

ISLAAHE KHIYAAL

(CORRECTION OF THOUGHTS)

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INTRODUCTION

Islahul Khiyal (Correction of Thoughts) has been compiled by Hakimul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (Rahmatullah alayh). This short compilation consisting of some correspondence between two relatives and a letter of a Shaikh to some of his Mureedeen who were adversely influenced by westernism, answers many baseless doubts created by westernism in the minds of Muslims who pursue western education. May Allah Ta'ala accept this humble effort and make it a means for eliminating the doubts of kufr which befuddle the minds of many Muslims nowadays.

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PREFACE

Someone wrote to his relative a letter counselling (giving naseehat – Deeni advice) him with regard to obedience to the Shariah in matters of a'mal (righteous deeds) and the adoption of an Islamic appearance. Being strongly influenced by modern western concepts, the relative entertained some doubts and uncertainties in regard to the naseehat offered. This person wrote a reply in an endeavour to dispel his relative's doubts and misgivings.

Since many people, under the impact of western modernity, are confronted with similar doubts, it has been felt that publication of these letters will be in the Deeni interests of the general Muslim public. Thus, the doubts and their answers are presented here in book-form which is named ISLAHUL KHIYAL (Correction of Thoughts).

In addition a Shaikh-e-Kamil once wrote to some friends influenced by modern ideas, a letter of profound naseehat (Islamic Advice). However, the opportunity for despatching the letter did not arise. Some persons had copies of this letter. Since the subject matter of this letter pertains to our discussion, it is appropriate to include it at the end of this compilation.

Muhammad Ashraf Ali

THE DOUBTS

The conception of Islam which the Ulama of Hindustan entertain of the Shariat and their peculiar way of following it are, in my opinion, not of the making of Islam. By changing circumstances of time and by the Will of Allah, the British acquired domination over the land of Hindustan.

A glance at the history of the time when Muslim rule was first established in Hindustan will reveal that the general condition of other nations was worse than that of the Muslims.

For example, in England, the test of boiling water was used to establish the guilt or innocence of a suspected criminal. It was believed that the hand of an innocent person will not be scalded in this test. People were burnt alive at the stake. Comparatively speaking, the Arab nation (i.e. the pre-Islam Arabs) of that age was not lagging behind others. It was a nation on equal footing with other nations of the time. Islam came and reformed the Arabs during an epoch when other nations too were equal in degradation.

Islam imparted to them the lesson of Tauheed. Within a short while a new nation arose. With sword in hand, nation after nation was conquered by Muslims in the wake of Islam's onward advance. Asia and a large section of Europe came under Arab domination.

Divine Aid and victory are confirmed by the Qur'an and Hadith. There can, therefore, be no denial of the fact that

Divine Aid is available for a nation which has imbued in it the ability to follow the Laws of Allah. This fact is evidenced by the grand empire established by the Muslims. Its example cannot be found in history.

After the age of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen, mutual conflict developed among Muslims. The shameful episode of Karbala was enacted by the hands of Muslims. Until Qiyamah, Muslims will regret this event. The signs of the decline of the Muslim empire were thus initiated. However, since there existed no dominant civilized nation at the time, Muslims enjoyed peace in the lands they conquered. Later, conquest of lands had come to a halt and the empire was consolidated. In spite of this, the signs of Muslim decline were on the increase by the day. While living in peace and prosperity, Muslims failed to secure themselves against future attacks by other nations.

Examples of injustices perpetrated by even small feudal landlords over their vassals are to be found in the age prior to the mutiny (of 1857).

Towards the 10th century the European nations had made considerable progress in the production of armaments. This led to misfortune for the Muslim kings and their downfall.

The age which I have described above may be said to be the initial stage. When viewing the condition of Muslims of this age and comparing it with other nations, then it will become clear that the early Muslims were men of high moral character and courage. In contrast, cowardice and love for comfort were the features of other nations.

However, Muslims became not only stagnant, but lapsed into re-congression. On the other hand, other nations continued with the process of progress. If Sultan Abdul Majid Khaan (of Turkey) did not emulate the western kings, it would not have been possible to have retained power and kingdom. If he had established in his dominion the type of Islam of Hindustan, then for the downfall of his kingdom there would not have been the need for others to do the work. The demise of the kingdom would have come of its own accord. According to the need of the time, he introduced in the army such weaponry which the Ulama of Hindustan would never have sanctioned.

In truth I say to you that if the Sultan had pledged to follow the laws of the Ulama of India and then if some Ulama from here had to proceed to supervise the lifestyle there (of the Turkish Muslims), and if the Sultan had to implement these laws then the kingdom would not have endured.

If it is retorted: ‘Confound the kingdom. Obedience to the Shariat is the aim and the great thing as long as the Hereafter is secured, it does not matter whether the kingdom survives or not’. – then I shall ask:

‘Of what use is there in living such a life of degradation and have such a disturbed heart?’

Furthermore, it will be tantamount to claiming that Islam does not teach us the way to govern and establish political control. On the contrary, it will mean that Islam advocates disgrace and teaches beggary whereas this is not so. It is utterly futile to cite examples of the early Muslims

because times have changed. If today the Sultan had to adopt the method of Hadhrat Umar (Radhiallahu anhu) and he himself (i.e. the Sultan) sets out in search of a lost camel of the Baitul Maal as Hadhrat Umar (Radhiallahu anhu) had done, never will he be able to govern. You are a wiseman and can understand that never, never would it be possible to govern today in this way.

It was in accord with the circumstances of that age for the Khalifah to make nocturnal tours of the streets to ascertain the condition of his subjects.

In the present age power is established with knowledge (knowledge of material things – science – technology), not by means of the sword. If today a man of great courage issues into the battlefield with sword in hand, his fate will be sealed from a thousand feet. The bullets which will silence him are the product of (scientific) knowledge. Alas! Muslims have failed to appreciate the created bounties of Allah. Water is used by Muslims for quenching thirst, to make wudhu and to purify. But Muslims have not used water scientifically. The same water produces steam. By harnessing steam, a single person can do what a thousand men cannot do. What conflict with the Shariat has constrained Muslims not to cast their gaze in this direction? Even now they are not prepared to learn from others. This is merely an insignificant example I am giving.

Volumes can be compiled in regard to the things which Muslims have failed to make proper use of or the use of which has been restricted to their perishable bodies. They

remain totally indifferent in regard to benefits for their posterity. They have failed to consider the fact that on the Day of Qiyamah a reckoning will be taken of every little thing. It is almost an article of faith with me that a man who employed the bounties of Allah so haphazardly will be arraigned in the Divine Court to answer.

Presently it is not known what exactly is claimed to be the requisite for Islam. Muslims have drifted very far from the Path. Having lived in a foreign country, I am observing the scene.

In relation to the present age there is nothing but disgrace in the teachings of our Ulama of the Deen, the leaders of religion.

If paradise and houris will be obtained in the Hereafter, then they have hope in Allah to acquire these. But his attitude supposes that the success of the life hereafter is dependent on living a life of futility here on earth. If this is so, then proclaim it in unambiguous terms. Do not beat around the bush saying that the dunya (materialism) too should be acquired to the degree of need. In fact, even basic worldly requirements cannot be acquired in the way which the Ulama of the Deen are today teaching us. As an example, consider the case of a person who acquires religious knowledge. After he becomes an Aalim, you yourself will wonder what occupation will he now pursue. Previously the suggestion was to teach him some trade. At most, he will be taught to become a carpenter or a blacksmith.

I now ask with the utmost of respect: What difference is there in the acquisition of the trades of carpentry and blacksmith on the one side, and in becoming an engineer and a technician on the other side? Does the Shariah differentiate between these pursuits? The only difference is that the Molvi Saheb does not understand these developments of technology. What, therefore, can they (the Ulama) teach others in this regard?

For teaching the trades of carpentry, etc. they will obviously have to employ qualified carpenters and blacksmiths. Who then prevents them from employing instructors in other professions? The fact is that Muslims have become so short-sighted and so much inferiority has overtaken them that they are unable to look forward. I have reached the stage of criticizing the Arabic (Islamic) Madaaris. In their present form I do not consider Deeni Madaaris to be ventures of virtue. Despite this, Alhamdulillah! I remain a Muslim and I have strong hope that Allah will keep me a Muslim.

Now listen to my criticism of the Madaaris-e-Arabiyyah (the Institutions of Islamic learning). According to Qur'anic Law, the observance of huqooq (rights and duties) is in the following order: first comes one's family members, then neighbours, then the people of one's town, then one's countrymen and then wayfarers. Let us now look at these institutions (the Madaaris). Who derives benefit from these institutions? It is not our duty to teach just anyone who makes an appearance. The obligation is to adopt a way which will be beneficial to our brethren.

Once a man who was an ardent follower of the Ulama met me. He spent much of his time in the company of the Ulama. His service to the Ulama was considerable. To me it seemed that in his daily programme, more time and attention were given to the Ulama. I asked him about the Fardh and Sunnat acts of wudhu. Although he admitted that he was performing Salaat for twenty-seven years, the poor man was unaware of the Fardh and Sunnats of wudhu. He informed me that he daily visited the Ulama. I asked him: Did none of them inform you of the Fardh and Sunnat acts of wudhu? How will you make wudhu on a journey if very little water is available? I then taught him those rules, as well as some other masaa-il. While thanking me profusely, he commented that he did not derive so much benefit from the company of the Ulama as he had from the little time he had spent with me.

I have no desire to praise myself by citing this example. I am merely revealing to you the condition of the Ulama so that it be realised that their condition requires reformation. If the Ulama are reformed then we (the laity) will automatically become reformed.

Ten years ago there was no objection against the syllabus of the Madaaris-e-Arabiyyah.

Great Ulama had existed but none of them considered it necessary to introduce carpentry and the profession of a blacksmith in the Madaaris. However, the new brand of Ulama of these times have deemed it necessary to train students in the Madrasah in the trades of the carpenter and blacksmith. If any of the noble Ulama of former times had

to be present now, they would object to the present Madrasah syllabus with the same vehemence that the present Ulama are criticizing the wearers of coat and pants.

Even the Ulama have undergone considerable transformation. You yourself, can observe this. Things which they had proclaimed haraam ten years ago now passed as permissible. After all, why is this so? They have to make adjustments as they become aware of the conditions of the changing times. Since our Ulama have adopted solitude and seclusion, they do not become readily aware of the changing circumstance of the times. If they emerge from their seclusion and see the level (of degeneration) the Muslim youth has sunk into, then perhaps they (the Ulama) may be better poised to formulate ways to reform and redeem Muslim children. But, they will only understand after some time when it is too late. Then perhaps there will no longer be the opportunity for reformation.

Islamic Knowledge is based on three things: I'tiqadat (Beliefs), Ibadat (Worship) and Mu'amalat (Dealings). In fact, you claim these to be fundamental conditions of Islam. Perhaps you have also included Tasawwuf, etc. There is no syllabus for I'tiqadat (Beliefs). Beliefs can be sustained by Ibadat and Mu'amalat.

A considerable part of Mu'amalat (Dealings) requires political control (government). Mu'amalat (Dealings) will necessarily be in accordance with the law of the government in existence.

In the present time legal rulings will not be according to Islamic Law. Perhaps the Ulama are unaware of this. Now of what benefit will be the Ulama's teachings, for example, the Islamic penal system, to their students? How will such teaching aid these students when dealings are decided in accordance to existing laws?

It is quite obvious that the judge who decides cases contrary to Islamic Law will come within the scope of the ayaat:

“They who do not decide according to that (Law) revealed by Allah, verily they are the transgressors.”

