



HAZRAT MAULANA YUNUS PATEL 

LIFE AND LEGACY PART ONE



**HAZRAT MAULANA
YUNUS PATEL SAHIB**
(RAHMATULLAHI 'ALAYH)

Life and Legacy

PART ONE

Title: Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Sahib (RA)
Life and Legacy

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Website: <http://yunuspatel.co.za>

Hazrat ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al ‘As
(Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) narrated:
I heard Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam saying:

“Allah does not take away the knowledge, by taking it away from (the hearts of) the people, but takes it away by the death of the religious, learned men, till when none of the (religious, learned men) remains, people will take, as their leaders, ignorant persons who, when consulted, will give their verdict without knowledge. So, they will be astray and will lead the people astray.”

~ Sahih Al-Bukhari

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

FOREWORD

by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Patel Sahib

حامدا ومصليا ومسلما

Numerous times daily, while reciting Surah Fatiha, we beseech Allah Ta'ala to guide us to the Straight Path – the Path of those whom He favoured. In Surah Nisaa, these favoured personalities have been described as the *Ambiyaa* (*alaihimus salaam*), the *Siddiqueen* (the highest rank of *Aulia*), *Shuhada* (martyrs) and *Sawliheen* (pious). It is thus clear that for true guidance, one will have to follow the path of the rightly guided personalities, who are among the specially favoured servants of Allah Ta'ala.

Among these specially favoured servants of Allah Ta'ala was the personality of my *marhoom* elder brother, Hazrath Moulana Yunus Patel Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*).

Hazrath Moulana (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) was greatly blessed in numerous ways. In particular, he was blessed with a somewhat unique charisma which drew people from all walks of life to him. In his most endearing and appealing manner, he ignited their hearts with the fire of the love of Allah Ta'ala. Thousands of people were deeply inspired by his teachings, including many who had never met or seen him. People from distant parts of the world found the Path

to Allah Ta'ala through corresponding with him for their *Islaah* and self-rectification. Numerous people around the globe came closer to Allah Ta'ala through listening to his intensely motivating talks and advices, spiritually invigorating Zikr and deeply moving Duas. *Alhamdulillah, thumma Alhamdulillah*, numerous people in various parts of the world continue to be inspired through listening to the recordings of his talks and by reading his books. May Allah Ta'ala keep this benefit flowing till Qiyamah. Aameen.

While the apparent greatness of such personalities is witnessed by those who come into contact with them, much of what has happened “behind the scenes” that brought about that greatness is unknown to most. It is through their biographies that one gets a glimpse into the wonderful qualities that took them to those great heights. This is among the fundamental objectives of compiling biographies of the Auliya – to present the gems of their remarkable qualities as well as to encapsulate their teachings, so that the generations to come could be inspired to follow in their footsteps and become true slaves and lovers of Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala accept this excellent work and abundantly reward all those who played a role in the compilation and publication of this biography. May Allah Ta'ala make it a means of great inspiration for the readers and a *Sadaqah e Jariyah* for Hazrath Moulana (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*). Aameen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Background to the Biography	1
About Hazrat Maulana (RA)	7
Programmes	11
Brief Life Sketch	23

CHAPTER TWO

Interview	28
-----------------	----

CHAPTER THREE

Childhood and Family	77
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER FOUR

Darul Uloom Deoband, Asaatiza	
Stay in India	102

CHAPTER FIVE

Return to South Africa	162
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER SIX

Work of Tabligh	198
Advice to Workers	216

Chapter One

BACKGROUND TO THE BIOGRAPHY

ABOUT HAZRAT MAULANA YUNUS PATEL SAHIB
(RAHMATULLAHI 'ALAYH)

MAJAALIS

BRIEF LIFE SKETCH

*“He whose heart is alive
With the Love of Allah Ta’ala,
does not die;
His imprints last forever.
Recorded in the annals of time.”*

BACKGROUND TO THE BIOGRAPHY

All praises are for Allah Ta'ala, the Executioner of all affairs.

Salaat and Salaam upon the best of all creation,

Sayyidina Muhammad Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam, eternally.

On the 11th of Sha'baan 1432, corresponding to the 12th of July 2011, our respected Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) departed from this earthly abode.

The compounded honour that was found in Hazrat Maulana's mubarak death only reflected and gave testimony to a life spent in obedience to Allah Ta'ala and His Rasul Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam. Alhamdulillah, Hazrat Maulana had completed his visit to Madinah Munawwarah, had completed the rites of 'Umrah, and a day later, completed a Nafl Tawaaf after Asr. After the Maghrib Salaah, on the Mataaf, engaged in Dua, Hazrat Maulana's soul departed. Subhanallah. As is said: "You will be resurrected as you die and you will die as you lived."

On a global level, the great loss of this Friend of Allah Ta'ala was felt and witnessed – and even those who had not met with Hazrat Maulana experienced an undeniable

sense of sadness. Thousands had drunk from this fountain of Divine Love and Ma'rifat¹ and had drawn guidance and inspiration from the teachings of Hazrat Maulana. It was not surprising that many expressed their eagerness and interest to know more about the life and personality of Hazrat Maulana.

Over the years, prior to Hazrat Maulana's demise, a number of requests were forwarded by muredeen and other associates to undertake a biography of Hazrat Maulana. Due to Maulana's humility, Maulana would reply that there was nothing much to write about – to the extent of saying that his life could be noted on the back of a stamp. This was the general and humble response.

Even in regard to the transcriptions and compilations of Maulana's talks that mureeds would present, Maulana's humility was such that he would say that there are already senior 'Ulama and Akaabir whose writings and teachings are presently being published – citing the works of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) and others, and would say that their works are offering great guidance to people already.

¹ Ma'rifat: Recognition of Allah Ta'ala

This was also his esteem for the ‘Ulama and Mashaa’ikh who were contemporary. Maulana would say that their books are also widely circulated in South Africa as in other parts of the world and benefiting so many. This made evident Hazrat Maulana’s humbleness, purity of heart, integrity and goodness, as well as making apparent that there was no coveting or hankering for any kind of name and fame or rivalry with contemporaries, in his heart.

Whilst many of the compilations were not published in Maulana’s lifetime, Maulana would make Dua for their acceptance. It was only with encouragement from Hazrat Maulana’s Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*), that a few Kitaabs were published in Hazrat Maulana’s lifetime. Alhamdulillah.

Here too, there was hesitancy and reluctance. It was when a mureed presented a compilation of Malfuzaat² that Maulana gave some consideration. However, Maulana specified that Mashwarah needed to be first made with his respected Shaykh before any further step was taken. On his visit to Karachi and subsequent Mashwarah, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) directed towards the publication of the Malfuzaat and other Kitaabs. Alhamdulillah.

² Malfuzaat: Wise and perceptive statements.

Again, Hazrat Maulana's sincerity, genuineness and self-effacement were apparent: Despite being a senior 'Aalim, principal of a Madrasah and at that time, president of the Jami'atul 'Ulama (KZN), he was particular in consulting with his respected Shaykh, drawing that noble guidance, direction and Duas, and did not consider himself independent of his seniors.

Furthermore, Hazrat Maulana always expressed concern about working sincerely for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala – seeking Allah Ta'ala in one's endeavours and not working for any worldly motives. Hazrat Maulana would often say: *'Do for Allah's Pleasure, Allah will give from His Treasure.'*

All in all, the manifestation of the Hadith: *"Whoever humbles himself for Allah, Allah elevates him,"* was apparent in the life and demise of Hazrat Maulana.

Towards the latter part of Hazrat Maulana's life, Maulana began to share more personal experiences with close associates and mureedeen and mentioned himself, that Insha-Allah, those incidents could be a means of some goodness for others.

In the closing year of Hazrat Maulana's life, yet another request was forwarded to do a biography. At that time,

Hazrat Maulana made known that if a biography was to be compiled, it should be done by one of his mureeds and instructed that such a biography be prepared without any excesses and exaggeration. Hazrat Maulana was extremely particular about saying things as they are, avoiding any kind of fabrication and exaggeration which would be misleading. Thus, this humble compilation of the life of Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) was initiated in his lifetime with Maulana's permission and guidance.

This book is more of an autobiography since it is presented as was shared by Hazrat Maulana. Alhamdulillah, over a period of seventeen years, the personal information and experiences Maulana had himself disclosed in the talks, lessons and other programmes, were noted and are now brought together in this compilation. Of course, these pages offer only a mere glimpse into Hazrat Maulana's life.

During an interview in Ramadaan 1431, Hazrat Maulana related many aspects of his life, from childhood. It was that interview which brought together Hazrat Maulana's life story with Maulana being the narrator, Alhamdulillah. The transcription of the interview was prepared and was also given to Maulana (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) for perusal and amendment. Some additions were made.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) had explained that the true objective of a biography is to present the scholarly and spiritual achievements, as well as the noble teachings, the manner of reformation, and the undertakings with respect to the dissemination of Deen, of a righteous and learned personality. Alhamdulillah, Hazrat Maulana’s life offers so much by way of guidance, inspiration and lesson. May Allah Ta’ala guide us in presenting the same regarding our noble Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*). As has been stated: “*When the pious are remembered, mercies descend.*”

May Allah Ta’ala accept the humble effort and make it a means of goodness and benefit for us and the entire Ummah. May Allah Ta’ala reward the ‘Ulama who gave their time to proof-read and correct, as well as all others who have kindly assisted in this undertaking. May Allah Ta’ala make it a Sadaqa-e-Jaariyah for Hazrat Maulana (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*). May Allah Ta’ala forgive us for our shortcomings and failings in the preparation of this biography.

Sha’baan 1444 / March 2023

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ABOUT HAZRAT MAULANA YUNUS PATEL SAHEB

(Rahmatullahi ‘Alayh)

From the official website, www.yunuspatel.co.za
(amended)

*All praise is due to Allah Ta’ala, the Inspirer of Faith, The All-Merciful
and The All-Beneficent.*

*Salaat and Salaam upon the Crown of the Believers, Sayyidina
Muhammad Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam, eternally.*

Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) was the Khalifa of two great luminaries: Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) and Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh), and was, himself, the mentor, preceptor and spiritual guide of thousands throughout the world.

Hazrat Maulana was a student of the world-renowned Darul Uloom Deoband in India, and studied under great Scholars of the time. Hazrat Maulana also had the privilege of benefiting from the companionship of many Mashaa’ikh from an early age.

Alhamdulillah, all those who had the good fortune of meeting and spending time with Hazrat Maulana were

witness to his noble character, piety and righteousness. Maulana's love for Allah Ta'ala and His Beloved Rasul Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam offered beautiful inspiration and incentive in following the path of seeking Allah Ta'ala. Maulana's deep-hearted desire to connect people with Allah Ta'ala and His Beloved Rasul Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam was manifest in his unrelenting efforts and sacrifices, serving the Deen and the creation of Allah Ta'ala. Hazrat Maulana's time was fully occupied with disseminating spiritual advice to saalikeen and mureedeen, offering guidance to people in general, throughout the world, as well as dealing with many social cases.

Such sacrifice, devotion and sincerity, which are rarely to be found, had been most instrumental in availing and benefiting the Ummah at large. Despite ailing health - being a heart patient, having had a few heart attacks, a quadruple bypass and being diabetic - Hazrat Maulana's deep-hearted love to impart the knowledge of Deen inspired him to continue, no matter what the condition of his health.

On one occasion, a few years after the bypass, on being asked about his health, Maulana replied: *"The doctor says: 'You have to slow down - cut down - refuse to take on more cases, reduce the programmes, etc. Just how to implement this advice is another issue. The observation is that just the bottom half of the heart is functioning. The top muscles are dead. The doctor's*

words: “I am amazed how you are continuing. This is not possible.” ...Does this not clearly indicate that I am running on the ‘fuel’ of Duas?”

Hazrat Maulana was based in the suburb of Asherville, Durban, South Africa. This was Maulana’s hometown for many years, where Maulana served the community relentlessly. Both the Masjid and the Madrasah (Masjid-e-Noor and Madrasatus Sawlehaat) were established in this area. Hazrat Maulana was also the founder of a boys’ institute, At-Taqla Boys Madrasah, in the Overport area.

Alhamdulillah, through Hazrat Maulana’s efforts, ‘Ulama and teachers were given the responsibility to take over the management of the Masjid and oversee the Madrasah while taking direction and guidance from Hazrat Maulana, in any undertaking or decision-making. This facilitated time for the spiritual upliftment of the Ummah, which was Maulana’s primary occupation in the final years of his life. Together with this, there were many Majaalis of Zikrullah and Islaah³, frequent informal programmes for mureedeen, journeys to visit Hazrat Maulana’s Shaykh in Karachi, and visits to the Haramain Shareefain.

