

THE ESSENCE OF FASTING

(condensed)



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Repetition of a Topic

You may have realized by merely listening to the Aayat [recited in the Khutbah] that the bayaan concerns fasting, as it [the Aayat] contains the theme of fasting. However, the thought may have also occurred to you that we have heard on many occasions about it [fasting]. What then necessitates its repetition?

Fellow Friends! You too repeat an act on many occasions. At night you have your supper, and then in the morning you eat again. After your morning meal you sit down for meals again in the afternoon. Why is it that this thought [why the repetition?] occurs when lectures are given, and when carrying out your daily chores it does not occur to you? If you say that eating is necessary then just as that is necessary, this [listening to a bayaan] too is necessary.

Actually, the reason is that you take roti [bread] to be food but not this, whereas just as there is food for the body, similarly there is food for the rooh [soul, life] too.

Just as the body always requires fresh food owing to the food burning out through our various actions and thus the need for replacement for sustaining the body, similarly the spiritual food which you received last year or a few months ago, it has absorbed into the rooh and has become burnt out through the nafs' [ego's, carnal pleasure's] various actions—pride, jealousy, hatred, ostentation, etc. Thus, just as food for the body serves as a replacement for food burnt out, similarly wa'z [lecture, bayaan] is the replacement for forgotten talk.

Now you may have realized that there is the same need to repeat a wa'z as repeating food intake. And wa'z has the same objective

which food has. The only difference is that food absorbs into the physical body and wa'z absorbs into the spiritual body.

Now if a lecture is repeated, it is not devoid of necessity. From this you may have understood the mystery behind the repetition of themes in the Kalaam [Speech] of Allah Ta'ala.

Loving Care

In books of philosophy and logic repetition is a discrepancy, whereas in the Qur'aan Majeed this same repetition is its outstanding beauty.

A person with sound perception and intelligence knows what magnetic pull this repetition holds. In philosophy and logic books the formal style has been adopted, whereas in the Qur'aan Majeed another style has been adopted. That style is not the formal one. It is the style of loving care.

See! When a father admonishes his son, and thereafter he sees the son's action in conflict with the admonition given, he admonishes again. Again he sees the son going against the admonition, the father repeats the admonition. If there is a need to repeat the admonition a hundred times the father will continue to admonish the son a hundred times. Neither will he think: "Why must I repeat the same thing over and over again," and nor will anyone else object to this repetition.

What is the reason for this? The reason is simply that the father has a high degree of loving care for the son. In the face of loving care, a formal approach is not conducted.

If on the other hand the father rears his son in this manner: he speaks once and does not repeat himself, thinking: “I have told him once,” then these selfsame ‘philosophers’ and ‘thinkers’ will be the first to become ‘irrational’ and object. They will say: “You treat your son with formal rules and regulations? You stand condemned in the eyes of people!”

Take an ustad who has two pupils. The one is dear to him and the other disliked. The attitude of the ustad to the two will be different. For instance, he will say once to the two: “Learn!” If the two remain quiet, then he will tell the dear student: “Learn!” If he remains inactive then the ustad will sternly tell him to learn.

As far as the disliked pupil is concerned, the ustad will not repeat himself. In the ustad’s mind, “If this one does not learn, then tomorrow he will catch it and he will stand accused.” Since the ustad holds the other pupil dear he will repeatedly tell him so that he is saved from punishment the next day. My friend! What difference should we understand in the ustad’s treatment of the two? The only difference is that the loving care induced the ustad to caution [the dear pupil] again.

Whether They Listen or Not

Do these philosophers want Allah Ta’ala to deal with us formally? Respected Audience! Where do philosophers appreciate this [repetition]? Only those endowed with love understand well that Allah Ta’ala has so much loving care for us that He does not stop at even ten times. He says it again and again. He himself declares:

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الدِّكْرَ صَفْحًا أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِفِينَ.

“Should we desist from admonishing you in view of your transgression? Not at all! We will repeat our admonition.”

Those upon whom the Shadow of Allah Ta'ala's perfect attributes is cast, they too have so much affection for creation that they continue to admonish regardless of anyone listening or not. Their condition is portrayed in this verse:

“Whether anyone listens or not I am going to speak.”

They bear in mind:

“Hafiz! Your duty is just to make du'aa. That's all. Don't entangle yourself in this worry that, has it been heard or not?”

An anecdote comes to mind over this listening and not listening. Moulana Sayyid Ahmad Bareilwi told Moulana Abdul Hay Saheb: “Give lectures.” Moulana Abdul Hay Saheb humbly said: “Hazrat! Who is going to listen to my lectures?” Moulana Sayyid Ahmad Saheb replied: “Allah Ta'ala will listen.” Moulana Abdul Hay Saheb then queried: “Hazrat! With a small audience how am I going to open up?” Moulana Sayyid Ahmad Saheb replied: “Don't face the audience.” He thus began to deliver lectures with his back to the audience. Consequently, innumerable people began to gather.

True Sincerity

Allahu Akbar! What sincerity! *“If no one listens, Allah Ta'ala will listen!”* This is precisely the sincerity by virtue of which those august personalities became fountainheads of spiritual grace.

His [Moulana Sayyid Ahmad Bareilwi's] associate, Hazrat Moulana Isma'eel Saheb went somewhere to deliver a wa'z. After completion of the wa'z and as he was leaving a person arrived eager to listen to the wa'z. When he heard that the wa'z was over

he heaved a deep sigh of regret and exclaimed: “Alas! My coming from so far was for nothing.” Moulana responded: “Don’t be dejected. Come, I will repeat the wa’z.” He held his hand and took him into the Masjid. There was only Moulana there and that person. Moulana then repeated the wa’z from beginning to end in the same way as he had spoken the first time.

How difficult that is! Having the same enthusiasm when speaking to a solitary listener as when speaking before a crowd of ten thousand! My friend! That is completely beyond our power. It appears that those illustrious souls did not set their sights on creation at all. Whatever they would say was for the pleasure of the Creator. The thought impregnated in their minds was: *‘The Being Whom we wish to please was present in the audience of ten thousand, and present here too with this solitary person.’*

In short, by inculcating sincerity those repetitions [in the Qur’aan Majeed] and that style is appreciated.

A Father’s Loving Care

You see a father undeterred from repeating in view of his loving care. Similarly, Allah Ta’ala does not forsake repetition.

An example of a father’s loving care comes to mind. There is a popular account of a Hindu in whose home a crow landed. He had a young son. The son asked: “Abba! What is this?” The father replied: “Son! You call this a crow.” The son asked a hundred times: “What is this?” And the father continued to answer without even a frown. He did, however, note this incident in his diary.

When the father became old and the son adolescent, coincidentally a crow came and perched itself nearby. The father asked: “Son! What is this?” “A crow,” the son replied. Again the father asked: “What is it?” The son looked at the father with big

eyes and said: “Crow!” When the father asked for the third time, “What is it?” the son burst out saying: “Are you crazy or something; asking the same thing over and over again!”

The father responded by saying: “Son! Don’t give vent to your anger. Calm down.” Saying this, he brought his diary and showed the son: “You asked me a hundred times and I did not become frustrated, whereas you became fed up only at my third query!”

Particularly [we find] nowadays, that generally no son obeys his father thinking of him to be the father. As long as he [the son] is getting something from the father, greed drives him to serve the father. And when the father is unable to earn then together with his age increasing, two dots are added to him. That is, from پاپ [Daddy] he becomes پاپپ [a misery].

Allah Ta’ala’s Loving Care

Fellow Friends! When the father has so much of loving care then how much of loving care must the Creator of that loving care have! If Allah Jalla Shaanuhu looked at His servants without loving care then once He would gently say: “Do this, not that.” Then if we did not carry out the order, He would have sternly rebuked the second time. On the third occasion He would have given us a rap. Thereafter, we would be on the receiving end as long as we did not carry out His order.

Allahu Akbar! What loving care! He sees sins being committed and continues to explain [the harm]. And not even after explaining over a lengthy period He drowns the transgressors as with the nation of Nooh (Alaihis Salaam); or the ground is upturned as with the nation of Loot (Alaihis Salaam); or destroyed by tempests as with the nation of Aad; or sins

becoming inscribed on doors as with the Bani Isra'eel; or a Farishta moving in to destroy. The poet echoes this when he says:

*“I sacrifice my life for Allah Ta’ala, and I love to dictate this.
Here, such sins upon sins and from there (Allah Ta’ala), these
endless favours.”*

And then after so much favours a stupendous favour is that when ‘*Allahummaghfirli*’ [O Allah! Forgive me] is said with sincerity, all sins are wiped out from the Book of Deeds. He does not preserve it in the Book of Deeds when forgiven, as in judicial courts. In our courts even if the case is thrown out, the files are not torn and thrown away. They are preserved in the file office.

Here a person becomes gleeful and exceptionally grateful at just that. And there [by Allah Ta’ala] the law is that the case is dismissed, and the files are obliterated so that the person is proven to be a Buzrug in the eyes of the Farishtas. No room is left for them [the Farishtas] to accuse us. *Allahu Akbar!* Is there any limit to His consideration!

Similarly, repetition of these themes is the very essence of favour and consideration. However, the simpleton objectors have shown their appreciation of this consideration by objecting: “Why like this?” They ought to level objections against themselves for the repetition found on them. Why two eyes, two ears, two hands, two legs? They may even wish to have four instead of two! Similarly, why do they repeat having a meal after an earlier one? After sleeping once, why do they retire to bed again?

Every Part of the Whole is Effective

In short, the objection that after this theme was mentioned once, why is it mentioned again, is superfluous. It is obvious that many

a time, when speaking once does not produce an effect then by repeating the effect is realized.

See! You brought home the medication prescribed by the hakeem. After just a dose of the medication, if there is no benefit you will obviously continue to take it for at least three days. After a dose without any benefit if someone advises you to leave it as no results were produced, you will respond in the same way; that benefit is not seen after just one dose. The medication has to be taken for at least three days. When we have this example in medical treatment then why not judge spiritual treatment in the same way.

Let no one labour under the notion that since the first admonition did not benefit, it was a waste of time. The first admonition was not a waste of time. It too was useful. The benefit was that it created the potential for benefit. The second admonition strengthened that potential and the admonition on the third occasion brought out that potential.

This is similar to the medication, in that after the first and second dose there was benefit, although not perceived and apparent. That became apparent with the third dose. Thus, the benefit accrued through the combination [of the three doses].

