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EVALUATION

Maulānā Marghūb Aḥmad Lāchpūrī *dāmat*
barakātuhum

(Annotator of Marghūb al-Fatāwā and prolific author)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Experience shows that not every talk is effective. This is because there are certain requisites and etiquette that the speech and orator have to fulfil. The ‘ulamā’ have written that:

1. The speaker, where possible, should read salātul-hājah before delivering his speech.
2. The speech should be tailored to the audience. It should not be that the head is paining yet the feet are being tended to.
3. The speech should be delivered in measured tones so that the audience has a chance to retain it.
4. The speech should be on the level or capacity of the audience.
5. Sometimes important topics should be broken down into segments.
6. If it is noticed that the audience’s attention is flagging, humour or interesting anecdotes should be resorted to while avoiding extremes.
7. The speech should neither be too long nor too short.
8. It should be delivered passionately.
9. Explain yourself through parables.
10. Avoid unverified matters.
11. Practise what you preach.

12. Desire nothing from the creation.
13. Do not restrict the talk to encouragement only or admonishment only. Combine the two.
14. Do not lecture every day.

If the speaker adheres to these etiquette Allāh *ta'ālā* will make his speech effective-Allāh willing.

The publication of the *Khutabāt-Salīm* series had been initiated a while back and some of its volumes have already appeared in the public domain. All praise belongs to Allāh; I too have had the opportunity to study them. This series contains all the etiquette required of a speech and orator. It is because of this that these speeches are not merely superficial talks but a golden register for the guidance of the ummah. I have strong hope in Allāh *ta'ālā* that He will make them a means of guidance for the ummah as they contain Qur'ānic verses and its inspiring commentary, Ahādīth with excellent explanations, quotes from the *Sahābah* that soften the heart, anecdotes of the Prophet *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, the *Sahābah* and pious predecessors that will direct ones attention to the Hereafter, parables and humorous anecdotes, Urdu and Arabic poetry etc. - in short everything required of a good talk.

Then there is the speaker himself to consider; as an educator he brings years of experience to the table. As an orator he is unparalleled in Britain. As a spiritual mentor he is unique (the *Khānqah Salīmī* bears testimony to that). He is the founder of a Dar al 'Ulūm, maktab and academy, the chief-editor of the monthly magazine *Riyād al-Jannah* and if I am permitted to say and at the risk of being criticized, he is a revivalist of

moral rectification amongst the European youth. Add to fact that he has kept the company of the elders, has affiliation to senior reformers, is beloved by his seniors, admired by his juniors and his contemporaries while having ties of friendship with him, acknowledge his seniority. He is the personification of the poem;

دوست دشمن سب تیری قائل ے مگر

کوئی قائل ے زبان سے کوئی قائل دل سے ے

Your friends and enemies both praise you, however some from the tongue and others from the heart.

At present a biography of the speaker is not required neither is it my intention to present one. I have in my mind an outline for this topic which I wish to present at a more opportune time.

This booklet, The Sacrifices of the 'Ulamā' For Dīn (is a transcript) of an exemplary lecture delivered in Lusaka, Zambia. No sane person will deny the existence of the sun in mid-day heat, yet what can I tell you? Such individuals exist who insist on denying this very fact by asking; what have the 'ulamā' ever done? They are doing nothing.

Which department related to the world or the Hereafter is void of the 'ulamā's efforts? In the fields of education, publication and literature, oration, moral rectification, tabligh, establishing madāris and masājid etc. they are peerless. In fact, even in fields considered to be secular, for example; Islamic schools, establishment of hospitals, welfare activities (aid and

relief work), politics, etc. their efforts are unforgettable. To deny this is nothing short of deceit.

You will find a sliver of those sacrifices our predecessors made for Dīn in this booklet. The contents and narratives that appear at appropriate places throughout this lecture are on par with any certified compilation. Read it and recite it to others, listen to it and make others listen to it as well. May Allāh *ta'ālā* convey this cry to one and all in a way that it takes root in their hearts, and may He make it a means of dispelling the habit of turning a blind eye to realities. May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept this booklet.

I've written these few lines despite my ineptitude, giving precedence to instruction over etiquette. I am not worthy of writing an evaluation nor do I desire to. I will however implore you emphatically to study these lectures, most of which were delivered impromptu according to the need of the time. You will find a great deal more content related to the subject matter than other researched publications.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept the speaker and his speech and may He make it a means of guidance for the ummah and a provision in the Hereafter for the author and publishers. Āmīn.

(Maulānā) Marghūb Aḥmad Lāchpūrī (Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*)
Dewsbury, England.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الرُّسُلِ وَخَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَعَلَى
إِلَيْهِ الْأَصْفِيَاءِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْأَتْقِيَاءِ أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ^١ وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: طَلَبَ الْعِلْمِ
فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ^٢ وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي
طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ^٣ أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ
سَلَّمَ.

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 وَاتَّبَاعِهِ وَآزْوَاجِهِ وَ
ذُرِّيَّاتِهِ.

We should express our profound gratitude to Allāh *ta'ālā* that He has, due to our affiliation with prophetic knowledge, gathered us here today at the

¹ سنن الترمذي ابواب العلم باب ما جاء في فضل الفقه علي العبادة ح ٢٦٨٢

² سنن ابن ماجه باب فضل العلماء والحث علي طلب العلم ح ٢٢٤

³ سنن الترمذي ابواب العلم باب فضل طلب العلم ح ٢٦٤٧

Lusaka Jāmi' Musjid at the behest of the Al-Falāh Academy.

A Collective Deficiency of Muslims

Knowledge is a profound and invaluable bounty of Allāh *ta'ālā*. As such, the centres of knowledge, namely the madāris and the men of knowledge, namely the 'ulamā', have great worth and value too. It is our misfortune that we do not value knowledge to the extent that we ought to, as a result of which we are unable to value the centres of knowledge and the 'ulamā' as we ought to.

At this time, approximately the entire ummah, the religious and irreligious, is collectively guilty of this shortcoming. This is a deficiency that requires urgent reform. If we will not value knowledge, the madāris and 'ulamā' as we ought to, the harm of this will not affect any of the aforementioned but ourselves and our progeny.

Therefore, I urge all my friends to acknowledge this flaw, and to be concerned about its reformation in order to safeguard ourselves, our children and our progeny till the Resurrection against its harmful consequences.

The Work of The 'Ulamā' is The Work of The Prophets

Rasūllulāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is the seal of Prophets. After him no Prophet will appear bearing a new Sharī'ah. This termination to the chain of Prophets transferred the responsibilities of prophet-

hood to the ‘ulamā’. This is explicitly borne out by the following Hadīth;

الْعُلَمَاءُ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

Undoubtedly the ‘ulamā’ are the heirs of the Prophets ‘alayhimus salām.

What this means is that Allāh *ta’ālā* will, till the day of Resurrection, use the ‘ulamā’ in the role of the Prophets ‘*alayhimus salām*. If we were to assume that the ‘ulamā’ today have abdicated this role, we would then be obliged to say that they are not the heirs of the Prophets. If this be true then, Allāh forbid, we would have to say that this prophetic statement is incorrect!

