

THE ESSENCE OF TARAAWEEH (Condensed)



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Exordium

You may recall that the previous Jumah I spoke on the essence of fasting and I pointed out a universal rule; that every Ibaadat [Act of Worship] has an appearance and an essence. Accordingly, the essence of fasting is mujaahadah and the gist of mujaahadah is to oppose the nafs [the carnal self; the propensity within a human being urging him to be neglectful of his Creator and incline rather to sensual pleasures].

Although it was not necessary to repeat it, nevertheless I have repeated it in order that we refresh our memories, and in order that the relationship to today's topic becomes evident.

In short, just as fasting has an essence, similarly, every Ibaadat has an essence.

Right now my intention is not to speak on the essence of each and every Ibaadat, as there is neither the need for it and nor the time. I will, however, speak on the essences of those Ibaadaat which are connected to Ramadhaan. Hence, the essence of fasting was discussed in view of it being the major Ibaadat of Ramadhaan. Herewith, those Ibaadaat will be mentioned which are of the special features of Ramadhaan, and each one's special nature is proven from the Nusoos [Qur'aan and Hadeeth].

The Ibaadat of Taraaweeh Namaaz

One Ibaadat is Namaaz and another, Tilaawat of the Qur'aan. Supplemented to these two is a new Namaaz which has been declared Sunnat. Other forms of Ibaadat could also have been advanced [for engagement in the Blessed Month of Ramadhaan]. Advancing Namaaz over the rest teaches us that it has a special relationship with Ramadhaan which no other Ibaadat enjoys. This Namaaz is called Taraaweeh.

Reading Taraaweeh Namaaz is also extremely necessary because it is proven from documental sources that it is encouraged, decreed, practised, desired, intended and praised from the practice of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and furthermore from the persistence of the Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum). For this reason the Muhaqqiqeen [Expert Scholars] have written that it is Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah [a strongly emphasised traditional practice].

Although it is documented that after three nights Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) did not emerge for Taraaweeh saying: "I feared that it would have been made Farz upon you," we learn from this that had there been no fear of a Farz declaration, he would have resolved to emerge [for Taraaweeh Namaaz]. A resolution is tantamount to an action. Thus, in view of his resolution the emphasis on Taraaweeh is further substantiated, just as it is substantiated by practice. This is one explanation of it being Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah, and considering its keynote it is a new explanation.

The popular explanation of it [being Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah] is that there are two types of regular practices; one, *actual* and the second, *in effect*. *Actual regular practice* is the perceivable constancy of an act. Examples are the Sunnats of Zuhr, the Sunnats of Fajr.

Regular practice in effect is when an act is rendered in a manner which shows that its permanency is desired. Accordingly, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) emerged for two, three nights and thereafter he never. Thereupon he said to the Sahaabah: “I was aware of everyone’s presence. However, I never came lest it becomes Farz on you. In that case, if you do not carry it out, you will become sinful.”

This does not mean that we have leeway, i.e. “It is not Farz, so why must we go through the trouble of staying awake and tiring ourselves?” On the contrary, it means that one will be sinful, albeit not on par to the omission of a Farz.

The Gravity of Omitting Taraaweeh Namaaz

Perhaps someone may say: “Okay, it does not involve a great sin. It is a small sin. If we leave it out there won’t be much sin involved.” Whoever says that, let him firstly accept the following proposal of mine whereby we can understand that he gives no consideration for something small and regards it to be superfluous. Then I will also give Fatwa to him that it is permissible for him to leave it [Taraaweeh Namaaz] out. The proposal is that he should take a small flame and put it in his thatch roof or in his clothing trunk. [This was in those times when homes had thatch roofs and clothing was kept in trunks. The analogy today would be to put a flame on the curtain or in the wardrobe.] Then when someone remonstrates let him say: “It is just a small flame. It is not a torch.”

If he desists from keeping this small flame, in view of the consequence of a small and big flame being the same, [i.e. his whole house burning out] then it will be said to him: “Hazrat! The consequence here [in committing a minor and major sin] is also the same.” And what is that consequence? It is the displeasure of Allah Ta’ala.

In fact, in a way the consequence of abandoning a Sunnat is graver than abandoning a Farz. The reason for this is that although the Honour of Allah Ta'ala is sublime which cannot be attained by even the Ambiya, however, we naturally find the effects of something perceivable greater. Accordingly, don't you see that you fear the government more than Allah Ta'ala! Why? The reason is that you do not see the chains and shackles of Allah Ta'ala. On the other hand, the cuffs and chains of the government are before your eyes. The prison of Allah Ta'ala (i.e. Jahannam) you do not see; the prisons of the government you do.

Take another example! How much are you attracted to your beautiful wife! You do not have that degree of attraction to Allah Ta'ala. Thus, we learn from this that something absent [i.e. something which is not before our eyes] does not assert that degree of effect which something present does.

Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has been observed. He was spoken to; he was seen; his company was kept. Although we did not see him, however, when we learn of his appearance, features, habits, eating, ways, manners, acts of Ibaadat and character it leaves a great impression on our minds. It produces the same effect as with seeing him in his practical life.

Allah the Sublime

This is unlike, Allah Subhaanahu wa Ta'ala. Up to this day, no one has seen Him and nor can anyone see Him in this world. There is no form which we can bring to our minds of Him, as we can of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

*“O One beyond thought, estimate, opinion and imagination!
And beyond everything people have said and what we have heard
and read!
The file has been closed and life has come to its conclusion,*

with us helpless and perplexed at Your very first attribute.”

He is:

وَرَاءُ الْوَرَاءِ ثُمَّ وَّرَاءُ الْوَرَاءِ

“Beyond the beyond and beyond that beyond.”

It has been said:

كُلُّ مَا خَطَرَ بِبَالِكَ فَهُوَ هَالِكٌ وَاللَّهُ أَجَلٌ مِنْ ذَلِكَ

In other words, *the pictures which pass through your mind are transient. Allah Ta'ala is much more splendid than all that.*

In short, He is such a Being Who has no figure, no shape, nor has anyone seen Him and nor can anyone see Him in this world.

Salvation—The Requirement and Allah Ta'ala's Rahmat

A requirement of this was that we would never have attained salvation. The reason for this is that Deen [i.e. learning and practising the Deen of Islam] is obligatory. And that is dependent on Ma'rifat [advanced perception of Allah Ta'ala]. Thus, Ma'rifat is also obligatory, whereas it [complete Ma'rifat] can never be acquired [because Allah Ta'ala is Waraa-ul Waraa]. Thus, we can never ever discharge the Right of Allah Ta'ala.

Subhaanallah! What Mercy! He did not make obligatory upon us Ma'rifat in proportion to His greatness. He made it obligatory in proportion to the perceiver's [i.e. our] position, to the extent that if four people of different understanding recognise Allah Ta'ala differently—according to their respective understanding—all will attain salvation. [It should be borne in mind that one is Aqeedah and the other is Ma'rifat. Aqeedah is the immutable, inflexible and essential belief every Muslim should hold. Difference in

Aqeedah is untenable in the Shariah. Hazrat Moulana Thanwi speaks here of Ma'rifat, not Aqeedah. Ma'rifat is further understanding and perception of the realities of the Shariah in excess to the basic fundamental tenets of Faith. Ma'rifat is commensurate to the mental reach, intelligence and above all, Taqwa of each individual. It, therefore, differs from one individual to another.]

It comes in the Hadeeth that in the Bani Israeel there was a person who would dig up graves and steal the shrouds of the dead. At the time of his death he called his sons and asked: "How was I as your father? What I mean is how did I treat you?"

The sons: You treated us very well.

Dying Man: In return will you carry out a simple task for me?

Sons: By all means.

Dying Man: When I die then incinerate my body. Thereafter, keep the ashes until a storm wind blows. Then throw my ashes into the wind. Perhaps in this way I can escape God and His punishment. And if the Lord Most High gets hold of me then He will give me such a severe punishment which perhaps He never gave to anyone else.

Accordingly, when he died, his sons fulfilled the testament. Allah Ta'ala gathered all his particles and blew life into him. When he came alive, Allah Ta'ala questioned him: "What is this you have done?" He answered: "O My Lord! I did it out of fear for You."

It comes in the Hadeeth **فَعُفِّرَ لَهُ** which means that he was forgiven on account of that.

A question arises here that since he doubted the Power of Allah Ta'ala, then how could he have been a Mu-min? Since he was not a Mu-min, how could he have been forgiven?

The answer can never be that perhaps in the former nations a non-Mu-min would also be forgiven. This possibility is negated by the fact that it is stated in the Nusoos [explicit Qur'aan and Hadeeth texts] that this Ummat [the Ummat of Muhammad Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam] enjoys the most Rahmat [Divine Mercy and Blessings], to the extent that the kuffaar [non-Believers] of this Ummat enjoy more Rahmat than the kuffaar of former times.

They [the kuffaar of this final era] sin, but escape transformation [to pigs and apes] as happened to the Bani Israeel. They are not utterly destroyed with tempests. In the former times, people were flattened with the upturned ground; some were destroyed with a terrible scream of an Angel. Have these [forms of Divine chastisement] descended on this Ummat? In spite of this, there is categorical textual proof (Nass-e-Qat'i) of the kuffaar of this Ummat being excluded from Divine forgiveness. Thus, if the kuffaar of the former times are forgiven, then the kuffaar of this Ummat would surely be forgiven as well, in view of the barkat [blessings] of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) bringing more Rahmat to them. The apodosis is null and void and thus the protasis is also null and void. This answer is, therefore, untenable.

The objection thus remains that due to scepticism in Allah Ta'ala's omnipotence he [the shroud-thief] was a kaafir. So, how was he forgiven? In short, the objection is strong.

Trying to escape this objection, some have interpreted **إِنْ قَدَّرَ اللَّهُ** [if the Lord gets hold of me] to mean **إِنْ ضَيَّقَ عَلَيَّ** [if He clamps down on me].

I say that leaving aside these intricacies the answer is really very simple. It is that his understanding was only that much. And he was obligated [to the Law of Allah Ta'ala] in proportion to his understanding. He understood the Power of Allah to be that much.

He did not have the intelligence to understand that the Power of Allah was way beyond that.

Similarly, the narratives of Bedouins in this regard are truly amazing and popular. There is a story of one Bedouin who heard a speaker saying in his lecture: “Allah Ta’ala has no hands, no feet, no eyes, no nose and no limbs. In short, He is pure and free of a physical body.” The Bedouin spoke: “Your Allah is round as a Syrian watermelon and cripple. Our Allah possesses everything.”

In short, every person understands according to his intelligence. And—Allahu Akbar—is there any limit to His Rahmat! Regardless of these axiomatic errors, all are registered as Aarifeen [Recognizers of Allah Ta’ala].

Leave alone others understanding the essence of the Divine Being, even Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said:

لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ

[(O Allah!) I cannot encompass You with praise].

Now who on earth can perceive His essence and reality!

In any case, Allah Ta’ala is:

وَرَاءَ الْوَرَاءِ ثُمَّ وَرَاءَ الْوَرَاءِ

Thus, we cannot think of an external form of the Divine Being as we can of perceivable objects. But, we can think of an external form of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) because, regardless of us not having seen him, every act of his has been portrayed to us. Hence, he is akin to being perceived. And the impressions left by a perceivable entity are greater. Thus, the demand of this is that we should feel ashamed of opposing him.

The Case of Eight Rakaats Taraaweeh

From this explanation it is proven that there is no scope in regard to Taraaweeh; to discard it with the notion that there is absolutely no sin involved or that it is a minor sin.

It is this very same natural impression [of the perception of Rasoolullah Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam] that people are cautious in regard to discharging Taraaweeh Namaaz, whereas they were neglectful of their Farz Namaaz for eleven months. It is indeed surprising then that people who do read their Farz for twelve months desire Taraaweeh to be cut short.

Just today I responded to a letter. What is surprising is that the writer is a so-called scholar. Had it been a layman it would have been relatively simple to explain to him. These so-called scholars, however, are persuaded with much difficulty.

In the letter the writer says: “Indolence is predominant nowadays. If those Ahadeeth are practically adopted in which eight or twelve Rakaats are clearly stated, then what harm is there in it?”

