

# **A PRECIOUS GIFT FOR THE STUDENTS**

**Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Salīm  
Dhorāt Sāhib**

**Translation edited by:  
Maulānā Mahomed Mahomedy**

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## EVALUATION

Hadrat Muftī Radā' al-Haqq Sāhib

Shaykh al-Hadīth and Principal Muftī of Dār al-'Ulūm  
Zakarīyyā, South Africa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

Allāh *ta'ālā* has bestowed Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib with a variety of special qualities. Maulānā possesses external, internal, spiritual and physical virtues. Allāh *ta'ālā* selected him to serve Islām in Britain. To do the work of Dīn within the confines of the masjid and the madrasah is not very difficult. However to spread the fragrance of Islām beyond these four walls in a polluted environment is a difficult task and this is what Maulānā is currently doing. In his gatherings and lectures one perceives the light of the sun and the moon, the fragrance of the rose garden and the beauty of many seasons of spring combined.

Maulānā's lectures and words of advice are well-known beyond the borders of Britain in every corner of the world and occasionally these discourses become the morning breeze which irrigates the four corners of the world via the spring clouds. I have heard many talks of Maulānā. They contain a sort of tranquillity and calmness together with an excellent manner of eloquent speech and expression. Maulānā's style of lecturing in Urdu is so captivating that a person wishes deep down in his heart that the discourse should continue for as long as possible. By listening to his Urdu accent, word

pronunciation and vocabulary you are convinced that he is a linguist par excellence. Maulānā combines Sufism to knowledge and practice like how honey is mixed with milk. He quotes the texts of the pious and the elders so fluently that one is involuntarily compelled to praise his memory. Allāh *ta'ālā* has blessed him with superb ability and skill to spiritually reform the youth.

When the books for the higher grades were not yet taught in his madrasah some of his students would come to us at Dār al-'Ulūm Zakarīyyā. We observed that they would mind their own business. They would stay away from all futile activities and keep to themselves in public.

The booklet before me which comprises of Maulānā's words of advice titled, "*A Precious Gift for the Students*" is clear proof of Hadrat's vast knowledge.

Maulānā is counted amongst those who have drunk from the fountain of Hadrat Maulānā Hājī Fārūq Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. In his discourses one can taste the drink of true recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā* coming from that fountain.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant Maulānā blessing in his health, knowledge and actions and may He grant the ummat the ability to take maximum benefit from him.

Radā' al-Haqq  
Dār al-'Ulūm Zakarīyyā, South Africa  
13 Jumād al-Ūlā 1438 A.H.

## LETTER

Hadrat Maulānā ‘Abd al-Hamīd Is-hāq Sāhib *dāmat*  
*barakātuhum*

Founder and Principal of Madrasah ‘Arabīyyah  
Islāmīyyah, Azaadville, South Africa

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ سُبحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى

Beloved, honourable and sincere Maulānā Muḥammad  
Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib

*As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*

I had the good fortune of looking at the complete manuscript of Hadrat’s book, “*A Precious Gift for the Students*”, which in reality is a transcript of an extremely important lecture. This slave had the opportunity of deriving benefit from it and I regard it to be most beneficial for myself.

*Māshā’ Allāh*, you have explained an extremely important topic in an excellent and eloquent manner of which we were in dire need. May Allāh *ta’ālā* grant you the highest reward for this, may He make it beneficial and crown it with acceptance. May Allāh *ta’ālā* grant us the ability to practise on it. Āmīn.

Was-salām

‘Abd al-Hamīd Is-hāq

Written by Maulānā ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm Shaykh, teacher at  
Dār al-‘Ulūm Azaadville

29 Jumād al-Ūlā 1438 A.H.

27 February 2017

## OBSTACLES ON THE PATH TO ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى مَنْ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدَهُ أَمَا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي، وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي، وَأَحِلِّ عُنُقَدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي يُفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي، سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ، اللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا نَنْفَعُنَا. إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِ.

It is a great favour of Allāh *ta'ālā* that He granted us the opportunity of spending some time in a centre of Islamic and spiritual knowledge. These learning centres are not here for any personal gain. Rather they are here for the students to derive benefit. You are all extremely fortunate that Allāh *ta'ālā* linked you to such an institution to acquire knowledge wherein experts in both the external and internal sciences are present. May Allāh *ta'ālā* enrich me with the blessings of this institute and may He also grant all of you, my fellow students, the ability to appreciate this centre of Islamic and spiritual knowledge. Āmīn.

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<sup>1</sup> سنن الترمذي، باب فضل طلب العلم، ح (٢٨٣٧)

## The status of a student

Māshā' Allāh you have left your homes in search of knowledge and this is your occupation day and night. You are very fortunate because Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said regarding the student of Islām:

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ

*The person who goes out in search of knowledge is in the path of Allāh ta'ālā until he returns.*

That person who leaves his home in search of knowledge is in the path of Allāh ta'ālā as long as he does not return home. The learning, revising, lesson preparation, sleeping, reclining, eating and drinking of students of Islām are all in the path of Allāh ta'ālā. Your status in the eyes of Allāh ta'ālā is very lofty. Therefore when you walk the angels spread their wings out of delight for your act of seeking knowledge. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أجنحتها لِطالِبِ العلمِ رِضا بما يصنعُ

*The angels certainly place and spread their wings for the student out of pleasure for the action which he is doing.*

## An amazing incident regarding Hāfiz ibn 'Asākir

Ibn 'Asākir rahimahullāh was a great muhaddith<sup>3</sup> of the past. He travelled from Shām to Nishāpūr in search of

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<sup>1</sup> سنن الترمذي، باب فضل طلب العلم، ح (٢٦٤٧)

<sup>2</sup> شعب الإيمان، فصل في فضل العلم وشرف مقدره، ح (١٥٧٣)

<sup>3</sup> Scholar of Hadīth

knowledge and met the great muḥaddith of that era, Imām Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Farāwī *rahimahullāh*. Imām Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Farāwī *rahimahullāh* says, “That student had such thirst for knowledge that he exhausted me for three days.”

My dear friends! Just ponder a little. How fond of knowledge that student must have been to tire his teacher for three days. He would go repeatedly to the teacher and say, “Teach me.” He would not even ask for a break from the lesson. Within three days the teacher became so exhausted that he took an oath that if this student comes to him to learn tomorrow, he would not open the door for him.

## Our carelessness

What is our condition when it comes to learning? Half an hour before the break our eyes are on the clock calculating that now thirty minutes remain, now twenty five minutes remain, now ten minutes are left, now five minutes are left. If the teacher delayed the break by two to four minutes in order to complete the lesson our hearts become restless.

My dear students! It is due to this very decline that after graduating Allāh *ta’ālā* does not take religious service from us and we do not become men of worth. Think a little. Imām Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Farāwī *rahimahullāh* was a great muḥaddith of that era. Did he not possess the fervour to teach Ḥadīth? When it came to imparting knowledge he would have definitely been desirous that some student should come to him, learn Ḥadīth and then spread the knowledge further. Such an eager teacher is saying that this student has so much

enthusiasm that he has tired me and compelled me to take an oath.

## The status of a student in the court of Rasūlullāh

Imām al-Farāwī *rahimahullāh* explains, “When I awoke the next day, someone knocked on the door. I opened the door and after exchanging the customary greetings with the visitor he said,

أَنَا رَسُولُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْكَ

*I have come to you as the messenger of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. I saw Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in a dream and he instructed me:*

امْضِ إِلَى الْفَرَاوِيِّ وَقُلْ لَهُ: قَدِمَ بَلَدَكُمْ رَجُلٌ شَامِيٌّ أَسْمَرُ اللَّوْنِ يَطْلُبُ حَدِيثِي فَلَا تَمَلَّ عَنْهُ

*Go to Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Farāwī *rahimahullāh* in the morning and say to him that a man of wheat-coloured complexion has come to your area from Shām seeking my Hadīth. Do not get tired of him.*

My dear students! See how lofty the status of a student is that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam is sending a message to a great muḥaddith that a student has come from Shām to Nishāpūr in search of my Hadīth. When he comes to you to learn do not become tired of him. The narrator says,

فَوَاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ الْفَرَاوِيُّ يَقُومُ حَتَّى يَقُومَ الْحَافِظُ<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>تذكرة الحفاظ: ٨٧/٤

*By Allāh! Imām al-Farāwī rahimahullāh would not get up from a lesson until Hāfīz ibn ‘Asākir rahimahullāh did not.*

After the incident of the dream, Imām al-Farāwī rahimahullāh made it his practice not to end the lesson as long as Ibn ‘Asākir did not say, “It is enough. I want to go.”

## Understand your value

When Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib rahimahullāh was taken to Dār al-‘Ulūm Karachi and he entered the masjid to address the students and teachers he only said one sentence, “Students! Understand your value!”<sup>1</sup> Today there is a need for students to understand their worth. Those who are occupied with and affiliated to knowledge need to recognise their value. What a lofty position Allāh ta‘ālā has blessed them with!

## Obstacles on the path to acquiring knowledge

I was saying that Allāh ta‘ālā elevated the rank of a student and granted him great status. Therefore the devil tries hard to put obstacles in his path. It is important for every student to understand some of the main impediments. After understanding these obstacles a student should try his utmost to stay clear of them in order to protect himself from failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Islāhī khutubāt, vol. 7, p 104.