Therefore, without the least bit hesitation or doubt we believe that the ‘ulamā’ in every era, fulfilled the rights of agency, representation and successor-ship of the Prophets ‘*alayhimus salām*, that they are currently doing so, and will continue to do so until the Resurrection, Allāh willing!

Serving Knowledge is Serving Dīn

يَحْمِلُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ كُلِّ خَلْفٍ عُدُولُهُ

The reliable and trustworthy individuals of every succeeding generation will bear this knowledge.

Dīn and knowledge are synonymous. They are not separate entities. In his prologue Imām Muslim *rahimahullāh* has quoted the following statement of Ibn Sīrīn *rahimahullāh*:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ دِينٌ

This knowledge is undoubtedly Dīn.

We deduce from this that knowledge and Dīn are one and the same. The individual who serves knowledge is serving Dīn, protects knowledge is protecting Dīn, disseminates knowledge is disseminating Dīn, propagates knowledge is propagating Dīn and seeks knowledge is seeking Dīn.

The prophetic statement [quoted above] also informs us that this knowledge, i.e. this Dīn, will be shouldered and protected by the judicious ‘ulamā’ of every succeeding generation.

The Protection And Dissemination of Dīn: The Extraordinary Achievements of The ‘Ulamā’ in This Regard

The Sahābah *radīyallāhu ‘anhum* were the first class of such ‘ulamā’ followed by the Tābi‘ūn. The Tābi‘ūn gained this knowledge and Dīnī trust from the Sahābah and shouldered it. The Taba’ Tābi‘īn in turn received it from the Tābi‘ūn and those who followed them from them. Each successive generation then carried the mantle from its predecessors.

The honour of serving this knowledge and Dīn that was, is and will continue to be passed on from generation to generation, was reserved by Allāh for the ‘ulamā’ only. The huffāz memorise its words, the *qurrā’* ensure its correct pronunciation while the ‘ulamā’ protect its meaning in addition to propagating it. They are the ones who are protecting it par excellence and they are the ones disseminating it as well. This is

because an individual can only convey that portion of knowledge and Dīn which he possesses. If I, for example, know five things then I can only convey those five things. Similarly, if I know ten things then I can convey ten things and if twenty then twenty. So, because the whole of Sharī'ah is in the possession of the 'ulamā' it is they who will convey it to the succeeding generation. Al-hamdullilāh, the 'ulamā' have successfully fulfilled this task and that is why they are the sole heirs of prophet-hood. Had they not completed this task, how would knowledge have survived today? How would the Sharī'ah continue to endure?

The Insatiable Thirst For Two Tasks Within The 'Ulamā'

Allāh *ta'ālā* made the 'ulamā' heirs of the Prophets '*alayhimus salām*. As such He created within them an insatiable thirst for two works; the thirst for seeking knowledge and the thirst for propagating it. In other words, they possess this zeal to seek knowledge from their seniors and convey it to their juniors and successors. They have left such a sterling record in this mutual exchange of Dīn and knowledge that forget any contemporary generation; from Ādam '*alayhis salām* till today no community will be able to rival them! If only we took the trouble to read and share the exploits, sacrifices and labours of the 'ulamā'! What do we know of their legacy of the past 1400 years? Not even an iota of it! A performance review of even one day of even one individual from amongst them would outstrip and exceed a review of our entire lives.

If Not For Diligence of The 'Ulamā' we Would Not Have Been Able to Practise Dīn

My brothers! It is very easy for us to ask while sitting comfortably in our homes: so what have the 'ulamā' done? Were it not for their efforts, we would not be sitting here in the Jāmi' Musjid of Lusaka today. Were it not for their efforts we would have been able to locate anyone to tell us what is permissible and impermissible. We would not even have been able to perform wuḍū' nor ghusl. Tell me, besides the 'ulamā' who else is there who would have been able to inform you of the factors that nullify wuḍū' or necessitate ghusl? Who would have informed you of what types of business transactions were allowed or not? Or which types of wealth are legitimate or not? Were it not for the toil of the 'ulamā', you and me, in fact the whole world would not even be able to read Qur'ān today!

The Favour of The 'Ulamā' on The Ummah

My brothers! The benevolence of the 'ulamā' has been suppressed beneath the collective heel of the ummah. The 'ulamā' have, currently are and will continue to make extraordinary efforts for the protection and propagation of Dīn. The Rasūlulāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* made the following prophecy:

لَا يَزَالُ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أُمَّتِي ظَاهِرِينَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَهُمْ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ

ظَاهِرِينَ

A group of 'ulamā' from my ummah will be dominant and continue to remain in that condition until the Resurrection.

Therefore my first request to this audience is to inculcate within their hearts the appreciation of knowledge, the 'ulamā', the madāris (institutions of higher learning) and makātib (institutions of primary education). Accept the fact that if it were not for the efforts of the 'ulamā' for 1400 years the Dīn would have already become corrupted, and perhaps today we would not have been Muslims!

This is not an exaggeration. Perhaps it is that you perceive some exaggeration precisely because you are unaware of the exceptional history of the 'ulamā'. As the adage goes;

الْتَّاسُ أَعْدَاءُ لِمَا جَهِلُوا

People dislike what they are ignorant of.

We imagine these kinds of statements to be exaggerated because we are oblivious of the sacrifices our 'ulamā' rendered for the protection of knowledge and Dīn, and how they merged their night and day, and mingled their blood and sweat in this pursuit.

Two Immense Services of The 'Ulamā'

In the span of 1400 years the challenges facing the ummah have been many. Other than the 'ulamā', who else rose to meet these challenges? If you were to pick up the books of history and have a look, you would not catch sight of anyone but the 'ulamā'. In 1400 years of history, in whichever corner of the world

mischief raised its head, you will not find any other fraternity besides the 'ulamā', who made bold to protect our creed, our Dīn and the ummah.

Two tasks are such that only the 'ulamā' are capable of accomplishing: (1) saving the ummah from tribulations and, (2) conveying knowledge and Dīn to them. There is nobody else besides the 'ulamā' who possess a complete knowledge of the Shari'ah. So, through which other means will Dīn be conveyed? Even with your limited knowledge, if you were to make the claim that these two tasks were only accomplished by the 'ulamā', Allāh willing you will not be wrong. Others may have lent collaborative assistance, but only after the 'ulamā' first drew their attention to the matter. Even then, in every instance, you will find that it was the 'ulamā' who laid the foundations.

Absorption of The 'Ulamā' in The Service of Dīn And an Envable Anecdote of Imām Muslim

My brothers! The 'ulamā' have rendered many great services. These noble individuals were unlike us; who if our minds were to formulate any Dīnī query, it would make no difference to us whether a solution was forthcoming or not. Conversely, if any academic or Dīnī query appeared before these noble men they would focus their fullest attention on it, becoming oblivious to the world and everything in it.

