

THE SOUL OF SUFISM

Transcript of a lecture delivered in Khānqāh Maḥmūdīyah,
Dhābel

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EVALUATION

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Hasan Gangohī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِیْمِ

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* is one of the influential ‘ulamā’ of Britain who possesses sound reasoning and is actively involved in all branches of Dīn. Maulānā has special proficiency in nurturing and reforming the youth of this day and age. Present before me is one of his important discourses, “The Soul of Sufism”, which is a very pleasant and interesting talk for those who seek to reform themselves. In this discourse Maulānā has explained the reality and details of Sufism by presenting different ways and methods of reformation and nurturing, the incidents of the pious elders and their captivating statements. Maulānā’s intense love for the way of the pious elders, his attachment to them and his annihilation of his carnal self are evident in every line of this lecture. I was present for this talk and personally realised the benefit and importance of the discourse. I was saying from the depths of my heart, “May Allāh increase the effect of this discourse.”

In reality, Sufism is not a customary relationship between disciple and spiritual mentor. In fact Sufism is to embellish the inner characteristics and accept instructions by annihilating one's carnal self through remaining in the service of a qualified spiritual mentor. What will a seeker of spiritual reformation require and need on this path of spiritual reformation? Maulānā has elaborated on this using examples and incidents. It can be said that this discourse is the essence of Sufism and spiritual reformation and it is the cry of an experienced spiritual mentor and from a pure heart (the heart of Salīm).

One of the beauties of this discourse is that the souls of the readers are moved by the poetry and couplets that have been included in many places. These couplets have enhanced the beauty of the discourse. In short, this lecture is really filled with wise incidents from the lives of the pious and their valuable statements. Hence it is a concise lecture on the soul of Sufism and spiritual reformation wherein the reality and crux of the subject of Sufism has been discussed. There are chapters of gems containing Maulānā's wisdom and recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā* expressed in various places of the discourse. These words are the essence and quintessence of the life-long experience of a qualified spiritual mentor who has recognised Allāh. Through it a person's *īmān* is strengthened, insight and intellect are enhanced, the soul grows and one is blessed with the light of knowledge and recognition of Allāh. The talk is in simple and easily understandable words but it is so delightful that after reading it once, it is difficult for a true seeker and enthusiast to put it down. I recommend all the 'ulamā' in general and especially the seekers of spiritual reformation to read this booklet carefully with concentration.

I make du'ā' from my heart that Allāh *ta'ālā* keeps Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib's shadow of kindness over us with ease for a very long time and may beneficial and useful talks such as this one continue to flow from his tongue. May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant all of his discourses and Islamic activities infinite acceptance. Āmīn.

Ahmad Khānpūrī
19 Shawwāl 1439 A.H.
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THE SOUL OF SUFISM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّيهِ وَنُسَلِّمُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ

Aim of life: To attain Allāh's pleasure

Allāh *ta'ālā* created us and sent us to this world to attain His pleasure. In one of his statements, Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says, “Neither *tabligh*, the *madrasah* nor the *khānqāh* is the aim.” Hadrat further states, “No *Muftī* should pass a ruling against me that I am saying that *ṣalāh*, *zakāt*, fasting or *ḥajj* is not the aim. The aim is only one i.e. a servant should embrace Allāh, make Allāh his beloved and become Allāh's beloved.”¹

Different people ask You for various things.
O Allāh! I ask You for Yourself. My only aspiration is to become Yours. My only desire is that You change my heart.

My beloved brothers! The sole aim of life is to attain the pleasure of Allāh *ta'ālā*. If we have *ṣalāh*, *zakāt*, fasting, *ḥajj*, teaching and serving Islam but we do not have the pleasure of Allāh *ta'ālā* then we have nothing and the teaching, writing of books, *da'wat* and *tabligh* and other works of *Dīn* mean nothing. But if Allāh *ta'ālā* likes any small action of ours and He becomes

¹ Hadrat Shaykh Ke Hayrat Angez Wāqī'āt: p.18.

pleased, then we have everything. This is the aim and purpose of life - that Allāh becomes pleased.

The Shari'at must be followed to attain Allāh's pleasure

The aim is the pleasure of Allāh *ta'ālā* and the medium for it is to follow the Shari'at and to be constantly obedient. In order to follow the Shari'at and be constantly obedient, sound knowledge is imperative. Once a person acquires sound knowledge and lives his life according to its dictates, the pleasure of Allāh *ta'ālā* will be attained. When a person acquires the pleasure of Allāh *ta'ālā*, he acquires everything.

If I have not acquired You, I have acquired nothing. If I have acquired You, I have acquired everything.