## First obstacle: Sin

The first and most harmful obstacle is sin. You have probably heard this poetry of Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* from your teachers many times:

شَكَوْتُ إِلَى وَكَيْعٍ سُوءَ حِفْظِي - فَأَرْشَدَنِي إِلَى تَرْكِ الْمَعَاصِي

وَأَخْبَرَنِي بِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ - وَنُورُ اللَّهِ لَا يُهْدَى لِعَاصِي

*I complained to my teacher Imām Wakī' rahimahullāh about my weakness of memory. He advised me to leave out sin, told me that knowledge is a light (from Allāh) and the light of Allāh is not bestowed to a sinner.*

Imām Wakī' *rahimahullāh* guided his student, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs ash-Shafi'ī and told him to abstain and remain distant from sinning because knowledge is a gift of light from Allāh *ta'ālā* and a sinner does not receive the light of Allāh *ta'ālā*. The reason for this is that the heart is the centre of knowledge. That heart which becomes polluted with sins no longer remains eligible for pure knowledge to enter it.

## The slightest disobedience of Allāh is also serious

The first thing that students need to pay attention to is that their lives should become pure of sin. They should lead a life of piety and abstain from both minor and major sins. Whether a sin is minor or major it is after all the disobedience of Allāh *ta'ālā* and the disobedience of Allāh *ta'ālā* under all circumstances is something serious. Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās *radiyallāhu 'anhu* says,

كُلُّ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَهُوَ كَبِيرَةٌ<sup>١</sup>

*All those actions which Allāh ta'ālā has prohibited are major.*

All those acts which Allāh ta'ālā has prohibited whether they pertain to major sins or minor sins, are major. The slightest disobedience of our creator Allāh ta'ālā is very severe. Thus a student should stay very far away from sin. This is the biggest obstacle in acquiring knowledge. Through sin, academic blessings come to a halt. Therefore every student should make a firm resolution at this very moment that I will not disobey Allāh ta'ālā in the future and if I slip up and commit a sin then I will repent immediately because to repent after sinning is also a command of Allāh ta'ālā. When a sin is committed, Allāh ta'ālā is disobeyed. If one does not repent after committing a sin, it results in another act of disobedience of Allāh ta'ālā. So we should resolve that from now on we will not commit any sin and if we do then we will repent immediately. Refrain from the disobedience of Allāh ta'ālā. That person who refrains from the disobedience of Allāh ta'ālā, He will bestow him with academic blessings.

## Harming a Muslim is a major sin

An important point to note regarding sin is that while living in the madrasah nobody should be caused an type of inconvenience by us because it is a major sin to cause harm to any Muslim. We disregard this during our study years. We vex whoever we like, we tease them, make

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<sup>1</sup>المعجم الكبير، ح(١٨)[٢٩٣]

them objects of our jokes, we poke fun at one another and so on. Academic blessings are blocked because of these things. Often the intelligent students get caught up in these evils because they scorn others on account of their intelligence. They interfere with them. If someone erred in reciting some part of the Arabic text in class then we start to mock at him. This mockery goes on for many years even after graduation. Allāh *ta'ālā* is observing that this poor and weak student's heart is paining and this poor boy cannot even express his feelings. The trouble-making students remember the Arabic text very well because they are intelligent. They remember different sayings and opinions. They come out first in the examination but due to this sin they are not blessed with the divine light of knowledge. They do not get the ability to practise on that knowledge and they are deprived of serving knowledge and serving the creation.

## Knowledge is not mere information, it entails practice

Words, letters and phrases are not knowledge. Hadrat Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* says,

الْعِلْمُ مَا نَفَع، لَيْسَ الْعِلْمُ مَا حُفِظَ<sup>1</sup>

*Knowledge is what benefits i.e. it causes one to practise. Knowledge is not phrases and words which are memorised.*

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<sup>1</sup> سير اعلام النبلاء: ٨٩/١٠

Knowledge is not those letters which a student memorises. The words and letters which a student stores in one corner of his mind is not real knowledge. True knowledge is that by which a student gets the ability to practise. A certain student learnt and memorised that the five daily salāhs are obligatory. This is a statement which he has memorised. This is not knowledge; it is a piece of information. He has not yet acquired the knowledge of this statement. Yes, if he also performs the five daily salāhs punctually it will be said that he has also acquired the knowledge of this statement.

Hadrat Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah *rahimahullāh* says,

لَيْسَ الْعَالِمُ الَّذِي يَعْرِفُ الْخَيْرَ وَالشَّرَّ، ائِمَّا الْعَالِمُ الَّذِي يَعْرِفُ الْخَيْرَ فَيَتَّبِعُهُ وَيَعْرِفُ الشَّرَّ  
فَيَجْتَنِبُهُ<sup>١</sup>

*A true 'ālim is not one who knows what is good and what is evil. A true 'ālim is one who after recognising the good, follows it and after recognising evil, he abstains from it.*

A person who can only distinguish between good and bad, permissible and impermissible, right and wrong by saying this is permissible and that is impermissible, this is lawful and that is unlawful, this is good and that is bad, is not worthy of being called an 'ālim. In reality that person is worthy of being called an 'ālim who acquires the knowledge of good i.e. information regarding goodness and thereafter follows it and brings it into his life and he recognises evil i.e. he acquires information regarding evil that this is bad, this is wrong, this is

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<sup>1</sup>تهذيب الكمال: ٢٢٧/٣

impermissible and thereafter he refrains from those acts.

## Harming a Muslim in the madrasah

We have learnt this Hadīth:

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ<sup>1</sup>

*A complete Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe.*

We learn from this Hadīth that in reality that person is worthy of being called a Muslim from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe. As long as we do not practise on this Hadīth we will not acquire the true knowledge of it. Most of the students have reached the age of puberty and are duty-bound and responsible to follow Islām. Hence while living in the madrasah we should pay careful attention that nobody should be caused any harm by our speech and actions. Everyone should keep in mind that when he leaves the toilet, he should leave it in a clean state. When he wakes up after performing wuḍū, he should leave the area clean. When he leaves the kitchen, he must clean his place before leaving. There are four to five students sharing a room. Because of one student the others should not be inconvenienced. It is part of harming a Muslim when some fellow students are sleeping and the rest are talking in a manner that disturbs their sleep or if four out of five are clean and neat and one is untidy or one is clean and four are untidy. This is harming a Muslim.

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<sup>1</sup> صحيح البخاري، ح (١٠)

This is a major sin and it happens repeatedly on a daily basis due to which the heart becomes polluted. When the heart becomes polluted we will be deprived of the blessings of knowledge.

## Teachers: Our greatest benefactors

Students are students. Sometimes through our actions our benefactors i.e. our teachers are also inconvenienced. Who can be a greater benefactor to us than our teachers? When we first come to the madrasah we do not have real human characteristics within ourselves. We do not have knowledge. As a result of their efforts we gain some understanding. We learn how to lead our lives. They are our benefactors who teach us the theory of knowledge and who also worry how the reality of that theory can come into our lives. We cause pain to their hearts. We do such actions during class that disturb them. We come late for the lesson. We do not learn the lesson. We do not live in the madrasah and boarding as we were supposed to. All of this causes inconvenience to them. How will such a student be successful? Since time immemorial the pious elders have experienced that students who cause grief and harm to their teachers are deprived of knowledge and the service of knowledge.

## The status of a teacher

Dear students! The status of a teacher is very lofty. Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu says,

أَنَا عَبْدٌ مَنْ عَلَّمَنِي حَرْفًا، إِنْ شَاءَ بَاعَ وَإِنْ شَاءَ أَعْتَقَ<sup>1</sup>

*I am the slave of the person who taught me one letter. He can buy or sell me if he wishes.*

A poet says:

رَأَيْتُ أَحَقَّ الْحَقِّ حَقَّ الْمُعَلِّمِ - وَأَوْجَبَهُ حِفْظًا عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ  
لَقَدْ حَقَّ أَنْ يُهْدَى إِلَيْهِ كَرَامَةً - لِتَعْلِيمِ حَرْفٍ وَاجِدِ أَلْفَ دِرْهَمٍ

*I found the greatest right and the one which is most deserving of preservation by every Muslim to be the right of the teacher. Without a doubt it is true that a teacher should be gifted a thousand silver coins out of honour for every letter he taught.*

Explanation: I found the right of the teacher to be very great in comparison to other rights. This is such an important right that every Muslim needs to give it due consideration. This right is so great that a student should give his teacher one thousand silver coins out of honour for each and every letter he taught him. This means that our lives will come to an end but we will not be able to fulfil the right of our teachers.

## How to interact with one's teachers

My brothers! Those who achieved anything, achieved it through receiving the attention and du'ās of their teachers. We do not fully appreciate our teachers because we are living in an era of freedom. What was the

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<sup>1</sup>السعاية في كشف ما في شرح الوقاية، ص: ٨

conduct of our pious predecessors? Muḥaddith Mughīrah *rahimahullāh* says:

كُنَّا نَهَابُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هَيْبَةَ الْأَمِيرِ

*We would fear our teacher, Ibrāhīm just as an ordinary subject fears the caliph.*

Ḥadīrat Imām Bukhāri *rahimahullāh* says regarding Imām Yahyā ibn Maʿīn *rahimahullāh*:

مَا رَأَيْتُ أَحَدًا أَوْقَرَ لِلْمُحَدِّثِينَ مِنْ يَحْيَى ابْنِ مَعِينٍ

*I did not see anyone respecting the scholars of Hadīth more than Yahyā ibn Maʿīn.*

My dear friends! Stay very far away from all the barriers and obstacles to knowledge. All those personalities who achieved lofty positions only achieved them because they paid careful attention to remaining distant from all the obstacles to acquiring knowledge. They did whatever they had to do to achieve this.

