' not good enough to take some effect from them? Can the taste buds of īmān not be changed through them? If you read their stories you will acquire spiritual rejuvenation.

We cannot awaken the community with anything apart from the speech of the Ahlullāh. The Muslim community can be revived only through it. This is because the Ahlullāh themselves are alive and so is their speech. The person who absorbs their speech also comes to life.

The fruit of having confidence in the Ahlullāh

A man was travelling with the intention of presenting himself before Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. He hadn't reached as yet when he said to his companion: "There is no doubt that Hadrat is a walī. At the same time I have no doubt about my own deprivation because I have been frequenting him for so long but let alone acquiring the spiritual conditions of the saints, I am not even giving up sins."

Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* learnt of their conversation through kashf. He directed his spiritual focus on the man in such a way that he began giving up sins immediately. The man himself relates: "Hadrat pulled me towards him in such a way that even if I want to commit a sin I cannot."

This is why I say you must not have doubts in the Ahlullāh. If you want to have any doubts, have them against your own self. Check your own self and you will benefit from it. You may well receive the spiritual focus of a saint and achieve your objective. As was the case with the above person who was still going to meet Hadrat *raḥimahullāh*. Even when he wanted to commit a sin he couldn't.

I am reading to you the speech of the Ahlullāh because it has emanated from their hearts, and it contains themes of cognition. This is why it has an effect and it will convey you to Allāh *taʿālā*. The

ʿulamāʾ have rendered a phenomenal service by compiling the speeches of the Ahlullāh in books. People are guided in this way. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

Note: I had to put in a lot of effort to simplify this article. The fact of the matter is that it is a result of Allāh *taʿālā* enabling me to simplify it. May Allāh *taʿālā* accept this flawed effort of ours through His grace and make articles of this nature useful to the Muslim community. Āmīn. (compiler)

A TREATMENT FOR TRIBULATIONS

This is certainly an era of tribulations. When the Muslim community accepted the path of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as explained by the ʿulamā', the community accepted rectification and reformation. But when it discarded this path, rectification also left it. The system which the ʿulamā' had adopted was to first develop īmān within the people. The seriousness of Dīn and the greatness of the Qur'ān were to be filled in their hearts. To this end, it was necessary to present to them the exact condition and situation in which they found themselves. They were told: Look! This is your present condition. The era which you are going through is really a serious tribulation. You are being put through tests and tribulations. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had sought refuge from it:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ. وَمِنْ يَوْمِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ لَيْلَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ سَاعَةِ السُّوْءِ، وَمِنْ صَاحِبِ السُّوْءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from all temptations, be they external or internal; from an evil day, an evil night, an evil hour and an evil companion.

There are various tribulations which descend from above. For example, floods, droughts, large swarms of locusts, hailstorms, and so on. Man becomes incapable and powerless to put an end to these tribulations.

In the same way, another type of tribulation falls upon man. Everyone – the masses and the elite are encompassed by it and it becomes extremely difficult

for them to extricate themselves from it. Man can only come out of it if Allāh *taʿālā* removes him.

I came across a chapter titled *al-Fitan* (tribulations) in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. I was overjoyed because I found the thing which I had been searching for. The thing which I learnt from it is that we are caught up in various types of tribulations, and the manner in which we can save ourselves from them.

Al-Fitan

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* lists all the tribulations which people have to face. The first tribulation which is the root of other tribulations is the tribulation of man's carnal self. This tribulation is intrinsic to man and is therefore at the head of the list. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* defines this tribulation as follows:

أن يقسو قلبه ولا يجد حلاوة الإطاعة ولا لذة المناجاة.

The person's heart becomes hard, and he does not experience the sweetness of obedience nor the enjoyment of private conversation with Allāh taʿālā.

He either gives up obedience and private conversation entirely, or he does them but is deprived of their joy. A narration states that excessive talking without the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* results in hard-heartedness. And a hard heart is furthest away from Allāh *taʿālā*. Since this person is far from Allāh *taʿālā*, it is not far-fetched for him to not fulfil Allāh's rights, will not carry out acts of obedience, be immersed in sins, and not give any importance to orders and prohibitions. If he can discard the rights of Allāh *taʿālā*, he will do the same

to the rights of fellow creatures. If he is not Allāh's, how can he be of anyone or anything else? Hard-heartedness inevitably results in the trampling of rights. This is the fruit of hard-heartedness. It is not restricted to not carrying out the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* such as salāh and fasting, rather, if he does not fulfil the orders of the higher authority, how will he fulfil lesser orders!? In short, he will fail to fulfil all types of rights.

I say, if Dīn and religious people appear good in the sight of a person, it will certainly benefit him – inshā Allāh. This is because if a person considers Dīn and people of Dīn to be good, it is a proof of his īmān. It establishes the fact that he is a believer. As for his misdeeds, they are proof of his *fisq* – flagrant sinning; and a *fāsiq* (flagrant sinner) is still a believer. Allāh *taʿālā* will pardon him by virtue of his īmān. It is generally noticed that when there is īmān in the heart of a person, he gets the inspiration to do good deeds at some time in the future. Thus, it is expected of those who have good thoughts about Dīn and people of Dīn that they too will start doing the works of Dīn. On the other hand, the one who is averse to Dīn and people of Dīn, he is in a dangerous situation. It is people like him who are classified as hard-hearted, and regarding whom the Hadīth states that he is far from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* says that man is made up of three departments.

1. The heart. It is the origin of fear and love, retraction and expansion, anger and bravery, and life. The heart has been created for the development of these qualities.

2. The intellect. It is the origin of sciences and knowledge. It has been created for the sciences.
3. The temperament. It is the origin of all human needs. It earns and obtains human needs.

The perfection of these three results is the perfection of man, and their defectiveness results in the defectiveness of man. Man's perfection through the heart enables him to surpass angels. The same can be said of his intellect. The intellect is the fundamental distinction between man and animals. In the same way, if man submits to the demands of his temperament and discards his intelligence, then he is included among the animals. It is the job of the intellect to maintain the temperament within its limits and not to allow it to transgress them.

Understand this point further: There is man, Shaytān and animals. If man remains within his appointed limits, he is man. If he accepts satanic deceptions – whether in a state of wakefulness or in a dream – then he is a devil from mankind. If he does not remain within the limits of his temperament as per the dictates of his intellect, then he is an animal. This is simple to understand, but the changes in times have placed a veil on this.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes an amazing point. He says that one of the forms of satanic deception is Shaytān's casting such thoughts in the mind of man that when he commits them, he renders that excellent system [of Allāh *ta'ālā*] upside down. This is what we are witnessing today. Consequently, man becomes an affirmation of the condition which the following verse prohibits us from:

وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّتِيْ نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَاثًا.

Do not be like the woman who unravels to bits the thread which she has firmly spun.[1]

Just one person is enough to corrupt this system. And if several people join hands or a large group of people get together to do it, then the spread of corruption is a certainty. Shaytān causes man to have doubts about genuine and correct beliefs. Sometimes he causes man to commit acts which sound-minded people will recoil from.

Nafs-e-ammārah

When the human temperament falls from its rank and drops to the level of bestiality, it is referred to as nafs-e-ammārah. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to it:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌ ۢ بِالسُّوْءِ.

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[2]

Nafs-e-lawwāmah

If there isn't total bestiality in it nor total angelic qualities – rather, there is a bit of both – due to which some of man's actions are good while others are bad, then it is referred to as nafs-e-lawwāmah. Mention of it is made in the following verse:

لَا اُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا اُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ الَّلوَّامَةِ.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 92.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

I take an oath by the day of Resurrection. I take an oath by the self which reproaches at evil.[1]

People in this category are between angelic and bestial qualities. They are heading for the Hell-fire, and the only way to extricate themselves from it is for them to engage in striving and spiritual exercises or remain in the company of a Sufi master who will change their course. They can remove themselves in this way. If not, they will remain on that level for their entire lives.

Nafs-e-muṯma'innah

If the same self chooses to adhere to the Sharīʿat – abstains from rebellion and transgression – and develops the desire to follow the Sharīʿat, it is referred to as a nafs-e-muṯma'innah. Reference is made to it in the following verse:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً.

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Sustainer – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you.[2]

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* beseeched Allāh *taʿālā* for this type of self:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ نَفْسًا بِكَ مُطْمَئِنَّةً، تُؤْمِنُ بِلِقَآئِكَ، وَتَرْضٰى بِقَضَآئِكَ، وَتَقْنَعُ بِعَطَآئِكَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75: 1-2.

[2] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-28.

O Allāh! I ask You for a self which is satisfied with You, has conviction in meeting You, remains happy with Your decree and is satisfied with Your gifts.

After explaining these three departments of man – the heart, the intellect and the temperament – Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says: "These are the details with regard to the elements of man."

Note: If these three elements are rectified, man will be embellished with effulgence and rectitude which is the objective of life. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Types of tribulations

To this point, we spoke about tribulations which are related to man's carnal self. Sometimes, a tribulation is experienced at the hands of a person's family. It is not personal but it is intrinsic to man; it cannot be separated from him. Yes, if the man himself is rectified, this domestic tribulation can be changed into rectitude. One tribulation with the family is when mutual relationships are spoilt. This could take place in a family, house or institution. Corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil* is another name for this.

The following statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes reference to it. The essence of it is that Iblīs establishes his throne on water. The small devils who were sent to different parts of the world to delude man assemble around him. Each one relates his doings for that day. Iblīs does not give much worth to what they say until one devil comes forward and says: "I separated a certain man from his wife." Iblīs is overjoyed when he hears this, seats him close to him and says: "Congratulations! This was the real thing which you did."

This is just one small example of the corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. It includes all those issues which crop up between two people who are in the same place. For example, father and son, mother and daughter, brother and brother, friend and friend, teacher and student, mentor and disciple, master and slave, etc. Whatever corruption ensues between them because of not considering each others rights will be referred to as corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. If you were to ponder in the light of what was just said, you will find nothing but corruption in the entire world. There is probably not a single house in this world regarding which we can say that it has achieved rectitude as regards *tadbīr-e-manzil*.

Sometimes man is put through tribulations which are like waves of the ocean striking him one after another. What this means is that a general all-encompassing tribulation is experienced. An example of this is when unqualified and unsuitable people hanker after the caliphate. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes reference to this when he says: "Shaytān has lost hope in Muslims in the Arabian Peninsular worshipping him. However, he still has the hope of causing disharmony among them to the extent that one group fights against another." This tribulation is known as corruption of *tadbīr-e-madīnah*. This tribulation is also from Shaytān. Those who are caught up in it do not even realize that they have become the instruments of Shaytān whose objective is to turn the smooth running of the city upside down. I stated previously that the source of all three tribulations is the tribulation of man as regards his own self. If a person is put through a tribulation because of the evils of his self, there can be no doubt about several people in one place being put through a tribulation together.

The source of it is also the corruption of the carnal selves of all these who are living together. And if a very large number of such people assemble in a city or town, it too will be corrupted. And its source will also be the corruption of the carnal selves of these people.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then explains a fourth tribulation which he refers to as *fitnah millīyyah*. An example of this is when the genuine heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* depart from this world and unqualified people are put in charge of Dīnī and worldly matters. This could take the form of 'ulamā' and Sufis occupying themselves in intricate and delicate matters, while abstaining from explaining the simple and essential matters of Dīn. In this way, they fall into tribulation and cause the masses to also fall into it. The rulers and masses become lackadaisical in Dīn, and discard enjoining good and forbidding evil. Consequently, ignorance pervades everywhere and the era of ignorance (*jāhilīyyah*) returns. This is the era which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes reference to.

The same theme is explained by Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* in an eloquent manner in his *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

أما بعد، فإن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر هو القطب الأعظم في الدين، وهو المهم الذي ابتعث الله له النبيين أجمعين. ولو طوى بساطه وأهمل علمه لتعطلت النبوة واضمحلت الديانة، وعمّت الفترة، وفشت الضلالة، وشاعت الجهالة، استسرى الفساد، واتسع الخرق،

وخربت البلاد، وهلك العباد. وإن لم يشعروا بالهلاك إلا يوم التناد، وقد كان الذي خفنا أن يكون. إنا لله وإنا أليه راجعون.[1]

The position of enjoining good and forbidding evil is that of the greatest pivot in Islam. It is the important responsibility for which all the Prophets 'alayhimus salām were commissioned. If it is shelved aside and its practice is abandoned, prophet-hood will become useless and religiosity will wane. Laziness will become common, misguidance will spread, ignorance will proliferate, corruption will permeate, unlawfulness will spread, the lands will become desolate and the populace will be destroyed. Even if they do not perceive and realize their destruction before the day of Resurrection. The thing which we fear will certainly take place. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

إذ قد اندرس من هذا القطب علمه وعمله وانمحى بالكلية حقيقته ورسمه واستولت على القلوب مداهنة الخلق وانمحت عنها مراقبة الخالق واسترسل الناس في اتباع الهوى الشهوات استرسال البهائم، وعز على بساط الأرض مؤمن صادق لاتخاذه في الله لومة لائم، فمن سعى في تلافي هذه الفترة وسد هذه الثلمة إما متكفلا بعملها أو متقلدا لتنفيذها مجددا لهذه السنة الداثرة ناهضا بأعبائها متشمرا في إحيائها كان مستأثرا من بين الخلق بإحياء سنة أفضى الزمان إلى إماتتها.[2]

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٢، ص ٣٠٧.

[2] إحياء العلوم: ج٢، ص ٣٠٧.

It is observed that not only practice on this pivot but even knowledge of it has been wiped out, and its reality and custom has been completely obliterated. The hearts are now controlled by flattery towards the creation while consciousness of the Creator has vanished. People are so free in following their desires and passions that they are behaving like encaged animals which have just been set free. The existence of a genuine believer who can bear the criticism of critics for Allāh's sake has become a rarity on the entire surface of the earth. The person who will mend this crack and seal this gap either by practising on it or taking hold of the reins to ensure others do it will be a reviver of this buried Sunnat. This is because he has taken up the task for its revival and bore the weight of reviving this Sunnat on his shoulders. He has been chosen among the entire creation for the revival of this Sunnat while the entire world is bent on putting an end to it.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then makes mention of other tribulations. One of them is known as *fitnah mustatīrah* in which people leave the bounds and demands of humanity. Ascetics and worshippers come out completely from the demands of their temperament. In other words, because they cannot rectify it they find it easier to discard it and adopt monasticism, yogic practices and so on. The masses turn fully towards bestiality and become complete animals. In fact, they start doing things which even animals do not do. The following verse applies to them:

أُولٰئِكَ كَالْاَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ اَضَلُّ.

They are like animals. In fact, they are more astray.

Then there those who are in-between. They could also be referred to as two-faced.

If they did not pay attention in this direction, they will remain in that category for the rest of their lives. If they realize their defectiveness and engage in spiritual striving or remain in the company of a qualified shaykh, and turn in the correct direction, they can extricate themselves from that tribulation.

Note: This is a beautiful explanation of the *fitnah mustaṭīrah* which deserves to be embedded in our hearts. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from such a tribulation. Āmīn. (compiler)

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* mentions another tribulation which he refers to as *fitnah al-waqā'iʿ al-jauwwīyyah*. This was explained at the beginning when we spoke of heavenly calamities such as floods, plagues and so on.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said:

فتنة الرجل في نفسه تموج كموج البحر

A person is inundated with tribulations with regard to his self. They pound on him one after the other like waves.

This can be understood more clearly from the following:

الحكمة العلمية على ثلاثة أقسام لأنها إما علم بمصالح شخص معين بانفراده ليتحلى بالفضائل ويتخلى من الرذائل ويسمى تهذيب الأخلاق.

Academic wisdom is of three types. It could be knowledge related to each person as a separate entity

so that he may embellish himself with virtues and divest himself of reprehensible qualities. This is known as tahdhīb al-akhlāq (the culturing of character)

This is the treatment for the tribulation which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* referred to as a tribulation which a person experiences with regard to his self. Since it is obligatory on each person to have knowledge of whatever is to his benefit, the culturing of character becomes obligatory on every person.

وإما علم بمصالح جماعة مشتركة في المنزل كالوالد والمولود والمالك والمملوك (والزوج والزوجة والتلميذ والأستاذ والشيخ والمريد) ويسمى تدبير المنزل.

The other is knowledge related to the wellbeing of people living together. For example, a father and his children, a master and his slave, a husband and his wife, a student and his teacher, a shaykh and his disciple. This branch of knowledge is known as tadbīr al-manzil.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* refers to it as the tribulation which a man experiences as regards his family.

وإما بعلم بمصالح جماعة مشتركة في المدينة ويسمى السياسة المدنية.

The third is knowledge related to the collective wellbeing of residents of a city or country. This is known as siyāsah madanīyyah.

This is the treatment for the tribulations regarding which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that they pound on man one after the other like waves. Practical wisdom demands not to confine one's self to

mere knowledge of these matters but to focus on their results, viz. to embellish one's self with virtues and empty one's self of evils. This is what is known as *tahdhīb al-akhlāq* – the culturing of character.

After explaining all the types of wisdom, the same people write:

أعرض عن أقسام الحكمة العملية بأسرها لأن الشريعة المصطفوية قد قضت الوتر على أكمل وجه وأتم تفصيل.

Philosophers turned away completely from the types of practical wisdom because the Sharīʿat of Muḥammad ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam explained it to the point of perfection, leaving people incapable of explaining it in such a manner.

Types of practical wisdom

The author of *Ghiyāth al-Lughāt* also defines practical wisdom as perfect knowledge of livelihood and the Hereafter. He explains its three categories, viz. *tahdhīb al-akhlāq, tadbīr al-manzil* and *siyāsah madanīyyah*.

From the acknowledgements or admissions of the philosophers, this point is further established and proven that Islam is a complete and perfect system of life. It contains principles and injunctions related to all three departments, viz. *tahdhīb al-akhlāq, tadbīr al-manzil* and *siyāsah madanīyyah*. There is no problem or dilemma in man's individual or collective life for which there is no solution in the Qur'ān or the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Unfortunately, there is no interest in Dīn. This is why people succumb to their carnal and personal desires.

Take the case of caliphate. The ruling of the Sharīʿat is that a qualified person must occupy this position and that an unqualified person must not vie for it. A caliph has to possess the quality of justice at the very beginning. However, if he does not continue on this quality of justice, and becomes a flagrant sinner instead, then there are certain details in this regard which we will explain later on.

Now just think for yourself. The caliphate is such an important and significant issue in Islam. How can Islam which is a perfect system not have rules and regulations for it? At the same time, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says with reference to it: "Tribulations which pound on man one after the other like waves." This is because its fire is ignited in the entire city or country and every person becomes involved in it. Shaytān finds an opportunity to spur man's carnal and bestial desires and causes people to fight against each other. This is why we find the appointment of a particular person as a caliph being against the temperament of many people. It is also in line with the temperament of many others. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* corrected and rectified these conflicting human emotions which normally burst forth on occasions of this nature. The following Hadīth of Hadrat ʿUbādah ibn Sāmit *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is quoted in *Sahīh Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Fitan*:

عن جنادة بن أبي أمية قال دخلنا على عبادة بن الصامت وهو مريض، فقلنا أصلحك الله حدث بحديث ينفعك الله به. قال سمعته من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال دعانا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فبايعناه، فقال فيما أخذ علينا أن بايعنا على السمع والطاعة في منشطنا

ومكرهنا وعسرنا ويسرنا وأثرة علينا وأن لا تنازع الأمر أهله إلا أن تروا كفرا بواحا عندكم من الله فيه برهان.[1]

Hadrat Junādah ibn Abī Umayyah relates: We went to visit Hadrat ʿUbādah ibn as-Sāmit radiyallāhu ʿanhu when he was ill. We said to him: May Allāh taʿālā bless you with good health. Relate a Hadīth through which Allāh taʿālā will benefit you (and all of us as well) and which you heard from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He said: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam called us and we pledged allegiance to him. In the allegiance he took a promise from us that we will hear and obey when we are happy about a matter or not, whether it is difficult or easy, and even if preference is given to others over us. Further, he said: You must not dispute with the rulers unless you see a clear blasphemy for which you have a proof from Allāh taʿālā.

This Hadīth clearly states that at the time of bayʿat Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to us that if someone else is given preference over us as regards a particular position, we will not be offended. Furthermore, we will not dispute in matters related to leadership with those who are qualified for it. The author of *Fath al-Bārī* states that the words "even if preference is given to others over us" mean: We will obey the one who has been appointed as a ruler over us. We will not wait for the fulfilment of our rights in our obedience to him. In fact, we will obey him even if he does not fulfil our rights.

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[1] متفق عليه، ولفظه للبخاري، كتاب الفتن.

This is the meaning of the Hadīth which is related by Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أتاني جبرئيل فقال إن أمتك مفتنة من بعدك فقلت من أين، قال من قبل أمرائهم وقرائهم يمنع الأمراء الناس الحقوق فيطلبون حقوقهم فيفتنون ويتبع القراء هؤلاء الأمراء فيفتنون، قلت فكيف يسلم من سلم منهم، قال بالكف الصبر ان أعطوا الذي لهم أخذوه وإن منعوه تركوه.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām came to me and said: "Your ummat will be put through tribulations after you." I asked: "From where will the tribulation come?" He said: "From their leaders and scholars. The leaders will deprive the masses of their rights. The masses will demand them and be put through a tribulation in this way. The scholars will follow the rulers and they will be put through a tribulation." I asked: "How can a person save himself from this?" He replied: "By abstaining from demanding his rights and exercising patience. If the leaders give them their dues, they must accept them [their dues]. If they refuse, they must leave them and must not demand them."

This was also the practice of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. They would first differentiate between who was qualified and who was not. The situation was not like how it is today where the learned and the ignorant, the wealthy and the poor, man and woman have all become equals.

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[1] فتح الباري: ج ١٣، ص ٤.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* adhered to the following teaching of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

لن يزال الناس بخير ما تباينوا، فإذا تساووا هلكوا.

People will continue experiencing goodness as long as they maintain the differences in their ranks. Once they all become equals, they will be destroyed.[1]

I say, an Arab poet had also understood this mystery regarding which even the intelligentsia of today are heedless. He said:

لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم – ولا سراة إذا جهالهم سادوا

The condition of the masses can never be in order if they have no one ruling over them. If an ignorant person is made ruler over them, they have no ruler in reality.

The reason why I am saying this is that the criterion for progress today is for every person to become a ruler. We have to convince them that their condition is not good and they are in fact in tribulation. It is very hard to convince them to believe this.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were not like this. Instead, they used to differentiate between the qualified and the unqualified, the jurist and the non-jurist. In fact, a less qualified person will refrain from explaining rules and regulations in the presence of his seniors. He would do this out of respect for the senior.

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[1] Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān ʿUthmānī: *Ishāʿat-e-Islām*.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates:

أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال استقرؤا القرآن من أربعة من عبد الله بن مسعود وسالم مولى أبي حذيفة وأبي بن كعب ومعاذ بن جبل.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Learn the Qur'ān from four people: ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Sālim Maulā Hudhayfah, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb and Muʿādh ibn Jabal.

The same Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to say as a way of expressing gratitude for Allāh's favours: "The Sahābah used to think that I know a lot about Allāh's Book. On the other hand, if I learnt of a person who knows more than me, I would undertake a journey to meet him." The Sahābī heard this statement and did not refute it.

It is stated in *Sahīh Bukhārī* and other books that Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a muftī. The scholars of Hijāz, Syria and Iraq concurred on this. They used to revert to him when they faced problems. A certain Sahābī said with reference to him: "As long as this distinguished scholar is in your midst, do not come and ask rules and regulations from me."

In the same way, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* enjoyed a distinguished position among the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* in the science of jurisprudence and Qur'ānic exegesis. Hadrat Layth ibn Abī Sulaym *rahimahullāh* said to Hadrat Tā'ūs *rahimahullāh*: "I see you always in the company of this youngster (Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*) but not in the company of

the other Companions of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*!?" Hadrat Tāʾūs *raḥimahullāh* replied: "What can I say! I saw 70 senior Companions of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* consulting and accepting the view of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* whenever they differed on any issue."

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn ʿĀs *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Zubayr *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* were also from among the jurists.

These were the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and this is how the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* practised on them. Unfortunately, the situation today is that let alone practising on them, people do not even have knowledge of them. In fact, we will not be wrong if we said that the exact opposite is being practised today. There is no sign of listening and obeying, nor is there any sign of abstaining from disputes. Listening and obeying is a branch of leadership, and here we have no leader. Therefore everyone is a chief today. This is why if someone is considered to be suitable for a position and given it, others are offended. Making objections to leadership has become the purpose of our lives. The conditions around us are testimony to this.

Today it is not only a matter of two individuals disputing for leadership, this is bad in itself. Rather, what we see today is that when one person is qualified for a certain position, another unqualified person stands up to compete against him. This results in heated disputes and fights. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. On the other hand, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Do not dispute in matters of the caliphate,

إلا أن تروا كفرا بواحا عندكم من الله فيه برهان.

unless you see a clear act of unbelief for which you have proof from Allāh taʿālā.

In other words, you must have an explicit text or authentic tradition which is not open to discussion. What this means, it is not permissible to rebel against the caliph as long as his action can be explained and rationalized.

When is rejection permitted?

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* says that the word "kufr" in the above Hadīth refers to a sin. The Hadīth will mean: Do not dispute with the rulers unless you see them committing an act which is clearly against the rules of Islam. In such a case, you can reject.

Other scholars say that the word "kufr" literally refers to kufr. Therefore, it will not be permissible to object to the ruler unless he commits an open act of kufr.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* says that the view of "kufr" will apply when the dispute is with regard to the leadership itself. This would mean, do not dispute with him by finding fault with his leadership unless he commits an act of kufr. As for "sinning", this will apply when the dispute is to do with something other than the leadership itself. What this means is that sinning does not damage the leadership. Therefore, instead of disputing the leader's leadership, objections may be made against his sinning. He should be apprized of it in a soft and lenient manner. Instead of resorting to harshness, a simple approach should be adopted. This will only apply if the person has the power to do it.

Ibn Tīn relates from Dā'ūdī that the scholars in general concur that if tyrant rulers can be removed without any tribulation and oppression, then it is obligatory to remove them. If not, the people will have to exercise patience. Some scholars say that an unjust person cannot be appointed as a ruler in the first place. If a just person becomes a ruler and becomes unjust after that, the scholars differ on the issue of rebelling against him. The correct view is that it is not permissible to rebel against him unless he commits kufr. 'Allāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* says that the scholars state the reason for not removing such a ruler and not rebelling against him is the inevitable tribulations, bloodshed and mutual fights which would ensue. There will be more harm in removing him than in leaving him in place. This is why it is not permissible to rebel against him.

These are the explanations of the Hadīth experts. I now present the texts of the jurists. From them we will learn when the imām and caliph can be removed, and when he cannot. The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

يكره تقليد الفاسق ويعزل به إلا لفتنة قال الشامي المراد أنه يستحق العزل ولذا لم يقل ينعزل.

It is detestable to appoint a flagrant sinner as a ruler. He will be removed on account of his sinning unless it is going to cause some tribulation. Shāmī said: This means that he deserves to be removed. This is why the author did not say that he is automatically removed.

وفي شرح المقاصد وأما خلعه بنفسه بلا سبب ففيه خلاف وكذا في انعزاله بالفسق والأكثرون على أنه لا ينعزل وهو المختار من مذهب الشافعي وأبي حنيفة وعن محمد روايتان ويستحق العزل بالاتفاق.

Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid states: There are differences of opinion as regard the leader removing himself. The same can be said about his automatic removal on account of sinning. The majority of scholars say that he is not automatically removed. This is the preferred view of Imām Shāfi'ī raḥimahullāh and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah raḥimahullāh. There are two narrations from Imām Muḥammad raḥimahullāh. Apart from this, they all concur that he deserves to be removed.

وقال في المسايرة إذا قلد عدلا ثم جار وفسق لا ينعزل ولكن يستحق العزل إن لم يستلزم فتنة.

It is stated in al-Musāyarah: If a just person is made a ruler and he then becomes unjust and a flagrant sinner, he will not be automatically removed. Rather, he will deserve to be removed provided his removal is not going to cause any tribulation.

وفي المواقف ان للأمة خلع الإمام وعزله بسبب يوجب مثل أن يوجد منه ما يوجب اختلال المسلمين وانتكاس أمور الدين كما كان لهم نصبه وإقامته لانتظامها وعلائها وإن أدى خلعه إلى فتنة احتمل أدنى المضرتين.

The following is stated in al-Mawāqif: The community has the right to remove its leader in the presence of a reason which necessitates his removal. For example, he has a quality which caused division among the

Muslims, or matters of religion are rendered upside down. [They have the right to remove him] just as they have the right to appoint him for the upholding of the sultanate. If his removal is going to cause tribulations, then the lesser of the two evils will have to be chosen.

WELLBEING

Related to the previous chapter on tribulations, we present an article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* on the subject of wellbeing. If only Muslims would study it so that they are saved from tribulations and enjoy wellbeing. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم.

I am going to speak about an essential topic today. Listen carefully.

We learn from the Ahādīth that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from tribulations and temptations. He said:

نعوذ بالله من عذاب النار ونعوذ بالله من الفتن ما ظهر منها وما بطن.

We seek refuge in Allāh from the punishment of the Hell-fire. We seek refuge in Allāh from tribulations which are apparent and those which are hidden.

Since this is mentioned in the Hadīth, we will have to understand what tribulations are, and also which are apparent and which are hidden. I would like to say something in this regard even though I know that this is not the era in which people speak about these things nor do they want to hear them. Nonetheless, our ʿulamā' and Sufis delved into this topic and wrote details about it in their books. Thus, we too will speak about it irrespective of whether anyone pays heed or not. At the same time, there may be some servant of Allāh *taʿālā* who derives benefit from it.

The Hadīth which I quoted above is narrated by Abū ʿUwānah in *Hisn Hasīn*. The commentator writes:

نعوذ بالله من الفتن أي الدنيوية والأخروية ما ظهر وما بطن، أي ما يتعلق بالأمر الظاهر والباطن، أو ما ظهر الآن وما سيظهر في مستقبل الزمان.

The word tribulations refers to those of this world and the Hereafter. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from them all. The apparent tribulations refer to those which are related to obvious and apparent things, while the hidden tribulations refer to those which are related to the inner self. Another meaning could be that apparent tribulations refer to those which are present, and the hidden ones refer to those which are yet to come. In this way, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from present and future tribulations.

We learn from the Aḥādīth that there are many types of tribulations. They are so severe that death has been given preference over them. The following is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār*:

الموت خير من الفتنة. الفتنة تكون من الله ومن الخلق. وتكون في الدين والدنيا كالارتداد والمعاصي والبلية والمعصية والقتل والعذاب وإليه أشار بحديث وإذا أردت فتنة في قوم فتوفني.[1]

Death is better than a tribulation. A tribulation is sometimes from Allāh taʿālā and sometimes from the creation. In the same way, it could be in Dīnī matters and worldly matters. For example, apostasy, sins, a calamity, killing, punishment, etc. A Ḥadīth makes

[1] مجمع البحار: ج ٣، ص ٨٥.

reference to this wherein Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When You intend putting a nation into a tribulation, cause me to die before that.

Man is also put through tribulations with regard to his self, family, wealth, children, house, neighbour, life, death, poverty and affluence.

The following is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār*:

فتنة الرجل في أهله هو أن يأتي لهم بما لا يحل من القول والفعل وما يعرض لهن معهن سوء أو حزن أو غيرهما. وفي ماله بأن يأخذ من غير حق ويصرف في غير مصرفه. وفي ولده لفرط المحبة والشغل به عن كثير نم الخيرات. وفي جاره بأن يتمنى مثل حاله وزواله عنه.

The tribulation of a man as regards his family is when he says or does something which is impermissible, or when he experiences evil or grief from them. His tribulation in his wealth is when he earns and acquires it in unlawful ways, and spends it in the wrong places. His tribulation in his children is when he goes beyond the limits in his love for them, and when they preoccupy him from many good actions. His tribulation as regards his neighbour is when the latter desires his good conditions and for their removal from him. (This is known as jealousy. Allāh taʿālā makes reference to this: "I seek refuge in You from the evil of the envious one when he envies me.")

فتنة المحيا ما يعرض في حيوته من الابتلاء بالدنيا والشهوات الجهالات أو الابتلاء مع عدم الصبر والوقوع في الآفات والإصرار على الفساد.

Another tribulation is that of life when man is faced with many worldly calamities, desires, ignorance. Or, he falls into such a tribulation for which he loses all patience. The same can be said of falling into miseries and persisting on corruption.

وفتنة الممات ما يفتتن عند الموت في أمر الخاتمة، نعوذ بالله، أو فتنة القبر المترتب عليه، أو سوال منكر ونكير مع الحيرة وعذاب القبر والأهوال.

The tribulation of death refers to those matters related to a person's final moments when Shaytān makes it difficult for him to have a good end. We seek refuge in Allāh. It could refer to the tribulation of the grave which follows immediately after death. Or it could refer to the questioning by Munkar and Nakīr when man is confused. It could also refer to punishment of the grave and other terrors in it.

Confusion at the time of questioning will be experienced by an unbeliever. A believer will be able to answer without hesitation because he had learnt his lessons in this world and revised them. He memorized those lessons while the unbeliever was heedless of them. This is why he will say, as stated in a Hadīth:

هاه هاه لا أدري.[1]

I do not know! I do not know!

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[1] مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ٢٦.

وفتنة الصدر ما ينطوي عليه من الحقد والحسد والعقائد الباطلة وما يعرض فيه من الشكوك والشبهة والوساوس.

A man's tribulation in his self and within him refer to the malice, jealousy, false beliefs, doubts, misgivings and whisperings which he experiences.

وشر فتنة الغنى كالطغيان والبطر وعدم أداء الزكوة وزاد لفظ الشر هنا تصريحا به أو تغليظا على الإغتناء حتى لا يغتروا.[1]

Affluence is also a tribulation. Man becomes rebellious and haughty because of it, and he refuses to pay zakāh. The word "evil" is added to the tribulation of wealth to make a direct reference to it, or to demonstrate its severity so that wealthy people do not become conceited.

Like the author of *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār*, Ḥadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* lists three types of tribulations in his magnum opus, *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*.

Three distinct tribulations

١. فتنة الرجل في نفسه.

٢. فتنة الرجل في أهله.

٣. فتنة تموج كموج البحر.

The tribulation of a man as regards his self. This was referred to as his tribulation in his chest. In other

[1] مجمع البحار: ٥٧.

words, man's heart becomes corrupt. When the heart becomes corrupt, the rest of the body will obviously follow suite. A Hadīth states:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله، ألا وهي القلب.[1]

There is a piece of flesh in the body. If it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is corrupt, the entire body will be corrupt. Listen! It is the heart.

Man's connection is with the creation and the Creator. When his carnal self succumbs to tribulation, his heart becomes spoilt and his connection with both [the creation and the Creator] becomes spoilt. In other words, false beliefs develop in his heart, and he also develops malice, jealousy and mercilessness towards the creation. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes reference to this spoilt relationship in the following way:

فتنة الرجل في نفسه بأن يقسو قلبه فلا يجد حلاوة الطاعة ولا لذة المناجات.

Man's tribulation with regard to his self is when his heart becomes hard. Thus, he neither experiences the sweetness of obedience nor the joy of private conversation [with Allāh ta'ālā].

The hard-heartedness is the effect of his relationship with the Creator. When he becomes hard-hearted, it also has an effect on his relationships with the creation. He starts to wrong and oppress them,

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[1] البخاري، كتاب الإيمان.

kindness and mercy are removed from his heart. Based on this, he becomes extremely callous towards his fellow humans and treats them in a manner which even animals do not treat each other. In other words, an animal may feel mercy but not this person. Whereas mercy is a praiseworthy quality which is a requirement of the Sharīʿat and is liked by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A Ḥadīth states:

إرحموا من في الأرض يرحمكم من في السماء.[1]

Show mercy to those on earth and the One in the heavens will show mercy to you.

The second tribulation which Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* makes reference to is of a person with his family. This refers to the corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. It is stated in a Ḥadīth that Iblīs establishes his throne on water. The small devils who were sent to different parts of the world to delude man assemble around him. Each one relates his doings for that day. Iblīs does not give much worth to what they say until one devil comes forward and says: "I separated a certain man from his wife." Iblīs is overjoyed when he hears this, seats him close to him and says: "Congratulations! This was the real thing which you did."

This is just one small example of the corruption of *tadbīr-e-manzil*. It includes all those issues which crop up between two people who are physically in the same place but very distant from each other. There is mutual enmity and ill-feeling towards each other. For

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[1] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الألباس: ج ١، ص ٩٧.

example, the father has a complaint against his son and vice versa. The same can be said of mother and daughter, brother and brother, friend and friend, teacher and student, mentor and disciple, master and slave, etc. If this is going to be the situation in any place, there can be no doubt about the corruptness of that place.

Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* complains about the people of his time and says that evil character has corrupted every household in such a way that no two persons have a heart for each other. He says:

> What is this noise and clamour which I am observing!? I see tribulation and evil filling the entire world.
>
> Every person wants each day to be better than the previous one, but the difficulty is that I see each coming day to be worse than the previous one.
>
> Daughters are at loggerheads with their mothers, and sons have evil designs against their fathers.
>
> There is no mercy between brother and brother. In the same way, the father has no mercy for his son.
>
> I see the Arab horse getting injured beneath its saddle while I see a gold necklace around the neck of an ass.
>
> Foolish, stupid and senseless people are throwing around sherbet of rose and sugar candy, while the intelligent and perceptive ones are being made to drink blood.

> O friends! Listen attentively to this piece of advice of Hāfiz. Do good deeds and remember well that I believe these words of advice to be more valuable than pearls and properties.

Look at the accurate picture which Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* paints of the tribulation which a man has to suffer with regard to his family. It is undoubtedly an accurate portrayal of the corruption of the family which develops because of our evil social dealings and interactions. If a house has a righteous environment, then even if a man comes home worried and stressed out, he will experience peace and tranquillity from the noble character of his house-people. But if the house is also corrupt, where can the man flee to?

Society has become evil and corruption is common in every home because the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* have been abandoned. A major blame of this can be placed on the women. They become the causes of the corruption in the home, and it starts from them. The man then falls in their trap. Sometimes the situation becomes so awful that they have to separate hearth and home. I know the conditions of some people. They are so distressed that they might find a little peace in their shops and offices, but their homes have become a hell for them, so they do not even want to step inside. They may find some solace by meeting their friends, but their close ones have become like scorpions to them.

I call this a worldly torment. When people corrupt their homes, they will turn them into a hell. Subsequently, when the same people go to work in an institution, office or government, they will carry the evil character with them. As a result, the

darkness which they carried with them will now pervade these places. I see this condition in the whole world. Those whose character has become corrupt are now looked up as teachers of sound character. All the intelligentsia of today are observing this but no one can say anything.

Tribulations like waves of an ocean

The third tribulation which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes reference to is the one which strikes one after the other like waves of an ocean. In other words, it has extensive borders causing the entire world to be pounded. He explains this further by saying:

هي فساد تدبير المدينة وطمع الناس في الخلافة من غير حق وهو قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الشيطان قد يئس أن يعبده المصلون ولكن في التحريش بينهم.[1]

Tribulations which strike like the waves of the ocean refer to the corruption of city and country. Unqualified people hanker after the caliphate. People then fight against each other as though they are animals. A Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes reference to this when he said that Shaytān has given up hope in the believers of the Arabian Peninsular worshipping him. However, he can still exercise his control over them by prompting them to fight against each other.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٢، ص ٣٥٦.

The tribulation of the self

I say, the people must have been caught up in tribulations for the ʻulamā' to have paid special attention in explaining them. They did this so that people of every era may save themselves. Today too if we observe the people, we will find them caught up in these tribulations. What I mean, a man is experiencing tribulations as regards his self, his family, and those which are pounding like the waves of the ocean. Although these appear to be three different types, their origin is one, viz. the tribulation of man within his self. Man's character becomes spoilt and he succumbs to evil character. When several people of this nature live under one roof, the peace and comfort of the house disappear. When this situation prevails in many homes, the entire city and then the country becomes a bedrock of tribulation and corruption; and peace and security no longer remain. Thus, we see that the tribulation of the self is the source of all tribulations. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam* prayed for sound character.

اَللّٰهُمَّ أَحْسَنْتَ خَلْقِيْ فَأَحْسِنْ خُلُقِيْ وَأَذْهِبْ غَيْظَ قَلْبِيْ وَأَجِرْنِيْ مِنْ مُضِلَّاتِ الْفِتَنِ مَا أَحْيَيْتَنَا.[1]

O Allāh! You beautified my physical body so beautify my character as well. Remove the anger of my heart and save me from misleading tribulations for as long You permit us to live.

The reason for this duʻā' is that when man's character is sound, he will be automatically saved

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[1] مجمع الزوائد: ج ٨، ص ١٢.

from tribulations and so will others. After all, it is because of unsound character that there is tribulation and corruption in the world. General peace ceases to exist and safety becomes scarce. Despite all this, those who are stupid and foolish – as made clear in the couplets of Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* - the worst of tribulations do not serve as admonitions to them. In fact, they rejoice over conditions of this nature and make them the means for the realization of their objectives.

On the other hand, the person who has the slightest personal perception and concern for the ummat has to endure "drinking blood" because soundness has disappeared from the world. To make matters worse, a person's time goes out of his control and so does his heart. What a shocking thing when our own heart is not under our control! We want to worship Allāh *taʿālā* with devotion, perform salāh, read the Qur'ān, engage in Allāh's remembrance; but because tranquillity of the heart is missing we cannot do all this. When there is a profusion of tribulations, everyone is affected – the seniors and juniors, men and women, the masses and the elite. They are so affected by them that they cannot save themselves even if they want to. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

لأرى الفتن تقع خلال بيوتكم مواقع القطر وروى المطر أي في الكثرة والشيوع وعدم التخصيص بطائفة.[1]

I see tribulations falling in your houses like rain when it falls in abundance and no place is left dry.

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[1] مجمع البحار: ج ٤، ص ١٠١.

Tribulations will be all-pervading in the same way and no group will be excluded.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* predicted the inundation of tribulations like rain water which gets everywhere, even in homes. In other words, their abundance will affect everyone, no group will be excluded. Although the scholars took this to mean the battles which were fought among the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* and Tābiʿīn, etc. tribulations are not peculiar to them. Rather, they refer to them and others which will descend periodically until the day of Resurrection.

The meaning of tribulations

I said the above because another Ḥadīth contains the words:

هناك الزلازل والفتن.

That is when earthquakes and tribulations occur.

The author of *Majmaʿ* explains this as follows:

إشارة إلى وقعة الجمل وصفين وظهور الخوارج في أرض نجد والعراق، وكذا خروج الدجال ويأجوج.

The word "tribulations" refers to the Battle of Jamal, Ṣiffīn and the appearance of the Khawārij in Najd and Iraq. It also refers to the appearance of Dajjāl and Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj at the approach of the Resurrection.

No matter what, we learn from the Traditions that tribulations always took place and will continue until the day of Resurrection. The literal meaning of *fitnah* (tribulation) is "a test". It then started to be used to refer to an evil which was a means of a test or trial. Its usage was expanded further until it came to mean

evils in general. For example, sinning, killing, unbelief, etc. This is why a Hadīth states:

A believer is naturally created in tribulation

المؤمن خلق مفتنا أي ممتحنا يمتحنه الله بالذنب ثم يتوب ثم يعود ثم يتوب.[1]

A man is naturally created in tribulation. That is, he is put through tests by Allāh taʿālā through sinning. He repents, then returns to sinning, and repents again.

He is saved sometimes and put through tests at other times. However, when he commits a sin, he repents. If he sins again, he repents again. This is the tribulation with regard to his Dīn.

Man is sometimes put through such a severe tribulation that he sees no way of coming out of it. It is known as *fitnah ʿumyā'*. It is explained in *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār* as follows:

فتنة عمياء صماء أي لا ترى منها مخرجا أو المراد بها صاحبها أي يقع فيها على غير بصيرة فيعمون فيها ويصمون عن تأمل الحق استماع النصح بل يحاربون عن الجهل والعداوة.[2]

One tribulation is blind and deaf. In other words, you cannot see any escape from it. Alternatively, it could refer to the person himself being blind and deaf to it. In other words, he falls into it without insight. Because he is blind to it, he cannot recognize the truth. And

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[1] مجمع البحار: ٥٦.

[2] مجمع البحار: ٥٨.

because he is deaf to it, he does not lend an ear to any well-wisher. Instead, he fights out of ignorance and enmity.

Look! The author of *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār* has explained *fitnah ʿumyā'* as: A person falling headlong into a tribulation with his eyes and ears shut. He is neither prepared to ponder over what is right and wrong, nor to listen to the good counsel of a well-wisher. His opposition is based solely on enmity and ignorance.

When tribulations of this nature become common, peace will cease to exist in this world. Whereas peace is demanded in the Sharīʿat. It is therefore necessary to obtain the means for peace. Tribulation is the exact opposite of it. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَدُنْيَايَ وَاَهْلِيْ وَمَالِيْ[1]

O Allāh! I ask You pardon and peace in my Dīn, worldly life, family and wealth.

Peace is undoubtedly a great bounty. It is only valued when there is no peace. This is the principle with bounties; they are only appreciated when they are withdrawn. This is why Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made many duʿā's for peace, and begged for it in everything.

This world is certainly a place of tribulation. Man is therefore put through tribulations at some time or the other. No person enjoys every type of peace all the time. This is because real peace and comfort will be in Paradise only. No comfort of this world is devoid of some type of pain and grief.

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[1] مشكوة شريف: ۲۰۲.

Since Paradise is the place for total peace and comfort, in this world also only that person will enjoy peace who is occupied with works of the Hereafter and is concerned about establishing a genuine link with Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, he discards all futilities and frees himself for the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. Any speech apart from the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* increases hard-heartedness.

A Ḥadīth states:

أن عيسى بن مريم كان يقول لا تكثروا الكلام بغير ذكر الله فتقسوا قلوبكم. فإن القلب القاسي بعيد من الله ولكن لا تعلمون.

Ḥaḍrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām used to say: Do not engage in too much of speech except for Allāh's remembrance or else your hearts will become hard. A hard heart is very far from Allāh taʿālā but because this distance is a metaphysical distance, you do not perceive it.

May Allāh *taʿālā* save us from hard-heartedness because when it develops, the heart does not accept any other influence. His hard-heartedness inevitably leads to foolishness and stupidity.

We learn the treatment for it from the above statement of Ḥaḍrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*. That is, the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh's remembrance does not cause hard-heartedness. If a person's heart does become hard, it is removed through Allāh's remembrance. When hardships and difficulties do not affect a heart, the person must conclude that his heart is not in good shape. He will have to focus his attention on it. Anyway, a believer has to be forever focussed on Allāh *taʿālā*. This is the ruling of the Sharīʿat.

DIVINE BENEVOLENCE

Yesterday I explained to you that even an infant knows the path. It cries so that its affectionate mother may come to it and breastfeed it. Allāh *taʿālā* is much more affectionate than a mother; He is waiting for you to cry to Him. The work can only be done when the correct way is followed. People do not want to do the work but want to achieve success. Various works are done in this world but the strange thing is that people want only our work to go to waste. Those who come here are skilled in their respective jobs, but when we say something to them, they start acknowledging their foolishness and dim-wittedness. They are not really foolish; they do not want to do the work. I speak about these things so that I could show the path to the people. However, it will only open to the one for whom Allāh *taʿālā* opens it. On whom does He open it? He told us that as well – on the one who follows in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A poet says:

> No person can traverse the path of the absolute truth unless he has Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as his guide.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* open the path to us through the sanctity of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Āmīn. (compiler)

Something has to be done to acquire rectitude

Listen! There are various levels of rectitude. One level is when a person performs salāh and keeps fast. However, he has not acquired that level of rectitude which is enjoyed by the saints. This is what I want to explain to you. They were something and we are something else. I do not want to denigrate you. A

saint addressed a gathering and said: "These are all people of Paradise." But he added: "Only certain ones are humans." Now that I am living among you how can I denigrate you? If I do not address you in this way and do not teach you how to understand, what more can I do? People come here and want to become saints without having to do anything. I say, even if you adopt the appearance of saints out of ostentation, do you think you will be saints in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*?

The seat of the saints cannot be occupied through mere boasting. If you want to occupy their place, you will have to obtain their means, viz. do as they did. If people are going to merely imitate the saints, do you think they will become saints? Certainly not.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* said:

> Man does something and a monkey does
> the same because it mimics the man.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* gives an example. He was an expert in advising and imparting words of wisdom through stories. He writes: A monkey used to live in a tree opposite a barbershop. Sometimes the barber had to leave his shop for some need or the other. When he would come back, he would find the scissors missing. Sometimes the shaving blade could not be found. Sometimes the mirror would have disappeared. One day he noticed his items on the tree with the monkey. He concluded that the monkey was the culprit who had been taking away his tools. He stood outside, did as though he was passing the blade across his lips and cheeks, left the blade there and went inside his shop. As was its habit, the monkey came down, grabbed the blade and fled to the tree. It then passed the blade across its lips and cheeks. It cut its lips and cheeks in the process.

When it realized this, it threw the blade and other tools. The barber never missed any of his tools after that day.

From this story Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* wants us to realize that a person has to have some intelligence even if he wants to imitate another. If a foolish person imitates another, he will cause harm to none but his own self. A person imitates the saints and assumes he has become like them, whereas there is a world of difference between the two.

When I address someone sternly on some occasions, I do it because people come here for this reason. That is, they desire rectification and reformation. This is why I address them harshly, and that too in the course of my lecture so that others who have misunderstood may have their misunderstanding removed. On the other hand, my written word is soft and lenient because the same (removal of misunderstandings) cannot be achieved through writing. This is why I say to you, no one should ever go from here and imitate me. I do not permit anyone to do this.

Listen! I want to put to work those who come here, this is why I have to speak harshly sometimes. How can I cause hatred in the hearts of those who come to me for rectification!? This is extremely reprehensible in Islam. Some people came to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and complained about a certain Ṣaḥābī. They said: "We work the entire day and return tired, and the one who leads us in ṣalāh reads lengthy sūrahs." Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "There are some people among you who are causing dislike in the hearts of others." Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then

addressed the Sahābī and asked him why he does not read shorter sūrahs.

I went to a certain place and delivered a lecture. Some senior people came to me and said: "You are saying these things, while others come here and say such and such things [different from what you said]." I replied: "I have come here for the sake of rectification. If I come and speak ill of senior people here, how will rectification be achieved? As for those who came and said harsh things to you, you should go to them and ask them the reason."

I believe that the 'ulamā' and Sufis cannot act independently. Even if they act harshly, they will have to remain within the limits of the Sharī'at. In other words, they can act harshly only to the extent permitted by Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. It is not permissible to exceed the bounds. There are many challenges. If I engage with you in any matter, I am neither free to do as I will nor am I independent. If you too understand this point, it will become very easy for you. What I mean is that you too are not free; you are also bound to the Sharī'at. Unfortunately you think you are free to do as you like. You neither consider me nor the Sharī'at. You do not take due consideration because you have not recognized the Sufis even though you may have the love for them. I love you in the same way as you love me. Love is easy, but recognition is difficult. The recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā* is anyway difficult. The recognition of Allāh's servants is also difficult.

Note: This is totally correct. Only if Allāh *ta'ālā* honours us with recognition together with love will the work become easy. (compiler)

Listen! On one occasion Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was speaking remarkable

things on the topic of recognition. Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib Phūlpūrī *rahimahullāh* said: "Hadrat! If it is difficult to recognize the friends of Allāh *taʿālā*, how much more difficult it must be to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* Himself!?" Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* approved of this statement. I thought to myself, you made such a beautiful statement that you even made Hadrat happy. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you.

I was saying to you that love is easy but recognition is difficult. If you have not acquired recognition, you should at least become its seeker.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a super gnostic. A man said to him: "Hadrat, I am ill. I cannot perform salāh in the Haram Sharīf. This is causing me immense sorrow and grief. I request you to pray for my good health." When the man left, Hadrat said: "He has not recognized Allāh *taʿālā*. If he is feeling well and he goes to perform salāh in the Haram Sharīf, he must express gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā*. If he is ill and cannot go there, he must be pleased with his lot and exercise patience." We learn from this that it is easy to be a lover but difficult to be a true ʿārif – one who has recognized Allāh *taʿālā*. You will have to subjugate the carnal self to acquire Allāh-recognition. You want to move around freely with your carnal self and satisfy its demands, and still acquire spiritual bounties – this is far-fetched.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* honour us with spiritual bounties through the blessings of our Hadrat. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

It is essential for every person to be sincere and devoted in this path. One cannot progress without it. A poet says:

> The tavern of love is open to everyone. The door of mercy is open to all. The table of bounties is laid out for everybody. However, there is one precondition for everyone: they have to be loyal.

I say, Allāh *taʿālā* is for everyone, the Dīn is for everyone, but the prerequisite is sincerity. It is required by everyone. I observed people living in the company of saints and jumping around a lot. Later on I learnt that they did not acquire the least bit of recognition and love. It is not the fault of the saints. The fault lies with us when we have no sincerity, neither in worldly matters nor in matters of Dīn. An attendant of a very senior saint used to say: "I lived with such and such saint but not a single day was for the sake of Dīn." Whether he said it out of humility or as a fact, he knows best. However, from what we observed of him, he did not say it out of humility. It is insincere people like this who have corrupted these places [the khānqāhs]. Yet they will blame the shaykh for not focussing his attention on them, this is why they have been deprived.

There were some people living in the company of a saint for quite some time. Another man arrived, stayed over for one week and received khilāfat. Those who were living there for so long began having bad thoughts. The saint was a man of the heart and a man of expositions. He came to know of their envy. He wanted to demonstrate the man's superiority to them. He asked them to go out into the fields and bring moist twigs. When they brought the twigs, he ordered them to ignite them. They could not be lit because they were wet. They said: "Hadrat! These twigs are wet, this is why they are not getting lit." He said: "I see! Wet twigs do not catch fire?!" They

replied in the affirmative. They must have assumed that saints do not know whether dry or wet twigs catch on fire. The saint was fully aware of this and wanted to remove the grime which was in their hearts. When he got them to affirm that there is a difference between wet and dry twigs, and established that they are so dim-witted that they still did not come to their senses, he said: "That man was a dry twig, so a slight focus from me ignited the fire in him and he became eligible for khilāfat within one week. But you fellows have not changed in the least. I am striving on you for so long but it is having no effect on you."

When the shaykh addressed them directly in this manner and proved the sincerity of the recently-arrived man and their insincerity, they realized their defectiveness. Before this, they were blaming the shaykh for their own faults. Why should the Ahlullāh be miserly on the path of Allāh *taʿālā*?! They are such that even the one sitting at their side is not deprived. But if the seeker himself has a defect in him, it will certainly be a cause of deprivation. It is for the removal of this defect and the creation of sincerity in people that these saints may scold or reprimand those who come to them. In this way, they may learn the reality and become occupied in the task at hand. As for the Hereafter, that is known to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. He alone knows the position in which each person will be. Just as a murīd can be taken to task for his insincerity in the path, the shaykh can be reprimanded because of a murīd. The conditions which will prevail in the Hereafter cannot be applied to the external conditions of this world.

The saints recorded some amazing incidents on this subject. There was a pious woman who passed away.

The people performed the janāzah salāh and buried her. A shroud-thief had attended the funeral. When everyone left after the burial, he returned to the grave and began digging it in order to remove the shroud. He heard a voice from inside: "It is so astonishing that the forgiven one is stealing from the forgiven one." In other words, this thief who has been forgiven wants to steal from a woman who has been forgiven. If we heard something like this, we would be terror-struck. The man asked: "How is that?" A voice replied from inside: "Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned me and said: 'I have pardoned all those who attended your funeral.' You too attended my funeral, so you are also pardoned." The man was quite moved. He thought to himself, Allāh's mercy is so great! Here I have come to steal the shroud but I am leaving with His mercy. People spend their nights seeking Allāh's forgiveness and cry to Him. Just look at Allāh's mercy! I came to steal a shroud but Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned me because I attended the funeral. He was overcome by remorse when he thought of this.

The essence of what I am saying is that the matter of the internal self and of Allāh *taʿālā* is different. Each person is treated differently. No one can fathom it. There was a scholar by the name of Ayyūb Sakhtiyānī *rahimahullāh*. He did not attend the funeral of a man who was well known for his flagrant sinning and immoral ways. Someone saw the man in a dream and asked him how he fared in Allāh's court. He replied: "Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned me solely out of His grace and kindness." The man added: "Go and read this verse to Ayyūb:

قُلْ لَّوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُوْنَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّيْ إِذًا لَّأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ ط وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُوْرًا.

Say: "Had the treasures of my Sustainer's mercy been in your hands, you would have certainly held back [from spending] for fear of spending [all]. Man is narrow of heart."[1]

Hajjāj was known for his oppression and tyranny. Someone saw him in a dream after his death, so he asked him: "How did you fare?" Hajjāj replied: "I have been pardoned." The man asked: "How is that?" He replied: "I said to Allāh *taʿālā*: 'O Allāh! It is the general belief of the people that I will not be pardoned. I therefore request You to display Your mercy.'" Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned him because of this supplication.

There was a senior scholar who passed away. Hadrat Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said with reference to him: "A very senior scholar has passed away. I see the angels taking his soul." Although Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was very far away, he was able to see through exposition. All this relates to the grace and pardon of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what I am saying: We do not know how each person is going to be treated. We do not know which pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā* may be sitting in this assembly. I do not know how each one is going to be treated.

I do not want to fall short in teaching you what is supposed to be taught. I must leave no stone unturned in explaining the path to you so that each person may receive what is destined for him, and is not deprived.

Note: Look at the pain and concern which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had in conveying

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 100.

what had to be conveyed. This is the condition of the true servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

You people love me. How can it be that you treat me with love and I treat you with enmity!? If anyone thinks in this way, it is a fault of his intelligence. There is a need for intelligence in this path. People of intelligence and understanding really succeeded when they remained in the company of saints. Now listen to an incident which took place in Thānah Bhawan. It was after maghrib. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* needed to relieve himself. He asked his attendant to go and leave water in the bathroom. It was the norm in those days to first cleanse one's self with clods of soil and then to proceed to the bathroom where one would wash one's self with water. Saying this, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* proceeded to the toilet. In the meantime, the attendant filled a jug of water and kept it ready. Because it was getting dark, he also lit a lamp in the bathroom. When Hadrat entered the bathroom, he saw that the water was ready for him and the lamp was also lit. He was very pleased.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then related this episode in a gathering and said: "If an attendant wants to do something more than what he has been asked, this is how he should do it."

We learn from this that the saints were appreciative of their attendants. The attendant who used his intelligence in serving a saint also derived something. In other words, he acquired the good of this world and of Dīn. These saints are generally more fastidious than kings. Only a true lover and intelligent person can bear their fussiness. Because these saints experience comfort from intelligent attendants of this nature, they are grateful to them.

Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* relates an incident in his *Mathnawī*. There was a saint who was heavily in debt and was now on his deathbed. His creditors surrounded him and sat around his bed. The saint must have been really embarrassed and pained. Allāh *taʿālā* provided a way out for him. A youngster who was a sweetmeat seller passed by. The saint called him, bought all his sweetmeats and fed it to those who were sitting around him. The boy asked the saint for the money for the sweetmeats. The saint said: "If I had the money do you think all these people would be sitting around me!? You can join these creditors and sit down with them." The boy began crying profusely and said: "What will I tell my father? My father will beat me. You will have to give me my money." On seeing this, the saint took a cloth, covered his face and lied down. Just then a man knocked on the door and presented a large tray which had envelops filled with money equal to what the saint was owing each of his creditors. An envelop containing money for the boy was also among those envelops. The saint paid off all his creditors and they left happily.

Someone asked the saint to explain this entire incident. He said: "I made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* for the fulfilment of my debts. I received a reply that I will have to cry. I tried my utmost but I just couldn't cry. I said: 'O Allāh! I am unable to cry.' Allāh said: 'Very well, cause someone to cry.' The only plan that came to my mind was to buy sweetmeats from this youngster because he will not be able to exercise patience and will certainly cry. Subsequently this is exactly what happened. He cried, the prerequisite was fulfilled and my duʿā' was accepted." This is what Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* refers to when he says:

> Look! As long as that young sweetmeat vendor did not cry, the ocean of Allāh's beneficence did not gush forth.

We learn from this that sometimes it remains closed and man's crying opens it.

The conditions of the Ahlullāh are indeed strange. Initially, those creditors felt that once the saint dies, they will lose their money. But their story ended with their eating sweetmeats and also receiving their dues. They probably never ate so much of sweetmeats in their life because wealthy people generally focus on earning without bothering to eat. This was probably the first time they ate sweetmeats to their stomach's full. The bad thoughts which they had about the saint were also dispelled because he paid off all his debts before departing from this world. This is just one example of Allāh's beneficence which He confers on His pious servants.

> When you will something, Allāh wills the same. Allāh fulfils the needs of His pious servants.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These themes as explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are extremely effective. They certainly get a person ready to rectify himself and to prepare for the Hereafter. Unfortunately no attention is given to reading these themes and to putting them into practice. How, then, can rectification be realized? May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us through His grace. Āmīn. (compiler)

STUDYING BOOKS IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR RECTIFICATION (1)

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Rafiʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was the son of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. He wrote an article titled *Risālah Bayʿat* which appealed to me greatly and which I included in my book *ʿĀqibat al-Inkār*. He notes some useful and exceptional points. I want to speak a little more on this topic and to expound on it further. Because people do not have an affinity with these sciences, they cannot understand them unless they are explained clearly.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Rafiʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

> The reality of bayʿat-e-Sharīʿat is that when an uneducated person who spent his life in heedlessness and sin comes to his senses (he thinks of setting right his life, is remorseful over his past life, wants to turn to obedience and piety), then normally, such a person cannot realize these objectives without empowering over himself an ʿālim who is pious externally and internally. Studying the books of the Sharīʿat is similar to referring to medical journals. Everyone knows that without acquiring expertise in medicine and medical treatment, it is extremely difficult for a person to set right his temperament and repulse the illness which he is suffering from.

In the same way, practising on the view of every scholar will lead to confusion and misunderstanding. This is because every scholar is not of a sound mind and sound senses. Bearing this need in mind, the person will have to choose someone as his shaykh and mentor. Together with knowledge and piety, the latter will have to possess two additional qualities: (1) He must not tolerate laxity and carelessness in enjoining good and forbidding evil. (2) He must be an expert in identifying the condition of the seeker and prescribing the simplest and most superior treatment for him.

Once he finds such a shaykh, he must choose him as his mentor and hand over the reins of all his affairs to him. In other words, he must give him full control in matters related to his rectification. He must hold on firmly to obedience to him so that he can realize his objective. The fruit of realizing his objective is total salvation in the Hereafter, reaching Allāh's court and acquiring His pleasure.[1]

Studying books is not sufficient for rectification

The first point which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* made is that studying books of the Sharīʿat is not enough for rectification. Rather, a person must appoint a pious scholar who possesses certain qualities (explained further on) to control his external and internal selves. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib

[1] *Risālah Bayʿat*, p. 27.

raḥimahullāh then gives the example of medical journals and textbooks. These too will not suffice a patient. This is an excellent point made by Ḥaḍrat Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*. I want to explain it further.

Nowadays there is a deluge of sciences and books. This is why there is this general misconception that reading books will suffice in the field of rectification. The reality is the exact opposite. I had been trying for quite some time to explain the difference in a manner which you will understand. That is, why is studying Dīnī books not enough and why is there a need for a shaykh? I considered this theme to be clear and obvious, but I felt it needed to be explained in a simple manner so that no murkiness remains.

Although reference is made to this in the quotation from Ḥaḍrat Shāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*, it will be a great achievement if people accept even after explaining clearly to them. This is why I felt the need to clarify it further. You can understand it as follows:

It is possible for a person to derive some benefit from reading the books of the Sharīʿat. However, whatever is explained to him in the book cannot compel him into action. He will have the knowledge but it will be left to him whether he wants to practise on it or not. If he feels like, he will put it into practice. If not, he will not. Alternatively, he will practise on certain things and not on others. It may well be that he did not even understand what he read. Or he understood it, but did not remember it at the time when it was to be applied. It could well happen that he has the books but he sells them or he sells his knowledge. In other words, after studying, he takes up a job where he is bound to the rules and regulations of that place and cannot apply his knowledge there.

In short, knowledge cannot impose on him in any way and cannot force him into action. It is therefore possible that his knowledge does not benefit him in any way. On the other hand, if he makes a pious and qualified mentor his ruler, he will have to adhere to his rules. After all, appointing someone as your ruler means that you give him full rights over you and you cease to have your own choice. If you were to have your own choice, it will be a bad choice; whereas the choice of your shaykh will be a good one. It is not easy to fight against Shaytān and one's carnal self. Only he can fight them who has some control and power over them. This can only be a shaykh. And to appoint such a person, he will have to be a pious ʿālim because he will make the seeker to practise on the Qur'ān through his wisdom and the authority which has been given to him. He is the one who will compel you towards rectification. This is the wisdom behind sending Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* even after sending down Books. Without doubt, a person has to follow the Qur'ān, but this is not possible without following a qualified person.

Medical issues and prescriptions are found in medical journals but no person can treat himself solely by reverting to these books. He will have to appoint a qualified physician to treat him so that he will uproot the patient's self-opinions and bad dietary practices. A physician can force him to take his medicines and reprimand him for not following his dietary guidelines. How can this ever be possible by a self-study of medical journals and self-treatment.

If this is the case with physical health, an intelligent person will have to appoint an expert for his spiritual health whose guidelines he will have to follow. This is a rational proof.

A traditional proof is found in the following verse:

اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

If you love Allāh then follow me.

This verse states that if you want to acquire Allāh's love, you will have to follow the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Certain verses even instruct us to follow other verses. For example:

نَتَّبِعُ آيَاتِكَ

We will follow Your verses.

However, it is extremely difficult to follow the verses and injunctions without following a qualified leader who has already followed the verses and injunctions himself. A qualified leader will be followed and this will automatically result in following the verses. And it is very easy to do this.

This is an explanation of appointing someone as a ruler over you to which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* made reference.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then points to a mistake committed by seekers. It is with regard to selecting a shaykh. He prohibits us from following every and other scholar because everyone is not of sound mind and sound senses. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is absolutely correct. We see people following those who, let alone having a sound mind, are absolutely senseless. Following such scholars will result in nothing but confusion and misunderstanding.

I say, if every scholar is not of sound mind and sound senses, and following him results in confusion, how can restricting one's self to the study

of books be enough? On whose opinion will he base his choice? If his choice of books is incorrect, will it not cause confusion and distress? A book too will have to be chosen by one's shaykh as he does with other matters. This is why it is not good to study any and every book without the permission of one's shaykh.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* used to say: "The books on Sufism are for the Sufis, nor for the murīds. Just as medical journals are for physicians and not patients." This is a beautiful teaching based on absolute wisdom. I add, medical books are also for patients because they contain details about ailments. However, they must be studied under the guidance of a physician. In the same way, books on Sufism are for the murīds as well, but through the guidance of the shaykh. This is why we see a shaykh sometimes saying to his murīd: "Study *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm*, study the *Mathnawī*; you will benefit from them." At the same time, the shaykh will prohibit others from reading these books because they will be harmful to them. It is for this reason that a shaykh has to be an expert, and he has to be proficient in knowledge and practice.

After explaining the need for a shaykh, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* lists the qualities of a shaykh. He says towards the end: In addition to having knowledge and piety, the latter will have to possess two additional qualities: (1) He must not tolerate laxity and carelessness in enjoining good and forbidding evil. (2) He must be an expert in identifying the condition of the seeker and prescribing the simplest and most superior treatment for him. In other words, the shaykh must be an expert in developing the capabilities of the murīd.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* concludes by saying: Once he finds such a shaykh, he must choose him as his mentor and hand over the reins of all his affairs to him. He must give him full control in matters related to his rectification until he realizes his objective.

Let me make one more point in this regard. The scholars and Sufis say that books alone are not enough for the rectification of the self and that the books of the Sharīʿat are like the medical journals. One cannot restrict one's self to medical journals for a cure of one's illness, in the same way books of the Sharīʿat alone are not enough for the removal of spiritual ailments. Let me present one proof for it.

The following is stated in *Nisāb al-Ihtisāb*:

قال العبد أصلحه الله تعالى ويكون له ثواب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر إذا كان مخلصا فيه وعليه وزر مخالفتهما إن لم يتب، نعوذ بالله والوعيد في حقه شديد. قال عليه السلام يؤتى بالرجل يوم القيامة فيلقى في النار فيندلق أقتاب بطنه فيدور لها كما يدور الحمار بالرحى فيجمع عليه أهل النار فيقولون يا فلان ما لك ما كنت تأمر بالمعروف وتنهى عن المنكر فيقول بلى كنت آمر بالمعروف ولا آتيه وأنهى عن المنكر وآتيه.[1]

A person will receive the reward of enjoining good and forbidding evil if he is sincere in it. If he is not sincere in it, he will suffer the consequences of acting against what he enjoined and forbade if he does not repent.

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[1] نصاب الاحتساب: ص ١٧٤.

We seek refuge in Allāh. There are severe warnings against such a person. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: A man will be brought forward on the day of Resurrection and then cast into the Hell-fire. His intestines will come out of his body and he will turn around with them just as an ass turns around a mill. The inmates of Hell will gather around him and say: "What is it with you? Weren't you the one who used to enjoin good and forbid evil?" He will reply: "Indeed. I used to enjoin good but abstained from doing it myself. I used to forbid evil but I committed it myself."

We learn from this Hadīth that knowledge is not everything. Rather, it has to be accompanied with action and sincerity. If there is no action and sincerity, knowledge becomes a calamity. A poet says:

> If you place knowledge on your body alone, it will become a snake for you. If you place it in your heart, it will prove to be your friend.

The above-mentioned person who had been enjoining good and forbidding evil must have been doing it without practising himself. He had knowledge of the Sharīʿat but he did not acquire practice and sincerity for it. Sincerity is not the quality of a book, so it cannot be acquired from books. It is the quality of a sincere person, so it can only be acquired from a sincere person. We also learn that the books of the Sharīʿat alone are not enough for rectification. Rather, there is a need to appoint a pious ʿālim as one's supervisor and to subjugate one's self to him. Only then will rectification be realized.

There are two points to be considered. One is the books of the Sharīʿat (the Qur'ān and Hadīth), and

the other is a pious and righteous person. Both are needed in the field of rectification. Books alone are not enough, and a shaykh alone will not suffice. Even after appointing someone as your shaykh, you cannot be independent of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. In the same way, you cannot be independent of a shaykh by taking the Qur'ān and Sunnat alone.

This is a tricky point which causes many people to err. One group believes that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are sufficient for it, and it has no need whatsoever to go to the Sufis. I believe that only those who focus on their knowledge and intelligence will think in this way. They find it demeaning to submit themselves before a shaykh. Pride prevents them from doing this. There is no question about the Qur'ān and Sunnat being insufficient; they are most certainly sufficient. However, when are they sufficient? Let alone trying to understand the meaning and message of the Qur'ān, we do not even have the time to read it. Instead, we will waste time reading newspapers. It is far-fetched of us to study the Hadīth. This is our condition, yet we claim that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are enough for us. This clearly means that we consider it below us to submit before someone. We want to keep away from submitting before anyone, so we choose to claim that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are enough.

Then there is another group which says: "Our shaykh is the book." This too is definitely wrong. In fact, there is a specific occasion when this is said. I explained this point to one seeker on one occasion. I feel I should quote it here.

A seeker wrote to me thus: "I am reading such and such book." I thought to myself that he must not become so engrossed in that book that he does not

pay attention to the actual thing. So I wrote to him: "The saints have a saying that the book for a murīd is his shaykh." He applauded this statement so much that I feared that he will be leaving one wrong and falling into another. As the saying goes:

فرّ من المطر وقام تحت الميزاب

He fled from the rain and stood under the water drain.

(From the frying pan to the fire).

This is why I explained this point in some detail to him. He wrote to me:

> Since quite some time I have been reading only the books and articles of Hadrat Wālā. I do not see any need whatsoever for any other book. However, if I come across a book occasionally, I will have a look at it. No matter what, I am grateful to Hadrat for having informed me of a very beneficial principle when Hadrat said: "Medical journals are for the physician; not for the patient. The physician is the sole book for the patient." Glory to Allāh! What a valuable principle. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you.

I replied:

> You expressed your desire for a detailed reply so I am writing to you. I had said: Medical journals are for the physician; not the patient. In the same way, books on Sufism are for the shaykh not the murīd. The sole book for the patient is his physician. In the same way, the book for the murīd is his shaykh. This is the

statement of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. He used to make it quite often and it is – in its place – a beautiful teaching. However, I want to explain it further so that it does not lead to misunderstanding. You have already heard that the shaykh is the book for the murīd, and it really appealed to you. Now listen to this as well: If a person takes on a shaykh, he cannot become independent of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. The 'ulamā' have laid down the principle that the Qur'ān and Sunnat together is the criterion. It is stated in *Taʿlīm ad-Dīn*[1] that Shaykh Qawwām ad-Dīn said:

O dervish! The criterion and yardstick for this path is the Qur'ān, Sunnat and the way of the pious predecessors who were qualified leaders. Not the way of those who merely received permission and have occupied blessed positions merely because they are children of a certain dervish, and are therefore occupying his seat. If a shaykh does anything which is against the criterion, it will be corrupt and baseless. In other words, if a shaykh says or does something which is against the Qur'ān, Sunnat and ijmāʿ, it will hold no value and no importance. He will not be eligible to be a leader and a shaykh.

[1] A book written by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*.

> The one who follows such a shaykh cannot reach his objective.[1]

Listen further:

In his *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah*, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* quotes from *Rāhat al-Qulūb* which is a collection of the statements of Hadrat Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar *rahimahullāh* compiled by Hadrat Sulṭān Nizām ad-Dīn Aulīyā' *rahimahullāh*. He says:

> The Sufis say: The murīd or shaykh who is not on the path of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah and his condition is not in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnat is a highway-robber.
>
> Look! This quotation clearly states that it is essential for the conditions of a murīd or shaykh to be in line with the Book of Allāh *taʿālā* and Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If not, he will be a highway-robber. The quotation before this stated that the Qur'ān and Sunnat are the criteria. We learn from this that the fundamental following for every person is essentially the Qur'ān and Sunnat. These two are the foundations for following. The shaykh follows them directly, and because the murīd does not have that level of competency of benefiting directly from them, he does it via his shaykh. Thus, he too follows the Qur'ān and Sunnat. If this is the case, how can he be independent of them?

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[1] *Taʿlīm ad-Dīn*, p. 127.

Listen further!

While giving a piece of advice, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Tafhīmāt* that no one can be independent of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. His words are as follows:

> My first advice is that you must believe in the Qur'ān and Sunnat and practise on them. You must always occupy yourself in pondering and reflecting over them. You must make it a point of reading a portion of both on a daily basis. If you cannot read them, you must listen to a few pages of their translation. When it comes to beliefs, you must follow the creed of the Ahl as-Sunnat of the past. You must not pay any attention to the details and investigations which the scholars of the past turned away from. Furthermore, pay no attention whatsoever to the doubts and misgivings of the pseudo-rationalists. When it comes to the subsidiary matters of Dīn, you must follow those 'ulamā' and Hadīth experts who combined jurisprudence and Hadīth. You must weigh juridical polemics against the Qur'ān and Sunnat. You must then accept what is in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and reject what is not. Remember, the Muslim community will always need to present the polemics of the jurists against the Qur'ān and Sunnat.

In the above quotation as well, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* clearly states that at no time can the Muslim community be

independent of weighing the polemics of the jurists against the Qur'ān and Sunnat. This is because the Qur'ān and Sunnat are fundamentally followed. If the view of a jurist, or statement or action of a shaykh is followed, it is because they follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in every action and statement of theirs.

After this clarification, I hope that this point has become clear to you. However, in order to complete this discussion, I will present one example. This example is actually from Miyājī ʿAzīmullāh Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* who was a special attendant of Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *raḥimahullāh*. He mentioned it to prove that "the spiritual practices and meditations which are in vogue among the Sufis for the sake of spiritual rectification are not innovations". He writes:

> They did not introduce these things into Dīn. Rather, they were made the means for carrying out those that were to be carried out by the Sharīʿat. These practices were for the sake of Dīn and not included in Dīn. You can understand this as follows: A physician wrote a prescription in which he prescribed *sharbat banafshah*. The patient needs to obtain *sharbat banafshah* but it is not available in the shops. So he gathers firewood, lights a fire, places a cauldron over it, brings sugar, water, *banafshah*, and other ingredients. He cooks all the ingredients and prepares *sharbat banafshah*. In this way, he obtains the medication which was prescribed. The entire sequence of events where he

> gathered firewood, lit the fire, and so on are not additions to the prescription but for the sake of completing the prescription.

This is why I also say that the books of the Sharīʿat alone are not enough for rectification. They too are like a prescription of a physician. A patient cannot regain his health merely by obtaining a prescription from a physician or by referring to medical journals. Instead, he will have to go to an expert to obtain his medicines according to the script which he gets from the physician. I used the word "expert" because if he goes to a novice, the latter will either not be able to differentiate between genuine and counterfeit medicines, or he will err in making the medicines. Consequently, the medicines will have no effect on the person.

Just as a prescription alone is not enough, instead it needs an expert; in the same way a person cannot learn Dīn solely by reading the books of the Sharīʿat. He will have to revert to an expert in Dīn. Love, fear, humility, submission, etc. are qualities of a believer and not of a book. It is therefore not possible to imbibe these qualities without living in the company of someone who has these qualities.

This is a clear example for the point which I am trying to drive home. We have made worldly things our objectives, so we understand them very well. On the other hand, there is no desire for Dīn, so the very same principles become difficult to understand when applied to Dīn. In other words, when it comes to a prescription, no one thinks that it is sufficient. Yet, in matters of Dīn, people generally believe that studying books of Dīn is sufficient. This is where the problem lies today. People are reading books and feel

that they have no need to consult the experts. As for spiritual rectification and setting right of character, no attention whatsoever is given to it. I explained to you that spiritual rectification can only be realized when you appoint someone above you. Even if people do find a man of Allāh, their jealousy and pride prevent them from submitting before him.

Dīn actually refers to the life of the heart, and of wakefulness. This comes from concern for the Hereafter. The external forms of Dīn are seen everywhere, viz. salāh, fasting, lectures, assemblies, teaching, studying, makātib, madāris, etc. In fact, there are more than what they were in the past. However, those who have a true perception know very well that there is no life in them. The external features of Dīn are present but they are devoid of a soul. The reason is that if a place has no people of the heart and no people of spiritual rectification, how will they learn anything about the heart and spiritual rectification? If there is no knowledge of these things, how will they practise on them? If they do not practise on them, how will they develop spiritual conditions? Consequently, only the external forms of salāh and fasting will remain, while that place will be corrupt as regard the reality and the soul. This will result in misguidance.

This is why I am saying to you that focusing on the external alone cannot bring about satisfactory results. You will have to revive the hearts. They will be revived through fear and hope. And fear and hope will be achieved by looking at the conditions and lives of those who have these qualities in them.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a very useful theme. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

raḥimahullāh with the best of rewards. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

STUDYING BOOKS IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR RECTIFICATION (2)

I ask you: Why did the people of the past choose to remain in the company of experts? Why did they emphasise this? And why is the need for it not felt anymore?

The Sufis have gone to the extent of saying that a murīd should submit himself before his shaykh as though he is a corpse in the hands of the one who is bathing him. The same theme has been excellently explained by a senior Egyptian scholar by the name of Shaykh ʿAlī Mahfūz in his book *al-Ibdāʿ Fī Madārr al-Ibtidāʿ*. I haven't come across a better explanation on this subject.

After relating the history of Sufism, he explains the soul of Sufism and the basis of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*. He writes:

ثم إنهم جعلوا الشيخ سلطة خاصة على مريديه حتى قالوا يجب أن يكون المريد مع الشيخ كالميت بين يدي الغاسل لأن الشيخ يعرف أمراضه النفسية وعلاجها، فإذا أبيح له مناقشته له ومطالبته بالدليل تتعسر معالجته وتتعذر.

فلا بد من التسليم له في كل شيء من غير منازعة. وقالوا إن الوصول إلى العرفان المطلق لا يكون إلا بهذا.[1]

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[1] الإبداع: ص ٣٦٦.

They gave special powers to the shaykh over his murīds to the extent of saying: A murīd has to be to his shaykh like a corpse in the hands of the one bathing him. This is because the shaykh knows the ailments of his carnal self and the manner of treating them. If a murīd is permitted to dispute with his shaykh or demand proofs from him, it will be impossible or difficult to treat him.

It is therefore essential for the murīd to submit before his shaykh in every matter without disputing. They say: Cognition is not possible without this.

Look at the beautiful example through which the author portrayed the status of a murīd. There can be no better example for him. The author says that the Sufis established a certain type of power and control over the murīd. This is because the shaykh has knowledge of the ailments of the carnal self and the ways of treating them. A murīd should therefore relinquish all his personal choices before his shaykh. He must become like a corpse in the hands of the one who is bathing him. The latter moves and turns the corpse as he likes, and the corpse accepts this. It is necessary for a murīd to become like this before his shaykh because if the murīd was given the right to dispute, argue and demand for proofs from his shaykh, it will become difficult if not impossible to rectify him. This is why it becomes essential for a murīd to obey his shaykh without any arguments. The Sufis say that it is impossible for a seeker to acquire real recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and spiritual cognition without this. The shaykh is the sole means towards gnosticism. If arguments and counter arguments exist between the shaykh and murīd, there can be no worse barrier between the two. If

there is an obstacle in the means itself, how will the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* be acquired!?

The author presents an excellent argument and provides cogent proofs on the issue of giving authority to the shaykh. This is undoubtedly the essence of Sufism. The Sufis have always been stressing this point.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* said: Give total control to him over yourself, and make obedience to him a part and parcel of you.

This is on condition that he does not instruct you to do something which is against the Sharīʿat:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق.

Obedience to the creation is not permitted if it entails disobedience to the Creator.

Allāh *taʿālā* is, nevertheless, the absolute ruler. However, the shaykh is Allāh's deputy. This is why he too is referred to as an absolute ruler. The first step on the path of Sufism is for the murīd to obliterate himself before his shaykh. By obliteration we do not mean obliteration of the body, but obliteration of one's views and choice. It is not easy to do this, especially for the scholars. This is why we notice that when a shaykh is firm on these principles and applies them strictly, then those who do not want to adhere to principles accuse the shaykh of being overly strict.

People used to say that Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is very strict. The fact of the matter is that he was not strict at all. Yes, he ensured that principles were applied. A lawyer from Patnah realized this himself and convinced his fellow

lawyers to appreciate this quality. The background to this is that when he went for hajj, he asked one of the khulafā' of Hadrat Hajī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: "Who should I revert to?" The khalīfah advised him to revert to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. The lawyer went and presented himself to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. When he returned home, his fellow lawyers assembled around him and asked him about his experience with Hadrat [Thānwī]. He replied: "Brothers! Listen carefully! He is a man of principles while the world has become unprincipled." These were intelligent people and were used to being troubled by unprincipled litigants all the time. They therefore smiled and appreciated what he said.

To sum up, this point is clear that mere reading of books is not enough for rectification. Rather, you will have to appoint a pious scholar to supervise you. It is essential for you to hand over the reins of your life to him. The task of rectification cannot be realized without this. It is difficult and virtually impossible to achieve rectification on your own. Another point which we learn is that every scholar does not have the qualification to do this. Rather, there are certain prerequisites for it. These were mentioned previously. When they are found in a person, he will be appointed as your mentor and shaykh. Or else, he will not. That is all. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

We think that these body parts – eyes, ears, etc. – work of their own accord, and when they get sick, we go to a doctor who then puts them right. On the other hand, look at how Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* thought of them. Despite having perfect body parts, he used to make this supplication:

وَمَتِّعْنَا بِاَسْمَاعِنَا وَاَبْصَارِنَا وَقُوَّتِنَا مَا اَحْيَيْتَنَا، وَاجْعَلْهُ الْوَارِثَ مِنَّا، وَاجْعَلْ ثَاْرَنَا عَلٰى مَنْ ظَلَمَنَا، وَانْصُرْنَا عَلٰى مَنْ عَادَانَا.

Let us enjoy the benefits of our ears, eyes and strength as long as You keep us alive, and continue their goodness after our death. Take revenge from those who oppress us and help us against those who are our enemies.

Here we see Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saying that although these body parts are ours, it is in Your control to enable us to enjoy their benefits. It is only through Your will that we can benefit from them. If You do not will it, we can do nothing about it. The same theme is to be found in the following supplication:

وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْ اَسْمَاعِنَا، وَاَبْصَارِنَا، وَقُلُوْبِنَا، وَاَزْوَاجِنَا، وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا. وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ.

Bless us in our ears, eyes, hearts, spouses and progeny. Accept our repentance for surely You alone are the acceptor of repentance, the most merciful.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in another supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا تَحُوْلُ بِهِ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيْكَ، وَمِنْ طَاعَتِكَ مَا تُبَلِّغُنَا بِهِ جَنَّتَكَ، وَمِنَ الْيَقِيْنِ مَا تُهَوِّنُ بِهِ عَلَيْنَا مَصَآئِبَ الدُّنْيَا

O Allāh! Give us such a portion of Your fear whereby it would come as a barrier between us and committing acts of disobedience against You. Give us such a portion of Your obedience whereby You could convey us into Your Paradise. Give us such a portion of conviction with which You could make insignificant for us the calamities of this world.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked Allāh *taʿālā* for fear although he was the chief of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* addressed the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* one day saying: "I am the most pious among you and I fear Allāh the most." Yet here we see him saying: "O Allāh! Just as I ask You for other things, I ask You for fear." Look at how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* maintained a balance by saying that the fear must not be so much that he is unable to do anything. Rather, it must be just that much which comes as a barrier from committing sins.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the overriding influence of tauhīd! Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not merely ask for fear which comes as a barrier between sins and himself. Rather, he said to Allāh *taʿālā* that he must be totally in need of Allāh *taʿālā* for abstaining from sins and entry into Paradise; he does not want to be indebted to any creation.

If it was us, we would have thought that fear alone was the barrier, and that obedience alone would

convey us to Paradise. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is saying, give us that amount of Your obedience through which You convey us to Paradise. If fear was believed to be the barrier to Hell and obedience the conveyer to Paradise, belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh *taʿālā* would be lost. This is what we learn from the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, i.e. they do not allow any occasion of tauḥīd to slip pass.

A man asked Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*: "Ḥaḍrat! Belief in tauḥīd is the most distinguished belief in Islam. Yet we hear certain things about the saints which make us think that they have lost tauḥīd. One saint is reported to have said: 'I am the truth.' Another said: 'Glory to me! Look at how great I am!' How is it that those who have acquired Allāh's proximity are trampling the core principle of tauḥīd?" When Ḥaḍrat Maulānā heard this question, he sat up and said: "Look at these modern inventions. A voice is recorded and imprinted on a record and played on a gramophone. A tape-recorder records a sound. When it is played, the same sound is heard. No one expresses astonishment at the ability of a plastic tape to deliver such a powerful speech. This is because everyone knows that the record is not speaking but someone else is. It is merely conveying what is imprinted on it. In the same way, when the saints make statements of this nature, they are not speaking themselves. Rather, the words of Allāh *taʿālā* are imprinted in them because of their extreme proximity with Him, which they then convey." A saint said:

> I am not saying "I am the truth." Rather, my Friend is instructing me to say it, so I am saying it.

The man fell silent when he heard this answer.

Now listen to another incident which is a clear proof of the knowledge and wisdom of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.

We were sitting with Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* on one occasion when a village registrar entered and posed a question to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. He asked: "When children of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* passed away, the Prophets experienced grief. In fact, it is established that they even cried. When Hadrat Ibrāhīm, the son of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam,* passed away, he came to him, uncovered his face and said:

إنا بفراقك يا إبراهيم لمحزونون

O Ibrāhīm! We are grieved at your separation.

Yet we hear that when the children of auliyā' pass away, they laugh. What is the reason for this? The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were perfect human beings and so were their life-conditions. Here it appears as though the condition of the auliyā' is superior to that of the Prophets'!?"

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* listened attentively to his question, sat up and said: "When a person has to undergo an operation and he is weak, he is made to inhale chloroform so that he loses consciousness and does not feel the pain of the operation. On the other hand, if a person is strong, he is operated without the need for him to inhale chloroform. He does feel pain but he is able to bear it because of his strength. In the same way, because the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are strong, they feel the pain but bear it on account of their strength. On the other hand, the auliyā' are weak, so they are

made to inhale the "chloroform" of ecstasy due to which they do not feel the pain."

Hadrat Maulānā Habīb Ahmad Kīrānwī *rahimahullāh*, the author of *Tafsīr Hull al-Qur'ān*, was present in the assembly. He was overcome by ecstasy when he heard this reply and said in a loud voice: "Hadrat, do not explain this to him; he is a village registrar. He will not appreciate this reply." He repeated this several times so I said: "This poor fellow posed such a thought provoking question due to which Hadrat gave this reply. Yet you are saying this about him!? Had he not posed this question we would not have had the opportunity of hearing such a beautiful answer."

There is a famous saying:

السؤال نصف العلم.

A question is half of knowledge.

The grand muftī of Pakistan, Maulānā Muhammad Hasan Amritsarī *rahimahullāh* was a senior khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. A large abscess had emerged in his foot and the doctors advised him that his foot will have to be amputated. He was taken into the operation room and the doctors wanted him to inhale chloroform so that they could carry out the operation. He asked: "What is the need for it?" They replied: "It is a major operation which will take quite some time. About 2-3 hours will be needed. You will not be able to bear the pain for so long." He said: "You don't have to worry about that; you do your job."

The operation started and Maulānā took a tasbīh and began occupying himself in dhikr. He did not turn his attention towards them. Later on, some people

asked him: "Hadrat, how did you bear the operation?" He replied: "It was nothing. Allāh brought before me the reward which I was to receive for this pain in the Hereafter. I lost myself enjoying the reward and did not feel a thing when my foot was amputated."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a lofty spiritual condition which is only acquired by Allāh's grace. I most probably heard from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* Ummat *raḥimahullāh* that when the mu'adhdhin used to say *"Hayya ʿAlā as-Salāh"*, Maulānā used to feel as though the trumpet for the day of Resurrection is being blown. When the verses:

نَارُ اللهِ الْمُوْقَدَةُ. الَّتِيْ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ.

The fire which is ignited by Allāh. Which climbs over the hearts.

Used to be read before him, he used to feel as though the heat of the fire is reaching his heart. This was indeed a lofty spiritual condition. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with it. Āmīn. (compiler)

When a servant establishes a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and a believer has such a strong affiliation, Allāh *taʿālā* confers him with a special spiritual condition due to which he becomes Allāh's alone.

Spiritual conditions are decreasing by the day, only words remain. Even if a person delivers a lecture, it does not change the heart. A spiritual condition can only change in the presence of a spiritual condition. This can be realized only by remaining in the company of a person who has a spiritual condition. The 'ulamā' are protectors of the Sharīʿat and words. The Sufis possess words together with spiritual

conditions. Both groups are rendering important services. Congratulations to them.

I am explaining the need for both groups and the difference between the two. Understand it well.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* said: Do not become influenced by a person merely by listening to his talk. And do not become his murīd until you have remained in his company and observed him from close quarters. If you find some effect in his company, he is reliable. If not, he is not. I am saying this because delivering a lecture has become an art. People are taught and trained in this field. They are taught voice modulation. When he delivers a lecture, it seems as though he is perfect when in actual fact he is nothing. He is devoid of spiritual treasures. Lecturers should focus on this as well so that their lectures have an effect and those listening to them can be rectified.

A deplorable incident of a lecturer

A man was delivering a lecture and the audience was listening attentively. Everyone was enjoying it when a youngster stood up and said: "O people! This is the man who murdered my father." The people became angry at the youngster because he had disgraced the speaker and wanted to hit the youngster. The speaker stopped them saying: "Do not say anything to him. It is normal for a person to err when he is young." The more the people tried to stop the youngster, the more he screamed. The people decided that they will have to save the Maulānā Sāḥib from humiliation. They felt they should make a collection and give the money to the youngster to buy his silence. They collected a considerable amount to save

the Maulānā Sāhib's dignity, gave the money to the youngster and sent him off.

After a few days, the people saw the youngster and the Maulānā Sāhib in a field. They had unlawful foods and drinks before them, and they were consuming these with relish. The people went to the Maulānā Sāhib and asked: "How can you reconcile your lecture with this action of yours?" He replied: "I made lecturing a means for my livelihood. We have many other ways through which we deceive people and make fools of them."

There is another incident related about the same people. A man went to a masjid and asked: "Who is the trustee and principal of this masjid?" The people replied: "What is the matter?" He said: "Nothing. I have some work with him?" When the people persisted, the man said: "I found a bag of jewellery on the way. It contains very expensive and valuable pieces of jewellery. The person who lost it will certainly come by looking for it. I am a traveller and will leave shortly. I am also a poor man. I do not trust myself. I may use some of that jewellery for myself. This is why I want someone from among you to keep the bag safely. If anyone comes searching for it, you may give it to him after ascertaining his veracity."

The people of the masjid were quite impressed and said to themselves that this is a very trustworthy man. He is saying he is poor, yet he is handing over the jewellery to us. They decided to keep the jewellery for safekeeping, but felt that they should make a collection among themselves and give the money to this poor traveller.

They made a collection and gave a large amount of money to him. He took the money, gave them the bag of jewellery and left. He must have gone a short

distance when a crying and wailing woman came to the people in the masjid. She said: “O people! A major calamity has befallen me. I do the job of making up and preparing brides. I borrow different pieces of jewellery from the rich and decorate the bride. When the wedding is over, I take the jewellery and return it to its rightful owners. I receive some money for this work and live my life in this way. Not long ago, I had a bag of jewellery and I was passing by this way. The bag fell off and I do not know where it is. Those pieces of jewellery belong to various people who had given them to me as a trust. Now what answer am I going to give to them?”

The people said: “There is no need for you to stress. We have the bag of jewellery here. But you will have to give us a list and description of the jewellery first so that we can verify that it really is yours.” The woman gave them a list with a description of all the jewellery. The people handed the jewellery over to her and, because they felt she was a poor woman, they gave her some money. Much later they learnt that this was merely a deception. The traveller and this woman were husband and wife, and they deceived people in this way. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

I related these incidents to you while speaking on the subject that you should not be bluffed by a person merely by listening to his lecture. Do not be so gullible that you are entranced by his words. You must check his actions as well and see whether he is righteous or not.

Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* performed the ʿishā salāh behind an imām. The imām read Sūrah az-Zilzāl in the salāh. The congregation departed after the salāh. Imām Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* held his beard and remained standing there until the

break of dawn. He was saying these words repeatedly:

يا من يجزي مثقال ذرة خير خيرا، ويا من يجزي مثقال شر شرا، أجر عبدك النعمان من النار.

O that Being who recompenses for an atom's weight of good and for an atom's weight of evil, protect your servant, Nuʿmān, from the Hell-fire.

This was the spiritual condition of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh*. The imām read the sūrah in the salāh and everyone heard it, but it seized Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* alone. Consequently, he remained awake the entire night and cried before Allāh *taʿālā*.

Ḥadrat Imām Zufar *raḥimahullāh* relates: Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* spent a night in my house. I observed him reading the following verse the entire night:

وَالسَّاعَةُ اَدْهٰى وَاَمَرُّ.

The Final Hour is more severe and more bitter.

Imām Zufar *raḥimahullāh* also relates that he read the following verse the entire night:

فَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُوْمِ.

Allāh was gracious to us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind.

Ḥadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* comments:

Did you see! These were the spiritual conditions of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh*. People assume that these imāms of jurisprudence were imāms of external

knowledge alone. We learn from this incidents how much their hearts were occupied with Allāh *taʿālā* and what a strong bond they had with Him. After reading incidents of this nature, we can say that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* was undoubtedly an imām of the internal sciences just as he was of the external sciences. The above-related incidents are clear proofs. These are evidences against all those who accept Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* as an imām. They ought to focus in this direction and follow him in this regard as well. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

Allāh *taʿālā* describes the dwellers of Paradise as follows:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ (١٧) فَاكِهِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ (١٨) كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٩) مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَصْفُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ (٢٠) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ (٢١) وَأَمْدَدْنَاهُمْ بِفَاكِهَةٍ وَلَحْمٍ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ (٢٢) يَتَنَازَعُونَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا لَا لَغْوٌ فِيهَا وَلَا تَأْثِيمٌ (٢٣) وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَكْنُونٌ (٢٤) وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٢٥) قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ (٢٦) فَمَنَّ اللهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ (٢٧) إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ.

Surely the righteous are in gardens and in bliss. Eating the fruit which their Sustainer gave to them. Their Sustainer protected them from the punishment of Hell. Eat and drink with relish in recompense for what you used to do. Leaning back on couches well laid out in rows. We wed them to maidens with large eyes. Those who had conviction and whose children followed their path with īmān, We joined to them their children. And We did not decrease even an iota from their deeds. Every person is pledged for what he earned. We sent down upon them, without interruption, fruits and meat which they desire. Snatching from each other a cup. That drink will neither give rise to senseless talk nor will it incite to

sin. There shall wait upon them young boys of their own as if they were pearls hidden in their shells. They turn to one another, asking each other. They said: "Before this we were also in our homes, fearing [the wrath of Allāh]. Allāh was then gracious to us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind. We used to call out to Him from before. Surely He alone is benevolent, merciful."[1]

These verses describe Paradise and its bounties. While describing them, Allāh *taʿālā* concludes by quoting a statement made by the dwellers of Paradise: "Allāh was then gracious to us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind."

These verses are recited but the spiritual condition demanded by them is missing. The most terrifying stage is that of the day of Resurrection. Allāh *taʿālā* describes it in various ways in the Qur'ān so that man may take some effect from those verses. However, he is so heedless that he does not pay the slightest attention. Our pious predecessors were not like this. When the Resurrection was mentioned in their presence, they used to fall unconscious.

It is recorded in the books that there was a certain scholar during the era of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* who used to deliver beautiful speeches. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would also attend. He used to go every Monday to listen to him speaking. Hadrat used to say with reference to his talks: "What excellent comfort the heart experiences from his talks!"

Note: Unfortunately, those who are affiliated to these auliyā' and Sufis have no inclination to attend the

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[1] Sūrah at-Tūr, 52: 17-28.

lectures of the genuine ʿulamā'. The same can be said of those who are affiliated to the work of Tablīgh and Daʿwat. They feel they have no need whatsoever to attend the lectures of the ʿulamā' and Sufis. Consequently, ignorance is becoming common and the bad effects of this are observed. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us refuge against ignorance. (compiler)

The above-mentioned scholar [whose lectures Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* used to attend] spoke on the verse:

كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ.

Eat and enjoy [yourselves] for a short while. You are certainly sinners.[1]

In the course of his lecture, he quoted a quadruplet poem. The first line describes worldly pleasures. The next couplet reads thus:

> All these things are attractive today, but not tomorrow. In fact, engrossing yourselves in them is similar to a straw casting itself into the fire.

Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* went into an ecstatic state when he heard it. He remained in that state for quite some time. He used to experience this quite often. In fact, there were times when people used to place him on a bed and carry him to his house. This was a genuine spiritual condition regarding which there is no objection. You should strive to acquire such a condition.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 46.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* was an imām in spiritual conditions just as he was in jurisprudence. He surpassed everyone of his time as regards his piety and worship.

It is stated in *Maʿdin al-Yawāqīt* that Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* used to perform 300 rakʿats optional ṣalāh every night. He was walking through an alley one day when he heard a woman saying to another: "This man who is passing by performs 500 rakʿats of ṣalāh every night." Subsequently, Imām Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* began performing 500 rakʿats every night. Such was the level of his integrity – he made his practice in line with the good thoughts which people had about him. He must have thought to himself, I can deceive the creation but I cannot deceive Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why he made his practice in line with what the woman thought about him.

A piece of advice to the 'ulamā'

This is why I advise the 'ulamā' to ensure that their lectures are not devoid of some story or the other of the saints. You should certainly relate their life stories because they combined words with spiritual conditions. If you relate their words to the people, their words and spiritual conditions will reach the people.

If this is the condition of the saints, what can be said of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*! It is our duty to relate the conditions and excellences of the saints. If we are not going to develop a spiritual condition within us and also abstain from relating the spiritual conditions of the saints, it will be extremely difficult to develop them. Whereas this era really requires of us to develop spiritual conditions. Today there is no shortage of words. Your words have filled the space

between earth and the heavens. Now tell me, when are you going to put all that into action?

The level of tauḥīd of Ḥaḍrat Niẓām ad-Dīn

There was a yogi in the time of Ḥaḍrat Niẓām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *raḥimahullāh* who used to remove illnesses completely. Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* used to suffer from bouts of unconsciousness. When he suffered from one such bout, his disciples decided to take him to the yogi. They were still on their way when Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* woke up. He asked: "Where are you taking me?" They replied: "To such and such yogi." He said: "Turn back! How can you take me to a man who rejects Allāh *taʿālā*?"

After some time he suffered another attack which was worse than the previous one. Again the disciples felt that they ought to take him to the yogi. They feared Ḥaḍrat's disapproval but thought to themselves that it will be better if Ḥaḍrat is cured. This time, Ḥaḍrat did not regain consciousness throughout the way. The disciples reached the house of the yogi and placed Ḥaḍrat in front of him. The yogi focussed his gaze on Ḥaḍrat and extracted the ailment. Ḥaḍrat opened his eyes and found himself right in front of the yogi. He could not say or do anything because the yogi had done his job. He said to the yogi: "Tell me, how did you acquire this skill?" He replied: "My guru taught me to act against my carnal self. I did as told and reached this level."

Ḥaḍrat said to the yogi: "What does your self tell you about embracing Islam? Does it tell you to embrace it or not?" He replied in the negative. Ḥaḍrat asked: "When your guru told you to act against your self, is this included in that instruction or not?" He was stupefied when he heard this question, but he was

true to his principles so he said: "It is certainly included." Saying this, he embraced Islam. When the light of Islam entered his heart he recognized who Hadrat really was and realized that he was on a very high level of spirituality. He therefore sat respectfully before Hadrat. This caused a huge clamour in Delhi and people began speaking about how Hadrat influenced such a senior yogi to enter the circle of Islam.

These are matters related to Allāh *taʿālā*. He could not tolerate such a senior saint like Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn *raḥimahullāh* to be indebted to a kāfir and for people to think that he was in any way superior to Hadrat. At the same time, Allāh *taʿālā* did not want this yogi who was serving Allāh's creation and benefiting them to go to the Hell-fire. This is why He guided him and made him Hadrat's attendant.

I say to you, this is what you must acquire. Our saints combined words with spiritual conditions. No matter where their words go, their spiritual conditions will go with them and people will be influenced by them.

Now listen to another story:

There was a tyrant king who used to imprison innocent people. He fell ill on one occasion. A saint was summoned and he requested him to pray for him by saying: "Hadrat, I am in a lot of pain. Make duʿā' that my health is restored." The saint did not refuse. Instead, he asked: "How many innocent people are their in your prison? Release them first and I will make duʿā' for you." The king issued an immediate order for the release of the prisoners. Once the saint got the king to do this, he raised his hands and made duʿā': "O Allāh! You showed him the ill effects of his tyranny and oppressive actions. I now request You to

show him the joy of obedience." The king's health was restored there and then, and he got up.

The story of a slave

A slave belonged to a wealthy and influential man. Although it was a time of drought, he was going happily somewhere. Some people said: "O you shameful fellow! We are suffering from a drought, everyone is worried, yet you are laughing and happy!? How is it that the drought has no effect on you?" He replied: "Why should I worry? My master owns ten villages."

When a certain saint heard his reply he went into spiritual ecstasy and said: "Glory to Allāh! The master of this slave owns ten villages and because of this he is so happy and worry-free. My Allāh owns the entire earth and heavens, yet I don't have even that much reliance on Him as this slave boy has on his master!?" The moment he said this, his worry and stress left his heart and he reached the level of *tawakkul* – reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is what you call a spiritual condition and this is what I am asking you to develop. You want to acquire tranquillity of the heart while it is devoid of spiritual affinity, how can this happen? Only when spiritual affinity enters the heart will it experience peace and tranquillity.

I am saying to you that the 'ulamā' of the past were something else. They combined words with spiritual conditions. Those who came after them adopted the words but not the spiritual conditions. No one acquired the spiritual conditions like those of the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. At the same time, those who came after them did not keep themselves empty of spiritual conditions. Now that we have no

concern about developing spiritual conditions, we are seeing the consequences of it, viz. let alone placing Muslims on the straight path, we cannot even put an end to their mutual differences.

I came across this incident in some books and also heard it from Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Anwar Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. A Hanafī scholar went to perform salāh in a Shāfiʿī masjid. The Shāfiʿī imām indicated to the muʾadhdhin to call out the adhān in line with the Hanafī way. He then requested the Hanafī scholar to lead the salāh. He did not refuse. He stepped forward and performed the salāh in the Shāfiʿī way.

I am relating this incident to you to show that when a special condition develops in the heart, all differences will cease to exist. Allāh *taʿālā* confers special spiritual conditions to the saints by virtue of their actions and sincerity.

We were in Thānah Bhawan on one occasion. We had just performed a salāh and were still sitting. A few people were performing the Sunnat salāh when we heard someone screaming. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* immediately asked: "Who is it?" Someone informed him that it is Shāh Sāhib. Hadrat said: "Call him here." When he came to Hadrat, he asked: "Shāh Sāhib, what is the matter?" He replied: "Hadrat, I thought of my sins." Hadrat asked for some water, read and blew on it, and asked him to drink it. I thought to myself, my coming here has been most beneficial because I learnt how Allāh's servants cry out of His fear.

I am explaining spiritual conditions to you, but remember, they can only be understood through spiritual conditions. Mere words are not enough. There is another incident on this subject:

A man was reading the Qur'ān in the masjid in Thānah Bhawan when he stopped suddenly. He stood up, held the Qur'ān in his hand and proceeded outside to Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. While walking towards Hadrat *raḥimahullāh*, he was saying: "*Khudh Yā Shaykh*." (Take this, O shaykh). He was speaking in Arabic although he had no knowledge whatsoever of the Arabic language. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* realized that he was overcome by some ecstasy, so he indicated with his hand for him to sit down. Hadrat asked for water, read and blew in it, and asked him to drink.

When the man regained his composure, Hadrat asked him: "What happened to you?" He replied: "Hadrat, this verse seized me and did not allow me to go on. I thought to myself that I will have to present it to you."

Listen further:

A saint was occupied in samāʿ for three continuous days and was in a trance during this entire period. However, when it was the time of a salāh, he would perform wudū' and the salāh perfectly. When he came out of his trance after the three days, his attendants said to him: "Hadrat, three days passed in this state." He asked: "Did I perform my salāhs while in this condition?" They replied in the affirmative.

He then wrote to an ʿālim asking him if these salāhs were valid. He replied: "The salāhs which Hadrat performed while his heart had left this world are valid. However, I feel Hadrat should repeat them out of consideration to the Sharīʿat."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful reply. He fulfilled the right of the Tarīqat and the Sharīʿat. This is a true spiritual condition which is conferred to the friends

of Allāh *taʿālā*. There is no conflict with the Sharīʿat in it.

Listen further:

The salāh was being performed in congregation and everyone had joined it except for one man who was sitting separately. When the congregation was over, one person went to him and asked: "Why did you not join the congregation?" He replied: "Look there." When he looked, he saw 50-60 people who appeared like this man, standing in the congregation. The person was also a scholar, so he said: "I will not be carried away by this hocus-pocus. Salāh is not obligatory on all these bodies whom you made to appear like you. Salāh is obligatory on this physical body of yours which Allāh *taʿālā* made. So get up and perform your salāh." Because the man's spiritual influence was in conflict with the Sharīʿat, the scholar did not allow him to continue with it.

Listen to another incident:

Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *raḥimahullāh* relates his personal incident. He says: "A brilliant light appeared before me. It had covered the entire horizon. I then saw an image within that light. It addressed me saying: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! I am your lord. I have withdrawn all obligations from you. If you want, you may worship me. If you do not want, you do not have to worship me. The choice is yours.'"

"When I heard this, I said: 'Get away from me, you cursed one!' The moment I said this, the light turned into darkness and the image turned to smoke and disappeared. The cursed one then addressed me: 'O ʿAbd al-Qādir! You saved yourself from me because you have knowledge of the injunctions of your Sustainer, and you are fully aware of your

conditions. I had deluded seventy people of the Tarīqat through a similar incident.'"

Someone asked Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir *rahimahullāh*: "How did you recognize that this was Shaytān?" He replied: "He was making lawful something which Allāh *taʿālā* had made unlawful through Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is not the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to make something prohibited to His Prophets and then to secretly make it lawful to a specific servant. Allāh *taʿālā* never does this; it is against His norm."

Did you see!? This was the blessing of following the Sharīʿat. Hadrat Shaykh Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* had acquired a correct understand of Dīn and was on an upright spiritual condition. This is why Shaytān could not influence him in any way. The Sharīʿat came from Allāh *taʿālā* and was revealed to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If you cast it aside and search for saintliness you will never find it. Allāh *taʿālā* can only be reached through the Sharīʿat and salvation in the Hereafter will be gained by following it alone. The Sharīʿat is the most essential thing. If you hold on to the Sharīʿat you will find the Tarīqat as well. After all, the Tarīqat refers to a spiritual condition. If you do good actions, you will develop that spiritual condition.

I related the story of the saint who was in a trance for three days, yet he was fully conscious at the times of salāh. He performed his wudū' correctly, and was fully aware of the times of salāh and the number of rakʿats when he performed those salāhs. This is undoubtedly a great feat. However, a greater feat of his was that when he regained consciousness, he thought about his salāhs and inquired about their validity. When he received the reply, he repeated his

salāhs. This is true saintliness and dervish-ness which is in line with the Sunnat in the sense that he did not allow an order of the Sharīʿat to be left out.

There are thousands of incidents of this nature related to the saints. From them we learn how they upheld the sanctity of the Sharīʿat.

My purpose in relating them to you is to show you that the Sharīʿat is extremely important. The more you believe in it and the more you uphold its sanctity, the higher the rank you will reach. In other words, your sanctity is dependent on the sanctity which you give to it. If you respect it, Allāh's creation will accept you and treat you with respect. If you disregard it, you yourself will be disgraced and Allāh *taʿālā* will remove the respect of people towards you from their hearts.

As for the Dīn, it belongs to Allāh *taʿālā*. It will remain until the day of Resurrection. If you do not respect it, Allāh *taʿālā* will create other nations who will uphold its sanctity.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful topic which ought to be read with the heart and soul. Unfortunately, even the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* do not like these topics. When will we ever read them and practise on them? Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

AN ASSEMBLY OF RECTIFICATION

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* said:

> Give so much of respect to knowledge that its obligatory rights are continually fulfilled.

He said:

> Knowledge refers to learning the realities of things.

Note: This is a comprehensive definition of knowledge. It could be defined in this way only by the true men of Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* had disciples who were ʿulamā' and laymen. He used to train and tutor each one according to his status. In the above statements, he addresses the ʿulamā' and says to them that they must respect knowledge in such a manner that they fulfil its obligatory rights. He then explains the reality of knowledge by saying that it entails learning the realities of things. In other words, if a person cannot fathom the realities of things, he is an ignoramus. The most we could say about him is that he knows the words and has no knowledge at all of the meanings. If the realities of things are not exposed to a person, he cannot guide others merely through words. When he explains to people, then in addition to his words being conveyed to them, the ignorance of his heart will also go across. On the other hand, when the one to whom the realities have been exposed addresses the masses, then the words together with the realities will be transferred to his addressees.

I would like to explain the statements of Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh*. Listen attentively. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ الْاُوْلٰى بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ.

After having destroyed the first generations, We gave to Mūsā the Book as an enlightenment for the people, a guide and a mercy so that they may remember.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* says in his commentary to this verse: When the intellect of the seeker of truth is set right, it is known as *baṣīrah* – enlightenment. When he accepts the injunctions, it is *hidāyah* – guidance. The fruit of guidance is acceptance in Allāh's court and closeness to Him. This is *raḥmah* – mercy.

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent explanation. Look at how he exposed the reality. We would have merely learnt the words and probably their translation. We could not have fathomed their reality. It is easy to memorize words, but difficult to understand their reality. After all, it is the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*; it is not easy to understand. It requires striving and bearing of difficulties.

Note: This is why people like us generally do not turn our attention in this direction. Consequently, we remain empty as regards the sciences of the Qur'ān. (compiler)

Look at how Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* explained the words *baṣīrah, hidāyah* and *raḥmah*. The first refers

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[1] Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 43.

to understanding and comprehension. The second to accepting the orders. And the third refers to the fruit of it i.e. closeness to Allāh *taʿālā*. We conclude from this that the absence of guidance today is due to an absence of enlightenment and understanding. If a person does not understand in the first place, how is he going to practise? If he does not practise, how will he acquire the fruits of the practice?

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. (compiler)

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* says further:

> Fulfil the rights of īmān through the Sharīʿat and your intellect.

This is because the Sharīʿat refers to the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā*. If you are not going to learn them, how will you fulfil the rights of īmān? He makes reference to the intellect as well because the rights of īmān can be fulfilled only through the intellect. In the absence of the intellect, the rights of īmān will not be fulfilled. The Sharīʿat can be recognized solely through the intellect and also the one who follows the Sharīʿat. Without it, how can its rights be fulfilled? There is a famous saying: Man can recognize his self solely through his intellect. Recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is also acquired through the intellect.

A scholar had gone to a certain place to deliver a lecture. A man said to me with reference to that scholar: "I decided to check with which foot he exits the masjid; the right or the left. And does he wear his shoe of the right foot first or the left. When I watched him, I saw him exiting with the right foot. I concluded that he is not worthy of anything. When he delivered his lecture, it had no effect." This is our general

condition today, except those whom Allāh *taʿālā* has guided.

A Hadīth states that in the latter part of time, the similitude of people will be like 100 camels but not a single one will be worthy of riding on. This means that there will be very few practising people. We are certainly experiencing that time today.

Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* says further on:

> The reality of īmān is to attest verbally and to have conviction in the heart.

He adds:

> Adhere to the injunctions of Islam. Islam entails following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's temperament.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation of Islam. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

We learn from this that when a person follows the Sharīʿat and turns away from the demands of his temperament, he will be called a Muslim.

A separate explanation for each one is found in the texts and we also explain them in that way. However, because these personalities are experts, they combine both and define them as done above. That is, Islam entails following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's temperament.

The Qur'ān states:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَاءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

We then placed you on a path concerning matters of religion. So follow this path and do not follow the desires of the ignorant.[1]

We learn from this that it is obligatory for the entire ummat to follow the Sharīʿat and harām to follow the desires of the ignorant ones. A scholar who has an affinity with the Qur'ān will explain this much. He will also say that we should not act on the demands of the carnal self. However, to combine both by saying that Islam entails following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's temperament, this I did not hear from anyone. It is a beautiful statement. The reason for combining both is that it is really the natural demands which stop a person from following the Sharīʿat.

He then says: Acquire genuine recognition. The reality of it is to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* with His Oneness. In other words, believe in the Oneness of His Being and the uniqueness of His attributes. Make Him the sole objective and quest. Believe that He alone is the real doer. This is recognition.

The story of Hadrat Junayd

Ibn ʿAtā *rahimahullāh* relates that Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* used to say:

I could not fall asleep one night so I decided to get up and complete my spiritual incantations. However, I did not experience the joy which I normally did. I thought to myself that I should go back to bed, but I could not fall asleep. I sat up and found no comfort in that as well. I opened the door and walked outside. I walked for quite a distance and then saw a man

[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 18.

lying down with a sheet covering him. When he heard my footsteps, he got up, looked at me and said: “Abul Qāsim, where are you going at this hour?” I replied: “How did you make out that I am Abul Qāsim seeing that your head is still covered with the sheet?” He replied: “It was I who called for you. I had said to Allāh *taʿālā*: ‘O Allāh, send Junayd.’”

I asked: “O my sayyid! Did you call me here for no reason?” He replied: “No. I actually prayed to the mover of hearts – Allāh *taʿālā* – to direct your heart to me.” I said: “It was the mover of hearts who moved me to come here. Now what is the need to call for me in this way? You could have sent someone to call me, and I would have come to you.” He replied: “I was faced with a problem which only you could solve. It was necessary for me to meet you, and this is why I adopted this method.” I asked: “Very well, what is the problem?” He said: “I want you to answer my question:

متى يصير داء النفس دواها؟

When will the illness of the carnal self become its medication?

Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* was a Sufi master, so he replied spontaneously:

إذا خالفت النفس هواها.

When the carnal self opposes its desires.

When he heard this reply, the man addressed his self: “You have now heard the answer from Hadrat Junayd. I had given you the same answer but you did not pay heed. Will you listen to me now that you heard it from Sayyid at-Tā’ifah?”

Do you know why I am relating this to you? I am doing it so that you may realize that this is a very important matter in the eyes of the seniors and saints. In other words, proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* is dependent on giving up the desires of the carnal self. They fought it and forced it into their obedience.

There is a point which I repeated several times when I was in Mumbai, and I said it to you as well. A very long time ago I had an associate who was a murīd of a certain saint. He said to me: "My shaykh used to say that the reason why the ʿulamā' do not become saints is that they do not occupy themselves in spiritual practices." I said to him: "First of all it is wrong to say that the ʿulamā' do not become saints because saintliness is an affiliation between the servant and Allāh *taʿālā*. It is known to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. We cannot say with reference to a layman or an ʿālim that he is not a saint. What you have to understand is that once a person establishes a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, he is a saint; whether he is an ʿālim or a layman."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a decisive verdict which we ought to bear in mind. (compiler)

The other reason which he gave – that the ʿulamā' do not occupy themselves in spiritual practices – is also not correct. The fact of the matter is that the one who does not subdue the carnal self is not a saint. The one who subdues it is a saint. If an ʿālim follows the dictates of his self, he will not be a saint. If he gives up following it, he will become a saint because he has now acquired Allāh's recognition.

In short, spiritual practice alone is not the basis for saintliness. Rather, it is subduing of the carnal self. The ʿulamā' who were present when I explained it in this way approved of it. I also said to the person: "If

your ʿulamā' are not saints, when did you become a saint? Why are you angry at those ʿulamā'? You should be angry at yourself first and follow the Sharīʿat. Do not obey your carnal self. You will not be able to follow the Sharīʿat as long as you do not give up obedience to your carnal self."

There was a saint in Delhi who said this repeatedly: "I am not your servant and you are not my Allāh. Why, then, should I obey you?" People who passed by and heard him saying this would express their disapproval and continue on their way. One man stopped to ask him, and said: "Shāh Sāhib, what is this which you are saying?" He replied: "You are the only one in Delhi who came to ask me this question. The fact of the matter is that my carnal self is constantly demanding something of me. So I say to it: 'I am not your servant and you are not my Allāh. Why, then, should I obey you?' All the people of Delhi assume that I am addressing Allāh *taʿālā*. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such utterances."

I say, the desire of the carnal self is the worst opponent in Allāh's path. Whatever is worshipped to the exclusion of Allāh *taʿālā* is due solely to the carnal self. This is why those who reach high ranks in Allāh's court do so by putting an end to the demands of their carnal self. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Sustainer and stopped his self from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

It is extremely difficult for those who have been rearing the self since childhood to give up its demands and to stop it from its desires.

People want an amulet (*taʿwīdh*) which will put an end to the desires of the self so that they do not have to strive to subdue it. This cannot happen. People are being destroyed because of the self and they are critically stressed. I am saying this because people come to me and ask me for amulets. I say to them: "I know the amulet for it but if I tell you, you will not accept. If you want refuge from the self, the preventatives have been provided by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. But you find it too hard to do. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to seek refuge as in the following invocation. Read it and practise on it.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الصَّمَمِ، وَالْبُكْمِ، وَالْجُنُوْنِ، وَالْجُذَامِ، وَسَيِّئِ الْاَسْقَامِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from deafness, dumbness, madness, leprosy and evil illnesses.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِيْ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from the mischief of my self.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is sinless but he is still seeking refuge from the mischief of his self. This is so that his followers may learn from him. After all, his ummat is duty-bound to follow him. Since he is asking Allāh *taʿālā* to protect him from the mischief of his self, and when Allāh *taʿālā* gives refuge to someone, can it ever be possible for the self

to rebel? It is only when Allāh *taʿālā* saves a person can he be saved.

A man used to say to me: "When the adhān used to be called, I felt as though the trumpet for the Resurrection was blown. Then when I proceeded for the salāh, I used to experience intense joy. As for my private conversation with Allāh *taʿālā*, that is beyond description. I used experience:

الصلوة معراج المؤمنين.

Salāh is the ascension of the believer.

When I used to read the Qur'ān in salāh, the congregation used to go into ecstasy. I myself used to be affected by my recitation. The same effect would then be felt by the congregation."

The man came with all these spiritual conditions from Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh*. When he returned to his hometown, he went to the graveyard, stood near the graves of his family members and seniors, and addressed them saying: "I have come with the treasure of the family which had disappeared."

He said to me: "The moment I said this, all those spiritual conditions were taken away from me."

He was left grief-stricken and sorrowful. If anyone praised him, he felt offended. He would say to them: "My spiritual conditions have been taken away from me, yet you are praising me!?"

He said further: "Now when I read the Qur'ān, my own voice does not appeal to me. How will it have an effect on others?"

The reason for this loss is that when he addressed his seniors in the graveyard, he said it out of ostentation. Spiritual conditions are acquired through striving and the blessings of the company of the pious. However, these are accompanied by ostentation and egotism which put an end to the person. When egotism enters a person's heart, it also creates pride. Consequently, he looks down on others with scorn and derision. This is why I say that it is not easy to subdue the carnal self. Many senior people cannot subdue it.

Note: Unless, off course, the person is inspired by Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

The seniors of Dīn say that the most tricky pass is the pass of egotism and love for position and authority.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* writes:

قد يكون في زيادة المال الطغيان، وفي زيادة العمل العجب.

Transgression is sometimes caused by excessive wealth, and excessive good actions causes egotism.