But, did anyone stop to think that the one who has recourse to the un-Islamic legal system also aids in transgression? He is fully aware that judgement will not be given in terms of the Shariah. Now what is the remedy of this situation? If it is said that the answer is to accept the situation with silence and patience, then one can gauge the unenviable and difficult condition of Muslims. What should they then do? In fact, if Allah Ta'ala removes them from this world, they will be saved.

Now there are the smaller issues with which we are daily confronted. The rules regarding such matters are to be found in Urdu books which are included or should be included in the syllabus for primary school children. The section dealing with Ibadat is very brief. However, this brief branch of knowledge has been extended so much that children are constrained to spend ten years learning these rules. After they have completed their studies, they emerge and are at a loss as what to do now. If it still

happens to be their age of education and they possess some enthusiasm and honour they will hurriedly acquire the knowledge of tib (homeopathy – herbal medicine) to create a way of earning.

If the student has already reached an advanced age as frequently happens, then he takes the road to the Musjid. You are more aware than myself of what these people do. I have somewhat digressed from what I actually want to say.

I am a person who has totally adopted western dress with the exception of the Turkish hat. By virtue of this differentiation (the Turkish hat) this dress which I am wearing becomes our national dress. If today someone refuses to accept this fact, then ten years hence, he himself will be constrained to wear it. I make this claim with great conviction. I don't have the slightest doubt in this. But, I am now being told to shun this dress because it is in conflict with the Shariah.

The type of dress I should adopt, should be shown to me. The type of work which fate has predestined for me necessitates that I travel daily on horseback for four hours and three hours by bicycle. I have to travel around in the cities and their surrounding environments. In this way I cover approximately twenty miles a day. It is not practical for me to don the frail garments considered to be Islamic dress. Such garments will last with difficulty even a day with me. You will accept my claim only if you regard me to be a truthful person. It is difficult to believe this without experience.

Should the example of previous people be cited, then I shall counter by citing the changed educational syllabus. Just as the need arose to change the old educational syllabi (even in the Madaaris), so has there arisen the need for changes in dress style, I am not prepared to simply change my garb. Before changing my dress-style it will be necessary for someone to practically demonstrate that my type of rugged activity can be successfully executed with the frail kind of garment (known as Islamic dress). If this could be proven to me, I take oath and say that I shall immediately abandon my present dress-style.

Regarding Ibadat: I do fast, pay Zakaat and I intend to perform Hajj. Allah Ta'ala is the executioner of wishes. Leave alone being punctual with Jamaat Salaat, I am unable to even perform Salaat on time. However, before Fajr Salaat I make qadhaa of the Salaat which I had missed the previous day. I am aware that this action is wrong. But I am trying to reform this defect.

The difficulty is that our Nabi (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has stressed performance of Salaat on time although Imam Shafi (Rahmatullah alayh) has issued a fatwa for combining two Salaat on special occasions. Hadhrat Abu Dawood (Rahmatullah alayh) has in fact mentioned the validity of combining Salaat merely on account of inconvenience which people encounter.

In conclusion I wish to mention that I have started this letter at 3 a.m. and have completed it after two and a half hours. In writing this letter I have not reflected on a single word. The words merely flowed from my pen without me

giving any deep thought. After having read this letter I consider it disrespectful to forward it. However, I am constrained to send this letter to you since I believe that it is not disrespectful to reveal one's illness to the doctor, e.g. it is utterly shameless to expose one's private parts to anyone. But these parts are revealed for medical examination without hesitation. If the patient hesitates and refrains from revealing the affected part, his disease will only deteriorate.

I have presented my beliefs and thoughts only for them to be corrected if possible. If in this sorrowful letter of mine you discern something useful, then for Allah's sake give it a thought. The time is so delicate that Muslims are being destroyed, but no one is concerned. Allah Ta'ala has made your speech effective. If what I have said is correct, heed it and if I am in error, rectify me. After all, I belong to you. Save me from disgrace on the Day of Qiyamah. If in your opinion my welfare and success lie in me giving up my present employment, then inform me in clear terms. I have revealed my condition to you with exactitude.

Since I have decided to reveal my defects, it is best that I inform you of another doubt bugging me. Did Allah Ta'ala send Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) only for the reformation of the Arabs or for entire mankind? In my opinion he was sent for only the reformation of his nation, the Arabs. I base my conclusions on the fact that the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. The Arabs of that time were great experts of their language. Their eloquence was proverbial. The revelation of the Qur'an in Arabic convinced them that the Qur'an was not the product of

man. They had no alternative other than accepting the Qur'an. Furthermore, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) spent his whole life with his nation. His demise coincided with the accomplishment of his mission.

Other nations who had accepted the Qur'an, did not do so on the basis on which the Arabs had accepted the Qur'an. On the contrary, other nations were vanquished and subjugated by the Arabs with the sword. They were forcibly converted to Islam. They were in no position to request Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) for the demonstration of miracles nor did they adopt Iman on the Qur'an like the Arabs.

Among the conquered nations were two types. Those who were defeated. Unable to oppose the Muslims, they embraced Islam. The second type consists of those who sued for peace, agreed to pay the Jizya and remained adherents of their religion. The Da'wah of Islam was not accomplished in regard to this group.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) never undertook journeys into the whole world. Numerous people at the time were unaware of his Risalat. Islam appeared in Hindustan after a very long time. The same applies to America, Africa and the greater parts of Europe and Asia. Allah Ta'ala created people in distinct groups and they died in this condition. What guidance then did they achieve from the Risalat of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam)?

THE REPLY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I have perused the letter of the respected writer several times. Just as modesty and inhibition are detrimental in revealing one's sickness, so too will it be detrimental for the patient if the physician be inhibited when diagnosing the disease. Thus, it has become essential to speak with liberty.

Firstly, I consider it necessary to briefly specify the causes of the diseases. From your letter I have discerned that the basis of your thoughts consists of two factors: One, – lack of Shar'i expertise; two – listening to the lectures and reading the literature of irreligious people. Therefore, the general remedy is twofold:

(1) According to availability of time, study at least the translation of the Qur'an, some chapters of Mishkat and one entire Kitaab in Fiqh. Study these under the supervision of an intelligent learned person.

(2) Do not venture near to the discourses and writings of the claimants of research and modern culture.

Secondly, the detailed remedy which I shall write after this brief explanation, should be read with understanding, justice and with an unbiased mind. If this prescription is adopted, then I have hope that by the grace of Allah Ta'ala all doubts will be dispelled, and rectification of beliefs

will follow immediately while practical reformation will be gradually accomplished.

The Detailed Reply

(1) The respected writer has firstly claimed that the understanding of Islam which the Ulama of India entertain is not the requisite of Islam. He then sought to substantiate his claim with historical facts which inform of the revolutions which took place among nations. In all fairness, if the viewpoint of those who have spent their entire lives in the acquisition and progress of Deeni Knowledge, is unreliable, then by which standard has the viewpoint of a historian in regard to research in the Shariah become reliable? Furthermore, an Aalim of the Deen substantiates every claim he makes with the Qur'an and the Hadith which is the speech of the Rasool. On the contrary, the historian tenders merely his personal opinion. In spite of the Aalim basing his case on the Qur'an and Hadith his view is considered unreliable while the view of a man of opinion is accepted as reliable and given preference! The only reason for this idea is that the beauty of the Shariah still remains screened from the gaze of the people of opinion. Only an infinitesimal part of the Shariah's beauty is visible to them.

I shall not stop at this brief explanation, but shall reveal the position of this historical evidence (tendered by the writer). The sum total of this historical reference is merely the presentation of a comparison between Muslims and other nations, as well as the claim that without adoption of modernity it is not possible to establish political rule. Thus, a discussion regarding the causes of the rise and

decline of nations is superfluous. However, the contention that political rule without adoption of (western) modernity is not possible, needs to be addressed. In fact, this is the purpose for the writer's presentation of the history of the nation. I have not yet understood which is the factor of modernity on which rests the operation of political rule and which according to the Ulama of India is in conflict with the Shariah. If the reference (of the necessity to adopt modernity) is modern armaments and methods of warfare for safeguarding the country, then (we ask) who is the Aalim of India who has ruled this to be contrary to the Shariah?

If the writer has been led to conclude so by (the Ulama's presentation of) the mas'alah of Tashabbuh (emulation of the kuffaar), then firstly, the law of Tashabbuh is not the invention of the Ulama of India. It is a mas'alah present in the Qur'an Majeed and mentioned in the Hadith. If any Aalim is opposed to this, his statement will be rejected since he will be in conflict with the Qur'an and Hadith.

Secondly, weaponry of war is not related to the mas'alah of Tashabbuh. Anyhow, ways and methods essential for the existence of political rule are not related to the mas'alah of Tashabbuh.

If by adoption of modernity the writer means eating from tables, hanging pictures in the homes and other such superfluous practices, then it must be said that such things have no bearing on establishment and existence of political rule. In short, I have not understood the meaning of that modernity, the adoption of which is considered

necessary for political rule, but which it is alleged the Ulama have proclaimed Haraam.

If in reality there does exist some requirement of modernity which is essential for political control, but which is in conflict with the Shariah and which is tolerated for the sake of mundane benefit, then the respected writer should for a short while make a comparison in the balance of intelligence between the relationship with Allah and the rights of Allah on the one side, and the transitory fruits of political control and worldly affluence on the other. He should weigh these with fairness and see which is of greater importance. Robbery is a crime. Should a man ignore the law on the basis of need and hardship, arguing that in view of the hardship he will resort to robbery irrespective of the law? How does intelligence classify this person? Will it be said that robbery is lawful for him? Or will it be said that the poverty accompanied by observance of the law is far superior to that affluence obtainable by way of crime? It is indeed surprising that greater respect and fear are accorded to a worldly government than to Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala is not even honoured as a worldly government is honoured!

I say with emphasis that if a time dawns when without adoption of kufr, political control is not possible, then it will be infinitely superior to die as a Muslim than to remain alive as a kaafir.

My honourable friend! Wealth and worldly honour are secondary aims. The true aim is the acquisition of Divine Pleasure. If honour and wealth are attainable along with

Divine Pleasure, it will be well and good. In the absence of Allah's Pleasure, honour and wealth will have utility only in this life, but what about the ultimate consequence? Does an ailing person not dislike being prevented from non-observance of his prescribed diet? Observance of a strict diet perplexes him but for the sake of the boon of health, the temporary discomfort of the disruption of normal diet is willingly tolerated. The benevolent physician is not concerned in the least about the discomfiture of the patient caused by observance of the diet.

The second inference of the complainant is that Islam does not teach us hukoomat (political control – government) and sultanate (kingdom), but on the contrary leads us towards disgrace and renunciation (this was the conclusion which the complainant had drawn on the basis of the interpretation of Islam, which he assumed was the view of the Ulama of India). Yes, truly speaking, Islam does not advocate a government (or way of political power and control), the ultimate result of which is the Fire of Jahannum.

If there is licence for such political power, then on the Day of Qiyamah even Fir'oun will argue: "Experience led me to conclude that without claiming divinity, I would not have been able to hold on to power. There would have been only disgrace among the people. Hence, I was constrained to proclaim my godhood".

Will such an argument be considered valid?

Assuming that someone, by far-fetched reasoning, proves the need for maintaining political power and that without the commission of sin it is not possible to hold on to the power then even on acceptance of the need for political power, it will be said that this special exigency pertains to the rule of ikrah (compulsion). The Shariah has made provisions for exceptional circumstances. In certain exigencies of compulsion and helplessness, the law of the Shariah while permitting indulgence in an act which is normally forbidden, demands heartfelt abhorrence for the act. While an extreme necessity may compel external commission of a wrong act, there is absolutely no justification for heartfelt acceptance of the act. No one has control over man's heart and thoughts. There is, therefore, no fear of being apprehended for one's heartfelt abhorrence of the wrong act, the commission of which was compelled by adverse circumstances.