Someone once enquired of Imām Muslim *rahimahullāh* regarding a Hadīth. He expressed his ignorance in the matter, immediately returning home to locate and research this Hadīth. He was so absorbed in this task that the world and its contents paled into

non-existence. In the interim a basket of dates was presented to him. He continued his research while [unconsciously] eating of the dates and coincidentally completed his task just as the dates came to an end. He was so absorbed by the knowledge that he was not even aware of how many dates he had consumed and that it had posed a health risk. The biographers write that such an excessive amount had been consumed that it led to his eventual death!¹

Imām Muḥammad’s Nightly Vigils Out of Concern For The Ummah

Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* spent the major portion of the night awake, researching and studying. Someone asked him why he did not rest? He replied: “How can I rest when the public go to sleep rest assured that should any query arise they would go to Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan for guidance? Should I also sleep and not study there is a danger of Dīn going to waste.”²

My brothers! It is very easy for us to ask: “What have the ‘ulamā’ ever done? What are they doing?” People who pose such questions should spend a week with those ‘ulamā’ who have dedicated their lives to knowledge and Dīn.

¹ تهذيب التهذيب ج ١٠ ص ١١٥

² علماء احناف كى حيرت انگيز واقعات ص ١٤٨-١٤٩

Imām Abū Yūsuf's Exemplary Concern For Knowledge And Action

Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* states: I sought admission to Imām Abū Hanīfah's class and continued attending it for 29 years. In that entire period there was not a single fajr prayer that I did not read in the Musjid of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*.¹

He paid so much diligence lest any portion of knowledge should escape him. The possibility existed that Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* might mention an article of law immediately after fajr while he was absent! Allāhu Akbar! What attention to knowledge!

He further states: "I never left his side for 17 years, not even on the occasion of the two 'īds, except when I became severely ill."²

He says: "One day I was sitting in Imām Abū Hanīfah's class when someone informed me that my son had passed away. I became caught up in a strange emotional tug-of-war. If I leave, I'll miss the lesson and if I ask them to postpone [the burial], it would be contrary to the Sunnah!" Do you see how much importance was attached to both knowledge and practice?

Today if a funeral takes place here in our Lusaka it is said; postpone the funeral, a son is arriving from India or Dubai! By acting contrary to the Sunnah will the deceased's objective in the grave be fulfilled? Relief in the grave can only be achieved through

¹ حسن التقاضي في سيرة الامام ابي يوسف القاضي ص ١٧

Ibid ²

implementing the Sunnah of Rasūllulāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. It is odd, is it not, that during their lives our parents were not appreciated but now that they have passed on we come from Dubai to pay our respects to their corpses?!

Imām Yusuf *rahimahullāh* must have thought; to delay the burial till the end of the class would be contrary to the Sunnah, while getting up now would result in missing the lesson. He said to the one who had informed him: “Bath him, shroud him and bury him. I will come home after class.”¹

A Satanic Thought

The efforts of the ‘ulamā’ were not trifling, my brothers! In order to keep us Muslims and to maintain our Dīn, the ‘ulamā’ made substantial sacrifices. Rid yourselves of the notion that the ‘ulamā’ have done nothing and aren’t doing anything. This is a satanic thought. Who informs you of the laws governing insurance? Who informs you of commercial laws? Whenever you are faced with a dilemma who do you turn to? Without the ‘ulamā’ how will you implement Dīn? Acting on Dīn is simply not possible without the guidance of the ‘ulamā’.

An ‘Ālim’s 45 Year Journey in Allāh’s Path

Imām Ibn Mandah *rahimahullāh* was a great muḥaddith. He spent the first 20 years of his life acquiring knowledge in his hometown. When he was satisfied that he had achieved everything he could at

¹حسن التقاضي في سيرة الامام ابي يوسف القاضي ص ١٧

home he started travelling abroad. He was 20 at the time and only returned home at 65.¹

Today we spend six years, 10 years in the madrasah. If we travel in jamā'at, we spend 40 days or four months. At most the 'ulamā' may go for a year. Ibn Mandah *rahimahullāh* spent 45 years in the path of Allāh! Neither father nor mother knew what had become of their son, neither brother nor sister knew what had become of their sibling, and neither uncle nor aunt knew of their nephew. Ibn Mandah *rahimahullāh* himself was unaware of how many family members were still alive and how many were deceased? Still, he continued to travel and pursued his quest for Hadīth. If he had not made this sacrifice, then perhaps you and I would not be Muslims today. His biographers write that on his return, he was mounted on a camel followed by a train of 40 camels bearing his books!²

Will you then still ask: What have the 'ulamā' done?! He returns after 45 years without any merchandise, or even so much as a penny. Rather he returns with knowledge and only knowledge. Ibn Mandah we salute you! May Allāh *ta'alā* convey millions of mercies upon your resting place! Had you not undertaken these toils and tribulations, we would not have been able to read the kalimah, we would not have been able to illuminate our bosoms with the instructions of our Master *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. May Allāh *ta'alā* reward you on behalf of the entire ummah. Āmīn!

¹ صحف من صير العلماء ص ٦٥

² تذكرة الحفاظ ج ٣ ص ١٦٥

Imām Bukhārī Survives on Grass

Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* left his hometown at the age of 16 in the pursuit of knowledge.¹ He travelled to whichever place he learnt of a muḥaddith; Makkah Mukarramah, Madīnah Munawwarah, Baghḍad, Kūfa, Baṣra, Shām, Egypt, Nishāpūr. In short he travelled all the Islamic countries.²

How many teachers did he have? He collated his Hadīth treasures from 1070 muḥaddithūn!³

Muḥammad ibn Hātim, Imām Bukhārī’s scribe says: “I’ve heard from Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* that during his student days such times passed where his allowance from home was delayed. Remember, those were the days when students practised on their knowledge. They were independent and begging was contrary to their nature. Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* continues: “When my allowance was delayed I would starve for up to two days at a time, surviving on nothing but grass!”⁴

The Astonishing Sacrifice of a Muḥaddith

A muḥaddith in search of knowledge of Hadīth lost his way in the wilderness of a jungle. Unable to find water he was forced to drink his own urine. Later in life he himself narrated this incident to his students:

¹ هدي الساري مقدمة فتح الباري ص ٦٦٩

² سير اعلام النبلاء ٣٩٥/٣٩٤

³ هدي الساري مقدمة فتح الباري ص ٦٧٠

⁴ هدي الساري مقدمة فتح الباري ص ٦٧٢

“This knowledge which I am conveying to you came with monumental sacrifices. In pursuit of it, I once became lost in a jungle wilderness. When thirst enfeebled me I was forced to drink my own urine to survive!”¹

Had^rat Maulānā Zakarīyyā’s Stay in The Madrasah For Six Months

My dear brothers! In every era ‘ulamā’ are found who sacrificed for Dīn and education. For the sake of protecting knowledge and Dīn and for the sake of conveying knowledge and Dīn to the coming generations they bore all kinds of amazing sacrifices. Shaykh al-Hadīth Had^rat Maulānā Zakarīyyā *rahimahullāh* narrates:

Once my shoes got lost and I only purchased a new pair after six months.