If a person has acquired everything but Allāh *ta'ālā*, he has acquired nothing. And if he has acquired nothing but Allāh *ta'ālā*, he has acquired everything. Allāh *ta'ālā* is acquired through following the Shari'at. In order to follow the Shari'at, sound knowledge is necessary. Even Sufism without knowledge is not reliable. Hadrat Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* says:

مَنْ تَفَقَّهَ وَلَمْ يَتَّصِفْ فَقَدْ تَفَسَّقَ، وَمَنْ تَصَوَّفَ وَلَمْ يَتَفَقَّهْ فَقَدْ تَزُنُّدَقَ،
وَمَنْ جَمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا فَقَدْ تَحَقَّقَ¹

One who acquires knowledge but remains bereft of Sufism will fall into sin. One who adopts Sufism but

¹ شرح عين العلم وزين الحلم: ٣٣/١.

*does not acquire knowledge will become a hypocrite.
Whoever joins the two will be on the truth.*

Perfection is realized in the khānqāhs

My beloved brothers! Sound knowledge is very important. Al-hamdulillāh, nowadays the number of people who frequent the khānqāhs is increasing greatly and many spend a lot of time in da'wat and tablīgh as well. These are two places where concern for Dīn and zeal for following Dīn are created. The zeal to follow Dīn and the enthusiasm to gain closeness to Allāh *ta'ālā* are created through all the avenues of da'wat and tablīgh whether it be the discourses of 'ulamā', the pre-jumu'ah lectures by imāms, the gatherings of spiritual mentors and their discourses, the present system of da'wat and tablīgh and so on. Once the zeal has been created to attain Allāh *ta'ālā*, the next step is to find the path which takes a person to Allāh *ta'ālā*. In order to achieve this, one has to go to the 'ulamā'. Zeal has now been created and through the blessing of knowledge, you have learnt the path as well. But there is one more problem:

Although I know the reward for obedience and abstinence I am still not practising.

A person may know everything. He may know that evil glances are not permissible and his heart also desires that he should not cast evil glances but he cannot abstain. Likewise he knows that ṣalāh is compulsory and he also wants to perform ṣalāh but he is not performing it. The zeal has been created, the path is known but he is not following the path. So what should be done? Go to the khānqāhs because completion takes place in them. By sitting in the company of the 'ulamā' you will learn the path, and by

going to the spiritual mentors, the method of following that path is acquired. Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib used to say, “Zeal is created through da‘wat and tablīgh, knowledge is imparted in the madāris and completion takes place in the khānqāhs.”¹

Attending the gatherings of ulamā’

It is necessary and important for those who frequent khānqāhs and likewise those who spend time in da‘wat and tablīgh to sit with ‘ulamā’ often so that their knowledge increases. When their knowledge increases, they will be protected from misunderstandings related to Dīn. Even among spiritual mentors there are those who are experts in the field of Sufism but do not possess a high level of knowledge. There were such spiritual mentors in the past who possessed great expertise in the field of Sufism but were not ‘ulamā’. And there are also ‘ulamā’ who have a very high level of knowledge but do not have much of a link with the branch of Sufism. Then there are some whom Allāh *ta‘ālā* blessed with a very high level of knowledge and they are masters in the field of Sufism as well. By going to such men, both needs will be fulfilled.

If we are affiliated to such a khānqāh where the spiritual mentor possesses a high rank in Sufism as well as in knowledge then both our needs will be fulfilled. If someone is linked to a spiritual mentor who is an expert in the field of Sufism but does not possess a high level of knowledge he should not think that he does not need to sit by any ‘ālim on the basis of unity

¹ *Malfūzāt-e-Masīh al-Ummat*: p.29.

of purpose. A disciple should acquire knowledge through the gatherings of 'ulamā' while spiritually reforming himself by his spiritual mentor with unity of purpose. And a preacher should acquire knowledge from the gatherings of 'ulamā' while preaching with sincerity.

People come here to benefit

Hadrat is like a spiritual mentor to me. I am feeling very ashamed. A person like me should not take the position which I am currently in with the intention of offering something. If someone like me came here to offer something, he will leave having been deprived. Allāh is my witness and he sees the condition of my heart. I am not worthy of presenting anything here. The truth is that I did not have the courage to excuse myself before Hadrat because I have a lot of respect for him in my heart. My status in front of Hadrat is lower than even a student. I am sitting in the masjid and I am not saying these words to draw the attention of Hadrat towards me. Hadrat's kindness over me has always been more than what I am worthy of. The reality is that people come here to benefit and not to offer anything. People come here to listen to lectures and words of advice and not to deliver lectures.

The kindness of Hadrat Muftī Ahmad Sāhib

My relationship with Hadrat spans for a period of approximately twenty five years. Our first meeting took place twenty five years ago when I first came to India. At that time I did not know anyone and I remember even now the time when Hadrat *dāmat barakātuhum* came to our Islamic Da'wah Academy with Qārī Siddiq Bāndwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Kāpaudrī *dāmat barakātuhum* also

accompanied them. Perhaps Hadrat does not remember that Hadrat Qārī Siddiq Bāndwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said to Hadrat, “Say something.” It was a gathering of ‘ulamā’. Great ‘ulamā’ of Britain such as ‘Allāmah Khālid Maḥmūd were sitting in that gathering. Our work was in its very initial stages. There was nothing at that time. My ship was wandering about aimlessly. At that time Hadrat said to the ‘ulamā’, “He has started good work. Come to him, put your heads together, sit and learn the method of working from him because Allāh *ta’ālā* has blessed him with insight as to how to work under the current conditions.” The work did not yet take off. It was only the beginning and I remember that Hadrat also said, “I am not saying this because I had something to eat by him. I am saying this because there is benefit for the ummat in it.” Hadrat’s kindness over me started from that time. His kindness has continuously increased. I have deep love and respect from the bottom of my heart for Hadrat and this is because whenever I met Hadrat, I always benefited from him.

