

AL-ISLAAH PUBLICATIONS

Part 2

FOR FRIENDS: PART 2 (DISCOURSES OF HAZRAT MASEEHULLAH KHAN SAHEB(R.A.))

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the discourse "Tartib of Suluk" (see "For Friends." No. 1.), Hadhratji skillfully and gently led us along strange and fascinating avenues. Along our journey, we stopped at the khanqas of Hadhrat Junaid Baghdadi, Hadhrat Mirzah Jan-Janah and Hadhrat Thanwi (Hadhratwala). Even more fascinating were the different concepts that we were introduced to. From amongst the various topics discussed, we had a chance to peep at topics like 'Ilm, the Madrasah and Jihad.

In this discourse, with the same charm and simple logic, Hadhratji takes us again by the hand and leads us into the very depths of 'ilm, the Madrasah, the Khanqah and Jihad - topics related directly and indirectly to each and every Muslim.

These few sentences do not suffice as an introduction to this majlis. The introduction to the first discourse should be re-read, as the comments made there also apply to this majlis - as well as to every forthcoming majlis!

Some have expressed the feeling that the level of some of the topics is "too high"; or the points too subtle to understand. Here, one should bear in mind the golden rule: Digest and assimilate what you do understand, and leave the rest till later. On re-reading these "evergreen" discourses at regular intervals, one is pleasantly surprised at the amount one does understand. Secondly, the logical step is to ask any one of the Ulema-e-Haq to explain those points not quite clear. (This latter step is also recommended to ensure that there are no inadvertent errors that may have crept into the translation. A second reason is the following: many points are so fine that they require detailed explanations before being understood. As this aspect is beyond the scope of these translations the services of the Ulema-e-Haq are essential.)

During the course of this discourse, reference is made to an interesting episode that occurred during the time of the Khilafat of Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) (A passing reference to this incident is also made in the discourse "Tartib of Su???k" on page 35.) Before proceeding with the translation of the discourse, this particular incident is being presented to you

Note: This present copy of "For Friends, Booklet No. Two" is a reprint of the one published in March 1990. This copy has been revised and reformatted. Seeing that Hadhratji passed away in 1992, reference to him has now changed with the epithet being added. Other changes have also been made where it was deemed necessary. In this revised copy Hadhrat Mufti Aqilur-Rahman sahib, who compiled the Urdu version, added a qissah as a footnote in the section on "kasre nafs". This qissah has been reproduced at the end of the Glossary.]

Dr. I. M

2. WAQI'AH

Time period: Sometime during the period that Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) was the Khalifah, Amirul Mu'minin - Leader of the Believers. (35 - 40 A.H.)

Personalities involved:

[i] Hadhrat Ali (r.a.);

[ii] Qazi Shureh (r.a.), a judge, appointed to this position by Hadhrat Umar (r.a.) during his Khilafat;

[iii] a Yahud who lived in Madina as a subject, under the rule of the Amirul Mu'minin.

Amirul Mu'minin, Hadhrat Ali's (r.a.) armour had been stolen. One day, while walking through the market place, he recognized his armour in the possession of a Yahud. He went up to the Yahud and said, "This is my armour." The Yahud retorted, "Bring witnesses to prove it. Alternatively, file a law-suit!"

[In relating this incident, Hadhratwala(R.A.) states: Bear in mind that, firstly, the Yahud as a nation had a very disgraced position throughout the world, since the time that they had been rebellious to Hadhrat Musa(A.S.). Secondly, they were a dominated minority group in the Islamic State. Thirdly, this Yahud was addressing the Head of State! This is the freedom of speech and action, within the law, granted to subjects. This brashness of the Yahud is an example of how the ta'lim of Islam was not mere theory, but was upheld in practice from the Khalifah downwards.]

Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) proceeded to Qazi Shureh (r.a.) and laid a charge of theft against the Yahud. The case came before the Qazi. Both plaintiff and defendant presented themselves in front of the Qazi on an equal footing.

Qazi Shureh (r.a.), without being overawed by the presence of Amirul Mu'minin, Hadhrat Ali (r.a.), seated himself with the pomp that the situation demanded. Calmly, without any trace of discomfiture or panic, he started his questioning. He asked the Yahud, "Does the armour belong to Hadhrat Ali (r.a.)?" The Yahud flatly denied it.

Thereupon Qazi Shureh (r.a.) turned to Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) and calmly requested, "Bring witnesses to support your claim."

[Hadhratwala comments: To doubt the validity of the claim of Amirul Mu'minin, Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) was unthinkable. Yet, proceedings had to be in accordance with the rules laid down by the Shariat. Wallah! Others who have adopted civilized attitudes have learnt these from Islam and then, too, they could not equal the standards laid out by Islam!]

Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) produced two witnesses. One was his son, Imam Hasan (r.a.), and the other was his freed slave, whose name was Qambar. In his opinion, the evidence of these two was acceptable in the Islamic law-court. However, Qazi Shureh (r.a.) differed in his understanding of the law related to acceptability of witnesses. In his opinion, the evidence of the son in favour of his father was not acceptable. He thus rejected the evidence of Imam Hasan (r.a.), accepting the evidence of the freed slave only.

Qazi Shureh (r.a.) addressed Hadhrat Ali (r.a.), "Bring another witness in place of Imam Hasan (r.a.). The evidence of your slave, seeing he has been freed, is accepted." Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) replied, "I have no other witnesses." Because of a lack of sufficient evidence - a second acceptable witness - Qazi Shureh (r.a.) dismissed Hadhrat Ali's (r.a.) claim, acting according to the Shariat and not according to his personal i'tiqad (faith and confidence) on the truthfulness of Hadhrat Ali (r.a.).

The Yahud, in the meantime, was observing the whole proceedings with full attention. On leaving the courtroom, he watched intently to see the reaction of Hadhrat Ali (r.a.). There was not even a flicker of annoyance on Hadhrat Ali's (r.a.) face. Not a word of displeasure at the verdict passed his lips, despite being "Asadullah" - "The Lion of Allah" - the title that he had earned for his ferociousness and courage in jihad against the kuffar.

Coming out of his reverie, the Yahud addressed Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) thus: "The reality of the situation has become quite clear to me, that your mazhab (religion) is a true one and your attitude is its effect on you." The Yahud continued, "Here, take it - this armour is yours! And I herewith proclaim that I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammed is His slave and messenger:

Hadhrt Ali (r.a.) said, "I, in turn, present this armour to you!"

The net outcome was that the Yahud became a Muslim. He remained with Hadhrt Ali (r.a.), until a day came when he became shahid in a battle (i.e. he was martyred).

3.ILM, JIHAD, THE MADRASAH AND THE KHANQAH.

[This is a translation of a majlis-e-khas held in Jalalabad, India, by Hadhrt Maulana Muhammed Masihullah Khan sahib . Saturday 2nd Rabi-ul Awwal 1409, corresponding to the 15th October 1988.]

[Hadhrtaji commenced this majlis by drawing the attention of those present to the majlis-e-am held the day before, Friday, after the Jumu'ah namaz.]

Those of you who were present yesterday when a wa'z (lecture) of Hadhrtwala (R.A.) was read, will have heard how the Ulema were addressed by him. He stressed the point that the responsibility of the reformation of the general Muslim populace rested on the shoulders of the Ulema. The Ulema body formed that axis around which the improvement of the character of the Muslim populace revolved.

4.WHO IS AN ALIM?

The question arises: Who is an alim? One can state categorically that all the Sahabah(r.a.) were Ulema. We can thus state quite confidently that an alim is not necessarily that person who sits with prescribed textbooks (darsiyat-e-kutub) in front of him and has an ustad (teacher) lecturing to him from a textbook. What kitabs were in front of the Sahabah(r.a.)? The Sahabah(r.a.) presented themselves to Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam), focus of the Divine mission, to be taught by him without the aid of any kitabs.

