

# THE NEED FOR ACADEMIC AND SPIRITUAL ACUMEN

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Kharod

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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَتَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَبَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا كَثِيرًا، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَاعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ. لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ.

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيمُ وَصَدَقَ رَسُولُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْأُمِّيُّ الْكَرِيمُ، وَنَحْنُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ الشَّاهِدِينَ وَالشَّاكِرِينَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَبَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي، وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي، سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ، اللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا. إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ وَدُرِّيَّاتِهِ.

### Attending a gathering of scholars

It is a very great favour of Allāh *ta'ālā* for having given me the opportunity of attending such a large gathering of the heirs of the Prophets '*alayhimus salām* and the guests of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. It is

most audacious of me to sit and speak in the presence of distinguished scholars, and the glittering stars of Gujarat. I am feeling most embarrassed. I am physically ill and academically blank. This is why I said to my beloved brother, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Ḥadrāt Maulānā Muḥammad Ḥanīf Ṣāhib dāmat barakātuhum and to the honourable principal that it will be better if they excused me. Now that I have to address you, I request my seniors, our ‘ulamā’ and our students to pray that Allāh ta’ālā inspires me to say things which will first of all be beneficial to me, and to others as well. Āmīn.

### The theme of today’s gathering

Today’s assembly is connected with the Qur’ān because a few students will be completing the Qur’ān. It is also connected to my dear mentor, Ḥadrāt Maulānā ‘Abdullāh Kāpaudrī Ṣāhib dāmat barakātuhum. Thirdly, it is related to a library. I was thinking about what I should speak about. While entering the masjid, this verse came to my mind. I thought to myself that I will first read the verse, and then speak on whatever Allāh ta’ālā instils in my mind. After all, this is the spiritual blessing of my seniors. Allāh ta’ālā says in this verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ

*Those who recite the Book of Allāh*

وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ

*and establish salāh*

وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً

*and spend, secretly or openly, of something which We provided them*

يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ

*they are hopeful of a trade that incurs no loss.*<sup>1</sup>

### **Action requires knowledge**

Allāh *ta'ālā* says in another place:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ أَمْنٌ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

*Surely those who believed and did good deeds, for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow.*<sup>2</sup>

The result of *īmān* and good deeds is Paradise. However, knowledge is necessary for *īmān* and good deeds. After all, actions are not possible without knowledge. In his *Sahīh*, *Hadrat* Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* has a chapter titled “The chapter on knowledge before action”.

Knowledge comes first, and then action. Action is necessary for success in the Hereafter and entry into Paradise. And action requires knowledge. And for knowledge, the study of books is essential. And – by the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* – a magnificent library is to be opened today. In it, books will be read, and through the Academy, the work of research will be undertaken. This will result in more books coming into existence. Scholars will study them and the laymen will also get an opportunity to read them.

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah Fāṭir, 35: 29.

<sup>2</sup> Sūrah al-Burūj, 85: 11.

## Develop an interest in reading books

Without proper knowledge, good deeds are not possible. And for the acquisition of knowledge, a study of books is necessary. Therefore, my first request to our students is to develop within them an interest in reading books. They must develop a taste for reading. The Book of Allāh *ta'ālā* also has to be studied deeply because it is the fountainhead of all sciences. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said:

خَيْرُ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ

*The best speech is the Book of Allāh.*

Our pious predecessors paid particular attention to it. 'Allāmah Ibn Taymīyah *rahimahullāh* said:

رُبَّمَا طَالَعْتُ عَلَى الْآيَةِ الْوَاحِدَةِ خَوْفَ مِائَةِ تَفْسِيرٍ

*While pondering over a single verse, there were times when I had to study 100 tafsīr books in order to fathom Allāh's intent.*

These personalities considered it to be most important to understand Allāh's aim and objective. This is why he says thereafter:

ثُمَّ أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْفَهْمَ وَأَقُولُ يَا مُعَلِّمَ آدَمَ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلِّمْنِي.<sup>٣</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> صحيح مسلم، باب تخفيف الصلاة والخطبة، ح ٨٧١.