Why after six months? He was so engrossed in his studies that he never left the madrasah for six months. The masjid was adjoined to the madrasah, so he could come and go without having to step outside. I mention this incident because Shaytān conveys to the minds of some individuals the following thought: “We accept that the former ‘ulamā’ did much for Dīn, but what are contemporary ‘ulamā’ doing?”

My beloved brothers! Every era has housed such ‘ulamā’ whose achievements were staggering. They were so obsessed with the protection of Dīn and its promulgation that even in the throes of death their sole

¹ ميزان الاعتدال ٢٦٠٠

concern was to convey maximum knowledge to their students.

Imām Sarakhsī's Mind Blowing Achievement

The amīr in Imām Sarakhsī's era whose name was Khāqān became displeased with him. So he had the Imām imprisoned in a well. How long was he incarcerated there? Fifteen years! Why was he imprisoned? He had dared to speak the truth, that's why. Boldly speaking the truth is another sole peculiarity of the 'ulamā'. Just check 1400 years of our history. It is only the 'ulamā' who were uncompromising in the face of the rulers.

My brothers! The 'ulamā' do not regale you with the achievements of their fraternity. They feel shy lest the praise of their peers is misconstrued as self-praise. I too feel like this, but what am I to do? The depreciation of knowledge and 'ulamā' has forced me to say something.

Anyway, due to his frankness he had to tolerate 15-year's imprisonment and its rigours. After consultation with his students, classes were conducted from the well. There was no library etc. present. Daily needs like eating, sleeping etc. were met in the well. What a world of hardship that must have been! The only concern even in that state was that whatever knowledge I possess must be conveyed to the next generation before my death.

His students arrived daily and he dictated his lesson while they were seated around the well. The name of this book which was dictated from inside a

well is called *Mabsūt*. In how many volumes is this book? Thirty volumes!¹

Allāhu Akbar! How knowledgeable must be that person who is capable of dictating a book while seated in a well without any recourse to a library or alternate references? What amount of toiling did he have to undergo to accumulate that knowledge?

My respected brothers! If you harbour any ill feelings towards the ‘ulamā’ then repent, read Sūrah Yā Sīn and convey the reward to them so that their souls are comforted and saved from any burden. Despite the favour of the ‘ulamā’ on us we spend all our time criticizing them. This is a major crime. Repent from it.

Imām Shāfi’ī’s Amazing Sacrifice For Answering a Query

Imām Muzanī *rahimahullāh* or Imām Rabī’ *rahimahullāh* narrate the following incident in the biography of Imām Shāfi’ī *rahimahullāh*:

One day Imām Shāfi’ī *rahimahullāh* was leaning against a pillar or some other support when he noticed a shaykh approaching dressed in woollen clothes and cane in hand. On his approach Imām Shāfi’ī *rahimahullāh* stood up, straitened his clothes and then re-seated himself upright. Why? Because these personalities were people of knowledge and etiquette. Anyhow, after mutual greeting the shaykh sat down and Imām Shāfi’ī *rahimahullāh* quietly observed him for a while. Eventually, the shaykh said: “May I ask you a question?” To which Imām Shāfi’ī *rahimahullāh* replied:

¹معالم ارشادية ص ٩٣

“Certainly!” The shaykh asked: “These laws that you lecture about, what is your source for them?”

Imām Shāfi‘ī *rahimahullāh* replied: “The book of Allāh. Whenever I explain a law I infer its proof from the Qur’ān.”

The shaykh: “Any other proof besides the book of Allāh?”

Imām Shāfi‘ī : “The Sunnah of Rasūllulāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*”.

The Shaykh: “What else?”

Imām Shāfi‘ī: “The consensus of the ummah.”

The ‘ulamā’ know that the laws of the Sharī‘ah are extracted from four sources: the Qur’ān, the Sunnah of Rasūllulāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, consensus of the ummah and analogical deduction. I do not wish to elaborate on this. At this moment the focus of my talk is on the efforts the ‘ulamā’ generated in the pursuit of knowledge.

The Shaykh: “According to you *ijmā’* (consensus) is an accepted principle. Do you have any proof of it being so?”

Imām Shāfi‘ī: “Yes I do, from the Qur’ān.”

The Shaykh: “Which verse of the Qur’ān?”

At this question Imām Shāfi‘ī *rahimahullāh* remained silent, pondering over the matter. It seems that he knew the answer but was unable to recall the proof at that moment. The shaykh said: “I’ll give you three day’s grace after which I will return for an answer or you will need to repent to Allāh *ta’ālā*.”

The narrator says that Imām Shāfi‘ī’s face changed colour. He went home and did not come out for three days. I’ve already explained to you how these pious personalities became so absorbed in their studies that they became oblivious to the world and its contents. It was the time between zuhr and ‘asr when he first entered his house, and it was between these very times that he appeared again three days later. His physical condition was such that his body had become bloated. His face, hands, feet and every limb were swollen. He looked like someone who had been ill for a while. That shaykh also arrived at the same time as Imām Shāfi‘ī *rahimahullāh* and after greeting him, he sat down, demanding an answer to his query. Imām Shāfi‘ī *rahimahullāh* read:

اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
نُؤَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا¹

Whoever contradicts and opposes the Prophet after the right path has been shown clearly to him and follows other than the believers’ way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him In Hell - what an evil destination.

This is an academic discussion and I do not wish to delve into it. Suffice to say the shaykh was satisfied with the answer and after affirming it, left. After his departure, Imām Shāfi‘ī *rahimahullāh* said:

¹النساء ١١٥

“From the day I entered my house I was preoccupied with the recitation of the Qur’ān, completing three recitations daily”!¹

Allāhu Akbar! He was searching for the answer. Obviously, he must have passed this verse several times without his mind registering it as a proof. That is why he kept on reading. He read the entire Qur’ān nine times and only after his mind revealed this verse as a proof was he satisfied.

Look at the difficulty he put himself through to answer just one question! The reality of the matter is that the service of Dīn was the butter and bread of these noble men. At every moment the following thoughts were perpetually circling their minds: what will please or displease Allāh *ta’ālā*? Is this permissible or not? My brothers! All of this was for our benefit. Had they not strived in this manner, we would not have been able to practise Islam today.

Concern For Knowledge And Dīn Even in The Face of a Hungry Lion

There lived a pious sage by the name of Hadrat Abul-Hasan Bunān az-Zāhid *rahimahullāh*. The ruler at the time was Ahmad ibn Tūlūn, an oppressive despot. An estimated 18 000 people met their fate because of his oppression. Hadrat Abul-Hasan Bunān *rahimahullāh* once declared the truth to his face, which as explained earlier has always been the peculiarity of the ‘ulamā’. Ibn Tūlūn became greatly displeased and angered, so he ordered that Hadrat Abul-Hasan

¹ سير اعلام النبلاء ٨٣١٠ و٨٤

rahimahullāh be fed to the lions! His minions complied by dragging the shaykh off to the arena.

The lion was brought in a cage. The public gathered to watch the spectacle from a safe place. The door of the cage was opened and the lion roared into the arena. The atmosphere was tense. The shaykh was surely just a guest in this world now.