It is just as a drop of water falls continuously from a tap onto a slab of stone. After a hundred days, for instance, a hole will form [on the slab]. No intelligent person will say that the hole was formed by the last drop. No, the hole was formed as a result of the drops collectively. Just as the last drop had an effect, the first and second drops were also effective. Yes, their effect was not apparent. The effect of the drops collectively became apparent with the last drop.

Similarly, place 5kg of mustard seeds on a balance and you will see the pan dropping. Place one seed and you will not perceive the pan to move. Similar is the case with two or three [seeds], as long as there is not a significant amount. The pan will drop when there is a sufficient amount. Then, it will not be said that it dropped due to the last grain. In fact, every grain had an effect and the pan dropped due to the collective effect of all.

For this reason, a person with keen perception will notice the movement of the pan by putting even one mustard seed inside the pan. [In these days electronic scales have fully revealed this reality.]

My purpose in producing all these examples is to substantiate the claim that every part of the whole is effective. Now, if benefit was not seen after giving a lecture ten times it cannot be averred that all that was futile. In fact, it was efficacious. It gradually nurtured the potential to benefit, although the benefit did not become apparent. Towards the end it came out.

It is just as you saw a child yesterday and then today again. This child has grown somewhat from yesterday. If not, then you will have to say that all at once he became 5 years old.

Similarly, the Saalikeen [Disciples of Tasawwuf] should rest satisfied. Their condition is such that if they do not gain some spiritual inspirations and fruits through Zikr and Shaghl they become disillusioned thinking that their efforts have come to naught. Nowadays the Zaakireen [those engaged in a programme of Zikr] are smitten with the feeling that at the very onset of Zikr and Shaghl the fruits should be born.

“You came just now, and you want to be a Peer already!”

They forget that just recently they started their course.

A saying comes to my mind for this occasion. It is amusing, yet true in meaning. The saying is popular among laymen:

“The drop fell at night. Mahmood its name was kept”.

The conception is but presumed. Yet they have settled that it will be a boy and his name will be kept that. A false cause is like the false hopes of Shaikh Chilli. [A famous character who built an empire in his mind by allowing his thoughts to wander. Only to see his entire empire crumble due to the basis of his thoughts, that is the loss of his wage, crumbling.]

Then he will grow up, have children, his name will be that, and so forth without any end. Now if a child was not conceived or a girl was born then they think: “Oh No! What has happened?”

Similarly, the Zaakireen think even before commencing Zikr that there will be spiritual conditions like this and spiritual states, inspirations and cascades of spiritual light like that. And once they have started, they are already waiting for Wahi.

How outrageous! In academic studies after commencing Meezaan [the first textbook on Arabic grammar in the Nizaami syllabus] they do not expect Bukhari immediately. However, in spiritual studies they wish not to climb up the ladder. They wish to fly to the top!

What is Zikr?

The reason for this bad approach and impatience in this sulook [road to Allah Ta’ala] is that they don’t know what is Zikr. If they knew, they would be patient. In fact, they would not even wait for the fruits, as waiting for one thing after another is when the first

thing is of secondary importance and the second thing is of prime importance.

When this person awaits fruits after Zikr it shows that he considers Zikr to be of secondary importance and the fruits to be of prime importance.

Do you know what is Zikr? It comes in a Hadeeth-e-Qudsi [a Tradition in which Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) relates the words of Allah Ta'ala]:

أَنَا جَلِيسُ مَنْ ذَكَرَنِي

“I sit with the one who remembers Me.”

Zikr is the company of *Mahboob-e-Haqeeqi* [the Real Beloved]. O Unjust One! You leave the company of *Mahboob-e-Haqeeqi* and run after something else!

Whenever a person would say to our Hazrat Haji Saheb, “Hazrat! I have made Zikr for so many days now, but I don’t feel anything,” Hazrat would respond: “Make shukr unto Allah Ta’ala that He gave you the towfeeq of Zikr.”

Now if someone hankers after fruits then there is no greater ignorance than that. In his opinion the company of *Mahboob-e-Haqeeqi* is also of secondary importance!

Moulana [Roomi Rahmatullahi alaihi] says about the mere company of the beloved:

*“Wherever the beloved is, sit there and be blithe,
whether above the heaven or in the bowels of the earth.
Wherever there is a face like Yusuf (Alaihis Salaam) radiant
like the moon,
it is Jannat even though it may be in the depths of a mine.*

A beloved said to the lover:

*'O My Darling! You have seen many cities in your touring.
Which of those cities is the best?'
The lover replied: 'The city wherein is my dearest.'*

Lovers have gone so far as to regard the company of the name of the beloved as a boon in the absence of the company of the beloved.

Moulana says:

*"A wayfarer saw Majnoon alone in a desert,
sitting all alone and looking dejected.
The sand was his paper and the finger his pen.
He seemed to be writing a message to someone.
He said: 'O Majnoon! What is this mania?
To whom are you writing a letter?'
He replied: 'The name of Lailah I am reproducing.
In this way my mind I am soothing.'"*

These are people who do not have the company of the beloved. They satisfy themselves with the company of the name. And you are one who is not satisfied with the company of the Beloved!

If someone says: "We do not see [the Beloved]! What is the procedure to see?" I give you glad tidings that the prescription for your eyes is to continue with your Zikr. This very prescription will one day make your heart see. Moulana says:

*"The fragrance (of the beloved) gives light to eyes.
Ya 'qoob's (Alaihis Salaam) sight returned through a fragrance
(i.e., Yusuf Alaihis Salaam's kurta)."*

In fact, there is a treasure beyond your aspiration. In love one aspires to sit with the beloved. And if the desire is too much, then one aspires to have the beloved in one's arms.

You have been given a state greater than all that; a state which you may have never even conceived of, and that is, the Beloved holding you in His arms. Thus, He says:

أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ.

“Be aware that He encompasses everything.”

If a beloved says to the lover: “Say, do you want to put me in your arms, or should I put you in my arms?” Wallah! If one’s understanding is sound, then one will say: “My luck! Take me in your arms.” Why? Because the one that takes the other in the arms is the lover.

To summarize, if there is any aspiration, it is to be wrapped in the arms of the beloved. It is the favour of Allah Ta’ala that He has wrapped you in the arms of His Rahmat, in such a way that you cannot fall out of it for even a moment. Is there any greater company than that?

With such a treasure do you wish for fruits; for spiritual states; for feeling; for yearning? That will be like:

*“When you receive the king’s hand to kiss,
then by going to the feet you have hit a miss.”*

You receive the office of the prime minister, but you say: “Give me a net and a sickle. I don’t want to be the prime minister; I want to stay a grass cutter.”

Naseehat for the Zaakireen

Whoever receives towfeeq of Zikr has indeed received a colossal treasure. Our Hazrat would recite:

*“I find Him or not, I will continue searching.
I get or I don’t get, I will continue wishing.”*

“Or I don’t get” is based on the external, that is according to what the saalik thinks. Otherwise, ‘continuing the search’ is, in itself, ‘finding’.

Someone said beautifully... although it is not surprising to say something which one does not understand. Frequently it happens that the speaker’s mind does not reach where the listener’s mind reaches. Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb recited a self-composed love poem to someone. The person asked for the poem to be repeated. Moulana repeated it and the person took enjoyment from it for quite some time.

Moulana asked: “What do you find in it so enjoyable?” He explained a meaning of the poem which Moulana’s mind did not even grasp. In any case, the poem is:

“To remain in search of the Friend, that is Mujaahadah (the spiritual exertion).

To think of the greatness of the Beloved, that is Mushaahadah (Divine Vision).”

Truly, Zikr and Fikr are precisely *Mushaahadah*. Thus, He declares:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرُكُمْ

“Remember Me, I will remember you.”

He [the Zaakir, Saalik] thinks of Allah Ta’ala and Allah Ta’ala thinks of him. With such a treasure what else can one wish for?

In short, some Zaakireen think of Zikr without fruits, to be futile. The answer to this is that which has just been explained. One should understand that the Zikr at the beginning has not gone to waste. It too was beneficial, albeit not discernable. At the end the benefit perceived was the benefit of the collective period [of Zikr].

I asked a certain Buzrug: “Why is it that Ulama require less Mujaahadah [spiritual struggle against the lowly desires of man] in Sulook?” He replied: “They make the most Mujaahadah. As long as they are engaged in academic pursuit, they are engaged in Mujaahadah.”

Subhaanallah! What a wonderful point he has brought to the fore! A flint which has been dried by sunlight for years ignites almost immediately. Whereas that which has not felt sunlight; it has always remained in a damp place, it ignites with great difficulty.

The years of sunlight thus, just as the struggle and effort of the student, are not without benefit. Today the effect is apparent. And if a person took it to be futile and sat idle then he is deprived. It has been well said:

*“A person brought up in pleasure and comfort,
Cannot walk the path to the Friend.
Love is the hallmark of those in distress.”*

Those who live in comfort and luxury gain nothing. Just look at students. Those among them who live in luxury gain fool’s potential.

In short, if you do not perceive benefit at the beginning of your course then do not become despondent and think that there was no benefit. In fact, the benefit is accruing. Everything will be received at once.

It is just like a person wishes to buy an expensive halwa [sweet dish]. He needs five rupees, whereas his [daily] income is two annas. A wise man advised him to put one, one paisa into a money box and when he has saved up five rupees, he can buy his halwa. Now, if he wishes to buy the halwa before he has saved up five rupees then he is in error.

O Zaakireen! Your daily Baarah Tasbeehs [a name for a specified amount and specified way of making Zikr with the *Kalimah Laa Ilaaha Illallah*] is also one, one paisa.

If you do not save it up, then how are you going to buy that which you desire [i.e., Divine Proximity and Divine Love]? Yes, when it amounts to five rupees then you will get a dish of halwa.

In short, if it takes long then let it, because taking long is also according to Divine Wisdom. Allah Ta'ala revealed to me wisdom behind it in the Mathnawi [Rhyming Couplets] of Moulana Roomi (Rahmatullahi alaih):

*“We moreover have the power that without delay,
We can show the road and bestow the favour of reaching Us come
what may.*

*So that you are saved from the stormy waters of the human
condition,*

and you are honoured with the treasure of Our Union.

However, (the wisdom in the delay and the Mujaahadah) is,

*That the sweetness and the pleasures of the destination,
are commensurate to the difficult of the peregrination.*

*(Hence it is a fact that) a person finds the pleasure of his children
and family once,*

*he has undergone the rigours of travels away from his
residence.”*

Taqleed over Self-Reliance

Particularly a person whose Shaikh is by him and still he is afflicted with stray thoughts! It is surprising because the Shaikh can console him. Why does he act on his own ideas?