## The destruction of Islām due to carelessness of the student

My friends! I am also a student like you so we can discuss those things that bring grief and pain to the heart among ourselves. Nowadays weaknesses are found in students and this is not only painful because one individual is being destroyed due to them but also because Islām is being destroyed. You are a chosen

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<sup>1</sup>سنن الدارمي، باب في توقيف العلماء، ح (٤٢٢)

<sup>2</sup>تدريب الراوي، ص: ٥٨٩

group to take knowledge from your teachers and pass it on to others. Allāh *ta'ālā* has made this knowledge reach our teachers via their teachers. If we are not careful, if we do not recognize our value and do not give ourselves any attention then this knowledge will not be transferred from them to us. It will get lost. When knowledge is destroyed then Islām gets destroyed because this knowledge is Islām. Imām Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn *rahimahullāh* says:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ دِينٌ<sup>١</sup>

*Indeed this knowledge is Dīn.*

Knowledge is wasted due to the carelessness and laziness of the student and when knowledge is destroyed then Islām is destroyed.

## Our weakness as students

Nowadays two evil qualities have entered students. The first evil quality is that as long as we do not complete the final year and graduate we regard ourselves as children. It is unfortunate that the attitude of most students even after reaching the final year is the same irresponsible attitude found in the first year.

Our second weakness is that we postpone the excellent ideas and thoughts that form in our minds and think that we will fulfil them but only after graduation. You have many teachers here, who are equal in rank to my teachers. They are my elders. I regard visiting and meeting them my good fortune. I am certain that they

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<sup>1</sup> صحيح مسلم، مقدمة الإمام مسلم رحمه الله، باب في أن الإسناد من الدين

give you better advice than whatever I am saying. I do not know how many words of advice you have probably heard from them after so many years and how many good thoughts and resolutions would have formed in your hearts but the habit of most students is to postpone such ideas. They think that they will do it but after graduation. It is extremely necessary to rectify this error immediately because if one was not morally trained during his years of study then it will become very difficult later on.

### **The madrasah is like a mother's womb**

Keep one thing firmly in mind that this madrasah is like a mother's womb. Whatever deficiency the child comes out of the womb with remains with him his entire life. If he is born blind, nobody can give him eyesight. If he is born without hands, he will remain without hands. If he is born lame, he will remain lame. If he is born deaf, he will remain deaf. If he is born dumb, he will remain dumb. This madrasah is also like a mother's womb. While studying, this madrasah is the mother's belly. Whatever you want to become, do it while you are here. Whoever comes out of here deficient will remain deficient and whoever comes out complete will remain complete. In fact if Allāh *ta'ālā* wills, the complete graduate will thereafter continue to progress towards perfection.

### **The need for spiritual purification and reformation**

We should make a firm resolution that from today we are not going to commit any sin and if we commit a sin then we will repent immediately. For this, attention

should be given to spiritual purification and reformation. There are great seniors present here. There are pious men of spiritual affiliation present here. The ‘ulamā’ look upon them with envy. Allāh *ta’ālā* has blessed them in both ways, academically and spiritually. If you spend six, eight or ten years here and you do not benefit from them then this will be a serious tragedy. Since they are experts in the external as well as the internal sciences they will place you on the path of spiritual purification in such a manner that you will not experience any academic loss. It is imperative that you link yourself to a man of spiritual perfection and a spiritual guide for your reformation. Through this blessing, Allāh willing, the correct manner of leading one’s life will be acquired and one will be blessed with a noble death. Hadrat Hakim Akhtar Sāhib rahimahullāh says:

O Akhtar, when a person obtains the company of a spiritual man, he learns how to live and how to die.

Whoever is blessed with the company of a pious man, a man of spiritual discernment, a friend of Allāh *ta’ālā* then through his company the manner of living is learnt. Thereafter he lives his life in accordance with the pleasure of Allāh *ta’ālā*. His life becomes a copy of the Sunnah and the principle is “*As you live so shall you die.*” Together with Allāh’s pleasure and a noble death, he is blessed with a saintly demise.

**Be punctual on the recitation of the Qur’ān and dhikr**

My dear friends! Every student should be punctual on the recitation of the Qur’ān. If one is able to read three

pārahs then read three pārahs. If one is able to read two pārahs then read two pārahs. If one is able to read one pārah then read one pārah. If one cannot read one pārah then read half a pārah. If you can only manage a quarter pārah then read a quarter but be punctual because it is through the recitation of the Qur'ān that the heart becomes purified. The recitation of the Qur'ān washes away the filth and residue of sin from the heart. Through it there will be blessing in one's knowledge. Together with the recitation of the Qur'ān make a little dhikr also. Whilst walking and moving around read the kalimah ṭayyibah one hundred times and read istighfār one hundred times daily. Hadrat Gangohī rahimahullāh would teach his disciples to read durūd sharīf at least three hundred times daily.<sup>1</sup> So read لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ one hundred times, صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ one hundred times, اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ one hundred times and اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ one hundred times. What is difficult about that? While walking from the classroom to the boarding you will be able to read istighfār one hundred times. When returning one hundred times durūd sharīf can be completed. Then again when leaving for the boarding another one hundred times durūd sharīf can be read. Gradually and slowly the number will increase so much that you will not be able to keep count. In addition to this, connect yourself with the pious elders who are here. Under their guidance strive to cleanse and purify your heart. Through this you will be guided to abstain from sins and there will be tremendous blessings in your knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tadhkirah ar-Rashīd*, vol. 2, p. 152.

## How to free oneself from sins

Many students lead a life of sin and evil. They are studying Mishkāt Sharīf, Jalālayn Sharīf, and even the final year Hadīth books but are caught up in evil glances. They are inattentive and lazy in ṣalāh. When they go home they miss the fajr ṣalāh. They watch movies, listen to music and roam around with bad friends. There are many students who perceive these wrongs but they do not know how to rid themselves of these sins. My brothers! Just as there are experts in the field of Arabic grammar, Arabic etymology, commentary of the Qur'ān and through sitting in their company we learn these sciences, similarly in order to save oneself from these sins there are experts. Link yourself to them. You are very lucky that you do not have to look anywhere else. Those experts are present before you in this very madrasah. Follow their guidance and reform yourselves.

I am saying again. Save yourselves from sin and if you commit a sin then repent immediately. Make this firm determination that my life can come to an end but I will not disobey Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is regrettable to see that some students do not worry about this and even after reaching the final year acts of sin and vice are very trivial in their eyes. They do not feel ashamed to speak about major sins in front of their friends. How can such students become a means of reformation and success for the nation?

## The teacher's desire for his students

My dear friends! I am not your teacher but despite this, even I desire that every one of you should become such

a graduate who can take care of the whole ummat. So what about your teachers who teach you, who make effort on you day and night, who prepare for the lesson till one-o'clock and two-o'clock in the morning, who wake up for tahajjud and make du'ā for you? How much do they desire for you?

My kind teacher, Hadrat Maulānā Hāshim Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* is the khalīfah of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā *rahimahullāh*. Besides Tafsīr and Hadīth I also studied other books under him. Hadrat has shown me a lot of kindness and continues to do so. Maulānā's eyes well up with tears when he says to me, "Maulānā! My heart becomes ecstatic when I observe your work. I regard your progress as my own personal progress."

I heard my beloved Shaykh, Hadrat Hājī Fārūq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* saying, "This thought never crosses a father's mind that since I am a millionaire my son should not become a millionaire. He should remain less wealthy than me. Rather this desire is constantly in the father's heart that I wish my son can become a billionaire. After saying this Hadrat *rahimahullāh* mentioned that this is the very conduct of a sincere teacher and a sincere spiritual guide. Whatever spiritual rank the shaykh has achieved, he desires from his heart that his disciple must surpass that rank. Similarly a sincere teacher has this desire in his heart that after many years of effort I have started to teach Riyād as-Sālihīn. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make it such that my student becomes a lecturer of Bukhārī Sharīf in my very lifetime.

## The parents' hopes

Your parents have not sent you here to merely pass six years of your life. They do not only want you to be safe from the outside environment. When they send you here they have these ambitions in their minds that their child will become like Hadrat Muftī Raḍā' al-Haqq Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum, Maulānā 'Alā' ud-Dīn dāmat barakātuhum, Maulānā Shabbīr Sālūjī Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum and like the rest of the elders present here and thereafter their beloved son will become a means of salvation for them in the Hereafter. They have this hope that one day their son will teach Hadīth, one day he will teach Tafsīr, he will lay the foundation for a madrasah or he will propagate the teachings of Islām to the entire world. However due to our laziness and carelessness we fail them and become the means of pain and grief for them.

## The story of a grief-stricken father

Many years ago I had to go to the city of London. Once there, a certain Maulānā insisted that I join him for tea. He was a graduate of a certain madrasah in India. After drinking the tea he went further inside his house to leave the utensils. When he returned he suddenly burst into tears and began crying profusely. It was only the two of us present in the room. I thought that maybe some tragedy had occurred. Maybe someone near and dear had passed away. I went close to him and consoled him. When he managed to bring himself under control and mustered up the courage to speak, he said, "Maulānā Sāhib! I thought that if I make my son an 'ālim he would become a means of my salvation in the

Hereafter. On the contrary ever since he graduated and came home he did not perform a single fajr ṣalāh. Instead of taking me to Paradise, he is going to take me to Hell. He will become the reason for my being taken to task because I did not train him as I ought to.”