The shaykh however was the epitome of calm, quietly sitting with his gaze lowered to the ground, exhibiting no stress or fear. The lion came bounding up to him and just as it reached him, inexplicably stopped and sat down. After a pause it stood up and slowly advanced towards the shaykh. On reaching him, it stared and sniffed at the shaykh in the manner a domesticated dog would its master. The lion had become afraid of a person who feared Allāh *ta'ālā*. The shaykh continued composed, his head bowed low and from his features it could be discerned that he was pondering something. Aḥmed ibn Tūlūn realised that this was a special servant of Allāh. To harbour enmity towards him is to court disaster, simple as that.

The audience began speculating about the shaykh's silence. Each person guessing whatever came to mind. Ibn Tūlūn too was curious and asked the shaykh what he had been thinking about sitting in front the lion. He replied: "I had full trust in Allāh *ta'ālā* that he would safeguard me. However when the lion approached me I began wondering whether its saliva is pure or not?"¹

¹حلية الاولياء ١٠٣٢٤

Allāhu Akbar! Even while staring into the face of a lion he was probing a law of the Sharī'ah! My beloved brothers! Peace and salutations be on these 'ulamā'. May Allāh *ta'ālā* bestow upon them millions of mercies! May He resurrect us in the company of these 'ulamā'! If you want to be successful then make du'ā' that Allāh resurrects us with them, because on the day of the Resurrection these pious personalities will occupy a very lofty status.

Abu Zur'ah's Status in The Hereafter For His Service to Hadīth

The muḥaddith Abū Zur'ah ar-Rāzī *rahimahullāh* passed away. Someone saw him in a dream teaching the angels to perform salāh in the first heaven. He enquired: "How did you achieve this status?" Abū Zur'ah *rahimahullāh* replied: "Rasūlulāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ وَاحِدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا

*He who sends salutations on me once, Allāh sends ten mercies on him.*¹

I have written with my own hand a million Aḥādīth and for every Hadīth I read *durūd*.²

If this is not the status of a person on whom ten million mercies have been sent then what is? My respected brothers! These are the people who have pitched their tents in Paradise centuries ago. Hence, we

¹ صحيح مسلم , كتاب الصلاة ح ٣٨٤

² مقدمة كنز العمال ١٩١١

should not deprive ourselves of Paradise by polluting our tongues against them. My brothers! Control your tongues! They don't stand to lose anything, but we risk losing a great deal.

The Sacrifices of Ya'qūb ibn Sufyān And Rasūllulāh's Attention

We cannot possibly imagine the lofty status the stewards of knowledge occupy in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā* and His Rasūl *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The muḥaddith Ya'qūb ibn Sufyān *rahimahullāh* says: "I spent thirty years travelling in pursuit of knowledge. I was once overcome by poverty that I had nothing to eat or drink, nor possessed any money. I was forced to become a scribe. So on the one hand I had my studies to worry about and on the other, my duties as a scribe which gave me a little income to fulfil my needs. As a result, my day passed in studying while my night passed in writing.

One night while writing, some fluid suddenly fell from my eyes and I became blind. I began crying bitterly. Why? I would not be able to fulfil the objective of my travels and I would not be able to continue my studies. This caused me to cry profusely and I eventually fell asleep. In a dream I saw Rasūllulāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* who asked me: "Ya'qūb! Why are you crying? I replied: "O Rasulullah I have lost my eyesight. This has distressed me greatly as I have now failed in my mission"! Rasūllulāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "Come closer". Then passing his blessed hand over my eyes, he recited something and

blew into them. When I awoke my eyesight had been restored!¹

My beloved brothers! The affiliation to prophetic knowledge is so great that these servants received divine help as a result of it, and Allāh *ta'ālā* assisted them in astonishing ways.

The Sacrifice of Four Students

There are four great Imāms whose first names were Muḥammad; Muḥammad ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī *rahimahullāh*, Muḥammad ibn Is-ḥāq ibn Khuzaymah *rahimahullāh*, Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī *rahimahullāh*, Muḥammad ibn Hārūn ar-Ruyānī *rahimahullāh* . Each was an Imām of his time. An amazing incident occurred during their student days. Coincidentally, all of them congregated in Egypt. Their collective expenditure was eventually exhausted so they began living a life of hunger and poverty. Over time their condition worsened to the extent that when they gathered at night they were quivering with hunger. They unanimously agreed to draw lots and the one whose name was drawn, would become their designated beggar. Consequently, Muḥammad ibn Is-ḥāq ibn Khuzaymah's name was drawn. He requested his companions to give him an opportunity to perform wudū', read two rak'ats of ṣalāh and ask Allāh *ta'ālā* for assistance.

This is what this student did. He performed wudū' and engaged himself in ṣalāh. He must have made du'ā' along the following lines: "O Allāh! Save me

¹تهذيب التهذيب ٣٣٦، ٣٣٧

from the humiliation of begging from someone.” He was a student but instead of begging from the creation he chose to humble himself before Allāh *ta’ālā*.

Shortly thereafter a knock was heard on the door. When they opened they saw that it was the courier of the local Governor. “Who is Muhammad ibn Naṣr?” he asked. When identified, the courier made over to him a bag containing fifty *dīnārs*.¹ Next he asked; “Who is Muḥammad ibn Jarīr? And he too was given fifty dinars. When he enquired about Muḥammad ibn Is-ḥāq they said that he was engaged in *salāh*. So the courier handed his share and Muhammad ibn Hārūn’s share over to them; each receiving fifty dinars respectively. Then the courier explained that the Governor while having his siesta the day before had seen a person in a dream who had chided him saying: “There are four students whose names begin with Muḥammad and who are quivering with hunger in your land while you sleep blissfully”?! So the Governor sent these bags as gifts and has pledged on oath that should they be depleted, you only need to send one of you to inform him and he will gladly grant you further assistance.”²

The Status of a Student in The Court of Rasūlullāh

Hafiz Ibn ‘Asākir *rahimahullāh* went to Abū ‘Abdillāh Farāwī *rahimahullāh* to study the science of Hadīth. Abū ‘Abdillāh *rahimahullāh* states that Ibn ‘Asākir *rahimahullāh* was so zealous in his studies that I became weary of him in just three days. Allāhu Akbar!

¹ Gold coins. The currency used at that time.

طبقات الشافعية الكبرى ٢٥١٢

How enthusiastic must this student have been that a muḥaddith who has dedicated his life to this task becomes worn out by him? He further states: “I swore on oath that I would not grant him any further admission”. The very next morning he heard a knock on the door and after greeting, his visitor introduced himself with the following words:

أَنَا رَسُولُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

I am the messenger of the Messenger of Allāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam dispatched to you.

I said: “Welcome to you!” He said: “I saw the Prophet sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in a dream. He instructed me to go to Farāwī and deliver this message:

قَدِمَ بَلَدَكُمْ رَجُلٌ أَسْمَرَ اللَّوْنِ يَطْلُبُ حَدِيثِي فَلَا تَمَلُّ مِنْهُ

A wheat-complexioned resident of Shām has come to you, seeking my Hadīth so do not become fed up with him.