There is also transgression in knowledge. It is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār* that knowledge causes transgression just as wealth does.

The egotism of those who do good actions is worse than that of the wealthy. A person is then utterly humiliated and all his spiritual conditions cease. He is left regretting for the rest of his life. Allāh *taʿālā* does this to remove him from his egotism. After all, he thinks to himself that he has become a saint. This in itself is egotism. The author writes about his own condition. He says that when he experienced any type of egotism in the course of treading the path, he

would be made to commit a minor sin. He would feel disgraced and realize that he enjoys no rank whatsoever. He used to think to himself that if a person commits sins, how can he ever be a saint? How can a sinner ever enjoy any rank? How can he claim to be a friend of Allāh *taʿālā*?

This is why the saints say that disobedience which creates submission and servitude is better than obedience which results in pride and arrogance. Shaytān was cursed because of his pride. He used to go around saying that there was no one like him. He was therefore disgraced.

In his *Bustān*, Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* relates the story of a worshipper. It will take several hours to relate the entire story to you. I will relate the gist of it. He says:

I have heard from the historians about a man in the era of Sayyidunā ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*. This man destroyed his life by spending it in ignorance and deviation. He was daring, audacious, hard-hearted, and his book of deeds was filled with darkness. In fact, Shaytān was ashamed of his vileness. This is the description provided by the Shaykh. You will see further on how he became victorious and entered into a pure life which would have certainly caused Shaytān to fall upside down and cry all his life for allowing this person to escape from under his wing. This shows that everything is in Allāh's control.

This person saw Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* just once in his life, and that too, from a distance. But his entire condition changed. It is related further on that Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* must have went on countless occasions to the virtuous person, but his end was totally different. The Shaykh continues:

I heard that Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* was returning from the forest when he passed by a place of worship of a worshipper (ʿābid). On seeing Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*, the ʿābid left his place of seclusion and placed his head at Hadrat ʿĪsā's *ʿalayhis salām* feet. On the other side, the unfortunate sinner was watching this scene from a distance and was quite perplexed. He became restless like a moth when it sees light and brightness. He felt ashamed in his heart and was staring at them with remorse just as a poor person looks at a wealthy person. The Shaykh then goes into some detail and says: This sinner began crying profusely and was saying:

"O Allāh! Pardon me my sins because if these sins remain with me on the day of Resurrection, they will be extremely evil companions."

This was the condition of the sinner. Now look at the condition of the worshipper:

The old sinner was sitting in one corner, crying and asking Allāh *taʿālā* to guide him. On the other side, the worshipper whose head was filled with pride was looking at the poor sinner from a distance and becoming annoyed at him. He was thinking to himself: "Why is this wretched fellow following us? He is an ignorant and ill-fated person. What do I have to do with him."

The Shaykh then quotes his statement which he made out of utter pride and haughtiness:

"I am annoyed by his pitiful sight because I fear some of his fire falling onto me. O Allāh! When the entire world gathers on the field of Resurrection for the accounting of deeds, do not cause me to rise with this sinner."

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* continues:

The worshipper was engrossed in these thoughts when revelation came to ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* in which Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Whether the person is an ʿālim or a jāhil (an ignorant person), the duʿā' of both is accepted in My court. I have pardoned his [the sinner's] evils and I shall convey him to Paradise by virtue of My mercy. If the worshipper feels it below his dignity to be with him in Paradise, tell him he should not feel any humiliation on the day of Resurrection because I will convey him [the fearful sinner] to Paradise and him [the fearless worshipper] to Hell. This is because the sinner's heart has been reduced to blood due to his pain and anguish. If the worshipper is proud about his worship, does he not know that humility and submission is far better than pride and haughtiness in the court of the All-Independent [Allāh]!?"

In other words: The worshipper was intoxicated in his pride when Allāh *taʿālā* sent revelation to Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* saying: If this person is an ʿālim, so what? And if this person is a jāhil, so what? I have accepted the duʿā' of both. This was the duʿā':

"O Allāh! Pardon me my sins because if these sins remain with me on the day of Resurrection, they will be extremely evil companions."

Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned the sinner his evil deeds and admitted him into Paradise solely out of His grace and generosity. Allāh *taʿālā* said: If this worshipper feels it below his dignity to live with him in Paradise, tell him he must not worry in the least about such an indignity. I will convey the sinner to Paradise and I will cast him into Hell. This is because the poor sinner had completely obliterated himself with repentance, while the worshipper relied on his worship. Does he not know even this much that

servitude and submission is better than pride and self-ego in the court of the All-Independent [Allāh]!?

The Shaykh now issues a warning:

The statements of intelligent people are remembered. O Saʿdī, you too should remember this one fact: The sinner who fears Allāh, who trembles and shivers on account of his sins, and has his sight solely on Allāh *taʿālā* for the forgiveness of his sins; is better than the worshipper who is ostentatious about his worship.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to be overcome by fear and submission. He remained very far from ostentation and liked the same for his associates. He used to relate this story in his assembly so that people may abstain from this evil condition and internal sickness. (compiler)

THE IMPORTANCE OF DUʿĀ'

The author of *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* writes in the chapter on duʿā' that one of its etiquette is that there must be presence of heart. The heart must not be heedless because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالٰى لَا يَسْتَجِيْبُ الدُّعَاءَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ غَافِلٍ لَاهٍ.

Allāh taʿālā does not accept the duʿā' of a heart which is heedless and unmindful.

Consuming halāl is one of the prerequisites of duʿā'. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to Hadrat Saʿd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

أطب كسبك تستجب دعوتك.

Ensure that your earning is pure and your duʿā' will be accepted.

It is said that duʿā' is the key to fulfilling one's needs while halāl morsels are the teeth of that key. Just as a lock cannot be opened with a blank key, duʿā' cannot be accepted without lawful earnings and halāl food.

Note: This shows the importance of consuming what is lawful. The acceptance of duʿā' is dependent on it. Consuming halāl is from among the obligations of the Sufis. Allāh *taʿālā* instructed His Messengers to consume halāl.

يَا اَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا.

There are many incidents which show how Allāh *taʿālā* accepted the supplications of those who

beseeched Him at the time of difficulties and calamities. They can be accepted today as well provided the prerequisites are fulfilled.

A few incidents on the acceptance of duʿā'

(1)

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* passed by a man who was beseeching and begging Allāh *taʿālā*. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said to Allāh: "If it was in my power to fulfil his need, I would have done it." Allāh *taʿālā* replied: "O Mūsā! I am much more merciful to him, but he is supplicating to me while his heart is attached to his goats. I do not accept the duʿā' of a person who is supplicating to Me while his heart is with someone else." Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* went to the man and informed him. He cut himself off immediately from his goats and focused on Allāh *taʿālā* with all his heart. His needs were fulfilled.

As long as he did not have presence of heart, his duʿā' was not accepted. The moment he turned to Allāh *taʿālā* fully, his duʿā' was accepted and his needs were fulfilled.

(2)

Hadrat Anas ibn Mālik *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* there was a man who used to travel between Madīnah and Syria for business. He would not join any of the caravans but would place his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and travel on his own. He was travelling from Syria to Madīnah on one occasion. On the way he met a thief who was on a horse. The thief shouted to the trader to stop. The trader stopped and said to him: "Take my goods and let me proceed on my way." The thief replied: "The goods are already mine. I plan to kill you." The trader asked: "Of what benefit will it

be to you if you kill me? Take my goods and let me be." The thief repeated his plan. The trader said: "Okay, give me a chance to perform wuḍū' and ṣalāh, and to supplicate to Allāh." The thief replied: "You may do as you want." The trader performed wuḍū' and four rakʿats of ṣalāh. He then raised his hands towards the heavens and supplicated to Allāh *taʿālā*:

يَا وَدُوْدُ، يَا ذَا الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيْدِ، يَا مُبْدِئُ، يَا مُعِيْدُ، يَا فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيْدُ، أَسْئَلُكَ بِنُوْرِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِيْ مَلَأَ أَرْكَانَ عَرْشِكَ، وَأَسْئَلُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ الَّتِيْ قَدَرْتَ بِهَا عَلٰى خَلْقِكَ، وَبِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِيْ وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، يَا مُغِيْثُ أَغِثْنِيْ.

He made this duʿā' three times. The moment he finished it, a man wearing green garments and riding a glittering horse came upon them. He had a spear in his hand. When the thief saw this man approaching, he left the trader and advanced towards him. When he got closer to him, this new rider attacked the thief, struck him and dropped him off his horse. He then went to the trader and said: "Get up and kill the thief." The trader asked: "Who are you? I have never killed anyone nor will I be happy to kill him." The rider went back to the thief and put an end to him. He returned to the trader and said: "Listen! I am an angel from the third heaven. When you made duʿā' the first time, we [angels] heard some noise at the gates of the heavens. We said to ourselves, it seems that some event has occurred. When you made duʿā' the second time, the gates of the heavens were opened and flames of fire began emerging from them. When you made duʿā' the third time, Ḥaḍrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* came to us and announced:

من لهذا المكروب؟

Who is going to help this man in need?

I requested Allāh *taʿālā* to permit me to see to the killing of this thief."

The angel added: "O servant of Allāh! Anyone who makes this supplication at the time of a calamity or difficulty, Allāh *taʿālā* will remove the calamity from him."

The trader then proceeded with his goods and reached Madīnah safely. He presented himself before Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and related the incident to him and quoted the duʿā' which he had made. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

لقد لقنك الله عز وجل عن أسمائه الحسنى التي إذا دعي بها أجاب وإذا سئل بها أعطى.

Allāh taʿālā taught you His beautiful names which, when He is beseeched through them, He responds. And when He is asked, He gives.

Note: We should make this duʿā' when faced with a difficulty or calamity. In fact, we should note it with its translation in our notebooks and make it a habit of reading it daily. (compiler)

(3)

I heard Ustādh Abū ʿAlī *raḥimahullāh* saying: The king Yaʿqūb ibn Layth suffered from an ailment which all the physicians failed to treat. Someone said to him: "There is in your kingdom a pious man by the name of Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh. If he makes duʿā' in your favour, there is hope that Allāh *taʿālā* will accept his

supplication." The king called for him and requested him to make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* for him. Sahl ibn ʿAbdillāh *rahimahullāh* said: "How can my supplication in your favour be accepted when there are so many oppressed people in your prisons." The king immediately released all those who were in the prisons. Sahl *rahimahullāh* then made the following duʿā' for him:

اَللّٰهُمَّ كَمَا أَرَيْتَهُ ذِلَّ الْمَعْصِيَةِ فَأَرِهِ عِزَّ الطَّاعَةِ وَفَرِّجْ عَنْهُ.

O Allāh! Just as you showed him the shame of disobedience, show him the honour of obedience and remove discomfort from him.

The king was cured immediately. He offered some money to Hadrat Sahl *rahimahullāh* but he refused to accept it. Someone said to him: "What was wrong in your accepting that money and giving it to some poor people?" He focused his gaze on the pebbles on the ground and they immediately turned into jewels. He then said to his companions: "If Allāh *taʿālā* has given so much of wealth to a servant, do you think he will ever be need of the wealth of Yaʿqūb ibn Layth?"

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just look at his high position in Allāh's court. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with similar acceptance. Āmīn. (compiler)

(4)

Hadrat Layth *rahimahullāh* relates: I noticed that Ibn Nāfiʿ was blind. When I met him again after a few days, I saw that he could see. I asked him: "How did you get your eyesight back?" He replied: "I saw a dream in which I was asked to make this supplication:

يَا قَرِيْبُ يَا مُجِيْبُ يَا سَمِيْعَ الدُّعَاءِ، يَا لَطِيْفُ لِمَا يَشَآءُ رُدَّ عَلَيَّ بَصَرِيْ.

I made this supplication and Allāh *taʿālā* restored my eyesight."

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to make this duʿā' for eyesight and insight. May He accept it in our favour. Āmīn. (compiler)

(5)

Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* in the Qur'ān. He says:

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ وَّأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا ۙ وَّكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ؕ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ ۙ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا ۚ قَالَ يٰمَرْيَمُ أَنّٰى لَكِ هٰذَا ؕ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ؕ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Then her Sustainer accepted her with a cordial acceptance and caused her to grow up gracefully, and He placed her in the care of Zakarīyyā. Whenever Zakarīyyā visited her in the room, he found some food by her. He said: "O Maryam! From where did this come to you?" She replied: "This comes from Allāh – Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit."[1]

When the wife of Hadrat ʿImrān fell pregnant, she made a vow to Allāh *taʿālā* that the child which is in her womb will be devoted for His worship and service, and that she will not use the child for her own needs. She added: "Accept this child for You are

[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 37.

all-hearing and all-knowing. You are hearing my plea and You are fully aware of my intention."

Vows of this nature were permitted in those days, but made specifically for male offspring. She made this vow in the hope that a boy will be born to her. But when she gave birth to a girl, she said remorsefully: "O my Allāh! I have delivered a girl." Allāh *taʿālā* says that she may be expressing remorse whereas Allāh *taʿālā* knows well the high status which this girl will enjoy, and that the boy which she desired would not have been equal to this girl in any way. She is superior because she will have unique blessings and excellent qualities. The mother of Maryam said: "I have named her Maryam and give her and her offspring in Your refuge against the accursed Shaytān."

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ

Then her Sustainer accepted her with a cordial acceptance.

In other words, males were normally accepted for such services but Allāh *taʿālā* accepted Maryam.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says with reference to the words "a cordial acceptance": When she gave birth to Maryam, she thought to herself that a daughter will not be accepted to render services to the House of Allāh (Bayt al-Maqdis). She therefore wrapped Maryam in a cloth and left her in an assembly of worshippers in Bayt al-Maqdis. Each one of them wanted to take the responsibility of caring for this child because she was the daughter of their imām, Hadrat ʿImrān. Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* who was the leader of these worshippers said: "I will take her and tend to her. I have the most right

because her maternal-aunt is my wife." The others said that they should rather draw lots, and the one whose name comes out will have the right to tend to her. Everyone agreed to this. Each one handed over his pen with which they used to record divine revelation. The pens were collected and placed under a cloth. One of the children who used to live in Bayt al-Maqdis was called and asked to remove a pen from under the cloth. He did as told and the pen of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* came out. The others expressed their disapproval in the manner in which the lots were drawn. They said: "All the pens must be thrown at once in the water. The person whose pen flows first, comes onto the surface and then stops will be appointed to take care of Maryam." They cast their pens in the Jordan River. On this occasion too, the pen of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* emerged the victor. Some of them said, this is not the way lots are drawn. Instead, the one whose pen flows with the current will be made responsible for Maryam. Again, the pen of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* flowed with the current while the other pens stopped flowing.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* was therefore appointed as the guardian of Maryam.

Allāh *taʿālā* says further:

وَّأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا

…and caused her to grow up gracefully.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that Allāh *taʿālā* caused her to grow swiftly. The extent to which children normally grew up in one year, she would grow within one day.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا

Whenever Zakarīyyā visited her in the room, he found some food by her.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explains the word "mihrāb" as a room in the upper storey of Bayt al-Maqdis. It was reserved for Maryam. The door to this room was raised so that anyone wanting to enter the room had to climb a ladder to do so. It was similar to the door of the Kaʿbah.

Ibn Jarīr *rahimahullāh* reports from Hadrat Rabīʿ *rahimahullāh* who said that none other than Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* could go to her. When he used to return from her, he used to close all seven doors. Despite this, she used to have summer fruits in winter and vice versa. This is why Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* asked her:

أَنّٰى لَكِ هٰذَا.

From where does this fruit which is so different from the fruit of the world come to you? Also, how does it reach you bearing in mind that all the doors to your room are locked? She replied:

قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ

She replied: This comes from Allāh.

Allāh *taʿālā* provides me with these foods without any human intervention. You should not be astonished by this and never consider it to be far-fetched because:

إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

If Allāh *taʿālā* wills, He can give sustenance without the adoption of any means.

(6)

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* relates an incident from the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Ḥaḍrat Jābir *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not eat any food for a few days. When he found this quite difficult to bear, he went to the houses of his pure wives but none of them had any food. He went to the house of his daughter Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhā* and asked: "Do you have anything to eat, I am feeling extremely hungry." She replied in the negative. On hearing this, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* got up to leave. As he left her house, one of the neighbours sent two rotīs and some meat as a gift to her. She took the food and placed it in a container, thinking to herself that she will not give it to any of her family members. Instead, she will keep it aside for her father. She thought this even though she and all her family members were also hungry.

She sent one of her sons to call Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. When he arrived, she said: "Allāh *taʿālā* has sent something which I covered and left aside for you." Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Bring the container here." She relates: "When I went to bring the container and uncovered it, I found that it was filled with rotīs and meat. I was surprised and thought to myself that Allāh *taʿālā* has indeed blessed it. I expressed my thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* and brought the container of food to my father.

He too expressed gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* and asked: "Where did this food come from?" I replied: "It has come from Allāh *taʿālā* because He gives sustenance to whomever He wills without the means and without us being eligible for it." When he heard my reply, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "All praises are due to Allāh *taʿālā* who made you similar to the chief-woman of the Banī Isrāʾīl (referring to Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām*) because it was also her habit to reply in the same way when she was asked about where she received her sustenance from." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then assembled Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Hasan *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and the other people of the house, and they all ate together. Everyone ate to his fill and some food was still left over. Hadrat Fāṭimah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* sent it to her neighbours.

Just as Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* used to receive non-seasonal food, Allāh *taʿālā* gave it to the righteous ones from the community of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. You have just read the story of Hadrat Fāṭimah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*.

(7)

Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a Sahābī. A similar incident about him is related in the Hadīth. The sons of Hārith ibn ʿĀmir ibn Naufal bought him for 100 camels from the unbelievers who had imprisoned him. They did this so that they could kill him to avenge the death of their father. This is because Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had killed their father. It is related in *Sahīh Bukhārī* that in the course of his imprisonment, Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked one of the sons of Hārith for a shaver so that he could purify himself. Incidentally,

a small child came to Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* around the same time. Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* seated him in his lap. (The scene which we can visualize is that Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had a blade in his hand and a child in his lap). When a woman saw this scene, she became terrified. She thought to herself that here is this prisoner and my child is in his lap! What if he kills my child!?

Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* perceived her fear and said: "There is no need for you to fear; I will never do such a thing (nor does my Dīn permit me to raise a hand against women and children)." The woman relates: "I have not come across a better prisoner than Khubayb." She also relates: "In the course of his incarceration, I saw Khubayb eating grapes even though no fruits were available in Makkah during that time." Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was in shackles and chains, yet he was receiving grapes. They were obviously sent to him by Allāh *taʿālā*.

هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

This comes from Allāh – Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

It is related with regard to the same Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* that when he was about to be put to the gallows, he asked for permission to perform two rakʿats of salāh. He was given permission. He performed the two rakʿats. They were so accepted in Allāh's court that they became an eternal Sunnat for all innocent people who were put to the gallows. He read the following couplets after performing the two rakʿats:

ولست أبالي حين أقتل مسلما – على أي شق كان لله مصرعي

وذلك في ذات الإله وإن يشاء – يبارك على أوصال شلو ممزعي

As long as my martyrdom is for Islam, I do not bother about which side I fall on. After all, it is solely for Allāh taʿālā. If He wills, He can bless every part of my body which has been chopped off and cut up.

He was then raised to the crucifix and his face was turned away from the qiblah. He said: "I do not bother about it, because no matter in which direction one turns, He will find Allāh *taʿālā*." The unbelievers then said to him: "We will release you if you renounce Islam." Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* replied: "I will not give up Islam even if you give me the entire earth. Let alone one life, I am prepared to give a hundred lives for the sake of Islam."

It is related that even at the final hour, Hadrat Khubayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* made this supplication: "O Allāh! These are all my enemies. I have no friend here. I request you to convey my salām to my beloved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*." Zayd ibn Aslam *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates: "I was present in the assembly when the effects of divine revelation appeared on the face of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He then said to us: 'The unbelievers have killed Khubayb. Jibraʾīl has just come to me and conveyed his salām.' Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied to his salām by saying: 'May the peace and mercy of Allāh be on him.'"[1]

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[1] Quoted from *Tārīkh Habīb Ilāh*.

(8)

On seeing the supernatural manner in which Hadrat Maryam received sustenance and hearing her statement:

إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* developed a special conviction in the immense power of Allāh *taʿālā*. He was so overcome by this spiritual condition that he presented a need to Allāh *taʿālā* which He accepted. This is also related in the Qur'ān:

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ

It was at this point that Zakarīyyā supplicated to his Sustainer.

Hadrat Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh* says that when Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* saw the fruits of summer in winter and vice verse which Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* used to bring to Hadrat Maryam, he developed a desire for a son. He thought to himself that if Allāh *taʿālā* can provide non-seasonal fruit to Maryam, He can most certainly create within his wife the ability to conceive a child. He took a bath on the night of the 27th of Muharram, turned to Allāh *taʿālā* and supplicated to Him even though he was gone old and his wife was barren.

The scholars say that Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* developed this desire even though he was old and his wife was barren because when he observed the manner in which Hadrat Maryam was receiving various foods and fruits, he realized that a child can

be born to an old man and a barren woman. This thought came to his mind because a child is also like a fruit, and a woman being barren is similar to non-season. If fruit can be provided out of season, a child can be conceived by a barren woman. An old man can be given the strength of a young man, and a barren woman can be turned into a fertile one.

Another reason for his supplication could be that when contrary to the norm of accepting elderly males for the service of Bayt al-Maqdis, a young girl (Hadrat Maryam) was accepted, then also contrary to the norm, an old man like him can have children.

Yet another reason could be that when he saw Hadrat Maryam starting to speak at an age when children do not normally speak, he thought to himself that his wife too can conceive a child at an age when a woman does not normally conceive. Alternatively, the urge to supplicate to Allāh *taʿālā* developed in him when Hadrat Maryam replied to his question by saying:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

If Allāh *taʿālā* can provide sustenance without the means, He can give a child to my wife even though she is barren.

(9)

No matter what, when Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* was impressed by what he observed in Hadrat Maryam, he made this supplication to Allāh *taʿālā*:

قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ.

He said: "O my Sustainer! Bestow upon me, from You, pure children. Surely, You are the hearer of supplications."[1]

Hadrat Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh* relates that Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* used to make this supplication as well:

يا رازق مريم ثمار الصيف في الشتاء وثمار الشتاء في الصيف، هب لي من لدنك ذرية طيبة.

O the Being who provides Maryam with summer fruits in winter and vice versa, bless me with a pure offspring from Yourself.

Allāh *taʿālā* accepted his supplication as related in the Qur'ān:

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلٰئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَآئِمٌ يُّصَلِّيْ فِي الْمِحْرَابِ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيٰى.

The angels then called out to him when he was standing in prayer in the room, that Allāh gives you the glad tidings of Yahyā.[2]

Glory to Allāh! Both these incidents – providing sustenance to Hadrat Maryam without any outward means and a child to Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* in old age – were supernatural incidents. Allāh *taʿālā* relates both in the Qur'ān. In this way, a door of guidance is opened to the followers of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam,* and the special servants of Allāh *taʿālā* are taught the lesson of reliance on Him.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 38.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 39.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the divine wisdom as explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It is indeed a powerful bounty on the followers of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. May Allāh *taʿālā* confer us with the quality of reliance on Him alone. Āmīn. (compiler)

Man is more in need of sustenance and children. His need for sustenance is obvious because it is the means for his existence. He needs children because they are the means for the continuity of his progeny. This is why people are always striving for these two. Look around you and you will find some people worried about seeking sustenance while others are concerned about getting children. Man will employ various means to acquire these. He will bear the hardships and difficulties which he has to face in his quest. Allāh *taʿālā* convinced His special servants completely by relating these incidents. This is why we see the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and the auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* shifting their gaze away from the causes and focusing on Allāh *taʿālā* alone, the Creator of the causes. Since Allāh *taʿālā* related incidents of this nature, their conviction has become stronger. They believe, without any doubt, that just as the all-powerful Allāh lays down the system of cause and effect, He can also fulfil the needs of His special servants without any causes. After all, the need for causes is a quality in man; not in Allāh *taʿālā*. If He wills, He can create the means and causes from unfavourable situations. And if He wills, He can confer bounties without any means. This is the general treatment of Allāh *taʿālā* with the masses. That is, He enables them to realize their objectives through causes and means. As for His special servants – the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and auliyā' – He sometimes gives them without external means.

This is borne out in the incidents related previously. Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* received non-seasonal fruits and Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* received a son in old age. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

From this story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām*, an entire chapter of knowledge opened up to me. A scholar had asked me about a certain couplet in the *Mathnawī*:

> Remaining in the services of the Ahlullāh
> for a short while is better than 100 years
> of sincere worship.

The scholar asked me: "Is there any basis for this statement in the Qur'ān and Sunnat?" Then he himself said that the following verse could be a basis for it:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصَّادِقِيْنَ

O believers! Fear Allāh and remain with the truthful ones.

I said to him: "This verse can be a basis for it." However, the thought came to my mind that this verse only encourages being the company of the truthful ones. As for it being superior to 100 years of worship, that does not seem to be proven from this verse. On the other hand, this story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* could become a basis for it. Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* enjoyed the company of Hadrat Maryam for a short while. On seeing the un-seasonal fruit with her and hearing her statement:

هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ إِنَّ اللهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

This comes from Allāh – Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit.

He developed a certain spiritual condition within himself which prompted him to ask Allāh *taʿālā* for a child. He then supplicated in utmost earnestness and humility to Allāh *taʿālā*, and turned to Him with such dedication that his supplication was accepted there and then. It was this short time of companionship which is superior to 100 years of worship.

Note: We learn from this that sometimes seniors also derive benefit from juniors as was the case with Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* who was a Prophet and Hadrat Maryam *ʿalayhas salām* who was not a Prophet but a pious woman. Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhas salām* developed that special level of reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* from her company. "Allāh gives sustenance to whomever He wills without any limit."

From this story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* we learn the lesson that causes in themselves are not the doers; Allāh *taʿālā* is the real doer. And He is not dependent on causes. He brings into existence through causes and without them as well, because He has the power to do it. The cause and the effect are the same to the Being who has the power to create causes.

(10)

Another point which we learn from this incident is that duʿā' is a major means of acquiring an objective. Let me relate an incident in this regard from the *Mathnawī*:

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* was accepted as a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā* by all – the intelligent and the foolish ones. There was a man in his time who was

making this supplication: “O Allāh! Give me wealth and treasures without having to do any work.” He would also say: “O Allāh! You created me lazy and lethargic, so provide me with sustenance through the path of laziness [I must not need to do any work]. I ask You for sustenance which comes to me without any toiling. I have no one to beg to apart from You, nor can I make any other effort.”

The man continued supplicating in this way by day and night for a considerable number of days, and people laughed and mocked at his persistence and “futile” hopes. This is because their gaze was confined to the physical and material means. They believed that sustenance can only be acquired through striving and hard work, while this man was hoping for sustenance in an extraordinary manner. He will not obtain it, and if he does, it will be most astonishing. He is so foolish that he wants sustenance without any effort. He wants to make a profit without engaging in any trade. No one ever received wealth in this way. How can it be possible unless a person climbs up to the heavens? If a person wants to achieve something, he will have to follow the means for it.

The man did not decrease his supplication just because of the taunts and jeers of the people. Instead, he continued beseeching Allāh *taʿālā* for sustenance without having to work for it. Allāh *taʿālā* who is the helper and supporter of all eventually accepted his supplication. A person assuredly realizes his objective if he has a true and genuine quest. The man saw a cow approaching his house. He shut the door of his house, broke the cow’s horns and slaughtered it without any pause or hesitation.

When the owner of the cow saw this, he went to him and said: “Hey you wretched fellow, you made my cow a target of your oppression! Tell me, why did you slaughter my cow? You are a fool and a thief. I want justice for Allāh’s sake.” The man replied: “I had been asking Allāh for sustenance since quite some time. My supplication has been answered. This cow was the sustenance which I had asked for, so I slaughtered it. This is the only answer I have for you.” The owner went into a rage, caught him by his collar, and gave him a few hard slaps on his face. He then dragged him and took him to Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* while saying to the man: “Move, you foolish and brainless fellow. Allāh’s Prophet will pass a decision on you.”

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* emerged from his house and when he saw these two, he asked: “What is the matter?” The owner of the cow said: “O Prophet of Allāh! The story is that my cow went to his house and he slaughtered it. He ought to be asked why he did this and what was he thinking when he did it.” Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* turned to the man and asked: “Why did you lay your hand on the property of someone else?” The man replied: “O Prophet of Allāh! I have been begging and beseeching Allāh *taʿālā* for the last seven years to give me sustenance without having to work for it. After supplicating to Him for so long, this cow suddenly came to my house. I was stupefied when I set eyes on it. Not because I received sustenance but out of joy over the acceptance of my supplication. My despondency turned to hope. I slaughtered it as an expression of thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* for having accepted my supplication.”

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* said: “Leave all your stories and expressions of your piety, and present a Sharʿī proof for your action. Do you want me to pass a verdict without your presenting a proof from the Sharīʿat and to introduce an evil way in the Sharīʿat in this way? Tell me, did anyone give this cow to you, did you buy it from anyone or did you receive it as inheritance? How did you become its owner? A farmer becomes owner of a piece of land when he buys it from someone. Return the property which you took. Do not make up stories. If you do not have it with you, take a loan and fulfil his due. Do not dilly dally.” The man said: “I never thought you will say the same things which people say to me when they mock at me.” He then sighed deeply, fell into prostration and addressed Allāh: “O the Sustainer of the world! O the one who knows those who are in pain. Make the facts clear to Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*.” After saying this, he began crying and wailing. Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* was trembled when he heard his crying. He addressed the claimant saying: “Give me some time. Hold on with your claims so that I may perform salāh in solitude and learn the truth from the One who knows all secrets.” Saying this, he stopped talking, directed his attention to his heart, and proceeded to his place of seclusion.

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* shut the door after reaching his secluded room and became engrossed in supplication. Allāh *taʿālā* informed him of everything related to the story, and apprised him of the criminal and the punishment for the crime. In this way, he came to know of things which no one else had knowledge of and he was left astounded.

Everyone assembled before Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* the next day. They stood in rows and waited

for his verdict. Just then, the same claimant addressed the youngster saying: "O you useless fellow! Give me back my cow immediately. If you cannot feel shame towards your fellow humans you should at least feel shame before Allāh *taʿālā*." The verdict of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* had changed. He addressed the claimant: "Remain silent. Don't you dare utter another word. Relinquish your claims and give the cow to your fellow Muslim. I will tell you just this much: Since Allāh *taʿālā* has covered you, you should express thanks to Him and let the matter lie. I advise you that if you desire your own good, you should relinquish your claim. If you are going to demand it, you will suffer the loss."

When the owner of the cow heard these words of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*, he began wailing and complaining even more, and said: "What type of verdict is this? Where is the justice? Have you made up a new Sharīʿat for me? Your justice is well-known throughout the world. In fact, the earth and the heavens are perfumed by it. How is it that you are issuing such an unjust verdict against me? You are a Prophet of Allāh. For Allāh's sake, do not say such a thing."

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "O you ignorant fellow! Are you attributing injustice to me? Very well, if you really want a fair verdict from me then listen. Bring all your wealth and possessions, and hand them over to this youngster." The owner of the cow became even more distressed when he heard this. He began throwing dust on his head and tearing his clothes [to express his disgust], and said: "You are continuing to add injustices against me."

The terrible condition of irreligious people

Did you see! This is what you call a real thief. He himself was a criminal and was fully aware of his own condition. Yet when the verdict went against him, he was prepared to dispute with a Prophet of Allāh. He labelled his verdict as unjust and started demanding justice from him. This is the norm with those who are on falsehood. They have no confidence in a saint, a scholar, and even in Allāh and the Messenger. Instead, they are slaves of their own objectives. The moment they face something against their whims and desires, they succumb to the demands of their carnal self and then utter whatever comes onto their tongues. They were already unfaithful in their hearts. Now they do not desist from hurting the proponents of the truth with their tongues. You have observed this in the above story. When the verdict went against him, he began speaking ill of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*.

An incident related to the distribution of Hadrat ʿAlī

An incident of this nature occurred during the caliphate of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. Two persons were on a journey. They stopped on the way for a meal. One man had five rotīs while the other had three. Just then another traveller arrived so they seated him with them. All three partook of the meal. When the third person was about to leave, he gave them eight dirhams and said: "This is in return for what I ate." Saying this, he continued on his way. The two argued about the distribution of the dirhams. The one who had five rotīs said: "I will take five dirhams and you can take the remaining three." The one with the three rotīs said: "We ought to divide the money equally."

They presented their case to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He said to the one with three rotīs: "You should accept the three dirhams which your companion is giving to you. He had more rotīs while you had fewer. How, then, can there be equality in the money?" The man said: "By Allāh I will never accept this verdict. You will have to give me my share in full." Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "I see. Are you saying that I passed an unjust verdict and that I trampled on your rights? Very well, if you really want justice then you will receive just one dirham while your companion will receive seven." The man said: "Glory to Allāh! How can this be? Explain it to me so that I can accept it on the basis of proof."

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "Listen! You were three people while there were eight rotīs. Since they cannot be divided equally, let's assume eat rotī had three pieces. This will total 24 pieces. We do not know for sure who ate more and who ate less. We will therefore have to assume that you all ate an equal amount. Your three rotīs make up a total of nine pieces of which you ate eight. One piece remained from it. Your companion ate eight pieces of his fifteen pieces, and seven pieces remained. The third person ate your one piece and seven pieces of your companion's. For your one piece you will obviously receive one dirham while your companion will receive seven dirhams for his seven pieces. If you really want a verdict based on absolute justice, then this is it. The man had to accept the verdict and bear his loss.

I related this verdict of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* while speaking on the point that this is how those who are on falsehood behave. In other words, they cannot understand the truth and the right thing unless they are totally humiliated in public. This is

what the man with three rotīs did, and so did the claimant in the time of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*.

Speaking of the verdict and sharp mind of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, I recall another incident where he solved a complex issue in a few seconds. We can gauge the expertise of our pious predecessors from it. They surpassed everyone in worldly matters as well by virtue of their religiosity and genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā*.

The sharp wit of Hadrat ʿAlī

Three men came to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and said: "We are co-owners of seventeen camels and would like to distribute them among ourselves. Our partnership is as follows: One person's share is half, the second person's share is one third, and the third person's share is one ninth. How will the seventeen camels be distributed among us because there is a fraction in each one's share? We request you to pass a verdict." Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* instructed his attendant to bring one camel from his camel-shed. They now had eighteen camels. He said to the person whose share was half: "Take nine camels. Bear in mind that you are receiving more than what you ought to receive because you ought to have received half of seventeen but I am giving you half of eighteen." He said to the person whose share was one third: "Take six camels. This is also slightly more than what you ought to receive." He said to the one whose share was one ninth: "One ninth of eighteen is two. And this is also slightly more than one ninth of seventeen. So take two camels."

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* then addressed all three: "The nine, six and two camels total seventeen

camels as per your shares." He then said to his attendant: "Take my remaining one camel and return it to the camel-shed."

Glory to Allāh! Marvel at his intelligence and knowledge! We are left astounded. Look at how quickly he solved such a difficult problem. This was solely the help of Allāh *taʿālā* which always accompanies His righteous servants. This world is quite strange. People witness incidents of this nature but very few believe them. They think that the Ahlullāh are just like them. This is why they doubt incidents of this nature and treat them with suspicion. In fact, sometimes they will even make verbal statements against them as was the case with the claimant when he heard the verdict of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*.

Criticising Hadrat Dāwūd ﷺ

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* writes further on:

The man continued criticising Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* for some time. The latter then called him forward and said: "O you wretched fellow! You have always been wretched, this is why your wrongdoing is gradually coming out into the open. Get away from here and listen carefully: 'Your wife and your children have all come under the ownership of this youngster and are now his slaves. Do not say anything further.' The man lost his mind when he heard this verdict. He picked up two rocks and began striking his chest. In his ignorance, he ran around in circles. The people too began castigating him when they learnt the facts. They did not know his internal condition before this.

Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* finally said: "O people! The time has come for me to bring the secret into the

open. Listen! There is a huge mango tree in such and such forest. It has intertwining branches and a dense growth of leaves which makes the tree appear like a tent. The tree trunk is like a centre-peg of a tent. I am getting the smell of blood from the roots of that tree. Blood has been concealed in the roots of that beautiful and dense tree. This wretched fellow murdered his master and buried him there. He then seized his master's wealth whereas he was his slave. This youngster is the son of the murdered man. He was a small child at the time when the murder was committed, so he does not know what happened. Allāh *taʿālā*, out of His forbearance, had concealed his crime up to now. However, the ingratitude of this shameless fellow caused him to be exposed and humiliated. This disloyal slave did not bother in the least about the wife and family of his master. He neither met him on days of joy nor received him warmly on the days of ʿīd."

Allāh's forbearance conceals many of man's sins. But when a person transgresses the limits, Allāh *taʿālā* disgraces him. Now that the man's secret was exposed, his crime brought into the open and the miracle of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* displayed before the entire creation, the very same people who did not know the facts and were therefore having doubts about the justice of Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* ran towards Hadrat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* and fell at his feet. They acknowledged: "We are blind as regards our own selves. Previously, we did not listen with confidence to whatever you said. Although we witnessed countless miracles at your hands, we did not have proper insight. We ask you to excuse us."

The wrongdoer was killed while an entire world was given life. In other words, those who were eligible for

their rights had their rights fulfilled. Each person set right his īmān, repented over his sins and became a true servant of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The carnal self has murdered the soul

After relating this story, Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* presents its moral. He writes:

This is exactly the condition of your carnal self. It was essentially the slave of the soul, but it killed your soul and became its own boss. All this corruption and evil has spread because of it. You should kill your carnal self so that the entire world comes to life. Because this hypocrite murdered its master – the soul – the punishment will be that you will have to make the carnal self the slave of your soul.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the admonitory moral which Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* extracted from this story. He was a master in this field. He was able to explain intricate and complex matters on Sufism through stories and anecdotes. The carnal self is certainly the worst enemy of man on the path to Allāh *taʿālā*. A Hadīth states:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك.[1]

Your bitterest enemy is your carnal self.

This is why it is so important to rectify it.

The Qur'ān refers to the self as *ammārah bi as-sū'*.

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ.

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[1]

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[1] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الالباس: ج ١، ص ١٢٨.

However, when man strives to rectify it through Allāh's grace and inspiration, he sees the evils which it contains. He may not be able to remove his evils at once due to his mischief and engrossment with evil pleasures, there will come a time when he will feel an aversion towards evils. Although this is not the ideal, because it is a prelude to excellence and perfection, it is desirable and praiseworthy. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* took an oath by this type of the self when He said:

لَا اُقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا اُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ الَّلوَّامَةِ.

I take an oath by the day of Resurrection. I take an oath by the self which reproaches at evil.[2]

This is also the natural sequence of training: Man must first clear his mind. His beliefs are then rectified. He sees the good for what it is and evil for what it is. He then acts on the demands of good. After a long period of striving, the "reproaching self" becomes the self which has acquired tranquillity regarding which Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً. فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ.

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you. Join, then, My servants and enter My Paradise.[3]

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

[2] Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75: 1-2.

[3] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-30.

Duʿā' – an important way to purify the self

We conclude from the above discussion that the self is one, but it goes through different changes. The self which teaches evil progresses and becomes a self which reprimands and reproaches. It progresses further and becomes the self which has acquired tranquillity. The means for acquiring this is striving and spiritual exercises. However, there is one important means which is generally not acknowledged as a means, and that is duʿā'. This is more so when it is accompanied by a special condition. You must have observed it when I related the story of Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* to you. When Allāh *taʿālā* said:

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ

It was at this point that Zakarīyyā supplicated to his Sustainer.

This is what I want to direct your attention to. Do not consider duʿā' to be insignificant. The greatest feats of Muslims in every era were achieved through duʿā', and will continue to do so in the future.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to turn to Allāh *taʿālā* all the time. He used to beseech Him with utmost servitude and submission. The scholars compiled his supplications in books and separated them into chapters. It is the responsibility of the followers of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to learn and memorize them. I am quoting a duʿā' which supports the point which I am emphasising, viz. duʿā' is an important means towards the rectification and purification of the self. There can be no one who could surpass Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in spiritual exercises and striving.

Despite this, he made this supplication to Allāh *taʿālā*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا.

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

It therefore becomes a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. That is, do not look at your own striving and spiritual exercises. Instead, seek Allāh's help and support. Say to Him: "O Allāh! If You shower Your kindness to this self and purify it, it will be purified. If not, it will destroy me in its mischief and evil plotting."

The gnosticism of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is displayed when he turned to Allāh *taʿālā* in the matter of the self and taught the same to his followers. We can never consider ourselves to be independent as regards the rectification and purification of the self. Rather, even with our striving and efforts, we must turn to Allāh *taʿālā*. If not, we will never be able to gain control over it.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how easy Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this difficult thing for us.

Note: This is an immensely important and beneficial theme which was excellently explained by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the Muslim community to understand it and practise on it. It is especially important for the associates of Hadrat Muslihul

Ummat *raḥimahullāh* to practise on it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE OBLIGATORY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE 'ULAMĀ'

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says in *Tafhīmāt* that it was the will of Allāh *ta'ālā* that the scholars should maintain and strive for that light which is derived from the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*, to proliferate it, and to encourage the hearts to acquire guidance through it. Allāh *ta'ālā* says in this regard:

فَلَوْ لاَ نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ.

Why, then, did a section from each group not go forth so that they may acquire an understanding of religion.[1]

وَلٰكِنْ كُوْنُوْا رَبّٰنِيّٖنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُوْنَ.

Rather, he will say: "You become the men of Allāh as you used to teach the Book and just as you yourself used to study it."[2]

The system of appointing caliphs, and sending inviters and propagators has been coming down from generation to generation. The scholars did this to elevate Allāh's word and so that the promise of Allāh *ta'ālā* contained in the following verse may be fulfilled:

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122.

[2] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 79.

It is We Ourselves who revealed this admonition and We are its protectors.[1]

Look! Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying that when Allāh *taʿālā* willed for the ʿulamā' of this ummat to strive to maintain the light which is derived from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the ʿulamā' made it a point to inherit it from generation to generation through the appointment of khulafā'. In other words, they thought that as long as they are present, they will carry out this task and continue conveying this light to the people. At the same time, there will have to be someone to continue the work after them. This is why they appointed a khalīfah.

Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says further that the promise which is contained in the words:

وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ

We are its protectors.

Was fulfilled through the ʿulamā'. Real internal protection is done by Allāh *taʿālā*, while the ʿulamā' have been made the means for the external protection. People in every era will be born who will be appointed to the responsibility of preserving the Sharīʿat and this light. Just imagine the honour which these ʿulamā' enjoy that this divine promise of protection and preservation is being fulfilled at their hands. This is why the ʿulamā' of this ummat will be standing in the row of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Note: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that the ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets. Just as

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[1] Sūrah al-Hijr, 15: 9.

the 'ulamā' are the partners of the Prophets in this work in this world, they will be their partners in the reward and honour in the Hereafter. The 'ulamā' ought to take solace from this and fulfil the legacy of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in the most perfect manner so that they can have the honour of success in the Hereafter. (compiler)

The travelling principles of Hadrat Thānwī

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say:

If the 'ulamā' of today apply the travelling principles of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* which he himself adhered to strictly, their respect and dignity will be established and their honour will increase in the hearts of the masses.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was in the practice of going for a walk in the morning. If he travelled to any place, he maintained this practice and would read the Qur'ān while walking. He used to inform his host: "I do not have breakfast nor am I in the habit of tea." The host had to make arrangements for lunch and supper only; not for breakfast. This provided immense ease to the host. If Hadrat *rahimahullāh* had companions who accompanied him, he would clearly inform his host by saying: "These are the number of companions for whom you will have to arrange meals. The remaining companions will make their own arrangements." If the host wanted, he would invite some of them on his own, or else they would make their own arrangements.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was fastidious in matters related to food and drink, and especially transparent in money matters. He paid particular attention to them and taught people about them with

special emphasis. Those who learnt these lessons from him are accepted and valued by people wherever they are.

No person's wealth is lawful unless given with an open heart

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "No person's wealth is lawful unless it is given with an open heart." He did not approve of his people being made hangers-on. In other words, he is made the objective of an invitation while his companions are treated as hangers-on and parasites.

If anyone invited him, he would say: "Go to each one of those whom you intend inviting and extend your invitation to them. If they accept, well and good." Those who were invited would then go to Hadrat and seek his permission. He used to say: "I do not want to stop anyone from the food. Rather, I want their respect and dignity to be maintained."

The following story is related in *Risālah Qushayrīyyah*:

A man invited a certain saint. The host said to him: "You may bring all the other poor people who are with you." They proceeded for the invitation. There was a green-grocer along the way. He began screaming and saying: "One of them owes me so much of money and is not paying me. These people are like this and like that." He began hurling abuses at them. The saint was quite saddened. On reaching the house of the host, he said to him: "I am distressed. Try and remove it, only then will I be able to eat. I need this amount of money." The host was a devoted man. He gave his key to his safe and said: "You may take out as much as you want." He took 300 rupees, gave the money to one of his disciples

and instructed him to take it to the green-grocer and say to him: "One of my associates owes you some money. I am giving you this money as payment." The disciple did as told. Once the saint and his associates had their meal, they went back. On the way, they passed the green-grocer. He pointed at them and said to those who were around him: "O people! Look! These are real saints and pious people. They are trustworthy people. They are the genuine dervishes. These are the men of Allāh."

Did you see! Just now he was hurling abuses at them but once he got his money, he began showering praises on them. This is the condition of worldly people.

Listen! If Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* did not write these points, we would not understand them. There is the story of a certain chief who heard that the son of a saint is due to arrive soon. When he heard of his arrival, he got up from his place and said: "The thief is coming to carry out his thieving." He then went to him and met him with utmost warmth. He kissed his hand, gave him some money, brought him to his house, seated him and served him breakfast. When he was leaving, he accompanied him for some distance. When the chief came back to his house, he said: "The thief came, did his thieving and left." We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

A man had heard both statements and observed the manner in which the chief treated the saint's son. He asked him: "If you have no faith in him, why did you extend so much of respect to him? And why did you give him money?" The chief replied: "I have been observing this practice in my family from the time of my father and grandfather, so I am continuing with it."

When I heard this, I expressed my utmost disapproval and thought to myself that this is certainly hypocrisy.

An ʿālim who was the most senior teacher in a certain madrasah came to meet Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. When the ʿālim decided to stay over in the khānqāh, Hadrat said to one of his attendants: "The ʿālim's food will be provided from my house. When the food arrives, you must go and serve it to him." The food was brought to him and he began eating. Just then another man entered, so the ʿālim asked him to join in the meal. The attendant said: "Hadrat, this is not permissible." The ʿālim said: "It is permissible." The attendant went and informed Hadrat Thānwī saying: "Hadrat, I took the food from your house and was serving it to that ʿālim, and he invited another person to join him in the meal. I said to him that this is not permissible, but he said that it is permissible."

When Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* heard this, he said: "Go and tell him that it is not permissible because the food that is served to him is not given over in his ownership (*tamlīk*). Its use has been made permissible for him (this is called *ibāḥat*). There is a difference between the two. When an item is given over in the ownership of someone, he has the right to do as he wills with it, and he can give it to whomever he wants. On the other hand, in *ibāḥat*, a person is permitted to use the item as much as he wants, but he does not have the right to give it to anyone else."

We learnt these points when we were in the company of Hadrat Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. It was the place where knowledge used to glitter and shine, and where we learnt social etiquette.

USEFUL PIECES OF ADVICE

The brother of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Shāh Ahlullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* offers many pieces of advice in his book *Chār Bāb*. A few are quoted below:

(1)

When faced with an important matter, consult the intelligent and wise well-wishers who are experts in that field. This is because Allāh *ta'ālā* instructed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to consult with the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*. This is actually an instruction to his followers to consult in all matters.

(2)

Follow the ways of the noble and righteous people in whatever you do. Stay away from the company of ignoble people. The type of people whose company you choose will definitely have an effect on you. If you remain in the company of ignoble people and those of the lower strata of society, your temperament will imbibe and absorb their qualities. You should therefore remain aloof from such people.

(3)

Do not be hasty in any Dīnī matter, and do not do any work without consultation and planning.

(4)

Do not allow yourself to be useless and idle. Instead, do works for the Hereafter. If you cannot do that, do not let an opportunity to pass in doing worldly works. For example, learn some type of craft or skill through which you could acquire of this world.

I quote a statement of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* which supports the above piece of advice of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. ʿAllāmah ʿAlī Fikrī quoted it in his book *as-Samīr al-Muhadhdhab*:

قال عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه إني لأكره أن أرى أحدكم سبهللًا لا في عمل الدنيا ولا في عمل الآخرة.

I dislike seeing any of you idle – neither doing any worldly work nor occupied in any action of the Hereafter.

The training of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

I always tell you that if you have no interest in doing any work of the Hereafter, you should at least occupy yourself in worldly occupations. Man has to do something or the other. Unfortunately I see you doing nothing for the Hereafter nor occupying yourself in any worldly activities.

When we speak to people about these things, they abhor our own presence and existence among them. Through their actions and attitude they are actually saying: "If this person was not around, we would have made tremendous progress." I reply to such people, very well, we will move aside. Do something and show us, but you will not be able to do anything because let alone being able to do anything, you do not even have the intelligence to understand anything. The general condition which I observe in you is that you will do nothing yourself, but if one person in your family works hard and earns something, you will fight with him and want to take his earnings by force. You then leave him distressed. You do nothing and you don't allow others to do anything.

The deplorability of idleness

Listen! I heard this from Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. There was a man sitting quietly in one place. A saint was walking pass but he did not offer salām to the man and continued on his way. When the saint was returning and walked pass the man again, he offered him salām. Someone asked the saint: "Hadrat, what is the matter? When you passed by this man the first time, you did not offer him salām, but you did on your return!?" The saint replied: "When I passed by him the first time, he was sitting idle, doing nothing. He was therefore closer to Shaytān. On my return, I saw him marking the ground with his hand. Although this action is futile, he became distant from Shaytān because he was now occupied in something."

We learn from this that no matter what work a person is occupied in – whether Dīnī or worldly – he will stay away from Shaytān. But if he remains idle and inactive, he will be subjugated by Shaytān. This is why Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said:

> Do not allow yourself to be useless and idle. Instead, do works for the Hereafter. If you cannot do that, do not let an opportunity to pass in doing worldly works.

And Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said:

> I dislike seeing any of you idle – neither doing any worldly work nor occupied in any action of the Hereafter.

Those who are occupied in some work – whether Dīnī or worldly – are safeguarded against temptation and corruption. Because they are occupied, they do not have the time to fall in futile activities.

There was a youngster here who was studying English. He is now gone to Europe. On going there, he kept a beard and began performing salāh regularly. He was also punctual with tahajjud and ishrāq salāh, and encouraged others towards Dīn. He is employed there and receives a monthly wage of 10 000. He wrote to his father: "Ensure you educate all the boys in Dīnī knowledge. Leave them in the service of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib in Allāhābād, and make arrangements for their education and training."

We observe from this that there are people who, despite going to Europe and living among the Europeans, are preserving Dīn. If this is the case, there is no harm in a person going to America, London or anywhere else. As long as īmān is with him, it will protect him wherever he goes.

I related this while speaking on the point that everyone is doing some work or the other, why can't you do something? You have hands and feet just as others do. Everyone is progressing, why can't you? When a person gives preference to Dīn, money is an aid to him. We cannot say it is unlawful. In fact, this world is necessary to a certain extent and one has to do something in it. He has to have wealth as well. There are Ahādīth in this regard.

Leaving your heirs wealthy

Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates: The Messenger of Allāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* came to visit me in the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage because of an illness which became very serious. I said: "O Messenger of Allāh! You can see the severity of the illness that has befallen me. I am a wealthy person with no one to inherit from me except a

daughter. Should I give two thirds of my wealth in charity?" He replied: "No." I asked: "Should I give half, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied: "No." I asked: "Should I give one third, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied: "Give one third; and even one third is a lot. It is better for you to leave your heirs wealthy than leaving them poor, begging from people. You will most certainly be rewarded for whatever you spend solely for the pleasure of Allāh. So much so that you will be rewarded for [the morsel which] you place in your wife's mouth."[1]

Look! Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited him from bequesting even half of his wealth. The reason he explained is that it is better to leave one's dependents wealthy than leaving them paupers so that they are saved from the humiliation of going around begging from people.

This instruction of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was from among the information of the unseen. Hadrat Saʿd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* did not pass away in this illness. Instead, he recovered and Allāh *taʿālā* blessed him with about ten sons and twelve daughters. Imagine what would have happened to these children had he given away all his wealth in charity.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* permitted Hadrat Saʿd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to make a bequest for one third of his estate. At the same time, he added, "one third is a lot". The jurists conclude from this that it is better to make a bequest of less than one third; and not a full one third.

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[1] *Sahīh Bukhārī* (1295). *Sahīh Muslim*, *Kitāb al-Wasīyyah* (5).

In this Hadīth Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches the ummat to leave their children wealthy. The ʿulamā' say that the īmān of the person who has no wealth is not safe. In other words, in the absence of wealth, a person sometimes loses his īmān as well.

The advice of Sufyān Thaurī

Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* was a wealthy man and also a Sufi. He said:

عن سفيان الثوري قال كان المال فيما مضى يكره، فأما اليوم فهو ترس المؤمن. وقال لو لا هذه الدنانير لتمندل بنا هؤلاء الملوك. وقال من كان في يده من هذه شيء فليصلحه فإنه زمان إن احتاج كان أول ما يبذل دينه. وقال الحلال لا يحتمل السرف.[1]

Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī rahimahullāh said: "Wealth was disapproved in the past. But today it is a shield (through which a person can be saved from many calamities and can maintain his dignity)." He said: "If we didn't have money, these kings would have put an end to us." (We would have been humiliated by them). He said: "If a person has any wealth, he must maintain it (he must not destroy it; he must invest it) because this is a time of (such irreligiousness that) if a person falls into need, he will sell his Dīn first." He said: "Lawful wealth does not hold the possibility of extravagance." (In other words, a special feature of lawful wealth is that it is not wasted and not spent without a Shariʿī need).

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[1] رواه في شرح السنة.

The safety of īmān lies in wealth

We learn from this that we should not vie with those who belonged to the best of eras [the Saḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*] because they were perfect in īmān. It was an era of goodness and righteousness. That no longer exists. The condition of people has changed. Their īmān has become weak and they cannot bear poverty. The safety of Dīn and īmān lies in having some wealth. If not, people will lose their īmān.

Brothers, listen! It is an accepted fact that the needs of the Hereafter take precedence over the needs of this world. And that the Hereafter is given preference over this world. However, what I want to show to you is that this world is also needed to a certain extent. It is one of the issues of our life and is needed to maintain our honour and dignity. We must not need to extend a begging hand before anyone. Ḥaḍrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh* is saying with reference to his time that if we did not have wealth, the wealthy would have wiped us out. What, then, can be said of the condition of the wealthy of our time. It is a great favour of our pious predecessors for having solved this issue and cleared the path for us. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Although people are frequenting the saints they are not benefiting from them because they neither possess knowledge nor wisdom. And so, they cannot understand what is said to them. All you people can do is when I speak, you start noting it down. I say, first understand what I say and then note it down. Yesterday I had quoted this Hadīth to you:

خِيَارُكُمْ مَنْ ذَكَّرَكُمْ بِاللهِ رُؤْيَتُهُ، وَزَادَ فِيْ عِلْمِكُمْ مَنْطِقُهُ، وَرَغَّبَكُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَمَلُهُ.[1]

The best of you is the one who when you look at him, he reminds you of Allāh taʿālā, his speech increases you in knowledge and his actions create a yearning for the Hereafter.

This Hadīth states that from among the many qualities of the best of people there is one specific quality, viz. his speech increases your knowledge. This proves the virtue of knowledge. The fact of the matter is that knowledge is required everywhere. Do you think the true religion will not require it?

When the principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband used to issue certificates to graduating students, he used to apply this rule: If he found that a student had weak capabilities and was not suited to teaching, he would write the word "sālih" (righteous) in his certificate. As for the student whom he considered to be

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٣، ص ٤٦٧.

knowledgeable and of sound capabilities, he would write the words "wa huwa qādir ʿalā ad-dars wa at-tadrīs" (he has the ability to teach).

Now look! To whom did he accord a higher level? Obviously to the one whose intelligence and capabilities he attested to. After all, that [dār al-ʿulūm] is a place of knowledge. The principal will therefore consider the one who has acquired knowledge to be of real worth. As for the word "sālih", it makes reference to his piety but not to his knowledge. He is therefore not suitable as a teacher.

Listen! The entire system has become spoilt and corrupted when those who are occupied in the teaching field pay no attention to knowledge nor do they acquire it. Yet they are the means for doing the work. It is as though they have no hands and legs. If the hands and legs are paralysed, how can any work be done? Many people went to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. They learnt nothing there nor are they prepared to learn anything here. Now you tell me. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* was such an eminent scholar, yet how many people learnt from him? Many people learnt actions, but only a handful were able to take and convey his knowledge. The fact of the matter is that knowledge is difficult while actions are easy. This is why people opt for actions and shy away from knowledge.

Students need spiritual practices

There are students in this assembly. I will therefore say something which will be of worth to them. Listen attentively.

Our seniors did not approve of students pledging bayʿat and occupying themselves in spiritual practices in their student days. They believed that

spiritual practices were not only distracting to their academic activities, but harmful and a cause of disorder. This is why when any student requested a shaykh to accept his bayʿat, he would reprimand him. He would also disallow him from dhikr and other spiritual practices. He would say to him: "This is the time to acquire knowledge; acquire it first. Your desire for bayʿat are satanic whisperings which want to divert you from your studies."

The opinion of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

We fully accept the above attitude of our seniors. They frankly stated what came to their mind based on their knowledge, integrity and experience. This attitude was most appropriate for their times. Nonetheless, after observing our present conditions and experiences in our Dīnī institutes and madāris, my view on this matter has changed. I now state with full insight that this approach is not beneficial at present. Instead, it is extremely harmful.

People in those days possessed Dīn and religiosity. Students used to learn a major portion of Dīn and character in their houses and then come to the madāris. They had full esteem for Dīn and people of Dīn in their hearts. They would therefore acquire knowledge alone from the madrasah. They did not think of any other path. Their closeness to their teachers who themselves possessed external and internal excellences was enough to prompt them towards action and sincerity. They had full reverence for Dīn and the salient features of Dīn. The sanctity of the Qur'ān and Sunnat was deeply embedded in their hearts. This is why their hearts were not empty of love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Consequently their preoccupation with knowledge did not harm them. After completing

their studies, they would remain in the company of the Sufis and enlighten their hearts with sound character within a short period of time. They would be embellished with action and sincerity which is the soul of knowledge, fill their hearts with love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, imbibe external and internal excellences, and attach themselves to their respective works. This was the norm in the past.

These conditions no longer exist. This era is filled with corruption. Atheism has become common. This has not only affected our homes and environments, rather, the places which were established for rectification were also affected negatively. In addition to not practising on the Sufi way, the situation has deteriorated to its rejection. Consequently, the madāris and khānqāhs are at loggerheads. There is a detachment between the 'ulamā' of the external sciences and the Sufis. Previously one was a stepping stone for the next. Once a person completed his studies in a madrasah, he would proceed to a khānqāh. But now they have become opponents of each other. If there is knowledge in the madāris, there is no sign of sound character in them. If there are some vestiges of dhikr and spiritual practices in the khānqāhs, there is no indication of knowledge in them.

Now that the situation has deteriorated to such an extent, I ask you, under what hopes are the students in the madāris stopped from pursuing spiritual excellence? When the fire of immorality and rejection has spread to the homes, madāris and environment, if we do not turn their focus towards the spiritual side, do you think they will accept the rectification of any shaykh after having spent 10-15 years in a

madrasah? Obviously not. They will be deprived of knowledge because their free-loving attitude kept them away from it. They will also remain deprived of sound character and sincerity – in fact, of Dīn and īmān – because you did not permit them to acquire it in the prescribed manner just because it negates their preoccupation with knowledge. The dreadful outcome of this is obvious.

This is why I say – and I say it with full confidence and conviction – that you will have to get the students attached to dhikr and spiritual practices during their student-days as well. Assuming their attention in this direction becomes a bit more and their attention to knowledge gets less, they would have at least acquired religiosity, abstinence, piety and īmān. If they do not become distinguished scholars, they will at least become abstinent and pious believers. If you do not turn their attention to this, they will neither acquire knowledge nor develop piety. Their condition will be appalling and they will be evil examples for our community.

Do not think that because they are studying Dīnī knowledge they will develop piety through it. This is a clear delusion. In the present conditions, the hearts are heedless and Shayṭān has taken full control of them. Knowledge alone is not enough for the cleansing of such a heart. Each task is accomplished in the manner prescribed. And the way to do it is as has been shown by the Sufis in every era, viz. Allāh's remembrance. This is why the scholars have always been in need of the Sufis. If success could be achieved through knowledge alone, all the great scholars would not have gone and presented themselves to the Sufis. Instead, they would have traversed this path through knowledge alone. This is

why I say, no matter how distinguished a scholar may be, he cannot achieve perfection through knowledge only. Nor will he be of any benefit to the Muslim community.

This time is different from that of the Sahābah's. It was only the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* who used to hear just one point from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and their hearts would be filled with īmān. Now it is unavoidable to follow the path of the Sufis to fill the heart with īmān.

It was with this need in mind that the Sufis prescribed a path of their own. They noticed that the time is such that the Qur'ān and Sunnat alone are not enough to remove heedlessness from the heart and develop genuine īmān. These heedlessness-filled hearts first need to be divested of heedlessness. The Sufis therefore prescribed spiritual practices and meditations. They stressed that the rectification of the heart is the core objective. A striking difference between their work and the scholars of the external sciences is that the 'ulamā' who taught in madāris did not necessarily make the hearts of those whom they taught to be in agreement with them. On the other hand, those who were taught by the Sufis were turned into their bosom friends.

Note: Unfortunately there is a retrogression in this field as well. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is speaking about the time before 1386 A.H./1967. There is a vast difference between that time and now. You can see it with your own eyes. (compiler)

You will therefore have to go to the saints to acquire sound character and sincerity, and for the perfection of your īmān and Islam. This work will have to be initiated in the madāris. In other words, you will have to initiate dhikr and spiritual practices. At the same

time, the madrasah is certainly a place for education. Therefore, if you see a student becoming fanatical about other matters, you must explain to him that he must not involve himself in anything which would divert him from the objective for which he left home and came here. It is also not correct to reserve the madrasah exclusively for knowledge to the extent that students do not bother about practising on their knowledge and graduate as rejecters of the Sufi way. This is extremely harmful. If students remain smug with the idea that they will practise later on, they will be deprived of knowledge as well. Correct knowledge is generally not acquired without practice.

There was a Maulānā to whom Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had conferred khilāfah. He was a senior scholar who was also a teacher in a certain madrasah. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* took back the khilāfah from him for some reason. Consequently he could not continue teaching in the madrasah. I say, if Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had not become displeased with him and had he kept Hadrat happy and remained on his path, then at least the associates of Hadrat would have accepted and acknowledged him. If outsiders did not accept him, there would certainly be someone who would. After all, he was a senior man. In this way, he would have had a large following and the madrasah would have remained in his control.

One point came to my mind from this incident. When a person acknowledges and believes in the saints, he experiences worldly benefits as well. But when his head goes off, he cannot differentiate between profit and loss.

Note: Māshā Allāh, this is a very comprehensive topic which ought to be borne in mind by the 'ulamā'.

Students too should tread the path of knowledge and practice in the light of what was said. (compiler)

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE FOR ALLĀH

People began coming to me when I started the work of teaching and training. Many of them used to get angry at me and feel offended. But when they saw that I am successful in my work and that people are accepting me, I began receiving invitations from many places. I received letters from various places informing me that there is a need for the work in their towns and villages, and so, I should come and initiate the work there.

If you see me successful, then it is because of Dīn and imparting correct education and training. Those who are unsuccessful, it is because of a lack of education and training. Total and perfect education and training is found in the Sharīʿat, but you are neither studying it nor are you placing your children in this direction. The consequences of this are before you: your children are not obedient to you, you are doing no Dīnī work nor are you good enough for any worldly work.

I am fully aware of your conditions, this is why I am speaking in this way. The root of all ills is that you have left aside the teachings of the Sharīʿat. From your present attitude it seems that you do not even want to come towards Dīn. How, then, can you succeed?

Look at what Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says, and there is no doubt about the uniqueness of this theme. He writes:

من علم وعمل وعلّم فذلك يدعٰى عظيما في السماوات.[1]

The person who studies, practises and teaches is referred to as a great person in the heavens.

In other words, the angels refer to him as a great person.

He says further that education is not completed without a teacher. At the same time, a student is an instrument for a teacher to fulfil his occupation as a teacher. What this means is that a teacher or mentor acquires expertise in his teaching and mentoring through a student. If a teacher loves his student on the basis that he is the means for his progress and proficiency, his love for the student will be classified as love for Allāh's sake.

In the same way, a person who spends his wealth for Allāh's cause, or invites a few guests and feeds them exotic foods as a way of gaining closeness to Allāh *taʿālā*, and loves his chef because he is skilled in his craft, then this is also love for Allāh's sake.

The love between teacher and student is certainly a love for Allāh's sake. If a chef is loved by his employer because of his skill, it will also be love for Allāh's sake provided the proximity of Allāh *taʿālā* is sought through the preparation of those exotic dishes.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* used to say that if you give exotic foods to your self, then you must also take a lot of work from it.

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[1] ابن عساكر، حديث: ١٧.

We learn from this that exotic and delicious foods are not prohibited to us. Yes, they must be made the means for proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. As for the disparagement over the exotic foods eaten by an unbeliever, this is because he considers these to be the objectives and believes them to be the purpose of his life. On the other hand, we Muslims make them the means to get closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* describes the general condition of people in the following couplet:

> Food is merely for one's survival and for acquiring strength for Allāh's remembrance. But you believe that this life is solely for eating and drinking.

An unbeliever makes it the objective of his life, thereby causing his heedlessness to increase. On the other hand, when a believer uses the bounties of Allāh, he acquires His recognition and his love for Him increases.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says further:

Loving the person who takes the responsibility of conveying charities to those who are eligible for charities is included in love for Allāh's sake. In fact, we can go one step further and say that loving one's attendant who sees to one's needs such as washing one's clothes, cleaning the house, preparing the meals, etc. so that he may free the person for knowledge and practice, then this love for the attendant is also love for Allāh's sake. This is on condition that the attendant's services are taken with the intention of freeing one's self for Allāh's worship.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says:

We go one step further and say that the person who loves a person who spends his wealth on him,

provides him with food, clothing, shelter and all other needs with the purpose of freeing him for knowledge and practice so that he gets closer to Allāh *taʿālā*, then this love is also for Allāh's sake.

Look at what Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* is saying and then check your own condition. You can understand it from the following example:

A person from this region went to a Maulānā and said: "Accept me as your murīd." The Maulānā replied: "Why don't you go and become a murīd of Maulānā Wasīyyullāh? [Referring to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*]. He is around at the moment and many people are reverting to him. Why don't you go to him?" The man replied: "He does not engage in any worldly activity." The Maulānā said: "I see, what did Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* do after he became the caliph? What did Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* do after he became the caliph? They used to receive a stipend from the Islamic Treasury. They were occupied in matters of the Islamic state; where did they have the time to earn a livelihood? This is a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He did this and so did his deputies. Allāh *taʿālā* sees to their needs and makes arrangements for them." The Maulānā added: "Hadrat Maulānā is doing the work of Dīn. If you can, then go and join him just as some people helped Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to carry out their responsibilities."

The affluent see to the needs of the pious

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* continues:

فقد كان جماعة من السلف تكفل بكفايتهم جماعة من ولي الثروة وكان المواسِي والمواسٰى جميعا من المتحابين في الله.

There were some wealthy people who had taken the responsibility of seeing to the needs of the pious predecessors. Both – those who spent their wealth and those on whom the wealth was spent – loved each other for Allāh's sake.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* says, we can go one step further and say that the person who marries a righteous woman so that she can be a means of protecting him against satanic whisperings and preserve his Dīn, or marries her so that she can bear him righteous children who will pray for him, and loves his wife because she is the means for realizing his religious objectives, then such a person is a lover for Allāh's sake.

This love is so overwhelming at times that it leaves no share for the self. This means that his heart has nothing apart from love for the beloved. Sometimes he will spend half his wealth for his beloved, sometimes one third, and at other times, one tenth.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* then says:

مقادير الأموال موازين المحبة إذ لا يعرف درجة المحبوب إلا بمحبوب يترك في مقابلته.

The extent of wealth is the scale of love. In other words, the more wealth you spend for the Beloved the more love you will be considered to have. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتّٰى تُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ

You will never be able to acquire perfection in virtue until you spend something of what you love.[1]

When love encompasses a person's heart, it leaves nothing but the beloved in it. He then leaves nothing for himself. He sacrifices everything for the Beloved. As was the case with Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* – he left neither his wealth nor his children for himself. He gave his daughter, Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and spent all his money on him. Glory to Allāh! Look at the love and sacrifice which he demonstrated. Then look at how Allāh *taʿālā* appreciated him by according him a rank which no one else in the ummat can reach.

Hadrat Ibn ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was sitting with Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. The latter had a cloak wrapped around his chest. Hadrat Jibrā'īl *ʿalayhis salām* came down and conveyed Allāh's salām and said: "O Rasūlullāh! What is the matter with Abū Bakr that he is sitting with a cloak wrapped around his chest?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "He spent all his wealth on me before the Conquest of Makkah, this is why he is in this condition."

Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Convey the salām of Allāh *taʿālā* to him and say, Allāh *taʿālā* asks:

أراض أنت عني في فقرك أم ساخط.

[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 92.

Are you happy with Me in this poverty of yours or are you angry at Me?

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* turned to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and said: "Here is Jibraʾīl. He conveys Allāh's salām to you and asks on behalf of Allāh if you are happy with Him for your poverty or are you angry at Him?" Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* burst out crying when he heard this message and said: "How can I be displeased with my Allāh!?"

أنا عن ربي راض، أنا عن ربي راض.

I am pleased with my Allāh, I am pleased with my Allāh.

Hadrat ʿĀʾishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: "You speak of Hadrat Khadījah a lot whereas Allāh *taʿālā* has given you a wife better than her." She was the daughter of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also loved dearly and intensely. This is why she made this statement. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "No. Allāh *taʿālā* did not give me a wife better than Hadrat Khadījah because when people rejected me, she affirmed me; and when everyone deprived me, she gave me."

The exegists say with reference to the following verse:

ووجدك عائلا فأغنى، أي بمال خديجة.

Allāh found you poor so He made you rich. That is, through the wealth of Khadījah.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā* and one of the characteristics

of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* is that they always acknowledge the favours of the creation. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to constantly speak of the favours of Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*.

I thoroughly enjoy speaking on this topic. You probably enjoy it as well. I came here to Allāhābād to convey some teachings to you. There was no need for me to leave Mumbai and come here. The programme of education and training was quite full there. I had become accustomed to the city and the weather also suited me. The only reason for leaving and coming here is because you have a right over me. I believe it is my responsibility to serve you because I did live here previously and initiated the work here.

Now let me quote a Hadīth to you:

من أخلص لله أربعين صباحا جرت ينابيع الحكمة من قلبه على لسانه.[1]

When a person worships Allāh taʿālā devotedly for forty days, springs of wisdom will gush forth from his heart and emanate from his tongue.

A man heard this Hadīth and began occupying himself in worship. He continued for forty days but no springs of wisdom flowed from his heart. He began doubting the Hadīth and asked some 'ulamā' about it. An erudite scholar said to him: "The Hadīth contains the words:

من أخلص لله

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[1] كشف الخفا ومزيل الالباس: ج ۲، ص ۲۰۰.

When a person worships solely for Allāh *taʿālā* [which we translated as "worships Allāh *taʿālā* devotedly"], springs of wisdom will flow from his heart. You worshipped Allāh *taʿālā* for the sake of the springs of wisdom flowing from your heart. Where, then, is the sincerity and devotion?"

The Sufis of the time applauded this answer because the thief was caught out. A person who does anything solely for Allāh *taʿālā* receives plenty from Him. People who follow their desires and have selfish motives cannot acquire perfection; they remain deprived.

I have been speaking on a certain theme for the past several days. I am saying a few words to complete it. Listen attentively. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ

In this way We gave power to Yūsuf in the land (of Egypt).

Look at how his brothers had cast him into a well, We removed him from it, made him a governor of Egypt and gave him such power that:

يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ

He could take possession therein wherever he liked (and lived in whichever place he wanted).

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ

We convey Our mercy to whomever We will.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes:

أي بنعمتنا وعطائنا في الدنيا من الملك والغنى وغيرهما من النعم.

We convey Our mercy to whomever We will by showering Our bounties on him in this world. These include kingdom and affluence.

وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

We do not waste the reward of the virtuous.[1]

بل نوفي لهم أجورهم في الدنيا لإحسانهم والمراد به على ما قيل الإيمان والثبات على التقوى.

Instead, We give them their reward in full in this world because of their virtuousness. Virtuousness refers to īmān and firmness on piety.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ

For those who do good in this world, there is goodness for them.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes:

والمراد بها الصحة والعافية أي للمحسنين صحة وعافية في الدنيا.

Goodness in this world refers to good health and wellbeing. In other words, the doers of good will experience good health and wellbeing in this world.

He writes further:

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56.

إن للمحسنين جزاء يسيرا في الدنيا هو الصحة والعافية وإنما توفية أجورهم في الآخرة وأرض الله واسعة على هذا أن يكون اعتراضا إزاحة لما قد يختلج في بعض النفوس من ذلك الجزاء بواسطة اختلاف الهواء والتربة غير ذلك مما يؤدي إلى آفات في البدن فقيل وأرض الله واسعة فلا يعدم أحد محلا يناسب حاله فليتحول عنه إليه إن لم يلائمه.[1]

The little reward which the virtuous receive in this world is good health and wellbeing. They will receive their full reward in the Hereafter.

Allāh taʿālā says: "The earth of Allāh is vast." It will be better to consider this sentence to be a parenthetical clause. This is to remove the misgiving some people have about differences in climate and environment causing harm to the body. Allāh taʿālā therefore says "The earth of Allāh is vast." Each person will therefore find a place which is suited to his condition. If he is living in a place which is not conducive to his condition, he must shift to another place.

Hadrat prays for his speeches to spread far and wide

I prayed to Allāh *taʿālā*: O Allāh! If You are pleased with whatever I am saying then convey my talks to distant places. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, they are reaching far off places and people are accepting them. I say to you as well, pay attention and listen

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ٢٣، ص ٢٤٩.

carefully. Understand them and put them into practice.

Now listen to another Ḥadīth in which Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited begging and instructed us to work. I will conclude today's topic with this.

عن أنس بن مالك أن رجلا من الأنصار جاء إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يسئله فقال ألك في بيتك شيء، قال بلى، حلس نلبس بعضه ونبسط بعضه وقدح نشرب فيه الماء، قال إيتني بهما، قال فأتاه بهما فأخذهما رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بيده ثم قال من يشتري هذين فقال رجل أنا آخذهما بدرهم، قال من يزيد على درهم مرتين أو ثلاثا، قال رجل أنا آخذهما بدرهمين، فاٰتاهما إياه وأخذ الدرهمين فأعطاهما الأنصاري وقال إشتر بأحدهما طعاما فانبذه إلى أهلك، واشتر بالآخر قدوما فأتني به، ففعل، فأخذه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فشد فيه عودا بيده، وقال إذهب فاحتطب ولا أراك خمسة عشر يوما. فجعل يحتطب ويبيع، فجاء وقد أصاب عشرة دراهم، فقال اشتر ببعضها طعاما وببعضها ثوبا، قال قال: هذا خير لك من أن تجيء والمسئلة نكتة في وجهك يوم القيامة، إن المسئلة لا تصلح إلا لذي فقر مدفع أو لذي غرم مفظع أو دم موجع.[1]

Ḥaḍrat Anas ibn Mālik raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that a man from the Anṣār came begging to Rasūlullāh

[1] سنن ابن ماجه: ص ١٥٨.

sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam so he asked him: "Do you have anything in your house?" He replied: "Yes, a saddle blanket part of which we lay on the ground [as a mattress] and part of which we use to cover ourselves [as a duvet]. And a bowl which we use to drink water." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Bring both items to me." The man brought them, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam took them with his hand and announced: "Who will buy these two items from me." One man said: "I will buy them for one dirham." He asked: "Who will offer more?" He asked this question a few times. A man said: "I will buy them for two dirhams." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam gave the items to the buyer, took the two dirhams from him and gave them to the Ansārī man. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then said to him: "Buy food for one dirham and give it to your family. Buy an axe with the other dirham and bring it to me." He did as he was told. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam took it from him, attached a handle to it with his own hands and said: "Go and chop wood. I do not want to see you here for the next fifteen days."

The man began chopping wood and selling it. He came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam after a few days with ten dirhams. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: "Buy grain with some of the money and clothing with some of it." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then said: "This is better for you than coming on the day of Resurrection with the blemish of begging on your face. Begging is not good except for a person whose poverty has caused him to fall to the ground, a person who is burdened by heavy debts, or a person who killed another and does not have the means to pay the blood money."

We learn from this Hadīth that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited begging while he encouraged earning a livelihood. Consequently, the Arabs became wealthy and the Saḥābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* became the most affluent. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* left the Saḥābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* wealthy before departing from this world.

The following is stated in the traditions:

ولقد أوتي خزائن الأرض ومفاتيح البلاد وفتح عليه في حياته بلاد الحجاز واليمن وجميع جزيرة العرب وحوالي الشام والعراق وجلبت إليه الأخماس والصدقات والأعشار وأهديت إليه من الملوك هدايا فصرف كلها لوجه الله وأغنى به المسلمين.

He was given the treasures of the earth and the keys to the cities. During his lifetime, the Hijāz, Yemen, the entire Arabian Peninsular, sections of Syria and Iraq were conquered. The khums, charities and ʿushr[1] *used to be brought to him. He received gifts from the kings. He spent all these for Allāh's sake and enriched the Muslims in this way.*

Glory to Allāh! Just marvel at the excellence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Look at how he taught the Muslims the system of worldly matters just as he had taught them about Dīn. He emphasised on them to keep away from anything

[1] Khums and ʿushr mean one-fifth and one-tenth respectively. These are forms of tax laid down by the Islamic state. Refer to the books of jurisprudence for details.

which would cause their humiliation and degradation.

Look at how he taught that Anṣārī Ṣaḥābī to preserve his dignity from begging or else it will be a blemish on his face on the day of Resurrection. It was this affection towards the creation which was found to perfection in Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Teachings of this nature can be from none but a Prophet; no one else can do this.

It is now our duty to adopt the teachings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and to make them the constitution of our life. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to practise. Āmīn.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECTIFYING CHARACTER

Bearing in mind the conditions which Muslims are going through today, it is difficult to explain to them what type of era they experiencing. The character of people has become so bad that house after house has been destroyed.

When we speak about character to those who come here, they are unable to understand it. I believe that the corruption of the entire world is due to the corruption of character. Whether the corruption is in you or in other nations, it is due to corruption in character. I heard this from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He used to say that people claim to have made arrangements for various things, but what arrangements did they make for corrupt character? Their character is corrupt so no system of theirs can operate successfully.

When we used to hear these points from Hadrat *rahimahullāh*, we would understand them and memorize them. Later on, we saw with our own eyes that the corruption of the world is due to corruption in character. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was an expert in this field and had insight about it, this is why he said these things.

A man wrote a letter to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* in which he said that he committed an evil in his very own house. He sought permission to come to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* wrote back: "Very well, you may come but you must not disclose your identity to me because I will then think of the incident which you wrote to me about." The man came to Thānah Bhawan and hadn't said

anything as yet when Hadrat went into a rage against him. He scolded him in such a manner that it seemed as though the roof will fall down. Hadrat finally said to him: “Go away from here.”

The man did not disclose his identity but Hadrat, through his spiritual light, realized who he was. This is why he treated him this way. Those who did not know what the whole matter was about obviously considered Hadrat to be extremely discourteous and ill-mannered. Whereas it is these very same people who are the worst in character. If a person disapproves of their bad character and tries to rectify it, they will all join hands to label him ill-mannered. They know nothing about good character nor did their forefathers. Bad character has been coming down to them from one generation to the next. Yet they are prepared to label their ‘ulamā’ and Sufis as ill-mannered.

Those who are a bit educated but still illiterate have no effulgence whatsoever in their hearts. Yet they will look at the ‘ulamā’ and Sufis and say: “Such and such action of his is against the Sunnat.” I say to them: “You are breaking the obligatory injunctions yet you want to make objections against us!? It is obligatory to acquire the recognition and love of Allāh *ta'ālā*; how much of it did you acquire? Pure tauhīd is obligatory, how much of it did you adopt? The love of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is obligatory, how much of it do you have?”

You do not know what is obligatory and what is Sunnat, yet you are using the word Sunnat to make objections against us!? As for those who reach Allāh *ta'ālā* after carrying out countless Sunnats, you say that they are acting against the Sunnat!? And you level various types of accusations against them!?

Listen! Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says that Sunnat means to discard this world while farḍ means to acquire the Hereafter. In other words, it is Sunnat to give up love for this world and obligatory to develop love for the Hereafter and give preference to it. There must have been such people in the time of Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* who must have levelled similar objections against the 'ulamā' and Sufis. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* teaches them to first understand what is obligatory and what is Sunnat, then make objections.

Bad character has resulted in total corruption

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* had excellent powers, this is why he could be patient and forbearing. However, the miseries and calamities of Muslims weakened him. He would not eat several meals at a time. This caused him to become thin and weak. From this you can realize how much the Ahlullāh are affected by the bad conditions and bad character of Muslims. It will be difficult for you to gauge this.

When you see students causing corruption in the madrasah, it is because of the corruption which exists in their homes. They bring their bad character from their homes to the madrasah and then display it here. This is why I want to keep my place safe from such people. If there is corruption in the temperament, they will cause corruption here as well.

The life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

In his book *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* has a chapter titled *Bāb Siyar an-Nabī ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* (the chapter on the life of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). In it, he

describes the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

In the course of his discussion he states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had the best temperament and was the most patient over calamities. He had the most mercy towards people because Allāh *taʿālā* sent him as a mercy to the worlds. Who, then, can be more merciful than him from among the creation. No one was ever harmed by his hand or tongue. He neither spoke harshly to anyone nor caused any physical pain to anyone. He paid the most attention to rectifying the domestic environment. No one paid as much attention as him in this regard. He was extremely particular in this regard because if corruption entered the home, it will spread to the entire city, and then from city to city until the entire country is engulfed by it. He therefore adopted a pattern which would rectify the homes and put and end to mutual disputes. This was a special attribute of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

He was very particular about his interactions with his Companions so that no one has a complaint against him. Consequently, every Companion thought that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* loved him the most.

Together with this, his focus on Allāh *taʿālā* never wavered. After all, he was a Prophet, and a Prophet has to give full consideration to the creation while not losing sight of the Creator in the least. He maintained a perfect balance between the two.

This resulted in each house being an example of Paradise and many people received the glad tidings of Paradise in this very world. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say: “If anyone wants to

see a Paradise dweller walking on earth, he must look at such and such person."

The need for sound character

I speak frequently about sound character because Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that this is an era in which character has become corrupt. The character of people in general is corrupt. This is why one cannot rely on their promises and covenants. How can one ever rely on the promise of a corrupt person? Hadrat's attention was therefore more on this subject. Once character is set right, other actions will be set right. One's worldly and Dīnī matters will come in order.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to express his disapproval at those who were particular about their dhikr and spiritual practices but not about their character. Confining one's self to spiritual practices while paying no attention at all to the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and remaining stubborn on one's bad character is totally against the Sunnat way. A person treading such a path can never reach Allāh *ta'ālā*.

There was a man whom Hadrat removed from his supervision and delegated him to Hakīm Mustafā Sāhib. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said to the man: "You must correspond with Hakīm Sāhib and write 25 letters to him. You must then inform me about it." The man wrote 25 letters hastily within a few days and presented them to Hadrat who looked at them and cast them aside immediately. He said to the man: "These letters do not contain anything on rectification and reformation." The man came to me and said: "I perform salāh, I keep fast, I read the

Qur'ān, I read tasbīh. Now what does he want of me?"

I said: "Brother, you alone know what Hadrat wants of you." He then went back to his house. When he returned, we came to know that he had written the letters himself and kept them aside. He had stated therein that he was the leader of the thieves who had attacked a certain place. That place belonged to one of Hadrat's relatives.

When I learnt of this, I resolved not to interfere in any person's matters because I do not know what evil quality is lurking in whom. In the meantime, Hadrat must be perceiving it through his spiritual exposition and treating the person accordingly.

Look! The man did not disclose himself but Hadrat perceived it through his insight and eventually caused him to confess it in his own words.

The point I am making is that as long as a person remains immersed in evil qualities, no action of his will be accepted. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* spent his entire life explaining these points to the people in various ways. The one who heard Hadrat's teachings, understood them and put them into practice was successful. Those who did not pay heed remained as they were without any change in their lives. You people come here to me, so you have a right over me to explain beneficial points to you. Whatever I said to you today is enough provided you put it into practice. It can be a means of success in this world and in the Hereafter for those who understood it. As for the person who has no interest whatsoever in putting into practice, then a lecture of several hours will not be enough for him; in fact, it will be a waste of time. I hope you will benefit from

this. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand and then practise.

KNOWLEDGE OF EVILS IS ESSENTIAL

Hadrat Hudhayfah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates:

كان الناس يسألون رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن الخير وكنت أسئله عن الشر مخافة أن يدركني.[1]

People used to ask Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam about good while I used to ask him about evil out of fear that it does not afflict me.

This Sahābī used to ask about evil so that he could abstain from it. After all, piety is dependent on it. A poet rightly said:

عرفت الشر لا للشر ولكن للتوقية – ومن لم يعرف الشر من الخير يقع فيه

I learnt about evil not so that I could commit it but so that I could save myself from it. The person who cannot distinguish good from evil is bound to fall into evil.

It is necessary to know and identify evil not for the sake of committing it but to safeguard one's self from it. A person can only save himself from something when he knows what it is and he is able to differentiate good from evil. If he cannot do this, he will succumb to evil. Whereas it is necessary to save one's self from it.

We normally hear this in every sermon:

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[1] مشكوة: ج ٢، ص ٤٦١.

نَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا

We seek refuge in Allāh from the mischief of our selves and the evils of our actions.

We learn from this that actions and the carnal self also have evils which, if a person is caught up in them, he will have to suffer loss.

I was sitting with a doctor on one occasion when a well-built young man came to him. The doctor wrote a prescription and he left. The doctor then said to me: "Look at how physically strong he looks but he lost his sexual potency. The reason for this is that he had conjugal relations with his wife during the days when it was prohibited [during her menses]. Consequently, he lost all his sexual potency." We learn from this incident that when Allāh *taʿālā* issued this prohibition:

فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَآءَ فِي الْمَحِيْضِ

Keep away, then, from women during the menstruation.[1]

He did not say it just like that. Rather, because of the severe harms which it has.

Some people do not engage in too many optional acts of worship but they are very particular about abstaining from sin. This is also a great quality. There is certainly virtue in doing good, but abstaining from evil is not any less virtuous. In fact, it is essential.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 222.

Just yesterday it was mentioned in the sermon that abstinence does not refer to making the lawful unlawful. Rather, it refers to having more trust and reliance on what is with Allāh *taʿālā* than what is with you. The People of the Book had made camel-meat unlawful on themselves and considered it to be abstinence and a way of gaining proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. The believers are ordered:

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُحَرِّمُوْا طَيِّبٰتِ مَآ أَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوْا ط إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ. وَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ص وَّاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْٓ أَنْتُمْ بِهٖ مُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

O believers! Do not declare as forbidden the good things which Allāh made lawful to you. Do not exceed the bounds. Surely Allāh does not love those who exceed the bounds. Eat of what Allāh provided for you - that which is lawful and pure, and continually fear Allāh in whom you believe.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place in the Qur'ān:

يٰأَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ط إِنِّيْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ.

O Messengers! Eat of the pure and do good. I am aware of whatever you do.[2]

The Messengers and the believers are instructed to eat pure and lawful things. We learn from this that the abstention of the People of the Book was not approved by the Sharīʿat. Rather, eating camel-meat was desirable and praiseworthy. While abstaining

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[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 87-88.

[2] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 51.

from prohibited things, how can a person start considering the lawful to be unlawful? If he imposes such restrictions on himself, he will be committing the sin of making the lawful unlawful. If he does this, it is not far fetched for him to legalize what is unlawful. The things which are harmful to man are listed by Allāh *taʿālā*. He says:

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لِلّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ. إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ.

O believers! Eat of the pure things which We provided for you and be thankful to Allah if you are indeed His servants. He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine and the animal on which the name of anyone other than Allah is invoked.[1]

If there were other unlawful things in the knowledge of Allāh *taʿālā*, He would have certainly classified them as unlawful. The fact of the matter is that when man becomes immersed in unbelief and polytheism, he loses his intelligence. Look at those polytheists: They made camel-meat unlawful to themselves, but they used to consume and drink blood with relish. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such actions.

The point which I was making is that it is totally wrong to cast aside lawful things and consider this to be saintliness. The clear texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth reject this.

I went to the house of a certain person. I had said to him from beforehand that he must not inform anyone

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 172-173.

of my coming. When I arrived, I saw a deputy collector coming forward to receive me. I concluded that my host must have mentioned my coming to him. I was aware of his nature and knew he would certainly mention it to someone or the other. Anyway, I did not say anything in his presence even though I was quite angered. I swallowed my anger. I began talking to the deputy inspector on a similar topic. I quoted this couplet to him:

> Strive in your actions and wear whatever you want. You may place a crown on your head and a flag on your shoulder; everything is permissible.

The deputy inspector was overjoyed when he heard it. He said: "I am hearing it from you; others act strict and stern. This is why I keep away from such people – they make everything impermissible." I said to him: "How can we make everything unlawful when Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ص۪ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ط إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ. إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوْءِ وَالْفَحْشَآءِ وَأَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا عَلَى اللهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ.

O mankind! Eat of the things of the earth lawful and pure. And do not follow Satan, surely he is your open enemy. He will only command you to commit evil deeds and obscenity and to attribute to Allah those things which you do not know.[1]

Now look! Is the prohibition of meat mentioned in any of these verses?

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 168-169.

A Hadīth states:

المؤمن القوي خير من المؤمن الضعيف.[1]

A strong believer is better than a weak believer.

Many evils were prevalent among the Arabs but Islam uprooted them. Islam ordered using things which are permissible but prohibited those which are unlawful. On the other hand, people are such that when they become flagrant sinners, they do not even consider the unlawful to be unlawful. They succumb to the deception of Shaytān. Consequently, they even make lawful things unlawful on themselves. Islam states that both extremes are wrong. Allāh *taʿālā* instructs:

كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا

Eat and drink but do not be wasteful.[2]

This verse prohibits wastage and extravagance. In the same way, Islam prohibits total immersion in the lawful. Total immersion means that a person becomes fully occupied in a thing and thinks about it all the time.

One of my friends said to me: "I was in the company of a certain person. He used to pay a lot of attention to food and drink, so much so that he used to have a doctor at his side to make special arrangements to cleanse his stomach." This is what you call transgressing the limits and it is prohibited.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says:

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[1] حلية الأولياء: ج ١٠، ص ٣١٤.

[2] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 31.

> A major portion of life has passed in worrying about what to eat in summer and what to wear in winter.

This is what is prohibited. As for wearing good clothes and eating delicious foods, this is not prohibited. In fact, if a person is wealthy, he is ordered to wear good clothes so that he may thank Allāh *taʿālā* for these bounties and so that poor people may see him wealthy and ask him. The Sharīʿat has laid down a limit for everything. Do not eat so much that you cannot walk and move around, or it causes you to become lethargic in carrying out good actions. Eating this much is certainly prohibited. Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* says:

> You are devoid of wisdom because you have filled your self with food up to your nose.

The scholars prohibit the same immersion and preoccupation which is stated in the verse "do not be wasteful". Apart from this, Allāh *taʿālā* instructs us to make use of His bounties while remaining within the limits. Yes, it is difficult to wear exclusive garments without developing ostentation and without looking down on others, to eat exotic foods without developing lethargy, and to continue worshipping Allāh *taʿālā* with the same verve and enthusiasm.

Note: In the same vein, I believe that it is not prohibited to use an air-cooler or air conditioner in summer. Yes, it is certainly prohibited if it causes a person to abstain from salāh or feel lazy to perform it [if these are not in a masjid]. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us against such a calamity. Āmīn. (compiler)

The value and loftiness of knowledge

Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* relates an incident:

A few scholars were at the king's palace. I was also present but my clothes were dirty. I was therefore carried out and made to sit in the rear. I went and sat in the row of slaves. The scholars then discussed a certain issue which they all failed to solve. I stood up from where I was sitting in the back row and said: "If you permit, I would like to say something in this regard." The people said that I could certainly voice my opinion. They did not recognize me. I then explained the issue in a manner which left them silent. The people said: "Come forward and sit here." The judge said: "Take my turban and place it on his head." Shaykh Saʿdī now had an opportunity to say something: "You can keep that turban of pride for yourself." Saying this, he left the assembly. When he left, the people said: "It seems as though that was Shaykh Saʿdī." They all rued over the fact that they hadn't recognized him.

Now look, he was sent to the back because of his appearance and they had to bring him forward because of his knowledge. We learn from this that we must never treat anyone with scorn no matter what type of clothing he is wearing. We also learn that knowledge elevates the rank of a person. If a person worries about nothing but clothes and is devoid of knowledge, he will be disgraced and humiliated.

A man wore the clothing which is normally worn by ʿulamā' and presented himself before a saint. The saint was sitting with his legs stretched out. When he saw this man approaching, he folded his legs out of respect for him. The saint asked him: "Where are you from and what is your name?" He replied: "People call me Iysuf (Yūsuf)." The saint realized that this was an ignorant man and said to him: "If your name is Iysuf why should I fold my legs?"

I related these incidents to you to show you that the Sharīʿat does not prohibit exclusive garments and exotic foods. Yes, the harms and evils which these can cause are prohibited. If a person wears exclusive garments, what is the need for him to look down on others? If he eats exotic foods, does it mean he must become heedless? The saints say: "If you feed exotic foods to the self, make sure you get it to do the necessary work as well." They say: "When a labourer is happy, he does more work and works harder."

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh* went to meet Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. The latter called his son and said: "This is a senior scholar. Do not let him sleep in the masjid. Make arrangements for him to sleep in such and such room. Prepare exotic foods for him." Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was a great scholar who adhered strictly to the Sunnat. You can gauge from this that the Sharīʿat permits indulgence in luxuries [provided it is within the limits]. It does not issue a total prohibition of all types of foods and clothes. As for the disapproval which you hear in this regard, it applies when people become immersed in food and drink. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say:

> This extreme luxury and comfort will eventually separate you from Dīn.

This refers to worrying about exclusive garments and exotic foods all the time. We see those who have succumbed to these things eventually moving away from Dīn. This is certainly impermissible because a non-objective has been made the objective. The person then forgets his objective in life. Similarly, the person who makes the lawful unlawful and believes it

to be abstinence is also castigated. Hadrat Maulānā used to say: "When I see a person not overly engrossed in food and clothing, I conclude that he is attached to the work. This is why he does not have too much of time to worry about food and drink. I believe that he has a good spiritual condition. On the other hand, when I see a person too occupied in food and clothing, I conclude that he is heedless of his objective."

The saints say:

> The men of the heart do not bother too much about external beautification and embellishments. (They do not even need it because their internal beautification is enough for them). Like the wall in a garden does not need any artwork [because the garden itself is so beautiful].

Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* was invited to a meal in the king's palace. He was wearing simple clothes so he was not permitted to enter. He went home, changed into an exquisite garment and came back. He was invited in. When the food was presented, he dipped his sleeve in the curry. The people asked him: "What are you doing!?" He replied: "I am feeding it because it is really this garment that has been invited. I had tried to come in earlier on but I was sent away. When I changed my garments, I was welcomed. I thought to myself on the reason for this change in attitude and realized that it was my garment. I concluded that my garment was invited to the meal."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Shaykh Saʿdī *raḥimahullāh* rectified these people. He enjoyed a laudable position among scholars but he was extremely humble. He could go to the royal palace as

and when he wanted. He went to the king's palace one day and sat down in the line of the slaves. When the king's gaze fell on him, he said: "Come and sit here, why are you sitting there?" He replied with the following couplet:

> Let me sit here because I am a worthless slave. I will therefore sit among the slaves.

When the king heard this, he hastened to him, held him by his hand, and seated him on his throne, saying:

> This is nothing but a throne. If you want to sit on my head and eyes, I will let you do so and sing your praises because you are my beloved.

The point I am making is that if the carnal self is protected against rebellion and evils, there is no harm in spending a bit more on food and clothing. After all, spiritual exercises are prescribed to remover pride and ostentation which are obstacles on this path. Apart from this, there is no harm in having and using permissible things.

> Talking and eating are permissible for the one who has reached a level of excellence. You haven't reached that level as yet, so you must remain dumb for now.

Remain silent until you acquire excellence

The points of Sufism are like exotic dishes, and they are permitted to the one who has reached the level of excellence. You haven't reached that level as yet, so do not eat and keep your mouth closed. Since you are defective, the speech which emanates from your mouth will also be defective. People listening to you

may erroneously consider you to be an expert, so you will cause harm to them as well.

As long as a person has not reached a level of perfection, he must not worry about setting right others. He must continue trying to perfect himself. Man reaches perfection through subjugation of the carnal self, and this undoubtedly requires intense striving. When Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* became the ruler of Egypt, he stayed hungry sometimes so that he may feel the hunger which is felt by poor people and think about them. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتّٰى تُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا تُحِبُّوْنَ

You will never be able to acquire perfection in virtue until you spend something of what you love.[1]

The Ahlullāh practised on this teaching.

There was a saint who felt like eating fish. A fish was bought, cooked and presented to him. Just then a beggar arrived and asked for food. The saint took the fish and gave it to him. He did not give him a part of the fish, rather the whole fish. Those who were present said to him: "You had asked for fish after you were really feeling for it, you should have at least kept a bit for yourself." He replied: "No." Someone went to the beggar, gave him money and convinced him to give the fish back. The person brought the fish and presented it to the saint but he refused to eat it. I say, he probably thought of the following verses:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 92.

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا. إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا. إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا. فَوَقَاهُمُ اللهُ شَرَّ ذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا.

They give food, for His love, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner. [Thinking to themselves]: "We feed you solely for the pleasure of Allāh, we desire no recompense from you nor any thanks. We fear from our Sustainer a day of dejection, of misery." So Allāh saved them from the evil of that day and bestowed them with brightness and joy.[1]

When Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* used to send charity to anyone, she would ask the person on his return: "What did the people say?" If the person said that they made duʿā' for her, she would also make duʿā' for them so that the reward for charity alone is stored by Allāh *taʿālā*. Look at her level of sincerity.

The effulgence of Allāh-recognition enters a person when his stomach is empty. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* said:

> Keep your stomach empty of food so that
> you may see the effulgence of cognition.

The stomach of a true believer is filled with spiritual food. A Hadīth states that a believer eats with one stomach while an unbeliever eats with seven. When a person has acquired spiritual treasures, he will not bother about physical pleasures. Worldly food and clothing will be of no importance to him.

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[1] Sūrah al-Insān/ad-Dahr, 76: 8-11.

Note: This is a very useful piece of advice. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

WORLDLY LOVE STOPS ONE FROM DĪN

I went to a place where all types of people assembled to listen to my lecture. I fell silent. People are accustomed to speaking and listening, so they were quite astonished when they noticed my silence. They did not say anything but I could make out that they wanted me to speak. So I said:

I saw Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* remaining silent for one two hours at a time, and those who were present in the assembly would do the same.

I then said to them: Various types of speakers must be coming to address you. Your teachers also speak to you. So what is the need for you to want me to speak? Let me do my work as I see fit.

I explained this point to them in detail. I said to them that there was a saint who had fallen completely silent towards the latter part of his life. He would not utter a single word at the time of his assembly. His disciples would sit and acquire blessings in this way. No one would want to leave in the course of the assembly. He used to be focused on Allāh *taʿālā* and those who were present used to benefit from the blessings of his focus.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* confer this bounty on us through His grace and kindness. Āmīn. (compiler)

You people enjoy listening to lectures while those people used to derive blessings from the spirituality of the saint. They used to get pleasure in merely sitting in his assembly and would not bother about getting up to leave. You should save yourself from

futile conversations so that your heart remains in Allāh's remembrance.

A poet rightly said:

> I do not know anything better than to zip my lips and close my mouth. Silence conveys a message which cannot be conveyed by words.

Note: This proves the benefit of silence. A saint said: "If a person's silence cannot benefit anyone, his speaking will also not be of benefit." (compiler)

The etiquette of an assembly

A man came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh*. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* called him to the front of the assembly and seated him in front of him. But the man began leaning against a wall. This was totally against the etiquette of the assembly. Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* addressed him: "Did you never get the opportunity of sitting in the assembly of any scholar?"

The assembly of a shaykh has to be respected. This is what Hadrat *raḥimahullāh* was drawing his attention to. We learn from this that a person becomes cultured only when he is taught manners and etiquette.

There is an incident about Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* that he spread out a cloth on the ground to perform salāh. Someone said to him: "O shaykh, do not do that. It is reprehensible." Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* asked: "Where is your house?" The man replied: "In Khwārizm." Imām Abū Hanīfah *raḥimahullāh* said: "Allāhu Akbar! The sound of the takbīr can now be heard from the last row!" What he meant is that how come the matter

has been turned upside down. Knowledge goes from here to Khwārizm, it does not come from there to here. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* then explained the ruling to him by asking him if there are straw mats in his masjid. The man replied in the affirmative. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *raḥimahullāh* said: "I see, how come it is permissible to perform ṣalāh on grass but not on fabric?" Imām Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* drew his attention to the fact that he should show respect to the 'ulamā'. When the 'ulamā' and Sufis are shown respect, it is done because of Dīn. The more respect a person shows to another, the more he will benefit. Respect is subservient to faith and confidence. The more faith a person has in another, the more respect he will show to him.

The reason for an absence of respect for the 'ulamā' and Sufis is that the sacredness of Dīn is no longer in the heart. This is why the people of Dīn are not shown respect. The saints are not shown respect because people have not recognized them.

I am describing to you the condition of the people of our times and the method of rectification. It is not easy to rectify people nowadays. If you try to do this, you will fall into difficulties. You will face much opposition and major tests. If you bear them, you will become a great person in Allāh's sight. This work is difficult because a person has to face the entire community.

From the experiences which I had with people I realized that people are not averse to Dīn, but they are scared of giving up the world. A youngster used to attend my assemblies. He complained to me that his father is angry with him for coming here. He fills the water pitcher so that his father could perform wuḍū', but his father does not use it. When I heard

this I said to him: "Your father is certainly not unhappy with you. He loves you. It is his love which is causing his displeasure. He thinks that if you continue coming here, you will not do any worldly work. You should therefore combine Dīn with worldly activities. You will have to bear some difficulties because Dīn is the objective. You must carry out your spiritual practices at night, and see to the farm and the grazing animals during the day. When your father sees that he is not suffering any worldly loss by your coming here – in fact, you are doing his work with more enthusiasm – he will not dislike your Qur'ān recitation, tahajjud, etc. If his worldly needs are not affected in any way and his son becomes a saint, how can he suffer loss?"

I know how these worldly people think. When the boy did as I advised him, his father became pleased with him to such an extent that if he did not come to me for a few days, his father would ask him: "So many days have passed and you didn't go to Maulānā?" Subsequently, his father came to me, shook hands with me and held my hand for quite some time. I concluded that this handshake was one of love and regret. He must have thought about his previous attitude. He developed so much of confidence in his son that when he was about to open a factory, he said: "Why should I call any outsider for the opening ceremony when my own son is a saint?"

I related this story to you to show you that people are generally not averse to Dīn. No loss can be suffered in Dīn; there is nothing but benefit in it. I challenge anyone to adopt Dīn and see what peace and tranquillity he experiences.

AN ASSEMBLY CAN BE TAKEN TO TASK FOR THE CRIME OF A SINGLE PERSON

It is permissible to take an entire assembly to task for the crime of a single person. The following Hadīth is quoted in *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم رأى نخامة في قبلة المسجد وهو يصلي بين يدي الناس. فحتها ثم قال حين انصرف إن أحدكم إذا كان في الصلوة فإن الله قبل وجهه، فلا يتنخمن أحد قبل وجهه في الصلوة.[1]

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu relates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam saw phlegm in the masjid in the direction of the qiblah while he was leading the people in salāh. He wiped it off and then turned around and addressed the congregation: "When you are in salāh, Allāh taʿālā is in front of you. You should therefore not spit to the front while you are in salāh."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at his humbleness. Although the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were at his beck and call, he removed the phlegm himself. This ought to serve as an example for us. (compiler)

The author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* writes in his commentary to this Hadīth:

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[1] صحيح البخاري، كتاب الأذان: ج ١، ص ٢٠٨.

قد تقدم في باب حك البزاق باليد من المسجد من أبواب المساجد مع الكلام عليه، وزاد في هذه الرواية فتغيظ على أهل المسجد ففيه جواز معاتبة المجموع على الأمر الذي ينكر وإن كان الفعل صدر من بعضهم لأجل التحذير من معاودة ذلك.[1]

Wiping off phlegm from the masjid with one's own hand was explained previously. The additional point in this narration is that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam expressed his anger at all the congregants. The point which we derive from this is that it is permissible to scold and reprimand an entire assembly for an action which was done by one or a few of them. It is permissible to do this because it will serve as a warning to the others not to repeat such an inappropriate action.

Look at how the scholars extract rulings from the Aḥādīth. From the above Ḥadīth, the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* proves that when a single person commits an inappropriate action, it is permissible to reprimand the entire assembly so that no one may repeat that action in the future.

I say, one wisdom behind reprimanding the entire congregation is as explained above. Another reason could be that because the rest of the congregation approved of the action of the one person, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reprimanded all of them. A person who approves of an action is as though he committed it himself. The acceptance of the above-mentioned action is deduced from the fact that no

[1] فتح الباري: ج ٣، ص ٥٤.

one reprimanded the person, no one went forward to clean it off, nor did anyone inform Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* about it.

As for the principle that your approval of the action of another is as though you committed it yourself, a parallel to it can be found in the Qur'ān. Let me explain.

The Qur'ān addresses the Jews who were living in the era of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادّٰرَءْتُمْ فِيْهَا وَاللّٰهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ.

When you killed a person and cast the blame for this (crime) upon one another, and Allāh was to disclose what you were concealing.[1]

This incident occurred during the time of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*; not in the time of the Jews who are addressed. The scholars explain that the present addressees are held responsible for the action of the past people because they approved of the action of their forefathers, were happy with it, and did not absolve themselves from it.

There are many places in the Qur'ān where latter generations were reprimanded for actions committed by their ancestors because they did not distance themselves from those actions; rather, they approved of them. The verse quoted previously is an example of this. We quote the verse again:

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادّٰرَءْتُمْ فِيْهَا وَاللّٰهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 72.

When you killed a person and cast the blame for this (crime) upon one another, and Allāh was to disclose what you were concealing.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says "you killed". The addressees are the Jews who were living in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* while the incident took place in the time of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. A man was killed from the Banī Isrāʾīl and the identity of the murderer was not known. Each person was trying to place the blame on the other. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* finally prayed to Allāh *taʿālā* and he was informed of the identity of the murderer.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place in the Qurʾān:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيْثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّوْرَ.

When We took a covenant from you and raised over you the Tūr.[2]

Here too the addressees are the Jews of Madīnah although no such covenant was taken from them nor was Mt. Tūr raised over them. This entire incident took place in the time of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*.

Coming back to the previously-quoted Hadīth, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was quite angered at seeing the phlegm in the masjid because the person who spat it out disregarded the sanctity of the masjid. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* issued a warning to everyone so that a similar incident does not recur.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 72.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 63.

I say, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly expressed his anger but he did not name anyone. He saw a mistake committed, the masjid was desecrated, he disapproved of the action, expressed his disapproval, but did not ask anyone to clean it off. Instead, he did it with his own blessed hand. Through this action, he displayed the sanctity of the masjid and demonstrated his great character to the Muslim community. Glory to Allāh.

From this we learn that it is permissible to express anger on occasions of this nature. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* used to get angry for Allāh's sake. The same can be said about the Sufis. Anger in itself is not blameworthy. In fact, there are occasions which necessitate anger. We have to learn when to get angry and when not to.

This is the Book of Allāh, understand what it says. You do not have the knowledge, what are you going to understand? Nowadays no one is prepared to learn and teach. There is also an absence of intelligence, so a person cannot even use it to understand. When we are faced with an important issue, it is the duty of an ʿālim to provide a solution and to explain to the masses. He will have to remove their doubts and misgivings. If not, the masses will remain totally heedless. Just as people can be taught by word of mouth, they can be taught through one's actions. In fact, practical education is more effective than verbal education. One should therefore rectify one's actions.

Look! Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not instruct any Ṣaḥābī to remove the phlegm; he did it with his own blessed hand. Imagine the effect it must have had on those who were present, and how much respect for the masjid must have developed in their hearts.

We learn from this incident that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to get angry when he saw anything which was against the Sharīʿat. He would also display his anger to the entire assembly so that everyone is admonished.

It is stated in a Ḥadīth that when Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to get angry, his face would turn red as though someone had squeezed a pomegranate on his cheeks.[1]

Another Ḥadīth states that he would repeat a point several times when he was angered. When the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* would observe the pain it caused him, they would hope that he fell silent.

The fact of the matter is that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* came to teach Dīn, and it is difficult to explain Dīn. They needed to be strict at times so that rectification is realized.

When I was in my village I saw a large group of people approaching. A man came to me and said: "These people are coming to ask you about anger. They want to know why you get so angry." Before I could say anything to them, I quoted the above Ḥadīth to them. I said to them: "Listen! This is how your Prophet used to get angry. His face used to turn red as though someone had squeezed a pomegranate on his cheeks. Did you hear! This was how your Prophet got angry. When he used to get angry, even a senior Ṣaḥābī like Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to become terrified and he would say:

رَضِيْنَا بِاللهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَبِيًّا.

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح، باب الايمان بالقبر: ٢٢.

We are pleased with Allāh as our Sustainer, Islam as our religion, and Muḥammad ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam as our Prophet.

The prohibition of excessive questioning

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was delivering a sermon from the pulpit. A man stood up and asked him a question which he answered. The man then asked another question related to lineage. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "He is born from such and such person." In other words, he was born out of wedlock. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then became angry and said: "Very well, you may continue asking questions. Anyone who wants to pose questions may do so." Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* perceived the anger of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said to him: "Let it pass or else no one will be saved; everyone will be disgraced."

Listen! To get angry for Allāh's sake is from among the essentials of īmān. The stronger one's īmān, the more he will be angered by sins and acts of disobedience. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* possess the highest level of īmān, this is why they are most angered by sins. They express their disapproval so that people too will dislike sinning.

If a person does not experience anger at all, then it is nothing to applaud. On the contrary, it is a defect in him. In the same way, anger which causes a person to commit impermissible actions, hurl verbal abuses, become violent – in short, to go beyond the limits – also cannot be applauded. His excellence lies in becoming angry when the occasion demands it, provided he does not transgress the limits.

The above-quoted Hadīth makes mention of the anger of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but it was limited to points from which the people may learn the sanctity of the masjid.

Now listen to another incident where Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did the exact opposite. The scholars normally quote it for additional benefit. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was in the masjid with a group of Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. A Bedouin entered and began urinating in the masjid. A few Companions hastened towards the Bedouin to stop him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* held them back and asked them to let him finish what he was doing. If they stopped him there and then, he would end up messing other parts of the masjid. Furthermore, stopping him from urinating could cause some type of illness to him. Now it is only the masjid which has been messed, let it not happen that his health is affected. When the man finished, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* addressed him in a soft and compassionate tone: "The masājid are the Houses of Allāh. Salāh is performed in them, people read the Qur'ān and engage in Allāh's remembrance. They are not the places for relieving one's self." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then got up, filled a bucket with water and poured it over the place where the man urinated. This made a deep impression on the man's heart. He went to his people and spoke about the noble character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He added: "By Allāh, he neither became angry at me nor did he repulse me." The man went and related this noble character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in many places, and it left a good effect on the people.

Now look! In the first incident he expressed his anger when he saw the phlegm in the masjid. And here he does not become angry in the least even though the man urinated in the masjid. In fact, he explained to the man in an affectionate manner.

We learn from this that when a person is involved in rectification and propagation, it is essential for him to understand the situation and occasion. If not, he will cause more harm than good. Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* said: Enjoin good and prohibit evil, but not in a manner that good becomes evil and vice versa. If an attitude of this nature persists, enjoining good and prohibiting evil will cause harm and the benefit will be replaced by corruption.

There is another incident which demonstrates the character of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. An unbeliever came as a guest to him. The man ate a lot in the evening. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made his sleeping arrangements. The man got up early in the morning and was gone. When Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* emerged from his room, he noticed that his guest had disappeared and the bedding was soiled. He brought water and began washing it with his blessed hands. The man came back for some reason or the other. He was mortified when he observed the scene before him. He was so impressed by the pure character of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that he embraced Islam.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not say anything to the man. Instead, he thought to himself that the man has the filth of unbelief within him, and this external impurity is nothing compared to that. He blessed the man with his pure character which

had an effect on his unbelief and prompted him to embrace Islam there and then.

The scholars extracted the principles of rectification and propagation in the light of these incidents. A different rule applies to those who are close to a person and have more opportunities of listening to him and learning from him. Another approach is adopted when dealing with strangers and outsiders. If close associates commit the slightest mistake, they are taken to task immediately. This is because they had many occasions to learn, but they did not. As for strangers and outsiders, their major and serious offences are overlooked and pardoned. They will be taught in an affectionate manner. Their bad mannerisms will be treated with noble character. Because they have fewer occasions and opportunities of learning Dīn, a soft approach is needed to teach them.

The Sufis adopt the same approach. When newcomers arrive at their place, they do not reprimand them immediately. They first teach them about Dīn and make them aware of right and wrong. When they break the rules after that, they are reprimanded.

Note: We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to adopt the same Sunnat method in our work of rectification, training and propagation. Āmīn. (compiler)

RASŪLULLĀH ﷺ WAS NOT TAUGHT POETRY

The compositions of poets are by and large based on their imaginations and generally contain lies and exaggerations. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* said with reference to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ.

We did not teach him poetry nor is it suitable for him.[1]

Why was poetry not suitable for him? The following is stated in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*:

ولا يصلح له صلى الله عليه وسلم الشعر لأنه يدعو لغير المعنى المراعاة اللفظ والوزن ولأن أحسنه المبالغة والمجازفة والإغراق في الوصف وأكثره تحسين ما ليس بحسن وتقبيح ما ليس بقبح، وكل ذلك ليستدعى الكذب أو يحاكيه الكذب وجل جناب الشارع عن ذلك.[2]

Poetry was not suitable for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam because a poet sometimes has to change the meaning of a word merely out of consideration for the word and scale. Furthermore, the poem which is considered to be best is the one which contains hyperboles, products of the imagination, or describing something beyond what it really is. Most poetry beautifies the ugly, and speaks good of what is not good. All these ingredients require fabrications or

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

[2] روح المعاني: ج ٢٣، ص ٤٧.

things similar to lies. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is obviously far above such things.

We learn from the above that poetry requires several futile and pointless ingredients. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* protected Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from it and did not give him the knowledge of poetry. He became so unattached to it that he could never compose a rhyming couplet.

The Arabs used to refer to the Qur'ān as poetry and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as a poet. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the following verse to refute this allegation:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ.

We did not teach him poetry nor is it suitable for him.[1]

Their allegation is refuted by asking them, how can the Qur'ān be considered to be poetry and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* a poet when he did not have any knowledge of poetry? The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* explains the difference between the Qur'ān and poetry. If the Qur'ān is not poetry then Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is obviously not a poet.

لا يخفى على من به أدنى مسكة أن هذا الكتاب الحكيم المتضمن لجميع المنافع الدينية والدنيوية على أسلوب أفحم كل منطق يباين الشعر ولا مثل الثريا الثرى أما لفظا فلعدم وزنه وتقفيته، وأما معنى فلأن الشعر

[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

تخيلات مرغبة ومنفرة أو نحو ذلك، وهو مقر الأكاذيب ولذا قيل أعذبه أكذبه.[1]

The person who has the slightest affinity with literature will know that this wise Book which is filled with all types of religious and worldly benefits in a style which silenced every speaking person is totally – in letter and spirit – distant from poetry like the distance between the Pleiades and the ground.

The difference between the two as regards words is clear because the Qur'ān is not confined to any scales and rhyming words. As for the difference between the two in meaning, we know that poetry is the product of a few attractive or repulsive imaginary thoughts. Also, poetry is a cache of lies and falsehood. This is why it is said that the sweetest poetry is the one with the most falsehood.

Note: The author presents an excellent example when he says that they are as distant as the *tharā* and *thurayyā* (the first refers to the ground and the second to the Pleiades which is the highest star in the cosmos). The same can be said about the distance and difference between poetry and the Qur'ān. (compiler)

والقرآن حكم وعقائد وشرائع والمراد من نفي تعليمه صلى الله عليه وسلم بتعليم الكتاب الشعر نفي أن يكون القرآن شعرا على سبيل الكناية لأن من علمه الله تعالى هو القرآن وإذا لم يكن المعلم شعرا

[1] روح المعاني: ج ١٣، ص ٤٦.

لم يكن القرآن شعرا ألبتة. وهذا رد لما كانوا يقولونه من أن القرآن شعر والنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم شاعر، وغرضهم من ذلك أن ما جاء به عليه الصلوة والسلام من القرآن افتراء وتخيل وحاشا ثم حاشا من ذلك.[1]

On the other hand, the Qur'ān is an embodiment of wisdom. It contains correct beliefs and injunctions of the Sharīʿat. The allegation that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was taught poetry is rejected. In this way, reference is made to the fact that the Qur'ān is not poetry. This is because the thing which Allāh taʿālā taught Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was the Qur'ān. If the thing which he was taught is not poetry, the Qur'ān is not poetry.

This is a refutation of their allegation that the Qur'ān is poetry and that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is a poet. Their purpose in making this allegation was to show that the thing which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam refers to as the Qur'ān is not the speech of Allāh taʿālā but a fabrication on his part and a product of his imagination. But this is definitely not the case.

Look at how he explained the difference between the Qur'ān and poetry. The Qur'ān contains points of wisdom, genuine beliefs, and an explanation of injunctions. On the other hand, poetry is merely a product of the imagination. In fact, the majority of it contains falsehood, fabrication and hyperboles. There is a famous saying about poetry:

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ٢٣، ص ٤٧.

The more falsehood in poetry, the sweeter it is.

Poems and poetry have nothing whatsoever to do with prophet-hood. In addition to poetry not being able to embellish the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, even scholars considered it to be a blemish. Imām Shāfiʿī *raḥimahullāh* said:

لو لا الشعر بالعلماء يزري – لكنت اليوم أشعر من لبيد

Had poetry not been a cause of defectiveness in the ʿulamā', I would have been a greater poet than Labīd.

No matter what, the Arabs prided themselves over their poetry. This is why they referred to non-Arabs as ʿAjam (those who are dumb). They had a deep attachment with poetry. In fact, they were totally immersed in it. Even their children were poets. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the Qur'ān to put an end to this attachment. They were men of letters and experts in the language. This is why they recognized the Qur'ān and submitted before it. The enjoyment and delight which they used to experience in poetry was now enjoyed in the recitation of the Qur'ān. In fact, far more than what they experienced in poetry.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *raḥimahullāh* writes in *Tafhīmāt* that nothing apart from the Qur'ān could put an end to their poetry. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *raḥimahullāh* discusses this subject very beautifully. It is quoted verbatim:

جاء في الحديث ما أذن الله تعالى لشيء ما أذن لنبي يتغنى بالقرآن يجهر به.[1] وجاء أيضا ليس منا من لم يتغن بالقرآن، وسر ذلك أن الله تعالى أنزل القرآن بلسان العرب وكانوا مشغولين بأشعار ينشدونها في محافلهم ويتغنون بها في خلوتهم وجلوتهم.

It is mentioned in a Ḥadīth that Allāh taʿālā does not listen as attentively to anything as He does to the beautiful recitation of the Qur'ān of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Another Ḥadīth states that the person who does not read the Qur'ān in a beautiful style is not of us. The reason behind this is that Allāh taʿālā revealed the Qur'ān in the language of the Arabs who used to sing and quote their poems in their assemblies, in public and in moments of solitude.

Shāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* adds:

Divine wisdom demanded that the Arabs be made to read in the same balanced style which they were accustomed to. However, it must have reached the peak of eloquence. Parts of it are therefore in rhyming verses. This slight similarity is sufficient. Unlike poetry, the Qur'ān does not submit to any scales.

وذلك لأن النشائد توجد في كل أمة من أمم الناس وأوزانهم مختلفة فالعرب لهم أوزان والهنود لهم أوزان ورأينا جماعة من أهل البدو

[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ١٩٥.

ينشدون النشائد من غير التقييد بالأوزان المعروفة...والأمر الملخص ما ذكرنا.[1]

Speech of this nature was needed because songs and hymns are found in every nation of the world, each having its own style and scale. The Arabs have their own and the Indians their own. We also came across a group of Bedouins singing songs without restricting themselves to the scales which were common at the time... This is the gist of whatever we mentioned.

أنزل القرآن نشائد لعادة العرب في إنشادهم الأشعار كان موافقة الحق ان ينشد تلك النشائد على ما هو المألوف عندهم من طرق الإنشاء. وهو المراد بالتغني فعبر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الرضا بسبب الموافقة لمراده بالاستماع والإصغاء ليس هنالك كلام يعبر عنه بأفصح من هذه العبارة. والله أعلم.[2]

When the Qur'ān was revealed in line with the poetic temperament of the Arabs, Allāh *taʿālā* wanted that its words be read in a beautiful voice. In other words, with tajwīd and in a measured way. And that it be sung in solitude to provide freshness to the temperament, as was the practice of the Arabs with their poetry.