Furthermore, when the law is relaxed on account of a pressing need and a normally unlawful act is indulged in, then too, it will not be said that the Shariah has been violated. The commission of the deed is by the permission of the Shariah, hence within the confines of the law.

Now if there really is such a situation of compulsion, it will concern only kings, rulers and governments. What is the need for the general public to perpetrate transgression of the Shariah? The special circumstances pertaining to rulers do not entitle the masses to the concessions applicable to a sphere which does not concern them.

The complainant has claimed that if the king of Turkey today implements the system of Hadhrat Umar (Radhiallahu anhu), he will not be able to exercise political control. If someone claims the opposite, that in fact, he will be able to rule better and more effectively, what is the proof for negating this claim? Assuming that the claim put forward by the complainant is correct, then too, it will not adversely affect our contention because the method of Hadhrat Umar (Radhiallahu anhu) consists of two classes of activities: Compulsory and optional. Adherence to the compulsory tenets is not detrimental to government in any condition whatsoever. Regarding optional activities such as nocturnal wanderings to investigate the conditions of the citizens, the Shariah does not impose these as compulsory acts. Thus, acts necessary in terms of the Shariah are not detrimental to government. On the other hand, acts which are considered handicaps for political rule are not compulsory according to the Shariah. Therefore, by what logic can it be proved that political rule is not possible by giving practical expressions to Shar'i verdicts?

It was then claimed that in the present era political power is established by virtue of Knowledge, not by the sword. It was then attempted to substantiate this claim by the discovery of gunpowder. My honourable friend! Firstly, just as modern armaments are said to be products of knowledge, so too, is the sword (or obsolete weaponry) a product of knowledge. If the sword cannot be said to be a product of knowledge, there is no reason then for claiming gunpowder to be a product of knowledge. Therefore, either it has to be conceded that in earlier times political

rule was also based on knowledge or it will have to be said that in the present age knowledge has no role to play in the establishment of political power.

Even if it is acceded that obsolete weaponry was not the product of knowledge, and modern weaponry is a product of knowledge, what is achieved by this argument? Did any Indian Mufti proclaim modern weaponry to be in conflict with the Shariah? Why then direct the accusation of Muslim decline to the supposed verdict (Fatwa) of the Ulama of Hind (India)?

Regarding the claim that Muslims have not appreciated the ni'mats (bounties) of Allah and in substantiation of it was mentioned that Muslims have not put water to proper use as it ought to have, since they use it only for quenching thirst, wudhu and ghusl, it must be said that with regard to the intelligence of the honourable complainant, this statement is exceptionally surprising. It is indeed an astonishing claim. It implies that technological use of water is superior to wudhu, ghusl, etc. It will suffice to say that if these modern uses are superior to wudhu, ghusl, etc. then why did Allah Jalle Shanuhu through the agency of Ambiyaa (Alayhimus salaam) impart so meticulously the benefits of such 'inferior' practices, and for thousands of years kept His servants in the dark regarding these technological developments?

Secondly, if according to the honourable complainant those who had used water for only wudhu, ghusl, etc. will be questioned for their supposedly unsystematic use of water, it follows that those who had put water to

technological use, will be enjoying higher ranks even though they never performed a single Salaat and even though they passed their lives in janaabat and khabaathat (immorality). By implication it will mean that those who had devoted night and day to Ibaadat will be the fuel of Jahannam while fussiaq, fujjar and even kuffaar will – Nauthubillah! – be the inmates of Jannat. Will the heart of any believer in the Reckoning and Kitaab accept this?

The query is made: Why did Muslims not direct their attention to technological progress? This query has no relationship with the fundamental claim that obedience to the Shariah is obligatory. To this day no one has averred that these technological developments are contrary to the Shariah. Therefore, it matters not whatever the reason may be for Muslims lagging behind in this sphere. Should we attribute this attitude of Muslims to indolence and inertia as the question anticipates, then too, there is no need to relinquish our claim that obedience to the Shariah is compulsory. It is, therefore, of no benefit to discuss this query.

Thereafter, the complainant proclaimed his unawareness of the aims and objects of Islam. This is even more surprising. These are so well-known that maybe even Hindus and deniers of Islam too are aware thereof though they do not subscribe thereto for some reason or the other.

Then follows the complainant's statements that Muslims have drifted very far from the goal towards which they are called. Honourable friend! It is the misfortune of Muslims themselves that they have become such strangers to the

laws of their true Master (Allah Ta'ala). Does it follow now that because Muslims have transformed their condition, Islam too should change itself to accommodate irreligiosity? Should irreligiosity be termed Islam to enable the irreligious (technological experts) to be counted as Muslims?

Remember well that the laws of Islam have already been perfected to such an extent that to the Day of Qiyamah change in them is not possible. Whosoever will accept these immutable laws will obtain salvation and whoever denies them will be overtaken by everlasting loss. If, for the propagation of the ahkaam (laws of Islam) it was a requisite that the ahkaam should not be at great variance with the condition of people, then why did Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and all the other Ambiyaa (Alayhimus salaam) appear during times of great corruption and strife to prevent people from idolatry?

According to the Qur'an, Hadhrat Nooh (Alayhis salaam) resolutely remained in this quest for nine hundred and fifty years. In all this time it never crossed his mind to abandon his mission nor was he commanded by Allah Ta'ala to refrain from propagating a message which was very strange and unacceptable to people. It never happened that the refusal of the kuffaar to believe led to the relaxation or abandonment of Kalimah Tauheed and its demands. On the contrary, the rejectors were overtaken by the punishment of the Flood. The Qur'an mentions this episode very clearly.

If during our time a similar corruption becomes widespread, will it devolve as obligatory or lawful for the Ulama to effect alteration to the laws of the Deen or steadfastly proclaim the truth?

Regarding the claim that there is nothing but disgrace according to the present age in the teachings of our Ulama-e-Deen, it will suffice to say that what they are teaching is either in accordance with the Deen or the product of their opinion. If it is contended that they are speaking on the basis of their opinion, such a claim will be totally unfounded. For every claim, they consistently produce Qur'anic and Hadith substantiation. How can it then be said that they propagate on the basis of personal opinion?

There is no alternative but to concede that the Ulama propagate the Deen according to Wahi (Revelation). Furthermore, this objection is directed, in actual fact, against Allah Ta'ala. It is in fact implied: Why did He order such laws which constitute a disgrace in this age? Nauthubillah! Also, it is not the responsibility of only the Ulama to answer this objection. This duty devolves on every Muslim. Now listen to the actual answer to this implied objection.

If there is any disgrace and dishonour as a result of obedience to the ahkaam (Laws of Islam), it will be so because there is either defect in the ahkaam or the fault of people. All doubts will be eliminated by having understood this fact. Firstly, it is necessary to understand the meaning of honour and dishonour. Both these

attributes are not among things described as independent existences. They do not exist as independent realities. They are relative issues. Their existence is related to certain conditions. If people hold the belief of greatness in respect of a particular being, that opinion is the honour and respect of that being. On the other hand, if they consider the being to be insignificant, such an attitude will constitute the disgrace of that being.

These two attributes (honour and dishonour) are thus subservient to the belief and opinion of people. Precisely for this reason will a naked man wallowing in filth be regarded with reverence by a follower while in the gaze of others he is viewed with contempt and disgrace. Similarly, an Islamic condition will appear honourable only in the sight of a person who views the ahkaam of Islam with honour and reverence. In contrast, a person who considers the ahkaam futile, will view with contempt and disgrace the very same entity which is regarded with honour by others. There is, therefore, no defect in the ahkaam. The fault lies in the misconception of the person who views the ahkaam with contempt.

If, because of his erroneous belief a man sees disgrace in following the ahkaam and he, therefore, discards this obedience, then in all fairness it is asked: Shall his baseless idea and belief be accepted and the ahkaam renounced or shall the man's error be proclaimed and adherence to the truth be confirmed? Thus, if a man believing bribery to be evil, usury to be evil and unlawful employment to be evil, opts to dig grass for his livelihood, what wrong has he perpetrated? What intelligent argument

is there to decry him? Should he disobey Allah Ta'ala and become disgraceful in the Divine Presence merely because people view his menial job with contempt and disgrace?

There was a time when in Spain being a Muslim was disgraceful. Without adoption of Christianity honour and life could not be safeguarded. Will those who had remained steadfast on Islam, sacrificing their honour and lives, be blameworthy or will it be said that the oppressors who regarded with contempt and hatred the honourable state (of being a Muslim) are at fault? The kuffaar left no stone unturned in their zeal to harm and cause disgrace to the Ambiyaa (Alayhimus salaam). They were abused and publicly vilified. They were stoned and persecuted. Why then did they choose to undergo that disgrace and persecution? It was in the hope of attaining Jannat and the Pleasure of Allah. Alas! Even intelligent people do not ponder in such simple and straightforward matters.

If lack of abundance of material possessions and wealth is termed disgrace then even wealthy thieves and robbers should be proclaimed respectable and honourable and these haraam avenues of wealth (theft, robbery, etc.) be given preference over the lawful means in which earnings are totally restricted. Theft and robbery are disgraceful because they are considered crimes by the law. If an act is criminal in the law of Allah Ta'ala, then why is it being proclaimed an avenue of respect and honour? Even if worldly respect is acquired in this way, the reality will unfold after death when these arguments will neither be accepted nor be heard.

For some there is disgrace here on earth and respect in the Akhirah while for others there is respect here and disgrace there. Now, every believer in the Akhirah should decide the course he will opt for.

It is entirely baseless to aver that even the bare necessities of worldly life are unattainable by the methods indicated by the Ulama. The example cited in substantiation of this claim was of a man, having become an Aalim, but not knowing what to do thereafter. Firstly, who has claimed that every person should become an Aalim on the academic level? In fact, senior Ulama say that only such a person should become an Aalim who enjoys peace of mind and contentment whether by way of mundane means or by strength of Tawakkul (Trust in Allah). Such a person should pursue higher Islamic Knowledge at the academic level and then devote his entire life to the service of the Deen. In regard to such an Aalim, the question: “What will he do?”, does not arise.

As far as discontented, greedy and people of desire are concerned, they should acquire the basic knowledge of the ahkaam of the Deen and become involved in the mundane occupations of their livelihood. From time to time they should refer their problems and questions to the Ulama for Deeni guidance. In regard to such persons, the question posed by the complainant is reasonable. In answer to the question: “What should they do?”, it shall be vociferously proclaimed: “Do not do what is haraam”.

Furthermore, among the mubah (lawful) occupations and trades, a blacksmith, a carpenter and technological /

technicians are all on par. No one has prohibited the pursuit of technology. Anyone is welcome to acquire this knowledge.

THE OBJECTION AGAINST THE MADAARIS

The complainant then lodged his objection against the Islamic Madaaris. His objection was that it is not our duty to teach just anyone and that we should adopt a system which will benefit our brethren. However, he did not specify if by benefit he meant worldly benefit or Deeni benefit. If he implied worldly benefit, it has to be asked: Is only the acquisition of worldly benefit adequate? Is there no need for Deeni benefit?

If he had implied Deeni benefit, is there then no need for Deeni Knowledge? Are the Madaaris not imparting this benefit (Deeni benefit)? I am not claiming that every student will turn out to be Abu Hanifah and Ghazaali. But it should not be overlooked that many of these students are useful products. Thousands benefit from them. A person who has a thorough awareness of these Madaaris and their products is well-appriized of this fact.