I was quite concerned and thought: “What answer am I going to proffer?” I supplicated unto Allah: “O Allah! Give this Molvi a fitting response.” Accordingly, Allah Ta’ala put it in my mind. I wrote:

“It’s really very simple. Ijma’ [Consensus] has already been enacted over twenty Rakaats being Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah. And, it is na-jaaiz [unlawful] to violate Ijma’. This Ijma’ signifies that those Ahadeeth [speaking of eight and twelve Rakaats] are mansookh [abrogated].

If you question this Ijma’ on the basis of some Ulama writing only eight to be Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah, the answer is that Ijma’ has already been enacted as mentioned. Thus, in

conflict to this Ijma' any exceptional qowl [view] will simply be set aside. Since its emphasis has been confirmed, omitting it will justify Divine reprimand."

He wrote one other point, that in the view of the author of Fat-hul Qadeer eight Rakaats should be read. I responded:

"The view of the author of Fat-hul Qadeer should be set aside in the face of the view of the Jumhoor Ulama [unanimous body of Ulama], particularly in view of his [Fat-hul Qadeer's author's] practice being in conflict to his view. Eight Rakaats is the research of the author of Fat-hul Qadeer, but he always read twenty. Therefore, his research is not worthy of practical application."

A modern-day 'mujtahid'¹ from Delhi hearing of eight Rakaats Taraaweeh came to Moulana Shaikh Muhammad Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih). He [the Delhi 'mujtahid'] was in a doubt whether Taraaweeh was eight Rakaats or twenty. These modern-day 'mujtahideen' call themselves 'Aamil bil Hadeeth' [practical employers of Hadeeth]. My Friend! The Hadeeth states twenty as well. Why don't you employ that? In that way you will also be fulfilling eight.

The fact of the matter is that the nafs [propensity of desire in man] finds ease in eight. Why then read twenty? Actually, they carry out whatever appeals to their nafs, and they even seek refuge in obscure and dha'eef² Ahadeeth.

¹ Mujtahid: One fully qualified to formulate principles and particulars from the Qur'aan and Hadeeth. The era of forming principles had terminated many centuries ago. The formulation of particulars on the basis of the established principles remains valid to this day. However, this alone does not qualify one for the title of 'Mujtahid'. The title of 'Mujtahid' is used here according to the arrogation of those averse to incumbent Taqleed.

² A Hadeeth which on its own cannot be used as a basis to formulate laws due to some defect in the chain.

And from all the Ahadeeth pertaining to Witr [Namaaz], they fancy the one Rakaat Hadeeth, whereas three Rakaats are also mentioned, five Rakaats are also mentioned and seven Rakaats are also mentioned.

In any case, the poor person from Delhi fell into confusion, thanks to their [the Ghair Muqallideens'] deception. He presented his problem to Moulana [Shaikh Muhammad Saheb].

Moulana: Brother! Listen! If the Revenue Department sends you a notice of paying your tax and you are not sure how much; one tax-adviser you asked said eight Rupees, another whom you asked said twelve Rupees—which added to your confusion—whilst a third said twenty Rupees; now how much Rupees will you take to the Revenue Department?

Delhi 'Mujtahid': Janab! One should go with twenty Rupees. If that is the amount to be paid then one will not have to beg from others. And if it turns out less, then one will have a balance. If I went with an insufficient amount, then from whom am I going to ask?

Moulana: In exactly the same way understand here. If twenty Rakaats are demanded there [by the Court of Allah Ta'ala] and you have only eight to your credit then from where are you going to get [the outstanding Rakaats]? If on the other hand you have twenty and eight are asked for, you will have a balance which will be your profit and of use to you.

Delhi 'Mujtahid': Absolutely correct. I understand now. From now on I am always going to read twenty Rakaats.

He was completely satisfied. Subhaanallah! What a way to explain! In all truth, these people [the Ulama-e-Haq, such as

Moulana Shaikh Muhammad Saheb Rahimahullah] are the sages of this Ummat.

If Allah Ta'ala Had To Be Technical With You

In any case, this shortening of Taraaweeh has been initiated by people who are regular performers of Namaaz. Worse than this, we regrettably find people saying that Jamaat [Congregational Salaat] is Sunnat-e-Mu-akkadah alal Kifaayah [which means that it is Sunnat upon the community as a whole, not on each and every individual]. “The Bhangi Saheb [the Mu-azzin] and his friends can make Jamaat,” they say. What injustice and transgression! You wish to be technical with Allah Ta'ala? If Allah Ta'ala also employs technicalities when it comes to compensation [i.e. in this world and on the Day of Qiyaamah]; if He also suffices with necessities just as you suffice with the necessary Ibaadaat [i.e. the Farz], then what a precarious position you will be in! For instance, if He only provides a half a loaf of bread and a glass of water for a day, nothing more, then what will be your fate? And if He gives even less than that, then what are you going to do? Bear in mind that it is not at all obligatory upon Him to give anyone. He gives purely out of His Grace, Mercy and Kindness.

A narrative comes to mind of this Grace and Kindness. One Aabid [worshipper] used to say: “I am entitled to Jannat by virtue of my good deeds because whatever Allah declares I carry it out, and for five hundred years I am dutiful to His command. Yes, out of His Grace He may grant more, but what I have rendered I am entitled to its reward.”

After some time, he [the Aabid] died. He was brought to the World of the Unseen. The Farishtas [Angels] there said: “Walk!” He walked. The plain was burning hot. Severe thirst overcame him. He asked the Farishtas: “Is there any water here?”

Farishtas: Yes, but at a price.

Aabid: What is the price?

Farishtas: Here a glass of water costs five hundred years of Ibaadat [worship].

The Aabid Saheb had just five hundred years of Ibaadat to his credit. Due to thirst, he became extremely restless. A dying man will do anything to save his life. He took the glass of water in exchange for his five hundred years of worship.

They proceeded further until his thirst grew even more intense. He asked for water. The Farishtas gave the same reply. The Aabid exclaimed: “I have no Ibaadat left!”

Now, he was brought before Allah Ta’ala. Allah Ta’ala spoke: “What have you brought? Speak! In which way are you entitled to forgiveness?” The Aabid replied: “O Allah! Forgiveness is purely through Your Grace, and I was in error.”

That was the price of one glass of water there. And what about the price of the other things which no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard of? The price of that will be more than a million years of Ibaadat, particularly if you look at it according to your own price list. Let me explain this.

It is a self-evident premise that wealth is dearer to you than deeds. Now listen to the price of bounties, firstly with wealth. You will understand this through a narrative.

A dervish went to a king to counsel him.

Dervish: Say if you go out hunting in the wilds and coincidentally you stray from your troops and lose your way. In searching

for your way you become so thirsty that you cannot proceed anymore. In fact, your life is on an edge. Just then a person comes to you and says: ‘You can have this glass of water in return for half your kingdom.’ What will you do in such a situation? Will you give your life and die out of thirst, or will you rather relinquish half your kingdom for the glass of water?

King: I will take the water.

Dervish: Okay. You drank the water and moved on. After a short while you had the urge to pass water, but you are unable to relieve yourself and in consequence you undergo severe pain. You meet a physician on the way who says: ‘Give me half your kingdom and I will relieve yourself of your pain and you will be able to pass water without any discomfort.’ What will you do?

King: Life is more important. I will give him the other half of my kingdom.

Dervish: This same kingdom which you are so proud of, its price is merely a bowl of urine and a glass of water! You derive pleasure in it and feel contented that, ‘I am so and I am so’!

Reflect over the worth of the world’s water! We drink jugs upon jugs just like that. In fact, if you reflect you will see that a person has drank up a few lakes of water [in his life], although it doesn’t remain in one. It becomes waste matter and is expelled from the body.

A very humorous anecdote comes to mind about this ‘expulsion’. One fool bought an ox. He took it to the lake for drinking. It is common among cattle to urinate while drinking. That ox also started to urinate. Upon seeing the ox urinating, the fool said [to the seller]: “Take your ox. I don’t want an ox with an outlet.”

Similarly, we have an outlet. If the water cannot remain in the stomach, then nothing can be done about it. The Giver [i.e. Allah Ta'ala] did not hold back.

In short, when in this world the price of a glass of water is half a kingdom and in the Aakhirat one thousand years of Ibaadat, then whatever we get here or whatever we are given [there in the Aakhirat] is all the Fazl [Grace] of Allah Ta'ala. No one is entitled to anything.

Now these technicalities which you put forward before Allah Ta'ala of Taraaweeh Jamaat being Sunnat alal Kifaayah, if He too employs technicalities then He will annihilate you over a single sin. If He gives you just that much of food to keep you alive, then you will cry for your mother!

In short, whatever these scholars have studied, they practise it on Taraaweeh. [In other words, they seek 'loopholes' in the Immutable Law of Allah Ta'ala—the Shariah—and they wish to distort the Deen.] Whereas Taraaweeh is Sunnat and hence there should be great care in its observance, regardless of a Farz enjoying a greater importance in belief (I'tiqaad).

The reason for greater care in its [Taraaweeh's] observance is that the influence of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is perceived, and this is but natural. Accordingly, if a Qur'aan is in front of one and the blessed kurtah of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is also there, then notice where the heart is drawn to; where one is naturally attracted to.

Although you believe in the Qur'aan to be the Kalaam [Speech] of Allah Ta'ala and that its veneration is waajib, however, in practice you will treat the blessed kurtah in a different way to the Qur'aan. Then too, it is neither shirk [idolatry] nor blasphemy because you find yourself reacting in that way naturally. Yes,

transgressing the limits of the Shariah is ma'siyat and bid'at [sin and innovation].

To summarize, when we are influenced so much by the garments of Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), then why not the veneration for his Sunnat?

Confusing Taraaweeh with Tahajjud

In any case, Taraaweeh is among the distinctive features of Ramadhan.

This speech is centred on the fact that Taraaweeh is among the distinctive features of this month. Some 'learned' people even question this.

I received a letter stating that Taraaweeh is the same Tahajjud which would be read [by Rasoolullah Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam] during the latter portion of the night and it subsequently assumed this form. I responded that it is conclusively proven that Tahajjud is one thing and Taraaweeh is something else. In this regard, we find substantiation for the Shar'i injunction of Tahajjud from the Kalaam of Allah Ta'ala.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَرْمَلُ. قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا. نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا.

أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا.

“O One wrapped in a blanket! Stand up and read Namaaz during the night, besides a little (rest); half the night or less than that (i.e. one third) or increase it (i.e. two thirds). And recite the Qur'aan with proper articulation.”

This Aayat is proof of it.

The second rukoo' [of Soorah Muzzammil] was revealed after eleven or twelve months [from the revelation of the above Aayaat] and the gist of it is that its [Tahajjud's] Farziyyat [compulsion] was abrogated.

Regarding Taraaweeh, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) states:

سَنَنْتُ لَكُمْ قِيَامَهُ

"I have established the practice of Taraaweeh (in Ramadhaan) for you."

If this [Taraaweeh] is Tahajjud, then why did Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) attribute it to himself? [In other words, why did he say that he has established this practice, whereas it had been established by the decree of Allah Ta'ala in the Qur'aan Majeed?] If we accept that [Taraaweeh is Tahajjud], it necessarily means that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is attributing to himself something which is attributed to Allah Ta'ala [Na'oothu Billah]. It is thus evident that Tahajjud is something else. Its Shar'i position is proven from the Kalaam of Allah Ta'ala. Taraaweeh on the other hand is that [Ibaadat] whose Sunnat nature is proven from the declaration of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

And a very significant point is that Ta'aamul of the Ummat [a practice inherited by the Ummat from generation to generation] has defined the two to be different.

Taraaweeh—A Feature of Ramadhaan

Be that as it may, this Ibaadat [of Taraaweeh] is peculiar to Ramadhaan, and it is in reality Namaaz. I wish to speak on the essence of this reality [of Namaaz] of which Taraaweeh is a particular member.

We can say that considering Namaaz in general, Taraaweeh is among the special features of Ramadhaan in view of Taraaweeh being a specimen of the general unconditional Namaaz. [In other words, Namaaz is a feature of Ramadhaan and in view of Taraaweeh also being Namaaz it is also a feature of Ramadhaan.] And, we can also say that with consideration for Taraaweeh being a special form of Namaaz it is a speciality of this month.