This is the meaning of *taghannī bi al-Qur'ān*. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that Allāh *taʿālā* listens attentively to the Qur'ān

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[1] تفهيمات: ج ١، ص ١٤٤.

[2] تفهيمات: ج ١، ص ١٤٤.

recitation of the Prophet, it refers to Allāh's pleasure. The pleasure was earned over the recitation of the Qur'ān in this way because it was in line with what Allāh *taʿālā* ordered. No other word could have expressed this meaning more eloquently. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

I now say to you, you have learnt that poetry is not suitable for a Prophet. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself speaks out against poets in the Qur'ān. He says:

وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُنَ. أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِيْ كُلِّ وَادٍ يَّهِيْمُوْنَ. وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ.

As for the poets – it is only those who are in error that follow them. Have you not seen them wandering aimlessly in every valley? And that they say what they do not practise?[1]

The scholars consider poetry to be a cause of defectiveness. Allāh *taʿālā* prescribed the Qur'ān to put an end to poetry. If this is the case, I cannot understand this reverse movement. What I means is that the Qur'ān came as an alternative to poetry but we are replacing the Qur'ān with poetry. When the Qur'ān or Hadīth is read, it has no effect on us. But no sooner some poetry is sung, we go into an ecstasy. This is extremely sorrowful. Even more surprising is when we do not learn the lessons of Allāh-recognition from the Qur'ān and Sunnat, but we feel we can traverse the stations of Sufism through poetry. It is absolutely foolish and irrational.

Note: This demonstrates the frankness and straightforwardness of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

[1] Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā', 26: 224-226.

ra<u>h</u>imahullāh in speaking out against poetry. It is sufficient admonishment for us. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE RIGHTS OF RAMAḌĀN

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم. أما بعد.

فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ.

يٰأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ.

O believers! Ordained for you is fasting as it was ordained for those before you so that you may become pious.[1]

We learn from this verse that the acquisition of piety is the real objective for the obligation of fasting. In other words, man's passion is broken down and his carnal self which constantly prompts him towards evil (*nafs-e-ammārah)* is transformed to one which experiences tranquillity with Allāh *taʿālā* (*nafs-e-muṭma'innah*). Furthermore, it develops good capabilities and praiseworthy qualities. This is the fundamental objective behind the obligation of fasting. By fasting, the person becomes habituated to restraining his carnal self from its various demands; and the firmness of this habit is the foundation of taqwā.

If these things are not acquired from fasting, and a person restricts himself to hunger and thirst, and his fasting is only in name, then he will acquire nothing from it. A fast of this nature has no value and rank in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. Even if a jurist or muftī

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 183.

issues a verdict of validity for such a fast, and says that it is valid in the light of the Sharīʿat, this fast is not acceptable in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not prescribe such a fast in the first place which does not result in taqwā. I would like to expound on this theme to you. Listen attentively.

Fasting has an external dimension and an internal one. The external fast comprises of abstaining from food and drink. However, you can understand for yourself that fasting cannot be just this because abstaining from food and drink is not praiseworthy in itself for man because he can do this even when he becomes angry. That is, sometimes he gives up food and drink out of anger. Thus, the objective of fasting, and the fruit of abstaining from food and drink is that man abstains from the prohibitions of the Sharīʿat and does not commit anything that is unlawful. For example, abstaining from speaking lies, backbiting, etc. this is in fact what taqwā entails. This is the reality of fasting and its internal dimension. And this is the fundamental objective behind the promulgation of fasting. The following words of the Qur'ān are clear proofs in this regard:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

…so that you may become pious.

Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to qurbānī:

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts that reaches Him.[1]

Just as Allāh *taʿālā* said with regard to qurbānī, the same can be understood with regard to fasting. That is, Allāh *taʿālā* made fasting obligatory so that man's desires may be broken, the heat of his carnal self may be extinguished, his *nafs-e-ammārah* may be converted into *nafs-e-muṭma'innah*, and man may acquire rectitude and piety within him. However, if this benefit has not been realized, then he has acquired nothing but hunger and thirst. And since this hunger and thirst is against the actual intention of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, you yourself are responsible for the surprise which you are experiencing. Had you carried out the order of the Sharīʿat while observing its limits and prerequisites, you would have certainly enjoyed its fruits.

I constantly say to you – and this is my complaint to you – that the general condition today is that even the actions which people do, they do not fulfil the reality, the etiquette and prerequisites of those actions. What, then, can be said of the actions which they do not carry out? They will carry out an action, bear difficulties in carrying it out, and then feel that they are absolved of their responsibility. However, on the day of Resurrection they will realize that it was not accepted in Allāh's court, and that whatever hardships they had borne for it went to waste.

Fasting is one of those actions. Those who do not fast in the first place do it because they – due to their carnal self and ignorance - have no knowledge of its

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḥajj, 22: 37.

importance and virtue. As for those who fast, there are many among them regarding whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كم من صائم ليس له من صيامه إلا الظمأ، وكم من قائم ليس له في قيامه إلا السهر.[1]

Many a fasting person gains nothing from his fast except thirst. Many a person engaged in night worship gains nothing from it except sleeplessness.

This too is a terrible situation and a major loss. It is essential for us to save ourselves from it.

I will now explain this Hadīth in the light of another Hadīth. A Hadīth in *Mishkāt Sharīf* states:

من لم يدع قول الزور والعمل به فليس لله حاجة في أن يدع طعامه وشرابه.[2]

A person who does not give up lies and acting upon them while in a state of fasting, then Allāh taʿālā has no need for him to abstain from food and drink.

This is because Allāh *taʿālā* is free from the need for food and drink. If the person abstains from both, the benefit of his abstention is not going to reach Allāh *taʿālā* in any way. In no way will Allāh's need be fulfilled thereby causing Him to become pleased with the person. Instead, Allāh *taʿālā* looks at the condition of the heart and piety; this is what He

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[1] رواه الدارمي. مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ١٧٧.

[2] مشكوة شريف: ج ١، ص ١٧٦.

focuses on. If these are not found in the fast, of what benefit was it?

In his commentary to this Hadīth, the author of *Mirqāt* says that *qaul az-zūr* means *qaul al-bāṭil*. In other words, to utter something which entails a sin irrespective of whether it is speaking a lie, the utterance of unbelief, a false testimony, a fabrication, a slander, backbiting, a baseless complaint, accusing someone of adultery, being vulgar and abusive, and cursing and mocking. All these are included in *qaul az-zūr*. As for "acting upon them", this refers to immoral acts. They are referred to as *zūr* because they entail sin just as *zūr* is found in speaking lies.

I say that although *zūr* is essentially an adjective of *qaul* (word), bearing in mind that it is also an injurious action of the tongue, the words "and acting on them" have been added as a further elucidation. Thus, *qaul az-zūr* and *wa al-ʿamal bihi* are one and the same thing.

The present Hadīth only mentions *qaul az-zūr*. Another Hadīth lists five things which break the fast and wuḍū'. They are: speaking lies, backbiting, carrying tales, casting evil glances, taking false oaths.[1]

From the above mentioned sins, some of them are serious and severe. For example, backbiting especially while one is fasting. A Hadīth states that a person who engages in backbiting in the course of the day has in fact broken his fast. Another Hadīth is quoted in the marginal notes of *al-Hidāyah*:

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[1] *Al-Jāmiʿ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, p. 314.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed by two persons. One of them was cupping the other. In the course of the cupping, one was backbiting about someone and the second person did not stop or reprimand him. On seeing this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أفطر الحاجم والمحجوم[1]

The cupper and the one who is being cupped have both broken their fast.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu,* the narrator of this Hadīth, says that when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that they have broken their fast, it was not because of the act of cupping, but because of backbiting and listening to it.

Look at the repugnance of backbiting and listening to backbiting as gauged from this Hadīth. The fast broke on account of it. Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* must have heard it from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* because he cannot issue a ruling on the basis of his own opinion.

This is supported by another narration related by Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. Two fasting people performed the zuhr or ʿasr salāh. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* completed his salāh, he turned to them and said: "Repeat your wudū' and salāh, but complete your fast." (In other words, do not eat or drink anything until sunset). "However, you must keep qadā' of this

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[1] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الإلباس، ج ١، ص ١٤١.

fast tomorrow." (In other words, this fast of yours has been invalidated. It is obligatory on you to keep qaḍā' of it). The two said: "O Rasūlullāh! What is the reason for this?" Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Because you were backbiting such and such person."[1]

Some commentators of this Ḥadīth write: Although the ʿulamā' say that this incident was as a way of castigating and reprimanding them, i.e. their fast according to the Sharīʿat has not been invalidated, they concur that backbiting reduces the reward of the wuḍū' and ṣalāh. Ḥaḍrat Sufyān Thaurī *raḥimahullāh*, acting on the apparent and outward meaning of this Ḥadīth, says that backbiting is actually an invalidator of a fast.

No matter what, the point which is clear from the above Aḥādīth is that there is a distinct contradiction between fasting and these sins. In other words, these sins cannot be combined with fasting. This is especially so with regard to backbiting – its repugnance and abhorrence is very clear.

The author of *Mirqāt* explains the reason for the non-acceptance of this man's fast. He says that eating is in itself permissible. The man abstained from eating, but committed an act which is intrinsically unlawful, and is not permissible under any circumstance. This is why the person became eligible for Allāh's wrath, and his act of obedience [the fast] is more worthy of being flung back on his face. Allāh *taʿālā* has no regard whatsoever for the fast of such a person, and He does not look at him with affection.

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[1] مشكوة، باب حفظ اللسان، ج ٢.

This is why I say that it is easy to give up food and drink. However, when a person keeps a fast which is devoid of lies, backbiting, futile conversations, immoral and shameless discussions, he will find it difficult. There are many who are bearing the hardships of fasting, and becoming thin due to fasting for an entire month. However, because their fast is coupled with backbiting, complaining, speaking lies, and various other futile conversations and discussions, they are not acquiring the objective of the fast which is piety. How can they then be rewarded for such a fast in the Hereafter!? It is so unfortunate that they deprived themselves of eating, and did not even get the reward for it. Can there be a worse loss than this!? People like this have lost in this world and in the Hereafter.

To sum up, the acceptance of a fast in Allāh's court is dependent on giving up sins. We learn from this that fasting enjoys a special status in the Sharīʿat. It is an important obligation and a salient feature of Islam. This is why more importance is given to it. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to give immense importance to the month of Ramaḍān and used to wait the entire year for the arrival of this month. With the arrival of this month, he used to direct the attention of the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* to the virtues of this month. Many great virtues with regard to the month of Ramaḍān have been explained by Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Ḥaḍrat Salmān *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* delivered a sermon on the last Friday of Shaʿbān. He said: "O people! A great and blessed month has dawned upon you (i.e. Ramaḍān). It is a month in which there is a

night which is superior to a thousand months. Allāh made fasting during the day compulsory and night worship (tarāwīh) less than compulsory (Sunnat). Anyone who does an optional act in this month shall receive the reward of a compulsory act done in other months. Anyone who carries out a compulsory act in this month shall receive the reward of 70 compulsory acts done in other months. It is the month of patience, and the reward for patience is Paradise. And it is a month of generosity. It is a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased. The one who provides food to a fasting person (to open his fast), it will be a means for the pardoning of his sins and emancipation from the Hell-fire. And he will receive the same reward as the fasting person without his reward decreasing in any way." Someone said: "O Rasūlullāh! Everyone does not have so much to give whereby a fasting person can open his fast." (This person assumed that the fasting person must be given enough food with which he can eat to his fill). Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "Allāh shall reward the person even if he gives him just one dry date, enough water to quench his thirst, or milk to which water has been added. The person who provides a full meal to a fasting person will be provided with special water from my pond after which he will not feel thirsty until he enters Paradise." He added in the same sermon: "It is a month where the first part of it is a mercy, the middle part is a means of forgiveness, and the last part is a means of emancipation from the Hell-fire. The person who lessens the burden on his slave in this month,

Allāh *taʿālā* will pardon him and give him salvation from the Hell-fire."[1]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Allāh *taʿālā* pardons the fasting people of my ummat on the last night." He was asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Is that night the night of power (laylatul qadr)?" He replied: "No. The fact of the matter is that every labourer has to be paid his wage on the completion of his labour."[2]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: Paradise is adorned from the beginning of the year for the month of Ramadān. When it is the first day of Ramadān, a breeze blows from beneath the ʿArsh (the grand throne of Allāh). It blows over the leaves of Paradise and passes through the doe-eyed damsels of Paradise. They say: "O our Sustainer! Appoint husbands for us from among Your servants through whom our eyes will take delight, and their eyes will take delight from us."

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "There are eight entrances to Paradise, one of which is called Bāb ar-Rayyān. This entrance is reserved for the fasting persons. No one else can enter through it."

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The person who keeps fast in the month of Ramadān with īmān and the hope of receiving rewards, shall have his past sins pardoned. The person who spends the night in worship in the month of Ramadān with

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[1] مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

[2] مشكوة، كتاب الصوم.

īmān and the hope of receiving rewards shall have his past sins pardoned."[1]

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The fast and the Qur'ān will both intercede on behalf of a person on the day of Resurrection. The fast will say: "O my Sustainer! I kept him away from food and drink during the day, so accept my intercession in his favour." The Qur'ān will say: "O my Sustainer! I kept him away from having a full night's sleep, so accept my intercession in his favour." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The intercession of both will be accepted."[2]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "The rewards for the good actions of a believer are multiplied by ten going up to 700. Allāh *taʿālā* said: The reward for fasting is excluded from this because fasting is for Me and I will personally reward the person for it. This is because a servant gives up his desires, food and drink solely for My sake."[3]

From the above narrations we can gauge how great a worship fasting is. I say that the greatest act of worship is salāh, but it too comes to an end with having to relieve one's self, sleep, etc. On the other hand, fasting is a worship which remains intact whether you are awake or sleeping. If you go to relieve yourself, you are still fasting. In short, in no

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[1] مشکوة، کتاب الصوم.

[2] مشکوة، کتاب الصوم.

[3] مشکوة، کتاب الصوم.

condition does it separate itself from you. This is a special feature of fasting which is not found in other acts of worship. Another major peculiarity of this worship which you must have observed from the above narrations is that Allāh *taʿālā* excluded its reward by saying:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

In other words, the rewards for other acts of worship are conveyed via the angels, while Allāh *taʿālā* will give the rewards for fasting Himself.

Qāḍī Thanāʾullāh Pānīpattī *raḥimahullāh* explains this Ḥadīth by saying: The reward for fasting is that the person will behold Me in the Hereafter, while in this world he will be blessed with My *maʿrifat* (true recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*).

He writes further:

A narration of Bayhaqī *raḥimahullāh* states that someone asked Ḥaḍrat Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah *raḥimahullāh* the meaning of this Ḥadīth-e-Qudsī. He said: This is a most authentic Ḥadīth. It means that when judgement will be passed on the mutual rights of people on the day of Resurrection, and a person has certain rights which he owes to people, then his good actions will be given to them to the extent that he is left with no good actions. However, when it comes to fasting, Allāh *taʿālā* will not give the person's fasts as payment for the rights which he owes. Allāh *taʿālā* will say: "Leave the fasts aside, because he kept them solely for Me." Allāh *taʿālā* will then fulfil the fasting person's remaining dues, and give rewards to those whom he is owing those dues

until they too are happy. Thus we see that a fast remains with a fasting person until it draws him to Paradise.[1]

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful Ḥadīth which displays the immense kindness and mercy of Allāh *taʿālā*. Look at how valued this act of worship – fasting – is in Allāh's court and how much He loves it that He separates it from the other actions of His servant and expresses His appreciation of it by saying: "It is solely for Me, and I will personally reward him for it."

You can well imagine what the Ahlullāh must be experiencing when they hear these glad tidings. They say on such an occasion:

> If I were to give my life on hearing this glad tiding, it will be worth it.

If you do not know this Ḥadīth, how will you value your fast? This is why I say that there is a need for knowledge before action. One's beliefs are put right through knowledge, and a yearning for action is created. A person learns the greatness and rank of a thing. This is how the ʿulamā' and reformers of every era undertook the reformation and rectification of the ummat. They would first convey correct knowledge to them, and through it they would urge them towards actions. The Sharīʿat belongs to Allāh *taʿālā* and He Himself placed beauty and attraction in it. Therefore, if an ʿālim merely conveys the words of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a simple and easy manner to the people, they will develop a love for the Sharīʿat. There were Allāh-fearing ʿulamā' of the past who delivered such

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[1] *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*.

lectures that in a single assembly, countless non-Muslims repented and became Muslims.

No matter what, after hearing the virtues of fasting as explained by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, there should be no one who does not bear the difficulty of fasting happily and does not seek its rewards.

Another reason for the uniqueness and importance of fasting is that it has a certain level of similarity with Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, everything has to be given up. A fasting person neither eats, drinks nor engages in intercourse. In this way, he bears a certain amount of similarity with Allāh *taʿālā* because He is totally pure from such things.

A fasting person is also similar to angels. He therefore acquires a type of sanctity and his soul is purified. However, this will only be when you, together with abstaining from food and drink, give up sins. This is because just as the angels do not eat and drink, they do not commit sins. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to the angels:

لَا يَعْصُوْنَ اللّٰهَ مَا اَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ

They do not disobey Allāh in whatever He commands them. They only do what they have been commanded.[1]

Thus, if together with abstaining from food and drink, you abstain from sins, you will bear total similarity with the angels. This is the essence of piety which is the fundamental objective of the obligation of fasting. And this is the reason why Allāh *taʿālā*

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[1] Sūrah at-Tahrīm, 66: 6.

made fasting a prelude to another most important act of worship, viz. hajj. The months of hajj have been delineated after the month of Ramadān so that man may purify his carnal self, develop rectitude and piety, and create within him the eligibility to present himself before the divine court of Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, Ramadān is like a month of striving, and the months which follow are the months of observing [Allāh's might, power and beauty].

If a person keeps fast as he ought to, his carnal self becomes completely pure. This means that he must not suffice with abstaining from food and drink. Rather, he must safeguard his tongue as well. He must abstain from backbiting, speaking lies, and wasting his time in futile conversations. This is the fast of the tongue. The worship of the ears entails abstaining from listening to backbiting and other futile and useless discussions. The worship of the eyes is that they must not be used to look at impermissible things.

If a person bears all these points in mind, it will be an indication that piety is found in his heart and that he is acquiring the objective of fasting. As for abstaining from the outward sins, this is the first step towards piety. Other levels come after it, viz. he must bear similarity with the angels. He must develop angelic qualities in the sense that he neither eats nor drinks, and remains in the constant remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is obviously a major level. Another level above it is when a person imbibes the qualities of Allāh *taʿālā* because abstaining from food and drink is from among the qualities of Allāh *taʿālā*. A person has these qualities when he is fasting.

Anyway, these are very high stations; leave them for the seniors. If you do just this much, it will be a great achievement. That is, save yourself from acts of disobedience and do not commit sins. This is why I consider it a boon for those who remain sleeping while they are fasting. I think to myself, although they are not carrying out any external acts of obedience, they are at least saved from backbiting and other sins. Although they will receive fewer rewards, their fast will not be unacceptable.

The reason for saying this is that I have personally seen people who are fasting, yet they are occupied in backbiting for several hours at a time. To make matters worse, they do not even consider this to be a sin. In fact, they go to the extent of saying: "Brother! If we do not do this, how will the time of the fast pass?" To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Listen! The Ahlullāh passed the time of the fast in the recitation of the Qur'ān, the remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā* and in du'ā'. Unfortunately, all these actions do not appeal to you, so you pass your time backbiting and eating the flesh of your fellow brothers. The Qur'ān likens backbiting to eating the flesh of your own brother:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ، وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا، اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ.

O believers! Abstain from much suspicion. Surely some suspicions amount to sin. Neither spy on one another

nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? You abhor it.[1]

It is stated in a Hadīth that when a certain person came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he said to the man: "You engaged in backbiting. Consequently I am getting the smell of raw meat emanating from your mouth."

We have seen many people playing cards while fasting. When they are asked about it, they reply: "We are merely passing our time." Obviously when you become distant from Dīn and thereby put an end to your affinity with Allāh's remembrance, recitation of the Qur'ān, etc. then you will spend your fasting day in playing cards and other futile activities. If you give up good actions, they will be replaced by evil activities. If you cast aside the Sunnat, it will certainly be replaced by bidʿat (innovations). This is how these people spend their time: Some of it is spent sleeping, some in backbiting and complaining, and the time after ʿasr is spent in preparing exotic dishes for iftār (opening the fast).

I say, it is certainly permissible to make preparations for iftār, and if it is done with a good intention then it will also earn you rewards. When a fasting person places his food for iftār and sits down in front of it, waiting for the adhān to be called, then Allāh *taʿālā* becomes extremely happy. This is because the person has the desire to eat and drink, the foods are present right in front of him, but he is waiting for Allāh's permission; he is not consuming the food. This demonstrates his total submission and servitude. This is why this action elicits rewards. But for

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[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 12.

whom? For the person who fulfilled the rights of the fast. That is, all his body parts joined him in the fast. His eyes, tongue, ears, legs, heart and mind all observed the fast. If he abstained from food and drink solely for Allāh's sake, then the time of iftār is undoubtedly a time of extreme joy and happiness for him.

A Hadīth states:

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ، فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ.[1]

A fasting person has two occasions of joy: When he opens his fast and when he will meet Allāh ta'ālā.

As for the person who already opened his fast with backbiting, lying, carrying tales, casting evil glances or false oaths before sunset; how can this time of opening the fast be an occasion of joy for him? After all, he has accumulated a large heap of sins on himself. First of all, he opened his fast before the appointed time. Then, when he did open his fast, he did it with something which is harām and unlawful, i.e. with backbiting, carrying tales and so on. He has actually added fuel to the fire. Thirdly, he is even happy over these sins and is under the assumption that his fast is valid and accepted. Whereas, he ought to have cried over his actions, repented, and sought forgiveness. Instead, he is rejoicing over these sins.

On the other hand, the fast of a true and pious believer is such that in addition to saving himself from sins, he keeps away from futile activities. Thus, when he opens his fast, he expresses his thanks to Allāh *ta'ālā* for having enabled him to pass his day in

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[1] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٩٣.

His obedience. His joy at the time of iftār is not over the iftār itself, but over the fact that the fast which is an obligation to Allāh *taʿālā* has been fulfilled in the proper manner. That is, he abstained from sinning throughout the day. His joy at this time is actually an īmānī joy – a joy based on full faith and confidence in Allāh *taʿālā*. After exercising patience of the entire day's tiredness, when he sees the various types of delicacies and bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* placed before him, and receives the permission to consume them, then he – so to speak – says:

> All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that we have not died. We have reached our friend. Thousands of praises over this courage of ours.

The reason why we do not value salāh, fasting, etc. is that we are ignorant of the Sharīʿat. The virtues of these actions are found in the Qur'ān and Hadīth, but we do not speak about them. Now if we do not speak about them, how will the masses come to know of them? And when there is no knowledge of a thing, how can someone practise on it? And if there is no practice, how can the blessings of those good actions be acquired?

Our pious predecessors were not like this. The pious elders and saints used to value the month of Ramadān. They used to pay particular attention to acts of obedience in this month. This is because when a person sets himself correctly in this month and does good actions in it, he is able to remain like that for the rest of the year.

Before giving the Taurāh to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, Allāh *taʿālā* instructed him to keep fast for one month. This was then increased by another ten days. Consequently, it totalled a fast of 40 days,

although the initial order was for 30 days. When he completed this entire number, Allāh *taʿālā* gave him His Book, the Taurāh.

If you also keep fast as required by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, you will realize and notice that you have indeed received something. The saints used to pay particular attention to these days. They must have gained something for them to have paid so much of attention to them! If this act of worship – fasting – did not have a special status, Allāh *taʿālā* would not have said:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

Or as per another narration: "I Myself become the reward for the fasting person."

The elders quote the following Hadīth-e-Qudsī in their writings:

مَنْ قَتَلْتُهُ فَأَنَا دِيَتُهُ

When I kill someone, I Myself become his ransom.

Here the word "kill" refers to killing with love. In other words, the person who obliterates himself in Allāh's love will become connected to Allāh *taʿālā* and remain connected to Him. When a fasting person gives up food, drink and all desires solely for Allāh *taʿālā*, and obliterates his carnal self, then this too is like a killing. Thus, the objective of both Ahādīth is the same, and the words وأنا أجزي به are synonymous to أنا ديته – I am his ransom.

The same Hadīth contains these words:

يَدَعُ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ مِنْ أَجْلِيْ[1]

He gives up his food and drink for My sake.

In other words: Fasting is solely for Me and I become his reward. The reason for this is that this poor fellow left his food, drink and desires for My sake.

Did you see the level of appreciation of Allāh *taʿālā* for your fast! This shows that your abstaining from food and drink is valued and appreciated in His court provided it is done with sincerity. As for the Hadīth in which Allāh *taʿālā* says that He has no regard for his abstaining from food and drink, this is when the fasting person did not fulfil the requirements and prerequisites of the fast, and did not observe the fast as per the demands of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Apart from this, fasting is a most valuable act of worship in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. A Hadīth states in this regard:

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَتَانِ، فَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ وَفَرْحَةٌ عِنْدَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِ.[2]

A fasting person has two occasions of joy: When he opens his fast and he will meet Allāh taʿālā.

He will receive the reward for his fasting directly from Allāh *taʿālā*. This too is a part of a Hadīth-e-Qudsī. Although Allāh *taʿālā* is explaining the joy which will be experienced by the fasting person, we learn from it that not only the fasting person but even Allāh *taʿālā*

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[1] الجامع الصغير، ص ٣١٤.

[2] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٩٣.

is happy over the fact that His servant gave up his food, drink and desires solely for Allāh's pleasure. Now what can be greater than this?

Listen further:

A Ḥadīth-e-Qudsī states with reference to iftār:

قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالٰى: أَحَبُّ عِبَادِيْ إِلَيَّ أَعْجَلُهُ فِطْرًا.[1]

Allāh taʿālā said: The most beloved of My servants in My sight is the one who hastens in opening the fast.

Another Ḥadīth states:

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا عَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ[2]

People will continue experiencing goodness as long as they hasten in opening the fast.

In other words, when they remain steadfast on this Sunnat, they will be safe from evil and corruption.

Taurbashtī *raḥimahullāh* said that the reason for this is that it entails acting against the People of the Book because they wait for the stars to spread out before opening their fast.

Subsequently, this has become the practice of the bidʿatīs of our community. The reason why it is superior and more beloved to hasten in opening the fast is that it is an expression of one's servitude and submission, and this is most suited to servitude. Furthermore, it is a demonstration of a person

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[1] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٧٨.

[2] صحيح البخاري، ص ٣١٥.

hastening towards the permission [to eat and drink] given by Allāh *taʿālā*.

Taurbashtī *raḥimahullāh* says further: In it is proof that the straight path entails following Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* strictly. The person who deviates from this is as though he has chosen crookedness and misguidance, even though it is in an act of worship.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also said:

تَسَحَّرُوْا فَإِنَّ فِي السَّحُوْرِ بَرَكَةً[1]

Partake of the seḥrī because there is blessing in it.

The ʿulamā' say that the blessing refers to the acquisition of strength to keep the fast for the day. Another narration states:

اِسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِمُقَايَلَةِ النَّهَارِ عَلٰى قِيَامِ الَّلَيْلِ وَبِأَكْلِ السَّحُوْرِ عَلٰى صِيَامِ النَّهَارِ

Take help from the siesta to spend the night in worship, and from eating at seḥrī time to keep fast during the day.

Another meaning of the "blessing" mentioned in the previous Ḥadīth is that it refers to additional rewards because the person has adopted the way of the Messengers *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that the difference between our fast and that of the People of the Book is the partaking of seḥrī.

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[1] سنن الترمذي، ص ١٧٩.

The author of *Mirqāt* quotes the following Ḥadīth:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ إِذَا أَفْطَرَ قَالَ: اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَعَلٰى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ.[1]

When Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to open his fast, he used to say: O Allāh! For You have I fasted and with Your sustenance do I open my fast.

The author then writes:

إِنَّ لِلصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ دَعْوَةً لَا تُرَدُّ.[2]

At the time of opening the fast, the fasting person has a duʿā' which is not rejected.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā' at the time of iftār:

يَا وَاسِعَ الْفَضْلِ اغْفِرْ لِيْ

O the One who possesses immense grace. Forgive me.

He would also say the following:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَعَانَنِيْ فَصُمْتُ، وَرَزَقَنِيْ فَأَفْطَرْتُ.

All praise is due to Allāh who helped me, so I could keep my fast; and gave me sustenance so I could open my fast.

These are the supplications which Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made; and you probably never heard them before. You should therefore

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[1] مشكوة: ۱۷۵.

[2] ابن ماجه: ۱۷۵۳.

practise on this Sunnat. Ensure that you make a duʿā' at the time of iftār because as per the statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it is not rejected. The reason for this is that the person kept fast. When his fast is accepted, then the reward for it is that his duʿā' is accepted. And we already quoted the Hadīth with regard to the reward for fasting:

إلا الصوم فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به

Except for fasting. It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

First of all duʿā' is an act of worship in itself. Then you included it in an act of worship [fasting] which is accepted. Since the fast ends at the time of iftār, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā' at that time. This is so that when this good action [fasting] goes up, the duʿā' will go up with it.

Bearing in mind that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have truly recognized Allāh *taʿālā*, they are fully aware of His rank and His doings. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this duʿā' at the end of the fast because this worship [the fast] is accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. He therefore presented his need [duʿā'] with the act [fasting] which is beloved by Allāh *taʿālā*. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* is most generous and affectionate. He will not accept the fast which is for Him while reject the duʿā' which is for His servant. The duʿā' is therefore accepted with the fast. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā' at this time and taught his followers how to ask of the Most Generous Allāh. When a person asks in the correct manner, he succeeds in his quest.

It is for this reason I say you must acquire knowledge of the Sunnat because action without knowledge is

not possible. And without knowing the Sunnat, it will be very difficult to tread the path of the Sunnat. Even after bearing many hardships and difficulties, you remain where you are because the path of Allāh *taʿālā* is confined to the path of the Sunnat. Without it, you will not reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* called me to partake of the sehrī in the month of Ramadān by saying:

هَلُمَّ إِلَى الْغِذَاءِ الْمُبَارَكِ

Come and partake of this blessed food.

Look! Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is calling it a blessed food. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* wants to feed him, yet there are so many among us who do not partake of sehrī and say: "We just have a sip of water. It is enough for us." This is not what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* wanted of us. In fact, he refers to it as the way of the Jews – that they keep fast but they do not partake of sehrī. Partaking of sehrī gives strength to the fasting person. This is such a blessed meal that even if you eat a bit extra, the Sharīʿat will not take you to task for it. Just as abstaining from food and drink while fasting during the day is a source of rewards, in the same way partaking of sehrī at night [latter part of the night] is a source of rewards.

We learn from this that the fundamental source of reward is obedience to Allāh's orders. When He prohibits us, it will be harām to eat food. When He orders us, then eating will earn us rewards.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how much ease there is in the Sharīʿat. We are made to eat and drink, and we are

conveyed to Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, the Sharīʿat did not ask us to give up an essential thing.

There was a person from our area who used to say: "A certain shaykh provides us with food and drink, and conveys us to Allāh *taʿālā*." When I heard this, I said: "It is possible that he may be conveying you to Allāh *taʿālā*. However, as for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, I can say with certainty that he fed people and conveyed them to Allāh *taʿālā*."

Allāh *taʿālā* made fasting compulsory, so Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked us to hasten in opening the fast and made it a Sunnat to partake of sehrī. In fact, he is calling that Sahābī (Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*) to join him in the sehrī and is referring to it as a blessed food.

There is no act of worship which is as long as fasting. If a person's intention is correct and he abstains from sinning, and fulfils it as ordered by Allāh *taʿālā*, then just that one month of Ramadān will convey him to Allāh *taʿālā* and this will be more than enough for him.

However, it is very difficult to keep the fast as it ought to be kept. It is very hard for a person to keep himself safeguarded against all types of sins for the entire day – sins of the eyes, ears, hands, tongue and other body parts. There is no act of worship where a person commits a sin while performing that worship, and it still remains correct and valid. Fasting is a worship which extends for the entire day. It is therefore very difficult for a person to keep all his body parts away from sin for such a long period.

This is why immense rewards have been set aside for the real and genuine fast. But this fast is not easy. It is easy to give up food and drink, but to do this as

ordered by Allāh *taʿālā*, this is very difficult; whereas this alone is the accepted fast. If the fast is not as ordered by Allāh *taʿālā*, and a person also engages in backbiting and other sins, Allāh *taʿālā* will not look at such a person with mercy. This is because the thing which was harām for the entire year, he did not give that up. And the thing [food] which was halāl throughout the year except for the days of fasting, he gave that up. After all, sins are harām at all times; and they will be even more harām while in a state of fasting.

It is most appalling to commit sins during these days. First of all because it is the month of Ramadān. Secondly because you are in a state of fasting. Yet you are backbiting!? I already explained this to you previously:

أَفْطَرَ مَنْ ظَلَّ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ لُحُوْمِ النَّاسِ

The one who spends the day backbiting people has broken his fast.

Similarly, a Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أفطر الحاجم والمحجوم[1]

The cupper and the one who is being cupped have both broken their fast.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* who is the narrator of this Hadīth said:

لا للحجامة ولكن للغيبة

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[1] مشكوة، ج ١، ص ١٧٧.

The fast did not break on account of cupping, but because they were engaged in backbiting.

Had it been us, we would not have explained all these points to you. But these are the words of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He is explaining to you that the objective of the Sharīʿat is not to merely give up food and drink. Rather, the objective is to acquire taqwā through fasting. Now you yourself can check how much of taqwā you have acquired.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly got hold of the real thief when he said: "When a person does not give up lies and acting upon them while in a state of fasting, the fast will not reach Allāh *taʿālā*." If it is not accepted in Allāh's court, it will not be accepted in the court of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The joy which a fasting person experiences at the time of opening his fast, as mentioned in the Hadīth, is for that person who kept the fast as it ought to be kept. This is because the joy which he is referring to at the time of iftār is actually a conglomeration of two joys. One is a physical joy which is experienced at being able to eat and drink. Thus, when you partake of the meal at iftār, see how much you relish it. You can understand this by eating the same foods out of Ramadān. You will not experience the same enjoyment as you did when you ate them at the time of opening your fast. So this is the physical joy. The other joy at the time of iftār is the spiritual joy which is experienced by a believer. He experiences joy over the fact that he was able to carry out an order of Allāh *taʿālā*. He – so to speak – says:

> All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that we have not died. We have reached our

friend. Thousands of praises over this courage of ours.

When a pious believer completes his fast and saves himself from sins, he experiences a special joy in īmān. He thinks to himself: I had to endure the pain of hunger, thirst and acting against my desires in this world; but I carried out Allāh's order as instructed by Him. I thus made my fast eligible for:

فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به[1]

It is for Me and I personally reward the person for it.

Obviously this is no small joy. When a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* performs salāh, keeps fast, or carries out any other order of Allāh *taʿālā* in the prescribed manner, then there can be no greater happiness than it. He experiences such spiritual joy that all physical joys are nothing compared to it.

No matter what, to keep a fast and to keep it in the correct manner is not any less of a joy. Yes, it is certainly difficult. When a servant's action is accepted on account of his sincerity, then everything else is accepted. And when something is accepted, Allāh *taʿālā* is most appreciative of it.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was leading the people in salāh. A Saḥābī uttered something from the back. After the salāh, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: "Who spoke?" All the Saḥābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* remained silent, and the one who uttered something also got scared. But because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked, he said: "I was the one." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu*

[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ١٧٣.

ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Your words were so beloved by Allāh *taʿālā* that 12 angels were fighting against each other to take those words up to the heavens."

Similarly, when a person's fast is accepted in Allāh's court, then whatever results from it is also beloved by Allāh *taʿālā*. You just heard how Allāh *taʿālā* loves the fasting person's abstention from food, drink and desires. In the same way, even the smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person and which is so disliked by others becomes more beloved to Allāh *taʿālā* than the fragrance of musk.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

وَلَخَلُوْفُ فَمِ الصَّائِمِ أَطْيَبُ عِنْدَ اللهِ مِنْ رِيْحِ الْمِسْكِ

The smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved in the sight of Allāh taʿālā then the fragrance of musk.

This is similar to jihād in the cause of Allāh *taʿālā* which is most beloved in His sight. Consequently, even the excreta and urine of the mujāhid's horse has great value in Allāh's sight. A Hadīth states that on the day of Resurrection everything [used by a mujāhid] will be placed on the scales and weighed, and he will be rewarded for it. This is because due to one action, the one who carried out the action is also accepted and valued. Then when he is accepted, everything attached to him will also be valued. In other words, anything which has the slightest relationship with him is accepted.

This is why I say that the path is very easy. There is no need for too much of striving. I ask you to just put salāh and fasting in order. In other words, perform salāh at its appointed time, and keep fast after believing it to be an order of Allāh *taʿālā*. During

these days [of Ramaḍān], abstain from food, drink, desires, and all sins whether minor or major. Become obedient to the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*. You will then see the immense enjoyment which you will experience, and how much you will be honoured by Allāh *taʿālā*.

The Ahlullāh visually observe how much proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* they are blessed with, and how much their hearts become purified through fasting.

We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to keep fast together with its etiquette and prerequisites. Āmīn.

RAMADĀN ASSEMBLY

A Hadīth states:

أدبوا أولادكم على ثلاث خصال، حب نبيكم، وحب أهل بيته، وقرأة القرآن، فإن حملة القرآن في ظل الله يوملا ظل إلا ظله مع أنبيائه وأصفيائه.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Teach three things to your children: (1) Love for your Prophet. (2) Love for his family. (3) Recitation of the Qur'ān because the bearers of the Qur'ān will be in Allāh's shade on the day when there will no shade other than His shade. They will be in the company of the Prophets and His chosen servants.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches us to teach and discipline our children in three things. This is an address to parents and grandparents to teach them these things. The address includes guardians of children. It means that they must be taught these things from a young age so that they become accustomed to them and grow up with these qualities. They must be so firmly embedded in them that they settle in their hearts and minds, they uphold them forever, and they are never separated from them in the course of their lives.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* listed these three specifically because it is extremely important for children to be taught them from the beginning.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ١، ص ٢٢٩.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made the teaching of these things obligatory on parents and guardians. The first is to create love and respect for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in their hearts. It is the duty of parents and guardians to supervise their children in this regard. Love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is obligatory because accepting the Sharīʿat he came with, doing what he instructed us to do and abstaining from what he prohibited to us are dependent on love for him. It is love for him which will prompt us to do all this. The principle is that a person obeys the one whom he loves. Once he develops love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, his heart will look up to the Sharīʿat which he came with. The love will prevent him from acting against his orders. The foundation of Dīn – love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – has been made obligatory on us; and parents and guardians are required to develop and ingrain that love in their children. By doing this, practising on Dīn becomes easy.

Now listen to what the scholars say in the explanation of this Hadīth:

Samʿānī *rahimahullāh* says that it is obligatory on parents to teach their children that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā*, he was commissioned in Makkah, he was sent as a Prophet to all of mankind and jinn, he passed away in Madīnah and was buried there. It is also necessary to teach them that it is obligatory to obey and love him.

Children should first be taught about the Oneness of Allāh

Ibn Qayyim *raḥimahullāh* says that the first thing which should fall in the ears of children is the Oneness of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is obligatory to teach them this first. For example, by saying to them: Allāh is One. Allāh is faultless. Allāh is the sole creator. Allāh alone is the master. Allāh alone is the provider.

They must be taught that He hears everything and that He is with them all the time and everywhere. His knowledge is all-encompassing. It is for this reason that the best names to be kept are ʿAbdullāh and ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān. The moment a child can understand, he must know that Allāh *taʿālā* is one, and that he is Allāh's servant.

After teaching a child tauḥīd, it is the duty of parents to teach him about Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He must be told that it is obligatory to love Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If parents do not do this, they will be sinning.

You are listening to me talking and you probably thinking to yourself that these are small and insignificant things. Why is he telling us these things? Why doesn't he speak on more complex issues?

I say, these are not small things. Not understanding these things has caused your own downfall. You do not know even these basics of Islam but you want to know about objectives and wisdoms. How can you fathom the objectives without knowing the fundamentals? Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is saying that you must teach these things to your children. It is an obligatory duty on parents and

guardians. Yet you are considering them to be insignificant!?

I cannot describe how much joy I experience when I speak on these topics. This is because I think that I have said something useful and noteworthy. If I were to speak on topics which you consider to be more challenging, I feel grieved because I know they are beyond you. Although you may enjoy listening to them, they are beyond you to put them into practice. My brains would get tired and you would not have benefited in any way. This would cause me sorrow.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was a mentor in the true sense of the word. This is why he used to explain fundamentals and basics with the same importance as he would objectives. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand them and reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn. (compiler)

Teach children the love for Rasūlullāh's family

The second point which this Hadīth mentions is the need to teach children the love for Rasūlullāh's family. The Hadīth uses the words "Ahl-e-Bayt". This could refer specifically to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Fāṭimāh *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, Hadrat Hasan *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hadrat Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*; or to all his family members.

The third point mentioned in this Hadīth is for parents and guardians to teach the Qur'ān to their children. It includes teaching them to read the Qur'ān, memorize it, and other sciences related to the Qur'ān. The same Hadīth gives the glad tidings of shade under Allāh's Throne for those who bear the Qur'ān. This will be on a day when there will be no shade apart from the shade provided by Allāh *taʿālā*.

On that day, the bearers of the Qur'ān will be in the company of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and other selected servants of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Now listen to what the scholars said in this regard.

Definition of bearers of the Qur'ān

The bearers of the Qur'ān as mentioned in this Hadīth refer to those who gave a place to the Qur'ān in their hearts. In other words, they memorize it, read it regularly and practise on its injunctions. They are the ones who will be in Allāh's shade. The reason for being in Allāh's shade on the day of Resurrection is that even when they were in this world, they were in the shade of the Qur'ān by virtue of memorizing it, reading it and practising on it. They will receive a full reward for it. The words "the day when there will no shade other than His shade" refer to the day of Resurrection when the sun will be hovering above the heads of people, and its intense heat will render them restless. There will be no shade on that day. Allāh *taʿālā* will honour the bearer of the Qur'ān by giving him a place in the shade of His Throne.

The words "shadow of Allāh" could also refer to the shade in Paradise. This means that they will be in Paradise where they will be enjoying its bounties. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَّنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيْلًا

We shall enter them in a dense shade.[1]

Another meaning is that these people will be in the close proximity of the shade of Allāh's mercy. In other

[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 57.

words, they will be safe and protected from the miseries of that day. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

This will be one honour which will be conferred to the bearers of the Qur'ān. The other is that they will be allowed to remain in the close company of Allāh's special and selected servants. Thus, firstly Allāh *taʿālā* will be their companion because they had a special bond with His Book while they were in the world. Because they had imbibed their qualities, they will be in their company in the Hereafter.

You heard the Hadīth and the explanations of the scholars. Now listen to the rules which the scholars derived from this Hadīth. They say:

We learn the obligation of teaching children. We are especially obligated to seeing to their discipline, teaching them certain things, and paying special attention to their religious training. The scholars add:

وانه حق لازم

Disciplining and educating children is their right which they have over their parents and guardians. Anyone who is put in charge of a child has to fulfil this obligation.

We are negligent as regards Dīnī education

You are not aware of your responsibilities. Whatever we spoke about has another name, and that is Dīnī education which is obligatory on you. Yet you come and complain to us about irreligiousness. You handed over your children to the schools, and when they become spoilt and disobedient, you come and complain to us. Do you think I do not understand these things? You ask me the way to rectification, so I am explaining to you that this was the way in which

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* trained his Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. He said:

أدبوا أولادكم على ثلاث خصال

Teach three things to your children…

Why do you not practise on this teaching? Did you carry out these instructions and then saw them causing misguidance? Or is it that you are seeing this bad day because you are discarding these teachings? Why don't you take steps towards rectification after having learnt your mistake?

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is saying that these are obligatory duties on the parents and guardians. Just as parents have rights over their children, so do children have over their parents. In fact, they have more rights; and that right is of educating, training, tutoring and disciplining them.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* spoke the truth without bothering if anyone feels offended or not. This ought to be the mark of mentors and reformers. If only the Muslim community could practise on this Sunnat. If they did, the mercy of Allāh *taʿālā* will shower on them.

اِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ.

Surely Allāh's mercy is close to those who do good.

(compiler)

The consequence of neglecting Dīnī education

فمن أهمل تعليم ولده ما ينفعه فقد أساء إليه.

The person who abstains from teaching his children whatever will be of use to them has in fact committed a serious wrong against them.

وأكثر عقوق الأولاد آخرًا لسبب الإهمال أولًا

In most cases, children are eventually disobedient to their parents when the latter were neglectful in educating them from the beginning.

Glory to Allāh! You cannot imagine how much I enjoy reading and speaking on themes of this nature. When I explain these points to you, I think to myself that I have served you.

The author says that those who are neglectful as regards the education of their children should not think that the harmful consequences of it will not befall them. No. In fact, when children become totally disobedient to their parents later on in life, it is because parents had been careless as regards their education when their children were young. It is as though they are getting a "full recompense" when their children become recalcitrant and disregard the rights of their parents.

The author says further on:

ومن ثم قال بعضهم لأبيه أضعتني وليدا فأضعتك شيخا.

This is why a son said to his father: You neglected me when I was a child so I neglected you in your old-age.

Note: The fact is clear before us. Every person has to strive to fulfil the duties which the Sharīʿat has imposed on him. This can turn the world into a garden of Paradise. If not, it will be an example of the Hell-fire. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire each one to fulfil the rights and duties which he is obligated to fulfil so that everyone can be saved from corruption. Āmīn. (compiler)

It is stated in *Tarsīʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyah* that Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Ghanī Ṭarābulisī *raḥimahullāh* said in his book *Fatḥ Rabbānī Wa Fayḍ Subḥānī* that the attainment of perfect īmān is within a person's choice. It can be acquired by adopting the means and abstaining from the prohibitions. The means are the good deeds because perfect īmān is the result of good deeds. As for the prohibitions and obstacles, they are the evil characteristics which are within the selves, e.g. ostentation, showing off, egotism, etc. One of the things which enables a person to acquire perfect īmān is the company of those who have it. That is, remaining in the company of the 'ulamā', righteous and genuine Sufis; and having respect for them. A person must be sincere in his confidence in them and be convinced that they are from among the effects of divinity. They do not have the power to do on their own accord, rather, they are Allāh's treasures on Allāh's earth. He placed some of His mysteries in them. As for the keys to all those treasures, they are solely in the hands of Allāh *taʿālā*. He will, out of His grace, open them to whomever He wills. And He can shut them off from whomever He wills. If the latter happens, they will neither be able to acquire any blessings from Him nor convey blessings to others.

Another thing which helps a person in acquiring perfect īmān is the books of the Sufi masters. Studying their books can also enable a person to acquire perfect īmān.

The words of Ḥaḍrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Ṭarābulisī *raḥimahullāh* end here. It's a beautiful quotation. I related it several times before and related

it to you today so that we can speak about significant things. I see people engaging in futile discussions, so I thought I should speak something noteworthy. You have already heard the words of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Tarābulisī *raḥimahullāh*. Now listen to another important point.

This is a book of jurisprudence. It is titled *Mā Lā Budda Minhu*. Towards the end of this book, the author Qāḍī Thanāʾullāh Sāḥib Pānī Pattī *raḥimahullāh* has a chapter which he names Kitāb al-Iḥsān. Normally such a chapter is not found in a book of jurisprudence. You will find chapters on purity, salāh, zakāh and so on; but I haven't come across Kitāb al-Iḥsān in any book of jurisprudence. The word iḥsān refers to the same thing which is related in a Hadīth known as Hadīth-e-Jibraʾīl. Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and asked him a few questions. For example: What is Islam? What is īmān? What is iḥsān? After explaining the rules of Islam and īmān, Qāḍī Thanāʾullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* goes into a brief discussion on iḥsān. This [*Mā Lā Budda Minhu*] is an excellent book but people rarely teach it nowadays. This should not be the case.

The author writes:

Listen! May Allāh *taʿālā* guide you. Whatever has been explained thus far was related to only the outer form of Islam, īmān and the Sharīʿat. In other words, it was an explanation of the external Sharīʿat. As for the core and essence of īmān, Islam and the Sharīʿat, you will have to search for its reality from the dervishes. If you want to acquire the spirit and internal form of Dīn, you will not find it in books. It is

to be found in the chests of the Sufis. You can only acquire it by remaining in their company.

The company of the Sufis is necessary to acquire ihsān

I first quoted the statement of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Tarābulisī *rahimahullāh* to you. In it he said that the company of the Sufis is an aid to acquiring perfect īmān. His words read as follows:

وهما يعين على تحصيله صحبة أهله وخدمتهم واحترامهم والإخلاص في اعتقادهم.

Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying that the only way to acquire the soul of Islam, īmān and the Sharīʿat (in other words, perfection) is through the service and company of the dervishes. Furthermore, Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah*:

Each of the auliyā' followed strictly in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – each one according to his status – in a manner that one could not reach the level of the other. In fact, he does not even understand the rank of the other. The Qur'ān too says in this regard:

وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلٰى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهٖ خُبْرًا

How will you be able to bear with me when you will see things that you are unable to comprehend?[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 68.

If there is going to be rejection in such a case, it will result in severe deprivation because a rejecter is always disgraced.

من أنكرهم ضل واعتدى.

The author of *ʿAwārif* says that the person who rejects the auliyā' has gone astray and transgressed the limits. As for the one who affirms the auliyā', although he has not reached their rank, there is hope that his affirmation which he extended to these personalities will convey him to perfection and make him a true recognizer of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look! He is saying with reference to the person who affirms the auliyā' and believes in them that he will reach a level of perfection. Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful statement! Look at how easy he made the path. I ask you, will a person who sits in the company of those who have acquired affirmation not acquire affirmation as well? He will certainly acquire it. We learn from this that affirmation is an act of the heart. There can be no other way of acquiring it apart from the company of the Sufis. The Sufis concur that whatever a person acquires in this path does it on the basis of companionship. In fact, the scholars say with reference to the intellect: Although it is a natural gift, it does increase through the company of intelligent people, studying the books of wisdom, and reading the biographies of intelligent people.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *al-Qaul al-Jamīl* on the prerequisites of a shaykh. He states:

The fifth condition is that the person accepting bayʿat must have remained in the company of Sufi experts and learnt etiquette from them. He must have

acquired internal effulgence and tranquillity over a long period of time from them. The prerequisite of the company of the righteous has been laid down because it has been the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that the objective cannot be acquired without having spent time in the company of those who have acquired it. This is in the same way as knowledge cannot be acquired without the company of the ʿulamā'. The same rule can be applied to learning the art of the ironmonger and carpenter from the masters in these respective arts.[1]

We learn from this that companionship is a lofty station on the path. At the same time, it is necessary to note that it can only be beneficial if it is accompanied by sincerity and affirmation. Affirmation is essential. It is affirmation which will convey the seeker to perfection and make him a true gnostic. Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

اَلَّذِيْنَ يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ

Those who affirm the day of Recompense.

The word "ta<u>s</u>dīq" is mentioned in it. In most places, the Qur'ān uses the word "yu'minūn" (who believe), but here the word "yu<u>s</u>addiqūn" is used.

What this means is that companionship which is accompanied with sincerity and affirmation is an intrinsic ingredient for success. It is so influential that it will not be wrong to refer to it as the actual path. This is because we explained previously that in perfect īmān, good deeds are the causes while bad characteristics are the obstacles to the perfection of

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[1] *Al-Qaul al-Jamīl*, p. 21.

īmān. Even for these two, companionship is most beneficial. Through it a seeker is prompted towards good actions, and because of it he gets the courage to remove evil characteristics from himself. The process of purification and reformation which a seeker goes through becomes easy through companionship. When he sees the submission, humility, consideration and uprightness of a saint, his heart is prompted towards these qualities. It is from this point that the path is opened to him and he realizes his objective.

I am explaining a very important and vital theme. If you listen to it with your heart, you will understand many of the statements and actions of the saints. Your heart will then focus on Allāh *taʿālā* while you are living in this world among your wife and children. If you do not listen to it, you will have to suffer the evil consequences.

I have spoken quite a bit on this subject. I was saying to you that Qāḍī Thanāʾullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* wrote that you must search for the essence of the Sharīʿat – which is also known as the Ḥaqīqat – in the company of the saints and acquire it from them. He then solves a major issue. Listen attentively.

Qāḍī Thanāʾullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* says: "Don't ever think that the Ḥaqīqat is something separate from the Sharīʿat. Allāh forbid, thinking in this way is absolute ignorance and unbelief. Instead, the Ṭarīqat and Ḥaqīqat are not opposite entities from the Sharīʿat. Rather, it is a part of the Sharīʿat when the heart is divested of all apart from Allāh *taʿālā* through the blessing of going to the service of the saints and remaining in their company. In other words, the heart is cleansed of the bonds which are obstacles to establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, the

evils of the carnal self are removed to turn it into a self which has acquired tranquillity (*nafs-e-muṭma'innah*), and sincerity and affirmation are then created in man. The Sharīʿat then becomes the core for such a person, and his external actions become weighty because they are supported by the heart. The person then reaches a level where:

His two rakʿats of ṣalāh are superior to the 100 000 rakʿats of those who are not of this level. The same can be said of his fasting, charity and other acts of worship.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that if you (non-Ṣaḥābah) were to spend gold equal to Mt. Uḥud in charity, it will not equal the half kilo of barley which was given by the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* in Allāh's cause. The difference is obviously because of the difference in īmān and sincerity. The level of sincerity and īmān which the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* had acquired by virtue of the company of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can never be acquired by non-Ṣaḥābah. The greatest of saints cannot reach the level which was reached by the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*.

Qāḍī Thanā'ullāh Ṣāḥib *raḥimahullāh* writes further:

Search for the internal effulgence of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the chests of the dervishes. In other words, you must acquire it by remaining in their company. You must illuminate your heart through it so that you develop genuine insight through which you can fathom every right and wrong and differentiate between the two.

He adds:

The Qur'ān refers to a walī (friend of Allāh) as a "muttaqī" – a righteous or Allāh-conscious person.

The Ḥadīth states that one of the signs of a walī is that his company reminds you of Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, by sitting in his company, love for this world is decreased and love for Allāh *taʿālā* increases. Thus, the person who is not a muttaqī cannot be a walī. Maulānā Rūm *raḥimahullāh* says that there are many devils in the garb of humans. You should therefore not pledge allegiance to all and sundry. Ḥadrat ʿAzīzān ʿAlī Rāmītnī *raḥimahullāh* conveys the same theme in the following couplets:

> Beware of the person from whose company you do not acquire spiritual concentration, and through whom worldly bonds are not severed. Run far away from his company. If not, my soul will not pardon you for this crime of yours.[1]

The author writes as a footnote to the above:

You must flee from the one from whom you perceive harm, e.g. a person who does not adhere to the Sharīʿat. As for the person who appears to be righteous, there is no harm in choosing to remain in his company and pledging allegiance to him. In other words, the least is that there is no fear of harm, irrespective of whether you benefit from him or not. If such a person's company has an effect on you, and that effect is considered reliable by the scholars of the external and internal sciences, then you must believe his company to be an elixir and a boon. If his company does not show any effect or it is not considered acceptable by the seniors, you must stay aloof from his company while having noble thoughts about him. You must then seek the path to Allāh

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[1] *Mā Lā Budda Minhu*, p. 173.

taʿālā from someone else because the objective is Allāh *taʿālā* and not any specific person.

Note: Unfortunately this rule no longer exists in the Sufi path. Everything has been reduced to customs. The original path of Sufism has been discarded. (compiler)

The effect which is reliable according to the seniors is this:

His company creates a condition due to which love for this world ceases while love for Allāh *taʿālā*, attachment to good deeds, inspiration to do good and abstain from evil, and disregard for evil is created in the heart. Furthermore, his company brings upon the condition which is described in a Hadīth:

إذا رأوا ذكر الله.

When you look at them, you think of Allāh taʿālā.

The person experiences tranquillity of the heart in Allāh's remembrance and internal focus. As he does more and more good deeds, he experiences an increase in his spiritual bond and condition. When he commits a sin, he feels restless and agitated; and a defect in the bond which he had acquired through the saint. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that when you experience joy at doing good actions and sorrow at doing evil actions, you must conclude that you are a true believer.

Look at how the scholars described the need for good company and its effect. I said previously that the scholars concur that anyone who succeeded in this path did so through the company of seniors. It is undoubtedly a true statement.

Listen further.

Khān Sāḥib said that Miyājī ʿAzīmullāh was a resident of Khaurjah. He was not an educated person. He knew some basic Persian and he used to teach children. However, he had been in the company of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* and was his disciple. This is why he had a deep understanding of Dīn. He spoke about the issue of *taṣawwur-e-shaykh* (where a disciple thinks about and conjures thoughts about his shaykh). He said that the power of conveying spiritual blessings was extremely strong in Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why his mere teaching was enough for the internal rectification of the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* and they had no need to occupy themselves in the spiritual practices which are in vogue among the Sufis. They reached spiritual heights without those practices. After Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, this strength waned over a period of time to the point that the Sufis had to resort to spiritual practices for spiritual rectification. This is why they chose this route.[1]

Look! He clearly states that because the power of conveying blessings was strong in Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, just being in his company was enough for the spiritual rectification of the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum*. They did not need to engage in excessive meditation and other spiritual practices. When this capability weakened over time, other practices were needed for spiritual reformation. The fundamental force is the ability to convey spiritual blessings. This is why those who came after the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum* were not referred to as Ṣaḥābah; they were known as Tābiʿīn. Those who

[1] *Arwāḥ Thalāthah*, p. 150.

had the opportunity of being in the company of the Tābiʿīn were not known as that, but as Tabaʿ Tābiʿīn. With the changing of the ability to convey blessings, the names also changed. Dhikr and other spiritual practices are aids in the spiritual path. The fundamental influencer is the ability to convey spiritual blessings. This is what Qādī Thanāʾullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* refers to:

> It is the same light which has been coming down continuously from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. You will have to go the saints, remain in their service and acquire that light from them.

Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yaʿqūb Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was a senior lecturer at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband. He used to say: "I cannot go to Ḥadrat Ḥājī Imdādullāh Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* because he is in Makkah. This is why I say to Ḥadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* and Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāḥib Nānautwī *raḥimahullāh* to undertake my training, but they are not listening to me. When I ask them to give me leave from my teaching so that I could go to Ḥadrat Ḥājī Sāḥib in Makkah, they do not give me leave. They say that if I leave the madrasah, it will have a detrimental effect on it."

Later on, when both personalities were going for ḥajj, they took Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yaʿqūb Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* with them. After all, he was the son of their teacher. The father of Maulānā Muḥammad Yaʿqūb Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* was Ḥadrat Maulānā Mamlūk ʿAlī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* who was the teacher of Ḥadrat Maulānā Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* and Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Sāḥib

raḥimahullāh. When the two completed the ḥajj and were about to leave for Madīnah, they said to Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*: "He (Maulānā Muḥammad Yaʿqūb Sāḥib) will stay here and remain in your company." Ḥaḍrat *raḥimahullāh* replied: "Very well, but tell him he must remain focused with his heart and abstain from speaking." When the two returned from Madīnah Munawwarah, Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* complained about Maulānā Muḥammad Yaʿqūb Sāḥib saying: "I asked him to do just one thing and he could not do that much. (i.e. to abstain from speaking). When any person asked me a question, he would answer without waiting for a reply from me."

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh* relates: "Despite this, because his shaykh [Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāḥib *raḥimahullāh*] was an expert, he conveyed Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāḥib to such a high level of spirituality that when he returned to India, he tutored many people to become Sufi masters."

Note: Did you see the effect of the company of the saints. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to choose their company with sincerity and inspire us towards good deeds. Āmīn. (compiler)

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Allāh *taʿālā* describes Himself in the Qur'ān. He also describes man to us. He says:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ. خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ. يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ. إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created. He has been created from a gushing forth fluid which issues from between the loins and the chest. Surely He has the power to bring him back.[1]

Listen! No one can ever describe Allāh *taʿālā* and man in the manner in which Allāh *taʿālā* did in the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says with utmost displeasure:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ.

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation. He says: "Who will give life to the bones when they have crumbled to dust?"[2]

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ.

Say: "He will give life to them who had created them the first time. And He knows every creation."[3]

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ.

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[1] Sūrah aṯ-Ṯāriq, 86: 5-8.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 78.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 79.

He who made for you fire out of a green tree, you then kindle [your fires] therewith.[1]

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ.

Is, then, He who created the heavens and the earth not able to create someone like them? Why not! He alone is the actual creator, the all-knowing.[2]

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ.

His command is merely this, when He wills to do something He says to it: 'Be!' and it immediately becomes.[3]

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ.

Pure is that being in whose hands is the dominion of everything, and it is to Him that you will be returned.[4]

You people may be thinking that you read Sūrah Yā Sīn every morning and that it is part of your daily practice. Listen! Read the Qur'ān as the Qur'ān. In other words, read it with your heart and with full conviction, and then see how much you will enjoy it. Unfortunately, you people read it as though it is an Urdu book. What effect will it have on you!?

Look at with what force Allāh *ta'ālā* is saying:

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 80.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 81.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 82.

[4] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 83.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]? Then behold! He becomes an open disputant.[1]

Because Allāh *taʿālā* is the sole Creator, He alone can say this. If man was doing the rectification, he could never say such a thing. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator, therefore he can say it frankly. This is also a clear proof that Allāh *taʿālā* is the Creator. He said something which no human could say. People would hesitate to utter such a thing and feel ashamed. They will fear that their addressee will feel offended. On the other hand, Allāh *taʿālā* says forthrightly:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْاِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ. خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّآءٍ دَافِقٍ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created. He has been created from a gushing forth fluid.[2]

A saint said: "I remain with my head lowered because I did things which, when I think of them, I feel ashamed." Allāh *taʿālā* speaks of things which will cause one to lower his head. There is certainly nothing more powerful to break his pride, arrogance and self-claims. The Qur'ān speaks on these matters. Allāh *taʿālā* describes Himself and man in the Qur'ān. It is easy for someone to say that He is the Sustainer of mankind, so He ought to speak about these things. Now look further:

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

[2] Sūrah at-Tāriq, 86: 5-6.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلٰى طَعَامِهِ. أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا. ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا. فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا. وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا. وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا. وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا. وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا. مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ.

Let man, then, reflect on his food: We poured the water, falling from above. We then cleaved the earth asunder. Thereupon We caused grain to grow therein. And grapes and edible plants. And olives and dates. And gardens of dense foliage. And fruits and pastures. Of use to you and to your cattle.[1]

Nowadays people are attracted to lectures only. I ask you, what are you going to do with that? You need to develop Allāh-recognition, and this is a work of the heart, not of the tongue. Who bothers about those who restrict themselves to the tongue? A single doer is superior to a thousand prattlers. Take the case of a single person who has a thousand people singing his praises. He is nothing but a talker. One doer of actions is superior to the former even though he may not talk a lot.

When Hadrat ʿUthmān *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was appointed as the caliph, he climbed the pulpit, delivered a short speech and fell silent. After quite some time, he added:

أنتم إلى إمام فعال أحوج منكم إلى إمام قوال.

You are more in need of a leader who is a doer than a leader who is a talker.

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[1] Sūrah ʿAbasa, 80: 24-32.

What he meant was that he was a leader who does, not one who talks a lot. And this is what you people need.

Cognition is an action of the heart

Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* has a chapter in which he states that cognition is an action of the heart. The chapter is titled thus:

باب قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنا أعلمكم بالله وأن المعرفة فعل القلب لقول الله تعالى عز وجل وَلٰكِنْ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* comments on the above by saying that Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* quotes a verse to prove that īmān is not perfected by the tongue alone, to the exclusion of the heart. He says that belief is an action of the heart. (Just as cognition is an action of the heart).

You have just read what the scholars are saying, i.e. cognition is an act of the heart. Yet people assume that it is an act of the tongue and that the person who is a good talker is a gnostic. In the same way, the addressee assumes it to be an act of the ear. The author of *Fath al-Bārī* writes with reference to this verse:

وَلٰكِنْ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ

Rather, He will take you to account for what your hearts have earned.

He says that although this verse was revealed with reference to īmān, it is clearly and certainly presentable as a proof for cognition because both

share the same meaning in the sense that both are actions of the heart.

Now listen to a Hadīth. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أبغض الخلق إلى الله تعالى من كانت ثيابه ثياب الأنبياء وعمله عمل الجبارين.[1]

The most abhorred person in the sight of Allāh taʿālā is the one who wears the clothing of Prophets while his actions are of tyrants.

This means that his acts of worship point to his being an ascetic and righteous person, but his actions are like those of tyrants and oppressors. The latter oppress and tyrannize the creation out of their pride, and forget the favours of Allāh *taʿālā* on them. They do not have an iota of mercy, and they accumulate of this world through their tyranny and oppression.

ʿAllāmah Zamakhsharī *rahimahullāh* says that a *jabbār* (tyrant) is one who does as he wants, beats whomever he wants, kills whomever he wants and wrongs whomever he wants without bothering in the least about the consequences. Another definition of a *jabbār* is that he is an arrogant person who does not submit to the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*. The most beloved in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* are the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and the truthful ones. The most abhorred in His sight is the one who imitates them outwardly, while he is not like them in his actions and character. If a person imitates the sincere and

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[1] كشف الخفاء، ج ١، ص ٢٤.

devoted servants superficially while he is ostentatious, then he is certainly abhorred. After all, he is wearing the garments of righteous people but acting in total opposition to them. The above Hadīth demonstrates the despicability of this action.

Take note of another point here:

أحب الصالحين ولست منهم – لعل الله يرزقني صلاحا

I love the righteous although I am not of them. Perhaps Allāh will bless me with righteousness.

The imitation mentioned in this couplet is not prohibited. In other words, if a person loves righteous people, wears garments like theirs, and imitates their ways so that he may become like them; then this is certainly a commendable thing.

I heard Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* relating the story of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* with the magicians. When they came to compete with him, they asked him: "Will you cast first or should we cast our magic first?" In order to prove the truth and disprove their falsehood, he asked them to cast first. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* then cast his staff on the ground and it turned into a serpent which began swallowing the small snakes of the magicians. Everyone was terrified. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* himself became scared. This is why the magicians accepted īmān at his hands. They realized that Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* is not a magician because a magician does not become frightened by his own magic. When they saw Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* becoming scared, they concluded that this is a miracle solely from Allāh *taʿālā*. They embraced īmān once they realized this. Pharaoh tried his utmost to threaten them but they

did not waver in the least. The Qur'ān relates this incident very beautifully:

قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسٰى إِمَّآ أَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَإِمَّآ أَنْ نَّكُوْنَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقٰى.

They said: "O Mūsā! Either you cast or we will be the first to cast."

قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوْا ج فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعٰى.

He said: "No, you cast [first]." By their enchantment, it appeared to him that their ropes and staffs were moving rapidly.

فَأَوْجَسَ فِيْ نَفْسِهِ خِيْفَةً مُّوْسٰى.

Mūsā then conceived fear within himself.

قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الأَعْلٰى. وَأَلْقِ مَا فِيْ يَمِيْنِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوْا ط إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوْا كَيْدَ سٰحِرٍ ط وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتٰى.

We said: "Do not fear, you shall certainly remain triumphant. Cast what is in your right hand, it will swallow all that they have made. That which they made is only a magician's trick. The magician does not succeed wherever he goes."

فَأُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوْآ اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هٰرُوْنَ وَمُوْسٰى.

The magicians then fell into prostration [and] said: "We believe in the Sustainer of Hārūn and Mūsā."

قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ط إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ج فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّلَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِيْ جُذُوْعِ النَّخْلِ ز وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَآ أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَّأَبْقٰى.

Pharaoh said: "Do you believe in him before I can permit you? Surely he must be your master who taught you magic. So I will now cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides and I will crucify you on the trunks of date-palms. You will come to know whose punishment from us is severer and more lasting."

قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلٰى مَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالَّذِيْ فَطَرَنَا فَاقْضِ مَآ أَنْتَ قَاضٍ ط إِنَّمَا تَقْضِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا.

They said: "Never shall we prefer you to the clear signs that have reached us and to Him who created us. Decree, then, whatever you want to decree. You can only decree in this worldly life."

إِنَّآ اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطٰيٰنَا وَمَآ أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ ط وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ وَّأَبْقٰى.

"We have brought faith in our Sustainer so that He may forgive us our sins and the magic which you compelled upon us. Allāh is best and everlasting."[1]

Look at how the magicians acquired the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. The scholars say that this was as a recompense for the respect which they gave to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Because they treated a senior Prophet with respect, Allāh *taʿālā* did not keep them deprived of the blessings of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Instead, He placed the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* in their hearts. The scholars write further that this was also a blessing of their external imitation of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* because

[1] Sūrah Tā Hā, 20: 65-73.

when they came for the competition, they dressed as Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* did.

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said to Allāh *taʿālā*: "I was commissioned to Pharaoh but he died as an unbeliever while the magicians were guided to Islam. What is the wisdom behind this?" Allāh *taʿālā* replied: "The magicians had adopted your dress so I could not see Myself punishing My enemies who are dressed like My beloved. By virtue of this superficial similarity, we caused their hearts to be joined with yours." Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful point.

Thus, we see that there is an imitation which is also praiseworthy and desirable. The other is the one through which a person becomes the most abhorred in Allāh's sight. There is a world of difference between the two.

I was saying to you that cognition is an action of the heart. When cognition enters the heart, the other body parts submit before Allāh *taʿālā*. The author of *Tarsīʿ* says that the reality of man which makes him man and separates him from animals is the heart. It is the heart which rules over other parts of the body. No body part can act against the dictates of the heart. A Hadīth states:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله. ألا وهي القلب.[1]

There is a piece of flesh in the body which, if it is sound, the rest of the body will be sound. But if it is

[1] صحيح البخاري، كتاب الإيمان.

unsound, the rest of the body will be unsound. It is the heart.

We learn from this Hadīth that the soundness and corruption of the entire body is dependent on the soundness and corruption of the heart. The soundness of the heart lies in it being filled with īmān and sincerity. Once this is realized, its effects will certainly be seen externally. I say, the Qur'ān is the source of this Hadīth. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to salāh:

وَاِنَّهَا لَكَبِيْرَةٌ اِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِيْنَ.

Salāh is certainly difficult except on those who have humility.

Allāh *taʿālā* is Himself saying that salāh is a difficult thing – externally and internally. The external difficulty is in the sense that it has to be performed on time and with congregation. It is internally difficult because it has to be performed with the heart focussing on Allāh *taʿālā*. A person has to empty his heart of whisperings and other thoughts while in salāh. Salāh is not the place where a person can turn his attention to anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. This internal focus is extremely difficult. It is with reference to this aspect that Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِيْنَ

…except on those who have humility.

Focus with the heart is not difficult on those who have humility and Allāh's fear. Humility is an action of the heart. When a heart has Allāh's remembrance and cognition – and we already said that the heart is

the ruler – then the rest of the body parts will also submit.

The Qur'ān attributes humility to the heart. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَلَمْ يَاْنِ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ.

Has the time not come for the believers that their hearts should feel humble at the remembrance of Allāh.[1]

We learn from this that humility is in the heart. A saint said:

> O Allāh! Bless me with the restlessness of true love. Bless our eyes with tears and confer our hearts with servitude.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the beautiful manner in which he expressed this reality. He attributed tears to the eyes and servitude to the heart. It is the same humility which reduces the difficulty of salāh. We conclude that when the heart is in order, the external body parts will follow suite. Now look for yourself. Where people reach their destination after many years of travelling, Allāh *taʿālā* conveys them in a minute. I say, if you do not develop humility in your heart, it is not possible for you to practise on the Qur'ān. As long as a person does not have a sound heart, he will not be able to read the Qur'ān as it ought to be read. The Qur'ān contains injunctions about everything. When the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* is read with the heart, the injunctions will descend into the heart. Recitation of the Qur'ān is prescribed for this purpose.

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[1] Sūrah al-Hadīd, 57: 16.

Maulānā Muḥammad ʿAlī Ṣāḥib Maungerī *raḥimahullāh* was a senior scholar and saint. He was a khalīfah of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Faḍl Raḥmān Ṣāḥib Ganj Murādābādī *raḥimahullāh*. Someone asked him, "Ḥaḍrat, how are you feeling?" He replied: "What you are asking about how I am feeling. In this world, a believer's feeling is suspended between fear and hope. Inshā Allāh, I will tell you how I am feeling when I am in Paradise. This is when I will be fully convinced that I have acquired Allāh's pleasure." These personalities were true gnostics.

Note: It is a beautiful reply which we ought to remember. (compiler)

At a time when Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* was facing opposition from all sides, Ḥaḍrat Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Ḥasan Majdhūb *raḥimahullāh* said to him: "Ḥaḍrat, a certain person was reading this couplet in reference to you:

> Although time has become my enemy, O heart, what we have to see is whether the emotion of the beloved is not in turmoil.

When Ḥaḍrat Maulānā *raḥimahullāh* heard it, he went into a type of ecstasy because the couplet fully expressed what his heart was feeling at the time and it was in line with his condition.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* directed us towards an excellent theme. It is beneficial to everyone. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

Listen to this Hadīth:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نوم الصائم عبادة، وصمته تسبيح، وعمله مضاعف، ودعاءه مستجاب، وذنبه مغفور.[2]

Now listen to the translation and explanation of this Hadīth:

The sleep of a fasting is an act of worship, his silence takes the place of Allāh's glorification, the rewards for his actions are multiplied, his supplications are answered, and his sins are pardoned.

No poem can compare with Hadīth

Glory to Allāh! Look at the beauty of this Hadīth. Do you think any poem can compete with it? The composition of the greatest of poets cannot compete with the Qur'ān and Hadīth. No poetry can make us independent of the Qur'ān and Hadīth. It is totally wrong to become so occupied with poetry that you give it more time than the Qur'ān and Hadīth. It will be a serious indignity to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. You should rather listen to Ahādīth and study their

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩٠.

commentaries as done by the ʿulamā' so that you will realize how deeply they loved Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A Hadīth states:

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل.[1]

Sleeping with knowledge (as an ʿālim) is superior to performing salāh with ignorance.

A shaykh used to say: "I convey people to Allāh *taʿālā* by giving them plenty of food and drink." I say: Where will that poor fellow ever convey you. However, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly conveyed people to Allāh *taʿālā* not only by feeding them but by making them sleep as well. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل.[2]

Sleeping with knowledge (as an ʿālim) is superior to performing salāh with ignorance.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the gnosticism which the statements of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* contained. If a person understands a single Hadīth with his heart, he will become a gnostic.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[3]

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[1] كشف الخفاء: ج ٢، ص ٢٩٦.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[3] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* explained the meaning of "intention" in much detail. The author of *Fayd al-Qadīr* also explained it beautifully. Although the latter is concise in his explanations, he covers all angles of a discussion. And because he is a Sufi, he gives excellent explanations of Aḥādīth.

At the beginning of his book, the author of *Fath al-Bārī* goes into a discussion on the following Ḥadīth:

إنما الأعمال بالنيات.

Actions are judged by intentions.

He says that the statements of the imāms on the greatness of this Ḥadīth have reached the level of *tawātur* (such a large number of scholars explained it that it is inconceivable for them to have concurred on fabricating a lie).

Abū ʿAbdillāh *raḥimahullāh* said: "There is no Ḥadīth which is more comprehensive, rich and beneficial than this one." Some scholars including Imām Shāfiʿī *raḥimahullāh* and Imām Aḥmad *raḥimahullāh* say that it comprises one third of Islam. Ibn Mahdī *raḥimahullāh* said that this Ḥadīth is worthy of making it the foundation of all other chapters. Imām Bayhaqī *raḥimahullāh* said that it is one third of knowledge. This is because man's actions are either with his heart, tongue or other body parts. An intention is made with the heart which is one of these three and the most superior. An intention is preferred because it is an act of worship on its own. Also because other actions are dependent on it. This is why a Ḥadīth states:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

If you focus on the intention, you will conclude that it is the better of the two.

Imām Aḥmad *raḥimahullāh* said that it is one third of Islam. This means that it is one of these three principles upon which all injunctions are based. One is the Ḥadīth:

إنما الأعمال بالنيات.

Actions are judged by intentions.

The second is the Ḥadīth:

من عمل عملا ليس عليه أمرنا فهو رد.[2]

The one who does an action which is not part of our Dīn is rejected.

The third Ḥadīth is:

الحلال بين والحرام بين...الخ.

The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear...

The explanation given by the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* is in its place. Now listen to what the author of *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* has to say.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḥimahullāh* also spoke about the Ḥadīth,

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ١٨٢.

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

In his lectures. He explained it beautifully and fulfilled its right. From this we can gauge to what extent the ʿulamā' recognized Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and how well they understood his speech.

A man was repeating the following couplet while he was in solitude:

> I sacrificed my heart for Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I fulfilled the duties which I owed to Allāh *taʿālā*.

I was present on one occasion when he was repeating this couplet, and it appealed to me. I thought to myself, yes brother, it is certainly our duty to sacrifice our heart for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and you have fulfilled it.

I thought of this incident while saying to you that the ʿulamā' recognized Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, appreciated his words and fulfilled his rights.

Now listen to what the author of *Fayd al-Qadīr* has to say.

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[2]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

[2] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

Why is this? You people know this much that a believer will live in Paradise forever. His living in it forever is not because of his actions but because of his intention. If it had been on the basis of his actions, his stay in Paradise would have been to the extent of his actions. The recompense which he received is due to his intention because his intention is to obey Allāh *taʿālā* forever. When death comes upon him suddenly, he receives this recompense by virtue of his intention.

The same can be said of an unbeliever. He will remain in the Hell-fire forever. Had he been eligible for it because of his actions, he would have been punished in it to the extent of his actions. He had made the intention that if he is able to live forever, he will still remain stubborn on his unbelief. Thus, he will be punished with an eternal stay in the Hell-fire because of this intention, and not because of his actions.

The intention of a believer is eternal, this is why he will receive eternity. ʿAllāmah Kirmānī *raḥimahullāh* said that the action which is better than an intention refers to an action which is made without an intention, or that the part which is the intention is superior to that part of which the action is made up of. This is why ostentation cannot enter an intention. A Ḥadīth states that if a person goes to bed at night with the intention of waking up for tahajjud but does not wake up, he will receive the reward for tahajjud and the sleep is a charity in his favour.

Some scholars say that the meaning of “an intention being superior to an action” is that whenever a believer does a good deed, there is no end to the good in his intention.

When an unbeliever commits an evil, he makes the intention of committing a worse evil in the future. Here too, there is no end to the evil in his intention.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the various ways in which the scholars of the past used to explain things. Nowadays the scholars do not explain to the masses. If they do, the most they will do is write a book. Only the one who has the knowledge will read the book. Others do not benefit from it, and remain deprived in this way.

Another meaning of an intention of a believer being superior to his action is that while a believer is busy carrying out a certain good action, he has the intention that when he completes it, he will do another good action.

It could also mean that an action alone cannot convey a person to the level to which an intention alone can convey him. Also, an intention can corrupt a good deed, and turn a corrupt deed so righteous whereupon the person is given a reward for it. He is then given multiple rewards for this intention. In the same way, it is a corrupt intention which can cause a multiplication in punishment. An intention is thus more far-reaching and more beneficial. There is a saying:

إذا فسدت النية وقعت البلية.

When the intention is corrupt, the calamity occurs right before the person.

People are on different levels as regards intention. The intention and determination of some people are superior to this world and whatever is in it. There are others whose intention is in the pits, and they have no determination at all. It is an intention alone which

can convey a person to a level which his action could not have conveyed him. For example, a person acquires and teaches knowledge so that Allāh's mercy may descend on him, the angels may pray in his favour, and the animals on land and the fish at sea may seek pardon for him. Another person seeks knowledge merely to fill his belly and to get a good job. What a major difference in intention between the two. The first is doing it solely for Allāh's pleasure. He will obviously be blessed.

The author states further:

عمل المنافق خير من نيته.

The action of a hypocrite is superior to his intention.

In other words, he has an ungodly intention but his action is outwardly good. This is why his action is superior to his intention.

The author then says:

وكل يعمل على نيته. فإذا عمل المؤمن عملا صالحا، ثار في قلبه نور.

Each one acts according to his intention. When a believer does a good deed, a special light is lit in his heart which then comes out and engulfs his body parts.

Did you see the many meanings which the scholars give for this Hadīth:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

Listen further.

An intention is superior to all the good things which are acquired through good actions. Another meaning is that an intention is an act of the heart. And we know that the heart is nobler, and it is the ruler. The action of the one who is nobler is also more noble. This is why an intention is superior to an action. We could say that the purpose of obedience is to enlighten the heart. A heart is enlightened more by an intention because an intention is an attribute of the heart. In other words, it is realized in the heart alone.

Listen further.

Ibn Kamāl says: This Ḥadīth means that the action of the heart is superior to the actions of the other body parts. ʿAllāmah Bayḍāwī *raḥimahullāh* clarifies this point. He writes in his tafsīr:

والله يضاعف لمن يشاء بفضله وعلى حسب حال المنفق من إخلاصه وتعبه بربه ومن أجله تفاوتت الأعمال في مقادير الثواب.[1]

Allāh taʿālā will multiply for whomever He wills through His grace, and according to the sincerity and reliance of the spender on his Sustainer. It is because of differences in sincerity that there are differences in the amounts of reward.

The gist of the above is that an intention as a genus is superior to an action as a genus. This is why if the two are separated, a person will be rewarded for his intention but not for his action alone. Because this cannot be applied to an unbeliever – because his

[1] بيضاوي، ص ١٦٩.

intention cannot be taken into consideration – the Hadīth says:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

Some scholars say that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said this because an intention refers to the servitude of the heart while action refers to the servitude of the other body parts. The action of the heart is more far-reaching and more beneficial than the action of the other body parts. The heart is the ruler while the other body parts are the subjects. The actions of a ruler are greater and more extensive than the actions of the subjects. An action is limited while an intention is not. The intention in the īmān of a believer is on the basis that he will obey Allāh *taʿālā* for as long as he lives. In fact, even if Allāh *taʿālā* were to bring him back to life and he dies again, he will continue obeying Him in each of his lives. Because this belief is firmly entrenched and eternal, the recompense for his intention will also be in a manner which his actions cannot be. This refers to abiding in Paradise forever.

The scholars say that when the intention is genuine and pure; ostentation, pride and vanity are removed from his actions. The person then reaches the rank of those who are perfect in their faith. As for the one who is not perfect, his heart is like any field in which so many trees sprout forth that there is no place to walk. This refers to the excessiveness of hypocrisy. It becomes a heart where the carnal self is fully

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

occupied by various types of whisperings and desires. How, then, can light enter such a heart? An enlightened heart is one which is like a wide barren field. It is a heart which Allāh *taʿālā* opened for Islam, and regarding which He says:

فَهُوَ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ

He is on a special light from his Sustainer.

He becomes fresh and energetic with Allāh's remembrance and His mercy.

Did you see what a beautiful explanation this is on the subject of intention? This is what I was referring to when I said that the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* gave a good explanation on intention. He explained the Ḥadīth beautifully. The speech of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* must be explained in a manner which makes one realize that it is indeed the speech of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. These scholars had recognized Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* fully, believed in his prophet-hood with all their heart and had strong īmān in him. This is why when the speech of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was presented to them, their hearts opened up and they explained it fully.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raḥimahullāh* wrote *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*. In it he writes that the author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī* explained some couplets of Shaykh Ibn Fāriḍ *raḥimahullāh* and presented them to Shaykh Madyan *raḥimahullāh* so that the latter may write a review. The shaykh wrote the following couplet.

سَارَتْ مُشْرِقَةً وَسِرْتُ مَغْرِبًا – شَتَّانَ بَيْنَ مُشْرِقٍ وَمُغْرِبِ

A lover said with reference to his beloved: She went towards the East while I went towards the West. What a vast distance between the two.

After writing this he returned it to Hāfiz Ibn Hajar *rahimahullāh* (the author of *Fath al-Bārī*). The latter concluded thus: The shaykh directed my attention towards the internal self regarding which I am neglectful. He realized this and began accepting the Sufis. In fact, he began remaining in the company of Shaykh Madyan and remained in his service until the very end. Glory to Allāh! He was filled with īmān and a desire for Allāh *ta'ālā*. Consequently, he did not remain deprived of spiritual treasures. Instead, he realized his objective.

Now let me say something about

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

The word intention is attributed to "a believer". We learn from this that the good which is found in an intention, is because of īmān. This would mean:

نية المؤمن خير من إيمانه.

The intention of a believer is superior to his īmān.

It becomes clear from this that:

إيمان المؤمن خير من عمله.

The īmān of a believer is superior to his actions.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

The superiority of the intention of a believer is because it stems from īmān, and we know that the rank and value of īmān is superior to actions. The level of an action is dependent on the level of īmān. The stronger the īmān the better the action because īmān is essentially the stimulus for action. Īmān is the source while actions are its branches. There is obviously no comparison between the two. The superiority of the source is obvious. Its superiority is thus proven.

Intention does not separate itself from a believer. Instead, his īmān maintains it and stimulates it in the heart. The Hadīth under discussion is essentially speaking about the superiority of īmān. People generally do not explain it like this whereas we learn from this attribution that the intention of a believer will always be better. His internal self will always be better than his external self. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prayed for this:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ سَرِيْرَتِيْ خَيْرًا مِّنْ عَلَانِيَتِيْ، وَاجْعَلْ عَلَانِيَتِيْ صَالِحَةً

O Allāh! Make my inner self better than my outer self, and make my outer self good as well.

The external self of a hypocrite is better than his inner self, while the internal self of a believer is superior to his external self. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نية المؤمن خير من عمله.[1]

The intention of a believer is superior to his action.

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩١.

I also quoted the following Hadīth at the beginning of my lecture:

نوم على علم خير من صلاة على جهل.[1]

Sleeping with knowledge (as an ʿālim) is superior to performing salāh with ignorance.

Now listen to what I have to say about it.

The sleep of an ʿālim is superior to the salāh of an ignorant person because leaving out the salāh is better for him than performing it. Due to his ignorance, he considers the wrong to be right and the prohibited to be obligatory. In the same way, he believes evil to be good. His ignorance prevents him from differentiating between the two. It is due to ignorance that we see people of today not doing what Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* instructed and emphasised, while being very enthusiastic about doing other things [which have not been ordered].

Do you know how this deplorable condition came about and why we are not successful today? Understand well that it is because of the same ignorance [mentioned above]. It is not that people do not want to do anything or are not bothered about doing it. They want to do the work but they are ignorant. This is why there is no blessing and benefit in the work. A person is obedient but he is also carrying out works of disobedience. And his ignorance causes him to assume that he is rewarded for it. Allāh forbid! Just imagine committing a sin

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[1] كشف الخفاء: ج ٢، ص ٢٩٦.

and having hopes of reward from Allāh *taʿālā*. What a repugnant act of ignorance!

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from ignorance. Āmīn. (compiler)

There is a link between external and internal actions

You should understand that there is a link and a connection between external and internal actions. The internal self sets right external actions – e.g. sincerity – and also corrupts them, e.g. ostentation, egotism, etc. If a person does not understand internal matters, the effects which they have on external acts of worship, and the ways of saving himself from their influence; he will not be able to remain secure from the evil effects of internal evils. The disadvantage in this is that in addition to his external actions being carried out without sincerity, there will soon come a time when external actions will be given up totally. The man will then experience nothing but wretchedness, misfortune, weariness and hardship. This is a serious loss. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

من أتعب نفسه في العبادة على خبط فليس له إلا العناء.[1]

The person who tires his self in blind worship (without insight and cognition) will acquire nothing but fatigue.

The reason for work getting spoilt

Listen! This is how the work got spoilt today and is continuing to get spoilt. You people think that there is no saintliness in the Sharīʿat and a person cannot

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير: ٢٩١.

become a saint through it. You think in this way because you see people performing salāh, observing the fast, performing tarāwīh salāh, reading the Qur'ān but not benefiting in any way. You therefore conclude that – Allāh forbid – there is nothing in the Sharīʿat. And if there was, these people [who adhere to it] would have been successful. This assumption of yours is absolutely wrong.

The fact of the matter is that people are becoming confirmations of the following Hadīth because of their ignorance.

من أتعب نفسه في العبادة على خبط فليس له إلا العناء.[1]

The person who tires his self in blind worship (without insight and cognition) will acquire nothing but fatigue.

If a person applies himself to worship but has no knowledge whatsoever of spiritual matters and their effects which are influential in the goodness or badness of actions, then all his actions will obviously go to waste. He will acquire nothing but fatigue and hardship. He will be totally in line with the following verse of the Qur'ān:

عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ. تَصْلٰى نَارًا حَامِيَةً. تُسْقٰى مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰنِيَةٍ.

Toiling, worn out. Falling into a blazing fire. Given to drink from a boiling spring.[2]

We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير: ٢٩١.

[2] Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah, 88: 3-5.

A statement of Hadrat ʿAlī

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "Two persons broke my back. One is the ignorant worshipper and the other is the scholar who is lazy and lackadaisical in matters of Dīn." People are deceived by an ignorant worshipper and a non-practising scholar. When people assemble around these two, the worshipper – through his ignorance – and the scholar - due to his malpractices – they will leave the people confounded. They will lead the people astray just as they are astray.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

نوروا منازلكم بالصلاة وقراءة القرآن.

Illuminate your homes with salāh and the recitation of the Qur'ān.

This is because the house of a believer is a place of worship. The house will be illuminated because the heart of a believer is like a mirror. The glitter and splendour of salāh and Qur'ān recitation will increase that light. The divine illumination of Allāh *taʿālā* will emanate from within and the reality of the demands of Dīn will become clear to him. Consequently, he will acquire tranquillity and conviction. Tranquillity is, after all, the objective of a believer:

اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ.

Listen! It is in Allāh's remembrance that the hearts find tranquillity.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 28.

Listen! I have something else to say. The scholars explained the following statement in various ways.

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

The one who has recognized his self has in fact recognized his Sustainer.

Let me say something to you. There is no need to go far. Why do you not come towards the Qur'ān? Look at what Allāh *taʿālā* is saying:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ. خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ. يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ. إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created. He has been created from a gushing forth fluid. Which issues from between the loins and the chest. Surely He has the power to bring him back.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ. أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا. ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا. فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا. وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا. وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا. وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا. وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا. مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ.

Let man then reflect on his food: We poured the water, falling from above. We then cleaved the earth asunder. Thereupon We caused grain to grow therein. And grapes and edible plants. And olives and dates. And

[1] Sūrah at-Tāriq, 86: 5-8.

gardens of dense foliage. And fruits and pastures. Of use to you and to your cattle.[1]

In the first quotation Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about man's origin. Man ought to examine his origin and creation. From this he will be able to recognize Allāh. In yet another place, Allāh *taʿālā* speaks in an angry tone:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ.

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation. He says: "Who will give life to the bones when they have crumbled to dust?"[2]

قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ.

Say: "He will give life to them who had created them the first time. And He knows every creation."[3]

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُ تُوقِدُونَ.

He who made for you fire out of a green tree, you then kindle [your fires] therewith.[4]

أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَهُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ.

Is, then, He who created the heavens and the earth not able to create someone like them? Why not! He alone is the actual creator, the all-knowing.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ʿAbasa, 80: 24-32.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 78.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 79.

[4] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 80.

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ.

His command is merely this, that when He wills to do something He says to it: 'Be!' and it immediately becomes.[2]

فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُون.

Pure is that being in whose hands is the dominion of everything, and it is to Him that you will be returned.[3]

Allāh *taʿālā* reprimands man for forgetting his creation.

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation.

Man thinks that his power is like Ours, and in the process he forgot how he was created. Since man has been reprimanded for his forgetfulness, the opposite of it becomes obligatory on him. And the opposite of it is to learn and realize how he was created. This means that in order to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* and have conviction in His power, it is necessary for man to think about his own creation. This is the meaning of:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 81.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 82.

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 83.

The one who has recognized his self has in fact recognized his Sustainer.

Self-recognition is obligatory because it is commanded in the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ.

Now let man observe out of what he has been created

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ.

Let man then reflect on his food.

When man studies his own creation, he will recognize his self, he will realize his insignificance and through this, he will recognize the greatness of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what Allāh *taʿālā* refers to when he says:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]? Then behold! He becomes an open disputant.[1]

Does man not know that We created him from a drop of sperm. This demanded of him to think about his origin. Then based on his insignificance and the greatness of the Creator, he ought to have been ashamed of his audaciousness and impudence. Secondly, he should have realized the proof of Resurrection from his creation. However, he did not do this. Instead, he began disputing openly with Allāh *taʿālā*.

I ask you: Is this not enough to make man realize his own self? Allāh *taʿālā* completely exposed the reality

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

of man and made him lower his head in servitude. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* provided beautiful points for the removal of pride. People read them and say that pride is still not leaving them. I say, can there be a better treatment for pride than what is given in the Qur'ān? Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ

He puts forth for Us a simile and forgets his [own] creation.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]? Then behold! He becomes an open disputant.[1]

Allāh *ta'ālā* says elsewhere:

اَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ مَّهِيْنٍ.

Did We not create you from a worthless fluid?[2]

فإذا هو خصيم، أي مبالغ في الخصومة والجدال الباطل.

We created him from a drop of sperm and now he is disputing with Us openly, and that too on false premises. We created him from the lowest and most insignificant of things, and he is suddenly arguing with Us on a matter whose correctness is attested to by his very own origin.

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

[2] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 28.

A cure for pride

I ask you, can a person still have pride after reading these verses? What are you doing? Where are you going? Understand the Qur'ān. Very few people read it with understanding, whereas it contains everything.

جميع العلم في القرآن لكن – تقاصر عنه أفهام الرجال

All the sciences are in the Qur'ān, but the comprehension of man falls short from understanding it.

Since Allāh *ta'ālā* sent down the Qur'ān, it means that He provided the means to send it to you. It is as though He took the responsibility of ensuring that it [the Qur'ān] will convey you to Allāh *ta'ālā*. If you still do not understand it and think that you will reach Him through other things, then woe and destruction to you. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا مَالِكُونَ. وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ. وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَمَشَارِبُ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ. وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ. لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُحْضَرُونَ. فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ.

Do they not see that We created for them of that which Our hands created, cattle, they are now their owners? We subdued them [the cattle] for them. Now some of them they use for riding and some they eat. For them, in the cattle, are benefits and fountains of drink. Why, then, do they not give thanks? They take gods apart from Allāh, hoping that they may be helped. They will

not be able to help them. [Rather] they will be brought forward as armies against them. You should therefore not be grieved by their statements. We know whatever they conceal and whatever they bring into the open.[1]

The sweetness of a royal speech

Look at how regal and sweet this speech is! Look at how evil destroys man. I told you that whatever Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* wrote as regards the treatment for pride is in its place. I say to you, man should just think about his creation for the removal of pride. This is the Qur'ānic prescription for it. Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

اَيَطْمَعُ كُلُّ امْرِءٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ يُّدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيْمٍ كَلَّا اِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِّمَّا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

Does every one of them hope to enter a garden of bliss? Never! We have created them of what they also know.[2]

Does man think he can enter Paradise without īmān? This is his vain hope. One of the explanations for the words "what they also know" is that it refers to the impure drop of sperm from which man is created. The following is stated in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* in this regard:

وفي التعبير عن مادة خلقهم بما يعلمون مما يكسر سورة المتكبرين ما لا يخفى.[1]

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 71-76.

[2] Sūrah al-Maʿārij, 70: 38-39.

By referring to the drop of sperm from which man is created as "what they also know", Allāh taʿālā breaks the swiftness of the pride of the proud and haughty ones. This is not concealed from the scholars.

We learn from this that pride has a swiftness which has to be broken. It is broken when man thinks about his origin and how he was created. When he sees that he has been created from such a despicable impure drop; it will create servitude in him, he will realize his insignificance, and his pride will be smashed.

Now listen carefully. Do not say that Imām Ghazzālī *raḥimahullāh* has prescribed various treatments for pride. The fact of the matter is that I am saying the same thing which he said. You can understand this much for yourself: Allāh *taʿālā* sent down His speech, showed man the ailments of his carnal self, and then prescribed treatments for them. Now what else is there to be said? What is the need for us to go so far? Did you know that the Sufis are in the habit of reading Sūrah Yā Sīn after the fajr ṣalāh so that it may serve as a meditation over man's reality and his insignificance? Man must be mindful of this so that he can realize the greatness and grandeur of Allāh *taʿālā*. The saints have the habit of meditation after fajr ṣalāh. The first meditation which they engage in is this what I just said.

Allāh *taʿālā* also speaks about matters related to man's self. The Sufis refer to it as *sayr anfusī* (a journey of the self). For example, Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] روح المعاني: ج ٢٩، ص ٧٥.

وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ.

And within your own selves [as well]. Will you not then see?[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* also speaks about *sayr āfāqī* (a journey into the world).

وَفِيْهَا آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

In it are signs for the believers.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰآ اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَاَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ.

O believers! Some of your spouses and children are your enemies. So be constantly aware of them.[2]

After reading the Qur'ān, what other book are you searching for?

فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

Which speech are they going to believe in after this?

Look! Allāh *taʿālā* taught His recognition in just two things.

(1)

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلٰى طَعَامِهِ.

Let man then reflect on his food.

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[1] Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 21.

[2] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 14.

This refers to Allāh-recognition through what He placed in this world. (maʿrifat-e-āfāqī).

(2)

In the other verse, He said:

اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ...

Does man not see that We created him from a drop [of sperm]?[1]

This is known as *sayr anfusī* (a journey of the self). This is what is referred to by the words:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.

The one who has recognized his self has in fact recognized his Sustainer.

It is a near and internal journey through things which are within man. As for the *sayr āfāqī* (a journey into the world), it is to do with things which are around him. Thus, why do you not acquire Allāh's recognition through things which are near to you?

Note: All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* explained comprehensive themes which display his deep knowledge, cognition, wisdom and intelligence. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to read them, understand them and put them into practice. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to value and appreciate the academic and practical wisdoms of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *raḥimahullāh* and pray for his high stages. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 77.

Appreciate this period of fasting

I say to you people: You must appreciate these fasts. You probably never heard this Hadīth:

نوم الصائم عبادة، وصمته تسبيح.[1]

The sleep of a fasting is an act of worship, his silence takes the place of Allāh's glorification.

The Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also fall under the category of divine revelation from Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى. اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى.

He does not speak by the desire of his self. It is solely an order that is sent down.[2]

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* values the actions of His servants. He turned the sleep of a fasting person into an act of worship and classified his silence as a glorification.

Now how does the sleep of a fasting person become an act of worship? In the Sharīʿat, fasting refers to abstaining from food, drink and conjugal relations from true dawn to sunset with the intention of fasting. When a person makes the intention of fasting and intends to keep away from these things, he has started his fast. The entire period from dawn to dusk is counted as an act of worship. There is no break or pause during this period. And we know that sleep is not an invalidator of fasting. Thus, no matter what a

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[1] فيض القدير: ج ٦، ص ٢٩٠.

[2] Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 3-4.

person does during the period of fasting – as long as it is not an invalidator of fasting – he will be carrying out an act of worship [i.e. fasting]. It will be classified as such whether he is awake, asleep, in the toilet, etc. This is a unique feature of fasting that it remains in the presence of these activities. On the other hand, other acts of worship cease to exist with the onset of sleep. This is the meaning of "The sleep of a fasting person is an act of worship".

The following Hadīth is another proof of Allāh's appreciation:

لخلوف فم الصائم أطيب عند الله من ريح المسك.[1]

The smell which emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is superior to the fragrance of musk in the sight of Allāh taʿālā.

I ask you, is this not appreciation? Does it not demonstrate the virtue of fasting?

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* observed fast for thirty days and was then proceeding toward Mt. Tūr to converse with Allāh *taʿālā*. On the way, he thought to himself that he ought to brush his teeth and clean his mouth before he can have the honour of conversing with Allāh *taʿālā*. He used a miswāk to do this. Because Allāh *taʿālā* loves the smell which emanates from a fasting person and he now removed it, Allāh *taʿālā* ordered Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to observe fast for ten more days.

Did you see Allāh's appreciation? It will be most unfortunate if we still do not value this worship and

[1] مشكوة: ص ١٧٣.

pay attention to it. I therefore advise you to continually value and appreciate your fasting.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are very useful and beneficial themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to appreciate them. Āmīn. (compiler)

I have been speaking on a certain theme for several days. It is a series which has been continuing. Each day, I say something about it. Because the theme is extensive, the text is always unable to explain it in full. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself explains it in detail. I read the Qur'ān to you. In it is an explanation of Allāh's recognition. I say, Allāh personally taught us how to recognize Him. It is to this end that He revealed the Qur'ān. The recognition is not confined to the Creator; it includes the creation as well. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us about our own selves. By revealing the Qur'ān, it is as though Allāh *taʿālā* took the responsibility of making us His recognizers through it.

Now you think for yourself. If Allāh *taʿālā* commissioned Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and sent His Books with them, does it make sense that He will give the responsibility of teaching His recognition to someone else? Do you think He will leave it to the intellect of man? That man must recognize Allāh *taʿālā* solely through his intellect? If the intellects of the philosophers and logicians were enough, why would Allāh *taʿālā* set up a system of commissioning Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*?

What we have to realize is that the intellect is a creation; the most it can recognize is related to creations like it. It is insufficient to recognize the Creator. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* took it upon Himself to teach us how to recognize Him. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to the Resurrection:

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيْمٌ. يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكٰرٰى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكٰرٰى وَلٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللهِ شَدِيْدٌ.

O people! Fear your Sustainer, for surely, the earthquake of the [last] hour is a mighty thing. The day when you behold it, every suckling mother will forget her suckling, every pregnant woman will deliver her burden, and you will see the people intoxicated yet they are not intoxicated, but the punishment of Allāh is severe.[1]

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* pointed towards Dr. Sayyid Mahmūd Sāhib Ghāzīpūrī (who was sitting in the assembly) and said: You wrote to me stating that the 'ulamā' focused less on the Qur'ān. The point which you made appealed to me. When anyone makes statements of this nature, I conclude that there is life in his heart due to which he is experiencing this disappointment. The fact of the matter is that people have certainly wrapped the Qur'ān and kept it one side. This is why they are not achieving anything.

Allāh *ta'ālā* describes the day of Resurrection and its severity by saying that it will leave people stupefied. Allāh *ta'ālā* gives the reason for it by saying:

وَلٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللهِ شَدِيْدٌ

...but the punishment of Allāh is severe.

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 1-3.

While presenting various scenes of the day of Resurrection to the believers, Allāh *taʿālā* addresses the unbelievers as well.

Where the Qur'ān uses the words:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

O believers!

The addressees are believers. And where the Qur'ān uses the words:

يَا اَيُّهَا النَّاسُ

O people!

The addressees are the unbelievers. Sometimes, the Qur'ān addresses the Jews and Christians separately. Since the knowledge of Allāh *taʿālā* is all-encompassing, He addresses the believers, the auliyā', the Prophets; and sometimes He makes a general address. The verse under discussion is a general address.

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ

O people! Fear your Sustainer

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِي اللهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّرِيْدٍ. كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيْهِ إِلٰى عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ.

Of people is he who disputes about Allāh without any knowledge and follows every rebellious Satan about whom it is decreed that whoever befriends him, him

will he lead astray and drive to the punishment of the fire.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* disapproves of anyone discussing the Being of Allāh *taʿālā* and to argue about it without knowledge. If anyone wants to debate and argue, he should at least have some knowledge. If a person wants to discuss the Being and attributes of Allāh *taʿālā*, he should have knowledge for that as well. How can he simply dive into a discussion without knowledge? How can he follow every rebellious Shaytān regarding whom it is decreed that whoever befriends him will be led astray by him and driven towards the Hell-fire.

In the case where a person does not have knowledge, yet he has the audacity to delve in issues of this nature, then it means he has been deceived by Shaytān and he is certainly following him. Shaytān does this to increase his numbers.

The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have been coming and explaining everything in a beautiful manner. They have been showing us some of their miracles but you are not accepting them. On the other hand, you are prepared to believe astrologers. You must have heard about the uproar which was created by some astrologers when they claimed that the Resurrection is upon us. Someone came and asked me about it. I said, nothing will happen. These are just stories which they fabricated. Many astrologers like them came into this world and have long gone, yet nothing happened.

When I say something to you, you doubt it. When I quote from the Qur'ān and Hadīth, you do not believe

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 3-4.

it. Yet you are ready to believe these fabricated stories. The fact of the matter is that if you do not accept the words of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, you are bound to follow liars and impostors. You will then have to follow the biggest and most notorious liar and impostor – Shayṭān. This world is based on following someone or the other. If you are not going to follow those who are on the truth, you will end up following those who are on falsehood. You will end us disgraced, plus you would have deprived yourself of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in the next verse:

يٰٓأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَّغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ ط وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ إِلٰى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْٓا أَشُدَّكُمْ ج وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ إِلٰى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا.

O people! If you are in doubt as to the Resurrection, then it is We who created you from soil, then from a drop [of sperm], then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh – partly formed and partly unformed – so that We may clearly expound to you. We cause to remain in the wombs whatever We will till an appointed time. We then bring you forth as an infant [that you may grow] and reach your age of full strength. From among you is he who is caused to die [young] and from among you is he who reaches a state

of abject old age – unable to understand anything after being able to understand.[1]

The sequential creation of man

These verses describe the sequential creation of man. It describes the different changes which take place and how he moves from one condition to the next even though there is an exceptional dichotomy between one condition and the other. The person who looks at this extraordinary power of Allāh *taʿālā* will be convinced that – based on logic – it will be easier for Him to bring man back to life. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ

…so that We may clearly expound to you.

We did all this so that the matter of life after death may become clear to you.

Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* explains to man his own origin and reality, and also teaches him about Allāh *taʿālā*. If you are going to cast aside the Book of Allāh, you will not find the path. I ask you, why do you not read this verse? Why do you not enjoy reading it? After all, Allāh *taʿālā* describes everything in it. He created you from soil, then from a drop [of sperm], then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh. He then caused you to remain in the womb, then caused you to emerge as an infant, to grow to your full strength, and then to reach abject old age.

Allāh *taʿālā* did all this so that you may realize that the qualities which you possess are temporary and

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 5.

honorary. Previously you were a distinguished scholar, and now you have been reduced to an ignoramus.

Each of the different stages of man's development have been mentioned separately to show that each one is a proof in itself of Allāh's power and His being the Creator. His power is gauged from the fact that He created man from soil. After that, each human is a proof of Allāh's absolute power and all-encompassing knowledge. This proof is therefore presented to the one who rejects. Furthermore, all the realities and intricate points which could not be brought into the text are explained in this way. The very creation of man is a proof of life after death because it shows that the One who can create in the first instance is more likely to be able to create a second time. Unbelievers also believe in the return of souls, but they do not believe in the recreation of the physical body.

I ask, why is this? Has the body not committed any mistake? It certainly has. Man commits sins with his hands, legs, eyes and other body parts. The soul is confined within it, so reward and punishment will be experienced by both [the body and the soul]. I add, even in salāh, the body alone does not submit itself before Allāh *taʿālā*. When you perform salāh, do you not bend and lower your body? Do you perform salāh with your soul only? Why, then, are you considering those who lower their bodies to be beneath you? You do not do it yourself so you do not respect those who do it.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ.

Do those who have earned evils think that We will make them equal to those who believed and did good deeds, so that their living and their dying will be the same? It is an evil claim which they make.[1]

How can it happen that believers are downtrodden in this world and are treated in the same way in the Hereafter? The unbelievers used to claim: "If the Resurrection takes place, we will be in a superior position over there as well." The present verse refutes their claim.

You may not see the virtue of righteous people in this world because all types of people inhabit it. The day of Resurrection has been set aside to differentiate the sinners from the non-sinners.

وَامْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ اَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ.

You stand aside today, O sinners![2]

The separation will take place in the Hereafter; this world is not the place for it. This world is inhabited by believers, unbelievers, hypocrites, etc. and each one believes that he is on the true path. This cannot be decided in this world. The day of Recompense is set aside for it.

اِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيْقَاتًا.

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 21.

[2] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 59.

Surely the day of decision is at a fixed time.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* provides proofs time and again but heedless people do not realize them. The reason is that you people have made the Qur'ān a worldly thing. Many people benefited from it but not those who turned it into a worldly item. Listen to what this exegete is saying. He is saying that the sequential creation of man is described in this verse so that the person who ponders over it will be compelled into believing that the Being who first created man from soil when there was no sign of life in him and was able to put him through the different stages of development is certainly able to bring him back to life.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* presented excellent points on Qur'ānic exegesis. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to appreciate them Āmīn. (compiler)

[1] Sūrah an-Naba', 78: 17.

Yesterday I related to you the story of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He experienced excruciating pain on the night of the 5th of Muharram. He performed the 'ishā salāh with congregation and then loss consciousness. He remained like that for one hour. When he came back to his senses, he asked: "Did I perform my 'ishā salāh?" The people replied in the affirmative. He said: "I'll perform it one more time because I do not know what happened." He performed it again and lost consciousness. This time it lasted longer. When he woke up he asked: "Did I perform my 'ishā salāh?" His attendants said: "You have already performed it twice." He said: "I'll perform it one more time because I do not know what happened." He performed it a third time, said: "*Yā Hayyu Yā Qayyūm*and passed away. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* repeated his salāh because his affiliation with salāh was strong. The condition which is strong in a person remains with him until his end. Performing his salāh repeatedly was not because of knowledge but out of love. Knowledge demands that if you have performed it once, it is fulfilled. He did not get consolation, so he performed it repeatedly. This is what love demands.

The following is related about Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus *rahimahullāh*:

> Despite the inundation of emotions and overpowering of spiritual conditions, he was resolute in following the lofty Sunnat.

He was firm in adhering to the obligations of Dīn.

It is also said about him that even in his final illness he did not allow any difference to creep into the nature of his worship. He performed a fresh wuḍū' seventy times in one night and followed each one with taḥīyyatul wuḍū'. On the final occasion, he made gestures indicating that he needed to perform wuḍū'. He performed it, commenced with two rakʿats of ṣalāh, and performed the bowing and prostrating postures through gestures. He passed away in that condition. What a blessed journey to the Hereafter!

Look! His time of departure from this world was almost up. He did not have the strength to perform the bowing and prostrating postures, but he still performed wuḍū' and ṣalāh in that condition. The reason for it is that he had established such a powerful bond with the bowing and prostrating postures that he was compelled to perform them involuntarily and spontaneously. This is why he performed wuḍū' and ṣalāh repeatedly.

We are not on the ways of the Ahlullāh and we do not even claim to be on their path. But we say to those who make such claims: "You are not on the path of the Ahlullāh. Their conditions were something and yours are something else. It is conditions which are taken into consideration and the fruits thereof are based on them."

The author of *Zubdah al-Maqāmāt* constantly writes about the humbleness, submission and fear of Ḥaḍrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddus *raḥimahullāh*. Together with that he writes that although he was overwhelmed by his spiritual conditions, he was intensely fastidious about fulfilling the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. On one occasion, the imām of the

masjid did not arrive on time to lead the salāh. His nephew, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī stepped forward and led the congregation. While reading:

اَلَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ

He paused slightly between these two words. The Shaykh repeated his salāh and said angrily: "Youngsters should be prohibited from leading the congregation. They must not be allowed to corrupt the salāh of the congregation. Does he not know this much that when a relative clause and pronoun join, they are treated as a single word? It is therefore not permissible to separate the two, nor to pause between them."

Incidents of this nature are recorded in the biographies of the saints but people do not relate them. It is with reference to this that someone rightly said:

> The Muslims may be buried in their graves, but the teachings of Islam are to be found in books.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* has recorded the life conditions of the saints. He recorded each one's life separately. Do you think you can reach the ranks of the saints by force? You are neither on their path nor do you possess their knowledge. You neither have their conviction, actions nor conditions. How, then, are you going to reach their level?

I had asked some people to write a synopsis of the topic on which I spoke yesterday. One of them wrote thus:

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Wālā's assembly of today was spiritually motivating to me. I was able to compare what Hadrat Wālā said to my own condition. In the process, I was sometimes affected by it and sometimes rued over the fact that I was not on that standard. I cried over the first condition and made duʿā' when I thought about the second. The entire assembly was spent between these two enjoyable states [of crying and making duʿā'].

At the beginning of the assembly, Hadrat Wālā related stories of the saints. From them we learnt how they respected the Sharīʿat and were particularly attached to following the Sunnat. After hearing about the nature of their salāh, my own salāh appears like a sin in comparison to theirs. When I heard about their attention to salāh, my heart was filled with the seriousness of Allāh's worship. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to confer me with His love and love for His worship. Āmīn.

Hadrat Wālā then continued speaking in this vein about the spiritual affinity of the saints while I continued crying. I cannot understand the reason for my crying except for the feeling that Hadrat wants to take me with him to Paradise. Due to his absolute affection and love, Hadrat Wālā wants to show us the easiest way – i.e. the path and the means – and wants us to tread it. But we are so wretched that we are not opening our eyes. This

reminds me of that incident from the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* when he said to his uncle, Abū Tālib: "Just whisper the kalimah in my ear and I will intercede on your behalf on the day of Resurrection."

While explaining the importance of the affiliation of the Sufis, Hadrat Wālā – in his humility – said: "Had I not been blessed with an affinity with Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, do you think these people would have ever bothered to even ask about me? It is really my affiliation with Hadrat which is doing the work."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said in this regard:

There are different levels of love and affiliation. The greater a person's affiliation with a Sufi master, the more he will benefit. He will benefit in this world and in the Hereafter. The nature of the benefit in the Hereafter will only be known when we go there. Because it is dependent on Allāh's grace, it is not bound to any rule. In other words, we do not know which action will be liked by Allāh *taʿālā* due to which the person receives His grace. That is all.

A Maulānā Sāhib had passed away. Someone saw him in a dream and asked him how he fared. He said that Allāh *taʿālā* pardoned him. When he was asked how, he said: "My wife had cooked a broth on one occasion. It had so much of salt that I could not eat it. However, I did not utter a single word of complaint – not softly nor harshly. I ate the food. Allāh *taʿālā* was pleased by this action and pardoned me on account of it."

I heard this story from one of my teachers in Deoband:

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd ar-Rahīm Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* was the father of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. One day he saw a dog lying in the mud. It was in a pitiable condition because of the severe cold. There was a public bath nearby. He carried the dog and gave it a bath. After some time, he happened to be going to some place. He went onto a path which was extremely narrow. It was difficult for just one person to tread that path. To make matters worse, there was mud and impurities on both sides. A dog approached from the front and both stopped – facing each other. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said: "O dog, go down so that I could proceed." He was informed through kashf that the dog said: "I am most astonished at the dervishes of today. They give preference to their own comfort over the comfort of others. Whereas the saints of the past used to forgo their own comforts for the comfort of others." He said: "That is not the case. Rather, the reason for this is that I have many duties to Allāh *taʿālā*. If I were to fall in the impurity, how will I be able to perform salāh without washing my clothes? I will have to bear the inconvenience of washing my clothes. On the other hand, you have no obligations. If you become impure, it will not affect you in any way. Once you get dry, you will be back to normal."

The dog said: "You are right. However, understand this much: If you went down and became impure, the impurity can be washed off with a single jug of water. But if I went down and you passed through without getting impure, your heart will develop an impurity which cannot be washed off with even the water of

the seven oceans. I am referring to the impurity of a superiority-complex which will develop in you on account of this. You now have a choice."

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was overcome by a spiritual condition. He jumped down and the dog went through. Subsequently he received ilhām[1]: "O ʿAbd ar-Rahīm! Do you know what this was all about? The story is that on one occasion you did an act of kindness to another dog. I willed for you to remain indebted to it. It was through a fellow dog – from its own kind – that I conveyed so much of knowledge to you."

We learn from this that the smallest of good actions should not be disregarded. It may well be that it is accepted in Allāh's court and becomes the means for a person's salvation.

When a person has an affiliation with a saint, it does not go to waste. He benefits from him in this world and there is hope that Allāh *taʿālā* will not deprive him of His grace in the Hereafter.

The above statement serves as a strong stimulus for those who are affiliated with saints to ensure that their affiliation is based on a genuine and sincere bond. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us and may He bless our affiliation with strength and genuineness. And may He make it a means of progress in our affiliation with Him. Āmīn.

You already heard that Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was fastidious in following the Sunnat and practising on the Sharīʿat

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[1] When Allāh *taʿālā* puts a thought in a person's heart it is called an ilhām.

notwithstanding the many spiritual conditions which he experienced. Being overcome by spiritual conditions and following the Sunnat are two opposites. A person is unconscious in the first while the second demands total consciousness. We cannot comprehend how these personalities combined the two. The proof for both is in the verse:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say, if you love Allāh then follow me.

Allāh *taʿālā* is instructing Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to say: "If you love Allāh *taʿālā* then follow me." Allāh *taʿālā* uses the words "if you love Allāh" for His love; and the words "then follow me" for following the Sunnat. He laid down the following of the Sunnat as a sign of love for Him.

I heard my teachers speaking about Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* but did not hear them quoting any statement of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. Whereas Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had himself come to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* to become his disciple. By the time he reached, the Shaykh had passed away. He then went back and pledged allegiance to Khwājah Bāqī Billāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs *rahimahullāh* was a distinguished scholar. This can be gauged from some of his conditions and statements. His fastidiousness in following the Sunnat and expertise in the Tarīqat can also be gauged from them.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* relates some of his conditions in *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah Fī Chishtīyyah al-ʿAlīyyah* (The

Clear Sunnah Among The Exalted Chishtīs). He writes:

> Every saint was particular about following the Sunnat – each according to his rank. One could not reach the level of the other, and could not even understand it.

He writes further:

> If a person rejects them even after learning about their fastidiousness in following the Sunnat, then such a person will inevitably be deprived. A rejecter acquires no position apart from disgrace and humiliation.

The author of *ʿAwārif* said:

> The person who rejects is astray and has transgressed the bounds.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful statement.

I came across this in the writings of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*; I did not see it anywhere else. He said: "A rejecter experiences nothing but humiliation, deprivation and repulsion."

He writes further:

> Although the one who affirms has not reached that level, there is hope that his affirmation which he is resorting to in his service and companionship of the saints will convey him to their level and make him a true gnostic.

Look at this exceptional statement of the Shaykh. A person reaches perfection solely through affirmation and becomes a true recognizer of Allāh *taʿālā*. After

all, Dīn entails nothing but affirmation. Allāh *taʿālā* describes the believers:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ

Those who affirm the day of Recompense.

Allāh *taʿālā* is listing the actions of the righteous believers and including in the list that they affirm the day of Recompense. The first verse of the Qur'ān which contains a praise of the believers states:

يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ

They believe in the unseen.

Their actions are described after this. Allāh *taʿālā* first says that they believe in the unseen. Īmān and affirmation are the same. Those who have the quality of affirmation are *musaddiq* – the affirmers. It is the path shown by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. In it there is no escape from affirmation. It is the greatest thing. Unfortunately, the condition of people is that they consider it to be nothing. If they engaged in repeating Allāh's name 5 000 times, they think they have done a great thing. But they consider affirmation to be nothing. Whereas it is learnt from the Qur'ān that it is indeed a great thing and enjoys a lofty position. Different forms of dhikr are nothing in comparison to it. This is why Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is saying that a person who goes to a saint with affirmation, it is hoped that his affirmation will convey him to perfection and make him into a gnostic.

Hypocrites and unbelievers were rejecters, so they were disgraced and driven out. The believers

possessed affirmation, so they were guided and accepted in Allāh's court.

A disciple of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* received an inspiration which said:

صر مؤمنا أو كافرا

It does not matter whether you become a believer or an unbeliever.

The Shaykh wrote to him:

> "It is known as an abusive love. It is an interference with one's love." He then added: "You must continue with your work and remain resolute on the Sharīʿat. Do not fear anything. Become the soil of Allāh *taʿālā* and you will become a king. Become His slave and you will be able to do as you want."

The Shaykh writes to one of his disciples:

> Remain vigilant and be steadfast in the work at hand. Remain firm on the Sharīʿat. As long as you remain steadfast on the Sharīʿat and continue the work tirelessly, you will experience light upon light, and mystery after mystery will be laid bare before you.

Glory to Allāh! What a powerful incentive! He says further:

A disciple was seeing some type of light so he related it to his shaykh. The shaykh was an enlightened person so he said: "Go and bring a handful of straw without asking its owner for permission to take it." The disciple did as he was told and the light went

out. The disciple came to the shaykh and informed him. The shaykh understood its reality and said: "Remain focussed. The light which you had seen was true light. Had it remained even after this sin which you committed [of taking straw without permission], it would not have been light in reality. It would have been darkness. It would not have been the truth, it would have been falsehood."

In other words, where there is no influence of the Sharīʿat, it is undoubtedly a satanic whispering.

The reason for asking the disciple to take a handful of straw which belonged to someone else was because although this action is permissible in itself, it was not becoming of the disciple to do this bearing in mind his spiritual condition. It was against his high level of piety. The shaykh therefore put him through a test. If his condition is genuine, it will affect him by doing even this small act. Thus, it did have an effect on him and the spiritual light which he was experiencing was extinguished. The shaykh concluded the genuineness of his disciple and was satisfied by it.

Now look! If the doing of a permissible act could have such an effect, what can be said of the deprivation which is experienced when a person commits major sins. You should therefore remain firm on obedience and uphold the Sharīʿat because there is nothing apart from the Sharīʿat to ensure internal spiritual purity. A person may become a genuine walī, the light which he sees may be genuine, his actions and words may be genuine; but he still has to follow and emulate Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. When explaining the Sharīʿat, he does not have the right to say anything from his side.

Know well that it is the time of a test, it is not the time for punishment and reward. The time for punishment and reward is in the Hereafter. What light, effulgence and spiritual ecstasy you may experience now; it is to test you. You should therefore remain fearful and always think of this famous saying:

والمخلصون على خطر عظيم.

The sincere ones are in real danger.

