

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVALUATION (1)	5
EVALUATION (2)	6
EVALUATION (3)	9
LETTER FROM MUFTĪ MUHAMMAD RAFĪ 'UTHMANĪ	11
LETTER FROM MUFTI MUHAMMAD SALMAN MANSURPURI	14
The Virtue of The One Who Possesses Deep Understanding of Dīn	17
Attachment to Your Alma Mater	18
Make a Decision.....	19
An Astonishing Incident From The Life of Imām A'zam	20
Becoming an 'Ālim is no Ordinary Feat.....	21
An Increase in The Number of 'Ulamā'-e-sū'	22
The Inheritors of The Prophets are The Well- wishers of The People	24
Who is a Faqīh fī ad-Dīn?	25
The First Sign of a Faqīh	26
The Second Sign of a Faqīh	26
Knowledge is Acquired For The Sake of Practising	28
The Importance of Optional Acts.....	28
The Need to Take Stock of One's Self	30

Hadrat 'Alī's Concern For The Hereafter	31
Love For Allāh And Self-obliteration	33
The Third Sign of a Faqīh.....	35
The Pleasure of Seeking Knowledge.....	36
The Academic Enthusiasm of 'Allāmah Binnaurī	38
Who is a Student?	39
Mustahab Means You Must Do And Makrūh Means You Must Abstain	41
How Our Elders Followed The Sunnah.....	42
Hadrat Shāh 'Alamullāh And The Dream of 'Ālangīr.....	43
The Restlessness of Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib	45
Align Yourselves to Our Pious Elders	46
Only an 'Ālim-e-Rabbānī is a True Guardian of Dīn	47
A Very Important Point	48
Do Not Have an Inferiority Complex	49
The Only Way to Serve Dīn	49
The Only Genuine Knowledge is Knowledge Brought by the Prophets.....	50
An Assembly of Angels Which Was Dismissed ..	52
A PRESENTATION TO GRADUATES.....	54
Being an 'Ālim is no Ordinary Matter	55
The True Inheritors of The Prophets.....	55

The ‘Ulamā’: Overseers of The Muslim Nation ...	57
Recognize Your Rank.....	59
The Best of ‘Ulamā’.....	59
An Earnest Appeal	61
My Beloveds! Recognize Your Rank.....	61
The Dīn for Material Gain.....	61
Course of Action.....	63
A Fear	64
Take up The Responsibilities of Prophet-hood...	64
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ‘ULAMĀ’	66
NOTEWORTHY POINTS FOR ‘ULAMĀ’.....	68
The Essence of Knowledge	68
Three Words of Advice	69
Three Qualities of a Perfect Scholar	69
Abstaining From Nonsensical Talk.....	69
Three Signs of an Ignorant Person	69
The Misfortune of Love For Fame.....	70
Rectification is Dependent on Two Categories of People	70
The Importance of Scholarly Dignity	71
Sinning: The Cause of Forgetfulness.....	72
Hadrat ‘Ali’s Advice to ‘Ulamā’	72
A Lecture is Not Effective When it is Not Accompanied With Action.....	73

What Emanates From The Heart Affects The Heart	73
Action is Essential For a Scholar	73
The Muslim Nation Does Not Benefit From a Worldly 'Ālim	73
Hearts Are Automatically Drawn Towards One Who Has Truly Recognized Allāh.....	73
Hastening in Issuing Fatwās is a Proof of Lack of Knowledge	74
Do Not Make it a Point to Answer Every Question	74
Memory is Sharpened Through Continuous Studying.....	75
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO 'ULAMĀ' AND STUDENTS	76
I Wish to Spread This Message as Much as Possible	76
The Need to Absorb The Temperament of Our Elders.....	77
The Teachings of The Elders Are Very Effective And Effulgent	77
Cling to The Lives, Conditions And Statements of The Elders of Deoband.....	78
An Excellent Way of Acquiring The Effulgence of Knowledge And Safeguarding Oneself From Current Tribulations.....	78

EVALUATION (1)

Hadrat Mufti Muhammad Taqī ‘Uthmānī
Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*

Shaykh al-Hadīth and Deputy Ra’īs Dār al-
‘Ulūm Karachi, Pakistan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَى، أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* is – by the will of Allāh *ta’ālā* – rendering excellent services through the propagation of Islam in Britain and working on the rectification and reformation of the youth. He sent me one of his lectures, *Who is an ‘Ālim Rabbānī?*, which he had delivered to an assembly of ‘ulamā’ in Dār al-‘Ulūm Bolton. This lecture contains many valuable pieces of advice from which I myself benefited. May Allāh *ta’ālā* inspire us all to practise on them. Āmīn. Similarly, I also perused through those pieces of advice of his which he presented to students who were completing the *Dars Nizāmī* course. Both lectures are guiding lamps for us students. Constant awareness of these pieces of advice for our own rectification will prove most valuable. May Allāh *ta’ālā* reward him well.

(Hadrat Mufti) Muhammad Taqī ‘Uthmānī (Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*)

18 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1433 A.H.

EVALUATION (2)

Hadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Kāpaudrī Sāhib
dāmat barakātuhum

Ra'īs at Dār al-'Ulūm Falāh Dārayn
Tadkeshwar, Gujarat, India

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين، سيدنا ومولانا
محمد وعلى اله وأصحابه وأتباعه إلى يوم الدين، أما بعد:

By the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā*, the large number of Islamic schools, madāris and dār al-'ulūms which we see today are more than what they were in the past. We see higher centres of learning and dār al-'ulūms constructed everywhere. Despite the increase in this quantity, we still see a dearth in quality and an absence of academic enthusiasm and practical application.

The knowledge which used to be acquired solely for the recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā* and identification of His rights and the rights of fellow humans has now become a means for acquiring monetary gain. The students of the madāris have become heedless of their objectives and are engrossed in activities which certainly contradict the rank of Allāh-fearing 'ulamā' and their high status.

Materialism and self-aggrandizement have crept into the religious centres of learning. This is injuring the awe and respect of the 'ulamā', and bad thoughts about them is spreading among the

masses. The 'ulamā' who were supposed to be firm fortresses and were to join forces to combat falsehood have themselves succumbed to infighting. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Instead of respecting each other and concealing the faults of one another, they are denigrating each other and are occupied in exposing the mistakes of one another. May Allāh *ta'ālā* protect us all from these tribulations.

In the presence of these sorrowful conditions it becomes an essential need to apprise the students of the madāris of their original status and objective. Self-worship and hankering after the world need to be replaced by Allāh-worship and desire for the Hereafter.

The present booklet contains an important lecture which Hadrāt Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*, the founder and Shaykh al-Hadīth of Jāmi'ah Riyād al-'Ulūm, Leicester, U.K., delivered with genuine feeling and concern to the students of Dār al-'Ulūm Bolton.

This lecture of the Maulānā ought to be distributed among the students of every madrasah so that our beloved students may imbibe the enthusiasm for knowledge and eagerness for practice of our pious predecessors; embellish themselves with lofty character and prove themselves to be lighthouses. These qualities cannot be acquired without purification of the self which is generally difficult to acquire without establishing a bond with a spiritual master.

اللهم وفقنا لما تحب وترضى، واجعل آخرتنا خيرا من الأولى. آمين يا رب العالمين.

Was salām

(Hadrat Maulānā) ‘Abdullāh Kāpaudrī (Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*)

Presently residing in Toronto, Canada

17 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1433 A.H.

28 April 2011.

EVALUATION (3)

Hadrat Mufti Ahmad Khānpūrī Sāhib *dāmat*
barakātuhum

Head Mufti and Shaykh al-Hadīth Jāmi'ah
Islāmīyyah Dhābel, Gujarat, India

Respected and beloved Hadrat Maulānā
Muhammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib.

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa
barakātuh.

On the occasion of my journey to Leicester, you gave me two booklets, viz. *Who is an 'Ālim Rabbānī?* and *A Presentation to Graduates*. I read both books from cover to cover during my journey from Dewsbury to London. Māshā Allāh you drew the attention of the graduates to matters which are extremely important.

The fact of the matter is that the deficiency in academic enthusiasm, concern for one's personal rectification and attachment to the pious predecessors and elders which you perceive in the new generation of 'ulamā' is absolutely correct. You diagnosed the illness correctly and there is now the need to implement with full conviction and force the treatment which you prescribed.

Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed you with sensible and intelligent speech which is accompanied by a pining heart. You are using these as means to steer the new generation in an excellent and dignified manner. These two lectures [referring to the two booklets] are clear proofs of this.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* enable the Muslim nation to benefit tremendously from your knowledge and blessings. I penned these few lines while sitting in the vehicle because I do not know whether I will get this opportunity or not. I pray for you with all my heart.

(Hadrat Muftī) Ahmad Khānpūrī (Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*)

29 Rabī' al-Awwal 1433 A.H.

LETTER FROM MUFTĪ MUḤAMMAD RAFĪ' 'UTHMANĪ

Grand Muftī of Pakistan and Head Muftī at Dār al-
'Ulūm Karachi

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Respect Maulānā MuḤammad Salīm Dhorāt
Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa
barakātuh.

I pray Allāh *ta'ālā* blesses you with perfect, immediate and eternal good health, and to enable you to continue the great services to Islam which you are rendering.

I received your letter via fax the day before yesterday. I was pleased to note that the annual "Youth Conference" which the Islamic Da'wah Academy has been organizing for the last 18 years is to be held once again this year on 11 March 2012. I pray from the depths of my heart for Allāh *ta'ālā* to enable this programme to continue without any problems and to progress as much as possible. Āmīn.

I was also very pleased to learn that a similar programme is being run for women since the last 14 years. I continually pray for the success and ease of both programmes.

On my last trip to Britain I received a copy of your printed lecture titled *Who is an 'Ālim Rabbānī?* I also received another lecture titled *A Presentation to Graduates*. Ever since reading these two lectures, I wanted to write something about them and you

yourself had requested the same from me. However, a flood of daily activities and occupations, despite working night and day and despite my own desire, I never got the opportunity to even start writing.

When I decided to reply to your letter today, I automatically picked up your two booklets which had been lying on my table since that time – waiting for an opportunity for me to write something about them. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, I happened to go on a short journey today and got a chance to read both booklets. I was most pleased at reading them.

You quoted the pious personalities of Dīn with genuine pain from the heart and practised on the instruction:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

Invite to the way of your Sustainer with wisdom and sound admonition.

You quoted Qur'ānic verses, Aḥādīth and wise sayings of the elders of Dīn, and in so doing, presented a valuable course of action for the graduating 'ulamā' and students. I hope the addressees derived maximum benefit. All praise is due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, I myself am perceiving the benefits after reading these two booklets.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* reward you with the best of rewards and may He bless you in your knowledge, practice and life. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make these two booklets and your other lectures most beneficial to the Muslim nation and crown them with acceptance.

We seek help from Allāh *ta'ālā* alone.