I am also not claiming that there is no need for reformation in the Madaaris. In fact, there is a need for much reformation. But, if because of indolence, lack of means or any other reason the reform process remains stagnant, does it follow that even the existing beneficial activity should be terminated? If someone audaciously replied in the affirmative, he shall be asked: Is the perpetuation of Deeni Knowledge necessary or not? If he

replies that it is not necessary, then such a person is not our audience. Discussion with him is futile. Instead of attempting to convince him of the essentiality of Deeni Knowledge, he should rather be advised to renew his Islam.

If the need to perpetuate Deeni Knowledge is conceded, then what are the means for ensuring this perpetuation? It is quite obvious that there is no way other than Ta'leem (to teach) and Ta'allum (to learn). Thus, whatever degree of Ta'leem and Ta'allum takes place now in Deeni Madaaris should be considered a boon. Only a person who is unconcerned of his actions and statements being conformity or in conflict with the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, will maintain that the Deeni Knowledge being imparted in Deeni Madaaris is redundant and futile. When this concern (for Allah's Pleasure) develops, man will set out in search. After searching, he will obtain the direction (leading to Divine Pleasure) from such persons donning poor and patched garments, sitting on straw mats engrossed in the study of a book with tattered pages. When daily solutions to problems are acquired from them, then will the value of this group be realised – only then will the extent of their labour be understood and appreciated. It will then be understood what work is being executed by these humble Madaaris. Yes, whoever is not in need of Deeni direction, will find all this to be futile.

Regarding the incident about the follower of the Ulama, who was ignorant of the basic rules of wudhu, etc., it is no fault of the Ulama with whom he had associated. The fault lies in his lack of concern. He never bothered to enquire.

Without asking them, it is not possible for the Ulama to go around teaching. How many can they teach in this way? How should they be aware of all persons ignorant of such rules? The Ulama are comparable to physicians. If a physician is consulted he will write out a prescription after examination. Only this much is necessary for the Ulama although there are some courageous ones who take stock of the condition of Muslims and keep them informed of the basic requirements of the Deen. The method for achieving this is wa'z (lecturing). Ignorant lecturers whose aim is monetary gain are not referred to. They are nothing but ignoramuses.

However, there are those sincere Ulama who deliver discourses. The inconveniences and difficulties which they have to face and bear from both the rulers and the public are bearable only to the Ambiyaa and the Auliya. At times the pressure of persecution is so considerable that it is best for them to take refuge in solitude and answer only those who ask. It is not within the courage and constitution of everyone to expose himself to danger. Neither does intelligence demand this nor the Shariah.

THE CONDITION OF THE ULAMA

The complainant thereafter maintained that the condition of the Ulama requires reformation. I do not deny this. However, if in spite of the misfortune of his deeds, an Aalim who does not reform his condition, claims and propagates that obedience to the Shariah is compulsory, he will not be wrong. Notwithstanding his personal condition, it will be necessary to act in conformity with

his statements which conform with the Shariah. At most, he too will be advised to act in accordance with the Shariah.

What is the reason for demanding that first an arrangement for the reformation of the Ulama be instituted then will follow the promise of reforming yourself? For your own reformation, the statements (of Deeni direction) of the Ulama are adequate. If the practical deeds of the Ulama are considered prior requisites for one's reformation, are the deeds of all Ulama then corrupt? Why then not follow those Ulama whose character is uprighteous? When there is no intention for reformation, thousands of excuses are available. But for the one who sincerely resolves to reform himself, reformation is possible at all times.

Thereafter, the complainant presented the argument of the change in syllabus – that with a change of times comes a change of ahkaam. By this argument the intention is to prove the permissibility of western dress. My honourable friend! All things are of two kinds:

(1) Aims and objects, and (2) means of acquisition.

Whatever the Shariah has ordained will remain immutable even if heaven and earth change. The immutable laws of the Shariah will not change because of time. The one who changes the ahkaam is a mulhid (heretic) and a zindeeq (infidel).

In so far as the means are concerned, they are in actual fact only the methods of acquiring the maqaasid (aims and objects). It is quite possible that in one age a particular method for the acquisition of the aim and object will be desirable and efficacious while in another age the aim and object may be acquired by another method. The earlier method is then relinquished and the new method adopted provided the latter is not prohibited by any Shar'i teaching or principle. An example of this is the Hajj. Hajj is the maqsood (aim or object). The method of acquiring this aim is to travel by air (for example). While it is not possible to bring about a change in Hajj, e.g. performing it in Muharram, it is lawful to change the method of acquisition, e.g. instead of travelling by plane another means of locomotion is chosen. Thus, it is permissible to discard one method of acquisition in favour of another.

Now when this principle has been understood, then it should likewise be understood that the Knowledge of the Deen is the maqsood (the object). A particular syllabus is the means of acquiring this objective. Halaal earning is the maqsood. Trade and profession are the methods of acquisition. Hence, by the methods of acquisition changing with the times and this being lawful, it should not be inferred that change in the maqaasid (aims and objects) is likewise lawful.

The prohibition of emulating kuffaar (Tashabbuh bil Kuffaar) is among the Maqaasid of the Shariah. This law is proclaimed in the Qur'an and Hadith. As long as an act remains within the confines of Tashabbuh, it will not change with the changing of the times. However, if for

some reason the attribute of Tashabbuh no longer remains, then on account of it being beyond the ambit of Tashabbuh it shall become permissible. In spite of this glaring difference, how can it be correct to argue the question of western dress on the basis of educational syllabus?

Furthermore, which act did the Ulama proclaim haraam ten years ago and now have issued the verdict of permissibility? If it is a matter pertaining to the means of acquisition, then the principle governing its change has already been explained. If it pertains to the Maqaasid (objectives) then no one has any right to effect any change therein. If someone did in fact effect any such change, it is his error. The principles of the Shariah do not change because of the errors of people. It will not be surprising if the complainant has implied by this claim western education.

In this regard it should be understood that whoever has proclaimed western education to be prohibited or even now maintains this prohibition, did so, not merely because of the English language, but on account of the accompanying evils and corruption, present and future. Thus, in reality the attendant corruption and evil have been branded haraam. Who is the Aalim who has today legalised evil and corruption which were prohibited ten years ago?

RENUNCIATION OF THE ULAMA

Thereafter, the charge of renunciation or seclusion was levelled against the Ulama. My honourable friend! Are you not aware that the Rasool whose Kalimah we proclaim and whose love and acceptance are propounded as integral parts of Iman, after stating the signs of these times (of proximity to Qiyamah), exhorted with considerable emphasis the adoption of solitude for the protection of Iman? In fact, he advised us to seek refuge in the forest. He said that it will be a time when a man will be a Muslim in the morning and a kaafir in the evening and again a kaafir in the morning and a Muslim in the evening. This will be the state of people.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that when you observe every man obeying his greed, submitting to carnal lusts, giving preference to this world over the Akhirah and preferring personal opinion, then save your own Deen and leave alone the public. My honourable friend! From the manifestation of these signs, everyone can understand that the times referred to in the Hadith are the present times. What evil have the Ulama then committed by having opted for seclusion? Those who have emerged from seclusion to plunge headlong into this strife and trial have themselves become corrupted in the attempt to reform others. Except a few, all went this way of error. Those whom Allah Ta'ala granted authority and power were saved. However, the majority is corrupted just like a person jumping into a blazing fire to save another. It will not be surprising if he is destroyed in the fire.

The main reason for the corruption of the reformer in the process of reformation is the disinclination of the person concerned to reform. He, himself has no desire for reformation. For this reason the reform endeavour has no effect. The one trying to reform, sometimes in the hope of succeeding to reform others, adopts a policy of flattery and acquiescence, overlooking erroneous statements and acts. Gradually, his (the one who has set himself the task of reforming) own heart is overtaken by darkness. This has been observed time and again.

This, then is the condition of the devotees of the world. They attempt to colour the Ulama with their hues while they themselves have no desire to be coloured in the hues of the Ulama. What benefit is there in squandering time and pursuing futility? The best course in such situations is to come away with one's own Deen saved.

Yes, whoever comes forward with the desire to reform himself, will find ready assistance, as long as there remains hope for reformation. When hope is lost, then instead of lecturing and admonishing, the best course is dua unto Allah Ta'ala, supplicating for hidaayat (guidance).

THREE BRANCHES OF DEEN?

The complainant thereafter made mention of three branches of the Deen, viz. Aqaa-id (Beliefs), Ibaadat (Worship) and Muaamalaat (Dealings). Two branches have been omitted, viz. Aadaab-e-Mu-asharat (Social Etiquettes) and Islaah-e-Nafs (Self-Reformation). All

these are, in fact, parts of the Deen. However, the claim that there is no syllabus for I'tiqaadaat is incomprehensible. What is meant by this?

Acceptance of several articles (of Belief) is termed I'tiqaadaat. These articles of Faith have been elaborated in detail in Kitaabs on this subject. Proofs have been formulated for every claim pertaining to articles of Faith. Thus, I'tiqaadaat is an independent subject of Islamic Knowledge. It is not a subsidiary branch of Ibaadat and Muaamalaat, as the honourable writer has inferred. It is not possible to delete this integral and vital part from the list of the branches of the Deen although an attempt was made to demonstrate that Deeniyaat is a concise subject by having resorted to deletion of this branch (i.e. I'tiqaadaat as an independent part).

In fact, this part (I'tiqaadaat) is the most important continents of Deen. Men of great intelligence have fallen prey to error in this regard. Unwarranted and baseless dispute in this field (I'tiqaadaat) led to the creation of the seventy-two deviated sects. Among these sects of deviation, the Mu'tazilah is on the rise in India. Most literature on this subject contain the propagations of this sect. Thousands of people are being destroyed by such literature. How is it possible to overlook such a vital issue?

MUAAMALAAT

In so far as Muaamalaat (mutual dealings) are concerned, the writer has discarded this branch by claiming it to be

subservient to the jurisdiction of the government. It appears that Muaamalaat being part of the Deen has not been understood. The occurrence of Muaamalaat is not a part of Deen. (In other words, the Deen does not compulsorily require involvement in contracts, transactions and dealings). However, when involvement does take place, it then is essential to comply with the Shariah. All dealings coming into existence have to conform to the Shariah. At this stage of occurrence, dealings (Muaamalaat) constitute part of the Deen. If dealings are in conflict with the Shariah, they will be invalid. Both the government and citizens are equal in this respect. They all have to comply to the Shariah.

ISLAMIC PENALTIES

The writer then mentioned the absence of Islamic penalties. Adulterers are not stoned and the hands of thieves are not amputated. This state of affairs does not exclude Muaamalaat from the Deen, nor does it follow that the existing penal code (introduced by a government) is lawful. Despite non-adherence to the Islamic penal system for any reason whatsoever, it still remains valid and obligatory. Muslims being sinful or excused for not conforming is entirely a different question. In no way does this lead to the conclusion that acquisition of the knowledge of Muaamalaat is not obligatory. For perfection of Deeni Knowledge it is essential to acquire knowledge of these laws even today.

If it is queried: Of what benefit is it to acquire knowledge which cannot be practically expressed, e.g. knowledge of

the Islamic penal system, the answer is: The benefit is the acquisition of correct knowledge of the Divine Ahkaam. Man will at least come to know the true laws of Allah Ta'ala. One should not labour under the misconception that imprisonment and fines suffice. (These measures do not fulfil the requirements of the Islamic penal code.)