The shaykh says further:

> The true men subdued and overpowered their lives, vanquished the world, and reached the effulgence and mysteries of Allāh *taʿālā*. All praise is due to Allāh.

Listen! The life-conditions of the auliyā' are commentaries and explanations for the life-conditions of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. If the spiritual conditions and stations of a saint are not explained, they will depart with his departure from this world. This is why the saints of every era explain and expound on the conditions of their pious predecessors. Although they have passed on, their excellences and teachings are alive. A poet rightly said:

> When a person's heart has been revived with love, his legacy is recorded forever in the newspaper of the world.

When I explained this, people were left amazed and couldn't believe that there were such people who possessed such knowledge, practice and spiritual conditions. People of this nature will be found in

every era. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to benefit from their blessings. Āmīn.

ACTION IS EASY, KNOWLEDGE IS DIFFICULT

I had addressed a person specifically in one of my assemblies and said to him:

There has been a constant battle between knowledge and ignorance. It was on the basis of knowledge and ignorance that battles were fought between the knowledgeable and the ignorant. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have been the original bearers of knowledge, while the unbelievers have been the flag bearers of ignorance.

If you examine any battle which is referred to as a battle between Islam and unbelief, you will realize that its fundamental reason is the same battle between knowledge and ignorance. This is because Islam is an embodiment of light while unbelief is nothing but darkness. It is for this reason that the Qur'ān refers to the unbelievers as ignorant. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قُلْ اَفَغَيْرَ اللهِ تَاْمُرُوْنِّيْ اَعْبُدُ اَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُوْنَ.

Say: Are you asking me to worship someone other than Allāh, O ignorant ones?[1]

The Prophets' sole objective was to proliferate knowledge. They were given this responsibility by Allāh *taʿālā* so they carried it out. The unbelievers - acting under the dictates of their carnal self – opposed them. Their own ignorance prevented them from giving up their ancestral ignorance, self-worship

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[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 64.

and ignorant customs. This is why they stood in opposition to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and ignited the fires of war.

The conflict between knowledge and ignorance sometimes took a very dangerous turn. If you were to think about it, you will find that this conflict always existed in this world; not only with the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* but with their deputies as well. The thing which is intrinsic to the original will be intrinsic to the deputy as well.

If you were to ponder about it, you will notice that even though some people have been Muslims for centuries, when the ʿulamā' present the Sharīʿat to them, they become antagonistic towards them. They display their total ignorance in their treatment of the ʿulamā'. This is why very few people are free from this conflict. When ignorance comes, it brings with it everything which is intrinsic to it. Bad character, abusiveness, enmity, conflict and antagonism are central to ignorance. When knowledge comes, it brings with it culture, decorum, sound character, love, affection and other related things. When ignorance gains the upper hand, people's character becomes corrupt, they become wayward and crooked; due to which they cannot differentiate between right and wrong. Egotism and self-worship becomes the order of the day. In short, rectitude departs from this world and it becomes a centre of temptation and corruption.

In such a situation, it becomes necessary to convey correct knowledge to the people. Because this is what will uproot ignorance and disperse its darkness. However, people assume that knowledge is easy and action is difficult. I say, knowledge is difficult and action is easy. Action is the result and fruit of

knowledge. Correct knowledge will always result in correct actions. If there is a defect in actions, it is because of defective knowledge. Knowledge comes first and then action. Therefore, when you see defectiveness in action, you must conclude that there is certainly some shortcoming in knowledge. Action is the corollary of knowledge and it is always subservient to it. In other words, if knowledge is perfect, actions will be perfect. If knowledge is defective, so will be actions. In short, the level of knowledge will decide the extent of actions. This is why I said that knowledge is difficult while actions are easy.

Take an example of something which is tangible. All those who are sitting here and listening to my talk are – Māshā Allāh – people of action. You performed ishrāq salāh and came here. Many of you must have performed tahajjud salāh. However, there will be few from among you who will be understanding my lecture. If you went outside and someone were to ask you what I spoke about, very few of you will be able to repeat what I said. This is because knowledge is difficult. It cannot be understood and conveyed without continued and lengthy practice.

The disharmony which we presently see in the madāris is essentially a battle between knowledge and ignorance. I made reference to this previously. This is why students too are not particularly affected by knowledge.

The favour of knowledge is not any less than the favour of wealth. When wealth is given to a person, he becomes indebted. However, we cannot understand how a student does not accept the favour of knowledge. We find people according the same respect to their teachers as they do to the spiritual

mentors. This is because they acquired knowledge from them, and there is no wealth greater than knowledge. Knowledge has turned them into their slaves. Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

من علمني حرفا صيّرني عبدا.

The one who teaches me a single letter turns me into his slave.

The opposite is happening today. Teachers are opposed and students are displaying rebellious attitudes to them. This clearly shows that they did not learn anything from their teachers and that knowledge did not have any effect on their hearts. Either they did not benefit at all or, if they did, their knowledge was taken away from them because of their disrespect towards their teachers. They were therefore deprived of their blessings. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Not matter what, it has been the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that there has always been a conflict between knowledge and ignorance; and knowledge eventually triumphs over ignorance. When correct knowledge is conveyed to others, they come onto the path. The misguidance, ignorance and corruption which you see today is because people do not have correct knowledge. It is generally felt that knowledge is present but there is a dearth in actions, and that this is the reason for corruption in the world. But I am saying to you that the absence of correct knowledge is another reason for a lack of actions. It cannot happen that there is a genuine scholar in a certain place and he is conveying the correct knowledge of the Sharīʿat to the people, and it is not having any effect on them. This is not possible.

We observe the people having some inclination towards actions and worship, but they do not want to come to knowledge. This is because knowledge is difficult. Do you know why knowledge is difficult? When you are in worship, you need to focus on just one thing. If you are in salāh, you to need to focus on salāh. When you are engaged in Allāh's remembrance, you will turn to it. The same can be said of fasting, zakāh, hajj and so on. The temperament will become focused on whatever needs to be done. On the other hand, when it comes to knowledge, the heart and the brain have to be kept occupied on every angle all the time. For example, if you have to speak about sincerity, you will have to think about the various verses which speak about it. You will have to check the different Ahādīth which make mention of it. How is sincerity acquired? What are the things which negate sincerity? If ostentation creeps in, sincerity disappears. If an action is done out of hypocrisy, it will also negate sincerity. In short, you will have to bear in mind all these angles at once, and this is extremely difficult. It confuses the mind of a person.

When I say that knowledge is difficult and worship is easy, I am saying it on the basis of a mutual comparison. It does not mean that there is no difficulty at all in worship. How can I say such a thing!? This is an era of flagrant sinning. If a person fulfils any act of worship it will be a great thing and will undoubtedly demonstrate his excellence. The point I am trying to make is that there is focus in worship, so it is easy. On the other hand, knowledge requires attention to several factors, so it is difficult.

It is because of this difficulty in knowledge that we are seeing some action today. At the same time,

knowledge is waning by the day. A Hadīth states that knowledge will be scarce towards the latter part of time. We are seeing this today. However, there is another narration which says that there will be a proliferation of knowledge towards the latter part of time. This appears to be a contradiction. The scholars of the past reconciled the two by saying that the reality of knowledge will certainly decrease, but superficial knowledge will increase. Those scholars had said this through their Allāh-inspired foresight, while we are seeing it today. There was a time when a student would record Hadīth from fajr to zuhr. Then from zuhr to ʿasr, the student and the teacher would discuss whatever was noted. There were no boarding and lodging arrangements for the students. There were no buildings and no madāris. Today, every type of ease is provided in the madāris. There is a library, guest house, teachers of the various sciences, food and clothing. All the means of comfort are present. If there is anything which is not present, it is knowledge. Do you know why this is the case? It is because knowledge is difficult. And because of its difficulty we find so many Ahādīth speaking about the virtues of knowledge. It is not only on the basis of our logic and intellect that we deduced that knowledge is superior. Rather, there are explicit texts in this regard. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

فضل العالم على العابد كفضلي على أدناكم.[1]

The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like my superiority over the lowest of you.

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[1] رواه الترمذي. مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٤.

Another narration states:

فضل العالم على العابد كفضل القمر ليلة البدر على سائر الكواكب.[1]

The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like the superiority of the full moon over all the stars.

Did you hear what Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said? In one Ḥadīth he says that the difference between a scholar and a worshipper is like the difference between him and the lowest among you. In another Ḥadīth he says that a scholar is superior to a worshipper just as the full moon is superior to the stars.

Qāḍī Bayḍāwī *raḥimahullāh* explains this as follows:

Worship is a feat and light which remains with the worshipper; it does not transfer to others. This is why it is compared to the light of the stars. Their light remains with them. On the other hand, knowledge is a merit which provides honour and virtue to the one having it, and is also conveyed to others. Its light is within the scholar and he is described by that virtue. However, it is not the scholar's personal excellence. Rather, it is a light which has been derived from the light of prophet-hood. This is why it is compared to the light of the moon. The moon's light is not its own; it has been derived from the sun.[2]

Comparison between knowledge and practice

The explanation of ʿAllāmah Bayḍāwī *raḥimahullāh* is in itself a beautiful explanation. However, my heart

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٤.

[2] نفع قوت المغتذي، ص ٩٩.

desires to compare knowledge and worship in a manner which is clearer. It is through the blessings of these very same personalities that a point came to my mind. Listen carefully.

Knowledge is superior to worship because it is transferred towards action. Every action has certain rules and regulations. If a person does not have knowledge of them, his action will not be correct. As though the validity of an action is dependent on knowledge of it. Furthermore, the virtues of worship are also because of knowledge. Action is discarded when knowledge is discarded. When correct knowledge enters a person's heart, it is not possible that he does not practise. After all, the fruit of knowledge is inevitable. On the other hand, for action, it is not necessary that a person has correct knowledge of it. There is a general and specific relationship between the two. Knowledge is transitive towards action, but action is not transitive towards knowledge. This is another reason for the superiority of knowledge. We see many people immersed in worship but, let alone other things, they are totally ignorant of the rules which are applicable to that act of worship.

The story of a worshipper

A saint fled from the people and began living in a mountain where he used to worship Allāh *taʿālā*. A youngster became angry with his house-people, so he fled and joined the saint. The saint had placed a candle in one nostril while his other nostril was left open. The boy asked him the reason for doing this. He replied: "I get the fragrance of flowers and other things while living here in the mountain. This causes my carnal self to feel inflated. I placed this impure candle in my other nostril so that my self does not

get inflated and remains on balance." The boy said: "Hadrat, I am not a scholar but I have heard that even if a hair's breadth of place is left dry, wudū' is not complete. By placing this candle in your nostril, some part of your face is definitely left dry and unwashed. This means that your wudū' is not valid in the first place. If your wudū' is not valid your salāh cannot be valid." When he heard this, he repeated all his past salāhs and advised the youngster: "Go back into the town and acquire knowledge. You must then come back and teach me. And I will teach you about spirituality."

Now look! He was a worshipper but did not know the basic rules of salāh and purity. This is what I meant when I said that knowledge is difficult while worship is easy. And by knowledge I am referring to genuine knowledge. That is difficult. As for superficial knowledge, it is not difficult at all.

The heart is the first repository of understanding of Dīn

Listen to what the scholars say in this regard:

قال التوربشتي حقيقة الفقه في الدين ما وقع بالقلب فظهر على لسانه فأفاد علما أورث خشية وتقوى، وأما ما يتدارسه الغرورية فإنه بمعزل عن المرتبة العظمى لأن محله لسانه دون قلبه.[1]

'Allāmah at-Taurbashtī rahimahullāh said: The reality of deep understanding of Dīn is that it reaches the heart first. From there, it emanates from the tongue, conveys knowledge and results in submission and

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[1] نفع قوت المغتذي، ص ٩٩.

piety. As for what the Gharūrī people study and teach, it is far away from that lofty position. This is because it is on the tongue and not in the heart.

Did you see the definition of real knowledge? It is that knowledge regarding which the Qur'ān says:

اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ.

From His servants, it is only the 'ulamā' who fear Allāh.

This is because piety and submission are the fruits of that genuine knowledge which the 'ulamā' bear. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

Say: Are those who know and those who do not know equal?

If the two are equal, it would mean that the sunlight and shade are equal, light and darkness are the same; whereas the two are opposites. In the same way, knowledge and ignorance cannot be the same.

The virtue of the 'ulamā'

You have already observed the virtue of knowledge and, through it, the 'ulamā'. Now listen to another virtue. You must have heard the saying:

موت العالِم موت العالَم.

The death of a scholar marks the death of the world.

I don't think you ever heard:

موت العابِد موت العالَم.

The death of a worshipper marks the death of the world.

From here we learn that a scholar is superior to a worshipper. His blessings are indispensable and he has a bond with the world. A worshipper saves only his self, while a scholar rescues countless people from drowning. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says:

> A Sufi emigrated from his khānqāh and went to a madrasah. He gave up the company of the Sufis. I asked him: "Hadrat, what difference did you see between a worshipper and a scholar which caused you to give up Sufism and take admission in a madrasah where knowledge is imparted?" He replied: "Brother, the fact of the matter is that the blessings of a Sufi are confined and restricted to his self. He will be able to save only himself from the waves of the ocean, while a true scholar of Dīn will do his utmost to rescue as many drowning people as he can. He will not allow them to drown.

You may have also heard the saying:

نوم العالِم عبادة.

The sleep of a scholar is an act of worship.

But I don't think you ever heard:

نوم العابِد عبادة.

The sleep of a worshipper is an act of worship.

This is because a scholar is able to turn worldly matters into Dīnī matters by virtue of his knowledge.

Therefore, even an oblivious act like sleep becomes an act of worship in his favour. He sleeps with knowledge and wakes up with knowledge. In other words, he considers sleep to be an order of Allāh *taʿālā* and a right of his body; so his entire sleep is counted as an act of worship. As for the one who does not have knowledge, it is not far-fetched for him to turn many of his Dīnī activities into worldly activities because of having a wrong intention when doing them.

In short, both these statements were not made in favour of a worshipper. This is so that people may realize the superiority of knowledge and know that the validity or invalidity of actions is based on knowledge. Knowledge is the root while actions are its branches. Even wilāyat (close friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*) is a subsidiary of knowledge. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* then describes who His friends are:

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ.

Those who believed and continued fearing.[2]

Friendship with Allāh *taʿālā* is dependent on īmān and fear of Allāh *taʿālā*. And these can only be acquired through knowledge. A poet says:

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 63.

You will have to melt yourself like a candle for the sake of knowledge. This is because you cannot recognize Allāh *taʿālā* without knowledge.

The signs of a walī

If a person has not acquired Allāh-recognition in the first place, how will he become His walī?

Allāh *taʿālā* says further:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ط لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

We learn from this that Allāh's criterion for wilāyat never changes. These points are explained in the Qur'ān but just look at what has been made the criteria for wilāyat by people. A person who is a walī of Allāh *taʿālā* has these qualities:

الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ.

Those who believed and continued fearing.[2]

But now, neither is īmān nor is Allāh's fear considered to be a prerequisite. In fact, I can go one step further and say that even humanness is not a prerequisite today. A person who prattles the entire day, whose nose is leaking, from whose mouth saliva

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 64.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 63.

is dripping, and who is lying in a drain is considered to be a walī. And when he removes his clothes and lies naked, then there is no doubt about his wilāyat. This is the condition of our beliefs. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from them.

I say, wilāyat is established from the Qur'ān. In the same way, the path to it – perfect īmān and perfect fear of Allāh *taʿālā* – is also described in the Qur'ān. How, then, can personal opinions and logic have a say in delineating what wilāyat is? Can logic be acceptable against a clear text of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth? This is nothing but misguidance. Shayṭān distorted an excellent and noble thing in such a way that people's very belief-system has been rendered baseless. It is obligatory to believe in the texts, and it is unbelief to reject them. It is a flagrant sin to abstain from acting on them while having the correct belief. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us. Just look at how we deviated. A poet says:

> How can your Islam remain when you discarded the Qur'ān? How can your īmān remain when you extinguished the light of īmān?

The ignoramuses do not have the slightest notion about the wilāyat of the 'ulamā', yet they are convinced about the wilāyat of people of this nature [described previously – who are lying naked in drains]. It is the very same ignorance which the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth spoke out against.

If the 'ulamā' were to explain these points to the masses and presented correct knowledge to them, many of these ailments would have been rectified. But the difficulty is who is going to do this? If a scholar was to speak on these topics, he will stutter and stammer because he does not have that amount

of confidence. The public too will say to him that they do not find him to be on the desired level of competence. They will say: "Although you are from among 'those who believed', we find you devoid of the quality of 'and continued fearing [Allāh]'."

Since the 'ulamā' know and understand wilāyat but do not come towards it, and the masses know that it is a high rank which is found in some people but not in the 'ulamā', so they [masses] allocated it to someone else. In this way, they began believing unqualified people to be qualified for wilāyat. This is why I said repeatedly that all the problems arise from ignorance. When a scholar does not convey correct knowledge to the masses, the latter's condition will get from bad to worse. As for knowledge, the places which were set up for it are fast becoming empty of it.

Maulānā 'Abd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh* was an erudite scholar and a dervish as well. But he used to conceal this. Students from distant lands used to come to study under him. After completing their studies, he would assemble the 'ulamā' to hand out graduation certificates to the students. He would say to the 'ulamā': "These are the students. You may test them on any subject you want." The 'ulamā' would reply: "Hadrat, there is no need for that. Your attestation is sufficient." They knew that these students were tutored by Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hayy, so no one had the courage to test the students. Now the situation is that neither does the seeker have knowledge of Sufism nor does the scholar have correct knowledge. The saints say that a seeker without knowledge is like a bird without wings. It cannot save itself from its enemies. In the same way, if a seeker does not have

knowledge, he will not be able to save himself from the carnal self and Shaytān who are his enemies. A Hadīth states:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقيه واحد أشد على الشيطان من ألف عابد.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: A single scholar is weightier against Shaytān than a thousand worshippers.

Shaytān is terrified by a scholar solely on the basis of his knowledge. As for an ignorant worshipper, he treats him like a morsel of food. He waits for the opportunity to snatch him. A worshipper devoid of knowledge remains defective.

Two levels of knowledge

There are two levels of knowledge. One is when a scholar acquires deep knowledge and becomes a master in his field. He can grasp the mischievousness of the opponents of knowledge and answer their objections. This level of knowledge is fard-e-kifāyah. It is necessary to have one such person in every place. If a place does not have such a person, the entire community will be sinning.

The other level is fard-e-ʿayn. This means that whatever a person does, he must have knowledge of the Sharīʿat related to that action. If he does not have the necessary knowledge, the action will be incomplete. In fact, it will also be incorrect. Today we do not have even this much of knowledge. Some of us do not even see the need for knowledge. This is the

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[1] مشكوة: ج ١، ص ٣٤.

door to ignorance – when no amount of knowledge remains in the heart and mind.

Correct knowledge gives birth to correct action. If there is knowledge but it is not giving birth to action, you can conclude that there is some defect. You must realize this defect and remove it. If you cannot understand it, go to the saints and they will show you the way. All this will only happen if you know that there are two types of knowledge, genuine and superficial, and that we are devoid of genuine knowledge. There is a need to leave the superficiality and move towards the genuine. Once you accept these basics, you will definitely find some servant of Allāh *taʿālā* who will remove you from superficiality and convey you to genuine knowledge. After this, you will undoubtedly become eligible for those virtues of knowledge and the knowledgeable which are mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.

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All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* the third volume of *Maʿārif Muṣliḥul Ummat* has been proofread not once but twice. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I received a lot of help from Maulānā Nabīl Aḥmad. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. Āmīn.

This volume contains important sciences. They need to be studied and adopted. This is essential for all Muslims especially the associates of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat *raḥimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us. Āmīn. It is through the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* that good deeds are completed.

Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Bayt al-Adhkār, Waṣīyyābād, Allāhābād.
16 Shaʿbān 1439 A.H./3 May 2018

WORSHIPPERS OF THE CARNAL SELF

وَمِنْهُمُ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ ط قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ أمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ ط وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْذُوْنَ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ.

Some of (the hypocrites) hurt the Prophet (sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam by saying things which offend him when he hears them). (When anyone stops them) they say: "This person is all ears." (It is easy to deceive him with a lie, so there is nothing to worry about.) Say (in reply to them): (You yourselves are deceived. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam hears something, it could be done in two ways. One is by affirming what you say and considering it to be correct in his heart. The second way is out of his good nature and nobleness. Although he understands fully well that it is wrong, he defers it out of his good nature. He does not interrogate the speaker nor does he belie him outright.) Thus, the Prophet is all ears for your own good. (The essence of it is that he learns from Allāh through divine revelation) and believes in Him. (The goodness of this affirmation is known to the entire world because educating and establishing justice are dependent on it.) He believes in (the words of the sincere) believers (because they are based on īmān and sincerity. The goodness of this is also obvious because justice in general is dependent on correct knowledge of conditions. And it is the sincere believers who are the means for that correct knowledge.) (As for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa

sallam listening to your mischievous statements), it is because he is merciful to those of you who flaunt their īmān (even though there is no īmān in your hearts. It is because of this mercy and sound character that he listens to your statements. Although he knows the reality of what you said, he overlooks it and keeps silent. Thus, his listening to you is of the second type but you, in your foolishness, assume that he believes and affirms what you said. In short, you think that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam does not fathom the reality of what you said whereas the fact of the matter is that you did not understand it.) Those who hurt the Messenger of Allāh (whether by saying whatever they said after referring to him as "he is all ears" or by merely stating that "he is all ears" – both these are offensive to his intelligence and intellect) – for them is a painful punishment.[1]

We learn from these verses that there were some people during the time of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam who concealed their hypocrisy and made fabricated statements in his presence. Although Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam understood their schemes and conspiracies, he – out of his good nature and magnanimity – neither exposed them nor humiliated them in public. On the other hand, these foolish fellows assumed that they duped Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and that he was convinced by their slippery tongues. In actual fact, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam fully understood each and every word which they uttered but he disregarded it and overlooked them. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes:

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 61. *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, p. 120.

وقد غرهم قاتلهم الله تعالى حتى قالوا ما قالوا كرم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حيث لم يشافههم برد ما يقولون رحمة منه بهم وهو عليه الصلوة والسلام الرحمة الواسعة. وعن بعضهم أنه سئل عن العاقل، فقال الفطن المتعاقل وأنشد:

وإذا الكريم أتيته بخديعة – فرأيته فيما تروم يسارع
فاعلم بأنك لم تخادع جاهلا – إن الكريم لفضله متخادع

May Allāh destroy the hypocrites for having made such audacious statements to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam. The fact of the matter is that they are deluded by his magnanimity. He did not reply to them verbally. Instead, he treated them with mercy. He is certainly an embodiment of extensive mercy. (His mercy extended to friends and foes.) Someone was asked about who an intelligent person is. He replied that he is the one who conceals and disregards a statement even after understanding its meaning fully. He then quoted these lines:

When you deceive a noble-minded person and you see him trying to fulfil your objective, then know well that you did not deceive an ignorant person. Instead, the noble-minded person feigned deception out of his kindness and grace.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh follows this with a beautiful explanation. Observe it carefully.

You still find many people like this, and they come to me as well. They neither do anything themselves nor do they want others to progress. Their sole objective is to spread mischief and to raise objections to every single thing.

A person came to me and said: "People say that you have many impositions and restrictions." I say, these people take away all of my time. They come after fajr, after zuhr, after ʿasr, after maghrib and even after ʿishā. And they still accuse me of having many restrictions!? Now what more do they want? I thought about this for some time – they take away all my time and still accuse me of being too strict. It eventually dawned upon me that these people do not do anything constructive themselves. When they see some work being done somewhere, they think to themselves that this place is out of their control. Now that some work is done there and people are benefiting, they will have to put an end to it by levelling objections. In this way, they try to bring the place under their control. People of this nature used to come to me in my hometown as well.

One man came in the afternoon when I was asleep. He said to my associates: "Go and wake him up, I have come to meet him." This is the level of retrogression. They neither adhere to principles nor do they allow others to apply their own principles. They have bought us for nothing – they take away our time and are still unhappy.

The same thing used to happen when I was in Gaurakpūr. They used to take away my time from the morning until after ʿishā, and they still had complaints.

A person came to me and said: “I have some complaints about this place.” I replied: “Brother, we never met before. You are from a different district and I am from a different district. Now what unseen inconvenience did I cause you that you have complaints?” After much cross questioning he admitted that he did not suffer any inconvenience from me, but added: “The fact is that the adherence to principles as applied here are very difficult for us.”

Now you see! People want us to become totally unprincipled. They are happy with it. It is difficult for them to adhere to principles and they want to remain free. When someone calls them towards principles and teaches the injunctions of the Qur’ān to them, they claim that he is strict. They see strictness in rules and regulations.

A person from Calcutta wrote a letter to me and quoted this verse:

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

> Had you been harsh, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.[1]

Allāh taʿālā addresses Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and says to him that if he was strict, harsh and hard-hearted; the large group of Saḥābah would not have rallied around him. Instead, they would have left him and dispersed.

The person quoted this verse to me because he assumed I was harsh and he wanted to show me that it is the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 159

wa sallam to be soft. I should therefore be soft and not be harsh. I replied to his letter. After some time, he wrote to me again and stated therein: "You are probably angry at me because I find my condition gone bad." I said: "Just look! He first quotes a verse of the Qur'ān to me, and then complains to me about the worsening of his condition."

Many people used to write to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh and quote this verse to him. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say to us: "I respond to their objection with the same verse." This is how he used to respond:

The theme of the verse is that if you were harsh, people would not have assembled around you. They would have left you and dispersed. This means that if a person is harsh and strict, people leave his company. The situation here [with Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh] is that not only are my old associates not leaving me, new people are coming here all the time. Had I been harsh and strict, all these people would have left me a long time ago.

Now let me explain another point. Listen to it attentively and understand it. Allāh taʿālā says:

عَلَيْهَا مَلٰئِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُوْنَ اللّٰهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ.

> Over it are appointed angels, stern and powerful. They do not disobey Allāh in whatever He commands them. They only do what they have been commanded.[1]

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[1] Sūrah at-Tahrīm, 66: 6.

Now look! Although the angels are sinless, they are stern and powerful. This shows that it is not a defect for innocence to be accompanied with sternness and strictness. Thus, even if Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was stern and strict, it would not have been a defect in him. However, Allāh taʿālā made him an embodiment of mercy so that no one may have any natural hesitation in benefiting from him in any way.

A Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was in his house when a Sahābī radiyallāhu ʿanhu called for him from outside. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked: "Who is it?" He replied: "It is me." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did not like this reply, so he said by way of a rebuke: "It is me! It is me!" He meant that this is a vague reply. Every person refers to himself as "me". How, then, can a questioner identify who the person is? He may not be able to recognize his voice. This is why he ought to give his name and abstain from saying: "It is me."

People are unprincipled and they want others to be like them. They want to make themselves vague and unclear like that soldier whose legs got chopped in a battle. He was lying unconscious on the battlefield. His companions assumed he was dead, so they left him on the battlefield and departed. When he woke up, he looked around and realized he was all alone. He became quite apprehensive and fretful. Just then he saw someone walking by. He contrived to call him near so he shouted out: "Brother! I am about to die. I have a bag of money tied to my back. You should rather come and take it or else it will get into someone else's hands." When the man came near to get the money-bag, the soldier struck his legs with a

sword and chopped off both his legs. The man fell near him. The man asked the soldier: “What have you done!?” The solider replied: “I don’t have any bag of money or any such thing. The fact of the matter is that I was quite restless at having to lie here by myself, so I made you to join me. We can now engage in idle talk and pass our time.” The man said: “You wretched fellow! You cannot walk yourself and you do not want others to walk.”

I say with reference to those people [who make objections against me]: They do not do anything themselves and they do not want others to do anything. They have no work, so they can do nothing but raise objections.

One person came to visit me. He was an ʿālim and knew English as well. He was a man of deep understanding. He was happy with whatever he experienced here and left. Later on I learnt that he was actually sent by someone who had claimed that I am very strict and harsh, so he should come here and verify it. When this ʿālim went back, the people asked him: “Tell us, what happened?” He said to them sarcastically: “I got a lot of hiding there.” After that, he explained the truth to them and described whatever he experienced. He added: “There is not strictness whatsoever. Even when he is harsh with some people, they accept it happily with their heart and soul.”

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the man’s justice and deep understanding. (compiler)

It was popularly believed that Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu was strict and stern. An intelligent person asked about his interactions with children. People informed him that children have an affinity with him. When Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu

ʿanhu used to walk pass, children would rush towards him, hold him by his garments, cling to him, hold his beard, and walk behind him for long distances. When the person heard this, he said: "He is definitely not strict and stern because if he was, he would never pay attention to children."

The fact of the matter is that Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu disapproved of whatever was bad and evil. He was stern in matters related to Allāh taʿālā as stated in a Hadīth:

وأشدهم في أمر الله عمر.

> ʿUmar is the sternest of the Sahābah in matters related to Allāh.

As for his personal matters, he was not strict in the least. He was extremely soft.

The hypocrites used to make up stories to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and leave under the assumption that they have deceived him. On the other hand, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam fully understood their schemes but closes his eyes to them out of his noble-mindedness. He extended his noble character to these schemers and traitors throughout his life. However, the moment he received divine revelation to expel the hypocrites, he announced the name of each hypocrite and expelled him. ʿAllāmah Ālūsī rahimahullāh quotes a Hadīth in *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī*:

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam stood on the pulpit on a Friday to deliver a sermon. He said: "O such and such person, stand up and leave because you are a hypocrite." In this way, he took the name

of thirty-six people, asked them to leave, and disgraced them in this way.

I say, those who were expelled were disgraced and everyone came to know that they were hypocrites. Those who were left in the masjid were honoured and everyone knew that they were sincere believers. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī rahimahullāh used to say with reference to this Hadīth: "The criminals were separated from the obedient ones on that day."

The second group of hypocrites

Now listen! Allāh taʿālā speaks about a second group of hypocrites. They had reached the peak of hypocrisy.

وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِيْنَةِ مَرَدُوْا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ ط نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ.

> From among the residents of Madīnah there are hypocrites who have reached such limits of hypocrisy that you too do not know them. We alone know who they are.[1]

This means: They have become such experts in their hypocrisy and so adept at concealing what is within them that despite your astuteness and far-sightedness, you are unable to identify them. You are unable to fathom their previously-mentioned secrets. However, nothing can be hidden from Allāh taʿālā. The reason why you cannot recognize them is that they did their utmost to conceal their hypocrisy

[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 101.

and display their sincerity. They kept away from situations where accusations could be made against them so that no one would suspect them of hypocrisy. They had set right their external selves very well, but they had concealed their hypocrisy from within and were happy with it.

On the other hand, the sincere Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum feared hypocrisy. One narrator relates: "I met seventy Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum who had participated in the Battle of Badr and each one feared hypocrisy over his self." A Hadīth of *Sahīh Bukhārī* states:

ما خافه إلا مؤمن، وما أمنه إلا منافق.

> Only a believer fears it, and only a hypocrite feels secure from it.

This means that a believer constantly fears hypocrisy, and questions himself whether it is within him or not. As for a real hypocrite, he does not even think about it and does not bother if a fatal illness like this is in him. Instead, he is happy with his condition.

Some associates requested me to write on sincerity. A discussion on sincerity will certainly contain a discussion on hypocrisy, and it ought to be so because a thing is identified by its opposite.

تعرف الأشياء بأضدادها.

> Things are identified and known by their opposites.

The exegists say with reference to the following verse:

وَاٰخَرُوْنَ اعْتَرَفُوْا بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ خَلَطُوْا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَيِّئًا.

> There are others who confessed their sins [after] having mixed a righteous deed with another that was evil.[1]

This verse refers to a group of hypocrites which was inspired to repent later on. Other exegists say that it refers to a group of Muslims who were lagging behind in carrying out religious works but were not hypocrites.

I was saying to you that there are people who do not want to remain principled nor do they want others to remain on their principles. In this very city of Allāhābād, two persons came to me and said: "We would like to come and meet you. At what time should we come?" I replied: "You can come whenever you wish." They were surprised by my reply and asked: "Any time!?" I replied in the affirmative. I realized that they didn't really want to come; they were merely asking for no reason. It was as I had realized. Had they come at mid-night, I would have had to receive them because mid-night is included in "any time".

Now listen further. A person came to me and asked me the best time to meet me. I said: "I normally sit in the morning to receive people, and they come to meet me during this time. You may come at the same time." He said: "I do not get an opportunity to come at such a time. I will only be able to come at ten in the night." Now I ask you: How can this be

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 102.

reasonable? People want to be free whenever they feel like it, and they want to restrict me. I must leave all my work and free myself for twenty-four hours to meet people. In the meantime, people will come whenever they are free. The one who is free in the morning will come then. The one who is free in the afternoon will come then. The one who is free at night will come then. In fact, the one who is free at tahajjud time will come then. And I must be ready to receive them at whatever time they come!?

I ask you, how can people make such a demand? If I am occupied at a certain time – for example, I am conducting a lesson – and I cannot meet them, then I am accused of being too strict. Is this fair?

A complete change has taken place nowadays. The thing which was praiseworthy is now considered to be a defect. To be principled is a praiseworthy quality. But now the same thing is seen as strictness. Similarly, if someone is told to at least seek permission when he goes to someone's house, it is taken as an insult. Whereas the issue of seeking permission is proven from the Qur'ān. Unfortunately, objections are even made to the injunctions of the Qur'ān. Allāh ta'ālā says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوْتِكُمْ حَتّٰى تَسْتَأْنِسُوْا وَتُسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰٓى أَهْلِهَا ط ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ. فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجِدُوْا فِيْهَآ أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوْهَا حَتّٰى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ ج وَإِنْ قِيْلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوْا فَارْجِعُوْا هُوَ أَزْكٰى لَكُمْ ط وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ.

> O believers! Do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked permission and wished peace to their owners. This is better for you so that you may bear in mind. Then if you do not find anyone therein, do not enter them as long as you are not given permission. If you are told: "Turn back," then turn back. In this there is much purity for you. Allāh knows whatever you do.[1]

The order to seek permission applies to all homes – those inhabited by males and females. It is so sad to see other nations adopting these rules while Muslims have discarded them. It is obligatory to seek permission and Sunnah to precede it with salām. (However, the offering of salām which is Sunnah is understood as the Islamic way while seeking permission which is obligatory is not considered to be necessary. Instead, if someone asks a Muslim to seek permission, he becomes offended. Whereas it is a sin to leave out an obligatory action.) The house in which no one apart from one's wife is living is excluded from this rule. If not, it would be included in the ruling of "other than your own houses" because the basis is the same. A house which is inhabited by males only, and a person is sitting there so that anyone who wants, may come and meet him, is also excluded from this rule. As for a house which is reserved for privacy and resting – even if it is for males only – or a house where people come to meet a person but it is ascertained that it is also used as a place for privacy

[1] Sūrah an-Nūr, 24: 27-28.

and sleeping; permission will have to be sought. Although this verse is addressed to males, the same rules apply to females.[1]

See with how much detail Allāh taʿālā is explaining the issue of seeking permission. Despite this, Muslims get offended by it. They do not know that it is an injunction of the Qur'ān.

I said to a Maulwī Sāḥib: "If you come to meet me and I reply that you should leave and go back because I cannot meet you at this time, will you be offended by it? From your condition I conclude that you will be offended. Whereas the Qur'ān teaches us:

وَإِنْ قِيْلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوْا فَارْجِعُوْا هُوَ أَزْكٰى لَكُمْ.

> If you are told: "Turn back," then turn back.
> In this there is much purity for you.

Look! Allāh taʿālā is saying that you must go back. We learn from this that when the person goes back, he is doing it by the order of Allāh taʿālā. Allāh is saying "turn back" and this is an order.

A king went to meet a saint. The doorman stopped him and asked him to leave. The king left without meeting the saint. He came back a second time and the saint received him. The king quoted a line to the saint:

> It is not becoming for a dervish to have a doorman.

The saint responded spontaneously:

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[1] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, Sūrah an-Nūr.

He has to have a doorman so that the dogs of this world do not enter.

These points which I am explaining to you are essential for our times. Muslims started disregarding them ever since people stopped explaining them. Muslims have become so heedless that they even lost their minds. Now listen to an incident in this regard.

My lounge for meeting males was in the outside cottage, and people knew it. This is where they used to come to meet me. On one occasion, the womenfolk of the house were not at home. I was sitting inside. An ʿālim came to meet me, so I called him inside. The same ʿālim came to meet me after one year. He began entering the female section of the house without permission and without announcing his arrival. The poor women got up quickly and ran out. This is the condition of the ʿulamā'. This man did not even think to himself that when I called him inside the first time, it was a temporary situation. After all, the place for receiving males is outside. Muslims feel they don't have to use their brains. Other nations can use their brains, but Muslims have no common sense. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

PARTNERSHIP IS A DEFECT, THIS IS WHY POLYTHEISM IS DEFECTIVE

The erudite scholars wrote profusely on the evidence for monotheism. I will explain a straightforward proof for it. We notice that people do not like a partnership and consider it to be a defect. Every person wants to have his own house, his own shop, his own business and so on. A partnership is needed when there is a defect in each of the partners, and the work cannot be done alone. Many ʿulamā' are called to deliver lectures because one will not manage on his own. The others will help him. Many workers are employed in a factory because one will not be able to do all the work on his own. Partners are brought into a business because one person does not have sufficient money or cannot do the job on his own. No matter what, we learn from this that a partnership is a defective thing. It is an accepted fact that Allāh taʿālā is pure from every defect and deficiency. Consequently, we will say that He is also pure from partnership. Since partnership is negated, His oneness is affirmed.

A Ḥadīth states:

من كان لله كان الله له.

> The person who becomes Allāh's, Allāh becomes his.

In his *Mathnawī*, Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh relates an incident under the above Ḥadīth. A lion, a fox and a wolf went out on a hunt. All three hunted an animal: a buck, a wild goat and a rabbit. The lion

said to the wolf: “You should divide the hunt.” The wolf said: “The division is obvious. The buck is for me, the goat is for you and the rabbit is for the fox.” The lion got angry at his division and thought to himself, this wolf has the audacity to think something of himself in my presence!? The lion pounced on the wolf, mauled it and left it one side. The lion then said to the fox to divide the hunt. The fox said: “Master! The division is obvious. There is no question about it. The rabbit is for your breakfast, the buck for your lunch, and the goat will be left for your supper.” The lion was quite pleased at hearing this and asked: “From whom did you learn this equity and division?” The fox replied: “From the division of the wolf and the consequence of its division.” On hearing this, the lion said: “I have no need for these preys, you may take all. I will hunt some other animals. I was merely angered by the wolf’s manner of division.”

This is how seniors should be respected. A person must remain humble before them. A father wants his son to be humble before him. The same is the case with a teacher with his student and a shaykh with his murīd. Every senior wants his junior to be submissive. If a son, student or a murīd does something which shows that he considers himself to be great and perfect, then each senior will certainly be angered.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat raḥimahullāh stated an excellent reality. In fact, it is an advice to all juniors that it is essential for them to be humble and submissive before their seniors. If not, the seniors will be offended, and this will cause the door of deriving benefit and blessings from them to be shut. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says that the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām obliterate themselves completely before Allāh taʿālā. This is why when His punishment befalls the nation, the Prophets are protected. A whirlwind breaks down the highest of trees and buildings, while a small piece of straw remains protected on the ground.

If a father or teacher does not like his son or student to raise his head in his presence, how will Allāh taʿālā tolerate the creation raising its head in His presence? Anyone who raised his head [in disobedience] before Him was destroyed. Namrūd claimed divinity so Allāh taʿālā empowered a mosquito over him. The mosquito went up his nose and reached his brain, where it began biting him. He used to get some relief when people struck his head with their shoes. The mosquito used to stop biting him when his head was struck. Apart from that time, it would continue biting him. He eventually died in that condition. When any person raises his head [in defiance] against Allāh taʿālā, one must conclude that the day for his destruction has arrived.

Note: Even today, those who are raising their heads and considering themselves to be superpowers will – inshā Allāh – soon be debased and humiliated by Allāh taʿālā. He will then confer honour to His special servants provided they fulfil the demands and requisites of īmān. (compiler)

There was a deputy who rejected Allāh taʿālā. He went to a place to take an exam. A relative of Hadrat Maulānā was from among the students. He was a religious youngster. The deputy asked him: “How many categories of existence are there?” He replied: “Four: animals, plants and inanimate objects. And

there is a fourth category which is miscellaneous." Whenever the deputy asked him about a thing which did not seem to fit into one of the first three categories, he would say that it belongs to the fourth category. He frustrated the deputy in this way. The deputy was blind of one eye. He said to the student: "I will only believe in Allāh as the all-powerful being if He returns my sight to me." The student replied: "Allāh is certainly able to do that. However, He says: 'This deputy has denied Me. This is why I damaged his one eye.'"

The student experienced some trepidation at having vexed the deputy in this way and feared that he may try to harm him. He therefore beseeched Allāh taʿālā and begged Him to protect him from the deputy's evil. The deputy suddenly felt a pain in his stomach and passed away. The student was protected against his evil.

A person related to me: "I went to meet a saint for the first time. On reaching there, the saint asked me to go back from where I had come. I left without feeling offended in the least. When I went to meet him again after some days, he said to me: "Go and take a rest. Once you are relieved of your tiredness, you must leave." I did as instructed. I then went a third time. He did not say anything to me – he did not ask me to leave. Instead, he said: "Even on this occasion I had decided to ask you to leave but I couldn't utter the words. Someone had restrained my tongue. I concluded that you are destined to benefit from me."

The saint was able to recognize that if he could ask the person to leave, it was proof of the person's disinterest. And when he comes with a genuine quest, he [the saint] will not be able to ask him to

leave. This is the reality – the Ahlullāh just cannot expel a genuine seeker. There is a major difference between the ways of thinking of the past and of today. If a saint were to say something to a visitor today, people accuse the saint of being discourteous without checking the condition of their hearts. They are prepared to level accusations against the saint. This is extremely unjust.

Note: This is certainly the situation. Although people frequent the saints, they are deprived of their blessings on account of their own insolence and apathy.

THE NEED FOR PIETY AND SINCERITY

Allāh taʿālā says:

وَاعْلَمُوْا أَنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ.

Know well that Allāh is with the pious.[1]

In his commentary to this verse, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says: This means that Allāh taʿālā is the helper and guardian of those who choose piety. Thus, you people should choose piety so that you acquire Allāh's help, assistance, closeness and friendship. Some commentators say that this means: Allāh taʿālā is undoubtedly with you with His help and assistance. Instead of saying "with you", Allāh taʿālā said "with the pious". This is done to praise those who have the quality of piety and to defame those who have shortcomings with regard to piety. Also, it is to show that choosing piety is the basis for Allāh's help.

Allāh taʿālā uses the word وَاعْلَمُوْا (know well) quite often in the Qur'ān. This is an order. It means that it is obligatory on you to know this. If it is obligatory to know it, it will mean it is harām to not know it. People desire the blessings which are received by those who do good actions, but they do not even want to learn. Whereas, good actions can only be done after knowing [and learning]. If you do not know, how will you carry out the action?

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 194.

We learn from the explanation of this verse that Allāh taʿālā has certainly promised to help the believers and to be with them. However, it is foolish to consider ourselves to be eligible for His help. What I mean is that Allāh's promise to help is certainly there, but it is for the righteous and pious believers. Observe the following verses as examples:

اَللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا.

Allāh is the friend of the believers.[1]

وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِيْنَ.

Allāh befriends the righteous.[2]

وَاعْلَمُوْا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ.

Know well that Allāh is with the pious.[3]

Look at the great promises of Allāh taʿālā for piety and righteousness! They apply to this world and the Hereafter. Hadrat Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh conveys this theme beautifully in his *Mathnawī*. He says:

> Allāh taʿālā fulfils the needs and wants
> of those who have the quality of taqwā.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam: "I see Allāh taʿālā hastening to fulfil your wishes." The background to this is that Bayt al-Maqdis was appointed as the

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 257.

[2] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 196.

[3] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 194.

first qiblah. The Jews used to mock at the Muslims for this. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam wanted the qiblah to be changed to the Kaʿbah. He used to pray for this to happen and would look at the skies repeatedly in anticipation of divine revelation in this regard. Allāh taʿālā says with reference to this:

قَدْ نَرٰى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَآءِ.

> We certainly see your face repeatedly turning towards the heaven.[1]

فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضٰهَا.

> Now We will turn you to the qiblah which pleases you.[2]

Hadrat ʿĀʾishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā must have based her observation on the words "which pleases you".

This is why I say that whatever is reserved for the pious in the Hereafter, they will certainly receive it. At the same time, they will receive more in this world as well. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا. وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ.

> Whoever fears Allāh, He makes a way out for him. And provides for him from [sources] he did not even think about.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 144.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 144.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that Allāh taʿālā tests His servants. The one who remains on taqwā is showered with bounties. Righteous servants were put through severe hardships but they did not deviate from the path of steadfastness. People murdered Hadrat Zakarīyyā ʿalayhis salām mercilessly. Hadrat Yahyā ʿalayhis salām was born to Hadrat Zakarīyyā after the latter had reached old age and had many hopes for a son. Despite this, the Banī Isrāʾīl martyred him. Allāh taʿālā blessed Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām with unique miracles. First of all, he was born without a father. Then Allāh taʿālā enabled him to cure those who were born blind. Those who suffered from leprosy – an incurable disease – were restored to good health at his hands. Despite all this, people were antagonistic towards him and became his opponents to the extent that only twelve people believed in him. People instigated the king against him. The king eventually sent an army to kill Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām. He went into hiding to save himself from the enemy. However, one of his twelve disciples turned out to be a hypocrite. He passed on information about the whereabouts of Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām in return for a few dirhams. The enemy came and surrounded the place. They laid out plans to kill him but Allāh taʿālā protected Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām against their plots. Angels descended and caused darkness to pervade. Allāh taʿālā then enabled the angels to raise him to the heavens. In the meantime, the form and appearance of one of the enemies was changed so that he looked like Hadrat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām. The people then arrested him. Although he screamed out repeatedly that he

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[1] Sūrah at-Talāq, 65: 2-3.

was not ʿĪsā, people paid no heed to his pleas and crucified him. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَكَرُوْا وَمَكَرَ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرُ الْمٰكِرِيْنَ.

> Those unbelievers plotted and Allāh plotted. And the strategy of Allāh is the best.[1]

Did you see the various types of hardships and difficulties which Allāh's special and righteous servants had to bear? Our condition is that we want to enjoy similar fruits and blessings like theirs, but we become alarmed at and fret over the slightest calamity. Dear brothers! Remain sincere to Allāh taʿālā and elevate your courage. A believer is never low in courage; he always has high aspirations.

A saint had fallen ill. He felt like eating fish. When the people learnt of his desire, they searched for a fish, brought it and prepared it for him. When they presented it before him, they suddenly heard a beggar at the door. The saint asked them to give the same fish to the beggar. They said: "Hadrat! You have the fish, and we will give him some money instead." He replied: "No. Give him this very fish." When they saw his insistence, they gave the fish to the beggar. When he left, some people went to him and said: "Sell this fish to us. We will give you a lot of money for it." The beggar gave over the fish happily. They returned to the saint and said: "Hadrat! He sold the fish happily to us. You may eat it now." He replied: "No. I will not eat it." He was probably thinking of this verse:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 54.

وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا وَّأَسِيْرًا.

> They give food, for His love, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner.[1]

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā sent something for a beggar. The latter said something. She asked the people what he said. They replied: "He praised you and prayed for you." She said: "We do not give to receive praise in return. Go and give him this second charity." Allāh taʿālā quotes a statement of the true believers:

إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللهِ، لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا.

> [Thinking to themselves]: "We feed you solely for the pleasure of Allāh: We desire no recompense from you nor any thanks."[2]

This is how the Ahlullāh are: Their focus is on Allāh taʿālā. When a person's focus is on Allāh taʿālā, the world and whatever it contains is of no value to him. Hardships and calamities are of no significance to him. Unfortunately, present day Muslims lose their devotion to Allāh taʿālā at the slightest discomfort. Even more sorrowful is when they are inundated by calamities and disasters, their heedlessness does not change in the least. Other nations have some perception of their shortcomings. This is why they want to progress. The Muslim nation is so fast asleep that nothing can awaken it. So many events

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[1] Sūrah ad-Dahr, 76: 8.

[2] Sūrah ad-Dahr, 76: 9.

have taken place and are still taking place but Muslims do not take admonition. They remain in their deplorable condition.

I say: O Muslims! You still have the opportunity. Come to your senses. Set right your relationship with Allāh taʿālā, choose truthfulness and sincerity, and your time will come back to you. It does not take Allāh taʿālā long to turn the tide. All it takes is for you to develop piety and sincerity. Couple sincerity with piety and you will witness Allāh's power. Allāh taʿālā will shower you with His mercy and help.

After the Battle of Badr, some Qurayshīs were taken as prisoners of war. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam released them after they paid a ransom. Allāh taʿālā says with reference to them:

يٰاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّمَنْ فِيْٓ اَيْدِيْكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَسْرٰٓى ۙ اِنْ يَّعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ فِيْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّآ اُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

> O Prophet! Say to the captives who are in your hands: "If Allāh finds any good in your hearts, He shall give you something better than that which was taken away from you, and He shall forgive you. Allāh is forgiving, merciful."[1]

In his commentary to this verse, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* relates the incident of Ḥadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu.

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[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 70.

According to one narration, this verse was revealed with reference to Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu. He relates: I had concealed my Islam and the Quraysh compelled me to join them in the Battle of Badr. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam heard this, he said: "If you are true in whatever you are saying, Allāh taʿālā will reward you for it. However, whatever we see on the surface requires us to collect a ransom from you. We are obligated to act on what is obvious. You should therefore pay the ransom for yourself, your nephews Naufal ibn Hārith and ʿAqīl ibn Abī Tālib, and your confederate ʿUtbah ibn ʿAmr." I replied: "O Rasūlullāh! From where am I going to get so much of money?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Where is that treasure which you and (your wife) Umm al-Fadl had buried? You had told her that you do not know what is going to happen on this journey, so it will be of use to her, ʿAbdullāh, ʿUbaydullāh and Qayyim." I asked: "Who told you about this?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam replied that it was Allāh taʿālā who had informed him. On hearing this, Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "I testify that you are true, that there is no deity apart from Allāh taʿālā, and that you are certainly Allāh's Messenger. Undoubtedly, none apart from Allāh taʿālā knew about this incident. I had given the money to Umm al-Fadl in the darkness of the night.

After some time Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu used to say: "Allāh taʿālā certainly gave me wealth which is far in excess of that ransom. Presently I have twenty slaves, and the cheapest of them is valued at twenty thousand dirhams. Allāh taʿālā also gave me the guardianship of Zam Zam. I will not exchange it for the wealth of all the people of

Makkah. I am now awaiting the forgiveness of Allāh taʿālā."

Another narration states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam received eighty thousand from the booty of Bahrain. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam performed wudū' and distributed all the wealth before performing salāh. He asked Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu to take as much as he wanted. He took as much as he could carry. He was saying this while he was carrying the wealth: "It is much more than the ransom which I had to pay. I am hopeful of Allāh's forgiveness."[1]

Did you see! When a person is sincere to Allāh taʿālā, the blessings of his sincerity are certainly manifested, and it does not take Allāh taʿālā long to change the tide of time. The sincerity of a believer never goes to waste. The promises which Allāh taʿālā made for sincerity are totally true. We must never doubt whatever Allāh taʿālā says.

A saint was going for hajj. He saw a person also wanting to go for hajj but he had no provisions for the journey. He asked the man: "You have no provisions for the journey, how are you going to reach Makkah?" The man replied: "It seems that your conviction is weak and you have no reliance on Allāh taʿālā." When the saint eventually reached the Haram Sharīf, he noticed that the man was there before him. When the man saw the saint, he called out: "O you weak of conviction! Look! Allāh taʿālā conveyed a provision-less person like me before you."

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[1] *Rūh al-Maʿānī.*

The story of a worshipper

The point I am making is that you must focus on Allāh taʿālā and continue with sincerity. It never happened that a person was sincere and blessings were not manifested. A Hadīth contains the story of a sincere worshipper. He had constructed a place of worship beyond an inhabited area and used to engage in his worship there. A child was born to a prostitute and she accused this worshipper of being the father. The people became angry and, without verifying the matter, they went and destroyed his place of worship and beat him severely. These very people had been devoted followers of this worshipper and used to kiss his hands.

From here I conclude that one should not rely on the devotion of the creation. A person should not be deceived by their adulation. They may be your devotees today, but tomorrow they will forsake you on the slightest pretext.

Now listen to the remainder of the story. The worshipper asked the people: "At least tell me what happened. Why are you doing this to me?" They then informed him that a woman is saying that she begot a child from you. On hearing this, he prayed to Allāh taʿālā to clear his name. He addressed the child and asked: "Whose child are you?" The child was still being breastfed [and could not speak as yet]. He spoke by the permission of Allāh taʿālā and said: "Such and such shepherd is my father." When the people witnessed this miracle, they began kissing the worshipper's hands and feet, sought his pardon, and said that they will make a place of worship out of gold for him. He said: "No. I have no need for that. Just make it as it had been."

Did you see how Allāh taʿālā helps his sincere servants! See how He changed the situation. The very people who had demolished his place of worship were now prepared to construct it out of gold. The gaze of Allāh's sincere servants is not on the embellishments of this world.

The blessing of sincerity

There was a person who began worshipping in the hope that people will consider him to be religious and then appoint him as a trustee over the endowments of Bayt al-Maqdis. He engaged in worship for many days with this intention but no one paid any attention to him. Eventually, the thought crossed his mind that he is wasting his efforts on a corrupt objective. He repented and began worshipping Allāh taʿālā with full sincerity. No sooner he chose to be genuine, Allāh instilled this idea in the minds of the people. They came to him and requested him to become the trustee. He admitted to the people by saying: "Initially I had started my worship with this intention. As long as I had this intention, you people did not come to me. Now I am worshipping Allāh taʿālā solely for His pleasure. I do not want the trusteeship."

Another story demonstrating sincerity

A person sat down in a masjid for worship with the hope that he will be considered to be religious and the king will give his daughter in marriage to him. The king had been searching for the most religious man for his daughter. The man's worship became well-known and the king's proposal arrived. However, the man replied: "I undoubtedly started my worship for this day [to receive the king's proposal], but Allāh taʿālā has been graceful to me. I

am now worshipping Him solely for His pleasure. I have no need for this marriage now."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is the fruit of sincerity – materially and spiritually. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say that there was an ʿālim in Lucknow who went to the office of a Lāt Sāhib (an English officer). It was the era of British rule. The ʿālim went in and said: "How is that there is employment for all of you here, while there is no employment for the Maulwīs?" Lāt Sāhib replied: "Who said so? Whoever needs employment will get it. However, Maulānā, our employment is not suited to you people. You should rather go and sit in a masjid for Allāh's sake. Allāh will give you sustenance." Lāt Sāhib then said something to one of his workers. The latter brought fifty rupees and Lāt Sāhib wanted to give it to the Maulānā but he declined it and said: "Now I will confine myself to the masjid and take from Allāh taʿālā alone."

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh used to relate that Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say: "Had I been in that Maulwī's place, I would have taken the money while thinking to myself that Allāh taʿālā has started giving me at the hands of this English officer." This demonstrates Hadrat's wisdom and insight. (compiler)

A Hadīth states that if you rely totally on Allāh taʿālā, He will provide for you as He provides for birds. They leave hungry in the morning and return full-bellied in the evening.

I say: A believer must never be immature. He must be mature and have high aspirations. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Is-hāq Sāhib

rahimahullāh and Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib rahimahullāh were the grandsons and deputies of Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib rahimahullāh. The two brothers emigrated to Makkah Mukarramah. They were men of high courage. They used to give a lot to people but could not give as much as they wanted because of their dire financial situation. This caused them to remain sad. One day the people observed both brothers extremely happy. They did not have the courage to ask the elder brother, but they asked Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib rahimahullāh: "You two look very happy today. What is the matter? Has a large amount of money come to you from India?" He replied: "Don't you know? The government seized our village, Hasanpūr, in India. Till now, our gaze was on our village, but now it is focused solely on Allāh taʿālā. This is why we are so happy." Glory to Allāh! Look at their reliance on Allāh taʿālā.

Observe these various incidents about Allāh's devoted servants. When a servant chooses to remain sincere and devoted to Allāh taʿālā, do you think Allāh taʿālā will leave him paralysed? Never! Choose sincerity and you will experience success in both worlds. Inshā Allāh.

IF ONLY MUSLIMS FOCUSSED ON THE QUR'ĀN

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī rahimahullāh says that the Arabs were accustomed to poetry, poetic compilations and eloquent manners of expression. They were of the view that no one equalled them in this regard, so much so that they referred to other nations as ʿAjamī – those who are dumb.

The Arabs had a deep affinity with poetry, and this had come down to them from generations. Poetry was their day and night occupation. Their inclination and partiality towards poetry could not be changed until an extremely eloquent speech was presented to them. Allāh taʿālā sent down the Qur'ān. Initially when they looked at it, they assumed that since it is Arabic and the mother-tongue of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is also Arabic, he must have composed it himself and presented it to them. Allāh taʿālā announced in no uncertain terms and challenged them saying: Very well, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is an Arab like you are. You have great litterateurs among you. Why don't you all get together and compose a single verse like that of the Qur'ān?

These powerful men of letters who could spontaneously compose countless poems in a single assembly failed to present even a part of a verse like the Qur'ān. They realized that this speech was beyond human capability. It has to be the speech of some other being. Allāh taʿālā conveys this theme as follows:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلٰى عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهِ ص وَادْعُوْا شُهَدَآءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ. فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوْا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوْا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِيْ وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ص أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ.

> If you are in doubt about this word which We have sent down upon Our servant, then bring a chapter like it and call those who are your helpers other than Allāh, if you are truthful. But if you are unable to do it – and you will never be able to do it – then beware of that fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say that they must have become really agitated and angry when they were told "you will never be able to do it". The pride of their literati must have been kindled and they may have tried to do their utmost, but could do nothing. They realized that this is the speech of Allāh taʿālā and that Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is Allāh's Messenger. After all, this speech incapacitated them. And the one to whom Allāh's speech is revealed is His close servant and Messenger. Thus, he is certainly Allāh's chosen Messenger.

I will now explain a beautiful theme. Listen attentively and understand it. A person cannot give up a thing unless something better and more enjoyable than it is presented to him.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 23-24.

Allāh taʿālā went into much detail in describing the bounties and pleasures of the Hereafter so that we may give up this world. For example, He says:

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقٰى.

> The Hereafter is better for the one who is Allāh-conscious.[1]

وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَّأَبْقٰى.

> The Hereafter is better and more eternal.[2]

And many other verses of this nature. Allāh taʿālā says that righteous servants will receive bounties which no eye has beheld, no ear has heard and no heart has imagined. He says:

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ.

> No self knows what bliss is in store for them.[3]

The following Hadīth Qudsī explains it further:

أعدت لعبادي الصالحين ما لا عين رأت ولا أذن سمعب ولا خطر على قلب بشر.[4]

> I prepared such things for My righteous servants which no eye has beheld, no ear

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 76.

[2] Sūrah al-Aʿlā, 87: 17.

[3] Sūrah as-Sajdah, 32: 17.

[4] مشكوة المصابيح، ج ٢، ص ٤٩٥.

has heard and no human heart has ever thought of.

When Allāh taʿālā described the pleasures and bounties of the Hereafter, the world left the hearts of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum and they developed such intense love for piety that no inclination for the unlawful remained in them.

When Allāh taʿālā willed to create an aversion for this world, He described the pleasures and bounties of the Hereafter. In this way, He diverted the focus of believers from this world to a loftier place – the Hereafter – and got them occupied with its bounties. This is the point I was making: Man cannot give up a thing unless you present to him something better than it.

When Allāh taʿālā dispraised wealth and riches, He removed our inclination for it by directing our attention to something else. He says:

وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِيْ تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَنَا زُلْفٰى، إِلَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا.

It is neither your wealth nor your offspring that can bring you closer to Us, except he who believes and does good deeds.[1]

This verse tells us that wealth and offspring in themselves cannot take a person closer to Allāh taʿālā. However, if they are accompanied with īmān and good deeds, they become the means of proximity to Him. Now look! Allāh taʿālā did not order them to discard wealth completely. Instead,

[1] Sūrah Saba, 34: 37.

He rectified the notion that they assumed abundant wealth and children to be the means of proximity. He then directed their attention towards īmān and good deeds.

Allāh taʿālā did not ask them to give up wealth completely. Rather, He said to them that although wealth is a good thing, it has no reality if it is not coupled with īmān and good deeds. He stressed to them that wealth is not the objective; īmān and good deeds are. In short, Allāh taʿālā did not prohibit the acquisition of wealth. He taught them the status of wealth and turned their inclination away from it.

A poet says: Many things have been made unlawful to you but you give up certain things and not others. For example, the flesh of swine is prohibited to you, so you abstain from it because you have found many other types of meat which are better than it. Alcohol has been made unlawful to you but you do not abstain from it. You probably did not find something better than it.

I say, this poet is not thinking correctly because the Ahlullāh have found the wine of Allāh's love. They are so inebriated by it that the world and whatever is in it has no value in their eyes.

I was saying to you that man's attention cannot be moved from something unless you present something better to him.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh has certainly laid bare the reality.

In the same way, understand that the Arabs were immersed and lost in the pleasures of their language. They were intoxicated by their descriptions of the feats of their forefathers. After performing hajj, a poet from each tribe would stand

up and applaud the feats and achievements of his ancestors, and deride the other tribes. The entire Arab nation was inebriated by this. They were habituated to poetry. They considered eloquence and powerful expressions to be the capital wealth of this life.

Because this was the condition of the nation and everyone was caught up in it, Allāh taʿālā treated this ailment of theirs. It was an easy treatment. He presented before the literati and poets an extremely eloquent speech – the Qur'ān. When they observed its eloquence and beauty, they were left stupefied. In this way, Allāh taʿālā turned their focus from the speech of the creation to the speech of the Creator.

Because these people were conversant in the language, knew the beauty of language, could recognize fine points, and were adept in eloquence; when they observed the eloquence of the Qur'ān and its inimitable style; they realized that it is the speech of Allāh taʿālā. This is why they fell upon it as a thirsty person falls upon water. This is the reason for revealing the Qur'ān in the Arabic language. A nation whose language was Arabic and which prided over its eloquence was overwhelmed and silenced by an Arabic speech, and all its pride and arrogance were broken.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality has been explained. May Allāh taʿālā reward Hadrat. (compiler)

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Dehlawī rahimahullāh writes that the Arabs were enamoured by poetry and were accustomed to singing poems. This was the norm with the entire nation. Their scholars and ignoramuses loved to sing poems. Allāh taʿālā sent down the Qur'ān for them to sing. As though He was

saying to them: If singing is what you want, here is the Qur'ān. There can be no better song than it. In this way, Allāh taʿālā diverted their inclination from poetry to the Qur'ān. History testifies that Allāh taʿālā diverted these people's fondness of poetry by revealing the Qur'ān to them. In this way, their sentimental attachment to poetry was put to an end.

The condition at present is the complete opposite. The nation is not being directed to the Qur'ān. Instead, even in lecture assemblies, poems are recited instead of the Qur'ān. The preference for poetry is being revived in-between lectures so that the masses may turn to poetry. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

The 'ulamā' assume that the masses have no inclination to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, and because they enjoy poetry, their inclination is towards poetry. They therefore give consideration to the preference of the masses and make special arrangements for poems to be rendered in their assemblies. Even worse, they get beardless boys with sweet voices to recite the poems so that the enjoyment may be perfect. In this way, more people will attend, numbers will increase, and the assembly will be successful. The success of an assembly is now measured by the number of attendees. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

I say: The Qur'ān is recited in an assembly and people do not give it any importance nor appreciate it. Then in the same assembly, poems are recited and people give importance to it and value it. Is this the measure of success of an assembly? Do you think Allāh taʿālā is not angered by this? I believe

that one of the reasons for the destruction which is experienced by Muslims today is that they have given preference to the speech of the creation over the speech of the Creator. They value the speech of the creation and are affected by it, but they have no value for the speech of Allāh taʿālā. If they do not even listen to it, how are they going to be affected by it?

It is said with regard to poetry:

أحسنه أكذبه.

> The more lies and exaggeration a poem contains, the better it is.

If this is the case, how can the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām have an affinity with poetry? Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنٰهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ.

> We did not teach poetry to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam nor does it behove his grand status.[1]

In contradiction to this, we now see poets being invited to lecture assemblies and consideration is given to the preferences of the masses. I ask you: If the ʿulamā' start giving consideration to the preferences of the masses and practise on their desires, then what will happen? The following applies in this instance:

> When unbelief will emanate from the Kaʿbah, where will Islam remain?

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

If only Muslims would ponder over this matter and turn their attention to the speech of Allāh taʿālā. Brothers! Is there anything that is not in the Qur'ān? Allāh taʿālā refers to the Qur'ān as a reminder, an admonition, an eye-opener, a guide. Just turn your attention to it and see for yourselves.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Dehlawī rahimahullāh says that Allāh taʿālā does not lend an ear to anything as much as Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam reading the Qur'ān. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said that the person who does not read the Qur'ān in a melodious voice is not of us. You see, this Qur'ān is also a means for singing. It contains all melodies.

A man was residing in the khānqāh of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh in Thānah Bhawan. When Hadrat Maulānā used to recite the Qur'ān in the fajr salāh, the man would say after the salāh: "Today, the recitation was in such and such tune." Hadrat Maulānā did not even know the science of music; he used to merely recite according to his preference.

People do not know Arabic whereby they could appreciate the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, and the ʿulamā' do not turn the people's attention to the Qur'ān. Consequently, the entire nation has become unmindful of the Qur'ān. The speech of Allāh taʿālā has become a mere adornment for a shelf. It is wrapped in beautiful silken covers and displayed on a shelf. Muslims believe they have fulfilled the rights of the Qur'ān in this way. Allāh taʿālā states in the Qur'ān:

نَبَذَ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ ۙ كِتٰبَ اللهِ وَرَآءَ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

> A group from the people of the Book cast aside the Book of Allāh behind their backs as though they do not know.[1]

The author of *al-Kashshāf* writes in his commentary to this verse:

> Shaʿbī narrates that the People of the Book had the Taurāh. They used to read it but did not practise on it. Hadrat Sufyān narrates that they used to make special covers of silk and brocade in which they used to place the Taurāh. They used to attach flowers made of gold to Allāh's Book. They used to do all this but they did not practise on the Book. Allāh refers to this as "casting aside the Book of Allāh behind their backs".[2]

Did you see? The People of the Book used to revere Allāh's Book. They used to embellish it with gold and cover it with silk. But because they did not practise on it, Allāh taʿālā said that they cast it behind their backs and they became eligible for Allāh's wrath. How unfortunate! Muslims of today have exactly the same attitude towards the Qur'ān. May Allāh taʿālā bless Muslims with the understanding to recognize the greatness of Allāh's speech.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 101.

[2] *Al-Kashshāf*, vol. 1, p. 77.

I say to people that it does not require too much of effort. All you have to do is resolve to read one or two sections daily. As long as you do not attach your heart to it, you will not be able to move forward. What is so difficult? A person reads a little and amasses a lot of benefit. Am I saying something wrong? I have rational and traditional proofs for this subject. I say to those who come here and am still saying to them: If you want to work with your heart, you may remain here. If not, go to some other place. You people probably consider these points to be puzzling, and you may not understand them. This is because you are convinced that the more you tire your self the more you will benefit. It is totally ignorant to think in this way. Even if you do a little work with your heart, you will see immense benefits. This Qur'ān is such a great thing. There is nothing which is more attached to Allāh taʿālā than the Qur'ān. I will prove this with evidences. Listen! The son and deputy of Ḥaḍrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī raḥimahullāh, Ḥaḍrat Khwājah Muḥammad Maʿṣūm raḥimahullāh writes:

> The Ism-e-dhāt (i.e. the word Allāh) creates an attraction and love, and conveys a person to the station of self-obliteration.[1]

It is related from Imām Ṣāḥib raḥimahullāh that the word "Allāh" is the Ism-e-dhāt. The Sufis believe there is no greater dhikr than it.

From the above quotations you have learnt the strong affinity which the word "Allāh" has with Allāh taʿālā, and the powerful effect it has. Now that you

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[1] *Maktūbāt Maʿṣūmīyyah*: 40.

understood this, listen to what Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib rahimahullāh has to say in his *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*:

> The strong affinity which a name has with the one who bears that name is surpassed by the strong and powerful affinity which a speech has with the one who uttered the speech. When a person's name is mentioned, the mind goes immediately to the person himself. Far more intense than that is when the speech of the one who uttered the speech [is heard or read]. This point is well-known to people of experience.[1]

We learn from the above quotation that the affinity which a name has with the one who bears that name is surpassed by the affinity with his speech. The extent of its influence and effect was gauged from the above texts. How much more affinity will Allāh's speech have with Allāh taʿālā? And how more intense will its effect be?

I was teaching *Sullam* (a well-known book on logic) and the discussion was on *Sub-ḥānahu Mā Aʿzama Shānuhu*. I said to the students: Look at how convoluted and complex the logicians have made this subject of tauhīd. On the other hand, when Allāh taʿālā revealed the Qur'ān and explained tauhīd, He explained everything in a short sūrah – Sūrah al-Ikhlās. He refuted all the deviated sects in this short sūrah. This has been well explained by Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib

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[1] *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*, p. 54 under the commentary of the verse: كلا إنها تذكرة.

raḥimahullāh in *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*. I say: Just as Allāh taʿālā is the King of kings, His speech is the king of all speeches. Why, then, should we search for other speeches when we have the speech of Allāh taʿālā!?

When people teach *Sullam* and other similar texts, they become confused with issues of this nature. I ask: Why are you becoming so worried? Look at how easy Allāh taʿālā made it in His Book. Unfortunately, we pay no attention to the Qur'ān. I now see people teaching and making money in the name of Dīn, but paying no attention to the Qur'ān. People value the ʿulamā' because of this Qur'ān. What I mean is that the masses appreciate the ʿulamā' because they teach the Qur'ān. On the other hand, the ʿulamā' have no value for the thing on account of which the masses value them. This is why when they explain the concept of tauḥīd, they do it from other books and not from the Qur'ān. I ask you: If Allāh taʿālā sent down His Book, will He not explain the most important belief, i.e. belief in tauḥīd? He certainly will. In fact, He explains it so beautifully that if you were to hear it, you will salivate and get up and say: "We cannot get enough of the Qur'ān."

Look at Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ alone. When Allāh taʿālā started to speak about His Oneness, He encapsulated the entire discussion in just four words: *aḥad, ṣamad, lam yalid wa lam yūlad, wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad.*

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ṣāḥib raḥimahullāh explains it beautifully in his *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*.

There was a Ṣaḥābī raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu who used to recite Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ a lot. Some people went to Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and said to him that this person keeps on reciting Sūrah al-

Ikhlās. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked him: “Why do you recite only this sūrah?” He replied: “I love this sūrah.” Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: “Your love for it shall admit you into Paradise.”

Even if you read the Qur’ān without understanding, you will benefit. Ten rewards are recorded in a person’s favour for each letter, and it increases one’s love for Allāh taʿālā. If it is read with understanding, then it is much better. A person will acquire Allāh’s love and Allāh-recognition.

BOASTING ABOUT ONE'S THOUGHTS

When defective people receive benefits and blessings from a person, they start considering themselves to be perfect and they become independent of a shaykh. They begin considering themselves to be equal to the shaykh. They develop claims to perfection. Whereas the little blessings which they are perceiving are actually reflections from the shaykh. If they sever their bond from the shaykh, these little blessings will cease to exist.

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh explains this theme in his *Mathnawī*. He relates an admonitory story of a scribe of divine revelation. I am reading it to you from *Kalīd Mathnawī* with an explanation. Listen attentively.

The need for a shaykh's company

From the above, Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh proves the need for a shaykh's company. He prohibits separating from a shaykh without having acquired perfection. In other words, if your shaykh places a salve on your wound and the pain which you were feeling subsides – and this causes you to assume that you are cured whereas it is merely the effect of the salve which is causing this effect – then you must not feel that you are not in need of the salve. Consider the relief to be the effect of the salve and do not believe that the health of the actual wound has been restored.

The meaning is obvious. If you perceive some soundness in your self on account of remaining in the company of your shaykh, it is a reflection from

the shaykh. Do not assume that you have achieved perfection so you no longer need the shaykh. Instead, you must remain in his company until you acquire deeply-ingrained capabilities and you reach the station of self-establishment. (However, if the shaykh permits you, then this is an exception to the rule because he knows what is most prudent. Nonetheless, independence at this point will also cause destruction.) There is no end to this discussion. While on this topic, listen to a story which proves the harm of assuming perfection and independence from a spiritual master without having acquired perfection first.

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh highlights a verse and then relates an incident about it. The verse is:

ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ؕ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

> Then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

Hadrat ʿUthmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu used to record divine revelation. Before him, there was another scribe who was particular about how he recorded divine revelation. He used to write the verses as Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam recited them. The effulgence of the revelation illuminated him and he would experience the wisdom in his heart. The same thing happened with the verse under discussion. (The details are as follows: The verses of Sūrah al-Muʾminūn were revealed to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He was

[1] Sūrah al-Muʾminūn, 23: 14.

reciting them and the scribe was recording them. When he reached this verse:

ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ؕ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

> Then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

The effect which was on Rasūlullāh's heart fell on the scribe's heart and before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam could say it, he said:

فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

> Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[2]

The same were the words of divine revelation, so Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: "Yes, write them down." Just by this one point the scribe went astray. He thought to himself: The thing which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is saying is in my heart as well.

Subsequently, a verse with reference to this scribe was revealed and his condition was exposed to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Allāh's wrath descended, fell on his heart, and he could not find a single letter within himself. He was removed from the post of a scribe and he even reneged from Islam. He then became an enemy of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and Islam. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: "O arrogant

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 14.

[2] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 14.

atheist! If that effulgence was your own, why has your heart become black and lightless? Had you been a fountain of divine knowledge, this dark liquid would not have flowed from you."

Up to this point we have acquired the objective of the story – that this is the harm of assuming perfection and considering one's self to be independent of those who have perfection.

The story continues: The man felt that his status will fall if he were to repent in the presence of people, so he abstained from repenting. He would have suffered grief at having to offer an apology and admitting his wrong, but he still could not repent. This was strange. He regretted and rued in his heart but it was of no use because in the absence of an apology and disregarding shame, a regret is a natural response which is not worthy of consideration. Anyway, he became an apostate, went to Makkah and joined the ranks of the idol-worshippers. He caused a lot of mischief and hurled obscenities against Islam and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. On the day of the Conquest of Makkah, he accompanied Hadrat ʿUthmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu, presented himself before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, repented and renewed his Islam. It is quoted from *al-Iṣābah* that he was performing the fajr salāh and passed away the moment he made the salām. In other words, he died a good death. His name is ʿAbdullāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī Surh radiyallāhu ʿanhu.[1]

Did you hear? A story of this nature is quite unique and unparalleled in history. A scribe who records

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[1] *Kalīd Mathnawī*, register one, 198.

divine revelation and then becomes an apostate!? What an admonitory story! We have to be on our guard at all times. We do not know what will happen and when. We must never boast about our condition. Instead, if we experience anything good, we must believe it to be a gift from Allāh taʿālā and be grateful for it. Being grateful for a bounty is the greatest thing. If we are grateful, the bounty will continue increasing. It will neither be taken away nor will it decrease. Allāh taʿālā says:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَاَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ.

If you are grateful I will give you more.[1]

On the opposite end, the worst thing is to be ungrateful for Allāh's bounties and favours. When a person is ungrateful, bounties are snatched away from him and Allāh's displeasure increases. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ اِنَّ عَذَابِيْ لَشَدِيْدٌ.

If you are ungrateful, My punishment is certainly severe.[2]

Imām Sāhib rahimahullāh said that the person who wants to die with īmān and remain firm on it until the very end must continually express gratitude over īmān. This is because we are promised the continuation of a bounty when we are grateful for it:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَاَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ.

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[1] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 7.

[2] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 7.

If you are grateful I will give you more.[1]

In the same way, it is necessary to be grateful for whatever acts of obedience a person does. Similarly, if a person receives spiritual bounties, it is necessary for him to be grateful to his shaykh. After all, he became the means for receiving the bounties.

When the Saḥābah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum observed the destruction of that scribe for his claims to knowledge, they became fearful and vigilant. They obliterated themselves completely before Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. This is why whenever he asked them about something, they would reply: "Allāh and His Messenger know best."

No matter from whom you receive something, it is your duty to obliterate yourself before him. If you learn something from someone and you then display your intelligence before him, it is most disrespectful and hypocritical. Shaykh Saʿdī raḥimahullāh relates the story of a wrestler in his *Gulistān*:

There was a wrestler who taught his student the art of wrestling, how to drop his opponent, and made him an expert wrestler. Other wrestlers failed to drop him. When he reached this level, he mentioned in the presence of the king: "My teacher certainly has superiority over me in the sense that he taught me wrestling. However, I have reached such a level that even my teacher cannot compete with me." The king disapproved of the student's insolence with respect to his teacher and ordered that the two will have to compete in public. When the teacher received this news, he must have thought to

[1] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 7.

himself: He learnt everything from me and he is now prepared to compete against me!?

Anyway, the courtiers and dignitaries of the sultanate assembled on the wrestling field to witness this strange match between a teacher and his student. The teacher had become old and weak, whereas the young student was jumping about like an elephant. The teacher hadn't taught the student one particular wrestling manoeuvre. And so, he advanced with that manoeuvre and the student could not respond to it. The teacher went into a rage, lifted him above his head and flung him to the ground. The student asked in astonishment: "How come you did not teach me this manoeuvre!?" The teacher replied: "I had reserved it for this day." The teacher then quoted these couplets:

> O loyalty! You were either not existing in the world or you were existing but no one at that time showed loyalty. There is no person who learnt archery from me and then did not make me a target.

The king gave the teacher a prize, punished the student and reprimanded him saying: "You had no shame to compete against the one who taught you? You were priding over your strength yet he lifted you above his head and flung you down."

It is extremely disloyal for a person to learn something from someone and then become his opponent. It is most detestable. May Allāh taʿālā protect us from it.

Imām Shāfiʿī rahimahullāh says:

شكوت إلى وكيع سوء حفظي – فأوصاني إلى ترك المعاصي

فإن العلم نور من إلهي – ونور الله لا يعطى لعاص

I complained to Wakī‘ about my bad memory. He advised me to abstain from sins because knowledge is a special effulgence from Allāh ta‘ālā. And Allāh’s light is not given to a sinner.

The absence of sincerity results in the deprivation of bounties

A Maulānā Sāhib encouraged a man to perform salāh and said to him: “If you perform salāh regularly and punctually for forty days, I will give you a buffalo.” The man performed his salāh for forty days and came to the Maulānā for his buffalo. The Maulānā said: “My objective was that if you perform salāh for forty days, you will develop an attachment for it and you will become a namāzī (a regular performer of salāh). It was not my objective to give you a buffalo.” On hearing this, the man said: “Away with you Maulwī Sāhib! I too performed those salāhs without wudū’.”

We seek refuge in Allāh ta‘ālā. Since he performed his salāh in such a disorderly way, he could not realize and experience its blessings. Blessings are experienced only when the action is done with sincerity.

A Hadīth states that when a person worships Allāh ta‘ālā devotedly for forty days, fountains of wisdom will gush forth from his heart. There was a saint who engaged in worship for forty days with the same intention but the fountains did not gush forth. He made du‘ā’ to Allāh ta‘ālā: “O Allāh! Please explain to me. Either I did not have the sincerity or this is

not a Hadīth." He received a reply: "Since you engaged in worship so that fountains gush forth, how can you claim that you did it for Me? How can sincerity still exist?"

The saint's focus was on the gushing forth of the fountains and not on أخلص لله (doing the worship solely for Allāh).

His example is similar to a teacher who spends the entire month waiting for his salary. He is so occupied in his thoughts about the salary that this affects his teaching as well. Now how will the principal deal with him? He will obviously not pay him. In fact, it will not be surprising if he retrenches him.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to teach, and the responsibility of the principal to worry about the payment of salaries.

In the same way, Allāh taʿālā wanted to teach this saint: Why were you focussed on the gushing forth of fountains? Your responsibility was to remain sincere, while it is Our responsibility to cause the fountains to gush forth.

A saint heard that the king has increased the stipends for some of his slaves because they are forever waiting to fulfil his orders and serve him. As for the slaves who were lazy in serving him, their stipends were not increased. The saint began crying when he heard this. Some people asked him: "Of what concern is it to you what the king decided with regard to his slaves? Why are you crying?" He replied: "The same applies to the slaves of Allāh's court. Those who present themselves sincerely in His court continue progressing. As for those who are lazy, they remain stagnating."

A man went to his friend's house after ʿishā and called out for him. The friend took a bit of time in coming out. When the friend opened the door after some time, he found him in a strange appearance. He had weapons in his hands, a slave-girl next to him, and bags of money on his head. He asked: "What is this!?" His friend replied: "When you called out for me, I thought to myself that some calamity must have befallen you. This is why you have come at such an odd time. If an enemy is troubling you, I am fully armed. If you need money, you may take these bags. If you desire a woman, you may take this slave-girl." The man laughed and said: "Brother! I merely came to visit you."

This was a sincere friend. If people choose sincerity, they will benefit tremendously. Sincerity is not some dry object. There is great enjoyment in it. Choose it and see for yourself.

MAN HAS INTELLIGENCE BUT HE STILL NEEDS ALLĀH'S GRACE

In his *Mathnawī*, Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh explains an example of a genuine shaykh and a fake. He writes:

> One type of soil is from which water gushes forth. An expert Sufi shaykh is similar to it because various sciences and facts flow from him. Soil of this nature is rare; you will have to search for it. This soil refers to a man of Allāh who is connected to Allāh. He has separated himself from his personal enjoyments. The sweet water of knowledge of Dīn flows from him. The seekers of Allāh taʿālā acquire life and progress from him.
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> As for the one who is a fake – i.e. a deceptive shaykh – you may compare him to an arid desert. He will suck at the water of your life all the time. In other words, he will waste away your life, your knowledge and your actions.

He says further on:

Now that you have learnt that there are two types of people – one a genuine expert and the other an ignorant impostor – you must seek wisdom and gnosis from a wise man so that you too develop insight and intelligence. The one who seeks wisdom becomes a source of wisdom. Once he becomes a source of wisdom, he is not in need of acquiring

knowledge through the customary and outward means. In other words, Allāh-bestowed knowledge and sciences descend into his heart. At the time when he was seeking knowledge under his shaykh, he was absorbing and memorizing whatever his shaykh said. After he receives Allāh-bestowed sciences, they become similar to those which he had memorized. Genuine sciences from Allāh taʿālā start to reflect on his heart. His intellect now enjoys rūh – divine inspiration as stated by Allāh taʿālā:

وَكَذٰلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوْحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا.

> In like manner, We sent to you a rūh by Our command.[1]

Divine revelation or inspiration is called rūh because it is a cause of spiritual life just as the soul is the cause of physical life.

In the beginning – i.e. before he could acquire Allāh-recognition, his intellect was his teacher [it directed him in whichever way it wanted]. Now that he has acquired spiritual blessings, the same intellect becomes his student. Initially, it was the intellect which had brought him onto the path of seeking. This is why it was its teacher. Then he began acquiring knowledge and sciences which are beyond the intellect and sight. The intellect therefore became his student and is now dependent on him.

Subsequently, his intellect starts saying things to him which Hadrat Jibraʾīl ʿalayhis salām had said to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam on the occasion of the Miʿrāj. That is, “If I were to merely

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 52.

place my foot across this line, the powerful light of Allāh taʿālā will burn me. Let me remain here. You may proceed. This is my limit." In this incident, Jibraʾīl ʿalayhis salām was initially the guide [who led Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam]. Now he was incapable of moving forward. In the same way, the intellect steers a person in the beginning but becomes helpless later on.[1]

Take the following example:

A king was sitting with his wife. He lifted his gaze, looked at something and began crying. His wife asked: "Why are you crying?" He replied: "It's nothing." She persisted and asked him the reason for his crying. He replied: "I see in the Lauḥ-e-Maḥfūẓ that I am going to die and you will marry this Abyssinian guard." Just imagine! Although he was a king, he used to look in the Lauḥ-e-Maḥfūẓ. His wife said: "If that is what is recorded therein, why are you crying? You should accept it."

From the statement of Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh that the intellect is the teacher in the beginning and becomes a student later on, we learn that the intellect does not remain a teacher all the time. Rather, it becomes a student as well. It behaves like a student in the presence of divine revelation. It does not have the choice to think against it. It is impossible for the intelligentsia to fathom the reality of divine revelation. It is beyond the intellect and out of its reach. The intellect is limited. It cannot encompass everything. It will help a person within its limits and will steer him, but it can be of no avail beyond its limit.

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[1] *Kalīd Mathnawī*, register one: 194.

This is why when rationalists go to the Sufis, they reduce themselves to students. They acknowledge that the things which they believed to be concepts and theories are actually obvious facts according to these pure Sufis. Man's senses have limits. For example, he can hear from up to a certain point and not beyond. He can see to a certain distance and not beyond. In the same way, his intellect can think up to a certain limit. It cannot fathom anything beyond that limit.

Rationalists got confused about the proof of Allāh's Oneness. They themselves do not understand it. They do not focus on the Qur'ān, this is why they are perplexed. Allāh taʿālā explained tauḥīd completely in Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ, but some people require some other type of proof. There was a shepherd who was tending to his goats in a forest. A rationalist went to him and asked: "Do you have any proof for the Oneness of Allāh?" The shepherd said: "Wait a bit, I will present a proof just now." Saying this, he left and returned with a thick club. He said: "Look! This is the proof of Allāh's Oneness. If you doubt it, I will strike you and reduce you to straw."

We cannot subject everything to our intellect. After all, it also has its limits, and is a creation. How can it ever fathom everything!? Imām Fakhr ad-Dīn Rāzī raḥimahullāh had established many proofs on Allāh's Oneness. However, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh is angry at him. He writes:

> If the Dīn revolved around the intellect, Fakhr ad-Dīn Rāzī would have been the *rāz dār* (the one who knows the mysteries) of Dīn. The proof of the intellect is like a wooden leg – it is

extremely shaky and weak. Once weevil gets into it, it rots and crumbles.

There is a story about Imām Rāzī raḥimahullāh. He went to meet a saint and began benefiting from his company. One day, he said to the saint: "I perceive something leaving my heart surreptitiously." The saint said: "Congratulations to you. There is nothing to worry about. It is your logic and philosophy which is coming out of you. Allāh taʿālā will replace it with another type of knowledge."

When he heard this, Imām Rāzī raḥimahullāh thought to himself: I acquired the sciences of logic and philosophy after so much of toiling, and it is now leaving me just like that!? He became worried and his temperament was not prepared to give up that old thing. And so, he left the company of the saint.

Now listen further. When it was the time for Imām Rāzī's departure from this world, Shayṭān came to mislead him. He asked him to present a proof for Allāh's Oneness. The Imām had many proofs in store, so he presented one. Shayṭān rebutted his proof. The Imām presented another one, and Shayṭān rebutted it as well. In this way, the Imām began presenting one proof after the other and Shayṭān continued rebutting and disproving each one. Eventually he had only one proof left. Shayṭān was on the verge of disproving this one as well, destroying the Imām's faith and causing him to leave this world without īmān.

While this was happening between Imām Rāzī raḥimahullāh and Shayṭān, the saint in whose company he had spent some time, was performing wuḍū'. His attendant was pouring water for him. Imām Rāzī's situation was exposed to him. He saw

that Shaytān was on the verge of leading him astray. He went into a rage, grabbed the water pitcher from the attendant's hand, flung it at a wall and said: "Why are you not telling him that you believe in the Oneness of Allāh taʿālā without any proof?" His voice reached the Imām's ears, and he said to Shaytān: "I believe in Allāh's Oneness without any proof." This was the only point left. The moment he uttered these words, his soul left his body. His īmān was saved through the saint's intervention and he died on īmān.

This is the minimum benefit of bonding with the Ahlullāh, but in reality, it is a major benefit. Did you see! When the time comes, all proofs are left scattered and it is only Allāh's grace which comes to one's help.

These rationalists demand for proofs of Allāh's Oneness. I say: Very well, we will certainly present proofs to demonstrate that Allāh taʿālā is one. However, you must first prove that you have just one father. You will spend your entire life but you will not be able to provide a rational proof for it. Why, then, are you asking for a proof for Allāh's Oneness? It is such an obvious and accepted thing that even Shaytān – who is bent on misleading man – attests to Allāh's Oneness. He says:

إِنِّيْ أَرٰى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّيْ أَخَافُ اللهَ. وَاللهُ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ.

I see that which you do not see. I fear Allāh. And the punishment of Allāh is severe.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 48.

A person was losing consciousness. Someone nearby began reading something and blew on him in an effort to revive him. Another person said: “Do not read and blow on him because he believes in more than one Allāh.” The one who was reading and blowing asked: “Who are you?” He replied: “I am Iblīs (Shaytān).”

Did you see? Even Shaytān who is there to deceive mankind desists from believing in more than one Allāh.

THE ACADEMIC ZEAL OF THE PAST SENIORS

When a person realizes that he has not acquired a certain thing, he continues seeking it until he acquires it. Once he thinks to himself that he has acquired a certain thing, he will not turn his attention to seeking it. When a person is to reach a certain level, the effects of it become visible from his early conditions.

An ʿālim observed a student sitting respectfully and studying a book with much enthusiasm. He was also taking down notes. On seeing him like this, the ʿālim commented: "This student will one day reach the level of excellence and perfection. His knowledge will enjoy a special status." He saw another student reading a book while he was lying down and leaning against a cushion. He said: "This student will not reach the level of excellence. He is not sincere in his quest for knowledge." Subsequently, it happened as the ʿālim had predicted.

An intelligent person understands the end from the beginning. A person who is to reach a certain level has unique conditions from the very beginning. A student who is to reach a lofty level in knowledge is enthusiastic from the beginning, he listens attentively to his teacher and absorbs whatever he learns.

There was a person who travelled from village to village trying to establish when the word فرجة is read as *farjah* or *furjah*. The language of the Bedouins was considered to be eloquent. The king disliked this person. This is why he would travel through the

deserts and villages clandestinely. While he was proceeding, a Bedouin addressed him with the following couplet:

ربما تجزع نفوس عن أمر – له فَرْجَة كحل العقال

> Sometimes people become terrified of a matter and flee from it, whereas a solution to it is as easy as untying a rope.

He learnt from this couplet that the word is pronounced *farjah*. The Bedouin also informed him that the tyrant king who was his enemy had died. The man replied: "I do not know what made me more happy; the news of the king's death or the correct pronunciation of the word."

This was the extent of people's zeal for knowledge and academic research. The man was moving about secretly out of fear for the king. The joy which he experienced at hearing of his death was not surpassed by the joy at establishing the pronunciation of a single word.

An ʿālim relates: A man wearing ordinary clothes entered our assembly and sat down at the head of the assembly without any reservations. I disapproved of his brazenness. He then addressed me: "O youngster! You may pose whatever question you want." I mockingly asked him about cupping. He first spoke about all the narrations on the subject of cupping and their levels of authenticity. After that, he went into a discussion on the times when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did cupping, and what amounts he paid on each occasion. From this he concluded that if this occupation was prohibited, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam would not have paid for the

services. This proves that cupping as an occupation is lawful. The man then spoke about the history of cupping – when it started and in which periods of history people engaged in transactions for cupping. He then focussed on the medical angle and discussed the medical benefits of cupping. I listened attentively to his explanations and was astounded. At the same time, I felt some regret in my heart at having scorned him when he arrived. I then took an oath that after seeing this man, I will never consider any person to be insignificant.

This was the extent of people's knowledge. Now the world is becoming devoid of knowledge. As regards the above story, I believe that the ʿālim must have had some thoughts about his knowledge. This is why the man came wittingly to rectify him. He wore ordinary clothes so that the ʿālim may consider him to be an ordinary person. He then proceeded and sat at the head of the assembly – the seat which is reserved for the head. A person would obviously be angered by this action. To add insult to injury, he addressed the ʿālim by saying: ""O youngster! You may pose whatever question you want." This must have enraged the ʿālim even more. After all, he too was a senior ʿālim. An ʿālim does not submit before anyone until he sees an ʿālim who is more learned than him. Once the man started his academic explanations, the ʿālim's ideas about himself were rectified and he realized that above every learned person there is someone who is more learned. As long as a camel does not descend from a mountain, it considers itself to be the greatest. The other lesson which the ʿālim learnt is that he must never look down at anyone.

The seniors state that when a person considers another to be insignificant, he is certainly deprived of benefiting from him. A person said to a saint [about another saint]: "I did not find him as I had imagined him to be." The saint said: "Go back to him and show utmost respect to him." The man went back as instructed and he certainly benefited from the saint.

The fact of the matter is that deriving benefit from a person is dependent on having confidence in him and having noble thoughts about him. The more the confidence in a person, the more the benefit.

There was a person who used to come to me. He was a manager for a senior chief. He wrote to me stating: "My master is leaving for hajj. I request your duʿā's." Incidentally, I was going to the station to bid farewell to a friend on the same day that the chief was leaving. I got an opportunity to meet the chief. Later on he said to his manager about me: "The man is of a high level but he does not dress exquisitely like other Maulwīs; he is very simple."

There is a story about the same chief. His son had fallen ill. He tried many medical treatments but did not succeed in restoring his health. The son passed away and the chief was quite grief-stricken. He wrote to me asking: "Why did he die even after we resorted to so many medical treatments?" His words were impudent but I excused him because I felt that the poor man was really saddened by the loss of his son and this has affected his thinking. Therefore, instead of expressing my disapproval I quoted the following couplet in my reply:

> If it is taqdīr (divine decree) which tears apart our garments and makes holes in it, and wants them to remain like that;

they cannot be patched even if the needle of our plans continues stitching for our entire lives.

The chief was consoled by this.

The writer (Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib) says: Glory to Allāh! This reply demonstrates Hadrat's wisdom. Had it been a novice like us, we would have issued a verdict of blasphemy against the chief. He was already so saddened by the death of his son, and we would have reprimanded him severely to straighten his thinking. It is not far fetched to believe that we would have hurled abuses at him and justified it by saying that it is an expression of hatred for Allāh's sake. Hadrat was really a reformer. He fathomed the depths of the ailment. That is, the man (Allāh forbid) was not objecting against Allāh's grace. Rather, he was expressing his astonishment at the fatal result despite resorting to so many medical treatments and spending astronomical amounts of money for it. He was – so to speak – saying: "I did not falter in resorting to all the means. Why, then, did they not produce the desired results?" He had focussed on the means, but the fact that the means are only successful when Allāh taʿālā wills them to be was hidden from him. After all, when Allāh taʿālā does not will for something to happen – in other words, when divine decree has already decreed something – then no matter what plans we resort to, they will never succeed. This is the point which Hadrat highlighted to the chief. The veil was lifted and he saw the reality.

COMMITTING AN ERROR AND BLAMING ONE'S TEACHER

There was a person who used to visit me frequently and would display his confidence in me. One day he said to me: "The waẕīfah of Lā Ilāha Illallāh which you taught me is not benefiting me. You may take it back. It is not enabling me to acquire of the world. No matter what my hand is touching, it is getting spoilt; it is being reduced to soil." The man added: "I will maintain my bond with you, but you must take back this waẕīfah."

When I heard this, I was left staring at the man's mouth. I did not say anything to him. I thought to myself that if this is the extent of his understanding, how can I get angry at him? This is the very same waẕīfah through which all the Auliyā' reached great heights and also received of this world through it. Yet this man has the audacity to say that he is not receiving anything of this world because of it. I concluded that he is insincere and probably did not read the waẕīfah with sincerity for even one day. Whereas taking the name of Allāh taʿālā with sincerity has the effect of acquiring the blessings of both worlds, and dispelling ignorance.

A saint went to a well to draw water to perform wuḍū' for the ʿaṣr ṣalāh. When he drew out the bucket, it was filled with gold. He went into a rage, flung it, and said: "I have no need for it. This is not the time to make jokes. My time for ṣalāh is passing by. I need water to perform wuḍū'." Did you see! Gold is of no significance whatsoever to those who have experienced the joy of Allāh's name.

Whereas that person [mentioned in the beginning] would often apply oil to my head, give me gifts and seemed to live like those who were sincere. Anyway, when he said this to me, I thought to myself that I shouldn't leave him just like that. I said to him: "Very well, you will have to take back whatever gifts you gave me up to now. Once you take them back, you may return what I gave to you [i.e. the waẕīfah]." I asked him: "Tell me, only you will no longer remain my murīd or will your wife also do the same?" He replied: "No, only I am returning the bayʿat to you; not my wife." I asked: "Why are you doing this? If you are severing your bond, you should do the same for your wife. Why should there be differences between husband and wife?"

The man left. When his wife came to know of what transpired, she came here fretfully and sent a message to me: "Why are you removing me? What wrong did I do?" I replied: "I did not remove you. All I said to your husband is that if he wants to separate himself from me, he is going to cause differences between husband and wife."

This incident passed. After some time, a person came to me and said: "I would like to say something about that man." I thought he must have uttered some obscenities against me, so there is no harm in listening to what this person has to say. I permitted him to continue. The person said: "He is seeking your pardon. He is saying you must have mercy on him or else he will go mad."

I will continue the story just now. Listen to what I have to say first.

When the man came to me and said that he does not want to remain my murīd, what was the reason for it? His sister wanted her share from her father's

estate. The entire estate was in this man's control, and from it, she was asking for one house. The man's brother-in-law also used to come to me frequently. The man assumed that I have joined ranks with his brother-in-law, whereas I do not get embroiled in people's affairs.

Now let's go back to him. When he asked for pardon, I said: "It's not going to happen like that. Rather, there are three conditions. If you fulfil them, I will pardon you." The conditions are: (1) Announce your quest for pardon, and announce publicly that you had severed your bond with your shaykh solely for worldly motives. This is so that people may understand the facts. Neither should the Ṯarīqah be treated like a toy nor should the shaykh be made a target of accusations. (2) Give over the house which your sister is asking for. It is her right and her demand is valid. (3) Invite all your relatives to a meal.

The man fulfilled all three conditions and resumed coming to me.

His family members used to discuss and say: "To this day, we hadn't received any food from him. Today we got something on account of you [referring to Ḥaḍrat]." He was a wealthy man but he was a miser.

I related this story because it is similar to the previous one. In the previous story, the person had come to return the waẓīfah while in this story, the person came to return his bayʿat.

I was saying to you that if Allāh's name is taken with sincerity, and if other acts of worship like ṣalāh, fasting, dhikr, etc. are fulfilled with sincerity;

a person acquires blessings in both worlds. There is no doubt about it.

The story of an ʿāmil

There was an ʿāmil who had jinn under his control. On one occasion he committed an offence so a jinn slapped him. He too became angry. He drew a large circle and sat in its centre. He lit a brazier next to him and placed a utensil containing oil on it. He then began reading some waẕīfah. Birds would fall from above into the boiling oil and die. These birds were actually jinn but in the form of birds. When many jinn died in this way, the chief of the jinn came to this ʿāmil and fell at his feet. He begged him saying: "Ḥaḍrat! Please stop. The jinn who had offended you has already burnt to death and received his punishment. Please stop! Many jinn have been killed." Only after the chief jinn beseeched him profusely did the ʿāmil stop his waẕīfah.

Did you see the effect of repeating Allāh's name?

The story of another ʿāmil

There was an ʿāmil in Gwāliyār. He had jinn under his control. When he heard about the greatness of Ḥaḍrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Quddūs Ṣāḥib Gangohī raḥimahullāh, he sent some jinn to Gangoh with the instruction of carrying the shaykh and bringing him to him.

The jinn arrived in Gangoh and the moment they set eyes on the shaykh, they were overcome by awe and fear. How could they carry him and take him? Instead, they adopted the form of humans and presented themselves before him fearfully. They said: "Ḥaḍrat! There is a certain person in Gwāliyār

who has immense faith in you. He would like to meet you. If you order us, we will convey you to him in absolute comfort." The shaykh realized that they were jinn and their ʿāmil had sent them for this purpose. The shaykh said: "If he is a student and wants to meet me, then should I be going to him or should he be coming to me? Just as you can take me to him, you can bring him to me."

The jinn went back and related what had transpired. The ʿāmil then came personally to the shaykh and requested him to accept his bayʿat. The shaykh inducted him as his murīd.

(The writer says: I recall Ḥadrat relating this story on one occasion. The shaykh ordered the jinn to go and bring the ʿāmil to him. They went back and tried to take hold of him. He asked: "What are you doing?" They replied: "The order of the shaykh is superior to yours. Come what may, we are going to take you to him and you will have to come." He then presented himself before the shaykh and became his murīd.)

The point I was making is that if a waẓīfah is read as it is supposed to be read, it is impossible for a person not to derive benefit. People are insincere, so they do not see any benefits. They then assume that it is the fault of the waẓīfah whereas it is their own fault. As the saying goes:

> Committing an error and blaming one's teacher.

As for the benefits of a waẓīfah, these are established from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Its benefits are not confined to the Hereafter. Rather, many benefits are enjoyed in this world as well. A Ḥadīth states that the person who reads Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah

after the maghrib salāh shall be protected against poverty." Look! It shows worldly benefit. At the same time, its reader will not be referred to as a seeker of this world because the world which Allāh and His Messenger have permitted will not be referred to as a world. The fruits of salāh, fasting, dhikr, etc. are certainly received in the Hereafter. At the same time, through their blessings, many worldly benefits are accrued. Although a believer focuses on the Hereafter, Allāh taʿālā – through His grace – gives him in this world as well. Allāh taʿālā says:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ.

> Whoever did good, be it man or woman, and is a believer, to him We will give a good life. And We will grant them their reward for the good deeds that they used to do.[1]

Now if people want to enjoy the same blessings which the sincere believers receive but do not want to choose īmān and sincerity, then this is not going to happen. There can be no deception in Allāh's court; it demands sincerity.

Allāh taʿālā is the all-powerful. When He wills, He enables the weakest of creatures to defeat the strongest. You must have seen an elephant. When it stands, it uses it trunk to blow things away from all directions. It does this to chase away ants and other

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 97.

similar creatures. If an ant were to get into its trunk and then cut into its brain, the elephant will die.

In the same way you must understand that if Allāh taʿālā wills to convey benefit to a person, He appoints a means for it. There is nothing which is difficult for Allāh taʿālā. When He wills something, it happens immediately. I say, if people were to be as sincere to Allāh taʿālā as they are when they present themselves to saints, they will succeed. Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh said that if people fear Allāh taʿālā as much as they fear a king, they will become angels.

Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh relates a story in his *Būstān*. There was a man who was occupied in worshipping an idol. He used to address it and say: "Sanam, sanam! (O idol! O idol!)" But he never got a response from it. One day he was doing the same thing when he unwittingly uttered the word "Samad, Samad." (One of the names of Allāh taʿālā, which means: all-independent.) He received a reply from Allāh taʿālā: "O servant! Here I am." The man was overcome by a spiritual condition, he became angry, smashed the idol and flung it away. He addressed it: "I had been calling to you for fifty years but you never replied even once. And here I called on Allāh taʿālā just once – and that too by mistake – and He heard my call."

There was a religious man who used to study with me. He received a money-order with his full name and address on it. The sender's name and address were also written on it. He was quite surprised and wondered who sent this money because he had no associate who would send him any money. He said to the postman: "I don't know this person, how can I accept it?" The postman replied: "No sir! Your name

is written on it. You must accept it." The man then took the form to his teachers and related all that transpired. They unanimously said to him: "You must have made some duʿā'. It has come to you from Allāh taʿālā. You must accept it."

I say, you people are living in the divine kingdom of Allāh taʿālā and eating whatever He gives. Will there be someone else to remove your worries? Just remain focussed on Allāh taʿālā; He is the dispenser of all affairs. Have firm conviction in this and set right your bond with Him.

DO NOT MALIGN YOUR SENIORS

Nowadays people do not understand anything yet they make objections continually. They go to the extent of levelling objections against the 'ulamā' of the past who had made major contributions. I say, they are not here today; this is why your tongue is becoming unbridled. If the same saint were to emerge from his grave, this objector will flee. In past times, people frowned upon backbiting, unnecessary complaining and making objections. The condition has changed to such an extent that these very evils are committed audaciously and with pride. A person has no qualification to carry out any Dīnī or worldly task, but he is prepared to object to everything. He will level objections against the masjid, the madrasah and everything else. The only thing he does not object to is his own self.

There were several senior 'ulamā' at a certain place. A man made some objections. The other 'ulamā' remained silent. However, there was one 'ālim who was affiliated to Ḥaḍrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh. He said to the man: "Listen! It is essential to carry out Dīnī works, no matter what. From your statement we learn that the 'ulamā' are unable to do it. The 'ulamā' will therefore resign, and you people may take this responsibility now. Do it and show it to us." The man fell silent.

Now I am observing a new trend. A person has no association with me; he merely came here once or twice. When he does something which is inappropriate, people attribute it to me by saying: "This man goes to such and such person, yet this is

how he is behaving!" Whereas even my angels have no knowledge of what he is doing.

Making objections is the only thing which is left in our times. Even the senior 'ulamā' of the past who directed countless people towards Dīn are maligned by people today. They claim that those 'ulamā' merely sat down and did one type of work. Whereas even common sense will tell you that if there are several important tasks to be fulfilled, each group should devote itself to carrying out one particular task. If each group does this, it will be able to fulfil the task completely and thoroughly. On the other hand, if all tasks were given to one person, none of the tasks will be completed properly. The system of the entire world operates in this way. Look at the government as an example. It has several departments and each department has its own group of people. For example, an independent department is established for the army, another for municipal administration, and so on.

In the same way, Dīn has several departments. A specific group has devoted itself for each department. It acquired proficiency in it and protected it by the written and spoken words.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib rahimahullāh explains this in his *Tafhīmāt*:

ومعظم ما دعت إلى إقامته الرسل أمور ثلاثة:
تصحيح العقائد في المبدأ والمعاد والمجازاة وغيرها.
وقد تكفل بهذا الفن أهل الأصول من علماء الأمة.
شكر الله تعالى مساعيهم. وتصحيح العمل في

الطاعات المقربة والارتفاقات الضرورية على وفق السنة. وقد تكفل بهذا الفن فقهاء الأمة فهدى الله بهم كثيرين وأقام بهم فرقة عوجاء. وتصحيح الإخلاص والإحسان الذين هما أصل الدين الحنيفي الذي ارتضاه. وقد تكفل به الصوفية رضوان الله عليهم. فاهتدوا وهدوا واستقوا وسقوا وفازوا بالسعادة القصوى وحازوا السهم الأعلى فلله درهم ما أعم نفعهم وتم نورهم.

There are three important aspects to which the Messengers invited. (1) Correcting beliefs on man's origin, the Hereafter, and reward and punishment. Those 'ulamā' who were proficient in the field of principles (uṣūl) took this responsibility. May Allāh ta'ālā reward them for their efforts. (2) Correcting actions related to acts of obedience which take one close to Allāh ta'ālā, and other essentials in line with the Sunnah. This responsibility was fulfilled by the jurists. Allāh ta'ālā guided many people through them and straightened many of those who had deviated. (3) Correcting one's sincerity, devotion and Allāh-consciousness. These are the foundations of the pure Dīn which Allāh ta'ālā chose for His servants. The Sufis – may Allāh be pleased with them – took this

> responsibility. They attained guidance and guided others. They satiated themselves and satiated others. They succeeded with the loftiest success and took the greatest share. All goodness belongs to Allāh alone. Look at how all-encompassing their benefit is and how perfect their light!

We learn from the above text that different departments of Dīn were adopted by different groups of ʿulamā' and each one took responsibility for it. When a person devotes himself to a particular task, he does it properly. For example, we see debaters are sometimes inspired with such convincing rebuttals to their opponents' points that ʿulamā' who are far more learned than them could not think of those answers. This is because when a person is engrossed with a particular type of work, he becomes an expert in it.

There was a need for a debate on one occasion. Many erudite ʿulamā' were present, but they all sent Maulānā Thanā'ullāh Sāḥib Amritsarī raḥimahullāh forward, while they sat back to support him. This was because Maulānā Thanā'ullāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh was an expert debater. Incidentally, the book of the opponent was placed on top of the Qur'ān. The opponent said: "Our book is placed on top of your book. This is a sign of our victory." Maulānā Thanā'ullāh Sāḥib replied: "This is not the case. When something needs to be protected, it is covered by something so that it is not damaged by dust and other dirt. Your book is placed on top as a dust-cover so that dust and dirt does not fall on the Qur'ān. How, then, can you claim that your book is superior?" The man was silenced by this answer.

While Maulānā Thanā'ullāh Sāhib was delivering a speech, he quoted a verse of the Qur'ān and stopped halfway intentionally. He said: "I forgot the rest of the verse. If there is a hāfiz in the audience, I would like him to stand up and read it for me." Many huffāz from all sections of the audience stood up. Maulānā said to the opponent: "Look at the many huffāz of the Qur'ān in this gathering even though we did not make any pre-arrangements to assemble them here. Now show me just one hāfiz of your book. This is proof of the truthfulness of our religion."

Hadrat Maulānā Murtadā Hasan Sāhib rahimahullāh was also an expert debater. A debate was organized against the Qādiyānīs in Bhāgalpūr. Many senior 'ulamā' of Deoband attended. Maulānā Murtadā Hasan Sāhib also joined them. The opponent said: "The Qādiyānīs have been making a noise since quite some time. If this is a false sect, why have you people been silent for so long?" The 'ulamā' remained silent. Maulānā Murtadā Hasan said: "Listen! Let me relate a story first. A person had domesticated a dog. A thief got into his house one night. The dog started barking. When the thief saw it, he placed a piece of bread in front of it. The dog became occupied in eating it. When it finished the bread and was about to bark again, he gave it another piece of bread. The thief continued doing this for some time. The dog thought to itself: "I am happy to eat his bread but I am being disloyal to my master. This should not happen." The dog did not pay attention to the bread. It continued barking until its master woke up and the thief had to flee."

"In the same way, you should understand that we are the dogs of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa

sallam. When we think of the obscenities of Ghulām Ahmad Qādiyānī and want to say anything against him, he immediately writes a book in praise of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. So we remain silent. However, when we realized that his praises are merely to keep us silent – while the reality is that he is trying to wipe out Islam – we got up and made a noise."

The opponent fell silent when he heard this example.

I was saying to you that division of work is not objectionable. Rather, the sages and intelligentsia have always been practising it. Even those who claim intelligence and wisdom today are practising on it. This is why you must think carefully before you say anything. It is not good to make objections against the seniors of the past. They were more intelligent and gifted than you, and they did far more work than you.

If they were in solitude and people were still benefiting from them – in fact, they were benefiting tremendously from them – why should there be any objection against remaining in solitude? After all, the objective is to convey general benefit.

If a person is in solitude and many people are benefiting from him, and another is wandering about without people benefiting from him, then which of the two is better? The fundamental objective is conveying of benefit. The seniors of Dīn used to sit in one place and people from all directions used to come to them and benefit from them. In this way, their benefit became all-encompassing.

A central figure must remain in one place

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh abstained from travelling to different places. He used to remain in one room and people would go to meet him there. A shaykh from Egypt arrived on one occasion. Although he was dressed in royal attire, he was a genuine shaykh. He stood outside and sent the attendant several times to check if Hājī Sāhib had come down or not. When he was finally informed that Hājī Sāhib has come down, he went in, became his murīd, and instructed his students to also pledge bayʿat to Hājī Sāhib. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was not in the habit of going anywhere. He used to remain in the Haram Sharīf [in Makkah]. Many distinguished ʿulamā' and erudite scholars from distant lands used to come to meet him, and return with Allāh's love and His recognition. After that, thousands of people used to benefit from each of those ʿulamā'. In this way, although he was sitting in one corner, his benefit spread far and wide. The fact of the matter is that when a person is one to whom people revert, he must remain fixed in one place. If not, the large numbers of people who come to him daily will be severely inconvenienced.

I am saying that it has been proven rationally and traditionally that there has to be division of work. This is how work can be done. Allāh taʿālā says:

فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوْآ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ.

> Why, then, did a section from each group not go forth so that they may acquire an understanding of religion and inform their

people when they return to them so that they might be on their guard?[1]

Everyone is not ordered to go forth; rather one group is ordered. We learn from this verse that there is division of work for each group. One group is for jihād, another for teaching and educating, and another for propagation. In the same way, if there are separate groups for each work, the work will be done. ʿAllāmah Shāmī raḥimahullāh states that it is farḍ-e-kifāyah to have a separate group for each human need, e.g. washer-men, toilet cleaners, doctors, etc. If there is no one to carry out a particular occupation, the entire community will be sinning.

A saint used to say: "Continue making duʿā' for these traders because if they do not exist, we will have to engage in business. After all, trade and business are also essentials of life." The same can be said of other occupations, e.g. agriculture, medicine and so on.

In the same way, there are different departments in Dīn. It is necessary to have a separate group for each department, e.g. teaching and educating, propagation, issuing legal verdicts, passing judgements, jihād and so on.

Do not level objections against past scholars

The point I am making is that whatever the seniors of the past did, they thought about it carefully. We do not have the mouths to object to them. After all, whatever work was done in those times was done by them. Did you do that work before you were born?

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122.

Brothers! The seniors have passed on. If you convey rewards to them, it will reach them. But if you try to catch their faults and rectify them, they are not here. How are you going to rectify them? Therefore, do not waste your time in futile activities. They did whatever they could. If you have the courage, you may do more and show us. What is the use in objecting to them? The only thing you are doing is causing pain to their souls.

Another point which we must consider is that they were born before us. They were our forefathers and ancestors. No matter what, they enjoy superiority over us. When you spit at the sky, the spit will fall back on your face. When we speak ill of our seniors, the ill comes back to us. After all, they were our seniors. If we do not show respect to our seniors, why should our juniors show respect to us? They too will follow in our way. Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh says in this regard:

> Do not malign your seniors so that your own name will be mentioned with honour.

It is possible for a few individuals to make major contributions in latter times, but on a collective level, the past eras are certainly better. The latter generations collectively cannot surpass the former generations as a whole.

Furthermore, there is textual evidence to support the belief that the closer an era is to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, the more goodness and virtue it will have. And the further away it is from his era, the lesser its goodness. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

خَيْرُ الْقُرُوْنِ قَرْنِيْ ثُمَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَلُوْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَلُوْنَهُمْ.

> The best generation is my generation. Then those who come after them, then those who come after them.

There was a saintly person who was a baker. He used to charge more for stale bread and less for fresh bread. He used to say: "The stale bread is closer to the era of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam than the fresh bread. The stale bread therefore has more goodness in it. This is why it will be more expensive than the fresh bread."

There was a handsome saint. When he was young, a person fell in love with him. But the saint remained completely chaste. When he became old, a whispering entered his heart and he thought to himself: "What if I had done that when I was young? I could have repented thereafter." The moment this thought came to his mind, he regretted it. He cried profusely and repented. He was quite concerned because his entire youth had passed without such a thought ever crossing his mind. Why did it have to happen now in his old age? While he was in this morose condition, he lost consciousness. He sees Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in his dream. He says to him: "There is no need for you to worry. This thought has not decreased your rank in Allāh's sight in any way. You are still accepted in His court. As for the reason behind this thought not coming to you when you were young and coming to you now that you are gone old, the reason for it is that the time of your youth was closer to my era, while your old age is further away from my era. The more distant an era becomes from my era, the more

evil will increase. This is why this happened." The man was consoled.

THE FOOD OF THE AHLULLĀH

An intoxicated elephant was moving forward, and an ignorant man advanced towards it and said: "Hamah aust." (It's all his) Later on someone asked him: "Everyone was fleeing from the elephant while you advanced towards it!?" He replied: "Hamah aust." Someone said: "When you saw the elephant, you thought of Hamah aust. When the elephant-driver was saying: 'Children, move away! The elephant is drunk,' why did you forget Hamah aust?"

The need for the intellect

The intellect is the greatest thing which Allāh taʿālā created for His recognition. After creating the intellect, He addressed it: "I will be recognized solely through you."

I heard Hadrat rahimahullāh relating that someone asked Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu: "What would you prefer? Dying sinless in your infancy or dying after you have become mature and acquired the recognition of Allāh taʿālā?" He replied: "I prefer dying after having acquired Allāh's recognition. If I commit a sin forgetfully, I will repent to Him; but I cannot tolerate leaving this world without having acquired Allāh's recognition."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of genuine gnosis.

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh relates that a person had a falcon. People wanted to feed it the most exotic foods but it refused. This is because the

falcon's food is meat, and people were wanting to feed it everything else. Why, then, should it eat what they offered? The fact of the matter is that people did not have knowledge of it, this is why they did what they did. In the same way, people do not recognize the Ahlullāh. Their food is Allāh's love and recognition. This is why they do not like anything else. Allāh's love and recognition is their spiritual food. This is why they are overjoyed when they meet people who are like them. They think to themselves that they now have the opportunity of talking about Allāh's love and recognition.

There is a famous proverb:

الجنس يميل إلى الجنس.

> Like forces are attracted to each other. [Birds of a feather flock together.]

Hadrat Rābiʿah Basrīyyah rahimahallāh is from among the Ahlullāh. You must have heard of her. She is well-known even among male circles. Men and women used to attend her assemblies. On one occasion, some people in her assembly were speaking ill of this world. She said: "These are worldly people because if all of those who are present here have discarded the world, what is the need to speak bad about the world? Since they are still speaking bad about it, it shows that the love for this world is deeply embedded in their hearts." After all:

من أحب شيئا أكثر ذكره.

> When a person loves a thing, he speaks profusely about it.

Hadrat rahimahullāh then said:

When the Sharīʿah speaks out against this world, it is done out of necessity. Just as the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām speak in praise of the Hereafter and Paradise, they speak out against this world by the order of Allāh taʿālā. There is a need for both.

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say: "When we honour a wealthy person, it is not because he is wealthy but because of niʿma." In other words, a Hadīth states:

نعم الأمير على باب الفقير.

> Excellent indeed is a wealthy person at the door of a poor person.

"This is why I honour a wealthy person – he is an excellent person for having presented himself at the door of a pauper."

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful point!

A person asked someone; "Tell me, what actions does this shaykh of yours do?" He replied: "He follows the Sunnah." When I heard this, I thought to myself that he gave a good answer. However, listen to this point as well: As long as you do not give up the carnal self, you will not be able to follow the Sunnah.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ قِنِيْ شَرَّ نَفْسِيْ.

> O Allāh! Protect me against the evil of my self.

The same supplication contains the words:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَنِيِّيْ.

Protect me from the evil of my semen.

He is teaching the youngsters that it has an evil, and youngsters are generally caught up in its evil. This is why they must seek refuge from its evil. This is for the youngsters. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was divinely protected from sin. He went to the root of the problem of the youth. All evils are because of sexual passion, and its source is semen. You will not understand all this because you have deviated from the path. If I were to teach you the most difficult wazīfah, you will practise on it. However, if you say this in the morning and evening:

اَللّٰهُمَّ قِنِيْ شَرَّ نَفْسِيْ.

O Allāh! Protect me against the evil of my self.

You will be saved from many tribulations and your entire day will pass with ease. But you will not practise on it. This is the general condition of Muslims – they do not want to follow the Sunnah.

There is a physical food which, if the body does not receive it, the body will perish. In the same way, there is a spiritual food. If the soul does not receive it, it will die. Love for Allāh taʿālā and His recognition cease to exist. The different forms of dhikr, pondering and reflecting, rectitude, piety, etc. are spiritual foods. If the soul does not receive them for a few days, it will gradually perish.

People toiled hard and made many efforts to preserve the ways and statements of the saints. They remembered these things and were successful.

The fundamental thing which we need to acquire from them is Allāh's love and recognition. After that, we may listen to their statements, understand them, memorize them and tread the path which they presented to us. Thus, if a person has physical proximity with the Ahlullāh with this intention, then it is not a bad thing. But if his sole objective is physical proximity and not what they teach, then it is nothing. I refer to it as: Falling head over heels without thinking.

The purpose of getting close to the saints is to learn Allāh's love and recognition, to learn and preserve what they say, and to practise on it. May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to do this. Āmīn.

Nowadays I see people frequenting the Ahlullāh mostly for this purpose. May Allāh taʿālā bless Muslims with an understanding of the genuine etiquette which is required for the Ṯarīqah and the people of the Ṯarīqah.

SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS OF THE AHLULLĀH

You people know these things, but I would like to explain them to you in a different way. Listen attentively. Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ ʿalayhis salām addressed his people:

وَيٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا.

> O my people! I do not ask you for any wealth for this [message].[1]

In like manner, Ḥaḍrat Hūd ʿalayhis salām said to his people:

يٰقَوْمِ لَا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ؕ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ.

> “O people! I do not ask you for any wage for this [message]. My wage is only on Him who created me. Will you not, then, understand?”[2]

Qāḍī Bayḍāwī raḥimahullāh says in his commentary to this verse:

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 29.

[2] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 51.

كذا خاطب كل رسول به قومه إزاحة للتهمة وتمحيضا للنصحية فإنها لا تنجح ما دامت مشوبة بالمطامع.

> In like manner did every Messenger address his people so as to remove the suspicion from the people that he is doing it for material gain. Furthermore, if a piece of advice is tainted with personal motive, it cannot be effective.

From here we conclude that it is a unanimous issue among the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām not to have any desire for any wage for the work of inviting to Allāh taʿālā. In fact, every Prophet clearly and frankly said it to his respective nation so that people cannot accuse them and they may be convinced that they [Prophets] are not doing the work of Dīn to acquire their wealth. Rather, their objective is the goodness of the people themselves. After all, if they do not want to accumulate wealth, why are they bearing so many hardships for their propagation?