(Hadrat Muftī) Muhammad Rafi' 'Uthmānī (Sāhib
dāmat barakātuhum)

Ra'īs of Dār al-'Ulūm Karachi

13 Rabī' ath-Thānī 1433 A.H.

**LETTER FROM MUFTI MUHAMMAD SALMAN
MANSURPURI**

Mufti and Lecturer in Hadīth at Madrasah Shāhī,
Murādābād, U.P. India

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Respected and beloved Hadrat Maulānā
Muhammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat*
barakātuhum.

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa
barakātuh.

I hope you are well. Your letter brought a lot of joy to me. Your respectable self has very noble thoughts about me by requesting me to write something about your recent publication. It seems paradoxical for me to write anything because you are an embodiment of sincerity and an erudite scholar who lit the lamps of Dīn in the centre of unbelief and thereby refreshed our memories of the pious predecessors. On the other hand, I am a sinful and heedless man whose statements are contradicted by his actions and who is prey to a dichotomy between his inner and outer selves. However, what I will certainly say is that your lecture is an elixir for people like us to remind us of our forgotten lessons and to reawaken our dead hearts. The pain and passion which you displayed to your addressees and readers are most effective and valuable.

Many years ago I had undertaken the task of summarizing one of the books of ‘Allāmah Ibn ‘Abd

al-Barr Andalūsī *rahimahullāh*, compiled some points on knowledge and ‘ulamā’ and had it published. I am sending it to you with this letter. I think it will be appropriate to attach it to your booklet in its entirety or after selecting portions of it.¹

Finally, I express my gratitude to you for your noble thoughts about me and request you to include me in your prayers. May Allāh *ta’ālā* give you a long life among us with every type of good health and wellbeing. May He enable the Muslim nation to continue benefiting from your blessings. Āmīn.

Was salām

(Hadrat Muftī) Muḥammad Salmān Mansūrpūrī
(Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*)
Madrasah Shāhī Murādābād
23 Jumādā al-Ūlā 1433 A.H.

¹ It contains many valuable and beneficial points. It is quoted towards the end of this book.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الرُّسُلِ وَخَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَعَلَى إِلِهِ
الْأَصْفِيَاءِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْأَنْفِيَاءِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ
خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي، وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي، وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي، يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي.
سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ. اللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا،
وَعَلَّمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا
تَسْلِيمًا، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ
وَأَرْوَاحِهِ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِ.

Distinguished scholars and dear students of
Dār al-'Ulūm Bolton:

The honourable teachers of your higher classes are presently seated here. Similarly, our guest and senior from South Africa, Hadrat Maulānā 'Abd al-Hamid Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum, and the Shaykh al-Hadīth of Dār al-'Ulūm Leicester, Hadrat Maulānā Ayyūb Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum are also present. It is really an audacious act for a student like myself to speak in their presence. May Allāh *ta'ālā*, through the focus and blessed presence of these personalities, inspire me to say things which are firstly beneficial to me, and then to all our friends here.

The Virtue of The One Who Possesses Deep Understanding of Dīn

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* says:

مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ¹

When Allāh wills good for a person, he blesses him with deep understanding of Dīn.

There are two explanations as regard the indefiniteness (*nakirah*) in the word خَيْرًا in the above Hadīth. One is that it is brought to show generality, and the other is that it is to show greatness.² It will therefore mean: When Allāh *ta‘ālā* wills every type of good for a person or when He wills a lot of good for a person, He blesses him with deep understanding of Dīn. In other words, if He wills to bestow a lot of good to a person or immense good to him, He blesses him with deep understanding of Dīn.

The students are fully conversant with this Hadīth because when the virtues of knowledge and the ‘*ulamā*’ are explained to them, this Hadīth is normally quoted. Students deduce from this Hadīth that if Allāh *ta‘ālā* wills good for a person, He makes him an ‘*ālim*. And because we will also obtain an ‘*ālim* certificate after spending six years in the madrasah, we will become eligible for this great virtue. In other words, the students feel happy over the fact that their virtue is being mentioned.

¹صحيح البخاري، كتاب العلم، باب من يريد الله به خيرا يفقهه في الدين، ح (٧١).

²فتح الباري، ٢١٨١.

But they do not ponder over the real meaning of *faqīh fī ad-Dīn* as mentioned in this Hadīth. We have to fully understand the meaning of *faqīh* and then try to develop ourselves accordingly. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire me and all of you as well.

Attachment to Your Alma Mater

Māshā Allāh! You all remembered your alma mater and made it a point to attend this function. This is an excellent system. It shows that your principal, the trustees and your teachers have a love for you. You must value this and reply their love with love. You must try to maintain the bond which is being renewed today.

I have a very affectionate and kind elder who is the Shaykh al-Hadīth of Madrasah Saulatiyah. His name is Hadrat Maulānā Sayf ar-Raḥmān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*. He is a khalīfah of Hāfiz al-Hadīth Hadrat Maulānā 'Abdullāh Darkhwāstī *rahimahullāh*. A few teachers of Dār al-'Ulūm Bury were martyred in an accident in 1982. Hadrat Quṭb al-Aqtāb Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *nawwarallāhu marqadahu*, appointed him and sent him to complete the syllabus [at the Dār al-'Ulūm]. On arriving here, he completed the syllabus of Hadrat Maulānā Ibrāhīm Desai Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Ya'qūb Desai Sāhib *rahimahullāh* [both of whom were martyred in the accident]. I have the opportunity of meeting him whenever I go to Makkah Mukarramah. He always gives one advice to the 'ulamā' and students, and that is to always maintain contact with their alma mater. I also have

full hope that you will all maintain a bond with your alma mater.

Make a Decision

As I was saying, you were invited here and you accepted the invitation. You will now have to make a decision before you leave. It is not enough that you came, heard a recitation of the Qur'ān, a poem in praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and the words of advice of our pious elders and spiritual masters. No, my dear friends! We will leave here with a new resolution, and – *inshā Allāh* – turn a new leaf in our lives. We will ponder over who a *faqīh fī ad-Dīn* is and then evaluate ourselves to see whether we are fulfilling the requirements of *faqīh fī ad-Dīn* or not. We will express our gratitude to Allāh *ta'ālā* for the requirements which we are fulfilling and be concerned about rectifying those areas where we are falling short. We will get up from here with a new resolution and endeavour to create a revolution in our lives.

My dear friends! Remember one thing: whether you consider yourself to be an 'ālim or not, the world looks up to you as an 'ālim. If you do any good, you will be enlightening the names of your teachers, your elders, your madrasah and your fraternity. But if it is the opposite, you will be discrediting everyone even if you have no contact whatsoever with your teachers, your elders and your madrasah. It should therefore be our constant effort to live a life in line with the good thoughts with which people look up to us.

An Astonishing Incident From The Life of Imām A'zam

Ḥadīrat Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* relates an astonishing incident with regard to Imām A'zam Abū Ḥanīfah *rahimahullāh*. You all are probably aware that Imām Ṣāhib *rahimahullāh* performed the fajr ṣalāh with the wudū' of 'ishā ṣalāh for forty years.¹ This is well-known. But what is the background to it? Imām Abū Yūsuf *rahimahullāh* relates that Imām A'zam *rahimahullāh* was going somewhere when, along the way, two people were conversing with each other. When they saw Imām A'zam *rahimahullāh*, one said to the other: "This is Abū Ḥanīfah who performs the fajr ṣalāh with the wudū' of 'ishā ṣalāh every day."

This was not really true because it was not Imām A'zam's *rahimahullāh* practice to perform the fajr ṣalāh with the wudū' of 'ishā ṣalāh. However, Allāh *ta'ālā* cast this idea in the person's heart because He probably wanted it to become Imām A'zam's *rahimahullāh* daily practice. When Imām A'zam *rahimahullāh* overheard their conversation, he felt very ashamed and thought to himself: "These servants of Allāh *ta'ālā* are having such good thoughts about me whereas I am not as they say. I should definitely try to be like that."

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah *rahimahullāh* said: "Glory to Allāh! O Abū Yūsuf! Do you see how Allāh *ta'ālā* has caused people to speak about me?! How bad it will be if Allāh *ta'ālā* sees me practising contrary to

¹تاریخ بغداد، ۱۳/۳۵۴.

this. By Allāh! I cannot allow people to attribute something to me which I do not do.”¹

He made a firm resolution there and then. Ever since that day until his death, he spent the entire night in worship, performing the fajr salāh with the wuḍū’ of ‘ishā salāh. This continued for about forty continuous years.²

Becoming an ‘Ālim is no Ordinary Feat

We should not even think to ourselves that we belong to the fraternity of ‘ulamā’. My dear friends! It is no ordinary feat to become an ‘ālim. It is a very great thing. The real ‘ulamā’ are ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz rahimahullāh, Hasan Baṣrī rahimahullāh, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Muḥaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh, Shāh Walī Allāh rahimahullāh, Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā rahimahullāh, Hadrat Rāipūrī rahimahullāh, Hadratji Maulānā Ilyās rahimahullāh, Hadrat Maulānā Husayn Aḥmad Madanī rahimahullāh, Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh, Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan ‘Alī Nadwī rahimahullāh. These were ‘ulamā’ and fuqahā’. These are the personalities who deserve the titles of ‘ulamā’, fuqahā’ and inheritors of the Prophets *‘alayhimus salām*. We should not even think to ourselves that we are ‘ālims. Rather, it was Allāh’s favour on us that, despite our incapacities, He created this good thought in the hearts of people who consider us to be ‘ulamā’. Since Allāh *ta‘ālā*

¹الخيرات الحسان في مناقب الإمام الأعظم أبي حنيفة النعمان، ص ٨٥.

²تاريخ بغداد، ٣٥٥\١٣.

conferred this favour and bounty on us, we ought to be ashamed and do our utmost to develop those qualities and attributes which ought to be found in an average ‘ālim so that we too will – to a certain extent – be blessed with the good fortune of becoming fuqahā’, ‘ulamā’, and inheritors of the Prophets *‘alayhimus salām*.

An Increase in The Number of ‘Ulamā’-e-sū’

The Ahādīth make mention of faqīh fī ad-Dīn. He is also known as ‘ālim-e-rabbānī and wārith-e-Nabī (an heir of the Prophet *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). These are all names referring to the same person. You know that there are two types of ‘ulamā’, viz. ‘ulamā’-e-rabbānī and ‘ulamā’-e-sū’. As the day of Resurrection draws near, the ‘ulamā’-e-rabbānī will decrease and the ‘ulamā’-e-sū’ will increase. May Allāh *ta‘ālā* protect us all. Hadrat Muftī Shafi’ Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say about his time: “Unfortunately, ‘ulamā’-e-sū’ are also graduating from our madāris now.”

This shows that previously there were no ‘ulamā’-e-sū’ coming out of our madāris, rather they were solely ‘ulamā’-e-rabbānīyyīn. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yāsīn Sāhib rahimahullāh, the father of Hadrat Muftī Shafi’ Sāhib rahimahullāh, used to say: “We experienced a time when every employee of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband, from the principal down to an ordinary errand boy, was a *sāhib-e-nisbat* (one who has a true bond with Allāh *ta‘ālā*) and a walī of Allāh *ta‘ālā*.”¹

¹ مجالس مفتہ اعظم، ص ۲۴۸.

