

**AND, JOIN THE RANKS OF THE TRUTHFUL (Auliya of Allah)
(QURA'AN)**

ZIKR-E-ILAHY



REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

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INTRODUCTION

ZIKR-E-ILAHÍ or Remembrance of Allah is one of the many lectures of Maseehul Ummat Hadhrat Maulana Shah Muhammad Maseehulláh Khan Sherwání (May Allah Ta'ala maintain his shadow of barkat over us for many more years). In this lecture Hadhrat Maseehullah Saheb diagnoses the spiritual degeneration in which the Ummah is caught up today. Not only does he diagnose the malady, but he provides the cure for this spiritual affliction of ours.

Organizations and movements, luminaries and dignataries of the world, time and again, come up with their self-invented theories for the solution of the ills with which mankind is suffering. All such theories and solutions offered by modern man fail — and will always fail— —to solve the miserable condition of moral and spiritual degeneration in which the Ummah is floundering today. They all fail for the simple reason that they have hopelessly failed in pin-pointing the malady. Their diagnosis is far off the mark and their prescriptions have no Divine flavour.

The prescription offered by Hadhrat Maseehullah Sáheb is the prescription enshrined in the Qurán Sháreef— —the prescription of Allah Ta'ala— — the only sure remedy for the elimination of our degeneration. This booklet will, therefore, serve the purpose of the earnest and sincere seeker of the Truth in his journey towards Allah Ta'ala.

Hadhrat Maseehullah Saheb is well-known to many thousands of Muslims of South Africa and he requires no introduction as far as they are concerned. Those who do not know this great Sufi and Saint of our time may write to the Mujlisul Ulama for the booklet which sets out in brief the history of Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat.

Was-Salaam.

MULISUL ULAMA OF S.A.

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وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١﴾

“(O Believers!) Do not become like those who became forgetful about Allah (by abstaining from practising in accordance with the Law of Allah- -they opposed the commands of Allah and indulged in His prohibitions.) In consequence Allah caused them to become neglectful of their own souls (in such a way that they could not discern what is truly beneficial for themselves.) Indeed these are the transgressors (who will suffer the chastisement of transgression).”

(Bayanul Qur’an)

This is a short ayat at the end of Surah Hashr. In this ayat, like in other ayat, is contained a very important topic.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSTAHABBAT

Every part of the Qur’an Shareef is of the greatest importance. No part of it is redundant or of no value. Those verses which do not discuss Fara-idh and Wajibat (compulsory laws) but mention only the Mustahab aspects are also of tremendous significance. Nowadays Mustahabbat are not regarded as of any importance. It is correct that in so far as practise is concerned, Mustahabbat are not on the same level as Fara-idh and Wajibat, however, to be educated in the Mustahabbat is essential for two reasons:

- (1) Knowledge will rectify any misconception regarding the category which Mustahab practices occupy in the Shariah. By being educated in the Mustahabbat one will not regard such practices as unlawful, fardh or wajib.

This knowledge is of utmost importance in regard of the rectification of l'tiqad (belief).

- (2) The barakat (spiritual lustre and effulgence) and beneficial results are innumerable. Ignorance of these many benefits and significances of Mustahab practices will not engender in any inclination towards these valuable practices.

Knowledge of the many and great benefits which can be obtained from such Mustahab acts which are regarded as most insignificant, will create in one the realization of the great loss which is suffered by abstaining from such valuable acts which in reality are priceless jewels. The need of Mustahabbat is for the perfection of deeds. Righteous deeds attain their full perfection and efficiency by means of the Mustahab etiquettes linked to them. Thus, the mention of Mustahabbat in the Qur'an Shareef is not unnecessary. Such practices have been mentioned because of tremendous importance and significance attached to them. If one possesses love for Allah, one will value and honour these Mustahabbat. The Ashiq Sadiq (true lover of Allah) possesses an unique temperament. He constantly searches for every aspect which will please the Mahboob (beloved Allah Ta'ala). When the true ashik realizes that the Beloved is pleased with a certain thing then he hastens towards it and endeavours to fulfil it, ever striving to please Him by not omitting anything which is pleasing to Him. If our temperament becomes imbued with love, then we will realise the value of Mustahabbat, and will regard its narration as the Rahmat of Allah and the Shafqat (affection) of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). This realization will dawn upon one when one discovers the detailed explanation of these rules and importance accorded them by Allah Ta'ala.

MUSTAHABBAT-- --THE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY OF THE ASHIQ

If in the Shariah was only the order for Faraa-idh and Wajibat, the ashik of Allah would have been overtaken by great distress and restlessness because the ashik is not satisfied by only that which is necessary, for that which is necessary is regarded by the ashik as a mere duty and obligation. Besides duty, the ashik's quest is for that which will direct the attention of the Mahboob to him, more and more.

We entertain the misconception that our relationship with Allah Ta'ala is merely constitutional, i.e. we are legally obliged to obey Him. It is because of this misconception that we regard as sufficient the discharge of Faraa-idh and Wajibat, and neglect the Mustahabbat, regarding them as unimportant. If our link with Allah Ta'ala was a bond of Muhabbat (love) and devotion, then we would have never obtained contentment from only the Faraa-idh and the Wajibat, but would have been in the constant search of Mustahabbat. We would then have hastened to everything which Allah Ta'ala loves and which is pleasing to him. And, on the otherhand we would have remained miles away from acts which are displeasing to Him. If our relationship with Allah Ta'ala was a bond of love and devotion we would not have investigated whether an act is detestable in a higher or lower degree (as people are in

the habit of asking-‘is such an act haram or ‘only’ makruh?’, the motive underlying the enquiry being the desire to indulge in it if it is makruh- -a lesser detestation than haram). For the ashiq it suffices that he knows the things and acts which displease his Mahboob. This knowledge is sufficient as a deterrent against the commission of acts displeasing to Allah Ta’ala. The ashiq does not probe the degree of displeasure, i.e. whether an act is greatly displeasing or slightly displeasing. His disposition is to refrain totally from all factors of displeasure, be these slight or great. To the ashiq all cases of displeasure are grave regardless of whether such displeasure results in slight annoyance or severe punishment.

OUR BOND WITH ALLAH TA’ALA HAS SLACKENED

Our condition now has degenerated to the degree of indifference where we enquire into the nature of the sin in view to practise it. Once it is known that a certain act is sinful, we pose the question: Is it a kabeerah sin or a sagheerah sin? This attitude is a clear indication that our relationship with Allah Ta’ala has weakened considerably, although not totally, for even this question (viz., probing the degree of gravity of a sin) is proof of the bond with Allah Ta’ala. At least that much connection with Allah Ta’ala remains that the perpetrator of the sin is not prepared to court the greater displeasure of Allah. If even this (weakened) bond was non-existent, then this question would have not occurred . . . the question of minor and major sin. It is therefore plain that there is yet fear for the major sins in view of considerable Divine displeasure ensuing in the wake of its commission. However, because of the weakness of our bond with Allah Ta’ala, displeasure of a lesser degree is countenanced and agreeable.

The question: Is it a major or minor sin?, is evidence of the bond with Allah Ta’ala as well as evidence of the weakness of that bond. Those who are in this habit of posing this question will be delighted from the foregoing explanation that their relationship with Allah Ta’ala has been accorded a firm footing. To a degree this delight is justified.

MERE RELATIONSHIP NOT SUFFICIENT

-PERFECT RELATIONSHIP IS THE GOAL

One should understand, reflect and remember that one should not be satisfied with mere relationship. Social ties exist among ourselves, but we do not content ourselves with the mere existence of such ties. On the contrary, the desire is there to perfect each bond of relationship. Thus, it will be realised that the mere concept of relationship with the wife is extremely weak. It is given force by only two statements (of ijaab and qubool-proposal and acceptance), and the same bond of marriage is rent asunder by a single word, viz., talaq. Notwithstanding this, no man contents himself with the mere relationship he has with the wife. Every man desires that his relationship with his wife attains perfection. Precisely for this reason no one stops at only the discharge of the obligatory rights, but in order to strengthen the bond and gain the pleasure of the wife, the husband by far exceeds the obligatory demands and

rights of the wife and provides a variety of comforts and luxuries out of his own free will and accord. This attitude of the husband is clearly motivated to strengthen and perfect the bond which exists between the wife and himself. Should the husband regard his wife with a constitutional (or legal) attitude and provide nothing more than her obligatory rights, then in spite of the existence of the legal bond between them, the relationship will be devoid of pleasure and love. In fact, in this attitude lies the danger of renting asunder the relationship.

A relationship will endure only if ways and means are devised to strengthen and perfect it. Although the marriage bond (i.e. the mere legal connection) is extremely weak, every man finds unbearable and peace-shattering its severance. Great pains are undertaken and many a scheme is devised to maintain the endurance of this marriage relationship. When this is the attitude towards a weak relationship, then indeed, it is most astonishing that we remain satisfied with the mere relationship which we have with Allah Ta'ala. The bond with Allah Ta'ala is the strongest of all relationship. No relationship is comparable with man's relationship with Allah Ta'ala. What then is the reason for our indifference? Why do we have no fikr (concern and desire) to strengthen the greatest of all bonds? Why are we contented with the mere relationship? And, why do we not regard the perpetuation of this bond to be based upon strengthening it like we do in regard to our mundane relationships? The mere existence of a relationship is not sufficient for its perpetual endurance. In fact the danger of destroying and eliminating this bond is ever present. Is the elimination of the Divine bond existing between man and his Rabb bearable to anyone? Never! Why then is no concern shown in the direction of strengthening and perfecting this bond? Maulana Rumi (rahmatullahi alayhi) says:

"O you who are perpetually engaged in pleasing the wife and children! How is it possible that you never have time to please your greatest Benefactor and Creator?"