Hardships and difficulties are borne for the acquisition of wealth and position. And it has been established through proofs that they do not seek wealth and position. The intellect demands that they ponder over what their actual reason is for this work of propagation. The intellect will impose on them to conclude that the Prophets have been ordered by Allāh taʿālā and that they are truly His Messengers who have been sent to convey Allāh's orders without additions and subtractions. Since this is the case, the Being for whom they are doing this work will reward them. There is no question of

asking someone else for a reward or wage. This announcement of the Prophets that they do not seek payment from the people is like a rational proof of their messenger-ship.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of immense wisdom which is suited to none other than Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. May Allāh taʿālā enable us to practise. (compiler)

Now understand this point: The concept of being a shaykh is also a branch of prophet-hood and subservient to it. It is not a separate entity. This is why the mashā'ikh will have to do what the Prophets did. They will have to follow the way of the Prophets in this regard.

In his *Masā'il as-Sulūk*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh writes under this verse: Just as the Prophets said to their people that they do not ask them for wealth and reward for their work of propagation, the mashā'ikh must say to their disciples and associates that they do not ask them for any wage. The quest for wealth is the worst obstacle in the path of spiritual guidance. Those who are seeking guidance will never go to a shaykh who is desirous of wealth. In this way, the door to deriving benefit will be shut.

It is my view that in our times it is inappropriate for the mashā'ikh to go around asking for donations for good works. The minds of people are weak, and miserliness and greed have overpowered them. When they have the slightest suspicion of worldly love [in a person], they fall into doubt about him.

This is what Qādī Baydāwī rahimahullāh was referring to when he said that the Prophets made this statement to remove suspicion from themselves

and to maintain the purity of their advice. When a piece of advice is tainted with personal motives, it is of no benefit.

We conclude from this that this is a ruling of the Qur'ān and the unanimous ruling of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām.

I am explaining these points but many people are probably not understanding what I am saying. If they do not understand, how will they practise?

There was a saint who used to go to the different areas around our town. He used to relate: "I used to induct the people of these areas as murīds but now I do not. This is because when they assemble around me and I start speaking, they break down crying before I can complete what I was saying." In other words, they neither listen nor do they understand. They cry without understanding.

The saint also used to say: "I realized that I cannot draw those people towards me, but they can drag me towards them." He used to relate a parable on this. Someone tied a buffalo to an idol and left. The buffalo began making a noise to release itself. The buffalo was obviously strong. It made a noise, uprooted the idol from its place and fled with the idol tied to it.

The saint used to say: "Just as the buffalo dragged the idol with it, these people will drag me towards them and I will not be able to draw them towards me. This is why I gave up inducting them as my murīds. Do you know what this means? I could not bring them towards Allāh's remembrance and obedience, but they were so firm in their irreligiousness that they would cast me into heedlessness."

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent point! I have heard that the people in our area used to like him a lot, but this what he thought of them. They wanted to have him solely for the sake of blessings – they did not want to benefit from him nor practise on his teachings. The same saint used to say: "The food is prepared and ready, but there is no one to eat it."

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh used to relate this story quite often. He used to say about himself: "Everything is here with us, but our people – especially our extended family people – do not pay any attention." It is certainly a sad situation.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* states that karāmāt are for the masses. As for the elite and those endowed with resoluteness, they fear karāmāt because those who are engrossed in istidrāj also receive these powers. Also, a person can receive karāmāt even before he puts an end to the tribulations of his self. However, it creates arrogance and deception. Another reason why the elite fear karāmāt is that they must not become an exchange for the Hereafter. When – together with the karāmat - they receive the glad tiding that their share of the Hereafter will not be decreased because of it, they accept it as a karāmat and do not abhor it. After all, these personalities focus on the Hereafter and they are desirous of rewards in the Hereafter. Thus, a karāmat in reality is a glad tiding in their favour that their share in the Hereafter will not be decreased.

He adds: In short, they believe that in this world, steadfastness on the straight path is the fundamental karāmat. In other words, abstaining from sins and carrying out acts of obedience. Allāh taʿālā says:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. أُولٰئِكَ أَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ.

> Surely those who said: "Our Sustainer is Allāh", and then remained steadfast, so there is neither fear on them nor will they grieve. They are the inhabitants of Paradise, abiding therein forever – as a reward for all that they used to do.[1]

He says that this station combines internal and external servitude, and is from among the highest stations. He adds: A karāmat which is worthy of consideration contains two ingredients: (1) Belief which is in line with the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah. (2) Steadfastness on acts of obedience.

The seniors of Dīn paid particular attention to explaining these points because this is the path from which Shaytān misleads people. They tried to seal off this path and engaged in powerful investigations on this issue. Unfortunately, those who come to us do not want to even listen to them. Yet, they want to receive the ranks which the Ahlullāh received. I say to them: You will never receive these ranks because you are materialistic people. You want to acquire these ranks for worldly reasons.

Some people related their own condition to me. One person said: "Previously when I used to read the Qur'ān and mention is made of evil people, I always

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[1] Sūrah al-Aḥqāf, 46: 13-14.

believed that it applied to someone else. And where mention is made of believers and the truthful, I believed it applied to me." To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return. We ought to think the opposite.

These people come to us but they do not realize that thinking in this way is a hijacking by Shayṯān and a plot of the carnal self. The reason for their being caught up is that they engage in some dhikr and their carnal self convinces them into thinking that they have reached lofty heights because of it. This is how they start looking down at others. I ask them: From where did you get the wings to become such experts while others did not get anywhere?

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a real point of rectification and spiritual training which can only be made by the Ahlullāh. (compiler)

Listen! If you die in this condition and proceed to the Hereafter, you will receive nothing. If you do receive anything, it will be this arrogance and conceit. You will then see the disastrous consequences of it. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

I have become old doing this work. This is why I say to you that the worst obstacle to reaching Allāh taʿālā is man's carnal self. As long as you do not vanquish the self, you will receive nothing in this path. If after coming onto this path, a person still does not realize that he cannot reach Allāh taʿālā through the path of the self, then he has understood nothing. You will not become an expert by thinking yourself to be so, no matter how much your self tries to convince you that you have become one. You will neither be an expert in Allāh's sight, in the sight of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam nor in the sight of believers. Nor will you have any follower in this world because of this. You are merely in

deception and nothing else. Your seniors of Dīn are telling you that the Sufis and elite used to fear their own karāmāt lest they become a recompense for the Hereafter. However, when they receive the glad tiding that their reward of the Hereafter will not be decreased, they are pleased.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say that Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib rahimahullāh was a man of kashf (spiritual exposition). He observed a shortfall of reward in his book of deeds so he said to Allāh taʿālā: "I did such and such good deeds. Why is there such a large shortfall in my book of deeds!?" Allāh taʿālā replied: "The decrease occurred because of the house which you built." He said: "If this were to happen, all the rewards of the Hereafter will be expended in this very world and no share will remain in the Hereafter. This is why I beseech You to give me in this world and not to reduce my share in the Hereafter because of this. If not, all my good deeds will come to an end."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Observe this frightening conversation.

I heard this story from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh, but other seniors abstained from relating stories of this nature. However, because Hadrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib rahimahullāh had reached the station of beloved-ness, he used to relate these things.

People from various places invite me. I say to them: When I cannot do any work here and even a few people are not benefiting, what will I do by going to other places? You people have been coming here since quite some time, but you still haven't understood my programme. What hope can I have of

your understanding it if I were to come to your place for a few days? If you could not understand it after such a long time, how can I expect new people to understand it in a few days? This is why I say: When a person is doing some work, come to him and learn it from him. This is the original system. Those who come here must understand what they are taught, get engrossed in it, then explain it to others, and make the latter do the same. This is how the work can be done and this is how it will proliferate.

I was at one place. I took out *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* and showed it to them. Some scholars were also present. I said to them: "Look! This is *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. I am reading this Hadīth from it that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to make this supplication after eating:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ.

> All praise is due to Allāh who fed me this food and gave it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

The person who reads this supplication has one year's sins pardoned. This is why I say to you: Even if you eat the most exotic of dishes and couple your meal with this supplication, your eating will also become an act of worship and you will acquire proximity to Allāh taʿālā.

However, people want us to read these supplications on their behalf. Where's the justice? You eat the food and don't make the supplication. We don't eat the food but we must make the supplication for you!

You have just heard this supplication for eating. A Hadīth also states that when a person wears clothes and reads the following supplication, two years of his sins will be pardoned:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَلْبَسَنِيْ هٰذَا الّلِبَاسَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ.

> All praise is due to Allāh who clothed me this garment and gave it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

I say further: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam fed us and conveyed us to Allāh taʿālā. It is now our duty to learn these supplications and make them part of our lives.

A Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made this supplication to Allāh taʿālā: "O Allāh! I ask You for the most virtuous of the things which You have given to people be it of wealth, family or children." In other words, I beg You for virtuous wealth, a virtuous family and virtuous children. These supplications form part of the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Look! A meal which was one of the highest form of heedlessness was converted into a supplication, a form of dhikr, and a means of proximity to Allāh taʿālā. Whatever sins are committed by man are due to food. Whatever negligence he displays is because of food. The strength which the carnal self receives is from food. Yet, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made it the highest form of Dīn and said that the person who reads this supplication shall have one year's sins pardoned. When a person reads it after eating, Allāh's help and inspiration will be with

him. The food will no longer be a cause of negligence. Rather, because it is in line with the Sunnah, the meal will be counted as an act of obedience. How, then, can it be a cause of heedlessness?

Glory to Allāh! Look at how easy Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made our work! Once food comes under our control – i.e. it does not become a cause of heedlessness – then all acts of obedience have come under our control, and we are also in control of abstaining from sins. Know well that Allāh's blessing will be with us and this supplication will not permit us to walk in the opposite direction. Similarly, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said that the one who reads the supplication at the time of wearing his garments will have two years' of sin pardoned.

Sins distant a person from Allāh taʿālā. When sins are pardoned on account of these supplications, then one gets closer to Allāh taʿālā and all barriers are removed.

Listen! The angels do not eat and drink, so they are sinless. This is why they do not read these supplications. The proximity which is attained through these supplications is reserved for humans. The heedlessness which man experiences because of eating and drinking is surpassed many times by the proximity which he acquires by reading these supplications. This is how man surpasses angels.

Muslims of today carry out other acts of obedience but they do not pay attention to the Sunnah practices of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and specific supplications. Whereas the stations of servitude and Allāh's pleasure are acquired from them. Allāh's pleasure is also one of the lofty

stations. Servitude is an objective and so are its requisites. A person writes:

> I used to cast aspersions on others, but when I opened my eyes, I realized that my own heart was a maze of defects.

In other words, as long as I hadn't opened my eyes and hadn't received insight, I assumed that others are nothing and they are the ones who will go to Hell. Once I opened my eyes, I saw nothing but evil within my self.

I went to one place and quoted the above couplet. The people were impressed and said that they received a valuable piece of advice. The next day I said to them: "I had quoted a couplet to you yesterday. Now listen to something else."

> As long as we did not recognize ourselves, we looked at the faults and merits of others. When our eyes fell on our own sins, no one appeared evil to us.

In other words, as long as I did not recognize my own self, I used to look down at others. When my gaze fell on my sins, I realized that I myself am the most evil; there is no one more evil than myself.

The people were overjoyed when they heard this. They said: "We wanted to come out of this evil but could not. Your explanation has helped us tremendously. If Allāh wills, we will come out of it."

When a person considers himself to be evil, he becomes so occupied with his own self that he has no time to look at the faults of others.

The saints say that when a person looks at his own merits, he is made to look at the faults of others.

When a person looks at his own faults, he is protected against looking at the faults of others.

These are the pieces of advice of your seniors, and they are meant to teach you. Recognize your self because the recognition of Allāh taʿālā is dependent on it. As long as you do not know your own self, you will continue looking at the faults of others. Such a person cannot achieve any rank in Allāh's court.

There is much joy in studying the spiritual conditions of the Sufis. Nowadays when juniors acquire a spiritual condition, they consider themselves to be experts. But they do not acquire the major spiritual conditions. The greatest spiritual condition is recognition of one's self. Allāh's recognition is dependent on it. If a person acquires it, he will not turn in any other direction. This is the steadfastness which the author of *Tarsīʿ* referred to as the greatest karāmat.

Man should be forever fearful while in this world. If he is, he will receive the glad tiding of the Hereafter. The one who does not have fear in this world will be made to suffer fear in the Hereafter.

There was a saint who used to sell gravy. People would come and buy from him, but they would pay him with counterfeit money. They assumed he cannot differentiate between genuine and counterfeit money, he is a fool, and they would continue deceiving him. Whereas he knew fully well what was happening and could identify counterfeit money. When he was about to depart from this world, he said: "O Allāh! You know well that throughout my life I had been accepting counterfeit money from Your servants. I beg You to accept my counterfeit actions today."

Glory to Allāh! People thought he was a fool but look at how intelligent he turned out to be!

There was another saint who used to pass by a woman's shop. When she used to see him, she used to mock at him and say: "Whose beard is better, yours or my goat's?" The saint would remain silent and continue on his way. People like him are as described by the Qur'ān:

وَّإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجٰهِلُوْنَ قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا.

> When the ignorant ones address them, they reply: "Peace!"[1]

The saint bore her taunts for his entire life. When he was about to pass away from this world, he advised that when he dies, his funeral bier must be made to pass by the woman's shop. The saint's followers carried out his bequest. When his funeral bier reached the woman's shop, he sat up, passed his hand over his beard and said: "All praise is due to Allāh, today my beard is better than your goat's." After saying this, he lied down once again.

Note: This was the saint's karāmat. It was the truth which cannot be denied.

Look! He did not say anything throughout his life because he was in constant fear. He did not know what is to happen. But once he died on īmān, he said: "All praise is due to Allāh, today my beard is better than your goat's. I am leaving with my īmān fully preserved. Therefore, today, I am better than you, your goat and all those who used to mock at

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[1] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 63.

me. I protected myself against all evils and am proceeding pure and clean towards Allāh taʿālā."

At the time when Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib rahimahullāh passed away, his death was exposed to Hadrat Maulānā Fadl Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī rahimahullāh. He said to those who were present in his assembly: "The angels are taking the soul of an Allāh-fearing ʿālim." The angels were taking his soul with such respect and reverence that Hadrat Maulānā concluded that it must be the soul of an Allāh-fearing ʿālim.

It was the time of ʿasr. Hadrat Maulānā Fadl Rahmān Sāhib rahimahullāh was sitting when he suddenly remarked: "Such and such senior person of ʿAlī Garh has passed away." He added: "The man has been pardoned."

Someone told me about the man that when he was about to depart from this world, he was reading durūd sharīf and tears were flowing continuously from his eyes. This is how he left this world.

I am relating these incidents to you to show you that no one knows in what condition a person will depart from this world. There are so many people regarding whom people have evil thoughts but they depart with īmān and are pardoned. This is why we should never consider anyone to be evil.

There was a man who constantly requested me saying: "Tell my son to perform salāh. It will be best if he starts to perform salāh." I thought to myself that he will reform if you remain silent.

The man passed away and he could not do anything. Later on, his son began performing salāh and kept a beard.

Your advice was not effective because it was tainted with personal motives. Remove your personal motives first and your advice will be effective.

It cannot happen that Muslims are taught Dīn and they do not learn it. After all, they are Muslims and they believe in Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. They spend their money on the madāris and take a part in religious works. In the same way, if they are taught Dīn, they will certainly learn it. Yes, they have to be taught in the proper manner. You will then see how they will advance towards Dīn and from them such people will be born who will serve Dīn. Remember, no teacher is going to descend from the skies.

If a man can teach a parrot to talk, can't he teach a human? However, there is a need for a qualified and dedicated teacher to teach and tutor humans. Man's greatest achievement is to gain control over his carnal self and extricate himself from personal motives. This is why I said, remove yourself from personal motives and you will see how effective your pieces of advice will be.

Note: May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to do this. (compiler)

DEVELOP A GENUINE SPIRITUAL CONDITION

Allāh taʿālā says in Sūrah Yūnus:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ.

> Give glad tidings to the believers that they have a true footing with their Sustainer.[1]

Then He says in Sūrah al-Qamar:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّنَهَرٍ. فِيْ مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِيْكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ.

> Surely the righteous are in gardens and rivers. Sitting in a seat of truth, in the presence of a sovereign who has control over all.[2]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* considers the words "a true footing" and "a seat of truth" to mean the same thing, viz. lofty and beloved ranks.

However, through his blessings, I say that one is the cause and the other is the effect. In other words, "a true footing" is the cause for "a seat of truth". In the first verse, the glad tiding is not explained because of its greatness. This is quite common in many places in the Qur'ān. The words "a true footing" are the reason for the glad tiding and not the glad tiding itself. Based on this explanation, the verse will

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 2.

[2] Sūrah al-Qamar, 54: 54-55.

translate thus: “Give glad tidings to the believers. And give them glad tidings because they have a true footing on [good] actions.”

Some verses explain others. The verse of Sūrah al-Qamar is explaining the glad tiding which is not mentioned in the present verse. This means: Give those who have a true footing the glad tiding that by virtue of their true footing, they will acquire “a seat of truth”.

It is this very “true footing” which is sought in this world. When a believer sets firm his foot with truthfulness, he surpasses the angels.

There is a need to place one’s foot – i.e. do good actions – on the path because mere words without actions are useless; they have no reality.

The “seat of truth” which will be received in the Hereafter will be on account of the “true footing” in this world. Some people will cross the Sirāṭ with the speed of lightning. This is because they were swift in following the Sharīʿah while they were in this world.

Now you tell me: If a person reads Allāh’s speech with his heart and passes “a true footing”, imagine the extent of truth he will choose!

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* says that just as truth and falsehood are adjectives for a statement, they can be adjectives for an action. This is why when a person is brave in doing battle, we say:

صدق في القتال.

And when he is the opposite, we say:

كذب في القتال.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* was an eminent scholar, and he made a pertinent point. However, one point remains, and that is *ḥāl* – a condition or situation. In other words, just as truth and falsehood are adjectives for words and actions, they can be for conditions as well. A person could be true in his spiritual condition, and he could be a liar. Ḥadrat Maulānā raḥimahullāh quotes a statement of Shaykh Akbar raḥimahullāh in *Tanbīh aṭ-Ṭabarī*:

> I can also recognize whether a person is true or false in his state of inebriation and sobriety.

We conclude that truth and falsehood are also found in a condition, after all, inebriation and sobriety are conditions. A qualified shaykh must be able to identify the spiritual condition of his murīd.

I say: A spiritual condition is the foundation, while words and actions are subservient to it. This is why the Sufis examine the genuineness of a person's condition. Once his condition is true, his words and actions will automatically be true because they are subservient to it.

The 'ulamā' of the external self look at the truthfulness of words and actions, and are focussed on it. Whereas it is subservient to the condition of the heart. How will words and actions be rectified when the heart is not in order? This is why they are always perplexed. On the other hand, the Ahlullāh look at the condition and focus on the heart. Once it is rectified, words and actions are automatically rectified. Ḥadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī raḥimahullāh used to say that the Ahlullāh rectify emotions and capabilities.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat certainly exposed a reality which mentors ought to bear in mind. Inspiration is from Allāh taʿālā alone. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh was reciting some poems about Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh. The latter said: "This is his spiritual condition. He is reciting them with his spiritual condition." On another occasion, another scholar was reciting some couplets in praise of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh. The more he was reciting them, the more the colour of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib's face was changing. When the scholar finished, Hadrat expressed his displeasure to him. Now look, the man was true in his words and actions. Whatever he recited was true. Despite this, Hadrat was displeased because he was not true in his spiritual condition. In other words, the condition of his heart did not coincide with what he was expressing with his tongue.

Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' rahimahullāh writes in *Fawā'id al-Fuwād* that when Hadrat Bilāl radiyallāhu ʿanhu heard the following verse, he began dancing. The verse is:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِيْ مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلٰكِنَّ اللهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ.

> You cannot guide whom you will. Rather, it is Allâh who guides whomever He wills.[1]

He said: All praise is due to Allāh for having kept guidance and Allāh-recognition in His control and

[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 56.

did not give them to anyone. Had guidance been in the control of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, where would he ever leave aside a helper and supporter like Abū Ṭālib for an Abyssinian like me!?

Hadrat Khwājah Ajmerī rahimahullāh listened to samāʿ on one occasion. He was overcome by ecstasy and went into solitude. One of those who were present in the assembly was overwhelmed by crying and became dejected. Hadrat asked him: "What did you understand from my condition that you started crying so profusely?" He replied: "O Shaykh! I do not have the ability to even understand your lofty condition, nor do I consider myself to be among those who experience spiritual ecstasy. However, the thought crossed my mind that what did we do before our existence which caused Allāh taʿālā to make us to be born a sinners, and then wants obedience and servitude from us? And what did you do before your existence that Allāh taʿālā made you a genuine saint and seated you on the throne of cognition?"

Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh was overcome by emotion when he heard this. He took the man affectionately into his lap and began crying profusely. He then addressed the man: "If there is anyone who has a special sentiment, it is you. And if anyone else has it, he has received it by virtue of you." Hadrat Khwājah rahimahullāh began reading this verse again and again:

وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْ لَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللهُ.

> We would not have been guided had Allāh not guided us.[1]

The Shaykh read this verse repeatedly to the extent that those who were present developed their own zeal, and they too were overwhelmed by spiritual ecstasy.

The story of Hadrat Fudayl

Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād rahimahullāh was a thief and robber in the beginning. Despite this, he had Allāh's fear in his heart. On one occasion, his companions hijacked a caravan, stole all the wealth and belongings of the travellers, and sat down to eat. One of the travellers asked: "Who is your chief?" They replied: "There he is performing salāh under that tree." The traveller asked: "How come he is not eating with you'll?" They replied: "He is fasting." The traveller said: "But this is not the month of Ramadān!?" He replied: "Our chief observes optional fasts as well." When the traveller heard all this about Hadrat Fudayl, he was quite astonished. How can this man observe fast and perform salāh, and engage in stealing and robbing at the same time?

The man proceeded towards the tree and noticed Hadrat Fudayl occupied in salāh with utmost humility and servitude. When he completed his salāh, the traveller remarked: "I see a strange thing. You observe fast but you also steal and rob. You perform salāh but you also murder Muslims. How

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[1] Sūrah al-A'rāf, 7: 43.

can you reconcile this stealing and murdering with salāh and fasting? How can these opposites meet?"

Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh asked: "Do you know how to read the Qur'ān?" The traveller replied in the affirmative. He said: "Very well, read something for me." The traveller began reading this verse:

وَاٰخَرُوْنَ اعْتَرَفُوْا بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ خَلَطُوْا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّاٰخَرَ سَيِّئًا ط عَسَى اللّٰهُ أَنْ يَّتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ط إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

> There are others who have confessed their sins [after] having mixed a righteous deed with another that was evil. Soon will Allāh pardon them. Surely Allāh is forgiving, merciful.[1]

It was by virtue of the blessing of Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh that that very verse came into the traveller's mind which contained an answer to his question. It was as though Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh was saying to him: I am also from among those who have some good actions and others which are evil.

I go one step further and say that this verse must have crossed the mind of Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh first, then fell into the mind of the traveller and he then recited it. The effect of "Soon will Allāh pardon them" was then manifested and Allāh taʿālā inspired Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh to repent and to reach great spiritual heights. It was

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 102.

Allāh's will for His servant to repent and to become a great shaykh. Glory to Allāh! Look at His power! Here is a man who is immersed in stealing and robbing while Allāh taʿālā has decreed that he will become a mentor to other shaykhs.

Genuine repentance

I heard the story of Hadrat Fudayl's repentance from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh as follows:

One of the travellers in the caravan was reciting the Qur'ān when he came to this verse:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوْبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللهِ.

> Has the time not come for the believers that their hearts should feel humble at the remembrance of Allāh [1]

The moment he heard this, Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh was overcome by spiritual ecstasy and he said repeatedly: "The time has come, the time has come." And he repented there and then.

When Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh used to steal from anyone, he used to note the owner's name and address, and the amount or items which he stole. When he repented, he went to those from whom he stole and returned their possessions to them. There was only one Jew from whom he had stolen forty thousand dīnārs that was outstanding. He went to the Jew in Nīshāpūr and said: "I have repented from my stealing and plundering, and obtained the pardon of all who I had robbed. Only your forty

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[1] Sūrah al-Hadīd, 57: 16.

thousand dīnārs are outstanding. I do not have that much at the moment. You may therefore ask me to serve you in whichever way you want or do whatever you want to me; I am ready for it." Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh began living in his service. The Jew had read in the Taurāh that when a follower of Muhammad sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam repents sincerely, then the soil which he touches turns into gold. The Jew wanted to put this to the test. He filled a bag with sand, placed it on a shelf and emerged from his house. He went to Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh and said: "I took an oath that I will never free you until you give me such and such amount of gold. To facilitate your freedom I am asking you to go inside and bring the bag of gold which is placed on the shelf. Bring it and give it to me so that my oath will be fulfilled and you will be freed."

Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh went inside, took the bag and placed it before the Jew. The Jew opened it and turned it over. He saw that the soil which he had poured into the bag had turned to gold. Whatever outstanding amount Hadrat Fudayl rahimahullāh owed to him was in the bag in the form of gold. On seeing this, the Jew said: "Not only has the soil turned to gold, you have turned the copper of my unbelief into pure gold. Present Islam to me because your religion is undoubtedly the truth." The Jew together with seventy members of his family embraced Islam. All praise is due to Allāh. Glory to Allāh. This was the blessing of Hadrat Fudayl's sincerity.

The blessing of sincerity

Qādī Shihāb ad-Dīn rahimahullāh was in the king's army. He was proceeding towards a jungle for one of

his needs. On the way, he passed by a place called Tarabābād. He heard the sound of someone crying emanating from the tent of a prostitute. The Shaykh was quite astonished because it was unheard of someone to cry in Tarabābād. He stopped his horse and dismounted, and thought to himself that he ought to find out the cause of this crying. However, he did not have the courage to go to the tent because he feared someone might have bad thoughts about him. After all, a Muslim has to keep away from places where people could cast aspersions at him. When the crying intensified, he could not control himself and went into the tent. He saw a woman all alone. She was crying and weeping profusely. When she saw him, she said: "I am excused. Go away from here. Another person had come before you and I sent him away as well." The Shaykh said: "You are misunderstanding me. I am donning the garments of righteous people. Do not think of me otherwise." The woman asked: "What, then, is your reason for coming here?" He replied: "It was your crying which brought me here. I want to know what is causing you to cry?" The woman fell silent. The Shaykh persisted. She eventually replied: "I thought to myself that although I am not an immoral woman, I have been included in that category on account of my name. I fear Allāh taʿālā may punish me because of my name." The Shaykh said: "A name is of no significance. You haven't committed an evil." The woman replied: "I seek refuge in Allāh! I never committed an evil. Instead, whenever any person comes here, I excuse myself as I did to you." The Shaykh asked: "Are you a free woman or are you a slave?" She replied: "I am a slave. I carry out my master's orders. He instructed me to give him four dirhams daily. I occupy myself

in worship on this prayer mat, and I receive four dirhams daily from under it. I then give the money to my master." The Shaykh asked: "What if an immoral person comes and your master appoints you to see to his needs? How will you save yourself?" She replied: "If that happens, Allāh taʿālā causes me to suffer a severe fever which renders me unconscious. Allāh taʿālā protects me in this way."

Glory to Allāh! This was the blessing of her sincerity. When a person sets right his affair with Allāh taʿālā, He provides a way for his protection.

The story of Bishr Hāfī

Hadrat Bishr Hāfī rahimahullāh lived for quite some time after his repentance. Despite this, he used to walk around bare-headed and barefooted. When people asked him the reason for it, he replied: "I was in this condition at the time when I received Allāh's help, got the inspiration to repent, and made a promise to Allāh taʿālā. I feel it inappropriate to change that condition."

I say, this is found in the Qur'ān as well. When Allāh's true servants make a covenant with Him, they do not change it in the least. They then become eligible for Allāh's favour and reward.

وَمَنْ أَوْفٰى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهُ اللهَ فَسَيُؤْتِيْهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا.

> Whoever fulfils whatever He has pledged to Allāh, He will give him a great reward.[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Fath, 48: 10.

There is another special point which is worthy of consideration. As per the rules, the word عَلَيْهُ should have been with a kasrah below the hā. However, according to the recitation of Imām Hafs rahimahullāh, it is with a dammah [as written in the verse above]. The exegists present some unique observations in this regard. They say that the letter hā originates from huwa هُوَ and the hā has a dammah on it. Here too, consideration is given to the original and the dammah has been maintained. Although the word علی entered on it, it was not made maksūr (a kasrah). From this it is deduced that a pledge/covenant is a thing which cannot be altered in the least, and it cannot deviate the slightest bit from its origin.

Glory to Allāh! What a striking point! This type of knowledge is really the share of these personalities.

Another point which they make is that if the hā was made maksūr – as per the rule – then the word "Allāh" would have to be read with an empty mouth. The dammah has been written to maintain the awe and splendour of Allāh taʿālā. Reading the name of Allāh with greatness lends greatness and seriousness to the order of upholding a pledge. A demonstration of the magnitude of upholding a pledge requires an augmentation of the name of Allāh taʿālā.

Now listen to how Allāh taʿālā treated Hadrat Bishr Hāfī rahimahullāh. When he fulfilled his promise to Allāh taʿālā, He too ordered the animals and birds not to excrete on the path which was taken by Bishr Hāfī rahimahullāh. And so, no matter which path he took, no animal would excrete or pass urine on that path so that the feet of Hadrat Bishr do not get

dirty. One day, some people noticed the droppings and excreta of animals on the path which Hadrat Bishr used to take. They thought that he must have passed on. When they made investigations, they learnt that he had in fact passed away.

I heard Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh saying with reference to Hadrat Bishr Hāfī rahimahullāh:

When people asked him the reason for remaining barefooted, he said: "The land is Allāh's carpet. I do not have the courage to walk on it with my shoes. I find it disrespectful."

Hadrat Bishr Hāfī rahimahullāh could have given both replies to the people. Showing respect is the point of similarity between both. In one, respect is shown to Allāh taʿālā, and in the other, respect is shown to His path.

These are some of the incidents about the saints. If people hear just one story of a saint, they are sure to be affected by it. However, the prerequisite is that their stories must be related in their words. One's own words should not be interpolated because their darkness will render the saints' words ineffective.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a factual point. (compiler)

SUCCESS LIES IN FOLLOWING THE SHARĪʿAH

It is totally unacceptable that we witness the material and religious destruction of Muslims, but we sit back as spiritual mentors without showing Muslims the path to success. The degeneration of the elite causes the masses to become degenerate. When the masses degenerate, you must conclude that the elite have not fulfilled their responsibility. If only a true pain for Muslims were created in our hearts.

When I select certain people from among those who come here, it does not mean that I want to drive away the others. How can I ever tolerate my fellow Muslims not coming here? Or what calamity has befallen me that I should say anything which is offensive against them? Brothers! Our honour lies in the honour of Muslims. Whatever selections I make here are done solely for the purpose of rectification, but people take this to mean insolence.

It is because of an absence of a selection process that our madāris have deteriorated and our khānqāhs have degenerated. There are such people studying in the madāris who do not serve knowledge after completing their studies. They study the entire syllabus and graduate, but they do not have the capability to teach even the elementary books. All I want is that this must at least not happen here. If your objective is to work and to learn Dīn, you may come. When people start coming here as a mere custom, I prohibit it.

Shaykh Akbar raḥimahullāh wrote that it is obligatory on a shaykh not to accept a murīd

without putting him through a test. This is what the Shaykh wrote. The Ahlullāh placed these verification criteria to protect the Sufi path from disrepute.

There were some people sitting here and talking about the sighting of the crescent. In the course of the discussion, they asked if we should also consider the calculations of the Hindus in this regard. I was sitting there and listening to them. I eventually quoted just one Hadīth to them. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

صوموا لرؤيته وأفطروا لرؤيته.

> Start fasting when you see the crescent, and observe ʿīd when you see the crescent.

What I meant to convey to them that in Dīnī matters, there should be no consideration to what the worldly people and non-Muslims have to say.

You see! Muslims of today have deteriorated to the extent of looking here and there while the injunctions of Allāh taʿālā are right before them. They disregard Allāh's orders and choose to do what their carnal selves and desires dictate to them. Whereas a great personality like Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is ordered to follow Allāh's orders and to abstain from following the desires of the ignoramuses.

This is how the Jews and Christians went astray. They distorted the Taurāh and Injīl to the extent that these books could not be relied upon. The Qur'ān was then revealed. The Jews and Christians used to make huge offerings to their scholars. This is why they did not submit before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam despite recognizing him

as a true Prophet. They feared their income will run dry.

There was a senior Jewish scholar by the name of Ibn Sūriyā. He had a private discussion with Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in which he said: "The Jews know that you are a true Prophet of Allāh, but they do not embrace īmān out of jealousy." I say: This Ibn Sūriyā had surpassed all of them in his jealousy and obstinacy because despite this admission, he did not embrace īmān.

Allāh taʿālā says:

فَخَلَفَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوٰتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا.

> There came in their place successors who abandoned salāh and went after their lusts. They will, later on, see the deviation.[1]

On one hand there is idāʿat (abandonment) and on the other side is ittibāʿ (obedience). The abandonment is of salāh, and the obedience is to one's lusts. This shows that abandoning Allāh's orders happens on account of obedience to one's desires and lusts.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is ordered to follow the Sharīʿah. The same order is given to the believers:

وَأَنَّ هٰذَا صِرَاطِيْ مُسْتَقِيْمًا فَاتَّبِعُوْهُ.

> This is My straight path. Follow it, then.[1]

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[1] Sūrah Maryam, 19: 59.

On the other hand, the Jews and Christians followed their desires and abandoned Allāh's orders. The opposite of divine order is carnal desire. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ.

> Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity.[2]

I say to you: You may certainly come here. I do not stop you. But come with understanding and intelligence. A person understands a few things and leaves here as though he is an expert, and he feels he is a senior person.

I say: There is no need for you to fall into striving and working hard. I will show you a simple way. Listen to a Sufi master with your heart. After all, the body parts are subservient to the heart. When the heart is in order, the actions will automatically get in order. The assembly in which Allāh's speech is quoted and the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam are explained is an assembly of īmān. It is an assembly of conviction and affirmation. It is an assembly of compliance. It is an assembly of surrender. It is an assembly of cognition. Thus, listen with your heart and see the benefits. May Allāh inspire us. Āmīn.

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 153.

[2] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 23.

There is a greater need for action than lectures

Some people say: The more knowledge is conveyed, the more the benefit. I say: This is not the case. Rather, the more knowledge is conveyed, the more the evidence will be established against a person. If, after the establishment of evidence, he still does not practise, the grip of Allāh taʿālā will be extremely severe. He will stand before Allāh taʿālā without having any excuse for himself.

I too was under the impression that as long as good lectures are delivered, people will listen to them and practise on them. I delivered one lecture after the other, one better than the other, but I saw no benefit. People were certainly listening to the lectures and swaying from side to side, but they did not put them into practice. After observing this situation, I said: O Allāh! Such diverse themes are explained but people are still not practising! Why is this? I received an answer that nothing will be achieved by mere lectures; you will have to ask the people to put them into action. When I did this, I observed the benefits.

I see people showing an interest in listening to lectures, but putting into practice is synonymous to death for them. I say to you that a lot of knowledge has reached us. Thousands of books have been written. Translations of the Qur'ān have reached every home. But I ask you, are the actions equal to the amount of knowledge which has been conveyed? Certainly not – not even one percent. Now you tell me: How is it to remain fully engrossed in the acquisition and imparting of something – knowledge – which is already present, and to totally disregard

something of which there is a severe shortage, i.e. practice?

There is no dearth of knowledge today. There is no shortage of lectures and talks. There is no scarcity of books. Yes, there is a real shortage of action.

Madāris have been established. Lectures and talks are delivered. I ask you, since you are doing all this, why are you not creating some foundation in it so that success can be achieved?

A Maulānā who teaches in a madrasah used to come to me. I said to him: "How come the principal of your madrasah never comes here?" He replied: "The principal does not keep a beard, so he is ashamed to come to meet you." Did you hear!? The principal of the madrasah did not have a beard. This was in the beginning. Later on, he began keeping a beard and started coming here.

Many senior people assembled around an ʿālim in Hyderabad. All of them had beards which were shorter than the Sharīʿah length. The ʿālim looked around him and remarked with much pain: "To whom should I deliver a lecture? There seems to be no Muslim here." The people were quite impressed and said: "Hadrat! You deliver your lecture, we will become genuine Muslims from today." He delivered his talk, they listened attentively, were impressed, and started keeping a full beard and began looking like Muslims.

Look! When they were addressed in this manner and they were asked to put into action, it benefited them. By this I do not mean that there is no benefit whatsoever in delivering lectures. What I mean is that this is not the time to suffice with delivering lectures. Rather, it is the time to get ready for

action. It is the time to do the work after thinking about it carefully.

You are coming here in such large numbers. Leave others aside, if we make a firm resolution to put into action, a lot can be achieved.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a reasonable demand. If people start putting into action – even if they are few – others will be affected and they too will follow suite.

SUCCESS IS IN ALLĀH'S CONTROL

The Banū Isrā'īl were People of the Book. They knew that murdering Prophets was no trivial matter, but they still did it. When they humiliated the Prophets and murdered them, Allāh taʿālā imposed tyrant rulers over them. This is what Allāh taʿālā does when He is displeased with a nation. Can anyone flee from Allāh's wrath?

The Banū Isrā'īl were seized on account of their waywardness and rebellion. Despite this, they were given a chance and told: Even now if you accept and repent, you will be given respite, and your Lord will show mercy to you.

When they returned to their mischief and depravity, they were seized by Allāh taʿālā. This is Allāh's law: When a nation becomes rebellious and does not pay heed even after getting a respite, it is seized severely.

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ.

Surely the grip of your Sustainer is severe.[1]

This is what we have to think about and be fearful of. When the Banū Isrā'īl disobeyed Allāh taʿālā, He imposed tyrant rulers over them. These tyrants desecrated their masājid, invaded their houses, plundered and murdered them. Let it not happen that we too become disobedient like them and are then imposed by punishments which were

[1] Sūrah al-Burūj, 85: 12.

unleashed on them. Allāh forbid! If this is the situation, we must repent immediately, we must turn to Allāh taʿālā and we must remove the causes of Allāh's displeasure. Allāh taʿālā will show mercy to us. Even after the transgression of the Banū Isrāʾīl and their destruction, Allāh taʿālā said:

عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا.

> It may well be that your Sustainer may have mercy on you. But if you do the same [sins], We will do the same [in punishment].[1]

This is the path which is chalked out for Muslims – they must turn to Allāh taʿālā with sincerity and devotion, and they must start calling to Him. If Allāh taʿālā wills, He can turn all difficulties into ease. Unfavourable conditions are nothing for Muslims. It does not take Allāh taʿālā long to create the causes. Unfortunately, Muslims cannot understand this much. Listen! Allāh taʿālā brought you from non-existence into existence. He then provides you with sustenance every day. What is so difficult for Him to create good conditions for you? He is all-powerful, all-mighty and all-encompassing.

وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيْطًا.

> Everything is in the control of Allāh.[2]

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ.

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 8.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 126.

Allāh has power over everything.

Du'ā's are still accepted

O Muslims! You may have made many du'ā's to Allāh ta'ālā for Paradise, and you may be doing the same to save yourself from the Hell-fire, but when did you make du'ā' with a true and sincere heart? Do it and see for yourselves.

A senior person used to relate: My father was a lawyer and I used to make three du'ā's for him.

1. He should give up his occupation as a lawyer.
2. He should go into the service of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh. In other words, he should establish a bond with him.
3. He should go to perform hajj.

Allāh ta'ālā accepted all three du'ā's. My father gave up practising as a lawyer, he began frequenting Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh and he performed hajj.

I ask you, is the acceptance of du'ā' only for a lawyer and for hajj? If you make du'ā', will it not be accepted? It will certainly be accepted. If there's still no importance given to du'ā' then one of the reason for it is that we value the means more than du'ā'. We think to ourselves that if the conditions are unfavourable, how can the opposite happen? Understand well that it is the plot of Shaytān and the carnal self when we gauge Allāh's power against ourselves. Listen! How long does it take Allāh to make the means conducive? Islamic history is filled with stories which demonstrate the unseen help of Allāh ta'ālā and His power.

On the occasion of the Battle of Ahzāb, the Arab tribes got together, mustered a force of fifteen thousand and surrounded Madīnah. A handful of Muslims dug a trench and placed their reliance on Allāh taʿālā. At the very time when they were needed, the Jews of Madīnah broke their covenant with the Muslims and joined the enemies. Even in such unfavourable conditions, the Muslims placed their full trust in Allāh taʿālā. They were confident that He will certainly help Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the believers. This is exactly what happened. From the very ranks of the enemy, Allāh taʿālā caused a person to become a Muslim. He then spoke to the enemies of Islam in a manner which caused friction among their ranks. The unbelievers returned in failure, and the difficulties of the Muslims ended without even having to go into battle.

Note: If only we could be inspired to make duʿā' as taught by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. Inspiration is from Allāh taʿālā alone. (compiler)

When the Quraysh of Makkah conferred to murder Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, it was ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu who advanced with an unsheathed sword to take up this task. The situation appeared unfavourable, but what happened? How long did it take Allāh taʿālā to turn the situation around? We all know that he had left with the intention of killing Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam yet he submitted himself and became one of his attendants. Then look at how Allāh taʿālā strengthened Islam through Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu.

My heart trembles when I think of all this. If only Muslims could understand it. If only they focus on

Allāh's power. Allāh taʿālā can do as He wills when He wills. His work is not dependent on anyone. This is what we need to focus on. Muslims do not focus on it, yet they speak of far-fetched things. May Allāh taʿālā confer us with His love and with a true understanding of Islam.

Note: This theme is not only noteworthy; it needs to be put into action. (compiler)

OBEDIENCE AND WORSHIP

This is an era of irreligiousness. Thus, when a large number of people become inclined to a person, he must not gloat over the large numbers nor think to himself that his number of followers has increased. Instead, he must consider it to be a test and a tribulation. To save himself from this, he must start presenting the correct teachings of the Sharīʿah. In this way, he will not be taken to task in this world and in the Hereafter, he can say: "O Allāh! I confined myself to presenting Your Dīn to Your servants who came to me." If he adopt this approach, those who are genuine in their quest will accept his teachings.

Glory to Allāh! This is a remarkable point which is the actual objective. Those who do not think in this way will not be able to remain in such assemblies; they will flee from there. And so, the personality will be saved from their mischief. (compiler)

Nowadays a lot of importance is given to gratification of the self. People have always been committing sins to this end, but now they have started worshipping for the same purpose. The seniors have stated that desiring gratification of the self in worship is worse than desiring it when committing sin. This is because worship has not been prescribed for this purpose. It is pure servitude; enjoyment of the self has nothing to do with it.

Note: If Allāh taʿālā, out of His grace, blesses a person with enjoyment in worship, it is out of His kindness. Our objective has to be action; not enjoyment and ecstasy. This is why our Sufis state

that action is the objective while spiritual ecstasy is praiseworthy. Even if spiritual ecstasy is not experienced, it is essential for a person to hold on firmly to action. This has been gauged from the teachings of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh and others. (compiler)

Reminding and admonishing which are the highest forms of worship and which are the responsibilities of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām have also become means for gratification of the self. This is why we see the assemblies and lectures of today having more arrangements for gratification of the self. The seniors say that this gratification is in two things, a beautiful voice and a beautiful appearance. Everyone knows the temptations caused by a beautiful appearance. A beautiful voice is not any less than it. A Hadīth states that a beautiful voice inflames hypocrisy in the heart.

We find both these things combined in lecture programmes. Young handsome boys with sweet voices are selected to sing poems. This is done for the gratification of the self. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return. If a lecture programme has been made a means for gratification of the self, can any benefit be derived from it? In fact, we see people getting further away from Allāh taʿālā.

I heard the statement of a senior ʿālim from two reliable sources. He used to say: "I delivered many lectures in Hyderabad. The people had confidence in me and used to listen to my lectures enthusiastically. However, not a single person could become a namāzī (a regular performer of salāh) through my lectures."

You may be thinking: If the people were not affected by the lectures and did not practise on them, why

did they listen to them? Now listen! Because he was a senior ʿālim and a powerful orator, and because his topics were well organized and presented in rhyming and eloquent sentences, people used to listen to him. It must be pleasing to the ear and gratifying to the carnal self. As for being affected and influenced by the lectures, they never sat with that intention; how, then, will they be affected?

This is how people were destroyed. A lecture which is a lofty action is made a means for self-gratification. Now you see how they reduced the rank and status of a lecture!? To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

The seniors of Dīn consider gratification of the self to be extremely evil. They say: If a person engages in worship when he experiences self-gratification and abandons it when he does not, then he is not sincere. A sincere person is one who does not allow self-gratification to influence him. Instead, he worships solely for Allāh's sake. People now listen to lectures for self-gratification and spend their money to purchase the means for it. This is why they will search for and select those speakers who can speak in a rhyming manner and who can present as much things for the gratification of the masses. They will do this even if it means spending more money to obtain such a speaker.

Then the venue is decorated and many arrangements for lighting are made. A person having the slightest pain for the Muslim nation can never tolerate these arrangements. Thousands of rupees of the Muslim community are wasted on unnecessary things. Imagine how much more work would be accomplished if the same money was given to the madāris and makātib which are striving for

Dīn. Or if the needs of a needy person were fulfilled, then how much rewards they would have earned. Unfortunately, the situation is that Muslims don't have the money to spend in places where money is needed. They behave as though they are totally bankrupt. But when it is an occasion to gratify the self, they will spend thousands of rupees. I ask you: Is the Muslim money which is spent on all these decorations and embellishments not extravagance and wastage? Does the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth not prohibit this? Will we not be accountable before Allāh taʿālā for wasting the money of Muslims in this way? The sad part is that even the ʿulamā' have given up speaking against these practices.

> When unbelief will emanate from the Kaʿbah, where will Islam remain?

There will be very few ʿulamā' who will express their displeasure at this wastage. There was a senior ʿālim who was a true reformer. Some people invited him for a lecture. When he reached the venue, he noticed small flags and various other decorations. He was incensed when he saw this because so much money of Muslims was being wasted. He became angry and returned to the railway station. Some people who had become accustomed to these customs said: "Many ʿulamā' came in the past. We raised flags in the same way. No one said anything. This Maulānā is coming with something new because he is expressing his displeasure at something which no one in the past objected to."

This is what some people said. Others who had some intelligence said: "Brother! The Maulānā is absolutely right." They went to the station and begged the Maulānā saying: "Ḥaḍrat! Please come back. We will remove all the decorations and

promise never to do this again." The Maulānā went back with them.

I say: Another reason for the masses becoming so carefree is that the 'ulamā' have made peace with them. They have given up reprimanding them when they do anything against the Sharī'ah. Now when a true servant of Allāh says something to them, the masses assume it is something new. Whereas the new thing is that 'ulamā' have given up their responsibility of reminding and admonishing, and have become just like the masses.

I was saying to you that people are prepared to spend as much money as possible for self-gratification. Even when they organize a lecture, they do their utmost to assemble the means for self-gratification. Even if the Qur'ān and Hadīth are read in those assemblies, because it is done for self-gratification, they get further away from Allāh ta'ālā. If man does something for self-gratification, he will never get close to Allāh ta'ālā.

The saints and seniors of Dīn used to do everything with utmost sincerity and solely for Allāh ta'ālā. The carnal self had no influence whatsoever. But now, people use the seniors to openly do things for the gratification of the self. The saints have laid down certain conditions for listening to samā'. For example, the heart must be filled with Allāh's remembrance to such an extent that anything apart from Allāh ta'ālā must not even cross the heart. The person singing the samā' must neither be a young boy nor a woman. The theme which is sung must be exclusively on Allāh's remembrance. It is something to think about: If an assembly is held for Allāh's remembrance, how can there be room for anything which is in conflict with the Sharī'ah? When the

saints used to listen to samāʿ, it was for Allāh's remembrance and while remaining within the confines of the Sharīʿah. The poems used to contain admonitory themes.

Hadrat Khwājah Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' rahimahullāh used to frequent the assembly of a senior ʿālim. He read the following four-liner on one occasion:

> Whatever you are eating and drinking today, and whatever enjoyment you are experiencing may seem very pleasing today. However, it will not be pleasing tomorrow on the day of Resurrection.

On hearing this, Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh went into a state of spiritual ecstasy, and this caused the entire assembly to go into a type of trance.

You see! The saints used to go into ecstasy when the Resurrection was described.

Hadrat Khwājah Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' rahimahullāh was an eminent saint and a friend of Allāh taʿālā. Despite this, he used to go to the ʿulamā' to listen to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Unfortunately, the situation now is that the Qur'ān and Hadīth are not given even the respect which is given to poetry. People go into ecstasy when they hear poetry, but experience no such feelings when they listen to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. They are not affected in the least by them. Whereas poetry is totally insignificant in Allāh's eyes. Allāh taʿālā says with reference to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ.

> We did not teach him poetry nor is it suitable for him.[1]

This verse shows that if poetry was liked, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam would have been more suited to it.

Now I ask you: The speech of Allāh taʿālā is recited in an assembly and it is not appreciated. The speech of man – poetry – is recited in the same assembly and people value it. What do you say about it? Do you think Allāh taʿālā is not angered when the speech of the creation is given preference over His speech?

I believe that Muslims are suffering because they discarded the value of the Qur'ān. They do not even lend an ear to the Qur'ān so that it could reach their heart. Whereas it is impossible for a believer to listen to Allāh's speech and not be affected by it.

Another reason for negligence towards the Qur'ān is that the 'ulamā' have given up speaking about its status. The Qur'ān is such that it is impossible for a believer to listen to it with his heart and not have his īmān refreshed. When the Ahlullāh listen to the Qur'ān, they are so affected by it that they experience spiritual ecstasy. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh was to deliver a lecture in Makkah. A person recited the Qur'ān before his lecture. Hadrat Maulānā was so affected by the man's recitation that he could not deliver his

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

lecture. He said: “If you wanted me to deliver a lecture, why did you ask him to recite the Qur’ān?”

I say: Is there any defect in the Qur’ān? [Certainly not.] Allāh taʿālā says:

أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ.

I perfected for you your religion.

Now where are you going after leaving these divine doors? Those who received anything did so from these doors. The Qur’ān contains promises and warnings, fear and hope. It is the most superior expression of Allāh’s power and might. It is impossible that a person listens to it with his heart and is not affected by it. In fact, even if the heart is not affected as yet, if a person listens attentively, it will gradually and surely affect his heart. Allāh taʿālā says:

إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَذِكْرٰى لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيْدٌ.

In this there is a [time of] contemplation for him who has a heart or who listens attentively.[1]

We learn from this verse that just as the Qur’ān is a means for advice and admonition for the one who has a heart, it is an admonition for the one who listens attentively. Listening attentively will cause the effect of the recitation to reach the heart gradually.

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[1] Sūrah Qāf, 50: 37.

Look at how easy Allāh taʿālā made it! He established two levels: (1) “In this there is a [time of] contemplation for him who has a heart.” This is for the investigative scholar. (2) “who listens attentively.” This is for the one who follows the scholars.

We learn from this that if it has not reached the heart as yet, but the person is listening attentively, it will reach his heart gradually. If a person lends an ear to the one who is reciting the Qur’ān, do you think it will not reach the ear of his heart? Allāh taʿālā laid down listening with the ears five times a day. The entire burden is placed on the reader, while you merely have to listen to him. I say, if Muslims really listen to the Qur’ān during these five times and, in the silent salāhs they think to themselves that the Qur’ān is being recited, it will create a special effulgence in the heart.

It is strange that Muslims do not pay attention to the simple and easy instructions of Allāh taʿālā, fall into unnecessary difficulty and hardship, and suffer from stress.

Each and every verse of the Qur’ān is an admonition of the highest level. Look at just this one verse and see what an important theme it contains:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ هَدٰنَا لِهٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْ لَا أَنْ هَدٰنَا اللّٰهُ.

> Praise be to Allāh Who guided us to here. We would not have found the path had Allāh not guided us.[1]

Glory to Allāh! What a lofty theme! If a person were to read this one verse with his heart, his pride and vanity will disappear.

May Allāh taʿālā bless us with a genuine attachment to the Qur'ān and enable us to experience a genuine spiritual condition from its recitation. Āmīn.

Note: This is an important topic which could have only been explained by someone like Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to practise. (compiler)

[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 43.

THE BEGGAR AND THE DONOR ARE DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER

Our condition is unlike that of our pious predecessors. This is because we have no quest for Dīn. Let alone having a quest, we do not even know what it means.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Sāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī raḥimahullāh listed three pieces of advice in a letter which he wrote to a person. They are:

(1) Create a genuine quest.

(2) Think of the consequences of actions.

(3) Develop a complete mixture of the external and internal selves.

He then explained "a genuine quest" as follows:

A genuine seeker is the one who is so overwhelmed and overpowered by the quest that no other objective and wish can come as an obstacle. His quest and his thirst reach such a level that if all the intelligentsia of the world pass a verdict that it is impossible for him to realize his quest and find his objective, he does not understand their verdict.

The Shaykh then explains the methodology. He says that the quest will only be born after doing something. If a person places one hand in the other and sits down, he will not achieve anything. He says in this regard:

> There is no room for sitting futilely. Do whatever you can. Do not think that this

is a small task. Allāh taʿālā has set aside a reward for every action.

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهُ. وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهُ.

Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it. Whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it.[1]

The Shaykh rahimahullāh then goes into a passionate discussion on the fusion of the internal and external selves.

The Sufis try to develop in their followers the same genuine quest which Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh is asking us to develop. The Sufis have made this their preoccupation. It cannot happen that a person is a seeker and the Sufis do not pay attention to him. A seeker goes to them in his quest for Allāh taʿālā and Dīn, and searches for them for the realization of his quest. In the same way, these personalities seek out the seekers.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh has the following heading in his *Mathnawī*: The beggar and the donor are dependent on each other. In other words, if a beggar resorts to patience, a generous man will go to his door to give him something. In the same way, if the generous man is patient, a beggar will come to his door. However, the patience of a beggar is his excellence, while the patience of a generous person is harmful to him.

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[1] Sūrah az-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8.

Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh then says:

> A generous person needs a beggar for his generosity to be manifested. It is similar to repentance requiring the existence of someone who repents. In the same way, the quality of generosity requires beggars and poor people. Beautiful people search for a clear mirror because the beauty of their faces can be displayed through a mirror. In the same way, a physical manifestation of generosity is through a beggar. If there are no beggars and poor people, how will the generosity of generous people be displayed? The generous are in need of this manifestation because they are rewarded through it.[1]

A solution to difficulties

I received a letter from a person in which he wrote: "I bought *Nisbat Ṣūfiyah* and *Waṣīyyatul ʿIrfān* and read both books several times, but I still cannot get enough of them. No matter how much I were to praise the manner in which the points of Sufism are explained and solved, my praises will be less."

I replied thus: "You wrote that you learnt many points from *Nisbat Ṣūfiyah*. You should read my other books as well, especially *Maʿrifat Ḥaqq*. Allāh willing, all difficulties will be solved. By Allāh's will, you are attached to the work at hand. Do not hanker after spiritual conditions. Continue with good actions. Be concerned about sincerity. Allāh

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[1] *Kalīd Mathnawī*: 127.

willing, you will realize your objective. In other words, you will acquire affinity with Allāh taʿālā. This is the objective of the path. Inspiration is from Allāh alone."

A person's letter to the editor of *Maʿrifat Haqq*

(addressed to Hadrat Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib)

I happened to come across few issues of *Maʿrifat Haqq*. I am also reading *Tilāwat-e-Qur'ān* at the moment. My heart desired that I write some words of prayer for you. May Allāh taʿālā accept your services to Islam. May He reward you abundantly and enable this blessed series to continue through the blessing of Lā Ilāha Illallāh Muhammadur Rasūlullāh.

I learnt from *Sidq Jadīd* (a newspaper) that Allāhābād is currently engulfed with the blessings of Hadrat Maulānā. This light is reaching us who are far away through your efforts. May Allāh taʿālā bless you. Glory to Allāh! *Maʿrifat Haqq* is published with vigorous efforts. It is a reflection of your attention, good disposition and love for knowledge. O Allāh! Bless us.

I am not worthy to introduce myself. I hail from an anonymous family. I am caught up in the ups and downs of life, and am living in solitude. I am affected by the destruction of Muslims and their disregard for Dīn. I pray for their wellbeing. May Allāh taʿālā remove all hardships so that this era of tribulations is replaced quickly.

I request you to pray for me and to convey my solemn and revered salām to Hadrat Maulānā. The reward for goodness is nothing but goodness. Was salām.

BELIEFS ARE THE FUNDAMENTALS

A person came to Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī rahimahullāh for the sake of becoming his murīd. The man begged and cried but Hadrat asked him to leave without accepting his bay'ah. Those who were present felt sorry for the man and thought to themselves: This poor fellow is pleading with Hadrat but Hadrat is refusing. Subsequently, they saw him in a place which was in complete conflict with Hadrat's creed. Someone asked the man: "You had been expressing your ardent faith in Hadrat and yet you are here in this place!?" He replied: "I had originally planned to come here, but because I reached early, I thought if I went to Maulānā [Gangohī] and was admitted by him, I would get food and accommodation for free." When the people heard this reply, they discussed among their selves: "Maulānā has foresight in whatever he does. We must not make objections to him."

Similarly, another person had come to Hadrat Gangohī rahimahullāh and expressed his faith in him but Hadrat did not permit him to stay over. One of the locals felt sorry for him and accommodated him in his house. He had a bag suspended from his neck. When he fell asleep, the host opened it and saw governmental documents in it. He gauged that the man belonged to the C.I.D. and so, he chased him out of his house. The moment the host went to Hadrat and the latter set eyes on him, he said: "Did you see! Now you too have understood." The man was mortified.

Beliefs are the fundamentals and everything else is a subsidiary. When there is a deficiency in beliefs, everything else is affected negatively. The seniors of Dīn did not give so much importance to shortcomings in actions as they did to beliefs. If a person of beliefs becomes corrupted, it is difficult to set him right. When we see people not benefiting today, it is because of corrupt beliefs.

Stories from the lives of our seniors

First story

A yogi came to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh. Hadrat spoke to him for a short while and he said: "Hadrat! Admit me into the spiritual family." Hadrat made him read the kalimah and admitted him. The yogi must had some minor doubt in his mind which was removed from the talk of Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh.

Second story

Hadrat Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd Sāhib rahimahullāh went out of Delhi on a hunt. A peacock was hunted. A yogi with his disciples were living in a nearby cottage. Hindus look up to a peacock with reverence, so these people were outraged at the killing and came out with their weapons. Maulānā's companions got scared. Maulānā said to them: "There is no need to fear. Inshā Allāh, we will feed this peacock to them." When the yogi came near, Maulānā held him by his hand and spoke to him in an affectionate manner. Maulānā said to him: "We are already here in your vicinity. You can do whatever you want, but let's speak first." The yogi softened his attitude when he heard Maulānā's manner of speaking. After discussing several issues, Maulānā presented Islam to him and he became a

Muslim. Some of his disciples also embraced Islam while others hurled abuses at him and left. Hadrat stayed over at the place. The peacock was cooked and everyone ate of it. The yogi also ate.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at Hadrat's knowledge, cognition and spiritual influence. Look at how rejecters of Dīn were softened.

Third story

Hadrat Khwājah Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' rahimahullāh was suffering from bouts of unconsciousness. There was a yogi who could cure any type of illness through his focus. Hadrat's disciples decided to take him to this yogi. While he was unconscious, they carried him and took him. On the way, Hadrat regained consciousness and asked: "Where are you taking me?" The disciples explained to him what they intended. Hadrat got angry and ordered them to take him back. They did as instructed. Hadrat fell unconscious again. The disciples concurred on taking him to the yogi. They thought to themselves, at least Hadrat will get better. Even if he gets angry at us, we will ask him for pardon.

They took him to the yogi who focussed his attention on Hadrat, and he got up immediately. Hadrat saw the yogi in front of him and realized what had happened. He asked the yogi: "How did you acquire this treasure?" He replied: "My guru taught me to always act against my self. I did as instructed and acquired this power." Hadrat asked: "Does your self desire to embrace Islam?" He replied in the negative. Hadrat said: "In that case, you will have to adhere to your guru's instruction and act against your self." The yogi embraced Islam. He had already been striving spiritually. So the moment he embraced Islam, his heart became enlightened.

Hadrat's spiritual affiliation was exposed to him. He pledged allegiance to Hadrat and was conferred with khilāfat.

Note: The reality is that the yogi removed Hadrat from a bodily ailment while Hadrat removed him from polytheism and secured salvation for him from the Hell-fire. There is a world of difference between the two. (compiler)

There are countless wisdoms behind the stories of the saints. We should neither reject them nor make objections just because we cannot fathom them. In the above story, we probably did not understand why Hadrat went to the yogi, but the wisdom which it contained is that he became a Muslim and a man of spiritual affiliation from whom many people benefited.

The statements of the logicians and philosophers are known as maʿqūlāt while the statements of the saints are known as muʿtaqadāt (beliefs). The maʿqūlāt can be combated by the intellect because they are intellectual statements. The statements of the saints cannot be combated by the intellect. Since the intellect has limitations, it cannot fathom and encompass everything.

You get a murīd and a murād. A murād is a person whom Allāh taʿālā personally conveys to the correct path in such a manner that He does not allow him to even go towards anything which is against the Sharīʿah.

Additional stories

First story

A murīd asked his shaykh about his spiritual rank. The shaykh asked him to not perform the ʿishā

salāh that night. The murīd did not perform the ʿishā salāh and subsequently could not fall asleep. He thought to himself that he will perform the fard salāh but not the Sunnah rakʿats. He performed the fard and fell asleep. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam came to him in his dream and said: "You performed the obligatory but you left out my Sunnah!? Do you dislike me?" He woke up with a fright and performed the Sunnah rakʿats as well. He related the incident to his shaykh the next morning. The shaykh said: "Had you fallen asleep without performing the fard, Allāh taʿālā would have visited you in your dream, waken you up and made you perform it."

It seems that the shaykh asked him not to perform his salāh to demonstrate the murīd's level of murādīyyat (a murād is a person who is personally conveyed to the path by Allāh taʿālā). It was not his intention to stop him from performing salāh. He knew – from circumstantial evidence and conditions – that this person will certainly not abandon salāh.

Second story

A woman's son drowned and some people came and informed her. She came to the place where he drowned and called out for him. He replied while he was in the water. His mother said: "Come here!" He emerged from the water and went to her. The people asked: "What is this strange thing which we are seeing?" She replied: "Allāh taʿālā informs me of an incident which is to happen before hand. He did not inform me of this, so I knew that it is not possible that he has drowned."

Third story

A saint used to see Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam quite often in his dream. The saint left for hajj. While he was travelling, he killed the son of a Bedouin. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam stopped visiting him in his dream. He became quite distressed. He sought the pardon of the boy's father and other family members, but was still deprived of Rasūlullāh's visit. When he reached Madīnah, he related his story to the senior saints of the city. They said: "We do not have the power to do anything. There is a woman who is immersed in Allāh's love. She may be able to help you." He went to the woman and described his concern to her. She said: "Look!" He lifted his gaze and saw Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in front of him.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the proximity and acceptance which this woman had with Allāh taʿālā. This is certainly His grace which He confers on whomever He wills.

Fourth story

There is a place in Masjid-e-Nabawī which remains locked. When an important matter comes up, it is opened and people make duʿā inside; and the duʿā is accepted. The government experienced a vital matter on one occasion. They tried to open the place but could not. The senior saints who were at Suffah tried to open it but failed. The ruler of the city asked: "Is there anyone left from among you?" They replied: "There is one person who lives like a mad man." He was called. He tried to open the lock and it opened. But he fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, the people asked him what had happened. He replied: "The moment I opened the lock, I saw Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam

in front of me who said: 'I opened it because of you.' This special favour of his caused me to fall unconscious."

People believe that saintliness lies in something other than following the Sharīʿah. This is why when they see a person adhering to the Sharīʿah, they do not consider him to be a saint and do not listen to what he has to say. Consequently, they have become totally misguided. The ʿulamā' have gone into much detail in reconciling the Sharīʿah and Ṯarīqah. The masses have become so self-opinionated that they differ with the legal verdicts (fatāwā) of the ʿulamā'. Whereas the Qur'ān addresses Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam as follows:

وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِيْ جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ.

> Assuming you were to follow their desires after that knowledge which has come to you, then you have neither a protector nor a helper from the grip of Allāh.[1]

If this is how Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is addressed, what will the order be to ordinary Muslims after the Sharīʿah has reached them?

Do you know why the masses differ with the ʿulamā'? It is solely due to carnal desires. And so, the carnal self becomes an obstacle to following the Sharīʿah. Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh says:

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 120.

> The desire is like a lock which prevents īmān from entering.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh then says with a painful heart: Give up the desires of the carnal self. O servants of Allāh! For how long are you going to be shackled by it?

When there are differences on the sighting of the crescent, they are solely due to the dictates of the carnal self. An order of the Sharīʿah is established but these ignoramuses do not accept it. At least the month of Ramadān, ʿīd and ʿīd al-ad-hā were left in the control of Muslims but they made them points of contention. They take far more delight from disunity than they do from a sweet delicious dish. A person is intoxicated by spiritual ecstasy while these slaves of the carnal self are intoxicated by their deplorable condition. The difference between these two is that the saints are in spiritual ecstasy throughout the year while the ignoramuses get intoxicated in Shaʿbān, Ramadān and the 29th of Dhū al-Qaʿdah.

I say: Everyone knows that the era before the era of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was known as the period of jāhilīyyah (ignorance). If that is the case, then his era will be referred to as a period of ʿālimīyyah (knowledge and enlightenment). How, then, can we accept ignorance in this period of knowledge?

> Their swords cannot succeed against their torpedoes.

The desire of an ignoramus is a torpedo while the words of an ʿālim are like a sword. An ʿālim cannot do anything against an ignoramus. Just as an ʿālim

is the opposite of an ignoramus, the opposite of the Sharīʿah is the carnal desire of an ignoramus.

When it used to be the 29th of Shaʿbān and Ramaḍān, I used to cover myself like a sick man and lie down so that people do not come to me to inform me about the sighting of the crescent. Because if I were informed and were to say something about it, people will make unnecessary objections which would then hurt me. Although I used to take these precautions, people still used to come here and testify to the sighting of the crescent. And then we would receive conflicting information from other areas. Other nations laugh at Muslims when they observe these acts of disunity. Despite this, Muslims feel no shame at all. They are disgraced in the sight of Allāh taʿālā, scorned by people of this world yet Muslims have no feelings whatsoever.

The Qur'ān and Ḥadīth teach us to submit ourselves the moment we hear an injunction of the Sharīʿah. The very meaning of Islam is lowering one's head in obedience. This was the condition of the saints. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Quddūs Ṣāḥib Gangohī raḥimahullāh used to listen to samāʿ. The public regulator prohibited him so he gave it up. The masses began chiding him and saying: "What type of saint is this; he got scared of the public regulator?" When Ḥaḍrat heard of this, he gave a beautiful reply. He said: "Brother! I am a Muslim and so were my forefathers. I heard an order of the Sharīʿah so I complied. Now what is the reason for chiding and criticizing?"

A saint had a dog (it is prohibited to have a dog as a pet but permitted for the sake of protection and safeguarding). An ʿālim said: "Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu

ʿalayhi wa sallam prohibited breeding a dog." When the saint heard this, he addressed the dog: "My dear fellow, Hadrat Sāhib has prohibited us. You better leave." The dog stood up and left. There was no sign of it after that.

Look! This saint could have given details about when it is permitted to keep a dog and when it is not. However, he did not consider it appropriate to reply to what an ʿālim said. He heard an order of the Sharīʿah and he submitted.

Nowadays there is no faith and confidence in the saints and scholars. If there is no confidence in the means through which one receives Dīn, how will people acquire it? Consequently, religiosity has departed and following of the carnal self has remained.

We are left astounded when we observe the manner in which people have subjugated the saints. Previously, people would sit in an assembly of a saint and depart after having learnt something or the other. Now the situation is that while the assembly is conducted, they reject what is being said. They are not affected in the least. I ask you: If you are not affected while sitting in a shaykh's assembly, how will you be affected out of it? If a student does not understand a lesson when his teacher is explaining it to him, it is more likely he will not understand it later on.

Allāh taʿālā says with reference to the People of the Book:

وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيْهِ إِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوْهُ مِنْ ۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ بَغْيًا ۢ بَيْنَهُمْ.

> None disputed in the Book except those who had received it after the clear injunctions had reached them, out of mutual spite.[1]

Today the same condition prevails among Muslims. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

The Sharīʿah instructs us that when an erudite ʿālim issues a fatwā, it is not permitted for the masses to differ with it. However, because they follow their carnal selves, they are not prepared to accept it. The Qur'ān constantly warns us against following the desires of the carnal self.

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللهِ.

> O Dā'ūd! We have made you a vicegerent on earth, so rule with justice among the people and do not follow the desire of the self or else it would lead you astray from the path of Allāh.

When a scholar issues a fatwā, people voice their own opinions against it. They do not follow it. They will following their personal views and opinions, but will make a display of faith in the ʿālim. In other words, if it is in line with their views and intellect, they will accept it. But if they do not understand it, they will reject it. Now you tell me, are they following their own opinions or are they following the scholar?

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 213.

Listen! The worst evil is the absence of submission before the Sharīʿah. Then, there are bad thoughts about the ʿulamā'. Thirdly, there is mutual spite. These are the causes of destruction. The nation has become so ruined that a person who has some feelings and perception can never remain healthy and normal when he sees this deplorable condition of the nation.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Abstain from differences because this is what shaves off Dīn."

The Qur'ān is with us. It relates to us how nations of the past differed with each other. The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām came to them, the Books of Allāh came to them, but their mutual squabbles did not allow them to accept. We have to ponder and reflect over these verses because the same condition is prevailing over the Muslims. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

RECOGNIZING EVIL AND TREATING IT

The Sufis focus on the rectification of the inner self. The outer self is fully exposed. A person can rectify it by himself. On the other hand, he cannot fully understand his inner self. He is able to fathom and rectify it through the assistance of a shaykh.

In the past, the Sufis used to rectify pride by making the person announce he has pride or by writing it and tying it around the palm [to serve as a reminder to the person]. However, my opinion has changed in this regard. Nowadays nothing is achieved by doing this. I believe the person has to be taught what pride is, viz. the worst type of ignorance and the most deplorable foolishness. Once he understands the severity of the ailment, he will give it up immediately. Severe forms of striving should not be imposed. A patient is already engulfed by one type of ailment, and now he is being burdened by the weight of different forms of striving. This is not how expert mentors operate. Instead, they treat the patient with utmost ease. The essence of my programme of rectification is that the person must relate to me whatever is in his heart. This is the striving for our times.

A person came to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāḥib raḥimahullāh and said: "I have a jinn under my control. When I instruct him to do anything, he carries out the task quickly, returns to me and asks me if there is anything else which needs to be done. I am now rendered incapable. How am I going to find a task for him all the time?" Shāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh said: "Dig a long bamboo

pole in your yard. When he asks for any work, ask him to climb up and climb down."

If a murīd were to be imposed difficulties all the time like that jinn or if he is humiliated, he will flee. How, then, will he be rectified? Whereas the objective is rectification; not causing someone to flee. The time for striving is when a person sees a bad trait in his carnal self, he must not permit it to continue. He will experience difficulty a few times, but the carnal self will be vanquished eventually.

A murīd complained to a saint about a fellow murīd saying: "He is drunk and lying down in an intoxicated state." The saint did not approve of this backbiting. Look at the manner in which he rectified the murīd. He said: "If the people see him lying in that state of intoxication, they will malign the Sufis in general. Go, carry him and bring him here." The poor fellow went, loaded the man on his shoulder and began walking back to the saint. When people saw this scene, they began mocking at him and said: "One is fully intoxicated while the other is semi-intoxicated." Once the man was humiliated in this way, he never complained about anyone.

The illness of the masses is self-infectious while the illness of the 'ulamā' is contagious. When the 'ulamā' become ill, so do the masses.

The need for a sound intellect and far-sightedness

Presently, rectification needs two things; viz. a sound intellect and internal effulgence. In this way, the claimants to intelligence can be defeated through the intellect while those searching for spirituality can be conveyed spiritual light. These two qualities were found to the level of perfection in

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh. He could silence senior intellectuals within a few minutes.

However, training and tutoring cannot be accomplished by the intellect alone. Abū Jahal was extremely intelligent. He was known as Abul Hakam (one possessing intelligence). Allāh taʿālā says with reference to the polytheists:

وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَّأَبْصَارًا وَّأَفْئِدَةً.

We had given them ears, eyes and hearts.[1]

The benefit of solitude

Some of the intellectuals and sages of the past were non-Muslims. However, they used to remain in solitude because they knew if they were to intermingle with people and an evil was committed, it would tarnish the intellect and they will not be able to come to the correct result. It is stated that the intellect is extremely delicate. The slightest carnal desire will taint it and then it will not be able to function properly.

A rectifier has to combine many qualities

The times needed a rectifier and reformer who combined several qualities. He had to have the highest level of intelligence so that he could rectify intellectuals. He had to have the highest level of knowledge to rectify 'ulamā'. He had to have reached the highest levels of Sufism to steer the spiritual seekers. And so, Allāh taʿālā created Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh and

[1] Sūrah al-Ahqāf, 46: 26.

fulfilled this need. He was an erudite scholar, intellectual and a man of great spiritual affiliation.

Hadrat Thānwī silences a person

There was a senior intellectual who used to say: "Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī did not take part in such and such movement. If I were to engage him in a discussion, I will silence him in four minutes." When Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh was informed of this, he said: "I too would like to meet him." The man eventually came to Hadrat.

The following conversation ensued:

The scholar: Why did you not join such and such movement?

Hadrat Thānwī: There is no unity among our people.

The scholar: Unity has now been realized.

Hadrat Thānwī: The unity which I am referring to has not be realized as yet. Temporary unity is possible, but arrangements for its continuity have not been made.

The scholar: What form should that take?

Hadrat Thānwī: There has to be an Amīr al-Mu'minīn.

The scholar: Why don't you become the Amīr al-Mu'minīn.

Hadrat Thānwī: I am ready for it. But what guarantee is there that I am the leader of the believers today and become a prisoner of the unbelievers tomorrow? What you can do is get all the wealthy people to give me control over their wealth and belongings, and I will guarantee them a better life than what they are presently in.

The scholar was left speechless.

The difference between harm and absence of benefit

There was a discussion about waqf properties. Some people were of the view that the government should have some control over them because trustees are unscrupulous and causing harm to the poor. Some intellectuals came to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh and said: "When a person divorces his wife and does not permit her to leave his house, she resorts to the government for help. In like manner, the poor are suffering harm in matters related to waqf properties. What, then, is the objection to allowing the government to have come control over these properties?"

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh replied: "When a woman is divorced, she acquires freedom but cannot take control of it. This causes her harm, so she seeks governmental intervention. This is not the case with regard to waqf properties because the poor are not harmed in any way. What you refer to as harm is actually absence of benefit. You can understand it by the following example. A person had some rupees and someone robbed him of the money. This is harm to the person. Another person did not receive money from anyone. He did not suffer any harm. Yes, he did not benefit." The intellectuals were left speechless. They said among themselves: We have studied so much but we could not understand the difference between harm and absence of benefit. We learnt the difference between the two today.

Note: This is certainly the knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnah which people studying the modern

sciences have no inkling of. There is no real knowledge apart from knowledge of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Other sciences could be referred to as facts and experiences, but they have no connection whatsoever with the genuine sciences. If Shaytān had received even a flicker of knowledge, he would never have resorted to logic in front of Allāh taʿālā. He would have feared Him and carried out whatever he was ordered to do. This is what Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam referred to when he said:

أنا أعرفكم وأخشاكم.

> I have the most recognition of Allāh. This is why I fear Him the most.

A child came to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. He asked the child a question and he replied by shaking his head. Hadrat said: "You are shaking such a heavy head but you are not moving this small tongue!?"

Hadrat then addressed the assembly which also comprised of ʿulamā': "Do you know what is the matter? The movement of the head is effortless while the speech which emanates from the tongue is complex. It is easier to focus on something which is effortless than what is complex. The ʿulamā' were highly impressed.

An example of Hadrat Thānwī's rectification

A Maulānā Sāhib sought permission to meet Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Hadrat gave permission but added: "In the course of your stay here, you will not be permitted to address me nor write to me." The Maulānā arrived and settled down in the khānqāh.

Some people were speaking in Hadrat's presence. This Maulānā also said something. Hadrat Maulānā addressed him: "We had already agreed that you will neither speak nor write to me while living here. Why did you speak?" He replied: "I forgot." Hadrat said: "Very well. Get up from the assembly and leave." When he stood up, the Maulānā said: "Hadrat! Can I give you the real reason why I spoke?" Hadrat allowed him. He said: "I remembered your instruction but I spoke because these people were speaking. I thought to myself that if I were to remain silent, they would assume me to be a foolish person." Hadrat said: "This is what I had also diagnosed in you, and this is what I thought. Very well. You may sit down."

A person travelled from A'zam Garh to Sarhind. On his return journey, he came to Thānā Bhawan to meet Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Hadrat asked him: "Where have you come from?" He replied: "A'zam Garh." The effects of displeasure were seen on Hadrat's face and he asked the man to write down what he said. When he saw this, he clearly stated: "Hadrat, I had travelled from A'zam Garh to Sarhind. On my return, I decided to meet Hadrat. This is how I came here." Hadrat was now happy with his reply.

We used to offer gifts to Hadrat, but each time we feared he would say: "You are insincere, I am not accepting it." Although he accepted a gift whenever we offered it to him, the fear of rejection remained. He used to say: "There is acceptance and rejection for everything; even for salāh. Do you think there is only acceptance for gifts?" This is why we feared his refusal of a gift.

People used to send or bring gifts to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and he used to accept them. A Sahābiyah radiyallāhu ʿanhā was cooking meat on one occasion. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked for some. She said: "We received it from charity." He replied: "It is charity for you but a gift for me." The Sahābiyah radiyallāhu ʿanhā then sent some meat to him and he partook of it.

We did not fear Hadrat Thānwī's displeasure [on us] as much as we feared his displeasure at someone else. He would then hand over the person to one of his khulafā'. No one could appeal the matter, and if anyone did say anything, he would say that it stems from pride.

Hadrat Thānwī's principles

One of Hadrat Thānwī's principles was that a person should first write to him seeking permission to come to his khānqāh. Only then should he come. A person had very little time. If he were to write a letter and wait for its reply, his time will be over. And so, he came to the khānqāh without writing to Hadrat. The man related to us: "I thought to myself, I am going. If Hadrat is displeased, I will leave. At least I will be able to meet Hadrat." Since the man was sincere and had faith in Hadrat, it had an effect on Hadrat's heart. Hadrat did not even ask him why he came without informing him first.

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say that all the saints accepted gifts, but they did so with sincerity and for the sake of Dīn. They did not merely accept money.

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh would also accept gifts but he maintained his independence at the same time. He never allowed his reliance on Allāh taʿālā to

waver. He lived his entire life with honour and dignity. This was also the practice of the pious predecessors. They would accept money, but from a sincere person. If they found a deficiency in sincerity, they would decline the gift.

Note: This is an excellent statement which Hadrat's associates ought to bear in mind. (compiler)

A person brought some money to Hadrat Junayd Baghdādī rahimahullāh. He asked the person: "Do you have a need for this money?" The man replied in the affirmative. Hadrat said to him: "You better take it because you have a need for it."

A person presented some money to a saint. The saint said: "Distribute it among the poor." He replied: "No. I have brought it for Hadrat." The saint said: "This is too much." The man said: "If Hadrat eats herbs and vegetables than it is certainly too much. But if Hadrat eats meat and rice dishes, then it is not a lot." The saint accepted the gift when he saw the man's sincerity.

There has to be sincerity in the giver and the receiver. The receiver must have his focus and reliance on Allāh taʿālā. The giver must not expect any concession in return. For example, he gives one thousand rupees to his shaykh. The shaykh then becomes angry at him for something which he did, and he thinks to himself: I just gave him a thousand rupees and yet he is angry at me.

The spiritual exposition of Hadrat Thānwī

There was a person who was associated to me. I was in Thānah Bhawan when he arrived with a jar of sweetmeats. He said to me: "You take half and present the other half to Hadrat Maulānā [Thānwī]."

I replied: “This is a difficult thing to do. Hadrat Maulānā does not accept gifts from new people. You have one of two options: Either keep all for yourself or give all to me.” He gave all to me. After accepting the gift from him, I thought to myself: “I certainly took my share, but now I also took Hadrat’s share. This is not right.” I went to Hadrat with much trepidation and presented the gift from my side. Hadrat accepted it happily. He then took a pencil and marked off half on the jar. I said: “Hadrat, keep all for yourself.” He replied: “No. Half for you and half for me.”

I thought to myself that this is certainly a kashf. Let alone kashf, Hadrat used to fill hearts with light, and this is his greatest feat.

After relating this incident, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said: “No one could cheat, steal or do anything surreptitiously in his presence.”

Note: This incident increased our faith and confidence in Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh. In addition to knowledge of the Qur’ān and Sunnah, he was blessed with spiritual expositions. Consequently, he rendered such services to the Dīn which were rarely surpassed. This is the grace of Allāh taʿālā which He confers on whomever He wills. (compiler)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said:

Grace and favours are acquired through reliance and confidence. Reliance is developed through faith. Nowadays people do not even understand what faith is; this is why they remain deprived. Evil actions and lack of good actions are not as harmful as faithlessness. A rejecter remains completely deprived.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* noted that rejection contains the darkness which is found in unbelief. This is an era of corruption. This is why Shayṭān's major attack is on beliefs. After all, one's īmān is the door to grace and blessings. People remain deprived even after finding a qualified and erudite shaykh.

The intellect and the heart are essential for Allāh-recognition

If you want to identify a great person, you need the intellect and the heart. It requires īmān and far-sightedness. A person can recognize a shaykh with the light of his heart or his intellect. If he does not have spiritual light, the intellect is essential. As the light intensifies, recognition of the shaykh increases.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a factual point! (compiler)

Benefit can be acquired by working according to principles

When a person works according to principles, he will benefit. If the greatest of works are carried out without adhering to principles, the harm will also be the worst. The harm is because Allāh's evidence becomes established. If a person still does not pay heed, Allāh's displeasure is inevitable. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

Every person benefits from remaining in the company of saints. If a person values their company and pays due consideration to the etiquette, then the benefits increase manifold. On the other hand, if a person is offensive, benefits are snatched away. It is a terrible situation when a person does not receive benefits at all; it is deprivation. And if he

receives benefits and they are snatched away, then it is a loss. A loss is worse than deprivation.

An appreciative person continues benefiting while the one who is not has his benefits snatched away. Some people remain in the company of saints but suffice with outward physical closeness. And so, they do not acquire what was supposed to be acquired and pass their entire lives in this way. Remaining in the company of saints in this way is not desirable. In fact, it is the same as not remaining in their company. It is stated that if a person finds benefit in a saint, he must pray that love for him becomes firmly embedded in the heart. Imagine a person remaining in the service of a saint. Allāh taʿālā gave him the opportunity of benefiting from him but he does not. This is indeed a severe deprivation. And worse than that is when a person acquires some benefit and then loses it. A seeker experiences this and finds an obstacle before him.

The first mistake in this path is turning away. If a person does not realize it, a barrier comes before him. If he still does not come to attention and does not repent, he retrogresses. If he still does not repent, it leads to enmity. When a seeker experiences these situations, he must not lose courage. Instead, he must repent, seek forgiveness and open the path once again. He must not sit down with his error and lose hope.

When an error is committed in a major task, the error is considered to be major. This is why a person should tread carefully when he undertakes a major task. Sometimes, a seeker moves away from the path. But because he is still engaged in outward and superficial actions, he assumes he is still on the path. The need for continuous caution is therefore

essential. If an error is made, let it be, because a human is bound to err. He should not allow it to break his courage. He must be resilient and continue with the task at hand. Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh says:

> If you cannot wrestle and drop the carnal self, you should not leave your hands and legs loose. You have to fight it throughout your life. Sometimes it will overpower you and sometimes you will overpower it.

There was a man who had deep faith in me. If someone were to say anything against me, he would go into a rage. Now listen to his condition. In his presence I said something to someone by way of rectifying the person. This man [who had faith in me] thought I was too harsh. Consequently, his spiritual condition began to deteriorate and he went very far off the path. One cannot rely on conditions. We do not know when Shaytān will deceive us. Listen to the following example:

The verses of Sūrah al-Mu'minūn were revealed to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He was reciting them and the scribe was recording them. When he reached this verse:

ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ؕ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

> Then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 14.

The effect which was on Rasūlullāh's heart fell on the scribe's heart and before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam could say it, he said:

فَتَبٰرَكَ اللهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

> Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

The same were the words of divine revelation, so Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: "Yes, write them down." Just by this one point the scribe went astray: He thought to himself: The thing which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is saying is in my heart as well.

Subsequently, a verse with reference to this scribe was revealed and his condition was exposed to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Allāh's wrath descended, fell on his heart, and he could not find a single letter within himself. He was removed from the post of a scribe and he even reneged from Islam. He then became an enemy of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and Islam. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: "O arrogant atheist! If that effulgence was your own, why has your heart become black and lightless? Had you been a fountain of divine knowledge, this dark liquid would not have flowed from you."

Up to this point we have acquired the objective of the story – that this is the harm of assuming perfection and considering one's self to be independent of those who have perfection.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 14.

The story continues: The man felt that his status will fall if he were to repent in the presence of people, so he abstained from repenting. He would have suffered grief at having to offer an apology and admitting his wrong, but he still could not repent. This was strange. He regretted and rued in his heart but it was of no use because in the absence of an apology and disregarding shame, a regret is a natural response which is not worthy of consideration. Anyway, he became an apostate, went to Makkah and joined the ranks of the idol-worshippers. He caused a lot of mischief and hurled obscenities against Islam and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. On the day of the Conquest of Makkah, he accompanied Hadrat ʿUthmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu, presented himself before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, repented and renewed his Islam. It is quoted from *al-Iṣābah* that he was performing the fajr salāh and passed away the moment he made the salām. In other words, he died a good death. His name is ʿAbdullāh ibn Saʿd ibn Abī Surh radiyallāhu ʿanhu.[1]

A Jew embraced Islam and pledged allegiance. Subsequently, he claimed that his allegiance did not benefit him in any way. In fact, he suffered losses in his wealth and children. He therefore broke his pledge and returned to where he was. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā. He was an insincere and insolent person.

Note: There are many people like this. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā from such a condition. Āmīn. (compiler)

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[1] *Kalīd Mathnawī*, register one, 198.

Now listen to the story of the man who became angry at me when I expressed my disapproval of certain people, and then accused me of being too harsh. His condition deteriorated by the day and he fell critically ill. He tried many medical treatments but his condition did not improve. The physicians said that he has no ailment. Previously I had said that these doctors are in the habit of saying such things. Then I thought to myself that they are treating other people and they are getting better. Why are they saying this about this particular man?

Subsequently, some people came to me and requested me to diagnose his ailment. I asked them to investigate and see if he is saying bad things about me. This is exactly what emerged from their investigations. They then brought the man to me and said: "We have made arrangements for him to remain with you." I said: "Very well, let him stay here." He remained with me and his condition was set right. All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā alone.

In the story of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām and Ḥaḍrat Khaḍir ʿalayhis salām, the former made objections to three actions whereas Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām had himself experienced three incidents of a similar nature. His first objection was when Ḥaḍrat Khaḍir ʿalayhis salām damaged the ship. He said that this would cause the ship to sink. His mother had also placed him in a box and placed him in the river where there was the possibility of his drowning. His second objection was when Ḥaḍrat Khaḍir ʿalayhis salām killed a youngster. Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām had also killed a Copt. The third objection was when Ḥaḍrat Khaḍir ʿalayhis salām did not take a payment for repairing the wall. When Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām went to

Madyan, he filled water from a well for the daughters of Hadrat Shuʿayb ʿalayhis salām. When the issue of payment for this job was raised, he replied that he is from a family which does not accept payment for a job.

Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām did not remember these similar incidents from his own life. The fact of the matter is that Allāh's knowledge encompasses everything.

Maulānā Nānautwī debates with an Aryan

A date was set for Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī rahimahullāh to debate with an Aryan. One of Hadrat's associates went to see the Aryan. He noticed cakes piled up on platters. While he was still looking at the Aryan, he ate all the cakes there and then. The associate returned and related to the people what he saw. He said to them: "If the debate is on knowledge, Hadrat will win. But what if the debate is on eating? What will happen?"

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh got wind of the associate's concern. Hadrat was a man of impeccable character. He said: "If the debate is on food, I will send you forward. However, tell me, why did this thought come to your mind? Why did you not think: If the debate is on not eating, then who will win? After all, abstaining from food and drink is the quality of Allāh taʿālā and the angels." In this way, Hadrat cautioned him about having bad thoughts about the person in whom he has faith. The elders said: "The one who asks 'why' will never succeed."

It is a sin to have bad thoughts about the Auliyā'

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh wrote a book on the topic that it is a flagrant sin to have bad thoughts about the Auliyā'. The book is titled *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah*. Similarly, Hadrat wrote a book in defence of Shaykh Akbar rahimahullāh. It is titled *at-Tanbīh at-Tarabī*. The book *as-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah* has three main chapters. The first chapter contains statements of the Sufis which emphasise the importance of following the Sharīʿah. The second chapter contains actions of the Sufis which demonstrate how particular they were about following the Sharīʿah. In the third chapter, he explains and removes objections to certain statements and actions of the Sufis which could be construed as them not following the Sharīʿah. This proves that if a person adheres to the Sharīʿah and emphasises it on others, then if he does an action which could be objectionable, it is necessary to explain and clarify it.

No statement and action of an erudite Sufi can be in conflict with the Sharīʿah. Yes, it is possible that a murīd may not understand it. In such a case, he must apply a good meaning to it.

Many of those who are still immature in the field of Sufism make objections against their shaykh when they see him strict in his training methodology. They accuse him of things which he is innocent of. The one who is inspired must abstain from doing this and look for an explanation for it. The person who searches for explanations in these matters is expected to make quick success. As for the one who

constantly makes objections and looks for faults, it is an indication of his deprivation.

It is necessary to investigate and make inquiries before aligning one's self to a shaykh. Once a bond is established after making inquiries, it is necessary for the person to obey and follow the shaykh. Now there is no room for objections and fault-finding.

Go to saints to acquire Allāh-recognition

Rats are quite clever when they are around judges. There was a judge who was writing down something when a rat came near him. He took a cup and covered the rat with it. Just then, another rat came with a gold coin in its mouth. It placed the coin in front of the judge and continued looking at him. It then left and returned with another gold coin. It continued in this way until it brought the bag in which the gold coins had been stored. The judge concluded that there are no more coins, so he removed the cup [and set the rat free].

Now I ask you, if the rats of a judge are so sharp-minded, do you thing that the Sufis will remain stupid and foolish? People go to the saints to learn about the being and attributes of Allāh taʿālā. If this is such an important task, imagine how intense faith a person should have in the shaykh. Nowadays people make claims to having faith and confidence in a saint whereas they do not have even a whiff of it. The masses have become unrestrained. They have no one to tell them anything. They do not realize their own positions. They have made backbiting about the 'ulamā', the righteous and the saints their occupation. They have gone to the extent of brazen opposition to the Sharīʿah. They have not read a single book on Dīn, they do not

know any rule, they do not even know the alphabets of the Arabic language but they are disputing with the ʿulamā' and opposing the Sharīʿah. This is a sign of utter loss and destruction.

There was a musician who would not observe the fast. He thought to himself that if he does not see the crescent, fasting will not be obligatory on him, so he used to remain indoors. One day his wife chased him out of the house and told him to go relieve himself near a pond. He left with his gaze focussed on the ground so that his gaze does not fall on the moon. When he went to the edge of the pond to relieve himself, he saw a reflection of the moon on the surface of the pond. He shouted out: "O you have inserted yourself into my eyes. I did not want to look at you but you came right before my eyes."

This is the condition of the ignoramuses yet they want to argue and dispute with the ʿulamā'. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

People neither have respect for the ʿulamā' nor do they revere the Sharīʿah. Every person considers himself to be a mujtahid.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh said that people do not consult the ʿulamā' on occasions of marriage. Instead, they consult the women or the village seniors. It is as though they are saying: "What do the ignorant ones about Dīn have to say on this issue?" They do not ask the ʿulamā' for rulings of the Sharīʿah. The deplorable condition that will ensue is obvious. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

A person wrote to me: "I got angry with Allāh so I did not perform the ʿishā salāh." I thought to myself that I will reply to his letter in a lenient manner. If I

were to reply harshly, then it is not far-fetched for him to become angry at me because he became angry at Allāh taʿālā. I wrote to him: "You have given up performing salāh for Allāh taʿālā, but you will now have to perform salāh for the creation. If you do not, people will say that this is an educated man but he does not perform salāh."

Incidentally, a person from the man's village was in my assembly. I related this incident without divulging the man's identity. When this person returned to his village, the man asked him about me. He replied: "Just don't ask! People have reached such pits that they are angry at Allāh taʿālā and have given up performing salāh for Him." When the man heard this, he became petrified and thought that this person has learnt about his story and will now relate it to the entire village. He wrote a letter to me stating that I probably exposed his story. I replied: "I certainly did, but I did not expose your identity. You may be rest assured."

I see people maintaining friendship with each other but recoiling from the ʿulamā'. Whereas love for the ʿulamā' entails love for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and love for the Sharīʿah.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says:

> Now that the roses have died and the garden has become desolate, there is not alternative but to acquire the fragrance of the blooms from rose water. Since the sun has set and darkness pervaded, it will be necessary to acquire light from the lamps.

The noble being of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is superior to the splendorous sun, and the

ʿulamā' are the lamps. Now that he has departed from this world, we will have to listen to his deputies – the ʿulamā'. Love for the ʿulamā' is in fact love for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and love for the Sharīʿah.

The story of Ibn Simāk

Ibn Simāk rahimahullāh came to Hārūn ar-Rashīd (the caliph). The caliph stood up out of respect for Ibn Simāk. The latter said: "Your humbleness while being a king is superior to your kingship." The caliph replied: "What a valuable statement. Say something more."

Ibn Simāk rahimahullāh said: "A person to whom Allāh taʿālā blessed with wealth must see to the needs of others and be generous to them. A person whom Allāh taʿālā blessed with beauty must choose a life of abstinence. A person whom Allāh taʿālā conferred saintliness must humble himself. If he does this, Allāh taʿālā will include him among His sincere and devoted servants."

Hārūn ar-Rashīd asked for a pen and ink-pot and noted these points with his own hands.

Note: These points should not only be recorded on paper but be engraved in the heart. Inspiration is from Allāh taʿālā alone. (compiler)

The story of Imām Muhammad

Imām Muhammad rahimahullāh came to Hārūn ar-Rashīd. The caliph got up from his place and seated Imām Muhammad rahimahullāh there. When the Imām was leaving, the caliph walked a few steps with him to see him off. One of the guards commented: "If you display such humbleness, you

will lose your royal awe." Hārūn ar-Rashīd replied: "The awe which departs on account of humbleness is better off departed. The greatness which diminishes due to showing respect to saints is better off diminished."

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of cognition. What a unique observation despite being such a great caliph. Unfortunately, we do not hear such words of wisdom even from ʿulamā'. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

This is why the masses are not being rectified and reformed. If Allāh taʿālā inspires the ʿulamā' to rectify their selves, the condition of the masses will improve. (compiler)

An ʿālim came to the king Ismāʿīl Khurāsānī. The king showed immense respect to him. When he was departing, the king walked a few steps with him. That night, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam visited him in his dream. He said: "O Ismāʿīl! You were respectful to one of the ʿulamā' of my ummat. I made duʿā to Allāh taʿālā to keep you with respect in both worlds. When you walked with him, I made duʿā that kingship remains for generation after generation in your family. Both duʿās have been accepted."

Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَنْ يُّعَظِّمْ شَعَآئِرَ اللهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوْبِ.

> Whoever honours the symbols of Allāh, it is surely from the piety of the hearts.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 32.

Just as a masjid, the Kaʿbah and Masjid-e-Nabawī are the symbols of Allāh taʿālā, the same can be said of the ʿulamā'. It is the ʿulamā' who teach us how to show respect to these sanctified places. When we had good times, we used to be respectful towards the ʿulamā' and Sufis. Now our roots have dried up, this is why our enemies laugh at us. Unfortunately, Muslims do not perceive it. It is certainly something to cry over.

Note: By Allāh's grace, these are extremely beneficial statements and teachings from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. We ought to study them deeply and practise accordingly. (compiler)

PROTECTING DĪN

Bearing in mind the current situation, people do perceive the need to serve Dīn, but because they do not understand the way to do it, we do not see resoluteness in them. We searched for teachings of our pious predecessors in this regard so that they could serve as milestones along the path. I came across this subject matter in the *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah* of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh and was overjoyed by it. It is quite enlightening. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh writes:

ولما كان رضاء الحق ان علماء الأمة أن يسعوا في بقاء النور المأخوذ من الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم وإشاعته وحمل الناس على الاهتداء به كما قال: فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ الآية، وقال: وَلٰكِنْ كُوْنُوْا رَبَّانِيِّيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُوْنَ. توارثوا نصب الخلفاء وبعث الدعاة عصرا بعد عصر وطبقة بعد طبقة لتكون كلمة الله هي العليا وليتحقق على أيديهم ما وعد الله في محكم كتابه حيث قال: وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ.

It was Allāh's will for the 'ulamā' of this nation to strive to maintain the light which was derived from the Prophets 'alayhimus salām, to proliferate it, and to prompt and encourage people to find guidance through

it. As Allāh says: “Why should it not be that from every large group, a small group goes out to acquire an understanding of Dīn?” Allāh says: “Become the people of Allāh because you teach the book and you study it.” Consequently, the practice of appointing a caliph and sending propagators was established in every era and every level of society so that Allāh’s word may reign supreme and so that whatever Allāh promised in His Book may be realized, viz. We alone are its protectors.

We learn from this that the original means for guidance is the light which is derived from the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. And that Allāh’s pleasure lies in striving to proliferate it and directing people’s attention towards it. This is the work of the ʿulamā’. This is why we see the practice of appointing caliphs and sending propagators has been inherited from generation to generation.

He says further on:

والخلافة ظاهرة وباطنة. فالخلافة الظاهرة إقامة الجهاد والقضاء والحدود وجباية العشور والخراج وقسمتها على مستحقيها وقد حمل أعباءها العادلون من ملوك الإسلام. والخلافة الباطنة تعليم الكتاب والحكمة وتزكيتهم بنور الباطن بقوارع الوعظ وجواذب الصحبة كما قال من قائل: لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللهُ عَلَى

الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ.

There are two types of caliphate; the external and the internal. The external caliphate includes the establishment of jihād, the justice system, the penal code, arrangements for the collection of ʿushr and kharāj, and distributing them among the rightful recipients. Those Muslim sultans who were just and equitable bore these responsibilities. Internal caliphate refers to teaching the Book and wisdom, purifying the hearts of people through internal light via lectures which shake the hearts and ring in the ears, and through companionship which has a magnetic pull. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard: "Allāh bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent in their midst a Messenger from among themselves - he recites to them His verses and purifies them [from polytheism and other evils], and teaches them the Book and things of benefit. Previously they were in manifest error."

وفيهم قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم العلماء ورثة الأنبياء. وقال: فضل العالم على العابد كفضلي على أدناكم.[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said with reference to such people: "The ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets." He said: "The superiority of an ʿālim over a worshipper is like my superiority over the lowest of you."

After dividing the caliphate between the external and internal, Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib rahimahullāh explains the prerequisites of a caliph:

ولا يكون الخليفة إلا من جمع المقاصد الثلاثة التي ذكرناها: وهي تصحيح العقائد في المبدأ والمعاد والمجازاة وغيرها، وتصحيح العمل في الطاعات والمقربة والارتفاقات الضرورية على وفق السنة.

وتصحيح الإخلاص والإحسان الذين هما أصلا الدين الحنفي.

وحفظ الكتاب والسنة وتدرب في قوانين السلوك وتربية السالكين. وأما الدعاة فلا يشترط فيهم إلا

[1] تفهيمان إلهية: ج ١، ص ١٣.

العدالة والسمت الصالح والوفاء بشرط الخليفة الباعث فيما ائتمنه على تبليغه.[1]

> A person can only be a caliph when he combines the three objectives which I had explained in the beginning. In other words: (1) Correcting the beliefs related to man's beginning, his destination, reward and punishment, and so on. (2) Correcting actions which convey one closer to Allāh ta'ālā, and beneficial essentials in line with the Sunnah. (3) Correcting sincerity, devotion and Allāh-consciousness. These are the fundamentals of the pure Dīn.
>
> Furthermore, the caliph (deputy) must preserve the Qur'ān and Sunnah. He must be experienced with and be an expert in the principles of the internal self and the training of seekers. As for a propagator, he only needs the qualities of justice and sound character. Furthermore, the deputy must adhere to the conditions based on which the shaykh had confidence in him and permitted him to propagate.

We learn from the above that a khalīfah must correct beliefs, actions and character (correction of the three objectives). He must also be a scholar of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, have knowledge of the

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[1] تفهيمات إلهية: ج ١، ص ١٤.

rules and regulations of the spiritual path (sulūk), and be an expert in the training of seekers.

Shāh Sāhib's advice to his deputy

Up to this point, the need for khilāfat and the prerequisites for a deputy were explained. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh now advises one of his students and disciples – Shaykh Muhammad ʿĀbid ibn ʿAlā' ad-Dīn ibn Sayfullāh – at the time of conferring khilāfat to him. It is an example to be followed by those who come later on. He writes:

> وأوصيه في خاصة نفسه بتقوى الله، ومجانبة الهوى، وترك صحبة الملوك والأمراء، والقيام بالأذكار، وكظم الغضب إلا في الله، ولزوم جادة السنة في المكره والمنشط، وترك السوال من الناس، وأن يعتقد في المحدثين والفقهاء خيرا، وأن يحبس نفسه عن الشطح وكل ما يكرهه الشرع ما استطاع. (ص ١٤)

> I advise him specifically to fear Allāh, keep away from desires, abstain from the company of kings and rulers, adhere to different forms of remembering Allāh, subdue anger except for Allāh's sake, cling to the Sunnah path in his likes and dislikes, abstain from begging from people, think good of the Hadīth experts and jurists, and safeguard himself against whatever is in conflict with the Sharīʿah and disliked by it.

Here the shaykh advises his deputy in matters which are related specifically to his self. That is, fear

of Allāh taʿālā, acting against the desires of the self, abstaining from the company of kings and rulers, adhering to Allāh's remembrance, abstaining from anger for one's self, steadfastness on the Sunnah path in one's likes and dislikes, abstaining from begging from people, revering the jurists and Ḥadīth experts and having good thoughts about them, keeping away from matters which are in conflict with the Sharīʿah, and abstaining from what the Sharīʿah disapproves of as much as possible.

This is followed by pieces of advice which apply to one's associates. He says in this regard:

> وأوصيه بمن معه أن يأمرهم بالمعروف وينهاهم عن المنكر، ويحضهم على طاعة الله ويجهد في إصلاح أمرهم والشفقة عليهم ويأمر كل من بايعه بالأذكار المسنونة ويحض المستعدين منهم على الأشغال القلبية والمراقبة.
>
> As for those who are with him, I advise him to enjoin them with good and forbid them from evil. He must encourage them to Allāh's obedience, strive to rectify them and be affectionate towards them. He must order those who have pledged allegiance to him to read the Sunnah forms of dhikr. Those who are prepared, he must encourage them to engage in spiritual exercises and spiritual self-examination.

The shaykh concludes by advising his disciple in matters related to the shaykh himself. He writes:

وأوصيه في حق نفسه أن يدعو الله لي ويناصحني ويفعل بمشائخي مثل ذلك، فإن وفى بالشرط فذلك ظني به، وإن نكث فسيعلم الذين ظلموا أي منقلب ينقلبون.[1]

> With regard to myself, I advise him to pray for me and desire my wellbeing. He must do the same for my seniors. If he fulfils the condition, then this is what I expect of him. If he acts to the contrary, then the wrongdoers will soon learn where they have to return to.

This is the type of people they used to appoint as a khalīfah and this is how they used to confer deputyship to them. It surely makes the heart tremble. Consequently, the khulafā' also adhered to the teachings of their mentors. This system continues to this day. And so, the absolute Dīn reached us in its correct form and shape. But now we see materialists corrupting this system.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh selected most important themes and presented a flowing translation of them. He made the work easy for us. May Allāh taʿālā reward him. (compiler)

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[1] تفهيمان إلهية: ج ١، ١٥.

APPRECIATE AND VALUE A SPIRITUAL CONDITION

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh undertook many forms of reformation. One very powerful reformation of his was when people used to ask him about the spiritual conditions of the auliyā'. Hadrat used to reply: "Spiritual conditions are not within one's control, while action is. We should therefore be concerned about what is within our control and abstain from pursuing what is not. Anyway, spiritual conditions are subservient to actions. Those who received lofty spiritual conditions did so on account of their actions."

Nowadays people want to do nothing but want to acquire the spiritual conditions of the auliyā'. How can this happen? If someone were to ask an erudite scholar the path to scholarship, he will say: "Submit yourself to knowledge and practise on the injunctions of the Sharīʿah." This is the only way you will be able to reach Allāh taʿālā.

The reason why we are not succeeding in our efforts of reformation is that the ʿulamā' are delivering lectures to suit the public. The illness is something while the lecture is on something else. There is a need for a lecture on a certain topic but the ʿulamā' speak on something which the public asks them. The ʿulamā' have become the followers and the masses the followed. The masses have given up obedience, whereas reformation is realized through obedience. When there is no obedience there can be no reformation.

This is the difference between Muslims and philosophers. Muslims follow a Prophet while

philosophers follow the intellect. These people do not reject the Prophet. They believe him to be a Prophet, but they do it for the sake of the masses. As regards their own selves, they say: "We have no need for a Prophet. The intellect is enough to guide us." This is totally wrong. It is essential for them to follow the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. No one is excluded from it.

Do you know why they don't follow? It is because of pride. It is not easy to follow someone. Had it been easy, Allāh taʿālā would not have made following Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam a sign of love for Him. Allāh taʿālā says:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللهُ.

> Say: If you love Allāh then follow me; Allāh will love you.[1]

I say to people: Allāh taʿālā revealed His speech and said:

مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيْمٍ عَلِيْمٍ.

> This speech is from a Being who is all-wise, all-knowing.

If this is the case, will this speech not contain matters of wisdom and knowledge? What, then, is the need for us to go begging to other people?

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of cognition and wisdom. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

The person of excellence does not order others to follow him; but to follow the texts. There is nothing more difficult that this.

I was relating to you that people used to write to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh for spiritual conditions and he used to reply: Occupy yourself in actions. We have been commanded to carry out actions; not spiritual conditions. Spiritual conditions are subservient to actions. When a person pursues spiritual conditions while disregarding actions, his spiritual conditions cease to exist and he is also not inspired towards actions.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say: People come here while having some thoughts in their minds, and they remain dogged on those thoughts. No matter how much we try to explain to them, they do not get rid off those thoughts. People consider saintliness to be something else, but do not understand the value of actions. Whereas all the saints of the past became saints on account of their good actions. People just cannot understand this.

Listen! This is the real cause of misguidance – people cast aside following the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām and are now following their carnal selves. As for those who claim to follow the intellect, that intellect is also a carnal intellect because when a Prophet is not followed, the light of the intellect is snatched away. They are wandering about, yet they refuse to follow the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. Instead, they will remain obstinate on their self-concocted ways. The fact of the matter is that man likes his own thing, no matter how bad it may be in reality. A woman may have a scrawny and ugly looking child, but she will still praise him about of

her love for him. She will say that he is handsome and good looking.

Hadrat Junayd Baghdādī rahimahullāh said that all paths apart from the path of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam are sealed off. There is no path apart from his which will convey a person to his destination.

The system of the Sufis of today is that when a person wants to tread the path, they teach him different forms of dhikr so that he may acquire some focus and concentration. But people believe this to be the objective. Our Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh used to emphasise obedience; not obedience to him but obedience to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Obedience is a great thing. Man cannot understand and realize its status and virtue without treading the path of obedience. If the virtue of obedience cannot be fathomed without obedience, how can anyone ever gauge its blessings and benefits!? The virtue of obedience can only be understood after obedience. Only then can its value be appreciated, and its blessings and fruits observed.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib rahimahullāh understood the value of obedience. He used to say: "There are two things which really appeal to me. One is the meal to which I am invited and the other is to be a muqtadī in salāh. Look at the extent of obedience in it. I will remain standing as long as the imām is standing. I can only go into rukūʿ when he goes." I say: If a person becomes a muqtadī with his heart during these five times [of salāh], his carnal self will certainly be subdued – if Allāh taʿālā wills.

Become obedient and you will see its benefits and blessings. Those who are obedient to their mentors reach success within a short while, and then there is nothing but enjoyment. An obedient person does not need to take any responsibility on himself. All he needs to do is remain silent and follow obediently. This is why Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say that he likes to eat the meal to which he is invited and to be a muqtadī. A guest does not have to worry about anything. He does not have to be concerned about whether the food will be enough or not. He is worriless while the entire responsibility of preparing the meal is on the host. In the same way, a muqtadī is unstressed. He merely has to stand silently behind the imām. On the other hand, the imām has the responsibility of his own salāh and of all his followers. Al-imām dāmin – everything is placed on the shoulders of the poor imām. The muqtadī is therefore at ease.

Allāh taʿālā said: فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ (then follow me) and made it so easy for us. We merely have to close our eyes and follow Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It is his responsibility to show us the way. Glory to Allāh! Look at how easy it is for us. We must continue following Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the road to our destination will be paved for us.

Undoubtedly, those who are obedient observe the blessings of this. Even in these times there are people who love Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and follow him. It is most probably a Hadīth which is related by Ibn Mājah rahimahullāh: Before you get married, you should look at the woman at least once so that after the marriage you do not find her unpleasant.

There was a proposal of marriage in some place. The boy wanted to see the girl but the girl's family considered this to be a humiliation, so they delayed the matter. When the girl learnt of her family's attitude and heard about this Hadīth, she said: "If this is the teaching of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, we will have to sacrifice our honour and everything else. Say to the boy that he can come to see me."

See how this girl obeyed the Hadīth. A real test of obedience comes when a person has to act against his carnal self and be obedient solely because it is the order of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. This was a beautiful quality in this girl. Inspiration is from Allāh taʿālā alone.

There was an ʿālim who was on one bank of a river. Someone sneezed on the opposite bank and said al-hamdulillāh. The wind was blowing in his direction, so the ʿālim heard this. A Hadīth states that when a person says al-hamdulillāh after sneezing, then the one who hears him must say yarhamukallāh. The ʿālim gave two paisa to a boat-man and crossed the river solely to say yarhamukallāh to the one who sneezed. When he said yarhamukallāh to him, a voice from the heavens said: "You may go! You have purchased Paradise for two paisa." Look at the benefit of following Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam!

A Sahābī went to a certain country as an envoy. While he was eating, a morsel of food fell down. He picket it up, cleaned it and ate it. Someone said to him: "These people are non-Arabs. We should not do such a thing in their presence." The Sahābī replied: "They can think what they want. We cannot leave

out a Sunnah of our beloved Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for these morons."

This is where the success of Muslims lies. They must follow Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and not be bothered by whatever obstacles they meet in this path. Success in both worlds lies solely in obedience to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. There is no other path of success for Muslims.

A simple path to sincerity and obedience

The writer says:

You must have observed from the above-related incidents the immense benefits which people experienced in this very world for obeying Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Now observe the severe loss which is suffered for acting against the orders of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Hadrat Anas radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that a dark-complexioned ugly looking person came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and said: "O Rasūlullāh! Will my dark complexion and ugliness prevent me from entry into Paradise?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam replied: "Certainly not. I take an oath in the name of the One in whose control is my life, you can go to Paradise despite your dark complexion and ugliness provided you believe in Allāh taʿālā and affirm with your heart whatever His Messenger has come with." The man was overjoyed when he heard this glad tiding. He said: "I take an oath in the name of the Being who conferred you with prophet-hood. Although I have come to you now, I testified eight months ago that there is none worthy of worship besides Allāh and

that Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) is His servant and Messenger. At the same time, I want you to hear this. I sent a proposal of marriage to these people who are sitting here and to many others who are not present here. But they all declined because of my unattractiveness. This, notwithstanding the fact that I am a high-ranking member of the Banū Sulaym tribe. The Banū Sulaym is my family. As for my dark complexion, it is the effect of my maternal family. (A person's lineage is attributed to his father's side. They belong to a high lineage, but my dark complexion is preventing people from accepting me.)"

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was affected by the man's speech. He addressed the gathering and asked: "Is ʿAmr ibn Wahb present here?" He belonged to the Thaqīf tribe and had embraced Islam recently. The people replied: "He is not present." Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked the man: "Do you know where he lives?" He replied in the affirmative. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Very well, you must go to his house, knock on the door in a well-mannered way and offer the salām. When you are called inside, tell the man of the house: 'Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam has performed my marriage to your daughter.'" (ʿAmr ibn Wahb had a daughter by the name of ʿĀtiqah. Allāh taʿālā had blessed her with physical beauty, beautiful character, soundness of mind and intelligence.)

The man proceeded to the house, knocked on the door and offered salām. The entire household welcomed him because they recognized from his salām that he was of Arab descent. They opened the door immediately, but the moment they set eyes on

his face, their enthusiasm sank and their fervent welcome disappeared. (He conveyed the proposal of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in this atmosphere. That is…) "I have been sent by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He has got me married to your daughter." They had already disliked him when they had seen him. When they heard what he said, they became more vexed. They rebuked him and sent him off. The poor fellow returned sorrowfully, proceeded directly to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and related the incident to him.

In the meantime, the girl perceived that the man was sent by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and he had performed her marriage with him. How, then, can we refuse? It would be a clear act of hypocrisy to claim belief in Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and to then deviate from his order. The girl cast aside societal modesty for the sake of Dīn and said to her father: "Dear father! You will have to be concerned about salvation. Let it not happen that divine revelation disgraces you. (In other words, divine revelation states that you are a hypocrite. What will you do then? You should therefore set right the matter before this happens.) Listen! If Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam has really performed my marriage to him, I am pleased with whatever pleases Allāh taʿālā and His Messenger sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam."

When he heard this, the father (ʿAmr ibn Wahb) left the house and proceeded to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. In his remorse, he sat at the edge of the assembly. When Rasūlullāh's gaze fell on him he said: "Are you the one who acted against the order of Allāh's Messenger?" ʿAmr ibn Wahb said: "O

Rasūlullāh! I am certainly the one who committed this crime. However, I repent to Allāh taʿālā and seek His pardon. O Rasūlullāh! How could I act against your order? I assumed that the man was lying. I have realized that it was actually your order. We now agree to give our daughter in marriage to him. We seek refuge from Allāh's wrath and the displeasure of Allāh's Messenger."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam performed the girl's marriage to the person for a dowry of four hundred dirhams. He addressed the girl's husband, Saʿd Sulamī: "Go and meet your wife." Saʿd radiyallāhu ʿanhu replied: "O Rasūlullāh! I take an oath in the name of the Being who sent you as a true Prophet. I do not even own a single cowrie. How can I go to my wife? If you permit (I will ask my relatives for something (which I could give as a deferred dowry)."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "I appoint three persons to take the responsibility of your dowry. Go to ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān and ask him for two hundred dirhams. Go to ʿAbd ar-Rahmān ibn ʿAuf and ask him for two hundred dirhams. Go to ʿAlī and ask him for two hundred dirhams."

Saʿd radiyallāhu ʿanhu went to each of these three Sahābah and they all gave him two hundred dirhams each and an additional amount. Saʿd took the money and went to the bazaar to buy goods which would make his first meeting with his bride enjoyable, and bring joy to both of them.

While he was busy buying the goods, a group passed by the bazaar and announced: "O those who belong to Allāh! Get ready to leave for jihād." This was an announcement from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu

ʿalayhi wa sallam asking the people to leave for jihād, and to do so quickly.

Saʿd radiyallāhu ʿanhu also heard the announcement. He raised his eyes towards the sky and said: "O Allāh! You are the Allāh of the heavens and earth. You are the Allāh of Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. My heart desires to spend this dowry money for a cause (jihād) which pleases Allāh, His Messenger and the believers."

Thus, he used the same money to buy a horse, a sword, a spear and a shield. He tied his back with his turban, and took a piece of cloth and wrapped it around his head and face in such a way that only his eyes were visible. He then proceeded and stood in the line of mujāhidīn. When people saw him, they asked each other: "Who is this mujāhid? We do not recognize him." Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "What is the need to probe this matter now? He must be someone. It seems that he is a newly-arrived Muslim from Bahrain or Syria who came to inquire about Islam. When he saw the caravan proceeding for jihād, he must have thought to himself that he ought to help the Muslims with his life and body."

Saʿd radiyallāhu ʿanhu fought valiantly on the battlefield. He fought with his spear and combated with his sword. He then dismounted from his horse, rolled up his sleeves, gathered his garments around his body and got ready to engage in hand to hand combat. When Rasūlullāh's gaze fell on his black arms, he asked: "Are you Saʿd?" He replied: "Yes, O Rasūlullāh! May my parents be sacrificed for you. I am indeed Saʿd." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "May your destiny be saʿīd (fortunate)."

He continued fighting with his spear and sword, and killed many of Allāh's enemies until someone announced: "Saʿd has been martyred." On hearing this, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam went to him, placed Saʿd's head in his lap, cleaned his face with his sheet and said: "O Saʿd! What a pure fragrance you have! What a deep love you have for Allāh and His Messenger!"

This was the reward in this world for the love which Hadrat Saʿd radiyallāhu ʿanhu had for Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The rewards which are in store for him in the Hereafter are much more and superior.

The narrator says: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam cried when he was martyred, but he smiled immediately thereafter. He turned his face away from Saʿd and said: "I take an oath in the name of the Lord of the Kaʿbah, he has been conveyed to the pond of Kauthar." Abū Lubābah radiyallāhu ʿanhu asked: "May my parents be sacrificed for you O Rasūlullāh! What is the pond of Kauthar?" He replied: "Allāh gave it to me. This is its length and breadth. Its banks are embedded with pearls and sapphires. Its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. The one who takes a single sip from it will never feel thirsty again."

He then asked: "O Rasūlullāh! We first saw you crying, and then we saw you smiling. And then you turned your face away from him. What is the reason for this?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam replied: "My crying was because I desired meeting Saʿd. I smiled when I saw the manner in which Allāh taʿālā conferred honour to him. I turned my face away because I saw the doe-eyed damsels of Paradise hastening towards him. Each one was

trying to outrun the other. This caused their calves to be exposed and their anklets became visible. I felt ashamed and turned my face away."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then conveyed his horse, weapons and other belongings to his wife. He sent a message to the girl's family: "Allāh taʿālā has blessed Saʿd with a wife who is better than your daughter."

It is necessary to safeguard one's health

Just as spiritual health has deteriorated today, the same can be said about physical health. People do not bother about their health and have not identified the temperament of their bodies. I ask you, if you have not identified your temperament, how will the doctor identify it? If a person identifies his temperament and then eats foods accordingly – by avoiding foods which are not in line with his temperament – his health will not go bad. Unfortunately, this is an era of being unprincipled. People are unprincipled in everything; even in matters related to their food and drink. Consequently, it affects their health. To make matters worse, we no longer find doctors and physicians in whom we can have confidence.

The benefit of companionship of saints

People can acquire many treasures from the saints, but it is difficult to ensure their continuity. A person's spiritual conditions have not been firmly embedded as yet, and his focus shifts away. This causes him to lose everything. This is why the Sufis say that a novice must neither turn his attention here and there, nor must he go on journeys.

There was a person who had good spiritual conditions. In addition to the obligatory salāhs, he used to perform one hundred rakʿats of optional salāh daily. A man who was going around for donations happened to come by. He brought a letter of intercession from a certain saint. The letter was addressed to this person. The latter therefore accompanied this collector to help him to obtain donations and contributions. He then related to me that because he got occupied in this, the condition of his heart changed. He began missing the optional salāhs which he used to perform, and the spiritual conditions which he enjoyed came to an end.

If you were to ponder over this story, you will think to yourself: The spiritual practices which the man was carrying out are classified as virtuous actions. When he accompanied the man to obtain donations, it was also a virtuous action because it was a service to Muslims. How, then, did his spiritual condition change for the worse? This is a complex issue. It is not easy to fathom and understand. It is only the mashā'ikh who can understand it.

Now listen! When a person receives a spiritual condition from Allāh taʿālā, he must pay attention to it and value it. When a person's attention shifts from it, and he focuses on something else, then it entails ingratitude to the first treasure which he had. Consequently, it is snatched away from him. This is why I say, it is easy to receive a spiritual condition but difficult to maintain it. When a servant remains devotedly focussed on Allāh taʿālā, he does not focus on anything else.

It is stated in *Majmaʿ al-Biḥār* that when a servant traverses the path of Allāh-recognition, he starts to recoil from people. He does not find solace in

anything apart from Allāh's remembrance. Did you see! Such a person begins to dislike people. But this dislike is not blameworthy. One type of hatred is the one which exists among the masses towards each other. Nowadays the entire world is immersed in it. It is a carnal hatred which is extremely unmannerly. As for the hatred which a man of Allāh has for people because they divert him from the True Beloved, it is known as bughd fillāh (hatred for Allāh's sake). It is an excellent spiritual condition. Allāh taʿālā says:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ.

> O believers! Some of your spouses and children are your enemies. So be constantly aware of them.[1]

Spouses and children are referred to as enemies because they occupy a person from Allāh's path. When a person starts to tread in Allāh's path, it is the same family and children which stop him. When a person is about to depart for jihād, his wife and children cling to him and ask him why he is leaving them.

