

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND TO THE LECTURE	4
INTRODUCTION	5
A Combined Need of The Laymen and The Elite.....	5
Rasūlullāh’s Affection For The Muslim nation	6
Rasūlullāh’s Intense Affection.....	8
The Idolaters Make a Meaningless Offer to Rasūlullāh.....	8
The Sahābah’s True Love for Rasūlullāh	8
Two Types of Love	9
A Story Portraying the Sahābah’s Love.....	9
The Slip Ups of The Sahābah are Pardoned.....	11
A Convincing Reply to Disputes Among The Sahābah.....	12
Another Incident Portraying The Devotion of The Sahābah.....	12
Our Distance From The Era of Rasūlullāh is a Mercy for Us	13
The Meaning of Acting on One Tenth of Dīn	13
An Example of Finding a Loophole	14
It is Unbelief to Reject an Absolute Order of Rasūlullāh....	15
A Unique Story Portraying The Obedience and Submission of The Sahābah	16
Another Incident Portraying The Sahābah’s Sacrifice.....	16
The Reason Why a Walī Cannot Equal a Sahābī.....	17
The Need to Attach Ourselves to The Sahābah	18
It is Essential to Follow The Pleasure of The Beloved	19
How to Learn The Wisdom Behind Injunctions of The Sharī’ah.....	19
The ‘Ulamā’ Must Not Explain Wisdoms Behind Injunctions of The Sharī’ah.....	23
A Reply to a Gentleman’s Question	24

Why is it Unlawful to Breed Dogs?.....	24
Why The Word <i>'Ishq</i> is Not Mentioned in The Qur'ān and Hadīth	25
Step Onto The Path of Love and The Mysteries Will be Disclosed to you.....	26
The Obedience and Love of Hadrat Uways Qarnī	27
Obedience is Superior to Dreaming of Rasūlullāh	28
The Obedience of Hadrat Wahshī.....	28
A Story Illustrating The Profuse Knowledge of The Sahābah	29
The Merits of Poverty.....	33
Humility – The Root of World Harmony	33
The Meaning of Strength of Mind.....	33
The Strength of Mind of Hadrat Khālid and his Companions	34
Incorrect Training of Children	35
A Treatment for Pride	36
The Merit of Righteous Companionship	36
The Benefit of The Company of The Accepted Servants of Allāh.....	38
Disregard for The Company of The Righteous	38
The Way to Acquire Perfection	39
The Sharī'ah Does Not Prohibit Worldly Progress	40
The Story of Akbar and a Jester	41
The Harm of 'Ulamā' Being Worldly	41
Dīnī Rectification Cannot be Realized by Mere Study of Books	42
Nothing Can be Achieved Without Companionship.....	42
An Important Issue Related to Divorce.....	43

Rectification of Dīn Through Action	44
Impositions of The Self Cannot be Cancelled Through Striving.....	45
The Need for Righteous Companionship for Knowledge and Action	46
Lack of Knowledge and Action Also Causes Worldly Harm	46
There is no Inconvenience in Dīn	46
A Person Practising on The Sharī'ah is Not Distressed.....	47
Why Does a Follower of The Sharī'ah not Experience Worry?	49
The Effect of Disobedience.....	50
The Reality of Distress	50
The Reality of Jam'īyyat.....	50
The Need for Two Things	52
Pious Companionship Without Formal Knowledge is Sufficient to The Extent of Necessity	52
Training is Also Dependent on Companionship	53
The Method of Acquiring Knowledge and Practice for Each Group	54
Signs of a Shaykh-e-kāmil.....	57
A Programme for Women	58
An Answer to Accusations Made Against The 'Ulamā' and Sufis	59
A Few Spiritual Masters	62
A Translation and Explanation of The Verse Which was Recited at The Beginning.....	64
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE	66

BACKGROUND TO THE LECTURE

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* describes one part of the marriage of Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh* as follows:

He was married to the daughter of his maternal uncle, Ra'ūf al-Hasan Sāhib, on 6 Dhū al-Qa'dah 1330 A.H. (17 October 1912) on a Friday after the 'aṣr ṣalāh. Maulānā Muḥammad Sāhib performed the marriage. Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, Shāh 'Abd ar-Raḥīm Sāhib Rāipūrī and Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Sāhib Thānwī were all present. Maulānā Thānwī's famous lecture, *Fawā'id as-Suḥbah*, which has been published many times was delivered on this day in Kāndhlah.¹

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* commenced his lecture after the jumu'ah ṣalāh and continued until the maghrib ṣalāh (except for a short break for the 'aṣr ṣalāh). He delivered the lecture while standing. There were about three hundred people in attendance. It was penned by Maulānā Sa'īd Aḥmad Sāhib.

¹ *Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Aur unki Dīnī Da'wat*, vol. 2, p. 61.

INTRODUCTION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَبَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا. (سورة الكهف: ٢٨)

Keep yourself with those who worship their Sustainer morning and evening solely for His pleasure. Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life. Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose condition has exceeded all bounds.¹

A Combined Need of The Laymen and The Elite

This is a verse from Sūrah al-Kahf. It contains an extremely essential theme which applies to everyone, the laymen and the elite. A theme which is essential for everyone will obviously be extremely necessary. Details in this regard are as follows: Some needs apply to the laymen only while others apply to the elite alone. There are others which apply to both. Although the first two needs are essential according to their level, a combined need will be absolutely essential. Another

¹ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

reason for its importance is that some needs are known to those who are in need of them but there are shortcomings in practising on them due to some reason or the other. On the other hand, other needs are not even known. Some matters are most trivial in the sight of the masses while those who are fully aware of the facts consider them to be most important. The same can be said about actions and ailments. Some are known to everyone. Although they are necessary, the more necessary ones are those which are not known. The present verse makes mention of a theme which is a combined need, yet known to very few people. This claim of ignorance can be ascertained by asking people what their belief is with regard to this theme or by observing their actions. The reason for saying this is that if a matter is treated as if it is unnecessary, it will be assumed that the person does not even know its essentiality. This is especially so when a person's beliefs also provide some testimony to this. I will identify this theme in brief, and my translation will then identify it in detail.

Rasūlullāh's Affection For The Muslim nation

It will be appropriate to explain the reason behind the revelation of this verse before going into the translation. Rasūlullāh's *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* affection to the Muslim nation – in fact towards humanity at large – can be gauged from his biographies, history books and Aḥādīth. We will learn from these sources that he had intense affection for everyone. The effect of this affection was his constant thinking about how he could benefit this nation. No one should ever assume that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had his own motives for thinking in this way or he had his own benefit in mind. It was definitely not so! Rather, it was solely for the benefit and well-being of the Muslim nation. It is a separate matter that thinking in this way and propagating it would earn unintentional rewards and benefit Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as well. However, this benefit was not his focus at the time. Based on the benefit of reward for propagation, Allāh *ta'ālā* said with reference to those unbelievers regarding whom Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had lost all hope:

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

*The same it is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.*¹

Allāh *ta'ālā* did not say: "The same it is to you" because warning or not warning was not the same for him. Instead, warning them earned him rewards while not warning them would not. From here, an objection which is made by scholars will also be answered, viz. when his warning and not warning were the same, why did he carry out a futile action? The crux of the reply is that it could only be considered futile if it was the same to him as well. Since it is not the same to him (because he earns rewards when he warns them and does not when he does not), this action is not futile. In short, there is no doubt that the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* are rewarded for propagation and warning, but the discussion is on whether the reward was his objective when he was warning them. Bearing in mind Rasūlullāh's *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* affection, we can ascertain that reward alone was not his objective. Had reward been his only objective, why would he feel so distressed? After all, reward was received merely for propagation. The Qur'ān says in this regard:

لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

*You may perhaps kill yourself over the fact that they do not believe.*²

وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

*You are not a watcher over them.*³

لَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ

*You will not be questioned about the inmates of the Hell-fire.*⁴

¹ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 6.

² Sūrah ash-Shu'arā', 26: 3.

³ Sūrah al-An'ām, 6: 107.

⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 119.

All these verses clearly display that Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was extremely worried about people embracing Islam. Consequently, he also mentioned this in most clear words.

Rasūlullāh’s Intense Affection

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “My similitude and your similitude is like that of a person who ignited a fire. Grasshoppers and moths began falling into it while he was driving them away from it. I am holding you by your waists and saving you from falling into the fire but you are slipping from my hands.”¹

Every person can gauge from these words that the objective of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was to save the people from the fire. This is why whenever he was made an offer whereby he could realize this objective, he would hasten in accepting it.

The Idolaters Make a Meaningless Offer to Rasūlullāh

Based on the above, the idolaters thought up a mischievous plot to annoy him. They said: “O Rasūlullāh! (why would they have said this? They ought to have said ‘O Muḥammad!) If we come to you, we can listen to some of what you say. However, these poor people are always in your company and we consider it below us to sit with them. This is why we do not attend your assembly. If you separate them and allot a special assembly for us, we will attend. If you were to allow them to remain while we are present, they will become audacious.” They had no intention whatsoever of becoming Muslims. All they wanted to do was to vex him and to separate him for a short while from his beloved Companions.

The Ṣaḥābah’s True Love for Rasūlullāh

No one else had the love which the Ṣaḥābah *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum* had for Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. This was the reason for their total obedience to him. There can be no total obedience in the absence of total love. Nowadays, most religious people have customary love.

¹ Muslim, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il: 19.

Two Types of Love

Brothers! There is a big difference between customary love and ardent love. The first one is adulterated by some motive or the other and there is always some type of failing or neglect in it. It is based on motive and nothing else. Sometimes when one motive is replaced by another, the self says to the person: 'Your objective is to save yourself from the fire. You may commit this sin now and you can repent later. You will be saved from the fire.' This is how our self has made us bold and audacious. Thus, there is a rational impetus to save one's self from the fire. The rational impetus can overpower the demands of the self. On the other hand, love is a natural impetus. If a person learns that there will be no punishment for giving up obedience, he will still feel ashamed of disobedience because the call towards obedience becomes natural.

Thus, the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum being the most obedient among the creation is because they were genuine lovers. Their love was not based on any motives. Their obedience resulted in advantages, but their love and obedience were not based on advantages. Their condition was such that even if they wanted to disobey, they could not.

A Story Portraying the Sahābah's Love

The love of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum can be gauged from the following story. For some reason, a Sahābī built a solid house with arches. His reason was not based on need even though he may have felt some need. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam happened to pass by one day. On seeing it, he asked: "Whose house is this?" The Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum replied: "It belongs to such and such person." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam did not say anything and went back on his way. When the owner of the house came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam and greeted him, he turned his face away. The man approached from a different direction and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam turned his face away again. The man became very worried. When he inquired from the other Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum they said: "We do not know if there is any specific reason for it, however, he did go past your house and

asked who it belonged to. We informed him. He did not say anything but has been silent since then.”

Look! Nowhere in this Hadīth does it clearly say that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said anything about the house. The owner therefore had no way of ascertaining with certainty that Rasūlullāh’s displeasure was because of his house. Our intellects of today would have said and issued a fatwā: He should have asked if this is the real reason for his displeasure or not. If it was the real reason, very well, he may demolish it. However, we would not even have sufficed with this much. Instead, we would have asked: “O Rasūlullāh! What is wrong with it? It has been built for such and such reasons and wisdoms.” These are the types of questions which are posed to the ‘ulamā’ today when they [‘ulamā’] convey the injunctions of Allāh *ta’ālā* and warn the public of certain ills and evils.

The Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum could also have responded in the same manner. They could have asked him for the hidden mysteries behind an injunction as is the norm nowadays. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam even had knowledge of the underlying mysteries while the ‘ulamā’ do not have that knowledge. The ‘ulamā’ have knowledge of injunctions; not of underlying mysteries and reasons. In such a case, it is even wrong to ask the ‘ulamā’ for underlying mysteries. On the other hand, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam received divine revelation. Even if he did not know the underlying reason behind an injunction, he could have asked Allāh *ta’ālā* and informed the people. However, this Sahābī disregarded all this and did not even see the need to find out the exact reason for Rasūlullāh’s sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam displeasure. Instead, he reduced to dust the thing which could have been the cause of his displeasure. In other words, he went at once and demolished the house.