In support of his view, the complainant presented the example of a man who is instituting legal action against someone for the crime of adultery. Although this is a delicate matter, I shall nevertheless, discuss it. An adultery action instituted in a court of law is a charge. The charge will be valid if there are four uprighteous eyewitnesses to the act of adultery. In addition there are a number of other conditions, but for the sake of brevity, I shall not discuss these. It is, however, correct that to institute legal action in instances where the Shariah does not permit, is unlawful and a grave sin. The one who institutes such an unlawful legal action is undoubtedly aiding and abetting in an act which is in contravention of the Shariah.

The question arising is: What should then be done in circumstances (i.e. where recourse to the Islamic legal system is not possible)? Should one merely renounce one's rightful claim? In reply I ask: Assuming that this person (i.e. the one who has a rightful claim) has no witnesses or evidence to support his claim, then what action will he take? Whatever is the answer to this question, will be our answer to the question of the honourable complainant. (In other words, even in the present un-Islamic legal system, a claim which cannot be supported by evidence will have to be abandoned.

Similarly, when there is no Shar'i evidence for one's claim or Shar'i courts are lacking, then the only course is to abandon the claim.)

In cases where it is Islamically lawful to claim, one may institute legal action (even in a non-Muslim court). If by instituting a claim, the plaintiff will be acquiring his right – which he is Islamically entitled to – or less than his entitlement, then he may take recourse to legal action (in a court which does not function according to the Shariah). If he is unable to obtain his full right and is constrained to institute legal action for the acquisition of portion of his right, then why should it be said that he is guilty of sinning? Regardless of the charge of contravening the Shariah, which is directed to the un-Islamic court, the plaintiff claiming his right commits no sin. Neither does he contravene the Shariah in claiming his right nor does he aid in any contravention of the Shariah.

Anyhow, let's forget all these facts. Why should this knowledge (of the Islamic penal system) be excluded from Deeni Knowledge? If all people of the world neglect health-care and hygiene, does it justify the exclusion of any branch of medical science? Will it be proper to argue that since people are not acting according to medical advice and prescriptions, this particular branch of knowledge should be discontinued?

In answer to the question: What benefit is there in teaching students the Shariah's penal system? We say that one benefit has already been mentioned. The second benefit is the perpetuation of knowledge. The perpetuation

of knowledge is not possible without teaching and learning. If this practice (of teaching and learning) is terminated, this section of Deeni Knowledge will be lost. If in the future there arises again the need for this knowledge, there will be no experts to expound it.

If the desire to excise and delete (branches of Deeni Knowledge) is so intense, then the process of deletion should firstly be effected to the Qur'an Majeed, for the Qur'an is the root of all knowledge. It may be argued: When these laws stemming from the Qur'an are no longer being practically adopted, then of what benefit is there in reciting the relevant verses? If at some time in the future, people abandon Salaat and Saum – Allah forbid – it will follow that the Qur'anic verses pertaining to these acts should also be deleted because in terms of this reasoning, these aayaat would then be redundant. Then, assuming the rulers of the time prohibit people from being Muslims, it will follow that all Qur'anic aayaat calling towards Islam be deleted – Nauthubillah! – since such verses will also be of no benefit in terms of this reasoning (of the complainant). In this way the entire Islam and the Qur'an will be proclaimed redundant. We seek refuge with Allah.

THE CONDITION OF MUSLIMS

Thereafter, the complainant (commenting on the declined condition of Muslims) said that it will be best if they are removed from this world, for then they will be saved. My honourable friend! Although you wrote this comment sarcastically, by coincidence you have written the truth. Truly speaking, it is indeed most difficult in this age to

practise Islam in its pristine purity. It is about these times that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“Then, there will dawn an age when the one who holds onto the Deen will be like one holding a burning ember.”

It is for this very reason that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that in times of corruption the one who adheres to the Deen will obtain the reward of a hundred Shuhada (martyrs). It has also been said (in the Hadith) in regard to these times of corruption that the bowels of the earth will be better than its surface. In other words, death will be better than life on earth.

In this era of fitnah, the one who takes his Deen safely with him to the grave has indeed accomplished a great feat. O Allah! Aid us. May our end be with Iman.

The honourable complainant then proceeded to confine small dealings to Urdu books and has greatly abbreviated the matters pertaining to Ibaadat. Now just as the honourable complainant has alleged that the Ulama are unaware of worldly matters it will be correct to claim that he is unaware of Deeni matters. In fact, it is not possible to enumerate the variety of questions with which people of regular Ibaadat are daily confronted. Every development has a different answer. When the various forms pertaining to Ibaadat are many, then how can their rules be abbreviated to the extent stated by the complainant (i.e. to a few Urdu booklets)?

For ascertaining this, a week or a month should be spent examining the letters of an Aalim involved in the

profession of Fatwa (Islamic rulings). The important questions should be selected and only when one searches for their laws and rulings in these Urdu books and in the Qur'an Majeed, will one realise the correctness or the error of the claim (of the complainant). Claims made simply without experience and observation are not worthy of consideration.

The honourable complainant has voiced surprise because ten years are being devoted to the pursuit of Deeni Knowledge. In fact, even after spending 50 years in this pursuit, perfection in Ilm is not acquired.

A considerable part of my life has been spent in this Deeni service, but until now I am still not aware of the recitation of 'رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ' or 'سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ' in Qaumah by the muqtadi after he rises to complete his Salaat once the Musaafir Imaam has made the Salaam. While it is known that the muqtadi will not recite Surah Faatihah, it is not known whether he should recite the 'Tasmee' or the Tahmeed or not. Can this mas'alah be shown to be in any Urdu book or in any section of the Qur'an Majeed?

If the question is answered on the basis of opinion, then know that everyone's opinion is not valid. Only the opinion of a man who has encompassed all branches of Deeni Knowledge, is worthy of consideration. This proficiency in Deeni Knowledge is attained only after many years have been devoted to the acquisition of Knowledge. Now say whether 10 years are excessive or too little in this pursuit?

The complainant then proceeded to find fault with those “taking the road to the Musjid”. Whoever sought Musjid employment for gaining wealth, undoubtedly, has committed evil. The Shariah also reprimands such a person. If, however, a man takes to the sanctuary of the Musjid for the sake of Ibaadat and Ilm while fully understanding that Allah Ta’ala is the Raaziq (Sustainer), then we ask: What wrong has he committed? After Nubuwwat, did Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) not set up a station in the Musjid? Did he not accept gifts from the Sahaabah? Does the Qur’an Majeed not instruct Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) as follows:

“Command your family with Salaat and you (yourself) be firm on it. We do not ask you for rizq. (In fact) We give rizq to you.”

After all, what blame is there on one who “takes the road to the Musjid”? In reality, the faults and defects of a man adhering to modern worldly standards (in appearance, dress, living conditions, etc.) are not viewed with contempt. In contrast, even the excellence of a man living in poverty is viewed with contempt and derision. The earnings of bribery of some high-ranking worldly personality is not viewed with the same degree of disgust and disgrace as are the successes of the recluses of the Musjid – successes which are bestowed by Allah Ta’ala. Under oath, you should honestly reply if this is not so. This (i.e. high regard for external worldly pomp) in fact is the reason that the kufr and fisq of affluent people are not viewed with gravity. On the other hand, the god-given

piety and righteousness of poor Muslims are looked on with contempt.

WESTERN DRESS

Thereafter, the story of western dress is mentioned. It was claimed that the mere changing of the hat was sufficient for the dress (viz. western dress) to be regarded as the national dress (for Muslims). This conclusion is most astonishing. Will a female's garb be described as a male's dress by any intelligent person merely on account of a male's hat? In fact, if a man clothes himself with male garments and adds to this just one item of a woman's dress, people will mock him. If the greater part of the dress is that of a woman, it will be even worse. (Thus, if the greater part of the dress is western as has been mentioned by the complainant, with only a Muslim headgear, it will not be described as an Islamic dress – Translator.)

The prediction of the complainant that after ten years the rejectors too will don western dress, is not acceptable without proof. Furthermore, if after ten years, this dress loses its peculiarity of being the dress exclusively of kuffaar, then the factor of Tashabbuh (emulation of the kuffaar) will have been eliminated. When a dress-style becomes so widely prevalent that it no longer remains the exclusive dress of a particular community, it loses the element of Tashabbuh. When this happens, it will not be wrong for even the earlier prohibitor to wear it. But as long as the aspect of Tashabbuh exists, the Shar'i prohibition will remain unchanged.

The claim was made that western garb is necessary for horse-riding. If I knew how to ride a horse, I would have practically demonstrated the error of this claim. Alas! I am now deficient in this aspect. Nevertheless, there are several answers to the claim.

It has been observed that many horsemen travel 50 miles per day without donning western garb. How do they ride their horses without western dress?

If these Islamic garments are susceptible to quick wear and tear, then by Allah's Fadhl, four trousers could be acquired for the price of one western pants.

Also, more durable and heavier cloth could be used for the trousers. Even the same material used for the western pants can be used to sew Islamic-type trousers. The trousers should be above the ankles. What is the need for a western pantaloons?

Assuming for a moment that without western pants, horse-riding is difficult, then at most, only one fact is established on condition that the ankles remain uncovered – viz. that there is a need for such trousers on specific occasions (when riding). Besides the specific times when one is on horse-back, what need is there for western dress and for other western items such as pictures, musical instruments (all paraphernalia of western living) which are in conflict with the Shariah?

Furthermore, is it not possible to change into Islamic dress after having completed the journey, and when donning it to have a heartfelt dislike for such dress? In this manner

the need could be attended to while the Shar'i contravention will also be watered down because the principle, "Necessities legalise prohibitions", is a Shar'i Law. However, this principle is conditioned with a stipulation, viz. "Necessity is restricted to the degree of need". In other words, when a real need exists, the law of prohibition will be relaxed – not totally – but to the degree permitting fulfilment of the need. For example, in the case under consideration, if the need is for a pantaloons, the permission (or concession) will not be extended to wearing a western coat as well. If the need for the western pants is for horse-riding, the concession will be confined to horse-riding. When not riding a horse, it will not be permissible to wear the western pants. When the need is only for external use, it will not be permissible to derive pleasure in the heart from its use. Does the patient find pleasure in drinking bitter medicine prescribed for his need? If utilisation (of a prohibited item) is executed in this manner (i.e. on account of need and with dislike), one can hope for pardon from Allah Ta'ala.

COMBINING SALAAT

The complainant thereafter mentioned the mas'alah of combining Salaat (i.e. performing several Salaat together at one time). My honourable friend! The Ulama always advise that sufficient Deeni Knowledge be acquired. Self-opinion is the result of incomplete knowledge. At least the complainant should have investigated the occasions for the permissibility of combining Salaat according to the Fatwa of Imaam Shaafi (Rahmatullah alayh). Do such

situations occur to the complainant or not? The conclusion (of the complainant) is the product of personal opinion.

Alas! Is it possible to dabble in the laws of worldly governments without any research? Can a person act on the law according to his own interpretation? If even a word appears ambiguous (in worldly law), one goes to great lengths to obtain clarification. If it happens that the ambiguity in the legal phraseology leads to several meanings, caution is exercised and the safest course is adopted. However, in regard to Divine Laws, verdicts pertaining to different situations are audaciously adopted. Is this not a careless attitude?

Regarding Abu Dawood (Rahmatullah alayh), it should be understood that he was a Muhaddith whose function was to merely narrate Ahadith. The understanding of the Ahadith, reconciliation and formulation of rules pertaining to the Ahadith were the functions of the Fuqaha-e-Mujtahideen. In the unanimous opinion (Ijma') of the Ummah there are certain conditions necessary for the validity of combining two Salaat. Among these conditions are illness and travel. However, according to Imaam Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullah alayh) combining Salaat even for a valid reason is not permissible.