And, again he says:

"In developing this contemptible world you have no moment to spare. But, how unconcerned are you of the pleasure of that Creator Who has arranged and assembled all these bounties?"

Alas! In worldly affairs we cannot bear nor countenance the slightest indifference and imperfection. We are unable to bear the slackening of weak and despicable ties, but in weakening our bond with Allah Ta'ala we do not feel the slightest pang of regret and pain of heart. Although even the mere relationship with Allah Ta'ala is a great favour, nevertheless to be contented with a weak bond is grave injustice. Certain people are even satisfied with the non-existence of relationship with Allah Ta'ala. But they are the kuffaar who are not our audience on this occasion. Some others again are contented with a weak relationship with Allah Ta'ala. This group is represented by us, Muslims of today. The effect of this is that we do not value the Mustahabbat. Once Hazrat Thanvi (Rahmatullah alayi) observed:

"In childhood I was once in the habit of performing Nafil Salaat in abundance. Upon studying Muniyatul Musalli I learnt that non-observance of Mustahabbat is not sinful. Upon realising this, I discontinued the performance of Nafil. At that time I did not

realise what I was doing. But, now I have realised that evil condition, for it implied the desire to maintain only a legal relationship with Allah Ta'ala, hence the attitude to only discharge the compulsory duties and neglect those factors which are pleasing to Allah Ta'ala."

OMISSION OF MUSTAHAB ON SHAR'I GROUNDS

It is entirely a different issue to omit Mustahab on Shar'i grounds. For example: Omitting the Mustahab in order to indicate to others that the act is not Wajib (compulsory); in a journey to omit the performance of Nafil Salat in consideration of one's travelling companions; or because of any difficulty occurring in some essential work; or due to much tiredness, the Mustahabs are omitted. Such omission of Mustahabbat is not reprimandable. Even the hadith says:

"Verily, your soul too has a right over you."

But the hadith orders us to seek protection against abstention from Mustahabbat due to indolence.

"O Allah! Verily, I seek refuge with You from weakness and indolence."

(Hadith)

It should be well remembered that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) exhorted us to seek comfort and in its pursuit, he (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) exhorted certain Sahabah to abstain from even some Mustahabbat and reduce the performance of Nafil Salaat. On the contrary he exhorted the seeking of protection from indolence. There is a difference in these two occasions of abstention from Mustahabbat. The quest for comfort is after one has made full effort and laboured fully in accordance with one's capability. When one has done so, the Shar'i command is that one should not labour and toil more than could be borne by one's ability and strength. The order is then to take rest and comfort. If, on the otherhand, one labours a bit and not to one's full capacity, and then refrains from the work, then it will be said that the cause is indolence. It is of such indolence that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ordered the seeking of protection.

THE BARKAT OF MUSTAHABBAT

Since our relationship with Allah Ta'ala is solemn, great and vital, the execution of Mustahabbat too is vital. This discussion was initiated by the assertion that every part of the Quran of Allah Ta'ala is of importance. It was said in this regard that in the Quran Kareem is the mention of Mustahabbat, but inspite of this, these Mustahabbat are considered to be unimportant; it is necessary to educate and instruct in these; their benefits and significance are innumerable. One such benefit is that at times Mustahabbat act as a prevention against sin. One who is constant in Tahajjud, Ishraq, Chasht and Aw-wabeen will abstain from sin to a greater degree than one who performs only the five Fardh Salat. Furthermore, a regular performer of Tahajjud, etc. is considered a pious person by others. This consideration in itself acts as an impediment to sin since such a person will feel ashamed to perpetrate sins.

Another benefit of Mustahabbat is that sometimes Allah Ta'ala is pleased so much with a certain Mustahab act that najat (salvation) is obtained by virtue of it.

An interesting episode is related here to indicate this importance. Someone saw in a dream, Seebaway, the expert of Arabic grammar, and enquired of him as to how he fared by Allah. Seebaway by belief belonged to the Mu'tazili sect. he replied: "Allah forgave me." When asked: "On what basis did Allah forgive you?" he replied: "On the basis of a question in grammar." He outlined the question as follows:

"The experts of grammar have differed in regard to the question of Ma'rifah (proper noun). Among the Dhama-ir (pronouns which are a class of Ma'rifah) which Dhameer is A'raful Ma-arif? Some said that A'raful Ma'arif is the Dhameer of the Mutakallim (1st person — the speaker); others said the Mukhátab (second person— —the one who is being addressed). And I said that the word Allah is A'raful Ma'arif; that there is no Ma'rifah superior to it, because the word Allah refers to the Being of Allah exclusively, there being no other possibility. This was pleasing to Allah Ta'ala Who said: 'You have honoured MY NAME well. Go you are forgiven.'"

Thus it will be realized that the forgiveness and salvation of this grammarian were attained on something which he said without even having had the intention of gaining reward, but he obtained victory on its basis.

EPISODE NO. 2

A saint was walking once at night time in severe cold. In the dark he saw a kitten shivering in the cold. He took pity on the kitten and brought it home where it was warmed. After the saint died, Allah Ta'ala asked him:

"What have you brought for Me?"

He ruminated: "My deeds are not worthy of presentation, but by grace of Allah, I possess the treasure of Imán in which there could not have been any trait of ostentation (riyá). I should present this to Allah Ta'ala."

He then stated: *"I have brought Tauheed."*

He was then reminded: *"Do you remember the night of the milk? The night when you drank milk and attributed the ensuing stomach-pain to the milk, saying that: 'the milk caused the pain'. What! Is this Tauheed? You overlooked Me and attributed the act to the milk whereas I am the true Cause."*

Upon this revelation, the saint trembled in fear. Allah Ta'ala exclaimed:

"You have now realized the reality of your claim? Now, I will forgive you because of an act which you never dreamt would be the medium of salvation. One night you took pity on a kitten shivering in the cold and gave it succour. You were merciful to My creature. It is a greater requirement that I be merciful to you. Go, you have been forgiven."

Such is the grace, barakat and favour of Mustahabbát. The ahádith are replete with such instances— —such insignificant occurrences which countenanced salvation.

EPISODE NO. 3

Another illustration is the episode of a prostitute which has been narrated in the hadith. Once she saw a dog in the intense heat licking the ground due to thirst. She took pity on the dog. Nearby was a well, but there was no rope and bucket with which to draw the water. She used her scarf as a rope and her leather sock as a container. With these she managed to draw sufficient water to quench the thirst of the almost dying dog. After a while this woman died. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that she was forgiven and attained salvation because of this merciful act shown to the dog. It has been well said:

'The Rahmat of Allah is in search of some excuse so as to forgive (people their sins). It does not search for any price.'

My friends! Never regard any good act as insignificant or despicable. It is not known which act appeals to Allah Ta'ala. Nowadays there are people who are disposed to abstain from practicing righteous deeds upon hearing episodes of Allah's boundless mercy.

THE EFFECT OF NARRATIVES

The similitude of these episodes is like the rain. Not only these episodes, but even Nusoos (Quranic verses and Ahadith) bear the same similitude. Rain in itself is highly beneficial and life-giving. However, its effect on different substrata varies. If the ground is fertile, the beneficial effect is manifested in the luxurious growth. If the ground is arid and barren, then the more the rainfall, the more thorn-trees, brambles and shrubbery. Shaikh Sa'di (rahmatullah alayhi) says:

"There is no doubt in the beneficial effect of rain. If it rains in a garden, tulips grow; if it rains in arid ground, thorns and brambles grow."

Similar is the effect of episodes of Rahmat on different persons. People of different dispositions are affected differently by these stories of mercy. Those of a sick disposition and unhealthy temperament interpret these incidents of mercy in a grossly distorted manner. They say if Allah Ta'ala forgives on the basis of such trivial acts, then there is no real need for righteous deeds. On the otherhand, those of a healthy disposition and who are straight-thinking, upon hearing such incidents of Rahmat increase their acts of obedience. In fact, at times, if forgiveness is obtained without punishment, those whose hearts are imbued with Divine Recognition are smitten with shame far greater than the shame which they would have suffered if they had received some punishment. Only those who have suffered this state know its reality.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE INCIDENT OF UHUD

Whoever has understood this condition (of extreme shame for obtaining forgiveness without being punished) will understand without the slightest difficulty the tafseer of the âyat:

فَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْكُمْ سِقْرًا
مَكْرًا

'Thus, (Allah Ta'ala) awarded you with grief as a recompense for grief so that you may not (again) grieve.'

The reference in this verse is to an incident which occurred during the battle of Uhud. Prior to the commencing of the battle, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) posted fifty Sahabah to guard the mountain pass — —to thwart any attack from the rear. They were instructed not to leave their posts without Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) permission, no matter what the condition of the main army may be. After this arrangement Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ordered the Muslims to attack. By the fadh'l of Allah the Muslims gained victory within a very short while. The kuffár were decisively routed. Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb who at that time was the commander of the kuffár army, fled with his army. The flag which he was holding fell down. The Muslims pursued the fleeing enemy. On observing this total route of the kuffar, a difference arose among the Muslims guarding the mountain-pass. Some were of the opinion that since victory has been achieved there no longer remained the need to guard the pass as the purpose for this duty no longer existed. In their opinion they would not be disobeying the order of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) if they now left their position. They argued that thus far they had not actively participated in the battle and they now felt the need to join in the pursuit of the kuffar. However, some others opposed this view, saying that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) issued strict instructions not to leave the post under any circumstances and without his express consent. But, the first group rejected this advice and forty men left the position which they were guarding and became engaged in the gathering of booty. This was an error of judgement on their part.