The intellectuals of today may consider this act to be irrational and say: “How could he demolish it merely on a possibility?” However, had it been irrational, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam would have been displeased by his demolition. The Sahābī demolished the house immediately and did not even inform Rasūlullāh sallallāhu

'alayhi wa sallam of what he did. Instead, he left it to his fate and thought to himself: "Just as Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam saw my house by chance, he will come to know of my demolishing it as well. The pleasure of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam is my fate and he will come to know of it by chance." The Sahābī knew that he can only go and inform Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam if demolishing the house was for his benefit. It was not for Rasūlullāh's benefit but for his own.

قُلْ لَا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ.

Say: Do not consider your Islam a favour to me. Rather, Allāh has done you a favour by guiding you to the path of imān, if you are saying the truth.¹

Anyway, when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam passed by that place again, he asked: "What happened to the house?" The Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum replied: "O Rasūlullāh! When its owner learnt of your displeasure, he demolished it immediately." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam was most pleased when he heard this and spoke against excessive constructions. How much of a building is necessary is another issue which is not mentioned here.

The Slip Ups of The Sahābah are Pardoned

You saw the level of the Sahābah's love. One of the demands of this love is for their slip ups to be pardoned completely. Look! No one bothers about a mistake committed by a most loyal attendant. Just recently an incident occurred: A person suffered a deep wound. A doctor said that if it is filled with the flesh of a human, it will heal. The person's attendant was present at the time. He said: "Take as much flesh as needed from my thigh." Now tell me, if the attendant commits a light mistake, will his master take him to task? Never! This is the reason why it is not permissible to criticize the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum.

¹ Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 17.

A Convincing Reply to Disputes Among The Sahābah

Brothers! If the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum had ten times more disputes and mistakes than what we read about, they are still pardoned. It is most astonishing! You consider yourself to be very appreciative in the sense that you consider the mistake of a loyal servant to be pardonable, yet you do not consider Allāh *ta‘ālā* and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam to be appreciative!? This is why we say without hesitation:

الصَّحَابَةُ كُلُّهُمْ عَدُولٌ

All the Sahābah are just.

We will rely on this Hadīth:

لا يمس النار من رأني

The fire will not touch the person who saw me.

If any of the actions of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum are errors, we will say: “The blood of martyrs is more valuable than water. This error is better than a hundred rewards.”

Another Incident Portraying The Devotion of The Sahābah

Such was the status of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum. Even the unbelievers knew how much they loved Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. On the occasion of the treaty of Hudaybiyah, several leaders of the unbelievers came one after the other to discuss with Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. When one of them returned to his people, he said to them: “I saw the courts and sessions of many great kings. I also went to the courts of Khusroes and Caesar. But I never saw the followers of anyone as obedient as the Companions of Muḥammad [sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] to him. When he spits, they do not allow it to reach the ground. When he performs ablution, they do not let the water which he has used to fall to the ground. If anyone does not get a chance to receive this water, he will rub his hand over the hand of the one who had the opportunity and would then pass his hand over his face.” Their condition was as described by a poet:

If I am unable to meet the beloved, his hair is enough. If I do not get that, his fragrance will be more than sufficient.

Brothers! Tell me, is there any order in the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth stating that the ablution water which has already been used by Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* must be taken and rubbed on one's face? Allāhu Akbar! At present there are many groups criticizing and disparaging the *Ṣaḥābah radiyallāhu 'anhum* but they do not look at this condition of theirs. When it comes to *ṣalāh*, fasting and so on, we could say that they were carrying out these acts out of desire for Paradise. But nowhere will we find any order – whether obligatory or desirable – stating that if they take his used ablution water and rub it on their faces they will receive such and such reward. By Allāh! We have so much of disregard that if we were to observe Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* performing ablution, we will not even move in the least. At present, is there even one out of a hundred who will do what the *Ṣaḥābah radiyallāhu 'anhum* did? In fact, it will not be surprising if we see them recoiling from such an act.

Our Distance From The Era of Rasūlullāh is a Mercy for Us

Brothers! We are very fortunate we were born in these times and not during the era of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* or else Allāh *ta'ālā* alone knows where our recoiling would have conveyed us. Nowadays we save ourselves from the fatwās of unbelief on many issues because the 'ulamā' find loopholes by saying, for example, the recoiling is not from the order of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* but from such and such person through whom this order reached us, this objection was made due to it being attributed to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and so on. If he were present at that time and this was our condition, then Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* would have issued a fatwā of unbelief for these actions of ours.

The Meaning of Acting on One Tenth of Dīn

It is a mercy of Allāh *ta'ālā* that we were born in such an era regarding which Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "There will come a time wherein if a person acts on even one

tenth of Dīn, he will attain salvation.” However, no one should deduce from this that if five times salāh were obligatory in the time of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and we perform just half that number it will suffice. In other words, if we add the fard and witr, we get a total of twenty. So if we perform just two rak’ats [one tenth] it will suffice. Some people could have such misunderstandings, therefore I am explaining this Hadīth. This reduction refers to the manner of performing and not the quantity. In other words, if a person has just one tenth of the sincerity and devotion which were present in doing good deeds at that time, it will suffice for his salvation. It is a great mercy of Allāh ta’alā for having caused us to be born in this era of concession. This is an explanation of the concession.

An Example of Finding a Loophole

Take the following example of a widow getting married. The hearts are generally constricted in this regard. In other words, the heart is not as much inclined to a second marriage as it is to a first marriage. Look at what Allāh ta’alā says about this constriction:

لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا
مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا.

They will not be believers until they recognize you alone to be the judge in the dispute which arises among them. Thereafter they do not find in themselves any constriction from your decision and they accept happily.¹

What, then, would the fatwā have been at that time? However, at present we will explain away this constriction by saying that they are not recoiling from the order of the Shari’ah. Rather, it is a natural shame because of the society in which they are living.

¹ Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4: 65.

It is Unbelief to Reject an Absolute Order of Rasūlullāh

However, if Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam were to address a person and instructed him to enter into a second marriage and he experienced a constriction in his heart, how would he have saved himself because a specific and direct address is a proof that all excuses are worthless. An example for this is found in the story of the marriage of Hadrat Zaynab radiyallāhu 'anhā. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam wanted to get her married to Hadrat Zayd radiyallāhu 'anhu. However, because she was from a noble family, she and her brother hesitated. The following verse was revealed immediately:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ.

It is not for a believing man nor a believing woman, that when Allāh and His Messenger have decided a matter, to have a choice in their matter.¹

Although this was a worldly matter, permission was not granted to complain and grumble. We learn from this that when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam issues an instruction – whether related to this world or Dīn – directly to a person, he has to follow. If he rejects, it is unbelief. So if we rejected at that time, we would have become unbelievers. But at present we say that we are merely recoiling from the manner of speech of the 'ulamā' and not from an order of the Sharī'ah. This is why I am saying that it is a mercy for us that we are very far from the era of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. The Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum alone had the courage to hand over their wealth, lives, children, houses and everything else to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

¹ Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33: 36.

A Unique Story Portraying The Obedience and Submission of The Sahābah

I remember coming across the following incident somewhere but I cannot remember exactly in which book. A man wanted to marry a certain woman. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam asked him: “Did you have a look at her?” What Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam meant was that he must make arrangements to look at her, not that he must send a message to her parents to permit him to see her. However, the man was a simpleton so he went to her parents and requested to see their daughter. The parents were offended and wanted to say something. The daughter was behind a curtain. When she heard the name of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam she removed the curtain immediately and said to her parents: “Beware! You must not utter a word after hearing the instruction of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.” She then addressed the man: “Since Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam has asked you to do this, here I am, you can have a look at me.”

Brothers! This is the essence of true love [for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam]. Underlying reasons, wisdoms, shame and embarrassment are all cast aside for it. A poet says:

O love! May Allāh keep you happy. You are such that thoughts are set right because of you and all ailments are treated through you. When we are overcome by pride and haughtiness, you are like a Plato and a Galen for us.

What a beautiful statement: O the treatment for pride and haughtiness!

Another Incident Portraying The Sahābah’s Sacrifice

Brothers! There were many Sahābiyāt radiyallāhu ‘anhunna who came to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and offered themselves to be his slave women but he replied that he does not have any need. Do you think people spoke out against this act of theirs? No! Instead, they valued such a woman. Listen! On hearing of a similar offer made by a woman, the daughter of Hadrat Anas radiyallāhu ‘anhu said:

“She has no shame at all!” Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* became angry and said: “She is a thousand times better than you because she offered herself to be in the service of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.”

The Reason Why a Walī Cannot Equal a Sahābī

This is the reason why no matter how great a non-Sahābī may become, he can never equal a Sahābī. Hadrat ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī *rahimahullāh* was asked about the status of Hadrat Amīr Mu‘āwiyah *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* so he said: “If Mu‘āwiyah is seated on a horse and the dust from its hooves rises and settles on its nose, the dust on the nose of the horse of Mu‘āwiyah *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* is superior to ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz *rahimahullāh* and Uways Qarnī *rahimahullāh*.” We cannot value such a statement but the true lovers know the meaning of the words of Hadrat ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī *rahimahullāh*.

Who knows the true value of a jewel? The king or the jeweller?

Thus, a great quality of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum was that they were true lovers. This is why they were able to materialize a rational and practical reformation and rectification which could never be achieved by any philosopher for his own people nor any king for his subjects. The Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum were blessed with a special light. Allāh *ta‘ālā* makes reference to it as follows:

أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ

Can he who was dead and whom We gave life thereafter, and gave him a light whereby he walks among people...¹

Whether you refer to it as light or the blessing of companionship, the essence is the same.

¹ Sūrah al-An‘ām, 6: 122.

عِبَارَاتُنَا شَتَّى وَحُسْنُكَ وَاحِدٌ - وَكُلُّ إِلَى ذَاكَ الْجَمَالِ يُشِيرُ

Our ways of expression are different but Your beauty is one. Every different expression indicates to that beauty.

The Need to Attach Ourselves to The Sahābah

If we want to reach the point where the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum were (as regards receiving from Allāh *ta'ālā* and not their rank because it is impossible to attain their rank), then we will have to attach ourselves to them by way of obedience. In this way, through their blessings we will be able to move along with them. This is similar to a railway engine which is moving from Peshawar to Calcutta. An old broken carriage also wishes to go to Calcutta. The only way it can do this is to attach itself to the engine with a chain. This ought to be our task as well – we must establish a link and bond with the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum.

Anyway, these were all mentioned by the way. My focus was on the level of love of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum to the extent that even the unbelievers knew of it. This is why they wanted to separate them from it for a while. However, as a poet says:

If an enemy says anything to you in a friendly way,
you must still regard it as a deception because a
hunter imitates the call of his prey in order to
hunt it down.

Wicked people have always adopted the principle of wickedness in the form of concern for one's welfare. Many people in the world treated Muslims in this manner. The unbelievers also did the same to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. His foresight was unique. However, based on the possibility that they might embrace Islam, he accepted their condition. As for concern for the sorrow of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam knew fully well that they were his own, even if he were to separate them from him for their entire lives, they would remain separated because they were the true seekers of Allāh's pleasure. Their condition was as described by a poet:

أُرِيدُ وَصَالَهٖ وَبُرِيدُ هَجْرِي - فَاتْرُكْ مَا أُرِيدُ لِمَا يُرِيدُ

I desire joining him but he wants me to remain separated. I cast aside my wishes to fulfil his wish.