## The sacrifices of parents

How much money do your parents spend on you! They save every penny they can and fulfil all of your needs. I tell the students in our country that when you phone home and say, “Dad! I want to go for ‘umrah” then instantly he is prepared to send you for ‘umrah simply on the basis that his child is studying the knowledge of Islām. I say to them that they should tell their brother who is studying in college or university to make the same request and say, “Dad! I want to go for ‘umrah.” The father will decline and say, “Currently our financial condition is not favourable.” But when the student of Islamic knowledge says that he wants to go for ‘umrah then the father tries to make the arrangements for it because he feel that his son is a treasure for him in the Hereafter. He will be of assistance to him in the Hereafter. Your parents feel and think that their son is in Dār al-‘Ulūm Zakariyyā therefore his twenty four hours are spent in pious works.

How many sacrifices are your parents making for your sake? You are a piece of their heart. You are the light of their eyes. When you first came to the madrasah you found it difficult. Do you think it was not difficult for your parents? They probably did not cry in front of you but after having left you here how much they must have cried, you cannot imagine. Then two, three or six

months after admission this madrasah becomes your home. Thereafter the situation becomes such that you go home but your heart wants to come back to the madrasah. However during your entire period of study they remain restless thinking, “I do not know if my child is sick?” or “What will my child be eating?” or “I hope my son did not get mixed up with the wrong friends.” When they look at great ‘ulamā’ in the country or city, then just by looking at them their heart becomes engrossed in this thought that my child is learning Hadīth and he is learning Tafsīr. After six or eight years when he graduates and returns then he will also be like these great ‘ulamā’. My brothers! We then graduate and return home, but we are useless. We are useless in actions and hopeless in character. Think how heartbroken they would be? Furthermore the same bad reports reach your madrasah and your teachers. How heartbroken would your teachers be!

## Practise on your knowledge

My brothers, make the acquisition of knowledge your ambition and protect yourself from the greatest impediment, protect yourself from sin. Nobody should be caused any inconvenience by us. There should be no disobedience of Allāh *ta’ālā* regarding His worship. There should be no disobedience of Allāh *ta’ālā* regarding our dealings and transactions. There should be no disobedience of Allāh *ta’ālā* with regard to social dealings. There should be no disobedience of Allāh *ta’ālā* regarding good character as well.

A student should make every possible effort to practise on his knowledge. Hadrat Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal

*rahimahullāh* says, “I practised every Hadīth that I wrote in my life.” Even when he came across the following Hadīth:

ان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم احتجم وأعطى أبا طيبة ديناراً

*Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam had cupping done and gave the cupper, Abu Taybah radiyallāhu ‘anhu one gold coin.*

Hadrat Imām Aḥmad ibn Hanbal *rahimahullāh* says, “I practised on this Hadīth as well by getting myself cupped and I gave the cupper one gold coin.”<sup>1</sup>

The academic level of the seniors was elevated on account of their level of practice

I wish to say something with a lot of respect. It is my deficient understanding that all the elders of the ummat became great because of their extent of practice. Since we come to the madrasah to acquire knowledge, we only focus on knowledge and aspects related to knowledge. We examine everything from an academic angle. When mention is made of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* then this thought comes to mind that Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* was very great because his level of knowledge was very high. Imām Muslim *rahimahullāh* was very great because his level of knowledge was very high. It was definitely great. There is no doubt about that. However their academic level became lofty due to their extent of practice. During their study years they would practise on their knowledge. They had a very high

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<sup>1</sup>تدريب الراوي، ص: ٥٨٨

level of practice and sincerity hence their academic level became lofty. You too should pay a lot of attention to practise together with knowledge.

## Every action should be done the Sunnah way

When entering the masjid enter with your right foot. When exiting the masjid leave with your left foot. Give with your right hand and receive with your right hand. What is hard about that? Both acts are the same. One person is performing two raka'ats optional ṣalāh and another is not. There is a difference. That person who performed the two raka'ats optional ṣalāh experienced some difficulty and the one who did not experienced no difficulty. But when it comes to wearing clothes and undressing, wearing shoes and removing them and being mindful of the right and left then what is difficult about that? It is not difficult at all. When it is not difficult then why should we not do it the Sunnah way?

## Protect yourself by opposing the devil and your carnal self

The devil prevents us from practising. We have to defeat him. I tell our students in our madrasah that none of you are bad. However the carnal self and the devil which is attached to you are both evil. The students, teachers and administrators, all need to get together and oppose them. For this purpose rules are made in the madrasah. These rules are not applied to you but to the carnal self. Instead of becoming angry with the teachers and the madrasah and assisting the carnal self and the devil, you should help the teachers and administrators by opposing your carnal self and the devil. You should

adhere to every rule of the madrasah and protect yourself through defeating the devil and the carnal self.

## An amazing statement of Hadrat Masīh al-Ummat

I have heard from Hadrat Hājī Fārūq Sāhib rahimahullāh that Hadrat Masīh al-Ummat rahimahullāh would say, “A student should enrol in the madrasah. He should not meddle in the madrasah affairs.” He should not interfere with the affairs of the madrasah. We should follow all the rules and if we did not understand any rule then we should not be critical and say, “Why was this rule made? If the rule was like this then it would have been nice. If it was like that it would have been better.” This is not our work. Hand yourself over to your teachers and the administrators.

## The second obstacle: Futile acts

The second obstacle in acquiring knowledge is futilities. Save yourself from futile acts as well. What is the definition of a futile act? A futile act is an act which yields no benefit in this world and in the Hereafter. A student should be so deeply engrossed in his studies that he does not get the opportunity to fall prey to futile acts. Nowadays every student has a cellular phone. Everyone wants a smartphone through which they can access the internet. Let alone a smartphone, a student should not even keep a simple phone without dire need. Those who appreciated knowledge did not even worry about food.

## The mind boggling academic engrossment of a student

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Zakariyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* mentioned a certain student who would be so engrossed in his studies that he would sleep very little. Whenever you saw him he would be studying a book. His manner of eating was also very strange. His food would be brought to his room. He would say to the one who brought the food to take the gravy away but to leave the roti. For as long as he lived in the madrasah he did not eat roti with gravy. The reason for this was if he had to mix the roti with the gravy and then eat it, his attention would be diverted away from the book. When he ate roti alone this was not the case. He would break the roti into bite size morsels and eat it while reading the book.

## The practice of Hadrat Thānwī during his students days

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* attained a very lofty rank. The reason for this was that he really appreciated his student days. When he would go to the madrasah in Shawwāl he would not know what was happening at home until Shaʿbān because whenever any letter arrived from home he would put it in an earthen jar. Why? Because either the letter contained some sad news or some good news. If it was good news the heart would be inclined towards home and if it was sad news then too, the heart would be drawn towards home. Maulānā could not tolerate this little inclination towards home because he did not want any deficiency to affect his engrossment in his studies. So all the letters were piling up. Maulānā

would only open all the letters and read them when the holidays would begin after completing the examination in Sha'bān then only would.<sup>1</sup>

Now what is our condition? Our attention while sitting in the classroom is constantly drawn towards football and cricket. Our attention is towards the commentary and towards the score.

## A valuable statement of Hadrat Maulānā Yahyā Sāhib

Save yourself from futile acts and in order to do so keep away from mixing and intermingling with one another. The father of Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Yahyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say, “No matter how intelligent a student may be, if he has the disease of making friends then he will not be able to become anything of worth. He will never be successful. And no matter how dull and weak a student may be, if he keeps away from friendship then he will definitely become a man of worth when he qualifies.”<sup>2</sup>

## The third obstacle: Laziness

The third obstacle in acquiring knowledge is laziness and besides being active there is no cure for laziness. Hadrat Muftī Muhammad Taqī ‘Uthmānī Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* says that some people say, “I am very lazy. I cannot do any work. Please give me something to read by virtue of which I can get rid of this laziness.” Muftī Taqī Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* says that I explain to

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<sup>1</sup> *Maulānā Ilyās rahimahullāh Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da'wat*: Pg. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Āp Bīti*, vol. 1, p. 13.

them, “If I tell you what to read and you become lazy to read it, then what? Are you going to look for something to read for that as well?”<sup>1</sup>

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says, “The cure for laziness is to become active.” Make a firm resolution that if you have to study then you have to do so. If you have to do revision then you have to do it. If you have to learn the lesson then it must be done. If you have to perform two raka’āts of tahajjud ṣalāh after ‘ishā’ then you have to perform it. This is the way to get rid of laziness. Together with this be consistent in du’ā. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam sought refuge from laziness:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكَسَلِ

*O Allāh! I seek refuge in you from laziness.*

## The fourth obstacle: Disrespect

The fourth and last obstacle is disrespect especially towards one’s teachers. Our pious predecessors had so much of respect and love in their hearts for their teachers that when they took their names they took it with respect. They would use the best of titles for them. They would add du’ās after their names. We mention our teachers’ names in a very simple way. We do not say ‘Sāhib’ at the end. We do not say ‘*dāmat barakātuhum*’. It is mentioned regarding Imām Masrūq *rahimahullāh* that when he would narrate Hadīth from Hadrat ‘Ā’ishah *radiyallāhu ‘anhā* he would mention her as follows:

حدثني الصديقة بنت الصديق حبيبة حبيب الله المبرأة

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<sup>1</sup> *Islāhī Khutubāt*, vol. 1, p. 61.