Whatever the case may be, whether you call Taraaweeh a general Namaaz or a special Namaaz, it is among the special features of this month and hence I have in mind speaking on the Rooh [essence] of Namaaz.

The Drivel of Ignorant Soofiyah

I again respond to the doubt which lingers in many people's minds that the external form of Namaaz is not the objective and only the essence is the objective. In this regard there are two groups of people. One group are those who do not abandon the external form, however, they regard the prime purpose to be just the essence. Taking the external form to be secondary their hearts are devoid of any veneration for it. They consider it to be absolutely insignificant.

The second group are those people who do not regard the external form to be in force at any stage. Accordingly, ignorant Soofiyah have deduced that the essence of Namaaz is just Zikr. Now they

feel themselves liberated from its external form. Their belief is that making Zikr is sufficient as this is the essence of Namaaz.

Just as these Soofi Sahebs have deduced the essence of Namaaz, have they ever deduced their own essence? According to their own reasoning their appearance is secondary. Why then do they nourish their external form [i.e. their bodies] and why do they clothe their external form?

Understand well that just as the essence of Salaat is nourishment for the soul of man, the external form of Salaat is nourishment for the external [i.e. body] of man. Thus, man's external has been bestowed this nourishment [of Salaat] as well, besides the natural nourishment [of food].

Just as you [ignorant Soofi Sahebs] have discarded this nourishment [of Salaat], discard that nourishment [food] also. Don't eat! Don't drink! Then we will know that Soofi Saheb is true to his colours, in that he observes his tastes everywhere. Why is it that you fling away the external form of Namaaz, but hold onto your own external form? If others eat 100 grams of ghee, Soofi Saheb has his ¼ kilo of ghee.

One Soofi Saheb became paunchy by over-eating ghee and revelling at invitations. A mureed [disciple] exclaimed: "Hazrat! You're becoming stout!" Soofi Saheb replied: "The nafs is a dog. And when a dog dies it becomes bloated."

[Nafs is the propensity in man which makes him crave for carnal pleasures and be forgetful of Allah Ta'ala. The reformation of the Nafs is the prime object of Tasawwuf.

The Soofi Saheb implied by his response that his nafs was dead, i.e. spiritually reformed. His justification for his obesity, however, is pure sophistry.]

The Mureed responded: “Hazrat! Since it has died, then throw it in the dump. Dead dogs are thrown in dumps!” The Soofi Saheb was silenced. Truly he [the mureed] gave a befitting response. Mureed! He was the peer [guide] of the peer.

So this is the state of affairs. They do not discard their external forms. On the contrary, they conjure up assorted stratagems for the sake of nurturing it. And Namaaz, they conveniently set aside.

There was another Soofi Saheb. He would also discard Namaaz. It was a popular belief among his Mureeds that Soofi Saheb reads his Namaaz in Makkah. A friend of mine said: “Since he reads his Namaaz there then he should have his meals there as well. It will be rich with blessings.”

And truly he hit the hammer on the nail. For Namaaz he goes to Makkah and for meals he returns to Hindustan!!! And why doesn't he make istinja [relieve himself] there as well? Is Hindustan a toilet for him to come here and make istinja?

If Makkah enjoys greater prestige in view of the Baitullah being there, then there are many blessed sites in Hindustan as well. It is the resting place of innumerable Ambiya, Sahaabah and Awliya. In fact, Aadam (Alaihis Salaam) descended [from Jannat] here. Thus, it may not be equal to Makkah, but in some aspects it is.

It's all nonsense and fraudulence [what ignorant Soofis and their ignorant Muredeen claim]. It is plain drivel that he reads Namaaz in Makkah. People have concocted such nonsense and grandiloquence for the sake of their carnal pleasures.

Perfection is in Meticulous Following of the Sunnat

Be that as it may, the effect of coming up with this essence [of Namaaz] is that the ignorant Soofiyyah do not regard the external form to be necessary at any stage. And those who do carry out the external form of Namaaz, although they do believe in Namaaz being Farz, however, it is clearly noticed that they do not attach much importance to the external acts of Rukoo' and Sujood. I have even seen that they make great effort to banish stray thoughts in Namaaz; however, they are unmindful of Ta'deel [correct execution of the postures of Namaaz] and carrying out the Sunan, whereas the rank of this [latter mentioned] is greater.

One Mureed of Hazrat Haji Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih) was a Saahib-e-Kashf [i.e. he would receive inspirations from the unseen]. He thought of reading a Namaaz completely free of obstructing thoughts. He read Namaaz with his eyes closed and free from any stray thought. Upon completion he became exultant. Then he meditated on the position of his Namaaz. The appearance of the Namaaz was shown to him. He saw that it was in the form of a handsome and beautiful person. He scrutinized further each part of the body. Coincidentally his gaze fell on the eyes, but to his dismay he found no eyes. He became very perturbed. He went to Hazrat [Haji Saheb] and mentioned what he saw. He did not explain all the circumstances of his Namaaz. But, what amazing intuition of Hazrat! Spontaneously he said: "You must have read the Namaaz with closed eyes!" Hazrat then said: "Although you read the Namaaz in such a manner that thoughts did not cross your mind, however, reading Namaaz with closed eyes is contrary to the Sunnah."

Leaving the eyes open and reading [Namaaz] is therefore more meritorious, regardless of thoughts crossing one's mind, whereas

reading with closed eyes even though no stray thought crosses one's mind is less superior because it is against the Sunnat.

To resemble Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is much more meritorious. Hazrat! In the eyes of Allah, resembling the appearance of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is also accepted.

I have a friend in Qanooj who is an attorney. He relates an episode of his that he went to a certain city. At one street he was met by an old lady who called him to her home. She treated him very hospitably. She served him sweet dishes. He asked her: "Mother! Why are you showing so much hospitality to me? Neither do you know me nor do I know you." The old lady replied: "I have a son who looks just like you. He is abroad. Your looks remind me of him."

Now whenever he [the friend of Hazrat Thanwi] passes there, he makes it a duty to visit her. She in turn receives him warmly.

Just think! When an old lady of lesser degree kindness shows so much affection to someone resembling her son, then will Allah Ta'ala not love resemblance to His Rasool in Ibaadat!

Bear this in mind that Wilaayat [Sainthood] is a branch of Nubuwwat [Prophet-hood]. The greater the degree of similarity to Nubuwwat the greater perfection there will be in a person's Wilaayat.

The masses are attracted mostly to one who shows emotional behaviour. In their opinion such a person is a Kaamil [achiever of perfection in Tasawwuf], whereas he is not a Kaamil. Yes he is ma'zoor [excused in the Shariat for his emotional outbursts due to being overwhelmed by Divine love or fear].

A Kaamil is one who resembles Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam); every act of his—sitting, standing, eating, drinking, smiling, talking—is the same [as that of Rasoolullah Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam]. In short, everything of his is like Rasoolullah’s. This is a Kaamil.

Lessons from the Sunnat

Who can surpass Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)? Yet, he would never be totally lost in thought in Namaaz. He says himself:

“I have in mind lengthening the Salaat when I come [for Salaat], but then I hear the cry of a child. I therefore shorten the Salaat for fear of the child’s mother becoming distressed.”

In those days women were permitted to come to the Masjid. However, when the danger of fitnah [evil, mischief] reared its ugly head the ban came into force.

So Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would hear the cry of a child in Namaaz. We learn from this that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would not be lost in thought in Namaaz. And from this we also learn that being lost in the thought of Namaaz in Namaaz is not perfection.

Another mas-alah [Shar’i ruling] is deduced from this [incident]. Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) says:

مَخَافَةَ رَوْحِ أَنْ تُفْعَلَ أُمَّهُ

It means: "... due to the possibility of the mother becoming distressed." From this we learn that the kashf [inspiration] of the Ambiya is not on a perpetual basis. Therefore, the kashf of the Awliya [the pious and holy personages of Islam] can never be perpetual. [In other words, kashf which laymen use as a yardstick to judge the greatness of the Awliya and Buzrugs is not within the free and full control of the Saahib-e-Kashf. He cannot produce kashf at any time and whenever he wishes. It is a condition which occurs sporadically and which is itself subject to Shar'i sanction. It can, therefore, never be a basis for judging the rank of a saint.]

We also learn from this that khushoo' [concentration and humility] is not, being lost in thought, because it is a certainty that Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would have khushoo' in Namaaz, and why not when Allah Ta'ala declares about the Kaamil Mu-mineen:

فَدَّ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ.

"Indeed the Mu-mineen who have khushoo' in their Namaaz are successful."

Since khushoo' is a corollary of Imaan, it will therefore be a corollary of Nubuwwat to a greater extent. And Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was never lost in thought. Thus khushoo' and concentration is one thing and being lost in thought is something else.

If both were one and the same thing it follows that two contradictors have been combined because the Aayat requires Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) having khushoo' and the Hadeeth indicates that he was not lost in thought. If both were one and the same thing it follows that the same thing is found and not found, which is absurd.

Some people have erroneously understood khushoo' and being lost in thought to be the same thing. And khushoo' is the essence

of Salaat, so istighraaq [to be lost in thought] will be the essence of Salaat as well. And when there is no istighraaq then there is no essence. When there is no essence then of what benefit is a Namaaz without essence? In consequence, they have taken their Namaaz to be worthless in view of there being no istighraaq, whereas it has just been proven that istighraaq is something entirely different and it is not the essence of Salaat, otherwise it would follow that the Namaaz of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was devoid of essence. [Na'oothu Billah!]

The Mysteries of Love

In any case, they have understood istighraaq to be a primary object and when that is not achieved they have taken mere Rukoo' and Sujood to be meaningless actions and in consequence they show no appreciation for it.

If you tell them to correctly discharge the Rukoo' and Sujood, which is really very simple, they will never. On the other hand, they are so much obsessed with istighraaq!

The mystery in this is that they have no reverence in their heart for it [the external postures of Salaat]. When a person understands something to be dear and worthy of reverence he cares for it.

If you are in love with someone, will you desire your beloved to have no eyes or a cut nose? As a matter of fact, love here [with someone] is also with the soul, because when the soul departs then one does not feel like even standing by the beloved. Moulana says:

“Love for mortals endures not, for a deceased person returns to us not.

Love for a mortal is not everlasting.

Have love for the Eternal Controller, the Ever-living.”

The second hemistich is the conclusion. In other words, since love for a mortal does not last those who truly understand the purpose of life focus their gaze on:

“Have love for the Eternal Controller, the Ever-living.”

Further, the reason for the transience of this love [for humans] is stated.

*“Love due to looks and complexion,
is not true love. It leads to embarrassment and humiliation.”*

The reason for this [embarrassment] is that when a person is in love with complexion and appearance it remains as long as the soul remains. Once the soul departs where can the complexion and appearance remain!

Then he [Moulana Roomi Rahmatullahi alai] admonishes:

*“Dive into that Ocean of Love in which is sunk,
the love of the former and latter folk.”*

Now the question arises: Here [in this world; with humans] a person falls in love expecting to receive his beloved, whereas there [love for Allah] the condition is:

“The Ocean of Love is that ocean which has no shore.

Here, other than giving your life there is no cure.”

The answer to this question is then given:

*“Do not say that we have no chance of being with that King.
For gracious ones difficulty is nothing.”*

The reality of the answer is that if it was left to you to reach there [Allah], then undoubtedly it would have been extremely difficult. But from that side we find:

“On his own the bold beloved comes into ones arms.”

He Himself directs His gaze. The Hadeeth-e-Qudsi states:

مَنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ بَاعًا الْحَدِيث

“Whoever comes close to Me a span of the hand I come close to him a cubit; whoever comes close to Me a cubit I come close to him a fathom...”

“The distance of love cannot be covered by running. In fact it becomes greater,

just as cutting the grapevine only makes it grow bigger.”

Just as the more you prune the grapevine it grows further, similar is the case with this path [the path of Divine Love]; it only extends furtherer and is not covered in any way.

Yes, He [Allah Ta'ala] completes it. An example of this in perceivable things is that of a child who has just learnt how to stand, but is unable to walk. You call the child out of love: “Come! Come!” If the child is attracted by your call and attempts to come to you then instinctively you will run to him/her and take him/her in your arms. And if the child is indifferent to your call then you too will not be attracted to it.