It is Essential to Follow The Pleasure of The Beloved

I recall another point from here, viz. it is essential for a lover to follow the pleasure of the beloved. We also learn that the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ‘anhum* did not focus on immediate benefits even though benefits are certainly acquired. This proves that even though there are benefits in the injunctions of the Sharī‘ah, obedience must not be dependent on them [the benefits]. Rather, obedience must be solely for Allāh’s pleasure. If a man falls in love with a woman and she says to him: “I will only meet with you if you wear your pyjamas, place a large basket on your head, remove your shoes and walk ten times from this point to that point”, he will never ask her the wisdom behind it. If he is a true lover, he will do it twenty times. He will not bother about whether what he is doing is cultured or not, whether it causes him shame or not. He will consider culture to be a form of punishment because it is an obstacle from meeting his beloved. In such a situation, only a person who is totally devoid of love will bother about the wisdom behind doing such a thing.

How to Learn The Wisdom Behind Injunctions of The Sharī‘ah

I am not saying that the injunctions of the Sharī‘ah are devoid of wisdom. There is certainly wisdom in them. However, firstly we cannot encompass them and secondly, the manner of gauging them is not by way choice. Rather, it is conferred by Allāh *ta‘ālā* and is – in most cases – dependent on piety. Just look at our history and see, the erudite scholars like Shāh Walī Allāh, Ibn al-‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Karīm Jaylī *rahimahumullāh* and others who wrote on the wisdoms and mysteries behind the injunctions of the Sharī‘ah. Do you think they studied them in a Madrasah? Do you think they acquired them through debating? Certainly not. Yes, what they did is when they completed their studies in a Madrasah, they began practising on their knowledge and led a life of sincerity and devotion. This created a special effulgence in their hearts

through which all these mysteries and wisdoms were exposed to them. This is what a poet refers to when he says:

You will acquire sciences like the Prophets without
the aid of any person and without any teacher and
book.

There is no other way of acquiring knowledge of the wisdoms and mysteries. However, even in such a case, the one who is seeking the truth must not have a desire to fathom the mysteries because this negates love. When an ardent lover of something that is dead does not ask for the wisdom behind its orders, and is totally obedient to it even if he learns later on that there was no wisdom whatsoever behind that order; how, then, can the one who is seeking Allāh and is a lover of Allāh *ta'ālā* ever make such an enquiry? In short, such an enquiry is totally against the path of love. The path of love requires a person to be mad in obedience.

Brothers! Had you not been doing this, I would never mention these examples to you. However, this is what you do to your fleeting and superficial beloveds. You carry out every order of theirs without asking for the wisdom behind it. In fact, you do the same with the superficial rulers of this world. If the Collector Sāhib were to tell you: "I need to meet you at such and such place tonight at two in the morning and consult with you over a matter which I will be carrying out the day after tomorrow", it will not even cross your mind that if the matter is to be decided the day after tomorrow, he could speak to me about it during the day also. What is the benefit in disturbing me at two in the morning? Even if you do experience this thought, you will cast it aside and think to yourself: "Whether there is any benefit in it or not, I have to make him happy."

If this is your attitude towards those whom you love and towards government officials, why is it not with Allāh *ta'ālā*? Could you find no one apart from Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to be your practising grounds for investigating wisdoms and mysteries? If there is any difference between the two, then tell us what it is. If there is no difference, then why do you have "whys" and "hows" to the

orders of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*?

In fact, Allāh *ta'ālā* is a beloved and also a ruler, so you ought to be more rigid in your attitude [of not asking “whys” and “hows”]. Your attitude towards Allāh *ta'ālā* ought to be as described in the following couplet:

If You bless me with life, it is in my good share. If
You give me death, it is my fate. Since my heart is
enamoured by You, You may do as You will.

Acknowledging Your divinity prevents me from
looking for reasons and wisdoms behind Your
workings.

Of what benefit is there in complaining and moaning? And what right do we have to complain? What rank do we hold that we can complain? Yes, we may ask for wisdoms and underlying reasons in order to silence the enemies of Islam. If it is necessary to silence them, it will be necessary to show the wisdoms. However, if I were to show you a better reply to the enemies and prove to you that it will render them speechless, you will certainly not see this need. An explanation to it is as follows:

There are two types of Muslims, the ‘ulamā’ and the laymen. If you are from the laymen, a simple thing for you to do is refer the opponent to an ‘ālim. Tell him to pose his questions to him because you do not have much knowledge. If you are an ‘ālim or the opponent considers you to be an ‘ālim, you must say to him: “The injunctions are laws. Their mysteries are mysteries of the laws. We have knowledge of the laws not of their mysteries. It is also not obligatory on us to show you the mysteries. If a judge passes a decree on a particular case, the defendant cannot say: “I accept the law on the basis of which you issued the decree, however I feel that this law is pointless. You should therefore explain its underlying reason.” Even if the defendant does make such a statement, it will be considered to be contempt of court and a crime. The judge will have the right to charge him for contempt of court. If the judge does not do this, he will certainly hold the person by his ear and expel him out of his court. If – at the time – the judge

is overcome by wisdom instead of wielding his authority, he will reply: "We have knowledge of the law. Allāh is the promulgator of the law, you must ask Him for the underlying reasons and wisdoms. He will reply to you either by providing you with the underlying wisdoms or by setting right your mind."

This is the answer with regard to the subsidiary matters of Islam. However, if the enemy wants to investigate the genuineness of Islam itself, we will have a rational discussion with him. We will not give the above answer to him. Rather, we will show him rational proofs to prove the truthfulness of Islam. We will continue doing this even if a person continues asking us for the next ten years. His example is of a person who rebels against the kingdom and does not accept the king as the king. You want to make him accept and he resorts to asking you the wisdom behind each and every law before he can accept. You will never give him such an option, you will consider it merely a procrastination and a waste of time. Instead, you will resort to the proofs of the king to prove that he is in fact the king, and prove that the law is in fact his law. Thereafter if he asks you for wisdoms behind the law, you will say: "We do not know its wisdom. He is the king, this is his law and it is obligatory to carry out his law."

We will give exactly the same explanation to the injunctions of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. We will first prove their genuineness through rational proofs and then prove that those injunctions are really from them. As for subsidiary matters, all we will say is that these are the injunctions of the Truthful one and it is obligatory to carry them out.

Take another example. We will need proof to establish that Hakīm 'Abd al-Majīd Khān is in fact a Hakīm (Unānī physician). However, once we have accepted him as a Hakīm, a patient cannot whinge and complain about his prescriptions and to pose questions about them. Since this is an accepted fact in worldly matters, why should we whinge, complain and object about Dīnī matters? Brothers! Do not think that the 'ulamā' do not know the wisdoms behind injunctions. They

know all these things but it is unwise for all wisdoms and mysteries to be brought into the open.

If a person lives with me for two years, then – Allāh willing – I will prove to him that there are rational wisdoms behind every injunction of the Sharī'ah. However, we do not consider them to be very notable sciences because they are deductions and conjectures. Scholars have noted many wisdoms and are still inspired to do so. However, these are sciences which are based on guesswork, this is why the 'ulamā' do not involve themselves with them.

The 'Ulamā' Must Not Explain Wisdoms Behind Injunctions of The Sharī'ah

The other reason why they do not occupy themselves with this is that if the wisdoms are ever disproved by conjecture, and a person assumed that a certain injunction is based on its wisdom, then once the wisdom is disproved, the injunction will also be destroyed. Therefore, explaining wisdoms and mysteries is a murky path. A clear reply is to say that we do not know the wisdoms, ask Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* on the day of Resurrection.

Look! If an announcer calls out by saying: “This is the order of the Collector Sāhib”, will anyone fight with him and say: “You must first explain the wisdom behind it or else it is a useless announcement”? We therefore say that if anyone is prepared to fight with such an announcer and constrains him to explain the wisdom behind the rule, we too will explain the wisdoms behind the injunctions of the Sharī'ah.

In short, we do have knowledge of the wisdoms and underlying reasons. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, we know them, but they are based on conjecture. The absolute knowledge in this regard is that it is the order of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Allāh *ta'ālā* is absolute, therefore His order is absolute and this is absolute knowledge. Unfortunately, people do not enjoy absolute knowledge, but do enjoy fabricated and made up stories. This is the actual reason for this ailment.

A Reply to a Gentleman's Question

I recall an incident when I was travelling from Shāh Jahānpūr. A gentleman was seated in the train. When we stopped at a station, his attendant came in and said: "Sir! It is not settling down." The gentleman replied: "Bring it here." I was surprised at hearing this and was wondering what it must be which the attendant cannot control, which he is asking to be brought into the train and which he will control. After a short while I saw the attendant coming in with a huge dog which was held by a chain. The dog was out of control. The attendant eventually handed it over to the gentleman. He tied the chain to one of the steel bars of the coach. He then turned towards me and asked: "Sir! It is unlawful to breed dogs although they have such and such qualities." He listed so many qualities which were probably not even found in dogs. I continued listening to whatever he had to say. When he finished, I said: "Sir! I have heard what you said. There are two answers, one is a general answer which is also a reply to other doubts. The other is a specific answer which applies to dogs in particular. Which answer do you want?" He said: "Give me both."

Why is it Unlawful to Breed Dogs?

I said: "The general answer is that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* made it unlawful. It is a general answer because it is an answer for all doubts until the day of Resurrection. However, there are two points which must be borne in mind from before. One is that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was a Messenger of Allāh. The other is that this is an order of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. If you have any objections to this, prove your objections." He said: "This is part of our imān."

This was a general reply, it was a rational and definitive answer; but the man did not appreciate its value, he did not like it. He said: "Sir! What is the specific answer?" I replied: "All the qualities of a dog which you listed are certainly found in a dog. Despite this, it has one very serious defect which wipes out all its qualities. The defect is that it does not have any fellow-feeling. You yourself may have noticed how when one dog sees another, it automatically shifts away from it."

He fell silent when he heard this reply and considered it to be an absolute answer, whereas it is merely a point. I did not know who this man was. Incidentally, when I came from Itāwah to Bareilly, Maulwī Zahūr al-Islām Sāhib said to me: “Did you have such and such discussion with any person?” I replied: “I certainly did.” He said: “The students of ‘Aligarh College were talking about your reply and were elated by it.” I gauged from this that the gentleman must have been educated at that college.

I related this incident to you to demonstrate to you that the reply over which they [the students] were so elated was – apart from being futile – of no value to me. I did not even consider it to be an answer.

To sum up, asking for underlying reasons and wisdoms is in total conflict with love for Allāh *ta’ālā* – as explained previously. Yes, it is another matter if we say that we are not lovers at all. However, Allāh *ta’ālā* negates this as well. He says:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

The believers are more intense in their love for Allāh.

Why The Word ‘*ishq* is Not Mentioned in The Qur’ān and Hadīth

The word ‘*ishq* is a ruined and trodden word, this is why it is not mentioned anywhere in the Qur’ān and Hadīth. One must have gauged from this that it is disrespectful to use this word for Allāh *ta’ālā* and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. You can understand it from the following example: A person speaks in praise of a viceroy and says that he also enjoys the powers of a constable. Although this is in fact correct, this form of praise is a serious defamation and disrespect. In fact, sometimes matters of this nature give the impression of a defect [in the person who is praised]. A poet says:

If a person says to the king that he is not one of ignoble descent, then this is not his praise. Rather, he is not aware of the rank and position of the king.

If a negation of something cannot be a praise, how can its affirmation be a praise? It will be even more disparaging. Thus, the word *'ishq* must not be used for Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The Qur'ān and Hadīth also do not use this word. Yes, "intense love" is mentioned. If Allāh *ta'ālā* has said that you are His ardent lover, how can you deny ardent or intense love? You should therefore follow the ways of an ardent lover. A poet rightly said:

Do not befriend an elephant owner or else you will have to make such a big house which can accommodate an elephant.

Either do not have ardent love tattooed on your face or have the cup of piety washed by the River Nile.