*The truthful daughter of as-Siddīq who is the chaste and beloved wife of the Beloved ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam narrated to me.*

How much respect did Hadrat Masrūq *rahimahullāh* have for Hadrat ‘Ā’ishah *radiyallāhu ‘anhā!* We should also have such respect for our teachers in our hearts. When taking the name of your teacher say, “Hadrat Maulānā so and so *dāmat barakātuhum.*” Yes, it is a different case if you have to mention his name repeatedly. In that case, after mentioning his name the first time with the titles and du‘ās as above then just to say ‘Maulānā’ will be sufficient. My dear friends! Respect all your teachers. It is necessary to even afford your most elementary teacher one hundred percent respect. If any teacher commands greater respect then show him two hundred percent respect. It can be one thousand percent. It is your choice. But this attitude of giving the senior teachers one hundred percent respect and the elementary teachers ninety percent is detrimental for you. This is lethal poison for you. You will not be successful in your endeavours.

So the fourth obstacle in acquiring knowledge is disrespect. This includes all forms of disrespect be it disrespecting the textbooks, teachers, learning aids and instruments, the madrasah or the classroom. Stay away from these forms of disrespect.

May Allāh *ta’ālā* grant you and me the ability to practise. Dār al-‘Ulūm Zakariyyā is among those madrasahs which are constantly in my mind and heart. I have met many of your teachers today after a very long time but I have sincere love for them. I consider it my good fortune to make du‘ā for them in seclusion. I love

this madrasah because when I come here I feel ecstatic and elated. May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward all of you with a handsome reward. I request both the students and the teachers to continue making du'ā for me that Allāh *ta'ālā* showers His grace upon me, keeps me steadfast on Islam and īmān and blesses me with a noble death with īmān. Āmīn.

وَأَجِرْ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

# ACTION WITH KNOWLEDGE IS VERY IMPORTANT

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib

Rector and Shaykh al-Hadīth of Islamic Da'wah  
Academy, Leicester, UK

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

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ، إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ. (الزمر: ٩)  
صَدَقَ اللَّهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيمُ، وَ صَدَقَ رَسُولُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْأُمِّيُّ الْكَرِيمُ، وَنَحْنُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ لَمِنَ  
الشَّاهِدِينَ وَالشَّاكِرِينَ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

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

It is a great favour of Allāh *ta'ālā* that he has blessed me with the great fortune of being in the company of students and teachers of Islām. Those affiliated to learning and teaching Islām are very superior in the eyes of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Dār al-'Ulūm Azaadville has gradually traversed the stages of progress and included itself amongst the famous madāris of the world. *Māshā' Allāh*, present here in the form of teachers is a group of experts in the Islamic sciences. Although I want to

address my fellow students at present and not these teachers and elders, I still feel bashful. It is not easy to say anything in the presence of the seniors. Some of the seniors here are on the level of my teachers. May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant them tremendous blessings in their knowledge, spiritual blessings, sincerity and their lives and may He grant us all students the ability to benefit from them. Āmīn.

## Students! Understand your worth!

Allāh *ta'ālā* has blessed those affiliated to the knowledge of Islām with a very lofty rank. It is important for every student to recognise his status and thereafter understand his value regarding how lofty the rank of students is in the eyes of Allāh *ta'ālā* and His Rasūl *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. When Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* went to Dār al-'Ulūm Karachi he only said one sentence in the gathering of the students and teachers. It was a very concise yet all-encompassing advice. Hadrat merely said, "Students! Understand your worth!"<sup>1</sup>

We appeal to the general masses in our lectures and discourses to appreciate the 'ulamā', the men of Islamic knowledge. My dear friends! Before we tell them to understand the value of the 'ulamā' and to appreciate them it is important that we, the students of Islām who are affiliated to knowledge first understand our value.

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<sup>1</sup> *Islāhī khutubāt*, vol. 7, p. 104.

Those affiliated to knowledge have a very lofty status

Those who leave their houses in search of knowledge have a very lofty status. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said:

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ

*The person who leaves in search of knowledge is in the path of Allāh ta‘ālā until he returns.*

The act of acquiring knowledge and learning and teaching Islām is so great that Nabī sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said:

خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه.

*The best among you is he who learns the Qur’ān and teaches it.*

Those who learn and teach the Qur’ān and the sciences of the Qur’ān are the best people of the nation. My dear friends! All the students and teachers of Islamic knowledge have acquired this virtue because the Qur’ān is the text and the Ahādīth are its commentary. Thereafter through the explanation of the Qur’ān and the Ahādīth the opinions of the jurists came into existence.

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<sup>1</sup> سنن الترمذي، باب فضل طلب العلم، ح (٢٦٤٧)

<sup>2</sup> صحيح البخاري، ٤٦٣٩.

## A student till death

This occupation is so blessed that the great luminaries of the ummat remained engrossed in it till their last breath. Imām Aḥmad *rahimahullāh* stated,

مَعَ الْمِحْبَرَةِ إِلَى الْمَقْبَرَةِ

*My life will pass in learning and teaching using this inkpot, pen and instruments of learning until I die.*

My dear friends! What a lofty virtue there is for seeking knowledge! When we came to study we did not even know these virtues. We were not even aware of the extent that Allāh *ta'ālā* appreciates the work for which we came. It is only the great kindness of Allāh *ta'ālā* that despite us being unworthy He included us in this fraternity of students of Islām out of His sheer favour and grace.

## Our two illnesses

While speaking in Dār al-'Ulūm Zakarīyyā one point came to my mind which I will mention here as well. The students studying in the madāris have two severe illnesses. One is that right until they graduate they feel that they are children. Every student in the first year feels that he is still a child. The second and third year students also feel that they are still children. A student is progressing academically because he went from the first year to the second year and from the second year to the third year. He is either learning Hadīth or the translation of the Qur'ān or the commentary of the

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<sup>1</sup> مناقب الإمام أحمد لابن الجوزي، ص ٣١

Qur'ān or the six authentic books of Ahādīth but still this thought lingers in his mind that he is a child. It is for this reason that the attitude and conduct found in the first year students remains in the final year. As long as this thought that I am still a child lingers in the mind there will always be a second illness. The second illness is the attitude where a student feels he does not need to do anything with the same punctuality, diligence and importance as the seniors. Thus he feels that he has to do them but not immediately. He will do them after graduation.

### Acquire external and internal spiritual blessings

You have excellent teachers here, *māshā' Allāh*. As I mentioned before, some of them are equal in rank to my teachers. A good number of them are pious men of spiritual affiliation. You sit before them in their company for three to five hours daily. If you change your way of thinking slightly and become a student in the true sense of the word by seeking the internal spiritual sciences together with the external academic sciences and making this decision that you do not want to only become an 'ālim but also one who practises on his knowledge, then you too will become men of spiritual affiliation before graduating from here, *inshā' Allāh*.

My dear students! Make this firm resolution today that we will work hard in our studies and together with this we will strive to practise on the knowledge we acquire.

### Knowledge is a double-edged sword

This knowledge is a double-edged sword. Do not think, "If I do not practise on my knowledge then what harm

can come? Only this much harm will be caused that I will be deprived of the benefit of that action. For example the two raka'ats optional ṣalāh after zūhr. If I do not perform them then there is no problem because I did not gain anything so I did not lose anything. I did not get reward nor will I be taken to task.” This thought is incorrect because to be deprived of gain and reward is one harm. But let us assume that this thought is correct. Then too one should not think in this manner because if knowledge is not beneficial it will be harmful. Knowledge is not something that can be non-beneficial and harmless at the same time. At all times it will either be one of the two, beneficial or harmful. If you acted upon your knowledge it will be beneficial and if you did not then it will be harmful. Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah *rahimahullāh* says:

العلم إن لم ينفعك ضرك

*The quality of knowledge is such that if it does not benefit you it will cause you harm.*

## Knowledge requires effort and sacrifice

Knowledge is a great wealth so in order to acquire it you should exhaust all your energy. This knowledge requires effort.

لو كان هذا العلم يحصل بالمنى - ما كان يبقى في البرية جاهل

فاجهد ولا تكسل ولا تك غافلا - فندامة العقبي لمن يتكاسل

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<sup>1</sup>صفة الصفوة، ج ١، ص ٤٢٧.

*If this knowledge could be acquired through hopes then nobody on the face of this earth would have been ignorant. (But since just hoping is not sufficient) strive, do not be lazy and stay away from idleness because the share of the lazy is regret in the end.*

Explanation: If through hopes and aspirations alone knowledge could be acquired by saying, “I want to become a commentator of the Qur’ān.” or “I want to become a scholar of Hadīth.” or “I want to become an expert in the field of Hadīth like so and so teacher of mine.” or “ I want to be an expert in the field of jurisprudence.”, then since every person would have great hopes and aspirations regarding knowledge, there would be no ignorant person on the face of the earth. However nothing is achieved through mere hopes so work hard, do not be lazy and do not even allow carelessness to come close to you because the one who is lazy will regret in the future, in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

One has to sacrifice everything for knowledge. When a student will make the sacrifice then only will he be granted a share of knowledge.

العلم لا يعطيك بعضه حتى تعطيه كلك

*Knowledge will give you a small portion of itself only when you give it your full self.*

## Get rid of the egotistic “I”

Knowledge cannot be acquired with pride, pomp and haughtiness. This knowledge is respect and loftiness through and through. It is respect and loftiness in this

world as well as in the Hereafter. While acquiring this knowledge one has to swallow his pride and abandon all pomp and glory as well as all luxuries, comforts, personal opinions and choice.

العلم عز لا ذل فيه، لا يدرك إلا بذل لا عز فيه.

*Knowledge is complete respect. There is absolutely no disgrace in it. However it is acquired through humbling yourself and not with pomp and glory.*

Knowledge is purely respect. There is not an iota of disgrace in it. However while studying you have to lower yourself. You have to sacrifice your desires. You have to get rid of your egotistic 'I'. You have to sacrifice your own opinion and humble yourself in front of your teachers.