³ Islaah: spiritual reformation

Despite an exceptionally busy schedule, Hazrat Maulana was blessed with the remarkable ability to maintain a balance in terms of fulfilling the rights of Allah Ta'ala, family, friends and disciples.

Hazrat Maulana's teachings comprised all branches of Ilm (knowledge): Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh, Tasawwuf, Zikr and the poetry of the Ahlullah, and were enriching, inspiring and enlightening to the heart, mind and soul. The emphasis was moral and spiritual reformation and purification.

Alhamdulillah, Muslims, all over the world, have and still are benefiting immensely from Hazrat Maulana's talks and teachings and find them a means of increasing and strengthening their Imaan and Yaqeen in Allah Ta'ala and their love of Nabi *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam*. May Allah Ta'ala grant Hazrat Maulana the best and highest stages of the Aakhirah. May Allah Ta'ala accept our humble efforts and make them beneficial for the Ummah at large.

PROGRAMMES

There were frequent programmes throughout the year, scheduled and informal.

- 1.) Hazrat Maulana would generally have a programme every Monday.

Depending on the season, it was either before the Isha Salaah or after the Isha Salaah. Maulana would discuss Islaahi matters, such as the importance of abstaining from sins, exercising justice in all matters, fulfilling the rights of Allah Ta'ala and the creation, as well as drawing lessons and inspiration from the lives of the pious.

One of the main components of Hazrat Maulana's programmes, which many people have cited as an important factor that drew them to Hazrat Maulana, was the discussion of contemporary issues and its impact on the lives of Muslims. Whenever the community at large faced spiritual challenges, Maulana provided guidance and direction on how to deal with them, in a manner that is practical, easy and at the same time, in accordance with Qur'aan and Sunnah, without compromise.

- 2.) A special Majlis was held every Thursday night, which Hazrat Maulana described as a Majlis of Taubah (repentance).

In this particular Majlis, Hazrat Maulana would present some advice relating to the purification of the heart and soul, or would recite a Naat Shareef⁴ or other poetry composed by our Mashaa'ikh, which Maulana would then translate and explain. This was followed with Zikrullah, where the name of Allah Ta'ala would be repeated, to light the fire of the Muhabbat (love) of Allah Ta'ala in the hearts. Alhamdulillah, the programme proved to be extremely beneficial to people across the globe, who looked forward to the programme and the opportunity of drawing inspiration from Maulana's beautiful Zikr.

Once, out of curiosity, a Christian priest listened to one of the Zikr programmes. He mentioned that he had never before felt such a close presence of God in his entire life. ...To a greater extent, Muslims found an increase in their Imaan.

All of Hazrat Maulana's programmes terminated with Dua. At times, the Duas were lengthy and emotional. They were

⁴ Naat Shareef: poetry in praise of Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam

also a means of transformation and reformation for many people.

Alhamdulillah, through the Fadhl (Grace) of Allah Ta'ala, the programmes were broadcast via radio-transmitting receivers to homes across the greater Durban area. In addition, the programmes were broadcast via audio-streaming on Hazrat Maulana's website, which Alhamdulillah, was appreciated by many in other parts of the world. Due to Allah Ta'ala creating such means of transmission, sisters got the opportunity to listen to the talks at home, from both the Masjid and Madrasah.

- 3.) The Jumu'ah talk would often be given by Hazrat Maulana at Masjid-e-Noor; otherwise at other Masaajid.
- 4.) Hazrat Maulana also had a daily habit of taking a walk in one of the parks, accompanied by mureeds, and would have a short programme there.
- 5.) Hazrat Maulana would sometimes have a Majlis-e-Khaas for mureedeen and saalikeen on a Saturday evening, where the poetry of the Ahlullah would be rendered and an explanation given thereafter.

- 6.) Hazrat Maulana would also have a short Majlis on a Sunday morning. Maulana would recite some prescribed Wazaa'if (prescriptive prayers from the Sunnah), engage in a little Zikrullah and a short Dua.
- 7.) Hazrat Maulana's love for his community and the Ummah was so deep that he did not restrict his spiritual discourses to those scheduled programmes. There were often more unscheduled programmes, or as Hazrat Maulana would refer to them as, 'Informal' programmes. Those talks were either on request from mureeds or visitors, or when Hazrat Maulana needed to advise and guide on some matters.

Many would express their appreciation for these informal talks. Maulana would sometimes respond to the appreciation, saying: *"The talk is 'informal' - and if benefit is derived, 'inform all'. Those who are here should inform those who are not present. Share with others that they too benefit, Insha-Allah."*

There were many weeks when mureeds were fortunate to have had a programme daily after the Isha Salaah, in addition to the scheduled programmes. This gave many the golden opportunity to spend time in the company of such a great personality.

- 8.) Hazrat Maulana would also have special Tarbiyyah lessons at the Madrasah for the students. Many other sisters would also attend these lessons. Alhamdulillah, in the latter part of Maulana's life, the students were fortunate to have Hazrat Maulana do the Tafseer of Surah An-Nisaa and Surah Yusuf. Those lessons are available on the website yunuspatel.co.za.
- 9.) Hazrat Maulana was invited to have programmes in various towns and cities in South Africa and was often invited to visit other countries on lecture tours.

Wherever Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) travelled, he avoided imposing any expense on the host concerning travel costs. Although the invitations were extended by others, Hazrat Maulana (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) was extremely particular in this regard and would cover those expenses from his side. He would also not impose on others that they should make any special arrangements for him with regard to accommodation, food, transport, etc.; such was his humility, simplicity and Istighnaa – setting an excellent and noble example.

Alhamdulillah, those who attended the programmes were from diverse backgrounds, young and old, black and white,

local and foreign brothers. Hazrat Maulana's gracious nature drew individuals from all walks of life.

Alhamdulillah, a great number of youth would eagerly attend the programmes. Youth, who were caught in a web of hedonism and accustomed to a fast and un-Islamic way of life, were touched by Hazrat Maulana's programmes and were inspired to change their lives completely. Many, who were involved in all kinds of sins and frequenting vice dens, were so deeply affected by Hazrat Maulana's advice that they were thereafter found in the Masjid, dressed according to the Sunnah and totally committed in the effort to obey Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam*. Many others, who were steeped in cultural practices and traditions, which have no affiliation with Islam, discarded their un-Islamic practices after attending these programmes.

The deep love for Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam*, which was manifest in the speech, actions, and character of Hazrat Maulana, had an undeniable effect on the hearts of people. Alhamdulillah, so many aligned their lives with the Sunnah by keeping company with Maulana.

RAMADAAN PROGRAMMES

Ramadaan was eagerly anticipated by Hazrat Maulana. Preparations commenced well in advance in order to welcome the beautiful month and accommodate the many guests who would arrive with the purpose of spending the time with Hazrat Maulana and benefiting from his company. Guests were from different parts of South Africa and many were from other countries.

Hazrat Maulana's concern and compassion were even more apparent in the month of Ramadaan. Despite weak health, the programmes increased. There was a programme after every Salaah besides Maghrib. In addition, in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadaan, lengthy late-night programmes were held, thereby keeping all constructively occupied in Ibaadaat. Hazrat Maulana's concern was that not a moment be lost during the precious month of Ramadaan. He would make Dua that each Ramadaan be the "mother of all Ramadaans" – which meant that it be the best Ramadaan in every way.

The programme after Fajr, in Ramadaan, was about twenty minutes and Maulana would briefly explain some Ayah, Hadith, Masnoon Dua, or address some other pertinent matter. The programme after Zuhr generally entailed some discussion related to the reformation of the heart and soul.

Hazrat Maulana initiated the recitation of Qur'aan Shareef by various Huffaaz daily after the Asr Salaah. Each Hafiz recited a part of the chapter (Juz) of the Qur'aan Shareef. Those who remained for the session would follow the recitation. Thus, one Khatam was completed in this manner during the Asr sessions every Ramadaan. Often, Hazrat Maulana would be one of the reciters. After the recitation of Qur'aan Shareef, Maulana would share some concise advice and spend a few minutes in Zikrullah and Dua before Iftaar (breaking fast).

After Taraweeh, Hazrat Maulana would have a programme for about 20 – 30 minutes. This session would usually include a Naat shareef, the poetry of the Ahlullah or 'Muraqabah-e-Maut (remembrance of death).

Hazrat Maulana would exert himself in the last ten nights, especially the odd nights, increasing the programmes, having sessions for Zikrullah, Surah Yaseen, Surah Al-Mulk and Surah As-Sajdah, and long, heart-rending Duas. Alhamdulillah, the time was well occupied in Ibaadaat and offered a wonderful training for all, teaching us how to make the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala, how to ask of Allah Ta'ala, how to manage our time and so forth.

THE ODD NIGHTS | AN ANALOGY

Hazrat Maulana described the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadaan as “flights”. Hazrat Maulana would say: *“Each odd night offers us a “flight” to connect with Allah Ta’ala. Even if the entire month may have passed in negligence, Allah Ta’ala in His Infinite Mercy gives us these odd nights to make amends and connect with Him. If a person wants to make Hajj, there are many flights that leave for the Haramain Shareefain, but he will have to board one of them. Similarly, if we want to connect with Allah Ta’ala and gain His Forgiveness, we will have to board these flights on the odd nights of Ramadaan – the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th night. Don’t miss out on the great bounties to be found in these nights – of forgiveness, mercy and fulfilment of Duas.”*

I’TIKAAF | AN ANALOGY

Hazrat Maulana would give a beautiful example to those in I’tikaaf:

“When a car has been badly smashed and damaged, it is taken to the panel-beater. It is repaired using different skills until it is back in shape and in its pre-accident condition. The procedure involves removing, repairing and replacing damaged parts, spray painting, etc. Special equipment is also used. After the hammering, welding and so forth, the car is in show-room

condition. However, the car is not meant to remain at the panel beater; it is to be driven out on the roads.

Similarly, we come into I'tikaaf with our spiritual hearts smashed and damaged with sins. The I'tikaaf - as well as our time at the Khanqah, in Jamaat or Hajj - is that opportunity to panel-beat the heart, back into its original sound and pure state. The time in I'tikaaf gives us the opportunity to make sincere Taubah and engage in various Ibaadaat to get back into our pre-accident condition. However, we will not be staying in the Masjid, in I'tikaaf, all year round. We will have to leave, go back to our families, go out and do our work of dunya as well. Insha-Allah, with the correct intention and effort, we will leave the I'tikaaf with a heart which is in a sound and strong condition, Insha-Allah.

We should also keep in mind that no one sends his car for panel-beating and intends that the moment he drives it outside, he will smash his car again. He will take great precaution after his first experience. Similarly, we will take more precaution that we do not commit sins and damage the heart again!"

AN EXPERIENCE OF LAYLATUL QADR

In Ramadaan 1417, on the night of the 27th, after the Taraweeh Salaah, Hazrat Maulana (Rahmatullahi 'alayh) led the Witr Salaah. In the second Rakaat, there was an apparent change in Hazrat Maulana's tone during the

Qira'ah. After the Salaah was a short break of fifteen minutes before the first session programme.

On commencement of the programme, Hazrat Maulana mentioned that some of the brothers had met him after the Salaah, and had mentioned that during the Witr Salaah, in the second Rakaat, they could hear voices, saying: "As-Salaamu 'alaikum ... As-Salaamu 'alaikum ... As-Salaamu 'alaikum..." Hazrat Maulana said: *"This servant of Allah Ta'ala also heard Salaam being made."*

Later, Hazrat Maulana mentioned that a different kind of Noor could be perceived and said: *"Allah Ta'ala is showing us that even in these times, these experiences are not beyond reach if we make a little effort. Despite us being so sinful and unworthy, Allah Ta'ala blesses us with these gifts also."*

In the Tafseer, Ma'ariful Qur'aan, it is stated from Hazrat Ibn Abbas (Radhiyallahu anhu) that angels descend in the leadership of Hazrat Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) and greet every Believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork.

Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam said: *"On the Night of Power, the Angel Jibra'eel (Alayhis Salaam) descends upon the earth with a group of angels, praying for blessings on every*

*servant of Allah Ta'ala whom they see in worship, standing or sitting and engrossed in Allah Ta'ala's praise..."*⁵

It is reported that the angels spread forth, visiting every house, whether large or small, whether in the jungle or on a ship, wherein a Believer lives. It is further mentioned by Mufasssireen that on the night of Qadr the angels give greetings of peace to the people in the Masaajid until the coming of dawn.