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā* that we have been forcefully admitted into this intense love. Our condition seems to be as if we are fleeing but we are caught, brought back and told: "You belong to Us. Where did you go?" A Hadīth states that Allāh *ta'ālā* is most pleased by those who are drawn by chains and admitted into Paradise.

Step Onto The Path of Love and The Mysteries Will be Disclosed to you

The general condition of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* was one of intense love – as mentioned previously. You too should adopt the same way. From among the blessings of emulating them, it is possible that you will be conferred with the sciences which you seek, viz. the wisdoms and underlying reasons behind injunctions. Look! If a person says to a king: "Show me your treasures", he will be considered to be audacious. However, if you wish to see his treasures, you must obey him and develop an informal and friendly relationship with him. It is then possible that there will come a day when the king will personally take you to show his treasures to you. A poet rightly said:

Sharpening your mind and intellect is not the way of reaching Allāh *ta'ālā*. Rather, submission and

total surrender are essential. Allāh's grace accepts those who surrender themselves totally.

Water only flows to a low lying region. Answers are only given where there are objections.

Medication is only needed where there is an illness. A cure reaches the place where there is an affliction.

You remained hard like a rock for many years and saw the consequences of it. Now reduce yourself to soil and see what happens.

Did you ever see a rock becoming green in the spring season? Reduce yourself to soil and see the different colours of flowers which will sprout from you.

In short, a person can succeed through total submission and surrender, and by reducing himself to soil. All those who received this treasure in the past had to go through the same process. As for the one who spent his entire life in making objections, he achieved nothing. Thus, the first path is a praiseworthy path and one of guidance. The second is blameworthy and one of misguidance. We have shown both paths. You can now choose whichever one you like.

I went to some length on this subject. My purpose was to demonstrate to you that the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum had such love for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam that if he were to tell any of them not to see him for the rest of his life, his love for Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam will remain the same. There are two incidents in this regard.

The Obedience and Love of Hadrat Uways Qarnī

One is the story of Uways Qarnī rahimahullāh who, despite his intense desire to meet Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, he carried out the order of the Sharī'ah by remaining in the service of his mother and did not meet Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam throughout his life.

Obedience is Superior to Dreaming of Rasūlullāh

I am astounded by those who wish to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in their dream but do not obey his injunctions. Whereas dreaming of him is inferior to meeting him while one is fully awake. Look at the level of Hadrat Uways's obedience! He did not even go to meet Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in real life because he knew that there is no substitute to obedience while there is a substitute to meeting him, viz. if a person does not meet him here, he will meet him in the Hereafter. A poet rightly said:

Intense love has a pull which will not leave you
just like that. If you do not attend my funeral, you
will certainly come to my grave.

Even this couplet makes mention of a substitute. If an incident of this nature took place with Hadrat Uways Qarnī who was a Tābī'ī, what can be said of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*?

The Obedience of Hadrat Wahshī

The second story is of Hadrat Wahshī *radiyallāhu 'anhu*. Although he is not a famous Sahābī, he is certainly a Sahābī. He may not be on the rank of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu 'anhu* and Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, he is nonetheless a Sahābī. A poet says:

Although the sky is very low compared to the
Throne [of Allāh], it is very high compared to a
sand dune.

Anyway, his story is that he martyred Hadrat Hamzah *radiyallāhu 'anhu*. When he presented himself as a Muslim Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said to him:

هل تستطيع ان تغيب وجهك عني؟

Can you keep your face concealed from me?

An objection could be raised at this point. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* loved his uncle so dearly that he even remained offended by a Muslim. This is a serious affliction for him to be so affected by a matter which was

against his temperament. If this was his response to a Muslim, what hope could a sinner have in him? Allāh alone knows how displeased he may be with us and how far away he will fling us. However, we obtain a wonderful glad tidings from this very same incident. Allāh willing, this one incident will solve all our problems because we learn from it that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* is so affected by it that he cannot bear a worldly pain to be borne by one of his followers. So if we hold on to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* on the day of Resurrection, he will certainly not be able to bear to see us in our affliction and will help us.

A Story Illustrating The Profuse Knowledge of The Sahābah

The Sahābah radiyallāhu *'anhum* learnt the same lesson from a similar Hadīth. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* was explaining something. The Sahābah radiyallāhu *'anhum* asked:

هَلْ يَضْحَكُ رَبُّنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

O Rasūlullāh! Does Allāh also laugh?

We can gauge how deep the knowledge of the Sahābah radiyallāhu *'anhum* was in the sense that they asked if Allāh *ta'ālā* laughs and not – like the people of today – the nature of His laughter. They knew fully well that if they have not fully recognized Allāh *ta'ālā*, how can they understand the nature of His qualities? A poet says:

If you have never set eyes on Sulaymān *'alayhis salām*, how will you understand the conversations of the birds?

A person had a detailed discussion with a spiritual master on the subject of the night of Mi'rāj. Look at the beautiful reply which he gave:

Does anyone have the courage to ask the gardener about what the nightingale said, what the flowers heard and what the morning breeze did?

Anyway, after hearing this Hadīth, the Sahābah radiyallāhu *'anhum* said: Allāh willing, we will not be deprived of receiving some good from a Sustainer who laughs as well. In other

words, we are not saddened because we do not know what will cause Him to laugh and which will then enable our forgiveness.

Brothers! Such was the knowledge of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum. We do not take joy from such things because our hearts have become like an impotent man. Our hearts have no feelings like an impotent man who can take no joy from a woman. Our hearts are impotent and immature like him. A poet rightly said:

The entire creation is like children except the person who is intoxicated with Allāh *ta’ālā*. The only mature person is the one who has escaped from the desires of his self.

Just as the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum deduced this from the Hadith, Allāh *ta’ālā* just now put this thought in my mind from the instruction of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam to Hadrat Wahshī radiyallāhu ‘anhu. That is, if we slip, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam will certainly assist us. Anyway, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said this to Hadrat Wahshī radiyallāhu ‘anhu and he followed him to the letter by not coming before Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam for the rest of his life.

أُرِيدُ وَصَالَهُ وَيُرِيدُ هَجْرِي - فَأَتْرُكُ مَا أُرِيدُ لِمَا يُرِيدُ

I desire joining him but he wants me to remain separated. I cast aside my wishes to fulfil his wish.

What emotions must have been running through his heart!

You are saying bitter things like separation. Do whatever you want, but not this.

If his neck was chopped off it would not have been calamitous. Imagine the grief of separation and then the grief of humiliation in the eyes of people! However, he was an ardent lover and did not bother about anything else. He sacrificed everything - his life, wealth and honour. Look at how cultured and well-mannered the rest of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum were – no one picked at him. Instead, they used to go to Syria to visit him. A Sahābī went to meet him

and asked him about the incident of killing Hadrat Hamzah radiyallāhu ‘anhu. He replied: “All thanks are due to Allāh ta‘ālā I was able to atone for it by killing Musaylamah, the impostor.”

Anyway, we see how the Ṣahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum obeyed Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in the severest of matters. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam was therefore convinced that if he acceded to the request of the Quraysh leaders by asking the poor Muslims to stay away from his assembly when these Quraysh leaders are present, they will not be offended in the least. Furthermore, there is the likelihood of the leaders embracing Islam. If they do not, at least his evidence against them will be established [in the sense that he conveyed the message to them]. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam was still thinking over whether he should do this or not when this verse was revealed:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطًا. (سورة الكهف: ٢٨)

Keep yourself with those who worship their Sustainer morning and evening solely for His pleasure. Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life. Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose condition has exceeded all bounds.¹

This was the circumstance behind the revelation of this verse which I explained above and I also mentioned a few other points. I will now explain its meaning.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الدُّنْيَا

¹ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

Keep yourself with those who worship their Sustainer in the morning and evening desiring nothing but His pleasure. In other words, they restrain their selves. Not only are you not permitted to ask them to leave, you yourself must not get up and leave them. For example, you yourself must not get up from there, take those leaders elsewhere and conduct a separate assembly for them. Had Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* done this, it would not have humiliated the poor Muslims in any way. Look! Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ

Keep yourself confined.

O Muḥammad! Your heart may also demand that you get up because your getting up is also prompted by Dīn. However, you must sit patiently.

From this you can gauge the high rank of those poor Muslims. After all,

يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ

Desiring nothing but His pleasure.

A poet rightly said:

Do not scorn the beggars of love because they are the kings without crowns and thrones.

I may be a beggar at the tavern, but you must see how I vex my pride over the skies and rule over the stars in my state of intoxication.

Look! Although Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is the king of both worlds, he says:

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْيِنِي مَسْكِينًا وَأَمِتْنِي مَسْكِينًا، وَأَحْشُرْنِي فِي زُمْرَةِ الْمَسَاكِينِ.

O Allāh! Let me live as a poor person, let me die as a poor person, and raise me among the group of poor people.

Look! He did not say the poor people must be raised with him but that he must be raised with the poor. In other words, they

must stay in their place and I must join them, I must be where they are. He could have said: They must be where I am.

The Merits of Poverty

The virtue of poverty must have been gauged from the above. Brothers! It is such a great thing that it is also a treatment for a very serious ailment – an ailment which is the root of all evils, an ailment which damages one’s worldly and Dīnī life – that ailment is the ailment of pride and arrogance. All contagious evils such as fighting, backbiting and jealousy stem from pride.

Humility – The Root of World Harmony

One day, our Hājī Sāhib [Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib] *rahimahullāh* made a very unique and deep statement which no reformer of today ever mentioned. He said: “People are trying to bring about harmony but they do not know its root. Humility is the root of harmony. Every person must develop humility within himself because disharmony always stems from pride. When every person will consider himself to be greater than the other, he will shirk many of his responsibilities. He will want to surpass others in every matter. This will result in disharmony. When there is humility in every person, every person will realize the rights of others over him. He will find himself lacking in this regard. In this way, every one will bend over for the other – and this is what harmony is. Our thinkers are trying for harmony but are chopping off its roots at the same time through their pride and arrogance. Their condition is exactly as portrayed by a poet:

A man is sitting on a branch and chopping off the trunk. The owner of the orchard looked and saw him doing this.

We are sitting on the branch of harmony but chopping off its trunk by pride. Today people are taught self-conceited pride in the name of “strength of mind”.

The Meaning of Strength of Mind

Brothers! Strength of mind means: Casting aside kingdom and living the life of a pauper. Its essence is as described in the following couplets:

Whether gold is scattered at the feet of a true believer or a sword is placed over his head, he has no hope and fear from anyone but Allāh *ta'ālā*. The foundation of tauhīd rests solely on this.

His condition is as follows:

The one who has acquired Your cognition does not bother about his life, offspring and possessions.

The Strength of Mind of Hadrat Khālid and his Companions

Brothers! Strength of mind is the one which was displayed by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*. Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* went with 100 companions to the court of Māhān, the Armenian. Māhān had a silken carpet laid out. Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* removed it. Māhān said: “O Khālid! I laid it out of respect for you.” Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: “The carpet of Allāh *ta'ālā* is far better than yours.”

Just ponder! Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* went with just 100 people while Māhān has an army of 200 000. Despite this, look at how Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* spoke to him. Māhān said: “O Khālid! My heart desires to make you my brother.” Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: “Very well, say: There is none worthy of worship except and Muḥammad is Allāh’s Messenger.”

Māhān said: “This cannot happen.” Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: “We even cast aside our blood brothers [for not accepting Islam], how will I ever make you my brother?” Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* then said: “O Māhān! You had better become a Muslim or else that day is drawing near when a rope will be around your neck and you will be dragged and presented before ‘Umar.” Māhān went into a rage and instructed angrily: “Apprehend these people.” Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* got up immediately and addressed his companions: “I warn you not to look at each other. Allāh willing, our next meeting will be at Haud-e-Kauthar.” Saying this, he drew his sword immediately. Māhān was overwhelmed by this terrifying sight and said: “I was merely joking with you.” Only then did Hadrat Khālid *radiyallāhu 'anhu* settle down.