One person was Bai't to Moulana Gangohi. One day he mentioned some state of his. I explained to him the nature of the state. He said: "Hazrat Moulana also said the same thing. I thought he was just trying to pacify me." I replied: "It seems that you take Moulana to be an impostor. What motive does Moulana have in flattering you?"

His eyes then opened. I made him make Taubah from this suspicion [of Moulana]. Thereafter he started to benefit through the Fazl of Allah Ta'ala.

Anyone who is sceptical even after the Shaikh's words should understand that he in fact does not regard the Shaikh to be a Shaikh. In fact, he regards his Nafs to be the Shaikh and he follows the Nafs.

The similitude of mistrust in guides is like a blind Hafez Jee who was invited somewhere. On returning he was holding the hand of a student.

The student said: "Hafez Jee! Khai!" ['Khai' means 'ditch' and also 'did you eat?'] The Hafez Jee [understood the second meaning and] said: 'Yes! I ate to my fill.' The student repeated: "Khai!" The Hafez Jee reiterated: "I ate to my fill." ...Until it was too late, and the Hafez Jee fell into the ditch. He then called out: "You Useless! Why didn't you say: "Hafez Jee! Khandaq [Trench]!"

[In other words, just as the guide could not save the Hafez Jee from falling, similarly, lacking faith and confidence in the Shaikh leads the Mureed to disaster.]

A blind man should follow the person whom he has given his hand to and not probe into details. Yes, if for some reasonable

excuse he loses trust [in the guide] then he should search for another.

If the patient starts to debate with the physician, then the physician will become fed up and he will stop all treatment. Yes, after a few days of Taqleed [emulation, following] you will become an expert yourself. *Mubaarak* is that Taqleed which brings success, and damned is that self-reliance which leads to failure.

This makes me think of a parable. A loaded pack was on the camel of a fool. An intelligent man was on his way when he chanced upon the fool. He asked: "What is in the sack?"

The Fool: On one side is wheat and on the other sand.

The Intelligent Man: Why did you load sand?

The Fool: To balance the two sides.

The Intelligent Man: Shed the sand and fill both sides with wheat equally. Your objective will be fulfilled, and your camel will derive some comfort.

The fool caught on and he did just that. Thereafter he joyously told the intelligent man to mount the camel. After much persistence the intelligent man got onto the camel. After riding for a while, the fool thought, 'When I own a camel in spite of my foolishness, this is an intelligent man, how much animals he must be having!'

He then asked the intelligent man: "How many camels do you have?"

The Intelligent Man: Not even one.

The Fool: How many cows do you have?

The Intelligent Man: None.

The Fool: How many goats?

The Intelligent Man: None.

The Fool: You must be having at least something.

The Intelligent Man: Nothing.

The Fool: Please get off my camel. And I am not prepared to carry on with your advice. Your intelligence is an absolute misfortune as it has not saved you from poverty. I don't want it to affect me and make me poor like you. I am much, much better off than you in that I have at least one camel."

Saying this, the fool loaded the wheat on one side and sand onto the other side as before.

As a matter of fact, that dearth in intelligence which takes one to Allah Ta'ala, is blessed compared to that intelligence which hinders one. Simple and unsophisticated Auliya-ullah reached the goal whilst the Greek philosophers stumbled and fell on the way.

Intelligence, in fact, is that which serves as a guide. And that which is a hindrance deserves to be told:

آزمودم عقل دور اندیش را بعد از آن دیوانه سازم خویش را

In other words, 'when the intelligence was found insufficient for the work then I made myself insane.' It does not mean that the intelligence was not used at all, as this [adopting to be insane] was also the work of the intelligence. Rather, the meaning is that he did not exceed the limits in employing the intellect.

This has been portrayed in the following verses:

"In the world of love there is no room for one's own thoughts and one's own ideas.

In this path it is kufr to keep your own views and your own ideas.

One who reposes his trust in his piety and intellect in Tareeqat [the Path to Allah Ta'ala] is an infidel.

Regardless of the Saalik possessing a hundred doctorates he is obliged to have tawakkul."

Tawakkul means to hand over oneself to Allah Ta'ala. And to hand over oneself to the Ahlullah is precisely handing oneself over to Allah Ta'ala. One should just hand over oneself to the Ahlullah. It doesn't work with your intelligence and your ideas because this path of union [with Allah Ta'ala] is a different course.

If an auditor general puts his foot in the ocean all his auditing will be of no avail, there. There the need will be to swim.

*“The ocean of love is an ocean without any shore.
There, no other alternative remains other than giving one's life
at the Beloved's door.”*

Here 'giving one's life' does not mean 'dying'. It actually means: 'to entrust your life to someone so that you are safe from destruction.'

If you do not hand yourself over to the captain of the ship, then your similitude will be like that of a shopkeeper who was travelling with his family in an ox wagon. On the way they came to a river.

He stopped the ox wagon at the bank and measured the depth of the water with a piece of bamboo. At some places the water was knee-deep; at some places waist-length; at some places head-high; at some places lower and some places deeper.

He [the shopkeeper] took out a pencil and a slate and started calculating the average depth of the water. The average worked out to be waist-deep. The ox wagon could go through that [or he thought]. He instructed the wagon driver: "Move ahead."

Now when the ox wagon reached the middle it started to sink. He realized he made an error in the calculation. At once he took out

his slate and pencil and recalculated. The [first] calculation turned out correct. He then remarked:

لیکھا جوں کا توں پھر کنبہ ڈوبا کیوں

“It’s exactly as I wrote! Then why did the family need a boat?”

Hazrat! Understand well that to follow Sulook with your own ideas is to drive the ox wagon into the river and drown oneself.

There is a need, at every place, for something suitable for the occasion. Moulana has written an anecdote of a grammarian boarding a boat. He was an expert in language. However, he was given to puerility. As long as a person is not perfect, he has the tendency to be puerile.

Accordingly, another linguist was about to read Namaaz. Some women arrived. They greeted: “Assalaamu Alaikum.” Unmindfully he gave the customary reply: “*Wa Alaikumus Salaam,*” and began with his Namaaz. In Namaaz it occurred to him: “I am such a reputed grammarian and I have made such a blunder!”

He could not think of a way to rectify his error, so he broke his Namaaz and ran after those women. As he drew close to them, he repeated: “*Wa alaikunnas salaam, wa alaikunnas salaam.*”

[“*Wa alaikumus salaam*” is the standard form of greeting for all occasions regardless of the second person. Although, in pure grammar ‘*alaikum*’ will be said to plural males and for plural females ‘*alaikunna*’ will be said.

The grammarian was preoccupied with purity in grammar and hence his consternation over uttering the traditional ‘*wa alaikumus salaam*’ to a female gathering].

The women may not have taken anything to be wrong [upon the first reply], however, his [the grammarian's] sudden descent like that of a tempest surely had them thinking. This is puerility.

In any case, the grammarian was on a boat. He asked the boatman: "Are you versed in syntax?" The boatman replied: "No!" The grammarian commented: "Alas! You have lost half your life."

The boat sailed on until, unexpectedly, it was caught in a whirlpool. The boatman asked: "Do you know how to swim?" The grammarian replied: "No!" The boatman remarked: "Alas! You have lost your entire life."

The boat is caught in a whirlpool. With it you too are going to drown. I am going to swim to safety. Your *nahw* [syntax] can never avail you here. Here you need *mahw* [immersion]. If you were *fana fil bahr* like me then the ocean will not drown you."

[The literal meaning of '*fana fil bahr*' is: surrender to the ocean or annihilation in the ocean. *Fana in Tasawwuf* means to completely give yourself over to the Shaikh and follow his teachings explicitly; to annihilate one's own opinions and desires. In this way the *Saalik* is ferried by the Shaikh over the stormy waters of the route to Allah Ta'ala. The boatman meant by '*fana fil bahr*' that he was thoroughly versed with the temperament of the ocean and, therefore, he was on a safe passage.]

So, one's own 'research' does not help everywhere. The need is, in fact, to emulate another. In spite of all our academic studies and book knowledge we are still unaware of what is to be planted in spring and what must be sowed in autumn.

Here our academic knowledge and studies are of no help. Here emulating simple farmers will help. If we start to farm relying on

our own ‘research’ the results will be hardship, loss of seeds and zero crops.

Why the Delay?

Whatever the case may be, in every field make the experts your leaders and emulate them. Once you have made Taqleed of them you won’t clamour then for hasty results saying: “It’s five days now that I have been making Zikr without any apparent spiritual state overcoming me and nor any form of ecstasy settling over me,” and “Ten days have past yet nothing!” That guide will restrain you from haste and you will be obliged to make his Taqleed.

Once I was beset with the thought that, why is it that the object is not acquired quickly? Allah Ta’ala knows of our quest; He has mercy on us; He has the power to make us reach our destination yet despite these factors, why the delay? In this state of confusion, I opened *Mathnawi Shareef*, and the page opened showed this poem. There wasn’t a need to turn pages here and there.

*“Your anguish (separation) is seeking recourse in Us.
Last night We heard your deep sigh in the hours of
darkness.”*

Here the anguish and the quest are acknowledged, and awareness and mercy are also acknowledged.

*“We have the power even without any procrastination,
to show the way and bestow Our union.”*

Here it is acknowledged that He [Allah Ta’ala] has the power to deliver at once.

*“So that you are saved from the stormy waters of the
vicissitudes of existence,*

and you are honoured with Our presence.

*However (the wisdom in the delay and Mujaahadah)
is that the sweetness and pleasures of the destination,
are commensurate to the difficulty of the peregrination.”*

The gist of the answer is: ‘You have the quest, We have mercy, knowledge and power. All this raises the question, but together with that there is wisdom. And that is the answer.’

*“Hence it is a fact that a person finds pleasure in his
children and family once,
he has undergone the rigours of travels away from
his residence.”*

In other words, the more trouble one undergoes in journey, the more one will appreciate home.

Our Hazrat would say: “Water is a bounty. That is obvious. Thirst is also a bounty, because by thirst one enjoys the water. If you drink water when not thirsty, you wouldn’t like it.”

It appears in the Hadeeth Shareef that when vacant area still remains in Jannat, it [Jannat] will say to Allah Ta’ala: “You did promise to fill me!” In fulfilment of that promise Allah Ta’ala will immediately bring into existence a creation and fill Jannat with this creation.

Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb would say: “That nation will not enjoy Jannat as we will. The reason for this is that they never went through any difficulty, and we have undergone the hardships of the world. Therefore, we will thoroughly appreciate that comfort.”

Truly:

“The one oblivious of the sweetness of grapes,

will not recognize the fruit of paradise.”