This shows quite clearly that the aim and objective is to gain 'ilm of Deen, and this is neither dependent on, nor confined to, kitabs. This is also borne out by the following Hadith sharif:

Seek 'ilm even though it be in (a country as distant as) China.

Another Hadith sharif states:

To seek 'ilm is fardh (compulsory) on every Muslim male.

Another narration includes every Muslim female as well:

To acquire 'ilm is fardh. The 'ilm referred to is knowledge of Deen, that Knowledge ('ilm) that was revealed through Wahi (Revelation) - Wahi-e-jali and Wahi-e-khafi - the Qur'an Sharif being "Wahi-e-jali" and the Hadith sharif being "Wahi-e-khafi". "Fiqh" is the setting out of the rules and laws contained in the Qur'an and Hadith sharif into a systematic arrangement, but nevertheless the ta'lim of Fiqh - the teachings of these rules and laws - still remain Wahi (Revelation).

Confirmation of the importance of attaining 'ilm, as well as its reality (haqiqat) have been stated in an amazing and wondrous manner in a specific ayet (verse) of the Qur'an Sharif. I am not a hafiz¹, so may I request a hafiz to recite the relevant ayet which states that when the order for jihad is given, do not all go out together.....

[At this point Hadhratji gave the lead and Haffeji Nىr Muhammed Sahib recited the complete ayet.]

All the Believers should not go out together (for jihad). Why should one (small) group from every (large) group not go out, (and the rest remain behind,) so that (these) may acquire the understanding of Deen, so that they may warn those who had gone out on their return, in order that they may adopt caution. (S.9. A.122)

I am not a hafiz, so the whole ayet has been recited by a hafiz: When the order for jihad is given, do not all go out together. Rather, one jama't (group) should go out and one jama't should remain with you (Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam)) to acquire 'ilm. Those interested, can look up the relevant tafsir (commentaries). The purpose here is to show the importance of 'ilm compared to jihad.

5.PURPOSE OF JIHAD

Let us now look into the subject of jihad. Waging jihad - jihad-e- amali - against the kuffar is not to force them to bring Iman. Jihad is to remove those obstacles that prevent isha't-e-nas - the dissemination of the teachings of Qur'an and Hadith sharif - for the sake of Deen; and to forcefully remove those obstacles that prevent those desirous of the Deen from coming towards the Deen. Jihad is the final phase in the removal of these obstacles. Otherwise, there is no need for jihad.

The case put to the kuffar is as follows: "Why do you cause difficulties to those who have become Mu'min? Why do you harass them? Why do you insult and humiliate them? Jan, mal and izzat-o-abru - life, wealth and honour and respect: Why do you harass them and cause them hardships in these? Those who wish to come towards Iman, why prevent them by tyranny? "You yourselves bring Iman or not - there is no compulsion. You do your work, and we will do ours. However, if you do not heed our words, at this stage we say nothing - we recognize our weak position."

There is no sense in knowingly putting ourselves into difficulties in a situation where our objectives are unattainable. The teaching of Islam forbids one to deliberately place oneself in difficulties, knowing full well that one's objectives are unattainable.

That is why the thirteen years in Makkah - the initial blessed Makkan Period - were spent with tremendous mujahadah² and riyadhat by the Muslims. The persecution produced such spiritual discipline and strength that all nafsaniyet was eliminated, and only radha-go'ey and radha-jo'ey remained - whatever was to be said was solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala; and whatever was to be done was solely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.

Character improvement in its entirety and perfection, progressed for thirteen years by waging jihad against the nafs. Tackle this first, so that when you are free from this task, your entire actions, ta'limi and ta'mili, 'ilmi and amali, muta'allaq-bil-zahir and muta'allaq-bil-batin, muta'allaq-e-infradi and muta'allaq-e- ijtima'i, min hesial mu'amulat and min hesial mu'asharat, min hesial adat and akhlaq, are solely for radha-e-ilahi.

[That is, one's entire range of actions, connected to learning and teaching, theory and practice, connected to one's outer, external actions and one's internal character, connected to individual activity or collective activity, whether it be in the sphere of transactions and social lifestyle, whether in the sphere of habits and character, should all be for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.]

Nothing else to remain or intrude between. This will result in your actions being fully within the boundaries of the orders of Allah Ta'ala, called the Shariat, in theory and practice, in instruction and compliance, whether connected to the zahir or batin, in a manner that is punctual and persistent.

Silently, for thirteen years the Sahabah(r.a.) progressed, developing firm, well-balanced characters, hand in hand with acquiring beneficial 'ilm. During this period they were not enjoined to perform any other ibadat (acts of worship). No order had come as yet to perform namaz (salat), to keep roza (fasts), to give zakat or to perform haj. These became compulsory only after the Hijrat, except for namaz, which became compulsory a year before the Hijrat. Yes, there were people performing haj, but this was done according to the ignorant customs then prevalent.

Do you understand the importance of all this?

Let us expand: It was only after the Hijrat, that a Markaz (Centre/Operational Headquarters) was acquired in Madina sharif. When obstacles were still being encountered in the matter of ta'lim of Deen, and outsiders persisted in harassing and obstructing the Ahle Deen Mu'min (i.e. the Muslims), then only was the order for jihad-e-amali given - the go ahead for jihad-e- amali came only after the Muslims possessed a markaz and had successfully passed the phase of jihad against the nafs. Now, whatever the Sahabah(r.a.) did, was within the limits set by the Shariat, for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and not for any personal motives.

Consequently, the full help and support of Allah Ta'ala was with them. Sukun (quietude) entered their hearts from one direction, and sakinah (tranquility) descended directly on them from Allah Ta'ala.

We can see that jihad was not ordered to force people to bring Iman: When obstacles were placed in front of them, the initiation of hostilities was permitted. Battle was also permitted when the enemy forced a direct confrontation - nay, in this situation it became not only ja'iz (permissible) but wajib (compulsory). Even the initiation of hostilities became wajib at times. At such times jihad would be in the category of fardh-e-kifayah, and in the category of fardh-e-'ain when there is a massed attack by the enemy.

6.TWO NECESSITIES FOR JIHAD

But when? Only when a markaz had been acquired. Thus, two important factors connected with jihad have been established: one is the acquisition of a markaz, and the second is the acquisition of taqwa (fear of Allah Ta'ala). To have a markaz is an 'illat (fundamental); to possess taqwa is a shart (stipulation). Mere possession of the shart, which is an external factor, does not make jihad fardh (compulsory).

These terms, 'illat and shart, will be better understood if explained in regard to namaz:

Verily, namaz has been prescribed upon Muslims at definite times. (S.4 A.103)

This command is the 'illat for performing namaz. Without this 'illat there is no namaz and no wudhu (ablution). Wudhu is an act outside namaz, but it is an essential prerequisite for performing namaz. Wudhu is a shart.

By adopting taqwa, sukun (tranquility) entered the hearts of the Muslims. By acquiring a markaz, a unique strength and sakinah (serenity) came to them from Allah Ta'ala. The sakinah that descended was from two sources: internally it entered their hearts through ilham (inspiration), and externally it came from assistance and support from mala'ikah (angels).

Support from outside, provided it is according to the Shariat, lends added strength.

The qissah of Hadhrat Musa (A.S.) illustrates this point quite nicely. When Allah Ta'ala ordered him to proceed to Egypt to speak to Fir'oun (to bring iman), Hadhrat Musa (A.S.) was hesitant. "Fir'oun is a harsh person. I am not liked by him because, accidentally, I killed one of his kinsman. On the one hand, I am unable to speak clearly (because of my stutter); on the other hand, the uncertainty of the situation causes me some anxiety. So, it would be much better if one from my own household, somebody in whom I have full confidence, who is my brother Harun, could be sent with me to lend support to me." Allah Ta'ala acceded to the request and sent Hadhrat Harun (A.S.) as a Nabi with him. This is an example of external support bringing sakinah.