<sup>2</sup> العقود الدرية في مناقب شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية، ص ٢٤.

<sup>3</sup> العقود الدرية في مناقب شيخ الإسلام ابن تيمية، ص ٢٤.

*I would then ask Allāh ta'ālā for understanding, and beg Him saying: O the one who taught Ādam and Ibrāhīm, teach me as well.*

These people were fully aware of the fact that the Qur'ān came into this world so that they could understand it and then practise on it. How will one be able to practise on it if it is not understood? You should therefore develop within you a firm desire to understand the aim and objective of Allāh ta'ālā. After that, the first tafsīr of the Qur'ān is the Hadīth. From there, other sciences proliferated. This is why you must develop an interest to study the Qur'ān, the Hadīth and all the other sciences.

Our pious predecessors gave immense importance to studying the religious sciences. The story of Imām Muslim *rahimahullāh* is well-known that he used to have dates at his side which he would continue eating while he was reading. He did not even realize how many dates he was eating, and this eventually became the cause of his death.<sup>1</sup> Such was the level of his academic engrossment and his obsession with reading. The reading of these seniors can be described as prolific, wide and deep. They used to read a lot, they were widely read, and their reading was in-depth.

### **A most beneficial piece of advice for teachers**

When we commenced the *Mishkāt Sharīf* year for the first time in our madrasah, the senior teacher of Hadīth at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, Hadhrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Haqq Sāhib A'zamī *rahimahullāh*, graced us with his visit. Hadhrat *rahimahullāh* was extremely kind and affection to me. He asked: "Who is going to

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<sup>1</sup>تهذيب التهذيب، ج ٤، ص ٦٧.

teach *Mishkāt Sharīf*?” I replied: “We have already decided on one teacher for the first volume. He is Maulānā ‘Iyād Sāhib who is a very noble person with good teaching abilities. After graduating at Dār al-‘Ulūm Bury he proceeded to Azhar University where he specialized in Hadīth. We are still thinking about who will teach the second volume.”

Hadrat said: “You must teach it.” I replied: “Hadrat, I do not have the knowledge and piety which are needed for teaching it. Even if I did have, a principal has countless other responsibilities.” Hadrat said: “You must teach it. By teaching it, you will get the knowledge and the piety. As for your other responsibilities, through the blessing of the science of Hadīth, your tasks of five hours will be accomplished in one hour.” I replied: “Very well. You must make du‘ā’ and give me some pieces of advice.”

Hadrat gave very valuable pieces of advice which are most useful to teachers. One of the things which he said was: “You must look a lot and speak little.” What he meant was when preparing for a lesson, one must read widely and deeply, but when presenting the lesson, it must be short and comprehensive.

## The Sahābah and the tafsīr of the Qur’ān

Imām Masrūq *rahimahullāh* says with reference to his teacher, Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd *radiyallāhu ‘anhu*:

كَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَقْرَأُ عَلَيْنَا السُّورَةَ ثُمَّ يُحَدِّثُنَا فِيهَا وَيُقَسِّرُهَا عَامَّةَ النَّهَارِ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>تفسير الطبري، ج ١، ص ٧٥.

*Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd radiyallāhu 'anhu used to read one sūrah to us. He would then speak about it and explain it to us for the entire day.*

It is well known about Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu that it took him 12 years to complete Sūrah al-Baqarah. It took his son, Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu, eight years to complete Sūrah al-Baqarah. They used to take these long periods of time because they used to read the Qur'ān and understand it. The reason for this is that they read the Qur'ān with the intention of practising on it. Obviously, understanding is essential for practising.

### **Who can have hopes**

Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ

*Those who recite the Book of Allāh.*

Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī rahimahullāh writes in his commentary to the above:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ (مَعَ الْعَمَلِ)

*Those who continue reading the Book of Allāh and do not suffice with its recitation. Instead, they practise on it as well.*

And they are especially mindful of:

وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُورَ

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<sup>1</sup> بيان القرآن، ج ٣، ص ٢٢٤.

and establish *salāh* and spend, secretly or openly, of something which We provided them, they are hopeful of a trade that incurs no loss.<sup>1</sup>

Those who read the Qur’ān, and couple their reading with practising on it – such people can be hopeful of Allāh’s pleasure and Paradise.

