

**A PRECIOUS GIFT FOR THE
SEEKERS OF SPIRITUAL
REFORMATION**

**Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Salīm
Dhorāt Sāhib**

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EVALUATION (1)

**Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib
Allāhābādī**

**Senior Khalīfah of Musliḥ al-Ummat Hadrat Maulānā
Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib rahimahullāh and 'Ārif
billāh Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Aḥmad Sāhib
Partābgarhi rahimahullāh**

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّيْ وَنُسَلِّمُ عَلٰی رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِیْمِ

All praise is due to Allāh, you delivered a lecture regarding the need for the ummat to reform their inner selves and the obligation of spiritually purifying the carnal self. The lecture is extremely beneficial and effective in preparing an individual to commence with his spiritual reformation because you have made a thorough effort to explain abstract spiritual matters by citing physical and tangible examples which, inshā' Allāh, will be better understood and grasped by the mind and heart. May Allāh *ta'ālā* through His grace make it such. Āmīn.

وَمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلٰی اللّٰهِ بِعَزِیْزٍ

And that is not difficult for Allāh ta'ālā to do.¹

The explanation you have given regarding 'the power of anger' and 'the carnal power' is also quite excellent. Hadrat Musliḥ al-Ummat rahimahullāh said regarding these two subjects, "To restrain these two faculties in

¹ Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14:20.

accordance with the laws of Islam results in good character.” Hadrat Muṣliḥ al-Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained this topic from a great shaykh’s book titled, *Tarsi’ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyah* to a certain salafi¹ ‘ālim and the latter was highly impressed.

Māshā’ Allāh, you shared sterling advice about keeping the company of spiritual guides and its benefit. In addition to this, you lectured about the need for spiritual guides to teach and instruct and you also emphasised and encouraged the disciples and those connected to the spiritual guides to practise upon these teachings and to do their best. May Allāh *ta’ālā* bless the ‘ulamā’ and spiritual mentors with the ability to train and admonish by employing the best manner and methodology and may He grant the disciples, infact the entire nation the ability to practise. Āmīn.

Māshā’ Allāh, you made a wonderful effort to explain in a simple manner the definition and importance of the spiritual level of *ihsān*. In actual fact you have explained what *ihsān* means, and rightfully so, because in the words of Hadrat Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Maulānā Zakarīyyā rahimahullāh, just as the beginning of spiritual progress is correction of one’s intention, *ihsān* is the highest level.

In the end I make du’ā that Allāh *ta’ālā* not only gives the disciples but all Muslim men and women the ability to understand and practise upon these pure pieces of advice because to reform one’s character and spiritually purify the carnal self is not only necessary according to the spiritual guides but also according to the ‘ulamā’ and jurists. It is for this reason that Allāh

¹ One who does not follow any of the four imāms of Jurisprudence.

ta'ālā mentioned the attainment of success on the basis of spiritual purification in various places in the Qur'an. Thus in the thirtieth pārah Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

*Successful indeed is he who purified his soul.*¹

I read almost all the beneficial contents of this booklet and thoroughly enjoyed all the topics and I consider it to be beneficial. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward you.

Was-salām

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Ilāh Ābādī

11 Rabī' al-Awwal 1438 A.H.

11 December 2016.

Written while travelling by plane between Harare and Lusaka.

¹ Surah ash-Shams, 91:9

EVALUATION (2)

**Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ayyūb Surtī Sāhib
Khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib
Hardo'ī *rahimahullāh***

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Tazkiyah (spiritual purification) and *ihsān* are two fundamental words which have been mentioned often in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. One of the primary objectives for which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam was sent is spiritual purification i.e. to clean and purify the heart from evil characteristics and corrupt desires and to adorn it with praiseworthy characteristics and beautiful qualities. Hence Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ.

*He (Allāh) is the one who sent among the illiterate ones a Messenger from themselves who recites before them His verses and purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom.*¹

Out of these four objectives, spiritual purification has been mentioned second. We understand from this verse that after reciting the Qur'ān, it is extremely important to attain spiritual purification. There are two places in the Qur'ān where success has been based upon spiritual purification. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

¹ Sūrah al-Jumu'ah, 62:2.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّهَا

*Successful indeed is he who purified his soul.*¹

and

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

*Successful indeed is he who purified himself.*²

Likewise Allāh *ta'ālā* mentioned His companionship with the rank of *ihsān* and in the Hadīth of Jibrā'īl '*alayhis salām* a beautiful explanation has been given regarding this. The crux of this discussion is that without spiritual purification and *ihsān* man is incomplete and deficient. The reality is that as long as the realm of the heart is not rectified there will be no joy in this world nor will it be easy to enter Paradise.

Blessed are those people who are concerned about rectifying their outer and inner selves. In order to achieve this, the apparent means is to keep the company of the spiritual guides and the friends of Allāh *ta'ālā* and to be punctual on one's daily acts of devotion in accordance to their teachings. These are the very same instructions and teachings which the 'ulamā' and seniors of the ummat regularly speak about in their discourses and gatherings. Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Sāhib *zādahumullāhu fadlan wa sharafan* explains these topics in his weekly and monthly gatherings with great care and in an impressive manner. Māshā' Allāh, the effects of his talks can be seen in the Muslim ummat, especially the youth.

¹ Surah ash-Shams, 91:9

² Surah al-A'lā, 87:14

This booklet contains two of his lectures which were delivered in Zambia and South Africa. In these lectures he has expounded greatly on the need and importance for spiritual purification and *iḥsān*. Maulānā has elaborated extensively in an impressive manner citing different examples. This lowly servant studied both the lectures in detail and found them to be beneficial. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make it possible for this booklet to be printed and to become beneficial for the people by granting it widespread acceptance. May Allāh *ta'ālā* have mercy on the one who says, “Āmīn.”

Was-salām

Muḥammad Ayyūb Surtī

23 Rabī' al-Awwal 1438 A.H.

23 December 2016.

AN EXPLANATION OF SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION AND REFORMATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

حَمْدُهُ وَنُصْبِي وَنُسْلِي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ أَمَا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ
اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ:

وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ. (الجمعة: ١٠)، وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي لَا يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ مَثَلُ الْحَيِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي، وَيَسِّرْ 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.

Allāh *ta'ālā* has sent us in this world with two conditions. One is the physical condition and the other is the spiritual. From the two, the spiritual condition is more important because from the body and soul, the soul is the main component. The sole function of the body is to bring the soul into this world and to

transport it to the realm of *barzakh*¹ after passing through this worldly life. If Allāh *ta'ālā* willed He could have brought the soul into this world without a body but He has His own system. Allāh *ta'ālā* can bring forth fruit without trees but He provides fruit through trees. Allāh *ta'ālā* can give water without rain and wells but He provides water through rain, wells, rivers and springs. This is the system of Allāh *ta'ālā* and He alone knows its wisdom.

The soul is the main component

The soul is the main component. The body is not the main part. That is why when a person passes away, his soul goes to Allāh *ta'ālā* and his body is buried in the ground. After the soul is extracted, the body is referred to as 'the corpse', 'the deceased' and 'the body' and it is said, for example, "Ismā'īl has passed away." or "Ismā'īl is gone." But Ismā'īl is lying here so how has he passed away? How did he go anywhere? Since the soul is the main component and it has left the body and gone to the Hereafter that is why people say, "Ismā'īl has passed away." or "Ismā'īl is gone." Nobody is prepared to call the body Ismā'īl any longer because it is not the main component.

People will fear a king as long as his soul is in his body. When the soul departs, nobody fears him anymore whereas it is the same body, the same face and the same limbs. We understand from this that the soul is the main part, it takes support from the body to come into this world from the realm of the souls and it remains in this world for a fixed period of time.

¹ The intervening period between death and the day of Resurrection i.e life in the grave.

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

You will remain and enjoy in this world for a fixed period of time.¹

Allāh *ta'ālā* tests his servants in that fixed period.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

(Allāh ta'ālā is) the One who created death and life in order to test you as to which of you is best in actions.²

It is not the body which becomes corrupt or pious through actions. It is only the soul which becomes corrupt or pious. Through pious actions the soul becomes righteous and through evil actions it becomes corrupt. If a person's body is ugly, he has no hands, he is lame, blind, dumb, or deaf but his soul is healthy because of pious actions then he is successful in both worlds. However if a person's body is attractive; he has blue eyes, he is handsome, healthy and everything is in perfect order but due to evil actions his soul is sick or dead then he has nothing, he is unsuccessful. Hence the soul is the main component. The body is just required to bring the soul into this world, to live in this world and to convey it to the grave.

An example of the body and soul

The body is like a jewellery box which serves as a safe and a mobile container. In actual fact the pearls and diamonds are the soul. Understand it through a simple example. If a person puts a cheque for one hundred pounds in an envelope and sends it to England then the main thing is the cheque, not the envelope. If the

¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:36.

² Sūrah al-Mulk, 67:2.

cheque could reach England without an envelope, nobody would have purchased an envelope but since the cheque cannot be sent without an envelope one has to purchase an envelope. Now once this envelope reaches England, the recipient will remove the cheque from the envelope and keep it safely with him and he will throw away the envelope. No matter how beautiful the envelope may be, he will throw it in the bin. It is possible that the cheque may not be as beautiful as the envelope and its paper may not be as expensive as the envelope's paper but despite this, nobody keeps the envelope and throws away the cheque. The cheque gets a high place on top of the desk and the envelope goes into the bin on the floor.

If the envelope gets damaged en-route to England it is not a matter of concern. Yes, the cheque should not get damaged. However the envelope is needed to convey the cheque to England safely. As long as the cheque does not reach its destination, it is necessary to protect the envelope. The moment the cheque reaches its destination there no longer remains any need for the envelope. The soul has a similar relationship with the body. The soul is like a cheque and the body is like an envelope. If the body gets destroyed then there is no cause for concern. Yes, the soul should not become corrupt through sin and the filth of evil characteristics. As long as the soul does not reach its lofty destination of *'Ilīyyīn*¹, it is necessary and compulsory to protect the body.

¹ Literally means the 'upper residences'. It refers to the place in the upper realm where the souls of the righteous are kept in the intervening period between death and the day of Resurrection.

The carnal power and the power of anger are two great bounties

We have two conditions and therefore two types of needs. Some needs relate to the physical body and some relate to the soul. In short, the physical needs of the body are two: (1) To keep the body away from harmful things and (2) To provide beneficial things for it. A snake is harmful to the body so we will keep away from it and bread is beneficial for the body so we will acquire it.

It is a great favour of Allāh *ta'ālā* that He has personally made the arrangements for these two needs and placed two urges in every man. One urge is referred to as the carnal power and the other as the power of anger. Through the blessing of the carnal power the effort to acquire beneficial things for the body comes into existence and through the blessing of the power of anger harmful things are fended off. The carnal power refers to that power which desires, seeks and draws anything of benefit. Through this power a person acquires anything he regards as beneficial for him. He knows that through the pound, dollar, wealth and riches all his body's physical needs will be fulfilled. Thus the desire for wealth and riches is created and one makes effort for it. This is the carnal power and it is not evil. If it was not for the carnal power then how would man eat? If he does not eat how will he live? If it was not for the carnal power he would not drink water. If he does not drink water how will he live? If it was not for the carnal power he would not have the desire to sleep. If he does not sleep how will he live?

Likewise the second urge is the power of anger. The moment his gaze falls on something harmful he becomes angry, concerned and tries to keep away from

the harm. This is also a great favour of Allāh *ta'ālā*. If it was not for the power of anger you will not be able to chase a thief away nor protect your family or your own life. The beauty of the power of anger is that whenever man perceives danger he immediately becomes defensive and angry. This anger in itself is not evil, rather its incorrect use is evil.

The basis of the intellect is balance between the carnal power and the power of anger

The carnal power and the power of anger are two great bounties as long as they remain within the permissible limit. As long as they remain balanced within the limit, the soul becomes *nafs-e-mutma'innah*¹ and when it exceeds this limit the soul becomes *nafs-e-lawwāmah*. If these two powers surpass the limit the soul becomes *nafs-e-ammārah*. Depending on how much these two powers move away from the balance, accordingly there will be deficiency in the intellect. So if these powers remain within the permissible limit the intellect will be complete and if it exceeds the limit, deficiency will come into it. The further away these powers move from the limit, the more the deficiency of the intellect will increase.