On one occasion, I was with my Hadrat, Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī *rahimahullāh* at the airport. Hadrat was sitting with his head cast down and I was the only one who was with him. The others were having Hadrat's luggage weighed. He suddenly looked at me and said: "Maulwī Sāhib! Seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā* from being among the 'ulamā'-e-sū' because there is an abundance of them nowadays."

'Ulamā'-e-sū' were non-existent during the early eras of Islam. There were 'ulamā' who feared Allāh *ta'ālā*, who were humble, who were forever conscious of Allāh *ta'ālā*, who possessed true understanding of Dīn and who were the true inheritors of the Prophets '*alayhimus salām*. There was no concept of 'ulamā'-e-sū'. As time moved away from the era of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, 'ulamā'-e-sū' began coming into existence, they increased gradually and eventually came into the majority. May Allāh *ta'ālā* protect us from them.

As I was saying, there are two types of 'ulamā', viz. 'ulamā'-e-rabbānī and 'ulamā'-e-sū'. The one who is 'ālim-e-rabbānī he is the one who is faqīh fi ad-Dīn and wāriṭh-e-Nabī. When virtues of 'ulamā' are mentioned, e.g. "The 'ulamā' are the inheritors of the Prophets",¹ we rejoice because we think they apply to us. We say: "Since we are the inheritors of the Prophets, people ought to honour us, respect us, serve us and fulfil our rights." The

¹جامع الترمذي، باب ما جاء في فضل الفقه على العبادة، ح (٢٦٠٦).

question we ought to ask is: “Do we have any duties and responsibilities which we owe to the masses?”

The Inheritors of The Prophets are The Well-wishers of The People

My dear brothers! We are committing the crime of *tatfif* (giving in short measure, but demanding our full due). Allāh *ta’ālā* says in this regard:

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ، وَإِذَا كَالُوا لَهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوا لَهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ.

Destruction to those who give short measure. Those, who, when they take measure from others, demand that it be given in full. But when they have to measure or weigh for others, they give less.¹

It is also *tatfif* when we demand our full from the masses but fall short in fulfilling our responsibilities. Just as they have certain responsibilities in relation to us, we have certain responsibilities in relation to them. From among their rights over us is concern about their religious welfare. What was the condition of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* in this regard?

كَانَ مُتَوَاصِلَ الْأَحْزَانِ، دَائِمَ الْفِكْرَةِ²

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam was in constant worry, always concerned.

If we claim to be the inheritors of the Prophets *‘alayhimus salām*, these same qualities [of

¹ Sūrah al-Muṭaffifin, 83: 1-3.

² الشماائل المحمدية، باب كيف كان كلام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، ح (٢٢٣).

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam*] have to be inherited by us. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* was in constant worry, always concerned. No Prophet lived a life of comfort and luxury. No Prophet lived a life which was inclined to this world, who was immersed in accumulating wealth. No Prophet was bothered about having the best of vehicles, pedigreed horses and excellent camels. No Prophet was worried about having huge mansions and exclusive garments.

Every Prophet came with just one single concern, viz. how every person on earth can become connected to Allāh *ta'ālā*. How can he become eligible for Paradise. Since Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* was the chief of all the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*, he surpassed them in this attribute as well. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* was “in constant worry, always concerned”. He was always worried and concerned about how Allāh’s servants can be saved from the fire of Hell.

My dear friends! We see our brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers going towards the Hell-fire but do not feel any restlessness in our hearts. If we are the inheritors of the Prophets in the true sense of the word, this quality of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu *'alayhi wa sallam* ought to be in us.

Who is a Faqīh fī ad-Dīn?

As I was saying, it is essential for us to know who a faqīh fī ad-Dīn is? Mullā 'Alī Qārī rahimahullāh quotes a statement of Hadrat Hasan Baṣrī rahimahullāh in Mirqāt Sharḥ Mishkāt:

إِمَّا الْفَقِيهَ الرَّاهِدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، الرَّاعِبُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ، الْبَصِيرُ بِأَمْرِ دِينِهِ، الْمَدَاوِمُ عَلَى عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ.¹

A faqīh is one who is abstinent in this world, desirous of the Hereafter, fully watchful with regard to his Dīnī matters, and constant in his worship of Allāh.

The First Sign of a Faqīh

The first sign of a faqīh is that he is abstinent in matters related to this world. Hadrat ‘Umar Fārūq *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* was a faqīh fī ad-Dīn, an ‘ālim-e-Rabbānī and a wāriṭh-e-Nabī. He was therefore abstinent in this world. He had no desire for this world. Although he was the Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (Leader of the Believers) he used to wear patched clothing. Our pious elders of the past were so unattached from this world that, according to Hadrat Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh*, if you were to study their lives, it would seem as if they were not living in this world; they were living in some other world.²

The Second Sign of a Faqīh

The second sign of a faqīh is that he is desirous of the Hereafter. These two qualities are so firmly embedded in his heart that their effects burst forth from his body. Anyone sitting in his company will also experience a desire for the Hereafter and a disinclination towards this world. This is why

¹مرقاة المفاتيح، كتاب العلم، ٢٦٧/٢.

²مجالس حكيم الأمت، ص ٣٣٥.

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* encouraged us to sit in the company of such a person.

The *Ṣahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum* asked him: “In whose company should we sit?” Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* replied: “Sit in the company of a person whose speech increases you in knowledge, whose actions create in your hearts a desire for the Hereafter and a disinclination to the world.”¹ May Allāh *ta‘ālā* confer these qualities to us.

A faqīh fi ad-Dīn cannot have any desire for this world. He remains concerned about the Hereafter all the time. The Hereafter is the centre of his yearning. Whatever he does is done after considering its benefit in the Hereafter. He thinks to himself: If I perform two rak‘ats of *ṣalāh*, this is the reward which I will receive. If I give good advice to a person, this is the benefit which I will acquire. If I teach something good to a person, it will benefit me in the Hereafter. If I pass on knowledge to a person, I will gain closeness to Allāh *ta‘ālā*.

In fact, even in worldly matters, such a person focuses on their benefits in the Hereafter, and how close he can get to Allāh *ta‘ālā* through them. When such a condition is realized, a person will never look for loopholes. His sole objective will be to practise on determination and not on concessions.

¹ كنز العمال، كتاب الصحبة، باب في آداب الصحبة، ح (٢٥٥٨٣).

Knowledge is Acquired For The Sake of Practising

Our present condition is the complete opposite. Knowledge is studied for the sake of practising on it, but a major weakness in us is that even after studying, we look for ease. Instead of practising on it, our knowledge becomes a means of casting aside practising on it. We have learnt that a certain action is desirable, a certain thing is optional, something else is Sunnah and something else is *sunnat-e-ghayr mu'akkadah* (a non-emphasised Sunnah). So what does all this mean to us? It means we are free. We feel that we will not be taken to task for not carrying any of them out, so we leave them.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

To Allāh we belong, and to Him is our return.

The Importance of Optional Acts

My dear brothers! These actions are certainly not essential but they are there to be practised on. They have a major impact in acquiring proximity to Allāh *ta'ālā*. A Hadīth Qudsī states:

وَمَا تَقْرَبْ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ

My servant does not get close to Me with anything that is more beloved to Me than by fulfilling whatever I made incumbent on him.

Allāh *ta'ālā* then says with reference to optional acts:

وَمَا زَالَ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ،
وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي أُعْطَيْتُهُ،
وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأَعِيذَنَّهُ.¹

My servant continues getting closer to me through optional deeds until I love him. Once I love him, I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hands with which he holds and his legs with which he walks. When he asks Me, I give him. When he seeks refuge in Me, I most certainly grant him refuge.

This shows that optional acts are also very beneficial. By adhering to them, a person becomes a beloved of Allāh *ta'ālā*. He is then protected by Allāh *ta'ālā* and his supplications are answered.

Hadrat Doctor 'Abd al-Hayy 'Ārifi *rahimahullāh* used to say: "Brother! A mustahab act refers to an act which is liked. An act which is liked is to be done, not to be left out."²

What comes to our minds? This is fard, we will have to do it. This is wājib, we will also have to do it. This is sunnat-e-mu'akkadah, we will have to do it as well. This is sunnat-e-ghayr mu'akkadah, there is no harm in leaving it out. Why? Because we will not be taken to task for leaving it out. Allāhu Akbar! My dear brothers! What is the definition of sunnat-e-ghayr mu'akkadah? Sunnat-e-ghayr mu'akkadah refers to an act which Rasūlullāh

¹ البخاري، كتاب الرقاق، باب التواضع، ح (٦٥٠٢).

² يادكار باتين، ص ١٣٤.

sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam would occasionally leave out. On the other hand, our attitude to it is that we will do it occasionally. And if we are in the habit of doing it occasionally, it is better than nothing. We have presently retrogressed to such an extent that we see no need whatsoever to carry out an act which is *sunnat-e-ghayr mu’akkadah*. Just think, my dear brothers! You are all my friends, I am also a student like you. It is only through the blessings of these personalities who are present here that I am saying a few words.

The Need to Take Stock of One’s Self

There is a need for us to sincerely take stock of our selves. This will benefit none but our own selves. Hadrat ‘Umar *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* used to say:

حَاسِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسِبُوا، وَزِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُوزَنُوا، وَتَأَهَّبُوا لِلْعَرْضِ الْأَكْبَرِ
عَلَى مَنْ لَا تُخْفَى عَلَيْهِ أَعْمَالُكُمْ.¹

Take stock of your selves before you are taken to account [on the day of Resurrection]. Weigh your deeds before they are weighed [on the day of Accounting]. Prepare for the biggest presentation before the Being from whom your deeds are not hidden.

Anyone who is an *‘ālim-e-rabbānī*, a *wāriṭh-e-Nabī*, a *faqīh fī ad-Dīn*, a righteous person and a friend of Allāh *ta’ālā* will be disinclined from the world and desirous of the Hereafter. He will be

¹تفسير ابن كثير، الفاتحة، ص ٤.

constantly occupied in actions and deeds which will benefit him in the Hereafter.

Hadrat Maulānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī Sāhib Meerutī rahimahullāh writes about Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī rahimahullāh that no matter what the condition or situation, I never saw any change in Hadrat's time table and devotional practices (*ma'mulāt*).¹

Hadrat 'Alī's Concern For The Hereafter

You may have read in *Mukhtārāt*² about Hadrat Dirār ibn Damurah's rahimahullāh description of Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu. One of the things which he said about Hadrat 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu was:

يَسْتَوْجِشُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَرَهْرَهًا وَيَسْتَأْنِسُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَظُلْمِيهِ

He used to recoil from the world and its attractions, and take solace from the night and its darkness.

He used to hold his beard and stand in the *mihrāb*.³ His condition was as described by Hadrat Dirār ibn Damurah rahimahullāh:

يَتَمَلَّمُ مَمَلَّمِ السَّلِيمِ، وَيَبْكِي بُكَاءَ الْحَزِينِ

He would mumble like one who has been bitten [by a snake or scorpion] and cry like a grief-stricken person.