The example which I have mentioned earlier in regard to acting on the laws of worldly governments will suffice for preferring the view of Imaam Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullah alayh). When none of the conditions are found for the validity of combining Salaat (in the view of other Math-habs), then how can one become so audacious as to resort

to this practice? For Allah's sake it should be stopped. By adopting this practice, the obligation of Salaat is not discharged and one remains liable. Do estimate the number of Salaat which were performed in this manner and make Qadha thereof.

Regarding your apology occasioned by the doubts, it is the result of your goodness. In fact, I lack the ability to diagnose and prescribe. However, I have written whatever came to mind purely out of sympathy and affection. Whatever lingering doubts you may still have, present them without hesitation, but do so in proper sequence. Subjects should not be mixed up. Answering a disjointed discussion is tedious and lengthy. This is precisely the reason why the present discussion is so drawn out. The greater part of the talk which has been presented is superfluous, having no relevance to the actual contentions.

Insha'Allah, all matters will be answered. Not only shall I answer, but I shall constantly make dua that Allah Ta'ala grants salvation from error and bestows true guidance. May Allah Ta'ala accept (this supplication).

EMPLOYMENT

With regard to the question of your employment, be advised that it is a question pertaining to the details. My honourable friend! Correction of the Principles (of Faith) is a prior requirement, hence I shall at this stage not comment on the legality or illegality of your employment. After clarification and rectification of the ideas pertaining to the usool (principles), shall I, Insha'Allah Ta'ala,

present to you my research on this question. Do give me respite of a few days. Meanwhile, the contentious questions should be solved.

RASULULLAH'S (SALLALLAHU ALAYHI WASALLAM) MISSION – CONFINED?

Finally, was presented the doubt that Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) mission was confined to the reformation of only the Arabs. This has indeed greatly agitated me, causing my hairs to stand on end. My honourable friend! This was the belief of the Yahood, which the Qur'an refuted very clearly. Furthermore, explicit mention is made of the universality of Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) mission. In this regard Allah Ta'ala proclaims in the Qur'an:

“We have not sent you (O Muhammad), but unto all mankind as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner.”

“We have not sent you, but as a mercy to all the world.”

“You have been raised unto all creation.”

In addition, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) himself declared that whoever refuses to embrace Iman after having heard him (i.e. Rasulullah – Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), will most certainly be an inmate of the Fire, be he a Christian or a Jew. These statements are verbal proofs.

There are also practical proofs for the universality of Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) Nubuwwat.

Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had despatched letters to the Kaiser of Rum, Kisra of Faaris, Najaahi of Habash and Maqooqas of Egypt, inviting them to Islam. In his letters he warned them of sin and misfortune which would befall them should they choose to reject the Call to embrace Islam. If his mission was not universal, why did he despatch such invitations?

Now that the clear proofs have been cited, what doubt can there be regarding the universality of the mission of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam)?

I shall comment on the cause underlying the doubt in regard to the universality of the Nubuwwat of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

(1) Since the Arabs of that era were experts of eloquence in their language, convincing them of the Qur'an which is in Arabic, being the Divine Word, and not the word of man, the doubt of Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) mission being for only the Arabs was created.

My honourable friend! Besides the Qur'an of Allah, there were thousands of Mu'jizaat (miracles) which all people could observe and understand. It does not matter if they could not understand the Qur'an.

Furthermore, after vehement opposition for many years, the acceptance by the Arabs of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam), should suffice. When such experts submitted after prolonged opposition, it is clear testimony for the fact that this Kalaam is indeed miraculous. Thus,

the Mu'jizah of the Qur'an by implication extends to all people.

(2) *The second cause for the doubt is Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) lifelong stay among the Arabs and his demise among them after the completion of his mission.*

What need is there for the Nabi to go to each person (or group) individually? If this was necessary, it would follow that those Arab groups and settlements to whom Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not go are also excluded from the ambit of his Nubuwwat. If it is said that the entire land of Arabia is one country, we shall say that all lands of the world are also a single land (viz. the world).

Although Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) did not travel personally to all places, nevertheless, his message reached many places as is evident from the Hadith.

Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) demise after the completion of Arab reformation is not a valid basis for the doubt. If a physician sent to cure the sick in a town, departs after curing some, and leaving behind adequate arrangements for the treatment of the others, it cannot be said that the object of the physician was only to cure the few. Curing some and making the necessary arrangements for the treatment of the others have set in motion the process for realisation of the objective in regard to the others.

(3) *The third ground for the doubt is that the other nations did not embrace Islam on the basis on which the Arabs had accepted Islam. While the Arabs were constrained to accept Islam on the basis of the miraculous nature of the Qur'an, other nations were subjugated by the sword.*

In reply, I have to say that it has already been shown earlier that the universality of the Qur'an's miraculous nature is an established fact. When the truth has become manifest, it is not intelligent to oppose it. It is precisely for this reason that the Law of Islam did not tolerate opposition and conflict. There are only two ways open: Acceptance of Islam or Jizya (i.e. a tax imposed on the non-Muslim citizens in Darul Islam).

This is the Law of Islam, not the introduction of the Sahaabah. This fact is not hidden from the experts of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Although this fact (viz. the two options of Islam) does not affect our claim, nevertheless, the allegation of forceful conversion to Islam is in conflict with the truth. The Sahaabah firstly resorted to Tableegh, discussion, debate and elimination of doubts. Only after manifestation of the truth did they resort to the two options (Islam or Jizya) to eliminate opposition. This is an intelligent course which prevails in all worldly governments. After a government is established it will be correct for it to utilise force against opponents of its rule.

(4) *The fourth basis for the doubt is that many people were unaware of Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) mission of Nubuwwat.*

In reply, it has to be said: The awareness of every individual is not a requirement for the universality of Nubuwwat. By virtue of the Rahmat (Mercy) of Allah Ta'ala, the obligation of accepting Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) Nubuwwat devolves on all who acquire this Knowledge. Those who have not become aware are exempted.

(5) *The fifth factor for the doubt is the question of guidance for America, Hindustan and Africa. These regions did not achieve guidance initially.*

This objection has already been answered in No. 4 above.

In view of the fact that the proofs of the universality of Nubuwwat are absolute and explicit while the doubts raised are exceptionally weak, I have replied in brief. If this explanation is not adequate, Allah forbid! then I am prepared to explain further.

THE LETTER OF NASEEHAT MENTIONED IN THE INTRODUCTION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Honourable Sir! May Allah preserve you.
Assalaamualaykum warahmatul-laahi wabarakaatuh.

Although I have not met you personally, nevertheless, having heard of your moral excellence and attributes, I have an unseen bond with you. It is this bond which has given me the courage to write this letter. Do not look at my insignificance and inexperience, rather keep in view the adage:

“Look at what he has said. Do not look at the person who has said it.”

I now commence with the Name of Allah Ta’ala. A careful study of your efforts and writings discloses that you have two aims: The welfare of Islam and the welfare of Muslims. The welfare of Islam has constrained you to refute the objections and criticism of the opponents of Islam. The welfare of Muslims is reflected in your desire to extricate Muslims from the pit of degeneration and to promote their progress.

No fair-minded person can have any objection against these lofty ideals. However, the ways and means for achieving these goals require scrutiny. In the determination of the ways and means there is a clash of opinion between your ideas and those of the overwhelming majority of the Ulama of Islam.

Your method of eliminating criticism against Islam is the adoption of silence with regard to modern research (i.e. scientific theories which conflict with Islam), and to

reconcile Islamic teachings with the results of this research. The basis of this endeavour is only the claim that modern scientific theories are correct and that everything of Islam is true and correct. No Muslim can have any scope for objection in accepting the second proposition, viz. everything of Islam is correct and true. However, the first proposition, viz. all scientific theories are correct, is open for discussion.

What is the proof for the assertion that all scientific theories are correct? I shall provide a few examples.

According to the scientists the heaven is not a physical body. What proof is there to substantiate the validity of this claim? What proof is there to refute the contention of the Hadith that the first heaven exists at a great distance from us – at a distance which 500 years journey would cover (the Hadith is silent as regards to the speed and means of locomotion in regard to the 500 years journey), and beyond the first heaven exists other heavens? With which rational proof does this claim clash?

Again, what rational proof is there to deny the existence of As-habul Kahf (The Companions of the Cave) and Yajuj and Ma'jaj?

If it is said that in spite of exploring, these people have not been discovered, we shall respond that inability to discover something is not proof of its non-existence. When America was not yet known to certain nations, it did not follow from its non-discovery that it did not exist.

When undiscovered lands were not known, did it follow that they did not exist?

In regard to the objection that the sites of these people (Yajuj, Ma'juj and As-habul Kahf) have been mentioned by name by the Mufasssireen, however, in spite of searches having been conducted there, the discovery of these communities was not made, it should be understood that Allah Ta'ala has the power to conceal sites from us even though they are present there. This question will soon be referred to again in the discussion of Mu'jizah (Miracles of the Ambiyaa).

Assuming that these people are elsewhere and not in the exact regions mentioned, what is the need for allegorical interpretation of the explicit statements (Nusoos) of the Qur'an and Hadith? What clear basis is there for abandoning the literal meanings of the text? If it is averred that such events are in conflict with nature, it will be said that until today there is no clear conception of nature.

Furthermore, there is no absolute proof for the claim that events in conflict with nature are not possible. Hence such occurrences cannot be described as being impossible (nor is it correct to say that these marvellous events are in conflict with nature).

If fitrat (nature) is said to be Divine Habit and the proof for the impossibility of diversion from or conflict with Nature is that the Divine Habit is Promise which manifests itself practically, hence it is not possible for the Divine Verbal Promise to conflict with it (i.e. with Divine

Practice), then in reply it will be said that both these suppositions are in need of scrutiny. Firstly, the Divine Habit (Aadat) is not a promise. Proof is required for such an averment. Secondly, for the manifestation of Aadat it is not necessary that an event transpires continuously. In regard to certain things the Divine Habit is for their occasional materialisation. Mu'jizaat are of this category, viz. of the category of occasional manifestation.

The verses, *“There is no change for the creation of Allah”* and *“And, never will you find for the Way of Allah a change”*, will be supportive of your claim if the meaning accorded to these verses by you is accepted. However, on acceptance of the interpretation of the expert Mufasssireen – and their interpretation is not very far from the meaning presented by you – your deduction is not correct.

Furthermore, consider the new inventions of phonography, telephone, radio, telegraphy, photography, etc. On the basis of your principle that events in conflict with natural (normal) habit or practice are impossible, will a person who is totally unaware of these inventions accept their reality? Should such a person accept your principle, he will be constrained to deny the reality of these inventions. In fact, on the basis of your principle, there will remain no need for the belief in the Creator of the Universe. If the existence of these things are to be accepted, it will be necessary to abandon your principle.

If it is argued that these inventions are related to material causes while Mu'jizah is an effect without causes, the answer is: Proof is required for restricting the causes of

effects to material or worldly agents adopted by man's volitional act. The Will and Command of Allah Ta'ala are great causes. What rational conflict is there to deny the Causes of Divine Will and Command? Thus, it has been proved that it is possible for a variety of Mu'jizaat to proceed at the hands of the Ambiyaa. Why should the Nusoos (Qur'anic ayaat and Ahadith) then be interpreted away?

This is the condition of other modern research as well. Mostly, such arguments are defective and based on conjecture and baseless emulation. However, if a logical argument is absolute in accuracy, not admitting any error, and a Nass appears to be in contradiction of such proof, then the Nass will be interpreted appropriately, e.g. from the Qur'anic Nusoos, hand, face, etc. have been asserted for Allah Ta'ala while absolute proof (Daleel Qat'i) refutes the existence of anthropomorphic attributes for the Divine Being. Thus, these words (hands, face, etc.) in relation to the Divine Being have been given a figurative meaning by way of valid interpretation. The condition for the validity of such interpretation is that it should conform to Shar'i and Arabic rules. If it does not, it will amount to interpolation.