You know that the child cannot come [by itself]; nevertheless even intelligent people are found doing the same [i.e. calling a

child that cannot walk the distance]. What is the reason for this? The reason is to test the craving and interest of the child. Similarly, Allah Ta'ala calls us:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ

“Allah is calling (all of) you to the Abode of Peace, i.e. Jannat.”

If you pose the question: “We cannot cover this road [to Allah Ta'ala]. So without calling He [Allah Ta'ala] should make us complete the journey?” Hazrat! In spite of your intelligence [and knowledge of the inability of the child to walk] you call your child. Why? Because that is the demand of love. Similarly, it is the demand of the Rahmat [Mercy] of Allah Ta'ala to call in mercy.

If one makes the intention of going then He comes Himself and takes one. And if anyone shows disinterest, then:

أَلْزَمُكُمْوهَا وَأَنْتُمْ لَهَا كَرِهُونَ

“What! Should we force it down your throats when you detest it?”

Now it is clear that:

“For gracious ones nothing is difficult.”

The doubt is thus dispelled.

In short, the actual centre of love in superficial love is the soul. Looks are in reality dead. Love for it is on account of beauty and beauty is on account of the soul. Thus it is proven that love is for the soul.

Looking at shoes and stockings even attracts the heart. Why, my friend, are you attracted to the external appearance when in fact you are in love with the soul? You should have understood this here as well, that Rukoo' and Sujood are the hands and legs of

Namaaz. Just as you are captivated by the external beauty of the beloved, similarly, beautify and adorn this [the postures of Namaaz] as well.

The Jewellery and Beauty of Namaaz

This [beautification] is not with bangles, mendhi, combing and tresses. Its method is that which Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) showed, and as said:

“Artificial beauties are adorned with cosmetics, make-up and jewellery.

Our beloved is not dependent on all that and possesses God-given beauty.”

It [Namaaz] is not in need of this customary form of adornment. Simplicity is its jewellery, and that is I'tidaal [tranquillity and composure]. Don't distort it by jumping out of Rukoo' like the case of a pocket-watch; making Sajdah so aggressively that one's forehead becomes bruised and the Masjid's straw-mat breaks.

There were two persons, a master and an attendant. The two had a competition to see who finishes [Namaaz] first. They started and the race was on. Speeding in and out of Rukoo' and Sajdah they finished the Namaaz. An onlooker who witnessed this commented: “It appears that you people recite your Qiraat, Du'aas, Attahiyyaat, etc. at home with only standing and sitting remaining.”

Some even make Imaamat in this way. One person used to say that he joined a certain Imaam in Namaaz. “When he started, I started. Before even completing my Thana he was in Rukoo'. When I went into Rukoo' he [the Imaam] was already in Sajdah. I went into Sajdah and he was already standing. I couldn't keep up with him so I broke my Namaaz,” he said.

Alas, this is the joke people have made of Namaaz. And if someone [i.e. some Imaam] shows some care then he goes and reads so long Soorats that people become tired. There was an Imaam in Roorki. It was summer and the Muqtadis were burning in the heat. But, this Imaam was eager to read long Soorats. He read a very long Soorat, so one person said: “Hazrat! Take pity on us.” He replied: “If you can’t bear the heat here, then how are you going to bear the Fire of Jahannam?” Subhaanallah! In his opinion everyone were Jahannamis, hence he was preparing them for Jahannam. What a wicked person!

In any case, this was the condition of:

“If he desisted from his wickedness, then what reparation did he do for his injustice?”

In short, there is no I’tidaal. If they prolong [the Namaaz], then so much that punishment is inflicted on the people [the Muqtadis]. And if they shorten [the Namaaz] then to such an extent that it becomes a game. There is either transgressing the limits or deficiency. The reason for this is that there is no explicit obedience to the Sunnat.

The Sunnat of Equilibrium and System

Namaaz and Roza are major acts. There was equilibrium and system in every act of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam); in his walking, in his talking, in his sitting, in his meeting, in his eating, in his drinking. This is what Hazrat Aishah means when she says:

كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ

“His character was in harmony with the Qur’aan.”

In other words, what is mentioned in the Qur'aan was like natural and habitual traits in him. Accordingly, it was his noble habit to move somewhat whenever someone came and sat by him. Allahu Akbar! Such fine points would be natural to his disposition! The wisdom in this is that the newcomer becomes cheerful, he feels appreciated and gladness is expressed at his coming. Furthermore, it appears in the Qur'aan:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا

“O Muslims! If you are told to provide some space in a gathering then provide space.”

The Qur'aan says that when you are told to give some place then move. Although Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was not instructed or told [by anyone] then too he would make space. His gaze was on the reason for the injunction. Such a fine point then and it became his nature!

In regard to system it is clearly stated in Shamaail-e-Tirmizi that every work of his was orderly and systematic. Accordingly, he had the constant practice of going once a week to Masjid-e-Quba.

It is simple to do something, but to endure it till the end is difficult.

“People say that affection is difficult. That’s all wrong. To endure is difficult.”

For us such punctuality is difficult, not so for Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Allah Ta’ala fashioned his nature such that no work of his was contrary to equilibrium and system. He would effortlessly pay attention to finer points.

In the latter part of the night he would visit Jannatul Baqee’. Hazrat Aishah (Radhiyallahu anha) gives the following account: “Once, during his time by me he went to Jannatul Baqee’. قَامَ

رُوِيَئًا—He got up quietly so that no one's sleep was disturbed.

رُوِيَئًا وَأَنْتَعَلَ—He wore his shoes quietly.” It appears in Nasaai Shareef that he likewise closed the door quietly. Allahu Akbar! Is there any limit to the degree of his considerateness! This was in spite of the fact that he was adored. Where would Hazrat Aishah be disturbed by him?

*“Even if you sit on my shoulders and head,
I will tolerate your playfulness because you are my beloved.”*

Regardless of that, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) took her comfort and rest into consideration. These things were ingrained in him. Involuntarily, one can never do that. Even if one tries, for how long can one keep it up? The saying is famous: “A new Namaazi cannot keep his feet straight,” until it [Namaaz] becomes a habit.

Reformation of Character and Its Similitude

An old man from out of town requested Moulana Fatah Muhammad Saheb to teach him ‘Aqd-e-Anaamil’ [a classical way of counting with the fingers]. Moulana sat to teach him. When Moulana would tell him to open one finger, all the fingers [of the old man] would open. When he tells him to close one, all would close, like Mulla Dô Piyaza who even died comically. He died with his feet perpendicular to his trunk. Now when his feet would be straightened he would sit up. When he was laid down his legs would shoot up.

In any case, the man tried for quite some time [to open or close just one finger] without success. When the students [of the Madrasah of Moulana Fatah Muhammad Saheb] started to giggle he [the old man] said: “Just imagine one open and the rest

closed.” Subhaanallah! When sitting to count then one should imagine one open and the rest closed!

This is the same state of a new Namaazi. Initially, there is difficulty. Thereafter, with practice it becomes easy. Similar is the case with character. Initially it is difficult to sustain it. Afterwards, by virtue of constant execution and discipline it becomes easy.

People now shirk from difficulty, whereas reformation of one’s character is not possible without it [difficulty].

Hazrat Shah Ghulaam Ali (Rahmatullahi alaiih) was in the service of Mirza Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaiih). Once, some mithai [sweetmeats] were presented to Mirza Saheb. Mirza Saheb said: “Ghulaam Ali! Take some mithai.” He [Shah Ghulaam Ali] went and stretched his hands out to take. Mirza Saheb rebuking him said: “You’re really a rustic! Why don’t you take in a plate or paper?” In any case, the poor person took some paper, put the mithai in it and went to eat.

Later Mirza Saheb asked: “Ghulaam Ali! Did you eat the mithai?

Ghulaam Ali: Jee Ha [Yes]!

Mirza Saheb: Anything left or did you eat all up?

Ghulaam Ali: I ate all up.

Mirza Saheb: You’re really a rustic. Is mithai something to fill your stomach with?

The poor thing was labelled a rustic over everything. He spent his life like that. However, what was the result?

“Whoever serves becomes served.”

He became Makhdoomul Ulama [the Shaikh of the Ulama].

A similitude of reformation (islaah) of character is like Moulana [Roomi Rahmatullahi alaiih] wrote the following anecdote: A

custom in Qazween was to tattoo the body. A person told the tattooer: “Draw a lion on my back.” The tattooer took the needle and the moment he pierced it the person shouted: “Ouch! What are you doing?”

Tattooer: I am making the tail.

Person: What’s the need for a tail? Can’t you make a lion without a tail?

A tailless lion left him speechless. He left the tail and pierced the needle elsewhere.

Person: What are you doing now?

Tattooer: The stomach

Person: Is the lion going to eat? Leave the stomach.

He left the stomach and started elsewhere.

Person: Now what?

Tattooer: The mouth

Person: Brother! This is just a picture. He doesn’t need to roar. Leave the mouth.

He left that and pierced elsewhere.

Person: Now what are you making?

Tattooer: I am making the ears.

Person: Don’t you get lions with ears cropped? Leave the ears.

The tattooer lost his cool and threw the needle on the floor saying:

*“Who saw a lion without ears, head and stomach?
Such a lion Allah never even make.”*

“When Allah Ta’ala never even created such a lion how am I going to make it?” Further, he sums up by saying:

*“If at every cut you frown and become angry,
then where can the heart become like a mirror so glossy?”*

If over every caution of the spiritual mentor (murshid) your condition is one of dissatisfaction:

*“When you cannot bear the prick of a pin,
then don't flaunt yourself in front of an angry lion.”*

Can one's character be mended when one lacks the strength to bear a pinprick? Hazrat! Peers [Spiritual Guides] have reformed the character [of the mureeds] in just that way [i.e. by cautioning, warning, rebuking and even putting the mureed through manual labour]. But, nowadays the state of affairs is that they [the mureeds] do not wish to do anything, yet they want everything [i.e. their islaah] to be done. Accordingly, they say, “Hazrat! Confer such grace that sins become detested by me,” as if the peer will clean his sins for him; as if he [the peer] is a cleaner. He thus implies: “O Peer! We have made you our peer to pick up our excreta and get rid of it.”

Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih) used to relate that a person came to a guru and said: “Make me your chela [disciple].” The guru replied: “Bhai! To become a chela is very difficult.” The person came back: “Then make me your guru.”

Similarly, nowadays people who come for the purpose of becoming mureeds, in actual fact they come to become gurus. Accordingly, a person came to me with the intention of bai't [initiation into the Spiritual Path]. When he came he picked up two faults in me. One, that I wear expensive garments. The second, I do not impart training of the Lataaif [the six spiritual faculties in man]. I responded by saying: “You yourself do not wear sackcloth. [In other words, he too sported expensive garments.] And when did I claim that I impart training of the Lataaif? Your objection should be addressed to someone who makes such a claim [without fulfilling it].”

The calamity that befell that person was that he ended up at such a place [i.e. another peer] where even more exquisite garments are worn compared to here [i.e. Hazrat Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaih]. Goodness! How can the islaah [moral reformation] of such people be made who are concerned with making islaah of the Peer?

A lady came visiting by us. Another female relative also happened to be by us visiting. Her [the relative's] daughter had a doll with her. When she [the visiting lady] saw she commented: "What kind of Buzrug is this who says nothing about girls playing with dolls by him?" [The doll had a head and hence the objection of the lady.] I was informed of this. I responded by saying: "Firstly, this girl does not stay by us. Secondly, I was not aware of it. Hence, I never stopped her. And leaving aside all this, a fitting response is: Have you come here for your islaah or to make our islaah? This is nothing but confrontation, in that we see some wrong and make your islaah and you search for our wrong and make its islaah. This is not at all right. Go about it in this manner: Firstly make islaah of all the wrongs which are in us. We will act according to what you tell us. Once you are satisfied that you have made our islaah then we will make your islaah in the same manner."

The poor thing became very embarrassed and apologized profusely. Goodness! What kind of conduct is this that one goes for one's islaah only to sit down and start making islaah of the Peer? If you are happy with the Peer then stay and if you are not happy with him then search for another.

If a patient questions the physician: "Why did you prescribe 4mg of the violet," the physician will respond: "Did you come here for treatment or to teach me."