¹ تذكرة الخليل، ص ٦٣ .

² Title of a book compiled by Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī rahimahullāh (translator)

³ Semi-circular section at the front of a masjid (translator)

He would humble himself and call out to Allāh *ta'ālā*, saying:

يَا رَبَّنَا، يَا رَبَّنَا

O our Rabb! O our Rabb!

He would address the world saying:

يَا دُنْيَا! أَلَيْ تَعْرَضْتِ، أَمْ إِلَيَّ تَشَوْفْتِ، هَيْهَاتِ هَيْهَاتِ عُرِّي عَيْرِي، قَدْ بَشَّكَ ثَلَاثًا، لَا رَجْعَةَ لِي فِيكَ.

O world! Are you coming before me? Are you beautifying yourself to me? Get away. Get away. Go deceive someone else because I have issued three divorces to you. There is no question of revoking this divorce.

فَعُمْرُكَ قَصِيرٌ، وَعَيْشُكَ حَقِيرٌ، وَخَطَرُكَ كَبِيرٌ، آه آه مِنْ قَلَّةِ الزَّادِ، وَبُعْدِ السَّفَرِ، وَوَحْشَةِ الطَّرِيقِ.¹

Your life is short, your assemblies are disdained and you pose a great danger. Aah aah! My provisions are little, the journey is long and the path is dangerous.” (the journey to the Hereafter is long and the path leading to it is filled with evils and the promptings of Satan, making it a dangerous path).

My dear brothers! We have to try to develop a condition like this within us. There must be disinclination to the world and desire for the Hereafter. This can be achieved by remaining attached to the *Ahlullāh* (the righteous servants of

¹صفحة الصفوة، ١١٨\١.

Allāh *ta'ālā*) – those whose hearts have already developed a desire for the Hereafter and a disinclination to the world.

Hadrat Hakīm Akhtar Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* says in a couplet:

O Akhtar! When any person has acquired the companionship of a righteous servant of Allāh, he has learnt how to live and die.

My dear brothers! The manner of living our lives in the proper manner can be learnt from the company of the pious elders. Akbar Ilāhābādī had said:

Dīn is not acquired from books, lectures and wealth. It is acquired from the [affectionate] gaze of the pious elders.

Love For Allāh And Self-obliteration

Nowadays there are many shortcomings in this regard. By turning our attention to this, we will acquire love for Allāh *ta'ālā*. It will result in acquiring the quality of self-obliteration and humility which are great bounties. Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that there are two peculiar traits which are enjoyed by none except the *mashā'ikh*: (1) love for Allāh *ta'ālā*, (2) self-obliteration and humility.¹

Obliterate yourself to the extent that you no longer exist. Neither must the colour and smell of your existence remain.

¹ اکابر کا مقام تواضع، ص ۶۹.

Develop perfection in your bond with Allāh *ta'ālā* to the extent that He remains, and you are obliterated.

Develop such perfection in your love for Allāh *ta'ālā* that you see the hand of Allāh *ta'ālā* in whatever you do thereafter. Once you develop this condition, you will experience nothing but progress and elevation. My beloved Hadrat Hājī Fārūq Sāhib rahimahullāh used to say: “What is the meaning of obliteration? It means you must find Allāh *ta'ālā*. And what is the meaning of finding Allāh *ta'ālā*? It means you must obliterate yourself.”

The one who has obliterated himself is the one who can benefit others.

The one who is magnanimous always remains humble. A goblet can only fill the measure when it bends its self.

Water which is in a goblet can only benefit others when it bends its self. If it refuses to bend its self, no one will be able to benefit from it and no one's thirst will be quenched. When it bends, the measure and glass will be filled. When the measure is filled, the benefit of the drink will continue.

The more a person obliterates his self the more bestowals Allāh *ta'ālā* will confer in his heart. In order to develop the qualities of humility, sincerity, devotion, submission and other praiseworthy qualities, you will have to remain in the company of the pious elders. You will have to attach yourself to a righteous elder and obliterate yourself [before him]. My dear brothers! This

treasure cannot be obtained without remaining in the service of the righteous.

When Hadrat Khwājah 'Azīz al-Hasan Sāhib Majdhūb *rahimahullāh* presented himself before Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, he said a couplet:

I have come with no other request at your door. All I am asking you is to obliterate me, obliterate me. I have come here solely to be obliterated.

By attaching ourselves to the pious elders and remaining in their company, their qualities and attributes will be passed on to us.

A musk-melon gets its colour by looking at another musk-melon.

It is therefore necessary to give a lot of importance to attaching one's self to the pious elders.

The Third Sign of a Faqīh

The third sign of a *faqīh fī ad-Dīn* is:

الْبَصِيرُ بِأَمْرِ دِينِهِ

Fully watchful with regard to his Dīnī matters.

He is vigilant with regard to his Dīnī matters, and his knowledge is firm and substantial. He knows what is lawful and what is unlawful, what is permissible and what is impermissible. He knows the limits of flexibility and the importance of resoluteness. He knows the limit of flexibility which he must show to the masses, and how much he himself must practise on flexibility.

Academic engrossment is essential for the acquisition of this quality. We will have to develop our minds to have an academic temperament. Students of the madāris are also seated here. Let me advise them that during their student days they will have to work very hard. They will have to strive very hard in Arabic grammar, etymology, eloquence, Arabic literature, the principles of tafsīr, the principles of Ḥadīth, the principles of fiqh and all the other sciences and subjects. Strive so much as though you drink up all the sciences. Then after you graduate, you must maintain a bond with these sciences. The general trend nowadays is that students do not pay any special attention to their studies during their student days. And the few who work hard do not maintain their contact with their books after they graduate. We do not see the enthusiasm and interest that ought to be there.

The Pleasure of Seeking Knowledge

‘Allāmah Zamakhsharī *rahimahullāh* says:

سَهْرِي لِتَنْفِيحِ الْعُلُومِ أَلْدُّ لِي - مِنْ وَصْلِ عَائِيَةِ وَطَيْبِ عِنَاقِي
وَتَمَائِلِي طَرَبًا لِحِلِّ غُؤَيْصَةٍ - أَشْهَى وَأَخْلَى مِنْ مُدَامَةِ سَاقِي

Remaining awake at night to research and investigate the different sciences is more enjoyable to me than meeting a beautiful singer and her sweet embrace. My swaying from side to side out of joy for having solved a difficulty is more desirable to me and sweeter than the drink which is offered by a waiter.

وَصْرِيْزُ أَفْلَامِي عَلَى أَوْرَاقِيهَا - أَخْلَى مِنْ الدَّوْكَاءِ وَالْعُشَّاقِ

وَأَلْدُّ مِنْ نَعْرِ الْفَتَاةِ لِذُقِّهَا - نَعْرِي لِأَلْقَى الرَّمْلَ عَنْ أَوْرَاقِي^١

The sound made by my pen as it writes across the page is sweeter to me than daukā' and 'ushshāq. The sound of dusting off the dust from the pages of my books is more enjoyable to me than the sound made by a young girl as she is playing her tambourine.

Hadrat Imām Muḥammad *rahimahullāh* said:

لَدَاتُ الْأَفْكَارِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ لَدَاتِ الْأَبْكَارِ^٢

To ponder and reflect over academic issues is more enjoyable than the pleasure which is provided by a virgin woman.

In other words, when I sit with the Qur'an and the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and ponder and reflect over the extraction of rules and regulations, then the pleasure which I experience at doing this is better than the joy which is experienced at taking pleasure from a virgin woman.

Someone asked Hadrat Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh*: “Hadrat! How much joy do you experience when you hear an academic point for the first time?” Imām Shāfi'ī *rahimahullāh* replied: “When any new academic point falls in my ears for the first time, I experience such joy and pleasure

¹صفحات من صبر العلماء، ص ١٣٩.

²حداائق الحنفية، ص ١٥٤.

that I hope – at that time – that my entire body was an ear.”¹

My dear brothers! We ought to experience this joy when acquiring knowledge. Once we start experiencing this joy and pleasure, we will never experience rest without studying and reading.

The Academic Enthusiasm of ‘Allāmah Binnaurī

This was also the condition of our elders and pious predecessors. Listen to the condition of one of our elders of the recent past, viz. Hadrat ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Yūsuf Binnāurī *rahimahullāh*. When the Majlis-e-‘Ilmī was established in Dhābel, Hadrat ‘Allāmah Binnāurī *rahimahullāh* was offered an academic post to undertake research work. The first task which was given to him was to research and reference the book *al-‘Arf ash-Shadhī*, a book written by his beloved teacher, Hadrat ‘Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*. ‘Allāmah Binnaurī *rahimahullāh* had to check and cross reference all the references which were mentioned by ‘Allāmah Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* and note them down. Hadrat ‘Allāmah Binnaurī *rahimahullāh* says: “There were times when I had to read thousands of pages just for one reference.”

‘Allāmah Binnaurī *rahimahullāh* mentions similar examples in this regard. I would like to make reference to just one astounding example. He relates: “While reading *al-‘Arf ash-Shadhī*, I came to a point where Hadrat Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* explained a principle of the Muḥaddithūn with

¹حاشية قيمة الزمن عند العلماء، ص ٢٩.

regard to the application of conflicting narrations. After explaining the principle, Hadrat Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* said that it is a very important principle but unfortunately, the compilers of the definitions of Hadīth (*mustalahul Hadīth*) did not make mention of it in their writings. Yes, Hāfiz Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalānī *rahimahullāh* did make mention of it in several places in *Fath al-Bārī*. I began reading *Fath al-Bārī* from the start, and while reading it, I came across what Hadrat Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* was referring to. However, Hadrat Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh* had said that Hāfiz Ibn Hajar *rahimahullāh* mentions it in several places. So I wanted to see how many times he mentions, and where. In order to ascertain just this one principle, I read *Fath al-Bārī* word for word from beginning to end.”¹

May Allāh *ta’ālā* endow us with an academic disposition of this nature and an attachment with our books. If one wants to progress academically, he has to have a bond with books, an academic disposition and an academic temperament. A student cannot be a true student without this enthusiasm.

Who is a Student?

Who is a student? Is he the one who takes admission in Dār al-‘Ulūm Bolton? Is he one who takes admission in our Academy? Is he one who

¹ For the benefit of the reader: *Fath al-Bārī* is an Arabic commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, printed in thirteen large volumes, each volume being about 700 pages. (translator)

بینات، إشاعت خاص، بیاد محدث العصر حضرت مولانا سید محمد یوسف بتوری، ص ۱۴۰.

takes admission in Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband? No! Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafi’ Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: “A student is one whose mind is always occupied in some academic question or the other.”¹

The word *tālib* (a seeker) is an active noun (*ism-e-fā’il*), and an active noun has the meaning of continuity (*istimrār*). If you are a *tālib-e-‘ilm* (seeker of knowledge, student), there has to be some academic question or the other in you all the time.