One son of a royal in Delhi cooked food with his own hands and treated Moulana Faizul Hasan Saheb. Thereafter he wished for compliment from Moulana. Moulana replied: “One cannot judge through only one meal. It is possible that it could have been better or worse. Cook a few times and serve me then it will be possible to judge adequately.” Truly:

وَبُضَيْدَهَا تَتَبَيَّنُ الْأَشْيَاءُ

"And with opposites do things become evident."

Similarly, when the Saalik reaches a station [in his spiritual voyage] after undergoing difficulty, then he appreciates it. His eyes open and he actively displays or verbally declares:

"In the latter part of last night, I was granted salvation from depression, i.e., spiritual encumbrance.

(It was as if) in the darkness of the night I received the elixir of existence."

Then the Peer will be appreciated and he [the Saalik] will exclaim:

"Enslavement (Perfect obedience) to the Shaikh-e-Kaamil is a wonderful panacea.

I became sand in front of him (i.e., I annihilated my ego in front of him) and attained so high stages!"

The stages are received at the very beginning, but one is unaware of it.

To summarize, once commencing Zikr and Shaghl one should not await quick benefit. Similarly, after listening to one lecture and the benefit is not felt, do not take it to have been futile.

Vintage Strength and Sweetness

In short, what has been said thus far requires that no objection should be raised if I repeat any topic. However, I will say something new Insha Allah. I will not repeat anything already said. It being new will be in regard to its external composition. Otherwise, all topics are old per se considering that they are taken from the Kitaab and Sunnat. Nevertheless, its external composition will be a new one. Thus, the question of it being antiquated falls away.

And in reality, it is not at all antiquated. In fact, the more time passes over it, instead of becoming antiquated and weak, its novelty and intensity surges. Its example is:

“The older the wine, the stronger it becomes.

Similar is the condition of one who drinks from the Divine-wine.”

As said:

*“Despite me becoming old, weary and weak,
when I gaze at you, I feel young and energetic.”*

Here [the talks on Allah Ta’ala] there is no draining and tiring through the passage of time. Despite Hazrat Haji Saheb’s weakness, when he would speak on *haqaa-iq and ma’aarif* [Divine realities and mysteries] he would sit up, and after completion of his talk he would groan due to weakness. What was this, after all, that produced that strength for that duration? Nothing other than those antiquated themes.

In academic sciences we experience the same, not however in actions. There [by Haji Saheb] actions were in the same category. He would stand and listen to the whole Qur’aan in Taraaweeh in a single night.

It was amazing! Like that it was difficult for him to even speak due to weakness, but, once he made his intention and said “Allahu Akbar” then where did all that weakness go to?

Hazrat would stand alone right to the end, whilst the Haafizes would read in shifts. The point here is that those illustrious souls would derive refreshment and rejuvenation through *a'maal* [deeds]. We do not experience joy in *a'maal*, but in academic things we derive pleasure. For this reason, in that, we too find strength.

In any case, the Divine-Drink does not expire, and it does not become out-dated. It is surprising that you do not throw away a coin which has lost its colour through time passing over it, and Allah Ta'ala's themes are discarded due to it being old!!! Is it not even equal to that old coin?

The Divine Decree of Fasting

In any case, here don't even entertain such a thought. I will speak something new drawn from this Aayat. Allah Ta'ala declares:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

The translation of the Aayat is:

“O People of Imaan! Fasting has been decreed upon you as it was decreed upon people before you.”

In the simile the point considered was ‘showing ease.’ [In other words, the fact that people of former times also fasted testifies to the ease of fasting.] Firstly for this reason that we are inclined to hasten towards good. The eagerness within us will drive us to do the same. And secondly, since our hallmark is:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ

"You are the best of nations",

our sense of self-respect tells us: 'Can't we do that work which people second to us have done, when we are rated first by Allah Ta'ala!'

So, it is as if [Allah Ta'ala says]: The former nations have taken something which you have not been given as yet. We have given them a 'bicycle' with which they can travel quickly. We have, therefore, given you as well so that you are not left behind." For this reason, Allah Ta'ala declared:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ

"Fasting has been decreed upon you."

It is an immense Rahmat [mercy] of Allah Ta'ala that he made it incumbent (farz) upon us. Its similitude is that of a loving and caring father administering a purgative forcibly to his son. Truly it is a great Rahmat that He declared it incumbent because He knew that without the command, we would not have fasted.

My father wished to give me a purgative once during childhood. He said to me: "Drink this. I will give you a rupee." I knew that if I refused to drink, he would have scolded me and, then too I would have been forced to drink. In that case the rupee would have been lost and I would still have to drink. Therefore, I drank.

For our own need and in our own interest Allah Ta'ala has prescribed a purgative and He has promised a reward drinking it. And in case we don't drink He has sounded a warning as well. Allahu Akbar! What a favour; what loving care! Wallah! It is a cause for ecstasy. People shake and dance at the beating of drums and playing of guitars. Alas! Their senses are dead. These academic points are things to become ecstatic about.

Barkat and Rahmat

In any case, Allah Ta'ala has decreed fasting upon us so that we carry it out, whereas look at people. They say: "Summer is extremely hot now. How are we going to fast? The heat is intense, and the air is thin. How are we going to pull through?" What evil thoughts of Allah Ta'ala! Did Allah Ta'ala instruct you to do something beyond your power?

لَا يَكْلِفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"Allah does not impose on anyone anything beyond his/her capacity."

If there is no rain or clouds, then one will be called on to make sabr which is also a Rahmat.

Be that as it may, what is the worry all about? When He wishes to take work, He creates the necessary circumstances for that work. Although the outcome of your evil opinion should have been a severe heat wave, as it appears in a Hadeeth-e-Qudsi:

أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي

"I am according to my servant's thoughts of Me."

Just as you think of Allah Ta'ala, He does the same. However, what mercy! Subhaanallah! At the very onset of Ramadhaan neither did the heat remain, nor the thirst, nor the thin air and nor the rays of the sun. And just a day before, it was so hot that one could not do without a fan. And without drinking water over and over again it was not possible to be at ease. One would drink water and lay back only to find oneself thirsty again.

Subhaanallah! What wonderful blessings are to be found in Ramadhaan! With the commencement of Ramadhaan cool

breezes began to blow. It can be likened to quinine, which is extremely bitter, however, the pill is coated with sugar so that the taste of the quinine is not felt and one can benefit by its intake. If it was left bitter, then too one would have had to take it [if one was sick with malaria].

However, don't entertain the notion that if the cool winds continue to blow then we will fast; otherwise, we are excused from fasting. You have been given the right start. Now continue. If the winds do not blow then too it is a Rahmat so that one appreciates that *sarraa* [ease, comfort] in *dharraa* [difficulty] and one exercises patience (sabr).

Understand this with the example of food. Some foods are best served cold, such as dessert, etc., whilst some are preferred hot, e.g. pilaau, qorma, etc...

Be that as it may, whatever He confers is Rahmat, whether cold or hot.

In the Presence of the Beloved

Similarly, the position designated to Namaaz is special presence in the Court of Allah Ta'ala. And the right of this presence is:

*“O Hafiz (Shirazi)! If you desire (lasting) presence,
then do not be neglectful of Him for even a moment.*

*When you meet the one you love,
then leave the Dunya and forget about it.”*

Really, it is a simple matter. Make your intention and stand in Namaaz. Truly, whoever has felt the touch of Allah Ta'ala's love, what worry does he have of cold and heat?

“In love bitter things turn sweet.”

The condition of lovers is:

*“What a wonderful moment it is for those stricken with His
thought,
whether He sees the wound or the bandage.
These are dervishes who loathe to be rulers.
Longing for Him they exercise patience over poorness.
Constantly they consume the drink of tribulation.
And if they taste some bitterness, they don’t voice their
dissatisfaction.”*

It is only a matter of enduring slight discomfort in Namaaz.

The gist [of the poem] is that they have observed Allah Ta’ala in two ways—in His attribute of Awesomeness and His attribute of Beauty.

*“We do not complain of the separation of the Friend (because),
if there was no absence then the presence would not bring
pleasure.”*

The Illustrious Auliya-ullah would have as their outstanding trait, shukr [gratitude] in even times of difficulty, for circumstances could have been worse.

Moulana [Roomi Rahmatullahi alaih] says:

*“If you are overcome with (spiritual) depression
then look at it as rejuvenation,
(as rejuvenation is much more complete and satisfying after
depression).
Be happy and don’t knit your brow.”*

They do not become agitated over depression as depression is precisely rejuvenation. [It is like the wash and scrub to cleanse the body, after which one feels clean and fresh.] To summarize, everything is the Rahmat of Allah Ta’ala.

The Merciful and Loving Prescription of Allah Ta'ala

If a doctor says: “Don’t drink water today, otherwise you will become diabetic.” He may have said for just one day, but as a precaution you will stay away [from water] for two days.

Alas! You attach so much importance to the doctor’s words, and this is the attention showed to Allah Ta’ala’s declaration! No doctor can show such consideration for ease compared to the ease in the treatment of Allah Ta’ala.

If a doctor wishes to put someone on a strict diet, he cannot judge the exact moment or time when the patient should observe the diet and permit the patient before the exact time of need to eat as he [the patient] desires.

In fact, the doctor will, as a precautionary measure, bring the patient to follow the diet well in advance and maintain the diet after the illness is over for quite some time. Whereas here [by Allah Ta’ala] the injunction is given precisely at the time of need. Only at that time is the instruction given to observe abstinence.

To put the cherry on the top, during the period of the abstinence permission has been granted to break the abstinence. In other words, He gave permission for indulging in the nullifying factors [eating, drinking, etc.] during the nights of Ramadhaan.

أَتَمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ

“Fast till the night.”

The characteristic of the nullifying factors has been changed. Now for this period [the night] they cannot be harmful.

It is not even conceivable from the elders of the Greek physicians that in consideration of the patient they change the characteristic of the harmful substance and as long as its characteristic has been changed, they permit its usage.

And when the innate peculiarity of it returned with the permission of Allah Ta'ala, in other words, at daybreak, the order was given to refrain, '*Soomoo*' [Fast] was sounded. Now don't eat and drink.

Perhaps someone may think that the Qur'aan Majeed was revealed hundreds of years ago. Whatever was to be decreed was decreed once. Where is '*Soomoo*' sounded daily [in Ramadhaan]?

The Fuqaha, in fact, were masters. They understood well the nature of this. They say that the cause of the obligation of fasting is witnessing the month [of Ramadhaan]. We are thus commanded implicitly upon witnessing the month, '*Soomoo*'.