Truly, these things are dampers. Then no benefit can be gained [by the mureed who dampens the feeling of the Shaikh]. This is

the ostensible conduct of the mureeds nowadays. Hence, they cannot bear what the Shaikh says [i.e. his rebuke].

Yes, one who is fortunate will bear everything.

“My Dear! Lend an ear to admonition, for a fortunate lad holds the admonition of a wise old man to be dearer than his life.”

Be that as it may, initially there will be difficulty. Thereafter, the things which were done with difficulty and strain will become second-nature.

Our Twigs and Sticks

To summarize, moderation is desired in everything. Thus, there is a greater need for moderation in Namaaz, as opposed to istighraaq [engrossment to the degree of being oblivious of everything else]. Therefore, do not feel that if there is no istighraaq then the Namaaz is futile.

Orators have concocted the meaning of this poem:

*“Tasbeeh on the tongue but, in the heart the thought of cattle!
Of what benefit is such a zikr?”*

to be that such a Namaaz is of no benefit. Understand well that the day these inner things [concentration, sincerity, devotion, etc.] will be bought the price will be these external acts [of Ibaadaat].

Aren't you aware that rich people even value artificial fruit, purchasing it and praising the maker for his reproduction of the original? It won't be strange if the same happens to you there [in the Hereafter]. My friend! Just watch! It will be the same. Allah Ta'ala Himself declares:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

“Listen! Allah Ta'ala has purchased from Muslims their lives and their wealth in exchange for Jannat.”

Right now a subtle point has come to my mind. Allah Ta'ala says: **اَعْمَالَهُمْ وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ** [their lives and their wealth]. He did not say **اَعْمَالَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ** [their deeds and their wealth]. It implies: No deeds? You have yourself and wealth. Give Zakaat and money is spent; read Namaaz and you have put yourself through strain. That is bought. Though your self and wealth may not be recognizable forms of Ibaadat, however, they will gain recognition [by Us] on the proviso that you engage them in a'maal [deeds]. Then, it does not matter if that amal [deed] turns out imperfect.

What Rahmat! Your horse died, but He paid you for the housing. [In other words, just as it would be a gesture of graciousness on the part of the purchaser to pay you or buy the housing, whereas the actual item—the horse—died, similarly, it is the Grace of Allah Ta'ala to reward us for our deficient actions]. This is the subtlety I have just now understood from **اَنْفُسَهُمْ**.

Be that as it may, regardless of this not being the Tafseer [of the aforementioned Aayat] my speech is not dependent on this Tafseer. This purport is present in other Nusoos [Qur'aanic or Hadeeth texts].

يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ

“Allah Ta'ala will convert their evil deeds to good deeds.”

Hazrat [Haji Imdaadullah Saheb, the Shaikh of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi] would say: “Our good deeds are even bad deeds.”

And why not? Have you ever heard of anyone paying for sticks and twigs the price which is paid for sugar candy? With sugar candy it [the sticks holding the sugar candy; similarly the sticks holding ice cream or the twigs holding grapes] has to be taken. But, will anyone purchase only the sticks for that price?

“Will you ever find a nursery like this, where you can purchase with one flower a bed of roses?”

He—Allah Ta’ala—takes half a life—i.e. a little effort—and gives in return a thousand lives—i.e. innumerable bounties. What you cannot even conceive, He gives.”

In worldly contracts work is taken fully and one receives less than what one desires. Even if a king has to give someone lavishly, then too the desire is to receive more. There [in the Akhirat], regardless of this deficient service [or ours] the exchange will be so great which:

مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ

“no eye has seen, no ear has heard of and nor has it crossed the heart of any human.”

He [Allah Ta’ala] is such a purchaser that if the appearance [of our deeds] is in order He will purchase it. Accordingly, you will see in Qiyaamat.

The virtue expressed in the Hadeeth Shareef for Rukoo’ and Sujood is general. It is not mentioned that there should be no thought of cattle in the heart. [It should be borne in mind that ‘thought’ here refers to involuntary thought. Voluntary and intentional thought of worldly affairs certainly impairs the Namaaz and decreases the thawaab. In fact, such intentional thoughts are negative of the sanctity of Namaaz and one is liable to answer in the Court of Allah Ta’ala for despoiling the Namaaz in this despicable manner.]

Yes, I'tidaal [composure and tranquillity] is necessary. In this regard, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said to the person who did not observe I'tidaal:

صَلِّ فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ

“Read your Namaaz for you have not read Namaaz.”

He did not ask: “Was there any heart and soul to your Namaaz or not?” This is the Rahmat conferred [by Allah Ta'ala] through the medium of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). Beginners have been instructed with I'tidaal, however, no imposition of the soul has been placed.

Isaa (Alaihis Salaam) would firstly make a model. Then he would blow life into it. Similarly, you should also firstly form a model [i.e. carry out the external acts of Ibaadaat]. Life will be blown into it afterwards. However, form a complete model, not an unfinished one. Otherwise, when life is put into it then too it will serve no purpose on account of being underdeveloped.

Noor Jahan and Zulmat Jahan

So, the point is make your Ruku' correctly. If you are unable to put life into it, that is no problem.

Similarly, the Saalik [seeker of spiritual purification and proximity to Allah Ta'ala] should remember that Zikr without urge and emotion is of no fikr [concern]. He should carry out his Zikr assiduously. Insha Allah, everything will be achieved. It should not be that instead of advancing he becomes disheartened and abandons everything, like the anecdote of Noor Jahan in her childhood and which resulted in Jahangir [son of Akbar the renowned Moghul Emperor] becoming obsessed with Noor Jahan.

It goes like this that he [Jahangir] went to the fair. He had a passion over pigeons. In one hand he had a pigeon and in the other hand another. Noor Jahan—a lass—was coming in his direction. He gave the pigeons to her saying: “Keep it for a while. I am coming just now.” When he returned he saw that one pigeon was gone. He asked: “How did it fly away?” She let go of the other saying: “Like this.” He became obsessed with her naivety.

This example came to mind over abandoning the external form of Namaaz, whereas effort should be made to bring life to one’s Namaaz. Similarly, she [Noor Jahan] let go of the one in the hand instead of searching for the one that left her hand.

You have also taken a ‘nice’ meaning from the Buzrug’s words; leave the Namaaz if you have thoughts about cattle [i.e. the world]. In fact, the meaning is: strive to perform such a Namaaz in which there is no such thought, not this that one should leave it. If you take this meaning [i.e. leaving the Namaaz altogether] then where she was Noor Jahan [literally: the light of the world], you will be absolutely Zulmat Jahan [the darkness of the world]. In fact, in respect to Jahangir she was absolutely Zulmat Jahan, regardless of how she herself may have been because:

كُلُّ مَا شَعَلَكَ عَنِ الْحَقِّ فَهُوَ طَاعُوتُكَ

[Whatever preoccupies you from the remembrance of Allah Ta’ala is your devil.]

Out of love for her what did Jahangir do? He sent her husband to fight in battle and be killed. In short, she was also Zulmat Jahan in regard to him.

It comes in the Hadeeth Shareef that a person was running after a pigeon. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) saw him and remarked:

شَيْطَانٌ يَتَّبِعُ شَيْطَانَةً

“A Shaitaan following a Shaitaan.”

In reality, the pigeon was not a Shaitaan. However, it was his Shaitaan. The Hadeeth implies: “One Shaitaan going after his Shaitaan.” Thus, in this way Noor Jahan was Zulmat Jahan. Similarly, if you take the meaning [of the aforementioned statement regarding Namaaz] to be that [i.e. to forsake Namaaz if one finds no concentration in it], then you will likewise be Zulmat Jahan.

The Essence, Soul and Purpose of Namaaz

In short, two errors have been made in the comprehension of the essence [of Namaaz]; one by ignorant Sufiyah, in that they have taken the essence to be the prime objective and they have totally discarded the external form. The second [error] is by the Ahl-e-Zaahir [the shallow Ulama whose gaze is only as far as the outward and apparent meanings of the Qur’aan and Hadeeth]. They have not discarded the external form. However, they show no appreciation and do not attach much importance to the essence.

In short, the purpose of the bayaan today is: What is the essence of Namaaz? In this regard, the Aayats recited [in the Khutbah of the wa’z] do pertain to Moosa (Alaihis Salaam), nevertheless, we are equally obliged to adhere to those Aayaat in view of there being no difference between us and the former nations with regard to Aqaa’id and Akhlaaq [Tenets of Faith and Moral Character]. The difference [between us and them] is only in external practices. [The purpose and essence of Namaaz as proven from the Aayat which will be discussed hereunder pertains to Aqaa’id, although Namaaz is an external practice.]

Furthermore, it is binding upon us in view of this episode of Moosa (Alaihis Salaam) being related to us without censure. [Such episodes of the former Ummats related in the Qur’aan-e-

Kareem without censure are binding upon this Ummat as well. This is an established principle of the Shariah.]

For now I only wish to speak on *أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي*. I recited the other portions [preceding the above Aayat] simply for the sake of blessings and out of respect. The Fuqaha have written that if a person recites many Aayaat of a Surah and omits the Aayat of Sajdah [if there happens to be one in that Surah] then this is makrooh [reprehensible]. Similarly, I felt it disrespectful to omit the other portions.

The translation of this portion is: *“Establish Namaaz for the sake of My Zikr.”* In *لِذِكْرِي* the Laam denotes purpose. In other words, *“the purpose and Rooh of Namaaz is My [Allah Ta’ala’s] remembrance.”*

Here Rooh does not mean delicate particles which come from the heart or an abstract substance. On the contrary, the purpose of Namaaz is its Rooh. So what is the purpose of Namaaz? It is the remembrance of Allah Ta’ala [as remembrance of Allah Ta’ala is the Rooh of Namaaz]. Similarly, the purpose and essence (Rooh) of Sowm is Mujaahadah which was explained previously [in the wa’z Roohus Siyaam or the Essence of Fasting].

O My Fellow Friends! Reflect over your Namaaz. Is there any essence in it or not? However, if there is no essence then one should not be rash to chop off its hands and feet as well, otherwise how is the essence going to come to it then? Therefore, preserve the make-up [the body of the Namaaz, i.e. the postures, the recitation and the zikr, etc.]. Then, this inanimate model will come to life.

Understand this in the following way. Take an animal whose soul has departed. A physician who possesses an art of transferring the

soul of one animal to another appears on the scene. The condition [for this transference] however, is that the neck of that animal be intact. If the neck is severed then how will that master of the art bring into effect this transference of the soul? Thus, those who have no soul to their Namaaz should compulsorily keep the limbs of their Namaaz intact.

How Past Deeds Will Come to Life

Do not entertain the doubt that, how are we going to rectify the Namaazes which we have already executed? Take note that when soul comes to it then it will come to all. The reason for this is that we see the effects of Tawajjuh Ilallah [turning to Allah Ta'ala] in even former actions.

أُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ

“These are the people whose evil deeds Allah Ta'ala converts to virtuous deeds.”

The former vice changes to virtue.

In the Hadeeth Shareef it appears:

الإِسْلَامُ يَهْدِيهِمْ مَا كَانُوا قَبْلَهُ

“Islam effaces all sins previously committed.”

Just see, the current practice asserts its effect on former actions.

When soul and essence come into your current actions they will spread to your past actions as well. The mystery in this is that actions in so far as their effects are concerned are inextricably tied to the agent [the person who carries out the deeds]. The agent is the location of the actions [i.e. the actions stem from him] and the location is found in the present time. Therefore, the actions/deeds

are also present in the present time. Where are they in the past, for one to become sceptical?

Although, the deeds have left, their effects still remain. And, in reality deeds are these effects because the verbal sense is merely something subjective and extracted. Thus, the conclusion of the infinitive is the actual action which is an effect. And, this effect lasts. It is for this reason that the Ahl-e-Kashf [those to whom Allah Ta'ala reveals certain transcendental realities] see external forms of deeds. A person came to the Majlis [gathering] of Hazrat Uthmaan (Radhiyallahu anhu) having gazed at a na-mahram woman. Hazrat Uthmaan said: "What is wrong with people; they come to our gathering with their eyes dripping with zina [fornication]!"