This verse was revealed in response to an incident of this nature. The families of some of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum had stopped them from emigrating [to Madīnah]. Consequently, they delayed in their emigration and went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam much later. They noticed that those who had emigrated early had

[1] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 14.

gone quite far ahead in acquiring knowledge and other aspects of Dīn. This verse was then revealed. The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum became so angry at their wives and children that they would have soon killed them. The next part of the verse was then revealed:

وَإِنْ تَعْفُوْا وَتَصْفَحُوْا وَتَغْفِرُوْا فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

> If you pardon, overlook and forgive, then Allāh is forgiving, merciful.[1]

The first and second parts of this verse tell us that wives and children hinder a person from Allāh's path. We should certainly fulfil their rights but should not become so engrossed with them that they hinder us from Allāh's path and from fulfilling His rights. We should neither trample on their rights nor display shortcomings in fulfilling Allāh's rights on account of them. This is the balanced path, and in it lies the excellence of a true servant.

Note: This is an excellent and impressive theme. May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 14.

MAN'S OBLIGATORY TASK (1)

The author of *as-Samīr al-Muhadh-dhab* has a chapter titled "Man's obligation to his self". Under it, he has a sub-heading titled *al-wājibāt al-adabīyyah* (moral obligations). He writes:

(من الواجبات الأدبية) أن يعرف قدر نفسه لأن أفضل مزية الإنسان هي أن يعرف نفسه ومن عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه. وقد جاء في الأثر: رحم الله إمرأ عرف قدر نفسه.

One of the moral obligations is for a person to recognize the value of his self. The greatest quality of man is to recognize his self. The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer. A tradition states: May Allāh show mercy to the one who recognized the value of his self.

The author then explains the above tradition:

أن يعرف مبلغ علمه ومقدار مواهبه العقلية من ذكاء وفطنة وذاكرة وقريحة وقوة الجسدية والمادية ومقامه الأدبي ونفوذه ومركزه في الهيأة الإجتماعية وبالإجمال يعرف كل صفاته ومزاياه حتى لا يكون مخدوعا بحب نفسه مغرورا بها مدعيا بما ليس فيه، ومن يقارن

أفعال المرء العارف قدر نفسه بأفعال الشخص المغرور المدعي ظهرت له قيمة تلك المزية.

Recognizing the value of one's self entails the person knowing the extent of his knowledge, and the extent of intelligence, insight, memory, sharpness, physical strength, moral standing, and rank and authority in society which Allāh ta'ālā placed in him. In short, he must know all his qualities and traits so that he is not misled and deceived by the love of his self, claiming to be what he is not. The one who compares the actions of a person who has recognized his self with those of a deceived claimant will clearly observe and appreciate the value of recognizing one's self.

فالأول يتكلم بما يعلم فيحرم الثاني يهرف بما لا يعرف فيحترق، وذاك يدعي ما فيه من المزايا فيحسن الظن به، وهذا يدعي أكثر مما فيه فتكذبه شواهد الإمتحان فيذل ويهان. وذاك يسعى على قدر علمه وطاقته فينجح، وهذا يسعى فوق طاقته فيخذل ويفشل، وذاك يسعى عن علم وجفرة فينال على قدرهما، وهذا يخبط خبط عشواء فيخيب. وهكذا

تكون مساعي الأول في الغالب صائبة ومساعي الثاني خائبة.

The first will only speak on what he knows. Consequently, he will be respected. The second will amplify and embellish what he does not know, so he will be disgraced. The first will only make claims to those traits which are in him, so people will have noble thoughts about him. The second person will claim to have more than what he has. His claims will be disproved at the time of tests and tribulations, so he will be humiliated. The first strives according to his knowledge and capabilities, resulting in success. The second strives beyond his capabilities, resulting in failure. The first strives on the basis of his knowledge and insight, so he realizes his objective to the extent of his knowledge and insight. The second wanders like a blind camel, so he fails in realizing his objective. Most of the efforts of the first are fruitful while the efforts of the second are fruitless.

والناس يميزون بلا شك بين أفعال الإثنين فيمدحون الأول ويذمون الثاني.[1]

[1] السمير المهذب: ٩.

> People undoubtedly make a distinction between the actions of these two, so they praise the first and dispraise the second.

This explanation of ʿAllāmah ʿAlī al-Fikrī really appealed to me. I wanted its gist to be explained so that it may be concise and easy to remember. I asked a person to write a condensed version of it. I was pleased with what he wrote, but I too will relate the gist of it. First listen to what that person wrote:

Recognition of the self is one of the human obligations. The essence of which is that man must know he is not independent in any matter. If he recognizes this, he has reached the level of excellence. If a person believes himself to be independent in this world – whether it be like the independence of atheists or flagrant sinners – he has not recognized his self. He has undoubtedly discarded an important obligation. Man must believe himself to be incapable, ignorant and dependent; but it is difficult to do this. It is very easy to follow the desire of the self into assuming that one is learned, capable and perfect. (This was the essence which that Maulānā Sāhib had explained.)

Now listen to what I said:

I understood the last point of ʿAllāmah ʿAlī al-Fikrī to mean that there are two types of humans. One is telling the truth and is on the truth. The other is a false claimant. It is necessary for the one who is occupied with passing on teachings and blessings to check whether he is on the truth and a person of insight as regards the position which he holds. The more he will be on the path of self-examination, insight and awareness, the more successful his

efforts will be. Another point to understand is that when a person strives and toils in the work which he is doing, then the people for whom he is toiling realize this, accept him with their hearts and have faith in him. As for the one who is a false claimant – i.e. he is not a man of insight and knowledge – people recognize him [his falsehood] as well, and they distinguish between the two.

وجائزة دعوى المحبة في الهوى – ولكن لا يخفى كلام المنافق

> Verbal claims of love are easy and possible for everyone. But the fact is that the speech of a hypocrite does not remain concealed.

Understand well that if the masses can distinguish and differentiate between the two, how will these two not be different in Allāh's court?

ʿAllāmah al-Fikrī said:

يعرف كل صفاته ومزاياه حتى لا يكون مخدوعا بحب

نفسه مغرورا بها مدعيا بما ليس فيه

> He must know all his qualities and traits so that he is not misled and deceived by the love of his self, claiming to be what he is not.

This is known as deception of the self and a subtle plot regarding which ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī rahimahullāh quoted the following statement of Ibn ʿArabī rahimahullāh in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

قال الشيخ وأكثر ما تقع المكر الخفي للمتاولين آيات الصفات وأخبارها وفيمن يبقى على حاله مع وقوعه في المخالفات وفيمن يرزق العلم الذي يطلب العمل ويحرم العمل به، أو يرزق العمل ويحرم الإخلاص فيه. فإذا رأيت يا أخي هذا الحال من نفسك أو من غيرك فاعلم أن المتصف بذلك ممكور به، وأطال في ذلك.

Shaykh Akbar rahimahullāh said: A subtle plot is by and large experienced by those who rationalize the Qur'ānic verses and Ahādīth on the subject of qualities and attributes [of Allāh ta'ālā]. It is also experienced by those who, despite committing conflicting actions, remain on their condition. Similarly, it is experienced by the one who is blessed with knowledge which demands action but is deprived of action. Or, he is inspired towards action but is deprived of sincerity. My dear brother! If you see this condition in your self or in someone else, then you must conclude that the one who has this quality is plotted against (i.e. he is deceived). The Shaykh then went into some details on this subject.

ثم قال فعلم أن الله تعالى ما أخفى المكر إلا على المكور خاصة دون غير المكور به فإن الله تعالى ما أعاد الضمير في يعلمون إلاى على الضمير في سنستدرجهم، وقال أيضا: ومكروا مكرا ومكرنا مكرا وهم لا يشعرون. فمضمر قوله هم هو المضمر في مكروا. فكان مكر الله تعالى يهؤلاء هو عين مكرهم الذي اتصفوا به وهم لا يشعرون. وأطال في ذلك ثم قال: وكل من لا يدعوا إلى الله على بصيرة علم يقيني فهو غير محفوظ من المكر وإن كان هو صاحب اتباع، والله تعالى أعلم.[1]

He then said: It is learnt that Allāh only engages in a subtle plot with the one who is deceived, and not with the one who is not deceived. This is because in the verse "We will gradually seize them from whence they will not even know"[2], Allāh returns the pronoun in "they" to the same people referred to in the pronoun "them". Furthermore, Allāh says: "They plotted and We plotted without their knowing it." Here too, the pronoun هم refers to the same

[1] اليواقيت: ج ٢، ص ١٣٢.

[2] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 182.

people referred to in the pronoun مكروا.

Thus, Allāh's plot against these people is the same which they are described with but they are not aware of it. After going into further details, the Shaykh says: Any person who does not call towards Allāh with insight and definitive knowledge is not safe from deception even if he has a large following. And Allāh knows best.

We learn from the above text that those who invite and call towards Allāh taʿālā are not the same. Rather, they are of different types. Some of them carry out the duty of inviting to Allāh taʿālā with insight and knowledge. Others do it without insight and knowledge; they merely do it as they want. Although the latter may have a following and some people may have faith in them, they are not safe from the deception and plot of the self. The reason for this is they have discarded the scale of the Sharīʿah. The only thing which will guarantee their safety is their holding on firmly to the scale of the Sharīʿah, and constantly weighing their conditions (and bringing their words and actions in line with it).

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is an insightful theme. We ought to read it with focus. May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

MAN'S OBLIGATORY TASK (2)

There are two types of people; those who are experienced and those who are not. An experienced physician acquires knowledge of medicinal herbs and drugs. He then gets first-hand experience with diagnosing the physical condition and temperament of patients. After that, he becomes experienced.

Similarly, a spiritual reformer first acquires knowledge of the Sharīʿah. After diagnosing the spiritual conditions and temperaments of people, he undertakes to treat and rectify them. He is fully aware of the changes in time and the ups and downs of conditions. He acquires a special ability to diagnose spiritual maladies. He receives this ability from Allāh taʿālā. He is more affectionate, merciful and concerned than a physician, and focuses on the rectification of people's condition. A spiritual reformer of this nature is an ʿārif. He knows the speed at which time is moving. He is fully aware of the environment, and the turn and change in conditions. His finger is on the pulse of people. And he is most aware of his own conditions and inspirations.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is an excellent teaching for those engaged in the work of reformation and rectification. When a reformer is occupied in the rectification of others, he must not become unmindful of his own rectification.

If a person is not abreast of the time in which he is living, does not recognize the conditions and temperaments of people, is not watchful over his own house, and is not aware of his own faults and

defects; and he tries to reform and rectify others, then the results are quite obvious.

A true reformer possesses the above-mentioned qualities. He is fully aware of the good and bad of his time. He is fully alert. This is why he can carry out the task of reformation and rectification. Unfortunately, students break the orders of their teachers. In fact, they oppose them. The same can be said about murīds with the mashā'ikh. Whereas whether a person is a student or a murīd, he learns everything from his teachers and mashā'ikh. Despite this, his egotism causes him to disobey them.

If this condition prevails in the madrasah and khānqāh, and the students and murīds become like this; how can rectification be realized?

In these times the work of rectification is no ordinary work. It is akin to chewing steel and making yourself a target for disparagement and ridicule. However, the Ahlullāh do not bother about all this. They are ordered by Allāh taʿālā. Those who oppose them will be dealt with by Allāh taʿālā Himself.

Those who are commanded by Allāh taʿālā to carry out a certain task acquire proficiency and expertise in it. They become the imāms in that field.

Note: This insignificant servant prays to Allāh taʿālā to bless him with this condition through His grace and through the blessings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat's tutoring and training so that the work of rectification can be achieved in the best way possible. Inspiration is from Allāh taʿālā alone. (compiler)

ʿAllāmah ʿAlī al-Fikrī had quoted the following saying at the beginning of his article:

ومن عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

> The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer.

It will be appropriate to explain it a bit. Understand well that we came across this theme in most books on Sufism. *Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir* refers to it as a Hadīth-e-kashfī. The text follows:

> فإن قلت فما معنى قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم في الحديث الثابت كشفا من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه فالجواب أن المعنى من عرف نفسه بما وصف به نفسه من كونه له ذات وصفات وما أعطاه من علمه من استخلافه في الأرض يولي ويعزل ويعفو وينتقم ونحو ذلك ويحتمل أن يكون معناه أن يعرف نفسه بالافتقار في وجوده ويحتمل أن يكون المراد معنيين معا لا بد من ذلك. (اليواقيت والجواهر)

> You may ask: What is the meaning of the Hadīth which is established by spiritual exposition: "The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer"? The answer is: It means that the person who recognized his self with all its attributes. For example, he has knowledge, he is Allāh's vicegerent on earth, he has the ability to appoint [someone to a post] and

remove, he has the power to pardon and exact revenge, and so on. The one who has recognized this, then he has – in reality – acquired the recognition of Allāh taʿālā. It could also mean: The person who has understood that his self is need of someone else for its existence, then he has recognized Allāh taʿālā. It could also refer to both meanings together. There is no contradiction in it.

In another place, he attributes this statement to Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu. He writes:

وفي كلام الإمام علي رضي الله عنه من عرف نفسه عرف ربه، قال بعضهم: أي لأنه لا يمكن لأحد معرفة نفسه قط لأن الحق تعالى جعل النفس مرتبة تعجيز لنا بيننا وبين معرفة ذاته كأنه تعالى يقول إذا عجز الإنسان عن معرفة نفسه مع كون هذا مخلوقة ومن أقرب الأشياء إليه فكيف بمعرفة من لا شبيه له ولا نظير ولا يجتمع مع عباده في حد ولا حقيقة.[1]

One of the statements of Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu is: "The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer." Some people said: It is impossible for a person to recognize his self because Allāh taʿālā created the self to

[1] اليواقيت والجواهر: ج ٢، ص ١٧١.

make us incapable between Him and our selves. This is so that man may realize his incapability. You can understand this in another way: It is as though Allāh taʿālā is saying: Since man is incapable of recognizing his own self which is a creation like him and is closest to him, how will he be able to recognize that Being who has none similar and equal to Him? And He is not similar to man neither in name nor in essence.

I thought of investigating this statement further. After consulting some books, I came across the following discussion on this Hadīth in *Mauḍūʿāt Kabīr* of Mullā ʿAlī Qārī raḥimahullāh:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه. قال ابن تيمية موضوع. قال السمعاني إنه لا يعرف مرفوعا. إنما يحكى عن يحيي بن معاذ الرازي من قوله. وقال النووي إنه ليس بثابت يعني عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم. وإلا فمعناه ثابت فقد قيل من عرف نفسه بالجهل فقد عرف ربه بالعلم، ومن عرف نفسه بالفناء فقد عرف ربه بالبقاء، ومن عرف نفسه بالعجز والضعف فقد عرف ربه بالقدرة والقوة. وهو مستفاد من قوله تعالى

ومن يرغب عن ملة إبراهيم إلا من سفه نفسه. أي جهلها حيث لم يعرف ربها.[1]

> The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer. Ibn Taymīyyah rahimahullāh said that it is fabricated. Samʿānī said that this Hadīth is not marfūʿ, rather it is a statement of Yahyā ibn Muʿādh. Imām Nawawī rahimahullāh says that this statement is not established from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, but its meaning is established. It means: The one who recognizes the ignorance of his self has recognized the knowledge of Allāh. The one who acknowledges the fleetingness of his self has recognized the eternalness of Allāh taʿālā. The one who understands that he is incapable and weak has understood the power and strength of Allāh taʿālā. This is gauged from the words of Allāh taʿālā: "Who is the one who turns away from the religion of Ibrāhīm except he who has made himself a stupid?" In other words, he kept his self ignorant of Allāh's recognition.

We learn from the above statements of the 'ulamā' that although this statement in these words is not established from the Hadīth, its meaning and import are totally correct. It is in line with the texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth, and is supported by them. This

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[1] الموضوعات: ٨٦.

is why we see the ʻulamāʼ paying attention to it and going into much detail in explaining its meaning. The author of *Tarṣīʿ al-Jawāhir* writes:

> قد أجمع العارفون على أن معرفة الله تعالى مترتبة على معرفة النفس. فمن عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.
>
> The gnostics concur that the recognition of Allāh taʻālā is dependent on the recognition of the self. And so, the one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer.

He then explains this further:

> قال في نتائج الأسرار للسيد مصطفى العروسي ما نصه من عرف نفسه وصفاتها بأنها آثار الحق تعالى وصفاته ورسوم أسمائه وصورها فقد عرف الحق. أي من عرف ذلك من شهود وذوق لا عن دليل وبرهان كعلم علماء الرسوم. الحاصل أن كل ما سوى الله تعالى آثاره الناشية عن أفعاله، فمن عرف ذلك كشفًا أو ذوقًا كما يأتي في وحدة الأفعال فقد عرف ربه.[1]
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> Mustafā Sayyid ʻArūsī said in *Natāʼij al-Asrār*: The person who has realized that his self and its attributes are the effects of the Being and attributes of Allāh taʻālā, and

[1] ترصيع الجواهر: ٦.

> reflections of His names; then he has recognized Allāh ta'ālā. In other words, the one who recognized Him through his enthusiasm and observation, and not through proofs and evidences as is generally the case with the knowledge of the 'ulamā'-e-zāhir. In essence, this means that everything apart from Allāh ta'ālā are His effects which stem from His actions. The one who recognizes this through exposition and enthusiasm, as is the case in the oneness of actions, then he has acquired the recognition of Allāh ta'ālā.

Similarly, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī rahimahullāh writes in his *Bayān al-Qur'ān* under *Masā'il as-Sulūk*:

> ومن يرغب عن ملة إبراهيم إلا من سفه نفسه، قال العبد الضعيف هو أصل لقولهم من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه.[1]

> Only that person will turn away from the religion of Ibrāhīm who is foolish with regard to his self. This weak servant says: This verse is the source for those who say: The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer.

The purpose behind quoting these texts is so that we may learn that although this statement is not a

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[1] بيان القرآن: ج ١، ص ٧٢.

Hadīth, there is no doubt that it is a divinely inspired statement made by the saints. Its theme is in line with the Qur'ān and Hadīth.

As for the explanation of Imām Nawawī rahimahullāh, it appealed to my heart. The essence of what he said is: The person who recognizes the ignorance of his self – i.e. he understands himself to be ignorant – will certainly come to the realization that Allāh taʿālā alone is the truly knowledgeable one. When he accepts that he is bound to perish, he will be convinced that only Allāh taʿālā is the eternal one. When he realizes his incapability and weakness, he will accept that capability and power belong to Allāh taʿālā alone. In this way, recognition of his self will lead him towards the recognition of Allāh taʿālā. This statement will then certainly prove true that "The one who recognizes his self has recognized his Sustainer."

This explanation of Imām Nawawī rahimahullāh appealed even more to me because it is affirmed by the following supplication of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ ضَعِيْفٌ فَقَوِّ فِيْ رِضَاكَ ضُعْفِيْ، وَاِنِّيْ ذَلِيْلٌ فَاَعِزَّنِيْ ،وَاِنِّيْ فَقِيْرٌ فَارْزُقْنِيْ.

> O Allāh! I am weak. Give strength, then, to my weakness by Your pleasure. I am disgraced, so give me honour. I am poor, so give me sustenance.

Look! After observing his own poverty and weakness, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam beseeched Allāh taʿālā for honour, sustenance and strength. He affirmed the intrinsic and genuine

qualities of honour and strength in Allāh taʿālā. He taught the Muslims that after seeing their own weakness, poverty and incapability; they must acquire the knowledge of Allāh's attributes of strength, power and providing sustenance.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī rahimahullāh said further on:

وهو مستفاد من قوله تعالى ومن يرغب عن ملة إبراهيم إلا من سفه نفسه.

This is gauged from the words of Allāh taʿālā: "Who is he who turns away from the religion of Ibrāhīm except the one who has made himself a stupid?"

Now listen to an explanation of it.

This verse states with restriction that only the one who is ignorant of his self will turn away from the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām. We learn from this that the one who is not ignorant of his self – instead, he recognizes it – will never turn away from the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām. The point which we learn from here is that man can indeed recognize his self. Thus, "the one who recognizes his self" is affirmed. As for the second part, i.e. "he has recognized his Sustainer", try to understand the following:

The words يرغب عن convey the meaning of turning away. If the opposite meaning is taken, it would mean that the one who is not foolish will not turn away. Not turning away means he will show an interest in it. He will cast aside other religions and choose the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām. He will believe in the oneness of Allāh taʿālā and

acquire His recognition. And this is the meaning of "he has recognized his Sustainer".

To summarize the above: Although this statement which is established from the saints is not mentioned with the same words in the Hadīth, it is certainly derived and established from the Qur'ān. Understand this well.

THE EXPERTISE OF A PERSON CAN ONLY BE TESTIFIED TO BY EXPERTS IN THAT FIELD

A king said to a barber: "If you can cut and trim my hair while I am asleep and without my knowing about it, I will give you the title of khalīfah." The barber replied: "Very well." Subsequently, the king was asleep one day, so the barber came and trimmed his hair without the king perceiving it." When he got up and learnt of what happened, he said: "You are certainly a master. I give you the title of khalīfah." The barber was overjoyed. He went home and related the good news to his wife. She replied: "The praise of the king is of no consequence. What does he know about this art [of being a barber]. You can only be considered to be an expert when four barbers concur and accept you as a khalīfah."

Now look! Even the barber's wife knew that the praise of defective people is of no significance. This is why she did not take the praise of the king into consideration. Today the situation is that even if a defective person were to praise another defective person, and an unqualified person were to speak in favour of an unqualified person, people will accept it.

There can be no worse defect than an imaginary excellence.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says:

> The person does not progress towards Allāh taʿālā because he imagines himself to be a master. O you who are deceived and deviated! There is no worse illness in you than your assumption of perfection.

This means that the reason why a person does not progress towards Allāh taʿālā is that he believes himself to be perfect. This is why he does not strive for perfection. The fact of the matter is that there is no worse defect than an imaginary perfection.

I get people like this coming here. I spend a lot of time thinking on how I should inform them that they do not possess excellence.

Look at the beauty of this statement! He says: I believe a seeker does not have a worse defect than considering himself to be perfect. This is the quality which does not allow him to progress. On the other hand, if a seeker perceives defectiveness within his self, he will reach perfection very quickly. Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says in this regard:

> The one who sees his own fault and defect will run very quickly towards his perfection.

There was a saint who used to take his murīds to Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī rahimahullāh. The latter said to him on one occasion: “Do you allow me to say something?” The saint replied: “Certainly, Hadrat.” Hadrat Gangohī rahimahullāh said: “You are nothing.” When he heard this, he got up immediately and said to his murīds: “Hadrat says that I am nothing. So I am telling you people to go your own ways.” He then turned to Hadrat Gangohī rahimahullāh and said:

"Hadrat! I now beg you to confer me with spiritual blessings." The saint then remained in Hadrat's company. Subsequently he reached such heights that the experts of the time concurred that no matter how vile a person's heart may be, if he spends time in the company of this saint he will be reformed. The saint acquired this expertise after obliterating himself. Once a person receives the focus of an expert, he succeeds and reaches the level of perfection.

A magician was producing mangoes through his magic and showing them to the people. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī rahimahullāh happened to pass by. When the magician saw Hadrat, he clasped his hands and said: "Hadrat! Please do not direct your focus against this. If not, I will not be able to do anything and my entire act will be spoilt."

Acting against the carnal self

While on the subject of "focus", I recall two incidents.

Hadrat Khwājah Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' rahimahullāh was suffering from bouts of unconsciousness. There was a yogi who could cure any type of illness through his focus. Hadrat's disciples decided to take him to this yogi. While he was unconscious, they carried him and took him to the yogi. On the way, Hadrat regained consciousness and asked: "Where are you taking me?" The disciples explained to him what they intended. Hadrat got angry and ordered them to take him back. They did as instructed. Hadrat fell unconscious again. The disciples concurred on taking him to the yogi. They thought to themselves, at least Hadrat will get better. Even if he gets angry at us, we will ask him for pardon.

They took him to the yogi who focussed his attention on Hadrat, and he got up immediately. Hadrat saw the yogi in front of him and realized what had happened. He asked the yogi: "How did you acquire this treasure?" He replied: "My guru taught me to always act against my self. I did as instructed and acquired this power." Hadrat asked: "Does your self desire to embrace Islam?" He replied in the negative. Hadrat said: "In that case, you will have to adhere to your guru's instruction and act against your self." The yogi embraced Islam. He had already been striving spiritually. So the moment he embraced Islam, his heart became enlightened. Hadrat's spiritual affiliation was exposed to him. He pledged allegiance to Hadrat and was conferred with khilāfat.

I related this incident to you to show you that he reached this level on account of subduing his self. As long as you do not subdue it and do not recognize it fully, you will not progress. At the same time, you have to understand that it cannot be subdued with a knife. It requires a different method, and that is following the Sharīʿah. This is how the self is subdued.

When the yogi embraced Islam, the news spread throughout Delhi. Only then did the people realize the status of Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn raḥimahullāh, and that there was no reality in the spiritual conditions of yogis. Islam's popularity spread in India on account of yogis of this nature embracing Islam. This yogi had many followers. They all embraced Islam. House after house and village after village embraced Islam. The truthfulness of Islam became fully entrenched.

I can relate these stories to you but I cannot make you understand the tricks and plots of the self. Darkness will remain as long as it is not fully understood and subdued.

The story which I related to you is an old story. Now listen to a more recent one.

A yogi lived in the eastern regions of India and he embraced Islam later on. This is how he became a Muslim: In the beginning he engaged in a lot of spiritual exercises. He used to wash his intestines daily. One day he was returning from the river after having taken a bath. He thought to himself: I am engaged in so intense spiritual exercises but I am still not experiencing any peace and tranquillity. The moment this crossed his mind, another thought came to him: How can you acquire peace when the path which you are treading is the wrong path?

When this thought came to him, he turned around. He did not even go to his house. He began searching for a man of Allāh. There was a Naqshbandī shaykh in a certain village. When he saw the shaykh, he became inclined towards him and he thought to himself that he will benefit from him. He embraced Islam at his hands and remained in his company. He studied Dīn under the shaykh, and learnt the rules and regulations of salāh and fasting. The shaykh became quite popular because a yogi embraced Islam at his hands. Because the yogi used to engage in many spiritual exercises, he would experience many spiritual expositions (kashf). This yogi who now embraced Islam used to say: “Through my kashf I can see all my gurus in the Hell-fire.” May Allāh taʿālā protect us from it.

All our excellences are dependent on the subjugation of the self. I say to you, saintliness has

not come to an end. We do not see it because subjugation of the self has ceased to exist. If you subjugate and subdue the self, you too can acquire saintliness. Those who do it are able to acquire it even in our times. When a person breaks the orders of Allāh taʿālā, it is because of the self. He knows that salāh, fasting and other orders are the injunctions of Allāh taʿālā, yet he does not carry them out. When a person focuses his attention on subduing his self, his condition changes for the better.

Two persons used to relate their story to me; and the Sharīʿah considers the testimony of two persons. One of them used to say to me about this khānqāh: "As long as I do not reach here by maghrib time, I feel restless. My heart does not find solace in performing salāh anywhere else." The second person said to me: "I am now becoming attached to salāh." I concluded that he has acquired something because when a person's heart becomes attached to salāh, you can be convinced that he is benefiting and it certainly has an effect on his īmān. When his īmān came in order, so did his salāh.

The son of a saint was inclined to the world. The saint wanted to teach him Dīn. The saint relieved himself and threw the clod of earth onto a rock which turned into gold. He said to his son: "Look! Your father has the ability of turning a rock into gold after the clod of earth touched him. Yet you are inclined to the world!? Why do you not turn your attention to this [spiritual] treasure?"

The saints have many powers which, when seen, then even yogis used to embrace Islam. If the saints were not given these powers, the yogis would have

taken the masses under their control and led them astray.

It is said that a yogi was flying in the air and the people began looking at him. Hadrat Khwājah Muʿīn ad-Dīn Ajmerī rahimahullāh also saw the spectacle and realized that the masses will assume this to be a great feat, and this will create a doubt in their beliefs. He took out a sandal of one of his mentors. The sandal flew up towards the yogi, began striking him on his head and caused him to fall down. The people realized that the yogi was nothing but a fake.

Another yogi gave a pebble to Hadrat Shaykh Jalāl ad-Dīn Panī Pattī rahimahullāh. Through Hadrat's blessings, countless other pebbles were created. When the yogi observed this feat of Hadrat, he became remorseful and emerged from his place. He placed the pebbles before Hadrat, placed his head at Hadrat's feet and said: "Hadrat! Give me some of your knowledge through which you are independent of things of this nature." Hadrat replied: "This treasure cannot be acquired without being a Muslim." The yogi became a Muslim immediately. Through Hadrat's attention, the yogi became one of the senior auliyā' of his time.[1]

There are many stories and incidents of this nature about the Ahlullāh. From them we learn about the phenomenal achievements of the saints, and the many blessings which Allāh showered on them in this very world by virtue of their sincerity. Now listen to another story.

A pious person was employed in a jail. One day, he was leading a prisoner and taking him somewhere.

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[1] *As-Sunnah al-Jalīyyah*, p. 42.

As they were walking, the time of salāh arrived. He said to the prisoner: “Sit down here while I perform my salāh.” While he was performing his salāh, the prisoner managed to unshackle himself and disappeared. When the man completed his salāh, he realized that the prisoner had escaped. He looked around but could not find the prisoner. He thought to himself, let me perform my salāh again. He performed his salāh. The next day he went to the jail and said to his officer: “The prisoner escaped. You can now take whatever measures you want against me.”

The man’s piety was well-known, so his officer said: “You may go. I am not recording anything in the register. Go and search for the prisoner.” He left and was quite worried about where he would find him. He went to his house and began performing salāh. He spent the night in salāh and in beseeching Allāh taʿālā. At midnight, someone knocked on his door. When he asked who it was, the person outside replied: “I am your prisoner.” The man was overjoyed and he opened the door. He asked the prisoner: “You had escaped, how did you come back?” He replied: “After I fled from you, I proceeded towards my house. However, each time I stepped in the direction of my house, I lost my eyesight. But when I turned in your direction, I regained my eyesight. I was fretful and did not know what to do. I concluded that if I fled, I will remain blind for the rest of my life. I realized that it would be easier to remain in the jail for some time and have my eyesight than to remain blind for my whole life. This is why I came back. Here, you can shackle my feet.”

Did you see the blessing of the man’s salāh. This is the power of salāh.

The man decided to resign from his job but his officer declined. The officer said to him: "You don't have to do any work. Merely present yourself during the office hours, sit here and spend your time in salāh and Allāh's glorification. We will continue giving you a salary."

There is the story of another pious man who would go to the bazaar daily and stand in the line of the menial labourers. People would come to hire the labourers but no one would hire him. He would proceed to a masjid and occupy himself in salāh. In the evening, he would return to his wife and children and offer an excuse to them. He would say: "The person for whom I worked only pays his labourers at the end of the month." The month ended in this way. He became worried the next day because he did not know what excuse he would give to his family.

While he was returning home in the evening, he passed by a jungle from where he broke some fruits and carried them with him in the hope that his family will get some consolation from this. When he reached the entrance of his house, he heard the sound of something cooking in a pot. He was surprised. He went in and asked his wife about how she made arrangements for the food because he had not brought any grains and other food items. She replied: "The person for whom you worked sent a person who handed over all these goods. He said to me: 'The person for whom your husband worked has sent these items for him.'" The husband realized that his salāh and beseeching to Allāh taʿālā were accepted. He continued performing salāh in this way, and someone would bring the house necessities at the end of each month.

This is how Allāh taʿālā favours His sincere servants because of their sincerity. They found Allāh taʿālā and they received of this world. There are thousands of stories of this nature.

Ḥāfiẓ Ṭā Hā Ṣāḥib used to relate the story of a policeman who used to proceed to the masjid at the time of ṣalāh. He went into the masjid one day when his officer came by. When he returned from the masjid, his officer expressed his displeasure and reprimanded him saying: "You are under our employ. You cannot go anywhere while you are on duty." The policeman replied: "I will go to perform ṣalāh. Fulfilling Allāh's duty is also my responsibility."

The officer was a haughty fellow and went into a rage. He said: "We will remove you from your job." The policeman also got angry and said: "I too am removing you." He just said this and a postman came with a telegram. The officer opened it and it contained this message: "We are retrenching you." He had assumed he had the policeman working under him but now realized that it was the policeman who had him as a worker." He expressed remorse and sought pardon. Just then another telegram arrived which stated: "The first order has been cancelled. You may remain in your job." However, now that the secret had come into the open, the policeman said: "I am not going to work any longer."

There are such servants of Allāh taʿālā; they live among us but we do not recognize them. May Allāh taʿālā bless us with the true recognition of the Ahlullāh and inspire us to appreciate them. Āmīn.

THE WAY TO TUTOR ONE'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

I want to speak about an important topic today. Listen attentively.

Allāh taʿālā says:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ. وَإِنْ تَعْفُوْا وَتَصْفَحُوْا وَتَغْفِرُوْا فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

> O believers! Some of your spouses and children are your enemies. So be constantly aware of them. If you pardon, overlook and forgive, then Allāh is forgiving, merciful.[1]

Before this, Allāh taʿālā said:

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللهِ. وَمَنْ يُّؤْمِنْ بِاللهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ.

> No misfortune befalls except by the order of Allāh. Whoever believes in Allāh, He shows the path to his heart.[2]

O believers! At the time of calamity, you have been ordered to exercise patience and to be pleased with Allāh's decree so that it does not prevent you from

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[1] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 14.

[2] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 11.

the Hereafter. Previously we were told that unbelief is a total barrier from success in the Hereafter. Similarly, becoming distressed over a calamity or becoming preoccupied with bounties and thereby falling short in carrying out Allāh's injunctions also prevents one from success in the Hereafter.

Thus, when it comes to calamities, one must understand that no calamity comes down without Allāh's order. Once a person understands this, he must be patient and be pleased with Allāh's decree. When a person has full faith in Allāh taʿālā, He shows his heart the path to patience and acceptance. Allāh taʿālā has knowledge of everything. He knows who was patient and who was not. He will then reward and punish each person according to His wisdom.

In short, obey Allāh taʿālā in every matter including calamities. And obey Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. If you refuse to obey, then know well that Our Messenger's duty is solely to convey the message clearly.

Just as you are ordered to be patient during calamities so that you are not prevented from the Hereafter, in like manner, you are prohibited from becoming engrossed in bounties so that you are not prevented from the Hereafter.

We made reference to calamities above. As regards bounties, you must realize that some of your spouses and children are your enemies in Dīn. You must be vigilant with regard to them. And if you pardon and overlook, then Allāh taʿālā is all-pardoning, most merciful.

Note: We learn from this topic that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh did not confine himself to

speaking about Sufism. Rather, the present topic enlightens us on the issue of rectification of society. This demonstrates his awareness of societal issues. (compiler)

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to the verse under discussion. He says that some women are antagonistic towards their husbands and they are deceptive to them. Similarly, some children are antagonistic towards the father. Consequently, they cause parents to taste the bitter pill of misery and offence. I have seen women who killed their husbands. Others spiked their husband's food and caused the latter to lose their minds. We have also come across some women who completely trampled over the honour of their husbands. Yet others squandered their husbands' wealth. In like manner, there are some children who not only destroy their parents' wealth but their honour as well. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

This is why Allāh taʿālā said: "So be constantly aware of them." Do not feel safe from their mischief and tricks. When this verse was revealed, some Saḥābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum must have become extremely angry at their wives and children whom they suspected of being like this. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that Ḥadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu said that this verse:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ.

O believers! Some of your spouses and children are your enemies. So be constantly aware of them.

Was revealed with reference to those who had embraced Islam and intended to present themselves to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam but their wives and children did not allow them. When they eventually came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, they realized that the other Saḥābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum had surpassed them in knowledge of Dīn. They became angry at their families and wanted to punish them [for not allowing them to go to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam sooner]. Allāh taʿālā then revealed the next part of the verse:

وَإِنْ تَعْفُوْا وَتَصْفَحُوْا وَتَغْفِرُوْا فَإِنَّ اللهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

> If you pardon, overlook and forgive, then Allāh is forgiving, merciful.[1]

In other words, if their sins are pardonable – whether related to worldly or Dīnī matters – and they seek repentance, then you must forgive them. That is, do not punish them; overlook them. Do not even castigate them nor disgrace them. Instead, conceal their errors and do not expose them to anyone. Understand well that Allāh taʿālā is forgiving, merciful.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* quotes the statement of someone who said that the enmity of one's wife and children is that they come as obstacles to the person's acts of obedience and actions which will be beneficial to him in the Hereafter. Sometimes they force him to earn ḥarām livelihood and commit sins so that they could live in comfort.

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[1] Sūrah at-Taghābun, 64: 14.

A Hadīth states: “There will come a time on my ummat when a person’s destruction will be at the hands of his wife and children.” In other words, they will criticize him for his poverty. This will force him to pursue unlawful income and lead to his destruction. Sometimes, love for one’s wife and children prompts a person to be concerned about a comfortable life for them while he is living and also after he departs from this world. And so, he gets involved in unlawful activities and destroys himself in this way.

If a religious person gets angry at this type of enmity from his wife and children, he will be justified in doing so. There can be no pain worse than it. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that if you do favours to a person and he causes you harm, then this becomes extremely painful. It urges you to exact revenge. This is why Allāh taʿālā interceded on his behalf and emphasised the point. He says: They can be your enemies. This is said to keep you on your guard and so that you do not become unmindful. It is not Our aim to create domestic disputes among you. Rather, if they err and slip up, you must pardon and overlook them. Your act of kindness will have a good effect on them and they will become your friends.

Allāh taʿālā created man and sent down the Qur’ān to set right his livelihood. He sent Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and taught various social etiquette. Nothing has been left out. One etiquette taught in this verse is that during occasions of anger, rectitude demands that a person becomes soft, lenient, pardoning and forbearing; and that he casts aside severity and harshness. A person should not lose control of his self when he is

angry. He must control his anger and refuse it to overcome him.

I am saying this to you after experiencing it: I found softness far more beneficial than harshness in the field of rectification and reformation. It was thought about certain people that they will not benefit and their rectification will not be achieved. They were reprimanded, warned and taken to task but nothing worked. After that, a soft approach was followed, and there was a world of difference between the two. In other words, they were rectified through softness and gentleness.

This is the divine system in the rectification of children. Try it out and see for yourself. Do you know why people get angry? They find enjoyment in it just as how some people find enjoyment in eating chillies. A person eating chillies feels its pain but he continues eating it.

Allāh taʿālā has saved our homes from destruction. I see the world is a target of it. There is no doubt that these peoples' actions cause pain. The internal conditions of people are not hidden from Allāh taʿālā. Because He Himself is merciful and kind, He instructs His servants: If your wives and children are disobedient to you and cause you pain, do not think that they have offended you only. Rather they have disobeyed Me as well. They have acted against My orders. Thus, I am also angry. But I am saying this for your own good that you must pardon them. I am interceding for pardon on their behalf.

When a believer hears this intercession from Allāh taʿālā, he will be completely ashamed. He will think to himself that Allāh taʿālā is interceding. I myself am a criminal against Him. I too am desirous of His

pardon. This demands all my feelings [of anger] to cease, and His order to prevail over everything.

Glory to Allāh! This is a tiny example of Allāh's pardon and mercy. It is the most balanced form of societal etiquette in the sense that Allāh taʿālā did not allow a believer to be oppressed and protected him against being an oppressor. This is just one example. The entire system of this universe revolves around pardon and mercy.

Allāh taʿālā concludes this highly emphasised intercession by saying, "Allāh is forgiving, merciful." This means that in your interactions with your subordinates, you must be mindful of the fact that you are also a subordinate of someone else [Allāh taʿālā]. If you are not going to be pardoning, forbearing and forgiving today; you too will be taken to task tomorrow. Just as these people are your criminals, you too are a criminal of someone [Allāh taʿālā]. You should think about what is going to happen in the Hereafter.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh writes in *Bayān al-Qur'ān* in the commentary to this verse: It encourages pardon. Sometimes it is obligatory when there is the overriding possibility that punishment will cause the person to become more audacious. At other times it is recommended.

May Allāh taʿālā reward the 'ulamā' for extracting rules and regulations from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and explaining them to us. How should one treat one's wife and children? You probably did not hear details in this regard because no one explained them to you. Consequently, people commit excesses and shortcomings in this regard. They become so immersed in their love for them that they do not blink an eye when they commit a wrong.

Alternatively, they vent all their anger on them, causing the destruction of the home. I have personally seen people going into a rage even before they enter their houses. If the slightest thing is done against their temperament, they start flinging things around. After doing this, they go out and leave the house. Now you think about it – if this is the scenario in a house, how can there ever be peace and tranquillity? Yet these are the very same persons who, when we are stern and strict with them in rectifying their misconduct, accuse us of being angry and strict.

Listen! Every type of anger is not harām. Anger which is for the carnal self is harām. Anger which is for Allāh's sake and against one's self for its rectification is not harām. In fact, it is obligatory. Without doubt, anger is the worst of blameworthy characteristics. This is why I say that anger is the most practised upon today. Everyone has succumbed to anger. A person is still a child but he is an embodiment of anger. The son vents his anger on his father. A wife against her husband. The subjects against their ruler. In short, the one who is supposed to be the ruled becomes the ruler on account of anger. This is why I say it is very easy to become a "big" person. All you have to do is become angry and you will become "big".

I said that everyone is practising on anger today. Now listen to a story in this regard.

A Maulānā was a guest at the house of a station master. When the food was presented, the Maulānā said: "Brother! These rotīs are excellent." The station master pointed to a whip which was suspended from a hook and said: "Maulānā! These rotīs are the blessings of that whip." The Maulānā

understood what he said but asked: “What do you mean?” He replied: “I taught my wife to make rotīs by whipping her time and again with that whip.”

The moment the Maulānā heard this, he moved away from the table-mat and stood up. He said: “You are a tyrant. I will not eat your food.” The station master begged him for pardon and eventually asked: “Is there any way for my pardon?” The Maulānā replied: “Yes. There is one way. Go to your wife and seek her pardon. If she pardons you and you promise never to do something like this again, I will eat your food. And when I pass by this way, I will inquire about you.” He went and sought his wife’s pardon, and promised never to do this again. Only then did the Maulānā consume his food.

Imagine how much of duʿā’ the woman must have made for the Maulānā because he rectified her husband’s oppression and anger in such a short time.

It is because of these unsound characteristics and rudeness that people have turned their houses into examples of Hell. The business places can be corrupt, the offices can be corrupt, the courts can be corrupt; and a man can perceive the constriction there. But if the house is in order, he can enjoy tranquillity. But if the house is corrupt, where can he go to?

This is why Allāh taʿālā showed us how to rectify and reform our homes. One way is to abstain from anger and to pardon our families. Allāh taʿālā says in another place in the Qur’ān:

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوْفٌ وَّمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَّتْبَعُهَآ أَذًى.

> Responding softly and forgiving is better than a charity which is followed by harassment.[1]

A good word (e.g. to a beggar) and forgiveness (asking him for pardon) is better than charity which is followed by counting one's favour (because the latter is extremely offensive).

This habit is quite common among people – they spend their wealth and then do something which causes the reward for it to be cancelled. There is a need to understand these things, and a greater need to speak about them.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh has explained excellent themes. We pray to Allāh taʿālā to enable us to speak in a similar vein and to practise. May Allāh taʿālā elevate the ranks of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. Āmīn (compiler)

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 263.

GOOD AND BAD SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

There are two types of social relationships; good and bad. Bad social relationships have generally pervaded the people nowadays. Consequently, they do not even realize which action of theirs will cause inconvenience to others and how they should carry out a certain action so that it is not bothersome to them. For example, I have to go to many places to which I am called. When I go to a certain place, I see people from all over assembling there. As though, when a person invites me to his place, he has to make arrangements for the boarding and lodging of all those who come to meet me. This is obviously a major inconvenience for the host. Feeding arrangements for wedding guests are easy because the wedding-host makes arrangements from months before hand. But here we find people arriving suddenly, and we do not know how many people are going to come. If a large number of people go unannounced to a person's house, what will that poor host do?

Now I have to teach you these things. People of the past were self-conscious, so they considered good social relationships. Presently, it is difficult to talk about these matters. If I were to speak openly, the same people will accuse me of being unmannerly. If I were to turn a blind eye, how will matters of the Sharīʿah be conveyed? Nevertheless, after observing these misconducts, I published an announcement titled *The Etiquette of Travelling*. I stated therein that feeding arrangements for guests who come to meet me will be my responsibility. I do not consider it permissible to place this burden on my host.

An example of bad social conduct

I went to Lucknow and I was staying over at the house of a certain person. The house was quite spacious and comfortable. The toilet was spotlessly clean and completely separate. However, as regards the food, the one who invited me said that it will come from his place. I permitted him based on his sincerity. Consequently, after the fajr salāh the poor fellow would rush to the market place for breakfast arrangements. He would then present the breakfast to the guests. He would go out again for the lunch arrangements, and again for the supper. In short, a large portion of the poor fellow's time used to be spent in feeding arrangements. He neither got time to read the Qur'ān nor to sit with me, whereas he was the one who had invited me.

Although these elders of Dīn may not be having breakfast in their own houses, they desired breakfast with their hosts as though they were wedding guests. No one told me that the Khān Sāhib is being inconvenienced, so the breakfast should be cancelled. Eventually, I said to him: "Brother! You should prepare some extra rotīs at supper time, and give one rotī and some curry to each person and tell him to have it for breakfast. In this way, you will save many hours of your time." Only then did he get some rest.

I am describing the bad social conduct of our times. It causes a lot of harm. I want to do some work, but I desist when I observe these conditions. If the work is done in the proper manner then a lot of work can be done.

When I came to Mumbai the first time, I was not ill; I was healthy. That calligrapher is sitting here

(reference is made to Zahīr Sāhib who was a resident of Sakkaryā, district Balyā and the son-in-law of the honourable Shams al-Haqq. He was injured in the riots in Fatahpūr). I came here because of him. He said to me: "We conveyed your books to the people there [in Mumbai] and you now have a considerable following there. The people are desirous of your visit. Allāh willing, they will listen attentively to whatever Hadrat says and they will practise on it."

I saw the people's eagerness but did not come immediately. Maulānā Riyāsat ʿAlī Sāhib Fatahpūrī is sitting here. He was in Allāhābād. I asked him: "People want to take me to Mumbai. The ʿulamā' are already going there quite frequently. The work of delivering lectures and propagating Dīn is already being done. What is the need for me to go?" He replied: "No. There is a dire need for you to go because there is a difference between you and other ʿulamā'. The work which they did in Mumbai is similar to levelling the ground. Now there is the need to plant the seeds, i.e. to embed them in their hearts. And this can only be done by you; it cannot be done by others."

I said: "Whether I can plant the seeds or not, or qualified to do it or not is another matter. However, you have certainly made a pertinent point and explained the difference [between the two]. In addition to external teaching, studying and delivering lectures, you perceived the need for internal spiritual action. It is extremely pleasing."

In short, after going through all those stages, I came here. You probably remember what I said when I first came. I said: It possible for you to think about someone like me: "Why has he come here?" I say in

response: “All types of people come here. If I also come, then what crime have I committed?” I then said: “I have come here to see you people. I haven’t come here to see your outward appearance, but to see your Dīn, to see how much of religiosity you have. I haven’t come here for monetary gain. I will therefore be cautious. I would have realized that I have come to test your religious affiliation. I will not use the same stick to drive everyone.”

These are the details with regard to my first visit to Mumbai. Subsequently, I fell ill and the doctors advised me to spend winter and summer here.

Similarly, before I went to ʿAlīgarh, I sent this Muftī Sāhib who is sitting here and who studied there. I sent him to assess the situation and to inform me about the atmosphere. Whether people will pay heed to me or not. Muftī Sāhib went to ʿAlīgarh and came back to me saying: “You should certainly go. It is a place to go to, and an opportunity to do some work. People have a yearning for Dīn. Furthermore, Hadrat has many followers there and many who love Hadrat. In fact, while I was there, the people treated me like a shaykh. They would sit around me and ask me about Hadrat.”

When Muftī Sāhib convinced me of the people’s eagerness, I proceeded to ʿAlīgarh. Without doubt, I found the conditions there to be better than what I heard. Before going, I prepared my self and thought to myself: “The people there have a liberal attitude. What will I do if they mock and belittle me?” My self replied to me: “We will exercise patience.”

I went there with these thoughts in my mind. But let alone experiencing any such incident, I did not even see a hint of it. Everyone received me with reverence and listened attentively to whatever I said.

One of my friends who is a professor invited me to tea. Few lecturers and students of the college were present. A masjid was right next to his house. We proceeded to the masjid for the ʿaṣr ṣalāh. The masjid was small but full of people. One of them said to me after the ṣalāh: "Ḥaḍrat, make duʿā' for us for our Dīn." I replied: "Very well." The moment I raised my hands, the entire congregation began sobbing and crying. I was astonished at this scene and thought to myself, O Allāh! Is this a madrasah or khānqāh of ʿAlīgarh? The lesson which I learnt after observing them is that Dīnī work can still be done here if it is done the proper way. And the proper way is to first direct their attention to the rectification of actions and character. In this way, their capabilities will be aligned.

Subsequently, they rectified their actions and character somewhat, and then developed superior capabilities. The love for Dīn, people of Dīn, Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam entered their hearts. When I saw them crying, I realized that love for Allāh taʿālā and fear of the Hereafter have entered their hearts. This is why they are in the present condition. Without this, a person cannot cry the way they did.

On the other hand, this is not the condition of our madrasah students. This is why it is necessary for them to set right their actions and character. If not, it may well be that the situation as described by Allāh taʿālā will befall them:

وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُوْنُوْا أَمْثَالَكُمْ.

> If you turn away, He will replace you by others and they will not be like you.[1]

I am not talking bad of our students because if I do, I will be talking bad about my own self. However, when I hear about their spiritual conditions, I am certainly saddened. May Allāh taʿālā rectify and reform us all. Āmīn.

There is turmoil in the madāris. The administrators and principals are worried about how to move forward. Just yesterday I received a letter from a person requesting me to establish a large centre here [in Mumbai]. What should I tell him? Those that are established are not controlled properly; what will happen if new centres are established?

From where will be bring principals and teachers for such a centre? Where will we find students who have not been affected by the current times? It is easy to make suggestions, but the one who is doing the work knows the challenges he is facing. How much of effort is required to train each person! People do not understand this but they continue giving suggestions. I say to such people: You should rather establish such a centre yourself.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh is describing the situation of his time. Presently, many more ills must have crept in.

In my hometown I taught people something about Dīn. Consequently, they began adhering to salāh and fasting. One person came to me and said: "You should assemble some people and focus your spiritual attention on them. This has been the way

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[1] Sūrah Muhammad, 47: 38.

of the saints." I replied: "I have conveyed them to this point. You can now take them further." People are quite strange. When some people start showing interest in salāh, fasting, Allāh's remembrance, reading the Qur'ān, etc. then they do not consider these things to be significant and do not believe them to be connected to saintliness. They believe saintliness to lie in a person closing his eyes and engaging in meditation – even if he does not adhere to external actions and internal character.

I was saying to you that it is difficult to do the work but easy to give suggestions. The principle is that one person does the work while people from each level of society assist him. This is because it is easy for people to follow one person. Like one imām having many muqtadīs. One king having an entire population of people following him. If the opposite were to happen, i.e. there are too many people giving their views and opinions, then the differences in views will cause fragmentation and no work will be done. Unfortunately, this is the condition of our times – it is difficult to follow someone and easy to voice opinions. This is why no work is done. If the work is done while adhering to rules and principles, a lot could be achieved even in these times.

The rule is before you can do any work, go and live with a person who knows it; and learn it from him. Few 'ulamā' came here some time ago. They got an opportunity to stay here away from everything else. On returning to their homes, they wrote to me and said that they benefited tremendously. They added: "People are coming to us and asking enthusiastically about you. Some of them are requesting us to set aside a time to read the books of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī

rahimahullāh, Hadrat's books, and the book *Ma'rifat Haqq* to them. We do not get the time to read these books ourselves. Therefore, if we read them to the public, we will learn and it will become easy for us to practise. If you permit, we will read to them and explain verbally."

I wrote back and told them that this is certainly the work to be done. It is also an easy way to influence Muslims. That is, the statements, teachings and biographies of the saints must be presented to them. If you start the work in this manner, it will certainly have an effect. But if a person does not want to do any work in the first place or does not do it in the proper manner, there is no cure for it and no work will be done. This is why there is a need to do the work.

> Success can be achieved with work; not by beautiful speeches. It can be achieved by adhering to Allāh's remembrance and showing concern.

MAN'S EXCELLENCE LIES IN SOUND CHARACTER

You know that Islam's foundation rests on character. This is what Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught. He said:

بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ.

> I have been commissioned to perfect noble character.

If you want to know how much of this noble character is found in the seniors of Dīn and how much they conveyed to others, you can pick up their writings and see for yourself. When I relate things to you, I do not write about them the night before and then relate them the next morning. Rather, people in every era have been conveying them, and they are still doing it. But you do not lend an ear. When people do not have faith in the teachings of a person, it is because they feel that this path is there to trap them. Listen! I am saying this frankly. This is why you people do not pay heed to what people like us tell you. Many people come here, but they do not come with faith. Had they come with faith and practised, there would have been a complete change in them.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught character to the world. Before his arrival, people were worse than animals. After all, there is some sort of mutual love and mercy among animals, but mercy had left the hearts of humanity. It was replaced by oppression. The Arabs had reached the pits when a girl was born to them. They would love

her in the beginning, but once she grew a little older, they would take her out into the desert, dig a hole, beautify her with garments and jewellery, and then shove her down the hole. She would scream from the bottom: "Father! What are you doing?" That merciless fellow would bury her alive and leave. This was the extent of their cruelty and oppression.

Now listen to another wrong! They used to make ṯawāf of the Kaʿbah while they were naked. Shayṯān blindfolded them. Although they had many seniors among them, their intellects were warped. They believed in Prophets and claimed to be on the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām. Yet, look at how they disfigured it. The fact is that when a long period of time passes after the demise of a Prophet, his teachings cease to exist and ignorance prevails. You have seen the condition of the Arabs, the extent of their cruelty and oppression, and the manner in which they distorted their acts of worship. This is an example of their evil character.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did them a great favour by distancing them from those evil characteristics. ʿUlamā' of every era apprised their people of the evil characteristics which were in them. They created a hatred for those evils in their hearts and then removed them from their selves. Now you are addressed so much but you are saying: "We are so steadfast, that no matter how much you speak to us, we are not going to be moved." So I say to you: "This is not steadfastness, and the Sharīʿah does not require steadfastness on any evil. Steadfastness which is required in Dīn refers to the pious conditions of a person and his resoluteness in remaining on piety."

A thief was put to the gallows and left hanging. Hadrat Junayd rahimahullāh happened to pass by. When he set eyes on the thief, he proceeded towards him and kissed him on his forehead. The people said to him: "Hadrat! That was a thief!" He replied: "I am certainly not commending his thievery. Rather, his resoluteness appealed to me. He was prepared to die but he did not give up his thievery. From this I learnt a lesson. If a person can be so steadfast on an evil, how much more steadfast we have to be in carrying out acts of righteousness!?"

The Sufis state that one of the principles of the path is to consume halāl. Allāh taʿālā says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا.

> O Messengers! Eat of the pure and do good.[1]

The other principle of the path is sound character as stated by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam:

بُعِثْتُ لِاُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ.

> I have been commissioned to perfect noble character.

Since this is what is said to us by the ʿulamā', we will have to understand what is good character.

Definition of good character

The following is stated in *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl*:

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 51.

حسن الخلق هو معاملتك مع كل أحد بما يسره إلا مما يخالف الشرع.

> Good character refers to interacting with each person in a manner which pleases him while remaining within the limits of the Sharīʿah.

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī rahimahullāh defines it as follows:

معاملة المخلوق حسب رضاء الخالق.

> Interacting with the creation in accordance with what pleases the Creator.

The point I am making is that the ʿulamā' went into much detail on the subject of good character. We teach you acts of worship and different forms of dhikr but we don't teach you character and morals. A person can give his wealth to another person but no one can give character to anyone. People come here and ask us to give them saintliness so that they can earn and eat a lot. A person had come to me. On one occasion he wrote a note in which he said that there is no need for karāmat in our times. After that, he came and sat close to me. This placed a heavy burden on my temperament. It was so heavy that I was forced to ask him to get up and leave. When he got up, he said: "I would like to say something." I replied that he could say it. He said: "I am searching for a karāmat within myself but cannot find it." I replied: "We conclude from this that you are searching for a karāmat inside me as well because if it is not in the earthen pot, how will it go to the jug? And if it is not in the jug, how will it

go to the glass. This is the rational proof that you are searching for a karāmat inside me." I then said to him: "Do you know why you are searching for a karāmat? So that you can make it a livelihood."

Materialism has crept into the Sufi path. This was never the way of the seniors.

While discussing the life of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in his *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was extremely concerned about domestic planning and used to be considerate of his Companions in this regard. He used to interact with people in a manner which caused them to be enamoured by him. An unbeliever was his guest. He overate at supper time. Consequently, he excreted in his bed. He got up early in the morning and went somewhere. When he returned after a short while, he saw Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam cleaning the bed. The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum were nearby and so were his attendants. He could have asked anyone to clean the bed, but he did not. He did it himself. This action had a deep effect on the person and he embraced Islam.

Glory to Allāh! This was the noble character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. People used to look at him and become Muslims.

A Hadīth states that when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam shook hands with anyone, he would not withdraw his hand until the person withdrew his hand. No matter how long a person held his hand, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam would continue holding the other's hand. Anyway, how could he leave anyone's hand? If he were to leave someone's hand, who would hold it?

After all, he will hold the person's hand and take him to Paradise. Why, then, would he let go of another's hand? It was due to these characteristics that the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum were so loyal to him. This was the consideration he showed to his Companions.

On one occasion, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam embraced a Sahābī from behind. He realized that it was Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam so he rubbed his back against the blessed chest of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He thought to himself: What a rare opportunity! I should acquire as much blessings as I can. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then announced: "Who will buy this slave?" The Sahābī said: "This slave is worthless, who is going to buy him?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "No. This slave is extremely valuable in the sight of Allāh taʿālā and His Messenger."

Glory to Allāh! This was the character of your Prophet. The character, training and tutoring of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam turned the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum into perfect human beings. Each Companion had his own peculiar trait, but all of them were perfect.

An ʿālim used to say: "People speak about the miracles of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. However, each Sahābī was a miracle himself." This is because each one was conveyed to the level of perfection according to his personal traits. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said with reference to Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu:

أرحم أمتي بأمتي أبو بكر.

Abū Bakr is the most merciful of my followers to my ummat.

I say: This was a reflection of Rasūlullāh's character and the effect of his company that Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu became like him who was the mercy to the worlds. From his character alone one could conclude that he is indeed the khalīfah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Some Arab chiefs had come to meet Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and he was inviting them to Islam. A blind Sahābī [by the name of Hadrat Umm Maktūm radiyallāhu ʿanhu] arrived and said: "O Rasūlullāh! Teach me some of what Allāh taʿālā taught you." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam felt a bit annoyed because he interjected his conversation. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam then went to his house. Allāh taʿālā revealed these verses:

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰى أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمٰى. وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكّٰى. أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى. أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى. فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدّٰى. وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى. وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعٰى وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهّٰى.

He frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man. What do you know? Perhaps he will purify himself. Or he may have pondered and the pondering may have benefited him. As for he who could not bother, you are concerned about him. You are not to be blamed in any way if he does not reform.

As for he who came running towards you,
and he fears, you pay no attention to him.[1]

After the revelation of these verses, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam proceeded to the blind Sahābīs house and laid out his sheet for him. After that occasion, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam would always lay out his sheet for him. When he left for Makkah on the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, he appointed this blind Sahābī as his deputy.

Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib rahimahullāh relates a unique incident about Hadrat Umm Maktūm radiyallāhu ʿanhu. He was mounted on his horse in the Battle of Qādisīyyah and fighting the enemy. He would advance forward and move back. He would attack and defend. This, despite the fact that he was blind. Yes, through the blessing of Rasūlullāh's companionship, the eyes of his heart were illuminated. He must have been looking with them.

There was a senior person who was both knowledgeable and a chief. Someone said to him by way of allusion that he was one-eyed. (He was alluding to the point that Dajjāl will be one-eyed.) The chief retorted: "A believer has one eye in his heart."

I was speaking to you about domestic planning and the particular attention which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam gave to it so that the home is not corrupted. Now if we were to abstain from speaking about the character and teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam to you, how will you learn them? Some people said to me that their

[1] Sūrah Abasa, 80: 1-10.

homes are becoming examples of Hell. Now listen! If you abandon the character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, the first punishment which you will receive in this world is that your homes will become examples of Hell and your life in this world will become bitter.

Note: This is certainly happening. (compiler)

A Bedouin began urinating in Masjid-e-Nabawī. The Sahābah went forward to stop him and began scolding him. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam stopped them out of consideration for him because if he were to stop urinating suddenly, it could damage his testicles, or if he were to stand up suddenly, he might soil the masjid even more. This approach of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had an effect on the person. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam called for him and explained to him in an affectionate manner by saying: "A masjid is a place where salāh is performed and the Qur'ān is read. It is constructed for Allāh's remembrance. Actions of this nature [urinating] should not be done in a masjid."

The Bedouin went back to his house and related this incident to his people. He spoke in praise of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and said: "He is a chosen Prophet. His character is spotlessly pure. I committed such a serious mistake but despite this – by Allāh – he neither got angry at me nor did he scold me." Subsequently, he always spoke highly of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. This was the character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Sound character was the greatest miracle

The ʿulamā' say that there are countless miracles of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. One is better than the other, but the greatest is his character and morals. In other words, Islam spread through his character. Rasūlullāh's exemplary character is well known. Even the Saḥābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum displayed such noble character which prompted large numbers of unbelievers to embrace Islam.

In his *Mathnawī,* Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh relates an incident from the life of Ḥadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu. He wrestled an unbeliever, dropped him down and sat on his chest. The man spat on the face of Ḥadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu, so the latter threw his sword aside and got off his chest. The enemy was astonished by his action and out-of-place pardon, and asked: "Why did you let me go?" Ḥadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu replied: "When I put you down and you spat on my face, my carnal self went into a rage and I was about to lose my noble character because my fighting which had been solely for Allāh taʿālā became tainted with the desire of my self. Partnership in Allāh's worship is not permitted."

Maulānā Rūm raḥimahullāh then quotes several lines of poetry the gist of which is:

"You have been created by the True One [Allāh taʿālā] and you are His slave. The one who is created by the True One must be vanquished by the truth. The glass of the friend has to be broken by the rock of the friend." When the unbeliever heard this, he said: "I had been thinking something completely different about you, and you turned out to be

something else. I too am the slave of the one from whom you received this light. Present the kalimah-e-shahādat to me because I presently consider you to be the most superior." Subsequently, the man and about fifty members of his clan embraced Islam enthusiastically.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says towards the end:

> Look at how many people he saved from destruction [in Hell] by virtue of his forbearance. The sword of forbearance is sharper than the sword of steel. In fact, it is superior to large armies in its ability to vanquish and gain victory.

Did you see? This was the result of sincerity and good character of a Companion and deputy of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum were not sinless, but they had a strong attachment to a personality who was sinless. The blessings of his sinless nature reached them as well.

صل يا رب على من هو من عصمته

يعصم الحق محبيه من الخناس

> O Allāh! Send salutations to the being through whose sinless nature, Allāh taʿālā used to save His lovers from al-khannās (Shaytān who conceals himself).

I say: As long as you do not come onto the path of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, you will not find the path of Allāh taʿālā.

Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu was a Sahābī. He was a close relative of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa

sallam and learnt from him. This is how he chose the path of pardon and forbearance on this occasion. He knew that the effect of sound character will be superior to that of the sword. This is why we see those who embraced Islam during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did so on account of his character. He was also well-mannered to those who believed in him. When he treated a person in a certain manner once, he continued treating him in that way.

The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum adopted his way. The scholars and saints who came after them followed the same path. They set right their own character and urged others to do the same. Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh speaks about conceit and its consequence, and humbleness and its blessing in a beautiful way. He writes:

> If you desire position, do not look down at people as the wretched ones do. If you are standing on a lofty pedestal, then intelligence demands that you abstain from laughing at those who have fallen down. Many of those who were standing slipped and fell. Those who were fallen down took their place.

He writes further on:

> I accept that you are free from fault. At the same time, do not cause pain to a person like me who is full of faults. If the ring of the Kaʿbah is in the hand of one person while another is lying down drunk in a tavern – and Allāh taʿālā wills to call the drunkard to Himself – is there anyone who can stop Him? If He removes the one who is holding on to the

> Kaʿbah from his place, can anyone have the power to bring him back?

This is the teaching of the Sunnah and the character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. That is, a person should not look at his own acts of worship with pride. This is why the seniors of Dīn were forever trembling out of Allāh's fear. The same book contains the following story of Hadrat Bāyazīd Busṭāmī rahimahullāh:

> I heard that Hadrat Bāyazīd Busṭāmī took a bath on the morning of ʿīd, changed his clothes and emerged outside. (He was passing by an alley) when the people of a house upstairs unwittingly threw down a container of ash. It fell on Hadrat's head, and his face and turban were covered in ash. He was dusting the ash off his face and was saying: "O my self! You are deserving of the fire (because of your actions). Why, then, are you becoming annoyed at this mere ash which has fallen on you?

After relating this incident, Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh teaches us the following lesson:

> The saints never looked at their selves. In other words, they saved themselves from egotism. Do not have hopes in the one who is egotistic to become a gnostic.

When Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu was the caliph, he despatched an army to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). The people of the city said to the army: "Ask your caliph to come to us. His description is found in our books. If he matches that description, we will hand over the city to you without doing

battle." The Muslims wrote to Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu and informed him. He left for Jerusalem. On the way, some Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum said to him: "Hadrat! These are non-Arabs. You will have to make a grand appearance before them. Wear this set of clothing and remove your cloak. Get off your camel and mount this horse." Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu did as advised solely to make them happy. However, after a short while, he said to them: "Vanity is creeping into me. Give me back my cloak and camel, and you can have these garments and this horse."

I say: Vanity could not have been creeping into Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu. After all, he had reached the level of perfection and had subdued his carnal self. He was also the deputy of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He did this to teach the others and to show them that these embellishments of the world contain nothing. Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu also said to them: "We are a nation whom Allāh taʿālā honoured through Islam. Our honour does not lie in these horses and garments."

He may have received divine inspiration stating that his outer appearance as described in their books is this very same cloak and camel. If he were to dress in any other way, they will not hand over the city. This is exactly how it happened. When he reached Jerusalem, their senior scholars were standing at the entrance of the fort with huge books. They were looking at Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu and cross-checking in their books. They found him to be exactly as described and handed over the keys to him.

You have heard the stories of the saints and the amount of asceticism, humility, abstention from egotism and pride they had to practise. Only then does man find the path. Sometimes a person does not find the path from the very beginning or he finds it but cannot traverse it safely.

A poet says:

> The proud ascetic could not cross the path safely, but the sinner reached Paradise by virtue of his humility.

Anyone who achieved anything in this path did so on account of humility, submissiveness and modesty. No one traversed this path through pride and egotism. This is because there is plenty of pride in Allāh's court. In fact, it is peculiar to him. A Hadīth states:

الكبرياء ردائي.

> Pride is My outer garment.

There is no submission in His court. And the rule is that if a thing is not found in a certain place, a person takes that item as a gift. This is why the gift of submission is accepted in Allāh's court.

A person considers himself to be a sinner and has his focus on Allāh's kindness. After carrying out an act of obedience, he believes that he fell short in fulfilling Allāh's right. He continues seeking forgiveness for this shortcoming. Allāh taʿālā loves this condition of a person.

TEACHINGS OF THE AULIYĀ'

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said:

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh said that the Sufis compiled their secrets and sciences in books so that those who are traversing this path may be able to compare and evaluate their own feelings, spiritual conditions and experiences against those of the seniors. They laid down specific terminologies and signs so that outsiders may not learn of them. Unfortunately, people revealed their writings to unqualified people, and this caused harm. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh then read the following from *Chār Bāb*:

1. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib rahimahullāh said that a person should do work which is connected to the Hereafter. If he cannot do that, he should not abandon work related to this world.

2. He said that a person should wake up before the break of dawn and perform salāh. He must then remain seated on his prayer mat until sunrise. He must occupy himself in glorifying Allāh taʿālā, proclaiming His Oneness and greatness, seeking forgiveness, reading the Qur'ān and praying for the protection of his life and wealth. If a person makes this du'ā in the morning, he is protected for the rest of the day.

3. He said that it is best to read thirty-three verses. If he cannot, he could suffice with reading Sūrah al-Fātihah, Āyatul Kursī and the four Quls (Sūrahs Kāfirūn, Ikhlās, Falaq and Nās). It is also an

excellent practice to read the following three times because the Hadīth mentions great virtue for it:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الَّذِيْ لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَآءِ. وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ.

> I commence in the name of Allāh with whose name nothing in the earth and heavens can harm. He is all-hearing, all-knowing.

4. When night falls, ensure that children are brought indoors. Do not allow them to go outside because this is the time when the Shayāṭīn are released. When it is the time to sleep, lock all the doors of the house and read the verses and du'ās which are to be read at this time.

5. Value your life and health because both cannot be given a second chance. Never give up two things whether you find it difficult or easy, viz. planning and independence.

6. This life is for a few days. It will pass eventually. Therefore, do not have animosity for anyone for worldly reasons.

I want to teach you these things but you do not want to learn them. I am here in Allāhābād for so long, yet many people have not come to meet me to learn these things. But when I am leaving, everyone has assembled. Like when a person passes away, everyone attends his funeral. I ask you: What is the level of this in the Ṭarīqah? Do you think Dīn will come into you if you have this attitude? Never. Dīn comes from learning, and this is something which you neither have the quest for nor the time.

Listen! While explaining the types of sciences of the Hereafter, Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī rahimahullāh says that one of them is ʿilm-e-mukāshafah, and it is ʿilm-e-bāṭin (knowledge of the inner self) which is the objective of all other sciences. Thus, the Sufis say that there is fear of a bad death for the person who does not receive a share of this knowledge. The minimum level of this knowledge is to affirm believe in those who possess it, and to abstain from animosity towards them and making objections to them. This is because animosity towards the auliyā' of Allāh taʿālā could also result in a bad death.

Listen! This world has not been created solely to waste it away by meeting people and socializing with them. Rather, its objective is to do the work of the Hereafter. Your people are coming to us but you are not deriving benefit from us. However, we are benefiting from you. One is that we are acquiring name and fame through you. And we have been prohibited from it. The Sufis say:

فإن الجاه مقطعة عظيمة.

> Name and fame is a severe chopper [which chops down a person in Allāh's sight].

Just as excessive wealth casts a person into transgression, the same can be said of popularity and a large following. When a person has excessive wealth, he transgresses the limits. Similarly, when a person has a large following, he falls into deception. This is why Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam prohibited anyone from walking behind him – it causes humiliation for the one walking behind, and is a tribulation and test for the one walking in the front. The Sufis says that popularity in itself is a

temptation, and the person who is popular is deceived. May Allāh taʿālā protect us.

Listen further! The author of *Tarsīʿ* has a section dedicated to the karāmāt of the auliyā'. He says that one of the karāmāt which Allāh taʿālā confers to His pious servants is enjoyment in carrying out acts of obedience in public and private. In other words, when they worship Allāh taʿālā in public and solitude, they experience a unique type of enjoyment. The Sufis have gone to the extent of saying that those who are occupied with Allāh taʿālā at night worship experience more enjoyment than those who are engrossed in play and amusement.

Some Sufis say: "If the kings were to learn about the treasure which we receive from Allāh taʿālā, they will fight us with their swords to acquire it." I say: Even then they will not acquire it because this is not how it is acquired. The wealth which Allāh's pious servants possess has come down to them from the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām as an inheritance. It is acquired through sincerity and devotion; not through fighting. This treasure is not a kingdom which is vanquished by the sword. The person who chooses sincerity receives this treasure from Allāh taʿālā. The person who fights those who have this treasure can never succeed.

The following is the story of Mullā Jiyūn raḥimahullāh who was the teacher of ʿĀlamgīr raḥimahullāh. On one occasion, the ʿulamā' issued a verdict that it was permissible for Shāh Jahān to wear silk. Mullā Jiyūn was asked about this ruling. He replied: "I will give my answer on Friday from the pulpit." Everyone was present for the Friday sermon, and so was Shāh Jahān. Mullā Jiyūn ascended the pulpit and said: "The muftī and the

one who asked for the fatwā are both kāfirs." Saying this, he got off the pulpit.

He said this because it is kufr to make the harām into halāl. The Sharīʿah classifies silk as harām for males. The king tried to make it lawful, and the ʿulamā' issued a verdict stating that it is lawful. This is why he said that both are kāfirs. Shāh Jahān was enraged. He returned to his fort and issued the order for the killing of Mullā Jiyūn rahimahullāh. Someone went and informed Mullā Jiyūn. He replied: "Very well. Bring me a pitcher of water. I too will prepare my weapon." In other words, I am going to perform wudū' because a Hadīth states:

الوضوء سلاح المؤمن.

Wudū' is the weapon of a believer.

Someone went and told Shāh Jahān that Mullā Jiyūn has performed wudū' and is now ready to combat you. Shāh Jahān was terrified when he heard this. He called for ʿĀlamgīr who was a special student of Mullā Jiyūn and asked him for his advice. ʿĀlamgīr said: "Give me the mantle and I will present it to him." ʿĀlamgīr proceeded and went to Mullā Jiyūn. The latter had a lot of confidence in his student. The moment he set eyes on ʿĀlamgīr, he concluded that he has come for pardon on behalf of Shāh Jahān. He was pleased at this.

If this is the effect of the wudū' of the saints of Dīn, what can be said about the effect of their salāh!? As for the treasure which they possess, it is extremely great. It is not acquired in the manner in which kingship is acquired. When you choose to acquire it, you will.

Further on, the saints say that there isn't anything more depressing for them then the sunrise. (They realize that with the break of dawn, the night will come to an end. Therefore, they will be deprived of the joy and sweetness which they were experiencing during their night worship. This is why they feel sad at the passing of the night.)

Another karāmat of the saints is that they are pleased with Allāh taʿālā under all conditions - whether healthy or sick, honoured or disgraced, wealthy or poor.

Look! He referred to the joy which the Ahlullāh find in worship as a karāmat. It is totally different from the karāmāt which you search for in the Ahlullāh. The karāmāt which you search for are nothing in comparison. The greatest karāmat is when a person experiences enjoyment in Allāh's obedience. The second karāmat is to be pleased with Allāh's decree in every situation. The Ahlullāh are pleased in every situation because they acquire tauḥīd and they believe everything to be from Allāh taʿālā. Thus, the people of tauḥīd have no alternative but to be pleased with every decree. Acceptance of Allāh's decree is one of the fruits of tauḥīd and cognition.

Love is also one of the fruits of tauḥīd. Whatever a person receives from the beloved is also beloved. Thus, these Ahlullāh are pleased with whatever they experience because it is with Allāh's love. Allāh taʿālā also becomes pleased with them, and then gives them whatever they desire. Since we have believed in Allāh taʿālā and chosen tauḥīd, Allāh taʿālā has the right to give us what He wants. And whatever He gives is the fruit of īmān and obedience. He gives us some of the bounties of īmān and obedience in this world so that our conviction

in the bounties of the Hereafter may increase. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَعَدَكُمُ اللهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيْرَةً تَأْخُذُوْنَهَا.

> Allāh has promised you many spoils which you will take.[1]

Allāh taʿālā has given you some of them in this world.

The author says:

When a person is pleased with Allāh taʿālā, then He too is pleased with him. A Ḥadīth states: "The person who is pleased with My decree, for him is My pleasure until he meets Me."

The author continues:

There was a time when I was never displeased by any order of Allāh taʿālā. Whatever I experienced – whether good or bad – I considered it to be for the best. My companions also thought the same. Then this condition passed. Subsequently, when we used to think of those days, we used to refer to them as ayyām-e-khayr (the days of goodness).

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī raḥimahullāh writes in *ʿUhūd Wusṭā*: "A covenant has been taken from us to remain pleased with Allāh taʿālā for whatever has been decreed for us – irrespective of whether it is a little obedience or a small amount of wealth."

He is saying this because if a little obedience is joined with being pleased with Allāh's decree, then because acceptance of Allāh's decree is a great

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[1] Sūrah al-Fatḥ, 48: 20.

thing, the little obedience will no longer remain little. A little obedience and a little wealth are good for you so that you do not become envious of those who have much more, because there is advantage to you in this. The advantage is that it will protect you against egotism and transgression.

He adds:

A covenant has been taken from us not to be displeased by Allāh's decree. When it is decreed for us to experience a certain situation wherein we fall into sin, we must not be displeased by it because Allāh taʿālā alone knows what is good for us. The advantage in this is that a person sometimes transgresses when he has excessive wealth, and he becomes conceited when he does too many good actions. Allāh taʿālā occasionally causes him to fall into sin to remove him from that conceit. This brings down the person and he comes out of conceit and pride.

The author relates his own condition:

In the beginning, whenever I experienced conceit over my spiritual condition, Allāh taʿālā would cause me to commit a minor sin. This would humble me. Consequently, I would not consider myself to be high-ranking nor would I assume any lofty position for myself. After committing the minor sin, I would reprimand myself and say: "You were considering yourself to be a saint. Now that you committed this sin, you have no rank in the sight of the masses and you do not even have the courage to show your face to anyone. How, then, can you claim to be a saint?" This used to uproot my pride and conceit.

This is what he was referring to when he said that a sinner has no standing. In other words, he ought to

be cast into the Hell-fire and Allāh taʿālā ought to be displeased with him.

He adds:

This sin would then become a source of mercy in my favour. This is why it is said that a sin which creates submission and humbleness is superior to obedience which creates pride and conceit.

These are the teachings of the Ahlullāh which I am presenting to you. Ponder over them and think about what the seniors of Dīn are saying.

May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

GENUINE TAUHĪD

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said: Listen!

It is morning now and you people must have had breakfast before coming here. However, the breakfast which I have to offer you is the following duʿā of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam which really appeals to me. He said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ رِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَعِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَعَمَلًا مُّتَقَبَّلًا.

O Allāh! I beg You for wholesome sustenance, beneficial knowledge and the ability to do actions which are accepted.

Look at how short but comprehensive this duʿā is.

We require wholesome sustenance and are also in need of beneficial knowledge. Similarly, we are dependent on actions which are accepted by Allāh taʿālā. Wholesome sustenance provides life to our physical bodies. Beneficial knowledge gives us spiritual life. Actions which are accepted are linked to our success in the Hereafter. Thus, in this short duʿā, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked for success in both worlds. He did a great favour to the Muslim nation by making this duʿā. It is now a Sunnah for us to make it. Thus, in addition to making this duʿā, a person will acquire a separate reward for following the Sunnah.

A great quality of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām is that they beg Allāh taʿālā for the fulfilment of every need. This is their means of livelihood and this is why they believe Allāh taʿālā to be the real

sustainer. We learn from this that just as we beg Him for the bounties of the Hereafter, we have to beg Him for the fulfilment of our worldly needs. In fact, this begging is a Sunnah. It is the highest level of submission; and submission is the greatest quality of a servant. We see the Ahlullāh begging solely from Allāh taʿālā in emulation of this Sunnah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. They present their needs in Allāh's court in various ways.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh quotes the duʿā of a pious youngster. The last line of the poem reads as follows:

> O Allāh! I beg You for sustenance which comes to me without effort because I cannot do anything but beg of You.

The greatest effort on our part is to beg from Allāh taʿālā with sincerity. We must beg Him for worldly sustenance and for sustenance of the Hereafter. The most effective action from the actions of Paradise is to beg Allāh taʿālā for Paradise. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to make this duʿā:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ.

> O Allāh! I beg You for Paradise, and words and actions which will draw me closer to it.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made this duʿā, so it becomes his Sunnah. In fact, it is the Sunnah of all the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām.

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām used to make this duʿā:

وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِنْ وَرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيْمِ.

O Allāh! Include me among the inheritors of the Paradise of delight.

There can be no easier way to become an heir of Paradise. Paradise is also a sustenance. Just as Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked for worldly sustenance by asking for wholesome sustenance, he asked for sustenance in the Hereafter by asking for Paradise. Some verses of the Qur'ān were revealed proclaiming the innocence of Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā. Among the things which Allāh taʿālā says therein is:

لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ.

For them is pardon and noble sustenance.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā says with reference to this verse: "I have already been pardoned. I am now waiting for and expectant of a noble sustenance, viz. Paradise."

Just as the Ahlullāh ask for wholesome sustenance in this world, they beg Allāh taʿālā for the noble sustenance of Paradise. This is their greatest action, i.e. begging from Allāh taʿālā, because they are conscious of the fact that a beggar receives everything at the door of the Generous One. The only prerequisite is to beg in the proper manner.

If a person cannot remember the long duʿās, he should at least make the following duʿā to Allāh taʿālā:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ رِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَعِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَعَمَلًا مُّتَقَبَّلًا.

O Allāh! I beg You for wholesome sustenance, beneficial knowledge and the ability to do actions which are accepted.

This duʿā is like the essence of all other duʿās. It includes sustenance of Paradise, sustenance of this world and beneficial knowledge which is actually Allāh's recognition. It is as though everything of this world and the Hereafter has been asked for.

The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām asked Allāh taʿālā for sustenance because man needs it. In fact, man becomes most deviated in his quest for sustenance. This is why many people opt for unbelief, sinning and deviation for the sake of sustenance. Despite this, they do not realize that they have deviated from the path because of it. When we observe their dreadful condition and say something to them solely out of concern for their welfare, they do not accept it. Let alone coming out of their dreadful situation, they are not prepared to accept the correct diagnosis of a spiritual doctor. It is as though they are saying to us: We were perfect even before we were born. If this is their attitude, they see no need to listen and pay heed. This is why they are not rectified and reformed. They remain in that depraved condition. Their pride stops them from admitting their shortcomings before the Ahlullāh. They feel that the focus and duʿā of the Ahlullāh may remove them from their condition. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

Sustenance is a strange thing. If a person has less, it is a calamity. If he has too much, he gets caught

up in other types of miseries. Extreme poverty is not a good thing. A person experiences misery on account of it. To make matters worse, the carnal self experiences an inadequacy and feels inferior. And if he has too much of sustenance, he becomes corrupt and rebellious. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard:

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللّٰهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ.

> If Allāh were to expand the sustenance for His servants, they would cause corruption in the land.[1]

There is blessing in the sustenance from Allāh

In short, we are in need of begging to Allāh taʿālā for our sustenance. Therefore, the sustenance which is given by Him will contain goodness and blessings. Even if it is less, He will bless us with contentment. After that, there will be nothing but peace and satisfaction. The absence of contentment causes the wealthy to be unsatisfied and distressed. If Allāh taʿālā blesses us with extra sustenance, He will protect us against corruption and rebelliousness. This is why the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām begged from Allāh taʿālā and taught this way to their followers. Now we want to teach these things to you. Unfortunately, those who come here neither listen to these points nor do they understand them.

The duʿās of Rasūlullāh must be practised

The thing which is the most difficult for the creation has been made the easiest by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 27.

ʿalayhi wa sallam. What I mean is that he has made us the most worriless about sustenance. Why, then, do we not adopt the duʿās which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught us? Why don't we make them a daily practice? We ought to make the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam our main focus, adopt these blessed duʿās and make them a daily practice.

Another point came to my mind so I am saying it to you. When anyone complained to Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham rahimahullāh about poverty and hunger, he would say to the person: "Do you have no value for poverty and hunger? I sold my sultanate for poverty. I value and appreciate it."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful point and how beautifully articulated! In other words, how can you value it? If you want to know its worth, ask Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham because he gave up his sultanate for it.

When Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh used to speak on this topic, he used to express it so beautifully. This is because he himself used to be affected by it. Sometimes, the conditions of the Ahlullāh used to affect the heart. A unique spiritual state used to overwhelm Hadrat Maulānā. And when he spoke in that state, it used to be extremely beneficial and impressive. We felt as though we have acquired that spiritual station or it is very easy to acquire.

An Englishman went to a saint and asked him: "Hadrat! Where do you eat from?" He replied: "I will give you the answer tomorrow." The man came the next day and immediately presented five hundred rupees to the saint. He then waited for the answer. When the saint saw that he has not understood the point as yet and is still waiting for the answer, he

said: “This is where we eat from.” In other words, I did not say anything to you but you presented this money to me. In the same way, Allāh taʿālā puts the thought in the hearts of people and they come and give me. What bond or relationship is there between you and me? Even our īmān is different. Despite this, you came and presented this money to me. All this happens by the will of Allāh taʿālā. Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh says:

> Consider the opposition of friends and foes to be from Allāh taʿālā because the hearts of both are under His control. If you experience any pain from the creation, do not be saddened because neither does comfort come from the creation nor discomfort.

Everything is from the Real Master. No one experiences comfort or discomfort without His will.

What the saint was saying to the Englishman is that we believe friendship and enmity to be from Allāh taʿālā. It is He who instilled in your heart to come and present such a large amount of money to me. This is how Allāh taʿālā conveys sustenance to His servants. In order to make you understand this point, I told you yesterday: “I will give you the answer tomorrow.” I knew that you yourself will present some money to me the next day and this will be the answer to your question.

The point I want you to understand is that the Ahlullāh are earning, and so are other people in the world. However, the earning of the Ahlullāh is that they beg from Allāh taʿālā and He conveys it to them. It is also an earning when a person asks from Allāh taʿālā.

Hadrat Maulānā was standing alone when a man came and presented something to him. Hadrat laughed in a loud voice and said: "Just now I was thinking of giving you something and here you are giving me something."

Based on this, I say to you that if you are prepared to beg from Allāh ta'ālā, and He is ready to give you, then what is wrong with that? All you have to do is ask, and see if you get anything.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh had a student in Kānpūr. I had met him. He came to Lucknow and went to the governor who was an Englishman. He said to the governor: "Do you have a vacancy for me?" He replied: "Maulānā! I will give you whatever job you want to do, but our employment is not suited to your status. You people ought to sit in the masjid and teach Dīn and religion. And Allāh will sustain you." The governor then indicated to his assistant to bring fifty rupees. The assistant placed it in a container and covered it with a cloth. The governor then handed it over to the Maulānā with utmost respect. The Maulānā said: "You just now said to me to sit in a masjid and teach, and Allāh will provide for me." I will practise on your advice and I will not accept this money. Saying this, he left. When Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh heard about this incident, he said: "Had I been in his place, I would have taken the money, thought to myself that my employment has been accepted, and that this is the down-payment for it."

Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh had reached a lofty spiritual station. This is why he said that he would have accepted the money had he been in the Maulānā's place because it was a down-

payment. Sometimes when a person is accepted for a job, he receives a payment before hand. This is a point of deep cognition.

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh used to convey us to distant places through these stories. What I mean is that he used to teach Allāh-recognition to us through these stories and make the path clear for us.

> If a minister were to fear Allāh taʿālā as he fears his king, he would become an angel.

I say, whether a minister or not, if the one who seeks sustenance were to establish a bond with the Sustainer as much as he is attached to seeking sustenance, he will be successful. This is what is missing today. That is, the attachment to sustenance is far more to the attachment to the Sustainer. Our focus is on sustenance but not the Sustainer. This is the difference between us and the people of the past. Their focus was on the cause of the means [Allāh taʿālā] while our focus is on the means. We focus on everyone else while our gaze has shifted from Allāh taʿālā. This is not how the saints were. They did not want to even hear about such things.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib taught tauhīd

A person's wife passed away, so he related this to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh. He uttered few words of consolation to the man, so the latter said: "Hadrat, she used to feed me and do everything for me." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh asked: "Who fed you when you were in your mother's womb?"

After some time, the man complained about another person and said: “He had told me he will take me to Madīnah but he went back on his word.” Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh became angry and said: “Do not make polytheistic statements in my presence.”

Did you see! These personalities believed it was polytheism to have one’s gaze on anyone apart from Allāh taʿālā, and to present one’s needs to others beside Him. They believed it negated tauhīd. They considered tauhīd to be the most valuable treasure and they safeguarded it all the time.

You must have heard the story which I had related in this regard. A person said to Shaykh Badr ad-Dīn: “Please write a letter of recommendation for me to Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Bulbun.” The Shaykh worded the letter as follows:

رَفَعْتُ قَضِيَّتَهُ إِلَى اللهِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْكَ. فَإِنْ أَعْطَيْتَهُ فَالْمُعْطِيْ هُوَ اللهُ وَأَنْتَ الْمَشْكُوْرُ. وَإِنْ لَمْ تُعْطِهِ فَالْمَانِعُ هُوَ اللهُ وَأَنْتَ الْمَعْذُوْرُ.

> I presented his case to Allāh taʿālā and then to you. If you give him, then Allāh is the real giver while you will be thanked. If you do not give him, then Allāh is the one who refused while you will be excused.

In other words, I am first presenting his matter to Allāh taʿālā. “O Allāh! This person has come to me. Although I am poor, You are rich. Please give him.” In this way, he set right the matter with Allāh taʿālā. He then said “and then to you”. In other words, after presenting his case to Allāh taʿālā, I am interceding

to you. He chose this theme so that the king too will become scared and think to himself that the Shaykh has presented the case to Allāh taʿālā. If I do not give him, it may well happen that my case will be presented to Allāh taʿālā and I will be destroyed. He says further on: "If you give him, then in reality, it is Allāh who gave him. You are the outward means but you will be thanked. If you do not give him, then Allāh is the one who refused while you will be excused."

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful letter of intercession! The intercession was done and at the same time, the concept of tauḥīd was not cast aside. The king must have given the man a lot after reading this letter.

I am speaking on the subject of sustenance but I recall something about Ḥaḍrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh, so I will relate it to you. He used to say:

The story is about the governor of Pānīpat. He was travelling on a conveyance. The one who was driving the conveyance was repeatedly saying: "Move away from the road, move away from the road." A man was approaching and did not pay attention. When he came close to the conveyance, the driver slapped him. The man was affiliated to a Qalandar Ṣāḥib. He went to the latter and complained to him about the ruler and said that he slapped him. The Qalandar Ṣāḥib went into a rage when he heard this and said: "Really!? Did he hit my man? Bring me a pen, paper and ink." When these were brought to him, he wrote:

> The one who slapped him was an eunuch. He pointed to him and wrote: The protector of Delhi ought to know

> that the one who is cut off from the front [castrated] and torn from the back has unjustly slapped my man on his face. His cry has reached the heavens. You should either replace him with someone else or I will send someone to replace you.

After writing the letter, he gave it to a policeman and instructed him to go right away and hand it over to the king. When the king read the letter, he sent a person immediately to replace the governor. He also emphasised on him to first go and meet the Qalandar Sāhib and inform him that he has come to replace the governor. The old governor was ordered to go to the king.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to relate this story quite often because he was also of this status. Allāh taʿālā had conferred this rank to him and he acquired it from Allāh taʿālā.

Listen! It is fard-e-ʿayn to acquire tauhīd and it is necessary to have a group in every era which teaches genuine tauhīd. If there is no one who bears genuine tauhīd and does not teach it to others, people will forget it. In fact, they are already forgetting it. When a person has perfect tauhīd, he becomes totally independent of the creation. The one whose tauhīd is perfect, his independence is perfect. The one whose tauhīd is imperfect, he cannot be independent of the creation. His gaze does not shift from the creation.

An astronomical amount of money was sent to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh from India to Makkah. It was first sent to some Delhi residents who were residing in Makkah and had businesses there. When the money reached them,

they sent a message to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh informing him of the money which arrived and that he could ask for it whenever he wanted. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh replied: "I will neither go for that money nor will any of my associates go. The Allāh who sent it for me from India to Makkah will convey it to me here at my place."

Glory to Allāh! Look at his independence! He did not go to pick up the money. While these personalities were totally independent, they were also absolutely humble. Several people lived with Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh. Those who came to perform hajj would go to his residence and distribute money among those who were living with him. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh was included among them. He used to wear good quality clothes and had a high quality prayer mat. When the person who was distributing the money came to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib, he thought to himself that this is a senior person, so he hesitated in giving him the money. Hadrat said to him: "You are giving money to everyone else, why are you hesitating to give me? Why are you not giving me?" He replied: "You are the chief of the fakirs." Hadrat said: "This is how I became a chief. You gave some money, someone else came and gave, and yet another person came and gave. This is how I became a chief." Saying this, he extended his hand and said: "Give me some money as well."

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh realized that this man had utmost respect for fakirs and dervishes. This is not the time to display independence; it is the time to humble one's self. This is why he extended his hand.

Glory to Allāh! These personalities were indeed unique. On one hand they were totally independent, and on the other hand they displayed utmost humility. They combined both qualities to the level of perfection. This cannot be done by all and sundry. It can only be done by one who is perfect and inspired by Allāh taʿālā. It is not for everyone.

The saints are independent but they are extremely humble at the same time. The main thing is that pride must not creep in. Independence is desirable. Independence is one thing and pride is totally different. Independence does not require pride. In fact, it can be combined with humility. Our seniors combined the two and proved it to us. They presented perfect examples of independence and humbleness. This is why Allāh taʿālā conferred them with great karāmāt. I related many stories to you on this subject. Now too I am relating stories of the saints to you.

A man went to a masjid and decided to stay over there. The imām of the masjid said: "You are not allowed to stay here. You should leave and look for some other place." The man replied: "I will not ask you for food or any other thing. I will only stay the night at your place and leave early in the morning." The imām accepted and allowed him to stay over. After some time, the imām offered him some food. He replied: "No, I will not eat." When the imām insisted, he said: "I eat chicken and rice, and nothing else." At midnight someone came and knocked on the imām's door and said: "Imām Sāhib! Take this." When he checked, he realized it was steaming hot chicken and rice. The one who brought it said: "Someone had taken a vow that when his friend returns from his journey, he will

send chicken and rice to the masjid. He has arrived today, so he sent this chicken and rice."

A large amount of money from Multān was sent to Hadrat Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar. The person who brought the money kept aside half the amount for himself and thought to himself that the Bābā does not know how much was sent. When he presented the money to him, Hadrat immediately said: "This brotherly distribution and fifty/fifty is not right." The man was mortified and was about to hand over the other half. Hadrat said: "I said this because actions of this nature are not good in the sight of a dervish. You have already kept aside one half for yourself, now take this other half as well." The man was overcome by faith in the Hadrat and requested him to induct him as a murīd. He inducted him and he began living respectfully with Hadrat. After some time, Hadrat said: "You may go back now. I have conferred the governorship of Multān to you."

Hadrat Zakarīyyā Multānī rahimahullāh was an erudite dervish. When he arrived in Multān, the senior 'ulamā' and Sufis of the city sent a cup filled with milk to him. The cup was filled to the brim. If we were in his place, we would have assumed that it was a gift. And if we were fasting, we would have broken our fast there and then. But Hadrat placed a flower on the surface of the milk and sent it back. Someone asked him: "Hadrat, what is the meaning of this? Milk was sent to you and you placed a flower on the top, and sent it back?!" He replied: "The 'ulamā' and Sufis of this city were sending me a message that this city is full of 'ulamā' and Sufis just as the cup is filled with milk. Therefore, there is no place for me in this city." I replied: "There is certainly no place for any additional milk, water or

any other liquid. But there is place for a flower. In the same way, I will live among you as a flower." The ʿulamā' and Sufis were impressed by his reply and realized that he was an erudite person. They had assumed they could render him incapable by their question and fail in their test. But when the cup of milk was returned to them, they were left speechless and developed deep confidence in him.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā Multānī rahimahullāh was a wealthy person and a man of supernatural feats. He used to go from Multān to Delhi in a short while.

When Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh departed from this world, he left Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh in his place. Hadrat Maulānā used to relate stories of this nature to us. The Tarīqah was preserved in this way. The excellences of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh were passed on gradually to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Had this not been the case, we would not know his excellences. Had Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh not listened to these points and preserved them, how would he have conveyed them to us? When a saint departs, his excellent qualities are preserved through his khulafā'. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh left behind great khulafā' who made immense contributions after him.

In his *Munājāt Maqbūl*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh quoted some couplets from the *Mathnawī*. I will quote a duʿā which used to be made by a youngster in the era of Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām.

> O Allāh! Listen to the duʿā of this servant. Bless me with sustenance without having to suffer hardship in acquiring it..

Bearing in mind that You created me lazy, prone to injury and lethargic.

O the all-wealthy! Since You created me lazy, give me sustenance through the path of laziness.

O the most-loving! I am lazy. I am the one who sleeps in the shade. I am lying in the shade of Your kindness and generosity.

You have probably portioned the sustenance of the lazy ones and those who sleep in the shade in a different way.

The one who has legs can search for sustenance. As for the one who has no legs, I beg You to see to his needs and give him solace.

Convey sustenance to this distressed one and open up the clouds on all the lands.

The land has no legs. This is why Your generous rain runs hastily towards it.

Because an infant cannot walk, his mother brings sustenance to him.

I am begging You for sustenance without having to strive for it. I can make no effort apart from beseeching You and begging to You.

The youngster used to make this duʿā continually. One day, a cow got into his house so he assumed that his duʿā has been accepted. He caught it and slaughtered it. But it belonged to someone else. The

owner presented the case to Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām. Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām said to the youngster: "Return his cow to him." He replied: "How can I!? My duʿā has been accepted. I have been making duʿā to Allāh taʿālā for many days to give me sustenance without having to work for it."

Since the youngster had no proof, Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām passed a verdict in favour of the cow-owner. The youngster began crying and wailing profusely. Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām concluded that he has been wronged. His crying shows that he is not a liar. Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām said: "I am not going to pass my verdict today. I will pass judgement tomorrow." There was a clamour and uproar among the masses. They said that it was so obvious that the cow belonged to such and such farmer. Why, then, should there be a delay in the verdict?

Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām proceeded to his private prayer chamber and made duʿā to Allāh taʿālā. He said: "O Allāh! I gauge from the youngster's crying that the cow belongs to him. What is the reality of the situation? Please explain to me." He received revelation stating: "The cow belongs to the youngster. The man who is claiming to be the owner of the cow is actually this youngster's slave. He had accompanied the youngster's father on a journey, killed him and buried him under a certain tree. He then stole his wealth and belongings."

After receiving this revelation, Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām assembled the people and took them to that tree. He asked them to dig the ground around it. After digging, the youngster's father's corpse emerged. Hadrat Dāwūd ʿalayhis salām then

informed the people: This man [who is claiming to be the cow-owner] was the slave of this boy's father. He murdered his master and buried him here. He then took possession of his wealth while this youngster had no knowledge of this. Therefore, this slave [who is claming to be the cow-owner] now belongs to this boy. The cow also belongs to him and everything else belongs to him."

The youngster had been constantly beseeching Allāh taʿālā to give him sustenance without having to strive for it. Allāh taʿālā accepted his supplication and gave him everything.

His father had been a wealthy man but he became a pauper. By virtue of his supplications, Allāh taʿālā returned all his father's earnings to him. Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh relates this story in detail in his *Mathnawī*. Just as the boy's supplication for sustenance without having to work for it was accepted, I say: If you cannot do anything else, continue asking for Paradise. O Allāh! We cannot do anything apart from begging You for Paradise. Through Your grace, admit us into Paradise without having to endure any hardship.

Paradise belongs solely to Allāh taʿālā. He made it for His servants. He wants us to ask Him for Paradise. This is why we should ask Him for it. Don't let a day pass without having asked Allāh taʿālā for Paradise. Together with that, beg Him for refuge from the Hell-fire. For this, you must memorize the duʿā of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam which I quoted to you. Make the duʿā in the same words because they emanated from the blessed tongue of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and were honoured with acceptance in Allāh's court. If we make the duʿā in the same

words, there is more hope of acceptance. The words of the duʿā are as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ. وَأَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ حَالِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا.

O Allāh! I beg You for Paradise, and words and actions which will draw me closer to it. I seek refuge in You from the Hell-fire, from the condition of its inmates, and from all which will draw me to it.

The easiest way to acquire sustenance and Paradise is to beg Allāh taʿālā for them together with doing good actions. Allāh taʿālā loves it when His servant begs Him. We have been ordered to do this. A verse states:

وَاسْئَلُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ.

Ask Allāh of His grace.

In his commentary to this verse, the author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* quotes the following narration:

عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: سلوا الله من فضله فإن الله تعالى يحب أن يسأل.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Ask Allāh of His grace because He loves to be asked.

Ḥaḍrat Ibn ʿUyaynah said that Allāh taʿālā ordered us to beg of Him so that He will give whatever a

servant asks Him, He will give it. The marginalia of *Tafsīr Jalālayn* contains the following Hadīth which is quoted from *Tafsīr Madārik*:

When a person does not beg Allāh taʿālā for His grace, Allāh taʿālā gets displeased with him.

Furthermore, Allāh taʿālā withholds the sending of abundant goodness and says: "I will not send it to My servants until they ask Me for it."

We learn from these narrations that it is desirable to ask Allāh taʿālā for His grace and bounties. It is so liked that if a person does not ask, he becomes eligible for Allāh's wrath and anger. We should therefore beg Allāh taʿālā for His favours and bounties, especially Paradise which is the greatest of bounties. We must continue begging Him for it and should never consider ourselves to be independent of it. Independence of this nature is reproachable and blameworthy.

THE ORIGINAL TREASURE OF THE AHLULLĀH

The author of *Tarsī'* says that one of the karāmāt which Allāh ta'ālā confers to His pious servants is enjoyment in carrying out acts of obedience in public and private. In other words, when they worship Allāh ta'ālā in public and solitude, they experience a unique type of enjoyment. The Sufis have gone to the extent of saying that those who are occupied with Allāh ta'ālā at night worship experience more enjoyment than those who are engrossed in play and amusement. This is because they are with their True Beloved at night. As for the people of play and amusement, they are occupied with the desires of their carnal selves. Thus, there is no comparison between the two. The enjoyment and sweetness experienced by the Ahlullāh is spiritual and creedal, while the enjoyment of the people of play and amusement is carnal. The difference between the two is like chalk and cheese. The person who gets a glimpse of spiritual enjoyment does not even turn towards carnal pleasures. Instead, he believes them to be obstacles and turns away from them. The Ahlullāh value their spiritual wealth and remain engrossed in its enjoyment. There is no greater treasure in their eyes.

The author says further on:

وقال بعضهم لو يعلم الملوك ما نحن عليه لقاتلونا عليه بالسيوف.

Some Sufis say: If the kings were to learn of our spiritual wealth and enjoyment, they

would have fought us with their swords to snatch it away from us.

He says further:

One of the karāmāt of the Ahlullāh is that they are fully pleased with Allāh taʿālā in all their conditions and situations – health, illness, honour, disgrace, affluence and poverty. This is because acceptance [of Allāh's decree] is the fruit of love. Whatever the Beloved does is beloved in the eyes of the lover.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī rahimahullāh writes in *ʿUhūd Wustā*: "A covenant has been taken from us to remain pleased with Allāh taʿālā for whatever has been decreed for us – irrespective of whether it is a little obedience or a small amount of wealth. It is obligatory on us to be pleased with the share which has been apportioned to us and the sustenance which Allāh taʿālā decreed for us.

Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu said:

رضينا قسمة الجبار فينا – لنا علم وللجهال مال

We are pleased with Allāh's distribution among us: For us is knowledge and wealth is for the ignoramuses.

This is what ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī rahimahullāh is referring to when he says: It is obligatory on us to accept whatever distribution Allāh taʿālā decreed for us – whether it is little obedience or a small amount of wealth.

The Ahlullāh are pleased with this distribution because if they receive too much of wealth, it leads to transgression. If the worship is excessive, it results in egotism. This is why too much of wealth is

not good. A person does not remain within the limits; he transgresses them. One form of transgressing the limit in wealth is when a person believes that the wealth which he received through Allāh's distribution is actually on account of his efforts. Allāh taʿālā makes mention of this in several places in the Qur'ān. He speaks about Qārūn as follows:

إِنَّ قَارُوْنَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوْسٰى فَبَغٰى عَلَيْهِمْ وَاٰتَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوْزِ مَا إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوْءُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولِي الْقُوَّةِ.

> Qārūn was one of Mūsā's people, but he behaved arrogantly towards them. We had given him such treasures that carrying the keys thereof would tire a group of strong men.[1]

Qārūn was from among Mūsā's people. He was from the Banū Isrā'īl and not the Pharaonites. Although he was from the Israelites, he chose to be rebellious and defiant. Allāh taʿālā explains the reason for his transgression by saying: "We had given him such treasures that carrying the keys thereof would tire a group of strong men." In other words, it was difficult for them to carry just the keys. There were so many keys to his treasures that it was difficult for a group of strong men to carry them. What, then, can be said about his treasures?

Allāh taʿālā says:

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِيْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 76.

> When his people said to him: “Do not be conceited. Allāh does not like those who are conceited.”[1]

The exegists say that the word “When” specifies the time of his acting arrogantly. This means that he acted arrogantly at the time when his people advised and counselled him. They said: Do not be conceited over your wealth and retinue of people who are at your beck and call. Surely Allāh taʿālā does not like those who are conceited. He replied to their advice by saying:

إِنَّمَا أُوْتِيْتُهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عِنْدِيْ.

> I received this wealth because of some knowledge which I possess.[2]

Everyone knows that whatever one receives is solely from Allāh taʿālā. But here he is saying that whatever he has been given is on account of his expertise. He forgot the sustenance of Allāh taʿālā. Even a normal wealthy person will not attribute his affluence to his self. Rather, he will believe it to be from Allāh taʿālā. Only then will he succeed.

The Sufis understood this secret fully. This is why they say: When Allāh taʿālā does not make you wealthy, He knows well the wisdom behind it. In fact, they went to the extent of saying: If Allāh taʿālā willed a little worship for you, be content with it. They say even though they are desirous of more and more worship, they are content with a little because acceptance of a little worship is not little; it is a lot.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 78.

In the same way, if a person does a lot of worship or owns a lot of wealth, but Allāh's pleasure is not in it, then it is valueless. When Allāh's pleasure is found in something which is insignificant, it is considered extremely significant.

The saints say that when a bounty is received from Allāh taʿālā, one's mind goes to Allāh taʿālā. The bounty causes one to think of the benefactor. A saint says: "When any person gives me a gift, my heart renews its covenant with Allāh taʿālā and I enter into a new agreement with Him."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how the saints combine gratitude with recognition of the True Benefactor.

This is the difference between the saints and the affluent. The affluent become wealthy solely by what Allāh taʿālā gives them; but they transgress and become rebellious with the same wealth. The more wealth they receive, the more their transgression increases to the extent that they fight with the Prophets of Allāh taʿālā.

On the other hand, the more the Ahlullāh receive, the more submissive they become before Allāh taʿālā and the more their carnal self becomes obliterated. This is because their focus is on Allāh taʿālā. They believe that they are not eligible for it. It is solely Allāh's grace and favour. So they praise and thank Him for it.

Allāh taʿālā conferred sultanate to the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām as well. It was so magnificent that no king received the like thereof. Allāh taʿālā conferred the greatest kingdom to Hadrat Sulaymān ʿalayhis salām. Despite receiving such a vast kingdom, he was not unmindful of Allāh taʿālā for a single moment. His gaze was always on Allāh taʿālā.

He understood that all this is solely a gift from Allāh taʿālā.

As for the wealth which Qārūn received, he considered it to be the fruit of his personal effort and expertise. He then rebelled against a Prophet of Allāh taʿālā. Consequently, he was swallowed by the earth together with his wealth.

I told you about that saint who used to renew his covenant with Allāh taʿālā each time he received a gift. He did this due to a certain incident. I am saying to you that money and wealth are not the objectives. Rather, it is the acquisition and fulfilment of needs. Food and drinks are objectives because life depends on them. Every person is in need of food and drink. Every person has two meals a day. Therefore, if he observes the True Benefactor at the time of eating, he can make the same eating a means for recognizing Allāh taʿālā. When he receives any bounty, he thanks Allāh taʿālā and says: "O Allāh! We were not eligible for this bounty, but You gave it to us out of Your grace and kindness."

In this way, every person can develop a bond with Allāh taʿālā and attain His recognition. Every person may not receive money and gifts, but every person certainly receives food and drink, and he can connect his heart with Allāh taʿālā through food and drink. If a person already has some bond with Allāh taʿālā, he can strengthen it through his food and drink, and continue acquiring more Allāh-recognition. The recognition of the Benefactor which can be acquired through His bounties is such a great thing that many acts of worship can be placed one side, and this recognition on the other side. Focus on the scantiness and excessiveness of worship happens before Allāh-recognition. Once His

recognition is acquired, a person goes to great heights through the most insignificant of things – a feat which cannot be achieved through many years of worship. Furthermore, the person does not focus on the scantiness and excessiveness of what is distributed. No matter how much sustenance is distributed – whether little or a lot – he is pleased with all of it.

This is what ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī rahimahullāh is referring to when he says: It is obligatory on us to accept whatever distribution Allāh taʿālā decreed for us – whether it is little obedience or a small amount of wealth. We have to be pleased with whatever amount of sustenance is decreed for us. He then says:

> وكذلك لا نسخط على مقدور ربنا إذا قدر علينا الوقوع في أمر من الأمور التي تنكس الرأس. فقد يعلم المصلحة لنا في ذلك.
>
> Similarly, a covenant has been taken from us not to be displeased with the decree of our Sustainer if it is decreed for us to do something which would cause us to lower our head in shame. This is because Allāh taʿālā alone knows the wisdom in it.

Further down he says that Sufis consider the fundamental karāmat to be steadfastness on the straight path and being pleased with Allāh taʿālā in all conditions.

وهذا مقام جامع لعبودية الظاهر والباطن، وهو أعلى المقامات.

> This is the station which combines internal and external servitude. And it is the highest of stations.

It is stated in the book *Abrez* that the genuine and acceptable karāmat is only in two things: (1) Holding the beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah. (2) Steadfastness on acts of obedience.

The point I want to make you understand is that the status of wealth and actions is the same. In other words, just as excessive wealth causes transgression and rebelliousness, excessive actions also cause a type of transgression. This is known as conceit. Wealth is a bounty from Allāh taʿālā but when a person transgresses in it, it becomes a punishment. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard:

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ بَدَّلُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللهِ كُفْرًا وَّاَحَلُّوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ.

> Have you not seen those who returned the favour of Allāh with ingratitude and caused their people to alight in the house of destruction?[1]

In this verse Allāh taʿālā threatens those who receive Allāh's bounties and favours but are not grateful to Him for them. Instead, they transgress and are ungrateful. In the same way, what is said about

[1] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 28.

wealth can be said about actions. Warnings have been issued to those who carry out actions and they have been threatened. The Ahlullāh fear this intensely. Many people have been destroyed because of it. This is what I want you to understand. Ponder over how the saints progressed and how you retrogressed.

When I said that the status of wealth and actions is the same, it is because just as wealth causes transgression – which could also be referred to as pride, conceit and boastfulness – excessive good actions cause a person to become conceited and proud, and they prompt him to make claims to his saintliness. Many are destroyed in this way without even realizing it.

Listen! This world is a place of tests and tribulations. Allāh taʿālā has various types of tests. Wealth and actions are also tests. In other words, Allāh taʿālā tests His servants through wealth and actions. Many wealthy people are destroyed in this test. Similarly, many who have excessive good actions are destroyed. This is because it is difficult for a person to acquire a high status and rank without his carnal self making claims. It certainly makes claims. When Allāh taʿālā sees a person believing Allāh's grace to be the result of his efforts, and is making claims about his own achievements; He seizes him by his neck and breaks it. There are many incidents in the lives of the saints where they were treated in strange and unique ways.

A saint was going to some place. He passed by a village inhabited by Christians. They were worshipping the crucifix. When he saw them doing this, the thought passed his mind that what type of people are these. How can they worship a crucifix?

He was looking at them with contempt. He received a message from Allāh taʿālā saying: If you want, I will show you the reality of your īmān. He immediately felt something leaving his heart and he fell in love with a Christian woman. He expressed his love for her. She replied: "You will have to consume wine, tend to our swine and become a Christian." He accepted all her conditions. He began living with her and tended to her pigs.

His murīds were saddened when they observed his condition. Some people tried to remove him from this situation but this was a test from Allāh taʿālā; no one could do anything. When they could not remove him, they left him and went to Madīnah. Hadrat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAttār rahimahullāh was also his murīd and he was living in Madīnah. The people went and described the Shaykh's condition to him. He was a Sufi and concluded it was nothing; it was some sort of test from Allāh taʿālā. This is why he asked them: "Why did you abandon the Shaykh while he is in such a condition? This is the time for you to be with him, and not to abandon him."

Hadrat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn rahimahullāh then spent the night beseeching Allāh taʿālā and begging to Him. He said: "O Allāh! I cannot bear to see my shaykh in this condition." He received a reply: "He has recovered. You may go to him." Hadrat Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn rahimahullāh and some people departed. In the meantime, the Shaykh came to his senses and thought to himself: What is wrong with me? How can I be here while wearing this rosary, living with this Christian woman and these pigs in front of me? It is a terrible condition to find myself in. He broke the rosary there and then, and asked

the woman to get away from him. She replied: "I refuse to go. Now that I am with you, I am on the same religion as you."

The Shaykh left the place and the woman accompanied him. She broke her rosary and remained with him. On the way, they reached a river. Shaykh Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAṯṯār raḥimahullāh was on the opposite bank and he saw the Shaykh approaching. He noticed that the Shaykh's condition had changed for the better. In fact, his spiritual stations were better than before. He was overjoyed to see his Shaykh in this condition. Everyone met the Shaykh and they cried profusely.

Note: This is a unique story. The fact is that this world is certainly not without a test. (compiler)

The fundamental karāmat

The author of *Tarṣīʿ* states that the Sufis say: A true man is not he who extends his hands in the air and it gets filled with dirhams. Rather, a real man is he who has dirhams in his pocket. When he puts his hand in his pocket, he does not find the money, yet it does not cause him the slightest distress and worry.

I am relating these noteworthy points to you. If you understand them, well and good. If not, you may do as you like.

The virtue of sayyidul istighfār

Ḥaḍrat Shāh Ahlullāh Ṣāḥib relates in *Chār Bāb* that the sayyidul istighfār which surpasses all forms of istighfār is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ رَبِّيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِيْ وَاَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَاَنَا عَلٰى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، اَبُوْءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَاَبُوْءُ بِذَنْبِيْ، فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ فَاِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ. اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ.

O Allāh! You are my Sustainer. There is none worthy of worship but You. You created me. I am Your servant and I am on Your covenant and promise as much as I can. I testify to Your favours upon me and I admit my sins. Forgive me, then, for surely none forgives sins but You. I seek refuge in You from the evil which I have done.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh says: The person who reads this during the day and passes away shall be in Paradise. The person who reads it at night and passes away shall be in Paradise.

The virtue of āyat-e-karīmah

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh adds: If there is any invocation which is established from the Qur'ān, Hadīth and statements of the Sufis, then it is the following:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.

There is no deity but You. You are pure of all deficiency. I was of the sinners.[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 87.

A person should continually read the above because Allāh taʿālā says with reference to it:

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

> We heard his supplication and delivered him from [his] distress. Thus do We deliver the believers.[1]

This means: We will deliver and rescue the believers who read this invocation.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh adds: Know well that seeking forgiveness and desiring pardon are the best of actions. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

كلكم خطاؤن وخير الخطائين التوابون.[2]

> All of you commit mistakes. And the best of those who commit mistakes are those who repent excessively.

Blessed is the person in whose book of deeds istighfār is recorded. When a person is consistent with istighfār, Allāh taʿālā removes every constriction related to Dīn and this world from him. He conveys sustenance to him from avenues he never imagined.

Listen! Abundant good actions are desirable provided they do not cause conceit. The saints used to engage in abundant worship and abstain from disobedience. Sometimes when they experienced

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[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 88.

[2] مشكوة المصابيح: ج ١، ص ٢٠٤.

conceit on account of abundant worship, Allāh taʿālā would cause them to commit a sin and uproot the conceit in this way.

The author of *Tarsī'* writes about himself: When I was treading the spiritual path, then whenever I developed conceit, Allāh taʿālā would cause me to commit a minor sin. This would cause me to lower my head and servitude would come into me. Subsequently, I would not consider myself to be on any lofty pedestal. I would say to my self repeatedly: Can a sinner ever enjoy a high rank?

This is Allāh's training. He causes the servant to fall into sin to remove the devil which is lurking in the carnal self.

Another point which we learn is that transgression and conceit which stem from good actions are worse than the transgression which develops on account of wealth. It is only when Allāh taʿālā removes a person from such a pit that he becomes a person of high rank. He also removes a person from conceit by causing him to commit a sin. In this sense, we could say that a sin which is a cause of servitude is also a mercy. This is why it is said: A sin which creates servitude and humility in a person is superior to obedience which becomes a cause of conceit and pride.

We learn from this that there is also wisdom in disobedience. The saints accept a sin because they realize that it is a test and tribulation.

The wisdom is that it removes the pride and vanity of the carnal self. When a person commits a sin, he himself considers himself to be a sinner and a rebel. Even people start looking at him differently. They think to themselves: "We considered him to be so

pious but look at what he turned out to be!" This creates servitude, submission and humility in the person; and conceit, vanity, etc. disappear.

The other point which we learn is that we should not look at a sinner with contempt. It is against the practice of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It is related that sometimes a person would come to him and the penal law would be implemented on the person. If anyone made a comment which displayed contempt for the person, the face of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam would turn red out of anger and he would reprimand the person. This means: The sinner committed the sin out of negligence or the influence of Shayṭān. Why, then, should you scorn him? Allāh taʿālā knows the wisdom behind it. We do not know how Allāh taʿālā will purify him from his sin. How can we know about it?

These are matters related to the internal self. They are from the Ahlullāh. We cannot say anything. Everyone receives spiritual conditions from Allāh taʿālā while on this path. The person who respects these conditions and remains fearful will not have his spiritual conditions snatched away from him. The person who disrespects these conditions will find them taken away from him. If spiritual conditions which are received from Allāh taʿālā are respected – i.e. they do not cause conceit, pride and vanity – then they remain intact and people remain steadfast on those conditions.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī raḥimahullāh relates a Hadīth in *Hayātul Muslimīn* which states that if a person commits a sin and another laughs at him because of it, then the latter will not die until he himself commits the same sin. This is because Allāh

taʿālā abhors such an attitude. Whatever happens in this world happens by Allāh's decree. Whatever is decreed for a person to do, he will do it. When others see a person committing a sin, they must understand that it is from among the things which are decreed for him. Since the carnal self and Shaytān are with every person, they ensure that he commits a sin. The most senior of people can err. This is why a person should never feel safe about himself. Instead, he must be forever fearful and think to himself: "I don't know when my carnal self and Shaytān will cause me to fall into sin." No one knows what is decreed for him.

These are important themes. Think about them carefully and practise. This is the essence of the path.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are certainly themes of deep understanding and wisdom. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh explained them so clearly and simply. May Allāh taʿālā reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

SERVITUDE

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ افْتَحْ لَنَا أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ.

O Allāh! Open for us the doors of Your mercy.

Together with this, he said:

وَسَهِّلْ لَنَا أَبْوَابَ رِزْقِكَ.

Make easy for us the doors of Your sustenance.

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا تَكِلْنِيْ اِلٰى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ.

O Allāh! Do not leave me to myself even for the blink of an eye.

وَلَا تَنْزِعْ مِنِّيْ صَالِحَ مَا اَعْطَيْتَنِيْ.

Nor snatch away from me the good which You bestowed to me.

Look! Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is supplicating for things which you could not have imagined.

He says in one invocation:

اَللّٰهُمَّ انْعَشْنِيْ وَاَحْيِنِيْ وَارْزُقْنِيْ.

O Allāh! Elevate me, keep me alive, give me sustenance.

Here you see Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asking for loftiness, life and sustenance.

وَاهْدِنِيْ لِصَالِحِ الْاَعْمَالِ وَالْاَخْلَاقِ.

Guide me towards good actions and manners.

اِنَّهُ لَا يَهْدِيْ لِصَالِحِهَا وَلَا يَصْرِفُ سَيِّئَهَا اِلَّا اَنْتَ.

Because none can guide towards good actions and manners except You, and none can divert evil actions and manners except You.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam says in another invocation:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّكِّ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعْدَ الْيَقِيْنِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from having doubts about the truth after having conviction in it.

He says:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعْطِنِيْ اِيْمَانًا لَّا يَرْتَدُّ، وَيَقِيْنًا لَّيْسَ بَعْدَهُ كُفْرٌ، وَّرَحْمَةً اَنَالُ بِهَا شَرَفَ كَرَامَتِكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

O Allāh! Bestow me with īmān which does not revert, conviction after which there is no unbelief, and mercy with which I could acquire the honour of Your respect in this world and in the Hereafter.

One would assume that since Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is a Prophet, he will make duʿā for

matters related to the Hereafter and teach us about rectification which will be useful for the Hereafter. However, together with the Hereafter, he taught us rules are regulations related to our livelihood. In fact, he even supplicated for it, as mentioned previously. In this way, he taught the Muslim nation to supplicate for matters of the Hereafter and for one's livelihood as well. Just as Allāh taʿālā likes supplications for Paradise, He likes supplications for sustenance. As regards closeness, the two are equal. This is why they are equal as supplications. It will not be correct to differentiate between the two.

I am teaching you this. I want you to understand it and practise on it. As long as you do not hold on to these invocations, you will not acquire the station of servitude with Allāh taʿālā. The action which Allāh taʿālā loves most is for a servant to acknowledge his servitude to Him.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ عَبْدُكَ.

O Allāh! I am Your slave.

Look at how he acknowledges his servitude. He is saying: "O Allāh! I am certainly Your slave."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said this to teach us. Unfortunately, our condition is that we feel if we were to acknowledge our servitude, we will be nothing. People will say: You are such a great person yet you are saying, "I am Your slave"!? We feel that this will cause our value to drop. So listen! If you were to go to Allāh taʿālā with your pride and egotism, it will not be accepted. Whatever you achieved will go to waste.

There are many ways in which one can enter through the doors of Allāh's proximity, but the biggest door is the one where a person acknowledges his servitude and accepts by saying: "I am Your slave." This displays the highest form of closeness. If a proud person says it, his pride will break.