### ‘Allāmah Bannūrī’s interest in reading

The first thing is to read abundantly. Hadrat ‘Allāmah Yūsuf Bannūrī *rahimahullāh* is a senior of our recent past. The students are probably thinking to themselves that I spoke about ‘Allāmah Ibn Taymīyyah *rahimahullāh* who belongs in the distant past. So listen to the story of ‘Allāmah Yūsuf Bannūrī *rahimahullāh*: While in Dhābel, the Majlis-e-‘ilmī gave him the task of investigating the book *al-‘Arf ash-Shadhī*. One of the things which he had to do was to find references for the points which were made by Hadrat ‘Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* in his lessons. ‘Allāmah Yūsuf Bannūrī *rahimahullāh* relates: “While working on *al-‘Arf ash-Shadhī* I had to read countless number of pages searching for each reference.”

He provides examples in this regard as well. He says: “At one point, Hadrat ‘Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* said: ‘There is an important rule for reconciling two conflicting Ahādith. The compilers of Mustalah al-Hadith (Hadith definitions) disregarded this rule. However, Hāfiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī *rahimahullāh* has mentioned it in several places in *Fath* al-*Bārī*.” ‘Allāmah Bannūrī *rahimahullāh* says: “When I opened *Fath* al-*Bārī*, I found the rule, but I

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah Fāṭir, 35: 29.

did not suffice with it because Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that Hāfiz Ibn Hajar *rahimahullāh* mentioned it in several places. I wanted to check where and how many times it is mentioned in *Fath al-Bārī*, so I read the book from beginning to end.<sup>1</sup>

## Who is a true student

My first request to the students is that their reading must be vast and deep. Develop an interest in reading from your student days. Read books in your spare time. Haḍrat Muftī Shafi' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that a real student is one whose mind is always thinking about some academic point or the other.<sup>2</sup>

The word *tālib* is an active noun which conveys the meaning of continuity. Let us – students - examine our gatherings and assemblies. There are no academic discussions in them. It will be very difficult to find anyone speaking on a grammatical issue, another trying to solve a etymological objection, searching for the meaning of a word in a dictionary, a student saying to his fellow mates that he was reading a certain commentary today and he learnt a certain point from it, and so on. We don't hear discussions of this nature. There are no academic discussions. Apart from the compulsory *muṭāla'ah* (preparation for the next day's lessons) and attending the classes, there is no academic occupation. In fact, the situation is the opposite. While sitting in class or in the *muṭāla'ah* room, the students are talking about football and cricket, sneaking and looking at their mobile phones. They even do this in their classrooms. And there are

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<sup>1</sup> *Bayyināt* – special edition. From a manuscript of Haḍrat Maulānā Sayyid Yūsuf Bannūrī, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> *Malfūzāt Wa Wāqi'āt Muftī Shafi' Sāhib*, p. 33.

some who go to the extent of watching immoralities on their mobile phones.

### **Why does a student need a smart phone?**

I always say to our students in England – may Allāh *ta'ālā* reward them because they pay heed – what need do you have for a smart phone? An ordinary mobile phone is enough so that if you need to phone someone, ask him about his wellbeing, etc. it will fulfil that need. Students most certain do not need a smart phone? In fact, even 'ulamā' don't need it. Yes, those who are senior, who have full control over their carnal selves, who can differentiate between right and wrong, useful and useless, and then while practising accordingly, they look at what is useful and abstain from what is harmful – then the smart phone is okay for them. But it is not for weak people like us. It is like quicksand which continually pulls a person down. What will those who secretly look at the mobile phones in bed be able to study the next day in class?

I advise our seekers, students and even teachers to get rid off their smart phones because a smart phone is most harmful. It has destroyed our valuable time. Only those who are senior may have a smart phone, WhatsApp and so on. Those who are the true leaders of the ummat, and for whom it is necessary to be fully aware of the conditions which are prevailing in the world do not even have ordinary mobile phones. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, our students have become used to the practice that the moment they enter the madrasah, they handover their phones in the office and they only take them when they are going home for the holidays. If there are no newspapers, no radio, no tape recorder, no mobile phone in the madrasah; what will the students do in their free

time? When they have nothing else to occupy them, they will read books in their free time.