This is what you call strength of mind – not that you go and settle down in a jungle out of pride, arrogance and disgust at poor people so that Muslims can see you. The strength of mind which we refer to today is the one which Allāh *ta'ālā* refers to as:

لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فسادًا

*Who do not seek to exalt themselves in the land nor to cause corruption.*¹

Thus, we see how the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* displayed strength of mind; and this only comes from tauhīd. Nowadays, pride is considered to be strength of mind, and this is what people are taught today.

Brothers! It is so sad and distressful that today children are taught obstinacy and arrogance from their very childhood days.

Incorrect Training of Children

A Ra'īs asked me: “What should I do if my child commits an offence against my worker?” In other words, should the child be reprimanded in any way for his offence? I replied: “The child must be instructed to apologize to the worker.” The man said: “That would be very humiliating. It will weaken his strength of mind.” When I explained the reality of “strength of mind” to him and demonstrated that what he is saying is actually insolence and arrogance, he understood what I was saying.

Brothers! By Allāh, people do not know how to bring up and train their children. Real training was what used to be done by private tutors of the past. A prince used to study under a teacher. The king went into the school and found that neither the teacher nor the prince was there. On inquiring from the other children he was told that the teacher left riding a horse and the prince went behind him. The king became displeased by this and went in the same direction as the teacher and prince. He eventually caught up with them. The king noticed

¹ Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 83.

the teacher riding the horse while the prince was running behind him. The king asked the teacher the reason for doing this. He replied: "Sir! You know that he is a prince and, if Allāh wills, he will ascend to the throne. He will have occasions when he will be riding a horse with all his servants and attendants following him. I am making him run behind this horse from now to show him how painful it is for servants to run barefooted behind a horse. He will remember the pain he is suffering at present, show mercy to his servants and attendants, and not impose on them more than what they can bear."

The king was most pleased when he heard this and said: "May Allāh reward you. You have trained him very well."

This is what you call real training.

A Treatment for Pride

We have to seek refuge and protection in Allāh *ta'ālā* from the widespread pride which we see around us. This is the cause of our destruction. Poverty is its treatment. A quality which is difficult to acquire even after ten years of striving can be acquired in a single day through poverty. This is the benefit of poverty as I understood it. Apart from this, poverty in itself is also beloved to Allāh *ta'ālā*. The one who desires the beloved is the one who is loved by her husband.

The Merit of Righteous Companionship

From the above, a person may think that I too will allow my house to be robbed and include myself among the poor people. Brothers! It is definitely not to be done. The following is the way of including yourself among the poor:

الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ

A person is with the one whom he loves.

Have love for the poor and – Allāh willing – you will reach their rank. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* says:

يَا عَائِشَةُ قَرِّبِي الْمَسَاكِينَ وَجَالِسِيهِمْ

O 'Ā'ishah! Bring the poor close to you and sit with them.

The words “Bring the poor close to you” mean that the poor must be allowed to come to you. The words “sit with them” go one step further by saying that if they do not come to you, you must go to them. Look at the great honour of the poor! This is the same poverty which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam was instructed with when Allāh *ta'ālā* said:

وَاصِرْ نَفْسَكَ...

Keep yourself confined...

This was the translation of the verse. You must have realized the object of my talk from the translation. However, I will also spell it out clearly to you. The literal meaning of the verse is what I just explained. However, it also has a certain purpose which will be well understood from my objective. I had thought to myself that a clear verse may be understood quickly but this did not happen. Anyway, you can understand it now. What is the purpose of the words “Keep yourself confined”? Obviously it is consideration for what would benefit the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum. After all, it has to mean one of two things: the poor people derive benefit from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam or they do not. If they do not, then what is the use of such an order? If anyone were to say that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam derives benefit from it in the sense that he is rewarded for propagating the Dīn, then it is absolutely wrong to confine the order to this only. Why should it apply to the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum alone? It includes propagation to the unbelievers as well. Thus, we learn that the main purpose of this order is to convey benefit to the poor people. In other words, if these poor people sit in the company of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam, they will benefit from him.

The Benefit of The Company of The Accepted Servants of Allāh

This proves that there is benefit in sitting in the company of the accepted servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*. This is a short sentence but I will explain it in detail – and this is the objective of my talk. Furthermore, it is a matter which is accepted by all and is established in the Qur'ān as well:

اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

Fear Allāh and remain with the truthful.

It is clearly stated in the above verse. Although the verse which I recited at the beginning is not so clear in this regard, but this is what is meant as per my explanation. In fact it is sufficient to prove that it is accepted by all.

Disregard for The Company of The Righteous

It is sad to say that although it is an accepted fact, the extent of its necessity never crossed your minds. It is this very necessity which prompted me to speak on this subject. It is generally felt that righteous company is beneficial. However, there is disregard to its necessity both in belief and in practice.

Let me explain this further. All parents are striving for the worldly success of their children. Those who have more inclination towards Dīn will have their children to become Maulwīs for the sake of Dīn. Those who have worldly inclinations will encourage their children towards a livelihood. In short, one made efforts for success in Dīn and the other for success in this world. However, in this list of different efforts you will not find any concern for righteous companionship. In other words, no one made this a point of priority. No one considered it essential as they considered other occupations to be essential. For example, where a person gives one day in a week, one day in a month or one month in a year solely for the sake of benefiting from righteous company. This practice of ours testifies to the fact that we did not consider it to be necessary at all.

Look! Times are set aside for all works. There is a time for meals, for resting, for taking a leisurely walk, etc. Did anyone

set aside a time for righteous company which is solely a means of rectifying one's character? The answer to this question is nothing but a zero. This is the subject which needs attention. There is general heedlessness in this regard while its need is most essential because no perfection – whether worldly or Dīnī – can be realized without righteous company. Yes, you can be whatever you want in name, but in reality that condition is just as described in the following couplet:

The Khwājah assumes he has achieved something
but he has achieved nothing except vanity.

The Way to Acquire Perfection

Nowadays people consider the studying of books to be perfection. I take an oath and say that no perfection can be achieved without an expert. And acquiring from an expert is dependent on companionship. Leave aside worldly achievements because I have no experience in them. There is no need to speak about them. As a poet says:

I am neither the night nor the night worshipper
that I can interpret dreams. I am a slave of the
Real Beloved. You will only hear about the Beloved
from me.

Although there is an objection against the Maulwīs for not showing the way to rectification in worldly matters, I reply to this objection by saying: It is similar to a sick person going to Hakīm Maḥmūd Khān. After taking his pulse, the Hakīm writes out a prescription for him. When he goes outside with the prescription, he meets a cobbler at the door. The cobbler asks him: “What did the Hakīm Sāhib say?” The sick man shows him the prescription. After seeing the prescription, the cobbler asks: “Your shoes are torn. Did the Hakīm Sāhib say anything about them?” The sick man replies: “He did not say anything.” The cobbler says: “Hakīm Maḥmūd Sāhib is totally oblivious to the needs of the world.”

Brothers! What reply will you give to this advisor apart from the fact that prescribing medication is the job of the Hakīm Sāhib and your job is to mend shoes. In the same way, we provide prescriptions for spiritual ailments and consider

worldly objectives to be on the level of mending shoes. Why, then, should objections against our position be levelled at us?

Brothers! It would be ridiculous to go to a goldsmith to mend horseshoes or to the district judge to make a bed. Yes! If Hakīm Maḥmūd Khān stops you from having your shoes mended, then he is a criminal. However, if the shoe is mended in such a way that it causes sores on the feet, then it is the Hakīm Sāhib's duty to stop you from wearing those shoes so that the sores do not turn septic and cause damage to your entire body.

The Sharī'ah Does Not Prohibit Worldly Progress

In the same way, if the 'ulamā' prevent people from earning of the world in lawful ways, then they are guilty. But if the people start finding fault with Dīn, the 'ulamā' will certainly prohibit them. This prohibiting is not really a prohibition of progress. Brothers! Imagine a person filling his pocket with gold coins. Then when there is some place left, he begins filling it with small shells. He continues filling them by forcing them in. The weight of all this causes the pocket to get torn and the gold coins start to fall off. If a person observes him doing all this and stops him from filling his pocket with shells, will we say that he is stopping him from progress? Never. Of what use are those shells which were acquired by losing gold coins in the process? When your Dīn – which is far more valuable than gold coins – is being destroyed, how will you gain success by accumulating a few shells of this world? The 'ulamā' will certainly prohibit you in such a condition. If you understand and realize what they are saying, you too will say:

That wicked fellow who destroyed Dīn because of this world should not rejoice.

Although it is permissible for us ['ulamā'] to save you from worldly losses, we do not consider it our responsibility. Therefore this should not be intentionally done when overwhelmed by other Dīnī occupations. After all:

We have discarded whatever we learnt except for things which concern the Beloved – these we repeat continually.

Look! The British issued a “fatwā” that there must be a group set aside for each task. So according to this fatwā, the ‘ulamā’ must be set aside solely for Dīnī works. Today there is a strange darkness that all tasks are considered to be the responsibility of one group, and the guilt for all tasks fall on the ‘ulamā’. If the ‘ulamā’ do anything and say to the people that they do not have the money to carry out the work, they [‘ulamā’] must collect it, then the ‘ulamā’ are asked to go around making collections.

The Story of Akbar and a Jester

This reminds me of a story which took place during the rule of Akbar. Akbar was happy about something so he gave an elephant to his jester. How could the jester afford to feed an elephant? So he hung a drum around its neck. Akbar happened to see this so he asked the jester the reason for it. The jester said: “Sir! Since I cannot afford to feed it, I hung a drum around its neck and allowed it to move around freely. It can then go around begging and eat to its fill.”

So it seems that the ‘ulamā’ are the elephants of Akbar’s jester. Why should the ‘ulamā’ go around asking for money? Our work is with our hands and tongues. As for giving money or collecting it, that is your work.

Anyway, I was talking about the point that it is not the work of the ‘ulamā’ to interfere in worldly terms and definitions. In fact, their excellence lies in not even knowing anything about them. The excellence in a child lies in the fact that he or she is absolutely innocent.

The Harm of ‘Ulamā’ Being Worldly

Another terrible harm is that if they become aware of worldly matters and know how they operate, they will start eating sugar and rice [become involved in luxuries] because the evil self is also with them. Look! If a train driver gets a place in the second coach, he will never want to sit in the engine room. The ‘ulamā’ must therefore remain ignorant of the world. Brothers! Look at the tyranny of it all! First of all we must bear the hardship of sitting in the engine room and get our bodies and clothes covered in soot for your comfort. And then an objection is made against us and we are asked: “Why don’t

you become the guards?” This is why I do not even make mention of rectification of worldly matters although they too are dependent on companionship. I am only talking about Dīnī rectification and reformation.

Dīnī Rectification Cannot be Realized by Mere Study of Books

Dīnī rectification cannot be realized by mere study of books, it can only be achieved through companionship. Trying to achieve this merely by studying books is similar to a person giving a laxative to his wife after looking it up in a medical journal and without consulting Hakīm Maḥmūd. Can anyone prescribe medicines merely because he has a pharmacopoeia by him? If you ask anyone to do such a thing, he will reply: “Sir! Every science has certain intricacies which can only be understood by the expert in that science. I cannot take the courage to give a laxative without a doctor.”