Allāh is remembered by gazing at him

Mūsā ibn Abī ‘Ā’ishah *rahimahullāh* is one of the narrators who appears in the chain of *Bukhārī Sharīf*. His student, Jarīr *rahimahullāh* says regarding him,

كُنْتُ إِذَا رَأَيْتُ مُوسَى ذَكَرْتُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لِرُؤْيَيْهِ

Whenever I saw Mūsā ibn Abī ‘Ā’ishah rahimahullāh, I would remember Allāh ta’ālā just by looking at him.

¹تهذيب التهذيب: ١٧٩/٤.

My condition is exactly the same. Whenever my gaze falls on Hadrat, I remember Allāh *ta'ālā*. If my commitments permit me, I will come and stay with and remain in the company of Hadrat because I perceive benefit. I feel ashamed. I am saying a few words because of Hadrat's instruction. This is the result of Hadrat's spiritual blessing.

I am speaking his words. It is my tongue
but his words. I am adorning his gathering.
The lantern is mine while the night belongs
to him.

My brothers! The world is operating because of these types of people. May Allāh *ta'ālā* keep the shadow of Hadrat over the ummat for a long time. May Allāh *ta'ālā* increase the spiritual wealth, internal treasure and knowledge which He has blessed Hadrat with on a daily basis. May Allāh *ta'ālā* spread the spiritual blessing of Hadrat throughout the four corners of the world and may He grant unappreciative people like us the ability to appreciate Hadrat. Āmīn.

Every khalīfah is not a spiritual mentor

Allāh *ta'ālā* has favoured Hadrat. Allāh's bounties are upon him. Hadrat possesses both knowledge and a deep understanding as well as Sufism. Hadrat is a true spiritual mentor. I heard the statement of Hadrat Maulānā Masīhullāh Khān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* from my spiritual mentor, Hadrat Hājī Muḥammad Fārūq Sāhib that Hadrat Maulānā said, "Every khalīfah is not a spiritual mentor." I always say that just as every doctor is not a surgeon likewise every khalīfah is not a spiritual mentor. But Hadrat Muftī Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* is not only a spiritual mentor but a perfect spiritual mentor.

Sufism is to correct the external and the internal self

We also have to acquire knowledge so that through the blessing of the spiritual mentor's company, we can fulfil the zeal to practise on the Shari'at with sound knowledge. Similarly when a person has knowledge, he will notice his shortcomings. Without knowledge he will not know what is wrong and what is right. When he does not know what is wrong and what is right, how will he be able to present his condition before his spiritual mentor? Therefore sound knowledge is very important and thereafter he should follow the Shari'at in the light of that sound knowledge. One must fulfil the commands, abstain from the prohibitions, purify ones soul from evil characteristics and embellish it with good characteristics. This is actually spiritual reformation which is to develop the external and internal self i.e. to correct the outer and inner self. This is spiritual reformation and the meaning of Sufism.

Three parts of spiritual reformation

There are three parts to spiritual reformation.

The first part is:

طَهَارَةُ الْقُلُوبِ عَنِ الْعَقَائِدِ الْبَاطِلَةِ

For the heart to be purified of false beliefs and corrupt theories and to remain pure till death.

The second part is:

طَهَارَةُ النَّفْسِ عَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ الرَّذِيئَةِ

For the soul to be purified from evil characteristics and to remain pure till death.

The third part is:

طَهَارَةُ الْأَبْدَانِ عَنِ الْأَنْجَائِسِ وَالْأَعْمَالِ الْقَبِيحَةِ

For the body to be purified from, ritual impurities, physical impurities and evil actions and to remain pure till death.

Thus spiritual reformation is for the heart, soul and body to be purified and to remain pure. This is obedience to the Sharī'at and this is consistent obedience. As a result of this we will be blessed with the pleasure of Allāh. Now we have understood the destination and the path.

Two actions: Excessive dhikr and keeping the company of the pious

In order to progress it is necessary to do two things and abstain from two things. From the two things which we need to do, one is to make excessive dhikr and the other is to remain in the company of the pious. Allāh *ta'ālā* says regarding His remembrance,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

*O you who believe! Remember Allāh ta'ālā excessively.*²

We must remember Allāh *ta'ālā* excessively to the extent that we are blessed with constant remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā*, but under the guidance and supervision of the spiritual mentor because this is a field which we have no knowledge of.

¹ تفسير المظهرى: ١٦٧/٢.

² Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33: 41.