Depending on how far the carnal power and power of anger move away from the boundaries of moderation, the intellect will continue to decrease. It is for this reason that the intellect of such people cannot comprehend if something is beneficial for their Hereafter or harmful and they err by giving preference to this world over the Hereafter. When a person makes

¹ Literally means contented soul. It refers to the purified soul that has pleased Allāh *ta'ālā*.

effort and brings this carnal power and power of anger within moderation, his intellect becomes complete and he begins to make correct decisions. Thus the person who yesterday was abandoning ṣalāh for the dollar, abandons the dollar for ṣalāh today. This is because the moment these two powers gradually become balanced, the intellect simultaneously becomes complete. When these two powers become completely ballanced the intellect will also become totally complete. Thereafter the intellect will guide one towards righteous works only.

All the Ṣahābah were just

When these three powers: the power of anger, the carnal power and the power of the intellect are rectified, such a person is called just. All the Ṣahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum were like this. Thus it is an accepted principle:

الصَّحَابَةُ كُلُّهُمْ عَدُولٌ

All the Ṣahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum were just.

This means that these three powers were absolutely perfect in the Ṣahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum and these powers had become balanced. The person in whom all three powers have become balanced cannot commit sin. When he cannot commit sin he becomes the intended meaning of the following verse eternally:

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

Allāh ta‘ālā is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.¹

¹ Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98:8.

Allāh *ta'ālā* gave us these two powers for our benefit. The carnal desire is not evil. If it was not for this carnal desire how would children come into existence? If children were not born how would man have existed in the world until now? Yes, if the carnal desire transgresses its limit, it is evil. Anger is not evil. If anger exceeds its limit it is evil. If these two powers of a person remain in their place with moderation then such a person does not need a spiritual guide. He does not need to take the pledge of spiritual allegiance. He does not even need to meditate or make loud dhikr or do any spiritual exercises because he is spiritually healthy. He does not need a doctor nor medication. I am explaining spiritual reformation to you people in a very simple and easy manner with the ability bestowed by Allāh *ta'ālā*. Through the blessing of your noble intentions these points are coming to mind at this very moment.

The need for a doctor and medication

If these powers exceed the limit of moderation a person becomes spiritually sick. Now he has to worry about acquiring treatment. If he has a minor physical ailment, treatment can take place at home through consulting a doctor. But for major illnesses he has to go to the hospital. In the same way, for spiritual illnesses there is a need for a doctor and a hospital. The spiritual mentor is the doctor for spiritual sicknesses. One has to get treated under his supervision and if the sickness is severe, he will have to also stay in the hospital i.e. the khānqah for some time.

When a sick person diligently gets himself treated by an expert doctor then, if Allāh *ta'ālā* wills, he will become healthy. Once he has become healthy there is no longer a need for the spiritual guide. It is a separate

matter that since he was spiritually cured through the blessing of the spiritual mentor, he has love and respect for the mentor in his heart and he is ever-grateful to him so he does not leave his spiritual mentor. Likewise through the blessing of keeping in contact with the spiritual guide he will remain under his supervision and if he becomes ill again he will be made aware of it so that he can turn his attention immediately towards the treatment. Otherwise once a person has been spiritually reformed and purified, keeping in contact with the spiritual guide is not necessary because he is no longer sick. If he leaves out his spiritual exercises then too there is no harm because there is no need for the medicine anymore. Yes, if he was careless and he became ill again, it will be necessary to get in contact with the spiritual guide, he will have to do spiritual exercises under his supervision and it is also possible that he will have to stay in hospital again.

The absence of a doctor and medication

In short, success and failure and good and evil revolve around these two powers. All the problems and corruption in the world are a result of these powers exceeding their limit. People commit oppression, cheat and take bribes because the carnal power and the power of anger have moved away from their place. Now a person is sick but there is no doctor nor medicine so how will he get better? A sick person needs both the observation of the doctor as well as medication.

A healthy person should eat wholesome foods and abstain from poison

If a person is well he does not need a doctor nor medicine but he will need nourishment. Likewise he

needs to abstain from poison and poisonous food. Islam has guided us in this regard. All evil actions are poison and all righteous works are food. Some foods are compulsory, some are necessary, some are Sunnah, some are preferred and some are optional. These are all foods and one should select them carefully. Likewise some poisons are harām and others are disliked. One has to abstain from them.

If a person carries out the compulsory acts as well as the necessary, Sunnah, preferred and optional acts, he will be very healthy. He is exactly like a person who eats bread, gravy, rice and in addition to these he also consumes fruit, milk, ghee and other foods in moderation. He will relish all these foods and his health will remain good.

On the other hand we have harām, makrūhāt-e-tahrīmīyyah and makrūhāt-e-tanzīhīyyah. The makrūhāt-e-tanzīhīyyah are harmful because they decrease the reward. Harām and makrūhāt-e-tahrīmīyyah are poison for spiritual health. They are extremely harmful to the spiritual self. The makrūhāt-e-tanzīhīyyah are harmful, the makrūhāt-e-tahrīmīyyah are more harmful and the harms of harām will be much more. The same applies to righteous acts. The optional acts are beneficial. The preferred acts are more beneficial than the optional acts. The Sunnah acts are even more beneficial. The necessary acts will be far more beneficial and the compulsory acts will be most beneficial.

Spiritual dieting

Just as a person diets from the physical foods by eating in moderation since eating more than one's need has a negative impact on one's health, likewise there are

boundaries and limits for spiritual food as well. You can perform two raka'ats fard of fajr salāh but not four raka'ats. If anyone says that this is spiritual food so instead of two raka'ats fard of fajr he will read four raka'ats, it will not be accepted by Allāh *ta'ālā* and this will be harmful to his spiritual self. Similarly if anyone wishes to fast on the day of 'Īd then instead of benefit there will be harm. The amount of food for the body should be proportionate to the body's need and the amount of food for the soul should be proportionate to the soul's requirement.

No desire for food due to illness

If a person is physically healthy and fit he will eat. He will not need any medication. If he becomes ill, he will eat less or not eat at all, or he will eat but the food will not be converted into anything beneficial for the body. Now he needs medicine which enables the food he eats or which enters his body to become beneficial.

Similarly if the carnal power and power of anger of a person exceed the limit and he becomes spiritually sick, he will not be able to make use of spiritual food. He will not be able to perform the compulsory actions. If he somehow manages to fulfil the compulsory acts, he will not have the courage to perform the necessary acts. If he does fulfil the necessary acts, he will not have the courage to fulfil the Sunnah, optional and preferred acts. A physically sick person has to force himself to eat some bread during meals and if you say to him, "Have something more. At least have one samosa.", he will say, "No, I do not feel like eating." The condition of a spiritually sick person is the same. If he somehow managed to perform the compulsory acts and someone says to him, "Brother! Perform the Sunnah as well.", he will reply, "No, I have fulfilled the compulsory

duty, I do not feel like performing the Sunnah.” It is due to the spiritual sickness that he does not have the courage to make use of the spiritual food. If he is spiritually healthy, he will desire every type of spiritual food. The compulsory, necessary, Sunnah, preferred and optional acts will all be desired and he will derive great enjoyment while performing them.

Either there is no desire for spiritual nourishment or there is, but it is minimal. Alternatively he is taking in all the nourishment i.e. he is doing all the actions such as the compulsory, necessary, Sunnah and optional acts but they have no effect on his spiritual self and spiritual health. No benefit is observed. There are many people who carefully fulfil all the actions for years but they themselves say that after ten years their present condition is the same as it was then. We find that the spiritual food is being consumed but the beneficial products are not being produced within the person. There is no benefit from the spiritual food. The reason is that together with the nourishment of actions he is also eating the poison of sin.

Now in order to create the desire for the spiritual food or to make the food which enters the body beneficial, there is a need for medicine. Whenever there is a need for medicine there is a need for a doctor as well. That is why we say that you should take the pledge of spiritual allegiance with a spiritual mentor and make him your doctor. Then whatever medication he prescribes use it so that the desire for spiritual nourishment may be corrected and the food that goes into the body produces beneficial products so that your health can be restored and the soul becomes strong once again. Once you are cured you will not need a doctor nor medication.

Spiritual nourishment and remedies are important

All the actions mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ahādīth such as ṣalāh, fasting, charity, recitation of the Qur'ān, dhikr of Allāh *ta'ālā* and so forth are foods and the spiritual exercise which the spiritual guide prescribes is a remedy. If anyone recites the third kalimah because its virtue is mentioned in the Hadīth then this is not a remedy but it is a food. The person who is not ill acquires total benefit from the food.

Meditation and loud dhikr are remedies. From the Qur'ān and Hadīth we obtain the spiritual food and from the spiritual exercises prescribed by the spiritual guides we get the remedy. It is necessary to use the food and the remedy in the correct manner. If someone is sick and he is consuming the food but does not use the medicine then he will not get cured. Another person is sick. He acknowledges that he is sick and goes to a spiritual doctor and takes the pledge of allegiance. He makes him his doctor. Whatever spiritual exercises (remedies) the doctor prescribes he follows them diligently but does not worry about good actions (food). He too will not get better because the medicine cannot work without the food. Hence the prescribed remedy of the spiritual mentor coupled with spiritual food is necessary.

One will have to carry out good actions diligently irrespective of whether the heart feels like doing them or not. This is the meaning of *mujāhadah* (self-exertion), that despite not wanting to do good actions a person exerts himself and keeps performing them. A sick person does not feel like eating but he is still told, "Look! Before you take your medication you have to eat at least one slice of bread." They feed the sick person by force, thereafter they give him medicine. The sick

man has to force himself to eat the bread. He has to bear great difficulty but the benefit of the medicine will only be realised when he treats himself according to the guidance of the doctor. Similarly one has to take the prescribed medicine of the spiritual mentor but together with this he has to exert himself and eat food as well. One has to perform the compulsory, necessary, Sunnah and preferred actions despite not wanting to do them. Likewise he has to keep away from poison i.e. the disobedience of Allāh *ta'ālā*. This is the crux of Sufism.

The essentials of Sufism

Three actions are essential in Sufism: (1) *Mujāhadah*: To perform good actions despite not feeling like doing them, to perform acts of worship for this is the spiritual food and to abstain from sin which is the poison. (2) To be punctual on one's daily acts of devotion. This is the medicine. (3) The company of the spiritual guide. This entails going to his surgery and consulting him continuously.

You would have understood the importance of these three fundamentals through the above explanation. Now if someone is concerned about spiritual food alone and goes to the surgery without taking the medication he will be unsuccessful. Alternatively he takes the medication diligently but he does not go to the doctor and does not consume food, then too he will be unsuccessful. If he goes to see the doctor at his surgery, spends time at the *khānqah* i.e. the spiritual hospital and remains in the company of the spiritual guide under his supervision but does not engage in *mujāhadah*, is not punctual on his spiritual exercises and does not take the spiritual food or medication, then too he will be unsuccessful. He will pass his entire life

in this deception that he is very concerned about his treatment but in the Hereafter he will come to know that he became even more sick than what he was.

The two stages of mujāhadah

My dear friends! Be very particular about performing righteous acts i.e. acts of worship and abstaining from sin. Be particular about the compulsory, necessary and the emphasised Sunnah acts. Abstain from harām and makrūh-e-tah̄rīmī acts. This is the first stage of mujāhadah.

وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ¹

My servant does not attain closeness to Me with anything more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him.

Explanation: The most beloved action from all those actions which My servant does to attain My closeness are actions which I have made incumbent upon him i.e. to perform the compulsory and necessary acts and to abstain from sin. Since these acts are most beloved to Me, the closeness My servant attains to Me through performing the compulsory and necessary acts and abstaining from sin is not attained through any other action.

Together with this, be punctual on the non-emphasised Sunnah acts, the preferred acts and the optional acts as well. And abstain from the makrūhāt-e-tanzihīyah. This is the second stage of mujāhadah.

وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالْتَّوَافِلِ حَتَّىٰ أُجِيبَهُ¹

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥١٠)

My servant continues to attain My closeness through optional acts until I begin to love him.