Khálid Bin Walid who at that stage had not yet embraced Islam and who was in the army of the kuffar observed this move. He had left some spies at the mountain to keep him informed of the position at the mountain-pass. While he was on the run with the army of the kuffar his spies informed him that the fortification at the mountain was abandoned. Khalid Bin Walid who was well-experienced in military tactics and a seasoned officer immediately retrenched his steps with five hundred soldiers and soon reached the post now guarded by only eleven Sahabah. The Sahabah defended valiantly but were overwhelmed and martyred. Khalid Bin Waleed then commenced his attack on the Muslims from the rear. Seeing the tables being turned, the rest of the kuffar army joined in the attack on the Muslims who were now encircled. The danger which caused Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to fortify the mountain-pass now materialised. Seventy Muslims were martyred in the ensuing engagement.

Hearing the false cry of the shaitan that Muhammad is slain, the feet of many Sahabah were uprooted and the tables were completely turned on the Muslims. In spite of this severe setback the Muslims were not defeated. Sayyiduna Muhammadur Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) with a handful of devotees held their ground, never turning their backs. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) ordered the Sahaabi to regroup. With one call all the Muslims regrouped.

Allah Ta'ala attributes the calamity upon the Muslims to the error in judgement which they made when they abandoned their position without the permission of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam),

The Quraan, therefore says:

وَصَّيْبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
أَرَاكُمْ تَخْفَوْنَ

“And, you disobeyed (the order of Rasulallah) after He (Allah) showed you that which you loved (i.e. the victory of the Muslims).”

They are then reprimanded by Allah Ta'ala:

فَأَنَّا بَكَرْنَا عَنْكَ لِجَهَنَّمَ
شَرِيكًا

“Thus He awarded you with grief as a recompense for the grief (which you caused Rasulallah by departing from his command) so that you may not grieve over that which has slipped by you.

The wisdom underlying this retribution is stated:

“So that you do not grieve over that which has slipped by you.”

This digression was necessitated by the assertion that some persons of noble disposition undergo greater shame and regret if no retribution is taken, hence the purport of the áyat (mentioned above) is:

We recompensed you with a little hardship so that you may not grieve much if forgiven without retribution having been taken.

The Sahabah were the beloved devotees of Allah and Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), If their error was forgiven without any recompense being meted out, they would not have been able to raise their heads all their life because of regret and shame. Thus they were given a slight punishment so as to save them from great grief. It will now be realised that punishment is not always to inflict grief. On the contrary, it is meted out sometimes to reduce grief.

AUDACITY- -A SIGN OF AN UNHEALTHY DISPOSITION

This explanation was necessary because some people upon hearing narratives of Rahmat become audacious and neglect righteousness. In this regard one should reflect: Will one who remains restless if not punished for error, become audacious in the commission of sin upon hearing narratives of mercy? Certainly, those who possess a healthy disposition and have a bond of love with Allah Ta'ala, will increase their obedience upon hearing episodes of Allah's Rahmat. The slave whose folly is overlooked without punishment and inspite of this, he becomes audacious in his disobedience is indeed a person of great degeneration.

The slave who, inspite of being forgiven his folly without being punished and is audacious in disobeying his master, is of the lowest calibre and most contemptible. A noble man is he who observing a favour of his master submits himself life-long. It is for this reason that it was said that those who become audacious in neglecting good acts upon hearing narratives of Rahmat are people of an unhealthy disposition. They should be concerned with the rectification of their condition and endeavour to create a bond of love with Allah Ta'ala. The method of attaining this goal is for a while to remain in the company of the pious saints. They will then not misconstrue the narratives of Rahmat and will acquire the true benefits of the Mustahab acts. Thus a life-time of misfortune will be obliterated. Indeed instructing us in the Mustahabbát is a great favour and mercy of Allah Ta'ala upon us.

REVERTING TO THE MAIN TOPIC

It will now be realised that every part of the Quran Kareem is of importance, and the Mustahabbát in so far as instruction and education are concerned too are of great importance. Regarding 'aml' (righteous deeds) Mustahabbát are of great efficiency in producing results. The claim that every statement of Allah and Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is essential, is therefore correct. It is also correct to claim that in the áyat under discussion is a very important subject similar in importance to subjects of other áyat. In this áyat Allah Ta'ala informs us of a very simple remedy for our evil plight and condition. There is no doubt in the fact that our plight is evil. No one is free from this vile condition. However, although the evil condition is common in us all, there exist differences in the degree of degeneration. In some the degeneration and destruction are of a greater degree and in others, of a lesser degree.

DISTRESSED IS HE WHOSE DEGENERATION IS OF A LESSER DEGREE

The one whose condition is of a lesser degree of degeneration will be more distressed than those whose condition is degenerated to a much higher degree. This discussion, therefore, is applicable to people of all degrees of degeneration. In fact, those whose degeneration is of a lesser degree stand in greater need of this discussion because they are overtaken by distress. This could be better understood by means of an analogy. It has been observed that those who are in great debt are worried to a lesser

degree than those who have lesser debt. The reason for this being that the one with great debt has already become addicted to debt and feel the strain much less than the one who is not in the habit of accruing debt. The one who is not habituated to debt suffers much although he has hope of liquidating his debt. He remains restless all night, and he wonders at those who can sleep peacefully in spite of being drowned in debt.

CONCERN OVER HARDSHIPS

When there is hope of overcoming the difficulty then there is concern and worry about it. When this hope vanishes then concern too disappears. One then ceases to be worried about the difficulty since it assumes one's second nature. One becomes like a permanent invalid. Likewise, those who do not sin much, remain worried and full of regret, and those who commit sin in abundance, are not concerned much. Constant commission of sin has desensitized them. At times abundance of sin induces in one the condition of hopelessness, i.e. one loses all hope in the mercy of Allah Ta'ala, labouring under the impression that forgiveness is no longer possible. When this state of degeneration is reached, man sins and derives full pleasure. He now opens his heart and sins most audaciously until when maut arrives, then too, he does not incline towards Istighfár and Taubah. Should he be instructed at this stage to resort to Istighfár and Taubah, he will vehemently refuse. In this regard Imam Ibn Kayyim (rahmatullah alayhi) said:

"While a man was dying those present instructed him to recite the Kalimah, but he refused saying: 'Of what benefit is a single statement? My sins are so numerous that a thousand Kalimahs too will not be able to obliterate them.'"

This was the state of hopelessness which had been reached. This state of hopelessness is kufr. May Allah Ta'ala protect every Muslim, Ameen.

AT TIMES EVEN OBEDIENCE HAVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS

The detrimental effects of abundant sin are manifest. It is astonishing that at times such harmful effects flow in the wake of obedience as well. This could not have been understood by anyone other than Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) who was educated by Allah Ta'ala, Himself. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"My Rabb educated me; He gave me the best of education, My Rabb schooled me in etiquette: He gave me the best of etiquette."

Since, Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was taught in this gracious manner by Allah Ta'ala, his far-sightedness and insight can never be overemphasised. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) explained that at times even obedience produces harmful results. His far-sightedness could be gauged from this instruction. Superficially it seems that obedience in any amount is meritorious. The more the obedience the better, hence there should not be limits prescribed for obedience. But Rasulallah

(sallallahu alayhi wasallam) understood this mystery well. He therefore explained that obedience too has a limit. A sick person requires medicine, but in spite of the medicine being beneficial, it has prescribed limits. If given in excess, the harmful result will be understandable. The same applies to obedience. Although in itself, obedience is meritorious and beneficial, but the physicians of the Rooh, the Ambiya (alayhimus salam) and their heirs have informed us that obedience too is like a remedy which has prescribed limits.

Khauf (Fear) of Allah Ta'ala is a state of great obedience. The Quran and Ahádith, over and over, instructs us to inculcate this Khauf. But, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) prescribed a limit for this Fear. Hence, in one dua he says:

“O Allah! Verily, I ask You that amount of Your Fear which will act as a barrier between us and disobeying You.”

In this dua it has been shown that fear without any limit is not the goal. That much of fear is desired which will prevent us from disobedience.

THE WISDOM OF PRESCRIBING LIMITS TO OBEDIENCE

Experience has proven that an excess of innate fear is harmful. A person afflicted with excess fear perpetually fixes his gaze on the Wrath of Allah Ta'ala. He does not consider any evil act worthy of forgiveness nor does he consider any of his deeds worthy of acceptance in the Court of Grandeur of Allah Ta'ala. Thus he does not entertain the hope of salvation. The end result will be that such a person will lose all hope in the mercy of Allah Ta'ala, and such hopelessness is kufr. Who other than Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) could prescribe that excess of obedience too could be detrimental? Allah Ta'ala says:

“Verily, none loses hope in the mercy of Allah, but a nation of unbelievers.”

Precisely for this reason did Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) say:

“. . . so much fear which will act as a barrier between us and disobeying You (i.e. sin).”

THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE AMBIYA (ALAYHIMUS SALAM)

The ancient philosophers on observing the eternal truths propounded by the Ambiyá (alayhimus salam) were stunned. In their books they were constrained to attest to the reality of Nubuwwat. In this regard they claimed that it is possible that from the First Cause of Grace (a crude reference to the Creator — —the philosophers had no clear conception of the All-Powerful Allah Azza wa jal— —translator) knowledge could be transmitted directly to certain persons. Because of this view, no philosopher denied the Nubuwwat of any Nabi during his time. They even went to the extent of saying that the lofty knowledge possessed by the Ambiya cannot be gained by means of

spiritual exercises. In spite of this acknowledgement, the philosophers committed the fatal blunder of claiming that the Ambiyá (alayhimus salam) were sent for the masses— —for the ignorant and the illiterate. They, therefore, did not feel obliged to follow the Ambiyá (alayhimus salam), claiming that they could purify their own souls by means of knowledge and spiritual exercises. Hence, in their opinion they stood in no need of a spiritual guide. Certain Mufasssireen have said that in regard to such philosophers Allah Ta'ala says in the Qurán Kareem:

“And, when the Rusul (Ambiya) came to them (philosophers) with clear signs, they became boastful because of the (worldly) knowledge they possessed. And, they were hemmed in by that which they mocked.”