My dear brothers! Our elders had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. There are countless incidents and stories in this regard. We also have to develop this thirst within us. In your student days, you must create a desire to work hard for the acquisition of knowledge and study hard so that you have firmness in the different sciences. After you graduate, you must keep your self attached to this knowledge. If you get an opportunity to teach somewhere – *al-hamdu lillāh* – it is a very meritorious thing. But remember, we must not consider ourselves dependent on teaching to remain attached to knowledge. Whether we get a chance to teach or not, we have to maintain and uphold the knowledge which Allāh *ta’ālā* conferred to us. We have to keep it fresh and we have to expand it. Remember! Knowledge does not stop. It will either increase or decrease. If you do not try to increase it, it will move towards decrease and gradually come to an end.

¹ملفوظات وواقعات حضرت مفتي محمد شفيع صاحب، ص ۳۳.

Mustahab Means You Must Do And Makrūh Means You Must Abstain

So one attribute of a faqīh is that he must be vigilant over Dīnī sciences. When there is firmness in his knowledge and he maintains a bond with the righteous elders with a view to rectifying his self, he will become:

الرَّاهِدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، الرَّاعِبُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

One who is abstinent in this world, desirous of the Hereafter.

Once he is blessed with disinclination to the world and desire for the Hereafter, he will become an embodiment of:

الْمُدَاوِمُ عَلَى عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ.

Constant in his worship of Allāh.

In other words, such a person will be constant and regular in his worship of Allāh *ta'ālā*. He will not search for concessions in order to flee from actions. His knowledge, his desire for the Hereafter and his disinclination from the world will direct him towards thinking that a desirable act has to be carried out and an undesirable act has to be abstained from. He will give full importance to desirable acts and do his utmost to abstain from undesirable acts.

Nowadays, everyone – the masses and the leaders – have this mindset that if something is *mustahab*, then because it is not essential, it must be left out. The same applies to *makrūh tanzihī*. Because it is not a sin to commit it, we feel we must

not abstain from it. No, my dear friends! Makrūh is disliked, and when something is disliked, we must do our utmost to abstain from it. Mustahab is desirable, and when something is desirable, we must try our best to carry it out.

How Our Elders Followed The Sunnah

Look at the ways of our elders in this regard. They used to adhere strictly to carrying out the Sunnah and mustahab acts. They were concerned about following the Sunnah in the “smallest” of acts. They used to inquire about the Sunnah way in everything so that they could embellish their lives accordingly.

An associate of Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* asked Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* the following question: “Hadrat! What is the Sunnah method of doing such and such action?” The person who asked the question had spent some time in the company of Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. So Hadrat Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* said to him: “You spent time with Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. What did you see him doing in this regard?” The man replied: “This is what he used to do.” Hadrat Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh* said: “This is the Sunnah way.” In other words, the manner in which you saw Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* doing that action is exactly according to the Sunnah.

Allāhu Akbar! Look at the conviction he had as regards every action of Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* being according to the Sunnah. He

did not have the slightest hesitation in this regard. He immediately said to the person with full conviction that this is the Sunnah way. Such was the lives of our pious elders. Their actions were so much embellished by the Sunnah that by merely looking at their actions, one could say that this is the Sunnah way.

Hadrat Shāh 'Alamullāh And The Dream of 'Ālamgīr

Hadrat Shaykh Ādam Binnāurī *rahimahullāh* was from among the senior khulafā' of Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*. And Hadrat Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* was from among his [Hadrat Shaykh Ādam Binnāurī *rahimahullāh*] khulafā'. Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* sought permission from his shaykh, Hadrat Ādam Binnaurī *rahimahullāh*, to emigrate to Makkah Mukarramah. Hadrat Ādam Binnaurī *rahimahullāh* gave him permission but added: "If along the way, any pious servant of Allāh *ta'ālā* requests you to stay over, you must agree to it."

He departed and as he was walking, he reached Rāi Bareilly. On reaching there, a pious personality insisted on him to stay there. Because his shaykh had instructed him in this way, he stayed over. Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed him with a lot of acceptance [in the eyes of the creation and in the court of Allāh *ta'ālā*]. Hadrat Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh* was born from his progeny.¹

¹ Hadrat Maulānā Abul Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was also from his progeny. (translator)

Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* was a pious personality of the era of 'Ālamgīr¹ *rahimahullāh*. One night, 'Ālamgīr *rahimahullāh* saw a dream in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* passed away. He was very confused and unsettled by this dream and asked the 'ulamā' for an interpretation. The interpretation they gave was that it seems Shāh 'Alamullāh has passed away.

When they made inquiries, they learnt that Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* had indeed passed away. The reason given for this interpretation is that Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* followed the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in every step. At that time, there was no one apart from Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* whose life was more in accordance with the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. When 'Ālamgīr *rahimahullāh* saw the dream in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* passed away, it meant the passing away of a person whose life was a complete example of the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. And at that time, there was no one who surpassed Shāh 'Alamullāh *rahimahullāh* in this regard.²

Allāhu Akbar! Allāhu Akbar! My dear brothers! We always take their names, we always consider our selves to be aligned to Hakīm al-Ummat *rahimahullāh*. We say that we are aligned to Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* and to Hadrat

¹ He was the Mogul king, also known as Aurangzeb. (translator)

² تاريخ دعوة وعزيمت، ص ۳۷۹.

Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. But what a major difference between them and us! Look at their actions, and look at ours.

What I am trying to say is that our knowledge has to be firm and solid, and practising on it must also be to the maximum.

We must remember this one point: All the virtues and merits of knowledge apply to the 'ālim who is a practising one. Knowledge without practice will be destructive and such people will be the first ones to be cast into the fire of Hell.

We have now learnt that a *faqīh*, 'ālim-e-Rabbānī and *wārith-e-Nabī* is the one whose knowledge is solid, who is disinclined from the world and desirous of the Hereafter. The treasure of abstinence will be acquired by remaining aligned and attached to the pious elders. When there is a bond with them, there will be rectification. When there is rectification, the person will be an embodiment of:

الْمُداوِمُ عَلَى عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ.

One who is constant in his worship of Allāh ta'ālā.

When there is Dīn, steadfastness, taqwā and concern for the Hereafter in a person's life, he will experience a restlessness for Allāh's creation and be worried about their welfare.

The Restlessness of Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib

This is why Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to be so restless and concerned about the ummah. He was not a pseudo-'ālim. He

was a faqīh, an ‘ālim-e-Rabbānī, and wārith-e-Nabī in the true sense of the word. He used to be restless at night and would turn from one side to the other. If his restlessness was too much, he would get up and go for a walk. His wife asked him one day: “What is it that is discomfoting you? Why are you not getting sleep?” Hadrat rahimahullāh replied: “What can I say? If I were to tell you the reason, two people will remain awake [referring to himself and his wife], and not one.”¹

My dear friends! All our elders were concerned and worried about the ummah. Every wārith-e-Nabī receives this in his inheritance. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said:

مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُكُمْ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ أَوْقَدَ نَارًا، فَجَعَلَ الْجُنَادِبُ وَالْفَرَاشُ يَمْعَنَ فِيهَا وَهُوَ يَدْبُهَا عَنْهَا، وَأَنَا أَخِذُ بِحُجْرَتِكُمْ عَنِ النَّارِ، وَأَنْتُمْ تَقْلُتُونَ مِنْ يَدَيَّ.²

My similitude and your similitude is like that of a person who ignited a fire. Grasshoppers and moths began falling into it while he was driving them away from it. I am holding you by your waists and saving you from falling into the fire but you are slipping from my hands.

Align Yourselves to Our Pious Elders

My dear friends! I am giving you a very sincere piece of advice. You must align yourselves to our pious elders and you must strengthen the

¹سوانح حضرت مولانا محمد يوسف كاندهلوي، ص ۱۵۷.

²صحيح مسلم، كتاب الفضائل، باب شفقتة صلى الله عليه وسلم على أمته ومبالغته في تحذيرهم مما يضرهم، ح

.(۲۲۸۵)

bond with those mashā'ikh with whom you are already aligned. Remain in contact with them, give due importance to informing them of your conditions, and then following their directives. Those of you who are not affiliated to any shaykh at present must do so as quickly as possible. Allāh willing, when abstinence comes in as a result of striving for knowledge and concern for rectification, you will become a faqīh, an *'ālim-e-Rabbānī* and a *wārith-e-Nabī*. Then no matter where you are, you will perfume everything around you and Allāh *ta'ālā* will use you to safeguard and propagate the Dīn.

Only an 'Ālim-e-Rabbānī is a True Guardian of Dīn

Study Islamic history and you will see that whenever any difficult time was experienced by Islam and the Muslims, then the person whom Allāh *ta'ālā* chose as a means for the preservation of the Dīn and the Muslim ummah was a *faqīh fī ad-Dīn*, *'ālim-e-Rabbānī* and *wārith-e-Nabī*. You can list them from Hadrat 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz *rahimahullāh* to Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* and the elders who came after them. Whenever the ummah faced any tribulation, Allāh *ta'ālā* always selected a *faqīh fī ad-Dīn*, *'ālim-e-Rabbānī* and *wārith-e-Nabī* to combat and overcome it. He was a person who was firm in his knowledge, abstinent in this world, desirous of the Hereafter and constant in his worship of Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is therefore essential for us to pay particular attention to our rectification and to embellish ourselves with these qualities.

A Very Important Point

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a very important point, and that is, you must hold on firmly to the ways of your elders and pious predecessors. They combined knowledge with practice, their way was closest to the Sunnah and closest to what is correct. We are indebted to our elders. We are what we are because of them. Whatever honour we have is due to them. The external sciences which we possess came to us from them, and due to which, we have some character in us. We can never be independent of them. We are indebted to them for many things. You must therefore remain fully aligned and affiliated to their ways, their thinking and their views.

In order to do this, it is essential for you to read their biographies and become aware of their different life conditions. Furthermore, you must pay particular attention to studying their admonitions, statements and books. Also, value the pious personalities of our times and take benefit from them.

My dear brothers! This is an era of many tribulations and attractions. We are surrounded by them. The only way to save ourselves is to remain firm on the ways of our pious elders who have successfully reached their destination.

My dear brothers! You can look at the state of the entire world and you will see that Allāh *ta'ālā* is taking Dīnī services (services which are worthy of being called services) from those who are attached

to our pious elders. Allāh *ta'ālā* is not in need of any worldly means for the preservation of the Dīn. He is neither in need of any position nor any degree. He only values piety and sincerity.

Do Not Have an Inferiority Complex

We must not be carried away by superficial attractions. My dear brothers! All that glitters is not gold. Old is gold.

We must never succumb to an inferiority complex. Allāh *ta'ālā* inhabited your chests with knowledge of prophet-hood. How, then, can you have an inferiority complex!? What a sorrowful state! This shows an absence of appreciation for the knowledge of nubūwwat.

My dear brothers! Imagine a person receives a job as a minister but he casts it aside and prefers being a toilet-cleaner! Yet, we will say that he has not disvalued his position as much as an 'ālim who does not value his position.