Your interpretations are, firstly, without any valid need. Secondly, they do not conform to Arabic and Shar'i rules.

Earlier Ulama have also answered the claims of the heretics. They had firstly demolished the theories of the heretics. Where they found theories to be correct, they (the earlier Ulama) employed a suitable interpretation. From

here you will realise that you have, without valid basis, described the majority of the Ahadith as unreliable. For this, you have no proof.

If some Shar'i Daleel (proof) appears to be in conflict with daleel aqli (rational proof), then this daleel aqli should be examined. But daleel aqli (absolute in certitude) is meant Daleel Qat'i (which is the highest type of Shar'i Proof). It should not be construed that by daleel aqli is meant daleel wahmi (Proof which admits doubts and error. Proofs in which there is no absolute certitude), otherwise it will become difficult to define this daleel aqli. The intelligence of a particular person or group cannot be fixed as the criterion for daleel aqli because there are great differences in the quality of the various intelligences. In addition, the research and theories of people differ. It will follow that every person's intellectual research will have to be accepted as accurate. This will mean the combination or co-existence of opposites.

Examples: Philosophers and scientists differ among themselves in many issues. Some subscribe to the theory that the earth is stationary while others subscribe to the rotation of the earth. Aristotle and Plato entertain conflicting beliefs regarding the temporal nature and eternity of the souls. It is obvious that one theory will be incorrect. Thus, even theories formulated on the basis of intelligent research can be erroneous. How then is it possible for you to claim with certitude that your rational proofs are absolutely correct and that it is imperative to subject the Nusoos to interpretation?

The intelligence of just any person is not reliable in these (Deeni) matters. Only the intelligence of one whose authority in the matters of Nubuwwat is an accepted fact, will be relied on. The function of Aql (Intelligence) is merely to recognise the principles of Tauheed and Risaalat. Beyond this, in the matter of details and particulars, is only obedience and submission. Whatever has been decreed by Allah Ta'ala, the True Sovereign, must necessarily be accepted. It is not lawful to submit the details (Furoo-aat) of the Law to one's reason. Should one submit the details of the Law (of the Shariat) to one's personal reasoning or subject it to far-fetched and baseless interpretation, one will not be excused for such transgression. If scope is given for such a process (viz. of subjecting the detailed rules to one's personal understanding), treason will become universal. It will become almost impossible to exercise the rule of the Law. The same should be understood in regard to the Laws of the Divine King.

If rejection of Hadith is on account of some differences therein then it should be understood that differences also exist in historical narrations and in news. It will then follow that history and news should also be denied. Historical narrations and news are accepted on the basis of the reliability of its narrators. Why can this same standard then not be applied to the acceptance of Hadith? Differences in historical reports and in news are not considered grounds for the rejection of such reports. Differences in narration do not harm the process of acceptance. Similarly, the reliability of Hadith narrators is ascertainable from Asmaa-ur-Rijal (a special branch of

Knowledge dealing with reliability and unreliability of narrators). On ascertaining the reliability of narrators the same treatment of acceptance will be accorded to the Hadith narrations.

All ideas expressed by you have now been answered. It should, however, be added that research in matters of the Deen is not a task for all and sundry. This should not be constructed as a denial of your knowledge and intelligence. Rather, the fact is that only the views of accepted authorities with established reliability will create an impression. People will respect their pronouncements. Thus, the research of the illustrious Ulama have been accepted as reliable by Muslims. Further, the Ulama are generally involved in this field and they are adequately discharging this service.

Another noteworthy fact is that everything in a particular era has its requirements, peculiarities and characteristics which are amenable to it. It is necessary for a man embarking on research in Deeni Masaa-il to be a well-known Aalim and pious. The greater part of his time should be occupied with this profession (Deeni research). He must be regarded by the public as a religious man of high intelligence. He should not be engrossed in worldly activities. A man devoid of these attributes should not venture into this field because his efforts will be in vain. Therefore, in view of your present condition you should maintain silence even if your research is correct. Under the circumstances, to speak – that too in conflict with the whole world – serves only to create division in the ranks of Muslims.

While you highly detest disunity and division, it is surprising that you do not ponder to fathom the great cause of this disunity.

Thus far, whatever has been said was in regard to the question of sympathy for Islam. The second issue is sympathy for Muslims and to devise schemes for their progress. There is no gainsaying in the merit of this. However, the plans which are devised to achieve this goal are questionable and require scrutiny.

The summary of your proposals in this regard is the adoption of western secular education and platitudes. I do not wish at this juncture to discuss consequences of western education in its present form, or of the conspicuous detrimental influence on religion exercised by such education. Firstly, a discussion on this topic will be drawn out. Secondly, the Ulama may be consulted in this regard. However, it should be mentioned that the progress of the nation is not confined to the pursuit of English.

In my opinion, material progress – if this is the actual aim – is by the acquisition of wealth. In this age it is observed that knowledge and excellences are not accorded proper recognition. Both the public and rulers honour people of wealth. Praise and plaudits are heaped on them. They are successful in the achievement of their mundane aims. They are included even in the judicial structures. They are appointed as consultants to the rulers whether they are proficient in English or not. (This was the situation

prevailing in India at the time when this essay was written – and still exists in varying degrees in all parts of the world. – Translator) Hence, if progress in affluence is the motive, then there is no better method than trade and commerce.

Every person is at all times dependent on the tradesmen and the merchant. If greater emphasis is accorded to trade, instead of learning English, the nation will acquire greater benefit. Assuming that the progress of the nation is confined to the acquisition of the English language, then it should be noted that there is no dearth of governmental educational institutions to execute this task. What is the need for the introduction of English in your Deeni madrasah? If it is argued that religious beliefs are corrupted in the governmental secular institutions, then I must say – and in your heart you too will admit it – that the beliefs of the products of government secular schools are not as corrupt as the beliefs of the majority of the students of this madrasah (viz. the madrasah in which English has been introduced).

If it is said the arrangements for Salaat and Deeni lectures can be made in a private madrasah (whereas this is not possible in government institutions), then remember that as long as your own ideas and conceptions (as head of the madrasah) are not transformed (to conform to the Shariah), the ideas of your followers and subordinates will not change. The condition of your subordinates will remain unchanged (in spite of the arrangements instituted for Salaat and lectures).

Further, let us assume the necessity of this madrasah (which caters for English education as well) for the progress of both the Deen and the Dunya. Who are more entitled to the benefits of progress – the rich or the poor? The wealthy already have a degree of progress albeit not the extent which is your aim. Nevertheless, they are in possession of sufficient mundane means for their needs. In contrast, the poor lack such means, hence they are more entitled for progress. Thus, admission of poor students to the madrasah should have been accorded priority and arrangements should have been instituted to provide bursaries and scholarships for them. In this way would they have been educated and trained, enabling them to acquire high-ranking positions. Prayers of gratitude would have emanated from their hearts. Even if dua is not considered to be significant, at least the quality of life of the poor would be improved. Undoubtedly, you will concede that this is a laudable goal.

It has, however, been confirmed that it is difficult for the poor to subsist in the madrasah (i.e. the madrasah where English is being taught and which operates under the control of the objector). The interests and welfare of the nation are therefore not being served.

Now remains the contention that, at least, the wealthy will progress by the acquisition of English education. The limit of such education (as it applied in the context of India in those days) is that one becomes a barrister or enters the civil service. The interests of the nation are not served by people in these capacities. A barrister acts to serve his own selfish pecuniary interests. In a dispute between two

Muslim brothers, the beneficiaries are the barristers who pocket huge sums of money and the winning party. What type of national progress is this?

If top posts in the government are achieved, of what benefit are these when Aqaa-id (Beliefs) have already been corrupted? When qabr and hashr (the grave and resurrection) are regarded to be meaningless fairy-tales, then why will there be the fear of Allah? A culture bereft of Divine Fear can never achieve the goal of reforming character. Only religion has this blessing. Among those who subscribe to religion, some abstain from prohibitions for the sake of the Creator's Pleasure; some do so because of fear for the punishment of the grave while some refrain from evil because of the fear for Jahannam. In all cases, religion is the factor of prevention. It prevents people from indulging in prohibitions. Mere character is not sufficient to achieve this aim. A man who has no religion to restrain him will commit injustice, accept bribes, issue unjust judgments, act by the dictates of vengeance. In short, there is nothing surprising if he should perpetrate any evil. A wise man has rightly observed that one who does not adhere to his religion lacks the capability for government.

Should a person develop a virtuous character without the aid of religion and thus abstains from corruption, he will be an exceptional case. Such rare cases will be considered to be non-existent.

All schemes which are being engineered at this time for the progress of Muslims are degenerate and corrupt. Neither is such sympathy for Islam based on correct

principles nor does such sympathy for Muslims constitute the proper means for achieving progress.

Whatever has thus far been said is in general for the benefit of all. I shall now discuss certain things which concern yourself in particular.

Firstly, is the correction of Aqaa-id (Beliefs). There is nothing surprising if some doubts occur to a person. However, by the grace of Allah Ta'ala there are present in this age highly qualified Ulama who have the ability to rationally and narrationally refute and dispel doubts. The writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali Tahseeldaar are sufficient for this purpose. In my opinion his writings will answer all your doubts. Study his writings in all fairness and rectify your beliefs.

Do not allow inhibition to deter you from proclaiming the error of your well-known research theories. This is not expected of your impartial and unbiased disposition. After all, you have already conceded many of your errors. Even now if you correct your ideas and announce them, the lofty degree of your excellence will become more conspicuous. The Muslim masses who by far outnumber those who claim to follow you, will become your sincere admirers. They will then be inclined to accept the schemes of progress indicated to them. In addition there is the great Thawaab of the Akhirah for correcting your beliefs and for numerous people being saved from deviation. Furthermore, some who hold you in high esteem will also retract their erroneous beliefs on account of your retraction.

Secondly, adherence to Jamaat Salaat is essential. Regular observance of Salaat itself is Fardh and performing Salaat with Jamaat is Sunnatul Muakkadah. The love for Allah and the Rasool, which is the demand of Islam, requires that neither Fardh nor Sunnat be neglected.

Thirdly, regarding the adoption of proper dress, I shall not advance any proofs in substantiation. I shall content myself with a simple fact: Why will it be considered wrong if a man dons female dress? Similarly, will it be wrong for the adherents of one religion to adopt the garb of the followers of another religion.

Fourthly, Allah Ta'ala has blessed you with every kind of ability and means. Hajj, by the clear text of the Qur'an is Fardh. Even if Hajj was neither Fardh nor Sunnat, the love for Allah and the Rasool will constrain everyone who can afford the journey to present himself in the Abode of Allah and the Abode of the Rasool. This is the demand of love. How unfortunate is it to be deprived of this journey even once in a lifetime despite having the means! What difficulty was there for you to have proceeded for Hajj directly from Aden either on your way to London or on your way back? Muster up courage now and initiate arrangements for the sacred journey.

Fasting and Zakaat are hidden acts of Ibaadat of which I have no information. It is, however, expected that you are observing these. If not, they too should be included in the aforementioned list of obligatory Ibaadat.