### The zeal for reading by our seniors

You have to develop a zeal for reading. There is a famous statement of Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*:

لَدَاتُ الْأَفْكَارِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ لَدَاتِ الْأَبْكَارِ

*To ponder and reflect over academic issues is more enjoyable than the pleasure which is provided by a virgin woman.*

The following are few couplets of ‘Allāmah Zamakhsharī *rahimahullāh*:

سَهْرِي لِتَنْقِيحِ الْعُلُومِ أَلَدُّ لِي - مِنْ وَصْلِ غَانِيَةٍ وَطَيْبِ عِنَاقِ  
وَتَمَائِي طَرْبًا لِحَلِّ غُوبِصَةٍ - أَشْهُي وَأَحْلِي مِنْ مُدَامَةِ سَاقِ

*Remaining awake at night to research and investigate the different sciences is more enjoyable to me than meeting a beautiful singer and her sweet embrace. My swaying from side to side out of joy for having solved a difficulty is more desirable to me and sweeter than the drink which is offered by a waiter.*

وَصْرِيرُ أَقْلَامِي عَلَى أُرَاقِهَا - أَحْلِي مِنَ الدَّوْكَاهِ وَالْعُشَاقِ  
وَأَلَدُّ مِنْ نَقْرِ الْفَتَاةِ لِدُفِهَا - نَقْرِي لِأَلْقَى الرَّمَلِ عَنِ أُرَاقِي

*The sound made by my pen as it writes across the page is sweeter to me than daukāh and ‘ushshāq*

<sup>1</sup> حدائق الحنفية، ص ١٥٤.

<sup>2</sup> صفحات من صبر العلماء، ص ١٣٩.

(songs). The sound of dusting off the dust from the pages of my books is more enjoyable to me than the sound made by a young girl as she is playing her tambourine.

Allāh is the greatest! Look at the zeal of our elders and seniors for reading and studying books!

## Knowledge and practice – the keys to success in both worlds

My dear students! You have to develop a zeal for studying and reading books. If you have this, you will acquire knowledge. If you have knowledge, you will be able to practise. If you practise, all the doors of goodness in this world and the Hereafter will be opened to you. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا

*Surely those who have believed and did good deeds – to them shall the Merciful endow with love.*<sup>1</sup>

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

*Allāh has promised those who have imān from among you and who did good deeds that He shall make them leaders in the land.*<sup>2</sup>

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

*Surely those who believed and did good deeds, for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow.*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah Maryam, 19: 96.

<sup>2</sup> Sūrah an-Nūr, 24: 55.

<sup>3</sup> Sūrah al-Burūj, 85: 11.

## Why is there no practice on knowledge?

From knowledge there will be practice, and from practice all the doors of success in this world and the Hereafter will be opened. However, we notice that despite having knowledge, there is no practice on it. There is a famous couplet of Ghālib who said:

I know the reward for obedience and  
abstinence. Despite this, my temperament  
is not inclined in that direction.

Even our students cannot do easy actions despite having knowledge. Shayṭān instils this idea in their minds that apart from the fard and wājib actions, doing other actions is an obstacle in the duration of one's studies. Some teachers are also at fault in this regard. When a student has some concern for the Hereafter, he is mocked at in the class. He is slated by referring to him as a Sufi Sāhib. Some teachers also meddle with those students who have pledged bay'at, who have a bond with the Sufis, and are in the practice of frequenting the khānqāhs. They do not realize how important this intermediary level is for actions and good deeds.

Knowledge will come from reading which will then convey a person towards action. However, many have experienced that there is no action in their lives despite having acquired the knowledge. We learn from this that there is a need for something additional, and that is spiritual affinity. After having acquired academic excellence, there is a need for spiritual acumen. This is what prompts a person towards action. Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib rahimahullāh says:

O Allāh! I did not know what it was to pine  
for You. I learnt from Your lovers to die for  
Your sake. O Akhtar! Once a person finds

the company of a friend of Allāh, he has learnt how to live and how to die. The essence of my life and the refuge of my existence is to live among Your lovers and to die among Your lovers.