I am teaching this to you but those who come here are not learning it. I teach them Dīn but they do not learn it. Even when I teach about the world they do not learn. Whereas they are in need of this world as well. It is because of their pride that they do not beg from Allāh taʿālā. If they were to beg from Him, they will succeed and they will experience tranquillity. I have come across worldly people like this. They have some needs attached to us but they act proudly. I have seen them displeased with us on account of worldly matters, but they do not ask. It is their pride that prevents them from begging from Allāh taʿālā. Even in their dealings with us, they want their needs to be fulfilled while having pride. Just think for yourself: If you have abandoned Dīn, you have abandoned Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, then what type of relationship and bond can you have with us? You abandoned the closeness which we had with you and severed relations, whereas in Islam, great importance is placed on maintaining relations.

When Allāh taʿālā created family relationship, it said: "O Allāh! What is my right?" Allāh taʿālā replied: "I will join the one who maintains you and sever the one who severs you."

From this we learn that Allāh taʿālā created mutual relationships and ordered for them to be joined and maintained. Unfortunately, the attitude of people

demonstrates that they will sever them as much as they can and abstain from carrying out any order of Allāh taʿālā. These people have become depraved and they do not want to give up their evil qualities. I am astonished at those people who are so needy that they even need bread, but their pride does not allow them to beg from Allāh taʿālā. The same pride has caused their mutual relationships to be severed. In this way, they have severed their bond from the Creator and the creation.

Look at your Prophet and see his humility. See how he is acknowledging his servitude to Allāh taʿālā by saying:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ عَبْدُكَ.

O Allāh! I am Your slave.

This demonstrates the highest form of bond with Allāh taʿālā and closeness to Him. This is why he adds:

وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ.

I am the son of Your slave.

He then adds:

وَابْنُ أَمَتِكَ.

I am the son of Your slave-woman.

This means: My servitude is personal and ancestral. Look at the extent of displaying one's need to Allāh taʿālā!

He is performing salāh, paying zakāh and engaging in Allāh's remembrance, and believing all this to be

the means of proximity to Him. In like manner, when he is experiencing this proximity, he is saying:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ عَبْدُكَ. وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ. وَابْنُ أَمَتِكَ.

> O Allāh! I am Your slave. I am the son of Your slave. I am the son of Your slave-woman.

I am explaining this theme to you which is not any less in acquiring Allāh's closeness. If you are not going to listen to it, what are you going to listen to? Look! Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made three statements:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ عَبْدُكَ.

> O Allāh! I am Your slave.

وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ.

> I am the son of Your slave.

وَابْنُ أَمَتِكَ.

> I am the son of Your slave-woman.

Those who concern themselves with their ancestry say it with pride: "This how our father was, this is how our grandfather was, this is how our great grandfather was."

I say: Just add one more statement to your claim, viz. "Although we are from their progeny, we do not have any excellence in us."

Here we see Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam saying:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ عَبْدُكَ. وَابْنُ عَبْدِكَ. وَابْنُ أَمَتِكَ.

O Allāh! I am Your slave. I am the son of Your slave. I am the son of Your slave-woman.

From this we learn that this is the original ancestral thing, viz. a person acknowledges his servitude before Allāh taʿālā and presents his needfulness and destitution in Allāh's court. After acknowledging and accepting his servitude, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam adds:

نَاصِيَتِيْ بِيَدِكَ.

My forehead is in Your hand [I am solely under Your control].

If a proud person were to say this just once, all his pride will be reduced to smithereens. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam continues:

مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ.

Your order concerning me is executed.

عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَآؤُكَ.

Your judgement concerning me is absolutely just.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is such a great Prophet, yet he is supplicating and beseeching in this manner. In such a case, what can decree do! It will remain suspended. Duʿā will go up from here and then decree will descend in line with it. Duʿā clashes with decree and then descends in line with the duʿā. This is the meaning of:

لا يرد القضاء إلا الدعاء.

Nothing but duʿā can repulse decree.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam says in another duʿā:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ.

O Allāh! I beg You of Your grace.

He says in another duʿā:

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنَا مِنْ فَضْلِكَ

O Allāh! Bestow upon us Your grace.

The previous duʿā is in the singular while the present duʿā is in the plural sense. This duʿā is on behalf of the entire ummah. He then says:

وَلَا تَحْرِمْنَا رِزْقَكَ

Do not deprive us of Your sustenance.

I do not see anyone who is deprived of sustenance while holding on to this duʿā. People will go and hold the feet of others but they will not say: "O Allāh! Do not deprive me of Your sustenance."

The entire world was created for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Were it not for him, this world would not have been created. Despite this, he is asking Allāh taʿālā not to deprive him of sustenance. He then adds:

وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْمَا رَزَقْتَنَا.

Bless us in the sustenance which You provided us.

Blessing is also a great thing. There is no limit to it. A single paisa can become equal to a hundred.

وَاجْعَلْ غِنَآءَنَا فِيْ اَنْفُسِنَا.

Make us rich of heart.

وَاجْعَلْ رَغْبَتَنَا فِيْمَا عِنْدَكَ.

Make us desirous of what is with You.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam says:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ خَطَايَايَ وَذُنُوْبِيْ كُلَّهَا.

O Allāh! Forgive me all my omissions and sins.

These duʿās ought to be repeated until they are memorized. After that it is hoped that the heart will focus on them.

Listen further.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Ahlullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh writes in *Chār Bāb* that the greatest form of seeking forgiveness is this:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ رَبِّيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِيْ وَاَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَاَنَا عَلٰى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، اَبُوْءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَاَبُوْءُ بِذَنْبِيْ، فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ فَاِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ.

> O Allāh! You are my Sustainer. There is none worthy of worship but You. You created me. I am Your servant and I am on Your covenant and promise as much as I can. I testify to Your favours upon me and I admit my sins. Forgive me, then, for surely none forgives sins but You.

This is the sayyidul istighfār regarding which it is stated that the one who reads it during the day and passes away shall be in Paradise. And the one who reads it at night and passes away shall be in Paradise. If a person is consistent on istighfār, Allāh taʿālā shall remove all Dīnī and worldly constrictions from him and shower him with sustenance which he never imagined.

The actions which you do with your hands and feet are not the only proofs of servitude. Rather, you must acknowledge your servitude verbally and accept the divinity of Allāh taʿālā. There is no greater proof of servitude than the one who says verbally: "I am Your slave." If he does this, all his sins will be pardoned.

Although the words "You are my Sustainer" acknowledge Allāh's divinity, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did not suffice with them. Instead, he said separately: "I am Your slave." It is the highest level of worship of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām to acknowledge and accept their servitude.

Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh gives several pieces of advice. He says: "Do not leave yourself paralyzed and indolent. Do work for the Hereafter. If you cannot, then do not allow yourself to cast aside any worldly work. Instead, occupy yourself in some craft and occupation." I have always been telling you that

if Dīnī work does not appeal to you, you should at least do some worldly work. Now we have found an explicit statement of Shāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh in this regard. Ḥadrat ʿUmar raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "I must not see you subahlall." Subahlall refers to the person who neither does any Dīnī work nor worldly work. I now have further support for what I said. I present these personalities to you in my transmission.

Shāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh says: Never give up two things whether you find it difficult or easy, viz. planning and independence.

I was explaining to you that the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām were certainly fulfilling the other forms and ways of servitude, and they surpassed everyone else in doing them. Together with this, they testified to their servitude by saying: "I am Your slave." By saying this, they paved the way for us and taught us that if we cannot do anything else, we should at least say this verbally: "I am Your slave." If you say this continually, it will convey you to the station of servitude. You will acquire servitude and you will automatically give up and hate everything which negates servitude.

Listen! I am not saying this from my own self. It is a Ḥadīth of *Mishkāt Sharīf*. Ḥadrat Abū Dharr raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: "When you get up in the morning, a charity on each joint of your body is incumbent on you. Each glorification of Allāh is a charity. Each praise of Allāh is a charity. Each proclamation of Allāh's Oneness is a charity. Each proclamation of Allāh's greatness is a charity. Enjoining good is charity. Forbidding evil is charity. And two rakʿats of ṣalāt aḍ-ḍuḥā which a person performs will suffice all these things."

A Hadīth Qudsī states: Hadrat Abū Dardā' radiyallāhu 'anhu and Hadrat Abū Dharr radiyallāhu 'anhu narrate that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam narrates from Allāh ta'ālā: "O son of Ādam! Perform four rak'ats of salāh at the beginning of the day for Me and I will suffice you for the rest of the day."

I explained this Hadīth when I was in Mumbai. I said to the people: This is a world of materialism. I do not know what you people do. I am relating an extremely important Hadīth from *Mishkāt Sharīf* to you. Allāh ta'ālā promises that if you perform four rak'ats of salāh at the beginning of the day, He will suffice for your sustenance.

When I explained this Hadīth in Mumbai, many people began performing this salāh. They used to come from distant places. Because they could not perform ishrāq at the place where they were residing, they would leave early and come to the place where I was residing. They would then perform it there. When I used to emerge for the assembly, I used to see several of them performing the ishrāq salāh. This used to bring me great joy. In short, many people began practising.

Similarly, Abū Ya'lā, Ibn Mardawīyyah and Bayhaqī in his *Shu'ab al-Īmān* relate from Hadrat Anas radiyallāhu 'anhu who said that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "When a person says Māshā Allāh Lā Haula Wa Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh with reference to any bounty which Allāh ta'ālā blessed him with – whether with regard to his wife, wealth or children – then Allāh ta'ālā most certainly repulses every calamity which was to befall him until death."

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* narrated the above Ḥadīth in his commentary to Sūrah al-Kahf under the story of the owner of the orchard. A Muslim who was a relative to the orchard owner had advised him thus:

وَلَوْ لآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

> When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh.[1]

He meant that he should acknowledge his incapability and realize that whatever is in this orchard is solely out of the grace and favour of Allāh taʿālā. The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* states that it encapsulates the remembrance of Allāh taʿālā when he says:

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

Ibn Abī Ḥātim raḥimahullāh narrates from Ḥaḍrat Anas raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu who said: When a person looks at any of his wealth and is pleased by it, and reads this supplication, then no calamity will ever afflict it. The supplication is:

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

Ibn Abī Ḥātim raḥimahullāh narrates that when Ḥaḍrat Imām Mālik raḥimahullāh used to enter his house, he used to say:

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 39.

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

I asked him: "Why do you say this when you enter your house?" He replied: "Did you not read the verse in which Allāh taʿālā says:

وَلَوْ لآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

> When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh.[1]

He says further on: Hadrat Imām Mālik rahimahullāh quoted this verse as proof and would say: "It is desirable for every person to read this supplication when he enters his house."

It is related that when Hadrat ʿUrwah radiyallāhu ʿanhu used to look at any of his wealth or enter his orchard, he used to read:

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

We learn from this verse that when we look at anything which pleases us – whether belonging to us or someone else – we should say:

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

If we do this, it will be protected against the bad eye.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 39.

When I explained this to the people of Mumbai, they came to me and said: “We cannot describe what an important thing we learnt. Now when we go to our shops, businesses or homes, we read this supplication when we enter.”

Those who listen attentively and understand will benefit. There are many others who are coming here since eons but are not learning anything. When I look at their condition, I quote the following:

> They went to the Kaʿbah but love for idols still did not leave them. They drank Zam Zam but the fire within them was not extinguished.

If you continue attending assemblies of this nature without learning anything then they become calamities for you. If you continue going to a scholar and do not understand the fundamentals, it means that a seal has been set on your heart. This is why you cannot understand anything. The following will apply to you:

وَطُبِعَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ.

> A seal was set upon their hearts, so they do not understand.[1]

The verse which I am explaining to you makes reference to an unbeliever who scorned a Muslim for his poverty. The Muslim replied: If you see that I am less than you as regards wealth and children, then listen:

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 87.

فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ أَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا.

> It may well be that my Sustainer will give me an orchard better than yours and send upon your orchard a whirlwind from the sky reducing it to a barren field the next morning.[1]

In other words: I hope that my Sustainer will give me an orchard better than yours. If you see me in loss, I have hope in the power and might of Allāh taʿālā to change my poverty into affluence. And, by virtue of my īmān, He may give me an orchard which is better than yours. He may well snatch away your bounties because of your unbelief, and inflict a calamity from the skies upon it which would reduce your orchard to a plain field.

This is a powerful story. Allāh taʿālā describes it in detail. Listen attentively.

وَأُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهٖ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْٓ أَحَدًا. وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا. هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ط هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا.

> All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 39-40.

> that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Sustainer." He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh nor could he take revenge himself. It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.[1]

After this discussion, a calamity struck the person's wealth. It is stated in *Tafsīr Khāzin* that a fire descended from the skies which burnt the orchard and farm, and dried the water supply. He began wringing his hands over whatever he had spent on the orchard. It was lying fallen on its trellises. (Whether it was completely scorched or semi-scorched, his sorrow over the orchard is specifically mentioned because he had invested more in it and loved it more. His grief over its destruction was not mentioned because it was obvious. What he spent in it is mentioned because it makes reference to a double grief – the present and the past spending, and the direct and indirect spending.) He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Sustainer. (We gauge from this statement that he realized this calamity struck as a retribution for his kufr. This is why he expressed remorse – had he not disbelieved, the calamity would not have struck. Or even if it did strike, he would have received a recompense for it in the Hereafter. Now he has lost in this world and the Hereafter. He must have learnt these points from

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 42-44.

the believer. His expression of regret does not mean that he must have become a believer because his regret is on account of the loss which he suffered. It is not proven that he regretted because kufr is abhorred.) He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh (by disallowing the calamity from striking or removing it after its descent. His pride over his group disappeared). Nor could he take revenge himself from Us. Helping on such an occasion is the work of Allāh, the True One, alone. Even in the Hereafter His reward is the best, and the consequence of it is the best in this world. (In other words, if His accepted servants suffer a loss, they receive the benefits of it in both worlds. On the other hand, an unbeliever remains in total loss.)[1]

The believer and unbeliever whose story is related here were relatives. The unbeliever was proud and haughty, and rejected Allāh taʿālā on account of his orchard. The believer owned less but Allāh taʿālā helped him, and destroyed the orchard and other assets of the unbeliever.

When I explained this in Mumbai, everyone responded by saying:

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

> Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass.
> There is no power except with Allāh.

When any of them would go to his shop, business or house, he would read:

مَا شَآءَ اللهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

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[1] *Bayān al-Qur'ān.*

Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass.
There is no power except with Allāh.

Brothers! I am not asking you to believe me. What I will certainly say to you is that you should believe and accept whatever I explain to you from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. If you accept it, your heart will be enlightened. The supplications of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam which I am narrating to you contain the element of acceptance. If you hold on to them, you will become accepted.

A Maulānā Sāhib was distressed. I asked him to read this supplication repeatedly:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعْطِنِيْ رَحْمَةً اَنَالُ بِهَا شَرَفَ كَرَامَتِكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

O Allāh! Bestow me mercy with which I could acquire the honour of Your respect in this world and in the Hereafter.

The Maulānā Sāhib was impressed by it and wrote it down immediately.

Hold on to these supplications; do not make someone's body a source of blessing. The only body which is a source of blessing is the body of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. These supplications are steps through which you can climb and reach the Causer of the means.

I taught another supplication to the above-mentioned Maulānā Sāhib. I told him to memorize it as well.

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْيُسْرَ وَالْمُعَافَاةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

O Allāh! I ask You for ease and pardon in this world and in the Hereafter.

He was highly pleased with this supplication.

If you too can appreciate them, then memorize them. Other forms of supplications [not supported by the Qur'ān and Hadīth] are of no significance whatsoever. When you make these supplications, the heart experiences tranquillity and you feel like you have reached the centre. Like circles which are in constant motion, and stop when they reach the centre.

I had explained this Hadīth from *Abū Dāwūd Sharīf*. If a person reads the following supplication after eating, all his past sins are forgiven:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ.

All praise is due to Allāh who fed me this food and gave it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

Similarly, if a person reads the following supplication after wearing his garment, all his past and future sins are forgiven:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَلْبَسَنِيْ هٰذَا الِّلبَاسَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ.

All praise is due to Allāh who clothed me this garment and gave it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

When I explained this Hadīth, the ʿulamā' who were present and had an affinity with Hadīth expressed their appreciation. It is Sunnah to wash one's hands before eating and to say Bismillāh. After these two, it is Sunnah to read the above-quoted supplication. If a person does this, then entire meal will become an act of worship. This is what I was meaning when I said that it is a path to human progress. In other words, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam conveyed us to Allāh taʿālā through the path of humanness.

Be conscious of the Sunnah and you will become conscious of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. When you adhere to the different forms of remembrance, you will think of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and be conscious of him. If a person follows these Sunnahs, it will become easy for him to reach Allāh taʿālā. All his time will then be spent in Allāh's remembrance. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made many supplications for sustenance. In this way, he made the doors of sustenance easy for us. He said that if a person is constant in seeking forgiveness, he shall receive sustenance which he never imagined.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made the following supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْهُدٰى، وَالتُّقٰى، وَالْعَفَافَ، وَالْغِنٰى.

O Allāh! I ask You for guidance, righteousness, chastity and contentment.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam also made this supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَصْلِحْ لِيْ دِيْنِيَ الَّذِيْ هُوَ عِصْمَةُ اَمْرِيْ، وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ دُنْيَايَ الَّتِيْ فِيْهَا مَعَاشِيْ، وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ اٰخِرَتِيَ الَّتِيْ فِيْهَا مَعَادِيْ، وَاجْعَلِ الْحَيٰوةَ زِيَادَةً لِّيْ فِيْ كُلِّ خَيْرٍ، وَّاجْعَلِ الْمَوْتَ رَاحَةً لِّيْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَرٍّ.

O Allāh! Rectify for me my religion which is a protection in my favour, rectify for me my worldly affairs wherein is my livelihood, rectify for me my Hereafter where I have to eventually return to. Make life [a source of] progress in all good, and make death [a source of] deliverance from all evil.

Here we see him supplicating for worldly needs as well.

These are some of the supplications of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. We all ought to hold on to them.

ASSEMBLY (1)

The following couplet is quite well-known:

> You cannot find Allāh in *Kanz* and *Hidāyah*.
> To find Him, you will have to look in the book of the heart because there is no book better than it.

Kanz and *Hidāyah* are well-known books which contain rules and regulations related to the lawful and the prohibited. These books are studied and taught. People go ecstatic when they read this couplet but very few understand it. Hadrat Maulānā explains the meaning of it as follows:

The spiritual injunctions of Allāh taʿālā cannot be found in *Kanz* and *Hidāyah*. They are found in the books of Sufism written by Imām Ghazzālī rahimahullāh and others.

Kanz and *Hidāyah* deal with external jurisprudence. A person can learn rules and regulations related to the external self. If he wants to learn the injunctions of the internal self, he will have to refer to the books of Sufism. The latter injunctions will not be solved by referring to *Kanz* and *Hidāyah*.

Hadrat rahimahullāh made a beautiful statement and explained this couplet thoroughly. It is intended to display the difference between the books of jurisprudence and those of Sufism. Juridical issues can be found in these books, but issues related to Sufism cannot. They can be solved by books on Sufism. This couplet certainly does not negate the value of *Kanz* and *Hidāyah*.

I explained the meaning of the couplet of Judge Akbar Husayn when he said:

> Dīn is not obtained from books, lectures and gold. It is developed from the gaze of the saints.

I said: Do not take the outer meaning of this couplet. Its objective is to turn our attention to the companionship of the saints.

It means that there are other people for acquiring Dīn. One can acquire it by remaining in their company. If the outer meaning was taken, countless libraries will be rendered useless. Whereas we compare our knowledge against books to ascertain the authenticity of our knowledge. Thus, books are essential. The presence of juridical books is a necessity because issues related to the lawful and prohibited are explained in them. The books of tafsīr are also needed because they contain knowledge of exegesis. The same can be said about Hadīth and other sciences; they are all preserved through books.

There is also a need for the company of the saints, but this does not necessarily negate the need for books. The saints have knowledge of the internal sciences. These cannot be learnt from books. When we explain a point, we present books as our evidence. This is why it is necessary to know and understand books. In this way we can establish our evidence on people. The ʿulamā' present books as their proofs, and the saints reverted to the ʿulamā' for rules and regulations.

There was a saint who used to listen to samāʿ. On one such occasion, he went into a state of ecstasy for three days. He lost control of his senses. When it

was the time of salāh, his associates would say to him: "Hadrat! It is the time for salāh." He would perform his salāh. When he regained consciousness after three days, he asked them whether he had performed his salāhs. They replied in the affirmative. He did not suffice with this. He wrote to one of his khulafā' asking him if his salāhs were valid in that state or not. What is the ruling of the Sharīʿah in this regard? Look at his respect for the Sharīʿah. His khalīfah wrote back: "The salāhs which Hadrat performed are valid because the heart had become completely detached from all except Allāh taʿālā. However, out of consideration to the Sharīʿah, I suggest you repeat those salāhs."

Look at the respect he showed to his mentor while maintaining the respect for the Sharīʿah.

I can relate many similar incidents to you where consideration is given to the internal self while the Sharīʿah is upheld at the same time. The above incident is recorded in a book, this is why it is an evidence for you and me. If this book was not existing, how would the evidence be established? Because it is recorded, I am relating it to you. Look! He was a man of samāʿ but the moment he regained consciousness, his first question was about whether he performed his salāh or not. These saints did not forget the injunctions of Allāh taʿālā, especially salāh.

The saints paid the most attention to the obligatory actions. There is no one who was particular about the Sharīʿah as they were. And they recorded it in books. This proves another need for books, viz. those who follow the Sufis may not cause any doubts and confusion, and the respect of the Sharīʿah may remain intact.

Hadrat Maulānā had come here. He went to the library and saw the book there. He then quoted from it in his own book by saying: "When I went to Allāhābād, I came across this theme in such and such book."

These personalities rendered powerful services by collating the rules and regulations for us. How, then, can we negate them and say that this is nothing? Our seniors bore many hardships in compiling these books, and made countless sacrifices for them. We have to appreciate them so that their services may remain. Yes, together with books, there is a need for Sufis. Books cannot make us independent of them.

A person came to me after ʿasr and asked: "Do you have *Misbāḥ as-Sālikīn*?" I replied: "The books are in the library. Go and ask those who live here to search for this book and take it out for you." After a while I sent someone to tell him that misbāḥ al-murīd (the lamp for the disciple) is a shaykh and not a book. I also said to him: "Listen! Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh is a part of your spiritual lineage. He said that the book for a murīd is his shaykh. He also said that the books of Sufism are for the Sufis; they are not for the seekers. Just as medical journals are for the doctors and not for the patients.

Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh used to explain this theme with such emphasis and passion that the 'ulamā' who were present used to sway from side to side. When Hadrat used to speak on these subjects, Maulānā Habīb Ahmad Sāhib Kīrānwī rahimahullāh would become so delighted that he would fall and get up, and he would say: "Wāh Maulānā! Wāh Maulānā!"

Hadrat Maulānā was in Kīrānah on one occasion and I was present. A village accountant came and asked Hadrat this question: "When we study the lives of the auliyā', we see them smiling and laughing when their children pass away. But the condition of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām was the opposite. What is the reason for this? Outwardly it seems that their bond with Allāh taʿālā is stronger."

Hadrat Maulānā was an expert on these issues. He said: The auliyā' are considered to be weak, so they are made to inhale chloroform. Without it, they cannot bear anything. When a weak person has to be operated, he is made to inhale chloroform. In like manner, the saints are made to inhale the chloroform of spiritual ecstasy. As for the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām, because they are strong, they are operated without any chloroform. This proves that the rank of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām is superior and higher."

Maulānā Habīb Ahmad Sāhib rahimahullāh went into an ecstasy and said in a loud voice: "O Maulānā! What are you explaining to this accountant!? What will he understand in these sciences?"

I was sitting near Maulānā Habīb Sāhib. I said to him: "What are you saying? Hadrat Maulānā is explaining these intricate points to this poor fellow but we are learning them. How can you say such a thing?"

The point I am making to you is that just as the auliyā' experience spiritual ecstasy, they experience intellectual ecstasy in the various sciences. Knowledge is not a dry subject. *Shāmī* is a book of jurisprudence. The following is stated therein:

> When man observes the amazing creations, his internal self is illuminated. Similarly, when he studies beneficial books, light enters his internal self.

Immense benefit is derived from studying the books of the ʻulamā' and Sufis. Read them for yourself and see if you benefit or not. Yes, if you do not understand a point in those books, you may leave it aside or ask someone to explain it to you. Why should you label those books as useless? Do you think the ʻulamā' and Sufis wasted their time in putting efforts?

Now listen to the Hadīth of Hadrat ʻAbdullāh ibn ʻAmr ibn al-ʻĀs radiyallāhu ʻanhu which I had been explaining to you for the past several days. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam stopped him from fasting continuously and asked him to alternate between fasting and not fasting. He also stopped him from engaging in night worship throughout the night. Instead, he should engage in night worship and sleep as well. The Hadīth then gives the reasoning behind this, viz. your self has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, your wife has a right over you and your visitors have a right over you.

I have been explaining this Hadīth since many days, and you must have heard it. Some people found it difficult. A major objection to it is that this Hadīth clearly prohibits spending the entire night in worship but there were many seniors who spent the entire night in worship. How will the two be reconciled?

The ʻulamā' say that this Hadīth is preconditioned by a cause, but sound in meaning. Those who cannot bear such hardship and there is a possibility

of damage to their body, mind, wealth or life; then this Hadīth will apply to them. Those who are not like this are not prohibited. Those who engaged in excessive worship were people who were immersed in Allāh's love, so they did not feel any burden nor did they fear any damage. A person cannot understand love until there is love in his heart. Those who are permitted excessive worship are the people of love. Excessive worship is established from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and Hadrat ʿUthmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu, and many other senior Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum. This is gauged from the life of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum. They did not suffer any loss or damage – not to their body, mind nor life. Because some people did not understand this point, they spread the notion that excessive worship is a bidʿah. Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī rahimahullāh wrote a monograph on this subject which he titled *Iqāmah al-Hujjah ʿAlā Annal Ikthār Fī at-Taʿabbud Laysa Bi Bidʿah*. He writes therein:

> When I graduated from my studies, I began studying books on the Hadīth narrators. I pondered over the books written on the achievements of the experts in the hope of adopting their ways and mannerisms, and embellishing myself with their qualities. I sought the straight path and my own reformation in this way. Someone said:
>
> أحب الصالحين ولست منهم – لعل الله يرزقني صلاحا

Although I am not from the righteous, I love them in the hope that Allāh taʿālā will bless me with righteousness.

In short, I learnt of the strivings and endeavours of the pious predecessors who spent every moment of their lives in exerting themselves in obedience to Allāh taʿālā. I also learnt of the latter generations who were happy to engage in excessive worship so that they can seek more goodness and acquire Allāh's pleasure. I thought that this is indeed the straight path, and this is how a person can acquire the high stages of Paradise.

As I progressed and received Allāh's grace, I studied Ḥadīth and the mysteries of the prophetic teachings opened up before me. I came across Aḥādīth which prohibited excessive and intensive worship, and also those who barred one from undue asceticism. The thought came to my mind that how can these traditions be reconciled with the strivings of the auliyā' (because when we study their lives, we learn of their arduous striving; and from these Aḥādīth we learn of their prohibition). I broadened by study on this subject and pondered deeply on the traditions.

I pursued the investigations of the scholars and the analyses of the jurists and Ḥadīth experts, and concluded that the reports and traditions on this subject are conflicting. We glean from

> some of them that there should be excessive striving in worship while others state that moderation is required. After reflection, I learnt that there is a place and occasion for each one. The Aḥādīth and traditions which endorse excessive worship are for the person who can bear them. Moderation is for the one who cannot.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent decision! Each one has a place of its own. Striving in worship is for those who have the strength and ability to do it. Moderation is for those who cannot.

He writes further on:

> What I mentioned above is also what I found in the statements of the erudite ʿulamā' and noble imāms. Then I suddenly heard someone saying that excessive worship – e.g. engaging in worship for the whole night, reciting the entire Qur'ān in one rakʿat, performing one thousand rakʿats of ṣalāh, and other similar actions which are narrated about the imāms – is a bidʿah, and that every bidʿah is deviation. I was astonished when I heard this statement and asked the person: "If the Ṣaḥābah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum, Tābiʿīn and a group of Ḥadīth experts are included in this excessive worship, how can it be a bidʿah?"
>
> He replied: "There are traditions which prohibit it, and these are mentioned in the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah*."

I said: “This is the view of a person whose gaze is not extensive and is restricted to the outer words. Does it not ring in your ears that a bidʿah is something which was not found in the first three eras of Islam and which does not have a basis in the four fundamental sources [Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, Ijtihād and Qiyās]? Whereas this very same excessive worship is to be found in that blessed era? And that there are Sharīʿah texts on not only the permissibility but desirability of excessive worship for the person who has the ability. There are explicit statements in this regard.”

He replied: “Some ʿulamā’ of our time say it is a bidʿah, and their view is acceptable according to the experts.”

I said: “If some ʿulamā’ of our time say it is a bidʿah, then they are confused by some Aḥādīth. They probably do not have knowledge of the principles of the Sharīʿah. They are not only excused but rewarded for it. The erudite jurists and Ḥadīth experts of the past said that it is permissible. How can their view not be relied upon in this regard?”

When he heard this, he lowered his head. He was bewildered and in deep thought.

Subsequently I heard that this statement has been proliferated among the scholars and the masses that excessive worship as related about past peoples is a repugnant bidʿah. And they

condemn the past and latter scholars for it.

I refuted them severely and established the path of moderation. I began explaining this in various assemblies and decided to write a monograph on this subject in a manner which was beyond compare. And to write a convincing and quick monograph which was matchless. In other words, no one wrote in this way. However, at the time, I was busy writing *as-Siʿāyah*, the commentary to *Sharḥ al-Wiqāyah*. My time was spent in it and this prevented me from taking a step in the fulfilment of this objective. Then a group requested me to write this monograph. So I reduced some of my time which I had devoted to writing *as-Siʿāyah* and began writing this monograph. I gave it the title: *Iqāmah al-Ḥujjah ʿAlā Annal Ikthār Fī at-Taʿabbud Laysa Bi Bidʿah.* The title means: Establishing the Proof that Excessive Worship is not an Innovation. This is its name, but its title is *Nuṣrah al-ʿĀbidīn Bi Dafʿi Ṭaʿn al-Khāmidīn* (Assisting the Worshippers in Repulsing the Criticisms of the Silent and Dead) so that one may learn what it contains from the very beginning.

I hope that those who read this book may do so with an open and just mind.

What an excellent book and what an excellent synopsis of it in the introduction! The author made a brilliant point when he said that a bidʿah is

something which is not found in the first three eras of Islam and is not based on any of the four sources of Islamic law.

We learn from this that a practice which was found in the first three eras is not a bidʿah. While Ḥaḍrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Ṣāḥib raḥimahullāh helped the worshippers on one hand, he did us a favour by saying that a different rule applies to those who are weak and feeble. If excessive worship alone was required, weak people like us would have been finished.

A man used to say to me: "What is the matter! Those who do not have the capability go onto the side of Sufism while those who have the capability go onto the other side, i.e. in opposition to Sufism?" I replied: "This is not the case. It is not that their capability prevents them from coming onto this side. Rather, the incapability of this side – Sufism – prevents them from coming onto this side." I added: "Was Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī raḥimahullāh not a man of immense academic acumen? What about Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Ṣāḥib Nānautwī raḥimahullāh and Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī raḥimahullāh? And what about Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh? Were they not men of academic erudition?" The man actually wanted to level objections against people like us, this is why I said this to him.

Now listen! When Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh was overcome by a bond with Allāh taʿālā and the reality was exposed to him, he said: "I wasted a portion of my life in writing books."

These points came to my mind in-between. They are useful and essential, this is why I went into some detail.

The point I was speaking about is that there is a need for books so that we could make them our proofs and evidences. If not, how will we convey Dīn? Look at the article of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib rahimahullāh which I read to you. Look at how clearly he explained the matter and how he reconciled the Ahādīth and practices of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum. If this theme was not written in books, how would we have learnt it? If he were alive, we would have heard it from him. But since he is not present, there is no other way of benefiting from his knowledge. How, then, can it be claimed that all books are useless and that there is no need for them?

Maulānā Bahr al-ʿUlūm wrote a commentary to the *Mathnawī*. There was a complex issue which the ʿulamā' were finding difficult to understand. Maulānā Bahr al-ʿUlūm found a solution to it from a text of *Hidāyah* and presented it to them. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh was overjoyed and said that Maulānā is indeed bahr al-ʿulūm (an ocean of sciences). He became popular by this title ever since.

There is a need for books because people and personalities will not remain forever, but their speeches and writings will be preserved. Yes, the spiritual condition of a person is not found in books; that is found in the person himself. This is why there is a need for such people as well. Books are needed for knowledge while people of spiritual conditions are needed to acquire spiritual conditions. Knowledge is found in books while a spiritual condition is an attribute of the one who has it. While the saints wrote books on one hand, they developed people of spiritual conditions on the

other hand. Thus, their sciences are preserved and there are – in every era – people who bear their spiritual conditions. People of this nature will continue to be found until the day of Resurrection so that their sciences together with their spiritual conditions are preserved. The spiritual conditions of the Sufis cannot be fully appreciated until a person is himself a man of spiritual conditions. In other words, a person has to have some spiritual condition to fathom their sciences.

I said this for it to be noted down: The objections which are made against Sufism are not due to any fault in it. Rather it is due to the shortcomings of the Sufis of the time. The objection is therefore valid in the sense that those who were responsible for the preservation of the science displayed shortcomings in this regard. If they display shortcomings, those who are associated to them will commit even more shortcomings. In this way, the science itself will disappear. It is therefore essential for them to convey this science just as they teach the different forms of dhikr to their disciples. They must convey it so that people become conversant with it and the science is not wasted away. When the spiritual conditions and sciences of the Sufis were not conveyed, it resulted in deficiencies. Consequently, the original Sufism did not remain, and this is why objections were made against it. In reality, this is not an objection against Sufism because the original Sufism is not before them. After all, the original Sufism is exactly in line with the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. How, then, can anyone refute it?

A person belonging to the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth group came to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Thānwī raḥimahullāh. When he made any statement, Ḥaḍrat Maulānā would reply

to it with a Hadīth. He asked: "What is the need for Sufism?" Hadrat replied: "The Hadīth stresses great importance on enjoining good and forbidding evil." This is what the Sufis do. It requires knowledge. If a Sufi does not have knowledge himself, what will he teach to his disciples?

No matter which branch of knowledge a person belongs to, it is his duty to preserve it. Just as it is the duty of a shaykh to rectify his disciples, it is essential for him to preserve the science.

Action is easy, knowledge is difficult. If you pay a slight attention, you will be able to act. But the door of knowledge is wide. There is a need to revert to the 'ulamā' and those who are experts in this field. One will have to refer to books and see what the 'ulamā' of the past said about a particular issue. Only then is an issue solved. You may sit in one corner to engage in Allāh's remembrance, and develop some bond with Him. But it is difficult to encompass the various chapters of knowledge.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say that saintliness is a lauhā lāt (an iron bound club). He would then explain what this means: The Sharī'ah is a delicate thing. At every step a person has to ask about what is lawful and what is not. On the other hand, saintliness is such a lauhā lāt that even if you say "I am the truth", īmān will not leave you. If someone objects to such a statement, one could say that the person who made it was overcome by a spiritual condition and is therefore excused. As for the Sharī'ah, the slightest transgression will cause an 'ālim to reprimand the person and he will say that it is unlawful.

If a person has established a bond and love with Allāh ta'ālā, then it is possible for Allāh ta'ālā to

pardon him when he does something which is in conflict with the Sharīʿah. However, an ʿālim will issue a verdict stating it is in conflict with the Sharīʿah. This is because this is what his position demands.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh rendered immense services to Sufism just as he did to other sciences. This is what I want to present to you and expound before you. Hadrat rahimahullāh helped the Sufis fully and, at the same time, he fulfilled the right of the Sharīʿah.

Make duʿā Allāh taʿālā blesses me with good health so that I could expound on the services of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh. When people learn of this personality, they express remorse over their inability to understand him merely because others deluded and deceived them. This is what happens in every era. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā.

ASSEMBLY (2)

Maulānā Mūsā Sāhib used to quote this couplet quite often:

> We will never search any more because we have found the address. Now that we have found the Prophet sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, we have found Allāh taʿālā.

The meaning of the first line of the couplet is obvious. Since we have found the one whom we were looking for and recognized him, there is no need for us to search further. I say: When you have learnt the whereabouts of your quest and identified where he is, that is when you have to go looking for him. How are you going to search if you do not know the whereabouts? What, then, is the meaning of not searching after obtaining the address? The second line states:

> Now that we have found the Prophet sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, we have found Allāh taʿālā.

Here too it does not necessarily mean that if you have found Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam you will certainly find Allāh taʿālā. After all, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam arrived but the unbelievers rejected him and went to Hell. Similarly, flagrant sinners committed their sins while Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was watching them. After adopting unbelief and sin, how can we say that they found Allāh taʿālā?

Listen! When you find the Prophet, the rights of Allāh taʿālā increase, and it becomes necessary to obey Him. This is because a Prophet comes as a

representative of Allāh taʿālā. He is commissioned to introduce Allāh taʿālā to the creation and to enable them to recognize His rights.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say that those who rejected Allāh taʿālā were few while those who rejected the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām were many. A large number of unbelievers were monotheists but they did not accept the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. In other words, many people believed in Allāh taʿālā but they rejected the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. This is why they remained unbelievers. After all, īmān is a combination of belief in Allāh's oneness and the messenger-ship of His Messengers. If a person believes in the oneness of Allāh taʿālā but does not affirm messenger-ship, he cannot be referred to as a believer. Despite being a monotheist, he will be classified as an unbeliever.

I said that if you find the Prophet, it does not necessarily mean you will find Allāh taʿālā. This is because there are two ways of finding the Prophet. One is you find the Prophet and then find Allāh taʿālā through him. A person reaches Allāh taʿālā through the Prophet. The other is to reject and belie the Prophet through whom you will find Allāh taʿālā. A person disrespects him and does not fulfil the rights which are due to him. Such a person will never reach Allāh taʿālā.

Rejecting the heirs of the Prophet

This is what the unbelievers did with the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām – they rejected and belied them. This is why they did not reach Allāh taʿālā and were cast into the Hell-fire. In like manner, after the departure of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa

sallam, rejecters of every era did the same thing with his heirs. Although they found and met them, they rejected these heirs. And so, they remained deprived.

There were people who experienced the eras of very senior saints whose hearts were filled with immense light and who bore much spiritual power. Despite this, people opposed and rejected them. In fact, even their own children opposed them.

Hadrat Maulānā Fadl Rahmān Sāhib hailed from Safīpūr; he was not from Ganj Murādābād. When Maulānā went from Delhi to his hometown, the people got together and drove him out of Safīpūr. His son joined them in driving him out. Maulānā left without saying a word. Subsequently, Allāh ta'ālā conferred him with unparalleled spiritual heights. When he reached this high status, his son used to come to meet him. Maulānā would expel him because this wretched fellow was with those who drove him out. Maulānā's son from his second marriage would secretly give refuge to his step-brother, feed him, give him money and so on.

It is very easy to meet someone physically. In this regard, we are all meeting each other. Despite this, it may well be that our hearts are not joined.

There was a school teacher from Memon Singh. He used to come to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh in Thānah Bhawan. He was a Bengali, and rice is the staple diet of Bengalis. Whereas pulse is more common in western U.P. On one occasion, there were some dry rice grains in the rice which we were eating. Some of the pulse was also dry. The school teacher ate it as it was, but he said later on: "Today, the rice did not join with the pulse." People made this into a joke. Subsequently,

when they used to meet him, they would ask: “Did the rice join the pulse today?” He would respond with a laugh and so would they.

Now look! Just as the rice and pulse were eaten together but they did not join, we may be meeting physically but the hearts are not joined.

It is difficult to meet a person and to fulfil his right of respect and honour at the same time. After all, he is a chosen servant of Allāh taʿālā and inspired by Him. This is one of the challenging problems which was faced by the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām and their deputies as well.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh related: It was a hot day and I was sleeping on the roof of my house. Some people had assembled and were engaged in a conversation. I heard them mentioning my name several times. At first, I hesitated and was not sure whether it was really my name they were mentioning or someone else’s. I then concluded that they were in fact speaking about me and were wanting to take over the madrasah. I got down from the roof and proceeded to the house in which they were assembled. I knocked on the door. When they opened it, I said: “You people have been saying these things. The madrasah is here. You can come and take it tomorrow morning. However, the money which has come from outside has come because of people’s faith and confidence in me. I will give you the addresses of the people who sent the money to me. You may write to them and ask them for it. If they permit you, I will give the money over to you. And in future, you must ask them directly and you can run the madrasah.” Saying this, I offered salām to them and left. No one came to me the next morning.

The point I am making is that it is difficult to follow a Prophet and also difficult to follow his deputies and heirs.

In his explanation to the following verse, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh writes in *Bayān al-Qur'ān*:

وَالَّذِيْنَ تَبَوَّأُ الدَّارَ وَالْإِيْمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّوْنَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ.

> [This wealth] is for those who are abiding in this abode and in faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them.[1]

This booty is (also a right) for those who are abiding in Dār al-Islām (Madīnah) which is (their hometown) and in īmān before (the arrival of the Muhājirūn). (This does not necessarily mean that all the Ansār preceded all the Muhājirūn in īmān. The virtuous attribute contained in the words "abiding in this abode" refers to acquiring excellence in one's hometown – especially submission and servitude. This is a great attribute because there are many obstacles to it in one's hometown. Also, if a person enjoys leadership and authority, it causes a worse blight against him.)

Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib Pānīpattī rahimahullāh writes in his commentary to the above verse: Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu 'anhu used to distribute the booty equally among the people. On the other hand, Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu used to give preference on the basis of the Hereafter. In other

[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 9.

words, those who were superior as regards the Hereafter used to receive a larger share of the booty.

Some wealth came to Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu and he distributed it equally among the people. Each person received twenty dirhams. Someone came to him and said: "O khalīfah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam! You distributed this wealth equally among the people whereas there are some people who enjoy extra virtue and are pioneers in embracing Islam. It would have been better if you gave preference to them and given them more than what you gave the others on the basis of their superiority."

Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu replied: "Allāh taʿālā has taken it upon Himself to reward the pioneers." In other words, they will receive superior rewards in the Hereafter on the basis of their superiority. As for this wealth, it is a source of livelihood in this world. It is better to distribute it equally.

When Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu became the caliph and astronomical amounts of booty came to him, he gave preference to the people of virtue. He said: "We cannot treat those who joined Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in the battles equally. They will have to be given some preference." He then allocated certain additional shares for the pioneers among the Muhājirūn and Ansār. Those who participated in the Battle of Badr received five thousand. Those who embraced Islam after Badr received a little less. In short, he distributed the booty on the basis of their ranks and virtues.[1]

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[1] *Tafsīr Mazharī*, vol. 9, p. 246.

These people really understood the verses well. What can we understand!?

Listen further! From the males, Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu enjoys the greatest superiority. From the females, it is Hadrat Khadījah radiyallāhu ʿanhā. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was married to her. The unbelievers used to make various accusations against Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam but they could do nothing to him because he was married to her and she was a wealthy woman. The wealthy people of Makkah could no longer say to him that he was the orphan of Abū Tālib. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard:

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنٰى.

> Did He not find you in need and made you self-sufficient?[1]

In other words, He made you self-sufficient through the wealth of Hadrat Khadījah radiyallāhu ʿanhā.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā was the daughter of Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu. Allāh taʿālā blessed here with immense creedal excellences. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam loved her deeply. However, the love which the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām and auliyā' have is creedal; it is not physical. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam used to think of Hadrat Khadījah rahimahullāh a lot. Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said to him on one occasion: "You speak of Khadījah quite often whereas Allāh taʿālā gave you a wife better than her (she was referring to herself)." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu

[1] Sūrah Duhā, 93: 8.

ʿalayhi wa sallam replied: “Certainly not. He did not give me a wife better than her. She believed in me when everyone else belied me.” In other words, the unbelievers of Makkah accused me of being a liar. She was also a wealthy woman, so she ought to have joined them. Despite this, she affirmed my prophet-hood. He continues: “She was the one who aided me when everyone abandoned me.”

Look! While speaking in her favour, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam says that she gave him wealth when everyone else denied him. He makes mention of wealth because there is a need for it as well. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī rahimahullāh was a highly regarded ascetic. He said: “If we had no wealth, the affluent ones would have wiped us out.” In other words, because we have wealth, the wealthy and affluent look up to us and do not treat us with contempt.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh writes in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*:

Allāh taʿālā fulfilled the material needs of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam through the enthusiasm and assistance of Hadrat Khadījah radiyallāhu ʿanhā. She was from among the wealthy women of the Quraysh.

This is an obvious point, and there is a clear text to support it:

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنٰى.

> Did He not find you in need and made you self-sufficient?[1]

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[1] Sūrah Duhā, 93: 8.

However, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh adds another point which, when I explained to some people, caused them to salivate. He writes:

وكذلك من أحبه الله يدبر له في عباده.

In like manner, when Allāh loves a person, He appoints one of His servants to make arrangements for him.

In other words, He causes some of His servants to become faithful to the person who then spend with an open heart on him. This is also a divine arrangement. The person [close friend of Allāh] has cast aside all planning and held on to the Being who is the sole planner. And so, Allāh ta'ālā sees to his needs. What is so difficult for Him? He appoints many servants for the fulfilment of his needs.

This is a beautiful observation made by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh.

There are many incidents of this nature in the lives of the auliyā'. What, then, can be said about the Prophets 'alayhimus salām? They cast aside this world completely.

I heard this story from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī rahimahullāh:

A non-Muslim brought the twelve gem stones of Persia and presented them to a saint. The latter became angry and the effects of his anger were visible on his face. He looked towards the rocks of the nearby jungle and they all turned into gem stones. He wanted to show the man that he has been blessed with this status, he does not need him to bring these gem stones and present them to him. The non-Muslim said: "Give me a share of the

independence which you have." The saint replied: "You cannot get it if you do not have Islam." The man embraced Islam there and then. Subsequently, he became a great walī through the saint's spiritual focus.

There are countless stories of this nature from the lives of the saints. We conclude from them that the one who holds on to Allāh taʿālā never suffers loss. Allāh taʿālā gives from the thing which causes you to drown. In other words, you have not come onto this path under the assumption that if you do, your needs will not be fulfilled. This is a wrong assumption because it negates tauhīd to believe that you are going to make your own arrangements for your livelihood. Tauhīd means you must adopt the means while placing your trust in the Creator of the means.

It is not permissible to disregard the Creator of the means

Tawakkul does not mean abandoning of means but moving one's gaze away from the means. In other words, one must adopt the means but focus the gaze on the Creator of the means. This is the reality of tawakkul. How can a person believe in the oneness of Allāh taʿālā and then let it go to waste!? Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَنْ يَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ.

> Whoever places his trust in Allāh, He is sufficient for him.

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا وَّيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبْ.

> Whoever fears Allāh, He makes a way out for him and provides for him from [sources] he did not even think about.[1]

Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī rahimahullāh writes that there was a Sufi. He had some food and drink kept aside, and was occupied in Allāh's remembrance. He had very little food and abstained from eating it out of fear that if he did, it will get finished. In the meantime, Allāh taʿālā had ordered an angel to replace the food once he eats it. When he eats it again, more must be kept in its place. The angel was ordered to continue doing this. But this Sufi just did not understand this. His gaze was on the means and not on the Creator of the means. Yet he was a Sufi!? Consequently, he passed away [for not eating the food] and the food was left uneaten as it had been.

He lacked reliance on Allāh taʿālā. Bearing in mind he was not engaged in any trade or other source of income, and there seemed to be no outward means, he ought to have focused his gaze more on Allāh taʿālā but he could not understand this.

Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir

Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī rahimahullāh entered the madrasah, sat in his place of assembly and said:

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[1] Sūrah at-Talāq, 65: 3.

It is said about ʿAbdullāh ibn Mubārak rahimahullāh that a beggar came to him and asked for food. He had nothing apart from ten eggs. He ordered his slave woman to give the ten eggs to the beggar. She gave nine eggs and kept one aside. When the sun was about to set, someone came and knocked on the door and said: "Take this basket." ʿAbdullāh ibn Mubārak went outside and took the basket from the man. He looked inside and saw the eggs. When he counted them, he realized there were nine eggs. He asked his slave woman: "What did you do with the one egg? How many eggs did you give to the beggar?" She replied: "I gave him nine and kept aside one. Because you were fasting, I thought to myself you can open your fast with it." He said: "You caused a loss to all ten eggs."

After relating this incident, Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī rahimahullāh said:

This was the type of bond which our pious predecessors had with Allāh taʿālā. They had full conviction that whatever they give, it will be replaced. If they give one, they will get back ten. Allāh taʿālā says:

مَنْ جَآء بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا

> Whoever comes with one good deed, for him is ten times the like thereof.[1]

This is what is referred to when it is said:

يؤمنون ويصدقون بما ورد في الكتاب والسنة.

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 160.

> Our pious predecessors used to believe in and affirm whatever is mentioned in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

They did not act against the Qur'ān in their actions, doings, and transactions.

They made an agreement with Allāh taʿālā and they made profits in it. This is why they held on to Him. They found His door open and entered it. They saw the doors of others closed, so they kept away from them. When there was a conflict of interest between Allāh taʿālā and everyone else, they sided with Allāh taʿālā. They did not bother in the least about others in conflict with Allāh taʿālā. When Allāh taʿālā disliked someone, they disliked him. When Allāh taʿālā liked someone, they liked him.

They did not bother about the criticism of anyone in their dealings with Allāh taʿālā. They feared no one in upholding the limits of Allāh taʿālā and establishing His Sharīʿah.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful story! And what an inspiring explanation by Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī rahimahullāh.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh once mentioned tauhīd afʿālī (oneness in actions) to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib Muhājir Makkī rahimahullāh - that he was experiencing them and these are the stations which he reached. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh was highly pleased.

This is what the spiritual mentors ought to teach. It is through tauhīd afʿālī that a person acquires the stations of tawakkul, radā bil qadā, tafwīd and taslīm (reliance on Allāh taʿālā, acceptance of His

decree, and complete submission and acceptance to Him).

The *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm* contains the following story:

Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām was proceeding towards Mt. Ṭūr. He came across a rock which was crying. He asked it: "Why are you crying?" The rock replied: "Out of fear for the Hell-fire because Allāh taʿālā says:

فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِيْ وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

> Beware of that fire whose fuel is men and rocks.[1]

The rock continues: "Since you are going to Allāh taʿālā, I request you to intercede in my favour so that Allāh taʿālā may leave me out of it."

Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām was so immersed in his conversation with Allāh taʿālā that he forgot to mention the rock. Allāh taʿālā Himself asked him: "Did you bring the intercession of anyone?" He replied: "Yes. A rock was crying and requested me to ask You to protect it from the fire of Hell." Allāh taʿālā said: "On your return you must inform it that I have given it salvation."

Ḥaḍrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām informed the rock. After many days, he happened to pass by the same place and saw the rock crying as it had been previously. He asked: "Why are you crying now?" The rock replied: "How can I abandon the One who gave me salvation?" In other words, it was because of my crying that I received salvation, so I should continue

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 24.

crying to Him. We learn from this that crying is an admirable action.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to relate this story repeatedly, and we used to enjoy it. He used to add: "The saints have even more love for the thing which conveys them to Allāh taʿālā. And so, they never give it up."

Someone said to Hadrat Junayd rahimahullāh: "You have already reached Allāh taʿālā, why are you occupied in His remembrance? What is the need for it?" He replied: "Allāh's remembrance is the means through which we reach Allāh taʿālā. How, then, can we abandon it?" In other words, now that we learnt that it has an influence in taking us closer to Allāh taʿālā, we ought to adhere to it even more so that we can get closer to Him. One can never get enough proximity to Allāh taʿālā.

Someone said to Hadrat Junayd rahimahullāh: "Some people claim to have reached Allāh taʿālā so they do not need to fulfil the obligations of the Sharīʿah such as salāh and fasting. These are means to reaching Him. Now that the objective has been realized, there is no need for them." Hadrat Junayd rahimahullāh replied: "They are correct in saying they have reached, however they have reached the Hell-fire."

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to explain this theme quite often and we used to enjoy it. He used to quote this poem:

> A nightingale had a petal of a beautiful flower in its beak and was wailing in this state of connection. I asked: "Why are you wailing while you are in this state of connection?" It replied: "It is the

magnificence of the beloved which has maintained me in this condition."

The tears of the crying which precedes connecting with Allāh taʿālā are hot while the tears which flow after connection with Him are cold.

We observed those who cried after the demise of Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh. Their tears were hot. When they cried while he was living, their tears were cold. This is something which we observed and cannot be denied.

ASSEMBLY (3)

A disciple of a saint came and complained to him saying: “One of our Sufis has consumed alcohol and is lying in a stupor.” The disciple said this in a scornful tone, so the saint was displeased with him. But he did not reprimand him for backbiting and for deriding someone in his presence. The saint did not say any of these things. Instead, he reproached him in a saintly manner and said: “It is certainly a terrible blight on the Sufis that someone from among them consumes alcohol in this way and lies down inebriated. You should therefore go and bring him here.” The disciple went, carried him and proceeded towards his shaykh. Anyone who saw the two on the road commented: “The alcoholic is completely drunk and this fellow is semi-drunk.” The disciple continued hearing these remarks but he had to carry out his shaykh’s order so he continued on his way silently. The shaykh had planned this so that the disciple may realize the repugnance of backbiting by himself and never do such a thing in the future.

Man may commit a sin due to human constraints. His carnal self may prompt him to commit a minor or major sin. However, he does not have the right to look down on others and belittle them. Allāh taʿālā has the sole right of pardoning whomever He wills and punishing whomever He wills. He can pardon the worst of major sins and take someone to task for the smallest mistake.

Allāh taʿālā wants the affairs of His servants to remain solely with Him. People should not interfere more than what their status demands. This is why we should abstain from looking at anyone with

scorn. There may be many whom we consider to be evil in this world but we will see them of high rank in the Hereafter. We are committing major shortcomings in this regard.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh quoted a Hadīth in *Hayāt al-Muslimīn* from Hadrat Muʿādh rahimahullāh who said: "If a person commits a sin and another laughs at him because of it, then the latter will not die until he himself commits the same sin."

This is the consequence of belittling someone. Yes, there is no harm in advising the person by way of concern for his wellbeing. One way of doing this is to speak to him in privacy without exposing his sin to anyone. Allāh taʿālā knows well the one who desires the wellbeing of another and the one whose intention it is to disgrace and humiliate. There are very few who advise out of concern for the person's wellbeing. The majority of people deride and ridicule the person.

A real Dīnī environment

A person wrote to me saying: "A Dīnī environment has been created here." I say in this regard: Is this a small thing that people are at least talking in this manner? This too is a boon. However, a real Dīnī environment is when no one wrongs another, no one backbites another and no one causes hurt to another. Nowadays there is no Dīnī environment even in our madāris and Dīnī institutions. I don't know what people are teaching and studying that a Dīnī environment is not being created. After all, what is a Dīnī environment?

It means there has to be knowledge, practice on that knowledge and discussions on it. Creating a Dīnī

environment has now become a totally separate issue. People do not even want to bring it on their tongues. Countless lectures are delivered. If this subject were to be mentioned in those lectures, we will at least see people talking about it. A Dīnī environment will then be created and no one will cause harm to another.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh says:

> Paradise is the name of the place where there will be no discomfort and no inflicting of harm on anyone. There will be no disputing and arguing with anyone.

The greatest thing in Paradise will be the absence of injury and offence. And the greatest action in this world is to abstain from looking down at a sinner with scorn.

Allāh's greatest attributes are those of pardon and mercy. And they are manifested after a sin. This is what the poet is referring to when he says:

> O Shaykh! A sin is the reflection of Allāh's pardon and mercy. Therefore, do not look at sinners with contempt. After all, they are the manifestations of Allāh's pardon and mercy.

By using the words "O Shaykh!", the poet is drawing attention to the point that although you are a shaykh, you cannot understand even this much that you should not consider sinners to be insignificant. What kind of shaykh are you!?

This is a difficult pass. This is where the carnal self influences a person. The moment he starts engaging

in a few forms of dhikr, he looks down at others with contempt. He then experiences the disastrous consequences of this.

I have seen it with my own eyes. The moment a person makes snide remarks about others, he is taken to task within a few days. People say: "Look! This fellow was speaking ill of such and such person and now he is caught up in the same evil trait and has been humiliated." This quality is a toxic poison for the Sufis, so they will have to rectify their own character. There is no need for them to worry about setting right others. If they were to rectify themselves, countless others will be rectified automatically. Unfortunately, they do not want to examine their selves. This is why I always say: As long as you do not subdue your carnal self and do not rectify your character, you cannot attain to any rank. If you were to present your carnal self in Allāh's court, it will be rejected.

Allāh's forgiveness

I heard this story several times from Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Thānwī raḥimahullāh and it is to be found in his lectures.

There was a very senior muḥaddith who was from among the teachers of Imām Bukhārī. He passed away and was presented before Allāh taʿālā. When he was about to be taken to task for something, he fell silent. Allāh taʿālā said: "O you old man! Why are you not saying anything?" He replied: "I am astonished by one thing." Allāh taʿālā asked: "What is that?" He replied: "I learnt one Ḥadīth." He then quoted the entire Ḥadīth as follows:

روى فلان عن فلان عن فلان...قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إن الله يستحيي ذي الشيبة المسلم. أو كما قال.

...Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Allāh taʿālā feels ashamed at a grey-haired Muslim.

The muhaddith continued: "But here I am seeing the opposite happening. This is why I am astonished. I'm not sure if this narration is authentic or the narrators erred." Allāh taʿālā said: "The Hadīth is authentic, its narrators are truthful and so is My Messenger. We are certainly ashamed of an old Muslim. Go! I have pardoned you because of your old age."

The matter in the Hereafter will be completely different. We will see and experience many astonishing things.

Concern for one's rectification

This is why I say to you to be concerned about your own self in this world. Abstain from looking down on others and belittling them.

When I quoted the following poem to a scholar, he was overjoyed and said: "You have grasped the elixir of life." The poem reads:

As long as we were not aware of our own selves, we continued looking at the faults and excellences of others. The moment our gaze fell on our selves, we did not find anyone worse than us.

The moment you realize that you are the most evil, you will have no right whatsoever to look at others with scorn.

The scholar added that this is a poem compiled by Bahādur Shāh Zafar. He then quoted another poem of his:

> O Zafar! Do not consider that person to be a human no matter how intelligent he may be. He is the one who does not remember Allāh when he is enjoying a good life, and does not fear Him when he is angry.

After all, there is no intelligence when a person forgets Allāh taʿālā.

A story portraying self-conceit

I had explained to you yesterday that excessive wealth causes transgression and excessive action causes self-conceit. I want you to understand from where transgression and self-conceit are born. The fundamental reason for it is that wealth is a bounty from Allāh taʿālā. In like manner, the ability to do good actions is through the inspiration of Allāh taʿālā. It is also a gift from Him. If a person attributes it to himself and considers it to be the result of his excellence and earning, then it is self-conceit and transgression.

I heard Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh saying: "We had everything, but when we considered it to be ours, everything was snatched away."

You can measure saintliness in the same way. In other words, if you believe it to be your own excellence and that you acquired it through your

striving; it will be snatched away from you. Self-conceit always stems from the belief that an excellence is self-earned. If a person does not believe it to be his own earning but a royal gift [from Allāh taʿālā], he will never have self-conceit. This is what the saints feared the most.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to explain it with an example. If a king gives a royal shawl to an ordinary subject, he must accept it and express his gratitude for it. At the same time, he must humble himself and bear in mind his low status. If he believes himself to be lowly and ineligible for this gift, and that the king conferred this honour to him solely out of his kindness, then this is humility. But if he believes he was eligible for it and he shows off with it, then it entails ingratitude coupled with transgression.

In like manner, if a servant receives a gift from Allāh taʿālā, he must be grateful for it and be mindful of the fact that he was certainly not eligible for it. Allāh taʿālā gave it to him solely out of His kindness. If he does not express gratitude, it will be as if he considered the gift of Allāh taʿālā to be insignificant. This is self-conceit and he will be classified as a criminal.

The saints used to combine gratitude with humbleness. They believed that although they were unworthy, Allāh taʿālā blessed them with this bounty. This is why it is obligatory to give thanks to Him. They never attributed it to their own skill nor considered it to be their personal achievement.

Wilāyat is also a gift from Allāh taʿālā. It is obligatory to be grateful for it. However, if a person commits excesses against his fellow brothers and treats them with contempt, then this is not

humility. It is difficult when a person receives a high rank to couple it with humility.

Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh said that the reality of tajassus (spying) is when a person does not leave others under the cover of Allāh taʿālā. This means that Allāh taʿālā concealed their faults while the person exposes them. He adds: Had you left what you exposed concealed, it would have been safer for your Dīn and heart.

Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh goes into much detail on this subject. He quotes a Ḥadīth which states that Allāh taʿālā has mad sacrosanct the life and wealth of every Muslim. He also prohibited evil thoughts about him. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ، وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا، اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ.

> O believers! Abstain from much suspicion. Surely some suspicions amount to sin. Neither spy on one another nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? You abhor it.[1]

Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh says that spying is one of the consequences of evil thoughts. This is because the heart does not suffice with thoughts; it wants to investigate. And to turn the thought into

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49: 12.

conviction, the person becomes occupied in spying which then results in backbiting.

This one verse prohibits all three in sequence, viz. suspicion, spying and backbiting.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of great wisdom and cognition from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. May Allāh taʿālā reward him. (compiler)

The narration which I quoted from *Hayātul Muslimīn* has been quoted by the author of *Mishkāt* from *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. It reads thus:

عن معاذ قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من عير أخاه بذنب لم يمت حتى يعمله. يعني من ذنب قد تاب منه. رواه الترمذي.

> Muʿādh radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: If a person commits a sin and another laughs at him because of it, then the latter will not die until he himself commits the same sin. (This refers to a sin from which the person had repented.)

The author of *Mishkāt* says that the person will commit the same sin or one similar to it. The narrator says that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam refers to a sin from which the person had repented and this person still scorns him for it. This means that if he has already repented, then it is as though he has no sin.

التائب من الذنب كمن لا ذنب له.

> The one who repents from a sin is like one who has no sin.

This is a Hadīth. How, then, can it be permissible for you to criticize the person?

He then adds:

> قال ميرك هذا التفسير منقول عن الإمام أحمد.

Mīrak said that this explanation is narrated from Imām Ahmad rahimahullāh.

I say: This is correct. However, how can you know whether the person repented from the sin or not? We will therefore say unilaterally that it is prohibited to criticize a person for any sin because it may well be that he repented from it.

The author of *Mirqāt* quotes that a Bedouin came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and asked him for advice. He said:

> فقال عليك بتقوى الله وإن امرؤ عيرك بشيء يعلمه فيك فلا تعير بيشيء تعلمه فيه يكن وباله عليه وأجره لك.[1]

> Adhere to Allāh-consciousness. If a person scorns you for something which he knows is in you, then you must not scorn him for something which you know is in him. In this way, the punishment for it will be on him and you will receive the reward for it.

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح: ج ٢، ص ٤١٤.

When the Bedouin asked Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for advice, he advised him to fear Allāh taʿālā. This shows how much Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam practised on the Qur'ān. After all, Allāh taʿālā advised the adoption of taqwā (fear of Allāh taʿālā):

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنِ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ.

> We commanded the previous people of the Book and you to continually fear Allāh.[1]

When the Bedouin asked Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for advice, he advised him the same thing. That is, he must fear Allāh taʿālā because this is what He commanded. The second piece of advice which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam gave to him is when anyone ridicules him, he must not retaliate by ridiculing him.

If these lessons and teachings are conveyed to people, they will benefit tremendously. However, who is there to convey these teachings?

Now listen to another Hadīth:

Wāthilah ibn Asqaʿ radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

لَا تُظْهِرِ الشَّمَاتَةَ لِأَخِيْكَ فَيَرْحَمُهُ اللّٰهُ وَيَبْتَلِيْكَ.[2]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 131.

[2] سنن الترمذي: ٢٥٠٦.

> Do not express joy over the plight of your (Muslim) brother (i.e. over a worldly, Dīnī, physical or monetary harm). It may well be that Allāh taʿālā will show mercy to him and cause you to fall in that plight.

The commentator writes:

المعنى يرحمه إرغاما لأنفك ويبتليك حيث زكيت نفسك ورفعت منزلتك عليه.

Allāh taʿālā will show mercy to him to humiliate you. (You thought that this person can never achieve any status while you will reach it through your physical power. Allāh taʿālā will put you into tribulation because you considered yourself to be pure and assumed you have a superior position than his.

I have seen this with my own eyes, this is why I am relating it to you. There were people who received lofty spiritual ranks but these were snatched away from them when they looked down on others. This is because they were deprived of the character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam; and his greatest characteristic was his humility. Scorning sinners totally negates humility. This is why Allāh taʿālā deprived them of lofty spiritual conditions.

The story of a claimant/impostor

The author of *Mirqāt* relates the story which occurred in one of the nations of the past. In his pride, a man said to his companion: "By Allāh, Allāh taʿālā will never pardon you." Allāh said to the sinner: "You must enter Paradise through My mercy." And He said to the other one: "Do you have

the power to stop My mercy from reaching My servant? You may now go to the Hell-fire."

This is the same Hadīth whose translation Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh quotes in his *Būstān* and which I related in detail to you. Towards the end, Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh presents the following conclusion:

> It is common practice to remember the words of the intelligentsia. O Saʿdī! Remember this one point from this story: The sinner who is fearful of Allāh taʿālā is superior to the pious person who is proud about his worship.

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "I do not like any person's [evil] action being mentioned before me even if I am given so much and so much." In other words, I abhor anyone relating another's fault even if I am given this world and whatever is in it. This is because it is an evil habit to relate the faults of others. Kings may do it for material gains, but what does a Prophet need this world for? Why, then, should he bear to hear anything detestable for the sake of worldly gain? This action is detested because it entails backbiting regarding which there are clear and explicit texts.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh related this Hadīth in *Hayāt al-Muslimīn:*

عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ رَاٰى عَوْرَةً فَسَتَرَهَا كَانَ كَمَنْ أَحْيَى مَوْءُوْدَةً.[1]

Hadrat ʻUqbah ibn ʻĀmir radiyallāhu ʻanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam said: "A person who sees a fault in another but conceals it (i.e. he does not relate it to others) is like one who saved the life of a girl who was to be buried alive."

From here we learn that exposing the fault of a person is synonymous to burying the person alive. The living of a person with faults is worse than death.

Listen further! Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam made the following supplication:

وَاَنْتَ رَجَآئِيْ، فَكَمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ اَنْعَمْتَ بِهَا عَلَيَّ قَلَّ لَكَ بِهَا شُكْرِيْ، وَكَمْ مِّنْ بَلِيَّةٍ ابْتَلَيْتَنِيْ بِهَا قَلَّ لَكَ بِهَا صَبْرِيْ، فَيَا مَنْ قَلَّ عِنْدَ نِعْمَتِهِ شُكْرِيْ فَلَمْ يَحْرِمْنِيْ، وَيَا مَنْ قَلَّ عِنْدَ بَلِيَّتِهِ صَبْرِيْ فَلَمْ يَخْذُلْنِيْ، وَيَا مَنْ رَاٰنِيْ عَلَى الْخَطَايَا فَلَمْ يَفْضَحْنِيْ.

You alone are my hope. Many a favour You bestowed upon me for which my gratitude

[1] أبو داؤد: ٤٨٩١. النسائي: ٧٢٨١. أحمد: ١٧٣٣٢.

to You was very little. Many a calamity You tested me with, over which my patience was very little. O the One for whose favour my gratitude was very little, yet He did not deprive me. And O the One over whose calamity my patience was very little, yet He did not abandon me. O the One who saw me committing sins, yet He did not disgrace me.

يَا ذَا الْمَعْرُوْفِ الَّذِيْ لَا يَنْقَضِيْ اَبَدًا، وَّيَا ذَا النَّعْمَآءِ الَّتِيْ لَا تُحْصٰى اَبَدًا، اَسْاَلُكَ اَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَّبِكَ اَدْرَاُ فِيْ نُحُوْرِ الْاَعْدَآءِ وَالْجَبَابِرَةِ.

O the giver of favours which never end! O the possessor of bounties which can never be counted! I ask You to send perfect mercy upon Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the family of Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It is only through Your power that I advance against the enemies and tyrants.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam says further:

اَللّٰهُمَّ احْرُسْنِيْ بِعَيْنِكَ الَّتِيْ لَا تَنَامُ، وَاكْنُفْنِيْ بِرُكْنِكَ الَّذِيْ لَا يُرَامُ، وَارْحَمْنِيْ بِقُدْرَتِكَ عَلَيَّ فَلَا اَهْلِكَ

O Allāh! Guard me through Your eye which never sleeps, embrace me with Your strength from which no one can be separated, have mercy on me through the

power which You have over me so that I am not destroyed.

Listen! When Allāh taʿālā starts pardoning the sinners on the day of Resurrection and changes their bad deeds into good ones, people will start admitting each of their sins. Mercy is the greatest thing which will benefit a person in the Hereafter. Initially, people will try to conceal their sins. But when they see Allāh taʿālā changing bad deeds into good ones, they will say: "O Allāh! I committed this sin and that sin as well." They will think to themselves that there is no need to conceal their sins. They will admit their sins because they will see an open display of pardon and mercy.

A poet says in this regard:

O Shaykh! A sin is the reflection of Allāh's pardon and mercy. Therefore, do not look at sinners with contempt.

The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām had the greatest recognition of Allāh taʿālā. This is why they never looked at their own obedience. They understood that their worship was nothing in comparison to the grand status of Allāh taʿālā. This is why they repented and sought forgiveness continuously. The same can be said of the auliyā'. Those who look down at sinners do so out of negligence. Had they been concerned about their own selves and were focused on the Hereafter, they would have no time to look at the faults of others. When concern for the Hereafter overcomes a person, he worries about it all the time. It does not allow him to sit back. He is conscious of it in everything, and every action is for the Hereafter.

The story of a saint

There was a saint who used to sell gravy. People would come and buy from him, but they would pay him with counterfeit money. They assumed he could not differentiate between genuine and counterfeit money, he was a fool, and they should continue deceiving him. Whereas he knew fully well what was happening and could identify counterfeit money. When he was about to depart from this world, he said: "O Allāh! You know well that throughout my life I had been accepting counterfeit money from Your servants. I beg You to accept my counterfeit actions today and to pardon me."

People thought he was a fool but look at how intelligent he turned out to be! After all, he was doing actions which would benefit him in Allāh's court. There can be no greater intelligence.

There was another saint who had a small beard. He used to pass by a woman's shop. When she used to see him, she used to mock at him and say: "Whose beard is better, yours or my goat's?" The saint would remain silent and continue on his way.

The saint bore her taunts for his entire life. When he was about to pass away from this world, he advised that when he dies, his funeral bier must be made to pass by the woman's shop. The saint's followers carried out his bequest. When his funeral bier reached the woman's shop, he sat up, passed his hand over his beard and said: "All praise is due to Allāh, today my beard is better than your goat's." After saying this, he lied down once again.

Look! He did not say anything throughout his life because he was in constant fear. He did not know what is to happen. But once he died on īmān and

heard the glad tiding of Paradise, he said: “All praise is due to Allāh, today my beard is better than your goat’s.”

Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf was a notorious tyrant just as the justice of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz was well known. People used to say that Ḥajjāj will not be pardoned. When he was about to pass away, he said: “O Allāh! People say that Ḥajjāj will not be pardoned. I beg You to pardon me so that Your mercy may be displayed and people may say: ‘Allāh even pardoned a tyrant.’” The seniors say that his supplication was accepted and he was pardoned. All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā.

The purpose of relating these stories is to show that the affair of the Hereafter is in the unseen. No one knows what decision will be passed about anyone. Thus, no one has the right to scorn and belittle others. Each person must worry about his own self and he must abstain from looking at anyone with scorn.

If you ponder over these points and practise accordingly, you will be protected against many evils.

Note: May Allāh taʿālā inspire all Muslims to practise on these valuable and rare pieces of advice of Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥul Ummat raḥimahullāh. Āmīn. (compiler)

ASSEMBLY (4)

Sayyid Ahmad Kabīr Rifāʿī rahimahullāh was an erudite Sufi and powerful reformer of his time. He advises the ʿulamāʾ as follows:

Your claims to knowledge have destroyed you. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from knowledge which does not benefit." Now you tell me, how can you be proud over the knowledge from which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam sought refuge? O beloved! Remain at my door because the time and moments which you spend at my door will be the time for you to turn to Allāh taʿālā. This is because our turning to Allāh taʿālā has become correct. Therefore, anyone who comes to us is also inspired to turn to Him.

Look! He is saying: "O beloved! Remain at my door." He then explains the reason for it, viz. "our turning to Allāh taʿālā has become correct." When a person's turning to Allāh taʿālā becomes correct, and he develops sincerity and honesty in himself, he has the right to invite others towards himself so that he can set right their turning to Allāh taʿālā and create truthfulness in it. He understands that his turning has become correct, so the turning of others will become correct through him. As for the one whose turning to Allāh is not correct as yet and he has not developed truthfulness within him, it will not be correct for him to make such statements. Instead, it will merely be a claim and self-praise.

Shaykh Rifāʿī rahimahullāh says further on:

Allāh taʿālā says:

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ.

> Follow the path of the one who has turned to Me.[1]

By saying this, Shaykh Rifāʿī rahimahullāh is practising on the above verse.[2]

The Shaykh says in another place:

Friends! Adhere to Allāh's remembrance because it is the magnet to reaching Allāh taʿālā. It is the means of proximity to Him. The one who remembers Allāh taʿālā develops affinity with Him. The one who has affinity with Him, reaches Him. However, remember that Allāh's remembrance becomes embedded in the heart through the company of the saints. A person adopts the ways of his friend. Attach yourself with people in whose hearts the remembrance of Allāh taʿālā is firmly embedded; and you too will acquire this treasure. If you were to remain in the company of negligent ones or in solitude, you will not acquire this treasure. Develop a bond with us. Our company is a tried and tested elixir. Remaining aloof from us is a toxic poison.

The Shaykh said:

> Adhere to Allāh's remembrance because it is the magnet to reaching Allāh taʿālā. It is the means of proximity to Him.

I say: This is its fundamental objective. The prerequisite for it is for a person to be true to himself and to have a genuine quest. If Allāh's

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[1] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

[2] *Al-Bunyān al-Mushayyad*, p. 55.

remembrance is done with these prerequisites, it will certainly be a magnet to reaching Him. But if it is adulterated by anything else, then not only will it not convey him to Allāh taʿālā, it may cause him to become insane and lose his mind. We personally saw people going insane because of loud dhikr. Some of them died in that state.

The Shaykh said:

> Develop a bond with us. Our company is a tried and tested elixir.

The love for this world, love for name and fame, and love for wealth are different types of poisons. Just as an antidote puts an end to the effect of a poison, in like manner the company of Ahlullāh puts an end to love for this world, love for name and fame, and love for wealth. The Ahlullāh have put an end to these things from their hearts. Thus, the person who remains in their company will also have them removed from his heart. After all, the effect of companionship is inevitable. Companionship most certainly has an effect.

The Shaykh said:

> Remaining aloof from us is a toxic poison.

I am adding another point to it. Just as the companionship of saints is an elixir – provided the preconditions of honesty and a genuine quest are fulfilled – in like manner, finding a saint, going to him and still not acquiring sincerity, and still not developing honesty and a genuine quest is a punishment for the person.

Sayyid Rifāʿī rahimahullāh is saying that remaining aloof from us is a toxic poison. But I am saying that

it is not only remaining aloof which is a toxic poison, but even when a person remains close to the saints but does not fulfil the prerequisites of companionship.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is certainly a point of training and rectification which every seeker ought to bear in mind. (compiler)

Hypocrites used to come and present themselves before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. They used to take oaths in Allāh's name. At the same time, they harboured hypocrisy, rejection and enmity in their hearts. They were then destroyed because of this.

The Shaykh continues:

> Who is going to prompt you towards action, and who is going to treat the poison which is inside you?

Sayyid Rifāʿī rahimahullāh is making reference to ostentation. All the saints say that sincerity cannot be developed if ostentation is not removed. But today, all these things have been removed from the Tarīqah. People assume that their physical closeness is everything. Do you ever hear any discussions on the repugnance of ostentation and other similar maladies? It seems as though people have banished these discussions. The Prophetic teachings are being obliterated one after the other. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib was reading the above article of Sayyid Rifāʿī rahimahullāh aloud. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said to him: "Maulwī Jāmī! Listen to one point."

A person in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh was experiencing excellent spiritual conditions through the blessings of Hadrat. He then returned to his hometown. He related this to me:

When I returned home, I addressed the seniors of my family and said to them in astonishment: "I have brought back the [spirituality] which has left you." The moment I said this, the spiritual conditions which I had received from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh were snatched away from me."

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh had conveyed him to high ranks.

The most harmful malady in this path is self-conceit. Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī rahimahullāh says that Shaytān was cursed because of the same self-conceit. When a person receives spiritual conditions by virtue of remaining in the company of the Ahlullāh, he develops self-conceit.

No matter how astray a person may have been, when he remained in the company of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh, he was rectified. The one who remained aloof from him did not come right. This is because as long as a person remained in Hadrat's company, Hadrat would diagnose from where he went astray, and then rectify him accordingly.

Note: May Allāh taʿālā create more and more reformers of this nature so that the Muslim nation can be reformed. Āmīn. (compiler)

When a person comes onto this path, people start referring to him as a pious and righteous man. This is when he gets spoilt, considers himself to be a

saint and makes claims to perfection. How, then, will he progress?

The *Gulistān* makes mention of a wrestler.

There was a wrestler who taught his student the art of wrestling, how to drop his opponent, and made him an expert wrestler. Other wrestlers failed to drop him. When he reached this level, he mentioned in the presence of the king: “My teacher certainly has superiority over me in the sense that he taught me wrestling. However, I have reached such a level that even my teacher cannot compete with me.” The king disapproved of the student’s insolence with respect to his teacher, and ordered that the two will have to compete in public. When the teacher received this news, he must have thought to himself: He learnt everything from me and he is now prepared to compete against me!?

Note: Nowadays there are many who make claims of excellence over their teachers. Consequently, they remain deprived of spiritual treasures – whether they realize it or not. (compiler)

Anyway, the courtiers and dignitaries of the sultanate assembled on the wrestling field to witness this strange match between a teacher and his student. The teacher was quite angry because this youngster had learnt everything from him but was now prepared to wrestle against him.

The teacher went into a rage, lifted him above his head and flung him to the ground. The student was disgraced despite his previous claims and the prize was given to the teacher.

O students! Listen! He was a thin and weak man, yet he picked up the student and flung him far away. This is why I always say to people: Do not

fight with the seniors of Dīn. They will carry you and fling you aside, and you will perish.

Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh then comments on this incident:

> O loyalty! You were either not existing in the world or you were existing but no one at that time showed loyalty.

I personally saw people of this type and used to be astonished because Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh taught us so much and explained so well, yet a person would come to him in an audacious manner. He was completely ruined. He acquired knowledge from Hadrat, learnt to write from him, learnt the spiritual path from him, acquired spiritual conditions through him; and yet he would come to vie with him.

O people! O you who come to me! Listen! That was the story of the wrestler. Now listen to another story.

A shaykh had a murīd. He was probably his khalīfah as well. In his intoxication, he said: "I was an egg of a duck. I sat under the duck. The mother-duck got left outside, while I began swimming in the river." He was referring to himself as a duck egg and his shaykh as a mother-duck. What this means is that the little one which emerges from the duck egg will also be a duck. Thus, I became like a duck and began swimming in the river. In the meantime, the shaykh got left outside. He said this in a state of intoxication.

When the shaykh heard this, he was quite disturbed. He said: "Yes, he certainly went into the river, but he died there."

When the murīd heard that his shaykh got wind of what he had said, and this was his reply, he concluded that his shaykh is displeased. He said to his co-murīds: "Go and ask the shaykh to pardon me." They replied: "He is outraged, we can't go. When we see him in a good mood, we will send you a message, and you must come." The shaykh listened to samāʿ one day and was in an ecstatic mood.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā raḥimahullāh used to say that when a man of spiritual heights listens to samāʿ, he becomes ecstatic because of his deep love for Allāh taʿālā.

This is why the shaykh was in such a good mood. The murīd's friends sent a message to him: "The shaykh is in an ecstatic mood today. If you come, you will be pardoned." He came barefooted with a brazier on his head, and stood at the place where the shoes are normally placed. When the shaykh saw him he said: "Because you asked for pardon by following the correct protocols, you may go. Your īmān has been saved. However, your life will not be saved. Disrespect results in the snatching away of one's life or one's īmān. You will certainly be punished. Your life will not be saved."

The murīd used to deliver lectures and people had confidence in him. A certain woman whose husband had been the king used to attend his lectures. The king had died and his son [the prince] was alive. Some people went to the prince and passed on the rumour that his mother wants to get married to the murīd. The prince went into a rage and instructed his soldiers to cast him into a river. He was cast into it and drowned.

The shaykh was at his place and he learnt of this through kashf. He said to those around him: “Such and such has been cast into the river.” He felt quite disturbed. The punishment which he had meted out to the murīd was for his training and tutoring, but he loved him immensely. This is why the shaykh was grieved by what happened.

When the prince [who was now the king] learnt of this, he came with an unsheathed sword and blood money. He stood before the shaykh and said: “If you want to take retribution, my sword is here. You may kill me. If you want blood money, it is here.” The shaykh said: “Get away from here. In return for my children, it will be you, and all your courtiers.” Subsequently, the sultanate experienced a sedition. The prince could find no way of escape. The enemies killed them mercilessly and destroyed them.

The point I am making to you is that when a person treads the path of Allāh taʿālā, he receives many blessings. This causes him to become egotistic and he makes claims to excellence. This causes his destruction.A person used to ask: “What is an easy way to kill the carnal self?” I replied: “It is very easy. However, when it is killed, it will approach you in a different way and say that you have no carnal self at all. And so, you have become an expert. In this way, self-conceit will enter you. And it is extremely difficult to remove. Except the person whom Allāh taʿālā protects.”

I am relating these stories of the Ahlullāh to you. You are probably thinking to yourself that if you want, you can traverse this path on your own. So listen! Those who traversed this path did so with sincerity. Without it, you cannot achieve anything.

ASSEMBLY (5)

There is no excellence in merely attending an assembly. Rather, excellence lies in attending, listening attentively, understanding and then differentiating it with other assemblies. Also, it is necessary for us to check if we are progressing or not. The worst loss is when a person remains in the company of someone and is still deprived. He does not even realize that he is retrogressing and lost so much.

To drive this point home, I constantly say to you that people who come here do not move away nor do they do anything. Only if a person were to ponder and then make an intention to do something will he be able to achieve something. All other tasks are accomplished with much difficulty. Do you think this task is so easy that it will be accomplished without any effort!? If this is not misguidance what else can it be? People just don't understand the level of the person and the type of work which is done here.

When people of the past used to go to the Sufis, they used to go with prior understanding. They recognized their status and acquired the treasures of their hearts.

Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh was a close associate of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. He used to say many things in his presence which we could not say. He accompanied us on one occasion when we went to a certain place. The Maulānā of the place showed us the different departments of his institution and the different works which are done by each department. In short, he was displaying

everything. Khwājah Sāhib held him and said: "Hadrat Thānwī conferred permission to such and such person, yet he did not confer it to you!? The reason why Hadrat differentiated between you and that person is this very quality of yours – that is, you value the external sciences and are concerned about them. But you have no concern for spiritual training and purification of the self. This is why he did not confer khilāfat to you."

A senior scholar came to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh said to him: "Maulānā! We will know your genuineness when you remain here without receiving anything (i.e. khilāfat)." The Maulānā replied: "We came just like that. Inshā Allāh, we will certainly accept it." Khwājah Sāhib must have thought about it carefully before saying this to the Maulānā. After all, he was an ʿālim and so was Hadrat Thānwī. It's possible he will derive academic benefit but not understand the spiritual side. This is why Khwājah Sāhib drew his attention to it.

I said to him: "Khwājah Sāhib! You were quite courageous in saying such a thing. After all, he is a senior ʿālim. It takes a lot of guts to be so straightforward."

When this ʿālim used to sit in Hadrat Thānwī's assembly, he used to talk a lot. Hadrat Thānwī said to him on one occasion: "Our Maulānā Sāhib speaks a lot. Inshā Allāh, he will not do this anymore." Subsequently, he fell so silent as though a seal was set on his mouth. He himself used to say: "Even if I want to speak now I feel as though someone is holding back my tongue." When a person sits before his shaykh, he must sit silently. It is a place for silence.

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī rahimahullāh and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī rahimahullāh were going to meet Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh. Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say: "Our shaykh is still alive and my work has been left incomplete. These people do not take me to him. It seems I will be left incomplete and I will die in this way." They said: "This person has a case against us. We will have to take him with." And so, they made arrangements to take him as well. On reaching there, Maulānā Gangohī said to Hadrat Hājī Sāhib: "We are going to Madīnah but Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib will remain with you." Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said: "Tell him that while he is here, he must remain silent. He must not say anything. At the same time, he must remain focussed on me."

When these two returned from Madīnah, Hadrat Hājī Sāhib said: "I told your Maulwī Sāhib to remain silent but he could not do even this much. Whenever anyone came to meet me, he would start speaking to the person." Maulānā Gangohī rahimahullāh used to say that Hadrat Hājī Sāhib was such an expert shaykh that he conveyed Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib to the level of expertise in a short period of time."

Hadrat Maulānā Yaʿqūb Sāhib rahimahullāh was a distinguished ʿālim. He knew the difference between a loss and excellence. Despite being such an erudite scholar, he wanted to reach the level of excellence.

When you go to the saints, it is not a place to quote different views and opinions. One must merely listen attentively. Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh says:

> There is no need to make any display in the presence of the shaykh because complex issues are solved here.
>
> This is not the place to voice opinions. It is an assembly where the beauty of the beloved is beheld.
>
> When you come here, listen to everything attentively. Do not utter a word. Place a lock over your mouth in his presence.

Look at what Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh is saying. The assembly of saints is not the place to voice opinions and enter into discussions. Instead, listen attentively to whatever is said, do not say anything, place a lock over your mouth.

He says further on:

> Create a path from your heart to his by joining your heart to his.
>
> Even a thorny heart will turn into a garden when it is attached to a saint.
>
> You should therefore obliterate yourself in his heart. Once you inhabit his heart, you will observe wonderful spectacles.

A Maulānā Sāhib sought permission to meet Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Hadrat gave permission, but added: "In the course of your stay here, you will not be permitted to address me nor write to me." The Maulānā arrived and settled down in the khānqāh. Some people including Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib were speaking in Hadrat's presence. This Maulānā also said something. Hadrat Maulānā addressed him: "We had already agreed that you will neither speak nor write to me while living here. Why did you

speak?" He replied: "I forgot." Hadrat said: "Very well. Get up from the assembly and leave." When he stood up, the Maulānā said: "Hadrat! Can I give you the real reason why I spoke?" Hadrat allowed him. He said: "I remembered your instruction, but I spoke because these people were speaking. I thought to myself that if I were to remain silent, they would assume me to be a foolish person." Hadrat said: "This is what I had also diagnosed in you, and this is what I thought. Very well. You may sit down."

The Maulānā was intelligent enough to admit immediately – he remembered Hadrat's instruction but spoke so that he is not considered to be a fool. It is easy to give up everything, but it is extremely difficult for an ʿālim to give up his pride. Hadrat Maulānā was pleased by his admission and realized he was a man of worth. When a person is genuinely honest, it certainly has a good effect. We saw this quite often when we were with Hadrat Maulānā rahimahullāh.

On one occasion he asked two people to leave the assembly. One of them proceeded to the masjid and began crying profusely. We thought to ourselves, let's see what happens now. Hadrat immediately called for the man from the masjid, and without the man having to ask for pardon, Hadrat cancelled his previous order. Hadrat must have understood that the man would not be able to control his heart. We said to the second person: "Look! That man cried and was summoned immediately. You too should cry." He replied: "I don't know how to cry."

We used to observe incidents of this nature all the time when we were with Hadrat Maulānā

rahimahullāh. But we did not utter a word. Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says:

> Even a one-day old child understands the Tarīqah. He cries so that the affectionate wet-nurse will rush to him. But you do not know that the Chief of all chiefs (Allāh taʿālā) does not give milk for free – without your crying for it.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh relates the story of a saint who was ill and the time of death had approached. But he was in debt, and his creditors came and sat around him; demanding their debts. Just then, a youngster who was selling sweetmeats happened to pass by. The saint called for the boy. When he came in, the saint bought all the sweetmeats and fed everyone who was present. He also fed his creditors and asked the boy to eat some as well. After everyone ate, the boy asked for the payment for his sweetmeats. The saint said: "If I had the money, do you think I would not have paid these creditors? Now you too sit down here with them." The boy began crying and wailing, and said: "My father will be outraged at me." Just then another person came with a large dish containing money which was placed separately for each of the creditors. The boy's name was also written on one of the bundles of money. The saint paid his creditors and gave the boy the money for his sweetmeats.

The people then asked the saint: "Hadrat! What was this all about?" He replied: "I had made duʿā to Allāh taʿālā and said that these creditors are annoying me, please pay their debts for me." Allāh taʿālā said: "You will have to cry. Neither are you crying nor your creditors." I thought to myself, I don't know how to cry. This is why I resorted to this

plan. I bought the sweetmeats from the boy and included him among my creditors. I made him cry in this way and made duʿā to Allāh taʿālā and said: "Here is one of my creditors who is crying."

Allāh taʿālā thus provided the means for paying his creditors. When someone cries, the oceans of Allāh's mercy begin flowing. Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says in this regard:

> Had the confectioner's son not cried, the ocean of Allāh's mercy would not have flowed.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh then presents the following conclusion:

> O man! Your work is dependent on crying with your heart. Success without beseeching and crying is difficult.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an impressive story. We ought to practise on its lesson. May Allāh taʿālā bless us with the ability to cry before Him. Āmīn. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh explained the issues of the Tarīqah superbly. When he used to explain them, people used to go into an ecstatic state.

I used to relate the teachings of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh in Mumbai without mentioning his name. After completing my talk, I would say: "This is the world. You get all types of people in it. There was a person of this era who used to say these things."

A person went to a saint and lived with him for one week. The saint wrote a certificate of khilāfat in his favour and gave it to him. The man then left. Those

who had been in the saint's company from long before thought to themselves: We have been here for so long but no one received khilāfat. And here is this man who received it so quickly!? How come he gave him superiority over us when those who are living permanently with him are better than this one?

These people did not understand the issue of sincerity. It is possible for a person to receive khilāfat in just one hour on the basis of his sincerity, while another does not receive it even after twenty years.

The saint understood the whisperings which were going through their hearts, and decided to give them an answer. He did not reprimand them in any way. He merely asked them to go out into the fields and bring fresh green twigs. These people had not become rebels as yet, so they carried out the order. When they brought the green twigs, he asked them to burn them. They struck their matches and tried to start a fire, but the fire just did not catch. The saint went to them and asked: "Are they not burning?" They replied: "Hadrat! These twigs are green, and green twigs cannot catch on fire."

PROGRESS THROUGH THE PATH OF HUMANITY (1)

I want to speak about a certain topic today. If you listen attentively, you will be astounded. I want to especially draw the attention of the ʻulamāʼ in this direction.

We are humans; not angels. All the Prophets were humans. Our progress in every field is therefore through the path of humanity; not through the angels. Man has been given angelic and human powers, but his angelic powers are weaker.

Among the angelic qualities which man has been given is his remembrance and glorification of Allāh taʻālā. Angels are forever occupied in doing this. Allāh taʻālā says:

يُسَبِّحُوْنَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُوْنَ.

> They remember [Him] night and day – they do not tire.[1]

Similarly, man engages in the remembrance and glorification of Allāh taʻālā. This is man's angelic quality. The spiritual conditions experienced by Sufis are of the same vein. When Allāh taʻālā addresses the angels, some of them lose consciousness. Once they regain consciousness, they ask each other about what Allāh taʻālā said. The same can be said of those who lose control over their selves when they experience spiritual ecstasy.

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[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyāʼ, 21:20.

It is therefore a great thing for a human to adopt angelic qualities.

Nonetheless, I am speaking about something else today, viz. humaneness. I am saying: A human can still reach the highest stages of proximity with Allāh taʿālā while maintaining his human qualities. Eating, drinking, sleeping, urinating, excreting and other activities are inseparable from man. The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām used these very activities as means to gain the highest levels in Allāh's court, while we consider these activities to be the worst causes of negligence.

The human qualities of eating, drinking, sleeping, etc. which are purely human activities and causes of negligence, and are not considered to influence one's closeness with Allāh taʿālā were made into the highest forms of Allāh's remembrance by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. This is certainly a great favour from him in that he turned an activity of inattention into one of Allāh's remembrance. I would like to explain this to you. Listen attentively.

No matter what, sleeping is an activity of inattention. The heedless ones commit major and minor sins because of food and drink. If they maintain moderation in their food, they will commit fewer sins. If they carry out these human activities in line with the Sunnah, it will remove their negligence and heedlessness.

Although what I am saying is simple and easy, you will not understand it quickly because you are very far from the Sunnah. However, if I were to tell you something which affects the mind and some of you go to the extent of becoming lunatics, you will understand it and consider it to be beneficial.

Eating is from among the previously-mentioned human activities. The Sunnah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam in this regard is to wash the hands before eating. This is one Sunnah. The next Sunnah is to read:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ. بِسْمِ اللهِ وَعَلٰى بَرَكَةِ اللهِ.

After eating, it is Sunnah to read:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ.

> All praise is due to Allāh who fed us, gave us to drink and made us Muslims.

A Hadīth of *Abū Dāwūd* states that when a believer reads the following after eating, then one year's sins will be pardoned.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنِيْ هٰذَا الطَّعَامَ وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ. غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه.[1]

> All praise is due to Allāh who fed me this food and gave it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

Similarly, when he wears clothes and reads this duʿā, his past and future sins are pardoned.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ كَسَانِيْ هٰذَا وَرَزَقَنِيْهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ مِنِّيْ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ. غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه وما تأخر.

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[1] مشكوة، كتاب اللباس: ج ۲، ص ۳۷۵.

> All praise is due to Allāh who clothed me this garment and gave it to me without any effort and strength from my side.

When a monotheist reads this supplication after eating, then the bond which develops between him and Allāh taʿālā is known to him alone. This is because food is a bounty, the Benefactor is recognized through the bounty, and the recognition is an action of the heart; not of the tongue. It is stated in *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*:

إن المعرفة فعل القلب.[1]

> Allāh-recognition is an action of the heart.

Thus, no matter what bounty a believer uses, he acquires recognition of the Benefactor through it. He is then immersed in his recognition of Allāh taʿālā. Subsequently, he does not suffice with recognition of the heart. Instead, he expresses it with his tongue:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ.

> All praise is due to Allāh who fed us, gave us to drink and made us Muslims.

The remembrance of the tongue is an effect of the recognition in the heart. A believer progresses tremendously by just this one act. Recognition of the Benefactor is already in the heart. By saying "All praise is due to Allāh" with the tongue, his recognition in the heart increases. Whatever words a believer utters by way of thanks are causes of

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[1] فتح الباري.

progress and increase in his īmān. Recognition which is in the heart strengthens inside, supports the tongue in uttering it; and the two join to impact creedal progress. In this way, the īmān of a believer is continually increasing.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of cognition and wisdom which could only be made by an expert of the Sharīʿah and Ṯarīqah. This is the grace of Allāh taʿālā which He confers on whomever He wills. (compiler)

I had given an example to portray this. A saint used to say: "Whenever anyone gives me a gift, my heart makes a new agreement with Allāh taʿālā and renews its pledge to Him."

I said: This is why he used to receive so many gifts. Allāh taʿālā knew that when He sends something to him, he will turn immediately to Him and renew his pledge with Him. He was certain that it was Allāh taʿālā who gave it to him and not the poor fellow who handed it over to him. This is what a monotheist believes – whatever comes to him is solely from Allāh taʿālā.

What an excellent pledge and agreement. We engage in Allāh's remembrance but cannot make a pledge with Him. Yet this saint could do it whenever he received a gift.

The saint used to renew his pledge with Allāh taʿālā whenever he received a gift. This is because the money which he received is a means to fulfil his needs. He used to renew his bond with Allāh taʿālā through it. We may not receive gifts, but we certainly receive two meals a day.

This is why I say that money is not as beneficial as food and drink. If a person has a lot of money, it is

of more use to others. It is spent to pay one's employees, rental for one's house and other expenses. As for the food which we eat and the water which we drink, they benefit us. Our humanness is maintained through them. We are dependent on them all the time.

We learn from this that food and drink are more useful to us than money. Therefore, if we believe it to be from Allāh taʿālā, thank Him for it, and renew our pledge with Allāh taʿālā at every mealtime; then imagine how much closer we will get to Him. However, it is not easy to do this. We will have to strive against the carnal self to do it.

The saint who used to renew his pledge with Allāh taʿālā each time he received a gift must have acquired this ability after a long time. You should continue likewise, do it with sincerity, and be conscious of the Sunnah at every moment. If you continue doing this, you will acquire it gradually; but you will have to strive in the beginning.

In the beginning, a person will have to get angry at his carnal self and he will have to feel sad at leaving out a Sunnah. Only then will the carnal self adhere to the Sunnah path.

There was a saint who never forgot to wash his hands at the time of eating, but would forget to say Bismillāh. When he completed his meal, he used to read the prescribed duʿā. Similarly, when he went to the toilet, he never forgot to enter with the left foot, but he would forget to read the duʿā. After leaving the toilet, he would remember to read the duʿā.

The saint examined his self fastidiously for reading two duʿās and leaving out two Sunnahs. Just as it is Sunnah to wash the hands before eating, it is

Sunnah to read Bismillāh. In fact, it is a greater Sunnah than washing the hands. The saint continued maligning his self and would say: How are you going to practise on the more important Sunnahs when you cannot carry out the smaller ones?

Experiencing grief and sorrow is the striving in this path. If a person does not feel grief, the bad condition will remain. The Ahlullāh feel severe grief over a bad spiritual condition. Only then can one adhere to the Sunnah and obligatory actions.

Several saints were having a meal together. A person arrived and offered salām. The saints did not reply to his salām and continued eating. When they finished the meal, the man asked them: "I offered salām to you but you did not reply!?" They replied: "We are Sufis. Everything we do is for Allāh taʿālā. Our eating is also a worship. When one is occupied in worship, he should neither offer salām nor reply to it. Like when a person is performing salāh or occupied in dhikr, he must neither offer salām nor reply to it.

Look at the point which they made! We are Sufis. It is not our way to enjoy Allāh's bounties while being heedless of Him. When we enjoy His bounties, we certainly remember Him. In this way, we turn a cause of heedlessness into Allāh's remembrance. Every Muslim should do this. Unfortunately, the situation now is that we do not think of Allāh taʿālā even when we are in salāh. Whereas the saints remember Allāh taʿālā when they are eating. Now just think! What a difference between us and them!

After eating, we need to relieve ourselves. More than the food, the ability to relieve ourselves is a greater bounty. If the food is not digested or a person

suffers from constipation, it causes much misery. Most ailments stem from the stomach.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught us to recite the following duʿā before entering the toilet:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنَ الْخُبُثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ.

> O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from the male and female jinn.

One must enter with the left foot and leave with the right foot. After leaving the toilet, he must recite:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَذْهَبَ عَنِّيْ مَا يُؤْذِيْنِيْ وَأَبْقٰى مَا يَنْفَعُنِيْ.

> All praise is due to Allāh who removed from me what causes me harm, and kept behind what benefits me.

This duʿā is more important than the one which is read after eating.

Had Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam not made this duʿā on this occasion, we would have considered eating to be a bounty; but not relieving ourselves. This is the meaning of "progress through the path of humanity". This is because the angels neither eat nor relieve themselves. If Allāh taʿālā were to send angels to teach us, how would they have taught us these things? Because the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām were humans, their progress is also through food, drink and relieving themselves; and they acquire the highest level of proximity with Allāh taʿālā through these actions. They can also be the means for our closeness to Allāh taʿālā provided our eating, drinking and going to the toilet are in line with the Sunnah and with the intention of following the Sunnah.

Sleeping is also a human necessity and from among the essentials of humanness. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught us the following duʿā at the time of sleeping:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ خَلَقْتَ نَفْسِيْ وَاَنْتَ تَوَفّٰهَا، لَكَ مَمَاتُهَا وَمَحْيَاهَا، اِنْ اَحْيَيْتَهَا فَاحْفَظْهَا بِمَا تَحْفَظُ بِهِ عِبَادَكَ الصَّالِحِيْنَ، وَاِنْ اَمَتَّهَا فَاغْفِرْ لَهَا وَارْحَمْهَا.

O Allāh! You created my self and You will cause it to die. Its death and life is therefore only for You. If You enable it to live, protect it with the protection through which You protect Your righteous servants. If You cause it to die, forgive it and have mercy on it

اَللّٰهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ أَمُوْتُ وَأَحْيٰى. اَللّٰهُمَّ قِنِيْ عَذَابَكَ يَوْمَ تَبْعَثُ عِبَادَكَ.

O Allāh! I live and die in Your name. O Allāh! Save me from Your punishment on the day when You resurrect Your servants.

There are other duʿās of this nature. When a person wakes up, he must recite the following duʿā:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُوْرُ.

All praise is due to Allāh who brought us to life after having caused us to die. We are to return to Him.

If a person recites these duʿās when going to sleep, his sleeping will be in Allāh's remembrance. When

he recites the duʿā upon awakening, his waking up will also be in Allāh's name. The time in-between will also be counted as being spent in Allāh's remembrance. His sleeping was a Sunnah because he took consideration of it and slept after having recited the duʿās. His waking up was also a Sunnah, so the time spent in-between was spent in the Sunnah.

The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum understood this by virtue of the company of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and applied the Sunnahs in their actions. The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum were so particular about the Sunnahs that they did not leave out any Sunnah.

Hadrat Hudhayfah radiyallāhu ʿanhu was a governor. It was his habit to pick up any morsel of food which fell down. He would then eat it because this too is a Sunnah.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā: "O ʿĀ'ishah! Appreciate sustenance because when it leaves a house, it does not come back." This is why the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum paid utmost respect to food.

Hadrat Hudhayfah radiyallāhu ʿanhu went to Persia for some governmental work. Many senior non-Muslim leaders came to meet him. He was eating at the time. The non-Muslims were sitting nearby. A morsel fell from his hand. He picked it up, cleaned it and ate it. One of his attendants whispered to him: "Hadrat! These senior leaders are present. Non-Arabs dislike this practice and look at it with scorn. They will look down at us." The attendant had said this in a low tone, but Hadrat Hudhayfah radiyallāhu ʿanhu replied in a loud tone: "Do you

expect me to give up the practice of my beloved Muḥammad Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for these morons?"

Glory to Allāh! Look at the Ṣaḥābah! What a beautiful reply! These people can look down at us with scorn, but we will not abandon a Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for them. Whether they are pleased with us or not, we did not come here to give up the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. If not, his Sunnahs will cease to exist one after the other.

It was because of the importance which they showed to the Sunnah that it remained preserved and came down to us. May Allāh taʿālā reward them.

It is the duty of the ʿulamā' in particular and the masses in general to continue practising on the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. If not, they will remain in the books of Ḥadīth and the Muslim nation will become deprived of its blessings. This is why there is a need to place more emphasis on it and to put it into practice. The first effort which is needed is to memorize the Sunnahs and then remember them at the appropriate occasions.

This is what I meant when I said that you will have to strive against the carnal self when applying the Sunnah. You will have to remember the Sunnahs of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Striving is also a Sunnah of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Subduing the carnal self is also a Sunnah. It is the duty of the seekers and those who are present to vent their anger on their carnal selves and express grief when a Sunnah is left out. Only then will success be achieved and the blessing of the Sunnah be received.

Imām Ghazzālī rahimahullāh said that it is necessary to be angry at one's carnal self when striving spiritually. If a person does not do this, his rectification and reformation will not be realized.

How would your quest and striving be proven in the absence of a carnal self? Allāh taʿālā created the self for the sake of striving. We do not know the countless desires which the self has. Each one prevents one from Allāh taʿālā. If a person tries to combat every desire of his self, he will reach a high status in Allāh's court. Allāh taʿālā will say: "You are Our friend because you left your self – which was your friend – for Our sake."

The point I am making is that the greatest humanness in you is the fact that you have a carnal self. The true men of Allāh taʿālā vanquished and disgraced it, and left it subservient to them. This is what Allāh's servants did. After striving to the full, they turned to Allāh taʿālā and said: "O Allāh! This self has been created by You. Its desires have been created by You as well. If You turn its direction, it can be subdued."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam made this supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا.

> O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master

We too have to follow this path and adhere to the Sunnah path. May Allāh taʿālā make it easy for us

and confer us with the blessing of the Sunnah. Āmīn.

PROGRESS THROUGH THE PATH OF HUMANITY (2)

Observe further details on the theme: Progress Through The Path of Humanity.

Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh states in *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*:

The times of heedlessness and rest are of two types. One is for the removal of tiredness and fatigue to help a person for future spiritual exercises, or to become a means for acquiring rewards by fulfilling the rights of fellow humans. When these benefits are considered, heedlessness and rest are sanctified and valuable.

It is on this basis that Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal radiyallāhu ʿanhu said:

إني أحتسب نومتي كما أحتسب قومتي.

> I hope for reward in my sleep just as I hope for reward in my night worship.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh explains this by saying that while the tahajjud salāh entails fulfilling the right of Allāh taʿālā, sleep entails fulfilling the right of the self. Both these rights – the right of Allāh and the right of the servant – have become obligatory by Allāh taʿālā making them obligatory.

While Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam instructed us to subdue the carnal self (when it is disobedient) on one hand, in like manner he ordered us to fulfil its right. The right of the self is included among the rights of fellow humans. Since both these rights have to be fulfilled, how can we separate the

two? This is what is known as misguidance. When we find something in agreement with the self, we take it. When we find something difficult, we cast it aside. Whereas both are equal since they are ordered by Allāh taʿālā. How, then, can we choose what we want and leave out what we do not? Once an explicit text is quoted, no consideration is given to personal opinions.

However, when this negligence [and rest] do not aid a person towards obedience, are not ordered by the Sharīʿah, and the intention of carrying out an order of Allāh taʿālā is not made in that period of rest; then this negligence contains no sanctity. Instead, it is harām.

Did you see how the ʿulamā' explain these themes. Just look at the times of rest and heedlessness. They appear to be blameworthy. There seems to be no angle of praise and goodness in them. However, after the explanation of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh, we learn that this aids man for future worship and spiritual exercises. It removes his exhaustion. This is why it is not worldly; it is Dīnī. It is not harām, it is obligatory.

I say, if you do not choose to rest, you will neglect the rights of fellow humans.

What a beautiful statement made by that Sahābī:

إني أحتسب نومتي كما أحتسب قومتي.

> I hope for reward in my sleep just as I hope for reward in my night worship.

He said with reference to sleep that he hopes for reward in it even though it is an act of heedlessness in its entirety. If a heedless action like sleep can

become a source of reward, why can't a Muslim acquire rewards from other actions which are less in heedlessness?

I told you just now that if a person eats with the intention of gaining strength for worship and the intention of carrying out Allāh's order, it will certainly elicit reward. But the precondition is intention; without it, there will be no reward. Those who practised on the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and turned their eating into an act of worship by being conscious of the Sunnah were on a unique level. We are on a different level because we cannot set right even our worship. They turned their times of heedlessness into worship and Allāh's remembrance while we turn our worship into times of heedlessness.

Had the ʿulamā' not explained it in this way, we would have assumed the rights of Allāh taʿālā to be confined to worship. We would not have accorded any status to the rights of fellow humans.

The explanation of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh is certainly excellent. Through his blessings, I will add another point:

When the Sahābī set right his night worship – by making it solely for Allāh taʿālā – do you think his intention will not have an effect on his sleep? Do you think it will not be for Allāh? It will certainly be for Him.

This is what is known as a union with Allāh taʿālā. I believe that this is how the Sufis began believing in the rank of union with Allāh taʿālā. After all, only those can be referred to as Ahlullāh who have set right everything. In other words, their intention is so proper that whatever is connected to Allāh taʿālā is

done solely for Him. And whatever is related to one's habit and temperament is also done solely for Him. This is where man's excellence lies. Night worship is an angelic quality. Sleeping is a human quality. If a person sets right his night worship, he has acquired an angelic quality. This is an achievement in itself. However, a higher achievement is when man progresses while remaining in his humanness. Thus, night worship solely for Allāh taʿālā is not such a great achievement when compared to turning one's time of heedlessness and rest – a human quality – solely for Allāh taʿālā by setting right one's intention.

This is the excellence which Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal radiyallāhu ʿanhu enjoyed. This is what he wanted to teach the Muslim nation by this statement. In other words: So what if a person achieved excellence through night worship!? A real achievement is when he acquires the same reward through his sleep as he would in his night worship.

Understand another point from here. Hadrat Muʿādh radiyallāhu ʿanhu speaks in the singular form. From this we learn that he is describing his own condition or the condition of those who are similar to him. Thus, this does not apply to everyone. It is for those who have liberated themselves from the pleasures of the carnal self, obliterated it and bonded with Allāh taʿālā. As long as the pleasure of the self remains in a person, it is obligatory on him to strive. Heedlessness in such a situation has no value.

This condition is therefore for those who have reached Allāh taʿālā, not for those who are blocked off. Those who have not freed themselves from the carnal self and present this statement of Hadrat

Muʿādh radiyallāhu ʿanhu as evidence for their negligence and desire for rest are deceived. They are delusional. Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh says with reference to them:

> Those who are deceived, you will not see any effect of the Sunnah in them apart from the siesta and partaking of sehrī in Ramadān.

This means that they have no attachment to the Qur'ān and Sunnah. They remember what is beneficial to them while their objective is merely to obtain carnal pleasure. They then attribute their actions to a saint or to the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Note: This means that there are other Sunnahs apart from sehrī and a siesta; one should practise on them as well. The Shaykh is encouraging us to practise on all Sunnahs; he is not maligning sehrī and a siesta.

I am speaking to you about the ways of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam as regards eating, drinking, sleeping, relieving one's self and so on. Look at how he turned these minor actions towards Allāh's recognition.

If you cannot endure the major spiritual exercises, you certainly eat, sleep and relieve yourself. If you adopt the Sunnah when doing them, you will not be deprived. The fact is that heedlessness does not allow a person to progress.

One of my friends used to say: "I wash my hands before eating and say al-hamdulillāh after eating, but I forget to say Bismillāh before eating. Similarly, I recite the prescribed duʿā when I leave the toilet but forget to recite the duʿā before entering." He took his self to task for this and used to grieve over it. He

used to say: “What has happened to me? I want to practise on the Sunnah but my carnal self does not allow me. I can carry out half the Sunnah but not the other half.” He adds: “I strove in this regard until I remembered to carry it out.”

Did you hear! You have to strive for the Sunnah as well. You have heard how people strive on the spiritual path. In like manner, you have to strive to remember the Sunnah.

Scholars have written that by remembering these duʿās, a person will gain the recognition of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He will think of him and acquire affinity with him. The affinity with Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam will then become a means of acquiring affinity with Allāh taʿālā.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh writes in *al-Qaul al-Jamīl*:

> Just as there are incantations of the Sufis, it is essential to practise on the different forms of remembrance which are mentioned in the Hadīth books.

I say: If you abandon the duʿās of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam – whether you are an ʿālim or an ordinary person – a major chapter of Dīn will cease to exist. This will create a large vacuum and the pseudo-saints will be looked up to. Each person will be left with the spiritual practices and characteristics of his forefathers. The spiritual practices and characteristics of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam will come to an end. Whereas Allāh taʿālā says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللهَ كَثِيْرًا.

> There is a good example for you in the Messenger of Allāh for the one who believes in Allāh and the Last Day, and remembers Allāh abundantly.[1]

This verse makes mention of the one who "remembers Allāh abundantly". Elsewhere Allāh taʿālā says:

اَلذَّاكِرِيْنَ اللهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّالذَّاكِرَاتِ.

> Those men and women who remember Allāh abundantly.

The ʿulamā' explain that if a person reads the morning and evening duʿās and the other prescribed duʿās for different occasions, he will be included among those who remember Allāh taʿālā abundantly.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī rahimahullāh writes in *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

سئل الشيخ الإمام أبو عمرو بن الصلاح عن القدر الذي يصير به من "الذاكرين الله كثيرا والذاكرات"، فقال إذا واظب على الأذكار المأثورة صباحا ومساء في الأوقات والأحوال المختلفة ليلا ونهارا. وهي مبينة في

[1] Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 21.

كتاب عمل اليوم والليلة كان من الذاكرين الله كثيرا والذاكرات.

A true believer loves Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, and in love, it is necessary to remember the words of the beloved.

One of my friends related to me that his mentor used to say: "The reason why the ʿulamā' do not benefit is that they do not carry out the spiritual practices of the saints."

When I heard this, I said: "This is not the reason. They do not benefit because they do not subdue the carnal self. Whereas it is necessary to subdue the self to reach Allāh taʿālā. And following the Sunnah is necessary for obliterating the desires of the self."

Allāh taʿālā made the obliteration of the self the means to reaching Him. He placed desires in it so that we appreciate reaching Him. We face obstacles at every step because of the self. Sometimes, we even lose hope. But those who truly seek Allāh taʿālā fight fiercely against the self and overpower it. When Allāh taʿālā observes their yearning and striving, He makes the path easy for them.

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوْا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ.

> It is He who sends down rain after they had lost all hope, and He spreads His mercy.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 28.

The happiness which they will experience at that time and the appreciation which they will express are known to them alone. It is as though they will say:

> All thanks to Allāh we have not died. Rather, we have reached our Friend. We are worthy of reprimand for this courage.

The carnal self is hard and harsh. It causes a person to cast aside the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth and the close company of saints. Its evil can be gauged from this. At the same time, Allāh taʿālā made it the means to get close to Him. This is done by combating it and following the Sunnah way. It is certainly difficult in the beginning, but when a person remains resolute, Allāh taʿālā paves the way for him.

Towards the end of his life, Ḥadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī raḥimahullāh used to say: "Had we known earlier what we learnt in the latter part of our life, we would not have striven so much." The path must have been opened to him by virtue of following the Sunnah and he must have realized that the easiest path is following the Sunnah.

I too am making the same point to you: The Sunnah path is the easiest. When you start repeating Allāh's name with the tongue, your heart joins in after that. In like manner, when you recite the duʿās at the time of eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., you will be first reciting them with your tongue. Gradually, your heart will also recite them. You will then experience a unique bond in your heart. Attachment to the larger Sunnah actions is developed through attachment with the smaller Sunnah actions. A

person starts practising on the smaller Sunnah actions and then progresses to the bigger ones.

It is the duty of the ʿulamā' and Sufis to encourage their people towards the Sunnah. In other words, they must practise on them and then encourage others. If the shaykh does not practise, the murīds will follow suite. If the ʿulamā' do not practise, the masses will do the same. In this way, the Sunnah will vanish completely. The reason why the Sunnah is being passed down the generations is that the ʿulamā' and Sufis are immersed in them in every era.

A saint entered a masjid with his left foot. When he became aware of his action, he fell unconscious and thought Allāh taʿālā must be displeased with him, this is why he left out the respect which he ought to have accorded to Allāh's house.

It is not easy to practise fully on all the Sunnahs of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It is the work of a powerful worker. However, when a person becomes fully focussed on it by thinking of the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam all the time, it is hoped he will develop an interest in the Sunnah and he will encourage others as well.

It is not easy for everyone to understand the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, be affected by them and acquire the light of recognition from them.

Allāh taʿālā sent Prophets ʿalayhimus salām from among humans for our training. Had He sent angels, we would not have been able to accommodate them. We would have been immersed in fear all the time. This is why Allāh taʿālā appointed humans as Prophets for our training and

tutoring. In this way, they will understand our human needs fully, and it will be easy to teach and train us.

Note: By the grace of Allāh taʿālā, these are very beneficial themes. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh presented the Sufi path in a very easy and simple way to us. May Allāh taʿālā reward him. (compiler)

HADRAT ʿABBĀS'S ADVICE TO HIS SON

It is stated in *Iḥyā' al-ʿUlūm* that Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu said to his son, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh radiyallāhu ʿanhu: I see this person (i.e. Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu) giving preference to your opinions over those of the old and senior ones. You should remember these five points (so that your position is maintained). (1) Never expose his secret. (2) Do not backbite in his presence. (3) He must never experience any deception from you. (4) Never disobey him in any matter. (5) He must never see treachery in you in any matter.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These pieces of advice are of paramount importance which ought to be embedded in our hearts. (compiler)

Hadrat Shaʿbī rahimahullāh said that each of these pieces of advice are better than a thousand pieces.

Although Hadrat Abdullāh ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu was a youngster, Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu valued his opinions over those of senior and aged people. From this we learn that there are certain causes and reasons for according preference, due to which a person is conferred with a position. Those reasons are sound characteristics which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam came to complete and perfect. This has nothing to do with age. Someone rightly said: Seniority is based on the intellect; not on age.

On seeing the reverence which Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu accorded to his son, Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu advised his son: Beware!

Never do anything which would cause you to lose your respect and this position which you enjoy. You should therefore remember these five points.

He then advised him as quoted above. Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu undoubtedly listed golden principles around which rectitude and success depend.

The first piece of advice: He must not disclose his secrets. Glory to Allāh! What an important point! When a person discloses a secret, he becomes disgraced and valueless in the eyes of the other. Confidence in him is lost. The harms caused by disclosing secrets are clearly observed nowadays. Our seniors were particular about sealing all avenues of harm; this is why they adhered to these teachings.

The second piece of advice: Do not backbite anyone. The prohibition of backbiting is clearly stated in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Its harms are many. Today, every assembly of ours is "beautified" with backbiting. It is certainly sweet. No sooner two people get together, they backbite the third person. Even the assemblies of our academic institutions, ʿulamā' and Sufis are not protected from it.

The third piece of advice: He must never experience any deception from you. If a person is caught out in a lie even once, his reliability falls and he is seen with contempt by the person who had to experience his lie.

The fourth piece of advice: Never disobey him in any matter. Obedience and submission to our seniors and elders is the basis of all excellence. Disobedience to them is a cause of deprivation and loss.

The fifth piece of advice: He must see any treachery in you. If treachery is found in a person, he can never have trustworthiness and integrity. It results in nothing but disgrace and humiliation.

I say: Nowadays, people have totally disregarded all discussions about sound character and evil character. Had our institutions, ʿulamā' and Sufis discussed this fully, and made sound character the basis for erudition, all mischief and corruption would come to an end, and rectitude and success would prevail.

When ʿAllāmah Shaʿbī rahimahullāh heard the pieces of advice which Hadrat ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu gave to his dear son, he said that each one is superior to a thousand pieces of advice. What greater praise can we shower on it?

Anyone who remains in the company of a senior and earns his confidence should also practise on these pieces of advice so that the senior's confidence (whether a shaykh, teacher or father) is preserved. (compiler)

THE ADVICE OF HADRAT MUSLIHUL UMMAT

Based on our experiences and observations, we can say with certainty that the fights and clashes which are taking place today are solely for the acquisition of influence and position. No regard is given to whether a person is qualified for that post or not. This is an obviously deplorable situation. The mere acquisition of positions is a blameworthy thing. It becomes worse when there is no question of whether a person is suitable for a position or not.

This is why I advise all my associates to never fall into such a situation. They must regard it as extremely harmful to one's Dīnī and worldly life. They must never dispute with anyone on this issue. It must not be even discussed in religious places and gatherings. Not discussing it will shut off the door to tribulation. If my advice appeals to Muslims in general, then they too should practise on it.

My second piece of advice is that one should strive to increase his understanding and intelligence. Imām ʿAbd ar-Rahmān ibn ʿAlī Jauzī rahimahullāh writes in *al-Adhkiyā'* that the greatest thing which Allāh taʿālā conferred on man is the intellect. After all, it is the tool through which Allāh's recognition is acquired. The benefits of one's worldly and Dīnī life are connected to it. It is through the intellect that man can focus on results and consequences. Complex issues are perceived through it and virtues are acquired through it.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Ahlullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh writes in *Chār Bāb*:

> Although the intellect, sharp-wit, intelligence and far-sightedness occur naturally in a person, they can be increased through experience, remaining in the company of intelligent people, studying the rational sciences, and listening to stories and pieces of advice. A person should therefore strive to strengthen his intellectual capabilities day after day. In fact, he must make a concerted effort to include himself among the intelligent ones and to abstain from remaining with the foolish ones.

Since the intellect is such a great thing, one ought to utilize it; it must not be left idle.

I say: Since we do not use our intellect, we have destroyed our worldly and Dīnī life. Our intellectual power is paralyzed. I find pious people particularly devoid of it.

Was salām
Wasīyyullāh, may Allāh pardon him.

THE DESPICABILITY OF LUXURY AND EXTRAVAGANCE

The following is stated in *Shāmī*:

> رتبة العابد التخيير بين الأكل المندوب والمباح وينوي به أن يتقوى به على العبادة فيكون مطيعا.
>
> It behoves a worshipper to keep himself between the mandūb and mubāḥ in his eating. He must make the intention of acquiring strength for worship. If he does this, his eating will be counted as an act of obedience and he, an obedient person.

He says further on:

> ولا يقصد به التلذذ والتنعم فإن الله تعالى ذم الكافرين بأكلهم للتمتع وقال: وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَتَمَتَّعُوْنَ وَيَأْكُلُوْنَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ.
>
> His objective must not be enjoyment and luxury because Allāh ta'ālā castigates the unbelievers for eating for the sake of enjoyment. He says: "As for those who are unbelievers, they are enjoying themselves and eating as animals eat. The fire is their abode."[1]

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[1] Sūrah Muḥammad, 47: 12.

We heard the words enjoyment, luxury and extravagance from before. Here, ʿAllāmah Shāmī rahimahullāh explains them in his language.

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says:

> The consequence of your extravagance and enjoyment is that you will be separated from Dīn.