Through excessive dhikr one is blessed with constant remembrance

Through making dhikr under the supervision of the spiritual guide, one will be blessed with the constant remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Allāh will remain in one's heart and mind all the time.

وَاللَّهِ مَا طَلَعَتْ شَمْسٌ وَلَا غَرَبَتْ

إِلَّا وَأَنْتَ فِي قَلْبِي وَوَسْوَاسِي

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

وَلَا جَلَسْتُ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أَحَدْتُهُمْ

إِلَّا وَأَنْتَ حَدِيثِي بَيْنَ جُلَّاسِي

And whenever I sit to talk to people the topic of my discussion is only 'You'.

وَلَا هَمَمْتُ بِشُرْبِ الْمَاءِ مِنْ ظَمًا

إِلَّا رَأَيْتُ خِيَالًا مِنْكَ فِي الْكَأْسِ

And whenever I intend to drink water out of thirst I see your reflection in the glass.

Your mirror is the hue and fragrance of the universe. Wherever I look, I only see You.

The medium of the spiritual mentor is necessary to attain this state. Allāh *ta'ālā* is able to do anything. He can grant a person this state without a spiritual mentor but the world is a place of means. Allāh *ta'ālā*

also bestows knowledge through the medium of a teacher. A child is not born without parents. Allāh *ta'ālā* has the power but He does not do so. In exactly the same way the spiritual mentor is a means of attaining constant remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Excessive dhikr under the supervision of the spiritual mentor leads one to constant remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

The company of the spiritual mentor is most beneficial for the disciple

The first thing is excessive dhikr. The second thing which is necessary is to abstain from evil company and to choose good company. From good company opt for the company of men of spiritual affiliation and even from them choose the company of your spiritual mentor in particular. No other company is beneficial for a disciple as much as the company of his spiritual mentor. If he has true respect for his spiritual mentor, he will derive a lot of spiritual blessing. Hakīm al-Ummat Thānawī *rahimahullāh* used to say, “When you intend to take the oath of allegiance, choose a person who you think is most beneficial for you.”¹ Do not look at who is superior. Look at who you will derive most benefit from.

Our elders were focussed and had an objective. This is why if a seeker came to them and they realized that he would get more benefit from a certain shaykh – they were able to recognize this by the person’s temperament and inclination - they would send him to that shaykh. They were not worried about increasing

¹ *Malfūzāt-e-Hakīm al-Ummat*: p.301, vol.26.

their own circles. Their only concern was that people should attain the closeness and love of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Tauhīd-e-maṭlab

Once we take the oath of allegiance it means that our belief is that our spiritual mentor is most beneficial for us. When the spiritual mentor is most beneficial, we should sit in his company as much as possible. Tauhīd-e-maṭlab (unity of purpose) means that you have only one medium of reaching Allāh *ta'ālā* and that medium is your spiritual mentor. If you sit in the company of any other pious man or listen to his talk with the permission of your spiritual mentor or after understanding his purport, then in such a case you should believe that whatever spiritual blessings you are receiving from that pious saint is actually the spiritual blessing of your spiritual mentor. For example, you came to this khānqāh in Dhābel in January, February and March and you had one problem which could not be solved in the company and gathering of Ḥadrat. Co-incidentally you sat in the gathering of another pious man in another city or country and you knew that Ḥadrat would have no objection to your sitting there. There will be no disruption to tauhīd-e-maṭlab in that case. You sat in that gathering and the problem which was troubling you for a long time was solved. At that moment this thought should come to mind that through the blessing of the attention of your spiritual mentor Allāh *ta'ālā* made the gathering of that pious man a means and you have been reformed. This is how firm tauhīd-e-maṭlab should be.

Go to the spiritual mentor after annihilating your ego

I often say that nowadays we do shopping for spirituality also. We have taken the oath of allegiance to one spiritual mentor but we go here, there and every other place. We are more inclined to those places where we feel good, where people frequent, and where we are respected and we are honoured. The thought enters your mind that when you are by your spiritual mentor, nobody even asks you about yourself. Brother! Why should they ask you? We go there to annihilate ourselves.

My brothers! Go there after eradicating your own opinion. Many 'ulamā' come to khānqāhs and search for academic points. One can listen to academic points by sitting in a classroom. We come here for our spiritual reformation. If we have a true and sincere quest, Allāh *ta'ālā* will put such words on the tongue of the spiritual mentor which we are in need of. The only requirement is that we listen attentively with the ears of the heart. Go to the khānqāh of your spiritual mentor with humility as a seeker of reformation and one in need.

Annihilate the carnal self

Once Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* took leave and came to Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* for his spiritual reformation. As he arrived he presented one of his couplets on a piece of paper:

I have not brought any other desire to your door. Annihilate (my carnal self). Annihilate

(my carnal self). I have come here to be annihilated.¹

A person should go to his spiritual mentor to be annihilated. The spiritual mentor is our physician. Just as a surgeon performing an operation cuts the body of the patient because he knows that without operating, the patient will not get cured, likewise the spiritual mentor deals with us according to our ailment. When there is a need, he will even shun us. In fact he will even become harsh.