They regarded this mundane life as the goal and were proud with the ability they possessed in this regard. They rejected the Akhirah, dubbed the quest for the Akhirah insanity and treated the warnings for rejection with mockery. Allah's atháb (punishment) finally overtook them.

The attitude of these philosophers was the same as that of those Jews who while acknowledging the Nubuwwat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was indeed a Nabi, but a Nabi for only the Arabs. They denied that he was a Nabi for them since they asserted that they possessed a Scripture. The folly of their thinking is manifest. They acknowledged that he was a Nabi. A requisite of a Nabi is that he is truthful. That very person whom they acknowledged as a Nabi, albeit for only the Arabs; declared:

“I am the Nabi unto all mankind. Obedience to me is obligatory. There is no salvation without following me.”

Their rejection of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is, therefore, in terms of their own claims and understanding, illogic and irrational.

SO-CALLED PHILOSOPHERS OF TODAY

The ancient philosophers were unlike the so-called philosophers and scientists of today. These so-called philosophers of today reject the very reality of Nubuwwat. In fact those of today are not philosophers. On the contrary they are technologists. Technology will remain beneficial as long as it is not misused. But technology does not qualify one as a wise man. Hikmat (wisdom) is acquired through spiritual and metaphysical knowledge.

But, the so-called philosophers (the scientists, theosophists, evolutioners, etc.) are absolutely devoid of any spiritual knowledge. It is because of the total lack of this form of knowledge that they reject outrightly Nubuwwat.

REVERSION TO THE ORIGINAL TOPIC

This digression followed in explanation of the assertion that at times harmful effects ensue in the wake of righteousness as well. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) made this abundantly clear. And, this was presented in explaining that sometimes abundance of sin causes one to lose hope in the mercy of Allah; and when such a condition is reached, one indulges in sin shamelessly and audaciously. Sin then ceases to bother or worry such a perpetrator. But one who has sinned slightly does not lose hope in Maghfirat and Rahmat. He always entertains hope and is concerned with his condition. He strives to abstain from sin. For this reason was it said earlier that those whose spiritual condition is on a lesser degree of degeneration, stand in greater need of this discourse.

THE CONDITION OF THE KHAWAS IN SIN

Among those of lesser degeneration, the condition of the khawás (special devotees of Allah Ta'ala) is more acute. Their state is aptly summed up in the couplet:

*"If from the garden of the Salik (the devotee journeying in the quest of Allah) a single blade of grass is reduced
Thousands of pangs of grief smite his heart.*

In other words: leave alone sin; if even a slight change undergoes his heart, a mountain of grief breaks down upon him, If at that juncture of grief a qualified spiritual guide is at hand, the devotee is consoled and saved from destruction, for at times the devotee is utterly annihilated by the unbearable grief. (This condition of extreme grief is called "Qabdh" in the terminology of Tasawwuf). About this condition Maulana Rumi (rahmatullah alayhi) says:

"When the condition of qabdh appears, contemplate the condition of bast (bast is the opposite condition of qabdh), remain happy and display no sign of grief."

This is indeed a statement of great wisdom and experience.

QABDH ALSO BENEFICIAL

Although it is quite natural to be worried during the condition of qabdh, but to remain intellectually perturbed even after being consoled and comforted by a Shaikh Kaamil (a qualified spiritual mentor) is regrettable. This consolation of the Shaikh Kaamil is based on the benefits which are given effect by the condition of qabdh. The state of qabdh is not to be interpreted as the negation of kamal (perfection).

Leave aside ordinary mortals, even Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) on the first occasion of Wahi, was overwhelmed by the heaviness of Wahi or by the grandeur and splendour of Allah Ta'ala, so much so that he was gripped by uncontrollable shivering. In fear Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) returned home from the Cave of Hira, wrapped himself in a blanket and went to sleep. After having rested, Hadhrat

Khadeejah (radiallahu anha) went with Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to Warqah Bin Naufal who was a great Alim of the Taurah and Injeel. After listening to the episode of Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)— —the incident of Wahi— —Warqah gave Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) the glad tidings of Nubuwwat. He then observed:

“Alas! One day your community will expel you from Makkah. If I remain alive, I will aid you wholeheartedly.”

After this first incidence of Wahi, the Revelation ceased for a period of three years. These three years— —the period of Wahi-cessation— —were of unbearable grief to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The grief and sadness increased to such an extent that at times Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) climbed the mountain and decided to throw himself from it ending his misery. What was this state of extreme grief and sorrow? It was nothing but the state of qabdh. This condition of qabdh is not a state in contradiction to the Shariah. If it was, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would not have experienced it. It was the love for Wahi which brought about this condition of grief in Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). In this state of extreme restlessness, Jibra-eel (alayhis salam) would appear and comfort and console Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). He would say:

“O Muhammad! You are the Nabi of this Ummat. Allah Ta ‘ala has raised you as the Nabi, Do not fear nor grieve.”

If this then was the state of even Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), then who else can there be who will not be overtaken by grief during the condition of qabdh?

By being conscious of the beneficial effects of qabdh, the heart experiences pleasure to a certain degree. At times one has an awareness of these beneficial effects although only in brief. In this regard Maulana Rumi (rahmatullah alayhi) says:

“O Salik! When qabdh alights upon you then do not be overwhelmed by grief, for it is the medium of your reformation,”

Thus it is clear that qabdh too has its benefits and that it is not an evil condition. The sálik should, therefore, not consider himself to be accursed when this condition overtakes him. Says Maulana Rumi:

“When qabdh alights then contemplate the condition of bast (which is the opposite of qabdh). Remain cheerful and happy and display no sign of grief.”

Maulana Rumi shows here that there is a strong likelihood of bast following the condition of qabdh. Like it is said:

“After every difficulty is ease. (Quraan), so too, after every qabdh is bast.”

Sometimes one acquires detailed knowledge of the beneficial results of qabdh. In that case the sálik becomes fully consoled and comforted by this awareness. Sometimes the purpose of qabdh is to eliminate the destructive force of riya (ostentation) and kibr (pride which had developed in the salik during the state of bast. Sometimes during the state of qabdh a new condition of spiritual elevation is awarded to the sálik. This results in some pride which leads the sálik to consider himself a great man of piety. If at that critical juncture Allah’s protection is not forthcoming, then the sálik will be utterly destroyed in pride and vanity. Allah Ta’ala protects the sálik in a variety of ways from these maladies and destructive forces. Sometimes Allah Ta’ala produces the state of qabdh and eliminates the pleasure and delight of the bast which had produced the harmful effects. The sálik then, instead of regarding himself as superior and with vanity, considers himself to be the most despicable and contemptible in the whole world. Truly, in that condition of qabdh, the sálik sees no one on earth as contemptible as himself. And, the true purpose of Tasawwuf is precisely this, that one considers one’s self as the meanest and most despicable.

TRAVERSING SULOOK (TASAWWUF) - - A REQUISITE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE STATEMENTS OF THE AHLULLAH (SAINTS OF ALLAH)

These states of spiritualism described will only be understood if experienced. Until such experiences have been attained, the words of the Ahle Dil (the People of the Heart. i.e. ,the Auliya) cannot be understood. It has been aptly observed:

“Someone enquired from me the nature of love I said: When you become like me you will understand the nature of love.”

Hadhrat Mujaddid Alfe Thani (rahmatullah alayhi) said:

“One cannot be an árif until one considers one’s self more contemptuous than a káfir.”

If this condition has not passed over one, one will not be able to understand it. Nevertheless, it may be understood by reflecting on the end of one’s life. What will be my end? Perhaps the end of a káfir may be better. (One may possess Iman today, but at death kufr manifests itself or a káfir may just before death be blessed with the wealth of Iman). Every person should always think along the line of the final result, and school one’s nafs with the lesson: When I am not aware of my own end, what right do I possess to consider myself superior or nobler to others? What right have I to regard others as inferior?

Although there is no certainty that one is the most despicable of all, nevertheless the possibility exists. In the face of this possibility it is not intelligent to consider one superior to others. The safest course, therefore, is to consider one's self to be the most contemptible. However, care should be exercised that this feeling does not degenerate to the level of "yás" (losing all hope in the mercy of Allah), because this condition of yás is kufr.

Someone said excellently:

"Despair not of the mercy of Allah Ta'ala. At times those drowned in immorality suddenly reach the destination by a single call"

THE WISDOMS OF QABDH

Thus when during the state of bast there results the manifestation of spiritually elevated experiences, a condition similar to pride sets in. At that stage Allah Ta'ala produces the condition of qabdh so that the sálik beholds in him the impressions of servitude and insignificance. He then regards himself as the most contemptible. This in reality is a condition of great Rahmat for the sálik, for it has become a medium of a wonderful blessing. If the state of qabdh did not settle over the sálik, he would have been destroyed in the condition of bast.

Besides this benefit, another advantage of qabdh is the removal of the hijáb (veil) which sometimes is created for the sálik by anwár and tajalliyát (spiritual illumination and effulgence). Such spiritual illumination is the result of Zikrullah (Remembrance of Allah). The sálik becomes lost in ecstasy in the resultant tajalliyát. His attention is thus diverted from Allah Ta'ala Who is the true Purpose and Motive for the striving of the spiritual traveller (salik).

Hadhrat Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki (rahmatullah alayhi) said:

"There are two types of hijab (spiritual veils or impediments), viz. Zulmání (of spiritual darkness) and Nurání (of spiritual illumination). Hijab Zulmání comprises evil whisperings (waswás) and suspicions (khatrat). Such factors enter the heart at the time of Zikrullah and they pertain to mundane affairs. Directing one's attention towards these factors of spiritual darkness is detrimental. Hijáb Nurání is the revelation of the tajalliyát and anwar of Alame Malakut or the realm of the angels. Since Alame Malakut is also an existence apart from Allah Ta'ala, the attention should not be focussed on it. Attention on anything besides Allah is diversion from Allah Ta'ala. Such diversion has to be shunned."