The following couplet of Akbar Allāhābādī is well known:

Dīn is not acquired from books, lectures and wealth. It is acquired from the [affectionate] gaze of the pious elders.

### **The secret to progress**

Today's gathering is related to books (*kutub*) and Sufis (*qutub*). Our Ḥadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Kāpaudrī Sāhib dāmat barakātuḥum is a *qutub*, Ḥadrat Muftī Aḥmad Khānpūrī Sāhib dāmat barakātuḥum is a *qutub*. Other seniors are also seated here. When I entered, I did not look around too much, so I don't know who else is here.

Knowledge will come from reading books, but reading itself will not convey a person automatically towards action. There is a need for spirituality (*qutub baynī*) to come in-between. This is my second request to you [students]. That is, together with reading, you will have to pay particular attention to establishing a link with the saints.

I am presently in a masjid, scholars are present, and I am sitting among senior scholars and Sufis. I am speaking frankly about myself. Perhaps it will be of benefit to someone. Whatever I seem to have achieved and whatever progress you may be seeing in me – its greatest cause, in fact, its sole cause – is the affectionate gaze of our seniors. There is neither any good nor goodness in my life, nor anything else which

I could say is the reason for my progress. Allāh *ta'ālā* was extremely gracious to me when He turned the hearts of the Ahlullāh towards me even though I neither deserved it nor had any quest for it. Had their hearts not turned in my direction, I do not know where I would be wandering about aimlessly. I do not know in which valley I would be going astray.

### **Value the existing Ahlullāh**

My dear brothers! With reading books, you must pay full importance to your spirituality. Do not compare the saints of your era with those of the past eras. The people of the past used to think in the same way about the saints of their era as we think about the saints of our era. We think that the saints of our era do not have the spiritual conditions like those of Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī *rahimahullāh*, Shaykh Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Shaykh al-Islām Maulānā Madanī *rahimahullāh*.

My dear brothers! The saints of our era are not in any way inferior to those of the past. The saints of each era are of a very high level and rank. It is our misconception to think otherwise. Nevertheless, if anyone still feels that the saints of our era are of a very low level in comparison to those of the past, then I humbly request them to at least look at their own selves. Assuming that they are of a lower level, then is there anyone better than them? If there isn't, you will have to value them. If a hungry person does not get biryani (an exotic rice dish), he is grateful for the dāl (pulse) which he receives because it has satiated his hunger.

My dear brothers! Do not compare the saints of your era with those of the past. Value those who are among

you because you will not get saints like them in the future. May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless Hadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Kāpaudrī Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum with a long life, good health and wellbeing. Allāh *ta'ālā* is all-powerful. He can do as He wills. May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless him with quick and total cure. May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless Hadrat Muftī Ahmad Khānpūrī Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum with a long life. I have benefited tremendously from these two elders. They have been most affectionate and loving towards me, and they made du'ā' for me. My heart desires to remain here and be in their company, but my situation does not permit it. The most important object of this journey of mine was to meet Hadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Kāpaudrī Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum. I wanted to see him just one more time. I make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to afford me another opportunity. Āmīn.

You must establish a bond with these senior scholars, Sufis and elders of Dīn whom Allāh *ta'ālā* created in our Gujarat. Together with reading books, develop your spirituality. Link yourself with whichever one you have an affinity and to whom your heart is inclined. At the same time, be respectful to the other Sufis and seniors, and benefit as much as you can while maintaining unity of purpose.

### **The difference between a Maulānā and a Maulawī**

I stress again: you have to do a lot of reading while developing your spirituality. Reading results in general knowledge. When this is coupled with spirituality by remaining in the company of the saints, the general knowledge becomes beneficial knowledge. If you do not pay attention to developing your spirituality, then the general knowledge will not remain general knowledge. It will become non-useful knowledge from which refuge is sought – as stated in the Ahādīth. In

fact, I can rephrase this in simple words by saying that a person can become a Maulānā by studying books, but if he couples it with spirituality, he becomes a Maulawī – man of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say with much sorrow: “Unfortunately, our madāris have become barren for the past 30 years.” How many years have passed since Muftī Shafī' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* departed from this world? How many more changes must have taken place in the madāris over this lengthy period of time? He used to say: “Unfortunately, our madāris have become barren for the past 30 years. Many Maulānās are born in our madāris but now Maulawīs.”<sup>1</sup> He also used to say: “Ulamā-e-sū' (evil 'ulamā') are starting to be produced in our madāris.”<sup>2</sup>