⁵ Shu'abal Imaan

BRIEF LIFE SKETCH

BORN:

13 Safar 1365

17 January 1946

DEMISE:

11 Sha'baan 1432

12 July 2011

PLACE OF BIRTH:

Stanger, South Africa

FATHER:

Haji Yusuf Patel

Haji Yusuf Patel (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had commenced the 'Aalim Course in Rander, India. He studied during the time that Hazrat Maulana Abdul Haq Omarjee (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) was a student there. However, he had to return to South Africa to assist the family when his father became ill. He left after the third year of the 'Aalim course and thus did not complete the course.

Haji Yusuf Patel was also instrumental in the establishment of the work of Tabligh in South Africa.

STUDIES:

Darul Uloom Deoband

TEACHERS:

Shaykhul Hadith, Hazrat Maulana Fakhruddin Sahib
(*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

Hazrat Maulana Fakhrul Hasan (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

Hazrat Maulana Mirajul Haq (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

Maulana Haamid Mia Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

FIRST APPOINTMENT AS IMAM:

1969, Mooi River

SECRETARY AND PRESIDENT OF JAMI'ATUL ULAMA KZN:

1973 – 2004

ESTABLISHED MADRASATUS SAWLEHAAT:

1982

ESTABLISHED AT-TAQWA BOYS MADRASAH:

2003

BAY'AT TO:

Shaykhul Hadith, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya
(*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib
(*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*)

KHILAFAT FROM:

Hazrat Mufti Mahmood-Hasan Gangohi (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*)

Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib
(*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*)

BURIED:

Jannatul Mu’alla, Makkah Mukarramah

Chapter Two

INTERVIEW WITH
HAZRAT MAULANA YUNUS PATEL SAHIB
(RAHMATULLAHI 'ALAYH)
WITH ADDITIONS

1. EARLY YEARS

I was born and brought up in Stanger. It was in the 1950s that I commenced my schooling. Unfortunately, the beginning was at a missionary school.

Grade one or Class one began in an environment and atmosphere of Christian ethos. We attended the school because we did not get a place in the other schools at that time. There were no alternate facilities and the people did not have the same apprehensions and fears as we have today – of the various fitnahs.

We were little children with a uniform of khaki shirts and shorts and our sling-bags. We would walk almost a mile to the mission school. Every Friday, the school would have Christian missionaries visiting us. They would sing hymns and Jesus Christ songs and everything else that is associated with Christianity.

We were young and very impressionable, and as is wont with children: Whatever you listen to, you also repeat. ...We would go back home and sing those same hymns

sometimes. On one occasion, my father happened to overhear us. He was shocked. His reaction was: *What is all of this?!*

After that eye-opener, we were taken out from the mission school and arrangements were made to move to another school in Stanger. I continued my studies right up until Std. 9 (Grade 11) in Stanger.

2. HIGH SCHOOL

My high school studies were at the Stanger High School and I obtained a very good pass rate when it came to the primary level. Alhamdulillah, it was always first or second. Even in Std. 7 and 8 (Grade 9 and 10), the pass rate continued to be good. ...Then, I failed Std 9.

I don't know whether it was some kind of quota system applied to the examinations because there were about ninety of us in Std. 9 and they failed sixty of us. At that time, they wanted only a certain number to get into matric (Grade 12) and proceed with further studies.

Of course, there was a big hubbub and much objection. Most of the parents were naturally very upset because they anticipated passes. And Alhamdulillah, our answers to the

questions, in our own opinion, were good enough for a pass mark. However, sixty were failed.

It was really, really upsetting and very disappointing and I just lost all interest. I did not want to go back to school; otherwise, my parents had planned that after I complete my matric, I would proceed to become a teacher, doctor or go into some other profession due to the good pass rates that I used to get.

In any case, that failure was a stepping stone to bounties from Allah Ta'ala of a different kind. Outwardly there was failure, but had I not failed, I would not have gone in the direction of Deen and Deeni education. When Allah Ta'ala intends for something, He changes the course of one's direction.

3. PARENTS

Our early schooling went together with our Madrasah education. Our parents were really very concerned about giving us a good Islamic education and upbringing. Alhamdulillah, they were very pious and dedicated.

In those days, the elders had a lot of Khauf-e-Khuda (Fear of Allah Ta'ala). They may not have had that much of

education and knowledge as we have in these days, but they had great concern for Deen. ...Alhamdulillah, these days, our children grow up with so many opportunities and so much exposure to the knowledge of Deen. Alhamdulillah, there are now no shortages of Madaaris, Makaatib, etc. in South Africa. Every person is presented with opportunities to acquire Ilm-e-Deen. There is just no excuse anymore.

Be that as it may, in those days, the senior people may not have had that much of knowledge as we have – but they had Taqwa in them; they had Khauf-e-Khuda, Muhabbat of Allah Ta’ala and His Nabi Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam. They were regular and punctual with their Salaah, concerned that their children must not do anything which is un-Islamic and displeasing to Allah Ta’ala. They tried in their own way to give us a very good upbringing. ...Of course, the influences at the schools were also prevalent. However, there were no cell-phones, television, internet and other technology, as available now. As such, there was not much corruption in the youth, as we have today.

Alhamdulillah, my fond memories of childhood are of very loving parents who were also firm and strict. They were loving, caring and compassionate – so we were fortunate enough to have a good and wholesome upbringing.

4. ISLAMIC STUDIES

Alhamdulillah, in those early years, the Madrasah education was very good. We had a Munshi Sahib (Munshi Moosajee (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) at the Maktab, and we have fond memories of him – especially the memory of his white suit worn on Jumu’ah.

He would test us and take revision of our sabaq, and in those days, it was not giving “*six of the best*”, but “*as many of the best*” – but Alhamdulillah, he was compassionate and affectionate, and we are truly indebted to him for whatever we learnt then. He used to have a lot of liking for me. ...His children are still in Stanger.

We also had Maulana Moosa Amejee (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) teach us. Maulana’s children are presently in Benoni and other places. There is Maulana Qaasim and others as well. He too was disciplined and firm – but all of our teachers gave us the best in those days. ...I think, compared to many other towns, Stanger was reputed to have a good Maktab education.

5. FIRST MEETING WITH HAJI PADIA (RA)

After the failure in Std 9 (Grade 11), many students requested a re-mark of the papers. I was also encouraged to go back to school. It was the December holiday when we received our results ... but that failure had made me become extremely despondent. It disturbed me so much that I did not want to go back, even though sixty out of ninety students had failed.

During the holiday, I came to Durban. There was a notice on the Grey Street Masjid board that Hazrat Maulana Haji Ghulam Muhammad Padia Sahib had returned from overseas after spending his four months and would be giving a talk at the Masjid, the same day. ...That was to unfold into something very eventful and totally un-anticipated for me.

In those days, there were hardly any visitors coming from overseas. Now, Alhamdulillah, we have so many 'Ulama visiting South Africa – many Mashaa'ikh, scholars, professors and lecturers. At that time, if we just heard that an 'Aalim was coming to our country, it was something momentous and was important news for the Muslim community.

Although Haji Bhai Padia Sahib was not an ‘Aalim, the notice on the board read: ‘Hazrat Maulana...’. Of course, there is no doubt that he was very pious, very committed, and I admired many of his qualities.

The Grey Street Masjid was packed to capacity. I was also present for the talk. Haji Bhai Padia (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) had a stammer in his voice. He was trying to explain and introduce this work of Tabligh for the first time in South Africa. As he tried to explain, it appeared as if no one really understood what he was saying – because there was no Jamaat movement in the country at that time. He finally asked: *“Is there anyone to assist and help me in this work?”*

He looked around. No one showed any interest. Then his father-in-law and an elderly person stood up. I was a young person of about seventeen, and being there, part of the audience, and having observed him thus far, it came to my mind: *Here is a person; he has come from overseas and he seems to be asking for some kind of help.*

He spoke in Urdu, so I did not fully understand what he was calling towards. It was just that feeling: *Here is someone who is earnestly seeking some kind of help in some kind of work, so I should not hesitate. I should at least offer him some kind of support.*

I raised my hand and got up. Everyone was extremely surprised that a youngster had responded to the call of Haji Sahib. What would someone so young be able to do? In fact, they started asking me: *“What kind of help are you going to give him?”*

I said: *“I don’t know. I am going to ask him what he expects.”*

Haji Bhai Padia (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) said: *“Masha-Allah,”* and gave me Duas.

After that incident – and it is a long story – but we thereafter went to Umzinto, which was his hometown. My marhoom grandfather resided in Umzinto – that is, the father of Chota Mota. Chota Mota is well-known and was running Da’watul Haq in Umzinto. His father was my maternal grandfather. I thus accompanied Haji Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*).

Haji Sahib gave a short talk there. He thereafter mentioned to me that he would be sleeping in the Masjid. That was very surprising. ...In those days, we only heard that a person slept in the Masjid in the month of Ramadaan – and it would generally be one elderly person – or maximum two, sitting for I’tikaaf, in a year, in the Natal region. It was like a major effort to get someone to sit in the Masjid even for the Ramadaan I’tikaaf.

When he mentioned his intention of staying in the Masjid, and it was out of Ramadaan, I found that surprising and strange. I asked my grandfather: *“Is this man going to sleep alone in the Masjid?”*

He said: *“Yes.”*

Thinking that it would be inconsiderate to leave him alone, I said: *“Someone should give him company. I will also spend the night in the Masjid.”* ...My grandfather gave me some bedding and I went back to the Masjid. Haji Sahib was very happy.

That night happened to be extremely windy. After the Isha Salaah, around 10 or 11 o’ clock, when the lights were switched off, there was total darkness. The darkness coupled with the strong wind blowing caused the windows to rattle and other sounds to be heard. There was no way of sleeping. Believe me, I thought Jinnaat were entering the Masjid from different places, and I was frightened.

6. DUA OF HAJI SAHIB (RA)

At about half past two, Haji Sahib got up to perform Salaah. I did not know much about Tahajjud Salaah. I just felt at ease that he was awake... although I pretended to be asleep.

I have not seen anyone cry in Dua like he did. He cried and he cried, and he cried for almost 2 – 2 ½ hours in Dua. He was making Dua in Gujarati, which I understood. He was praying for us ... that Allah Ta’ala open the doors for people of learning and for the Mashaa’ikh to come into South Africa, for the Jamaat work to spread here, and Dua for the Ummah at large. Anything you can think of, and he was begging and asking of Allah Ta’ala. In that Dua, he also made a lot of Dua: *“Ya Allah, this youngster who is with me, accept him also for this work...”*

I kept saying: *“Aameen, Aameen.”*

After he completed his Dua, he saw that I was awake and told me to make wudhu and read two or four Rakaats of Salaah. And that was the starting point. Thereafter, Haji Bhai Padia commenced this work of Tabligh.

7. COMMENCEMENT OF THE WORK OF TABLIGH

From Umzinto, we came to Durban. Reaching our destination meant catching a bus or taking a taxi at times. It is a long story. ...From Durban, we proceeded to Pietermaritzburg. There, we visited a few ‘Ulama. They

asked Haji Bhai Padia (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh): “What do you intend to do? Are you an ‘Aalim?”

He said: “No.”

They asked me: “What are you going to do?”

I said: “I don’t know. I’m with him. I’m learning.”

They thought that we were wasting our time.

8. MAIDEN SPEECH

We then proceeded to Estcourt. There was no wasting time with Haji Bhai Padia (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh). En-route, Haji Bhai Padia (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) taught me the six points.⁶ When we reached Estcourt and we prepared to introduce this work to the people, Haji Bhai Padia (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) instructed me to give the bayaan⁷ on the six points.

I told him: “Haji Sahib, I don’t know the six points properly. I’ve never given a talk in my life. I’m only seventeen. What can I say?”

⁶ The Six fundamental qualities that were common in the lives of the Sahabah (Radhiyallahu ‘anhum). If these qualities are genuinely adopted and practiced upon, it becomes very easy to practice on the rest of Deen. The six points are: Imaan, Salaah, Ilm & Zikr, Respect and honour of every Muslim, Sincerity of intentions and spending time in the path of Allah Ta’ala.

⁷ Bayaan: talk

He said: *‘Read Durood Shareef and start.’*

That was my first bayaan – my maiden speech. I think the six points took me about six minutes, and if you had listened to the bayaan, you would have laughed. After the third point, I asked: *“Haji Sahib, what’s the fourth one?”* On being told the fourth point, I repeated the same to the audience.