Hijáb Nurani is a graver condition than Hijab Zulmání because it retains the attention more by virtue of its spiritual effulgence. Another diversionary aspect of Nurani Hijáb is the revelation of new and amazing phenomena. Observing these super-natural phenomena the sálik considers himself spiritually perfect whereas the truth is that he is as yet involved with ghair-Haqq (that which is besides Allah). Thus such spiritual

illumination constitutes an obstacle for the sálik in his spiritual sojourn towards Allah Ta'ala. Furthermore, the sálik experiences a state of ecstasy during the flow of such spiritual illumination and effulgence, hence, he is overcome with immense grief if such illumination ceases. At this juncture Allah Ta'ala overtakes the sálik with the state of qabdh and eliminates the tajalliyát which were previously experienced. In this manner the sálik is awakened from his ecstasy; his attention is diverted from ghair-Haqq and rivetted to Allah Ta'ala Who is the true and original Purpose of the sálik.

There are other wisdoms and advantages of the state of qabdh. If it was not for this condition, the salik's attention will be diverted from his true purpose. Therefore, if any zákir and shághil (one engaged in the Zikr of Allah and in spiritual exercises) at any time experiences this condition of qabdh he should not fear, but should consider it the Rahmat of Allah Ta'ala. In it is betterment. The sálik, himself, on most occasions will discover the wisdoms underlying the state of qabdh. By being conscious of these benefits and advantages of qabdh, the heart derives peace and consolation which results in pleasure. The qabdh in itself is not something of comfort or consolation. On the contrary it is an aspect of worry and concern. The consolation is derived by being conscious of the advantages ensuing in its wake.

NATURAL CONCERN DURING QABDH

It is obvious that in worldly set-backs, loss and hardship, the result is grief and sorrow. Although the loss in itself is something painful and of concern, the heart could be solaced by thinking about the sawáb in the Akhirat resulting from the loss or by instituting measures of safety to prevent a recurrence of the loss which was due perhaps to negligence. In spite of the consoling factors in such cases, one does not become pleased with the actual loss or hardship. The similitude of qabdh is the same. It is a spiritual loss which in the analogy is comparable with material loss occasioning natural grief. Like the mundane loss is not something of consolation, so too, the qabdh in itself is not a phenomenon of comfort and consolation. It is a different matter that meditation on the advantages of qabdh produces consolation. Like in mundane affairs, a new and increased income daily is a cause of comfort, so too, is the condition of bast which is the actual state of happiness and comfort. The continuous inspiring of the heart with spiritual illumination is the actual state of delight and pleasure. The esoteric-self (bátin) steadily and continuously progresses in such states of Tajalliyáte Haqq.

IT IS THE ONE WHO SINS LESS WHO IS CONCERNED

This discussion was initiated upon the assertion that among those who sin less, the khás (special devotees) are smitten with extreme grief and restlessness by even the loss of a spiritual state or experience, leave alone the commission of sin. The grief suffered by the sálik by the slightest loss of a spiritual rank is far greater than the loss which a king suffers by losing his kingdom. It should now be clear that one who sins less is smitten by greater concern and grief than one who sins much. His example is

like one who has never borrowed from anyone. He always possessed and gave to others. If at anytime his funds are depleted— —leave alone borrowing— —he is overtaken with extreme worry. The thought of incurring debt is repulsive to one who has never borrowed.

EVEN THE POSSIBILITY OF SIN CREATES SHIVERS IN THE AULIYA

Leave alone sinning, the Ahlulláh (Saints of Allah) shudder at the mere possibility and thought of sin. They are terrified by even a reduction in their spiritually illumined experiences and inspirations, because such a reduction creates the suspicion or fear of demotion and being distanced from the Proximity of Allah Ta’ala.

They suffer and grieve more than others in the event of having committed a sin because they are pained and wounded severely by the spear of sin. On the contrary those who have been desensitized by abundance of sin do not refrain from sin even after repenting. It is reported in the Hadith that the commission of a sin results in a black spot forming on the heart. With each sin a new black spot forms until finally the whole heart is engulfed by the blackness of abundance of sin.

The feeling of concern over committing sin is common to all although in various degrees of perception. Some perceive it more, some less. One who is not at all pained by sin is indeed on an extremely low ebb of degeneration. His very condition of indifference is a cause for extreme pity. Firstly, we (as Mu’min) should be reduced to tears by merely gazing on sin, and if this is not our condition then we should lament and be grieved for not being in the position to shed tears when gazing on sin. Such a condition of hard-heartedness is indeed lamentable. My friends! If one cannot shed tears then at least assume the form of shedding tears. In this regard the Hadith states:

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَبْكُوا
فَتَبَاكُوا-

“And, if you do not cry then assume the form of crying.”

In this Hadith, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) substituted ‘tabáki’ (assuming the form of crying) for ‘buka’ (actual crying) because shedding actual tears is not the motive or purpose. The true purpose is the crying of the heart. Therefore, although in ‘tabaki’ actual crying does not occur, the crying of the heart does take place. The nature and reality of the heart crying is concern and grief, sorrow and regret. It has been well said:

“Noble is the eye which sheds tears in the remembrance of the Beloved (Allah Ta’ala)

Noble is the heart which is scorched in the fire of separation (separated from its Beloved Allah Ta’ala),”

Once Hadhrat Isa (alayhis salám) delivered a discourse, The effect of the talk was so profound that the audience started to tear their clothing. Hadhrat Isa (alayhis salám) said:

“Tear not your garments, tear your hearts.”

It should not be inferred from this that those who had torn their garments by being overwhelmed in grief are to be criticized. The statement merely means that the ‘asl maqsood’ (true and actual purpose) is the ‘tearing’ of the heart. One should endeavour in this direction and not criticize those who tear their garments in a state of uncontrollable grief and sorrow. Shaikh Sa’di (rahmatullah alayhi) says:

“Do not be amazed at the superficial errors of the Saints, for they are drowned in the ocean of Allah’s Love.”

In this statement of Shaikh Sa’di is counsel for us not to criticize and find fault with the Auliya. Vindicating the Auliya, Shaikh Sa’di (rahmatullahalayhi) says:

“In the effort to obtain the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala they droop their heads in their garments. When the grief becomes unbearable they rent their garments.”

THE KAMIL POSSESSES THE ABILITY TO CONTROL KA’FIYAT

The kámil (a saint who has attained spiritual perfection) superficially seems to be sákin (dormant) whereas in actual fact he is progressing at an extremely swift pace. He takes immense strides (in the spiritual realm) in the shortest of time. However, occasional states of ecstasy, e.g. tearing of garments, unconsciousness and uncontrollable shedding of tears are not negatory of his kamál (perfection). Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radiallahu anhu) once fell into a swoon upon mentioning the name of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Who could be on a higher pedestal of spiritual perfection and illumination than the Sahábah Kirám?

The Sahábah Kirám were the strongest and possessed the most independent dispositions. The demise of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was an event of the greatest and gravest occurrence to the Muslims. However, besides shedding tears and crying they did nothing else. If they had to wail and tear their garments as much as they could, all would be slight in the face of this momentuous event. Nevertheless, they all showed superb restraint and control. Some change which had undergone certain among the sahábah was quickly rectified by the wise counsel of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (radiallahu anhu). Despite their extreme grief and sorrow, the Sahábah immediately involved themselves in the activities of the Deen. The ability to exercise control and restraint in conditions of extreme grief and sorrow was common to all the Sahábah Kirám. Their ability of control during spiritual states and experiences was of such a high degree that they never were overwhelmed. They neither danced in

ecstasy nor tore their garments. They had full control of themselves during the states of kayfiyat. Hadhrat Shaikh Abdul Haq Radwali (rahmatullah alayhi) said:

“Hadhrat Mansur (rahmatullah alayhi) was an ‘infant’ (i.e. not having attained, perfection in this Path), hence he screamed in a mere drop (of that Eternal and Divine Love) which overwhelmed him. But here (referring to, the Sahábah) were men (a reference to their great courage and capacity to bear themselves during spiritual experiences of elevation). They (were such men) who consumed oceans of Divine Love without even a sign showing.”

The ocean (of Divine Love) of the Sahábah Kirám did not take the route of wajd (ecstasy), raqs (spiritual-dances) and shath (statements uttered during ecstasy, having meanings other than that conveyed by the words). Their ocean took another direction, viz, benefit and service to Allah’s creation. Their enthusiasm and their clamour were directed and channelled into the service of the seekers of the Truth. In consequence, thousands of people attained the rank of wilayat (sainthood). If at times their ocean of love was beyond enduring then it found an outlet in tears. It is said:

“O Rabb! What kind of fountain is the Fount of Love? I drank a drop and an ocean of tears flowed.”

The shedding of tears when overwhelmed by such grief is not a deficiency. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) also at times shed tears during Salát, and a sound like a boiling cauldron would emerge from his breast.

THE OVERWHELMED IS EXCUSED

Screaming, tearing garments and spiritual dancing are not acts of kamál (perfection). These are mere conditions which are neither desirable nor reprehensible. The desirable conditions are those which bear likeness to the states of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The greater the resemblance to the conditions of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the greater the degree of perfection. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has, therefore, said that the true (and desired) crying is the crying of the heart, not mere shedding of tears. But, assuming the form of crying is not without advantage. In it is obedience to the order of Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Thus, at times when shedding tears is not forthcoming, then by imitating this advice of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the desired goal is attained.