Similarly, when the time for Zuhr comes [for example], then we are commanded implicitly with: '*Saloo*' [Read Namaaz]; the reason being that the time of Zuhr is the cause of its obligation.

Yes, the cause of Hajj is the Baitullah and as it has no duplicate, Hajj too is not duplicated, [that is, the Farz Hajj]. And here [in the Fast of Ramadhaan] the causes are repeated. Hence their effects are also repeated although you may not perceive it.

Make your ear like theirs and you will also hear at the time of every Zuhr '*Saloo*' and every day of Ramadhaan '*Soomoo*'.

This is precisely what Aarif-e-Roomi (Alaihir Rahmah) says:

“Take the wool out of your ears, so that you can hear the call of Irji’ee (Return to your Rabb with you pleased with Him and He pleased with you).”

And Aarif-e-Shirazi says:

“Since the Day in eternity ‘Alastu’ is ringing in the ears of those Illustrious Souls.

Therefore, they make a hue and cry with the Word of Affirmation.”

From the back of Aadam (Alaihis Salaam) Allah Ta’ala took out his progeny, and from their backs their progeny and so forth until the entire human race was gathered before Allah Ta’ala Who then called out: “Am I not your Rabb?” اَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ

All the creatures gathered responded emphatically: بَلَى “Certainly You are”.

In the aforementioned poem Aarif-e-Shirazi speaks of that covenant and it is known as ‘Ahd-e-Alast’.

‘Alastu bi Rabbikum’ that was said in eternity has not ceded. Similarly, the ‘Salloo’ and ‘Soomoo’ have not stopped. They live on today and will continue to remain alive. Those with fine perception perceive them and they become happy. This being proven, the notion of the command not being continuous thus falls away.

In summary, what loving care does Allah Ta’ala have for us! He told us to observe abstinence, for a short time, however.

اَتَمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ

“Fast till the night”

A doctor is powerless over exercising such ease, as he [the doctor] can only point out benefit and harm, whereas Allah Ta’ala

is the Originator of benefit and harm. As long as He wishes He keeps an object beneficial and when He wishes He makes it harmful.

How much consideration does Allah Ta'ala give to you! He has established a department of benefit and harm. Something remains beneficial at night and in the morning it becomes harmful. For the whole day it remains harmful. At night it becomes beneficial once again.

One is this Rahmat [Mercy]. Then this Shafqat [Loving Care] that when the particular thing becomes harmful, He makes incumbent [Farz] abstention from it. This then is the point underlying:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ

“Fasting has been decreed upon you.”

Why Has Fasting Been Made Incumbent Upon You?

Further He states: لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ “so that you become Allah-fearing.”

Why has fasting been made incumbent upon you? It makes you hopeful of becoming Allah-fearing.

This translation dispels the objection that لَعَلَّ is used to signify doubt and expectation. When Allah Ta'ala has knowledge of everything then why did He use a word signifying doubt? The actual meaning is that fasting has been made incumbent for you to hope that you become Allah-fearing. In other words, fast and have hope of becoming Allah-fearing.

Here too, hope is in the form of the idea that by fasting you will become Allah-fearing. There is no certainty. This too is the exquisite way of Allah Ta'ala. If He declared: “Be sure that you will become Allah-fearing,” then after fasting we would become proud of our piety. This in turn would totally distance us from Allah, as ‘naaz’ [sense of pride] and ‘niyaaz’ [sense of dependence which is what Allah Ta'ala wishes to see in His servants], do not combine.

It is as stated in regard to the Sahaabah:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا.

“Allah has promised those who have brought faith and have practised righteous deeds among them, forgiveness and a grand reward.”

Here He said مِنْهُمْ [among them]. If He did not say مِنْهُمْ then the sense of dependence borne by them would not have been there. A short word was included, and it made a world of difference.

For this reason, Buzrugs do not prefer ‘naaz’. They prefer ‘niyaaz’.

Hazrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) was so much overwhelmed by niyaaz that not withstanding: عُمَرُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ “Umar will be in Jannat” having been declared, he would ask Hazrat Huzaifah (Radhiyallahu anhu) who was the acclaimed knower of confidential reports from Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam): “Did Rasulullah mention my name among the Munaafiqeen [hypocrites]?”

Truly: *“I do not prefer you to be with even a shadow.
It is love and with-it thousands of suspicions.”*

Whoever died, Hazrat Umar would only join the Janaazah when he saw Hazrat Huzaifah going along.

In fact, who is the Beloved? His attribute is:

لَا يُسْتَأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْتَأْلَوْنَ.

“He is not questioned about what He does; rather they are the ones who are questioned.”

مِنْهُمْ was thus added, so that the Sahaabah attain this quality [of *niyaaaz*]. Proximity is not the lot of those with *naaz*. Proximity [to Allah] is the lot of those with *niyaaaz*.

For this reason, all the Ambiya were *Ahl-e-Niyaaaz*. Incomplete Buzrugs however tend to display *naaz*.

Once in Saharanpur there was a downpour. A *Majzoob* [Saint effectively under his spiritual state] said: “Stop! Stop! Are you going to kill us?” The rain immediately stopped.

He was a *saahib-e-haal* [one overcome with a spiritual condition]. It does not behove a *non saahib-e-haal* to say something like that.

*“For openness one requires a countenance like that of a rose
(i.e., one should be adored).*

*If you do not have, then don't be disrespectful (by being
unreserved).”*

Even the Ambiya cannot utter such words. However, there is a great difference in the rank of the two. *Majzoobs* are like small children who lack understanding. Even if they pull the father's beard, neither will the father be unhappy and nor is it viewed to be disrespectful in custom.

The Ambiya on the other hand are like intelligent elder sons. The elder son cannot dare to put his hand on the father's beard.

However, the closeness which he has to the father, the young child can never have because the mature son is an aid to the father.

Similarly, a Majzooob can never have that proximity which a Saalik [sober disciple of Tasawwuf] possesses.

In short, all the Ambiya--and Hazrat Umar-- not withstanding the glad tidings given to them, were in a state of uneasiness. This then is the wisdom underlying the augmentation of مِنْهُمْ. Allah Ta'ala wishes to see a display of dependence, not pride. Similarly, here too [in the matter of fasting] لَعَلَّكُمْ was said so that no one takes Allah Ta'ala to be indebted.

The math-hab [doctrine] of the Ahl-e-Sunnat [followers of mainstream Islam—the four math-habs of Haq, viz. Hanafi, Shaafi'i, Maaliki and Hambali] is: لَا يَجِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ شَيْءٌ “Nothing is obligatory on Allah Ta'ala.”

According to us [the Ahl-e-Sunnat] nothing is obligatory upon Allah Ta'ala, and wherever: حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ “It is a right due by Allah Ta'ala” appears in the Nusoos [clear texts of the Qur'aan and Hadeeth] it signifies: ‘similar to a right’. In other words, Allah Ta'ala will fulfil it in a manner befitting of an obligation.

In short, whatever He does is meritorious. Kufr [infidelity] is also His creation. Creating kufr is also meritorious, although its perpetration is despicable. The reason for this is that in creating kufr there are all sorts of wisdom and in perpetrating kufr there is no wisdom.

*“In the factory of love kufr is also manufactured.
Who would the Fire burn, if there was no infidel?”*

If there was no kufr the world would have been incomplete, akin to a beautiful mansion without a toilet. It is obviously incomplete.

At this juncture understand this as well that when there is wisdom in creating the actions of others, then to a far greater degree is there wisdom in His actions.

In any case, to show that no one has a right over Allah Ta'ala لَعَلَّ was added. Now the meaning is: "You can expect taqwa."

This was the introduction. Unintentionally it has become lengthy. Nevertheless, many important and beneficial things were mentioned.

Now I am going to speak on the topic which is the aim of the bayaan. لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ [so that you people abstain] requires an object.

Either its object is النَّارَ [Hellfire] or الْمَعَاصِيَ [sins]. The purport of both, however, is the same because for abstention from Hellfire it is necessary to first of all abstain from sins. Similarly, by abstaining from sins it is possible to abstain from Hellfire.

Now if someone asks as to how *Taqwa* comes about through fasting, then we will reply that saving oneself from Hellfire was through the medium of abstaining from sins (*Taqwa anil ma'aasi*). As to the role fasting plays in abstention from sins the answer is that it is the characteristic of fasting.

Accordingly, experience it and see for yourself. People who prior to Ramadhaan were steeped in fisq and fujoor [flagrant transgression and wanton sins], in Ramadhaan they certainly cut down. They read Namaaz and even start to make Tilaawat. As long as they are engaged in Ibaadat [worship] they are safe from those sins.

The Effect of Fasting in Abstention from Sins— Another Explanation

This was one answer to the question of what role does fasting play in abstention from sins. There is another answer which has a popular explanation, and one which Allah Ta'ala has inspired into my heart through His Fazl.

The popular explanation which Imam Ghazaali and others have written is that the bestiality of man decreases through fasting. This is due to the fact that [in fasting] one has to leave one's pleasures and desires which in the first place gave rise to sins.

The explanation which comes to my heart is absolutely untarnished, whereas this one is tarnished, in that what decrease is there in indulgence in desires and pleasures?

We ask whether it is permissible to eat to one's fill at night and engage in conjugal rights with the wife, or not? If it is permissible [as is obvious] then the bestiality did not decrease at all, as many people eat so much at night that they are filled for, not a day, a day and a half!

Fasting will only be beneficial on the basis of that explanation if, similar to the day, a person does not indulge in eating and drinking during the night.

And if you say it is not permissible then it militates against the Nass [explicit command of the Shariat]. This is the tarnish for which senior people had to resort to a new and baseless view, that is, eat less during the night. Otherwise, in their opinion, the purpose of fasting is defeated.

This explanation [of theirs] ostensibly appears to be appealing and better. However, in actual fact it is far from the truth. The question is: Has it been encouraged anywhere to eat less during the fasting month or not? If it has, then where? In spite of much investigation, we did not find it anywhere. As a matter of fact, we have found the contrary:

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ

“Eat and drink until the first light of dawn appears.”

And the Ahadeeth speaking on the virtue of reduction in food are general. They cannot be restricted to fasting.

The question is: What proof is there of reduction in food being especially applicable to the Fasting Month? It has to be said that there is no encouragement for this in the Nass. This is merely an analogical deduction. This raises the point that such an important issue is missing in the teachings of the Nabi!!!

Yes, the doubt can be dispelled from the explanation of the Jumhoor [majority Ulama] in this way that the breaker of man’s bestiality is not reduction in food. Rather, the breaker of man’s bestiality is Mujaahadah or leaving a habit.