### **The pious predecessors were particular about spiritual acumen**

My dear brothers! When reading is coupled with spirituality, and when both are developed, then the likes of Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī will be born, the likes of Qāsim Nānautwī will be born, the likes of Shāh Walī Allāh will be born, Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī will be born, Ilyās Kāndhlawī will be born.

My dear brothers! Look at all the great personalities in history and show me just one who confined himself to studying. All the foremost personalities, even those who are known for their academic acumen alone, such as Imām Bukhārī, Imām Muslim and others, coupled academic acumen with spiritual acumen.

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<sup>1</sup> *Malfūzāt Wa Wāqi'āt Muftī Shafī' Sāhib*, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Islāhī Taqrīre*, vol. 1, p. 262.

I say to our students that because you have come to the madrasah for an academic purpose, when you hear the name of a scholar, you look at his personality from the academic angle only. You look at Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* as an academic alone. You must look at them from the practical angle as well. If Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* did not have that practical life which he had, he would never have been Amīr al-Mu'minīn Fī al-Ḥadīth (the leader of the believers in Ḥadīth). If Ḥadīrat Shaykh al-Ḥadīth [Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Ṣāhib] *rahimahullāh* did not have that practical life which he had, he would never have become the Quṭb al-Aqtāb. These personalities combined academic interests with spiritual development. In fact, I say that Allāh *ta'ālā* had selected them from their childhood, this is why piety is found in them from their childhood. As a result of this, they are inspired to undertake wide and in-depth reading and studying.

### **Spirituality enables universal and international work**

If you hold on to academic and spiritual acumen, Allāh *ta'ālā* will take international work from you. You must have heard this statement:

مَوْتُ الْعَالِمِ مَوْتُ الْعَالَمِ

*The death of an 'ālim marks the death of the world.*

If this is the case, we will have to accept the following:

حَيَاةُ الْعَالِمِ حَيَاةُ الْعَالَمِ

*The life of the world depends on the life of an 'ālim.*

Each 'ālim must have an international concern and religious self-respect. I always say that by the time the turban is tied on graduating students from a

madrasah, each student must have developed two qualities within him: (1) religious self-respect [the zeal to defend Islam], (2) the zeal to convey the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to every human.

### The condition of an Allāh-fearing 'ālim

My dear brothers! I do not want to be an obstacle between you and these seniors who are present. When academic acumen is coupled with spiritual acumen, an 'ālim-e-rabbānī (Allāh-fearing 'ālim) will come into existence. His condition will become like that of Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu. He used to hold his beard and stand in the *mihrāb*.<sup>1</sup> His condition used to be as described below:

يَتَمَلَّمُ تَمَلُّمَ السَّلِيمِ، وَيَبْكِي بُكَاءَ الْحَزِينِ، يَقُولُ يَا رَبَّنَا، يَا رَبَّنَا

*He would mumble like one who has been bitten [by a snake or scorpion] and cry like a grief-stricken person. O our Rabb! O our Rabb!*

He would address the world saying:

يَا دُنْيَا! أَيْ تَعَرَّضْتِ، أَمْ إِلَيَّ تَشَوَّفْتِ؟ هَيْهَاتِ هَيْهَاتِ غُرْبِي غَيْرِي، قَدْ بَتَّتْكَ ثَلَاثًا، لَا رَجْعَةَ لِي فِيكَ.