## **A student should not interfere with madrasah affairs**

I heard from my beloved Hadrat Hājī Muḥammad Fārūq Sāhib rahimahullāh that Hadrat Maulānā Masiḥullāh Khān Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say, “A student should enrol in the madrasah. He should not meddle in the affairs of the madrasah.” This means that a student should enrol in the madrasah but he should not interfere with the administrative affairs of the madrasah.

Surrender yourself to the teachers, the administrators and the principal. Do not formulate your own opinion. No matter who is appointed to teach a certain book or how he teaches it. Whether he gives a long lecture or a concise explanation you will not give your opinion and preferences on these matters. If the devil whispers evil

thoughts into our minds then we will not express those ideas. We will not reveal them to our fellow students and say that a certain teacher gives very short explanations or another gives very long lectures or if this book was given to a certain teacher to teach, it would have been better or if our group study time was until a certain time it would have been good or if we could sleep till this time it would have been great or if the examination was scheduled for this date it would have been good. We will not interfere. We will rely confidently on our principal, teachers and administrators and think to ourselves that they are our well-wishers. They decide all affairs after much contemplation with the best intentions and there is goodness for us in following this system. Do not turn your attention elsewhere. You should only have one ambition i.e. knowledge and practice should come into your life.

## The harms of friendship

Keep away from friends. This is a disastrous obstacle for knowledge. When there will be friendship then there will be meetings. When meetings will take place you will get involved in futile actions and sin which will result in the deprivation of knowledge. Maulānā Yahyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* the father of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh* used to say, “No matter how weak a student may be, if he keeps away from making friends, he will become someone of worth and no matter how intelligent and capable a student is, if he is afflicted with

the disease of friends he will lose his precious knowledge and will not be able to achieve anything.<sup>1</sup>

Dear friends! Make a firm resolution that from now on you will spend everything of yours to acquire knowledge and together with practising on your knowledge you will propagate it further as well. Get rid of this idea that six years are to study and practice will come thereafter. Knowledge and practice should be simultaneous. Resolve that from now on you will only befriend knowledge and practice.

### Tahajjud ṣalāh for a student

A certain student came to learn under Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal *rahimahullāh*. At night Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal *rahimahullāh* kept a jug filled with water in his room. It was customary in that error for the ‘ulamā’ and students to wake up for the tahajjud ṣalāh. In the morning when Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal *rahimahullāh* entered the room he saw the jug filled with water just as he left it. He concluded that the student did not wake up for tahajjud. Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal *rahimahullāh* was utterly surprised.

My dear friends! I ask you: Was this surprise because the student was absent from the fajr ṣalāh or the zuhr ṣalāh, because he missed the first takbīr of ṣalāh or because he missed a rak‘at of ṣalāh? No it was not that. Rather he did not wake up for the optional tahajjud ṣalāh. Despite this, Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal *rahimahullāh* was surprised and the following words came on his tongue:

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<sup>1</sup> *Āp Bīṭī*, vol. 1, p. 13.

سبحان الله، رجل يطلب العلم، لا يكون له ورد بالليل<sup>1</sup>

*Glory be to Allāh! A person is a student but he performs no pious acts at night? This is something very strange!*

A student should not engage in such actions and acts of worship which become obstacles in his studies. But I ask you: Is all our free time spent in studying? Do we not play? Do we not go for strolls? Do we not engage in chit chat? If there is any student who sits with a book for twenty four hours and says, “Instead of performing four raka’ats of tahajjud salāh would it not be better for me to study one sentence of the textbook?” then that is understandable. Why is it that whenever we are told to do something to create a connection with Allāh *ta’ālā* we say, “This is an impediment in our studies” but when it comes to futile acts and sins these thoughts do not come to mind?

## Sufyān Thaurī and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal act on every Ḥadīth

You have to exhaust yourself to acquire knowledge and to practise on it. Ḥadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* and Ḥadrat Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal *rahimahullāh* both state, “I did not read any Ḥadīth which I did not practise upon.”<sup>2</sup> My brothers! If we do not find the courage to practise on all the Aḥādīth like these pious predecessors then at least practise on five Aḥādīth out of two hundred. Bishr Ḥāfi *rahimahullāh* used to say:

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<sup>1</sup>صفة الصفوة، ج ١، ص ٤٨٠.

<sup>2</sup>سير أعلام النبلاء: ٤٤٢/٧، تدريب الراوي، ص: ٥٨٨

يا أصحاب الحديث، أدوا زكوة الحديث، اعملوا من كل مائتي حديث بخمسة أحاديث<sup>1</sup>

*O students and teachers of Hadīth! Discharge the zakāt of Hadīth. At least practise on five Ahādīth out of every two hundred.*

## The excellence of the men of knowledge

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ؛ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ. (الزمر: ٩)

*Can the people of knowledge and those who do not possess knowledge be equal?*

When students hear this verse they become very happy because their virtue has been explained in this verse that ‘ulamā’ and non-‘ulamā’ are not equal. We are superior to those that do not possess knowledge. Indeed the virtue of the men of knowledge has been explained in this verse that the ‘ulamā’ and non-‘ulamā’ are not equal in rank but this is not the only interpretation of this verse.

Another meaning of this verse is that the ‘ulamā’ and non-‘ulamā’ cannot be equal in practice and actions. In contrast to the actions of non-‘ulamā’ the actions of the ‘ulamā’ in both quantity and quality will have to be far superior. I heard Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* saying, “There should be a difference between the ṣalāh of the ‘ulamā’ and non-‘ulamā’. The difference should be so glaring that if anyone sees an ‘ālim performing ṣalāh he will recognise that he is an ‘ālim.” An ‘ālim should be punctual on the sunan ghayr

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<sup>1</sup>تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

mu'akkadah<sup>1</sup> and the optional ṣalāhs. He should perform his ṣalāh with khushū' and khudū'<sup>2</sup>. He should fulfil all the Sunnah and mustahab acts of ṣalāh. Just by looking at him performing ṣalāh one comes to know that this is an 'ālim. When the status of the 'ulamā' is higher than others then their actions should be equally better than the others. They should also be ahead of everyone regarding the responsibility of protecting and propagating Islām. The amount and extent of the responsibility of the Muslim nation which rests on the shoulders of the 'ulamā' will be more than what is on the general masses.

## Knowledge will not remain without practice

My dear friends! One should make a lot of effort to acquire knowledge and to practise upon that knowledge as well. If there is no practice then knowledge will be lost. Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu says:

هتف العلم بالعمل، فان اجابه وإلا ارتحل<sup>3</sup>

*Knowledge calls out to action. If action listens and responds then knowledge waits and remains with it otherwise knowledge departs.*

You go to your friend's house and call him from outside. You shout, "Ismā'īl! Ismā'īl!" Now if Ismā'īl answers, you will wait for him and go with him into the house. But if he does not respond, you will leave. Likewise knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> Non-emphasised Sunnah

<sup>2</sup> Humility and concentration

<sup>3</sup>تدريب الراوي، ص ٧٣٥.

calls out to action. If action listens and responds then knowledge remains with it otherwise knowledge departs.

This knowledge which is acquired with a lot of effort will only remain when there will be practice in one's life. If there is no practice then all the sacrifices you are making now to acquire knowledge and all your efforts will be lost because the knowledge you are acquiring as a result of these sacrifices and efforts will depart on account of not practising on it. The best way to protect your knowledge is to practise upon it. Imām Waki' rahimahullāh says:

إذا أردت أن تحفظ الحديث فاعمل به<sup>1</sup>

*If you want to remember Ahādīth, practise on them.*

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ismā'īl rahimahullāh says:

كنا نستعين على حفظ الحديث بالعمل به<sup>2</sup>

*We would seek assistance to remember Ahādīth by practising on them.*

When these pious predecessors acquired Ahādīth they would begin practising upon them. Those Ahādīth would become a practical part of their lives so there was no question of forgetting them. How can a person forget something which has become a part of his life?

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<sup>1</sup>تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

<sup>2</sup>تدريب الراوي، ص ٥٨٨.

## Our two weaknesses

I mentioned previously that we have two weaknesses. One is that we do not regard ourselves as mature and responsible right until we graduate. We regard ourselves as children. The second weakness is that we have this mindset that whatever we have to do we will do it after graduation. Māshā' Allāh, you have teachers who possess knowledge of both the external and internal sciences. Each one of them is like the confluence of two oceans. While teaching they will definitely be guiding you to practise upon that knowledge. They explain to you and train you because every teacher desires that every student who studies under him should practise upon his knowledge. Surely through the blessing of the company and words of advice of these kind teachers the desire to practise has also been created in your heart but despite this fact we are deprived and fail due to our mindset that we have to practise but only after graduation. Remember! Whoever does not practise now will not be able to practise after graduation as well. The good and bad habits you have during your student days will remain with you throughout your life.

## The study period is like the mother's womb

The pious elders have mentioned that the study period is like the mother's womb. If the child has formed completely within the mother's womb, he will come into this world complete. But if he was incomplete in the mother's womb i.e. he does not have an ear, no hands or legs, he is lame, crippled, insane, blind, or he is dumb then no power in the world can give him these limbs and faculties. If he comes out from his mother's womb

perfect then he will progress in perfection but if he comes out from his mother's womb imperfect he will progress in imperfection. Therefore do whatever you can in whatever quantity you can. Control your carnal self and suppress its demands.