The temperament was accustomed to humours forming from food at a certain time. Now that there is no food coming during that time the bestiality is inevitably broken. This [explanation] seems correct.

We, accordingly, witness it too that regardless of excess indulgence in food during the nights, in Ramadhaan, a degree of weakness overcomes one. This is furthermore the basis for fasting prescribed for one not in the means to marry. Now, one does not have to aver that less eating should take place during the nights of

Ramadhaan otherwise the purpose will be defeated. This averment does not seem to be correct.¹

The second explanation [to the role fasting plays in the abstention of sins] Allah Ta'ala has inspired into my heart through the Barkat of those illustrious seniors. It has as basis for the role of fasting in abstention from sins something else.

It is just as punishment is sounded in many places [in the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth] for kufr and shirk [infidelity and polytheism]—abstention from which is obligatory—whereas the actual punishment does not feature in abstention from kufr and shirk. The thought of punishment features; thinking of what the punishment will be like causes one to abandon kufr and shirk. Similarly, thinking of the nature of fasting features in abstention from sins.

The gist of the popular explanation is that fasting is a condition whereby one is saved from sins, and the gist of this explanation is that fasting is such a concept that thinking of its condition saves one from sins.

Whoever's intelligence is sound should ponder over the nature of fasting. What is it? The nature of fasting is: not eating, not drinking and not engaging in conjugal rights with the wife. One will understand that these things were halaal. When these have been made Haraam then things which were Haraam before, how grave do they become?

¹ In this regard, it appears in *Hujjatullahil Baalighah* in the Chapter of Fasting: “Then there are two ways to reduce intake of food and drink. The first is to consume little and the second is to lengthen the duration between meals to more than the usual duration. In the Sharaa'i [Commands of the Deen] the latter is considered, not the former.” (p. 242)

Then one will think: It is shameless, that I abstain from things which were halaal and involve myself in Haraam!

Now if he eats to his fill at night then too the benefit of fasting is not lost because he can eat as much as he wishes without that thought and sense of shame being wiped out; the thought that when Halaal things have been made Haraam then what must the position of Haraam be?

In fact, his eating at night is in effect not eating because he eats at night so that he does not eat during the day; he drinks so that he does not drink during the day; he has conjugal relations with his wife so that he can abstain during the day.

In short, since his eating is for abstaining then in effect that eating is also not eating. So, at night too he abstains (in effect) and during the day too he abstains (in reality). Now the doubt is dispelled that when he loads his stomach at night like a rifle loaded with gunpowder then what benefit is there in fasting.

To summarize, this is the period in which certain things have been declared Haraam despite being Halaal; during the day, as a matter of fact, and during the night as a matter of effect. This produces the thought in the mind: “O Nafs! What must be the position of Haraam things?” In this way he will have shame and for the whole Ramadhaan he will remain aloof from sin.

The Chillah of Ramadhaan

Then he will become accustomed and able to leave sins since a month is a substantial period. Particularly the last ten days when apart from the Ibaadats of Siyaam and Qiyaam [Fasting and Taraaweeh] there are other acts of Ibaadat as well.

In the day there is I'tikaaf [taking up seclusion in the Masjid] and at night, compared to other nights, more Ibaadat is rendered in consideration for the last ten nights, more so the nights of Qadr [21st, 23rd, 25th ...].

Thus, lawful acts are then reduced even more. These ten days thus substitute twenty days. So, in this exquisite way a *Chillah* [forty-day period of abstinence] was brought to completion. The days are thirty, however, forty days work is done.

Subhaanallah! What Rahmat! If a physician does that—that is, he administers two purgatives in one day—then instead of benefiting it will be exceptionally harmful. In fact, it will put the patient's life at stake. Here, a forty-day prescription has been administered in thirty days in such a way that you were not even aware of it. In any case, forty days are completed.

And *Chillah* is such a phenomenon that it comes in the Hadeeth in regard to it:

مَنْ أَخْلَصَ لِلَّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا الْحَدِيثَ

which means that whoever devotes forty days for the sake of Allah, Allah Ta'ala will make fountains of wisdom cascade from his heart.

Some Buzrugs have included ten days of Sha'baan to complete forty days. That, however, is the work of the courageous.

This *Chillah* will only be beneficial, however, when one really has *khuloos* [that is, a sincere desire to do it]. Otherwise, its parable will be that of a person who was told by someone: "Read Namaaz." The person replied: "What will you give me?" The first person replied: "If you read for forty consecutive days I will give you a water-buffalo [which is a major asset for rural-dwellers in the Indo-Pak sub-continent]."

When forty days passed, he said: “Bring my water-buffalo.” The other person replied: “What water-buffalo? I just said like that.” The person retorted: “Go! I even paid no attention and read without wuzu.”

That will thus be the condition if there is no *khuloos*. If there is, then this will be the condition:

‘I heard a wayfarer in some land, saying this riddle to his friend.’

In other words, a Saalik was saying:

‘O Sufi! Liquor will only be pure when it matures for forty days in a bottle.’

By liquor is meant love, and by bottle the heart.

In the *Mu-tamarul Ansaar Convention* in Meerath there were many secular-educated people present. I said: “You people have adopted a bad programme for solving your doubts. Doubts are not dispelled in that way. If you truly wish to solve your queries, then for forty days go to an expert whom you have confidence in and prepare a list of your queries. Present this list to him.

During this [forty-day] period if any new query comes to your mind include it in the list, but do not say anything verbally. For forty days sit in his company and listen to his talks. I declare with trust in Allah that without him answering your questions [directly] all your queries will be removed. Thereafter, you won’t be caught up in such doubts. And if any doubt prevails, it will immediately be expelled upon asking.”

One newspaper editor was also present in the convention. He said to me: “I told them: ‘Now what do you people have to say? Bring forth your objection? They replied: ‘We can only object when the contrary is proven through experience. And stating before first-hand experience is to display our foolishness.’ I then posed them

the question: ‘Okay! Tell me if that appeals to you people?’ They replied: ‘Yes it appeals. It appears to be the truth.’

This is our final answer. The argument of Allah is complete. Now if anyone does not remove his doubts then we [the Ulama] cannot be blamed.

If a doctor says: “Stay in Shimla [a resort town] for two months. The climate here does not agree with you.” Instead of two months, you will be prepared to spend four months there. And here you do not have the time to spend forty days! The actual reason is that removing the malady [of objection to the teachings of the Deen] is not the intention. It is mere talk. They in fact run away from the causes of the malady.

A friend of mine—Molvi Isa Sahib—was studying BA in Allahabad [Allahabad]. He would attend my lectures. Allah Ta’ala showed such grace that the lectures left a deep impression on him. Some student colleagues of his would also come. Observing his changing condition, they said to themselves: “Don’t attend the lectures, otherwise he [Hazrat Thanwi] will make us useless like he has made him [Molvi Isa Sahib].”

Allahu Akbar! They consider becoming Isa to be useless and prefer to become Dajjal! Do they know what this ‘uselessness’ is all about? It is this:

*“Understand well that whoever Allah Rabbul Izzat calls,
he ceases to be of use in all worldly pursuits.”*

This ‘idleness’ and ‘deprivation from progress’ [in mundane affairs], is like you have a cook who receives a monthly salary of five rupees. The cook knows how to cook exquisite dishes and incidentally he is very much attached to you.

A friend of yours came as a guest. You served him meals prepared by that cook. He enjoyed it and was very pleased. He asked who cooked the food. You took the name of your cook.

This friend of yours quietly spoke to the cook to go along with him and be his cook for a salary of ten rupees per month. The cook refuses saying: “These five rupees I am receiving is better than your ten rupees.” Thereafter you came to know that he turned down an offer of ten rupees monthly employment preferring to make do with your five rupees. Be honest and say whether you will be pleased with the cook’s faithfulness or you will be displeased? Will you say: “Why doesn’t he progress?”

Your opinion, that is, your advice to progress requires that he takes the ten rupees offer and quit working for you for five rupees. However, in this instance you too will appreciate his decision not to ‘progress’ and you will feel like rewarding and honouring him.

This is precisely what the Moulanas say. Like that cook, quit the entire world then you will see what progress is. [‘Quitting the world’ simply means giving Deen first preference. Where there is a clash between the Ahkaam of Allah Ta’ala and our mundane interests we are called upon to be faithful to our Creator and Cherisher. This, simply, is ‘quitting the world’.]

“He (Allah) takes half (i.e., an incomplete and deficient) life and gives back hundreds of lives.

(In fact) you cannot even imagine what He gives.

Who can match that investment, where in lieu of one flower you receive a whole flower-garden?”

And what can be greater than this, that He gives everything and He Himself becomes yours! So, my friend, that is how ‘useless’ they become!!!

Another friend of mine, also a BA and a District Superintendent, became an Allah Wala [a Man of Allah]. A relative of his said that I [Hazrat Thanwi] will be called to answer on the Day of Qiyaamah for stopping people from progress. I replied: “If I require help there [in the Aakhirat] then let him not come to my aid.”

In short, these forty days hold amazing peculiarities. A person thus abstains from sin for forty days.

Another possible explanation of how these forty days are completed is that during Ramadhaan every person makes a point to wake up for Sehri and generally it is a practice to read some Nafl Namaaz at that time. So, approximately a third of the night is spent in the state of being awake. $30 \times \frac{1}{3}$ gives us 10 days. Thus, this 10 plus 30 is equal to 40.

Or you may say that this ten is in effect, and the one mentioned earlier was also in effect. If they are not equal to ten in actual fact, then certainly equal to its half, that is five. Thus, five of the last ten days and five of the latter part of each night plus the actual thirty days gives us forty days.

Which ever way you look at it, a *Chillah* is complete. Forty days is a substantial period, and its peculiarity is that an act carried out for this entire period becomes easy. Furthermore, being a substantial period, one becomes accustomed and able to carry it out regularly. Therefore, لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ easily follows.

The Essence of Fasting

The point underlying abstention from sins based upon both explanations is *Mujaahadah* [to struggle and strive against the dictates of the nafs], whether you look at it in this way that fasting is the means of bestiality being broken which is the means of abstention from sins, or you look at it in this way that the concept of fasting in the mind is the means of leaving sins. That is when a person bears in mind that lawful acts have been prohibited, thus the position of unlawful acts should be much worse.

Be that as it may, *Mujaahadah* is the means of abstention from sins. Thus, fasting takes the role of abstention from sins because it is *Mujaahadah*. This characteristic is such that it should be called *the essence of fasting*. And that is what I wish to speak about today.