External support bringing sakinah, may be through man and may also be through the agency of mala'ikah, as mentioned already.

For some sakinah and strength may also descend directly into the heart through ilham from Allah Ta'ala, without any outside means, thereby gaining strength of heart. An example of this latter method is also to be found in the Qur'an Sharif:

Then, after sorrow, He sent down unto you a security and slumber....(S.3 A.154)

In the middle of the Battle of Uhud, sakinah descended on the Sahabah (r.a.) and they were overcome by sleep. With this tranquility all their tiredness also left them and they felt light of heart.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF 'ILM OVER JIHAD

We have stated already that the Shariat has stipulated the undertaking of jihad to remove the obstacles placed in propagating Islam. Jihad is very important. Everybody knows that. Nevertheless the importance of 'ilme Deen is such that all have been forbidden to go out in jihad all at once, but the command has been given that a group should remain behind in the presence of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wassallam) in order to learn 'ilme Deen.

The importance of the jihad of acquiring 'ilm in relation to physical jihad-e-amali is such that the latter (jihad-e-amali) is dependant on the former: if one does not have correct 'ilm, according to the Haq of the Shariat and the limits of the Shariat, what will be the state of one's jihad? It will definitely not be according to the wishes of Allah Ta'ala.

That is why Allah Ta'ala says: Do not go out all together, if it is not a situation of nafir-e-am (general hostilities). No, do not do such a thing. Rather a jama't (group) from amongst you should stay in your (Rasulullah (sallaahu alaihi wassallam's) presence to acquire 'ilm, while some should go out in jihad.

The elevated status and importance of acquiring 'ilm is being emphasised. Staying put in one place for the jihad of acquiring 'ilm is also a burden on the nafs - one is restricted, one's freedom is curtailed, one has to be punctual. This is a jihad against the nafs.

Allah Ta'ala then says: Those who return from jihad should now be taught by those who had remained behind in the royal court of Rasulullah(sallallahu alaiyhi wassallam) what they had learnt. The word used is "fiqah" - the correct understanding: to be able to comprehend and explain. "Liyatafaqqahu fid din" - the plural used denotes that the students of Rasulullah(sallallahu alaiyhi wassallam) are being addressed. One can see how a chain has formed. Starting from Rasulullah(sallallahu alaiyhi wassallam), 'ilm has been passed on to his students; his students have, in turn, become ustads (teachers.), and those returning are now the students, for 'ilm to be passed on to them.

8.MEANING OF 'ILM

Another point is that "knowledge" is clearly meant to be that of Deen. What is meant is that the finer points of the Deen should be taught and understood. "Fiqah" includes the power of deduction; it includes recognition of place, person and situation (moqah-mahel). Please note: "Lita'lamu" is not used because this would give a more limited meaning, namely "to teach". "Fiqah" implies that one should be imbued with such an understanding and fluency of the Deen academically that, if anyone were to launch an intellectual onslaught against you, you will not be overawed. In your propagation of the Haq you will reply in a calm and graceful manner. The setting forth of Haq will be done politely, with good manners, without being subdued by the questioner, without being overwhelmed by him. Your response may be in reply to a query, or it may be in anticipation of any objections.

Ayyohat tullab! Hearken O ye students! This is called acquiring 'ilm! This is called studying! It is not done superficially. It is not merely skimming over the surface. Study should be in depth, with insight and foresight. The word "fiqah" encompasses all these aspects. That is why it is said:

One faqih is more burdensome on Shaitan than a thousand abeds (worshippers).

To mislead a thousand abeds is an easy task compared to misleading a single faqih. Here again the word "faqih" appears - that person who has a deep understanding of Deen, the finer and subtler points as well as the basics. Note that the term "muhaddith" - scholar of Hadith sharif - is not used.

A logical deduction is that if Shaitan himself was a faqih, he would not have been misled by his nafs. Shaitan had 'ilm, but he was not a faqih. His ustad (teacher) was Nafs, and that is why he was led astray. The temptation of hubbe jah (love of fame and prestige) was too great. His nafs was not disciplined by the process of tazkiyeh akhlaq (reformation of the character) and Shaitan, despite possessing 'ilm, succumbed.

9.THE QUALITIES OF A TAIBUL 'ILM

In this is a lesson for the talibul 'ilm, the ahle 'ilm (the students and the savants): what degree of tazkiyeh akhlaq has to be attained; the standard of the akhlaqe hamidah (praiseworthy qualities) to be firmly established. The akhlaqe razilah (despicable qualities) should be subdued to a point of non-existence and gaflat (negligence) ceases completely, with yad-dasht (remembrance of Allah Ta'ala) becoming firmly grounded.

We are still dealing with the word "fiqah". The talibul 'ilm has the responsibility of acquiring 'ilm in depth, not mere superficial knowledge, but going into details and finer points; understanding and being able to convey to others (ifham wa tafhim). The inquiring mind of the talibul 'ilm should delve into deeper aspects; his perception should be profound; his answers should be erudite; his tabiyet (temperament) should be free, not overawed by others; his stance should be confident; his outlook should be all-encompassing. This is the manner in which he should set forth the Haq.

In the early years this emphasis on attaining knowledge caused an upsurge in all fields of study. The enemies of Islam - the enemies of 'ilme Deen - did not miss the opportunity. Using philosophical and pseudo-scientific arguments, they launched a headlong assault against the Deen. That is why always, but especially so in this day and age, the talibul 'ilm's knowledge cannot be cursory. He has to know the masa'il (rules) of Philosophy and the sciences of Logic and Astronomy.³ It is essential for the ustad to teach these to the student. This should be done in a simple manner, easy to comprehend, going into necessary details, so that the student may be armed for the onslaught by the enemy. These are subjects that should not be removed from the syllabus, as is the trend, unfortunately!

Not only nowadays, but in those days as well, philosophical and pseudo-scientific arguments were put to the Muslims, to confuse the simple-minded and lead them astray. The kuffar tried to mislead the Sahabah(r.a.) with such arguments. An example of one such argument is the following:

"What kind of logic is it that the killing by Allah Ta'ala is haram, but killing by yourselves is halal?" This alludes to the fact that the meat of an animal dying through natural causes, in other words 'killed by Allah Ta'ala' is haram; but the meat of the animal slaughtered according to the method shown by the Shariat is halal. The kuffar and mushrikin would say, "Just see what your Rasul is saying. It does not make sense." Those Muslims who were naive and simple-minded became confused by this distorted logic.

Another attack would be made as follows: Referring to istinja, they would say, "What, does your Rasul even teach you to urinate and defecate?" In this sarcastic manner they tried to belittle the mission of Rasulullah (sallallaahu alaiyhi wassallam).

But, the Sahabah(r.a.) were firm and undaunted. They replied with serenity, "Yes, he does! Before our becoming Muslims we never even knew how to urinate and defecate! Yes, he does teach us these!"

The simple fact is that to make istinja in the correct manner, according to the laws of the Shariat, is also counted as ibadat (worship). To get one's perspective straight, let me add that istinja, performed according to the Haq of the Shariat and the laws of the Shariat, far outweighs a thousand episodes of kashf and a thousand acts of karamats in attaining qurbe-Ilahi (nearness to Allah Ta'ala). Please understand this well! The qurbe-Ilahi and the status attained by the ibadat of istinja performed in the proper and correct Shari manner, are far, far greater than thousands of episodes of kashf and karamats. The latter, in relation to the former, are valueless.

To continue: simple-minded Muslims, those newly entered into the fold of Islam, were easily confused. And in this day and age the distorted logic and philosophical and pseudo-scientific arguments directed at the Muslims have increased manifold. The enemies of 'ilme Deen are very active. Their aim is to mislead the uninformed.

It is amazing that on that side (among the non-Muslims) there is a tremendous upsurge and spread of knowledge, whereas we are limiting it. This is a great weakness on our part.