Whoever adopts the first stage of *mujāhadah* becomes an ardent lover of Allāh *ta'ālā* and if he progresses to the second stage he becomes the beloved of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

A certain sick person only eats bread and gravy. He is fulfilling the first stage of *mujāhadah*. He will enjoy good health. Another sick person consumes fruit in addition to the bread and gravy. He also drinks milk. His health will be better than the first person. Therefore we should not suffice on the compulsory and necessary acts but also pay attention to the Sunnah, preferable and optional actions as much as possible. Since we are sick it is also necessary to take medication i.e. we should be punctual on daily acts of devotion as well as spiritual exercises.

Maintaining contact with the spiritual guides

If you are not in contact with those spiritual guides whom you have pledged allegiance to then establish contact. If you are not going to their 'surgery' start going from now. If you are going there but you are not consulting them then start consulting. Tell them that you have certain sicknesses and then follow whatever treatments they prescribe. Make *mujāhadah* together with the treatment. In the beginning it is very bitter but if you persevere in using the remedies and making *mujāhadah* then gradually the *mujāhadah* will become easier and sweeter.

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥١٠)

If a person fulfils all these aspects diligently he will become spiritually healthy and when the soul becomes healthy, the *nafs-e-'ammārah* comes out of filth and becomes *nafs-e-muṭma'innah*. The love of Allāh *ta'ālā* descends in that soul. Such a person is referred to as a man of spiritual affiliation. He attains the friendship and connection with Allāh *ta'ālā*. He acquires the quality of *ihsān*. Now he either sees the manifestation of the power of Allāh *ta'ālā* in every place or he is conscious of the fact that Allāh *ta'ālā* is seeing him.

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ¹

(The quality of ihsān is) that you worship Allāh ta'ālā as though you are seeing Him and if you cannot see Allāh ta'ālā then (remember) He sees you.

Hadrat Hakim Akhtar Sāhib rahimahullāh explains this in one couplet:

You will attain a connection with Allāh ta'ālā through the company of the spiritual guide but you must abstain from sin and be constant in dhikr.

This is an important lesson for the seekers of spiritual reformation. One will not attain success by merely engaging in spiritual meditation and spiritual exercises regularly. One has to follow the complete programme and practise on the complete system. It is also necessary to be punctual on one's daily practices and to keep the company of the spiritual guide. If the spiritual guide is far away then keep in contact telephonically or by letter. I have heard from Hadrat

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب الإيمان، باب سؤال جبريل النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم عن الإيمان والإسلام والإحسان وعلم الساعة، وبيان النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم له، ح (٥٠)

Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* that Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say, “Keeping in contact with the spiritual guide via correspondence and following his instructions is a substitute for his company.” The company of the spiritual guide is imperative and beneficial as well but just to sit there and return home is not sufficient. Tell him your condition every one to two months and take guidance from him.

Together with informing the spiritual guide and following his guidance you must be punctual in doing righteous actions in addition to keeping the company of the spiritual guide, abstaining from sin and being punctual on daily acts of devotion. If this complete package (programme) exists then Allāh *ta’ālā* will bless you with His affiliation. Just as Allāh *ta’ālā* brings us into existence in this world via our parents and blesses us with knowledge via the teacher, likewise He will bless you with His affiliation via the spiritual guide. However there are three requirements: (1) abstaining from sin (2) regular dhikr (3) the company of the spiritual guide.

You will attain a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā* through the company of the spiritual guide but you must abstain from sin and be constant in dhikr

It is still possible to become a saint

Allāh *ta’ālā* has sent high-ranking saints to this world throughout the passage of time. Sometimes this evil whisper enters the mind that in the past people would pledge allegiance and keep in contact with the spiritual guides. They would attain lofty ranks of sainthood. Why do we not see this in our era? My brothers! There

is no shortage of saints nowadays as well. There is a shortage in our quest because we are not prepared to follow the complete programme. The people of the past used to follow the complete programme. All praise is due to Allāh almost everyone in our era takes the pledge of allegiance, everyone has contact with the spiritual guides but we fall short in the subsequent stages. There is no dhikr, no punctuality on one's daily practices and no *mujāhadah*. We are satisfied and content with those actions that are already in our life but have absolutely no concern for those that are not.

If a person is already punctual on salāh he will continue performing salāh carefully to the extent that he will not even miss the first takbīr but he fails to abstain from the habit of backbiting to the point that he does not even make an effort to abstain. In actual fact he does not even realise that backbiting is a major sin and he needs to abstain from it. He ought to take stock of himself daily by asking himself, "How much did I backbite during the day?" and "How much control do I have over this habit?" But no, he does not pay attention to that at all. Likewise there is no effort regarding the sickness of evil glances. It is taken for granted that it is impossible to abstain from evil glances. On the other hand the condition of his salāh is such that initially he was performing two salāhs then he progressed to three then four and now he currently performs all five. Initially he was performing salāh at home but now he performs salāh in congregation. Now he performs salāh in the first row with takbīr-e-ūlā¹. He has made salāh his goal but he did not make abstaining from evil glances his goal. In reality he is

¹ The first takbīr of salāh.

absolutely unconcerned about it. So my dear friends! Worry about the whole of Islam and for this three efforts are necessary: (1) *mujāhadah* (2) daily practices (3) the company of a spiritual guide.

There is probably one thought which is troubling your minds: why did great spiritual guides whom we believe were all spiritually healthy and not sick such as Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā As'ad Madanī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* take spiritual medicine? What need did they have for medication? Only sick people need medicine. The answer is that they did not need the medication. However through continuously using it they had become so accustomed to it that later on they could not leave it out. This medicine acts as a vitamin for this category of pious elders. It becomes a means of spiritual progress for them. If such people completely leave out meditation and spiritual exercises they will not experience any deficiency in the least but if they continue to do it they will progress even further.

An amazing statement of Hadrat Shaykh Junayd Baghdādī

Someone met Hadrat Shaykh Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh* and noticed that Hadrat had a tasbīh¹ in his hand. The man was an intelligent person. He enquired, “Hadrat! This tasbīh is normally held by an unmindful person in order to remind him to make dhikr. Your heart is constantly engaged in the remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Why do you need a tasbīh?” Hadrat replied, “Should I be disloyal to that

¹ A string of beads to keep count of one's dhikr.

medium through which I have reached Allāh *ta'ālā*?¹ Initially his heart was unmindful. Through holding the *tasbīh* in his hand he was blessed with the ability to make *dhikr* and through constant *dhikr* the remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā* became entrenched in his heart. Should he abandon that means which elevated him to that spiritual level?

He did not abandon *dhikr* even during the last moments of his life

Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* did not leave out his loud *dhikr* even on the day he passed away. Someone had recorded Hadrat's *dhikr* on cassette and sent me a copy as well. I listened to it and the cassette is probably lying somewhere in my house. This is a great lesson for us. Hadrat did not leave out his daily practices even during his illness so what about us who are spiritually sick? How can we leave out our daily practices? When we get sick, we meditate for two days and leave it for four days. We make *dhikr* for two days and leave it for five days. Not only Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* but you will not find a single one of our elders who was not particular about his daily practices.

Hadratjī Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Sāhib and his daily *dhikr*

Look at the practice of Hadratjī Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadratjī Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had increased his *dhikr*. In the Chishtī order of Sufism we have the *bārah tasbīh* (twelve *tasbīhs*): Two hundred times لا إله إلا الله, two

¹ *Tārīkh-e-Baghdād*, vol. 1, p. 245.

hundred times *إلا الله*, six hundred times *الله*, and one hundred times the name of Allāh, *الله*. Thereafter the dhikr of Allāh's name is increased. It is written in the biography of *Hadratjī Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Sāhib rahimahullāh* that *Hadratjī Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh* continued increasing his dhikr of Allāh's name until it reached seventy thousand.¹ It was the daily routine of *Hadratjī Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Sāhib rahimahullāh* that after the fajr *salāh* in *Nizāmuddīn* he would participate in the public programme. After the programme *Hadratjī rahimahullāh* would go make dhikr at the graveyard of the auspicious elders close to *Nizāmuddīn* where one experiences peace of mind, and would return before *zuhr salāh*. He would make his complete dhikr of the *bārah tasbīh* and seventy thousand times the name of Allāh daily while sitting there.² When a person makes dhikr like this, the remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā* occupies his heart. In fact, every hair and part of a person is illuminated by it and then the condition becomes such that when you see these men of Allāh *ta'ālā*, you remember Allāh *ta'ālā*.

الَّذِينَ إِذَا رُؤُوا ذُكِرَ اللهُ³

When one's gaze fall on them, the onlooker remembers Allāh ta'ālā.

¹ *Sawānih Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad In'ām al-Hasan rahimahullāh*, vol. 1, p. 223.

² *Sawānih Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad In'ām al-Hasan rahimahullāh*, vol. 1, p. 223.

³ سنن ابن ماجه، ح (٤١٥٢)

The tranquil effect of beholding Hadratjī

Those who saw Hadratjī Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* will bear testimony to this fact. I also saw Hadratjī *rahimahullāh* many times and that too when I was young. In fact I was in my childhood and was totally ignorant about the ways and mannerisms of the elders. But I speak of the condition of my own heart that whenever I attended a *tablīghī ijtīmā'* then before Hadratjī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā 'Umar Pālanpūrī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would speak. Hadrat would deliver a very impressive lecture on the oneness of Allāh *ta'ālā*, faith, conviction and concern for the Hereafter. At that time I had a lot of love for Hadrat Maulānā and I still do. I really enjoyed his lectures. I would become totally absorbed in his lecture. Despite this, there would remain a desire within myself in one corner of my heart: when will Hadratjī *rahimahullāh* come so that my heart could find peace by looking at his face? As soon as the lecture of Hadrat Maulānā 'Umar Pālanpūrī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was about to conclude and Hadrat Maulānā Sulaymān Jhānji Sāhib *rahimahullāh* brought Hadratjī *rahimahullāh* into the masjid or the tent, I would feel as if dark clouds were spread all around but suddenly they scattered and the sun had appeared which illuminated every place.

My only desire

My dear friends! I have only one desire. Everyone must connect himself to Allāh *ta'ālā*. Everyone must become the beloved of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Everyone must become the friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*. In order to achieve this goal we must do three things. This requires that some time be dedicated to one's daily acts of devotion. Nowadays Allāh *ta'ālā* does not require us to engage in a lot of exertion because the environment is very corrupt. In

such an environment if anyone is able to fulfil the *bārah tasbīh* regularly then this also is a great achievement. In the past the environment was very good so it was not difficult to meditate for one hour. Presently the environment is evil. It is filled with evil, corruption and the material world. Everyone is engaged in earning the material world. In such an environment, the *mujāhadah* of taking out ten minutes to meditate is even greater than one hour of meditation in the past. To make the dhikr of Allāh *ta'ālā* one thousand times in this environment is greater than the *mujāhadah* of making dhikr several thousand times in the past. Hāji Fārūq Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say, “There was a time when tablets used to be very big. They were not tablets but cannon balls! Thereafter the doctors did research and made small tablets. Likewise Allāh *ta'ālā* saw our spiritual weakness and changed the thousands of huge cannon balls to just five hundred, six hundred and twelve hundred small tablets. They yield the same benefit as the thousands of incantations of the past.” That is all my brothers! Take up the courage and progress.