The Only Way to Serve Dīn

Our goal and objective is to serve the Dīn, and this will have to be according to the ways of the pious elders and predecessors. The Grand Muftī of Pakistan, Ḥaḍrat Muftī Rafī' 'Uthmānī *Ṣāhib dāmat barakātuhum* says: “Anything which appears to be against the ways of our pious elders – no matter with how much sincerity it is said – must not be considered to be a part of our creed. This is because all the efforts of our pious elders are shielded by the shell of the Sunnah. Anything against this will be against the Sunnah.”

He says further on: “Remember! The more we move away from the ways of our pious elders, the more we will be moving away from the path of moderation and the path of the Sunnah. Bear this in mind: Whatever you do must be in line with the ways of the pious elders.”

I repeat: You can look at the state of the entire world and you will see that Allāh *ta’ālā* is taking Dīnī services (which are worthy of being called services) from those who are attached to the ways of our pious elders. If you want to be included among those who are serving the Dīn of Allāh *ta’ālā*, you will have to attach yourself to the teachings and principles of our pious elders and remain steadfast on their ways.

The Only Genuine Knowledge is Knowledge Brought by the Prophets

You must bear this point carefully in your mind: The erudite ‘ulamā’ state that the only genuine knowledge is knowledge brought by the Prophets *‘alayhimus salām*. Everything else are sciences, arts and crafts. They are all the slaves of prophetic knowledge and nothing else. If a person studies them as an instrument for the benefit of Dīn, without making them the objectives and while remaining within the boundaries of the Shari’ah, then there is nothing wrong in them. If anyone considers them to be the objective, or, after studying in a university or college, he looks down on and scorns the madāris, the people associated to the madāris, their system and their syllabus; or goes one step further by criticizing them, then this is a very dangerous situation. It is not becoming of

a servant of Dīn. The person whose thirst was quenched from the fountain from which the science of Hadīth and the science of the Qur'ān gushed forth, and then goes on to criticizing it, looks up to the centres of irreligiousness with respect, and considers the ways of our pious elders to be constricted and narrow-minded can never render genuine and valuable services to the Dīn. You must safeguard yourselves from destruction of this nature. Our success lies solely in the ways of our pious elders and predecessors. Hadrat Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* said:

لَا يَصْلُحُ إِخْرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا بِمَا صَلَّحَ بِهِ أَوْلَهَا^١

The latter generations can only succeed if they tread the ways of the early generations.

Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said:

إِنَّا كُنَّا أَذَلَّ قَوْمٍ، فَأَعَزَّنَا اللَّهُ بِالْإِسْلَامِ، فَمَهْمَا نَطْلُبُ الْعِزَّةَ بِغَيْرِ مَا أَعَزَّنَا اللَّهُ بِهِ أَذَلَّنَا اللَّهُ^٢

We were the most despicable people. Allāh then honoured us with Islam. As long as we seek honour from anything different than what Allāh honoured us with, He will humiliate us.

Success is only in the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and his Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*. There is no success in any other way. The way of our elders is closest to the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and his Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*.

¹ التمهيد لما في الموطأ من المعاني والأسانيد، ٣١٥\٩.

² مستدرك الحاكم على الصحيحين، كتاب الإيمان، ح (٢٠٧).

An Assembly of Angels Which Was Dismissed

Ask those who had the good fortune of seeing these pure souls. When Shāh 'Aṭā'ullāh Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* saw 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*, he said: "The caravan of the *Ṣaḥābah radiyallāhu 'anhum* was proceeding and everyone departed. Just one person got left behind; he is Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*."

Whenever *Hadrat Muftī Shafī' Ṣāhib rahimahullāh* got a few spare moments from his busy schedule, he used to start speaking about the senior 'ulamā' of Deoband and would continue speaking about them for lengthy periods of time. He would eventually end very remorsefully with the following line:

It was an assembly of angels which was dismissed.

My dear friends! Our elders were angels among humans and glittering jewels in the dust.

In this crowd of the world, we do not know where they got lost. There were some angels living among humans. Very rarely would you see such fakirs who glitter like jewels in the dust.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* keep us attached to these personalities in this world and in the Hereafter. May Allāh *ta'ālā* make us the true inheritors of the Prophets '*alayhimus salām*. May He make us fuqahā' and '*ulamā'-e-Rabbānīyyīn*. May He make us His and His Rasul's *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* true lovers. May He include us among the servants

of His beloved Dīn. May He enable us to tread a life which would earn His pleasure and bless us with a good end. Āmīn.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

A PRESENTATION TO GRADUATES

The graduates of Jāmi'ah Riyād al-'Ulūm had an opportunity of assembling in their alma mater for two days in 1429 A.H./2008. Our benefactor, teacher and tutor, the founder and Shaykh al-Hadīth of the Jāmi'ah, Hadrat Aqdas Maulānā Muḥammad Salīm Dhorāt Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum* – out of his affection and kindness – stayed with us in the musjid of the Jāmi'ah. he showered his spiritual and academic children with valuable pieces of advice with full attention and concern. Together with emphasising the need to remain attached to the creed and way of our elders, he advised us to strive towards our own rectification and the rectification of the Muslim nation at large.

The following advice is a portion of the farewell sitting of that gathering. It is also the core and essence of all the sessions and could be referred to as the crowning touch. His advice reduced the audience to tears, awakened the sleeping hearts and instilled a new fervour in them. If only there was a way of preserving the nature and emotions of that session. Nonetheless, if the sum total cannot be acquired, it does not mean that it must be left out altogether. We therefore take the opportunity of presenting the words of that session to the reader.

We hope these words will help and aid the reader in realizing his objective. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *ta'ālā*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نحمده ونصلي ونسلم على رسوله الكريم. أما بعد:

Being an 'Ālim is no Ordinary Matter

My beloveds and dear ones! By the will of Allāh *ta'ālā*, you are now included among the 'ulamā'. People now look up to you as 'ālims. It is a great bounty of Allāh *ta'ālā* for having attached us to scholars although we are not eligible for it. O Allāh! All praise and thanks are due to You. However, not a single one of us must think to himself that he is now an 'ālim because being an 'ālim is no ordinary matter. A genuine 'ālim is a faqīh, and a faqīh as per the definition of Hadrat Hasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh* is:

إِنَّمَا الْفَقِيهَةُ الرَّاهِدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، الرَّاعِبُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ، الْبَصِيرُ بِأَمْرِ دِينِهِ، الْمُدَاوِمُ عَلَى عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ.¹

A faqīh is one who is abstinent in this world, desirous of the Hereafter, fully watchful with regard to his Dīnī matters, and constant in his worship of Allāh.

The True Inheritors of The Prophets

Who is an 'ālim in the light of the above definition? Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, Hadrat 'Uthmān *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, Hadrat 'Alī *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz *rahimahullāh*, Hasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh*, Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh*,

¹سنن الدارمي، باب من قال العلم الخشية وتقوى الله، ١٠١١، ح (٢٩٤).

Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh*, Imām Shāfi‘ī *rahimahullāh*, Imām Aḥmad *rahimahullāh*, Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*, Imām Muslim *rahimahullāh*, Shaykh Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh*, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī *rahimahullāh*, Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*, Shāh Walī Allāh *rahimahullāh*, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz *rahimahullāh*, Shāh ‘Abd al-Ḥaq *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Ya‘qūb Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*, Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Ilyās *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā ‘Abd al-Qādir Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh*, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Masīhullāh *rahimahullāh*, Maulānā Siddīq Bāndwī *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā ‘Alī Miyā [Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwī] *rahimahullāh* – these people and others like them are worthy of being referred to as ‘ulamā’.

If we had to look at the achievements and character of these personalities, their sincerity and devotion to Allāh *ta‘ālā*, their simplicity and selflessness, concern for the Hereafter and disinclination from the world, concern for the wellbeing of the Muslim nation, academic zeal and striving, striving for the preservation of Islam, efforts to save the Muslim nation from tribulations – if we had to look at all these achievements and praiseworthy qualities, and then looked at our own heedless lives, we will be ashamed over the fact that

we are referred to as 'ulamā'. I fear that if those who do not know anything about our elders were to see our actions and character, they will probably hold wrong opinions about these elders.

Anyway, Allāh *ta'ālā* has included us externally in the group of 'ulamā'. It is a favour from Allāh *ta'ālā* and a manifestation of His quality of covering and concealing [the faults of mankind]. No matter how much thanks we express for this favour, it will be less. The most important aspect of this favour is for us to try to become like 'ulamā'-e-Rabbānīyyīn and to make them our models. After all, they are the true inheritors of the Prophets '*alayhimus salām*. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire us. Āmīn.

The 'Ulamā': Overseers of The Muslim Nation

I need you to understand a prelude to what I am going to say. The similitude of the Muslim nation is like that of goats. In other words, individuals of the Muslim nation are like goats. The devils from mankind and jinn-kind are dangerous wolves who are constantly on the watch to cause their spiritual destruction and who attack them through various ways. The 'ulamā' of the Muslim nation are the overseers and shepherds. The biggest responsibility of a shepherd is to tend to his flock with full concern for their wellbeing.

Look! How does a shepherd tend to his goats? Goats are immature, forgetful and stubborn. Despite this, the shepherd controls his anger and takes care of them because he considers them to be a valuable capital. He fears that if he does not

exercise patience and forbearance, he might lose this valuable capital. He keeps a watchful gaze on his flock with absolute vigilance and enthusiasm. He is always on his guard, he is constantly thinking about the protection of his flock, he is always concerned about them and he continually watches his surroundings. He thinks about the direction in which the wolves live, where they can attack from, and what plans he can make to keep them away. He checks if the goats are wandering off in the wrong direction and if any of them is separating itself from the main flock. In short, the shepherd considers every single goat to be a valuable capital, constantly tries to protect them and is never unmindful of his responsibility.

My dear friends! The ‘ulamā’ are the shepherds of the Muslim nation. Every ‘ālim has to have this feeling that every worshipper in the musjid, every student, every Muslim resident of his locality – in fact, every member of the Muslim nation – is a valuable asset. He must do his utmost to protect this asset all the time because it is our most valuable asset in the Hereafter.

A shepherd accrues many benefits from his flock, e.g. milk, meat, skin, wool, etc. Similarly, the ‘ulamā’ will receive many benefits from taking care of the Muslim nation. Their knowledge and piety will increase, their scale of good deeds will become weightier, they will progress in the proximity to Allāh *ta’ālā* and they will receive the special attention of the beloved Rasūl of Allāh *ta’ālā* – *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. Every member of the Muslim nation is a valuable asset for our Hereafter.

We have to exert all our efforts to oversee them, and it must be our constant effort to ensure that even a single member does not become a morsel for the satanic wolves. The chief of the inheritors of the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*, Hadrat Abū Bakr *radīyallāhu 'anhu*, had said:

أَيُّعَصُّ الدِّينُ وَأَنَا حَيٌّ^١

Can any defect enter Dīn while I am alive?

Never! No “goat” can suffer spiritual or Dīnī loss while the shepherd is present.

Recognize Your Rank

My dear friends! Recognize your rank and accept the Muslim nation as your most valuable asset. Once this perception develops, not a single moment can pass in heedlessness. Your gaze will be towards the forest, towards the wolves and towards your flock. If you ever perceive any danger from the wolves, you will get up immediately and combat them with full earnestness. While worrying about saving your flock from dangers, you will continue making efforts to provide for the needs of your flock.