I then asked: *“What’s the fifth one?”* ...When told, I relayed the same to the audience, and then the sixth point – and that was my maiden speech.

From there, we went to Ladysmith and further on, to Johannesburg, where we visited a few people. In Johannesburg, we met Hazrat Mufti Sanjalwi (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*), who gave us a warm welcome, good advice and a lot of Dua. In that manner, we slowly covered the country, coming back to Durban, going back to his hometown and going out again to Cape Town.

We also went to Stanger. In the Masjid there, Haji Bhai Padia (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) instructed me: *‘Explain the aadaab of sleeping.’*

I recall very clearly that while I was explaining the aadaab of sleeping, I went flat onto the ground to show the

congregation how to sleep. From the reactions of the brothers, they were worried that I fell sick or had left this world. Someone asked: *‘What happened?’*

I then said: *‘Don’t worry, nothing happened. I am just explaining how you must sleep.’*

...Generally, no one was interested but Haji Sahib did not lose heart; he did not give up hope; he continued and persevered. His crying and Duas were constant and those were the seeds which germinated, and today, we have a beautiful tree bearing so many fruits.

That was the actual commencement of the work of Tabligh in South Africa and since then thousands have participated in this field of Deen – Alhamdulillah.

Thereafter, Haji Bhai Padia (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) said: *“You should go for studies and become an ‘Aalim.”*

I said to him: *‘You will have to speak to my father.’*

He spoke to my father, who then spoke to my grandfather and that was how I ended up in Darul Uloom Deoband in April 1963. ...There, we spent seven years and Alhamdulillah, learnt a little and returned⁸.

⁸ Out of humility, Hazrat Maulana used this expression, whereas he completed the entire Aalim-Fadhil course at the world-renowned Darul Uloom Deoband.

9. DARUL ULOOM DEOBAND

In those days, it took twenty-one days to reach India by ship and it was not easy. The days in Darul Uloom Deoband were also tough. Those who have studied there – the students of that era – know how difficult it was. ...The toilets were open-air toilets; then the mosquitoes, the bugs, the flies, the fleas. There were no facilities as there are now. Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala carried us through those days.

In 1963, there were about fifty-five of us who left from South Africa for Deoband. However, in our final year, of the fifty-five, we were about seven who were left in Darul Uloom Deoband. A few went to some other institutions; others returned home because of sickness and the difficulties that were faced there, in those days.

In our final year at Deoband: After Fajr, we would prepare for class. Classes would commence at 6 a.m. until 12 p.m. and continued after Zuhr, from 2 p.m. Tirmidhi Shareef was taught after Asr and lessons continued even after Maghrib. From 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. Bukhari Shareef was taught by Hazrat Maulana Fakhruddin (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*). Hazrat would also teach us for three hours in the morning.

10. ASAATIZA

The ‘Ulama of that era were senior in age and were of that group who were outstanding and brilliant in every field that one can think of – whether it was Tafseer, Hadith Shareef, Fiqh or Jurisprudence, or whether it was philosophy or anything else. They were Ulama par excellence ... like Hazrat Allamah Ibraheem Balyawi (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh). Hazrat Qari Tayyib Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) used to say: *“If I have any kind of a problem, I just go to him. Alhamdulillah, he solves the problem in a few seconds or minutes.”*

Allah Ta’ala’s Fadhl, we commenced our studies with pious and specially-gifted Asaatiza and ‘Ulama.

In our final year, the Shaykhul Hadith was Shaykh Fakhruddin (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) and he could be described as the last of the chain of great Mashaa`ikh that we had, with regard to Bukhari Shareef teaching in Darul Uloom Deoband. Of course, we had many thereafter, but he was one of those brilliant and outstanding ‘Ulama. He was like an angel on earth.

He was ninety years of age. ...Believe me, he was not even obligated to teach as he would do - in the morning, evening

or afternoon. In our country, we would say that he was in the 'pension age'. Despite the age of 90, he would sit with folded legs on the platform and place his hand on the side of his head.

We were three hundred and thirteen students - like the number of Badr, Alhamdulillah. The lesson was three hours in the morning. He used to teach for three hours at a stretch, in one posture, without any movement. We used to move backwards and forwards and change our sitting positions - but he would be still.

At night, during the winter months, he would teach again, from 8 o'clock until midnight. It may be difficult for people today to believe, but that was the duration of those lessons - from 8 o'clock until midnight ... four solid hours, sitting in one position, teaching Bukhari Shareef at the age of 90+. Subhanallah!

When we would bring him for the lesson in a wheelchair, we used to think: *What is he going to teach today? He is so old.* But when he sat and when he spoke, his voice was crystal clear, as if a young person was speaking. His knowledge flowed like water and he would refer to various Hadith Kitaabs and Tafaseer without any reference books in front of him. At the end of the four hours, when there was just

one-minute left, without looking at the clock, he would say:
“Molvi Sahib, I am now tired.”

We were sitting right in front of him with our Kitaabs. We would then say: *“Hazrat, it is already midnight.”*

He would say: *“Ach-cha ...”* He used to tire at the exact time when the lesson was over. Allah Ta’ala had blessed him with great Roohani and spiritual strength.

11. MEMORY OF SHAYKHUL HADITH

As for his memory: He was extraordinary in the knowledge he had retained. As said, he used to speak for those four hours without any references in front of him, and would just continue effortlessly and proficiently – something extremely remarkable. It would be rare to come across someone so knowledgeable, resourceful and expertly in this day and age.

I recall on one occasion when he was unsure of an Ayah of the Qur’aan Shareef and then corrected himself. Thereupon, he said to us: *“Not to boast and not out of pride – but just to give you some encouragement. I memorised the Qur’aan Shareef in twenty-eight days, Alhamdulillah.”*

He went on to relate to us that his father was performing the Taraweeh in a certain place and passed away on the first of Ramadaan. Due to the situation and the need for someone to continue with the Taraweeh, he commenced memorising the Qur`aan Shareef – by memorising one Para in the morning and reciting the same at night, in the Taraweeh. He said to us: *“I already knew two Paras. Alhamdulillah, in twenty-eight days I memorised the Qur`aan Shareef. And I memorised Surah Yusuf in twenty minutes.”*

On listening to that, I said: *“Hazrat, it takes us about thirty minutes to read it, looking inside.”*

That was the kind of outstanding and unique personality we had for our Bukhari Shareef lessons, and we were fortunate to have been recipients of Hazrat Maulana’s Duas and Muhabbat.

12. KINDNESS

Once, during my final year, I fell very sick. I had such high fever that I could not attend the Bukhari Shareef lessons. It was a very rare occasion to miss lessons. Otherwise, I tried to be punctual in attending. Alhamdulillah, I used to always sit in front of the Shaykh during lessons and would also read the Ibaarat (text of Ahadith).

Hazrat Maulana Fakhruddin Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) enquired from the students about my absence. When he was informed, Hazrat arranged to visit me and that too, with the students. Someone quickly came to tell me that Hazrat was especially coming to visit me since I was sick, with a group of two hundred students! Allah Ta'ala had put such Muhabbat in the hearts of the Asaatiza.

These are my assets: Their Duas.

13. HUMILITY OF SHAYKHUL HADITH

Alhamdulillah, I had the opportunity of eating with Hazrat Maulana Fakhruddin Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) many, many times. It was his practice on Thursdays to invite the senior Asaatiza of the institution. They would share their experiences and if there was anything which needed to be discussed with regard to the education and Madrasah, it would be discussed. Alhamdulillah, I was fortunate to also have been present. ...Hazrat Maulana would have plain gravy, which he dipped his bread in. He would take just a few pieces in his mouth and with that much eaten as a meal, he would teach for three to four hours at a stretch.

One day, I said to him: *“Hazrat, you do not look too well today.”* This was said because we wanted some time off. We were getting tired. I said: *“The Madrasah does not impose upon you to teach this much and you are considered to be retired.”*

He responded, and his words are still clear and resounding in my mind: *“Molvi Sahib, we are basically taking this salary because there is a need, but all this that I am doing is dunya.”*

That was his Tawaadhu and humility, his Taqwa and piety. That was his opinion of himself, whereas he was serving the Deen with such Ikhlāas, such sincerity. ...It offers food for thought and deep reflection for all of us serving Deen. It was the Suhbat and the company of such people that produced those ‘Ulama, at that time, who are serving the Deen. May Allah Ta’ala grant him and all our Asaatiza the best of rewards for having taught us, guided us and inspired us. Aameen.

14. RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA

When I completed my studies at Darul Uloom Deoband, I passed another six to eight months going from place to place in India and then returned in 1969.

Returning home to South Africa held its tests and challenges. At that time, the salary was such that a person could not survive on such a meagre amount. It was due to this reason that many went into business. It was very sad and unfortunate, but this is why we lost a lot of ‘Ulama.

In those days, the attitude was: *Now that they have returned, they must live a life in a shack or a hut (or something like that) and survive. ...*As if those ‘Ulama did not have wives, did not have children and family responsibilities. The salaries were very, very low. As a result, many ‘Ulama went into different fields.

This same Shaykh Fakhruddin Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*), who I have been talking about, gave me priceless advice.

15. ADVICE

When leaving, I asked: *“Hazrat, any advice now that I am going back to South Africa?”*

He responded: *“Keep Allah Ta’ala in front of you and keep the dunya and material things behind you. Insha-Allah, you will find that you will get Allah Ta’ala in your life and dunya will follow. Your Rizq (sustenance) is Muqaddar. It will follow you.”*

That advice sunk into my heart and mind. I therefore decided that whatever happens, I must serve the Deen of Allah Ta'ala in whichever way possible. However, there were to be lots of hiccups as well as challenges encountered during the journey.

16. IN SOUTH AFRICA

There was a little town in Northern Natal. They did not have anyone to perform the Taraweeh Salaah during the month of Ramadaan, nor did they have anyone to teach in the Maktab which had been established there. The person who was teaching there had suddenly left, and no one was really interested in serving in the town because it was extremely cold in the winters; the salary was about R90, and the living conditions were not as one would have liked. In the other towns and in other places, others were offering better salaries and better accommodation.

The Transvaal, as it was known at that time, was much more advanced. I did go there to assist them when a family member had requested. Alhamdulillah, they took a liking to me and they were insistent that I should teach there. However, taking a survey of the area, I found that from Pietermaritzburg up until Newcastle – believe me, there was not one ‘Aalim in the region.

Pietermaritzburg had two or three ‘Ulama – but beyond that, whether it was Howick, Mooi River, Estcourt, Weenen, Greytown, Dundee and other towns, no ‘Ulama were to be found. Far off, in Newcastle, we had one ‘Aalim – Hazrat Maulana Qaasim Sema – who was doing sterling work. Maulana Abdur-Razzaaq had not as yet returned to Ladysmith. Alhamdulillah, there were many others who were doing the work of Deen in other parts of Natal. I thus decided that was the area I should “adopt”, as we would say. Subsequently, I went to Mooi River.

17. FIRST TEACHING POST

There, in Mooi River, we also ran a kind of ‘mobile’ Madrasa. It was a small town and there were about ten or twelve children. We would get them into a combi and take them to Nottingham Road, Rosetta, Greytown – here, there, and wherever Allah Ta’ala took some khidmat. I would try to establish some Madrasa, do a little khidmat of Deen – and that is how we continued.

It was really, really tough. ...And I just say out of Shukr to Allah Ta’ala and as an encouragement for others, that we must never lose hope. Since the Shaykh had said that dunya would follow, I was wondering: *When will the difficult time*

pass? ...The salary was very meagre. At the same time, I was being offered R800 from Johannesburg, from Kerk street, and one or two other places. Someone even offered R1000, together with a house, electricity, water and everything else.

And in Mooi River, with R90, I had to pay R10 towards the lights and water, and then there were other expenses. Of course, things were cheap then. ...Allah Ta'ala reward my wife. She used to burn the midnight oil, sewing some dresses and garments to assist in keeping the 'fire burning'.

When other offers came, I would think: *Am I going to leave this place and this area just so that I get a little more money? What about the neglect that could set in? What about the Islamic education needed in these areas?*

Despite the odds, I assured the people of the town: 'You do not have to worry. People can make me any kind of offer but I will not leave here unless it is for more khidmat of Deen or for health reasons.' – because it was extremely cold in that region.

18. JAMI'ATUL 'ULAMA

Alhamdulillah, I joined the Jami'at around that time. Within the first or second year, I was appointed the assistant

secretary of the Jami'at with Hazrat Maulana Qaasim Sema (Rahmatullahi 'alayh). A few years later, I was the joint secretary, then vice president and thereafter president.