Abū ‘Abdillāh Farāwī rahimahullāh at the time was a senior lecturer of Hadīth while Ibn ‘Asākir rahimahullāh was his junior and a student. However, he ranked highly in the court of Rasūllulāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam because of his love for knowledge and the intensity he displayed in acquiring it. Farāwī rahimahullāh understood this immediately and thereafter it became his habit, that as long as Ibn ‘Asākir rahimahullāh wanted to continue the lesson he would continue teaching him.

A fellow associate says:

فَوَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ الْفَرَاوِيُّ يَقُومُ حَتَّى يَقُومَ الْحَافِظُ

*By Allāh! Farāwī raḥimahullāh would not get up (to leave) until Hafiz Ibn 'Asākir did.*¹

In other words Imām Farāwī raḥimahullāh would dismiss every other student on expiry of the allotted time, but in the case of Ibn 'Asākir raḥimahullāh, until he did not halt the lesson, Imām Farāwī raḥimahullāh would continue teaching.

My respected brothers! This is that fraternity who received divine assistance from Allāh ta'ālā and Rasūlulāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Some 'ulamā' say that when students leave their home town in pursuit of knowledge, Allāh ta'ālā removes imminent calamities from this ummah by the blessings of their journey.

The 'Ulamā' And The Muḥaddithīn Are The Party of Rasūlulāh

Abū Naṣr al-Wā'ith raḥimahullāh says: "I once saw Rasulullah ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam in a dream. He and his Companions were on their way to visit Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān Su'lūkī raḥimahullāh. I too followed behind them. When Rasūlulāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam reached Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān I sat down in front of him. While seated there I was struck by the thought that this is the Imām of the muḥaddithīn who is ill. Should he pass away there is the fear that a void would appear in Dīn and the service

¹ مجموعة رسائل في علوم الحديث ص ١٤٨

of Hadīth. The Prophet of Allāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* looked at me and said;

لَا تُفَكِّرْ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ عَصَابَةَ أَنَا سَيِّدُهُ

*Do not concern yourself with that! Allāh will not destroy the party of whom I am the leader.*¹

My brothers! These were blessed people. There are many more anecdotes of these sacred personalities that come to mind and that I wish to narrate, but time does not permit.

The 'Ulamā' Are The Well Wishers of The Ummah

Remember well! The 'ulamā' are our and the whole ummah's well wishers. Their night and day became one in order to convey knowledge to us. They bore many great sacrifices. Had they not mixed their blood and sweat and not merged their night and day we would be completely ignorant of Dīn. What was the extent of the Islamic library when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* departed from this world? A few pages of Hadīth and the Qur'ān and even those were scattered. The Qur'ān had not been compiled into one volume as yet and not a single book of Hadīth existed. However, due to the blessed efforts of the 'ulamā' , if today you were to visit any bookshop and ask to be shown books of tafsīr, the book seller will point to one section of his store where dozens of tafsīr books reside. Similarly, if you were to ask for a commentary on *Bukhārī Sharīf*, he would point to another section of his store filled only with commentaries of *Bukhārī Sharīf*.

¹ طبقات المفسرين ١٥٥،١٥٤/٢

The 'ulamā' strove very hard for the protection of Dīn and the dissemination of it.

Were it Not For The Toils of The 'Ulamā' we Would Not be Able to Read

Were it not for the exertions of these personalities we would not have been able to read the Qur'ān. In the time of the Sahābah there were no diacritical marks on the Arabic letters. ب خ ج ث ت etc. had no dots. If the Qur'ān was left in this condition how would we be able to read it? The 'ulamā' undertook the task of inserting dots to the letters in order to differentiate between ب خ ج ث ت etc. Ponder! How would we be able to read the Qur'ān without zabar, zer, pesh?

In The Absence of 'Ulamā' we Would be Like Cattle

My respected brothers! We would not have been able to read the Qur'ān, understand it or practise on Dīn. In such circumstances what would have the difference been between us and cattle? That is why Hasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh* is reported to have said;

لَوْلَا الْعُلَمَاءُ لَصَارَ النَّاسُ مِثْلَ الْبَهَائِمِ

Were it not for the 'ulamā' people would become like cattle.¹

If it was not for the 'ulamā', knowledge would not have been safeguarded. Had knowledge not been

¹ احياء علوم الدين ٢٢١

safeguarded our humanity would not have been preserved.

My brothers! These ‘ulamā’ and huffāz who are teaching our children to read Qur’ān, are the same people who taught us how to read in our childhood. They taught us the method of wudū’, ghusl and salāh. They began our education with ا ب ت ث and with great effort, endowed us with an appreciation for knowledge and etiquette. They taught us character, life skills and made our lives purposeful.

This teacher in the primary maktab, this lecturer in the dār al-‘ulūm, this jurist writing out a fatwa, all these huffāz, ‘ulamā’ and muftīs are our well-wishers and deserve appreciation.

The ‘Ulamā’s’ Guidance is Free

My brothers! I ask you; when you or the ummah are faced with an unfamiliar situation who do you turn to for guidance? I always say that internationally the ‘ulamā’ and muftīs are the only ones who offer free consultation; endeavouring to solve your difficulties. We are therefore greatly indebted to them.

First Appeal: Appreciate Knowledge, The ‘Ulemā’ And The Madāris

My beloved brothers! My very first appeal to you is to fill your hearts with the appreciation of knowledge, the ‘ulamā’ and the centres of knowledge i.e. the madāris and makātib. The work of the ‘ulamā’ is a full-time engagement, so never allow the thought to cross your mind that the ‘ulamā’ are not doing anything and

they *are* earning a salary for their religious services. If they do not draw a salary then how would they survive? How would their needs and the needs of their families be met?

Close your factory, shop or occupation and stop working. We will see how you survive!

Patronage of The 'Ulamā': The Shar'ī Obligation of a Community

Hakīmūl Ummah Thānwī *rahimahullāh* wrote that the husband has been made responsible for his wife's expenses because she is duty-bound to him. In the very same way 'ulamā' who are serving Dīn are restrained (by their commitments) to their communities. The Imām (for example) is tied down; that's why he has to be punctual for his ṣalāh and maktab duties. The same applies to a Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in a Dār al-'Ulūm, a teacher and a muftī. Because of their services they are unable to earn those means by which they could meet their expenses. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the community to see to their needs.¹

You fulfil all the needs of your wives, beyond necessity even, yet you are not prepared to afford your 'ulamā' even a moderate existence. What great expense are we providing for the 'ulamā' that we can justifiably feel that we are doing them a favour by giving them money to fulfil their religious duties? Rather, it is our Shar'ī responsibility to consider and assist those 'ulamā' who are rendering Dīnī services.

¹ ملفوظات حكيم الامة ١٥٢،١٥١،١١٢

It is fortunate that Allāh *ta'ālā* has created within them an insatiable thirst for learning and teaching. Therefore they remain in the makātib, madāris and masājid, listening to negative criticism, bearing verbal abuse and tolerating humiliation. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward them richly!