The Best of 'Ulamā'

My dear ones! We can only be 'ulamā' in the true sense of the word when we become good shepherds and take care of the Muslim nation in an excellent manner. It is therefore necessary for us to understand our objective, to develop a perception of

¹مشكاة المصابيح، كتاب المناقب، باب مناقب أبي بكر، ح (٦٠٣٤).

our responsibility and to ensure the continued existence of this perception. We must be shepherds all the time and remain occupied in overseeing our flock. Obviously, the one who is constantly concerned about the success and wellbeing of his flock will be even more concerned about his own success. The one who strives to save his flock from wolves will strive to safeguard his own self from wolves and other external and internal dangers.

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا

*Surely you have lengthy occupations by day.*¹

You will be concerned about your flock during the day and not heedless of your own self. You will cry and beseech before Allāh *ta'ālā* in the solitude of the night and be worried about your own success.

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

*Continue remembering the name of your Sustainer and devote yourself to Him, staying aloof from everyone else.*²

These are the 'ulamā'-e-rabbānīyyīn who have been given the title of "the best of 'ulamā'" in a Hadīth and these are the best of people.

إِنَّ خَيْرَ الْخَيْرِ خَيْرُ الْعُلَمَاءِ³

The best goodness are the best of 'ulamā'.

¹ Sūrah al-Muzzammil, 73: 7.

² Sūrah al-Muzzammil, 73: 8.

³ سنن الدارمي، باب التوبيخ لمن يطلب العلم لغير الله، ١١٦١، ح (٣٧٠).

An Earnest Appeal

After graduating from the Madāris, some people lose their perception of being shepherds. They stay aloof from serving Dīn and interact excessively with the masses. This causes them to succumb to an inferiority complex. They become like ordinary laymen. If they see any evil they keep silent. In fact, sometimes they do not even perceive that evil. When satanic wolves attack the Dīn of ordinary people, they too become targets of the wolves. They are unable to differentiate between truth and falsehood, good and evil, right and wrong. They fall into tribulations very easily.

I plead to all of you – my beloveds – to take a thorough stock of yourselves. If any of you finds himself as described above, he must hasten in obtaining salvation from it and include himself among the ‘ulamā’-e-rabbāniyyīn.

My Beloveds! Recognize Your Rank

My beloveds! I feel like repeating a statement of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He addressed the students and lecturers of Dār al-‘Ulūm Karachi and made just one statement to them: “My beloveds! Recognize your rank.”¹ I too am saying: “My beloveds! For Allāh’s sake, recognize your rank.”

The Dīn for Material Gain

There is one level below this. May Allāh *ta’ālā* protect us from it. May Allāh *ta’ālā* keep us under

¹اصلاحي خطبات، ۱۰۴\۷.

His wing. It refers to those who appear like shepherds but are wolves in reality. There are those among them who adopt the appearance of shepherds and acquire material gains from the “goats” – they acquire material benefits from the masses. They fulfil their monetary needs from them. An abundance of invitations and gifts is the peak of their wishes. How sorrowful! How sorrowful! The knowledge which was for the Hereafter is being used for material gain.

Hadrat Hasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh* saw a juggler demonstrating his jugglery, so he said to his students:

إِنَّ هَذَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا لِأَنَّهُ يَأْكُلُ الدُّنْيَا بِالدُّنْيَا، وَأَصْحَابُنَا يَأْكُلُونَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ¹

This person is better than those of our fraternity because he earning of the world through worldly means, while members of our fraternity earn of the world through Dīn.

The above discussion was about those who use the Dīn for material gain. There is another group which is worse than them. They adopt the appearance of shepherds and attack the Dīn. They label the lawful as unlawful and vice versa. They label those who are firm on Dīn, abstinence, caution and piety as being narrow-minded. They delude the masses by saying:

الدِّينُ يُسْرَرُ

Dīn is easy.

¹مرقاة المفاتيح، ٢٨٧\١.

In so doing, they cast the Muslim nation into many new tribulations. They make incorrect deductions from the texts and move the people far away from the straight path. Both these groups are known as ‘ulamā’-e-sū’ (evil ‘ulamā’). The Hadīth refers to them as shirār al-‘ulamā’ (the worst of ‘ulamā’). They are indeed the worst of people.

إِنَّ شَرَّ الشَّرِّ شِرَارُ الْعُلَمَاءِ¹

The worst evil are the worst of ‘ulamā’.

Course of Action

My dear ones! You must continually seek refuge in Allāh *ta‘ālā* from becoming the worst of ‘ulamā’ and make a constant effort to include yourself among the best of ‘ulamā’. How can you do this? Strive to rectify your self and develop fear in your hearts. In order to realize this, you must establish a bond with spiritual masters. Maintain contact with them and have yourself rectified. Make a decision today and right now that you are going to change your life and you are going to get yourself included among the best of ‘ulamā’.

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ

Has the time not come for the believers that their hearts should feel humble at the remembrance of Allāh and what has come down of the true religion?²

My dear ones! Say from the depths of your hearts: “The time has come! The time has come!”

¹ سنن الدارمي، باب توبيخ لمن يطلب العلم لغير الله، ١١٦\١، ح (٣٧٠).

² Sūrah al-Hadīd, 57: 16.

My dears ones! Do not fear. Do not lose courage. Turn to Allāh *ta'ālā* and move forward. Attach yourselves completely to your spiritual masters. They are you spiritual fathers. How can you remain aloof from them? They are your spiritual doctors. Can any patient be independent of his doctor? Even if our doctor is displeased and shuns us away, we will have to beg to him because we are ill and need his treatment.

A Fear

If heedlessness in this regard increases, there is the fear of being included among evil 'ulamā'. Our Hadrat Ludhyānwī *rahimahullāh* said to me on one occasion: "Maulwī Sāhib! Constantly ask Allāh *ta'ālā* to save you from being included among evil 'ulamā' because there is a proliferation of evil 'ulamā' in our times." Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say: "Unfortunately evil 'ulamā' have started to come out of our Madāris." He also used to say: "Our Madāris have become barren since some time. Many Maulānās are qualifying, but no Maulwīs. In other words, Allāh-fearing 'ulamā'-e-rabbānīyyīn are not being produced."

Take up The Responsibilities of Prophet-hood

My dear ones! What can I say to you? When I look at your faces, I think of the time when you were students. Then when I look at how content you are with your Dīnī services, it pains my heart beyond description. When I used to look at your capabilities during your student days, my mind used to race forwards towards the future and I used

to think to myself that this child of mine will render such and such services and this child will be of such and such Dīnī benefit. A certain scene of religious service and propagation used to come to my mind. But now when I look at how some of you have wasted your capabilities by being content with minor services, limiting yourselves to the extent that neither your wife and children are deriving any Dīnī benefit from you, nor your family and community at large; then all this pains me severely to the extent that I cannot describe it. My dear ones! Take up the responsibilities of prophet-hood from here.

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

Allāh bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent in their midst a Messenger from among themselves - he recites to them His verses and purifies them [from polytheism and other evils], and teaches them the Book and things of benefit.¹

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَكِينَ الْحَقَّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ

It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion in order to give it supremacy over every religion.²

Get up from here with the call of Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu 'anhu:

¹ Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 164.

² Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 33.

يَنْقُصُ الدِّينَ وَأَنَا حَيٌّ؟

Can any defect enter Dīn while I am alive?

Just think, my dear ones! Allāh *ta'ālā* elevated you to the position of “heirs of the Prophets” and selected you to lead the Muslim nation. What a terrible calamity it will be if we fall from this grand position and fall in such a way that there remains no difference between us and the masses! We are despising such a high level and falling to such pits! If a cabinet minister were to despise his position and opts to become a toilet cleaner, it will not be considered to be such a serious ungratefulness compared to our ungratefulness of our position.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْعُلَمَاءُ وَيَا مَلِحَ الْبَلَدِ - مَا يُصْلِحُ الْمَلِحَ إِذِ الْمَلِحُ فَسَدَ
وَأَخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE 'ULAMĀ'

Shaykh al-Hadīth Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad
Salīm Dhorāt Ṣāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*

1. To beautify with good character those who are carrying out external good deeds but are lacking as regards purification of the heart.
2. To beautify external and internal good deeds those who are lacking in both, even though they may possess knowledge.

3. To embellish with knowledge and external and internal good deeds those who are lacking in both knowledge and action.
4. To set right and firmly establish the beliefs of those who are wavering in this regard, and to then convey them towards knowledge and good deeds.
5. To remove from the darkness of unbelief to the bright and straight path of īmān those who are deprived of the valuable treasure īmān.
6. To cooperate as much as possible with organizations, societies, movements and individuals who are carrying out the above responsibilities in whichever correct manner it may be, and to look up to them with respect.
7. To make one's self an embodiment of the following in order to be successful in the above-listed responsibilities:

الرَّاهِدُ فِي الدُّنْيَا، الرَّاعِبُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ، الْبَصِيرُ بِأَمْرِ دِينِهِ، الْمُدَاوِمُ عَلَى عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ.

One who is abstinent in this world, desirous of the Hereafter, fully watchful with regard to his Dīnī matters, and constant in his worship of Allāh.

NOTEWORTHY POINTS FOR 'ULAMĀ'¹

The Essence of Knowledge

Hadrat Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah *rahimahullāh* says that Hadrat Ja'far Sādiq *rahimahullāh* said: The essence of the knowledge of people is confined to four things. (1) Man must recognize his Sustainer. (2) Man must know the favours of Allāh *ta'ālā* on him. (3) He must know what Allāh *ta'ālā* wants of him. (4) He must know how he can come out of Allāh's disobedience.

Note: This means that knowledge which steers man towards these four points and urges him to practise on them is essentially knowledge which is beneficial. Knowledge from which these points are not acquired is not worthy of being referred to as knowledge.

¹ The famous author, Imām Abū 'Umar Yūsuf ibn 'Abd al-Barr Qurṭubī Andalūsī *rahimahullāh* (d. 463 A.H.) wrote a comprehensive book titled *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Faḍlihi* in which he discusses the importance of Dīnī knowledge, the merits of 'ulamā' and their responsibilities. It is considered to be a unique book on this subject. Later on, a senior scholar of Beirut, Shaykh Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Maḥmaṣānī (d. 1349 A.H.) undertook to present a concise version of this book. The Shaykh removed unnecessary chains of transmissions and repetitions, and thereby made it easy to benefit from it. When I had the opportunity of studying this book, I noted certain beneficial points and added headings to facilitate understanding. I also provided some explanations at certain places. I hope the reader will benefit from these valuable pages. (Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Sulaymān Mansūrpūri *Sāhib dāmat barakātuhum*).

Three Words of Advice

Hadrat ‘Abbās *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* advised his son, Hadrat ‘Abdullāh *rahimahullāh*, as follows: “O son! Never acquire knowledge to show off to people, to dispute with them or to display arrogance.”