When I was the joint secretary, Maulana Ansari (Rahmatullahi 'alayh) from Durban, who was a reputable 'Aalim, insisted I come to Durban. We had decided on opening an office in Durban. I still recall him saying: *'How long are you going to remain there?'*

Before moving to Durban, I spent about 1 - 1 ½ years in Escourt. From there, I came to Durban. ...That was the beginning of another chapter. It is sometimes hard to believe how those early days passed, but Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala made us pass those days with respect.

Many a time, in the early part of the morning, we would go to the national highway and hitch a lift to Durban. We could not afford a car. For four and a half years, I just could not afford a car. ...I would hold the hand of one child, and the wife would carry the other. We would go to the national highway and hitch a lift to Durban. From Durban, we would take a taxi and go to Stanger – that is how we used to make our way.

Alhamdulillah, we did not beg of anyone. We did not stretch our hands. Allah Ta'ala gave respect and Allah Ta'ala has now provided so much, so much, that we cannot make enough Shukr.

In those years, there was safety and security. There was no fear. We would leave our home, in Mooi River, for four or five weeks in December and that home was on the main street. Now, the conditions have changed so much.

19. FIRST JUMU'AH

My first Jumu'ah was quite an interesting experience. I returned from India after about four years of studies. In those days, there was no speedy communication, as we have today, with the telephone and cell-phones, that you can make calls every day – to your parents, your family members and friends. ...When in India, if a person made one or two calls in the two or three years that he was there, his parents would be fortunate.

It was in 1963 when I left South Africa for Darul Uloom Deoband. The first time I returned home was after four years – for a holiday of about two months. ...For four years I had not seen my parents and they had not seen me. Many family members had passed away. Nikahs had taken place,

children were born and there were many other happenings in those four years. There was no ease in communication whereby we could be informed of all those happenings.

We would write letters – and a letter would take about twenty-one or twenty-two days to reach Durban – that is, if you got the ship before departure. There were two ships making this trip: The Kampala and the Karanja. When the ship left Bombay, it took about twenty-two days to arrive in Durban. That meant that a letter would take about thirty days to reach our parents – again, if the letter reached the ship in time.

If we missed the ship, that meant that it would be after two months before we would receive a letter from our parents or a letter would reach them. ...That was the kind of Sabr (patience) we had to adopt, and it was something that we became accustomed to after some time.

Almost four years after my departure to study at Darul Uloom Deoband, I returned to South Africa. We did not have Darul Uloom Azaadville or Zakariyya or Newcastle or the many Darul Ulooms that we have now. We did not have the number of Madaaris, Makaatib and Masaajid as in this present day. India was an important seat of Islamic learning. If a person returned from some institution in India, the people took it for granted that the person was

already a qualified 'Aalim. As soon as he returned, he was expected to read Qira'ah, give the Khutbah, lead the Salaah and give bayaans – everywhere.

The people would repeatedly request: “*Maulana, some bayaan, some nasihah...*” - some this, some that, whereas we had studied for only three years and had little experience.

I knew that would happen – because that is what happened when a student returned to South Africa. I was not much of a speaker but I prepared three or four bayaans. I prepared them well, memorised them - like how we have little children by-hearting for their Jalsas. Alhamdulillah, those talks were well prepared, from the Qur'aan Shareef and Ahadith, of about half an hour or 45 minutes each.

As soon as I arrived, the Imam – Maulana Moosa – if I recall correctly, requested that I give a bayaan for the first Jumu'ah. Maulana Aadam Bhayat was there and other elderly and senior people sat to listen also. That was the first talk given. About two nights later, I was requested to give another talk, and a few nights later, another bayaan. ...My stock of three was over, so I packed my bags and I said to them that I am going to meet my uncle and visit some family members, and left Stanger.

When I reached the next destination, there was an immediate request for a bayaan. As had happened in Stanger, I gave the first one, the second one, and before the third could be given, I packed my bag and I went to another place. I went ‘touring’ in this manner. Then I got back to Stanger, spent a few days and it was time to return to India.

Those were the first few bayaans which were given. I was just 20 / 21. May Allah Ta’ala forgive me – there was no Ikhlaas in anything. It was nothing but show business, riyaa. ...You just want to impress and give some kind of a powerful bayaan so that the people express their admiration with: “Wah Wah...” and as soon as that was finished, I disappeared.

This is why we need the Suhbat of the Mashaa’ikh. Our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) once mentioned the advice of Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*). The great Shaykh addressed the ‘Ulama and said: “O ‘Ulama! Do not ascend the mimbar immediately after completing your studies. Spend some time in the company of a righteous Shaykh and learn Ikhlaas! Then, the mimbar will be yours. When there is Ikhlaas, you will benefit the people. If not, very little or no benefit at all will be taken.”

All our Akaabir were affiliated to a Shaykh-e-Kaamil. This process of Islaah and Tazkiyah is essential no matter who you are or what qualifications you have. It is in the company of the Auliya Allah that a person learns and acquires Ikhlaas. Their hearts are reservoirs of Ikhlaas. We should humble and avail ourselves of their company⁹.

...Nonetheless, that was the starting point.

20. MANAGING COMMITMENTS

When asked how Hazrat Maulana was able to undertake so much of Khidmat...

In all honesty, the work of Deen is not within my capability. It is not in my capacity. I cannot do justice. ...I was really wanting to be doing something quietly, somewhere where there is no popularity, no name and fame. ...But if Allah Ta'ala makes it such, and takes some khidmat, He does so in the manner He wishes and creates the asbaab (means) as well.

⁹ Hazrat Maulana would travel to Karachi every year; sometimes twice in a year to spend time at the Khanqah Imdadiyya Ashrafiyya, in the Suhbat of Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib (Rahmatullahi 'alayh).

And truly, it is sometimes very, very taxing – especially now, with the emails and the letters coming from different parts of the country and even other parts of the world. The volume is overwhelming at times. Then we have the responsibilities of the Masjid, the Madrasah, social and welfare cases, and we are continuously dealing with problems: domestic disputes, inheritance problems, drug problems and so forth.

I cannot really say that I am doing anything because I know it is not within my capacity. It is not my capability and not something within my power to do. ...And especially being a heart patient, going through the bypass and a number of heart attacks, as well as other ailments. It is clearly only Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl, His Ihsaan, His Karam. I cannot make enough Shukr – even if I have to rub my forehead on the ground until Qiyamah, it will be inadequate and will never be enough before the Kindness of Allah Ta'ala.

21. FAMILY

When asked about family:

Alhamdulillah, I have three children: two daughters and one son. Alhamdulillah, my son completed his Hifz and thereafter I sent him for the 'Aalim course. He did two years

and thereafter went to Pakistan, returned home and married. He has three children.

My two daughters are also married. One resides in Port Elizabeth, and has three daughters and twin sons. The other daughter is married to Maulana Naeem Motala – who is a very good ‘Aalim and who runs a boys’ Darul Uloom – Madrasah Hameediyah. Alhamdulillah, all are well settled and may Allah Ta’ala grant them Istiqaamat on Deen and give them progress in both worlds.

22. NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

One of the interesting experiences of my first heart attack was that it was on the eve of the 10th of Muharram. I was giving a talk on the virtues of the Day of Aashura. After commencing the talk, about fifteen or twenty minutes later, I experienced a very, very sharp pain. ...And it was as if those were truly the last moments of my life.

The Masjid was full to capacity; I was giving the bayaan and in my mind, I thought: *I am really going - so what is the purpose of ending the bayaan now.* ...I decided to just continue until I pass away. However, the pain was getting sharper and more severe. Then I decided that I rather make Dua and end off –

thinking maut will come at any time. I made the Dua and the next thing, I collapsed there, in the Masjid.

Nothing is co-incidental. It is Allah Ta'ala's working and help that a very good doctor friend was there, right in the front. He immediately checked me and said that I had a heart attack. From the Masjid, I was taken directly to the hospital and was treated. They had to put some stents and Alhamdulillah, I began to recover with everyone's Duas; otherwise, I was hoping that it was the final breath that I took – in the Masjid, in Dua.

Another near-death experience was when I was travelling with the wife. We were to travel from Bombay to England. We had completed Hajj and then went to India. I was undertaking the trip to London for a programme. We were booked on a certain flight – an Air India flight. The departure time was 11 p.m. or around that time. Everything was confirmed.

Whilst walking in the airport terminal, I saw the Lufthansa board and desk. I went and enquired: “*Do you have a flight to London?*”

The attendant said: “*Yes, we have*”.

I asked: “*What time is your flight?*”

And was told: *“12 o’clock”*.

I asked: *“Can I take the flight? I have got this ticket but want to take this flight?”*

The attendant said: *“You will have to go to the Air India desk. They will have to endorse it...”*, etc.

The wife was a little upset that I changed the flight since we already had something confirmed. But I said that I just did not feel like taking the Air India flight. She asked the reason and I replied that I cannot give any reason. It was just a strong feeling that I must not take the flight.

We got the tickets endorsed, came back to Lufthansa and took the flight. Alhamdulillah, we arrived safely in London. In the morning, when we were having breakfast, we were listening to the news over a radio station. One announcement was made, that Air India - flight number – whatever it was – had crashed. All passengers had died. It was the same flight which we were to take.

I don’t know how many times I had experiences where I thought that my time was up and that death was imminent – but Allah Ta’ala only knows when it will arrive. Make Dua wherever it comes, it comes in a state that Allah Ta’ala is pleased with me.

23. DREAMS

On being asked about dreams ...

I am hesitant to discuss dreams – especially on air. ...However, since it is requested, out of Shukr, I will relate a few.

Alhamdulillah, there have been some Mubarak dreams – but we must remember that dreams do not make anyone pious. A dream does not make a person a Waliullah. ...We should not think that because of some dream, we have reached the Arsh of Allah Ta’ala, we are pious, etc. Mubashsharaat (glad-tidings) should make us humble and we should express Shukr over it. If there is some warning in a dream, we must correct ourselves.

I take this as a ni’mat of Allah Ta’ala, that Alhamdulillah, Thumma Alhamdulillah, I have seen Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* in my dream. The following dream is related because there is a lesson in it for all of us.

In the dream, I am at the Raudha Mubarak. There is a gatekeeper there – like how we see those officials and those ‘Darbaan’ as we say – the security guards. He asked me: “*What do you want? What have you come for?*”

I responded: *"I have come to meet Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam."*

He opened the green gate and I went in.

Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam was sitting on a bed – very, very handsome; his beautiful face and locks of hair – as we read in the Hadith Shareef. And he was full of smiles. He shook my hand – and there was such warmth in it. He smiled, and his words were: *"I am happy with your speeches."* Thereafter, it was as if I was sitting with him for a long time. ...Although the sleep was not that long, in the dream I was sitting with him for a long time and we were discussing different issues, and he was so happy.

And then suddenly our conversation turned to Palestine, Iraq and those places where there are a lot of problems. Everyone knows what is happening in those countries. ...The dream occurred when the Kuwait–Iraq war was taking place. It had disturbed me greatly. The bombardment by the Americans and the thousands of Muslims who had lost their lives had disturbed me tremendously.

That discussion which was so beautiful and where there was such a beautiful smile on the Mubarak face of Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam changed. ...When we

started talking about this, his words were: *“The Ikhtilaaf in my Ummah has increased tremendously.”* – That means, the disputes, the arguments, the fights, the quarrels, etc. have increased tremendously in the Ummah. Muslim countries are all at logger-heads and the whole Ummah seems to be just going down.

The smile and the happiness which was on the Mubarak face of Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam – believe me, when I think of it even now, it makes me cry – that the happiness was replaced with so much of sadness. He was so sad, so sad, so sad ... that I thought: *What are we really doing to the sensitive heart of Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam?*

On another occasion, I dreamt that in our Masjid, Masjid-e-Noor, there was a bed on the right-hand side. Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam was sitting on the bed and the Masjid was filled to capacity. In the dream, I was announcing to the congregation: *How fortunate we are that today we have Nabi Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam in our Masjid.* ...I remember the following words so clearly – addressing the congregation: *“Look at the Mubarak face of Nabi Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam! How young and fresh he is still looking.”* These words I can clearly remember, *“how young and fresh”*. He was looking so beautiful, so handsome.

I proceeded to Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam*, to make ‘mulaqaat’¹⁰. Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) was on the side – as if he was there to introduce. Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) introduced this sinful slave of Allah Ta’ala: “*He is Maulana Yunus Patel....*”

Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* smiled – with that same smile and he shook my hand in such a way that I could feel as if the coolness of that touch entered my chest. When my eyes opened, I could still feel the coolness.