In the same way, our Dīn has certain intricate matters. It is therefore a serious mistake to confine one’s self to books. Never ever confine yourself to books. Instead, remain in the company of someone. My time is soon to expire, I will therefore try to be brief and then end my talk (the audience requested Hadrat Thānwī not to be brief. He said thereafter):

Nothing Can be Achieved Without Companionship

In short, there is a severe need for righteous companionship but people have no concern whatsoever for it. Whereas even an ordinary task cannot be accomplished without companionship. Look! A person cannot prepare *gulgulās* (a type of sweetmeat) merely by looking at *Khawān Ni’mat* (name of a recipe book). If worldly occupations cannot be mastered without companionship, how can the sciences of the Shari’ah be acquired without it? I recall having a lawyer as a guest when I was a child. I took the translation of the law from him, paged through it and felt I understood it. I then asked the lawyer if what I understood was correct. He replied: “No. Rather, it means something else.” After he explained what it meant, his explanation sounded very correct. Now look! Urdu is my mother-tongue. But because I was not conversant with this field [of law], I could not come to a correct understanding. Now imagine if it is a book in a foreign language or a

translation. A foreign language cannot be fully understood without first having proficiency in its finer points. As for a translation, it cannot preserve the same peculiarities of the original language. Thus, a person cannot fathom the crux of a matter merely by studying a book.

Look! If I were to quote a couplet of Dhauq and present it to you in Persian, you will never enjoy it. The same applies to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. You will have to learn the language first, then learn the rules of that science from those who are experts in it, only then will that science be acquired. The Qur'ān can never be understood without a Mufasssīr nor the Hadīth without a Muḥaddith. The 'ulamā' here will themselves agree that although they spend night and day in this field, they still have the occasional need to enquire from others. There were times when my teachers explained a point and I explained the same point differently, and they accepted my explanation. So if this is the condition of those who are occupied in this field, how can those who have nothing to do with this field feel satisfied with their own understanding?

Sometimes an issue has other restrictions which are not mentioned but have to be considered. A real expert is needed for this. It is for the same reason I declined to teach Shāfi'i jurisprudence to a student of the Shāfi'i Madh-hab when he requested me. I knew that a certain issue might have a certain restriction which is not mentioned there but at some other place. Since I am neither aware of it nor proficient in this field, I will err in understanding it correctly.

An Important Issue Related to Divorce

Let me explain this with an example. The word *ikhtārī* (make a choice) is from among the allusions (indirect intent of divorce). Some people see this word under the chapter *Bāb al-Kināyāt* (the chapter on allusions) and err into thinking that if a person utters this word to his wife with the intention of divorce, then divorce will take place. Whereas this issue is firstly related to *Tafwīd at-Talāq* (handing over the right of divorce) and then in *Bāb al-Kināyāt*. It is stated in *Bāb al-Kināyāt* that it is an indirect intent of divorce, while in *Tafwīd at-Talāq* it is stated that in order for the divorce to take place, a prerequisite is for the wife to say: *ikhtartu nafsī* (I have given

the choice to my self). If the wife does not say anything, divorce will not take place by the husband's mere saying *ikhtārī*. This is why I declined to teach this Shāfi'i student and referred him to Maulwī Tayyib Sāhib who was an expert in Shāfi'i jurisprudence. Honesty demanded I refer him to someone else. There are thousands of examples of this type – as long as an erudite shaykh does not inform us of the intricacies of a matter, they cannot be solved. This is why companionship is so necessary. We learn from this that one need for companionship is intellectual rectification.

Rectification of Dīn Through Action

The other rectification of Dīn is through action. This needs training which is also dependent on companionship. The fact that action is dependent on training and mere knowledge is insufficient for it shows that the 'ulamā' also display shortcomings in action. Consequently, the condition of people like us is as portrayed in the following couplet:

The lecturers make a display on the pulpits and podiums. But when they are in privacy, they do other things. I encountered an objection from a question posed by an intelligent man: Why do those who instruct others to repent not repent themselves?

After all, what is the reason for backbiting despite knowing its harms? We know that bearing malice is evil, yet thousands of 'ulamā' are caught up in it. The only reason is that they did not undergo rectification. This causes a weakness in actions. Thus, we learn that mere knowledge and intention are not enough for actions. There is a need for training as well. People assume that action has to do with intention, so an intention is enough. However, the error in this is that an intention itself needs some power and strength, and the person did not look into this aspect. Alternatively, we could say that an intention is only enough when obstacles do not have any effect on it. And when there is no training and tutoring, there are certainly obstacles.

Impositions of The Self Cannot be Cancelled Through Striving

For example, impositions of the self are also obstacles. You want to wake up in winter to perform salāh but your self stops you. This requires training. Training weakens the effects of the impositions but does not uproot them completely. Some people are deluded into thinking that striving completely removes impositions. This is a wrong assumption. Yes, striving certainly weakens them.

The self is a snake. It has not died. Yes, it is depressed and grieving because it does not have the tools.

Maulānā related a story: A snake was hibernating in winter. A snake-catcher thought it was dead, so he tied it in ropes and dragged it into the city centre. People gathered all around, while the snake-catcher was boasting about how he caught it and how he killed it. The people too were amazed by his story. In the meantime, the sun shone on the snake and the heat awakened it. The people realized that it was alive and they all fled from there. The snake-catcher's boastfulness disappeared. The Maulānā relates this story and says:

The self is a snake. It has not died. Yes, it is depressed and grieving because it does not have the tools.

The causes of depression should not be given up. They are the different forms of striving, spiritual practices and special measures. Therefore, when rectification is taught, it is essential to teach special measures. Most of our reformers constantly speak of orders, prohibitions, rewards and punishments, but they do not demonstrate the measures for them although there is a severe need for them. We want to abstain from speaking lies but the self says to us: "There is such and such advantage in it. You must tell the lie." We are then compelled by it.

Look! If there is a lot of bile in the body, it cannot be resolved by giving the patient tranquillizers. He will have to be given expellants. Thus, mere advice is like a tranquillizer. In short, impositions of the self require training.

The Need for Righteous Companionship for Knowledge and Action

The essence of my talk is that the need for two things has been established. One is knowledge and the other is action, and both are dependent on training. The first [knowledge] requires special mentors, and the second also needs special mentors. Thus, knowledge and action are both dependent on companionship. However, we are heedless in this regard.

I had said that when something is essential and people disregard it, then there is a severe need to inform them. This is why I am saying it: Companionship is something on which perfection in knowledge and action is dependent. Knowledge and action are both necessary. Thus, we can see how essential companionship is.

Lack of Knowledge and Action Also Causes Worldly Harm

We have established that knowledge and action are both necessary. Absence of both has worldly harm and harm in the Hereafter. Harm in the Hereafter due to absence of action is obvious, and there are many warnings in the Qur'an and Hadith in this regard. As for the worldly harm, anyone who wishes can see for himself that when a person acts on the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* he is saved from every type of worry. In the same way, when he acts against his teachings, he experiences an inundation of problems and worries. I am not saying that actions bring about salvation from every type of difficulty, rather, it certainly brings salvation from worry.

I recall an incident in this regard. Maulwī Ghulām Mustafā is a friend of mine. He was teaching the children of a wealthy and powerful man. He would also teach them how to perform the five ṣalāhs. The children's mother began complaining that the Maulwī Sāhib is causing my children to catch a cold because he makes them perform ablution in the early morning. Brothers! Hardships of this nature will have to be experienced when practising on Dīn.

There is no Inconvenience in Dīn

A man came to Maulānā Fadl ar-Raḥmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and said: "A woman's husband is gone missing." The Maulānā

said: “She must wait for ninety years.” The man said: “There is a lot of inconvenience in doing this, and we know that there is no inconvenience in Dīn.” The Maulānā said: “If there is inconvenience in this, there is inconvenience in jihād as well.” So this is not the meaning of inconvenience. Inconvenience refers to worry and distress – and these are not found in Islam. Yes! There is certainly hardship and difficulty. Is there no hardship and difficulty in worldly occupations?

A Person Practising on The Sharī'ah is Not Distressed

By Allāh! The one who practises on the Sharī'ah will be freed from all worries. A person may say: “We have come across many religious people who are in problems most of the time. For example, their income is less and they are constrained in their spending.” The answer is: This hardship is on the body, not on the soul. Worry comes from hardship on the soul. You can understand it from the following example. A person meets his beloved after a very long time. The two look at each other from a distance, one greets the other and is desirous of embracing her. At that very point, the beloved runs towards him, embraces him and embraces him so tightly that his bones are crushed. Now I ask the experts in love! Will the lover experience any discomfort from this embrace? He will certainly experience it. However, it is a discomfort for which a thousand comforts can be sacrificed. If at the exact time of this pain the beloved says: If you are feeling any pain, I will release you and embrace this person who is next to you in the same way, what reply will you give? Obviously he will say:

May the enemy not be killed by your sword. May the heads of friends remain safe from being used as tests for your dagger.

He will say:

His prisoners do not want freedom from his prison. His prey does not seek freedom from his trap.

In other words, if there is true and genuine love, a person will disregard pain and discomfort totally. Instead, he will experience joy in it. This is a point of experience – you can observe the conditions of the true men of Allāh – they do not

experience the least bit of spiritual pain from poverty and lack of wealth. In fact, they feel sorry for you over your affluence as you feel sorry for them over their poverty.

When Hadrat Shibli Sāhib rahimahullāh looked at any wealthy person, he would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي عَافَانِي مِمَّا ابْتَلَاكَ بِهِ وَفَضَّلَنِي عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ
تَفْضِيلًا.

All praise is due to Allāh who saved me from what He has afflicted you with and He has blessed me with special favours compared to a great part of His creation

You look at the external hardships suffered by the Ahlullāh and feel sorry for them while they do not feel sorry on their own selves because they do not even consider these to be difficulties. Even in reality they are not difficulties. I can clearly proclaim once again: The one who follows the Sunnah does not experience any distress. His condition is always as described in the following couplet:

Do not go down the path of despondency because there are many paths of hope. Do not go towards darkness; there are many suns.

In other words, do not lose hope in Allāh *ta'ālā*, have hopes in Him.

Ask those who passed their B.A. degree how much of hardships and difficulties they had to bear. It was not passed by mere hopes. Someone rightly said on the subject of mere hopes of success:

Although I am very far from my beloved, I am happy over the hope that my beloved may hold my hand once again.

This couplet applies more to those who failed a few times. They neither bother about their food nor their rest – they are with their books all the time. It is most astonishing that a person who gives up his food and rest just for ten rupees is considered to be a man of high aspirations. No one considers

him to be afflicted by miseries. But when a man who is seeking Allāh *ta'ālā* casts aside luxuries, he is considered to be suffering. In short, my claim that these people [Ahlullāh] do not suffer from worries is now proven. (Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* stopped at this point for the 'aṣr ṣalāh and resumed his talk after the ṣalāh). He said:

Why Does a Follower of The Sharī'ah not Experience Worry?

I had stopped at the point where I said that the one who practises on the teachings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is preserved from every type of worry. The doubt which a person may have on this statement was also removed. It will also be good to understand the reason for this. One reason is rational and the other has to do with love. The rational reason is that this teaching rectifies every harm. Even justice-seeking people of other religions have accepted this. If any person rejected it out of fanaticism, others refuted him.

The second reason has to do with love. In other words, those who are madly in love will be able to understand it (although this reason is also a rational reason, the intelligentsia have not understood it fully. This is why I did not refer to it as rational). There is a rational principle which states that when a person is obedient to a powerful person, the latter saves him from problems. Now who can be more powerful than Allāh *ta'ālā*? Thus, a person who acts on the teachings of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* – because he is obedient to Allāh *ta'ālā* – He will save him from every worry. Yes, it would have been another matter if the problem was beyond the control of Allāh *ta'ālā*. However, it is unanimously believed that nothing is beyond Allāh's control. Yes, if a matter seems to be worrisome but is not really such, then this claim of protection from it does not apply. For example, parents protect their child, but if any part of the child's body turns septic, a lancet will be applied to remove the septic part. The child thinks that his parents are not protecting him and cries out. But there is a difference between the views of the child and his parents. A poet says:

The child trembles when the lancet is inserted.
But the affectionate mother is satisfied and happy
with the procedure.

This discomfort is really a comfort. No one can save himself from discomforts of this nature and no one even tries. This is that reason based on love, but is a rational reason in reality. I am not restricting myself to rational reasons but proving it from the Qur'ān as well.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

Allāh makes a way out for the one who fears Him and provides sustenance for him from where he did not even imagine.