Our duty is to make effort

I will just mention one last point and conclude. Hadrat Shaykh Shāh Ghulām Rasūl Kānpūrī Sāhib rahimahullāh went to my spiritual guide to take the pledge of allegiance. My spiritual guide told him to make *istikhārah*. When he came again Hadrat asked him, “What happened?” he said, “I told my carnal self that pledging allegiance is slavery. Why do you want to unnecessarily abandon freedom and fall into the shackles of slavery? My carnal self responded, “Through this slavery I will find Allāh *ta'ālā*.” I said, “What guarantee do you have that you will definitely

find Allāh *ta'ālā*?" It said, "If I do not find Allāh *ta'ālā* then He will know that I searched for Him." This was sufficient for me."¹

It is through the blessing of your sincerity and desire that such a long talk took place otherwise it was not my intention to deliver a lecture. This is a gathering of dhikr and as Allāh *ta'ālā* has decreed, many brothers have come who have no connection with the aspect of spiritual reformation. Therefore I wanted to say a few words on this topic before the dhikr and all praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* who put an excellent topic of discussion in my mind. My brothers! Pay attention to spiritual reformation. We all are in need of it. Keep in contact with your spiritual guide and along with keeping contact follow his prescribed remedies. Spiritual guides are experts. They will consider all your commitments and then only prescribe a remedy. They are aware if someone is teaching Hadīth, Tafsīr, and jurisprudence or if someone is a principal, student, doctor, businessman, or that this person is so busy and that man is so busy. Just as a small child and an adult may have the same illness but the doctor gives the adult bitter medicine and the child sweet medicine. The doctor decides how the medicine should be administered and in what dosage by examining the patient. Likewise spiritual guides are experts because they are spiritual doctors. They too examine the patient and decide how the medicine should be administered and in what dosage. Thus it is necessary to inform them of your condition and to follow their guidance and remedy. When this consultation will take place then the spiritual patient will explain his pre-occupation to his

¹ *At-Tablīgh*, vol. 5, p. 48.

spiritual guide by saying, “You told me to read one pārah. All praise is due to Allāh, after much effort I am able to read half a pārah daily.” After some time when the spiritual guide feels that the patient is so pre-occupied that he does not have the time to read one whole pārah then he himself will say, “You should keep half a pārah as your daily practice.” He will even console the spiritual patient as well by saying, “You should not worry. There is no need to become perplexed. If Allāh wills, you will progress.”

Through the company of the spiritual guide and being punctual on daily practices the heart becomes clean. The inner spiritual sicknesses and evil characteristics are removed. The love of Allāh *ta’ālā* settles in the heart. Spiritual exertion becomes easy. One is blessed with spiritual progress and the rank of sainthood. He is blessed with a good death and all the stages of the Hereafter become easy and enjoyable.

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

A SUMMARY OF SUFISM AND SPIRITUAL REFORMATION

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ أَمَا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ
الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ، ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ
الْكَبِيرُ. (البروج: ١١) صَدَقَ اللَّهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيمِ، وَصَدَقَ رَسُولُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْأُمِّيُّ الْكَرِيمُ،
وَنَحْنُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ لِمَنِ الشَّاهِدِينَ وَالشَّاكِرِينَ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي، وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي، وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي 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.

In the company of the seekers of divine love

It is a great favour of Allāh *ta'ālā* that He blessed me with the company of those who seek His love. You come every month to the Jāmi' Masjid of Azaadville to spend time in the company of Hadrat Muftī Muhammad Sa'īd Motārā Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum. This action of yours is very blessed.

Dīn does not come through books, lectures and wealth. Dīn comes through the gaze of the pious. O Akhtar, when a person obtains the company of a spiritual man, he learns how to live and how to die.

The purpose of your coming here is to somehow obtain some portion of the love of Allāh *ta'ālā*. You have this good opinion of Hadrat Muftī Sāhib that if you go to him and sit in his company you will get some portion of the treasure of love for Allāh *ta'ālā* which Allāh *ta'ālā* placed in his heart. It is with this intention that you come here every month. Thus every person gathered here is to some level a seeker of divine love. When this is so then it is an occasion of great joy and happiness for me that today I have been blessed with the company of the seekers of divine love. I have hope that through the blessings of those gathered here Allāh *ta'ālā* will also make me part of this group.

Hadrat Muftī Sāhib has been very kind. As soon as he came to know of my journey he said to Qārī Hudhayfah Sāhib that I should attend his programme on Saturday after 'ishā' salāh and say a few words. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, I have respect for Muftī Sāhib in my heart. Furthermore, this is also a blessed gathering so even if I was not invited, I would have surely attended.

Keeping contact with one's spiritual guide and unity of purpose

You should continue attending this gathering and I request those seated here who are connected to other spiritual guides to strengthen their connection with their spiritual guides because it is necessary to maintain a link and connection with your spiritual guide to attain success on this path. In fact it is an essential requirement and an important fundamental. Keeping contact means your hearts should be linked to theirs and you should also have complete respect, confidence, love and unity of purpose.

What is tauhīd-e-maṭlab?

The meaning of *tauḥīd-e-maṭlab* (unity of purpose) is to believe that you will only receive spiritual blessing, spiritual progress and spiritual success through your spiritual guide. You will only reach your intended destination through him. Just as a breastfeeding child searches for its mother despite there being thousands of breastfeeding women around him. Even if his mother is ugly and extremely dark in complexion and a beautiful woman arrives, he will go to his mother because he believes that his need will be fulfilled through his ugly mother. He feels that the kindness, love, well-wishing and sympathy that he will receive from her will not be received from the beautiful woman. Through the blessing of *tauḥīd-e-maṭlab* a disciple is protected from the interference of the devil. Without it a disciple remains confused and lost. The devil turns such a person away from his goal.

Blessing is proportionate to one's respect and conviction

Tauḥīd-e-maṭlab is the definition of keeping contact with one's spiritual guide. *Tauḥīd-e-maṭlab* does not necessarily mean that you should believe that your spiritual guide is the greatest and loftiest of all spiritual guides. It is sufficient to believe that your aim and objective will only be achieved through your spiritual guide. You will receive spiritual blessings in proportion to the quantity and quality of conviction and respect you have for your spiritual guide. Hadrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thānī says, "There were three types of people who attended the gatherings of our mentor Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and each person received spiritual blessings in proportion to his belief and conviction. Some believed that Khwājah Sāhib was

an ordinary friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Others believed that he was a very great saint. Some felt that there was nobody equal to him in that era.” Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would count himself in the third category and used to say, “In this era there is nobody who can match our spiritual guide.”¹ The spiritual blessing which Hadrat Mujaddid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* received through his spiritual guide is as clear as daylight and this was through the blessing of his conviction he possessed for him.

Attending the gatherings of other spiritual guides

If any disciple attends the programmes of other spiritual guides with the permission of his spiritual guide or keeping in mind his spiritual guide’s aim then there is no harm in that. However he should keep this point in mind that the temperament of the spiritual guide should not contradict the temperament of his own spiritual guide. Another important point to note is that you should not ask them anything pertaining to your reformation. Only refer to your spiritual guide for your reformation. Furthermore you should believe that all the spiritual blessings you derive from the company of other spiritual guides is the spiritual blessing of your own spiritual guide which you are receiving via that pious person. Never should this thought cross your mind that I do not derive the same benefit from the company of my spiritual mentor which I derive from the company of so and so spiritual guide because the spiritual blessing perceived is on account of your spiritual guide. It is through evil thoughts like these that the devil leads one astray. It is for this reason that the spiritual guide sometimes does not allow his new

¹ *Tasawwuf Ke Masā'il Aur Oes Ki Haqiqat*, p. 48.

disciple to go to other spiritual guides as long as he does not become firm. This is the disciple's essential need and it is in his best interest.

Spiritual guides consider themselves to be in need

Since spiritual guides are sincere they have no problem with their disciples going to another pious person. They are glad when they go to a friend of Allāh *ta'ālā* and derive benefit. They consider themselves to be in need. When they conduct spiritual programmes they make *du'ā* thus, "O Allāh! Till today I could not become Your seeker in the true sense of the word. It is Your favour that You have sent such a large number of seekers of Your love on the pretext of a spiritual programme and I have been blessed with their company. O Allāh! Through their blessing make me a true seeker as well." No spiritual guide goes to conduct a programme with this intention that he is going to give something. He participates as a seeker himself. When they sit in *i'tikāf* during *Ramadān* then in addition to the intention of following the *Sunnah* they make this intention that so many seekers of Allāh's *ta'ālā* deep love have come to the doorstep of Allāh *ta'ālā*. I will sit with them so that I may also receive some of that love through their blessing.

Allāh alone is the giver, everyone else is a distributor

The original source of spiritual blessing is Allāh *ta'ālā* but spiritual guides are the medium. The giver is Allāh *ta'ālā* alone. None of our teachers from whom we acquire the external and internal science is the giver. They are all distributors. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* says regarding himself:

إِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ وَاللَّهُ يُعْطِي

I am only a distributor. Allāh ta'ālā alone gives.

The word إِنَّمَا is used for restriction. It means that I am not the owner of anything. I only do the work of distributing.

The entire Hadīth is as follows:

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهُهُ فِي الدِّينِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ وَاللَّهُ يُعْطِي¹

When Allāh ta'ālā decrees great goodness for a person, He blesses him with deep understanding of Islam. I am only a distributor. Allāh ta'ālā alone gives.

Here in the tanwīn of خَيْرًا there are two possibilities: (1) It could be for showing greatness or (2) It could be for universalization.² It means that whoever Allāh ta'ālā wants to bless with great goodness or whoever Allāh ta'ālā wants to bless with every type of goodness, He blesses him with sound understanding of religion. Now someone may wonder about the reason why nobody received the amount of goodness that Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu 'anhu received. No one else got the magnitude of goodness which Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu, Hadrat 'Uthmān radiyallāhu 'anhu and Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu received. Everyone makes effort. So Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam gives the answer that brother, look! Allāh ta'ālā gives. I am only a means and a distributor. I was not stingy nor unfair in my distribution. Allāh ta'ālā is the

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب العلم، باب من يريد الله به خيرا يفقهه في الدين ، ح(٧٢)

²إرشاد الساري: ٢٥١/١

knower of the unseen. He is aware of the condition of everyone's heart and actions and accordingly He gives each one spiritual and internal bounties through me. A person will receive bounties through me in proportion to his striving and sincerity. The striving and sincerity of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radīyallāhu 'anhu* was of the highest degree so Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed him the most. This was followed by the striving and sincerity of Hadrat 'Umar *radīyallāhu 'anhu* so Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed him accordingly.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*That is the favour of Allāh ta'ālā which he grants to whomever He wishes.*¹

The three signs of a qualified spiritual guide

The spiritual guide is the medium. The benefit derived from him will depend on the extent of his perfection and the extent of the disciple's ability to derive spiritual blessing from him. My beloved, Hājī Fārūq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say, "If the spiritual guide has the qualities of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and the disciple has the qualities of Hadrat Abū Bakr as-Siddīq *radīyallāhu 'anhu* then the task is accomplished."²

Hadrat Shaykh Muḥīy ad-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī *rahimahullāh* says, "A qualified spiritual guide has three signs. The first sign is that his religion should be like the religion of the Prophets *'alayhim us-salām*. The second is that his administration should be like the administration of kings. The third sign is that his

¹ Sūrah al-Jumu'ah, 62:4.

² *Islāh Kī Sau Bāte*, p. 2.

diagnosis and prescription should be like that of the physicians.”¹

The first sign of a qualified spiritual guide is that his religion should be like the religion of the Prophets *‘alayhim us-salām*. The Prophets *‘alayhim as-salām* were very firm in religious matters. They never compromised. Likewise a qualified spiritual guide will never compromise in religious matters. He will be a follower of Islamic law. He will practise everything within the limits and confines of Islam. He will be sincere. His work will not be adulterated by worldly or personal motives.

The second sign is that his administration should be like the administration of kings. He will have a moderate nature. He accomplishes all work employing excellent managerial skills. He is not naïve. Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says, “To be naïve is not an achievement. None of the one hundred and twenty four thousand Prophets *‘alayhim us-salām* were naïve. Every one of them were intelligent and vigilant. That person who cannot understand the plotting and scheming of a human being can never understand the plotting and scheming of the devil”² Likewise the spiritual guide is intelligent in order to assess his disciple and when the need arises he can reprimand him as well. The third sign is that his diagnosis and prescription should be like that of the physicians. When they place their fingers on the pulse they understand what the sickness is and thereafter they immediately prescribe the best medicine for that illness. In the same manner a qualified spiritual guide

¹ *Malfūzāt-e-Hakīm al-Ummat*, vol. 1, p. 177.

² *Ashrafi Bikhre Mauti*, p. 1.

reads the condition of the one who is spiritually sick and immediately comes to know what the sickness is. Thereafter if the disciple practises on the prescription which he prescribes, he finds it to be most effective.