These are just mentioned out of At-Tahdeeth-bin-Ni’mat¹¹. Alhamdulillah, other people have had dreams of Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* and myself together. May Allah Ta’ala make it a means of goodness.

I take these dreams to be an encouragement. They give me a lot of consolation. It gives me some kind of courage when I feel down. ...After you try to make some effort and you don’t see some kind of a change, you sometimes feel a little down. But then these dreams offer a lot of hope and I think to myself: *You just have to carry on doing the work that you are supposed to be doing and the results are to be left to Allah Ta’ala. He will give Hidayat. Our duty is to make the effort.*

¹⁰ mulaqaat: meeting

¹¹ At-Tahdeeth-bin-Ni’mat: Proclaiming of the favours of Allah Ta’ala upon you

24. ADVICE

On being asked for advice...

Nasihah that is given is for myself first.

There is a great deal of work which we are doing, but I think there is one ingredient which we are not really making an effort on. ...On a general note, and also addressing myself: Presently, there is an explosion of knowledge – especially in South Africa. Previously, we did not have so many Madaaris, so many Darul Ulooms, so much of the work of Tabligh and so many Khanqahs in South Africa. We never heard of a Khanqah in those days. We never heard of a Darul Uloom when we were in our young age. The first one was established in Newcastle after great effort.

Now, we find in every town there are so many Huffaaz, so many ‘Ulama, so many Muftis. ...And then look at the organisations – we lose count. We did not have media like we have today which has brought a lot of knowledge across to our community and people around the world, which was never imagined. We did not even dream of all of this. With our computers and through the Internet, so much is accessed.

I believe that on the one hand, the knowledge being disseminated on these different platforms and the amount of work being done is a great ni'mat – a great bounty of Allah Ta'ala. On the other hand, it is a Hujjat¹² and a Daleel¹³ – that we were given all these opportunities. We were given the knowledge; we were given the tools for spreading that knowledge, gaining that knowledge and imparting that knowledge – that is, within the boundaries of Shari'ah – but how much of Amal did we make on that knowledge? How much have we brought into practice? This is where the real test lies for us.

25. ANALOGY

When visiting a Darul Uloom, I mentioned the following to the students: So much of Islamic knowledge and information have been installed on our computers and are available on the Internet: Bukhari Shareef, Tirmidhi Shareef, Abu Dawood Shareef. ...All the Tafaseer, Hadith Kitaabs, Fiqh (jurisprudence) Kitaabs, knowledge of science and every other subject. There is just a remarkable volume of knowledge there.

¹² Hujjat: evidence

¹³ Daleel: proof

Though all this knowledge has been installed on the computer, the computer does not have the quality of Tawaadhu (humility). The computer does not have Shukr in it; the computer does not have Sabr, Hilm, Taqwa and all the other noble qualities of a Muslim. The computer cannot have these qualities. These are qualities of the human being. Despite the computer having Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, or Jalalain, Ibn Katheer and other great books, do we tie a turban around the computer and call that computer an ‘Aalim or Scholar!?

For the human being, knowledge has a definite purpose, and that is to transfer it into our hearts and apply it in our lives. The knowledge which is being imparted through the Kitaabs, the Madaaris, Darul Uloom, the work of Tabligh and through authentic channels, are many – Masha Allah. We make Dua that Allah Ta’ala increases whatever is being done, within the parameters of Deen and Shari’ah, and increases all the good activities – but the effort towards Ikhlaas (sincerity) seems to have left us. It seems to be an ingredient that is in short supply, together with practising on our knowledge. We fall short on A’maal and Ikhlaas.

I make Dua that Allah Ta’ala blesses me, the Ummah as well as whoever is doing Deeni work, within the boundaries of the Qur’aan and Sunnah, with Ikhlaas.

Even if we have a little Ikhlāas, it goes a long way. All this work, which we are seeing throughout the country, are the fruits of the seeds which were planted by people of Ikhlāas. At that time, they went through great difficulties, great hardships, pain, problems, suffering. They made many sacrifices. Alhamdulillah, with Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl and Karam, they established these institutions – which grew from there.

So many have come from far and wide to study here in South Africa. Alhamdulillah, we find today, in our country, Deeni knowledge is flourishing. May Allah Ta'ala bless us with the reality of that knowledge, with lives of Taqwa and piety. May Allah Ta'ala unite the Ummah.

26. UNITING THE UMMAH

There are just too many quarrels, arguments and disputes over trivial, trivial matters. Sadly, we don't have the capacity to accommodate differences of opinions, which are based on the Qur'aan and Sunnah. We are not talking about whims and fancies, rather opinions based on Qur'aan and Sunnah. We worked with different people and different organisations. There were occasions when we disagreed. At such times we expressed our views and clearly stated that some things being done were incorrect.

They say that if a snake falls from the ceiling, take a stick and kill it. However, you don't have to go around looking for snakes. ...Sometimes we have people who are just out to create mischief – to create more and more friction, division and disunity in the Ummah. We have circulation of e-mails and messages which include incorrect information and even lies. That then circulates and leaves so many people in doubt: They don't know what is the truth.

Very sadly, the whole atmosphere which we had, has changed: There was, at one time, much unity in the community despite different views and ideas – which again, were based on the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Now, there is just controversy, mischief, lies and slander. ...The dream, which was related earlier, has been my life's mission.

This is my message: Let us work towards the unity of the Ummah. Of course, the principles must be there: the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Our unity is upon the Qur'aan and Sunnah, which we should firmly adhere to. If we do so, we can go a long way. ...And if we cannot give any input or contribute in any positive way; if we cannot do anything good, at least let us not create more friction and division ... because it truly hurts the very sensitive and mubarak heart of our beloved Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam.

Yes, it is our duty that when something is Baatil (falsehood), we say that it is Baatil; it is not correct. We learn from the Ahadith that among the signs of Qiyamah is that there will be an increase in fitnas – great fitnas. There will be ignorance, and ignorant judgements will be given even in the matters of Deen. Amr bil-Marooif and Nahy anil Munkar are responsibilities and obligations upon all of us. Hazrat Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) had offered valuable advice, which we should keep before us. Hazrat Maulana (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) said: “The words of advice should be **true**, the intention should be **true**, and the manner and approach should also be **true**. This will then draw positive results.” Allah Ta’ala grant us Taufeeq.

27. IFTAAR REQUEST

This interview was during the month of Ramadaan. On being asked what Hazrat Maulana would like for Iftaar...

Many people want to know and ask: “What must we bring for you, for Iftaar?” ...When I went to Stanger for two Ramadaans in recent years, they would ask me: “What do you want for Iftaar?” ...I would say just one samoosa and one piece of whatever else may be on the Dastarkhan.” This is my Iftaar - and this is

the truth. What can you really eat? Just have a few bites of anything and it suffices, Alhamdulillah.

Alhamdulillah, my wife is very fortunate in that respect. She said herself: *“One thing about you - you have never been fussy with regard to food or anything. If there is anything ready and prepared, you will eat it.”* ...And if not, I will settle for a fried egg, Alhamdulillah.

28. ON A LIGHTER NOTE

Just to conclude, on a light-hearted note: My Nikah took place on the 26th of December 1969. That day was called ‘Boxing Day’ in South Africa. Although we were married on Boxing Day, Alhamdulillah we haven’t ‘boxed’ ever in our married life. Alhamdulillah, we have had a very nice, peaceful and happy married life.

I have said, in the bayaans, that we must learn to adopt the right approach when dealing with our wives. Wives sometimes have a kind of ‘pride’, that they are the wives, and they will speak very freely and say things that may even upset or provoke the husband at times. ...How should we respond? What must we do? ...I suggest that you take out a pen and notebook because sometimes their Malfuzaat are better than what others deem to be our “Malfuzaat”.

Their quotations are better than our quotations. Say:
‘Masha-Allah, this is Malfuz number ninety-nine, or this is quotation number one hundred and three....’

Alhamdulillah, this kind of response eases and dispels any tension. The wife also begins to smile. That is the end of the disagreement or quarrel. The husband too will be happy.

...We are just humble slaves of Allah Ta’ala, with nothing worthy to discuss about ourselves.

Chapter Three

CHILDHOOD

FAMILY

The following chapters comprise of some incidents from the life of Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) which Maulana related at different times, occasions and places. Some analogies and anecdotes are included which Maulana enjoyed to share.

Most of these incidents were noted down during Hazrat Maulana’s lifetime and Alhamdulillah, were heard directly from Hazrat Maulana. There may be slightly different versions of some incidents or some maybe incomplete in this compilation. However, the compiler has chosen to bring together what was heard personally.

1. MY FATHER

One of the noble qualities of my marhoom father was that from our childhood days he was very particular that we must not ask any person for anything. The training, the Tarbiyyah and the discipline that he gave to us was that we must not have our sight or gaze on any person's wealth. ...Even if our aunts or uncles gave us something when we were children, and my father came to know of it or saw it, he would ask: *Who gave you this? Where did you bring it from? Did you ask for it? ...Why did you not say that you have sufficient?*

He, himself, practised on this all his life. He did not have expectations in people. My father always desired to give to us than take from us. This is a very wonderful quality which he ingrained in us. Alhamdulillah, this nurtured within us the quality of keeping the gaze and attention on Allah Ta'ala, asking Allah Ta'ala and having expectation in only Allah Ta'ala.

In this field of serving Deen, there is a greater need to keep the heart clear of 'Ishraaf'¹⁴. There should be no expectation in people to give us anything or do for us. Ishraaf is a

¹⁴ Ishraaf: having expectation in receiving some material benefit from someone.

spiritual sickness and shows great weakness. Sometimes a person announces or informs that he has Ta-alluq with a certain Shaykh, or is the son or brother or friend of so-and-so – to gain some kind of favour or to take some worldly benefit from others. Because of his ‘connections’, he takes advantage of people.

Ishraaf can be in different ways. Sometimes, the person may mention his own credentials – that he is so-and-so – again, with some expectation and anticipation. May Allah Ta’ala purify our hearts and protect us.

When Hazrat Mufti Shafi Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) passed away, Hazrat Dr Abdul Hayy Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*), who was the Shaykh of Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Taqi and Mufti Muhammad Rafi’ Usmani, instructed both of them not to take over the Majlis which their father would conduct every week. Further, Hazrat Dr Abdul Hayy Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) instructed them to resign from Darul Uloom Karachi, which was founded by their father. He explained to them that there is no family succession in occupying Deeni positions and that these positions require a specific expertise and proficiency, which they will have to develop, to be worthy of those posts.

That instruction was for a temporary period of time and for the purpose of Islaah. Mufti Muhammad Taqi Sahib (*Daamat*

Barakaatuhu) explained that was the Shaykh's Tarbiyyah – so that they do not aspire for name and fame now that their father had passed away, nor entertain any sort of expectation and anticipation of taking Hazrat Mufti Shafi Sahib's (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) place or obtaining high positions because of family ties.

From another angle, unfortunately, many of us have expectations and hopes in others. Parents have expectations in their children; children have expectations in their parents; the wife has expectations in her husband and vice versa. When these expectations are not met and these hopes are not fulfilled, there is disappointment, grief, depression, bitterness, resentment and estrangement.

Keep the gaze focused on Allah Ta'ala. Ask of Allah Ta'ala. Trust in Allah Ta'ala. Have your expectation in only Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala does not disappoint.

2. BARAKAH

When we were at school, we would wait for the lunch break and it seemed to be ages before we had our lunch break. The holidays were such – that one would think it would not end. There was so much of Barakah in that era.

In the 1970s, I had a VW Beetle. For just R5, I was able to fill up the petrol tank and travel from Mooi River to Johannesburg and come back half way. In those days, there were no burglar guards and no one was worried or afraid of burglaries, hijackings, etc. – as we find today. We would leave our home, in Mooi River, for four or five weeks in December. The house was on the main street. There was no fear. There was so much of Barakah and such safe conditions. Those experiences were over forty years ago.

Today, the complaint is that there is no Barakah. This is also from the signs of Qiyamah. Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* said: “Qiyamah will not begin until time passes quickly. A year will be like a month, a month will be like a week, a week will be like a day, and a day will be like an hour, and an hour will be like the flare of the fire.”¹⁵

We are living in such times and should understand that we are close to Qiyamah. I have mentioned before that we consider Qiyamah to be far away, whereas it is fast approaching, beginning with death. With the questioning in the grave, reward or punishment commences.

¹⁵ Sunan Tirmidhi

3. TAKING LESSON FROM MAGNETS

In our childhood, we saw the shoemakers pick up nails with magnets. When they would rub the nail on the magnet, the nail became magnetic and picked up other nails. In our school days, we also learnt that magnets attract certain metals and these metals also become magnetic.