Three Qualities of a Perfect Scholar

It is narrated by the ‘ulamā’ that a person cannot be considered to be an ‘ālim in the true sense of the word unless the following three qualities are found in him: (1) He does not scorn those who are below him in knowledge. (2) He is not envious of those who are above him. (3) He does not take any payment for his knowledge.

Abstaining From Nonsensical Talk

Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* said: “Nonsensical talk hardens the heart and it is a breeding ground for malice.”

Note: In other words, a person must abstain from unnecessary discussions and debates. He must express what he understands to be the truth but must not take sides.

Three Signs of an Ignorant Person

Hadrat Abū Dardā’ *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* said: “There are three signs of ignorance: (1) to consider one’s self to be better, (2) to engage in futile conversations, (3) to abstain from practising what one preaches.”

Note: If these three qualities are found in a person, he is really engrossed in ignorant ways even if he may be known as an ‘ālim.

The Misfortune of Love For Fame

Hadrat Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād *rahimahullāh* said: “If a person is caught up in love for fame, the following evils will certainly be found in him: (1) He will be envious of his contemporaries, (2) feelings of rebelliousness will overwhelm him, (3) he be forever searching for the faults of others, (4) if a person is praised in his presence, he will abhor it from within his heart.

Hadrat 'Alī *radiyallāhu 'anhu* came out of a masjid and people began walking behind him. He turned towards them and said: “Can a person’s heart remain safe if he sees such status accorded to him?” He added: “When a foolish person hears the sound of footsteps behind him, it becomes a cause of corrupting his heart.” In other words, when they see such status accorded to him, foolish people begin to consider themselves to be great whereas this is no proof of greatness.

Hadrat 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: “Walking behind a person corrupts the one who is followed and is a humiliation to the one who follows him.”

Rectification is Dependent on Two Categories of People

Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: “If two categories of my nation are rectified, every one else will be rectified. They are: the 'ulamā' and people of authority.”

Hadrat Qatādah *rahimahullāh* said: “The similitude of the 'ulamā' is like that of salt. When

anything gets spoilt, it is put right through salt. But if the salt itself is spoilt, there is no way of putting it right.”

Note: We learn from this that in order for the Muslim nation to be rectified, it is essential for the religious and political leaders to first rectify themselves and have the quality of rectitude in them. Rectification of the masses cannot be imagined without this.

The Importance of Scholarly Dignity

Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* said: “If the scholars safeguard the stateliness of their knowledge, they will receive leadership of the entire world by virtue of their knowledge. However, they utilize their knowledge for the acquisition of wealth from worldly people causing themselves to fall in the sight of the people.”

Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās *radiyallāhu ‘anhu* said: “If the bearers of the knowledge of prophet-hood [the ‘ulamā’] live up to the demands of knowledge, they will become the beloveds of Allāh *ta‘ālā*, the angels and the righteous; and awe for them will settle in the hearts of people. Unfortunately, these ‘ulamā’ are seeking the world through their knowledge. Consequently, not only have they fallen from grace in Allāh’s sight but also in the eyes of people.”

Note: It is commonly observed that an ‘ālim who preserves his scholarly stateliness and does not allow his religious position to be tainted by

materialism is the one who is considered to be deserving of honour and respect.

Sinning: The Cause of Forgetfulness

Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: "I feel that the committing of sins causes academic facts to be forgotten by a scholar." In other words, sinning becomes a cause of forgetting knowledge. This is clearly proven by experience.

Hadrat 'Alī's Advice to 'Ulamā'

Hadrat 'Alī *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: "O bearers of the knowledge of prophet-hood! Continue practising on your knowledge because a real 'ālim is the one who acquires knowledge and practises on it. Soon there will be people whose knowledge will not go down their throats even though they are referred to as scholars. Their public life will be different from their private life. There will be a conflict between their knowledge and their practices. They will sit in circles and vex their pride and boast over each other (as to who has a bigger following). So much so, a person will be displeased by his companion solely because he left his assembly and attended the assembly of another. These are the ones whose deeds will not weigh anything in the court of Allāh *ta'ālā*."

Note: The essence of this advice is that the 'ulamā' should be more concerned about the rectification of their selves and pleasing Allāh *ta'ālā* than about increasing their numbers.

A Lecture is Not Effective When it is Not Accompanied With Action

Mālik ibn Dīnār *rahimahullāh* said: “If an ‘ālim does not practise on his knowledge his advice will pass through the hearts of people just as raindrops slip off a slippery rock.” In other words, a lecture is not effective when it is not accompanied with action.

What Emanates From The Heart Affects The Heart

Hadrat Suwār *rahimahullāh* said: “When a point emanates from the depths of the heart, it affects the hearts [of people]. On the other hand, when a point emanates merely from the tongue, it passes through the hearts of people.”

Action is Essential For a Scholar

Hadrat Hasan Baṣrī *rahimahullāh* said: “It is more essential for a person who surpasses people in knowledge to surpass them in action as well.”

The Muslim Nation Does Not Benefit From a Worldly ‘Ālim

Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* said: “An ‘ālim is a physician of the Muslim nation and wealth is its illness. If an ‘ālim himself becomes engrossed in acquiring undue wealth, how will he treat others?”

Hearts Are Automatically Drawn Towards One Who Has Truly Recognized Allāh

Hassān ibn ‘Atīyyah *rahimahullāh* said: “The more a person progresses in his recognition of Allāh *ta’ālā* the more people are attracted towards him.”

Note: The blessings of such sages spread throughout the world and people are unwittingly attracted to them.

Hastening in Issuing Fatwās is a Proof of Lack of Knowledge

Hadrat Ayyūb Sakhtiyānī *rahimahullāh* used to say: “The one who is most audacious in issuing fatwās to people is the one who has the least knowledge. The one who is most cautious in issuing fatwās is the one who is most knowledgeable about the differences among the ‘ulamā’.”

Do Not Make it a Point to Answer Every Question

Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* used to say: “An indication that knowledge is departing from a person is when he tries to give his opinion on every question and issue.”

Hadrat ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī *rahimahullāh* said: “We were with Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* on one occasion when a person came to him and said: ‘I have undertaken a journey of six months and come to you to ask you a ruling. The people of my locality insisted I come to you.’ Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* said: ‘You may ask whatever you wish.’ The man presented his question. After hearing what he had to say, Imām Mālik unhesitatingly said: ‘I do not know the answer to your question.’ The man was left astonished and dumbfounded at Imām Mālik’s acknowledgement of ignorance because he came here under the assumption that the answer to every question can be obtained here. When the man regained his composure, he said: ‘Hadrat! What will I tell my

people when I go return to them?’ Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* replied: ‘Tell them that Imām Mālik does not know this ruling very well.’”

Memory is Sharpened Through Continuous Studying

Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* was asked: “What steps should be adopted for sharpening the memory?” He replied: “Continue the study of books (this will strengthen the memory).”

Note: An ‘ālim who wants to preserve his knowledge must make it a point of reading and discussing matters of knowledge. Neither can his knowledge be preserved without this nor can academic issues remain in his mind. If he gives up reading, then even the knowledge which he has will gradually leave him.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO 'ULAMĀ' AND STUDENTS¹

Hadrat Muftī Muhammad Taqī 'Uthmānī Sāhib
dāmat barakātuhum

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على رسوله الكريم، وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين.
أما بعد:

We do not have the time to deliver a long lecture. At the same time, matters of Dīn do not need long lectures. If Allāh *ta'ālā* blesses us with sincerity then even a short talk can be beneficial. Allāh *ta'ālā* protect us – if there is no sincerity, then even a long lecture is useless.

I Wish to Spread This Message as Much as Possible

Nowadays I perceive a desire to place emphasis on a certain point to my dear students, and I wish to spread it and proliferate it as much as possible. I wish to do this especially among our students. The message is: Allāh *ta'ālā* – through His grace and kindness – attached us to such elders regarding whom we can say that – Allāh willing – they were examples of *ما أنا عليه وأصحابي* in our times. The understanding of Dīn and the manner of practising on it as presented by our elders is really a great treasure for us. Allāh *ta'ālā* is extremely

¹ This talk was delivered at Islamic Da'wah Academy, Leicester, U.K. on 4th Sha'bān 1433 A.H./25 June 2012.

kind and merciful to us for having attached us to them and enabled us to be affiliated to them.

The Need to Absorb The Temperament of Our Elders

However, I see a major weakness and shortcoming in our circles, viz. there is deficiency in knowledge about the conditions of our elders, their temperament and their lives. We study our Dars-e-Nizāmī, try to remember it and do many other things with it. However, acquiring mere knowledge of it is not enough. Rather, the peculiar spirit and temperament which was found in our elders, in the ‘ulamā’ of Deoband and Sahāranpūr needs to be imbibed and absorbed by us. Consequently, the picture of the creed of the ‘ulamā’ of Deoband which we see before us is not really a true picture.

The Teachings of The Elders Are Very Effective And Effulgent

Allāh *ta’ālā* has placed a lot of effect and effulgence in the lives, statements and teachings of these elders. However, when I go to our students and speak with our teachers, I realize that many of them do not know anything about the lives of our elders such as Hadrat Maulānā Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. I went to a place and posed this question: “Brothers! Do you know who Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was?” One person replied: “He was the head teacher at Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband.” People do not even know this much.

Cling to The Lives, Conditions And Statements of The Elders of Deoband

Due to our ignorance about the lives and biographies of these personalities we are understanding something completely different. There is a deficiency in acquiring that peculiar and special temperament and spirit which we ought to have acquired. I have therefore perceived an urge in my heart to share this with my friends and emphasize it on them. Brothers! You may continue studying whatever you are studying. May Allāh *ta'ālā* endow you with intense capabilities in it. However, together with that, you must remain attached to the lives, writings and statements of these elders.

Make it a practice of your life to study the lives, statements, writings and lectures of Hadrat Nānautwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Madanī *rahimahullāh* and so on.

An Excellent Way of Acquiring The Effulgence of Knowledge And Safeguarding Oneself From Current Tribulations

I say to you with full conviction that – Allāh willing - just reading their biographies will bring tremendous benefit to you. Make it a practice of your life and part of your daily programme. From among these books is the autobiography of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth [Maulānā Muhammad Zakariyyā] *rahimahullāh* which is a treasure house of many facts. It may be an autobiography in title, but it is

really a narrative containing the biographies of the righteous elders.

I have just this short and comprehensive request to my brothers. You must consider attachment to these elders to be a great bounty for yourselves. And the way of appreciating this bounty is for you to remain attached to studying their lives, statements and writings. Allāh willing, He will bless you with effulgence in your knowledge through it, and it is also an excellent way of safeguarding yourselves from the tribulations of the times. May Allāh *ta'ālā* inspire us all. Āmīn.

وَأَجْرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



Al-hamdulillāh, the English translation of the new edition of this inspiring book was completed on 17 Jumādā al-Ukhrā 1435 A.H./18 April 2014.

May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept this humble effort, and may He make it a means for our salvation in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

I request the reader to inform me of any mistakes, typographical errors, etc. in this translation. Constructive criticism and suggestions on how to improve this work are most welcome. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

Mahomed Mahomedy
Durban, South Africa