The question of acquiring only superficial knowledge does not arise at all! The importance of correct 'ilm - 'ilm being knowledge of Deen - cannot be emphasized enough. At all times the value of 'ilm relative to jihad must be borne in mind to appreciate its importance.

Suffah.[A raised platform.] ("Sufi" is related to this word.) This place is still in existence today since the time of the Sahabah(r.a.). In the Masjid-e-Nabawi in Madina you will see a raised platform on which you will find people sitting and reciting (making tilawat of) the Qur'an Sharif. This is where the talibul 'ilm - the Sahabah(r.a.), the As-habas-Suffah - used to lodge in the time of Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam). They used to gather there. Besides the acquisition of 'ilme Deen they had no other work

10.THE MADRASAH - SOME IMPORTANT POINTS

Before proceeding, let us digress a little to the subject of the gathering (ijtimayet) of students (in an institution for them to study, i.e. a madrasah): The As-habas-Suffah present a precedent for providing boarding facilities at a madrasah for the students. The madrasah is established for the teaching of Deen. It should thus accommodate those who have come to learn, by providing food as well as shelter. Even students from the neighbourhood should stay at the madrasah's boarding, and not in their own homes. The discipline of staying collectively with others - ijtimayet - in the "Boarding", as well as the punctuality at lessons, consistency in studies, ease at revision, time saved in travel, are features not to be attained by students staying in their own homes. The supervision here over their studies is achieved with ease.

In my young days how did I not undertake the supervision of the students! I used to pitch up at any time - sometimes after Maghrib, sometimes after 'Isha, sometimes before Fajr, sometimes after Fajr. Chacha-Mia is sitting here - ask him.

Teachers - the mudarrisin - should similarly reside on the premises. If they stayed in the neighbourhood it will take them approximately ten minutes to get to their classes. But if they stayed on the premises they would be at their classes almost immediately. If finances allow, the houses of the mudarrisin should also be built on the premises.

These topics are mentioned incidentally.

11.THE AS-HABAS-SUFFAH

Coming back to the Suffah: The Sahabah(r.a.) resided here to acquire 'ilm. They were so engrossed in this task that food was of secondary importance to them. If food was available, well and good; if not, no matter. What did Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (r.a.) say? (He was also one of the As-habas-Suffah.) "I should feel faint and collapse at times. People thought that the Jinn had got hold of me and, in that age of Ignorance, they used to pull my ears to 'cure' me! The simple truth was that I used to faint through lack of adequate food!"

Nowadays, despite being provided for, students still complain. This is a far cry from the dignity and majesty (shan) that students (talaba) should have. The demands of 'ilm are various, one of which is

to have hilm (forbearance). Talaba are expected to develop hilm in their quest for 'ilm. They should not be full of complaints, nor should they quarrel and fight amongst themselves.

12. IKHTILAAF - DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

Hadhratwala did point out in his wa'z (lecture) that ikhtilaf (differences of opinion) are bound to occur. Where do differences in viewpoint not exist? With ikhtilaf one can even expect khilaf (opposition). Ikhtilaf existed even between ustad and pupil - between Imam Abu Hanifah and his pupil, Imam Yusuf . Those were days of ijtiḥad, yet there was room for ikhtilaf. Ikhtilaf was in umur-e-intizamiyah (matters of administration) but not in mazhab (school of thought). There is still room for ijtiḥad in umur-e-intizamiyah, even though the doors are closed as far as ijtiḥad in fiqh is concerned. With differences in opinion, there were also opposing stances, but never quarrels and disputes. The attitude adopted was: "You have understood it that way; we have understood it this way." And there the matter rested, without disputes.

But do disputes not exist amongst others? Definitely they do: doctors dispute among themselves, and so do lawyers, judges and administrators.

What a fine qissah (incident) was not related by Hadhratwala in the wa'z read yesterday, involving Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) and Qazi Shureh! What an important mas'alah on ikhtilaf it demonstrated! Ofo! On the one hand was Hadhrat Ali (r.a.), a Jannati, one of the Asharah-Mubasharah - those who were given the glad tidings of Jannat while in this world! His intelligence was a by-word, his 'ilm second to none: Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) was the one to be summoned to reply to questions posed by delegations coming to Madina from outside. His mental agility was superb; his capabilities in arithmetical calculations were outstanding.

Should anybody have asked Qazi Shureh whether Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) was truthful in his claim or not, Qazi Shureh would unhesitatingly have taken qassam (an oath) that he was truthful. "But," Qazi Shureh would have said, "I am helpless in the matter: It is a question of mu'amalah and huquqs (dealings and rights), which have to be according to the Haq of the Shariat and the limits of the Shariat, in accordance with the evidence produced. I, personally, have no choice in the matter. My decision will be based on the criteria above. My opinion is that the evidence of a child in favour of the parent is invalid."

Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) did not challenge this opinion. He did not state that he had proof that a child could give evidence in favour of the parent. If he did not have such proof, why would he have brought his son forward? It should be remembered that Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) was the Khalifah of the Islamic State at the time and, as such, he was Qazi Shureh's superior. Did he remove Qazi Shureh from his post? Of course not! He happily accepted the decision of the Qazi as final. He was not even upset. Neither did he pass any comment on the merit of the decision.

In relating this excellent incident, Hadhratwala remarked that this is the attitude the Ulema should have. Ulema should neither dispute nor quarrel nor get involved in altercations like the common people. This only gives the man in the street an opportunity to ridicule the Ulema.

13. ULEMA OF OLD AND US

Question: If the ta'lim is the same, what is the difference between the Ulema of old and us?

Answer: They had ta'lim combined with a composite good character; whereas we have mere ta'lim without tarbiyet, without having developed a good, well-balanced, congenial character. We have learning without a training in character development, without the akhlaq-e-mahmudah hasanah (the praiseworthy qualities) being well grounded, without fana (annihilation) of the nafs. They had fana of the nafs - they took no offence.

Further on, see the hoslah (wisdom) of Hadhrat Ali (r.a.). When the Yahud admitted that the armour did belong to him and wished to return it, Hadhrat Ali (r.a.) responded by presenting the armour to the Yahud as a gift!

Let us summarize the lessons to be learnt from this incident:

- 'ilm and hilm (forbearance) should go hand in hand.
- Not to dispute.
- Not to take offence when one's opinion is rejected in favour of an opinion that is contrary.
- Hoslah in dealings. Other words for hoslah are farzan and mardan (sagacity/ wisdom/ heroism). These are lessons for the student - just as hilm (forbearance) goes with 'ilm, similarly hoslah also goes with 'ilm.

All this is mentioned incidentally, to demonstrate the shan (high and noble status) of 'ilm - the honour, dignity and majesty to be accorded to 'ilme Deen and the institution where 'ilme Deen is taught, i.e. the madrasah. It is imperative to maintain this shan.

The madrasah is a basic institution. In our lectures, in the talks from the mimbar, the madrasah is referred to as our fortress, as our mahafiz khanah - it is the backbone of our Deen.

14.THE NEED FOR KITABS

It is interesting to note that the Hadith sharif referred to earlier use the words "talibul/ utlubul 'ilme" and not "talibul/ utlubul kutub". The initial teaching of Deen was without kitabs (books). The capability to memorise was amazing in the early days: on listening to a hundred-verse qasidah⁵ just once, the listener would be able to repeat it word for word! But, as the Muslims went into decline and enthusiasm waned and memories were not as keen as before, it became necessary to adopt the written word as an aid to teaching.

Again: What kitabs were in front of the Sahabah(r.a.)? Rasulallah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam) used to speak and the Sahabah(r.a.) used to listen. Their memories were excellent. They were enthusiastic. They took care in revising what they had learnt and enquired from each other on what they had missed out. This is the original and correct method of ta'lim.