Now, so many decades later, we take a lesson. On its own, the nail is not magnetic and will not attract pins and other similar objects. However, when it is in contact with a strong magnet, for a period of time, it draws some of that magnetism and it then has the capacity to attract other objects.

The hearts of the Ahlullah are filled with the love of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam*. This love makes their hearts magnets, which draw the hearts of people. If we keep the company of the Ahlullah for a considerable amount of time, with sincerity, our hearts too will become magnets. We will draw the love of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam* as well as the effects of their piety and other noble characteristics, Insha-Allah.

4. SNAKES AND LADDERS

There was a game that we played when we were very young called ‘Snakes and Ladders’. We were children and did not think anything more of it than a game. However, now, on reflection, there was a lesson to take. ...I am not promoting such games but am presenting a lesson: In the game, you climb and climb and then one bite from a snake and you go back to square one.

The lesson to take is: In the spiritual world, when you are climbing, don’t be complacent. Do not take it for granted that you are doing very well for yourself. The snake of nafs is ever-ready to bite. Hazrat Khwaja Azizul Hasan Majzooob (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) had said very aptly:

*“Have no trust in this nafs, O devout one!
Even if it becomes an angel,
remain distrustful of it.
Look at the snake of your nafs.
As soon as you are negligent, it bites.”*

If a person sees snakes or dogs in a dream – then the snake is nafs and the dog is shaytaan. Of course, there are other interpretations but for a saalik, if he sees a snake or a dog biting him, it is probably nafs or shaytaan.

Just as a person, bitten by a snake, urgently seeks treatment because of the poison that has entered his system, similarly, when bitten by nafs, seek immediate treatment from a spiritual doctor. With sincere Taubah, start 'climbing' again.

5. NIGHT-SOIL BUCKET SYSTEM

In our very young days, there was the night-soil bucket system. The night-soil collectors would come around to each house. They had empty buckets that were exchanged for the buckets that were already filled with excreta covered with soil, to minimise the bad smell, and then that would be dumped somewhere. When those collectors came, we used to close the windows tight and hold our nostrils. At that time, we would forget that the filth being collected was from our own bodies. They were doing us a favour by removing it. ...There were no unions in that time; otherwise, if they went on strike for two weeks, we would have had a serious problem.

Today's generation will not relate to this because that system is no more. However, we take a lesson from it. Sins are like faeces. As Believers, we should be able to recognise the bad odour of sins. We should shut the door and windows of our hearts and safeguard ourselves from sins and fitnah.

Unfortunately, we have become so immersed and accustomed to sins that we are immune to its stench. We are like those night-bucket collectors who became accustomed to the foul odour. Otherwise, a Muslim will be deeply unhappy and distressed if he commits a sin. Instead, even if we come out of sins, we go back again. ...Similarly, sins such as pride, vanity, greed and other evil qualities in the heart have a terrible stench. Yet again, we remain unaffected.

If the night-bucket collector spends considerable time in an Itr shop, he will appreciate the sweet and pleasant fragrance and will not want to return to his job. In the same way, if we keep company with the pious, we will enjoy the fragrance of their noble company and the fragrance of good deeds and piety. We will then not want to return to our sins. We will then be able to differentiate between good and bad.

6. DO NOT TOUCH

In the 1950s, as a young boy, I recall visiting the museum. There were different animals – wild animals, omnivores, carnivores and so forth... but they were all stuffed with sawdust. And there were signs near the animals, which read: **‘PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH.’**

Would a person find such a sign in the Kruger National Park when on a safari, wanting to see the Big Five? When does the king of the jungle require a sign such as: **Please do not touch?** Yet, in the museum, this sign was placed next to the lion because there was no life in the lion. There was no haqeeqat (reality). Even if it was the king of the jungle – he was now stuffed with sawdust. Rats too could nibble without fear because there was no life; there was no worry of even a roar.

Now, after decades have passed, observing the present scenario of the Muslim Ummah – globally, we see our similarity to those stuffed animals. We have lost the power and supremacy which is otherwise reserved for the Believers.

The majority of us Muslims today have no reality. ...Our great weakness and overwhelming incapacity are due to us having ‘stuffed’ our hearts with the love of dunya – a prophecy which is so clearly manifest today. Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam said: “The people will soon summon one another to attack you as people, when eating, invite others to share their food.”

Someone asked: “Will that be because of our small numbers at that time?”

He replied: “No, you will be numerous at that time: but you will be froth and scum like that carried down by a torrent (of water), and Allah will take the fear of you from the hearts of your enemy and cast al-wahn into your hearts.”

Someone asked: “O Messenger of Allah, what is al-wahn?”

He *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* replied: “Love of the world and dislike of death.”¹⁶

More than one billion in number, but we, the Muslim Ummah, have become so weak and subservient.

7. CONCERN OF PARENTS

After marriage, when we were still young, we would drive down to Stanger, leaving home after Isha. My parents would get very worried that we were travelling at night. ...Of course, those days were different. There was no fear like how we have today. They would say to us that we should instead leave early in the morning and not travel late at night. We used to think: *Why do they get so worried?*

Now, as parents, we realise. It is natural for parents to have concern and to worry about their children. It is not that

¹⁶ Abu Dawood and Ahmad

they are interfering in our lives. It is just their sincere love. We should appreciate their concern.

Alhamdulillah, after we moved to Durban, my parents lived with us for over seventeen years. In all those years, neither did my parents complain about Aapa nor did Aapa complain about my parents. We had such a good relationship. I see it as a Karamat¹⁷ of my parents.

My mother passed away on the 21st of Ramadaan, in my arms, whilst I was putting Zam Zam in her mouth. My father passed away when I was reading Surah Yaseen and reached the Ayaat on Jannah,

هُم وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلَالٍ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَكِئُونَ ۝

لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُمْ مَّا يَدْعُونَ ۖ سَلَامٌ مِّن رَّبِّ رَحِيمٍ ۝

“They and their spouses - in shade, reclining on adorned couches. For them therein is fruit, and for them is whatever they request (or wish). Peace!” – a word (of salutation) from a Lord Most Merciful!”

[Surah Yasin 36:58]

Alhamdulillah, both were blessed with easy and Mubarak deaths.

¹⁷ Karamat: miracle

8. NOBLE QUALITIES OF MY FATHER

It was my father's habit to wake up for Tahajjud at 2 a.m. or 2.30 a.m. He would wake up and commence with Salaah, Tilawat and Dua. It is their Duas that carry us. It is a great ni'mat to have pious parents.

When we were children, my father would always bring 'Ulama home. He liked to host them. We were very young and did not think anything of it. However, he would make us meet the 'Ulama and they would give us Duas. Those Duas – of parents and the pious – are like seeds which germinate.

Alhamdulillah, those who were living at that time would say that my father was someone who had no issues or problems with anyone. He studied for three or four years in Rander and then had to return since my grandfather was sick. He had to take over the shop.

Once there was a trustee election in the Masjid. It became a big commotion since no one wanted to listen and everyone wanted to talk. We were young and were in the Masjid also. We just sat there watching the '*tamasha*'. My father was around 40 years of age. To bring sanity to the situation, he sat on the Mimbar and began to recite Qur'aan Shareef

aloud. Alhamdulillah, he used to read very beautifully since he studied under the Qurra of Rander. When he commenced the Qiraat, everyone became silent. There was complete silence in the Masjid. After he completed, he said to them: *“This is the Masjid, the House of Allah Ta’ala. It is not appropriate to make a noise in the Masjid.”*

Although he was younger than most of them, they respected him and accepted what he said. They did not object or take offence. Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta’ala put that respect and awe. They then decided amongst themselves: *“Let’s go outside.”* – because they wanted to settle the matter.

9. ‘BROADCASTING’

If an ‘Aalim or learned person was going to visit the town and give a talk, my father would write down the details from the notice board on a page ... that Maulana so-and-so is arriving and will be giving the talk ... the day, time, etc. He would give us that page and we would then go from shop to shop to pass on the information, showing the people the written message. The people would ask us: *“Who is he?”*

We were young and did not know those ‘Ulama. We would say: *“We don’t know ... but he is giving a bayaan.”*

That was the way of 'broadcasting' the programme. Alhamdulillah, my father was desirous for the people to take benefit and made this effort.

10. MY FATHER'S ADVICE

Many people invite me for programmes or have other requests. Knowing the situation, my father repeatedly advised me: *"Don't commit to anything immediately. Say, 'Insha-Allah, I will let you know by the evening or tomorrow.' This gives you time to think and decide. Think carefully before committing yourself. If you commit immediately and then cannot make it, people will have the opinion that you went back on your word or promise."*

Now, people are inviting from Canada, America, Australia and other countries. They say: *"Give us a date. We will make the arrangements."*

As advised, I reply or say: *"Contact me (at a certain time) ..."*

It is my habit to confirm dates about two weeks before. Since I do not want to take advantage of these sincere brothers who invite, I try my best to make my own arrangements so they are not burdened financially with travel costs, etc. Although people extend their hospitality, we should never exploit their kindness and generosity.

11. AN ESSAY

When I was in Standard 9 (Grade 11), I had to write an essay. My English teacher marked that essay and wrote, at the end: *“Your essay is a conglomeration of disjointed facts!”*

In the talks which are now given, I find the same sequence ... a conglomeration of different points. However, it is my habit to make Dua beforehand: *“O Allah, whatever is beneficial for myself and for the audience, put it into my heart and let it come onto my tongue so that our hearts may be revived and the flame of Your Love may be lit in our hearts.”*

12. APARTHEID AND ISLAM

On one occasion, I was with my respected mother when she began to feel weak and unwell. There was a bench near where we were walking and I got her to sit down – so she could rest a little. No sooner did we sit, a police officer came by and instructed us to get off the bench. He indicated to a sign nearby, which had the words, ‘EUROPEANS ONLY’ or ‘WHITES ONLY’. Although I tried to explain to the officer that my mother was unwell, there was no mercy shown. We were non-white so we could not sit on the bench.

That occurred in the days of apartheid when race and skin-colour placed you in a particular category. The white or European group could live free of any restrictions, whilst every other racial group was restrained and restricted in different ways. Signboards were placed everywhere – buses, trains, beaches, hotels, hospitals, etc.

Alhamdulillah, in Islam, there is no apartheid, no discrimination. Allah Ta’ala – the Creator of man – does not look at colour. He does not look at race or language. Allah Ta’ala looks at the heart. Hazrat Bilal (*Radhiyallahu ‘anhu*) was dark in complexion – a Habshi – but he had a white heart. We are not judged by colour, beauty, wealth, etc. The criterion is Taqwa. Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* said: “Verily Allah does not look towards your physical appearances, or towards your riches but He sees (the sincerity of) your hearts, and (the nature of) your deeds.”¹⁸

Hazrat Abu Zarr (*Radhiyallahu ‘anhu*) narrated that Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* said to him: “Verily you are not better than a fair-skinned person or a dark-skinned person except that you excel him by Taqwa (piety and fear of Allah Ta’ala).”¹⁹

¹⁸ Sahih Muslim

¹⁹ Ahmad

13. NAMING THE FIRST CHILD

I was in Madina Shareef at the time of the birth of my first child. The family contacted me to inform me, and asked me to name the baby. There was a shop nearby playing Qira`ah by Qari Abdul Baasit. I had been listening to his recitation of Surah Aal-Imraan. I had just heard the following verse and immediately thereafter the call came through:

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ ۖ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ ط
وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ ۚ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ۝

“BUT WHEN SHE DELIVERED HER, SHE SAID, ‘MY LORD, I HAVE DELIVERED A FEMALE.’ AND ALLAH WAS MOST KNOWING OF WHAT SHE DELIVERED, ‘AND THE MALE IS NOT LIKE THE FEMALE. AND I HAVE NAMED HER MARYAM, AND I SEEK REFUGE FOR HER IN YOU AND (FOR) HER DESCENDANTS FROM SHAYTAAN, THE EXPELLED (FROM THE MERCY OF ALLAH).”

[SURAH AAL-IMRAAN 3 : 36]

I chose the name Maryam with the intention that Allah Ta’ala grants the qualities of Hazrat Maryam (alaihas Salaam): her modesty, chastity, piety and her obedience and submission to Allah Ta’ala.

I thereafter travelled to India where I met Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) and informed him that Allah Ta’ala had blessed me with a daughter. Hazrat made Dua: *“May Allah Ta’ala raise her in the shadow of both parents.”* ...What a noteworthy Dua by Hazrat Mufti Sahib.