Mujaahadah—Its Virtue, Nature and Acquisition

In brief, two things I wish to speak on. One is that the object or the essence of fasting is *Mujaahadah*, which has as its cornerstone, abstention from sins. This is precisely what Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) says, that whoever did not abstain from lies during fasting and he did not abstain from nonsensical things Allah is not in need of his fasting.

Like that Allah is not in need of anyone's fast. But the meaning is that the object of fasting—abstentions from sins—when that was not exercised, then of what worth was the fast?

Allah Ta'ala speaks on the virtue of *Mujaahadah*. He asserts:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

**“Those who make Mujaahadah in Our path, most certainly
We guide them to Us.”**

He has also commanded it:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ

**“O Believers! Fear Allah, search for means of proximity to
Him and make Mujaahadah in His path.”**

He has also explained its nature:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَهَمَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى...

**“And one who fears the appearance before his Rabb and
restrains the nafs from desire...”**

In other words, the nature of Mujaahadah is: هَمَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى
“restraining the nafs from desire”,

and the course of action to follow in acquiring it is: وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ
“fearing the appearance before Allah Ta’ala.”

If you say that by Mujaahadah in the Aayaat [Verses] of Mujaahadah is meant Mujaahadah against the kuffaar, then my friend, I will say that you are perhaps unaware of what is stated in the Hadeeth Shareef:

الْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ

**“The Mujaahid is one who wages Jihaad against his carnal
desires.”**

Engaging in outward Mujaahadah [Jihaad on the battlefield] is very simple.

*“O King (and Lord of Glory)! We have killed the outside enemy.
However, the enemy within which is much more evil is still alive.
Defeating him is not the work of the intellect and the senses.*

The lion inside (the nafs) cannot be tamed by a rabbit (the intelligence).”

We have killed the outside enemy, yet we are oblivious of the enemy within us! As a matter of fact, Mujaahadah with the nafs is the greater Jihaad and Mujaahadah with the slaves of the nafs [i.e., the kuffaar] is a lesser Jihaad, because restraining the nafs from sins and opposing its dictates is a tough operation.

The Three Stages of Opposing the Nafs

And you should know that there are three stages to opposing the nafs:

1. opposition in sins
2. opposition in pleasures
3. opposition in rights

Opposition in sins is Farz and Waajib and opposition in rights is transgression, as will be explained in a short while. Opposition in pleasures, however, requires some explanation.

Total abandonment is reprehensible. However, reduction is good. Total abandonment will place undue burden on the nafs and the possibility of it giving up all work exists. Therefore, do not burden it unduly and nor be totally lavish with it. Adopt moderation.

There is another subtle reason for not abandoning pleasures altogether, and it is that one will develop love for Allah Ta’ala. See! If you drink hot water, then *Alhamdulillah* will come out from an unwilling tongue. And if you drink cool water then *Alhamdulillah* will emanate from every pore of your body.

Our Hazrat would say that this is precisely the reason why it is necessary to take along provisions for the journey of Haj. The nafs should not be troubled. Hence, Moulana Gangohi would make special arrangements for cool water.

Someone said to Mirza Mazhar Jaan-e-Jaana that a certain person does not eat pure gravy. He mixes water to it and eats in this way [as a form of abstinence]. Mirza Mazhar Saheb replied: “That person is unaccomplished [in Sulook]. The distinct manifestation of Allah Ta’ala in the pure [gravy], where is it in the watery [gravy]?”

The point here is that by eating wholesome gravy one will feel pleased and shukr [gratitude] will emanate from every pore. Manifestation does not mean [in Mirza Mazhar’s statement] vision. It means perception.

This same perception is that by virtue of which [we perceive that] Allah Ta’ala manifests Himself in His speech [the Qur’aan-e-Kareem]. It is the same perception by virtue of which [we perceive that] He manifests Himself in His bounties. Observe Him in His speech. Observe Him in His bounties.

A narrative comes to mind. Zaibun Nisaa [the daughter of Aalamgeer Rahmatullahi alaih] used to write anonymous poems. She was an accomplished poetess. She joined a hemistich to the hemistich of the king of Iran. The hemistich [of the king] was such that no one could add to it.

The king wrote to Aalamgeer who was in Delhi to send the poet who completed the poem.

Aalamgeer was in a quandary. He said to Zaibun Nisaa: “Carry on adding hemstitches! Look at the consequence.”

Zaibun Nisaa wrote a poem saying: “Send this in reply:
*If the nightingale sees me in the garden of flowers,
it will turn away from the flowers.
If a Brahman sees me,
he will leave his idol-worship.
I am concealed in my speech,
like the fragrance of the flower in its petals.
Therefore, whoever wishes to see me,
let him look at my speech.”*

The king understood that the hemistich was written by some female.

Similarly, if you wish to see Allah Ta’ala, look at His speech.
*“O Recognizer of the Truth! Do you know what the Qur’aan is?
It is the exhibition of the Lord of mankind before the human
race.”*

Similarly, observe Allah Ta’ala in His bounties. In short, do not totally abandon delights.

The third is opposition in rights [of the body]. Opposition to the nafs in this is Haraam. For instance, it is necessary to eat that much whereby one does not become weak, and it is necessary to sleep that much whereby one does not become lethargic.

I tell my friends to sleep eight hours. If you do not sleep that much, then the minimum amount of sleep should be six hours. Sleeping less than that could result in the brains becoming ‘dry’ and thereafter brain damage will set in. This then is the explanation of Mujaahadah.

Mujaahadah Appropriate to This Age

Mujaahadah, actually, entails four things:

1. reduction in food
2. reduction in sleep
3. reduction in speech
4. reduction in association with people

The first two, however, have been discarded now. The latter two remain. One is reduction in speech and the other is reduction in association with people; that is, meeting less.

Nowadays the condition of people is such that they sit in lounges and sitting rooms gossiping about all and sundry. They pass their time in newspaper reading; sometimes playing chess; sometimes cards. Alas! These people do not treasure their free time. Whereas they should understand that:

“What a wonderful life for that individual whose cravings are a handful!

Livelihood to the degree of necessity is required. Then let a man do what he has to do.”

In short, people squander their time in this manner.

The two [forms of Mujaahadah] that have been discarded are reduction in eating and reduction in sleep. In other words, eating less and sleeping less. That is to say that you have full permission to eat to your fill. Don't eat less. Eat to your fill, but do not overeat, as this stage transgresses the stage of eating to your fill.

One is filling the stomach and the other is satisfying one's greed. Don't satisfy your greed as this is of no benefit. The food does not digest. At the following meal one will not be hungry. One will feel lethargic. The food will not be assimilated into the body.

Some people eat so much that there remains no place in the stomach for even air. One person came to Moulana Faizul Hasan Saheb who was a physician as well. He said: “Give me a prescription for my stomach-ache.” Moulana wrote a prescription. The person replied: “Hazrat! How am I going to take the medication when there remains not even place for a morsel of food in my stomach after eating?”

There is a narrative of a miser who overate out of greed for a sumptuous meal. His stomach started aching. He thus went to the hakeem. The hakeem replied: “Put your finger in your mouth and take out the food.” The miser replied: “So delicious pilau with so much ghee and flavoured with such aromatic saffron! How can I spew it out?”

Be that as it may, eat to your fill and then stop. Yes, if you eat a morsel or two less, that is better. The benefit is that you will have true hunger at the next meal and whatever you eat will be assimilated into the body. Then there won't be a need for advice on whether to eat or not.

So, if you stop short of a morsel or two then for the next meal there will be no need to pass a bill, whether to eat or not. In any case, eat well. Don't starve yourself, as nowadays physical health has deteriorated considerably.

People of former times were very strong. The reason for that was that they would marry after the period of growth. Their lifespan would be greater as a result. [In other words, they would not ruin their health in their youth. Hence, they would be physically strong and healthy.] Now to eat less, drink less in weakness is to kill yourself.

One friend of ours started to eat less on his own accord. When he saw the harm, he made Taubah [he repented].

This type of Mujaahadah should thus be discarded. Do, however, inculcate the habit of meeting less and speaking less.

The summary of this discussion is that abstaining from sins and adopting solitude by which reduction in talk is also acquired, is a major asset. For experience try it out. Simply adopt solitude. Stop speaking and stop sins as well. Then, Insha Allah, you will acquire *Nisbat-e-Baatini* [a spiritual bond with Allah Ta'ala]. It won't matter then if you make very little Zikr.

On the other hand, if you make a lot of Zikr, but you do not adopt solitude and reduction in speech, then you will never gain this *Nisbat*.

One Buzrug adopted an amazing procedure for solitude. He would engage himself in Nawaafil. If someone came, they had to wait. After Salaam the Buzrug would briefly enquire of the person's wellbeing and then engage himself in Namaaz once again. Following this procedure, automatically less people came to him. No one took offence and fame for being a recluse was averted.

One Buzrug did this: when anyone would say anything he would tell them: "Write it and give me the paper for I have a problem in hearing." Who is going to write futile things? In this manner, he would remain safe from listening to stories, tales, gossip and backbiting.

Another Buzrug's approach was to totally abstain from speech during the day. The idea behind that was that idle talkers would not give up their rest at night to come and speak.

In short, there are many possible ways to adopt solitude. If you are accomplished [in Tasawwuf] then you may devise your own plan. Otherwise consult with the Shaikh.

Excessive speech leads to major evils. Sometimes the tongue gossips about someone; sometimes it complains about someone and sometimes it speaks ill about someone.

*“The heart inside the body becomes dead through futile expression,
even though your words may be like the pearls of Eden.”*

No matter how beautiful speech it may be, if it is unnecessary, it will sully the heart. Even a *wa'z*, if it comprises of inessential points the result is the same. And if you associate less then there is no need to strive for less speech independently as it will be achieved automatically.

In short, Mujaahadah appropriate to this age is simply: meet less, speak less and indulge less in pleasures some what.

And don't be so extreme like one *durwaish* ate musk melon in front of me and said: “After sixteen years I am eating now.” Our Hazrat would eat everything. ² Once, some grapes came from somewhere. He shared all and said: “This has come out of *Hubb Fillah* [Love for the sake of Allah]. By eating it, *Noor* will settle in the heart.”

It appears in the Hadeeth Shareef: “*Eat and drink whatever you wish, as long as you avoid Haraam.*” So, eat and drink

² That was the time when foods were wholesome, natural and generally halaal. We find ourselves in times when unwholesome, unnatural, harmful and Haraam foods are the order of the day, and the general public are utterly negligent in this regard. It is, therefore, essential that we observe extra caution in matters pertaining to food and drink, as a healthy Imaan and Deen rests on it.

everything, but abstain from Haraam.³ This is balanced Mujaahadah.