This is the manner in which the Deen has reached us - initially without kitabs but, later, through kitabs and formal lessons in the madrasah. For reasons already mentioned, it became impossible to teach without kitabs and, more so in this day and age, kitabs have become fundamental in ta'lim; and the madrasah must have prescribed textbooks in its syllabus.

The emphasis in the madrasah is on the important task of ta'lim. - this is the shan of the madrasah. With this concentration on academic learning there is no equivalent emphasis on practical aspects - there is little inclination towards tarbiyet (character training).

15.THE ROLE OF THE KHANQAH

Let us now proceed in another direction, towards that place that is called the khanqah. The khanqah is not khamkha (nonsensical)! It has its place: the concentration here is on the important aspect of tarbiyet. Great, great Ulema have spent lengthy periods in the khanqah, after graduating from the madrasah, to benefit from the shan that tarbiyet offers.

Incidentally, it is an unfair criticism for the madrasah to level at the khanqah and say that the real khanqah was the one that existed in those days, when there were proper murabbi - those making tarbiyet of others - so that it was worthwhile for the madrasah student to spend some time there. Where are murabbi of that quality nowadays? If this argument is valid, then the appropriate retort from the khanqah is: Where are the tutors in the darsghah (tutorial room) like the tutors of the past? Are there any tutors like Maulanas Gangohi sahib, Qasim sahib, Yacub sahib and Thanwi sahib? If the khanqah lacks murabbi like those in the past, similarly the present day darsghah lacks the tutors of the past. If you abandon residence at the khanqah then, logically, abandon tutorials in the darsghah as well! If you are not prepared to abandon these tutorials, why do you dissuade others from attending the khanqah? Why do you place criticisms and objections in front of others and discourage them? Why make statements such as, "Staying in the khanqah is a waste of time!"?

Do you understand, or not yet?

In this age of our decline, just as the present tutors suffice, similarly you will find in the khanqah that sheikh who is capable of making the tarbiyet of others. No age is desolate - zamanah khali nahi. If you abandon the one, abandon the other as well. If you do not abandon the one, there is no question of abandoning the other! This is khida (deception).

To continue: The emphasis in the darsghah is on ta'lim, and the approach is through tutorials. In the khanqah the emphasis is on tarbiyet, by tackling akhlaq. Comparatively, akhlaq takes priority, as seen by the fact that the thirteen years of the Makkah-Period were spent in building character; and a good character is impossible without proper tazkiyah (purification) of the nafs.

This process is not possible unless the person does not attach himself to the masha'ikh and the khanqah. Together with tarbiyet, the masha'ikh will also give ta'lim to the talib (seeker) - [In our context this is that person who seeks the closeness of Allah Ta'ala. This involves a process of self-rectification, called islah].

Allah Ta'ala states:

And keep yourself steadfast with those who call out to their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His Countenance. (S.18. }.28)

The meaning is that you (Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam)) should sit firmly with those who are talib. Set aside one such time as to sit closely with them, with steadfastness. After all, they are sincere in their quest. This is an indication that the sheikh should have one such period when he comes out to sit with the talibin, who should gather around, as the Sahabah(r.a.) used to do.

At such times the talk of the sheikh is not only on tarbiyet, but in order to achieve tarbiyet he also gives ta'lim - the ta'lim is to put the theory of tarbiyet into actual practice whilst in the khanqah: "Make zikr in this fashion; make muraqabah (meditate) in this manner; make shaghl (specific spiritual exercises) in this way. Do all these at this or that particular level. Adopt taqwa in this way."

Each talib has gathered for tazkiyah akhlaq - to cure the nafs of the illnesses affecting it, to embellish the heart with spiritual effulgence. Each one's level of taqwa is different. Each one's illness is different. Therefore, each one's prescription and each one's restrictions (parhez) will differ, tailored to each one's personal needs.

Let us compare this to the tutorial in the darsgah: The tutor takes the kitabs "Shar-e Wiqayah", "Hidayah", etc., and gives a lesson from the chapter "Kitabut Taharat". The lesson does not merely state how istinja should be performed. The tutorial will go into other details - there will be a section on usable water; how to recognize pak (pure) water from appearance, smell and taste; what water is pak; what water is na-pak (impure); how to make na-pak water pak. You will notice that, though the chapter is on taharat (purification), the discussion must flow into several different channels. This is necessary in order for the talib of zahiri taharat (external purity) to achieve his objective of taharat in whatever situation he may find himself.

Similarly, the talib attending the majlis is a talib of batini taharat (inner purity). He has presented himself to sort out all the different problems that he encounters. The talk of the sheikh will be varied. Sometimes he relates some waqi'ah or hikayet (incident or detail). This methodology is also used in the Qur'an Sharif and Hadith sharif. At times there may be tartib (methodology); at times targib (persuasion); at times tahdhidh (prodding). The topics may also vary: the discussion may be on kibr (arrogance), or it may drift to hasd (jealousy), to qana't (contentment), to ikhlas (sincerity), etc. If these discussions are not 'ilmi then what are they?

The majlis of the sheikh is thus an 'ilmi tutorial without the aid of any textbook, providing both ta'lim and tarbiyet. Masa'il (laws/ regulations) may not be listed in that much detail, but sufficient detail is provided for the needs of talib of tarbiyet. And the subjects are those discussed in the darsgah, taken from Qur'an Sharif Hadith sharif:

Do not be jealous one of the other.

Do not have animosity one for the other.

Do not backbite. (S.49 A.12)

Verily, Allah loveth not any vainglorious boaster. (S.31 A.18)

These subjects are obviously related to purity of the batin and not to physical taharat. This is the khanqah - that place where one can purify one's batin, with the appropriate ta'lim to enable correct tarbiyet.

In summary: Tarjumah, tafsil and m'ani zahiryah (translation, details and external meanings) will be dealt with in the tutorials of the madrasah darsgah; whereas the intibaqi tariq (method of application), with the necessary ta'lim for tarbiyet, will be dealt with in the khanqah. In other words, academic knowledge will be acquired in the madrasah, but the practical application of that

knowledge will take place in the khanqah: Scrutiny and evaluation over here. Inspection and stock-taking over here in a khanqah. This is what the khanqah is for.

16.MUHASABAH - STOCK-TAKING

This Hadith sharif states that one should take stock of oneself, take account of one's activities, before this is done for one on the day of Qiyamat. Everybody knows what will transpire on that day in front of Allah Ta'ala, when rewards will be according to one's deeds. Another role of the sheikh as a muhtasib (evaluator) is indicated in this Hadith sharif: he evaluates the talib and he also gives ta'lim on the method of taking hisab. When and how, are explained to each individual according to each person's requirements.

17.ZIKR

The sheikh gives ta'lim on zikr. The Qur'an Sharif commands us to be in constant zikr, which is an objective in itself:

Then remember Allah, standing and sitting and lying on your sides. (S.4. }.103)

The ta'lim of the sheikh attempts to establish constant zikr in the talib. In addition, the sheikh shows the methods of producing a special effect in the heart, one of fervour, passion and yearning (zouqi and shouqi). The method shown differs with each individual - the manner in which zikr should be done; the time during the day and night most beneficial; the quantity of the zikr at any one time. With regards to the quantity of zikr the sheikh will further look at factors like the free time, strength and courage of the talib.

Ta'lim is also given on the loudness of zikr:

And remember your Rabb within yourself. (S.7. A. 205)

One person will be advised to make zikr silently; another will be told to raise his voice slightly; and the third would be instructed to make the zikr a bit louder still. Again, according to the requirements of the moment and the individual.

This is all part of the ta'lim of the khanqah. All this is within the boundaries set by the Shariat, whether it is asghal, azkar or muraqabat, as seen by the Qur'an Sharif ayat stated above. Whatever ta'lim the sheikh gives is within the bounds of the Shariat. Methods may differ, but a change in the tone does not change the reality.