The amazing incident of Mirzā Mazhar and Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī

One of the disciples of Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān-e-Jānā *rahimahullāh*, Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would diligently serve his spiritual mentor. Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān-e-Jānā *rahimahullāh* had a very sensitive temperament and would often reprimand his disciples for small matters. This reprimand would always come at the opportune moment. Hadrat never shouted for no reason just because he felt like it. Once Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was fanning Hadrat and Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān-e-Jānā *rahimahullāh* became upset and said, “Do you have strength in your hand or not!” Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* took heed to the reprimand and began to fan faster. Hadrat said, “You want to make me fly?” Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said, “First I was fanning too slow, now I am fanning too fast!” Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* just had to say this much and Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān-e-Jānā *rahimahullāh* became angry and expelled him from the room because this was

¹ *Ashraf as-Sawāniḥ*: p.98, vol.2.

necessary for his spiritual reformation. There must have been some spiritual illness in him which was in the knowledge of his spiritual mentor.

Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a true seeker so he tried to persuade Hadrat. If our spiritual mentor had to treat us like that, we would probably leave the khānqāh. He was a true disciple. He felt that without his spiritual reformation he would not be successful in the Hereafter and without the attention of his spiritual mentor, his spiritual reformation was not possible. Therefore he remained in the khānqāh and continued to persuade his Hadrat. After many days, his spiritual mentor became pleased. He returned to Hadrat’s service and Allāh *ta’ālā* made him traverse the path of reformation. The day Hadrat Mirzā Mazhar Jān-e-Jānā *rahimahullāh* granted him khilāfat he said, “Ghulām ‘Alī! The harshness I showed you was for your own benefit. It was necessary to fulfil the purpose for which you came. You came for spiritual reformation and purification so I had to do it. Now go. If any servant of Allāh *ta’ālā* asks you how to remember Allāh *ta’ālā*, you must teach him.”¹

An interesting story about Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib and Hadrat Thānwī

Once Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh* became upset with Hadrat Khwājah ‘Azīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *rahimahullāh* and banned him from attending his gathering. It was the instruction of his spiritual mentor. What could he do? However he was a great lover. He wrote a poem and sent it to Hadrat.

¹ *Malfūzāt Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-Qādir Rā’ipūrī*: p.33.

They will not open the door there and I will not leave this door. Each one has his own rule. Somewhere it is his, somewhere it is mine¹

My beloved brothers! When there exists such fervour and love, one's task is accomplished. Today in this blessed gathering, in this khānqāh of Hadrat *dāmat barakātuhum*, we are speaking respectfully about Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who was not even a Maulānā, Muftī or Qārī and we regard him as an ideal example in the chapter of spiritual reformation and purification. This status is acquired through annihilating one's carnal self.

If you want some status, annihilate your ego. When a seed is planted in the ground it grows into a rose and a garden. Annihilate yourself to the point that you no longer remain. The hue and scent of your being must no longer remain. Create such perfection of His remembrance that only He remains, and you (ego) become extinct.

An amazing statement of my beloved Hājī Sāhib

This is the meaning of constant remembrance that you create such perfection of Allāh's remembrance that only He remains, and you (ego) become extinct. Neither your being nor your hue and scent should remain. My spiritual mentor, Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, said to me, "Son! Annihilate yourself to such an extent that you do not even perceive the annihilation." Friends! What is the point of that annihilation where

¹ *Dhikr-e-Majdhūb*: p.74.

you still perceive the annihilation of yourself? If this thought lingers in your mind that you are something and you have annihilated yourself then what is the benefit of such annihilation? Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say that his spiritual mentor, Hadrat Masīh *al-Ummat* *rahimahullāh* used to ask, “What is annihilation?” He used to reply, “To gain.” By annihilating one’s ego, a person gains a lot. What is annihilation? Annihilation is to gain. Then he used to ask, “What is to gain? He would reply, “Annihilation.” By annihilating one’s ego, a person gains a lot.

Listen to discourses with the intention of practising

Abstain from evil company and keep good company especially the company of pious men of spiritual affiliation and stay more often in the company of your spiritual mentor. It is not sufficient that you come to the *khānqāh* of your spiritual mentor once a week or once a month. Together with that, take benefit from his discourses. I have heard and read the discourses of Hadrat. There is no advice which a disciple is in need of that Hadrat did not give attention to. Read the Hadīth lessons over and over again. Listen to Hadrat’s discourses over and over again but with the intention of practising. Today we listen to talks for entertainment. We listen to talks for enjoyment. We say, “It was an excellent talk. I thoroughly enjoyed it.” We go shopping for talks also. May Allāh *ta’ālā* save us from the evils of YouTube. May He save us from the harms of the mobile phone. A simple mobile phone is okay but there is no need for a smart phone. I asked someone, “What do you call a smart phone here?” He replied that they call a simple phone ‘small’ and a smart phone ‘big’. I said, “It makes a person do big things also!”