## What if the 'ulamā' become corrupt?

My dear companions! If good actions did not come into our life and we graduate from here with the title of 'Ālim and Maulānā then what goodness can be expected from such an 'ālim? May Allāh *ta'ālā* protect us! Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* says,

الْأَعْمَالُ السَّيِّئَةُ دَاءٌ وَالْعُلَمَاءُ دَوَاءٌ

*Evil actions are a disease and the 'ulamā' are the antidotes*

All the evils we see in the world are spiritual illnesses and the 'ulamā' are the doctors. They have the treatment for these illnesses. They treat people with these treatments and people get better. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* adds,

فَإِذَا فَسَدَ الْعُلَمَاءُ فَمَنْ يَشْفِي الدَّاءَ

*But when the 'ulamā' become corrupt i.e. when the antidote gets spoilt, how will the illness be treated? How will the sickness be removed?*

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<sup>1</sup>حلية الاولياء: ٣٦١/٦

## Do not go near sin

Therefore create the fervour to practise upon knowledge. You should not even come close to sin. When a child reaches puberty he becomes accountable to fulfil all the injunctions of Islām irrespective of whether he is in the first year, in the pre-first year or learning to memorise the Qur’ān. All the injunctions of Allāh *ta’ālā* become binding upon him. He is now addressed by Allāh *ta’ālā* to do certain actions and abstain from certain actions. My dear friends! Save yourself from sins and all those things that take you towards sin. If there is no need to have a mobile phone then do not have one. If there is a need and you can get your work done through a simple phone then do not keep a smartphone. What need does a student have for a smartphone? What need does a student have to use the internet? Where is the free time for him to do all of this?

## Hakīm al-Ummat would not read letters the entire year

It was the practice of Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* not to open all the letters which reached him during the year. It is obvious that the letter would contain either good news or bad news and both cause one’s attention to be diverted. If a letter stated that there is going to be a wedding in our house, in your paternal uncle’s house or your maternal uncle’s home then one’s attention would be diverted. If it stated that your maternal uncle or paternal uncle passed away then again one’s attention would be diverted. My dear friends! Think how much a person’s attention would be diverted by this type of news? Not much yet Hadrat *rahimahullāh*

could not tolerate that his attention be diverted away from knowledge for even a little while so what did he do? He had an earthen jar by him. When any letter arrived he would place it in the jar. At the end of the year when the lessons and examinations were over he would read the entire year's letters before going home.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays the situation is such that a student checks his messages during class time. He also checks them during night studies. He reads the newspaper. He closely follows the football and cricket news. What connection does a student have with all these things? What does an 'ālim have to do with all of this? What do men who have a connection with the knowledge of prophet-hood have to do with it? All these things divert your attention.

## Keep away from futile actions and sin

Stay away from futile actions as well as sin. Keep the respect and love of your teachers at heart. Always conduct yourself respectfully. Stay with each other in the classroom and boarding in such a manner that nobody is inconvenienced since causing harm to a Muslim is prohibited. If you use the toilet then before exiting check well and ask yourself if the person coming after you will be inconvenienced? When you have made wuḍū' then before waking up check if the person sitting after you will be inconvenienced? Five students stay in one room so think if others are being inconvenienced by you or not. Perhaps you sleep at an odd time and wake up at an odd time so is anyone not being inconvenienced by this? Is anyone not being inconvenienced by your filthiness? To cause harm to a

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<sup>1</sup> *Matā'e Waqt Aur Kārwanē 'Ilm*, p. 250

Muslim is harām but students repeatedly cause harm to others.

## Like knowledge, practice requires effort

You have to practise on knowledge, abstain from sin, stay away from futile actions and strive. You have to make effort for knowledge and practice as well. You strive for knowledge. You stay awake at night and wake up early in the morning. You repeat the words of the text and try to understand it. In exactly the same way you have to make effort to practise. Just as knowledge requires effort similarly practice requires effort. Just by acquiring knowledge one will not attain salvation in the Hereafter. All the virtues of knowledge are for those people who after acquiring knowledge practise upon it. You know what the outcome will be in the Hereafter of those who only acquire knowledge and do not fulfil its demands. It is mentioned in a lengthy Hadīth that such people will be called first and due to not fulfilling the demands of knowledge they will be cast into Hell. The narrator says that before narrating this Hadīth Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radīyallāhu 'anhu* sobbed and wept until he fell unconscious.<sup>1</sup>

## Acquire the external and internal sciences

Our pious elders and predecessors attached great importance to action together with knowledge. We come to the madrasah to study so we have this mindset that the madrasah is a centre of learning and we are going there to acquire knowledge. That is all that is in our

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<sup>1</sup>سنن الترمذي، باب ما جاء في السمعة والرياء، ح (٢٣٨٣)

mind. This is the reason why when mention is made of the pious elders and predecessors our minds are drawn to their academic excellence. It does not go towards their excellent practices and in actual fact we are not even aware of their perfection in their actions. Therefore one more weakness of students while studying is that they are inclined to those teachers who are lofty in knowledge but they are either not inclined to those teachers who are great with regards to their piety and taqwā or the inclination is minimal since they teach the lower grades.

My dear friends! We came to the madrasah to acquire knowledge of both the external and internal. Therefore always have the desire to learn the external and internal sciences and take benefit from both lines. Some teachers possess both. They are the confluence of two oceans. Appreciate them but have respect for all your teachers.

## One hundred percent respect for every teacher

I tell the students in our madrasah that it is not within our control to have the exact same respect, awe and love for all the teachers. Even Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said to Allāh *ta’ālā* regarding his pure wives *radiyallāhu ‘anhunna*, “O Allāh! It is within my ability and choice to divide my time between my wives. I am equal and fair in this but I do not have control over my heart. My heart is in Your control. Therefore if I have more love and if I am inclined more towards ‘Ā’ishah then do not take me to task.”<sup>1</sup> The purpose of mentioning this is to show that if the respect for

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<sup>1</sup> سنن أبي داود، باب في القسم بين النساء، ح (٢١٣٤)

someone in your heart is more than one hundred percent, maybe one thousand percent, there is no harm in this but to love every teacher one hundred percent is necessary. If out of one hundred percent there is one percent short, then too you will be a failure.

## Magnanimous people became magnanimous through practice

I was saying that since we came to acquire knowledge and this is a centre of learning, when Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* is mentioned the mind only goes towards his academic excellence. Ask any student to say something about Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*. He will be able to speak about the academic perfections and achievements of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* but not about his perfection in actions. He will be able to speak about the academic perfections and achievements of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Zakarīyyā *rahimahullāh* but not about his perfection in practising on his knowledge because his mind does not even go towards their actions whereas the fact of the matter is that all the magnanimous people of the past did not become great because of their knowledge but due to their actions. If they did not have practice in their lives from childhood then their bosoms would not have been capable of holding this knowledge. After acquiring this knowledge if they did not attach importance to practising upon the knowledge, a vast amount of knowledge would not have been disseminated through them and they would not have been regarded as the pillars of the ummat. There was piety and taqwā in their lives from their very childhood hence they enjoyed blessing in their knowledge. Together with progressing

in knowledge they progressed in practising so they were blessed in their knowledge and the service of knowledge and Allāh *ta'ālā* used them for the guidance of the ummat. Thus you should pay attention to practice together with knowledge. The person who practises on the knowledge he possesses, Allāh *ta'ālā* will grant him knowledge which he does not possess.

## The astonishing memory of Imām Muḥammad

The lives of the pious predecessors were pure from their childhood and their hearts were clean from the filth of sin. Hence their hearts took in the knowledge immediately. Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* came to Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* to be admitted to his class. It was a pre-requisite of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* for a person to be an excellent *Hāfiz* in order to be admitted. Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said to Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*, “First memorise the Qur’ān and become perfectly conversant in it.” Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* left and dedicated himself to the memorisation of the Qur’ān. He returned after one week with his father and informed Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* that he had memorised the Qur’ān very well and it was fresh in his mind.<sup>1</sup> He was granted this astonishing memory because his life was pure.

## Imām Muḥammad’s passion to practise

You can gauge from the following incident how pure the life of Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* was from sin and how particular he was on practising Islām! One day at

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<sup>1</sup> بلوغ الأمانی، ص: ۶۵.

the age of fourteen Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* came to the gathering of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* and asked a question pertaining to jurisprudence. He said, “If an immature child sleeps after having performed the ‘ishā’ ṣalāh and he becomes mature at night within the ‘ishā’ ṣalāh time before true dawn will he have to repeat the ‘ishā’ ṣalāh? Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* answered, “Yes.” It is obvious that at the time when he performed the ‘ishā’ ṣalāh he was not obligated by Islām to perform the ṣalāh since he was immature. Now since he became mature at such a time when the cause for the obligation of the ‘ishā’ ṣalāh is found, then just as he becomes mature he is addressed to perform his ‘ishā’ ṣalāh. Now he must perform his ‘ishā’ ṣalāh. When Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* heard this reply he immediately left the gathering and went to a corner of the masjid to perform his ‘ishā’ ṣalāh. When Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* saw this enthusiasm of Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* to practise he became extremely pleased and said, “If Allāh *ta’ālā* wills this boy will traverse the rank of success.”<sup>1</sup>

## The memory is weakened through sin

When one’s life becomes polluted with sin the memory is affected and knowledge will not be secured. Imām Shāfi’i *rahimahullāh* says:

شَكُوتٌ إِلَى وَكَيْعِ سُوءِ حِفْظِي - فَأَرْشَدَنِي إِلَى تَرْكِ الْمَعَاصِي

وَ أَخْبَرَنِي بِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ - وَ نُورُ اللَّهِ لَا يُهْدَى لِعَاصِي

<sup>1</sup>بلوغ الأمانى، ص: ٥٠، ٦.