The Household of Those Who Abuse The 'Ulamā' is Deprived of Knowledge

I was advising you to instil appreciation in your hearts. Appreciation for what? For knowledge, the 'ulamā', huffāz, muftīs, madāris and makātib. Who will benefit from this? The 'ulamā' and the makātib? No! The benefit will accrue to you. You will become successful. The individual who respects the 'ulamā', madāris, knowledge and everything affiliated to knowledge, will be blessed with goodness and benediction. On the other hand, those who attempt to humiliate them, Allāh *ta'ālā* will punish them. Part of that punishment will be that He will not allow knowledge to enter their homes.

The suburb of Leicester in which I reside is called Highfields. I always tell the audience there that to understand the reality of this statement you do not need to travel beyond Highfields. Today, here in front of this audience I say that in order to understand the reality of this statement you do not need to travel beyond Lusaka. Observe those people who make the 'ulamā' the target of their derision. Despite countless efforts they are unable to gain knowledge and if any of their children becomes an 'ālim he is unable to serve Dīn. Whereas, you will find knowledge entering the homes of the ignorant and sinful. You will find scores

of examples where an individual who does not even sport a beard but because of his appreciation of knowledge and the educated class, his children or his grandchildren are blessed with the treasure of knowledge. Eventually, through his blessed progeny a remarkable change is effected to his life. So complete this one task: appreciate knowledge and everything affiliated to it!

Second Appeal: Seek Knowledge Yourself

Secondly, seek knowledge yourself. Those of you not connected to a khānqah, tablīgh, the 'ulamā' or madāris should be more concerned about acquiring knowledge. Those brothers of mine who are connected to the khānqah or tablīgh should also establish a relationship with the 'ulamā' to gain maximum benefit from them. I ask you to ponder carefully and tell me how much knowledge have you acquired in the last eleven months? Or what efforts have you made to acquire knowledge? Unfortunately acquiring knowledge does not even form part of our religious activities or schedule. If there is no progress in our knowledge then how can our Dīn progress? Where there is knowledge there is action. Similarly where there is progress in knowledge there will be progress in action. Therefore for Allāh's sake be concerned about acquiring knowledge and make a concerted effort in this direction.

When Knowledge Increases, Actions Increase

Those individuals affiliated to the khānqah have a relationship with their spiritual mentor, because of which their hearts become illuminated, brimming with

the love of Allāh and they acquire a level of zeal for doing things to please Allāh *ta'ālā*. However because of limited knowledge their actions remain restricted. Our tablighī brothers, after spending forty days or four months, usually return with some enthusiasm for pious actions. However, because of the deficiency in knowledge their actions too remain stagnant. We possess the same amount of knowledge today we possessed ten years ago. So, despite our enthusiasm, how will action emerge out of this state? Increase your levels of knowledge! When knowledge increases actions increase!

A steam engine can generate as much steam as it wants, but it can only go as far as the tracks allow. If the tracks from Lusaka end at Petauke, the train will not be able to travel beyond that point regardless of how much steam it generates. The engine will make chook, chook noises but will not be able to advance. Similarly, by the blessings of attending the khānqāh and by the blessings of spending time in the field of da'wah a change will be perceived in the state of the heart and the zeal for actions will increase but because the tracks i.e. knowledge is absent, there will be no progressive action in our lives. When we have no knowledge of the action itself then how can we fulfil that action?

When we perceive this enthusiasm in our hearts we erroneously assume advancement to our īmān and recognition of Allāh, whereas the train is actually stalled in one place. A stationary train makes a lot of noise because of which a person listening to it, wrongly assumes that the train is hurtling full steam ahead to its destination.

Some Straight Talk

With all due respect to the people of Lusaka and Zambia I would like to say that you are not benefitting from your 'ulamā' to the extent that you ought to. In fact it appears to me that you have hamstrung your 'ulamā'. They are not allowed to occupy the mimbar. The board only allows those whom they see fit. They are not allowed to conduct Qur'ān or Hadīth lessons. Conditions are not like this in England. The mimbar is reserved for the Imām in almost all the masājid. He is allowed to freely address the jumu'ah congregation for half an hour at a time, rectifying improper conduct without any fear of complaint. Sometimes even the committee becomes the target of his aim.

My respected brothers! How will such a community become aware of the laws of Allāh *ta'ālā* who constrains the tongues of the 'ulamā', evicts them from their religious responsibilities, grants control of the mimbar and miḥrāb to the laity and does not afford them the opportunity to freely speak out about right and wrong? How will a community which is unaware of the laws of Allāh join the highway to Paradise? You have fettered the bearers of the knowledge of Qur'ān and Hadīth. They are unable to speak, nor given any opportunity to do so. You are estranged from them, place restrictions on them, not interested in their lectures. If you cannot listen to their talks whose talks will you listen to? How will you acquire authentic education under such circumstances? My brothers! This is a very dangerous state of affairs. It is a breeding ground for increased ignorance.

Furthermore, you are also not benefitting from visiting scholars as you ought you. Until their hosts do not request the committee for an opportunity for them to talk, the congregants show no interest. When a great scholar or saint comes to town they do not even consider inviting him to lecture in their masājid so that the congregants could benefit from him. I am greatly surprised to learn that great scholars come here and just sit at home. We should go to them and ask them to come to our masājid so that the public can have the opportunity to benefit from them. I am very junior, a mere student, so I am not appealing to you on my own behalf. In fact, I instructed Maulānā Anas not to request the platform from any musjid. I do however want to draw your attention to the senior, respectable ‘ulamā’ who come here.

In England the public swarm around such ‘ulamā’. Masājid vie with each other to host these saints; each trying to outdo the other in getting them to their respective towns for their benefit. Over here, on the other hand, these saints remain for one or two weeks indoors and there is not even a desire in the hearts of the responsible people to request them to lecture at their masājid. There is neither a desire for knowledge nor any enthusiasm to profit from the ‘ulamā’! Despite this condition we are still proud of our piety!

I do not care whether I am given a chance or not, nor do I desire it. We speak the truth and it is our responsibility to draw your attention to incorrect behaviour. Otherwise, on the day of the Resurrection you will grab me by the collar and say: “You saw the wrong, yet you left without saying a word! We were

deprived of Dīn because of it and because of your shortcoming we are being taken to task today”. I wish to remain blameless on the day of Resurrection. Therefore in the Jāmi’ Musjid of Babanghi Duhul I have explicitly pleaded my case to the people of Lusaka.

The Effect of my Father’s Nurturing

I have said what I believe to be correct and as a well-wisher. May Allāh *ta’ālā* accept the effort and inspire you, the audience, to act accordingly and reward me for it. If I said anything wrong, I firstly ask Allāh *ta’ālā* to forgive me and thereafter apologise to my friends here. It was not my intention to hurt anyone’s feelings or to cause any harm to anyone. As a result of my father’s nurturing, whenever I sit down to lecture I endeavour to say such things that will take the audience closer to Paradise and further away from Hell. This is my task. Therefore, whatever comes to mind, I try to express it while being conscious of the Hereafter. This is not the first time that I’ve been here. I’ve come several times before. This is my standard practice whether I am here or at home in Leicester or whether in a public or private gathering. Whatever I need to say, I say it explicitly because I have no ulterior motives or material greed. I have no affiliation to anyone based on wealth or money.