Mujaahadah after Ramadhaan

In any case, Mujaahadah is the essence of fasting. Even after Ramadhaan adopt a Mujaahadah for that period which shares the same relation with this Mujaahadah [of Ramadhaan]. However, be a bit circumspect, as often Shaitaan embroils a person in transgression through obedience.

For example, there is a person on whom Haj is not *farz*. Shaitaan agitates the person to carry out this Mujaahadah. Then when this person sets out for Haj his first pitfall is discarding of Jamaat [congregational prayer]. Thereafter Namaaz starts to be neglected. Thereafter dissatisfaction in the heart for Allah Ta'ala is felt due to the hardships of the journey. It finally leads to kufr. For such Hujjaaj [Pilgrims] Shaikh Mas'ood (Rahmatullahi alaihi) said:

*“O People going for Haj! Where are you heading?
The Beloved is here. Come! Come!”*

These are people who do not find the Beloved in Haj because their Beloved is here. [In other words, they omit a greater and more pressing virtue, like going to a Shaikh of Tasawwuf for their islaah, for a lesser one, like Nafl Haj and Umrah.]

It is, therefore, befitting that one asks the Shaikh. The Shaikh knows well the schemes of Shaitaan:

فَإِنَّ فَعِيَهَا وَاحِدًا مُتَوَرِّعًا أَشَدُّ عَلَى الشَّيْطَانِ مِنْ أَلْفِ عَابِدٍ

***“For a single devout Faqeeh,
is sterner on the Devil than a thousand worshippers.”***

³ Haraam brings within its purview harmful foods as consuming harmful foods is also Haraam. Understand this point well.

The reason for this sternness is that Shaitaan puts a thought in the mind and with great difficulty he impregnates it in the mind. The Shaikh is alerted to this evil scheme and exposes it. Shaitaan is thus left defeated. His years of planning are foiled. For such people Shaitaan was always in despair. Hence, he said:

لَأَعْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ.

“I will most assuredly mislead all of them, besides Your chosen servants among them.”

There should be no cause for concern that since Shaitaan is their enemy what tremendous harm he will cause to them! The point is that if Shaitaan is their enemy then too he is powerless against them. He is like a melon, and they are like knives.

If the knife falls on the melon it will cut the melon and even if the melon falls on the knife, then too the melon will be cut. Similarly, if Shaitaan is the enemy of the Ahlullah he only harms himself.

In any case, the operation of Mujaahadah is very delicate. Therefore, enquire from someone who knows.

I had two things to mention in this bayaan. One is: Stay away from sin during Ramadhaan, take to solitude, meet less with people and speak less.

The second is that you should continue your Mujaahadah after Ramadhaan. Don't stop at Ramadhaan. Then, after the fast it will be like you are still fasting. This is supported by the words of Buzrugs, for they have declared non-fasting also to be fasting. Accordingly, Namaaz which is said to be the epitome of Ibaadah and Mujaahadah, has been declared to be in effect fasting, in view of there being no eating and drinking in it.

In a *Hadeeth-e-Marfoo'* [a Hadeeth whose chain extends to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)] it appears:

سِيَاحَةُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ الصِّيَامُ كَذَا أَخْرَجَ ابْنُ مَرْدُويَه

“The siyaahat of this Ummat is Siyaam (fasting).”

‘*Siyaahat*’ actually means travelling. In this regard the Tafseer of ‘*saa-iheen*’ [travellers] has been given to be ‘*muhaajireen*’ [migrators].

In a simile fasting has been declared to be a journey of migration, and apparently, the reason for this simile is difficulty and struggle [Mujaahadah]. From this, it is clear that the essence of fasting is Mujaahadah.

It has thus been narrated from Ibn Uyainah:

إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ الصَّائِمُ سَائِحًا لِتَرْكِهِ اللَّذَاتِ كُلَّهَا مِنَ الْمَطْعَمِ وَالْمَشْرَبِ وَالنِّكَاحِ

“The Saaim (fasting person) has been called Saa-ih (traveller) simply in view of his abstention from all pleasures, namely food, drink and sexual intercourse.”

In another Hadeeth-e-Marfoo’ it appears:

سِيَاحَةُ أُمَّتِي الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ رَوَاهُ الْحَاكِمُ

“The siyaahat of my Ummat is Jihaad in the Path of Allah Ta’ala.”

Obviously, two *Marfoo’ Hadeeths* have to be in accord with each other. It is thus even more manifest from this that fasting and Mujaahadah are harmonious and that Mujaahadah is the essence of fasting. In:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“so that you may become Allah fearing,”
this essence of fasting is alluded to.

So, my friends! Neither is this essence found without a body and nor is the body without the soul an essence of any consideration. Therefore, if you fast then do stay away from sins.

The Pleasure of Namaaz and the Zikr of Allah

What do some people do during the fast? Sometimes they play chess; sometimes cards; sometimes music and they say: “We are making the fast enjoyable!” What need is there for you to make the fast enjoyable? The fast is enjoyable in itself. What is the need to make it enjoyable?

If you want similar enjoyment then there is something else, namely: **وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ**.

Make the Zikr of Allah; recite the Qur’aan; read Namaaz. There is so much enjoyment in Namaaz that when the Yahood uttered profanity in regard to the Aayat:

خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ

“**He created the heavens and the earth in six days**”; that [Na’uthu Billah] “after that Allah Ta’ala took a break”, and this hurt Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) deeply, the following Aayat was revealed:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ اُتُوْبٍ.

which means: “**We created the heavens, the earth and everything in between in six days and We did not become tired.**”

To remove the grief Allah Ta’ala said:

فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ

“**Restrain yourself over what they speak.**”

But how can one restrain oneself over such a grave matter? Allah Ta'ala explains the way:

وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ.

“Glorify your Rabb before sunrise and before sunset.”

In other words, engage in Namaaz. Then you won't bother about anyone because when your attention is directed to the Beloved then your mind will not pay attention to anything else. This is because remembrance of Allah is such a thing that with it, one is not aware of any difficulty.

Leave alone other difficulties, the difficulty of death itself which Allah Ta'ala has named 'museebat' [calamity], it too will seem to be nothing.

Accordingly, Hafiz Shirazi says:

*“That will be a joyous day when I leave this desolate place.
I will then gain inner comfort and the company of the Beloved.
I have vowed that when this grief (i.e., this worldly life) comes to
an end,
I will go to the door of eternal bliss (i.e., the door of the Beloved,
Allah) merrily and singing.”*

It is only the Barkat of Zikr that he longs for death and says that, that day is blessed when he moves from this ruined abode.

Someone may perhaps say: “This [his saying] is before actual death. If his condition is like that precisely at death, then we will believe.” Take this, then.

One Buzrug said:

*“The time has come when I will be free of this material body.
Stripped of this body I will become full of vitality.”*

*What is Tauheed? It is to be with Allah Ta'ala alone,
in privacy and in company."*

At the demise of Ibnul Faariz (Rahmatullahi alaih) all eight Jannats were revealed to him. He said:

مَا قَدْ رَأَيْتُ فَقَدْ ضَيَعْتُ أَيَّامِي إِنَّ كَانَ مَنزِلَتِي فِي الْحُبِّ عِنْدَكُمْ

In other words, "If this is the worth of my love then all my efforts were in vain." The Jannats disappeared and the Manifestation of the Desire appeared. With that his rooh [soul] departed and the message bore truth, that:

*"If Malakul Mowt (the Angel of Death) comes to take my life,
then I do not wish to give my soul until I see Your
Countenance."*

This was their condition precisely at the time of death. Now listen to the condition of those Illustrious Souls that became noticeable in the dunya after death.

One Buzrug stated in his bequest that so-and-so mureed of his should recite this poem when his Janaazah is taken, as it will bring joy to his soul. The poem is:

*"We have come (empty-handed) as beggars to Your Boulevard.
For the sake of Allah, share some of the beauty of Your
countenance.*

Stretch Your hand out to our need.

We will pay homage to Your hand and Your arm."

The bequest was carried out. When there are indications of veracity then we understand therefrom that their souls were in a state of joy—joy that materialized in this world. And the joy of the Aakhirat is something apart from this.

Listen to the episode of Sultan Nizaamud Deen (Rahmatullahi alaih). When his Janaazah was being taken along a mureed of his started to recite out of sheer agony:

*“O Our (Beloved Who resembles a) silver tree!
Are you going to the fields?
It is highly inconsiderate for you to go without us.
O One whose countenance is the theatre of the world!
Where are you going for entertainment?”*

It is recorded that his hand emerged from his kafan [burial shroud]. It stopped the mureed from reciting further. Then the hand returned inside the kafan. Allahu Akbar! What composure!

*“Don’t go to the avenue of despondency.
Hopes (by Allah Ta’ala) are plenty.
Don’t go towards darkness.
Here there is much brightness.
That person can never die,
whose heart has come alive with (Divine) love.
Our (the Lovers of Allah Ta’ala’s) eternal life is recorded,
in the journal of the world.”*

They have no grief nor any sorrow. It is the Barkat of that Pure Name [of Allah Ta’ala].

*“Allah! Allah! How sweet is this name!
It has become the milk and sugar of my entire life.”*

So, my friend! Can’t you find enjoyment in this Name? Find your pleasure in it. Thereafter what need will you have of anything else?

*“A person who has recognized You (O Allah)!
What is he going to do with life’s story?
What is he going to do with sons, relatives and family?”*

In other words, his heart will not be attached to them although he will certainly fulfil their rights.

Du'aa

I have said whatever I intended to. Now make du'aa unto Allah Ta'ala that He grants understanding and the towfeeq to practice. Aameen.

Allah Ta'ala asserts in the Qur'aan-e-Kareem:

“O People of Imaan! Fasting has been decreed upon you as it was decreed upon people before you.”

“Those who make Mujaahadah in Our path, most assuredly We guide them to Us.”

“O Believers! Fear Allah, search for means of proximity to Him and make Mujaahadah in His path.”

“And one who fears the appearance before his Rabb and restrains the nafs from desire then verily Jannat is the Abode (for him/her).”

Mujaahadah is the means of abstention from sins. Thus, fasting takes the role of abstention from sins because it is *Mujaahadah*. This characteristic is such that it should be called *the essence of fasting*. And that is what I wish to speak about today.

The object or the essence of fasting is *Mujaahadah*, which has as its cornerstone, abstention from sins. This is precisely what Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) says, that whoever did not abstain from lies during fasting and he did not abstain from nonsensical things Allah is not in need of his fasting. Like that Allah is not in need of anyone's fast. But, the meaning is that the object of fasting—abstentions from sins—when that was not exercised, then of what worth was the fast?