Exert yourself

We have to do two things: 1. Engage in dhikr. 2. Stay in the company of the spiritual mentor. Be extremely punctual on your daily acts of worship. May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant me the ability as well. Be consistent on your recitation of the Qur'ān and dhikr. I know the temperament of Hadrat. He makes his disciples work hard. He does not have the customary temperament of the *khānqāh*. Hadrat himself exerts himself and he makes others do the same as well. I know because when he comes to England, I ask Qārī 'Abd al-Hannān Sāhib and other co-travellers, "What was the programme schedule for today?" After listening to the schedule and work, I pity Hadrat but even with so much of work, Hadrat does not miss his daily acts of worship. Hadrat practises himself and desires that others should also practise. So be very punctual on your daily acts of worship-the recitation of the Qur'ān, dhikr, *tasbīhāt* and so on. Together with the daily acts of worship abstain from evil company and keep good company especially the company of your spiritual mentor. We must attend the assembly every week and every month. This is a very blessed system. How easy it is for us. What great kindness it is of Hadrat upon us that considering our pre-occupation, Hadrat restricts and confines himself to us. A much larger number of people than this would have attended if Hadrat had to be in another city or country at this moment but Hadrat restricts himself to this place and gives us an opportunity.

The etiquette of attending the *khānqāh*

Therefore my brothers, come with etiquette, respect, love and conviction. Come with a quest as one in

need. If an announcement had to be made outside right now that one thousand rupees are to be distributed to each person, everyone will run out. The rich will also run because they will get a thousand rupee note for free so what harm is there? However he will not go as a needy person. He will be desirous but not in need. And if it is a poor man who has nothing at home, he will go with a quest and need. It is obvious that the effort and desire of both will be very different. The rich man's attitude will be, "If I get anything, well and good. If I don't then it is okay." The poor man's attitude will be, "Come what may, I must get the money because if I don't get this one thousand rupee note, I don't know what will happen." Therefore come to the gathering with a quest and in need. Fulfil all the requirements of the khānqāh. Every visitor knows the rules and regulations of the khānqāh and the temperament of Hadrat. Hand yourself over to your spiritual mentor like wood which is in the hands of a carpenter. The wood does not say to the carpenter, "Make me into a chair. Make me into a pulpit." We should hand ourselves over in exactly the same way. We have reliance on our spiritual mentor and that is why we gave him our hand. Since we are coming regularly it means that we still have that reliance. If that reliance has terminated then stop coming here. When you have reliance, hand yourself over to your spiritual mentor.

A disciple should have the qualities of Hadrat Abū Bakr

Our Hājī Fārūq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say, "If the spiritual mentor has the qualities of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and the disciple the qualities of Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu 'anhu* then

understand that the task has been accomplished.”¹ Our spiritual mentor possesses the qualities of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, knowledge and al-ḥamdulillāh he even practises on his knowledge. So the spiritual mentor has the qualities of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. Now we need to develop the qualities of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* within ourselves, i.e. his service, companionship and obedience. If you examine the life of Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr *radiyallāhu ‘anhu*, you will not find anything besides companionship, service and obedience. We have to do two things: 1. Together with being punctual on daily acts of worship, make excessive dhikr. 2. Keep the company of the pious especially the company of your spiritual mentor.

Abstain from two things: Sin and futilities

In addition to doing the two actions mentioned above, we have to abstain from two things: 1. Sin 2. Futile activities. Brothers! Strive to abstain from sin. We should have this attitude that we can die but we will not disobey Allāh *ta’ālā*. A believer does not plan to commit sin by thinking, “I will watch a film on Sunday after ‘ishā’ ṣalāh,” or “I will commit this sin tomorrow.” Never does this happen. It is only on account of being overwhelmed through the effect of company, the environment, the carnal self and Shayṭān that a believer commits sin. The moment he notices his error, he repents immediately and seeks Allāh’s forgiveness.

¹ *Islāḥ Kī So Bāte*: p.2.

A believer abstains from sin

Understand this through an easy example. When we wear clothes on 'Īd day or for Jumu'ah, we wear it with this intention that we will not allow our clothes to get dirty. We know that they will get dirty. They will get dirty with perspiration. Sometimes food falls and leaves a stain but we are still determined to protect them. We do not intentionally soil them but if they get soiled, we do not think that since they have become dirty, we will allow them to get even more dirty. In fact, we will try our best to save our clothes from getting more dirty. We will wash them with soap at the first opportunity and clean them. A believer should also have the same zeal for saving his heart from the stains of sin thinking, "This heart will never get dirty. It will not get dirty with the stains of minor nor major sins." However despite this firm determination if it gets dirty due to being overpowered by circumstances, he will immediately apply the soap of repentance and seeking forgiveness and cleanse it that very moment.