*O world! Are you coming before me? Are you beautifying yourself to me? Get away. Get away. Go deceive someone else because I have issued three divorces to you. There is no question of revoking this divorce.*

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<sup>1</sup> Semi-circular section at the front of a masjid. (translator)

We are students. We have the knowledge of the Qur'ān and Hadīth in our hearts. We have the knowledge of prophet-hood in our hearts. Is our condition anything like this [as was with Hadīrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu]? The only things which we think of all the time is that we must have a good vehicle, a nice house, and all the possessions of comfort and luxury. Whereas our master, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

إِيَّاكَ وَالتَّعَمُّمَ فَإِنَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ لَيْسُوا بِالْمُتَنَعِّمِينَ<sup>1</sup>

*Remain aloof from luxuries because the servants of Allāh ta'ālā are not worshippers of luxuries.*

Hadīrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu was the Amīr al-Mu'minīn, and the caliph of the Muslims. He could have accumulated whatever he wanted. Yet, he used to say:

يَا دُنْيَا! أِنِّي تَعَرَّضْتُ، أَمْ إِلَى تَشَوُّفٍ؟ هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ غُرِّي غَيْرِي، قَدْ بَنَّتْكَ ثَلَاثًا، لَا رَجْعَةَ لِي فِيكَ.

*O world! Are you coming before me? Are you beautifying yourself to me? Get away. Get away. Go deceive someone else because I have issued three divorces to you. There is no question of revoking this divorce.*

فَعُمْرُكَ قَصِيرٌ، وَعَعِيشُكَ حَقِيرٌ، وَخَطْرُكَ كَبِيرٌ

*Your life is short, your assemblies are disdained and you pose a great danger.*

<sup>1</sup>مسند أحمد، ح ٢٢١٠٥.

آه آه مِنْ قَلَّةِ الرَّادِ، وَبُعْدِ السَّفَرِ، وَوَحْشَةِ الطَّرِيقِ.<sup>1</sup>

*Aah aah! My provisions are little, the journey is long and the path is dangerous.” (the journey to the Hereafter is long and the path leading to it is filled with evils and the promptings of Satan, making it a dangerous path).*

### **The special qualities of the leader of the caravan**

My dear brothers! If you studied your books correctly and had the company of the genuine Ahlullāh, if together with academic striving you obliterated your personal opinions and subjugated your carnal self to the Ahlullāh, then – Allāh willing – you and I will experience a similar condition [like that of Hadrat ‘Alī radiyallāhu ‘anhu]. Our condition will then be as described by a poet:

A lofty gaze, an affectionate heart, and a life  
which is in pain [for the Beloved]

If you realize academic and spiritual acumen, your gaze will become lofty, Allāh *ta’ālā* will bless you with an affectionate heart, and a life which is in pain for Him. ‘Allāmah Iqbāl says that these are the special qualities of the leader of the caravan:

A lofty gaze, an affectionate, and a life  
which is in pain [for the Beloved]. These are  
the provisions of the leader of the caravan.

My dear brothers! You are leaders of the caravan of the future, and these are our provisions for the journey. If we want to acquire these provisions, we will

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<sup>1</sup>صفة الصفوة، ١١٨.

have to establish a humble bond with the ‘ulamā’ and the Ahlullāh.

وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

*Above every knowledgeable person, there is one more knowledgeable.<sup>1</sup>*

My dear students! You must remain as students even after you graduate. Go and sit in the company of the seniors and acquire knowledge from them. Go to the Ahlullāh and acquire spiritual knowledge from them. These are the provisions of our journey. Once you acquire these provisions, your thinking will become global, your pain will be global and your efforts will be global. Consequently, Allāh *ta’ālā* will confer you with global success.

May Allāh *ta’ālā* inspire you and me. May He bless our seniors in their knowledge, blessings and sincerity. May He enable us to remain under their cool and sweet shadows for a long time. May He inspire us to value and appreciate them. This is an era wherein there is a dearth of men of worth. Our seniors are leaving this world one after the other. May Allāh *ta’ālā* protect those of our seniors who are alive. May Allāh *ta’ālā* protect our madāris. Āmīn.

I was given importance and the opportunity to sit here. I express my thanks to Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Hanīf Sāhib, the principle Sāhib, the elders, the organizers and all of you. I request you to make du’ā’ for me. May Allāh *ta’ālā* reward you with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 76.

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

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رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

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 these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: [maulanamahomedy@gmail.com](mailto:maulanamahomedy@gmail.com)

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