It is to be emphasised that the tarbiyet and the intibaqiyet (character training and applications) of the khanqah are the very lessons studied in the darsqah. Change in terminology does not change the reality behind a particular item.

Let us proceed further: you should know by now that the life of a mu'min is at no time free of ibadat. This was also stated in Hadhratwala's (R.A.) wa'z yesterday and it is something we all accept without argument. The Qur'an Sharif states:

And I have not created the Jinn and Mankind but they should worship Me. (S.51 }.56)

But, there is something more to it: what is the command given in regard to the manner of ibadat? Answer: with muraqabah. In other words, a mu'min's whole life is never free of ibadat with muraqabah.

18.MURAQABAH

What is the substantiating the proof of this? It is the following: a long narration, called Hadith-e-Jibril (a.s.) which records the questions posed to Rasulallah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam) by Hadhrat Jibril (a.s.) and the answers given. After asking, "Min al-Iman (What is iman)?" and receiving a reply, he asked, "Min al-Islam (What is Islam)?" After receiving the appropriate reply, he posed a third question, "Min al-Ihsan (What is Ihsan)?" Rasulallah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam) gave the following reply:

Note that the word "an ta'budu" (that you make ibadat) is used and not the word "an tusalli" (that you perform namaz). Neither are the words "an tusumo" (that you keep roza), "an tuhajju" (that you perform haj) used.

No! Quite clearly the words are: "an ta'budullah ka annaka tarahu..."- "that you make ibadat of Allah Ta'ala as if you are seeing Him. And, if you are able to see him, never mind, your faith and belief (i'tiqad) is that Allah Ta'ala is hadhir-nazir (Omnipresent): thus your ibadat should be such that you are aware that He is seeing you!" "...fa innakayarake." (... for He is seeing you.) Comparatively, it is easier to bear in mind that He is watching you.

Therefore, the awareness of the fact that Allah Ta'ala is seeing you (yad) should be firmly established. At no time should this awareness be absent. This only comes with constant reminder - the moment one forgets, remind oneself; again, if one forgets, remind oneself; and again, and again! Slowly, degree by degree, a stage will be reached when there will be constant remembrance (yad). In Sufi terminology, this is the stage called "malake yad dasht", where the heart is said to have become muzakkir.

Let us put it altogether again: from the previous ayet of the Qur'an Sharif we come to know that the mu'min's sole duty is to make the ibadat of Allah Ta'ala. In other words, no action of a mu'min is free of ibadat. In the above Hadith sharif the mu'min has been ordered to ensure that his ibadat has the quality of "ihsan" - that is, the muraqabah that Allah Ta'ala is watching him. Placing these two together we can safely state that every act and deed of a mu'min-bandah, his every moment, should be ibadat with muraqabah ihsan.

This explains muraqabah - the thought and contemplation that Allah Ta'ala is watching me. Is this contrary to the Shariat? Obviously not! This is directly from Hadith sharif.

We now come back to zikr. The Qur'an Sharif has numerous ayat commanding zikr. Two such ayat have just been quoted above. A zakir (one making zikr) is not necessarily that person reciting with his tongue the Kalimah sharif or Durىd sharif or tasbihat, but a zakir is every such person who is acting in obedience to the orders of Allah Ta'ala, submitting himself to Him, with His yad in his heart and his work (whatever it may be) falls under the Laws of Allah Ta'ala, every such person is a zakir.

This is supported by the following Hadith sharif, taken from Hasne Hasin:

Every obedient servant of Allah is a zakir.

One can go even further: Take it that, for a short duration while he is concentrating on his work, the thought of Allah Ta'ala is not even in his heart. Yet, the work he is doing is performed as an act of obedience, in accordance with the laws of Allah Ta'ala. In this situation he is still a zakir!

For example: the husband approaches his wife, in obedience to the command of Allah Ta'ala, he is in zikr. During the act his tongue is not engaged in zikr, yet he is in zikr. The proviso, of course, is that there is ita'ate kamilah - complete and perfect obedience.

Out of the three specific items that the sheikh gives training on - namely ashghal, azkar and muraqabah - muraqabah and zikr have been explained with supporting proof from Qur'an Sharif and Hadith sharif. This brings us to the third item, shaghl (pl. ashghal).

19.SHAGHL

By definition, shaghl is to fix one's eyes on and stare at any one object, in order to bring a special benefit. There should not be even a flicker of an eyelid. And, at the same time, the heart must be kept engaged in the yad of Allah Ta'ala.

This is the desired state one should be in during namaz. When one is standing in qiyam, one's gaze should be fixed at the spot where one's forehead is going to touch the ground in sajdah (prostration). Or, should one be peeping here and then, allowing all kinds of thoughts to enter one's heart? Obviously not.

Staring with a fixed gaze at one spot has the effect of warding off stray thoughts and aiding concentration. Instead of wandering hither and thither, one's thoughts will be controlled and one's concentration will improve.

And may Allah Ta'ala bless Imam Abu Hanifah - and very much so! Why? In the situation when one is out in the countryside and it is time for namaz, Imam Abu Hanifah states that one should place a sutrah⁶ in front of one when standing up for namaz. This is to prevent passers-by from walking directly in front of you - they will walk around the sutrah. If you do not possess a sutrah, not even a stick to place in front of you, Imam Abu Hanifah(R.A.) states that one should draw a line in the sand at that point where one is going to make sajdah. Once again, may Allah Ta'ala bless Imam sahib - he was a great Sufi. Not only Imam Abu Hanifah but all the Imams were great Sufis.

If somebody were to ask Imam sahib , "Why draw a line? Passers-by will not notice the line, so of what benefit is it?" his answer would be, "It is of benefit to the mussalli - the one making namaz. His gaze can fix on the line and he can concentrate. There will be no dispersal of thoughts." Passers-by will not benefit, but the mussalli (the one performing the salat) will have achieved the object of warding off stray thoughts and thereby concentrating on his namaz. Imam sahib has given ta'lim on shaghl.

All three items discussed are to be found in namaz: Namaz is zikr from beginning to end; muraqabah is a state throughout; and shaghl is prescribed at every rukun (phase of the salat), from the beginning when "Allahu-akbar" is recited till the final ending of "Assalamu-alaikum-wa-rahmatullah." These essential items are taught by the sheikh in the khanqah, ikmalin and itmamim - in supreme perfection. This is the khanqah, the place where ta'lim and tarbiyet are to be found to the degree of ikmalin and itmamim.

But for whom? For the talibe mukhlis - the seeker who is sincere. For the talib who is mukhlis and saccha - sincere and honest.

20.MUNAFIQUN

Why this stress? Because all types come to the khanqah. There were munafiqin (hypocrites) in the time of Rasulallah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam). Various munafiqin, big and small, attended his court even. So why be amazed at the presence of such in the khanqah? The ones to benefit, however, are those who are mukhlis and saccha -these are the real talib. If you see the other type in attendance, why blame the khanqah? What fault is it of the khanqah?

There were munafiqin sitting on the Suffah itself; there were munafiqin around Rasulallah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam); munafiqin were even found to be present among those writing down wahi even though this figure was absolutely small. This was the situation in the early period, that of Rasulallah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam) and of the Khulafa- e-Rashidin. This situation did not improve as time went on and the era of decline set in. If some insincere ones find their way to the khanqah in this age, why should this affect the khanqah or the talibul-'ilm?

If one were to apply the same scrutiny to the darsghah, one will find even more such insincere ones in the madrasah. One will find very few students attending to their studies in the correct manner; being completely punctual in attendance; paying full attention to the tutor during lessons, without a moment's distraction even; learning with ifham and tafhim (in-depth understanding), with ikmal and itmam (utmost perfection); aiming to gain full mastery of the subjects. The majority of the students will be otherwise, especially nowadays. If the khanqah has two to four such insincere ones, what are their numbers in the madrasah? Even more! If this is the situation in the madrasah, with the talibe sadiq in the minority, must one close the madrasah..?