This is a promise of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Thus, my claim is proven by the intellect and Qur'ānic proof. The crux of all is that a person who acts on the teachings of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* does not experience any worries and problems.

The Effect of Disobedience

Just as obedience has the above effect, disobedience has the effect of causing constant and continuous worry and distress to the disobedient person. Although he may consider it to be comfort, it is really a distress for him.

The Reality of Distress

It is necessary for me to explain the reality of distress. What is distress? It refers to perplexity and anxiety of the heart; not external hardship. You can see for yourself that the hearts of those who are immersed in sin are always murky and dark. They never experience the thing which is known as *jam'īyyat* (tranquillity, contentment). The more their contacts with the world, the more their distress increases. If a person cannot perceive this, he must test it out for himself.

The Reality of Jam'īyyat

The test is as follows: He must free himself for one week and engage in the remembrance of Allāh *ta'ālā* with full sincerity and devotion. At the end of one week he must check if he feels anything new in his heart. Allāh willing, he will certainly feel something different. He must now bear this condition in mind and give up his solitude. He will automatically find himself caught up in the effects of heedlessness. He must then

compare his previous condition with the present one. He will realize that he is certainly distressed and he will see darkness and worry before him. As for the previous condition, it will be one of contentment and effulgence. This is the test. Allāh willing, he will realize that all worldly people are immersed in distress. Most people will not be able to perceive this without testing it first because if a person has never experienced contentment, he will never understand distress. He will consider distress to be contentment. However, his consideration of it as contentment is similar to a villager living on the borders of the country who considered his humiliation to be an honour. There is a well-known incident which relates thus: A man arrived in India and reached a sweetmeat shop. When he saw all that was displayed before him, he craved it. He did not have any money, so without even asking the shopkeeper he picked up whatever he fancied and ate it all. The shopkeeper had him prosecuted. The city judge pronounced the following punishment on him: He must be made to sit on a donkey and paraded throughout the city with young boys walking behind him and playing drums. This punishment was meted out to him. When he returned to his hometown, his people asked: "O master! You went to India, what did you get there?" He replied: "India is an excellent country. The sweetmeats are free, you get a free ride on a donkey, you get an army of boys walking for free behind you, and you get them playing drums for free."

Just as the villager thoroughly enjoyed that condition, the same can be said about the worshippers of luxuries of today. They look at their following, attendants, servants, honour and items of luxury and assume them to be contentment. The reality will dawn on them one day. They will be seated on a donkey but they will think they are sitting on a horse because they never had the occasion of sitting on a horse. If they get an opportunity of sitting on a horse, they will realize they had been sitting on a donkey previously; or they could not distinguish horses from donkeys because of the dust and dirt. A poet says in this regard:

فَسَوْفَ تَرَىٰ إِذَا انْكَشَفَ الْغُبَارُ - أَفَرَسَ تَحْتَ رَجْلِكَ أَمْ حِمَارٌ

When the dust settles you will see whether a horse is beneath you or a donkey.

Once the dust of heedlessness settles, the person will learn what is really under him.

Anyway, there can never be contentment in disobedience. From my entire explanation you must have realized the absolute necessity of actions and the distress caused by disobedience. Thus, the necessity of action has been made manifest. Action is dependent on knowledge, so knowledge is also essential.

The Need for Two Things

To sum up, the need for two things is established, viz. knowledge and action. Knowledge needs education while action needs training and tutoring. And both need companionship. Thus, the absolute necessity of companionship is established.

Pious Companionship Without Formal Knowledge is Sufficient to The Extent of Necessity

In fact, I can go one step further and say that if a person does not have formal knowledge from books but has only companionship, it will suffice him to the extent of necessity. Yes, he will not be a Maulānā because erudition in knowledge cannot be achieved without studying, but he can certainly learn the essentials. In fact, if a person has a strong memory and perfection in religiosity, he can also acquire knowledge solely through companionship and without having to undertake formal studies. The knowledge of the majority of the Ṣaḥābah *radiyallāhu ‘anhum* was acquired solely through companionship – without any books and studies. However, conditions changed later on and there was a need to codify the branches of knowledge in order to preserve them. If they were not codified, people would either not preserve them or they could not be relied for claims of authenticity and memorization. The codification of the sciences and their formal teaching is an extenuating need, and not an intrinsic one. Thus, we can say that a person who is acquiring

knowledge is not independent of companionship, while a person who remains in the company of another can be independent of formal education. This was my discussion on the dependence of education on companionship.

Training is Also Dependent on Companionship

We now come to the second point of training which is more essential than education. Training can in no way be achieved without companionship. People of other religions also understood its necessity. The colleges have hostels which house students. Even the children of the city are housed there. This is done solely to develop the special qualities of their lecturers within them. I am merely quoting this so that people who are impressed by modern thinking may be convinced by what I am saying. If this was not the case, there is absolutely no need for us to copy the ways of other religions. We have absolutely no doubt whatsoever in this regard because we witness it daily. Scholars and students come to us for rectification because their character is not good. They request me to teach them a few forms of dhikr and then want to leave. Instead of teaching them, I advise them to remain staying there. They continue staying there and within a short time, by living in that environment, their condition is rectified through the blessings of someone or the other. Even though the blessings may be of a junior. Seniors also need juniors because they are also rectified through them.

Sometimes people are asked to remain with us for six months or a year. They do not understand what we are saying to them. However, when they stay here, when their condition changes and they are reprimanded and scolded for every minor misdemeanour, they realize that there was a real need for it. We are constantly faced with incidents of this type, this is why there was absolutely no reason for us to quote the statements of modernists. However, since people are not convinced without this, I related it here. To sum up, we need both groups – one from which we acquire knowledge and one from which we receive training.

The Method of Acquiring Knowledge and Practice for Each Group

Now let me explain the methodology for this. There will be different methods because there are two types of people.

The uneducated

The first group comprises those who are uneducated. If they have the time, they must be made to seek knowledge through formal education. Even if a person does not become a qualified 'ālim, he must spend at least two to four years in studying and doing nothing else (this is my opinion). He must remain totally devoted to his studies no matter what.

You can decide how long you are going to spend in studying. However, you must certainly spend at least one year. If after a year there is a need to study other sciences for a livelihood, then Dīnī knowledge and worldly knowledge may be combined. Those who can complete their studies must be allowed to do so. That which people consider to be a waste of time is also most essential.

A man from Klānūr came to me and began asking me about my nephew. I said that he is studying Arabic. He asked: "Do you intend teaching him English after that?" I replied: "No." He said: "Are you not going to allow him to progress? He could study English and obtain top jobs." I said: "If everyone becomes occupied in this, who is going to serve Dīn? After all, there is a need for Dīn as well." He said: "Many students qualify annually from the Deoband Madrasah for this purpose [of serving Dīn]." I said: "Glory to Allāh! What justice! If becoming a Maulānā is a mark of progress, why should it not be selected for my nephew? And if it is something to be scorned, why should it be decided for the students of Deoband? Are they not our children?"

Anyway, those who have the time must be made into fully qualified 'ulamā'. The children of the wealthy are more eligible for this because the poor cannot do without seeking a livelihood. They will either waste their time doing other work while others will make knowledge a means for earning. Subsequently, neither will their lectures have any effect nor will their fatwās be reliable. On the other hand, the wealthy are independent so their reformations will be more effective. It

is therefore essential for the wealthy to certainly select one or two of their children to study Islamic sciences. However, the criteria of selecting them should not be what it is till now, i.e. the most foolish and dumb-witted are chosen to study Islamic sciences. And then objections are made against the Maulwīs that they are stupid and foolish.

Brothers! The Maulwīs are not stupid. Rather, stupid people are made to become Maulwīs. Now this is how you must select: The child who is the most intelligent and the sharpest must be selected to study Islamic sciences. You will then see how intelligent and sharp the 'ulamā' are. Unfortunately, the general attitude of people nowadays is that the thing which is of no use is given over in Allāh's name. What do people think of Allāh *ta'ālā*? Do they think that anything which is of no use to them must be given over in His name?! This is why a foolish and dumb-witted person is selected for Allāh's Dīn. So please excuse us from such a selection. It will certainly benefit the person who is selected but will be of no benefit to the nation. The nation can only benefit from those who are content and intelligent.

This is the programme for those who are uneducated and can be educated. As for those who are uneducated and do not have the time to undertake a formal study, they must go occasionally to the 'ulamā' and ask them about matters pertaining to Dīn. People go to meet the 'ulamā' nowadays but not in the correct way. They go to subdue the 'ulamā' to their ways of thinking by speaking to them about what is contained in the newspapers and what occurred in the country.

Brothers! They have no need to know about the country and they have no need for lawyers. You should rather worry about your own country and become your own lawyer. In other words, you must go to the 'ulamā' and inform them of your actions and maladies, and ask them for their rectification.

This is the programme of education for those who do not have the time. Once knowledge is obtained through these various ways, you must make plans for righteous companionship. You yourself must go to the righteous and take your children to the 'ulamā' to listen to their talks. Look! The children come home for holidays and all their time is wasted in football and

cricket. You must certainly set aside at least one hour daily for them to sit in the company of an 'ālim. All these details are related to the uneducated.

The educated

We now come to the second group. They have studied quite a bit and have considerable knowledge of the essential sciences. We can refer to them as Maulānās. I say to them: Although they may not have confidence in erudite 'ulamā' because they consider themselves to be knowledgeable, they must certainly correspond with such 'ulamā'. I will not say which 'ālim they must revert to. Rather, I will say that they must revert to all. It would be best if such a Maulānā writes a letter to four 'ulamā' weekly and asks them a certain academic question. He must then compare the answers. I am not restricting him to any specific 'ālim. When he is comparing the answers, he must not have any preconceived opinions about them. He must look at them with an open and equitable mind. If there is any doubt about any answer, he must present the answer and proofs of one to the others without divulging the identity of those who answered his question. If a Maulānā does this, then – Allāh willing – the truth will become clear to him on all issues. If – under the impossible supposition – a certain ruling still remains unclear, he will not be taken to task on the day of Resurrection.

If a Maulānā does not have so much of affinity with the different sciences and cannot undertake a comparison, he must merely select one 'ālim. For example, if a person does not have any affinity with medicine and the doctors have different opinions about an illness, what will the person do? He will either give preference to one prescription over the others or he will look at the proofs as a whole and select one.

Shut your eyes from the entire world and focus on the beloved for whom you have reserved your heart.

From the above, a solution is also found to the following question: If there are differences among the 'ulamā', what should a person do? Whose opinion must he practise on? The answer is that doctors also have differences. What do you do

in such a situation? You revert to the most senior doctor. Signs of seniority include: he must have studied under an expert, he has a lot of experience and most patients experience relief at his hands.

Thus, when there are differences among the 'ulamā', look at whose students they are, for how long have they been serving Dīn and what type of benefit people have been getting from them? If the teacher of one 'ālim was an expert, and the present one has been serving Dīn for a long time – these are two signs of expertise. Furthermore, his companions are more towards Dīn – which is equivalent to a doctor having many successes with his patients. On the other side, the second 'ālim does not have these accolades. So select the first one and leave the second one. This is the method of selecting 'ulamā'. However, this method is for those who do not have the ability to make a decision.

As for those who have the ability to make a decision, they must make detailed investigations and research on both sides and then make a comparison as explained previously.

All this was related to education and knowledge.

Signs of a Shaykh-e-kāmil

We now come to the matter of training and tutoring. The method for the educated and uneducated is the same. You must select a shaykh who has rectified his own character. This can be ascertained by visual signs. You must go to several spiritual masters. It is not difficult to do this. After all, people go from town to town searching to buy a certain item. So if you have to go to a few places to search for a shaykh, what is so difficult about it? The signs are as follows:

1. He must have sufficient knowledge of Dīn.
2. He must be practising on his knowledge.
3. He monitors and takes to account his associates in an affectionate manner.
4. People who remain in his company no longer feel attached to this world.