Similarly, when a person carries out an act of Taa'at [obedience unto Allah Ta'ala] an impression which the Ahl-e-Kashf recognise, is left in him. The Farishtas [Angels] learn of the past deeds by looking at the Book of Deeds, whereas for the Ahl-e-Kashf the person himself is a Book of Deeds. Hazrat Ali (Radhiyallahu Ta'ala anhu) echoes this in the following quatrain:

دَوَائِكَ فِينِكَ وَمَا تَشْعُرُ

وَدَائِكَ مِنْكَ وَمَا تُبْصِرُ

*(Your remedy is within you, yet you do not realise.
Your malady comes from you, yet you have no eyes.)*

وَتَحَسَّبُ أَنَّكَ جِزْمٌ صَغِيرٌ

وَفِيكَ انْطَوَى الْعَالَمُ الْأَكْبَرُ

*(You think of yourself to be a small mass,
whereas in you unfolds a huge universe.)*

وَأَنْتَ الْكِتَابُ الْمُبِينُ الَّذِي

بِأَحْرُفِهِ يَظْهَرُ الْمُضْمَرُ

*(You are the manifest book,
from whose words are revealed mysteries.)*

فَلَا حَاجَةَ لَكَ فِي خَارِجٍ

يُخْبِرُ عَنْكَ بِمَا سُطِّرَ

*(You have no need therefore for any outside apparatus,
to disseminate information about you of what is recorded.)*

Thus, it is as if you are a manifest book yourself. It appears in the Qur'aan Majeed:

وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا

“They will find the deeds they carried out present.”

Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih) [the Ustaad of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi] also gave a Tafseer for it. The popular Tafseer is: مَكْتُوبٌ فِي الصَّحِيفَةِ (written in the Book of Deeds). However, Moulana would say: “The very actions carried out will be present,” as the words denote. Thus, on the Day of Qiyaamat [Resurrection] people will find all their deeds present.

A question arises here: How will such deeds return that have terminated? Muhaqqiq Dawwaani responded by contending in his treatise ‘Zowraa’ that deeds in reality are substances. Hazrat sent the treatise to me. Perhaps the intent was that Hazrat approved of his [Muhaqqiq Dawwaani’s] research. Wallahu A’lam! I cannot say for sure because Hazrat did not state anything. I perused the treatise. I cannot comprehend how deeds are in reality substances. Yes, this much I do understand that in Qiyaamat there won’t be the verbal sense. On the contrary, according to the statement of Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb the effects of those deeds will assume external forms and appear before the people gathered on the Plains of Qiyaamat. Allah Ta’ala has created its similitude here, viz. the cinema. Just as past events are screened at a cinema, similarly, on the Day of Qiyaamat these [actions and deeds of

ours] will be screened. For instance, a thief will be seen there in the act of theft; a fornicator will be seen in the act of fornication. In short, whatever effects of deeds are accumulated in a person all will be seen in the form of external actions there. A person's hands and feet will speak and reveal whatever he did like how a gramophone speaks [and how the speakers of the host of modern gadgets speak].

There is a story of a zaani [fornicator]. He committed zina and was having a ghusl [bath]. The water was flowing out into the street-gutter. A Buzrug [Saintly person] happened to be passing by. He looked at the water and commented: "Zina is flowing in this." Someone asked: "Hazrat! How do you know that a zaani is having a bath?" He replied: "I see a picture of zina in every drop of water." So Hazrat! The effects of all deeds are produced in one. Thus, all forms of Salaat previously performed are present in a person. Thus, by virtue of this Salaat in which soul is breathed, soul spreads to all.

Look! When light is reflected on one mirror, then this mirror illuminates all the mirrors in front of it, provided that there is no obstacle. The picture that comes on one mirror is reproduced on all. Similarly, if there is potential in the previous Namaazes then too Rooh will reach them, as echoed in this verse:

"One sun shines on a thousand glasses."

It is for this reason that I say there is an essential need to preserve the external form. However, don't be contented with only the appearance. Make an effort to bring Rooh to it as well. And what is that Rooh?

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

"Establish Namaaz for the sake of My remembrance."

It is the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala. Now, each person should see if there is Zikr in his/her respective Namaaz.

The Nature of Zikr and its Two Stages

So, firstly understand the nature of Zikr. I am going to elucidate its stages. It has two stages. One is Zikr of Allah Ta'ala and the other is Zikr of the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala.

Zikr of Allah Ta'ala means to remember Allah Ta'ala. And what is it to remember? Unqualified Sufis have put forward a cryptic meaning to it, whereas it is very simple.

This is similar to some Mudarriseen's [teachers; Ustaads] habit of displaying even easy passages [of text books] to be problematic. I don't know what the wisdom in this is. Perhaps they feel that by displaying it to be problematic students will devote attention to it. But, this objective can be attained by simply saying: "Listen attentively." It appears that their motives are corrupt. They wish to display their academic prowess; that they can unravel problematic passages with ease. This is the same sickness with which some fraudulent Shaikhs of Tasawwuf are afflicted with.

During my teaching days in Kanpur there was a student by the name of Molvi Fadhl-e-Haq. He was studying Sadra [a kitaab on Philosophy] by me. In Sadra the discussion of 'Muthannaat bit Takreer' is widely recognized to be extremely difficult. When that lesson came then before informing him of it being the notorious discussion I gave the lecture. For further assurance [of him having grasped the discussion] I asked him to repeat the lecture. When I was sure he had understood I said: "This is the same 'Muthannaat bit Takreer' discussion which is popularly believed to be very intricate." Upon listening to this he became startled. I told him: "Fear not! It's over. Do you see what an easy passage it is, whereas it is commonly regarded to be difficult?"

When the final examinations came the examiner showed his 'kindness' by asking the same question. He [Molvi Fadh-e-Haq] wrote such a wonderful explanation that I have not seen a clearer explanation on the discussion by anyone. Truly, it is worthy of publishing. Now I do not know whether it is still in Jaami'ul Uloom [the name of the Madrasah in Kanpur where Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi taught for 14 years] or it is destroyed. I did advise [the administrators] to preserve it.

The condition of certain fraudulent Shaikhs then is to give such a labyrinthine explanation of essential Masaail [issues] pertaining to Tasawwuf that the audience view it [Tasawwuf or the Masaail of Tasawwuf] to be complex. In this regard they have explained the meaning of Zikr to be such that there should be neither Zikr of the Zikr nor Zikr of the Zaakir. Now, everyone is baffled as to the purport of this. Thereafter the thought occurs that when understanding it is difficult then to practice on it will be to a far greater extent difficult because practice without understanding is not possible.

Alhamdulillah, I will point out the meaning of Zikr. It is very straightforward. The meaning of Zikr is such that any villager can even understand. Listen! Zikr means to remember. How is it to remember? When you remember your son [for instance] do you have this thought in your heart as well that you are remembering? Or do you only have the thought of your son?

When you remember your beloved then the thought of you remembering the beloved's beauty and looks does not enter your mind because if it does then it is remembrance of a sentence, not remembrance of the beloved. Thus, the gist of Zikr is that the person who remembers only thinks of who he is remembering, of nothing else, to the extent that he does not even think of himself engaging in remembering. This is the nature of Zikr.

The remembrance of Allah Ta'ala is the same; besides Allah Ta'ala there should be no other thought in the heart, to the extent that there should not be the thought that one is remembering Allah Ta'ala. This is the first stage of Zikr. The gist of it is that the thought of the Mazkoor [One remembered] is in the heart, not the thought of the Zikr.

The second stage is remembrance of not the Mazkoor, but the Zikr at least. In other words, there is at least this thought that one is making Zikr. This is remembrance of the Zikr; it is not direct remembrance of the Mazkoor. However, this is also sufficient, although it is a lower stage in relation to the actual right of Zikr.

This [second stage] should be insufficient [for us] because it is not remembrance of Him. But, alas, we do not even remember that we are remembering, leave alone remembering the Mazkoor.

When we read Namaaz we do not even have the thought that we are reading Namaaz. In fact, all the nonsensical thoughts of the dunya [world] gather in our minds. When reading Namaaz sometimes we think about the wife; sometimes about the children; Molvis think about their lessons!

*“At night when I intend reading Namaaz,
I say: “What are my children going to eat in the morning?”*

A certain linguist would give a wonderful tafseer [explanation] of it [the above couplet]. He would say:

“At night when I intend reading Namaaz then due to the preponderance of my worldly activities, instead of saying the Takbeer-e-Tahreemah I utter: “What are my children going to eat in the morning?”

In other words, the Takbeer-e-Tahreemah of others is “Allahu Akbar”, but his Takbeer-e-Tahreemah is: “What are my children going to eat in the morning?”

In our Namaaz we find the thought of business; sometimes the thought of the home. So there is no Zikr of Zikr even, not forgetting that the first stage was that there should not be Zikr of Zikr, but Zikr of the Mazkooor.

“Surrender yourself to the Beloved. Union is this and nothing else.

And don't even give thought to you surrender. Perfection is this and nothing else.”

This is Fanaa-ul-Fanaa [the highest stage of Sulook or the Sojourn to Allah Ta'ala], where you are even unaware of your Fanaa [surrender to Allah Ta'ala]. Similarly, perfect obliviousness is that you are not even aware of your obliviousness. A sleeping person is he who does not know that he is sleeping. On the same token, a Zaakir is he who is unaware that he is making Zikr. From this explanation it can be seen that Fanaa-ul-Fanaa also is nothing difficult.

To summarize, Zikr of Allah is this that there is not even Zikr of the Zikr. Truly, if it was not elaborated on, it would have appeared to be extremely subtle and beyond our comprehension.

In any case, this is true Zikr, viz. when there is not even Zikr of the Zikr. However, on the basis of other dalaail [Shar'i proofs] Zikr of the Zikr suffices here [in Namaaz]. Carry out Zikr of the Zikr and through the Rahmat of Allah Ta'ala it will be included in لِذِكْرِي [i.e. in the essence and purpose of Namaaz].

If someone raises the question: What is the proof for permission to suffice on Zikr of the Zikr? The proof is in the Hadeeth:

مَنْ تَوَضَّأَ ثُمَّ صَلَّى رُكْعَتَيْنِ مُقْبِلًا عَلَيْهِمَا بِقَلْبِهِ أَمْ يُحَدِّثُ فِيهِمَا نَفْسَهُ الْحَدِيثُ

(A person who makes wudhu and thereafter performs two Rakaats Namaaz with concentration in such a manner that he does not divert his attention, ...)

Speaking on the virtue of Tahiyatul Wudhu [two Rakaats performed after wudhu] Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) says: “Make a thorough wudhu and perform two Rakaats with your mind focussed on it.” Now, reflect over the meaning of “with your mind focussed on it.” It means: focus your mind on the Namaaz. This is precisely Zikr of the Zikr.

Thus, if you recite a Qaseedah [a lengthy poem] in praise of the king and you do not think about the one you are praising then at least you should be thinking about the praises itself. Similarly, here too if your attention is only on the Zikr then through the Rahmat of Allah Ta’ala it will be recorded as concentration.

Taqleed and the Fuqaha

The Fuqaha [Jurists of Islam] have understood the secret behind this. They have written a rule. Truly, the Fuqaha understood the mysteries of the Shariat and by virtue of this they could make Ijtihad [deduce laws directly from the Qur’aan and Hadeeth].

Nowadays, everyone lays claim to being a Mujtahid and Muhaddith [expert in Ijtihad and Hadeeth]. There was a villager who had abandoned Taqleed [explicit following of one of the four Math-habs of Islam, viz. Hanafi, Shaafi’i, Maaliki and Hambali]. Someone enquired from him the proof of reciting Faatihah behind the Imam. He replied: “It comes in Tirmiji (Tirmithi): ‘Kihdaaj Kihdaaj.’”

The Hadeeth Shareef says:” “Khidaaj, Khidaaj.” [In other words, the self-styled Salafi village-dweller could not even pronounce the Hadeeth Kitaab and the words of the Hadeeth correctly, yet he saw himself fit to subject the Qur’aan and Hadeeth to his ignorance]. This is the harm [of abandoning Taqleed]. Are these

people [the Ghair Muqallids; the Salafis in our times] Muhaddith? These people are not Muhaddith. Can a person become a Muhaddith by erroneously understanding a smattering of Ahadeeth?