Do you understand? It is very necessary to discuss these issues. Allah Ta'ala has caused these thoughts to intrude and issue forth and be presented to you. This is an assessment of the current situation, an insight into the times.

If there is no need for the khanqah, then equally there is no need for the madrasah. If there is a need for the madrasah - the need is there and the need is great! - then there is need for the khanqah as well, to an even greater extent in this age.

Before, both student and tutor were of a different calibre. The tutor had the qualities of a sheikh and the student used to be a talibe sadiq, one with taharat and taqwa. Despite (or, because of?) these excellent qualities they still attended the khanqah.

21.TAQWA - A QISSAH

Take Maulana Muzaffar Husain sahib. (His qissah comes to mind at the moment, though there are numerous other qissas.) He was a resident of Kandlah. His generation was just before that of Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi and Maulana Muhammed Qasim Nanotwi - the latter two were still in their youth at the time that Maulana Muzaffar Husain had attained old age. Anyhow, while still young, he had gone to complete his studies by Shah Muhammed Ishaq sahib in Delhi. At the time, he had already completed courses in Persian and a few other kitabs and he was already conversant with all the fiqhi masa'il.

He arrived in Delhi and presented himself at the house of Shah Muhammed Ishaq sahib . Mealtime came and he was served with dhal and roti. He ate the roti but not the dhal.

When the dishes went back to the kitchen, Shah sahib's wife noticed the uneaten dhal. "Ofo! What kind of youngster is this? He ate the roti, but not the dhal. Does he want to be served meat everyday?" She commented drily. Shah sahib said, "I will go and find out."

Investigate first. It is not correct to cast aspersions on anybody without first investigating and finding of the facts.

Shah sahib went. "My lad, you did not eat the dhal. Are you on some kind of diet? You ate the roti but not the dhal."

"Hadhrat, my heart did not desire it."

"No, no. I insist. Tell me the real reason."

"Hadhrat, the fact is that I detected that some sour mangoes had been added to the dhal, that is why I did not eat it."

At this point it must be explained that mostly the sale of mango crops in those days was the same as is present in many areas these days. The farmer sells the fruit crop before the appearance of the mango on the tree. Selling an unknown item is an illegal transaction - be'i-batil. Whoever buys that mango does not become legal owner after a be'i-batil.

Do you see his insight and taqwa? Yet, he had only gone to study! That was a wondrous age.

Shah sahib was wonder struck. "My thoughts did not even focus on this aspect!" He went inside and told the wife, "Allah Ta'ala has sent a mala'ikah to us for our islah!"

It does happen at times that certain matters have such fine points that these details escape the attention of many a learned person. When a junior points out something which is correct and haq (truth), it beholds the seniors to take note and accept. This is the attitude adopted by our akabir (pious elders). Shah sahib had no hesitation in accepting the correct observation and attitude of the student. He said, "No mangoes are to be bought from the bazar in future until it has not been ascertained from which orchard they came - whether they came from an orchard where the fruit has been sold after the appearance of the crop or before its appearance."

That age of the talib 'ilm was such then - and nowadays it is such that using tawil (re-interpretation) many matters are made ja'iz (permissible).

This qissah also emphasises, once again, the importance of 'ilm, the great need for 'ilm and the madaris. 'ilm is the foundation of all our deeds. Then can be no 'amal (deed) without 'ilm and any 'amal without 'ilm is not qabul - that deed is not accepted.

22.ILM & JIHAD: A COMPARISON

The importance of 'ilm has already been discussed. The ayet quoted earlier, pointing out the importance of 'ilm in relation to jihad, has been brought to your notice already, that when the order for jihad is there, do not all go out in jihad but some should remain in the company of

Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam); and, when those who had gone out in jihad return, give them ta'lim - teach them what you have learnt, that 'ilm that you had attained, convey to them.

Despite this strong stress on 'ilm, the emphasis on the importance of 'ilm has been increased to a higher degree by Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam) in the following Hadith sharif:

Whosoever sets out to seek 'ilm is in the Path of Allah until he returns.

"Fi sabilillah"- "In the path of Allah"- is to be in jihad. This is the accepted meaning, as seen in other instances in the Qur'an Sharif. And this phrase Rasulullah(sallallahu alaihi wassallam) has applied to the talib of 'ilm. That person who has left his home to acquire 'ilm, he is in the path of Allah Ta'ala; he is in jihad. In other words, the talib of 'ilm is of the mujahidin - he is of those waging jihad.

23.THE FOUR TRIALS IN JIHAD

The obvious question is: With whom is the talibul 'ilm making jihad?

The answer is: With his nafs.

The mufassirin (authentic commentators of the Qur'an Sharif) have written lengthy commentaries on this Hadith sharif. You are advised to read them.

Let us summarize their findings:

What are the trials facing the mujahidin?

ONE: I'la'e Deen, also called I'la'e Kalimatullah - to uphold the Deen (or Kalimah of Allah Ta'ala). Jihad is not for territorial gain and aggrandizement. Jihad is for the sake of Deen - the purpose is to enable those who have the Deen to practise Deen properly by removing the obstacles that others had placed in their path; also, to stop the torment that others are inflicting on them. This is the first point in jihad - I'la'e Deen.

The purpose of attaining 'ilm is the same: namely I'la'e Deen. There is no other purpose except to uphold the Deen.

TWO: The second point is izlale Shayatin - to disgrace and humiliate Shaitan, to weaken him. This also applies to the acquisition of 'ilme Deen.

I am sure you are aware of the Hadith sharif that describes Shaitan seating himself on his throne (takht) on the sea when evening approaches...

24.KARAMAT & ISTIDRAJ

Incidentally, this amazing feat of Shaitan is not termed a "karamat" (miracle) but "istidraj" (deception). Any feat that appears to be supernatural or wondrous, shown by one not following the Shariat, cannot be termed a "karamat". It is "istidraj" and a trap for the unwary - a trick to lead them astray. Shaitan, as we all know, is the head of the kuffar - his kufr is the greatest - yet he has the capability of manifesting this amazing feat of setting his takht on the sea and gathering all his fellow-shayatin on it. Despite being weighty, the takht does not sink into the sea. This is "istidraj" which Allah Ta'ala sets forth as a test. This is mentioned by-the-way, to warn the unwary not to be hoodwinked by those disobedient to Allah Ta'ala.

To continue: When evening approaches, Shaitan spreads his takht on the sea and seats himself on it. His off-spring - fellow Shayatin - who had been roaming around since the morning spreading their evil, return to give their reports. Shaitan listens to all and comments indifferently and impatiently at each one's report and responds: "Yes, yes. Well done. Yes, yes. Well done." Then one gets up, and says, "Listen to my report. Today I created friction between husband and wife, with the result that both flew into a rage - gussah got hold of them."

It comes in the Hadith sharif that if anyone is overcome with gussah at the time that something goes against his temperament (tabiyet), in appearance he is a human being, but in reality he is a beast, and he has approached the edge of Jahannam - a slight push and he is inside!

The little Shaitan continues: "Having caused them to fly into a fit of rage, I goaded them on till a stage was reached where the husband gave the wife three talaqs (a divorce)." At hearing this, Shaitan (senior) stands up in happiness and comes to pat the other Shaitan on his back. "Shabash! Shabash! You have really done a great piece of work! Shabash! Bravo!" Shaitan seats himself again.

Finally another Shaitan stands up. "Listen to me as well!" The big Shaitan: "What do you wish to say?" This Shaitan: "A talibul 'ilm was going for classes. I tackled him. I whispered first one thing then another to him, until I managed to stop him from proceeding to his class. I managed to get him to put his satchel down and got him involved in playing games. In this way I prevented him from proceeding to acquire 'ilme Deen." The big Shaitan again stands up in sheer joy. He comes and pats this Shaitan on his back and then clasps him joyfully to his breast. "Shabash! Shabash!" he cries exultantly.