In other words, you will gradually lose your Dīn. Hadrat Hāfiz rahimahullāh says:

> The one who was nourished on luxury and comfort, and is accustomed to enjoyment and relaxation cannot reach the Friend [Allāh taʿālā].

This is because lovers are forever prepared to bear calamities and miseries. In other words, those who remain in solitude and are striving fully – they are the ones who are able to traverse the path. This cannot be achieved by the delicately-nurtured.

We also knew that comforts and luxuries are not a good thing. But when the jurists explained this subject, its meaning became clear. Man eats with various objectives in mind. One is for the sake of enjoyment. Another is to gain strength for Allāh's worship. ʿAllāmah Shāmī rahimahullāh says that the latter reason must be the objective of a believer. After making this intention, his eating will become an act of worship, and he will become an obedient servant. Mere enjoyment should not be the sole purpose.

The proof which he presents is really the reserve of such scholars. If these jurists did not explain it to us, we would never have concluded this theme from this verse. He says:

One should abstain from luxury and extravagance because Allāh taʿālā makes mention of it in His castigation of the unbelievers. He says that their eating and drinking is solely for enjoyment. What do they know about worship while in their state of unbelief!? Thus, there is no question of eating for the sake of obtaining strength for worship. To them, this world alone is the place of enjoyment. Their eating and drinking are thus for carnal satisfaction. How can the trait which is a point of castigation for the unbelievers ever become a trait of believers!? Therefore, the sole objective of a believer has to be obedience and worship.

Since life depends on food and drink, a believer eats, but to the extent of necessity. He does not make it the objective of his life. This is the major difference between the eating of a believer and an unbeliever. A believer considers it to be a cause of life while an unbeliever believes it to be his sole objective. Shaykh Saʿdī rahimahullāh makes reference to this as follows:

> Eating is there so that man can survive through it. Strength may come into his body so that he can worship Allāh taʿālā. But you are under the assumption that this life is solely for eating and drinking.

Allāh taʿālā refers to this as enjoyment and extravagance. Wherever Allāh taʿālā describes this trait of the unbelievers, He uses the word tamattuʿ (enjoyment).

ʿAllāmah Shāmī rahimahullāh quoted this verse:

وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يَتَمَتَّعُوْنَ وَيَأْكُلُوْنَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَّهُمْ.

> As for those who are unbelievers, they are enjoying themselves and eating as animals eat. The fire is their abode.[1]

Allāh taʿālā says:

كُلُوْا وَتَمَتَّعُوْا قَلِيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ.

> Eat and enjoy [yourselves] for a short while. You are certainly sinners.[2]

قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوْا فَإِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ.

> Say: Enjoy yourselves. You will then have to return to the Fire.[3]

Here too they are threatened with the Hell-fire because of their enjoyment. Allāh taʿālā says in another place:

ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

> Leave them to eat and enjoy themselves, and to be preoccupied by hope. Soon they shall come to know.[4]

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[1] Sūrah Muhammad, 47: 12.

[2] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 46.

[3] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 30.

[4] Sūrah al-Hijr, 15: 3.

In all these verses Allāh taʿālā castigates the unbelievers for their enjoyment and opulence. Together with this, He warns them of the Hell-fire. We learn from this that the cause of their heedlessness is lavishness and wasting of Allāh's bounties and favours. This is why Allāh taʿālā did not approve of these things for the believer. In this way, the different path of each group may remain separated.

Note: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam also prohibited extravagance and enjoyment.

عن معاذ بن جبل رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لما بعث به إلى اليمن قال إياك والتنعم فإن عباد الله ليسوا بالمتنعمين. رواه أحمد.

Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam despatched him to Yemen, he advised him saying: Continually abstain from luxury and enjoyment. The special servants of Allāh taʿālā are not luxury worshippers.

AN ʿĀLIM'S PARAMOUNT DUTY

The principal duty of an ʿālim is to express the beauty of the Sharīʿah to the people, to present the concessions which the Sharīʿah offers, and to explain to the people so that they realize that the Sharīʿah which Allāh taʿālā sent is not there to inconvenience us. Rather, it considers every concession in our favour. Also, full consideration is given to ease in all the injunctions of the Sharīʿah. Once they realize this, the Sharīʿah will become beloved to them.

For quite some time I had been thinking about writing on this subject. I believe it is essential to present this theme in our times so that people have love for the injunctions of the Sharīʿah. In this way, it will become easy for them to reach Allāh taʿālā, they will adhere to the Sharīʿah enthusiastically, and thereby reach great heights in the court of Allāh taʿālā. It was with this in mind that I had been explaining the Hadīth of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs radiyallāhu ʿanhu to you for the last few days. I had been explaining it to you even before I went on my journey. I also wrote something about it. I hadn't completed it as yet, and I fell ill. I had been making duʿā to Allāh taʿālā to restore my health so that I could complete it. Since I started it, I should at least complete it. The Hadīth reads as follows:

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to me: "O ʿAbdullāh! Is it true that you always fast during the day and spend the whole

night in worship?" I replied: "Indeed." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Don't do that. Alternate between fasting and not fasting. Perform salāh and go to sleep as well. Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, your wife has a right over you, and your visitors have a right over you." (*Mishkāt*)

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī raḥimahullāh quotes this Ḥadīth in his *Iʿtiṣām* and explains it in detail in his *Muwāfaqāt*. After reading his explanation, we realize the phenomenal importance of this Ḥadīth. I am presenting some parts of it to you:

He notes a general principle in *Muwāfaqāt*:

> فاعلم أن الحرج مرفوع عن المكلف لوجهين أحدهما الخوف من الانقطاع عن الطريق وبعض العبادات وكراهة التكلف. وينتظم تحت هذا المعنى الخوف من إدخال الفساد في جسمه أو عقله أو ماله أو حاله.
>
> Hardship is removed from a mukallaf (one who is under the obligation of the Sharīʿah) for two reasons: (1) Out of the fear that a person will sever himself from the path, and acts of worship and impositions of the Sharīʿah will be abhorred by him. This includes his fear of decay in his body, intellect, wealth or condition.
>
> والثاني خوف التقصير عند مزاحمة الوظائف المتعلقة بالعبد المختلفة الانواع مثل قيامه على أهله وولده إلى

تكاليف أخر تأتي في الطريق. فربما كان التوغل في بعض الأعمال شاغلا عنها وقاطعا بالمكلف دونها وربما أراد الحمل للطرفين على المبالغة في الإستقصاء فانقطع عنهما.

(2) The second reason is fear of shortcomings in actions when there is an inundation of different types of duties connected to him. For example, seeing to the needs of his family and children, and preoccupation with other responsibilities in this path. If he becomes too immersed in some of the actions, he will not fulfil those duties and leave out other needs because of it. Sometimes he will try to fulfil both completely and fully, but this will cause him to leave them out completely. In other words, he will not fulfil either of the two.

Glory to Allāh! When the ʿulamā' delve into a Hadīth, they explain it so clearly that everything is understood. I want to explain some of what has been said.

ʿAllāmah Shāṭibī raḥimahullāh said: "Constriction is removed from a mukallaf (one who is under the obligation of the Sharīʿah)." There is a Qur'ānic proof for this. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ.

He has laid no hardship on you in religion.[1]

This means: There is no type of hardship in whatever injunctions Allāh taʿālā laid down. A mukallaf does not experience any hardship in carrying them out. This is the greatest feature of divine injunctions because they are promulgated for all situations. If various situations were not considered when promulgating them, it would have been difficult to carry them out. Consequently, he would not carry them out.

The author of *Rūḥ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to this verse:

> قيل عدم الحرج بأن جعل لهم من كل ذنب مخرجا بأن رخص لهم في المضايق وفتح عليهم باب التوبة وشرع لهم الكفارات في حقوقه والأروش والديات في حقوق العباد.[2]
>
> One meaning of haraj (hardship) is: For every sin, Allāh provided a way out for people and gave them concessions in difficulties. (For example, if a person cannot stand in salāh, he may sit. If he cannot perform wudū', he may perform tayammum.) Then He opened the door to repentance for them. He prescribed atonements for the non-fulfilment of His rights, and penalties and blood money

[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 78.

[2] روح المعاني: ج ١٧، ص ٢١٠.

> when the rights of fellow humans are trampled.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and his Saḥābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum practised the most on the injunctions of Allāh taʿālā. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam considered ease for the entire Muslim community. This is why he did not promulgate orders which were constrictive. The ʿulamā' derived a general principle from this by saying that there is no hardship in the Sharīʿah. The author of *Muwāfaqāt* writes:

> Allāh taʿālā made this Sharīʿah pure and easy. A special consideration was given to the preservation of the hearts of the creation. This is why He made the Sharīʿah beloved to them. If they act in a manner which is the opposite of ease, they will fall into hardship.

He then presents a proof for this statement.

[He asks]: Have you not seen this teaching of Allāh taʿālā:

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللهِ لَوْ يُطِيْعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ.

> Know well that the Messenger of Allāh is among you. Were he to follow you in many matters, you would suffer. However, Allāh made īmān beloved to you and beautified it in your hearts, and placed the

repugnance of unbelief, sinning and disobedience in your hearts.[1]

He writes further on:

> Allāh taʿālā informs us that He made these actions beloved to us by making them easy for us. This is why He beautified īmān in our hearts.
>
> We learn about easiness from the following verse:
>
> يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ.
>
> Allāh wills ease for you; not difficulty.
>
> Allāh taʿālā has consideration for us, this is why He does not want to put us through any constriction. In other words, although He has the right [to put you into difficulty], because He loves you, He wants you to carry on with all your work while fulfilling His injunctions.

What a beautiful explanation done by ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī raḥimahullāh! Because He made it easy for us, He made īmān beloved to us. This is why He beautified īmān in our hearts. In this way, the heart gets filled with īmān. Allāh taʿālā then promises reward for it. That is, if you choose īmān, you will be rewarded. This is another reason why īmān is made beloved to people. In other words, īmān is in itself easy. Add to it the true promise of reward for it.

A Ḥadīth states:

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt, 49: 7.

عليكم من الأعمال ما تطيقون، فإن الله لا يمل حتى تملوا.

> Carry out actions to the extent which you have the strength to do because Allāh does not tire in giving rewards until you yourself get tired in carrying out the actions.

In other words, if you stop the action, you will not be rewarded.

The following Ḥadīth makes reference to night worship in the month of Ramaḍān:

أما بعد فإنه لم يخف عليّ شأنكم الليلة ولكني خشيت أن تفرض عليكم صلوة الليل فتعجزوا عنها.[1]

> I was not unaware of your eagerness. However, I feared that the night ṣalāh will be made obligatory on you and you will be unable to fulfil it.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam performed tarāwīḥ for two nights. He did not emerge from his room on the third night. The Ṣaḥābah raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum had assembled and were waiting for Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Some of them coughed to draw his attention to the fact that they were waiting for him. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu

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[1] صحيح مسلم: ج ١، ص ٢٥٩.

ʿalayhi wa sallam knew that if he emerged, an action will become obligatory on them because Allāh taʿālā loves this salāh immensely. This is what he was referring to when he said: "I was not unaware of your eagerness. However, I feared that the night salāh will be made obligatory on you and you will be unable to fulfil it."

A Hadīth of Khaulah states that Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said: This is Khaulah. People say that she does not sleep at night. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked: "Don't you sleep at night!?" He then said:

خذوا من العمل ما تطيقون فوالله لا يسأم الله حتى تسأموا.

> You should only do what is within your capacity. By Allāh, Allāh continues giving reward [and never gets tired] but you will become tired.

This was the best of eras. A Sahābiyah was spending the entire night in worship. She was obviously doing it out of love for Allāh taʿālā. Despite this, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam disapproved of it. In this way, he showed mercy to her, to her intellect and to her Dīn. In fact, he showed mercy to the entire Muslim nation because people would emulate her. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam must have thought to himself: I am present and people will start doing things which are disapproved by Allāh taʿālā and I have not been commissioned for this. Since Dīn is easy, I cannot tolerate anyone bearing difficulty. I am Allāh's Prophet. How can you do anything which is disapproved by Him in my presence? The bond with

Allāh taʿālā is not depended on excessive striving and bearing of hardships.

Hadrat Anas radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam entered the masjid and saw a rope tied between two pillars. He asked: "What is this rope for?" The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum replied: "Zaynab radiyallāhu ʿanhā tied this rope. When she gets tired [after engaging in acts of worship], she takes support from it." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Untie this rope. You should offer salāh when you are fresh [and energetic]. And when you get tired, you must lie down."

What is the benefit in tying a rope? You should rather hold on to the rope of Allāh taʿālā. The original rope is of the Qur'ān, Hadīth and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Act on their teachings. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللهِ جَمِيْعًا.

Hold on to the rope of Allāh altogether.[1]

Now Shaytān wants to creep in via this rope and wants to remove the Sharīʿah from us.

Hadrat Muʿādh radiyallāhu ʿanhu relates that when he led some people in salāh and prolonged it, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him:

إن منكم منفرين فأيكم ما صلى بالناس فليتجوز
فإن فيهم الضعيف والكبير وذا الحاجة.[1]

[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 103.

> Some of you are causing an aversion [to salāh]. Whoever leads people in salāh must make it short because there are in the congregation those who are weak and old, and those who have to fulfil a need.

Therefore, consideration should be given to all.

The author of *Muwāfaqāt* says: The essence of the Hadīth of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr radiyallāhu ʿanhu in which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam prohibited him from fasting continuously is that Allāh taʿālā does not want to impose any hardship on a person's body, intellect and wealth.

Hardship to the body refers to engaging in worship which causes pain to the body, and the body falls ill because of the worship. This has been removed from a mukallaf. He will have to be considerate in this regard in the sense that whatever he does must not cause pain to his body. Just as it is prohibited to cause pain to others, it is prohibited to cause pain to one's own body so that it does not succumb to illness.

From the words "hardship to the intellect" we understand that the body is an external thing and the intellect is an internal thing. To put it in another way, it refers to the heart. It is as though the intellect and heart are the same because the heart is the abode of the intellect. This would mean, do not do worship which would cause illness to the heart, restlessness and agitation which would then have an effect on the brain.

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[1] صحيح البخاري: ج ١، ص ٧٩.

Physicians focus on the body but still do not do justice to it. Here we see Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam focussing on the body, the intellect and the heart. He also draws attention to wealth and a person's condition. He was the spiritual physician of the Muslim nation. This is why he safeguarded us against every type of hardship.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did not cause any monetary hardship in the acts of worship which he laid down. In fact, worship is reduced on account of monetary hardship. There is a ruling which states that a person is permitted to not join the salāh congregation on account of a loss of four ānās. These concessions are given so that people will develop a love for the injunctions of the Sharīʿah, and actions will become easy and beloved to them. When a person loves the Sharīʿah, he will certainly love the one who brought the Sharīʿah. Thus, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam wants to convey you to him through ease and connect you to Allāh taʿālā in this way.

Allāh taʿālā explains His laws and provides many concessions to His servants. We do not make any concessions but Allāh taʿālā makes concessions for everyone. After all, He is the most merciful of those who show mercy.

Further on, the author of *Muwāfaqāt* that Allāh taʿālā removed hardship in one's condition. This means, occupy yourself in worship for as long as enthusiasm remains in the heart. Once boredom creeps in, then it is hardship.

You have seen this Hadīth and you will be able to translate it. But these scholars are explaining the essence of the matter.

Look at how clear it became after the above explanation, and from where to where he conveyed us! These scholars certainly understood the temperament of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and fulfilled the trust of conveying the words of Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam to us. They explain them to us because they are Allāh's orders. They are obviously lofty because the loftier the speaker, the loftier his speech. The orders of Allāh taʿālā are certainly different from the orders of others. The more a person follows the Sunnah, the more he will understand the Sharīʿah, display its beauty to the people and make the injunctions of the Sharīʿah beloved to them. Such a person enjoys a high rank in Allāh's court. This is in fact the right of deputyship. It is essential and inevitable for the one who is on this rank to pay full regard to it.

All our excellences are dependent on believing in the Sharīʿah. The more we believe in the Sharīʿah the more we will progress. Allāh taʿālā will not allow a person who practises to go to waste. He will reward him and the person will get closer to Allāh taʿālā. However, the person who understands the mysteries and intricacies of the Sharīʿah and the one who merely worships cannot be equal. His paucity of action will be made up by his knowledge. A Hadīth states:

نوم العالم عبادة.

The sleep of a scholar is an act of worship.

This is because his sleep is also on knowledge. Just as his other life conditions are in line with knowledge, his wakefulness and sleep are in line with the Sharīʿah. Here too he seeks to follow the

Sunnah. He acquires a high rank by virtue of his knowledge.

People in Kānpūr had entered the name of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh as a witness. Hadrat was popular and many senior people acknowledged him. Had they tried, Hadrat would not have to present himself as a witness. However, Hadrat said: "I will go. I want to see what they ask me." There was a large crowd at the court. Many lawyers were present. The opposing lawyer asked: "Are you an ʿālim?" Hadrat related to us: "I thought to myself that if I said I was not an ʿālim, he will say that the testimony of an ʿālim is required. Since I am not an ʿālim, how did I have the audacity to come here to testify. The case would be thrown out. I therefore thought about it and replied: "This is what Muslims think of me." The lawyer's next question was: "All the people believe and accept you." Hadrat related to us: "If I were to say that they all believe and accept me, then whatever was to be said after that, he would have asked me to say it because everyone believes me. This is why I said: "There are two meanings of acceptance. One is to affirm and consider the person to be truthful. The other meaning is to practise on whatever I say. Everyone knows I am truthful. As for practising, some of them do while others do not."

When Hadrat returned from the court, the lawyers crowded him and said: "When the lawyer asked you these questions, we thought to ourselves: Let's see what answer Maulānā gives. You gave answers which silenced us all."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said:

This was a mere play for Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh because he had the life of the

Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum before him and the unseen help of Allāh taʿālā with him.

A Hadīth states: The Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum were sitting in one place. A person came and asked one of the Sahābah who was a chief: "Are you a chief?" He replied: "If I don't disobey Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, I am a chief. If not, I am nothing."

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh had deep knowledge of history and the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum. He recalled their answers, this is why everything was easy for him.

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh used to say: "I had said to the lawyer that belief and acceptance have two meanings. One is to affirm and the other is to practise. The reason why I said this is that practice does not necessarily have to be in line with the affirmation. It could well be that a person affirms but does not practise."

Allāh taʿālā says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ.

> Those who believe in what was revealed to you and what was revealed before you.[1]

A quality of the believers – according to this verse – is that they believe in the Qur'ān and also believe in the Books which were revealed before it. We believe in the previous Books like the Taurāh and Injīl, but we do not practise on them. In like manner, it is

[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 4.

possible for someone to believe in us but not practise on what we say.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent point!

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh had his focus on the verses of the Qur'ān and he refuted this objection in tafsīr. This is why when he was asked, he understood the answer immediately. He was always focussed on these matters; nothing was left out. He gave an answer which left everyone stupefied. Those lawyers also said to him: "Hadrat, had you studied law, no one would have bothered to consult us."

I say: He was in fact a lawyer [a legal representative] – he was representing Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, he was conveying the Qur'ān and Sunnah to the people, but you lawyers do not appreciate this because you do not consider it to be a major work. Whereas an ʿālim who is conveying the words of Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is a representative of Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. This is no ordinary work; it is a phenomenal position.

I am relating these incidents about Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh so that your minds will be illuminated.

Academic points from Hadrat Thānwī

I did not develop my intellect by studying at a madrasah but through Hadrat Thānwī's company. He remembered everything. If we got stuck at any point and faced an obstacle, he would provide a solution.

Note: Glory to Allāh! I say the same thing about my shaykh, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā, he remembers at every occasion, answers every question and provides a solution to every complexity. All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā alone. (compiler)

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī's brother said to him that a government collector wants to meet him. Hadrat replied: "I will go personally to meet him. If he were to come here, we will have to show reverence to him and see to his needs, etc. If I go to him, he will show reverence to me." Hadrat's brother was happy with this reply and believed Hadrat was right.

What Hadrat meant was that if he were to go and meet the official, Hadrat will be saved from having to receive him with reverence. When Hadrat Thānwī met him eventually, he asked: "You wrote a tafsīr, what did you receive for it?" Hadrat Thānwī replied: "I am overjoyed when I see it read by my people. There is nothing greater than that in my sight. It is a service to my people. I see people deriving benefit from it. This is enough for me. The officer was highly impressed by this answer."

Immense intellect is required to convey knowledge. Knowledge in itself is insufficient. Someone mentioned to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh that a certain scholar claims that usury is permissible, and the proof which he presents is that it is essential and necessary for progress. Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh said: "There may be a need to accept usury to progress as much as possible, but progress is not dependent on believing usury to be permissible."

The person who had conveyed this question to Hadrat Thānwī had a friend who was sitting next to

him. When he heard this answer, he said: “Just marvel at his knowledge and the answer which he gave!” Allāh taʿālā says that usury is harām. The jurists also say the same thing. How, then, can we claim it to be halāl?

The benefit which a person derives through his knowledge is also through his intellect. Others also benefit from him through the intellect. They will understand Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and Allāh taʿālā in the same way. Allāh taʿālā says:

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّماوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ.

> They have not understood Allāh as He really is. The entire earth is a [mere] handful of His on the day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh used to teach the translation of the Qur’ān to his honourable wife. When he came to this verse, he asked her: “This verse makes reference to the earth being grasped in a hand, and the heavens being rolled up in the right hand. What is the point in this?” She replied: “Reference is made to the fact that when something is small, it is taken in one’s palm. And when something is large, it is taken in the hand without being made into a handful. Also, it is held with the right hand.” Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh liked this explanation and wrote the same point in his *Bayān al-Qur’ān*. Hadrat Thānwī

[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 67.

rahimahullāh included many fine and intricate points in his tafsīr. His academic acumen and expertise in the field of tafsīr can be gauged from this.

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh had a righteous companion who was also a hakīm. He said: "I studied with Hadrat Maulānā. I read the books which he read. But Allāh ta'ālā blessed him with different types of sciences. I do not have that knowledge." Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh was on a different level. In addition to in-depth knowledge, Allāh ta'ālā blessed him with an exceptional intellect.

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh was in the sitting room one day. A student came to him and said: "Hadrat! My carnal self is not right. I am constantly fearful of committing sins on account of my carnal desires. What should I do?" Hadrat Thānwī was about to give an answer when an 'ālim who was sitting nearby blurted out: "You must keep fast." The student said: "I kept fasts but did not benefit in any way." The 'ālim fell silent. Hadrat Thānwī said: "Brother! The Hadīth contains the word *'alaykum*. This means you must stick to and hold on to fasting. Fasting for one or two days will not suffice. You will have to adhere to it and keep fasting continuously; only then will you benefit." The 'ālim felt ashamed.

Look! Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh gave the 'ālim an answer from the very same Hadīth which he had quoted. Such was the erudition of Hadrat; he used to give a scholarly answer for everything.

There were other saintly personalities who rendered services to Dīn. But the perfection of the Sharī'ah and its compilation as done by Hadrat Thānwī

raḥimahullāh was unparalleled. It is an accepted fact that if a person were to pick up just one work of Ḥaḍrat Thānwī – *Bahishtī Zewar* – he will see many general principles and learn many fine and intricate points. Ḥaḍrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh did a great favour to the Muslim nation by just this one book. If not, it would have been extremely difficult to teach rules and regulations in this era of academic retrogression. This book has made the matter so easy.

People started conducting *Bahishtī Zewar* lessons at the place where I was staying in Mumbai. I was overjoyed by this and concluded that the people have taken effect from my words.

Ḥaḍrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh was an ʿālim of Dīn. His words are therefore a guidance for people. If they pay attention to it, many will be guided.

A person came to me and asked: "Do you have *Miṣbāḥ as-Sālikīn*?" I replied: "The books are in the library. Go and ask those who live here to search for this book and take it out for you." After a while I sent someone to tell him that miṣbāḥ al-murīd (the lamp for the disciple) is a shaykh and not a book. I also said to him: "Listen! Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī raḥimahullāh is a part of your spiritual lineage. He said that the book for a murīd is his shaykh. He also said that the books of Sufism are for the Sufis; they are not for the seekers. Just as medical journals are for the doctors and not for the patients. When he heard this, the man said: "I have learnt a great thing. Allāh willing, I will continue coming here."

Ḥaḍrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh used to explain this theme with much emphasis and intensity. Other

scholars also wrote about it. Hadrat Shāh Rafīʿ ad-Dīn Sāhib Dehlawī rahimahullāh states:

> Similarly, practising on every scholar's opinion causes much confusion and distress because every scholar does not possess correct views and correct perceptions.

Look! He is saying that every ʿālim does not possess correct views and perceptions. Thus, a book is not beneficial to every single person.

It is the duty of a murīd to make his shaykh his book, and make his teachings his guiding lamp. Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh presented a general principle by saying that books on Sufism are for the shaykh; not for the murīd. Just as the ʿulamā' refer to Shāmī and other books for rules and regulations, the Sufis must refer to these books. The murīd must follow his shaykh.

These were erudite ʿulamā' and Sufis who revived Sufism with their knowledge, actions and spiritual conditions. This is how a science is kept alive: Those who are qualified in it must keep it alive. If they pay less attention to it, it will become obliterated.

When I turned the attention of some people towards medicine, a hakīm sent me a message saying: "Hadrat! If you do this, then Inshā Allāh, medicine will be revived." I said to him: "It is your responsibility to revive it; not mine. I am not a physician. Yes, I can support you. I will send intelligent people to you. It is your responsibility to train them. If you [physicians] revive medicine, it will be revived. A science can only be revived by experts of that science. If we show concern for our science, it can remain alive. If not, it will disappear."

THE WAY TO SUCCESS

It is stated in *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm* that the Sufis say: Effective and beneficial dhikr is the one which is continuous and with presence of heart. The benefit of dhikr with the tongue alone in such a way that the heart is unmindful of it is merely in name. Similarly, engaging in dhikr with presence of heart for a short while and then becoming so occupied with worldly matters to the extent of becoming unmindful of Allāh taʿālā is also not beneficial. What a person ought to do is remember Allāh taʿālā with his heart perpetually. If he cannot do this, then at least for most of the time. This comes before worship. In fact, the essence of worship is created from this. The peak of physical forms of worship is the acquisition of this presence of heart. It is not easy to acquire. Those who did acquire it did spiritual exercises, only then did they acquire this treasure.

In Bāb ash-Shurūṭ wa al-Irādah, Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh quotes the statement of a traveller: I asked an abdāl who had cut himself off from the creation:

كيف الطريق إلى التحقيق؟

What is the path to reaching the reality?

Sometimes, I asked him like this: "Teach me an action on account of which I find my heart perpetually attached to Allāh taʿālā."

He replied: "Do not set your gaze at the creation because it is darkness." I replied: "It is very difficult to do this." He said: "Very well, do not listen to their

speech because it is a cause of hard-heartedness." I said: "I cannot do this much also." He said: "Okay, do not have any dealings with them because it causes desolation." I replied: "I live among them, so it is inevitable to have dealings with them." He said: "Okay, the least you must do is not acquire tranquillity from them because acquiring tranquillity from the creation is a cause of destruction." I said: "Indeed, this is the cause." The sage then said: "O servant of Allāh! You cast your gaze towards those who are heedless. You lend an ear to the speech of the ignorant. You have dealings with those who are idle. And you still want your heart to be perpetually attached to Allāh!? How can this happen!?"[1]

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

These are the righteous things which remain forever:

لَا اِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ، سُبْحَانَ اللهِ، وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلهِ. وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ.

The benefit of Allāh's remembrance

The first benefit of Allāh's dhikr is that a person develops affinity with it. Its peak is love for Allāh taʿālā. When a person acquires affinity with Allāh's dhikr, he cuts himself off from others besides Allāh. "Others besides Allāh" refers to everyone and everything which a person leaves behind at the time of his death. When a person passes away, neither

[1] *Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm*, vol. 3, p. 184 – translated by Nadīm al-Wājidī.

does his family, wealth, children nor kingship accompany him to his grave. Nothing apart from Allāh's dhikr remains with him. If he develops affinity with it, he benefits from it and takes enjoyment from it because whatever had been diverting him from it has disappeared. After all, it is worldly needs which had been preventing a person from Allāh's dhikr. Now that he has died, they have ceased to exist. It is as though this person is now in solitude with his Beloved. There can be nothing more joyous than this because he has been liberated from this prison which had been an obstacle between himself and his Beloved.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said that Jibraʾīl ʿalayhis salām cast this into his heart: "You may show your love to whomever you love. There will come a time when you will be separated from them." What he meant was matters related to this world will cease for a person after he passes away.

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَّيَبْقٰى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.

> All who are on earth are bound to perish. The countenance of your Sustainer will remain in all its majesty and glory.[1]

Advice to a woman

A woman said to me: "I carry out all the works of Dīn but I am not acquiring tranquillity of heart." I asked: "What does your heart desire?" She replied:

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[1] Sūrah ar-Rahmān, 55: 26-27.

“My heart is restless by the world.” I said: “A Hadīth states:

اَلدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ.[1]

> The world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for an unbeliever.

A heart is obviously restless by a prison. This is actually an excellent condition which you are experiencing. Just as a person is agitated by a prison, your heart is agitated by this world. This is a good sign because it shows your soul is desirous of Paradise. Everything chooses what suits it.”

Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh says:

> The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām discard the means of this world, while the unbelievers discard the means of the Hereafter. The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām prefer the Hereafter, this is why they strive for its means. The unbelievers love this world, this is why they strive for its means.
>
> The reason for this is that birds of a feather flock together. A bird runs behind its fellow bird, while its desire is in the front. Because the unbelievers are suited to the Hell-fire, they began liking the ways of the prison of this world and sought the world whose destiny is the Hell-fire. Because the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām were suited for

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[1] مسلم، كتاب الزهد، ص ٤٠٧.

Paradise, they focussed on it with their hearts and souls and yearned for the Hereafter whose destiny is Paradise.

This woman was not heedless of Allāh's remembrance. How can a heart which is attached to Allāh taʿālā ever become attached to this world!?

A shroud-thief

Now listen to another story. It will certainly create some yearning for Allāh taʿālā and the Hereafter.

A pious woman passed away. People performed her janāzah salāh and buried her. A shroud-thief had attended the funeral with the intention of stealing the woman's shroud after everyone departs. And this is what he did. When everyone departed, he approached her grave and was about to pull out her shroud. Just then, a voice from inside said: "Glory to Allāh! What can be said of that person who has been pardoned and yet he is stealing the shroud of a woman who has been pardoned!"

The man stopped in his tracks when he heard this. If you were in his place you would have fled, thinking that it was a demon. The man did not get frightened. Instead, he asked: "What does this mean?" The woman replied from her grave: "Allāh taʿālā pardoned me and said to me that He has pardoned all those who attended my funeral. You also performed the janāzah salāh for me, so you too are pardoned. This is why I expressed my surprise."

The thief was deeply affected by this. He regretted his action from the depths of his heart and thought to himself: "Just look at me! I came to steal the shroud while Allāh taʿālā made arrangements for my forgiveness." He realized the kindness and

generosity of Allāh taʿālā. He repented sincerely and became a pious person.

The repentance of a tale-bearer

Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām went out into the fields to pray for rain but his supplication was not accepted. He received divine inspiration: "How can We accept your supplication when there is a tale-bearer among you?" Mūsā ʿalayhis salām said: "O Allāh! Tell me the identity of the person so that I can remove him from our society or ask him to repent. I will supplicate after that." Allāh taʿālā replied: "We are castigating a tale-bearer and now We must do the same [by giving you his identity]!? You should rather ask all the people to repent, and the tale-bearer will also be included among them."

This is the way in which Allāh taʿālā conceals our sins. He does not want to disgrace His servants. This shows His affection and kindness towards sinners. Without doubt, even parents do not have this much affection for their children. Another point we learn is never to treat sinners with scorn and contempt. We do not know what relationship each person has with Allāh taʿālā. We can certainly abhor the sin, but not the sinner.

There was a scholar by the name of Ayyūb Sakhtiyānī rahimahullāh. A person whose outward condition was not good passed away in his era. This scholar therefore did not attend the man's janāzah salāh. Someone saw the deceased in his dream and asked: "How did you fare?" He replied: "Allāh taʿālā was gracious to me and pardoned me." The deceased added: "You must tell Ayyūb Sakhtiyānī: So what if you did not attend my funeral!? Allāh taʿālā was kind to me and He pardoned me." The

deceased also said: “You must recite this verse to him:

قُلْ لَّوْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُوْنَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّيْ إِذًا لَّأَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْإِنْفَاقِ ط وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ قَتُوْرًا.

> Say: Had the treasures of my Sustainer’s mercy been in your hands, you would have certainly held back [from spending] for fear of spending [all]. Man is narrow of heart.[1]

There are many stories depicting Allāh’s mercy and fear for Him. A narration states that when a person says Lā Ilāha Illallāh, it passes by his book of deeds, erases his sins and replaces them with good deeds.

I said previously that the day of Resurrection will be a difficult day, and it will also be easy. It will be difficult for the unbelievers and easy for the believers. Although it will be easy, a believer is terrified by the Resurrection while living in this world. This is what īmān demands – a believer must fear the terror of the Resurrection.

Zurārah ibn Aufā

Hadrat Zurārah ibn Aufā rahimahullāh recited Sūrah al-Muddath-thir in his salāh. When he reached the following verse, his soul left him and he fell down.

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُوْرِ.

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl, 17: 100.

When the trumpet is sounded.[1]

A Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "How can I enjoy life when the blower of the trumpet has placed it in his mouth and is waiting for the order of Allāh to be issued?

This is how Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam portrayed fear of the Resurrection. When the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum heard this, they asked: "O Rasūlullāh! If this is the extent of your fear, what can be said of us?" He replied: "You must read:

حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيْلُ وَعَلَى اللهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا.

Allāh is sufficient for us. What an excellent dispenser of affairs He is! We place our trust in Allāh.

It is stated in the traditions that when it is Friday, all the creations – birds and animals – except for man and jinn become fearful because this could be the start of the Resurrection. After all, the Resurrection will be on a Friday. This is why they become fearful every Friday.

When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum to read:

حَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيْلُ.

It was not only for them. Instead, he personally beseeched Allāh taʿālā thus:

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[1] Sūrah al-Muddath-thir, 74: 8.

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ السَّبْعِ، وَرَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اكْفِنِيْ كُلَّ مُهِمٍّ مِّنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتَ وَمِنْ اَيْنَ شِئْتَ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لِدِيْنِيْ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لِدُنْيَايَ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لِمَا اَهَمَّنِيْ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ بَغٰى عَلَيَّ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ حَسَدَنِيْ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ كَادَنِيْ بِسُوْءٍ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ عِنْدَ الْمَسْاَلَةِ فِي الْقَبْرِ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ عِنْدَ الْمِيْزَانِ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ عِنْدَ الصِّرَاطِ، حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ، عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ.

O Allāh! The Rabb of the seven heavens and the Rabb of the grand Throne. O Allāh! Suffice me for every important matter as You will and from wherever You will. Allāh is sufficient for me for my Dīn. Allāh is sufficient for me for my worldly life. Allāh is sufficient for me for all my worries. Allāh is sufficient for me from the one who oppresses me. Allāh is sufficient for me from the one who is envious of me. Allāh is sufficient for me from the one who deceives me with evil. Allāh is sufficient for me at the time of death. Allāh is sufficient for me at the time of questioning in the grave. Allāh is sufficient for me when my deeds will be weighed. Allāh is sufficient for me near the bridge [over Hell]. Allāh is sufficient for me; there is none worthy of worship except Him. I place my trust in

Him alone, and He is the Rabb of the grand throne

Did you see! Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam did not leave out any difficult time or place from which he did not beg Allāh taʿālā for His protection and sufficiency. He begged Allāh taʿālā for sufficiency in the grave, when deeds are weighed, when crossing the bridge, and everywhere else. He placed his trust in Allāh taʿālā alone. On another occasion, he begged Allāh taʿālā to include him among those who place their trust in Him:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِمَّنْ تَوَكَّلَ عَلَيْكَ فَكَفَيْتَهُ، وَاسْتَهْدٰكَ فَهَدَيْتَهُ، وَاسْتَنْصَرَكَ فَنَصَرْتَهُ.

O Allāh! Make me of those who placed his trust in You, so You sufficed him; who sought guidance from You, so You guided him; who sought Your help, so You helped him

Look at the various ways in which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam beseeched Allāh taʿālā. He asked Allāh to grant him sufficiency in important matters, and to include him among those whose request for sufficiency, guidance and help He accepted.

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām carried out Allāh's order when he made his son Ismāʿīl ʿalayhis salām lie down on the ground to sacrifice him. He passed a knife across his son's neck after taking Allāh's name and placing his trust in Him. However, Allāh taʿālā showed him an example of sufficiency by sending down a sheep from Paradise which was then slaughtered by him.

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām did not know he was passing the knife across the neck of a sheep. He thought he was doing it across his son's neck. This was a spectacle of Allāh's power that the sheep was slaughtered and Hadrat Ismāʿīl ʿalayhis salām was completely protected.

Ibrāhīm ﷺ is cast into the fire

Allāh taʿālā said to Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām: You have done your work by passing the knife, but it does not cut by its own will; it cuts solely by My order. If I do not will it, it cannot cut. When a fire burns, it does so by My order. If I prohibit it from burning, it will never burn."

The fire was turned into a garden for Hadrat Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām. When he was cast into the fire, angels came to him and asked him if he has any need. He replied: "I have no need for your assistance. My Allāh is sufficient for me, and there is no need for me to ask Him because He is fully aware of my condition."

Allāh taʿālā helped him. This is described in the Qur'ān as follows:

قُلْنَا يٰنَارُ كُوْنِيْ بَرْدًا وَّسَلٰمًا عَلٰٓى إِبْرٰهِيْمَ.

> We said: O fire! Be a coolness and [a source of] peace for Ibrāhīm.[1]

The ʿulamā' say that "peace" has been mentioned with "coolness" because if it was only "coolness", the fire would have given up its heat and turned to ice. Its coldness could have caused Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis

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[1] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 21: 69.

salām discomfort and proven destructive. This is why Allāh taʿālā ordered it to be moderately cold and peaceful. In this way, neither the heat nor the cold will harm him.

The tauḥīd of Ibrāhīm ﷺ

The response of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām was the highest level of tauḥīd. He was immersed in tauḥīd and had lain the foundation of tauḥīd in his time. He knew that being cast into the fire was a test from Allāh taʿālā. At the same time, he was fully convinced that Allāh taʿālā will never abandon a person who raises the flag of tauḥīd among polytheists of this nature. Thus, by virtue of his devotion to Allāh taʿālā, He turned the fire into an orchard and, through it, the pride of Namrūd was broken and his weakness was displayed.

Imām Ghazzālī raḥimahullāh explains this story in much detail. He says that Allāh taʿālā has many angels who are assigned duties in the Hell-fire but the fire does not burn them.

The story of a tyrant king

There was a tyrant king who compelled believers into becoming unbelievers. Those who refused were cast into a fire. When he realized that he is not fulfilling his objective in this way, he plotted another scheme. He would take infant children and cast them into the fire in the presence of their parents. The latter will not be able to bear this and renege from Islam. When a child was cast into the fire, it called out from inside: “Come in! This is not a fire; it is a flower garden.” When the people heard this, they began jumping into the fire one after the other. The king was enraged. He addressed the fire: “O fire!

What is the matter with you? Why are you not burning?" The fire replied: "I am not a garden, I am indeed a fire. It is certainly my job to burn. If you doubt this, come into me and see for yourself. As for those whom I am not burning, it is because I am instructed by someone [Allāh] and they are His beloveds."

Those who say the kalimah will not be lonely

Did you see how Allāh taʿālā protects His righteous servants! This is why I say: The greatest thing in tauḥīd is the kalimah – Lā Ilāha Illallāh. It is said that the people of the kalimah will not feel lonely – neither at the time of death, in the grave nor on the field of Resurrection.

This is why we should repeat this kalimah as much as possible. When a person's heart becomes separated from everyone and everything on account of Lā Ilāha, and becomes attached to Allāh alone on account of Illallāh, there can be no loneliness and isolation. This kalimah is a person's companion in this world and the Hereafter. Man has ulterior motives when he is a companion of another. He does not bother about the pain and discomfort of anyone.

I went to visit a friend. Whenever I go to any place, I say to the people: "Do not announce my arrival." This friend requested me to deliver a talk, and I did. A Deputy Ṣāḥib also attended. I was quoting the following couplets when he entered the assembly.

> How will the approaching [death] ever be deferred? The restrained and delayed life will certainly depart.

Where will you ever place a flower over my grave when you will not be able to pour sand over it.[1]

The Deputy Sāhib was deeply affected by these couplets.

Without doubt, there is much admonishment in the remembrance of death. This is why Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam ordered us to remember it abundantly. This is what will create fear of the Hereafter which is the basis for reformation. Hold on to the basis, i.e. think of the Hereafter and you will progress very quickly.

It is related that when a deceased person is taken away, he screams out: "Where are you taking me?" If humans were to hear his screaming, they will be terrified.

No matter what, the Hereafter is a difficult stage. It is another matter if Allāh taʿālā makes it easy on a believer out of His grace and kindness. Fear of it causes a believer to be restless and he is constantly worried about it.

The karāmat of a saint

There was a saint who used to pass by an immoral woman. When she used to see him, she used to mock at him and say: "Whose beard is better, yours

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[1] Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh passed away at sea while on a journey to perform hajj. He was buried at sea not far from the Jeddah harbour. This couplet is therefore in line with his burial. His associates applauded it and believed it to be his karāmat. May Allāh taʿālā shower His mercy on him. (compiler)

or my goat's?" The saint would remain silent and continue on his way.

The saint bore her taunts for his entire life. When he was about to depart from this world, he advised that when he dies, his funeral bier must be made to pass by the woman's house. The saint's followers carried out his bequest. When his funeral bier reached the woman's place, he sat up, passed his hand over his beard and said: "All praise is due to Allāh, today my beard is better than your goat's." After saying this, he lied down once again.

The fact of the matter is that throughout his life he feared the Hereafter and presenting himself before Allāh taʿālā. This is why he thought to himself that he does not know how his end will be. If he passes away with īmān, it is certainly a joyous occasion for a believer. If – Allāh forbid – he has a bad death, the goat is a thousand times better than him because there is no punishment for it in the Hereafter. No one knows how he will fare at the end of his life. This is why he remained patient for his entire life and did not utter a word to the woman. Only when he saw the angels of mercy at the time of his death and received the good news from Allāh taʿālā was he satisfied.

Note: It is stated in the traditions that before a believer passes away, he receives the following glad tidings:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ. اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً. فَادْخُلِيْ فِيْ عِبَادِيْ وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ.

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with

> Him, He pleased with you. Join, then, My servants and enter My Paradise.[1]

The saint must have heard this, and then addressed the woman as stated above. May Allāh taʿālā bless us with this bounty. Āmīn. (compiler)

This is how the friends of Allāh taʿālā are – the fear of Allāh taʿālā overpowers them. This is why they consider themselves to be worse than everyone; even worse than animals. And so, they are conferred with lofty ranks in the Hereafter even though worldly people may consider them to be fools on account of their humility and submission.

A saint who accepted counterfeit coins

There was a saint who used to sell gravy. People would come and buy from him, but they would pay him with counterfeit money. They assumed he cannot differentiate between genuine and counterfeit money, he is a fool, and they should continue deceiving him. Whereas he knew fully well what was happening and could identify counterfeit money. When he was about to depart from this world, he said: "O Allāh! You know well that throughout my life I had been accepting counterfeit money from Your servants. I beg You to accept my counterfeit actions today."

Glory to Allāh! People thought he was a fool but look at how intelligent he turned out to be! Understand well! The more lenient you are to Allāh's creation, the more lenient Allāh will be towards you.

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[1] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-30.

There is a Ḥadīth in *Sunan Tirmidhī* which is narrated by Ḥaḍrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When a person of the previous nations was taken to account, no good deeds were found in his book of deeds apart from the fact that he was a wealthy man. When he used to give on credit, he used to tell his employees to be lenient towards those who were in financial constraints, to give them respite and to pardon them.

When he was presented before Allāh taʿālā, He said: "If he can order his employees to pardon those who were in financial constraints, I am more eligible to do this." Allāh taʿālā then ordered the angels to pardon him.[1]

The point I am making is that if you want Allāh taʿālā to be lenient to you, you must do likewise to His creations.

I had related this incident to you. There was a Maulānā. On one occasion, his wife sprinkled extra salt in the food. When the food was presented to him, he ate it without saying a word. When he passed away, someone saw him in a dream. The man asked: "Maulwī Ṣāḥib! How did you fare?" He replied: "I have been pardoned." When he was asked the reason, he said: "It was on account of that meal in which there was extra salt and which I ate without uttering a word of complaint." Allāh taʿālā said: "I liked your patience and the fact that you did not say anything to your wife. You pardoned your wife's mistake. Go! I am pardoning you today because of it."

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[1] *Sunan Tirmidhī*, vol. 1, p. 156.

Glory to Allāh! Someone rightly said:

> Allāh's mercy does not demand any wealth. Rather, it searches for an excuse [to pardon].

SINCERITY AND KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT CONDITIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR RECTIFICATION

Our seniors were successful on account of two reasons:

(1) They possessed full knowledge of the Sharīʿah.

(2) They had sincerity.

Now, even if a person is sincere, because he does not have knowledge of the Sharīʿah, he can neither understand the modus operandi nor can he explain and expound on the rules and regulations. As for the modus operandi, listen to what Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Ṣāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī raḥimahullāh has to say in his *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah* in a chapter devoted to this theme. The chapter is titled "The Condition of the People of Ignorance and How Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam Reformed it".

Under this heading he states that if you want to ponder over the meanings of the Sharīʿah of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, you will have to first appraise the conditions of those ignorant ones among whom Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was commissioned, and whose habits and customs was – so to say – the ingredient of his Sharīʿah.

Jāhilī customs – the basis of Rasūlullāh's reformation

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh made a small statement: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam focussed on the depravation which had pervaded the nation before his arrival and reformed their conditions accordingly. If a person wants to understand his reformations, it will be necessary for him to first understand those conditions on which his reformations were applied. From this we learn that it is necessary for every reformer to have full knowledge of the conditions of the people of his time. He will have to know what they are doing in conflict with the Dīn. He must identify and recognize their emotions, thoughts and inclinations. Knowledge of these will be essential for their reformation. Without understanding them, reformation will not only be difficult but impossible.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib rahimahullāh goes on to explain that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was sent with the pure religion of Ismāʿīl ʿalayhis salām so that he may straighten the crookedness which had crept into it, remove distortions and propagate its light. This is the meaning of:

مِلَّةَ أَبِيْكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ.

The religion of your forefather Ibrāhīm.[1]

Thus, when he came for the reformation of this religion to which the Arabs were linked, it was necessary for its principles to be accepted, and its ways to be well-known. Many fissures and gaps had

[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 78.

crept into the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām at the time when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was commissioned. At the same time, some vestiges of the religion remained. Therefore, there was no question of changing and altering them. Rather, it was rationally obligatory to maintain them in the name of Dīn and the Sharīʿah because this was a strong impetus for accepting the call of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and a powerful proof to establish the evidence against them.

The Banū Ismāʿīl remained steadfast on the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām until a man by the name of ʿAmr ibn Luhayy was born among them. It was through his corrupt views that they began worshipping idols and dedicating animals in their names. Consequently, they went astray and led others astray. By this time, the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām had become non-existent, and the correct was mixed with the corrupt. Ignorance, polytheism and unbelief reigned supreme. No further misguidance was expected from them [because they had reached the pits]. Allāh taʿālā then commissioned Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam to them so that he may straighten their crookedness and reform their corruption.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam first examined the religious law which prevailed among them. Matters which were in line with the religion of Ismāʿīl ʿalayhis salām or were from among the symbols of Allāh taʿālā were left as they were by Allāh's order. Those that were corrupted or distorted, or were from the symbols of polytheism and unbelief were classified as baseless and invalid. As for habits and customs, he taught them their

etiquette and what was disliked of them. He prohibited them from baseless customs and ordered them to follow righteous customs. Creedal and practical issues which had been abandoned during the time when Messengers had stopped coming were revived. In this way, Allāh's favour on Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was completed and His Dīn was straightened. The people of ignorance used to accept the possibility of Prophets being commissioned. They also believed in reward and punishment. They accepted the different types of righteousness. In other words, they believed in the reward of doing many acts of reward, and they practised on them to some extent.

While they had all these things in them, there were three types of people before the commissioning of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The fussāq, the zanādiqah and the ghāfil juhalā'.

The fussāq: Due to their overpowering carnal desires and lack of religiosity, they were immersed in actions like those of wild animals. They themselves testified to their own iniquity. Consequently, they were already expelled from the religion of Ibrāhīm and Ismāʿīl ʿalayhimas salām. I say: Today there are a considerable number of people who are included in this category. The conditions and incidents are before you, so there is no difficulty in understanding who they are. When a person becomes fearless of Allāh taʿālā and has no consideration whatsoever for His Dīn, then it is not far-fetched of him to have these characteristics.

The zanādiqah: They were naturally born with misunderstanding. They could neither fulfil the objective which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam wanted to realize, emulate him, nor affirm

what he brought. They remained wandering in their doubts and misgivings. They feared their own people, and the latter used to reject them. They considered them to have already left the religion, and that they have cast aside the necklace of religion from their necks. If their rejection and deplorable condition had reached such a pitiful level, there was no harm in their being out of the fold of religion.

The ghāfil juhalā': They did not even raise their heads to look at religion, nor did they have any perception of it. They were the majority among the Quraysh. This was because their era was too far away from the era of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. This is what Allāh taʿālā refers to when He says:

لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا اَتٰهُمْ مِنْ نَّذِيْرٍ.

> So that you may warn those people to whom no warner had come.[1]

Despite their disregard, they had not moved away completely from the path of religion whereby no evidence would benefit them, no accusation could be levelled against them, and they could not be made to accept in any way.

From among the principles which they also accepted was that they believed that the creation of the heavens and earth, and the administration of major things were done solely by Allāh taʿālā. They believed none could refute His order and none could defer His decree. The Qur'ān relates their beliefs as follows:

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[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 46.

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللهُ.

> Were you to ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth?" They will reply: "Allāh."[1]

However, their zanādiqah used to say that there are angels and souls apart from Allāh taʿālā. They believed in these creations to be similar to the position of ministers and advisers before a sultan. This means that the Sharīʿah has also handed over certain affairs to the angels, and that the supplications of those who are close to Allāh are accepted. From this they concluded that since they enjoy a special position with Allāh taʿālā, they will be able to do something for them. Whereas this logic of theirs was totally wrong.[2]

The Prophetic way has to be followed when inviting towards Allāh

According to Shāh Walī Allāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh knowledge of the elements of corruption is necessary for the realization of reformation. Even now, the same thing will have to be done if we want to reform the nation. Reformation cannot be achieved by mere expression of general principles. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam wanted to reform the Arabs, he appraised the condition of the people of ignorance, and then made this the element of his Sharīʿah. Shāh Walī Allāh Sāḥib raḥimahullāh expresses the same theme in another place. He writes in *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah*:

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[1] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 25.

[2] *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, vol. 1, p. 125.

> When a person establishes himself in a certain place for the sake of calling Allāh's creation, and people turn their attention to him, he will have to do the same thing which was done by the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām because he is obliged to follow and emulate them.

Now look! The seniors who invited the creation towards Allāh taʿālā are telling us to do what the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām did and to adopt their modus operandi. Without this, the responsibility of inviting towards Allāh taʿālā will not be done. If people reach a certain level, they cannot remain independent; they have to remain subservient to the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām.

Think for yourself. Since we are dependent on Rasūlullāh's guidance for everything, we will be even more dependent on him for the duty of inviting towards Allāh taʿālā because it is an extremely important duty. We will have to learn his ways in this regard and adopt them. If not, we can never succeed.

> O Saʿdī! Do not think you can traverse the path to Safā without following in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.
>
> Anyone who follows a path which is different from Rasūlullāh's can never reach the destination.
>
> Those who strayed from this path walked a lot and were severely distressed, but they still did not find the path.

> None could traverse this path other than the one who followed Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The one who did not follow the shepherd (Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) went astray.

Now listen to what Allāh taʿālā says:

> وَأَنْزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ.
>
> We revealed to you this Reminder so that you may expound before the people that which has come down to them, and so that they may contemplate.[1]

In his commentary to this verse, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that the word *dhikr* (Reminder) refers to the Qur'ān. It is derived from *tadhkīr* which also means to lecture and advise, and awaken from heedlessness. The Qur'ān is referred to as *dhikr* either because it contains admonition and advice, or because it is a cause for remembrance and awakening. "so that you may expound before people" – i.e. you may convey it to everyone and explain it to them. The word *an-nās* refers to all people although the Arabs (or people of Makkah) were the first addressees. The words "that which has come down to them" mean: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam must convey to the people the rules and regulations which are mentioned in the Qur'ān. In like manner, he has to relate the conditions and destinies of past nations.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 44.

How they treated their respective Prophets ʿalayhimus salām, the various types of punishments which befell them, and their eventual destruction. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had to explain all these openly. If they contemplate on all these things, they will probably become the causes of their becoming believers.

The mysteries and sciences of the Qur'ān have to be explained

Hadrat Mujāhid rahimahullāh says that the word "expound" refers to explaining all that is general. It is said that it is not confined to the lawful and the prohibited, and the stories of past nations. Rather, it entails explaining the mysteries and sciences of the Qur'ān while taking into consideration their individual capabilities. The Hadīth refers to the mysteries and sciences of the Qur'ān as:

لا تنقض عجائبه.

Its mysteries are endless.

A poet said:

جميع العلم في القرآن لكن – تقاصر عنه أفهام الرجال

All knowledge is in the Qur'ān but man's intelligence cannot fathom it.

Thus, explaining the mysteries and sciences of the Qur'ān while taking into consideration each person's capabilities was also a responsibility of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. This explanation is supported by a tradition narrated and verified by Hākim rahimahullāh. Hadrat Hudhayfah radiyallāhu ʿanhu says: "There were

some of us who remembered these sciences while others forgot them."

This statement is very close to the one made by a group of scholars who say that *tabyīn* (exposition) is more general then explicit explanation of the objective and reference to the meaning. It includes analogical reasoning, the import and allusion of the text, conclusions and other similar things. Reference is made to this from the words "and so that they may contemplate". It asks man to ponder and contemplate over the Qur'ān so that he can fathom the facts and take admonition from them.

Allāh taʿālā is addressing Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam: We revealed the Qur'ān so that you may openly explain its injunctions, admonitions and stories. Perhaps this will inspire them to contemplate and then embrace īmān. We learn from this that the way to bring people towards guidance is to explain the Qur'ān to them. The Qur'ān has been revealed solely for their guidance, and one can expect them to be guided through it. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is himself ordered to expound it.

We conclude that the original position of expounding belongs to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It then came to the Allāh-conscious ʿulamā' by way of deputyship and inheritance. Fulfilling this responsibility requires knowledge and understanding of the Qur'ān. This is essential. Without it, no one can accomplish the task of expounding. When there is no expounding, there will be no guidance and no reformation. It is not an easy task. It cannot be done by all and sundry. I myself see only three or four people who can fulfil the responsibility of expounding the Qur'ān. In

other words, who can explain the guidance and teachings of the Qur'ān and show the correct path to the ummah.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh has brought to light some pertinent points. May Allāh ta'ālā enable us to understand them and to inspire us to fulfil the responsibility accordingly. Āmīn. (compiler)

A similar type of ignorance which prevailed during the time of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam has now come to us. We also have flagrant sinners, atheists and the heedless ones. Thus, the need for expounding (*tabyīn*) is felt today as well. Since there are no Prophets, who is going to carry out this responsibility? Obviously, it is only the 'ulamā' who are the heirs of the Prophets who can do it. However, what I see today is that the ignoramuses – despite their ignorance – are making claims to erudition and scholarship. They want to do the work which is the wont of the 'ulamā'. We do not see the *tabyīn* which is required. The more the number of people doing the work, the more the ignorance is increasing. We too are living in the era in which you are living. Why, then, is your opinion reliable and ours is not?

They are the ones who level objections against the 'ulamā' by saying that the latter are not doing anything. I say to them: Very well, do the work and show us. The 'ulamā' will pull back their hands. Undoubtedly, they too will not be able to do anything. It is easy to make objections against others but difficult to do something yourself. When you have to do the work yourself, you will realize the many challenges you have to face. The shocking thing is that every person is behaving like an erudite

scholar. He neither has knowledge of the Qur'ān nor of the conditions of people. Yet he is ready to rectify and reform others. I ask you, what will he be able to achieve? Have you ever seen unqualified people doing the work?

The reason why work is not done

Previously, a person would not initiate any work until he graduated or received khilāfat from a saint. These things no longer exist. The only thing which is left is egotism. Each person considers his view to be better and remains fanatical about it. You are not benefiting because the correct education is not being imparted. This is why your condition is not coming right. Teaching and training are not being realized because expounding the injunctions of the Qur'ān has ceased. The general trend is that the ʿālim is following the masses and the shaykh is following his murīds – except in certain cases.

We fear the masses, so we do not open our mouths to expound and explain. You people are coming here of your own accord, this is why I am saying these things to you. However, it is out of fear of the masses that those who were qualified to do the work are sitting at home while unqualified people have taken their places. Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī raḥimahullāh says:

> The Arabian horse is injured and is lying beneath the palanquin, while I see a gold necklace around the neck of a donkey.

The work can still be done, but the way to do it is to learn the methodology of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and to work accordingly. When people adopted this approach, they did great work even here in India. The seniors of Dīn went to all corners of India. People observed their character,

sincerity, honesty, Allāh-consciousness, integrity, sound social etiquette and transparent dealings. The masses rallied around them and benefited from them. Whichever nation they went to, they turned them for the better. No matter which assembly they went to, they converted it into a place of Allāh's love. You want the work to be like what it was during the era of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum, but you are devoid of knowledge, practice and sincerity. How, then, can the work be done? This is why I feel like quoting this couplet which depicts your condition:

> Who will not die at this naivety!? You are fighting but you do not even have a sword in your hand!

The sword which I am referring to is the sword of sound character. In India, Islam did not spread by the sword; it spread through sound character.

Work has to be done as was done by the pious predecessors

If you want to do any work in India, you will have to follow the practices of your pious predecessors and adopt the character of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Islam is existing, the Qur'ān is existing, sound character is existing and, all praise is due to Allāh, strength and power are also existing. All this is in its place. When did the ʿulamā' ever say that Islam spread by the sword!? They say that it spread through sound character. You still have it with you, and you can choose it when you want. No one can deny it to you. You should therefore bring it to the forefront so that Allāh's mercy descends and you enjoy Allāh's help.

I noticed the condition of the Muslims changing here. The people have changed a bit but there is a shortage of teachers. The more workers we have, the more the work. There is a need to present the conditions in a correct manner to them. When people understand their true condition, they will come to realize sooner or later. We believe in the Dīn, we believe in Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, we believe in the Qur'ān. The only thing which is needed is action. There is no need to compel others. Rather, we have to start practising. Others will see us and they will follow suite. The more people do the work, the greater the effect and benefit. Evil certainly has an effect, but the effect of good surpasses it. When piety and goodness spread, evil is uprooted.

Instead of interfering with work everywhere, it will be better to remain in one place, spend your energies there and set things right. It cannot happen that people of one area become religious, and people of other areas do not turn their attention to it. I say, put right just one salāh and all objections will end. This is because salāh requires purity. If you are particular about it, all your whisperings and doubts will cease. Salāh is a link between a servant and Allāh taʿālā. When the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum performed salāh and returned to their respective places, their faces would appear different. It was as though they had just met Allāh taʿālā. Today we neither give importance to salāh nor to purity.

The fact of the matter is that there are few people who speak of these things. Without doubt, it is not an easy task to present the Sharīʿah in a manner which causes people to love it. It is necessary for a

person to know the temperament of the people, their conditions and their inclinations. Only a person who considers these points can effect reformation and he alone is worthy of being referred to as a reformer. If not, you may refer to an ʿālim as an ʿālim, but you will not call him a reformer.

Allāh taʿālā commissioned Prophets and sent Books for the reformation of nations. The Prophets expounded the Books to their respective nations, and they benefited from them. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الْأُولَىٰ بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ.

> After having destroyed the first generations, We gave to Mūsā the Book as an enlightenment for the people, as a guide and as a mercy so that they may remember.[1]

First, the perceptiveness of the seeker of truth is set right. This is known as *baṣīrah*. Then he accepts the injunctions. This is *hidāyah* (guidance). After that, he is conferred with the fruit of *hidāyah*, i.e. proximity with Allāh taʿālā. This is *raḥmah* (mercy).[2]

Glory to Allāh! What a well-sequenced explanation, and so impressive! May Allāh taʿālā enable us to understand it. Āmīn.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 43.

[2] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*.

The reason for an absence of guidance today is the absence of expounding the Qur'ān. It is impossible for an erudite ʿālim to be in a place and misguidance remains there. An erudite ʿālim cannot bear to see misguidance.

A Ḥadīth states that when innovations become common, an ʿālim must display his knowledge. If he does not, ignorance will pervade and innovations will spread. Even if everyone does not accept after expounding the truth, there will certainly be some people who do. When a long time passes over a teaching, it becomes adulterated by falsehood. At such a time, there is a need for a person who separates the truth from falsehood. When Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam came into this world, it was passing through this phase. Some remnants of the religion of Ibrāhīm ʿalayhis salām were found, and people innovated certain things and mixed them with religion. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam expounded the true religion and removed falsehood from the truth. This was followed by the era of the jurists. They too expounded the Dīn by deriving rules and regulations from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. If the ʿulamā' and Sufis of today are only there for blessings, the masses will remain deprived. This is why it is necessary for them [ʿulamā' and Sufis] to do the work correctly.

The workers are opposed by their own people

The work is certainly difficult, and its reward is solely from Allāh taʿālā. A person will experience some pain from the masses. Our own people oppose us. What, then, can be said of outsiders? The reason for this is there is opposition between īmān and kufr. Kufr is envious of īmān. Allāh taʿālā says:

حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ.

...due to their selfish envy.[1]

The reason is that these people think to themselves: "The believers acquired the wealth of īmān while we are left deprived." Therefore, the only thing they can do is hope that this bounty [of īmān] is snatched away from them.

وَدُّوْا لَوْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ.

They wish that you also become unbelievers.[2]

They hope for your kufr so that they and you can be equal in kufr.

In the presence of corrupt character and corruption in Dīn, when a reformer wants to rectify the people and expound the truth to them, he sometimes has to adopt a stern attitude. Consequently, his own people object to him and say that he is too strict. A senior person had come here. He used to say about me: "He is a bit sharp-tongued. But because he says it with sincerity, people tolerate him." I called a man and asked him: "Tell me, am I sharp-tongued?" He replied: "No. However there is power, weight and authority in your speech." I said to the senior person: "See, this youngster has understood but you haven't." He replied: "I intended the same thing but could not express myself." I said: "Yes, that's possible. One person does not understand the

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 109.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 89.

meaning of someone's speech, or, he understands it but cannot convey it."

When a point is not understood

I recall an incident in this regard. A man advised his son to speak sweetly and softly with people. He must seat them on a high place. He must receive them while wearing heavy garments. And he must feed them expensive foods. When the father passed away, some people came to the son to pay their respects. When one of them addressed the son, he replied: "Molasses." When another spoke to him, he said, "Wool." When he emerged outside, he wrapped himself in linen and other heavy fabrics which are normally laid out on the floor. He seated them on a raised platform. And prepared meat and other expensive foods for them.

When they ate the meat, they remarked: "The meat is not tender." He rebuked them by saying: "Hey! I slaughtered my expensive fifty-rupee dog for you'll, and you are saying that it is not tender!?" When they heard this, they stopped eating. They then said to him: "Whatever you did today was completely strange. Tell us, what is the matter? When we spoke to you, you made reference to sweet molasses and wool. Then you seated us on a raised platform. Then you wrapped yourself in heavy fabrics which are normally laid out on the floor."

The son replied: "I was practising on my father's bequest. He asked me to speak sweetly and softly with people. And there is nothing sweeter than molasses and nothing softer than wool. This is why I responded to your questions by saying molasses and wool. My father had asked me to seat you'll in an elevated place. I had this platform constructed

because there can be nothing higher than it. My father had advised me to wear heavy garments when I receive people. I did not have anything heavier than this. He had asked me to feed you'll expensive foods. This is why I slaughtered my valuable dog for you'll."

This is the result of not understand what is said. A person says something, and the other misunderstands it completely. When I adopt a strict tone to make a person understand what I am saying, I do not intend to be harsh to him. Rather, it is out of desiring his wellbeing and so that he may fully understand what is said.

I had been referring to strictness in speech. Now listen to the other part, viz. sincerity.

That person had said to me: "Because you speak with sincerity, people tolerate what you say." Sincerity is an internal quality. Allāh taʿālā alone knows who has sincerity and who hasn't. How can we know the internal condition of people!? How can we say if he is ostentatious or sincere? So this is not the reason for tolerating my strictness. Rather, what he refers to as strictness and toleration it, it is because people understand that I speak when necessary and do not give undue concession to anyone. I speak out the truth frankly. This is why people understand and appreciate it.

There may be many religious people who are worried about irreligiousness, but cannot say anything verbally. When they hear me speaking about these evils, they believe it to be in support of them. They think that their will is being fulfilled through me. This is why they are happy with me. After all, everyone is searching for the truth and it is pleasing. This is why they are happy with me.

The Maulānā Sāhib referred to my speech as strict. I heard that Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī states in his *Futūhāt*: The ʿulamā' who confine themselves to the external self hesitate in understanding the speech of the Sufis. The story of Imām Ahmad and Shurayh is sufficient for you. The two attended the assembly of Hadrat Junayd rahimahullāh. They were asked: "What did you understand from his speech?" They replied: "I do not know what he was speaking about. However, I find a powerful force of his speech in my heart. It points to his internal actions and sincerity. His speech was not like that of a person who is on falsehood."[1]

I was saying: The work of reformation and expounding is certainly difficult. Those who work also have to face opposition. However, the real work is to turn an opponent into a supporter. Mere words are not enough. Today there is no agreement between the word and the action. This is why one cannot rely on the word alone. It requires action as well. Action points to the rational while words point to the behavioural. This is why a person's action can be in conflict with his words. In other words, he may have sound knowledge, so he can speak. But his practical life is weak, so his speech is not beneficial.

The crux of this entire discussion is that sincerity is essential for those who are doing the work. Whether a task is small or big, it is not accepted without sincerity. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ.

[1] *At-Tanbīh at-Tarabī*, p. 35.

Actions are gauged by intentions.

There is another important point: Knowledge is necessary for inviting towards Allāh taʿālā. A person must have knowledge of the Qur'ān and Hadīth, and he must be fully aware of the conditions and situations of people. Only then can he do any work. No work can be done without this.

We pray to Allāh taʿālā to bless us with the ability to do the work correctly. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE PROPHETIC WAY OF TEACHING

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّيْ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ.

Since many days I had been wanting to present to you an example of the prophetic way of teaching, but I couldn't think of what and how I should do it. A few days ago I came across the following Hadīth in *Maʿārif as-Sunan* in the chapter on cleansing one's self with pebbles after relieving one's self.

حدثنا هناد قال حدثنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن إبراهيم عن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد قال: قيل لسلمان: قد علمكم نبيكم كل شيء حتى الخراءة؟ قال سلمان: أجل. نهانا أن نستقبل القبلة بغائط أو ببول أو أن نستنجي باليمين أو يستنجي أحدنا بأقل من ثلاثة أحجار أو أن نستنجي برجيع أو بعظم.[1]

...Someone (probably an unbeliever or hypocrite) said to Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu: "Your Prophet teaches you everything; even how to relieve yourself!?" Salmān replied: "Indeed. He prohibited us from facing (or turning our back to) the qiblah whether we are urinating or passing excreta. He prohibited

[1] معارف السنن: ج ١، ص ١١٢.

> us from cleansing ourselves with the right hand, from using less than three pebbles, or from using animal droppings or bones to cleanse ourselves."

I would like to speak on this Hadīth.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam came into this world to guide people. And so, he issued injunctions for all matters of life and laws for every department of life. In this way, a straight and clear system was presented. Those who practised on this system were successful in both worlds. Those who did not make his teachings and guidelines their illuminating lamp, and did not practise on them, had that amount of misguidance remaining in them.

The injunctions of the Sharīʿah apply to every department of life. Even relieving one's self which, to some extent is important, has a ruling of the Sharīʿah. The injunctions of the Sharīʿah when relieving one's self are:

1. Do not clean yourself with your right hand.
2. Do not use less than three pebbles.
3. Do not face nor turn your back towards the qiblah.
4. Do not use animal droppings and bones to clean yourself.

This is the meaning of the answer of Hadrat Salmān Fārsī radiyallāhu ʿanhu.

No matter what, the objection of the polytheist was idiotic and stemmed from belying and rejecting the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It was not confined to this [objection about relieving one's self]. Rather, polytheists used to reject

whatever came to their minds. This objection was in fact a criticism of Dīn. Allāh taʿālā makes reference to it:

وَطَعَنُوْا فِيْ دِيْنِكُمْ.

...and criticize your religion.[1]

It was done solely to cause offence. The following verses make reference to it:

وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلٰى أَهْلِهِمُ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ. وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ.

When they return to their people, they return jesting. When they see them, they say: "Surely these people are going astray."[2]

While the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum were occupied by day and night in learning and absorbing matters of Dīn, these people [polytheists and hypocrites] were occupied in making objections. Look at the lofty levels which the Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum reached and the pits of misguidance which these people fell into. They were eventually cast into the Hell-fire.

Criticizing, objecting and mocking were actions of the unbelievers and polytheists. Unfortunately, we have to say that the qualities which were found in the unbelievers of those days are found in many Muslims of today. Those who call themselves

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 12.

[2] Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn, 83: 31-32.

Muslims are seen mocking at and belittling Dīn and people of Dīn. The conditions of people are before you. You yourself can decide if these attitudes are found in Muslims today or not. The reason is obvious. When the Sunnah and Sharīʿah are discarded, it causes one to make objections about Dīn. When awe for Dīn left the heart, it resulted in hatred for people of Dīn. People then began making various objections against them and began criticizing them. They even went to the extent of twisting and turning their statements so that their good words were exposed as bad words.

The same thing was done by this polytheist. Instead of being pleased with the pure teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, he began mocking at them. Whereas there was nothing about Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam which was objectionable. After all, he was Allāh's Prophet. Whatever he said was from Allāh taʿālā and for the guidance of people. His teachings stemmed from pure kindness, affection and concern. Here too, he did not say anything inappropriate. Rather, he said: When you relieve yourself, do not face the qiblah because if you do, you will be disrespecting the Kaʿbah whose respect is obligatory.

Then he said: Do not clean yourself with your right hand because it is in this hand that a believer will receive his book of deeds on the day of Resurrection. The believers shall be the aṣ-ḥāb al-yamīn – the people of the right side. It is therefore necessary for believers to be conscious of this while in this world. This is why every inferior task should not be done with the right hand.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam also said: Do not use less than three pebbles. Reference is

made to cleaning one's self thoroughly. He said that bones are the food of jinn and animals. And the jinn had complained to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam about this. So he prohibited believers from using bones.

These points can only be learnt through teaching. Why, then, should a person object to this teaching?

This polytheist objected to and mocked at a teaching of utmost purity. The reason for it is that several centuries had passed when no Prophet had been sent to the Arabs. Education was absent among them and so, ignorance had reached its peak. People had become egotistic and they developed obstinacy. Obstinacy means when a person opposes something wittingly and knowingly. On one occasion, he accepts a thing by way of knowledge, intellect, religion and belief. And on another occasion he opposes the very same thing. The Arabs were passing through this second phase at the time when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was commissioned. They corrupted their own temperaments by following the leaders of ignorance and obstinacy.

Maulānā Muhammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd Dehlawī rahimahullāh explains the same theme in *Sirāt-e-Mustaqīm* in the following words:

> Man has been naturally born with certain things. The goodness of certain things and the badness of others have been embedded in his temperament. Every human who kept his temperament pure and protected from following blindly in the false footsteps of the ignorant and obstinate ones who have corrupted their own nature and

> destroyed the laws of disposition, considers these matters to be worthy of pride and accomplishment not only for himself but for the entire human race.

Maulānā rahimahullāh is saying that it is man's nature to consider certain things to be good. And there are many things which he naturally knows to be evil and bad. This is on condition he did not destroy his sound temperament by emulating the ignorant and obstinate ones.

Now that this point has been made clear, understand that when the polytheist posed the question to Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu, it stemmed solely from ignorance and obstinacy. After all, the goodness of these things [how to relieve one's self] was clear and obvious. There was no defect at all in those teachings. The sole objective of the obstinate fellow was to make objections, and this is why he asked the question. Allāh taʿālā too decreed objections for some people, and this wretched fellow was from among them:

وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ تُكَذِّبُوْنَ.

> Do you make rejection your sustenance?[1]

When the polytheist asked:

قد علمكم نبيكم كل شيء حتى الخراءة؟

> Your Prophet teaches you everything; even how to relieve yourself!?

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[1] Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah, 56: 82.

The words themselves show that he belittled this teaching of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Arabs use the word حتى for progress and for retrogression as well. Here it is used in the context of retrogression. For example, a person says:

جاء الحجاج حتى المشاة.

> All the pilgrims arrived; even those who came on foot.

The following is an example of progress or ascension:

مات الناس حتى الأنبياء.

> The people passed away; even the Prophets did.

This means, no one is safe from death. Let alone the masses, even the elite will have to die one day.

In the Hadīth under discussion, the word حتى is used to show descent (from something better to something lower). The words "even how to relieve yourself" are similar to "even those who came on foot".

This would mean: He [Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam] certainly teaches you important and significant things, but I have heard that he teaches you small and insignificant things as well. The essence of Hadrat Salmān's answer was: He certainly teaches us these things. In other words, just as he teaches us about tauhīd, messenger-ship, the Hereafter, and the rules of salāh, fasting and hajj; he teaches us how to relieve ourselves.

He teaches these things because he was commissioned to teach the Sharīʿah; and the Sharīʿah contains major and minor rules. Yes, bearing in mind that they are the injunctions of Allāh taʿālā, every rule – whether small or big – is equal. Thus, just as it is kufr to mock at major rules, it is kufr to mock at minor ones.

Thus, when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam teaches the etiquette of relieving one's self, he shows its Sharīʿah status. Just as there is a natural angle to it, there is a Sharīʿah angle as well. Your objection stems from your assumption that it is a natural thing which everyone knows and understands. Therefore, what is the need to teach it? Know well that your reasoning is based on ignorance. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught it from the Sharīʿah angle, and we are ignorant of it. Therefore, it certainly needed to be explained by Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

The world was impure before the arrival of Rasūlullāh ﷺ

I say: The world was impure at the time of the arrival of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He was the one who opened the door of purity. The world did not know it before this. What interest do unbelievers and polytheists have in purity!? Allāh taʿālā says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ نَجَسٌ.

The polytheists are impure.[1]

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 28.

A polytheist just cannot understand the laws of purity. Therefore he has to object to it. I say to you: When you see an unbeliever objecting to something, you can conclude that it is Dīn. External and bodily purity is from among the salient features of Islam. Like īmān – it is one of the salient features of internal purity.

Purity is the first thing in the obligations of the Sharīʿah. It comes before salāh. It holds a special position in Dīn. A Hadīth refers to it as half of īmān. The jurists say it is one of the prerequisites of salāh. If a person pays importance to purity, he will inevitably learn what impurity entails and the ways to avoid it. Thus, just as Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam opened the door of worship and purity, he taught what impurity is and explained how to acquire purity from it. After all, he perfected Dīn. Had he only taught the rules of tauhīd, the Hereafter, salāh and zakāh; who would have taught the rules of purity? How can salāh be valid without purity?

The beauty and excellence of the Sharīʿah

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam taught us to do certain things when relieving ourselves and to abstain from certain things. These are etiquette which ought to cause sound minded people to lower their heads of acceptance. This is why it is good to mention it; there is no repugnance at all in it. In fact, it could be said that if he did not explain these details, people would have considered this issue to be repugnant. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam brought a complete system of life.

Beauty of the system, excellence of the law

The beauty of a system and excellence of a law lies in its explanation of: man's individual and collective life, planning his own life, and setting right his domestic issues. This law must explain all of man's situations and conditions. The Sharīʿah of Islam addresses all the issues which are faced during different conditions of a person's life. It teaches etiquette, morals, injunctions and beliefs. It is this very comprehensiveness which is Islam's distinguishing feature, and due to which it is superior to all religions of the world.

These were the beauties of the Sharīʿah which Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu wanted to explain through his answer to the polytheist. It demonstrates this Sahābī's perfect understanding, wisdom and intelligence. After all, the polytheist intended to mock at the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. The real and definitive way to respond to him was to stupefy him. If not, it would have been best to remain silent. After all, it is one of the attributes of the righteous:

وَّإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجٰهِلُوْنَ قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا.

> ...when the ignorant ones address them, they reply: "Peace!"[1]

However, Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu disregarded his derision and treated him like an ignoramus, in fact, like a person who was asking the wisdom behind such a ruling. And like a well-wishing reformer, he began teaching him the

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[1] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 63.

etiquette and wisdoms of this teaching. To put it in another way: You are mocking at it, so understand well that this is not the occasion to mock. Rather, these are matters of the truth and are correct in themselves. Teaching them entails teaching matters of the truth. And this is the responsibility of teachers and reformers. You should therefore adopt these teachings and abstain from making objections.

The 'ulamā' define an answer of this nature as *jawāb 'alā uslūb al-ḥakīm* – an answer on the style of a wise person. They say: An answer like this is different from what the addressee expects. A person asks a question and the wise answerer thinks about whether such a question behoves the questioner or not. If it does not, he gives a reply which is appropriate to his situation. Outwardly, the question was something while the answer appears to be referring to something else. People of intelligence conclude that it was *jawāb 'alā uslūb al-ḥakīm*. Observe the following example from the Qur'ān.

يَسْئَلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ.

> They ask you about the crescents.

In other words, they ask you the reason for the waxing and waning of the moon.

قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيْتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ.

> Say: They are appointed times for the people and for the ḥajj.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 189.

The benefit in this is you can learn the timings for your trade, agriculture, acts of worship, and especially hajj.

The question was about the reason for the waxing and waning of the moon, but the answer gives their benefits. This is because Allāh taʿālā is all-wise. He knows there is no benefit in explaining the reason for the waxing and waning of the moon, nor can their intellects fathom it. Their question was therefore disregarded and they were given an answer which proved to be beneficial for them. They are also told indirectly that the question they ought to have asked should have been one which would have given this answer.

In the Hadīth under discussion, Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu applied the person's question in a manner which was different from what the latter intended, and answered him accordingly. In this way, it drew attention to the man's stupidity and foolishness in the sense that the meaning which we took is easier to understand and more in line with intelligence, while he is classified as foolish.

The rulings related to relieving one's self contain advantages and mysteries which the outer intellect cannot fathom at times. This is what is meant when it said that Dīn is complete and perfect. Allāh taʿālā says:

اَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِيْ وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِيْنًا.

Today I have perfected for you your religion, completed upon you My favour,

and I have chosen for you Islam as your religion.[1]

Islam is a complete religion

I just now explained to you that the Sharīʿah of Islam encompasses all departments of life. In other words, it has etiquette, morals, injunctions and beliefs. It is a perfect religion and a complete way of life. This is a general explanation of the comprehensiveness of Islam. A general statement cannot be understood fully without explaining the finer points of something. This is why I will elaborate a bit.

Man has two types of relationships in this world. One is with Allāh taʿālā and the other is with his fellow humans. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam set right the relationship with the Creator by opening the door of purity and salāh. He then joined the relationship among fellow humans by teaching sound character and morals. He gave so much of importance to this that he made it more important than worship. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق.

I have been commissioned to perfect noble characteristics.

There could not be a better way of describing the merits, virtues and lofty status of sound character and morals. When he referred to something as the reason behind his commissioning as a Prophet,

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[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 3.

nothing else can have a superior and nobler rank than it.

In his *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāḥib Muḥaddith Dehlawī raḥimahullāh has a chapter *Bāb Sïyar an-Nabī ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – an explanation of the ways of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He states therein:

وكان ألزمهم بإصلاح تدبير المنزل ورعاية الأصحاب وسياسة المدينة بحيث لا يتصور فوقه، يعرف لكل شيء قدره.[1]

Included in the ways of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam: He imposed on them domestic organization, due consideration to one's companions, administration of the city in a manner that nothing beyond it can be imagined, and the value of each thing is appreciated.

We learn from this that setting right the organization of one's house and giving due consideration to those who visit you are extremely important. These cannot be realized without perfect character.

The rights of Allāh taʿālā are nevertheless fulfilled in some way or another. However, many shortcomings are displayed nowadays in fulfilling the rights of fellow humans. This is why this world has become an example of Hell. Immorality has reached its peak. Evil is no longer considered to be evil. People have

[1] حجة الله البالغة: ج ٢، ص ٢٠٥.

fallen into destruction but they haven't perceived it. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Imagine if the character of the Sharīʿah were to be adopted today. I am not referring to administration of cities. We could say that this is not within our control. However, administration of our selves, our homes and giving consideration to our fellow humans are all within our control. If we were to rectify these things, we could enjoy Paradise even in this world. This is why Allāh taʿālā sent Islam to this world. And this is what Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam – in his affection, mercy and extreme kindness towards the creation – desired. That is, people should adopt the teachings of the Sharīʿah and acquire success in both worlds.

THE MODUS OPERANDI

I do not travel around unnecessarily because the times are quite tumultuous. We do not know what will happen and where it will happen.

I only leave my house when I am really compelled. I think the person who is taking me has the controls in his hand.

> My friend has tied a rope around my neck; and so, he takes me wherever he wants.

The reason for not going anywhere of my own accord is that 'ulamā' are already going to various places and fulfilling the local needs. They must do the work and – by Allāh's grace – they are doing it. This is why one should not take the first step, especially for the sake of going to any place. Even when there is a need to go anywhere, I consult my friends and associates. Only then do I pluck the courage to travel anywhere.

The general condition of love and confidence

A person wrote to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī rahimahullāh requesting him to come to Madras because there are thousands of people who are pining for his visit.

Hadrat wrote back: "There seems to be a lot of love for me. Thousands of people are pining for me!? But not even ten people from there come here to visit me!? There is no such love. You are inviting me merely to embellish your gathering and create some popularity for your function. I will not come."

Remember! Benefit from the saints is derived when one has faith and confidence in them. If this is absent, the heart develops rejection and objection to them. How, then, will you benefit?

The etiquette of Kabīr al-Auliyā'

Hadrat Jalāl ad-Dīn Kabīr al-Auliyā' rahimahullāh was an awe-inspiring saint. His moustache had grown long, but no one had the courage to clip it because of his awe. Nor could anyone draw his attention to it. Qādī Diyā' ad-Dīn Sunāmī rahimahullāh took the courage one day. He held Hadrat's beard with one hand, took hold of a scissors with the other and clipped his moustache. Subsequently, Hadrat rahimahullāh would hold his beard lovingly and kiss it saying: "This beard was held on one occasion for the sake of the Sharī'ah of Muhammad sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam."

There was another saint who uttered a statement which was in conflict with the Sharī'ah. He said it at a time when he was overcome by some spiritual condition [and was therefore not accountable]. When that condition ended, his disciples informed him: "Hadrat! This is what you had said against the Sharī'ah." He asked: "Really!? Did I really say it!?" He imposed the following punishment on himself: He would stand on one leg in the cold water of a pond and repeatedly say: "May the Sharī'ah of Muhammad sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam be upheld and remain eternal. May the Sharī'ah of Muhammad sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam be upheld and remain eternal." He would stand in this way until his leg would get swollen, crack open and bleed. He eventually received a message from Allāh ta'ālā stating that his repentance has been accepted. Only then did he stop punishing himself.

I am relating these incidents to show you that you may be imposing on these saints, but they have imposed much more on their selves. The difference is they did it solely out of their love and bond with Allāh taʿālā, and for the sake of following the Sunnah and the Sharīʿah. Whereas you impose on them because of a lack of honour and respect for them.

The value of a genuine quest

If you want to derive benefit and blessings from the saints, you must first develop a quest. If you do, you will certainly find a man of Allāh taʿālā. After that, treat him with respect and you will receive his blessedness.

Understand one point. The absence of it causes disrespect and faithlessness in them. The saints enjoy the true recognition of Allāh taʿālā, and tawakkul is a major fruit of it. This is a quality which they possess. If you were to consider them below you in this regard, then it entails complete negation of faith in them. If I were to ask you or the public: "Who gives you sustenance?" You will say that it is Allāh taʿālā. Yet, you believe that you are the one who provides sustenance to these saints. We seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā from such thoughts. Look at the extent of bad thoughts about the saints! You even consider them to be below you!? And, Allāh forbid, even below the general masses!? The saints have already reached the station of tawakkul. They have turned their attention from the means and focussed on the cause [Allāh taʿālā]. There are many stories about them in this regard.

A saint went to Delhi. After suffering hunger for several days, a person brought hot breyani[1] in a large dish and presented it to him. Since he was quite hungry, he ate to his fill, and there was still some left over. He thought he will keep it on a shelf and have it at another time. He picked up the dish and proceeded towards the shelf. He was about to place it on the shelf when the thought crossed his mind: "It is against tawakkul to store food for another time. The Allāh who provided me now will provide me later as well." Saying this, he got down and gave the food to a poor person. He met a majdhūb on the stairs who said to him in a loud voice: "You did very well [by giving the food away] because a decision was passed that if this dervish placed the food on the shelf, he would be caused to die hungry."

Note: This is a matter related to the spiritual world and is exposed to some people. We should therefore not make objections against such people. (compiler)

Now listen to a Hadīth related to this:

مَنْ جَعَلَ هُمُوْمَهُ هَمًّا وَاحِدًا هَمَّ الْآخِرَةِ جَعَلَ اللهُ غِنَاهُ فِيْ قَلْبِهِ وَجَمَعَ شَمْلَهُ وَأَتَتْهُ الدُّنْيَا وَهِيَ رَاغِمَةٌ. وَمَنْ جَعَلَ هَمَّهُ هَمَّ الدُّنْيَا جَعَلَ فَقْرَهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ، وَشَتَّتَ أَمْرَهُ وَلَا يَأْتِيْهِ إِلَّا مَا كُتِبَ لَهُ.[2]

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[1] An exotic rice dish.

[2] رواه الترمذي: ص ٥٦٢.

> The person who makes all his concerns into just one – i.e. the concern about the Hereafter – Allāh taʿālā shall place self-sufficiency in his heart, place focus in his life, and the world will come to him while it is abased. As for the one who makes the world his sole focus, Allāh will cause him to experience poverty right before his eyes, cause all his affairs to become disrupted, and he will only receive what was decreed for him.

This is what the Sharīʿah teaches a believer with regard to his sustenance. It is therefore necessary for us to understand it and believe in it. May Allāh taʿālā inspire us. Āmīn.

The reason why people commit shortcomings with regard to Dīn and the saints of Dīn is they do not have knowledge of Dīn nor the true recognition of the saints.

Listen! There are rules on how to do every single thing. If the rules are followed, success is achieved. In like manner, there are rules and ways on how to acquire Dīn. If it is learnt in the proper manner, it will come into a person's life. This point has been fully understood by Judge Akbar Husayn. We are sorry to say that a person who studied English has understood it and is explaining to others. He says:

> When did they ever remain in the company of a shaykh and learn Dīn!? They were educated in a college and died in an office.

He is making reference to the lecturers and professors under whom he studied. He is speaking

in a tone which we cannot, but the point he made is the reality which he explained beautifully, in a manner which highlighted its importance. The point is: Dīn comes into a person when he learns it under someone. Yes, it can happen that a person is living in the house of his shaykh but pays no attention to acquiring Dīn. He will not acquire Dīn by mere physical proximity to the shaykh. Rather, he will have to rectify his faith, lower himself before the shaykh and obliterate himself. Only then will Dīn come into him.

I now ask you: Since it has been established that Dīn will only be acquired when you learn it – and today, people generally have no interest in Dīn, they have become free in their temperaments – there will have to be some people who devote themselves to teaching and studying Dīn so that it continues. If not, it will come to an end.

The way to acquire Dīn

This is the way to acquire Dīn:

If you are able to remain in the company of the pious, it will become very easy for you. You must acquire Dīn from them. If this is not possible for any person, he must read their books, lectures and statements; and make this the means for acquiring Dīn. When the Sufis compiled their books, they did it with the intention of latter peoples benefiting from them. ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī rahimahullāh explains this theme beautifully in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

> One of the benefits of compiling them [books] is that when latter peoples study them, their hearts will be filled with the themes contained in them. They can progress in this way. The clouds of

> mercy may descend on their hearts and tongues. The land of their hearts may be illuminated by the rectitude and guidelines of these personalities. And through it, guidance may be revived.
>
> In this way, the books of these personalities will fulfil the role of being their deputies after their demise.[1]

He writes further:

> Furthermore, the Sufis will receive the rewards for their intentions and their noble objectives (for which they compiled these books). The seekers of every era will derive benefit from the facts which they explained. Facts which solve the problems associated with the science of tauhīd and maladies of the heart.

Did you see! He is saying that their intention behind compiling these books was to solve problems associated with the science of tauhīd and maladies of the heart. They realized that if they did not explain these sciences and departed with them, the latter generations will not be as adept in explaining and expounding them. Obviously, if we are not around and our books are not there to represent us, these sciences will perish. Because:

مَوْتُ الْعِلْمِ بِمَوْتِ أَهْلِهِ.

> Knowledge dies with the death of those who possess it.

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[1] *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*, vol. 1, p. 22.

That is, if they have not compiled it.

You must have heard the saying:

مَوْتُ الْعَالِمِ مَوْتُ الْعَالَمِ.

> The death of an ʿālim marks the death of the world.

However, the previous statement is more profound. That is, the death of an ʿālim marks the death of knowledge. But people do not understand this.

I am addressing the ʿulamā' who come and ask us the method of doing the work of Dīn. I am showing them the way. One person cannot do it by himself. The work of Dīn requires many people.

You should therefore do it. If you can start it by yourself, you must certainly do it. If you can bring people onto the path of guidance, then commence with Allāh's name. If not, you should at least read the books of the elders and saints to the people. The science of tauḥīd is certainly a difficult branch of knowledge. Nonetheless, you could at least explain the maladies of the heart to them. This is what the saints did – they explained the maladies of the heart to those who frequented them, made efforts to remove those maladies, and started their rectification in this way. I will relate few incidents in this regard.

Spiritual farsightedness

The governor of Multan sent a gift to Ḥaḍrat Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar raḥimahullāh via a certain person. The man kept half for himself and presented the other half to Ḥaḍrat. Ḥaḍrat said: "Brother! This fifty/fifty distribution is not right." Ḥaḍrat caught

the man out the moment he set eyes on him. Had it been someone today, he would have become angry at Hadrat and accused him of suspicion. The man did not do this. Instead, he became frightened, handed over the other half which he had kept for himself, and expressed remorse. Hadrat said: "Brother! The money is not my objective. Anyway, I would have given it to someone else. Therefore, you may keep the half which you had kept for yourself. And here, take this half as well. I am giving all to you. I merely wanted to show you not to do such things when dealing with us."

When the man observed Hadrat's spiritual exposition and enlightenment, he fell at Hadrat's feet, begged for his pardon and became his murīd. Hadrat kept him for some time and, when he reached a level of spiritual perfection, Hadrat said to him: "You may go. I am appointing you to serve the people of Multan."

Look! The man rectified his heart, was sincere and devoted; and so he acquired Dīn and this world. Just as this saint caught the man out for his thievery through spiritual exposition, the saints of every era used their farsightedness and spiritual purity to catch out the thieves in the hearts of people and rectified them spiritually.

A king and an apple

A saint was performing salāh. When he completed, his attendant informed him that the king is waiting to meet him. The saint heard what was said to him but did not pay attention to it. He started performing salāh again. The attendant went to the king and said: "I informed Hadrat about your arrival but he did not say anything in reply, and is

occupied in salāh again." The king thought to himself that coming here and then seeking permission to enter was probably disliked. So he went inside on his own. The saint received him with open hands. He asked his attendant to bring apples. The saint then sliced them personally and placed them before the king. One of the apples was large and good looking. The king thought to himself: If this saint has some spiritual illumination in his heart, he will give this apple to me.

People commit offences of this nature with saints and are therefore deprived of their blessings. The king had gone to meet him and acquire his blessings, but he started to test him. He was worried about the illumination of the saint's heart but knew nothing about the light of his own eyes. People are caught up like this.

On one side, the king had this thought. On the other side, the saint said to him: "Listen! A man had a donkey. He would show it a ring, watch etc. in an assembly, and then blindfold it. He would then give the item to someone in the assembly. The donkey would go to each person and sniff him. It would then stand by the one who had the item, and strike him with its head. People used to be amazed by this feat."

After relating this incident to the king, the saint said: "If I were to reveal my spiritual exposition to you, I will not be any better than that donkey. And if I did not reveal it to you, you will say that this saint has no effulgence in his heart." Saying this, he took the large apple, placed it before the king and said: "Here, I am giving this apple to you."

You see! This is how worldly people treated the saints of every era.

Third incident of spiritual exposition

Three persons wearing a special type of dress went to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh. One of them said to the other two: "I am wearing these garments intentionally so that he may be disturbed when he looks at them." The other two said: "No brother! We are going to meet him because we consider him to be a saint."

When they reached Hadrat, they were received according to their intentions. He called the two and seated them close to him. As for the other one who came to vex Hadrat, Hadrat became angry at him, scolded him and expelled him. This was a clear spiritual exposition. It was as though Hadrat was present when they were discussing among themselves before they could come to him.

Fourth incident

A person wrote to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī rahimahullāh in which he described his spiritual condition. He made mention of a major sin which he committed and also sought permission to come to Hadrat. Hadrat granted him permission but added in the letter: "When you come here, you must not divulge your identity to me." The man came. The moment Hadrat set eyes on him, he went into a rage and expelled him from the khānqāh. We do not know how he learnt that this was the man.

We used to observe incidents of this nature everyday. We concluded the extent of spiritual effulgence Allāh taʿālā must have placed in his heart. This is known as the effulgence of farsightedness. He used to see everything through it, and treat each one accordingly. It used to rectify

the faith and confidence of the people. Those who went to the saints with the correct faith were successful.

There was a Maulānā who used to talk a lot in Hadrat Thānwī's assemblies. Do you know why? It was because he had the same ailments which are in the hearts of people. People of knowledge generally have the ailment of displaying their knowledge. For the sake of rectifying him, Hadrat rahimahullāh said: Our Maulānā Sāhib talks a lot. Inshā Allāh, he will not talk after this. Subsequently, he fell completely silent. He used to say to us: "I want to say something but I feel as if someone is holding my tongue."

The point I am making is that erudite Sufis are found in every era, but only those people benefit from them who go to them with faith. After all, when you go to the saints, it is your beliefs and faith which are rectified. It is only people with faith who benefit. As for those who go with incorrect beliefs, they remain deprived. A poet says:

> Hasan [Basrī] came from Basra, Bilāl radiyallāhu ʿanhu came from Abyssinia and Suhayb radiyallāhu ʿanhu came from Rome. Each of them benefited from the teachings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam but Abū Jahal who was a resident of Makkah did not benefit from him. This is indeed startling.

Incidents of this nature used to create faith and confidence in the people for the saints of Dīn. They were the means of rectification of their hearts. These were counted among the achievements of the saints. Unfortunately, the very same things are today considered to be the failings of the saints and they

are labelled as unmannerly. It is certainly a point of deprivation. Look at how Shaytān has deceived people into turning morals into points of immorality. I say: There are no morals today. People have destroyed them a long time ago.

It is compulsory to treat the ailments of the heart. This is achieved by going to the saints with faith in them, listening to their teachings attentively, and practising with one's heart.

Nowadays people are just not bothered about doing the work, but they will invite me to various places. Just recently a person went to his village. When he came back here, he said to me: "The people in my village are requesting you to come and spend one week with them. If Hadrat goes, they will benefit tremendously." People of another town also expressed the same request. Another person wrote to me saying: "You went to Mumbai in summer, so you should come to our place in winter." I ask you: "What is the purpose of inviting me? If you want the work of Dīn to be done, then this is not the way nor can any work be done in this way."

The way to do the work

This is the way to do the work: If a place has 'ulamā' and Sufis, and they are suited to do the work and to convey teachings to the people, then they must do it personally. Where there are no such 'ulamā' and Sufis, then the educated people from the community must take the reliable and authoritative books of the 'ulamā' and Sufis, and read them to the public. They must make this the means of teaching Dīn and creating an interest for Dīn among people. After the saints, it is their speeches and writings which are their deputies. This means that just as their

company is effective and people benefit from it, the same can be achieved from their writings.

The company of a pious person is beneficial because what he teaches to others has already affected his own heart. His heart is filled with Allāh's love, bond and recognition. Therefore, the heart of anyone who sits in his company will be affected by his heart. The same can be said about the speeches and writings of the saint.

To put it in another way, the speech of a person is essentially a reflection of his heart. A poet says:

إِن الكلامَ لَفِي الفُؤاد وإِنَّما

جُعِل الِّلسانُ على الفؤادِ دَليلًا

> Speech is in the heart, and the tongue indicates to what is in the heart.

The tongue renders what the heart contains

From this we learn that a person's tongue renders what the heart contains. A heart which is filled with Allāh's recognition, remembrance and love will certainly leave its effect on the tongue. Subsequently, the person before whom the saint's speech/writing is read will surely be affected by it. Maulānā Rūm rahimahullāh conveys this theme in his *Mathnawī* as follows:

> Do not be enamoured by the outward speech of charlatans because their hearts are filled with countless evils. The speech of the one who has evil character will certainly have an evil effect. How can a dead heart have any life and effect? Man's speech is a part of man,

> like a piece of bread is a part of the bread. (Therefore, as the speaker is, so will be his speech.)

Now this is such an easy way to work for Dīn. If a person realizes that his speech has no effect, he must read the speech of saints to people. The latter's speech is accepted and liked by Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. It is just as effective and beneficial as being in the company of the saint. In fact, it surpasses his company in certain situations. The effect and benefit of a saint's company last for as long as he is alive. Whereas his speech and written word are beneficial when he is alive and when he departs from this world. It is useful when he is present and when he is not.

In praise of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*

A Maulānā Sāhib wrote to me:

> By Allāh's grace, *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* (name of a periodical) is fulfilling the role of enabling us to recognize the truth. Although we are deprived of physical proximity with Hadrat, we are deriving tremendous educational benefits and blessings from it – even more than what we derive when we visit Hadrat occasionally. At the same time, my inability to present myself more often certainly causes me restlessness.

Now look! This Maulānā Sāhib is saying that he is benefiting from *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*. He adds that he is deriving more benefit than his occasional visit here. I say to you: If the Maulānā Sāhib is himself impressed by the writing of someone, will others not

be affected by it if it were read to them? They will certainly be affected and impressed.

The Maulānā Sāhib added:

> In the latest edition of *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*, I read the article on the status and reality of modern inventions. My heart and tongue spontaneously responded with admiration for it by saying "Māshā Allāh, Sub-hānallāh". Allāh taʿālā inspired Hadrat to speak on this topic in a manner which has rarely been addressed by seniors of today.

I was pleased to read what the Maulānā Sāhib wrote because – all praise is due to Allāh taʿālā – benefit is being derived from this periodical and people who have the thirst are finding it useful. Those who are living far away are also deriving benefit from *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq*.

Benefiting from the writings of Hadrat Thānwī

It is absolutely correct that everyone – those who are near and those who are far away, those who are present and those who are absent – benefit from the writings and statements of the Ahlullāh. I am presenting Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī Sāhib rahimahullāh as an example. People benefited tremendously from his company. Similarly, countless people benefited from his writings and recorded statements while he was alive. All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā, they are benefiting from them even today.

The narrator adds:

What Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said about his shaykh – Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh –

can be said about Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh as well. Hadrat was probably drawing our attention to his written works and to the periodical *Ma'rifat-e-Haqq*. After all, he was speaking about that Maulānā Sāhib and how he benefited from this periodical.

The Maulānā Sāhib had said:

> Although we are deprived of physical proximity with Hadrat, we are deriving tremendous educational benefits and blessings from it – even more than what we derive when we visit Hadrat occasionally.

In other words, sometimes, the effect of a person's speech/writing is more impressive than being in his company. He is correct about this.

The narrator adds:

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh wrote a book titled *Fawā'id as-Suhbah*. In it he quotes a text from the introduction to *Akhbār al-Akhyār* of Hadrat Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh. The reason why a person's writing is more impressive than being in his company is gauged from it. He writes:

> In the case where a person is deprived of the benefit of the company of the pious and the bounty of visiting the Sufis, then listening to their statements and stories and studying their lives play a major role in encouraging a person, removing heedlessness from his heart just as it happens when remaining in their company. In fact, this is also a type of companionship. Furthermore, they are

> free from human defects and pure from having to witness natural matters and slip-ups.

This can be explained as follows:

The company of a shaykh, his humanness and human weaknesses could come as barriers to a seeker deriving benefit from him. In other words, when he observes certain natural things or human slip-ups in the shaykh, these could change his opinion of the shaykh. On the other hand, his recorded statements, teachings, life conditions and stories only convey the beauty and excellence of the shaykh. (There is nothing to cause disloyalty towards him.) The benefits of these writings and the absence of harm in them are thus obvious.

We conclude that reading and listening to the statements and writings of the saints are akin to sitting in their company. And, sometimes, they are excellent alternatives to remaining in their company.

There is more benefit in Allāh's speech

At this point, someone may think: We learnt the benefit and merit of the speech of the Sufis. If this is their rank in Dīn, what can be said of the speech of Allāh taʿālā!? Since we have surmised the acquisition of benefit from a book, why should we not derive benefit directly from Allāh's Book?

There is no question about the Qur'ān being a fountainhead of guidance. It is then followed by Hadīth which is actually an explanation of the Qur'ān. However, it is not easy for everyone to benefit directly from the Qur'ān because neither does every person have the capability nor an affinity

with Dīn. To develop an affinity with Dīn, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, it is necessary for people to first study or listen to the writings of the Sufis and 'ulamā'. They must make this the means for developing an affinity with the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Once affinity is developed, then the original path is of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. They must read the Qur'ān, ponder and reflect over its meanings, and use it to get closer to Allāh ta'ālā and to recognize Him.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is certainly an excellent judgement. It is both enlightening and worthy of being put into practice. (compiler)

The duty of khulafā

When the Sufis depart, the fundamental thing is their teachings. The means which enable the teachings to continue are the khulafā. If the teachings continue through the shaykh's writings, then they are his khulafā. The point I am making is if you cannot acquire benefit from the original, do it from the deputy. Although the deputy may not be as effective as the original, there is no alternative to reverting to him. A poet says:

> When the rose petals no longer remain
> and the garden has been left desolate,
> then the fragrance of the rose can be
> found only in rose essence.

A poet says:

> Since the sun has become hidden and
> announced its departure, we have no
> alternative but to acquire light from the
> lamp.

Thus, if we have not met the saints, or met them but did not derive benefit from them, then the only thing left is to revert to their deputies, to study their books and derive benefit from them. Like their company, their speech is beneficial and impressive. I had read the letter of that Maulānā Sāḥib to you.

Another Maulānā Sāḥib wrote a letter to me a few days ago.

> *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq* is widely accepted and highly beneficial in this region. A man is employed by the railways. He had become a target of modernism and was drowning in its ocean. He got the inspiration to study *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq*. When I saw him recently, I could not recognize him. By Allāh's grace, he has a beard. He said to me that this periodical taught him Dīn and through it he reached this level [of religiosity]. He also said to me that he encourages his friends and relatives to study it. Anyone who sees him now is left amazed.

He writes further:

> There is another person who subscribes to many periodicals. He said to me: "*Al-Furqān* (name of a periodical) contained an article from *Maʿrifat-e-Ḥaqq* on the subject of Sufis and the Sufi affiliation. It has a remarkable effect on the reader. As you read it, you feel as though it is settling into your heart. The heart then experiences a unique condition."

Look at how this Maulānā Sāḥib related his own experiences and those of his friends and associates.

He says that anyone who reads *Maʿrifat-e-Haqq* is certainly impressed by it.

Now why are you searching for a modus operandi? This is the way to do the work. First, you yourself must imbibe the writings of the saints and then convey them to others.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is an excellent theme which ought to be read by the elite and the masses, and then practised upon. This applies especially to the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. Inspiration is from Allāh taʿālā alone. (compiler)

TEACHING THE QUR'ĀN REQUIRES A SPECIAL INTEREST IN IT

Some of our seniors encouraged the proliferation of the Qur'ān. When Ḥaḍrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan Ṣāḥib raḥimahullāh returned from his incarceration in the Malta jail, he assembled his special students and said: "While in the solitude of the Malta jail, the point which became clear to me is that two things are essential for the rectification and reformation of the Muslim nation. One is mutual cooperation and unity. The other is spreading the message of the Qur'ān."

I would like to expound on this a bit. In today's times, there can be no greater task for the Muslims than to proliferate the Qur'ān. After all, its words are guidance and so are its meanings. It is an embodiment of guidance. Therefore, no matter how much we become occupied with it, it will be liked by Allāh taʿālā and Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, and it will be a source of drawing Allāh's mercy.

This encouragement towards the Qur'ān is therefore totally correct. However, these seniors probably (and Allāh knows best) mean that people must have the enthusiasm to proliferate the Qur'ān and to develop the same enthusiasm in others. Without this, the real benefit of the Qur'ān will neither be derived by the teacher nor the student. In fact, in some situations there is the danger that if people do not possess the correct interest in the Qur'ān, it could prove destructive for the one teaching it and those

who are being taught. Shaykh Akbar rahimahullāh writes:

> فكذلك الشيخ إذا لم يكن صاحب ذوق وأخذ الطريق من الكتب وأفواه الرجال وقعد يربي به المريد طلبا للمرتبة والرياسة فإنه مهلك لمن تبعه لأنه لا يعرف مورد الطالب ولا مصدره.[1]

> In like manner, if the shaykh is not a man of correct interest and affiliation – instead, he merely studied the path from books and the verbal utterances of people – and then starts to tutor his disciple for the sake of acquiring rank and leadership – then this will be destructive to those who follow him. This is because he will know nothing about the ups and downs of his disciple.

If a shaykh has to have the correct interest and affiliation, this condition will apply even more to the teaching of the Qur'ān. The person who wants to convey the words and meanings of the Qur'ān to others will have to be a man of correct affiliation and interest. If he wants to proliferate the Qur'ān without having fulfilled these conditions, he will not be able to do it. The absence of a special interest will deprive him of imbibing the teachings of the Qur'ān. How, then, will he be able to create the same in others?

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[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٩.

The point I am making is that the greatest fortune for us is to turn our attention to the Qur'ān. However, when the Muslim masses are encouraged towards it, it will only be beneficial if the person is himself of sound affiliation. Only a person having a sound affiliation will be able to develop the same in others. Presently we observe Muslims showing some interest in the Qur'ān. The translation and explanation of the Qur'ān are taught in our madāris. Unfortunately, a special interest is not being developed in our students and the general public. How can it be developed when their condition is as described by ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Khaulī rahimahullāh in the introduction to *Miftāh as-Sunnah*:

> ومن عجيب أمرهم أن يعدوا من كبار المفسرين من درس مثل تفسير الجلالين أو النسفي دون أن تكون له ملكة فهم في القرآن وذوق يدرك به سر فصاحة وكمال اقتدا على تطبيه على سير الناس ومعاملتهم.[1]
>
> Another reason for the ineffectiveness of the Qur'ān lessons of today's people is the latter's astonishing attitude of considering a person to be a senior exegist only when he conducts lessons from books like *Tafsīr Jalālāyn* or *Tafsīr al-Madārik* of Imām Nasafī. Even if the person conducting the lesson neither has the capability to understand the Qur'ān nor the required

[1] مفتاح السنة: ص ٤.

> keenness through which he could fathom the secret behind its eloquence, and the full aptitude to apply the Qur'ān to the lives and conditions of people.

ʿAllāmah Khaulī rahimahullāh has explained it beautifully and identified the crux of the problem. This is the general condition today. A person has no aptitude at all for the Qur'ān and Sunnah, but he is the one who is delivering lectures. This is why Qur'ānic teachings are not proliferating. The fundamental prerequisite which was laid down by the erudite 'ulamā' has been disregarded today. How, then, can the teachings of the Qur'ān be proliferated? On the other hand, if a scholar lectures on the Qur'ān with the correct interest and a teacher teaches it with the required keenness, then the audience and students will certainly be affected by it and benefit from it. When we see no effect in these lessons, then it is because the work is not being done as it should.

Qur'ān and Sunnah lessons to remove people from misguidance

No matter what, the encouragement given by some of our elders towards teaching the Qur'ān is totally in its place. After all, it is the Qur'ān and Sunnah which are the fountainheads for our guidance and the capital of our lives. ʿAllāmah Khaulī rahimahullāh writes in this regard:

ولا شيء أهدى للنفوس وأجلب لسعادتها وأرجى
لطهارتها من تفهم هذين الصنوين والعكوف على

درسهما وتدبر معانيهما، والنفوذ إلى مغز أهمها فهناك طهارة القلب وصفاء العقل وكمال النفس.[1]

> There is nothing better than understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunnah to guide people, to acquire good fortune for the self and to purify it. This includes devoting one's self to teaching them, pondering over their meanings and delving into their most important essence. This is how purity of the heart, clarity of the mind and perfection of the self can be realized.

However, as I had just said, the prerequisite is that studying the Qur'ān, teaching it, delivering lectures on it and proliferating it have to be done with the correct keenness.

I asked some of my associates in this regard. They responded with workable points. I am quoting my question and their answer verbatim for the benefit of the reader.

Shāh Waṣīyyullāh's special method of tafsīr

I asked them:

What do you think is the difference between the manner in which I am teaching and explaining the Qur'ān to the way in which others are teaching the translation and tafsīr of the Qur'ān?

They replied:

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[1] مفتاح السعادة: ص ٤.

There is a vast difference between your teaching methodology and the methodology of others. This is what we found:

1. Before lecturing to the people about the Qur'ān, it is necessary to create the greatness of the Qur'ān in their hearts. The more its greatness and importance are embedded in the heart, the more the heart will grasp its themes and its effect will increase. We already believe in the Qur'ān. However, the significance and reverence which developed in our hearts after listening to your lessons were much more than before. Furthermore, the manner in which Hadrat speaks on a subject and directs our attention to the Qur'ān is not done by anyone else.

2. Another important point which must be taken into consideration by the one who is making tafsīr of the Qur'ān is to abstain from relying on his knowledge of the Arabic language. If he does, he will certainly err in its tafsīr. Instead, he must have one of the commentaries of the erudite exegists of the past in front of him and speak in the light of what it contains. He must make it the basis of his discussion and explanation. After that, if any point comes to him by the blessing of these seniors, he may explain it as well. This is on condition it is not in conflict with the Sharīʿah.

3. Do not be overly concerned about quantity. You may explain briefly but ensure the explanation is in a manner which clarifies the objective of the Qur'ān to the people. Do this even if it means repeating an explanation several times. After all, the objective is to understand the Qur'ān; not to merely have knowledge of its words.

4. The fourth point which I perceive in Hadrat's lessons – and which I believe is peculiar to Hadrat

in these times – is that there is definitely the right of the Creator and the right of the creation; and man has to fulfil both. Hadrat explains the themes of the Qur'ān from his heart, spiritual condition and on the basis of his own peculiar emotions. Because Hadrat is himself affected by the Qur'ān, others are affected by it. From this we learn that the most important prerequisite for a person who is delivering Qur'ān lessons is to be himself affected by it. If not, his lesson and explanation will have no effect on others.

This is our condition today: First of all, Qur'ān lessons are not conducted. Even when they are, because we are not affected by the Qur'ān, our lessons have no effect on others.

On another occasion I asked the same Maulānā Sāhib:

"I am teaching the Qur'ān in a certain way. If more people do the same, won't its benefit become more common?"

He replied: "I don't think there is anyone who teaches it in the manner and style which you do. Nonetheless, if scholars start teaching it according to their personal capabilities and in the proper manner, then there is hope of the work increasing."

The elite also show disregard to the Qur'ān as the masses do. We see the scholars showing importance to Hadīth lessons but not as much to Qur'ān lessons. There may be some servant of Allāh taʿālā who is serving the Qur'ān in the correct manner, and we praise Allāh taʿālā for it. However, as far as we know, the importance given to Hadīth lessons outweighs what is given to tafsīr of the Qur'ān. Whereas the Qur'ān is the fountainhead of all

sciences. From the higher sciences, jurisprudence (fiqh) is certainly derived from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. The Sunnah itself is a commentary of the Qur'ān. But now more importance is given to the commentary [Sunnah] and less to the actual text [the Qur'ān]. This is an upside down situation and totally against the magnificence of the Qur'ān. This attitude of the learned and religious is extremely astonishing. May Allāh taʿālā inspire us to show the correct respect to the Qur'ān and give us a large share of its understanding. Āmīn.

The narrator adds:

You have read the diagnosis and prescription of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. I ask you to make an appraisal of every town and family – without the restriction of time and place – and observe every place whether it is a dār al-ʿilm (place of knowledge), dār al-ʿamal (place of action) or dār as-saltanah (seat of government). This is the ailment wherever disputes are occurring. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh has made a significant and vital point. If the situation is rectified, the disputes in those places will come to an end. Hadrat has shown the path to rectification, viz. if you want to benefit from a person, keep him happy and occupy his heart.

Although this prescription has been tried and tested, it is not easy. Something has to be done for it. Hadrat had related the story of the attendant who had made a place for himself in the heart of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. It did not happen just like that. Rather, he demonstrated his sincerity and devotion through his words, actions and spiritual conditions to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Only then did he find a place in his heart.

> Majdhūb is looked down upon with scorn by the entire world. Only then did he find a place in your heart.

The attendant turned his focus from every person who frequented Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh and created a bond with him solely for Allāh's sake. He was totally concerned about Hadrat's and Hadrat's family's comfort. This is why Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh accorded special attention to him. As far as I remember, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh had related an incident demonstrating this attendant's sincerity. Some special guests of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh arrived in the afternoon. The attendant realized that these were esteemed guests, and Hadrat will certainly make arrangements for their meals. The attendant went to his wife and asked her to quickly prepare a meal for three people. He then went and informed Hadrat Thānwī thus: "Hadrat! We have these guests. Do not trouble our mother [referring to Hadrat Thānwī's wife] to prepare anything. I have already arranged for my family to prepare a meal. It will be prepared at my house, brought to Hadrat's house, and then presented to the guests."

This was what the situation demanded. Also, Hadrat Thānwī received mental relaxation from this, and his wife received physical rest. This is why Hadrat said to the attendant: "May Allāh do good for you."

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh used to say that this attendant was extremely sincere. Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh made this duʿā from his heart, thereby ensuring the attendant's success. The attendant would always see to Hadrat Thānwī's needs and continually receive his duʿās.

Note: When a person is sincere with the Ahlullāh, they shower him with physical and spiritual bounties. They practise on the verse:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ.

> The reward of goodness is nothing but goodness.[1]

[1] Sūrah ar-Raḥmān, 55: 60.

SPECIAL STATEMENTS

The Ambiyā' ʿalayhimus salām are the leaders and guides of the nation. Their statements, actions and life-conditions are mandates and examples for their followers. This is why we have been ordered to follow and emulate them. Just we believe it to be necessary to follow them in all matters, the same applies to their affairs of the Hereafter. Although their followers cannot reach their level, each one has to imbibe their conditions according to the level of his īmān. Making their conditions the focus of one's attention is the demand of īmān.

The reason for the misguidance which we see today is that people have turned a blind eye to the conditions of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām with regard to the Hereafter. Neither do the masses know them nor do the ʿulamā' teach them. Whereas the greatest Sunnah of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is Allāh's recognition. And fear is necessary for it.

Fear and hope, and knowledge of matters related to Paradise and Hell are the fundamentals of Dīn. When knowledge of the fundamentals disappears, it is inevitable for misguidance to become common. After all, the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām came to remove misguidance. When a department of their life is discarded, it will become corrupt.

Listen! Allāh's fear – i.e. fear of Allāh's displeasure, fear of Allāh's wrath, fear of Hell and fear of its punishment – has been the salient feature of the righteous servants of Allāh taʿālā in every era.

People have discarded focusing on the affairs of the Hereafter. They have abandoned studying the

themes on encouragement and instilling fear. Consequently, they have fallen into worldly and Dīnī destruction. Dīn essentially refers to the life and wakefulness of the heart. And this is realized through concern for the Hereafter.

The external features of Dīn like salāh, fasting, lectures, religious assemblies, studying, teaching, makātib and madāris are certainly present. In fact, they are more than the past. However, people of perception understand that no life remains in them. The outer appearance of Dīn is present, the soul does not exist. When a region does not have people of the heart and people of rectification, how will the people of that place know anything about matters related to the heart and rectification? If they have no knowledge of it, how will they put it into practice? If they do not practise, how will they develop a spiritual condition? Thus, only the external form of salāh and fasting will remain, while that place will be totally bankrupt spiritually. In this way, misguidance will become common.

This is what I mean when I say that the external self alone is not enough. You will have to develop life in the heart. And this comes from fear and hope, which in turn come by focussing on the statements, actions and life-conditions of the people of fear and hope.

There is an external Dīn with external actions. In like manner, there is an internal Dīn which is related to the conditions of the heart. For example, honesty, sincerity, humility, forbearance, love and fear. All these are connected to the heart. The Sufis teach these aspects of Dīn. People frequent the saints and live with them for many days. However, they are unable to acquire the desired benefit from

them either because their intention is not clear, they have insufficient quest, or faith and confidence in the saint are absent.

This is why it is necessary when a person goes to a saint, he must think about it carefully first: What does he hope to acquire? Is this the place for it?

Every thinking and mature person who does a worldly job, does it with a certain objective. If a person does something without any purpose, people will call him a lunatic. If the purpose is correct but he chooses the incorrect way of doing it, he will be called a fool. Therefore, when frequenting a saint, the first essential thing to do is correct the intention, identify the purpose of going to him, give proof of your quest, and have faith and confidence in the saint whom you wish to benefit from. If there is a shortcoming in any of these conditions, the person will never succeed. This is what we are observing today: People are not fulfilling the prerequisites of a genuine quest but want to derive benefit from the path. How can they hope to achieve this?

A valuable statement

In the periodical *Ma'firat-e-Haqq* I came across a valuable statement of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh on the issue of the movement for [Indian] independence. It is with reference to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī rahimahullāh. I am quoting it here. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

During the movement for independence, a person quoted the following couplet with reference to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. The man quoted it in the presence of Hadrat Khwājah 'Azīz al-Hasan Sāhib rahimahullāh. The theme of the couplet is

that Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh does not bother about the opposition of people, he is focussed on pleasing Allāh taʿālā.

> Although the time has become our enemy. O heart! What we really have to check is whether our relationship with our Beloved is not disturbed.

Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib rahimahullāh went to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh and informed him of this couplet which was said by a certain person. Since it conveyed the present condition of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh, he was overjoyed when he heard it and went into an ecstatic state. This condition of the heart is undoubtedly a great bounty. A person who acquires it is certainly fortunate because it is this recognition which will convey him to Allāh taʿālā.

An important statement

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh said:

We have become old and there is no time left to acquire anything. We understand from this that it is pride which prevents man from acquiring an excellence. It is this pride which prevents him from submitting before an erudite person. After all, there are people of spiritual excellence in every era, and the person can acquire it from them. It is his pride which prevents him from humbling himself before them. This is why he achieves nothing and remains untutored and foolish. Man acquires something when he casts his pride and haughtiness aside.

I am addressing the ʿulamā' in particular. Students are not acquiring excellence nowadays because of their pride and arrogance. This is the obstacle in

their path. If they understand this and take the courage to cast it aside, they will reach a level of excellence. Those who did acquire any excellence did so by obliterating their selves and putting an end to their pride.

General statements

1. You may love a saint but not know him well enough. Generally, people are able to love a saint quickly but recognition is difficult for them. Whereas progress can be made with recognition. We conclude from this that one needs intelligence to recognize someone.

2. The Prophets ʿalayhimus salām come into this world as embodiments of rectitude and guidance on behalf of Allāh taʿālā. This is why you will not hear anything from them which could cause you to recoil. They speak clearly and plainly, so it is easy for everyone – the elite and the laity – to understand them.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a point of real cognition which has to be borne in mind. (compiler)

3. Pride and ostentation in actions are the qualities of Shaytān. He is the founder of pride and ostentation. On the other hand, the first worshippers are the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām, and their greatest quality is humility and sincerity. When worshippers develop pride and ostentation, it is through the deception of Shaytān. It is a difficult "mountain pass" for worshippers. There is no escape from it except by genuine emulation of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām in their character, ways, mannerisms and spiritual exercises. This is the meaning of the following couplets:

O Saʿdī! Do not think you can traverse the path to Safā without following in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Anyone who follows a path which is different from Rasūlullāh's can never reach the destination.

Observe the following couplets as well:

The accursed Iblīs was an abdāl for thousands of years and assumed the position of amīr al-mu'minīn (leader of the believers). But when he opposed Ādam ʿalayhis salām on account of his pride and arrogance, he was disgraced and humiliated just as animal droppings decompose in the hot sun. Therefore, do not oppose the Ahlullāh. Just think! How can you ever cause your horse to run ahead of the king.

Note: The blameworthiness of pride and arrogance is so clear. The Ahlullāh teach us to not only protect ourselves against it but to abhor it. May Allāh taʿālā protect us from all blameworthy characteristics. Āmīn. (compiler)

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All thanks are due to Allāh taʿālā for His favours. Dear reader! You have read the fourth volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* – a most beneficial collection of statements and lectures of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Allāhābādī rahimahullāh. This collection is indeed a favour to us from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat rahimahullāh. May Allāh taʿālā enable us to appreciate this collection with our hearts and to

publish more volumes in this series so that the Muslim nation may gain as much benefit as possible. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh taʿālā.

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

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رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ.

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that they could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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