OUR CONDITION- -IN NEED OF REFORMATION

Indeed, our condition stands in dire need of reformation. Those who are involved in even less sin should also regret. Those who do not regret should indeed regret because of their impervious and hard condition. This condition of indifference to sin—

—the condition in which there is no regret— —is a more dangerous situation. It is graver if it remains static even after being reminded. Sometimes, one fails to regret one’s deplorable state of degeneration, but upon being reminded, one is induced to reflect. Such reflection too is an opportunity. Those who have no regret for their sorrowful state of sin do, however, acknowledge that they are sinful, for every person is constrained to confess that he is sinful. Thus everyone realises the malady, but the deficiency is in respect of remedying the disease. There is no concern shown in this direction. Abstaining from treating the disease is highly dangerous. This is quite obvious. It is therefore imperative that attention be paid to treating the spiritual maladies.

THE REASON FOR CHOOSING THE AYAT UNDER DISCUSSION

The áyat which I had recited contains the remedy for this common disease. Allah Ta’ala says:

“And, do not become like those who forgot Allah. Thus Allah caused them to become forgetful of their own souls. Indeed, these are the transgressors.”

Subhánallah! Indeed, Allah Ta’ala has honoured his servants in this áyat by refraining from saying: Do not become *of* those people who have forgotten Allah. Since the áyat is directed to Muslims and it is indeed remote from the dignity of a Mumin to forget Allah, it has been said:

Do not become *like* those who have forgotten Allah.

The affection, love and honour in this style of address are manifest. The purport of this manner of address is:

Forgetting Allah is remote and not expected of your love, but it is possible that you may become like those who have forgotten. You should not be like them.

Another implication of this style of address is that one who totally forgets Allah is a kafir whereas the audience of the áyat is Muslim, and it is not possible for Muslims to be káfir. For this reason it has not been said:

DO NOT BECOME *OF* THOSE WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN ALLAH.

Instead it has been said: Do not become *like* those who have forgotten

Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ya’qub (rahmatullah alayhi) said that it is not conceivable that a person who has been a Muslim becoming a renegade. Cases of certain “Muslims” having reneged from Islam and adopted some other religion are not at all surprising, for such people never were Muslims at heart. Their claim to Islam was confined to lip-service. Their hearts were devoid of Imán. At times the condition (kayfiyat) of the heart and the statement of the tongue become factors for the

negation of Imán. In such cases where Imán has already been negated people consider themselves to be Muslims whereas in actual fact their Iman has been annihilated. By Allah they are not Believers.

AN EPISODE OF GREAT ADMONITION

I shall relate an amazing and awful incident in which there is great admonition and lesson. I have personally heard this incident from Hadhrat Thanvi (rahamátullah alayhi) who said that Shaikh Dahhán, a senior Alim of Makkah Muazzamah narrated:

“A certain Alim in Makkah Muazzamah passed away and was buried there; After sometime another man also died there. The heirs of the deceased desired that he be buried in the same grave as that of the Alim. In accordance with their wishes the grave of the Alim was opened. To their utter shock and astonishment they discovered that instead of the Alim, there laid the body of a beautiful young girl. On closer examination it was found that the body was of a European girl. All stood in astonishment. Coincidentally, a man from the gathering recognized the girl since he had previously seen her. He informed the people that the body was that of a French girl. She was the daughter of Christian parents, and she had studied Urdu by him. In secrecy she had embraced Islam and that he had taught her some Deeni books. The reason for the miraculous transfer of her body after death was now obvious. She was a Muslim and pious as well, hence the transfer to holy ground. But, the question remained: What has happened to the body of the Alim who was buried in that grave? It was then suggested to the instructor of the girl that upon his return to Europe after Hajj he should investigate the grave of the girl. The grave should be opened to see if the body of the Alim was perhaps transferred into her grave. This was agreed upon. A man who knew the Alim well accompanied the girl’s teacher to Europe.

On reaching Europe, the girl’s teacher narrated the episode of the girl and her grave in Makkah to her parents, They were greatly perturbed when hearing this astonishing story. They finally agreed to the request to have her grave in France dug open. When the coffin was opened its contents were amazing, for it was the body of that Alim who had died and was buried in Makkah Muazzamah,”

This news caused much concern to the people of Makkah Muazzamah, What was the reason for the transference of this Alim’s body to a place of kufr? It was decided to ask his wife for some clue to the mystery. There surely must have been some vile deed of his which was the cause of this miraculous transfer from an abode of holiness to a place of kufr. A deputation went to the home of the Alim and requested his wife: “Was there anything contrary to Islam in your husband?” She replied: “He was a constant and conscientious reciter of the Qurán, steadfast on Salát and performer of Tahajjud.”

People asked her to ponder and reply, for his body after burial in Makkah Muazzamah has been transferred to a place of kufr. There must certainly be something in him which was in opposition to Islam, His wife then said:

“The only thing that I can think of is that after sexual relations when he prepared for ghusal he would always say:

A nice thing of the Christian religion is that ghusal janaabat is not Fardh,”

It was then said to her:

“Indeed this is most assuredly the cause of the transference,”

This was then the reason for Allah Ta’ala having dumped his body among the Nasára whose way he preferred.”

This episode will illustrate that although externally this man was a complete and perfect Muslim, but investigation established that he contained an aspect of kufr, viz., preference for a custom of the kuffár. Since preference for kufr is in fact kufr, it is manifest that this man was not a believer from the very inception. It should not, however, be inferred that in such cases bodies will always be transferred. Such rare incidents take place by the command of Allah to act as direction and admonition for us. In this regard, the Qurán says about Shaitán:

“And, he was of the káfireen.”

In other words, from the very beginning, he was a káfir. It is not that he was a believer in the beginning and later became a kafir. This is an erroneous notion which people entertain. On the contrary, he was always a káfir, but his kufr lay dormant and hidden, and only became manifest with his refusal to make sajdah for Hadhrat Adam (alayhis salam). Shaitan had already learnt from the Luh Mahfooz that a being will become káfir, but because of his external piety he became unconcerned and negligent of himself. He could not conceive that being such a great worshipper, he could become káfir, Shaitan thus was utterly destroyed by his takabbur (pride) and indifference. On the contrary, all the Malá-ikah were extremely perturbed when they learnt that a being will become a kafir. They prayed that this misfortune should not be the lot of any among them. As a result of their fikr (concern) and tawadhu’ (humility) they remained in the Court of Divine Acceptance, and Shaitán was rejected and cursed because he never was within Divine Acceptance. Once a person is accepted by Allah Ta’ala, he never is rejected, just like one who has attained buloogh (physical maturity) never returns to the state of physical immaturity (na-báligh). Similarly, once a man has accepted Islam with sincerity of heart, he never becomes káfir.

A mature person is one who after having accepted Islam submits his whims and desires to the Command of Allah. Not only does he submit himself, he totally

annihilates himself in the obedience of the Divine Command. And, an immature person is one whose lowly desires dominate him. Maulana Rumi (rahmatullah alayhi) says:

“All creation are like children (immature and inexperienced), save the one who is engrossed with Allah Ta’ala. Only he is mature (and developed) who has obtained freedom from lowly desire.”

Truly, once Imán has settled in the heart, its expulsion is not possible even if attempted. It is recorded in Bukhari Shareef that Hadhrat Sufyán Ibn Harb (radiallahu anhu) prior to embracing Islam was questioned by the emperor, Heracleus:

“Has anyone after embracing this religion of Islam reneged from it in detestation (i.e. disliking anything of it?)”

When Abu Sufyàn (radiallahu anhu) replied in the negative, Heracleus exclaimed:

“Indeed, such is Iman after having settled in the recesses of the heart.”
Iman is synonymous with love, hence the Qurán states:

“Those who have accepted Imán are strongest in the love for Allah.”

In this áyat, Imán is defined as love. If the love is true it will never leave the heart. This is exactly the case of Imán. It is for this reason that the devotees of Allah (the Auliya) do not accord place in their heart for even a love which is lawful so that at the time of maut their attention is not taken towards the love which is transitory and perishable. At the time of departure from this ephemeral abode they do not wish to have any love in their hearts besides the love of Allah and His Rasul (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Should we (ordinary mortals) not be able to abstain from excess of lawful love then at least we should abstain from unlawful love. This is imperative.

If we desire a life and death like the chosen one’s of Allah, then we should link up with them. Insha’Allah, then one day we too will be bestowed with this treasure which they possess.

Reverting back to our original topic, the audience of the áyat:

“Do not become like those who have forgotten Allah.”

cannot be the kuffár. It applies to only the Believers. Further, the áyat says:

“. . . thus, He caused them to become forgetful . . .”

This statement indicates a significant point. However, before understanding this point it is necessary to explain something. Allah Ta'ala states:

“We are closer to man than his jugular vein,”

If after knowing this, man still becomes forgetful of Allah Who is closer to him than his jugular vein, then it is inconceivable that he will remember himself. It should now be obvious that the one who has forgotten Allah Ta'ala, has, in fact, forgotten himself. He who remembers Allah Ta'ala, will remember himself, albeit not directly and independently, but as a creature of Allah, He will remember himself by virtue of his bond of love with Allah; by virtue of the bounties of Allah Ta'ala; by virtue of the possessions which he holds as an amánat (Trust) of Allah Ta'ala. Such a person remembers and thinks of everything through the Medium of Allah Ta'ala, just like an ashiq thinks of the things of his beloved. Thinking of things associated with the beloved is in fact remembering the beloved.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AHLE DUNYA AND AHLULLAH

The Ahlulláh (Auliyá of Allah) care for themselves and all their connections and associates in the manner of a servant. They do not behave like employers. We (Ahle Dunyá— —the people of the world) eat merely to fill our stomach whereas they eat to care for the machine awarded by the Owner (Allah Ta'ala). It should now be simple to understand the wisdom underlying the Divine prohibition of suicide. Allah Ta'ala states:

“Do not kill yourself.”

Suicide is forbidden because life does not belong to man. Since it is not man's property, he is not at liberty to use and misuse it as he pleases. Life too is Allah's property and He has not permitted us to employ it without His Consent. In the same way, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“Verily, your body has a right over you; your soul has a right over you, verily, your eye has a right over you.”