Why did the big Shaitan joyfully clasp the other Shaitan to his breast? The reason is that he feels greatly offended at anybody attaining 'ilm of Deen. So to say he thinks as follows, "There is disgrace in this for me. When that child grows up he may become an alim (scholar) of the Deen, a faqih (one who has correct and in-depth knowledge of the Deen). How many sinners will he not bring back to the Straight Path! He will burden me like a mountain! He will be an obstruction in my scheming and istidraj."

That is why it comes in the Hadith sharif:

A single faqih is harder on Shaitan than a thousand abeds (worshippers).

We have thus proved point number two, that a talibul 'ilm acquiring 'ilme Deen is a direct cause of izlale Shayatin - disgrace and humiliation of Shaitan - to a complete degree.

The THIRD point: The mujahid (the person waging jihad) is involved in itti'abe nafs - putting the nafs in ta'ab and mushaqqat - placing the nafs under stress and involving it in toil and effort. The mujahid combating the kuffar is exerting himself physically and he is under great pressure. The talibul 'ilm is also involved in itti'abe nafs - he has left home and all the comforts that the home provides in order to attain 'ilm. Where is the luxury of home food and refreshing drinks, of rest and ease? This is itti'abe nafs, so that the talibul 'ilm is in jihad because of itti'abe nafs.

The FOURTH point is kasre nafs. "Kasr" means "to break".⁷ This is the breaking of nafsani desires - breaking the lusts and passions of the carnal self. The eyes desire to roam hither and thither; the tongue wishes to speak uninhibitedly; the ears yearn to listen to what it should not. The tabiyet (temperament) has to be restrained from all these desires of the nafs. To tire out the nafs with toil

and effort is part of mujahadah. To break the nafs by restraint and discipline is riyadhat. For example: The nafs wishes to sleep a full eight hours, but in reality the talibul 'ilm allows himself only three to four hours of sleep. In jihad as well there is kasre nafs. Does not the enemy send beautiful women to tempt the mujahidin? Our history bears testimony to how the Nasara sent beautifully adorned women to try and seduce the mujahidin, how tempting goods and wealth were spread in front of them along the roads to make them victims of lust and greed. But, what did the Nasara find? Thirteen years of training the nafs had produced men of akhlaq - disciplined characters. Gold and jewels meant nothing to them. Graceful and beautiful maidens were completely ignored! These, then, are the trials that those out in jihad come across. These are the very trials that face the talibul 'ilm. That is why, as stated previously, the Hadith sharif states:

Whosoever goes out to seek 'ilm is in the Path of Allah until he returns.

The person referred to is the talibul 'ilm - that student who has a talab for 'ilme Deen. The word "talab" appears in the Hadith sharif. The key-word is "talab", meaning "producing a taqadha". The word "taqadha", in turn, is an inner state of disquiet that exists at not having attained one's objective; a state of unease that does not disappear until and unless one's objective is acquired. This is also called a "hal" (condition/ state) in the terminology of the Sufis. The talab has been created within the student to attain 'ilm; a hal has been created within him for 'ilm. One simple example of such a hal is real hunger, which causes a state of unease that disappears only on satisfying that hunger.

Do you understand, ayyuhat tullab (O ye students!), my dear brothers, my dear buzurghs?

Ayyuhat tullab! The talibul 'ilm has set out with the talab of 'ilm. This is the talab, the taqadha, that the student should have, that until he has not attained his objective, he is not at ease. The motivation and desire (taqadha) should be so great that he does not make friends with others; he does not sit here and there involving himself in useless and superfluous talks and activities (la-yani-o-lahu). He discards all these in his talab and taqadha of 'ilm. He is at ease only after having prepared his lesson. He is punctual in his attendance; he listens attentively to the tutor; he then revises what he has been lectured on. If he misses out on anything he is filled with regret. This is the talibul 'ilm.

My dear brothers, my dear buzurghs! This is the meaning of talab! Talab is one thing and kasb (acquisition) is another. The word used in the Hadith sharif is talab and not mere accusation (kasb). Maulana Rumi puts it as follows:

A talib should have an extreme degree of forbearance and tolerance;

I have never heard of an alchemist sitting back in defeat.

What Maulana Rumi is saying is: I have not have heard of one desirous of Dunya (a materialist) sitting down, tired and dejected. O you desirous of Deen, shame on yourselves that you are just the opposite! Just look around you at those involved in worldly activities - they do not rest until their objectives are achieved.

So, the one desirous of Deen (talabgar) should be "bayad sabar- o-hamul" - tolerant and forbearing, having a hold on his tabiyet, exercising great self restraint when he encounters anything against his temperament. Note that the words "sabar-o-hamul" is used, not just "sabar" and "hamil"- not merely showing patience, but exercising immense tolerance and forbearance. If anybody swears at

him, he simply ignores the abuse. If anybody slaps him, he takes no notice. If somebody upsets him, he does not flare up. This is the talibul 'ilm - the one so desirous of 'ilm that he does not rest until his objective is attained. How can he flare up in anger?

We have shown that in the correct context all the thawab (Divine reward) that the mujahid accumulates, also accrues to the talibul 'ilm; all the fadha'il (virtues) that apply to the mujahid, also apply to the talibul 'ilm. In the correct meaning, the talibul 'ilm is the personification (misdaq) of the fadha'il of jihad - the talibul 'ilm is the authoritative claimant of the virtues listed for waging jihad.

Remember it well that today you have come to know the reality of 'ilm: how high and noble 'ilm is, how high is the status of 'ilm.

25.EVERY OBEDIENT SERVANT OF ALLAH IS A ZAKIR

The genuine talibul 'ilm, with the qualities mentioned above, has another claim as well. He performs what is fardh and wajib; he is punctual with his sunnate mu'aqqidah; he acts with taqwa - such a talibul 'ilm enjoys a station no less than that of one performing abundant nawafil and making abundant zikr. In comparison, this talibul 'ilm may not be performing much nawafil, his zikr and tasbihat may be minimal, but abstaining from sin and performing what is fardh, not allowing his namaz to become qadha, performing what is wajib and sunnate mu'aqqidah, he has a stage even higher. He is in obedience all the time; he is with taqwa all the time; he is in ibadat all the time; he is a zakir all the time. He is the misdaq of the Hadith sharif:

Every obedient servant of Allah is a zakir.

Today the importance of 'ilm has been placed in front of you. The very high status of 'ilme Deen has been related to you. What has also been adequately shown is that the ta'lim attained in the darsghah will reach completion and perfection (ikmaliet and itmamiet) in the khanqah. Any deficiencies will be corrected in the khanqah, where aptness and practical application are taught (intibaqiet and tatbiqat). Perfection in zahiri a'mal cannot be achieved without the batini akhlaq. For example: Namaz is part of the zahiri a'mal. Perfection in namaz cannot be achieved without having the quality of ihsan as explained in the Hadithe Jibril quoted and explained earlier. Ihsan forms part of the batini akhlaq and is elucidated in the khanqah. Both zahiri a'mal and batini akhlaq are brought to perfection in the khanqah. The state of maqame ihsan is attained. Ikmaliet and itmamiet are thus achieved.

The great need for both the darsghah and the khanqah has been laid out in front of you. Supporting waqi'at, Qur'an Sharif ayat and Hadith sharif have been quoted, and the example of the As- habas Suffah has been brought to your notice.

26.SUMMARY & DUAA:

We have need for the acquisition of 'ilm, with effort and serenity, for which we are dependent on the madrasas. And for practical application of 'ilm we are dependent on the khanqas. The dire necessity for both have been explained in detail to you, by the fadhl of Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the tawfiq, in the correct meaning, to be talib of tarbiyet and talib of 'ilme Deen, with ikhlas and sidq.