Some people claim that Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Isma'eel Saheb was a ghair muqallid. Whether he was a ghair muqallid or not can be judged from the story of his son. Firstly, look at the level of the son's Taqleed then understand that if he [Hazrat Moulana Isma'eel Shaheed Saheb] was a Ghair Muqallid his son too would have been a ghair muqallid in view of his son being tutored and nurtured by him.

His name was Muhammad Umar. This Molvi Muhammad Umar Saheb once came to the Jaami' Masjid of Delhi. A group was reciting Hadeeth. He also went and sat there. Some people said [to him]: "Hazrat! These people [reciting Hadeeth] are ghair muqallids." He replied: "What have I got to do with their aversion for Taqleed? I came to hear the Hadeeth of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)." One among the group having recited some Ahadeeth said: "Imam Abu Haneefah has violated the Hadeeth." Upon listening to this he [Molvi Muhammad Umar Saheb] became enraged and said: "What audacity you have to object to Imam Saheb." Still fuming he got up and said to his associates: "Come brothers! Let's go from here. Here irreligious people are gathered."

Truly, to make objections against those illustrious personages takes a lot of audaciousness. Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih) was imparting Hadeeth lessons. In the course of the lesson he answered Imam Shaafi's contention from the Hadeeth. Full of exuberance one student remarked: "Hazrat! Had Imam Shaafi'i been here he too would have conceded." Moulana at once changed complexion and rebuked the student saying: "Who am I? Had Imam Shaafi'i been here I would not

have been able to even open my mouth, and I would have made Taqleed of him.”

Hazrat! This is the degree of respect those illustrious souls [the Fuqaha-e-Mujtahideen] commanded. So Ijtihad is not a simple thing. To memorize Ahadeeth is one thing, and Ijtihad is something entirely different. This [Ijtihad] was the lot of the Fuqaha. In this regard the Hadeeth states:

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ

which means: “Allah Ta'ala grants understanding of Deen to those for whom He desires good.”

They [the Fuqaha] were given such understanding by virtue of which they formulated Usool [Principles and Rules] which have remained immutable to this day. Accordingly, they have explained a rule by virtue of which the mystery behind the issue under discussion [i.e. Zikr of the Zikr of Namaaz being adequate] is revealed. The rule is that in certain laws the cause of the law substitutes the reason for the law. For example, they reflected firstly over the reason for qasr [reduction of four Rakaat Farz Namaaz] on journey. They discovered that the reason for it is hardship. However, to determine hardship in certain cases is difficult and hence its cause which is journey, substitutes the reason which is hardship.

But understanding the reasons or substituting the reasons with causes is the sole prerogative of the Fuqaha. As far as we are concerned, it is not jaaiz [permissible] for us to deduce reasons or to tamper with the reasons. Firstly for this reason that we do not possess that degree of understanding and secondly because the Fuqaha would deduce reasons to extend the law, whereas we have no work with extension of the laws.

Furthermore, permitting this in these times is fraught with the danger of the door of heresy opening. Nowadays, the disease is

endemic of concocting fanciful reasons for every law [of the Shariat]. What is the wisdom in keeping a beard; what is the wisdom in reading Namaaz; what is the wisdom in fasting? And they [the modernists; the slaves of the nafs; the munaafiqs who question the Immutable Law of Allah Ta'ala] call this 'philosophy'. Concoction of this philosophy is not permissible for this reason that they think the law is based on the rationale they have concocted. And where this 'rationale' is not found they assume the law is not applicable.

Once a person explained the rationale of wudhu, and to a degree he explained it well. He said: "What consideration in specifying the washing of the extremes of the body [head, face, hands and feet] which are six and directions are also six! All these [six parts] are encompassed by the directions. And in view of these six parts of the body among the Arabs largely remaining exposed to dust, dirt and the urine drops of their animals, washing them was instructed."

Further, he erred badly by saying: "Since this is the reason, and we dwell in homes with windows and doors we have no problem with dust and dirt. Thus, wudhu is not necessary for us." Accordingly, this misfortunate person would read Namaaz without wudhu.

Here's more: "Why has Roza been made Farz? To break the bestiality in man. In view of us having disciplined our nafs, it is an exercise in redundancy for us to fast. [Na'oothu Billah!]

Namaaz has been made Fardh to inculcate humility. Hence, it has been declared:

وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ

[Be humble together with those who show humility].

And since we have already inculcated humility in us, Namaaz is therefore not necessary upon us."

The Fuqaha had deduced reasons to extend the injunctions to other circumstances, whereas they [the self-styled mujtahids of today; the university-educated so-called ‘scholars’] suck out reasons from their thumbs to escape the injunctions. For this reason I am tentative in speaking of the rationale of the Ahkaam [Laws of Islam], lest people labour under the notion that the Ahkaam are based on those reasons, notwithstanding that we students of the Deen are fully aware of such rationale. People think that the Moulanas do not know the rationale of the injunctions. They know everything. For certain reasons they do not disclose.

There is nothing which is hidden from the Moulanas [i.e. those Ulama who have dedicated their lives to studying and disseminating the Deen of Allah Ta’ala].

Be that as it may, I am going to speak on it now because the audience is the Ulama, hence there is no harm. In fact, there will be added fervour in a’maal [deeds and actions]. So the Fuqaha would explicate for the purpose of extension and I am going to elucidate for the purpose of action.

In regard to the rationale we understand, it should be borne in mind that we should not consider it the object of the injunction. On the contrary, we should understand the injunction to be the object of the rationale, meaning that the injunction covers many particulars of rationale of which this is one. We find this much difference in the deduction of rationale between us and the Fuqaha. Their rationale is the object of the law, whilst our rationale’s object is the law.

In any case, look at the discernment of the Fuqaha! They have derived a major point which will be mentioned further on. And having derived such a major point they were protected from

future error. Had it been anyone else they would have found escaping from error after their deduction almost impossible, as said in this poem:

“You tie me in a bier and throw me in the depth of the ocean saying: “Watch out! Don’t make your garment wet!”

Those were the Fuqaha; caught in the deep ocean and they emerged dry! Here they scrutinized the relationship between safar [journey] and qasr [reduction in the number of Rakaats]. They concluded that qasr on safar is in view of hardship. See! They fell here into the ocean, but their clothes remained dry! In other words, this was an occasion of making a serious blunder. The possible blunder was in averring that if there is no hardship on journey then there is no concession of reduction. Had it been the ignoramuses of today they would have fallen into the trap and the confusion and anxiety ensuing thereafter are evident.

Hardship is a hidden and subtle factor. Prescribing and determining it leaves room for doubt. But, those were the Fuqaha; in the ocean and out with their clothes dry!

Regardless of the illat [reason] for qasr being hardship, they understood its cause, that is safar to be its substitute. The law of qasr now revolves around a Safar-e-Shar’i [journey recognized by the Shariat]. Qasr will have to be made in such a case. We see nowadays on account of the railways people hardly go through hardship. Subhaanallah! What intelligence! Had these illustrious personages lived during the time of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) they would be among the special and close companions. How they understood the intent of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and escaped deviation!

I asked Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb: “If a person miraculously reaches Calcutta in a few seconds does he make qasr

or not?” He replied: “He will make qasr because he has reached the distance of qasr, regardless of him experiencing no hardship.”

It is by virtue of this understanding [of the Fuqaha] that there is no irregularity found in the Shariah. In this regard, it comes in one Hadeeth that if a person crosses the path of one reading Namaaz then he [the one engaged in Namaaz] should ward him off. If he doesn't move away then **فَلْيُمَاتِلْهُ** –fight him. Some [Ulama] adopt the apparent meaning. The Hanafiyyah regard it [the Hadeeth] as a deterrent in view of the reason for the injunction. Ponder over the reason. The reason is to preserve one's concentration in Salaat. And the actual Namaaz certainly is entitled to be preserved. Now, if you fight to retain the attribute, your Namaaz will break. This is irrational; placing so much emphasis on the attribute and totally ignoring the matter.

Subhaanallah! What keen perception of Imam Abu Haneefah (Rahmatullahi alaih)! The Ahl-e-Zaahir [shallow Ulama; those who are steeped in literal interpretations of the Ahadeeth] do not possess such deep penetration and hence they level objections against Imam Abu Haneefah (Rahmatullahi alaih).

Zikr of the Salaat and its Import

Be that as it may, in conjunction to that statement of the Fuqaha this mystery of Tasawwuf is fully in harmony that, the reason for establishing Salaat is Zikrullah, and Zikr of the Salaat is the cause of Zikrullah. Therefore, this cause substitutes the reason.

Just as the Fuqaha explained that hardship is the reason for qasr, and safar is the cause of the hardship; this cause substitutes the reason, similarly Zikrullah is the reason for establishing Salaat, and Zikr of the Salaat [i.e. keeping one's mind on the Salaat] is the cause of this Zikrullah; therefore Zikr of the Salaat is the

substitute of the reason which is Zikr of Allah Ta'ala. Hence, Shaari' [the Promulgator of the Law of Allah Ta'ala, i.e. Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)] considers both on an equal level. It is for this reason that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) states: مُقْبِلًا عَلَيْهِمَا بِقَلْبِهِ [directing his attention to the two Rakaats], and Allah Ta'ala declares: لِذِكْرِي [for My remembrance].

Really, those who do not accept the Hadeeth [reference is to a group of modernist munaafiqeen who reject the Authority of the Hadeeth of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)] are in a major problem! It devolves upon them to acquire the nature of Zikrullah because that is commanded in the Qur'aan. They have no right to suffice on 'focussing their attention on the Salaat' because that is the purport of the Hadeeth.

To summarize, what Rahmat that Zikr of the Salaat comes in place of Zikr of Allah! And this Zikr of the Salaat is not at all difficult.

Then the actual cause for us being neglectful even in this practice is our ilmi [academic] deficiency. In other words, our basic deficiency is that we have not understood the meaning of Zikr of Salaat. Hence it appears difficult to us.

We have understood its meaning to be that only the thought of Namaaz must be in the heart and no thought of anything else should even cross the heart. No! In fact, it means that we should keep only the thought of Namaaz in our hearts and not bring alien thoughts into it. If it comes, let it come. But, do not voluntarily draw thoughts to your mind. Voluntarily just keep your mind on your Namaaz. Thereafter whatever thoughts come involuntarily, ignore them. You are not obliged to prevent them and nor can you stop them.

Understand it in the following manner. A beloved tells the lover: “Just look at me and no one else.” He started to look at the beloved. Coincidentally, a pigeon flew directly across the path of his view and hence his gaze fell on it. Will the beloved say: “You did not listen to me!” Never! The reason for this is that he did not pursue it. It came itself in the line of his view.

This is similar to the statement of Moulana Mahmood Hasan Saheb (Quddisa Sirruhu). Moulana wrote a refutation of the Ghair Muqallideen [the Salafis]. In answer to the accusation that he goes after the Ghair Muqallids Moulana responded with a subtle and wonderful answer. He writes: “I don’t go after them; they come themselves and stand in my way.”

Similarly, there are two types of thoughts. One type, are those thoughts which come themselves and ‘stand’ in your way. The other, are those which you go after.

The Ahl-e-Zaahir [shallow Ulama] blunder severely here. They do not differentiate between the two and hence they labour under the notion that Zikr and Khushu’ [concentration] are very difficult. It is not difficult! It is exceptionally simple. I will illustrate it with an example. The mas-alah is known that Namaaz is not valid without niyyat [intention]. Furthermore, it is also acknowledged that niyyat is not with the tongue but with the heart. It is the action of the heart; thinking in the heart that, “I am reading Namaaz”. This is precisely the nature of Zikr of the Salaat. Just as the attention is focussed to it [the Salaat] at the beginning, if this attention is maintained for the entire duration of the Namaaz then Zikr of the Salaat has been achieved. Now you know that Zikr of the Salaat is really very easy.

Concentration in Namaaz and in the Recitation of the Qur'aan

Another Ibaadat in Salaat, particularly in Taraaweeh, and like that in Ramadhaan as well is the recitation of the Qur'aan. I will point out the nature of concentration in it as well.