In conclusion, you are reminded that you have entered the final phase of your life. Besides Aqaa-id and A'maal there is no other companion along the journey into the Akhirah. Bid farewell to your friends of a few days, be these friends in the literal sense or in the figurative sense such as desires of the heart. Take along the everlasting Friends, viz. Aqaa-id and correct your A'maal (actions), because it is said in the Qur'an:

“When their time (of death) arrives, they will not be able to delay it by a moment nor advance it.”

Finally, if I have said anything to offend you, attribute it to my unawareness of your disposition and overlook it. Do not attribute it to prejudice or spite. By Allah! Writing is permissible only if motivated by sympathy and affection.

If the advice is acceptable to you – and I hope it is – then do inform me otherwise there is no need to bother about a reply.

CONCLUSION

THE SECOND LETTER

For a considerable time I intended replying to your letter. However, non-availability of time did not permit an earlier reply. Many a time I resolved to give a brief reply, but my heart desired that I write in detail. Finally, when I could not find sufficient time, I decided to write this short letter in order to allay the thought that the cause for the

suspension of correspondence was the previous letter whereas it is not so.

I want to assure you fully that I am steadfast on the Deen of Islam. I believe it to be the best of religions. I have no doubt in the Tauheed of Allah. I adhere to this doctrine rigidly. Since this treasure of Tauheed has come to us via the agency of the Nabi, I believe him to be the true Nabi of Allah. However, I do not subscribe to the belief that he is the object of Divine Love and that the universe was created for his sake. My firm belief is reflected in the Qur'anic statement:

“I am only a man like yourself to whom comes revelation.”

As far as Iman is concerned, I find myself on retitude. Besides Allah no one can be aware of this fact.

Further, comes Deen. Consider the five daily Salaat in which there are many Divine Wisdoms. I have logically understood these and am aware that there is no better way of worshipping and thanking the Creator than Salaat. It is essential for everyone to be steadfast on Salaat.

I have no trouble with Hajj and Zakaat. However, I have one or two doubts regarding fasting. I do not doubt fasting being compulsory. But my doubts concerns the specification of the month of Ramadhaan. I wish to be convinced in this regard. It is not my desire to strengthen the opposite view. On the contrary, I wish to entrench the view which conforms.

As far as dress is concerned, I never think for even a moment that it has any relationship with Iman and Deen. Sincere acceptance of the Aqaa-id (Beliefs) of Islam is sufficient for us on earth. Any suitable style and method pertaining to dress are acceptable provided that there is no interference in the Aqaa-id of Islam. According to the demand of the age I consider the adoption of western dress necessary in the same way as man has a need to answer the call of nature. In other words, I endeavour to free myself of these garments at the first available opportunity. On reaching home I cannot tolerate being in that garb (western garb) for even a moment.

With regard to the education of my child, I am of the opinion that after completing Arabic and Qur'anic studies he should pursue secular education. If you have any misgiving in this matter, I cannot comment thereon.

I vehemently object the type of education being imparted to Muslims in the Arabic Madaaris. If you wish to bring about change in this system of education, then do continue the correspondence with me. I shall assist you in this matter with my worldly experience. Truly speaking, Muslims are on the verge of drowning. The time for the total destruction of the worldly and religious life of Muslims is not far off. This will be the consequence of the futile education which is being imparted to Muslims.

I consider these doubts and misgivings of mine to be well-based and well-intended. These misgivings are the product of my research. The openness and liberty with which I

have expressed these, will indicate that this way of explanation is devoid of hypocrisy.

THE REPLY

Undoubtedly, I was somewhat perplexed by the delay in your replying. The anxiety has today been cleared by receipt of your letter.

Your beliefs pertaining to Tauheed and Risaalat are correct in entirety. May Allah Ta'ala keep us all steadfast on these Aqaa-id. However, regarding Risaalat, a certain aspect has been left unclear. If your conception of Risaalat is universal, embracing all mankind, then it is correct. On the other hand, if you have restricted Risaalat to the Arab Nation, it will be wholly erroneous and in conflict with the Qur'an and Hadith. This erroneous conception of Risaalat does not suffice for Najaat (Salvation in the Akhirah).

With regard to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) being the beloved of Allah, if by beloved (ma'shooq) is meant mahboob, it is then necessary to accept that he is the mahboob of Allah Ta'ala because the Qur'an confirms this in several places. The Qur'an states that Allah Ta'ala loves the pious. Undoubtedly, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is the noblest of pious people. Why then will Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) not be Allah's Mahboob?

If by beloved is meant the idea which poets have of the word ma'shooq, then it will not be permissible to entertain such a belief. Although it is correct that the universe was created for Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam),

nevertheless, since that fact is not based on the highest degree of proof (Daleel-e-Qat'i), it is not included among the fundamental beliefs of Islam.

If by confining Deen to Salaat, Fasting, Hajj and Zakaat, the reference is to the Arkaan (Fundamental practices) of the Deen, it will be correct. But it does not follow from this that the laws of the Deen consist of only these acts. On the other hand, if by this confinement is understood the Laws of the Deen, it will be manifestly erroneous. There are thousands of laws in the Deen. Some are Fardh, some are Wajib and some are Sunnat. These are not hidden from the people of knowledge.

You mention that you have logically understood the benefits of Salaat. This fact is not disputable. However, to logically understand the Furoo' (detailed rules of the Deen) is questionable. Remember that the Usool (Principles) of Deen are logical and rational while the Furoo' are narrational (i.e. accepted on the authority of reliable narration) and Shar'i (Orders of the Shariat). The benefits discernible in the Furoo' are inherent wisdoms. They are not the causes for the Laws. Hence, the existence of the laws are not dependent on the benefits. By regarding the benefits to be the actual reason for the ahkaam (laws), there is the danger of denying the validity or necessity of the laws when a change of circumstances and opinion takes place.

Further, there is no need for us to understand the rational proofs for the Furoo' (specific rules). When the Nubuwwat of the Nabi has been confirmed by rational

proof, it logically follows that all laws are from Allah Ta'ala and whatever emanates from Allah Ta'ala is correct, true and in order. This brief daleel (proof) suffices. There is no need for elaborate proofs to substantiate this fact.

On the other hand, in so far as the Usool (Fundamental Principles) are concerned, there is a need for rational proofs otherwise it will lead to impossibilities, the explanation of which is involved and lengthy. The only need for the Furoo' is that these should not conflict with any absolute (Qat'i) rational proof. If anyone presents an argument claiming that any specific mas'alah (rule) is in conflict with rational proof, it will devolve on the follower of Deen to answer.

With regard to your doubt in the stipulation of the month of Ramadhaan for fasting, and your endeavour to acquire satisfaction on this issue, it is not known if satisfaction (itminaan) is meant Shar'i satisfaction or rational satisfaction. If the reference is to Shar'i satisfaction, then know that there exist Qat'i Dalaa-il (Absolute Proofs) of the Qur'an and Hadith to substantiate the stipulation that the month of Ramadhaan is the month of fasting. There is, therefore, no need for disquietude on this issue.

If your dissatisfaction pertains to rational proof, then I have already explained the rule in this regard, viz. it is not necessary to substantiate the Furoo' by means of rational proofs.

You have then claimed that the style of dress has no relationship with the Deen. If by this claim you mean that the relationship is not with the Arkaan (Fundamental) of Deen, then you are correct. Undoubtedly, style of dress is not included among the Arkaan of Deen. However, it does not follow that dress is excluded from the Ahkaam (Laws) of the Deen. Therefore, if it is your claim that dress has no relationship with laws of the Deen, then the claim is absolutely erroneous. The Hadith has explicitly prohibited certain forms of dress. Warnings of punishment are sounded in the Hadith for forbidden types of dress.

You contend that you are wearing western dress on account of the demand of the times. If at some time it becomes the demand of the age to abstain from Salaat, will abandonment of Salaat become lawful? Should the times demand abstention from reciting the Kalimah, will this be lawful? Yes, difficult circumstances bring about some relaxation. As long as a real difficulty cannot be proven there can be no relaxation of the laws.

Your opinion regarding the education of your child is good. However, bear in mind that secular education should not become a means for earning an unlawful livelihood.

With regard to your offer to assist in the process of the education of Muslims, if this is desired, I do yearn for reformation in the field. However on account of the lack of power, who will assume the responsibility of this task? Since I do not possess the power to give effect to reformation of Muslim education, it is pointless to even

approach me in this regard. Nevertheless, if I am apprized of something intelligent, I shall convey it to others. But I will consider only such acts as beneficial which do not bring about conflict with the Shariah. Anything which conflicts with the Shariah is manifestly corrupt.

Finally, it was averred that Muslims will soon be annihilated because of the orthodox style of Deeni education. With regard to the old system of Deeni education, Muslims may be annihilated at some time in the future (according to the contention of the modernist). But in so far as worldly (secular) education is concerned, Muslims have already been ruined. They have lost their Deeni moorings. Now which system of education is misdirected? The education which has already caused the downfall of Muslims or the education about which it is claimed will soon cause a downfall, regardless of whether the claim is true or false?

There is nothing wrong in probing into matters freely. But the quest for the truth and fairness are necessary conditions.

Was-salaam

KNOWLEDGE OF HAQQ

No one is immune from the inspiration of shaitaan. The knowledge of the Ulama-e-Haqq is derived from the niche wherein the lantern of the knowledge of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) responses. This knowledge of the Nabi (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has been corroborated by Absolute Wahi (Divine Revelation which admits not the slightest vestige of doubt) while the knowledge of these Sufiyah (Saints) is derived from the fountain of Ilhaam and Kashf (forms of revelation which admit inspirations from shaitaan or the nafs). Error is possible in this fountain. It is therefore imperative that the Saalik (the traveller along the Path of Tasawwuf) despite his Ilhaam and Kashf, adopts taqleed of the Ulama-e-Haqq. He should regard the Ulama-e-Haqq as established on the Truth and himself on error. The support of the Ulama is derived from the taqleed of the Ambiyaa (Alayhimus salaam) who have been supported in turn by Absolute Wahi which is immune from error. To give preference to one's Kashf and Ilhaam (if such inspiration conflicts with the Shariah) over the statements of the Ulama-e-Haqq is in fact according preference to one's inspiration over the revealed laws of Allah Ta'ala. This is pure ruin and destruction. That which is absolute in truth and worthy of following is the Kitaab and Sunnah.

(Mujaddid Alfe Thaani – Rahmatullah alayh)

MUJADDID ALFE THAANI SAID:

* The actions of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are of two kinds, viz. acts of Ibaadat or acts of personal habit. We brand as an evil bid'ah (innovation) a practice which is in conflict with the Ibaadat practices of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam). We vehemently prohibit such bid'ah practices because it is forging of a new way into the Deen. Such a new way is 'mardood'(rejected and accursed). On the other hand, we do not brand as an evil bid'ah a practice which is contrary to the personal habit of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

It is indeed a great Favour of Allah Ta'ala that all lovers of Allah and sincere servants of Allah are constantly engaged in reviving the Sunnah. At all times they are in preparation to eradicate one bid'ah or the other. This is so because Sunnat and bid'ah are two opposites.

* People have covered the priceless and glittering Sunnah practices of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in the darkness of bid'ah. They have destroyed the lustre of Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi wasallam) Millat in the pollution of bid'ah. It is ironical that these bid'ah practices are regarded as laudable (by the votaries of bid'ah) and have been designated 'bid'ah hasanah' (good innovations). Alas! They seek the perfection of the Deen and Ummah through these so-called bid'ah hasanah practices.

* This servant (Mujaddid Alfe Thaani) does not discern any glitter or light or goodness in any of these bid'ah practices. Besides darkness and pollution, nothing else is discernible in these innovatory practices. Tomorrow (on the Day of Qiyaamah) people will realise that the consequences of bid'ah are nothing but destruction and regret.