Hadrat Thānwī's unique method of treatment

I once heard from Hadrat Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh that a certain old man wrote to Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat rahimahullāh, “Hadrat, when I walk in the street and happen to see a strange woman I cannot turn my gaze away from her.” Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat rahimahullāh replied, “There is no need to turn your gaze away. You need to fix your gaze.” This prescription is not for everyone. This remedy was specifically for that sick person because Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat rahimahullāh was aware of his condition. Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh was Hakīm al-Ummat and the spiritual physician of the Ummat, therefore he wrote in his reply that there is no need to turn your gaze away. You need to fix your gaze. Fix your gaze and ask yourself if that woman is of equal age to your daughter, sister or mother. If she is the same age as your daughter then imagine that this is your daughter and tell yourself, “This is my daughter. This is my daughter. This is my daughter.” If she is the same age as your sister then imagine that this is your sister and tell yourself, “This is my sister. This is my sister. This is my sister.” If she is the same age as your mother then think and tell yourself, “This is my mother. This is my mother. This is my mother.” Hadrat sent the letter and said, “Follow this remedy and report to me after ten days.” The man

wrote back, “Ḥaḍrat, all praise is due to Allāh *ta’ālā* I was relieved from the sickness within three days.”¹

The spiritual guide distributes and Allāh *ta’ālā* gives. Whatever we receive is from Allāh *ta’ālā*. The spiritual guide is a means. Just as Allāh *ta’ālā* creates but parents are the means and they must be respected by their children, in exactly the same way we receive internal spiritual blessings from Allāh *ta’ālā*. Since the spiritual guide is the means therefore he must be revered. He is like a teacher. Allāh *ta’ālā* gives knowledge but a student receives it through the medium of the teacher. Therefore the teacher also is respected.

A serious deception of the carnal self

Since the spiritual guide is the medium, it is necessary to maintain contact with him and that too with the quality of *tauḥīd-e-matlab*. Nowadays one of the sicknesses in people is that they keep contact with many pious people and therein lies the plot of the carnal self to attain the praises of people. I want you to pay special attention to what I am saying. If your aim is to reform yourself you will strengthen your contact with your spiritual guide and according to his method you will be punctual on your daily practices. You will be concerned about your spiritual reformation and you will follow the path of spiritual purification as shown to you by your spiritual guide. But the present condition is such that a person has taken the pledge of allegiance with a certain spiritual guide and he has contact with another ten spiritual guides as well. Despite this he is not taking religious guidance from even one. He merely

¹ *Ifādāt-e-Fārūqī*, vol. 2, pp. 47-48.

keeps in touch with all of them and when he meets one of them anywhere then he says referring to some pious person, “Today I spoke to Hadrat. He extended his greetings to you.” and so on and so forth. These are the seekers of the love for fame. They use religious acquaintances for worldly purposes. Once a person takes the pledge of allegiance he should be punctual with reporting his condition and following the advice given together with confidence in and obedience to the spiritual guide. Without this, a person will not realise his objective by mere keeping of contact.

Your spiritual guide and other spiritual guides

There is no harm in keeping contact with other spiritual guides provided that *tauhīd-e-matlab* remains. Our spiritual guide is like our father and the other spiritual guides are like our paternal uncles. It is obvious that it is necessary to respect one’s paternal uncle also. Therefore you should respect and honour all the friends of Allāh *ta’ālā*. Keeping in mind the goal and objective of your spiritual guide, you can take benefit from the discourses and programmes of other spiritual guides with the permission of your spiritual guide. However you should only consult and follow your spiritual guide because you must have this conviction that whatever I will attain will only be through the medium of my spiritual guide. When this conviction exists, you will respect your spiritual guide the most and you will never turn your attention to anyone else in his presence. In fact you will remain attentive to your spiritual guide and you will only derive benefit from him.

The tauhīd-e-maṭlab of Ḥaḍrat Gangohī

Ḥaḍrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* states, “If Allāh *ta’ālā* gathers all the saintly people in one place and amongst them is Ḥaḍrat Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*, Ḥaḍrat Junayd al-Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*, Ḥaḍrat Shiblī *rahimahullāh* and our Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then we will not leave the company of Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* to go anywhere else. We will not even turn towards anyone else. Yes, if Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* desires then he can look at them because they are his seniors but whatever we want to take we will take it from Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Whatever spiritual blessing we will receive will be through our spiritual guide. Our relationship is with Ḥaḍrat Ḥājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*.”¹ Have such conviction in your spiritual guide that you believe whatever you attain will only be through your spiritual guide. If you understand the goal and objective of your spiritual guide and you attended the programme of another spiritual guide and you derived benefit from it, then too you should be convinced that this is the spiritual blessing of your spiritual guide which reached you via this pious person.

What to take to your spiritual guide?

Every disciple should maintain a heart to heart connection with his spiritual guide. Attend his gatherings regularly and be punctual when attending. Keep in mind a few points. Together with *tauḥīd-e-maṭlab* the following points are essential to obtain

¹ *Tārīkh-e-Mashā’ikh-e-Chisht*, p. 285; *Ḥaḍrat Thānūī Ke Pasandīdah Wāqī’āt*, p. 186.

spiritual blessings from your spiritual guide. Whenever you go to your spiritual guide present yourself with respect, love, conviction, confidence, etiquette, desire and need.

You should have respect in your heart for your spiritual guide as well as love and conviction. Conviction means that you should believe in your heart that my spiritual guide is an expert in the field of reformation. He is sufficient for my guidance. In comparison to other spiritual guides I will obtain more benefit from him. I will attain success in my quest through him. So one should have love, respect and conviction. If these three are found then etiquette will come automatically. In fact only one of the three is sufficient for etiquette.

Love itself will teach you the etiquette of love.

The difference between a pseudo-quest and a genuine quest

You must come into the company of your spiritual guide with a quest which is coupled with honour, love, conviction, confidence and respect for your spiritual guide. The quest should be of a person in need. One is to merely come with a quest and the other is to come with a quest of a needy person. There is a big difference between the two. Understand it through an example. An announcement was made outside the masjid that one thousand dollars were being distributed to each person. Obviously a desire would arise in every person's heart that what harm is there if I get one thousand dollars for free? On one hand there is a person who owns one hundred thousand dollars. He will also go out for the one thousand dollars but without regarding himself to be in need of it. On the

other hand there is a person who only has ten dollars in his pocket. After hearing the announcement he also goes out for the money but as a person in need. There will be a difference in the efforts of both men. The first person will have this attitude that if I get it well and good but if not then it is not a problem. The second needy person goes with this mindset that whatever happens I have to get that one thousand dollars because if I return empty handed then I am at a loss. Perhaps I will never get this opportunity again.

You should come to the programme of your spiritual guide as one who is in need thinking that I am spiritually poor and needy and since this is my spiritual guide I will attain the wealth of love and recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā* only through him. It is possible that I will not get this opportunity again. There is no guarantee of life so today I want to gain spiritual blessings before leaving this gathering. When a person searches as a needy person then he will surely be successful in his quest. Allāh *ta'ālā* will surely be gracious to him. When a hungry child turns to his mother in need and with a desire, he cries, he implores and he rubs his heels then his mother embraces him and he gets what he wants.

The likeness of those who come without desire and need

If a person attends the gathering of his spiritual guide without a desire then he is going without a container. If anyone goes in search of milk or water without a container how will he return successfully? And if he goes searching but not as a person in need then he will take a container along but a very small one. Now the container itself is so small that even if a river of milk or water is flowing he will only get the amount which the

container can hold. In exactly the same manner if a disciple goes to the gathering of his spiritual guide without any need then he will receive a very small amount of spiritual blessing from him. If a disciple goes there as a seeker in need but he does not possess love, respect, conviction and confidence for his mentor then he is taking a container with holes. Whatever comes into the container will come out and the container will remain empty. Thus a disciple should go to his spiritual guide as a seeker in need with love, respect, conviction and confidence. He should go with this fervour that if I do not receive what I came to obtain today it is possible that I will be deprived for the rest of my life. It is possible that before the next programme my spiritual guide may leave this world. It is possible that I may leave this world. I only have this one programme. When he will go with this concern, he will take a huge container which is free from defects. Now, Allāh willing, he will return successfully.

The deception of procrastination

My brothers! If a person attends a programme with this mindset that he is in need, whatever he attains will be from this programme and he only has this one chance, he will benefit tremendously. Sometimes this thought enters our minds that today I will join the programme. Next month also I can attend and I will come again after one month. Then in Ramadān I will come for ten days and if Allāh *ta'ālā* wills I will keep coming every year. I have many chances to reform myself. My brothers! This is a deception of the devil. The intention to consistently go for i'tikāf and programmes is very noble but we should regard every programme of the spiritual guide to be the last. You should think that perhaps you will not be favoured in future with all this

spiritual blessing from the court of Allāh *ta'ālā* which is being distributed through your spiritual guide. My brothers! Abstain from procrastination. Abstain from delaying. Come with a genuine quest and as a person in need.

An amazing statement of Hājī Fārūq Sāhib

Māshā' Allāh, you people come here every month. This is a very blessed and beneficial routine but do not do it as a customary and habitual practice. If you have taken the pledge of allegiance there should be a quest and thereafter with a quest keep in contact with your spiritual guide as one in need. Practise on his pieces of advice and be consistent and regular in informing him of your spiritual condition and following his prescription. I have heard my beloved spiritual guide, Hadrat Hājī Fārūq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* saying, "To take the pledge of allegiance is Sunnah and to reform yourself is compulsory." Thereafter Hadrat explained by an example: A person took an oath by uttering, "If I do not read my fajr ṣalāh today, my wife is divorced." He came to the masjid and performed the two Sunnah of fajr and omitted the obligatory ṣalāh. Is his wife divorced or not? It is obvious that she is divorced because he omitted the obligatory ṣalāh and due to omitting the obligatory ṣalāh he cannot be termed as one who performed his fajr ṣalāh. Hadrat says that another person enters the masjid. He also took an oath saying, "If I do not read my fajr ṣalāh today my wife is divorced." He leaves out the two Sunnah of fajr ṣalāh and performs the obligatory ṣalāh. Is his wife divorced? She is not divorced because since he performed the obligatory fajr ṣalāh he is included among those who performed their fajr ṣalāh. Hadrat said that if a person does not take the formal pledge of allegiance with

anyone but keeps in contact with a qualified spiritual guide for his spiritual reformation and gets his reformation done then he has fulfilled the obligation whereas another person who has formally taken the pledge of allegiance but does not get himself reformed then he will be taken to task on the day of Resurrection because he neglected the obligation.

My brothers! Attend the spiritual gatherings consistently with a genuine quest and be regular in keeping the company of your spiritual guide because it is a major mistake to take the pledge of allegiance only and to regard the company of the spiritual guide to be unnecessary. The company of your spiritual guide is extremely beneficial and important for your reformation. Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh* says, “The main requirement on this path is the company of the spiritual guide and love for the spiritual guide.”¹

Mujāhadah: A fundamental pillar of spiritual reformation

One important and necessary requirement for spiritual reformation is *mujāhadah* or striving. This is a fundamental pillar for spiritual progress. Through it proximity with Allāh *ta’ālā* is realized, progresses and is maintained. The meaning of *mujāhadah* is to oppose the carnal self and to fulfil the commands of Allāh *ta’ālā* for the pleasure of Allāh *ta’ālā*. This means that one should fulfil all those things which Allāh *ta’ālā* made compulsory and necessary and abstain from those things which Allāh *ta’ālā* prohibited under all circumstances. This is the first level of *mujāhadah*.

¹ *Malfūzāt-e-Hakīm al-Ummat*, vol. 24, p. 106.

The two levels of mujāhadah

Mujāhadah has two levels. The first level is to fulfil the obligatory, necessary and essential commands of Allāh *ta'ālā* and to abstain from the prohibited and makrūh-e-tahrīmī acts. A person who establishes this level of *mujāhadah* in his life becomes the friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ.

Listen carefully! Indeed the friends of Allāh ta'ālā will have no fear nor will they grieve. They are those who have faith and abstain from acts which anger Allāh ta'ālā."

The second level of *mujāhadah* is to be consistent in fulfilling the Sunnah acts, preferred and optional acts while carrying out the obligatory and necessary actions. Likewise to abstain from makrūh-e-tanzihī acts while abstaining from the prohibited and makrūh-e-tahrīmī acts. This is the second level of *mujāhadah*.

The ardent lover of Allāh

The first level of *mujāhadah* is important and very lofty. Allāh *ta'ālā* says in a Hadīth-e-Qudsī:

وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ

My servant does not attain closeness to Me with anything more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him.

The most beloved actions in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā* are those which He made incumbent upon His servants.