Because of the natural rights which all parts of the human body has over man, it is not permissible for man to sterilize or destroy his sexual ability or to deliberately eliminate his sight. The Arifeen— —the Auliyá of Allah— —thus regard their bodies as the property of Allah Ta'ala, hence they nourish and care for it with this intention. In material needs end fulfilment we sometimes consider the Auliyá to be like us, whereas in actual fact there is no resemblance. About the Auliyá it has been wisely said:

“The ignorant are unaware of the condition of the Arifeen; it is best, therefore, to be brief in talk in their regard.”

The Ahle Duniya drink cold water for pleasure and to quench thirst. But, the árif drinks water so that he fulfils the shukr of Allah on every gulp. Truly speaking, we do not belong to ourselves. We are the property of Allah Ta'ala. Whoever remembers Allah, will remember himself. In remembering himself, he will firstly remember Allah Ta'ala and then himself. Such indirect remembrance of the self is not tawajjuh ilal ghair (attention on others besides Allah) which is forbidden. The gaze of the Ahlulláh is firstly on Allah Ta'ala. The gaze of creation is secondary, resulting from the gaze and attention on Allah because such creation belongs to Allah. On the contrary, our gaze is firstly on creation and secondly on Allah Ta'ala as the Creator and Fashioner.

ALLAH IS NEAR: NAFS IS FAR

It is established that the gaze of the Ahlulláh falls first on Allah Ta'ala and thereafter upon themselves. Thus, to them Allah Ta'ala is closer than their own nafs. If Allah Ta'ala was not closer, no person's gaze would be directed firstly to Him. Hence, whoever forgets Allah Ta'ala has forgotten himself. This is what is conveyed by the Quranic statement:

فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ

“. . . thus, He (Allah) caused them to forget their ownelves.”

Such people are then classified by Allah Ta'ala:

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“Indeed, they are the faasiqoon (transgressors).”

This portion of the áyat is presently under discussion since the purpose of the discussion is to explain the remedy for the degenerate condition stated in the áyat. The word, ulá-ikah ^{أُولَئِكَ} in this portion of the áyat is a demonstrative pronoun (Ism ishárah). It indicates the word fásiqoon (the transgressors), hence the meaning of fásiqoon is applicable to ulá-ikah. According to the rule of Ilme Balághat (Rhetoric and Eloquence) the demonstrative pronoun is re-iterated in the ism ishárah (i.e. the demonstrative pronoun) and the order or conclusion of the musharun ilayhi is based upon the qualities of the mushárun ilayhi stated previously. It is on the basis of this rule of rhetoric that the Ulama of Tafseer have said in the tafseer of the verse:

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًىٰ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“These people (ulá-ikah) are on guidance of their Rabb; and these people (ulá-ikah) are the ones who are successful.”,

that the ism ishárah here establishes that the order of guidance and success is based and dependant upon the qualities stated prior to the ism ishárah, viz. Imán bil ghaib,

lqamate Salát, Acceptance of the Divine Books, Spending wealth, etc. . In the same way, here in

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“These are the people who are the transgressors.”,

the quality of nisyán (forgetfulness) is repeated. This quality of nisqán has been stated previously in:

“Those who have forgotten Allah.”

Thus the conclusion of fisq (transgression) is based upon this quality of forgetfulness. The result, therefore, is that transgression is the consequence of being forgetful of Allah Ta’ala. In actual fact, a fásiq and a transgressor is one who has forgotten Allah Ta’ala.

THE REALITY OF FISQ (TRANSGRESSION)

The meaning of fisq is to transgress commands, and this is the reality of sin in which we are involved. Alhamdulillah! This ayat quite clearly informs us of the original cause of the malady. The cause of our degenerate condition is our forgetting Allah Ta’ala. According to the principle, cure by opposite’ (al-iláj bidh-dhid), the remedy for our forgetfulness should be by its opposite, viz, remembrance. Since the cause of the degeneration is forgetfulness, the remedy should be remembrance. Thus the true and proper remedy for sins is the remembrance of Allah Ta’ala. In other words, the curing of the disease will follow the elimination of the cause of the disease. Here the cause is nisyán, the elimination of which is necessary. And, this elimination of nisyán, stands in need of Zikrulláh. Remembrance of Allah will result in the elimination of forgetfulness. Since these two are opposites, their co-existence is a logical impossibility. In the same way, the elimination of both is logical impossibility. The conclusion, therefore is: the cure for sin is remembrance of Allah.

HOW TO REMEMBER ALLAH TA’ALA

How is Allah Ta’ala to be remembered? A variety of mediums of remembering Allah Ta’ala exists. For example: Remembrance by means of love; remembrance by means of fear; remembrance by means of shame. These mediums of remembrance are then divided into different types. Take, for example, remembrance by means of love. This love for Allah may be motivated by love for His being (Zát) or it may be the result of the motive of sawáb for good acts. Similarly is the case of fear. Fear may be for the Being of Allah or it may be induced by His punishment. Likewise, shame (hayá) which may be hayá for His Zát or for His lhasánát (bounties and blessings). With regard to the medium and form of remembrance, the dispositions of people vary. In some people the Muhabbat (love) for Zát is dominant. In other words, their disposition is so much overwhelmed by the grandeur and splendour of Allah Ta’ala that they are compelled

into the muhabbat of Zat. They are engrossed in Zikrulláh neither for the acquisition of Jannat nor for salvation from Jahannum. They are motivated in their Zikr solely by the consideration of pure muhabbat for Allah Ta'ala.

Others again are motivated by the desire to acquire Jannat in their Zikrullah, as well as the motive of being saved from Jahannum. There is no wrong in this motive since the actual purpose is Zikrullah, and this motive or medium is lawful in its attainment. Should one commence one's Zikr even with this intention— —viz., acquisition of Jannat and salvation from Jahannum— — then, Insha'Allah, a day will dawn when one's Zikr will be by the motive of the higher degree. One's Zikr will then be solely as a result of true and pure muhabbat for Allah Ta'ala. On that stage of Zikr one will be concerned with nothing but the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.

The motives of Zikrullah could be better understood by means of an analogy. Consider two students engaged in acquisition of knowledge. One studies solely for the sake of acquiring knowledge, deriving pleasure out of his studies, and the other studies for the acquisition of some material gain which will be the ultimate consequence of him qualifying in his branch of study. Undoubtedly, the condition of the former student is superior since he has not been motivated by any greed or base desire. Although the second student is of a lower calibre, nevertheless, no intelligent person will advise him to discontinue his studies because of his lower motive. Any such advice will culminate in only being deprived of knowledge.

THE OBJECT IS ZIKRULLAH

The actual object is Zikrulláh, and not the medium of its attainment. It is therefore wrong for certain people of shallow insight to criticize those who engage in Zikrulláh because of their desire for Jannat and salvation from Jahannum. Such criticism is reprehensible since Allah Ta'ala, Himself, encourages us towards Jannat:

“Hasten towards the maghfirat (forgiveness) of your Rabb and towards Jannat, the vastness of which is like the vastness of the heaven and earth.”

Some critics have concluded that the motive of Jannat in Zikrulláh is contemptible. In fact, they are levelling their criticism against Allah Ta'ala, for He, Himself exhorts this motive for Zikrulláh. All means and methods instructed by Allah Ta'ala are of a superb quality and highly meritorious although one method is superior to another, nevertheless, all mediums instructed by Him are magnificent and worthy of acquisition. Zikrullah for the sake of only Divine Pleasure is the highest degree, but the motivation of Jannat is also a motive of a high degree. The motive of Jannat in Zikrulláh should be that Jannat is the bounty of Allah Ta'ala; its acquisition will be the consequence of His Pleasure and that He has commanded us to request it. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) also asked Jannat, hence viewing the motive

from his angle, it is likewise of the highest degree. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“O Allah! I ask You for Jannat and such acts and words which draw towards Jannat.”

This Hadith establishes that petitioning for Jannat is not an inferior motive or method of Zikrulláh. If it was not a worthy motive, Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would not have made this duá. It was said earlier that to the ashíq, everything of the Mahboob is beloved, hence Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) supplicated for Jannat. Further, the Mahboob has instructed to ask of Him, hence supplicating in obedience to His Command is the cause of His Pleasure. When Allah Ta’ala, Himself expresses a Desire for us to fulfil, then contentment and abstinence (qana’at) are to be confounded. The árif kámil (perfect saint of Allah) is one who does not display independence from the slightest blessings of Allah Ta’ala, not to speak of such a lofty ni’mat as Jannat.

Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) requested Jannat also because it will be the abode where man will see the Vision of Allah. Thus in reality, Rasulallah’s (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) request was a supplication for the Vision of Allah Ta’ala. Someone observed:

“Those who are áshiq, desire Jannat because it will be the meeting place of friends.”

For this reason one saint said that since he discovered that friends will meet one another in Jannat, he became eager for Jannat. Jannat and all factors leading and encouraging towards it constituting the motive for Zikrulláh, are therefore, among the highest of methods. Another subtle point in the request for Jannat is at times the request is not motivated by only the Vision of Allah Ta’ala, which will occur in Jannat, but by the thought that one is not worthy of asking for something as lofty as the Divine Vision; at least it will be a great blessing if the abode of Vision is visited. This intention too is worthy of merit. Hadhrat Hajee Imdádullah (rahmatullah alayhi) said:

“Those who wish for the vision of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are indeed fortunate. I do not regard myself worthy of even glancing at the green dome (of Musjid Nabawi).”

It has been aptly said:

“A hair of your lock is sufficient for me (O heart!) Yearn not in greed, for even the fragrance is a blessing.”