5. The majority of those who remain with him are religious people.

When you come across such a person, you must frequent him and spend a few days with him if you get an opportunity. Your character will be rectified in this way. By remaining in his company you will see how he [for example] subdued his anger on four occasions. Consequently, you will subdue yours at least once. In this way it will become your habit to subdue your anger. If you are unable to remain in his company, you must at least correspond with him, describe your ailments to him, e.g. you have greed, avarice, instability and so on. He will then write back and tell you what to do. You must act on that. A shaykh will not teach you different forms of dhikr for the rectification of character. Rather, he will teach you different procedures which you will have to follow. Although these can be found in books, they are not beneficial to a novice because books contain general guidelines. You have specific problems and insufficient understanding to apply the generalities to your specifics.

This is the method of training – whether through companionship or correspondence. The same programme must be for your children as well. Even if they are occupied in Western education, you must set aside at least one quarter of their holidays to spend in the company of the pious. This will have an effect on them. If your children spend even one month in a year in the company of a pious person, neither will science be harmful to them nor English. The programme for men and children was described to this point.

A Programme for Women

We now come to the women. One arrangement which could be made is that if there is a pious woman in the family, they must go to sit in her company. If there isn't one, you must read the *Malfūzāt* of the pious personalities to them, and relate the various conditions of living personalities. Give them books which they would read continually. Read the books of 'Allāmah Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* to them. I personally experienced this and found it most beneficial.

This is the programme for education and spiritual training – one is related to the ‘ulamā’ and the other to the spiritual masters.

An Answer to Accusations Made Against The ‘Ulamā’ and Sufis

People err with regard to these two groups. One is that they accuse the ‘ulamā’ of not being practising ‘ulamā’, and sight this as the reason for not acquiring knowledge from them. The other is that they accuse the Sufis of not being erudite ‘ulamā’, and sight this as the reason for not learning how to rectify and reform their ways from them. If you want to find such an all-inclusive personality then let me tell you that rarely will you find one.

Brothers! If you cannot find someone as all-inclusive as Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahīmahullāh* so what? If you lay down such a prerequisite of perfection in matters of Dīn, you must do the same when acquiring of this world. So now you must not work because you were not made the king. If you reply by saying that if you cannot be made king, you will at least have to make do with whatever job you can get, then we will give you the same answer here. That is, if you cannot find an Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahīmahullāh* today, then you will have to make do with the Maulwīs of today. In the same way, if people are searching for a Junayd Baghdādī *rahīmahullāh* then the same reply is given to them. Moreover, if you are searching for a Junayd Baghdādī, then you should at least develop that level of quest in you as was found in the disciples of Junayd Baghdādī.

Brothers! Consider it a boon that you found pious elders who are in accordance with your quest.

In short, the ‘ulamā’ are accused of being non-practising ‘ulamā’. Although it is a correct accusation in respect of some ‘ulamā’, it is – first of all – wrong to consider all ‘ulamā’ as non-practising. There are many who are practising ‘ulamā’ and I could even list them for you, but if people do not even bother to ask, why should I tell you? If certain faults are found in practising ‘ulamā’ also, then the answer is that no human is faultless.

Secondly, even if the 'ulamā' are non-practising, then I ask you: If Hakīm Maḥmūd Khān is not cautious about his diet, will you stop going to him for medical treatment? You will certainly go to him. Why should his own actions have anything to do with his qualifications?

Yes, if you do not go to non-practising 'ulamā' for spiritual rectification we can understand that, but he is sufficient for the acquisition of knowledge. For example, if you ask a non-practising 'ālim about matters related to beliefs, e.g. whether Allāh can be seen or not, or whether man has a will of his own or not, and so on, then what do his actions have to do with such matters?

Another similar excuse which is given is that there are differences among the 'ulamā' and we are confused as to who we should follow. I already explained this that you must give preference to one as per the rules. For example, if you go to several lawyers and they all give different views about your case, you will eventually give preference to one. When this rule is applied in all other matters, why should it not be the same in Dīnī matters? Why should doubts and misgivings come up for every matter? The rules and principles of giving preference were explained previously.

In short, even if the 'ulamā' are non-practising, you must acquire knowledge from them. Similarly, objections are made against the Sufis that they are not fully qualified Maulwīs, this is why people are searching for Sufis who are fully qualified 'ulamā'.

Brothers! Just as it is not essential to acquire knowledge for one who is a completely practising person, it is not essential to undergo spiritual training under a fully qualified 'ālim. Yes, knowledge to the extent of necessity is essential. Do not be like that dervish who plastered his one nostril with excreta and sealed his one eye with wax because he felt that if you can see sufficiently with one eye, there is no need to look with both eyes. And if you inhale the fragrance of flowers with the open nostril it ought to make up for the foul smell which he is inhaling with the nostril which is plastered with excreta. As though he is voicing his opinion to Allāh *ta'ālā* and saying that He made one redundant eye. Incidentally, a few 'ulamā'

who had spent time in the company of spiritual masters met him and informed him that his ablution, ṣalāh, etc, went to waste. The dervish cried profusely and rectified his ways.

This is why I say, knowledge to the extent of necessity is essential, perfection in knowledge is not essential. Thus, you must look at the knowledge of the 'ulamā' not at their actions. And in the Sufis, you must look at their actions, and do not search for perfection in knowledge. However, if you incidentally find one who is an 'ālim and a shaykh, well and good! Glory to Allāh!

If you find one like this [one who is an 'ālim and a shaykh], establish a bond with him. If you do not, then establish a bond with two. Two is not a large number. We have contacts with thousands of people for worldly reasons. So there is nothing astonishing if you bear the airs of two people for the sake of Dīn. Your actual objective – Allāh *ta'ālā* – is such that even if you establish a bond with a thousand people and bear their airs, it will not be enough.

Many hardships are borne for a single heart. Many thorns are borne for a single flower. A seeker must be patient and prepared to bear hardships. I have not come across a tired and weary alchemist.

We also learn from what I just said that if you fail with one, you must revert to another. This is similar to the treatment of a sick person:

I will continue seeking until my objective is fulfilled. Either my body reaches the True Beloved or my soul leaves my body.

A poet says:

A seeker must be patient and forbearing. We have never come across a tired and weary alchemist.

Remain fully occupied in this quest throughout your life. It is then impossible for you to be deprived.

There is no ardent lover at whom the beloved did not look. O brother! You do not even have any pain. If you had, the doctor is here.

Remaining completely occupied in this quest as described:

You must always be anxious in this path of reaching Allāh *ta'ālā*. Do not take a break for a single moment until the very end. There will certainly come a time when divine providence will become your confidant and your bosom friend.

In other words, there will certainly come a time when you will reach your objective [Allāh *ta'ālā*].

I now conclude my talk. I said previously that I will not list the names of those practising 'ulamā' but the view is that I should tell you – but not so that you become suddenly devoted to them. At the same time, do not think I am saying this to you so that you become devoted to me. You should certainly not become devoted to me. I am not worthy of it – I am merely one who teaches rules and regulations. I am not saying this out of humility nor do I need to resort to any humility. I express whatever I have within me. All praise is due to Allāh, I possess essential knowledge and I am prepared to teach it, although I am not perfect in it. There are many things which I do not know. When I am asked of such things, I say and I will say that I do not know it. Yes, I do not deny possessing essential knowledge and I do not claim to be eligible for your devotion and confidence in me. This is why I am not saying that you must have confidence in these elders because I am saying so. You must test them for yourself and observe for yourself. Thus, I am not naming them for the reason of having confidence in them; my purpose is to merely inform you. The elders are:

A Few Spiritual Masters

One is Maulānā 'Abd ar-Raḥīm Rāipūrī who is present in this gathering. He is sufficient for one's spiritual training. The other is Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Maḥmūd Ḥasan Sāhib who is sufficient for both – knowledge and spiritual training. The third is Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib – he too is sufficient for knowledge and spiritual training. I have not named others at present.

I have written a bequest in which I listed the names of some spiritual masters. You must test them for yourselves.

However, a test cannot be taken just once or twice. Most people consider Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* to be a “dry” person. They either did not meet him or met him at a time when he was occupied in some other task or taking someone to account. Seeing him like this just once, they make an incorrect judgement on him for his entire life. This is similar to a person who hears about a certain judge who is very pleasant. On hearing this, he goes to the court to meet him. Incidentally, he reaches at a time when the judge is passing a judgement of life imprisonment on two criminals and the death sentence on two others. The person will certainly consider the judge to be cruel. However, an intelligent man will say: Brother! You have seen him in court, and that too at a time when he was judging on very serious crimes. You should at least go to his house and see how he is. In the same way, a person meets a pious elder just once and labels him as a very “dry” person.

Brothers! You must remain with them for at least one week and observe them. If anyone of them still does not appeal to you then there is no treatment for you.

A person may have the misgiving that I only listed personalities who are my own elders. It seems like a conspiracy. My first answer is that Allāh *ta’ālā* knows whether it is a conspiracy or not. Secondly, I have given up accepting bay’ah from anyone, so it cannot be a conspiracy. I am merely informing you of what I know. Yes, one misgiving remains: Praising my elders essentially amounts to praising my own self and claiming that I am a pious elder, that is why I am able to identify such people.

The one who speaks highly of the sun is actually praising his own self because both eyes are illuminated through it.

My answer to this is that very well, you can think like that, why should I extricate myself? Secondly, how do you know whether I listed their names after recognizing them to be spiritual masters. I may have heard about them from some other personality and their spiritual rank must have been established under the principle of:

أنتم شهداء الله في الأرض

You are Allāh's witnesses on earth.

Anyway, you must observe these personalities and test them.

I have personally advised you and spent some time in it myself. If anyone does not have the desire to pay heed, the Messenger's duty is merely to convey. He is not responsible if anyone practices or not.

A Translation and Explanation of The Verse Which was Recited at The Beginning

Based on the benefit of this companionship, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is instructed thus: Do not deprive your *Sahābah*. Instead, keep your self attached to them.

I will now translate the verse and conclude my talk.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ

O Muhammad sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam! Keep yourself with those who worship their Sustainer morning and evening solely for His pleasure. Let not your eyes overlook them (i.e. keep your eyes focused on them).

I extract one ruling from here. There is also benefit from the focus and attention of the spiritual masters. Thus, it is as if the first sentence makes reference to education in the sense that by sitting with them, they will learn rules and regulations. While the second sentence makes reference to spiritual training. Allāh says further on:

تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

Seeking the adornment of this worldly life.

Some scholars consider this to be a sentence on its own. It would thus mean: Do you seek the adornment of this worldly life?

However, I consider it to be a sentence depicting a state or condition. In other words, overlooking them with the intention of seeking the adornment of this worldly life must be abandoned not because you are seeking the adornment but because it entails overlooking them. In this way, the realization of adornment is not essential.

Another prohibition is issued further on:

وَلَا تُطِيعْ مَنْ أَعْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا.

Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose condition has exceeded all bounds.

A third point is learnt here: Do not accept the advice of the one “whose heart We have rendered heedless...” This is because there is no blessing in the advice of an irreligious person. Thus, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* is prohibited from accepting the advice of the Quraysh leaders who wanted him to reserve a special assembly for them.

The gist of this verse is that both education and spiritual training are beneficial through companionship. The spiritual masters are also instructed not to show any disregard. Glory to Allāh! What a comprehensive statement. I now conclude my talk.

We make du‘ā’ to Allāh *ta‘ālā* to bless us with sound understanding and the inspiration to practise. Āmīn.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, the English translation of this enlightening book was completed on 19 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1435 A.H./20 April 2014.

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

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

Mahomed Mahomedy
Durban, South Africa.