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥١٠)

Allāh *ta'ālā* made the obligatory actions and necessary actions incumbent. Similarly He made it incumbent to abstain from the prohibited and *makrūh taḥrīmī* actions. Hence we understand that a servant does not attain closeness to Allāh *ta'ālā* with any other action greater than being consistent in the obligatory and necessary actions and abstaining from the prohibited and *makrūh-e-taḥrīmī* actions. Through these actions he becomes a special friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*. He becomes the ardent lover of Allāh *ta'ālā*. He is favoured with special sainthood. He acquires the quality of *iḥsān* or Allāh-consciousness.

The beloved of Allāh

Allāh *ta'ālā* further states:

وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ¹

My slave continues to acquire My closeness through optional acts of worship until I make him beloved to Me.

Explanation: My slave does not stop when he manages to fulfil all the obligatory and necessary actions and to abstain from the prohibited and *makrūh-e-taḥrīmī* actions thinking that now it is not so necessary to perform the Sunnah, preferable and optional actions and to abstain from *makrūh-e-tanzīhī* actions. Rather, he does those actions too and continues to acquire My closeness through those acts until he becomes My beloved.

When a servant opts for this second level of *mujāhadah* along with the first level he is blessed with the lofty level of *iḥsān* i.e. Allāh *ta'ālā* makes him His beloved.

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥١٠)

Through the first level of *mujāhadah* Allāh *ta'ālā* becomes beloved and the servant is the lover and through the second level of *mujāhadah* the servant also becomes the beloved of Allāh *ta'ālā* and this is a very superior level of perfection. 'Allāmah Ibn Kathīr *rahimahullāh* has mentioned the saying of some wise men:

لَيْسَ الشَّأْنُ أَنْ تُحِبَّ وَإِنَّمَا الشَّأْنُ أَنْ تُحَبَّ¹

Your loving someone is not an achievement. It is a great achievement if someone becomes your lover and you become the beloved.

Think my brothers! How great is the achievement of the one who becomes the beloved of the Creator of the universe! It is for this reason that Allāh *ta'ālā* further says in a Hadīth-e-Qudsī:

وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنِ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأَعِيَدَنَّه²

If he asks Me I will surely grant him. If he seeks refuge in Me I will definitely grant him refuge.

Hadīth-e-Jibra'īl

Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* came to Nabi sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* in the form of a traveller from another land and said:

أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ

Inform me about Islam!

Nabi sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* said:

¹تفسير القرآن الكريم: ٣٣٦/١

²صحيح البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥١٠)

الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ وَتَحَجَّ الْبَيْتِ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا

Islam is to bear witness that there is none worthy of worship besides Allāh ta'ālā and Muḥammad ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam is the Messenger of Allāh ta'ālā, and to establish ṣalāh, pay zakāt, fast in Ramadān and perform Ḥajj of the house of Allāh ta'ālā if you have the ability to undertake the journey.

Thereafter Ḥadhrat Jibra'īl 'alayhis salām said:

فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ

Inform me about imān.

Nabi ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ

Imān means you must believe in Allāh ta'ālā, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day and to believe that destiny -whether good or bad- is from Allāh ta'ālā.

Imān means to believe and Islam means to do actions. Believing and accepting is referred to as imān. After believing, to carry out those commands that become binding on a person is known as Islam.

A comprehensive explanation of iḥsān

Thereafter Ḥadhrat Jibra'īl 'alayhis salām said:

فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ

Tell me about iḥsān. How will firmness, perfection and beauty be created in acts of worship?

Nabi sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ¹

Ihsān is to worship Allāh *ta‘ālā* as though you can see Him and if you cannot see Him (i.e. if you cannot acquire such concentration) then too you will worship Him in the best manner because He is watching you.

The ‘ulamā’ have given two explanations for this Hadīth. One group says that in response to the question about *ihsān*, the two sentences which Nabi sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam uttered were both for the same purpose. Rasūlullāh chose two expressions for one thing. The first expression is أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ and the second expression is فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ. *Ihsān* is to worship Allāh *ta‘ālā* as though you are seeing Him i.e. if Allāh *ta‘ālā* had to be in front of you and you had to see Allāh *ta‘ālā* then how will you worship Him? How will you recite the Qur’ān? How will you perform ṣalāh? If you make du‘ā then in what state will you be? When faced with a sin, will you disobey? Absolutely not. In fact you will exhibit obedience along with humility and calmness, and observe the highest level of etiquette and rights. There will not be an iota of deficiency in the worship. The worship and actions of a servant who achieves the rank of *ihsān* are as if he is looking at Allāh *ta‘ālā* and performing them.

Likewise a person who is blessed with the conviction and awareness that Allāh *ta‘ālā* is watching him, then too his actions are of a high level and extremely good. He fulfils every command and abstains from every sin

¹صحيح مسلم، كتاب الإيمان، ح (١)

and he fulfils all acts of worship while observing all etiquettes and rights; and with a high level of humility and calmness. Since he has achieved the rank of *ihsān* he is always conscious and aware that Allāh *ta'ālā* is watching him. In short, one reality has been expressed in both sentences. You are seeing Allāh *ta'ālā* or Allāh *ta'ālā* is seeing you. In both conditions a person fulfils the acts of obedience in the best manner and he abstains from sin under all circumstances.¹

The second group says that in this Hadīth Nabi sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam has explained two levels: (1) *Maqām-e-mushāhadah* and (2) *Maqām-e-murāqabah*. *Maqām-e-mushāhadah* is when a servant sees Allāh *ta'ālā* with the light of his spiritual eyes. This condition overcomes him that Allāh *ta'ālā* is in front and he is seeing Allāh *ta'ālā* with the eyes of his heart, his spiritual eyes. In this case it is not difficult to estimate the rank of worship and pious actions that are performed. This is the highest level of *ihsān* which is the rank of those who have recognised Allāh *ta'ālā*. *Maqām-e-murāqabah* is when a servant passes his life while imagining that Allāh *ta'ālā* is watching him, is aware of his every state and He knows everything about him- his external and internal, his intention and action. This is the second level of *ihsān* which is the rank of the sincere ones.²

A disciple continues to make effort and progresses until he reaches the first level of *ihsān* i.e. *maqām-e-murāqabah*. Then he feels that Allāh *ta'ālā* is watching him and He is aware of his every action. Now he lives his life in the obedience of Allāh *ta'ālā*. He attaches

¹ شرح النووي: ١٤١/١

² فتح الباري: ٢٥٦/١

importance to the obligatory and necessary actions. He abstains from the prohibited and the *makrūh-e-tahrīmī* acts. In addition to this he does as much Sunnah, preferred and optional actions as possible, and strives to abstain from the *makrūh-e-tanzīhī* acts. Similarly by continuously making *mujāhadah* he reaches the second level through the blessing of the first level and he attains *maqām-e-mushāhadah*. This rank is higher than the first rank. Now he begins to feel that he can see Allāh *ta'ālā* with the eyes of the heart. He observes the manifestation of Allāh's *ta'ālā* power in every action and everything. When he sees any perfection in any creation his attention is immediately drawn towards the giver of the perfection [Allāh].

It is only Your colour, it is only Your fragrance

I went into the rose garden and saw every
rose

I went into the garden and looked at the flowers. All of their colours were different. Some were blue and others were pink. Some were yellow and others were red. The fragrance and scent of each one was different. The colours of the flowers were different and their fragrances were also different but in all their colours I saw only Your colour and in all their fragrances I perceived only Your fragrance.

I went into the rose garden and saw every
rose. It is only Your colour, it is only Your
fragrance.

When the one who has attained the highest level of *ih̄sān* looks at flowers he sees the Creator of the flowers. He sees Allāh *ta'ālā* in every atom of the universe.

Wherever I look, I only see You

Hadrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says:

The colour and smell of the world is Your
mirror

When I pick up my mirror and gaze at it I see my reflection in it. Every one of you will see your reflection in your mirror so it is obvious that in the mirror of Allāh *ta'ālā*, Allāh *ta'ālā* will be seen. Now what is the mirror of Allāh *ta'ālā*? Hadrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says:

The colour and smell of the world is Your
mirror

Whatever is in this world is the mirror of Allāh *ta'ālā*. After reaching *maqām-e-mushāhadah* whoever looks at any atom of this universe will only see Allāh *ta'ālā* therein.

The colour and smell of the world is Your
mirror. Wherever I look I only see You

A few poems of an ardent lover of Allāh

Listen to a few Arabic poems of a friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*!

وَاللّٰهِ مَا طَلَعَتْ شَمْسٌ وَلَا غَرَبَتْ - إِلَّا وَأَنْتَ فِي قَلْبِي وَوَسْوَاسِي

By Allāh! The sun does not rise nor set except that You are in my heart and thoughts.

By Allāh! At the time of sunrise, sunset and between sunrise and sunset and between sunset and sunrise in my heart and mind, in my intended and unintended thoughts only You exist.

وَلَا جَلَسْتُ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أَحَدْتُهُمْ - إِلَّا وَأَنْتَ حَدِيثِي بَيْنَ جُلَاسِي

Whenever I sit to talk to people the topic of my discussion with them is only 'You'.

Whenever I sit to talk with my friends then the topic of discussion among my friends is only one. Only your remembrance comes upon my tongue.

وَلَا هَمَمْتُ بِشُرْبِ الْمَاءِ مِنْ ظَمًا - إِلَّا رَأَيْتُ خِيَالًا مِنْكَ فِي الْكَأْسِ

Whenever I intended to drink water out of thirst I see Your reflection in the glass.

Whenever I lift a glass to drink water and I look at the water then even there I only see You. My brothers! Whoever achieves *maqām-e-mushāhadah* sees the manifestation of Allāh's power in every place and everything.

وَفِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَهُ آيَةٌ - تَدُلُّ عَلَى أَنَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ

In everything there is a sign that He alone is the One Allāh.

The remembrance of Allāh and pondering over the creation

It is evident that the actual being of Allāh *ta'ālā* cannot be seen in this earthly life because these mortal eyes cannot see an immortal and everlasting being. Likewise this mortal mind cannot fully comprehend the eternal and everlasting Allāh *ta'ālā*. Thus Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said:

تَفَكَّرُوا فِي خَلْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَفَكَّرُوا فِي اللَّهِ¹

Ponder and reflect over the created signs of Allāh ta'ālā, the creation of Allāh ta'ālā and the universe, but do not ponder over the actual being of Allāh ta'ālā.

The remembrance and mention of the actual being and attributes of Allāh ta'ālā is desirable but it is not permissible to ponder and reflect over the actual being and attributes of Allāh ta'ālā because the comprehension of the reality of the actual being and attributes of Allāh ta'ālā is above and beyond man's intellect. Sometimes such pondering and reflection becomes a means of going astray for the deficient mind of man. Understand this through the example of the sun. Through its light everything can be seen but if anyone tries to look at the actual sun his eyes will be dazzled. Thus remember Allāh ta'ālā, engage in His dhikr excessively and in every condition.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ، الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

Indeed in the creation of the skies and the earth and in the alternation of day and night, are great signs for the intelligent, who remember Allāh ta'ālā standing, sitting and reclining and ponder over the creation of the skies and earth.²

Through the dhikr of Allāh ta'ālā and pondering and reflecting over His creation one will attain the recognition of the Creator. There is one magnificent sky which contains the moon, the sun, the stars and the

¹العظمة، ح (٩)

² Surah Al 'Imrān, 3:190-191.

planets. Then they have a strong and fixed system, not one second here nor one second there. There is no need for maintenance nor repairs. Then there is the earth, the rivers, the oceans, the mountains, the wind, the rain and other countless creations. Ponder over them and recognize the Creator and then make His dhikr excessively because Allāh *ta'ālā* did not give anyone in this world that brain or intellect which can encompass His being.

The levels of *ihsān*: The favour of mujāhadah

I said previously that there are two levels of mujāhadah. Whoever accomplishes the first stage i.e. he gives due importance to all the obligatory and necessary actions, he abstains from the prohibited and makrūh-e-tahrīmī acts and in the case where he makes a sin he repents immediately, Allāh *ta'ālā* blesses such a person with the first level of *ihsān* i.e. *maqām-e-murāqabah*. Thereafter this servant progresses in his mujāhadah and he begins to diligently observe the Sunnah, preferred and optional acts and he stays far away from makrūh-e-tanzīhī acts as well. He is then blessed with the second level of *ihsān* which is called *maqām-e-mushāhadah*. Now he becomes the beloved of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

مَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالتَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنِ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأَعِيذَنَّهُ¹.

My slave continues to acquire My closeness through optional acts of worship and obedience until I make him

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥١٠)

beloved to Me. When I make him beloved then I become his ears through which he hears, his eyes through which he sees, his hands through which he holds and his feet through which he walks. (I observe his every limb because now he cannot disobey Me and he becomes completely obedient to Me. Therefore) if he asks of Me I will surely grant him and if he seeks My protection I will surely grant him protection.

Mujāhadah is a pre-requisite for this path

My brothers! What I want to say is that the main thing on this path is mujāhadah and opposing the carnal self because the reformation of one's actions and carnal self revolve around mujāhadah. But our greatest shortfall is found in this aspect. Disciples think that the company and attention of their spiritual guide is sufficient and everything will be achieved through it. If only by the company of the spiritual guide, without any mujāhadah or effort, correct business dealings come into our lives, correct social dealings, good character and all acts of worship, then on what basis will we get Paradise? We will only get Paradise when we make an effort. The interpreter of the knowledge of Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Khwājah 'Azīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *rahimahullāh* says in one poem:

The guide only shows you the road.
Travelling on the road is the work of the
traveller

The spiritual guide only shows the road by saying: This is the method of reformation, this is the manner of spiritual purification, this is the way to develop *nafs-e-mutma'innah*, this is the way to oppose the devil. If anything is troubling the disciple then the spiritual guide will steer him and remove his confusion. He

encourages the disciple by telling him to go ahead and to continue doing the work and there is no need to worry. The spiritual guide knows the path of reformation and according to the need he guides. In addition to this, through the blessings of his du'ās and attention it becomes easy for us to tread this path, but we have to walk this path ourselves. The one seeking the love of Allāh *ta'ālā* and spiritual reformation is called a *sālik* (traveller) because he is travelling on that road. We have to become travellers. We have to make effort and this effort is called *mujāhadah* which is a pre-requisite for this path.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

*Those who strive for Our sake, We will definitely show them Our path.*¹

Those who strive and make *mujāhadah* for the sake of our love and to please us we will open for them many roads through which they can reach Us. When it seems difficult to abstain from a sin or sometimes one has to make an immediate decision and there is no way of contacting the spiritual guide then also Allāh *ta'ālā* inspires the hearts of the true seekers and shows them the way to abstain from sin. *Mujāhadah* brings the help of Allāh *ta'ālā*, through which one does acts of obedience. Now it is clear that one will progress and be granted the rank of *ihsān*. Therefore Allāh *ta'ālā* says further:

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

*Surely Allāh ta'ālā is with those who do good.*¹

¹ Surah al-'Ankabūt, 29:69

Indeed Allāh *ta'ālā* is with those who do good. He is with those who have acquired the quality of *ihsān*, the quality of sincerity and who do good acts which please Allāh *ta'ālā*.

The company of the spiritual guide and dhikr together with daily practices are also important

My brothers! The main thing is *mujāhadah* i.e. to oppose the carnal self. Through it one is granted the closeness of Allāh *ta'ālā* and through it one progresses in his closeness to Allāh *ta'ālā*. Together with this, the company of the spiritual guide and dhikr coupled with daily practices are also important because through their blessings a disciple comes onto *mujāhadah*. I will explain through an example. There is a certain student who is preparing for the exams. He studies his books until the late hours of the night. He wakes up early in the morning as well and again studies his books. There are only two to three weeks left for the exams. He is sacrificing all his desires. He is sacrificing his friends, loved ones, rest, play and everything else. He is only occupied with his books day and night. His father is also observing him making a lot of effort. One day he calls him close to him and says, “Son! Your exam is very close. Eat two walnuts and drink one glass of milk daily. It will assist you in your exam and you will be successful.

The poor student was tired through all his effort. A thought comes to his mind that if I knew from before that through drinking milk and eating walnuts I will attain success why would I have fallen into this difficulty? He leaves the books and goes after the milk

¹ Surah al-‘Ankabūt, 29:69

and walnuts. Will he pass the exams? No he will not because the main thing was to study the books and after understanding the subject-matter of the books to memorise it. As for the walnuts and the milk, they are an aid and a means for understanding the books and grasping the content.

Now understand it like this. *Mujāhadah*, opposing the carnal self and being punctual in fulfilling the commands of Allāh *ta'ālā* are like studying the books and learning their contents. The walnuts and milk are like daily practices and the company of the spiritual guide. If a disciple keeps the company of the spiritual guide and does daily acts of devotion but does not make effort and *mujāhadah* to do good actions and abstain from sins, he will not be able to progress. A disciple should also make *mujāhadah*. He should do the obligatory, necessary and sunan-e-mu'akkadah acts. Likewise he should abstain from the prohibited and makrūh-e-taḥrīmī acts and gradually increase the second level of *mujāhadah* as much as possible. Together with this he must keep the company of his spiritual guide. He must obtain the attention and du'ās of his spiritual guide and be very punctual on all the practices which the spiritual guide taught. If he continues with these three aspects then, Allāh willing, he will quickly progress spiritually and will attain complete success.

The mere gaze of the spiritual guide is not sufficient

Many disciples fall prey to laziness. They have great zeal in the hearts to attain the love of Allāh *ta'ālā* but they find *mujāhadah* to be very difficult. Such people go into the company of the spiritual guide where they hear some of the extra ordinary incidents of the pious predecessors that just by one gaze one's objective was

attained. Therefore they wait for the same thing that one day Hadrat's gaze will fall on them and just like that their objective will be realized. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make it happen so but it is not the normal system of Allāh *ta'ālā*. How many incidents do we find where the disciple did not make any effort and by the mere spiritual attention of the spiritual guide his goal was attained? They are very few and rare. Those who had experienced such an incident where the disciple rendered some small service like in the incident of Hadrat Khwajah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh* and the baker where Hadrat's gaze fell upon the baker and he received spiritual attention then his goal was accomplished. That disciple had definitely done some great *mujāhadah* in his life by virtue of which Allāh *ta'ālā* used an excuse to bless him with the gaze and spiritual attention of a saint and granted him the rank of sainthood. My brothers! Nothing is achieved without *mujāhadah*.

Spiritual progress is subject to mujāhadah

Some people think that they do not have to do anything and their objective will be realized just by the spiritual attention of the spiritual guide. Some are those who make dhikr regularly but the purpose is only to be punctual on the practices taught by the spiritual guide. When the occasion arises to abstain from sin they do not make *mujāhadah*. My dear friends! Spiritual progress will only occur through *mujāhadah*, lowering your gaze, taking yourself to the masjid at the time of fajr, holding your tongue from backbiting, abstaining from sin and saving yourself from impermissible pleasures.

Mujāhadah is Sufism

My brothers! Progress will be attained through *mujāhadah* and opposing the carnal self and it is this very *mujāhadah* and opposing the carnal self which is Sufism. Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says, “A concise definition which summarises Sufism is that the carnal self should be coerced to do acts of obedience when it becomes lazy to do them and it should be forced to abstain from the disobedience of Allāh *ta’ālā* when it becomes lazy to do so.” Hadrat further states, “Whoever acquires this has no need for anything else because through it one is blessed with a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā*, through it the protection of that connection with Allāh *ta’ālā* takes place and through it one continues to progress in his connection with Allāh *ta’ālā*.”¹

When a disciple chooses to do *mujāhadah* he is blessed with a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā*. Through the blessing of this connection with Allāh *ta’ālā* this *mujāhadah* remains and increases. Allāh *ta’ālā* forbid, if he was lazy in *mujāhadah*, he will deteriorate to the extent where he can be deprived of his acquired sainthood. *Mujāhadah* is necessary to reach sainthood and equally necessary to maintain that sainthood till one’s last breath.

Mujāhadah is a pre-requisite for progress

My brothers! *Mujāhadah* is a pre-requisite in order to progress and succeed, therefore be consistent in *mujāhadah* and strive to achieve both types. The compulsory *mujāhadah* should be done i.e. fulfilling the obligatory and necessary acts and abstaining from the

¹ *Baṣā’ir* Hakīm al-Ummat, p. 99.

prohibited and makrūh taḥrīmī acts and the optional *mujāhadah* should also be done i.e. doing the Sunnah, preferable and optional acts and abstaining from the makrūh tanzīhī acts. The compulsory *mujāhadah* is necessary for acquiring sainthood but one should not leave out optional *mujāhadah* until he is not consistent on the compulsory *mujāhadah*. He should also do the optional *mujāhadah* because the heart is illuminated and gains strength through it. The result of this will be that the compulsory *mujāhadah*, doing the obligatory acts and abstaining from the prohibited acts which were just now regarded as difficult also become easy. One should therefore make a thorough effort to fulfil all the obligatory, necessary, Sunnah, preferred and optional acts. But keep one thing in mind: taqwā (piety) and the acquisition of the friendship of Allāh *ta'ālā* are impossible unless one's life is free of sin.

A beneficial advice for my friends

I tell my friends in England that just as we keep a notebook for our daily important errands and duties for example we need to collect something, we need to hand over something, or we have a reminder for the entire week's work, in a similar manner keep a notebook only for the sins you commit. Sit in private and think about what sins are present in your life. Thereafter write them down in the notebook and strive to get rid of them. Then look at the notebook weekly and take stock of yourself. See which sin has decreased and which sin you have been saved from. Which sin was not present but has crept into your life? Continue to adjust the book by adding and subtracting the sins. As a result of this effort to leave sin, if you feel that despite my efforts a certain sin is not coming under control, then refer to your spiritual guide and follow his guidance. By doing

this inshā' Allāh there will be a lot of progress. Our true personal state will become evident before us through which pride and vanity will be broken down and humility will be developed.

Abstaining from bad company and keeping good company

My brothers! I am saying that *mujāhadah* is the foundation and there are two essential supportive factors:

- (1) Punctuality on daily practices
- (2) Keeping away from bad company and keeping good company, especially the company of your spiritual guide.

Wherever you go, choose good company. Always look for good company. People say, “Where will you find good company nowadays?” Brothers! If you make effort then you will definitely find good and pious company. Hadrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to take an oath and say, “If anyone goes to the mu'adh-dhin of any masjid with a sincere desire and sits in his company he will benefit from his company because he raises the word of Allāh *ta'ālā* five times a day.”¹ If a person cannot find good company then at least abstain from evil company. Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say, “If you do not find good company then at least stay away from evil company.”² A sick person has two responsibilities: (1) to abstain from harmful things and (2) to take medication. If he is not taking medication then he should at least abstain from harmful things.

¹ *Islam Aur Hamarī Zindagī*, vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

² *Islam Aur Hamarī Zindagī*, vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

One has to abstain from evil company and choose good company, especially the company of spiritual guides and the pious, From these your own spiritual guide's company is very important. Go to your spiritual guide with a quest, as one in need, with etiquette, respect, love, conviction and reliance. Together with this one should also be punctual on daily practices. So there are three things to do in total: (1) Keeping good company, especially the company of one's spiritual guide (2) *Mujāhadah* i.e. opposing the carnal self (3) Punctuality on daily practices.

The company of the spiritual guide

We have to do these three tasks. From them one task is the primary task and objective i.e. *mujāhadah* and opposing the carnal self. Through the other two tasks one will gain assistance in the primary task. The primary task will become easy. If one makes *mujāhadah* without doing these two tasks he is most likely to be unsuccessful. It is possible that a person may be overcome with despair or become tired and abandon *mujāhadah*. Therefore these three tasks are important: *mujāhadah*, punctuality on one's daily practices and the company of one's spiritual guide. Wherever and whenever you get the opportunity of being in the company of your spiritual guide then regard it as a bounty and take benefit. Nowadays one sickness is that people are fond of listening to lectures so they go to the gathering of the spiritual guide for the purpose of listening to the lecture and that too for entertainment and enjoyment. If the purpose was to gain the company, then despite there being no enjoyment in the talk we would have attended consistently. Even if we did not understand the topic we would have attended diligently because the purpose

is the company of the spiritual guide and that was attained, al-hamdu lillāh.