Sometimes the request for Jannat is the result of tawadhu’ (humility) becoming dominant in one. The áshiq does not consider himself worthy of his Mahboob. He therefore desires to be at least in an abode of proximity to the Mahboob. Sometimes in order to exhibit dependence and need, Jannat is wished for. In short, different

persons have different intentions in asking for Jannat, and effort is made in its attainment. The purpose of all is finally obtain the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. The difference is only in the difference of means and methods. It does not matter if the goal is attained by a direct method or an indirect one; whether we advance towards Him or He draws us towards Him.

THE FORMS OF FEAR (KHAUF)

Like muhabbat has various forms, so too has khauf. Some have the fear of the Zát (the Being of Allah, Himself). The fear is induced by the grandeur and splendour of Allah Ta'ala. Others again have fear of reprimand and punishment in the Ahirah. Both these forms are good in their appropriate places. The grandeur and splendour of Allah Ta'ala do not manifest to some, hence fear of punishment acts as their protection against sin. Therefore, there is no criticism to be levelled against those who practice righteousness because of the fear for Divine Punishment. This condition of fear is not inferior, but on the Contrary it is a lofty status, although the manifestation of Divine Splendour acting as the protection against sin is Superior.

So far the kinds of Divine Remembrance have been explained. There are two such kinds, viz, through the medium of muhabbat and through the medium of khauf.

A THIRD FORM OF DIVINE REMEMBRANCE

A third form of Divine Remembrance is called 'remembrance of hayá' or remembrance via the agency of shame. This agency is utilized by those in whose disposition hayá (shame) is dominant. They practice righteousness and engage in Zikrulláh as a result of this dominant trait of hayá in them. They are ashamed of being forgetful of their Creator. Khauf and muhabbat are not their motivating force in the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. Although such persons are not devoid of muhabbat, nevertheless, it (muhabbat) is not a dominant feature in them. Haya is their dominant disposition, and such hayá is sometimes because of Zát and sometimes because of In'ámát (blessings and bounties).

Thus, in some, muhabbat is dominant, in some, khauf and in some, hayá. The dominant feature in each person is the cause for that person's obedience and remembrance of Allah.

SPECIFIED EFFECT OF ZIKR NOT THE GOAL

It has been seen that there are many forms of Zikr and the purpose of these various forms is the same, viz., attainment of the goal., which is the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. The one who engages in zikr should, therefore not aspire for the acquisition of states of ecstasy or some kayfiyat, for these are not attainable by one's volition. The bandah (servant of Allah) is not required to strive after acts and affairs beyond the scope of his volition. It is because of the misconception (i.e. striving to attain states not within

one's ability) that regret and frustration set in when the zâkir (one who is engrossed in zikr) after having made zikr for a considerable time fails to realize any spiritual state or kayfiyat. Yet no one knows which kayfiyat is beneficial for him, and which is detrimental. Allah Ta'ala brings about His Recognition sometimes by causing laughter, sometimes by inducing tears and sometimes by regret and worry. It has been well said:

"What have you said to the flower that it is ever laughing and what have you said to the nightingale that it is ever crying?"

What is obtained from the Mahboob, should be regarded as best and one should be pleased with it. Those who have understood this mystery are happy and pleased in all states and circumstances. If khauf dominates them, they do not search for muhabbat; if hayà is dominating in them, they do not search for muhabbat or khauf. In all states they are resigned in pleasure.

CAUTION TO THE SALIKEEN

This what has been said is of special benefit to the sâlikeen because they entertain great spiritual ambitions. The disease of desiring kayfiyat and lofty ranks is marked among them. They should know that such ambitions are contrary to the abdiyat (being a slave). Abdiyate Kâmilah (true and perfect state of subjection and submission to Allah) consists of annihilating all desires and yearnings in the Desire of Allah Ta'ala. Some zâkireen, after having made Zikr, complain that they experienced no pleasure in the Zikr. Alas! Life has been squandered in the pleasures of the nafs. When will you turn towards the Mahboob? Remember that the mathhab (the way) of the áshiq is:

"Love is the fire which when it blazes consumes everything besides the beloved."

It is also said:

"When the sword of Là (i.e. Là in Là ilâha il-lallâh) is brandished in the annihilation of ghair-Haqq (all that is other than Allah) then see what remains after Là"

Once Là ilâha il-lalla-h has been said, everything besides Allah is negated, thus it is obvious that after this will remain only il-lallâh (but Allah only). Everything else besides Him will be annihilated. Such love which devours and destroys partnership in the Divine Love is to be congratulated. Now do not hanker after any special kayfiyat or special rank. Remain only in the quest of Allah Ta'ala. Be pleased even if nothing is obtained. It is accepted that your desire is noble, but ponder! The desire of your Mahboob is that you remain with desire unfulfilled. Is your desire then superior to the desire of the Mahboob? If you do not realise your desires, then too nothing is lost, for you will attain to Him., and once He has been attained, everything is attained.

ZIKR AND FIKR THE GOAL

My bretheren! The duty of the servant is only to engage in the zikr of Allah Ta'ala. He should regard as the aim and object, remembrance of Allah and constant reflection. The gaze should not be on the attainment of any kayfiyat (spiritual experience). Allah Ta'ala has addressed us:

“Do not become like those who have forgotten Allah. Then, Allah caused them to forget themselves.”

We should not become among those who are guilty of such forgetfulness, for then the Divine Decree:

“Indeed these people are the fasiqoon”, will be applicable to us as well.

The cause of degeneration as pointed out is nisyán (forgetting Allah), and the remedy for this nisyán is zikr and fikr. There is now a simple method of eliminating our degenerate condition and abstaining from sin. That simple but most efficacious method consists of appointing a time for zikrullah in solitude. The zikr which is to be carried out in the appointed time of solitude should be by both tongue and heart, otherwise it will be:

*“Tasbeeh in hand; taubah on the lips and heart filled with the taste of sin.
Sins too are ashamed of our taubah”*

Remembrance by the mere lips produces no quick and effective result. The remembrance by both tongue and heart brings about the desired effect swiftly. When sitting in remembrance of Allah, then do not deliberately introduce thoughts other than Allah into your heart. Stray thoughts which enter the mind involuntarily will be of no harm. A sentry standing guard will be a criminal if he deliberately permits unauthorised persons to enter, but if entry is gained by over-powering the sentry, he will not be considered a criminal. Similar is the case of thoughts entering the mind during Salát and Zikr. Deliberate introduction of thoughts is sinful and harmful whereas stray thoughts assaulting the mind are of no substance.

In the twenty four hours of night and day, fix at least one hour for this specific remembrance of Allah. During this hour of solitude engage in the zikr of either La ilâ ha il-lallâh or Allahu Allah. This must be a daily practice. I am showing you a wonderful prescription. By Allah! Constancy in zikr will firstly divest you of sin. You will not approach sin. Involvement in this spiritual degeneration will be brought to an end. Then, even if sometimes one is over-powered by the nafs and shaitan, the Noor in the heart will immediately react. Immediately it will seem as if a spear has pierced the heart. Peace of heart will be utterly shattered. The servant will then hasten towards taubah. You will be constrained towards taubah. Insha'Allah, in this way you will be freed from all sin. Indeed, this is an extremely simple prescription for curing our degeneration and abstaining from sin.

CONCLUSION

The summary of this wa'z (lecture) is:

In the áyat (recited in the beginning), the sentence

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“They are indeed the people who are the fásiqoon.”.

is the effect of نَسُوا اللَّهَ (forgetting Allah). This establishes that the cause of the degeneration and transgression is nisyân (forgetfulness). To be cured of this condition Zikrullah is imperative. This is precisely what Allah Ta'ala indicates to His servants in this áyat. He addresses the Muslims in loving tones and with love. In other words, Allah Ta'ala is saying in this áyat:

O Muslims! You should not be deceived into indifference and forgetfulness— — forgetting the remembrance of Allah. You should not behave like the kuffár who have forgotten Allah. There is no resemblance between them and you.”

O my brothers! After having heard this Call of Allah, it is essential that we regard the remembrance of Allah as an obligation of life. We should be constant in making dua for taufeeq, the inclination and ability to engross ourselves in zikrullah. Finally, we will come within the purview of the áyat.

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ

“Remember me and I shall remember you.

I now conclude with the duá that Allah Ta'ala grant us all the taufeeq of zikr and obedience. Ameen.

THE HOLY CHISTIYYA, MASEEHIYYAH, ASHRAFIYYAH, IMDADIYYAH SPIRITUAL TREE

Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat Maulana Mohammed Maseehullah Khan belongs to the auspicious chain of Auliya, which is linked to Rasulullah (sallalláhu alayhi wasallam). Every name in this holy 'tree' is a Star of immaculate piety and spiritual excellence in the firmament of 'Ma'rifat' and 'Tasawwuf. The 'Tasawwuf of the members of this great Spiritual Order is deeply rooted in the Qurán and the Sunnah of Rasulullah (sallalláhu alayhi wasallam).

Hadhrat Mohammed Maseehullah Khan Khalifah of	
Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi	(died 1362A.H.)
Hajee Imdadullah Makki	(" 1317A.H.)
Hadhrat Noor Muhammad	(" 1259A.H.)
Hajee Abdur Raheem	(" 1246A.H.)
Shah Abdul Bàri	(" 1226A.H.)
Shah Abdul Hádi	(" 190 A.H.)
Shah Adhdud-din	(" 172A.H.)
Shah Muhammad	
Shah Muhib-bullah	(" 1058A.H.)
Shah Bu Sa-eed	(" 1040A.H.)
Shah Nizámuddin Balkhi	(" 1005A.H.)
Shah Jaláluddin	(" 989 AH.)
Shah Abdul Quddus	(" 924A.H.)
Shaikh Muhammad	(" 989 A.H.)
Shaikh Ahmad Aarif	(" 882 AH.)
Shah Ahmad Abdul Haq	(" 837 AH.)
Shah Jaláluddin	(" 765 A.H.)
Shaikh Shamsuddin	(" 716A.H.)
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