I only know what a burden it is for me tour any country. My own locality is harmed, as such I feel difficult to leave. I travel only because of the religious benefit. My close associates know I am not in the habit of gallivanting around. I don’t desire to be invited anywhere nor am I greedy for gifts and offerings. Wherever I go I purchase my own ticket. My sole

motivation is to speak of Allāh's Dīn, visit those friends and Muslims who love each other solely for Allāh *ta'ālā*, to visit the local institutions, 'ulamā' and saints and to profit from their company. I have no other purpose. I may have said something to offend you so I reiterate that I ask Allāh *ta'ālā* to forgive me and I apologise to all of you, my friends.

Third Appeal: Start Qur'ān And Ḥadīth Classes

My beloved brothers! Inculcate an appreciation for knowledge and the 'ulamā', and profit from your local 'ulamā'. You have excellent 'ulamā' so afford them the mimbar. You should give opportunities to such 'ulamā' who will inform you of matters that require reform even if it be bitter to accept. You should make du'ā' for such 'ulamā' and express gratitude to Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is our grave misfortune that we have become accustomed to sweet talks and have made it a rule that nobody should disagree with us.

My brothers! I was saying that you should inculcate appreciation for knowledge, the 'ulamā' and madāris. Seek knowledge yourselves, profit from the 'ulamā', read books of authentic 'ulamā', initiate Qur'ān and Ḥadīth classes, grant your 'ulamā' liberty to speak, seat them on the mimbar and allow them to talk, otherwise on the day of Resurrection the general public will grab you by the collar [for failing them].

Fourth Appeal: Connect Your Children to Religious Education

While acquiring knowledge yourselves attach your children to religious education. Send them to the

madāris. Alḥamdulillāh, Lusaka is self sufficient. I am very pleased at the level of da‘wah and tablīgh work. Side by side, excellent efforts are being made in the field of khānqah, senior ‘ulamā’ visit regularly, and there is an excellent educational system. The masājid have makātib for educating the minor children. There are daytime and full-time boarding facilities for male children. You have full-time girl’s madāris. So take advantage of these institutions and give your children a good education and good nurturing.

Success in Both The Worlds Are For Those Who Appreciate Knowledge And The ‘Ulamā’

Instil gratitude in your hearts for knowledge, the ‘ulamā’ and the madāris. Educate yourselves and your children. If you do so you will enjoy success in this world and the Hereafter. I now conclude with a brief anecdote.

Imām Aḥmad *rahimahullāh* was once performing wuḍū’ at a river bank. Another individual sat upstream of him for the same purpose. He was about to pour water onto his hands when he suddenly withdrew them. Here was a person who valued ‘ulamā’ and honoured knowledge. The thought had crossed his mind that; I am an ignorant, uneducated person and Imām Aḥmad is the Imām of his time and a pious saint. If I wash my hands here my used water would flow in his direction. This is bad etiquette. It would be better if I sat downstream of him so that I could use his second-hand water.

When this person passed away, someone saw him in a dream and asked: “How did you fare?” He

replied saying: “I was taken to task for my sins and became greatly anxious about my future. But Allāh *ta’ālā* said me: “You have one good deed which outweighs all your vice. You once showed great honour to Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* because of his knowledge. I exonerate you of all you sins and enter you into Paradise because of that.”¹

Course of Action

My beloved brothers! Value knowledge, appreciate the ‘ulamā’ and value everything affiliated to knowledge; the Qur’ān, books, print media and lectures. Seek knowledge and read books that have been authenticated by reliable ‘ulamā’. Regularly attend lectures and classes of the ‘ulamā’ and give them free reign to teach Dīn in the masājid. Establish Qur’ān or Hadīth classes at least once weekly. It would be better if one designated scholar does so regularly. It doesn’t matter if the audience is small. By the blessings of that gathering people will gradually attend, be it ten, fifteen or even twenty years later. Its effects will then spread from there. The educational field is like that; its effects are only realised after fifteen, twenty years. So please pay due attention to it. Lastly, attach your children to knowledge by making them huffāz and ‘ulamā’. May Allāh *ta’ālā* endow us all with the ability to act accordingly. Āmīn.

¹ مجالس مفتي اعظم ص ۳۱۴/۳۱۵

Ta'lim, Tablīgh And Tazkiyah Are Essential For The Survival of Dīn

My respected brothers! All of us are attached with our hearts to tabligh, the madāris and khānqāhs. Practically speaking though, it is not possible to be involved in all of these activities simultaneously. So whichever work we are more inclined to, carry it out diligently, while maintaining a relationship with these other activities. All of them belong to us and are requisites for the maintenance of Dīn. Continuously visit each other, meet each other and assist each other; and Shayṭān will never find an opportunity to create misunderstandings. If we afford Shayṭān the opportunity to sow the seeds of misunderstanding amongst us the harms of it will be felt by none but ourselves.

My brothers! Stubbornness is not a good thing. Pride too is detestable. When confronted with the truth, we should accept it and when informed of an error we should abandon it. This is the hallmark of an honest, righteous believer. Allāh *ta'ālā* will grant us great (spiritual) development. These activities are all the activities of Dīn, and as such are ours and belong to us. A person while sitting at home will receive a share in all of these works for merely wishing them well and making sincere du'ā' for them and on the day of Resurrection he will be rewarded as a co-participant-Allāh willing.

Du'ā'

O Allāh! Inspire us all! O Allāh! Grant immense blessings to al-Falāḥ academy, its staff, affiliates,

students and supporters. O Allāh! Quickly grant al-Falāh academy a spacious, suitable venue. O Allāh! Whatever challenges lie ahead grant them a speedy crossing. O Allāh! Besides al-Falāh, also grant progress to our Jāmi' Masjid, Masjid Tawhīd, Musjdun Nūr, the madāris running under the auspices of Makīnī Masjid, the students at the madrasah of Maulānā Imtiyāz, Masjid Zaynab and our biggest madrasah Jāmi'ah Islāmīyyah! Grant success to whichever institutions there are and whatever efforts are taking place! O Allāh! Grant us unity and piety. Grant us mutual assistance and make us a means of spreading the effulgence of knowledge and dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Allāh! Grant progress to the field of da'wah and tabligh and grant its participants even more enthusiasm. Grant growth to whatever good works are taking place in Zambia, Africa and the whole world. Āmīn!

وَ آخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

و صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ



Al-hamdulillāh, the English translation and editing of this inspiring book was completed on 02 Rabī' al-Awwal 1437 A.H./14 December 2015.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept this humble effort, and may He make it a means for our salvation in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn.

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

I request the reader to inform me of any mistakes, typographical errors, etc. in this translation. Constructive criticism and suggestions on how to improve this work are most welcome. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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