Companionship is of essence

The gathering of the spiritual guide has two benefits. One is his company and the second is increase in knowledge. If a person does not understand the topic then too there is no problem because the main thing is the company and that is acquired. The effect of keeping company is truly wonderful. That believer who was favoured with one moment in the company of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* becomes higher than every individual of the ummat even if he did not hear one word from Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. We understand from this that the main thing is to keep pious company.

I was saying that the purpose of coming to the spiritual guide should not be to listen to the lecture. The main purpose is his company. If you know that your spiritual guide is in a certain masjid or in a certain madrasah and you are free then go to that masjid or madrasah with this intention that your fifteen or twenty minutes of time will be spent in the company of your spiritual guide. Perhaps the spiritual guide will not even know that his disciple has come with the intention of spending time in his company. It is not even necessary for the spiritual guide to know because the spiritual guide is not the giver. The spiritual guide is the distributor. The giver is Allāh *ta‘ālā* and He will definitely send spiritual blessings through the distributor. Many poor disciples try hard to go forward in order to acquire the attention of their spiritual guide but some of those in the service of the spiritual guide do not allow such sincere people to come close. Ḥakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says, “There are some

people who are close to the spiritual guides but they become the ones who cause difficulty. They always cause difficulty to others.”¹

Dr. Sābir Sāhib

Allāh *ta'ālā* had blessed our Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh with a very sincere servant in the form of Dr. Sābir Sāhib rahimahullāh. I regard Doctor Sāhib as my great benefactor and all those people who had a connection with Hājī Sāhib rahimahullāh definitely regard Dr. Sābir Sāhib rahimahullāh as their great benefactor as well. He made great effort to ensure that every visitor takes maximum benefit from Hadrat rahimahullāh. He never felt that a certain person is getting too close and that the attention of Hadrat is being directed more towards him. In fact he would draw our attention and say, “Hadrat was missing you a lot. If you came to Hadrat after ‘ishā’ also it would have been good.” He would invite us to come. One must be such a servant. This zeal should exist that the entire world should be blessed with the spiritual blessing of the fire of love that Allāh *ta'ālā* placed in the bosom of your spiritual guide.

Allāh alone is the giver, the spiritual guide is only a means

I was saying that some poor disciples try hard to get close to the spiritual guide and when they fail they become despondent. Such people should not worry at all. They should not even come close to becoming despondent. You should continue to pass your life in accordance with the guidance of your spiritual guide. Allāh *ta'ālā*, the giver of spiritual blessing is observing

¹ *Malfūzāt Hakīm al-Ummat*, vol. 6, p. 212.

everything. Do what you have to do. When the giver of spiritual blessing decides to bless you then He will make some excuse to direct the attention of the spiritual guide towards you because He is the giver. Allāh *ta'ālā* addresses the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* and says:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا.

*If it was not for the grace and mercy of Allāh upon you none of you would have been purified.*¹

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* are being told that if it was not for the grace and mercy of Allāh upon them, none of them would have ever been spiritually purified. We understand from this that the giver is Allāh *ta'ālā* but since the spiritual guide is the distributor you have to remain connected to him. A rich man gives a poor man something but the poor man has to go to the door of the rich man to take something from him. The door is a means to take from the rich man. Without going to the door he will not get anything from the rich man. Likewise Allāh *ta'ālā* is the giver but the spiritual guide is like the door. Whoever goes to the door and remains there will receive spiritual blessing. Thus one should hold firmly onto the spiritual guide.

The favours and kindness of my elders

Now I will recite one poem of Hadrat Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat has been extremely kind to me. Hadrat Muftī Sāhib has taken the names of some pious men who have been kind to me. Besides them there are many other elders who have been kind. Recently some friends came to meet me in Leicester.

¹ Surah an-Nūr, 24:21.

They mentioned the favours of the pious elders upon me so I said to them, “Brother! How can I deny that? That will be ingratitude.” Allāh *ta’ālā* has been very kind to this low servant and He has directed the attention of almost all the senior pious elders of our era towards me but what can I say? I am so worthless that after all the attention of these elders I am still the way I was, rather I have deteriorated even further. Make du’ā that Allāh *ta’ālā* has mercy on my condition and blesses me.

How to cultivate the barren land of the heart

Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says,

You will attain a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā* through the company of the spiritual guide but...

Hadrat Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has added the restriction, ‘but’ to show that if you come to your spiritual guide observing all the etiquette and rules then you will surely be blessed with a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā* but you have to do certain actions and then come. One is *mujāhadah* and the other is punctuality on daily practices. Before coming in the company of the spiritual guide do both these actions and level the farmlands of the heart. Free it from pebbles, stones, wild plants and wild grass. After the programme you return home. You must come again the following month. Make *mujāhadah* and be punctual on the daily practices for the whole month. Through the blessing of these efforts some ability will develop in the land of the heart. Now when you come the following month you will perceive that there is great spiritual ecstasy in the gathering, but it ends just as you leave the gathering. We conclude that there is a need to

make more effort on the land. Go and make more *mujāhadah* and be punctual on the daily practices, then come back to the spiritual guide. If this time you feel that the spirituality remained strong during the gathering and it continued after the programme up to the door of the masjid, you can conclude that your effort is becoming evident. The land has improved. Now go and, together with *mujāhadah* be punctual on the daily practices. You will feel the spirituality until you sit in the car.

My brothers! Inshā' Allāh through continuous effort a time will come when the spirituality will remain till you go home, thereafter it will remain for two to three days. And if you continue making *mujāhadah* and continue being punctual on the daily practices then the farm of the heart will continue improving. If Allāh *ta'ālā* wills, a time will come, and it will definitely come, wherein that seed which came from the heart of the spiritual guide and fell into your heart will now take the form of a strong fruit-bearing tree of the recognition and love of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Then irrespective of whether you are in the mall or any place of unmindfulness, the spirituality will be the same which you perceive in the gathering of your spiritual guide. So what does Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib *rahimahullāh* say?

You will attain a connection with Allāh *ta'ālā* through the company of the spiritual guide but you must abstain from sin and be constant in dhikr.

The meaning of 'abstain from sin' is to make *mujāhadah* and 'constant in dhikr' means punctuality in one's daily acts of devotion. May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant you and me the ability. Āmīn.

An incident of a pious man

I conclude with one incident. There was once a pious man whose heart was saturated with the love of Allāh *ta'ālā*. He was on his way somewhere during the rainy season so it was drizzling lightly. A husband and wife were walking in his direction and there was a hole on the road which was filled with water. While walking the pious man's foot slipped into the hole and the water splashed onto the lady's clothes. Her husband was furious, gave the pious man a hard slap and said, "Blind man! You cannot see where you are going?" Little did he know that this was a friend of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

I am mentioning this incident to enlighten us about what we will receive if we make this effort. The one who attains Allāh *ta'ālā* attains the whole universe.

O Allāh! If You are not mine then nothing is mine. If You are mine then everything is mine. The sky is mine. The earth is mine.

Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib rahimahullāh says:

O Allāh! If You are not acquired then nothing has been acquired. If You are acquired then everything has been acquired.

If a person has everything but Allāh *ta'ālā* is displeased with him, he has nothing. Let us take the example of an 'ālim or a mufti who holds the post of Principal Muftī in a madrasah. He is teaching Hadīth, he has honour and position. In short he has everything but if we assume for a while that if Allāh *ta'ālā* is not happy then he has nothing.

I am a guest who has come here. I have been honoured and respected but if Allāh *ta'ālā* is not pleased with me then it all means nothing. Everything is there but...

If You are not acquired then nothing has been acquired.

And if we have nothing but...

If You are acquired then everything has been acquired.

My brothers! We need to acquire Allāh *ta'ālā*. We will acquire Allāh *ta'ālā* through *mujāhadah*, opposing the carnal self, being punctual on daily acts of devotion, abstaining from evil company, choosing good company, coming regularly to our spiritual guide and being particular about informing him of our spiritual condition and following his prescription. If we get Allāh *ta'ālā* then our life will become like that pious man.

That poor pious man exercised patience and carried on walking. While walking he passed by a sweetmeat shop. Hot rice pudding was being prepared. It was cold and he was feeling sad. The shop owner made an intention that he would give a glass of rice pudding for free to the first person his gaze fell upon that day. The owner said, "Brother! Come here!" When he received the hot rice pudding, he thanked Allāh *ta'ālā* from his heart and said, "Your way is strange. Sometimes You cause me to get a slap and sometimes you provide me with hot rice pudding." While eating the rice pudding that lady arrived with her family members and accused the pious man of killing her husband. What happened was that when the couple reached home, her husband slipped and fell down the stairs. His neck broke and he died. The lady said, "My husband slapped you so you most probably cursed him which resulted in his death, so

you are the murderer.” The pious man responded, “Now I understand. I did not curse him. The fact of the matter is that water splashed onto your clothing because of me so your lover became upset and slapped me. In exactly the same way, when your husband’s slap landed on my face, my lover [Allāh] became upset and He slapped your husband.”¹

Become Allāh’s beloved

My friends! Become Allāh’s beloveds. All the problems of this world and the Hereafter will be solved. The way to become Allāh’s beloved is through *mujāhadah*, the company of the spiritual guide and regular dhikr. May Allāh *ta’ālā* bless me, you, all our acquaintances and the entire ummat with this fortune. Āmīn.

I was feeling ill. I did not think I would be able to speak in such detail. This is through the blessing of your love and the men of spiritual affiliation seated here as well. I am very pleased that you gather here every month with special concern for spiritual reformation because nowadays Muslims are very neglectful about aspects of spiritual reformation and the whole world suffers the consequences.

Purification of the heart is compulsory on every person

Spiritual reformation is compulsory. Just as the five daily salāhs are compulsory similarly the purification of the heart is compulsory on every Muslim. Spiritual reformation is not any department of Islām. Some people feel that they are involved in the department of Islamic education and because they are teaching in a

¹ *Sukūn-e-Qalb*, p. 145.

Dār al-'Ulūm there is no need for them to worry about spiritual reformation. This is a major misunderstanding. Just as the five daily salāhs are compulsory on the teachers of a madrasah, Islamic relief workers, those involved in da'wat and tabligh or those answering Islamic questions, it is compulsory on every Muslim to spiritually purify his heart irrespective of which department of Islām he is involved in.

The bottom line is that whatever department a person is involved in, he must concentrate on that and pay attention to it. This is for the workers. Muftī Sa'īd Sāhib has taken up the department of spiritual reformation and we will say to him that he is doing a service to Islām. He is looking after one department of Dīn. Now he must devote his complete attention towards the khānqāh. If he cannot serve in any other department of Dīn then that is not a problem. Likewise a person who is involved in the department of da'wat and tabligh should devote his attention completely to the work of da'wat and tabligh. If he cannot serve another department of Dīn, it is not a problem. If someone is teaching Hādīth he should devote his complete attention to Hādīth. If he cannot look after another department of Dīn, it is not a problem. However as far as a person's personal spiritual reformation and purification goes then that is compulsory upon every individual.

A major error

The devil causes us to err in this regard. Some feel that Dīn has many departments so spiritual purification and the khānqāh is one of them. Since they are in the department of Islamic education and taking care of a madrasah they feel there is no need to spiritually purify themselves. Others feel that because they are involved

in the department of tablīgh there is no need for them to become the disciple of anyone and get themselves spiritually reformed. This is a major error. It is the compulsory duty of every individual to spiritually reform himself. Yes, it is a different matter if you formerly make it your field of work or not, that is your choice.

There are many khulafā' of different pious elders seated here. The truth is that I am very junior but despite this fact I make a request to these khulafā' to make the department of spiritual purification their occupation and take this blessed work forward. The nation is unmindful. If through you the ummat turns its attention towards spiritual purification then inshā' Allāh, Allāh *ta'ālā* will pass decisions in favour of the ummat.

Du'ā

May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless this monthly gathering of yours, grant Hadrat Muftī Sāhib abundant blessings in his knowledge and spiritual blessings and make his spiritual blessing widespread. Hadrat Muftī Zubayr Sāhib has come from Durban. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make his knowledge and spiritual blessing complete and widespread. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make the knowledge and spiritual blessing of all the other khulafa' present here complete and widespread and grant us the ability to purify ourselves spiritually. Āmīn.

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* the editing of this translation was completed on 03 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1439 A.H./20 January 2018. We pray to Allāh *ta'ālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

رَبَّنَا نَقْبَلُ 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

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