The wonderful effect of repentance

Allāh *ta'ālā* has kept an effect in repentance. Whoever repents seriously, the power to abstain from sins will develop in him and he progresses. A certain person is involved in evil glances. Every ten minutes he steals a glance here and there. He tries to refrain but because his heart is diseased, the evil glance take place despite his efforts. He must repent each time he casts an evil glance. The benefit of repenting over and over again will be that he will perceive very quickly that previously he was looking at evil every ten minutes. Now through the blessing of regular repentance, the power to abstain from sin has increased and now he is

glancing at evil every hour. Then he will find that it is happening after a day. Thereafter he will find that it is happening after every month. Then he will find that it is happening after every six months. If this routine of repentance continues, a time will come when through the blessing of repentance a wall of protection will form between him and sin and he will despise sin. Hadrat Doctor 'Abd al-Hayy 'Ārifī *rahimahullāh* used to say, "There is great power in repentance and seeking forgiveness. Make a habit of repenting and see for yourself. You will automatically develop a hatred for sin."¹ Therefore my brothers! Abstain from sin and do whatever you have to achieve it. If sin takes place, repent immediately.

It is equally important to abstain from futilities

The second thing which is necessary to abstain from is futilities. This is very important. One has to abstain from sin but abstaining from futilities is equally important. If we look at futilities from an academic perspective, then they have no benefit in the Hereafter nor any worldly benefit, but they are not sinful. Now when it is not a sin then what is the harm in doing it? My brother! Futilities take a person towards sin. Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says, "The border of futilities is joined to sin. In the beginning it is permissible but the end result is sin."² The second point is that when time is the most valuable capital of life, why do we want to spend it on such an act wherein there is no worldly benefit nor benefit in the Hereafter?

¹ *Ifādāt-e-'Ārifī*: p.83.

² *Dawā'e Dil*: p.50.

An amazing incident of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham and Hadrat Khidr

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related the incident of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh*. Once Hadrat Khidr *'alayhis salām* came to meet him. After meeting him, Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* went back to making dhikr. Hadrat Khidr *'alayhis salām* said, “I am Khidr.” Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* said, “Very good. It is possible.” Hadrat Khidr *'alayhis salām* said in astonishment, “The whole world desires to meet me and I have come personally to meet you and you are not even paying attention to me.” Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* said, “That person who has a break from meeting Allāh *ta'ālā* will desire to meet you.”

Futilities are also barriers

My brothers! Appreciate each and every moment and save yourself from futilities under all circumstances. If one drop of urine or blood falls onto your clothes, they become impure and if tea falls on them, they will not become impure but there will be a dirty stain. In exactly the same way, the heart becomes impure due to sin and it does not become impure due to futilities however it surely gets dirty. A barrier forms and when this happens, one is not blessed with the complete recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā*. If you apply paint on a mirror, you will not be able to see your reflection. This is the result of sin which completely prevents the recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā*. If dust settles on the mirror, the mirror does not perform the function which it was supposed to perform on account of the dust on it. Likewise futilities also becomes an

impediment in attaining the recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā*. In this day and age, the greatest tool of futilities is the cellular phone. I am being liberal by saying that the cellular phone is a tool for futilities otherwise people and even 'ulamā' are getting involved in major sins through it.

In touch with the world despite being secluded

When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam was asked,

مَا النَّجَاةُ؟

What is (the pathway to) salvation?

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said,

أَمْلِكْ عَلَيْكَ لِسَانَكَ وَلْيَسَعَكَ بَيْتُكَ وَأَبِكْ عَلَى خَطِيئَتِكَ¹

Control your tongue, your house should be spacious for you and cry over your sins.

Many people control their tongues and do not come out of their houses unnecessarily through the blessing of purifying their carnal self so they feel that they are acting on this Hadīth. Brother! This constant chatting on the cellular phone is also included amongst the actions of the tongue. Chatting is taking place so where is the control of the tongue and where is seclusion? And I do not know what messages are constantly coming on WhatsApp. Despite all of this, will it be correct to claim that we are controlling our tongues and secluding ourselves? We are so occupied

¹ سنن الترمذي، باب ما جاء في حفظ اللسان، ح(٢٤٠٦).

in futilities and the worries of the world because of the cellular phone, internet and WhatsApp that the heart and mind do not get peace. If that is the case, how will we make spiritual progress?

The importance of peace of mind and the story of Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib

Hadrat Muftī Maḥmūd al-Hasan Gangohī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* narrated the story of Hadrat Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* lived in Makkah Mukarramah for a few years and regularly kept the company of Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was the disciple of Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He was a Muḥaddith and an expert physician. He did not leave any stone unturned in his effort to traverse the path of spiritual reformation. It is for this purpose that he went to Makkah. One day Hājī Sāhib said to him, “Maulānā Sādiq al-Yaqīn! You lived in Makkah which is such a blessed place, you made a lot of effort and I did whatever I could however you have not benefited and your heart has not been purified. Therefore my advice to you is that you go to Gangoh.” Where is he being sent away from? From Makkah Mukarramah, the Masjid al-Harām? Where is he being sent to? To Gangoh. And who is his spiritual mentor sending him to? To one of his disciples. This is what is called the group of sincere men. His spiritual mentor is sending him to one of his disciples and since Maulānā had reliance and conviction in his spiritual mentor he did not object. He got ready and left for Gangoh.

Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* asked Maulānā about his spiritual condition and two things became apparent: 1. He was occupied with teaching Hadīth. 2.

He wrote prescriptions for the sick. Hadrat told him to leave out both occupations. Look! A person will only be able to leave out his Hadith work when he has complete reliance on his spiritual mentor. Otherwise he will say, “What kind of advice is this that he is stopping me from Hadith.” However Maulānā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had complete reliance and respect, hence he left both the occupations and within thirty days he traversed the path of spiritual purification. In thirty days he was blessed with recognition and connection with Allāh *ta’ālā*. Thereafter Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* sent him back to Makkah Mukarramah.

Here a question arises. Why did Hadrat Gangohī prevent him from teaching Hadith? Muftī Mahmūd Sāhib was an imām in Sufism. Hadrat says, “Hadith and medicine are occupations which cause the mind to remain constantly absorbed in them. If any objection arose regarding a Hadith, it will constantly play in one’s mind. This also happens in the field of medicine because one has to examine patients and prescribe medicine and so on. Hence Maulānā was not being blessed with that peace of mind which is required to create a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā*. Therefore Hadrat Gangohī stopped both works as a result of which peace of mind was attained and progress was made.

Now another question arises. Was Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* not aware of this? Hadrat Muftī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said, “Actually Hājī Sāhib did diagnose this illness because he was an expert spiritual mentor but since he was neither a physician nor a Muhaddith he probably thought, “Perhaps Maulānā will not be completely satisfied with my prescription and the

remedy will not be as successful as it ought to be.” Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was a physician and a Muhaddith. Therefore Maulānā would be completely satisfied with Hadrat Gangohī’s prescription.”¹

Peace of mind is necessary for spiritual progress

Our condition is such that we do not get peace of mind at all because we are always occupying our minds with problems and difficulties. One madrasah student from our Islamic Da’wah Academy came to meet me during the month of Ramadān. He said, “I will make iftār, perform my tarāwīh salāh and make sehrī here.” I said, “Very well.” Co-incidentally we were next to each other in the first row for tarāwīh salāh. After every four rak’ats he took his phone out to look at the messages. Now where will one gain peace of mind like this? What spirituality will be left in such a salāh? My brothers! Peace of mind is necessary for progress. And to attain it, we have to abstain from futilities. I say whoever does not really need a smart phone should not own one at all.

Summary

We have to do two things and we must abstain from two. Besides this there is one more action. Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said, “To be successful, there is one more action which is like a condition. It is ittilā’ and ittibā’.”² Ittilā’ and ittibā’ is to relate your spiritual condition to your spiritual mentor and to practise on his guidance with conviction and compliance. My brothers! If we keep a relationship of

¹ *Mawā’iz-e-Faqīh al-Ummat*: p.66.

² *Ashrafi Bikhri Moti*: p.15.

ittilā' and ittibā with our spiritual mentor, we make a lot of dhikr, are particular about keeping pious company and in addition to that we abstain from sin and futilities then Allāh willing, we will be blessed with constant obedience. We will be blessed with the pleasure of Allāh and we will attain Allāh. Thereafter the entire world will be at our feet.

O Jigar! The pinnacle of my raging love is only this much that He conquered me and I conquered the world.

My brothers! I always say that if your intention to practise is weak, then too explain your spiritual condition to your spiritual mentor. It is possible that through the blessing of his du'ā', concern and attention, the drive to do good actions will be created.

Final request

It was extremely difficult to speak in front of Hadrat. It was only through the spiritual blessings of Hadrat and his spiritual attention that I was able to say a few words. May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant us the ability to practise. I ask you repeatedly in this gathering not to abandon this place. Come over and over again punctually and benefit from Hadrat. May Allāh *ta'ālā* bless Hadrat in his lifespan. Nobody came in this world to live forever. It is possible that we die before Hadrat. If that happens, it is very good. Hadrat will make du'ā for us. But it is also possible that Hadrat may pass away before us. I always say that we are not prepared to think unpleasant thoughts about those whom we love a lot such as our parents, teachers and spiritual mentor. We are not prepared to bring the thought of our spiritual mentor's demise to our minds. Then all of a sudden when the news of his demise

reaches us we realise that everything is over. Sometimes we should think, “My Hadrat is alive at the moment. I still have to reform myself spiritually. If Hadrat passes away what will happen to me?” Hāji Fārūq Sāhib rahimahullāh and Hadrat Ludhyānwī Sāhib rahimahullāh were both very kind to me. I was favoured with the kindness of many other spiritual mentors. Hadrat shows a lot of affection to me as well but after the demise of my spiritual mentor there is a type of remorse that lingers. There is a lot of grief. A certain wound remains in the heart which never heals. Therefore appreciate Hadrat. Progress in your dhikr under the guidance of Hadrat. Take benefit from his company and engage in ittilā' and ittibā regularly.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant you and I the ability to practise. *Āmīn*.

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

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* translation and editing of this book was completed on 29 Dhū al-Hijjah 1439 A.H./10 September 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. *Āmīn*.

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

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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