*I complained to my teacher Imām Wakī' rahimahullāh about my weakness of memory. So he advised me to leave out sin and he told me that knowledge is a light (from Allāh). And the light of Allāh is not bestowed to a sinner.*

From their very childhood our pious predecessors abstained from sin. This is why knowledge continued to be absorbed in their chests.

## The mind-boggling memory of Abū Zur'ah

Once the scholar of Hadīth, Abū Zur'ah *rahimahullāh* said with regard to some knowledge he had recorded, "I wrote this fifty years ago and thereafter I did not get the opportunity to look at it again but despite this I know which book, on which page and which line it is written."<sup>1</sup> Allāh *ta'ālā* gave them such mind-boggling memories in order to protect the religion of Islām and the reason was that Allāh *ta'ālā* protected their bosoms from the filth of sin.

## Imām Bukhārī is saved from eating ḥarām

Allāh *ta'ālā* wanted to take great work from Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* hence He protected him from ḥarām food. His father said at the time of his demise, "There is not a single silver coin which I am leaving behind that has been sourced from ḥarām or doubtful means."<sup>2</sup> Allāh *ta'ālā* Himself makes such arrangements so the hearts of these men do not become dirty and no

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<sup>1</sup> طبقات الحنابلة: ١/١٩٢

<sup>2</sup> هدي الساري، مقدمة فتح الباري، ص: ٦٧١.

harām morsel should nourish their bodies. You should also keep your hearts clean. Opt for a life of piety and if you commit a mistake then repent immediately. Then see what a treasure trove of knowledge Allāh *ta'ālā* will bless you with.

## Tazkiyah is essential for taqwā and taubah

I tell the youngsters in England to hold fast onto the two t's i.e. taqwa (piety) and taubah (repentance). You should either be on the platform of piety or on the platform of repentance so when death comes to you, you will be on one of the two platforms. There should be no third platform. There is another 't' that is required for these two t's i.e. tazkiyah (spiritual purification). If one strives for tazkiyah then Allāh willing, the quality of taqwā and taubah will come into one's life.

*O Akhtar, when a person obtains the company of a spiritual man, he learns how to live and how to die.*

This is a very good opportunity. Māshā' Allāh, there are spiritual guides here also. Discourses are delivered and gatherings of dhikr take place. Strive for knowledge and practise on that knowledge. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī rahimahullāh says,

لَيْسَ طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فُلَانٌ عَنْ فُلَانٍ وَإِنَّمَا طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ الْخُشْيَةُ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ<sup>1</sup>

*Seeking knowledge is not saying such and such person related to me. True search of knowledge means khashyat (submission to Allāh ta'ālā is created in the heart).*

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<sup>1</sup>حلية الاولياء: ٣٧٠/٦

My dear friends! Learn the outward form of knowledge and acquire the light of knowledge through some concern for your spiritual purification under the supervision of the spiritual mentors. The spiritual mentors understand and know well what to do for the spiritual purification of a student while he is studying and to what extent. Inshā' Allāh, they will not make you suffer any academic loss. Rather, by acting on their guidance, inshā' Allāh, there will be progress.

## The unparalleled punctuality of Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh

My dear students! Sin and futile activities are our sicknesses. It is due to these that we have very little or no desire to learn. We find it very difficult to come to class and participate in the lesson. This habit of one's student years remains with a person until he begins teaching. Our pious elders were very punctual on their lessons. Hadrat Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was a very great Qārī. He is one of our pious elders. He is one of the khulafā' of Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh*. He was so punctual on his lessons that he would come to the class half an hour before time and would begin teaching and he would continue teaching for half an hour after the time ended.<sup>1</sup>

If he had to travel anywhere or leave for hajj or 'umrah and the flight was scheduled for example at two-o'clock, then Qārī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would not take leave on that day and depart from home nor would he come to the madrasah and leave early for home. According to his

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<sup>1</sup> *Tadhkirah ash-Shaykhayn*, p. 307.

normal habit he would come half an hour early to the madrasah and from there he would proceed to the airport. Likewise when he returned and it was madrasah time he would first come from the airport to the madrasah and teach the entire day's lessons before going home.<sup>1</sup> Imām Tha‘lab *rahimahullāh* says, “Ibrāhīm Harbī *rahimahullāh* came to study under me for a period of fifty years. He did not miss out even one day!”<sup>2</sup> Allāhu akbar! He did not remain absent for one day in fifty years.

## The passion of Imām Abū Yūsuf for knowledge and practice

Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* says, “For as long as I studied under Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* it never happened that I did not perform the fajr salāh in the masjid of Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*.”<sup>3</sup> Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* would come with great care and punctuality to the masjid of Imām Sāhib *rahimahullāh* for the fajr salāh because he did not want the lesson to commence in his absence due to his performing salāh in another masjid and he did not want to miss a few points of the lesson due to coming late.

He says, “While I was sitting in a lesson one day someone informed me that my child had passed away.” Now it is clear that it is Sunnat to hasten in bathing, enshrouding and burying the deceased but if he left he would miss the lesson and if he told them to delay the

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<sup>1</sup> *Tadhkirah ash-Shaykhayn*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> سير أعلام النبلاء: ٣٦٠/١٣

<sup>3</sup> حسن التقاضي في سيرة الإمام أبي يوسف القاضي، ص: ١٧

burial then it would be contrary to the Sunnah. Now see what importance he attached to both knowledge and practise in his study days! He told the messenger, “Bury my child after bathing him and enshrouding him. I am coming home after the lesson.” The child was buried but he did not abandon the lesson.<sup>1</sup> Allāhu akbar! These luminaries made effort for both knowledge and practice, this is why they had blessing in their knowledge.

## Practise on your knowledge and propagate it to others

My dear friends! Strive hard to acquire knowledge. Strive hard to practise on that knowledge as well and make effort to convey this knowledge to others. Start this effort now. I tell the students in our madrasah to make it their practice to invite each other to good and forbid one another from evil. If you see anyone doing something wrong then advise him with wisdom and in a beautiful way by saying, “Brother! This is wrong. Why are you doing this? Why are you wasting your precious time? Why are you disobeying Allāh *ta’alā*? Why are you breaking the madrasah rules?”

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

*Call the people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and sound admonition.*<sup>2</sup>

I also wish to add that we should create this spirit within ourselves that if someone enjoins us to do good

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<sup>1</sup> حسن التقاضي في سيرة الإمام أبي يوسف القاضي، ص ٩.

<sup>2</sup> Surah an-Nahl, 16:125

or forbids us from evil then we should regard him as our kind well-wisher and we should pay attention to what he is saying. This thought should not come to mind that he is also a student like me. Who is he to tell me? Rather view him as your well-wisher believing that he is saving your future and your Hereafter from getting spoilt.

## You are the future 'ulamā'

My dear friends! Worry and strive to make something out of yourself because you are the future 'ulamā'. An 'ālim who does not practise upon his knowledge becomes wretched in the eyes of Allāh ta'ālā. Hadhrat Abū ad-Dardā' *radīyallāhu 'anhū* says:

ان من شر الناس عند الله عز وجل منزلة يوم القيامة عالما لا ينتفع بعلمه.<sup>1</sup>

*On the day of Resurrection the most wretched person in the sight of Allāh ta'ālā will be an 'ālim who does not benefit from his knowledge.*

It is for this reason that refuge has been sought from non-beneficial knowledge:

اللَّهُمَّ اني اعوذ بك من علم لا ينفع<sup>2</sup>

and beneficial knowledge was beseeched for:

اللَّهُمَّ اني استلك علما نافعا<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> حلية الأولياء، ج ١، ص ٢٢٣.

<sup>2</sup> صحيح مسلم، ٢٧٢٢.

<sup>3</sup> سنن ابن ماجه، ٩٢٥.

## Conclusion

So you have to work hard to acquire knowledge. You have to practise upon it. You have to convey it to others. Likewise while studying follow a routine of daily acts of devotion. Recite the Qur'an daily. Read one pārah daily. If you cannot read one pārah then read three-quarter pārah. If you cannot read three-quarter pārah then read half pārah. If you cannot read half pārah then read quarter pārah. Engage in some dhikr daily: one hundred times kalimah ṭayyibah, one hundred times istighfār and regarding durūd sharīf, Hadhrat Gangauhī *rahimahullāh* says that one should read at least three hundred times durūd sharīf daily.<sup>1</sup> From here to the room you can easily read durūd sharīf one hundred times. Likewise when returning from the room you can read another one hundred. These devotions will be completed while walking and moving around. Learn the masnūn du'ās also and read them punctually. Read the prescribed du'ās that are made after ṣalāh. These practices will not harm your studies. Rather through their blessing spiritual light will illuminate our hearts and as a result the hearts will absorb knowledge very quickly. Follow the rules of the madrasah strictly and whenever you find the opportunity then in an easy and light manner speak about aspects of Islām. Speak to your brothers, your sisters, your parents, your relatives and your friends. Similarly keep away from those people who spend their time with bad company and in evil places without looking down upon them. But definitely tell them a few light words about Islām.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tadhkirah ar-Rasheed*, vol. 2, p. 154.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* grant you and me the ability to appreciate knowledge and to practise on it. You are students. Your du'ās are readily accepted. Therefore in addition to your teachers and elders I request you to continuously make du'a for me that Allāh *ta'ālā* keeps me firm on the straight path, He gives me the ability to do such works that are pleasing to Him and that towards the end of my life He blesses me with a noble death. Āmīn.

وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

## EDITOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* the editing of this translation was completed on 21 Rabī' al-Ākhir 1439 A.H./9 January 2018. We pray to Allāh *ta'ālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

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

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

Was salām  
Mahomed Mahomedy  
Durban, South Africa