See! If a Hafiz is weak in a certain ruku', how will he recite it? He will recite it with due concentration. This is precisely the gist of concentration on the Qur'aan. Thus, just as you recite one rukoo' with concentration recite all twenty Rakaats in this manner. This is exactly the meaning of presence of mind in Salaat.

If someone claims that I have cooked this up, I will say, "No, Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith-e-Dehlwi has written on the nature of presence of mind in Salaat the same." Now point out what difficulty is there in it?

Read your Namaaz with presence of mind. You only have to read the whole Namaaz with the thought you had at the time of niyyat. What added difficulty is there?

Recite the Qur'aan with presence of mind. It simply entails keeping your condition the same throughout the twenty Rakaats as your condition is when reading a kach-cha [not properly memorized] ruku'. After this, if someone still does not achieve presence of mind it is his own neglect.

In any case, in this discourse the islaah [reformation] of the Ahl-e-Zaahir is that they should recite the Qur'aan and perform their Namaaz mindfully. The mistake of the Ahl-e-Baatin [disciples of Tasawwuf] is that they needlessly worry about stray thoughts. This is the reality [of Zikr in our Namaaz] which I have spoken

on. Don't append to it your own ideas, for it will not endure. You may restrict yourself for a few days [with some self-imposed condition in Zikr in Salaat], but thereafter your nafs will flee like a runaway camel. Then you will never be able to bring it under control.

If you attempt to block all thoughts from your mind, for a few days you may succeed, but thereafter you will be devastated by an avalanche of stray thoughts. The reason for this is that previously [and quite correctly] they would come and go. Now, you have amassed them at the 'door' of the heart. Once that door opens there will be a stampede and it will take months to undo the damage. I am not putting forward some flowery speech. I am saying through experience. See for yourself. Don't put a stopper; leave it as it is.

The Significance of Tilaawat of the Qur'aan in Ramadhaan

In any case, these are the true realities; these are the simple truths and this is the meaning of:

الدِّينُ يُسْرٌ

[The Deen is easy].

So, this is the essence of the Qur'aan and the essence of Salaat which is mentioned in:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

[Establish Salaat for My remembrance].

Understand it in this manner. Recitation of the Qur'aan is part of Salaat. Thus, what the essence of Salaat is, it will be the essence

of all its parts including the Qiraat-part. In fact, this [Qiraat] is such a significant part that no other part can substitute it.

Other Arkaan [elements of Salaat] have their substitutes, not it [Qiraat], to the extent that one who cannot recite it is ordered to make do with Takbeer and Tahleel [saying Allahu Akbar and Laa Ilaaha Illallah]. This may raise the doubt of it being the substitute of the Qur'aan; however, look; this Takbeer and Tahleel are also portions of the Qur'aan, as Allah Ta'ala states:

وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

See, there is Takbeer in it. In many places سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ appears. اللَّهُ also comes.

Thus, in view of this [Qiraat] being a significant part, its essence will also be Zikr. This explanation establishes the exclusive nature of Namaaz.

Now, the Qur'aan remains. Well, the Qur'aan is specially connected to Ramadhaan from the very beginning.

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

"The Month of Ramadhaan is that month in which the Qur'aan was revealed."

This proves its exclusiveness in so far as the Revelation is concerned.

Another peculiarity [of the Qur'aan to the month of Ramadhaan] is that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would make dor [revise] to Jibraeel (Alaihis Salaam) in Ramadhaan.

Furthermore, the Fuqaha have written that it is Masnoon [Sunnat] to make a khatm [completion] of one Qur'aan in Taraaweeh.

Also, we learn from all these Nusoos [Qur'aan and Hadeeth declarations] that Tilaawat [recitation] of the Qur'aan in Ramadhaan is even more desired. This was the Shar'i peculiarity [of Tilaawat of the Qur'aan to the month of Ramadhaan].

A peculiarity by nature is that in this month every person becomes inclined to the Qur'aan. Hence, I consider it [Tilaawat] more meritorious for the Zaakireen [mureeds in the Khaanqah] than Zikr [i.e. the special forms of Zikr prescribed by the Shaikh to his Mureedeen]. I don't mean that Zikr should not be made; it should be continued, however, mostly Tilaawat of the Qur'aan should be made. The reason for this is that all twelve months are equal in relation to Zikr, whereas reciting the Qur'aan in Ramadhaan brings one special blessings. Just as when one goes to Makkah one should make excessive Tawaaf—one should engage in other Ibaadaat as well, but mostly Tawaaf—similar is the case with the Qur'aan in Ramadhaan.

These are the Ibaadats of Ramadhaan. Thus discharge these Ibaadats with their appearances and essences. In other words, carry them out with attention.

In any case, this was the essence of Salaat which Allah Ta'ala states:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

“Establish Namaaz for My remembrance.”

I now conclude my topic. Make Du'a unto Allah Ta'ala for towfeeq to make amal. Aameen.

Epilogue

Just now whilst reading Namaaz [the Asr Namaaz which followed the bayaan] the answer to a question was inspired into my heart by Allah Ta'ala.

Hazrat Haji Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaihi) would say: “Whatever is inspired in the heart whilst performing Namaaz is correct.”

The question is: “Since Zikr has two stages; one higher, viz. Zikr of the Mazkoor [the One remembered] and the other lower, viz. Zikr of the Zikr; and it is proven that Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would [occasionally] err in Namaaz then—Na’oothu Billah—would Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) be unmindful in his Namaaz like us? If there is full attention to something then how can one forget?”

The answer is that in truth the cause of erring is not concentrating on the Namaaz, but there are two causes of this loss of concentration. One is concentration on something loftier than Salaat, which is directing one’s attention to Allah Ta’ala, which is the highest stage of Zikr; and this was the peculiarity with Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

The other is thinking about something inferior to Salaat, which is not even the lower stage of Zikr. This is the case with our negligence which we are caught up in.

Thus, Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) not concentrating on the Salaat is something else and our loss of concentration is something else. Both, however, jointly share the point of forgetting. This is echoed in this verse:

“Do not judge the actions of seniors according to your actions.”

In any case, this was the doubt that was lingering in my mind for years. However, Alhamdulillah, today it has been cleared.

Addendum

Thereafter, my dear Molvi Zafar Ahmad [the nephew of Hazrat Moulana Thanwi] wrote to me that he has found in the works of the Salaf [illustrious former Ulama] confirmation of what I had said. In this regard, he sent the following text: “Allaamah Tahtaawi has mentioned at the end of the Chapter on Sujoodus Sahw the following: ‘The Sahw [omission and error] of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was in view of him becoming so engrossed with Haq Subhaanahu wa Ta’ala that his mind was diverted from the Salaat to Allah Ta’ala and in consequence he erred [in the Salaat]. The following Arabic poem portrays this interpretation:

يَا سَائِلِي عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ سَهَا
وَالسَّهْوُ عَنْ كُلِّ قَلْبٍ عَافِلٍ لَاهِي
قَدْ غَابَ عَنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَسَهَا
عَمَّا سِوَى اللَّهِ فِي التَّعْظِيمِ
لِلَّهِّ

—Abus Sa’ood

*“O One who asks me about Rasoolullah [Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam]; how did he make Sahw, whereas Sahw is the product of a heart that is indifferent and careless?
His heart left everything and hence the Sahw, whilst it became engrossed in the veneration of Allah forgetting everything else.”*

The End

The Essence of the Essence

1. Every Ibaadat [Act of Worship] has an appearance and an essence.

2. The essence of fasting is mujaahadah and the gist of mujaahadah is to oppose the nafs.

3. Reading Taraaweeh Namaaz is also extremely necessary because it is proven from documental sources that it is encouraged, decreed, practised, desired, intended and praised from the practice of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and furthermore from the persistence of the Sahaabah (Radhiyallahu anhum). For this reason the Muhaqqiqeen [Expert Scholars] have written that it is Sunnat-e-Mu'akkadah [a strongly emphasised traditional practice].

4. The consequence here [in committing a minor and major sin] is also the same.” And what is that consequence? It is the displeasure of Allah Ta’ala.

5. We cannot think of an external form of the Divine Being [Allah Ta’ala] as we can of perceivable objects. But, we can think of an external form of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) because, regardless of us not having seen him, every act of his has been portrayed to us. Hence, he is akin to being perceived. And the impressions left by a perceivable entity are greater. Thus, the demand of this is that we should feel ashamed of opposing him.

6. Ijma’ [Consensus] has already been enacted over twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh being Sunnat-e-Mu’akkadah. And, it is na-

jaaiz [unlawful] to violate Ijma'. This Ijma' signifies that those Ahadeeth [speaking of eight and twelve Rakaats] are mansookh [abrogated].

7. If twenty Rakaats are demanded there [by the Court of Allah Ta'ala] and you have only eight to your credit then from where are you going to get [the outstanding Rakaats]? If on the other hand you have twenty and eight are asked for, you will have a balance which will be your profit and of use to you.

8. Bear in mind that it is not at all obligatory upon Allah Ta'ala to give anyone. He gives purely out of His Grace, Mercy and Kindness.

9. Understand well that just as the essence of Salaat is nourishment for the soul of man, the external form of Salaat is nourishment for the external [i.e. body] of man. Thus, man's external has been bestowed this nourishment [of Salaat] as well, besides the natural nourishment [of food].

10. Leaving the eyes open and reading [Namaaz] is more meritorious, regardless of thoughts crossing one's mind, whereas reading with closed eyes even though no stray thought crosses one's mind is less superior because it is against the Sunnat.

11. A Kaamil [one who has achieved perfection in Tasawwuf] is one who resembles Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam); every act of his—sitting, standing, eating, drinking, smiling, talking—is the same [as that of Rasoolullah Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam]. In short, everything of his is like Rasoolullah's.

12. Khushu' and concentration is one thing and being lost in thought is something else.

13. Just as the more you prune the grapevine it grows further, similar is the case with this path [the path of Divine Love]; it only extends further and is not covered in any way.

14. “Allah is calling (all of) you to the Abode of Peace, i.e. Jannat.”

15. There was equilibrium and system in every act of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam); in his walking, in his talking, in his sitting, in his meeting, in his eating, in his drinking. His character was in harmony with the Qur’aan.

16. Initially it is difficult to sustain it [character]. Afterwards, by virtue of constant execution and discipline it becomes easy.

17. The Saalik [seeker of spiritual purification and proximity to Allah Ta’ala] should remember that Zikr without urge and emotion is of no fikr [concern].

18. The purpose and Rooh of Namaaz is Allah Ta’ala’s remembrance.

19. On the Day of Qiyaamat [Resurrection] people will find all their deeds present. For instance, a thief will be seen there in the act of theft; a fornicator will be seen in the act of fornication. In short, whatever effects of deeds are accumulated in a person all will be seen in the form of external actions there. Allah Ta’ala has created its similitude here, viz. the cinema. Just as past events are screened at a cinema, similarly, on the Day of Qiyaamat these [actions and deeds of ours] will be screened. A person’s hands and feet will speak and reveal whatever he did like how a gramophone speaks [and how the speakers of the host of modern gadgets speak].

20. The gist of Zikr is that the person who remembers only thinks of who he is remembering, of nothing else, to the extent that he does not even think of himself engaging in remembering. This is the nature of Zikr.

21. The remembrance of Allah Ta'ala is the same; besides Allah Ta'ala there should be no other thought in the heart, to the extent that there should not be the thought that one is remembering Allah Ta'ala. This is the first stage of Zikr. The gist of it is that the thought of the Mazkoor [One remembered] is in the heart, not the thought of the Zikr.

22. The second stage is remembrance of not the Mazkoor, but the Zikr at least. In other words, there is at least this thought that one is making Zikr. This is remembrance of the Zikr; it is not direct remembrance of the Mazkoor. However, this is also sufficient, although it is a lower stage in relation to the actual right of Zikr.

23. They [the Fuqaha] were given such understanding by virtue of which they formulated Usool [Principles and Rules] which have remained immutable to this day.

24. The reason for establishing Salaat is Zikrullah.

25. All twelve months are equal in relation to Zikr, whereas reciting the Qur'aan in Ramadhaan brings one special blessings. Just as when one goes to Makkah one should make excessive Tawaaf—one should engage in other Ibaadaat as well, but mostly Tawaaf—similar is the case with the Qur'aan in Ramadhaan.

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