Choosing a good name for one’s child is a right that the child has over us. Sadly, in these times, many parents want unusual names – and they have no interest in the meaning or the origin of the name. They just want the name to be different and unique. This is not intelligent parenting from a Muslim mother and father. We are instructed to keep good names and encouraged to name our children by the names that are beloved to Allah Ta’ala or after the Ambiyaa (Alaihimus Salaam) and the pious – so that their noble qualities will manifest in our own children, Insha-Allah. Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam said: *“On the Day of Qiyamah, you will be called by your (own) names and the names of your fathers. Therefore, keep good names.”*²⁰

Together with a good name, the correct Islamic Tarbiyyah (nurturing) must be given to the child. This too is the right of the child. We are accountable regarding our children.

²⁰ Abu Dawood

One father named his son, Salahuddin. He then had a dream which I was asked to interpret. The dream clearly indicated the potential of the child to become pious and righteous. However, for the son to have those noble qualities of Salahuddin Ayyubi (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*), the parents would have to give him the correct Deeni upbringing.

Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* said: “Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of a people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. **A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband’s home and his children and she is responsible for them.** The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for it. **No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.**”²¹

14. DOOR OF DUA

My mother passed away in the month of Ramadaan 1418. When I mentioned to my Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib that my mother had passed away. I said: “*My door of Dua has closed.*”

²¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari / Sahih Muslim

With kindness and compassion, Hazrat replied: *“My door is still open. I am making Dua for you and will continue to make.”*

Allah Ta’ala’s Kindness that we have such pious people making Dua for us. We are very much in need of Dua.

15. DON’T DELAY BURIAL

My mother passed away in Ramadaan at about 1 p.m. Alhamdulillah, with Allah Ta’ala’s Fadhl, at 4 p.m. the Janazah Salaah took place. By about 4.15 p.m. she was buried. In three hours, everything was done.

My father passed away at about 11.30 a.m. and the Janazah Salaah was at 2.30 p.m. Thereafter, within 20 minutes, the burial took place. ...A maximum of three hours is required if the qabr is ready.

We also have family members far away: I have first cousins in Kimberly. My father’s nephews are in Botswana, Johannesburg and other places. Many phoned me and expressed their wish to come for the Janazah. I requested that they stay where they are and not rush down for the Janazah Salaah. I mentioned that even if they read Surah Ikhlās three times for my father and send it as Isaale

Sawaab, that would be more pleasing to me. ...Sometimes, in the rush and haste, there is an accident or other difficulties are encountered. And there is unnecessary delay waiting for everyone to arrive.

In a Hadith, related by Hazrat ‘Ali (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu), Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam mentioned three matters wherein there should be no delay:

- 1.) Salaah when its time arrives,
- 2.) Offering the Janazah Salaah when the body is brought forth (after the completion of the washing), and
- 3.) Marriage of a woman whose match is found.²²

This is a clear instruction of Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam.

Yes, there may be some formalities: It was a murder case, or because of heavy rain, there was a delay in digging the grave ... but just because of one person coming from Cape Town or Johannesburg – to wait and wait is an inconvenience for people. Therefore, as soon as the Janazah is ready, bury the person. Then, there will be no need to put up a tent and have a feast.

²² Tirmidhi

Our duty, as neighbours and friends, is to take any guests home and give them a meal. What we find today is that the person has passed away, but the focus is on preparing lunch and supper. Many are pre-occupied in these arrangements as if there is a Nikah or Walimah taking place.

It is my Wasiyyat that there should be no delay and nor should they even wait for the next Salaah. Bury me as quickly as possible, as is Sunnah. All should make this Wasiyyat to their family and children. ...Islam is so simple and beautiful. If only we put this beautiful Sunnah into practice, even the non-Muslims will say Islam is the best ... but we have no example for them. What they do, we do.

Hazratji Maulana Yusuf (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had given a clear instruction: *"If I pass away on the train, then the first station that is reached, find a qabrastan and bury me there."* ...This was because he travelled so often. However, due to circumstance, there was some delay – but that was again, due to circumstance.

16. MARRIAGE

After my father passed away, we were sorting out and clearing his papers and came across his marriage certificate.

My marhoom grandfather was an Imam of the Umzinto Masjid. Alhamdulillah, he was a pious man and known as 'Sufi Sahib'. He had performed the Nikah of my parents on the 4th of August 1942. Alhamdulillah, they were married for 58 - 60 years.

Similarly, many others of those generations remained married until death. They understood that Nikah should be for always – and that it requires effort and work, mercy, compassion, patience and tolerance. They persevered. Unfortunately, these days, divorce seems to have become the order of the day. Marital disputes are brought to us every day ... and it really takes a toll on the heart.

Of course, there are also many fitnahs which contribute to this – like the cell-phone, chatlines, free mixing of men and women, etc. It is for the individual to fear Allah Ta'ala. This is what is announced in the Nikah Khutbah also. Moreover, what we generally find today is that selfishness over-rides good character and loyalty. Such is the level of selfishness, self-interest and self-importance nowadays, that priority status is given to only 'me', 'myself' and 'I'; everyone else takes a back seat. Unsurprisingly, this leads to marital discord and other problems.

I tell the students at the Madrasah time and again to remember this simple advice:

*“In Khidmat, you will get Izzat;
In giving love, you will receive love.”*

As well as:

*“Don’t go by the book of “My Rights”. Go by the book of Love,
Ihsaan²³ and Khidmat²⁴.”*

Work to fulfil the rights of others instead of demanding one’s own rights. If we all adopt beautiful character, then automatically this world will become a paradise. ...Yes, rights have been established, but we cannot have a peaceful society if there are just demands for rights and no fulfilment of the corresponding obligations.

²³ Ihsaan: favour

²⁴ Khidmat: service

Chapter Four

DARUL ULOOM DEOBAND

ASAATIZA

STAY IN INDIA

1. TRAVELLING TO INDIA

In 1963, on board the ship going to India, a Buzurg²⁵ boarded from the port in Maputo. There were eight or ten of us going to study. We were still dressed in jeans, etc. – without topees. He was very sympathetic and kind to us and drew us to his programmes on the ship. His beautiful character was what won us over. He took such a liking to us that he said: *‘I have one daughter who is married. However, if I had more daughters, I would have all of you as my sons-in-law.’*

This is the wise approach of the Mashaa’ikh. They adopt kindness, mercy and compassion when addressing the people and they win them over – so that it becomes easy to invite to Deen. What these noble qualities bring, harshness and hardness will never bring. Allah Ta’ala mentions in Surah Aal-Imraan about Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ ۚ

“THUS, IT IS DUE TO MERCY FROM ALLAH THAT YOU DEAL WITH THEM GENTLY. AND HAD YOU BEEN ROUGH OR HARD-HEARTED, THEY WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE DISPERSED FROM AROUND YOU...”

[SURAH AAL-IMRAAN 3 : 159]

²⁵ Buzurg: saintly person

Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam said: “Verily Allah is kind and loves kindness and confers upon kindness which He does not confer upon harshness.”²⁶

Of course, there will be times when there will be Islaah, some reprimand, etc. However, this must be free of the nafs. I have mentioned before that sometimes a mureed does not follow through with the Shaykh’s repeated advice and guidance. A Kaamil Shaykh will reprimand or express some anger upon the mureed because the mureed is disobedient to Allah Ta’ala. He sympathises and feels for his mureed. He does not want the mureed to destroy himself.

On the other hand, one who is not ‘Kaamil’ and not ‘Muttaqi’, will get offended if the mureed does not follow through with his advice. His anger is due to the fact that his mureed is not listening to him – and not because the person is displeasing Allah Ta’ala. This anger is not for Allah Ta’ala. This anger is not because the mureed is indulging in Haraam and inviting the wrath of Allah Ta’ala. ...How different the two forms of anger are! One is with Ikhlāas and the other is with Takabbur.

The same approach of compassion and mercy must be adopted with students. They have made a sacrifice to learn Deen or to memorise the Qur’aan Shareef. They are an

²⁶ Sahih Muslim

Amaanat to us. They have come to us to take Deen and not hate Deen. Let us be a means of them loving Deen.

2. CATCHING UP

When I reached Deoband, I was about three months late in the Madrasah year and it was difficult to catch up. I did not even know Urdu.

There was an Ustaaz, Maulana Haamid Mia Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) – the best teacher of the first year and distinguished in his teaching of Sarf and Nahw. He was, in fact, kept to teach the first-year students because it was the foundation. Maulana was informed that I had come late to the Madrasah, and it was suggested that I go to him to cover up what was missed thus far. When I asked him, he said: ‘*No problem, come at midnight.*’ ...We had some free time after Asr and Isha – about 1 – 1 ½ hours, but he said: “*Come at midnight.*”

He, himself, was teaching eight or ten Kitaabs every day and taught even at 10.30 p.m. ...There, in Deoband, at that time, there were about 3500 students.

Although strange, it was his instruction and I agreed. I made sure I stayed awake so that I could be on time. I went to his home at midnight. One room was open where his Kitaabs

were and where he taught. As soon as I would go there, he would teach me. This continued for two weeks and each lesson was 45 minutes. Because I pitched up for those lessons at midnight, he said: *“Since you came regularly, now you can come after Isha. I wanted to see how keen the student is.”*

Look at the dedication of the teacher! What a sacrifice he was prepared to make. He stayed awake only to impart Deeni knowledge and that too, to only one student. These are the noble examples of sacrifice for the sake of Deen. We do a little and think the world of our efforts... yet look at the sincerity, dedication and commitment that the Ustaaz had.

(Look at the dedication of the student. Hazrat Maulana set a fine example of a sincere student also. – compiler)

3. ISLAAH

Upon my arrival at the Darul Uloom in India, I visited Delhi, which was not very far from the Darul Uloom. This was within a day or two after arriving. Some students were going to see the Red Fort and I accompanied them. However, when I reached Delhi, I went about sightseeing on my own. There were long queues of people lined up at the cinemas and that became a temptation. I ended up in one of the cinemas and

watched a film. ...May Allah Ta'ala forgive me. At the time, I did not realise the magnitude and seriousness of doing so.

One of my Asaatiza was blessed with Kashf. On return from Delhi, that Ustaaz took one look at me and asked: *'Where did you go?'*

I replied: *'Delhi.'*

He asked: *'For what?'*

I answered: *'Sightseeing.'*

He then asked: *'Did you go to the cinema?'*

I replied: *'Yes.'*

He said: *"I see the effect of visiting the cinema and watching a film in your eyes."*

That was the Baseerat (inner sight) and purity of his heart.

My Ustaaz then said: *'You have just come from South Africa and have taken admission in Deoband. You want to become an 'Aalim. ...Allah forbid and protect you, but if you had died, you would have been disgraced because people would have asked: Who died? Whose son? ... What was he doing? Who were his Asaatiza?' ...Your family, country, this institution and your Asaatiza would also have suffered disgrace and embarrassment.'*

Alhamdulillah, that advice and caution were so effective that although I visited so many parts of India thereafter, I did not ever think of visiting a cinema. ...I am relating the incident with the hope that this piece of advice, given by my respected Ustaaz, will also impact on your hearts as it did on mine – and it becomes a barrier between us and all sins.

4. ENCOUNTER WITH A CYNIC

In the early days, we used to travel to India by ship. It took us twenty-one days to reach Bombay. During my third year, when I was travelling back to India, I met a doctor on board the ship. In conversation he said to me cynically: *“Maulana, you people talk about the angels; that each person has an angel on his right shoulder and on his left shoulder and these angels record the deeds of a person. If this is the situation, then our shoulders would have been so broad that we would not have found a coat to fit us!”*

In turn, I asked him: *“You must have attended school?”*

He replied: *“Yes!”*

I asked: *“From class one to matric?”*

He replied: *“Yes.”*

I said: *“You furthered your studies, doing medicine?”*

Again, he said: *“Yes.”*

I continued: *“You attended university and travelled to different countries. I am sure you remember all this?”*

Again: *“Yes.”*

I said: *“If I were to take you to your hometown, you will remember many different things. All this knowledge, which you acquired during your life, through your studies and travels, where is it? It is stored in the brain. Yet, if the situation is as you say it is, then your head would have been so big that you would not have found a hat to fit it.”*

Alhamdulillah, I had recalled a similar incident in the life of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qaasim Nanotwi (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*). Allah Ta’ala put that response in my mind, which disproved the person’s crooked thinking and mentality.

There are many people who, despite their claims to Islam, seek to find fault with or disparage its teachings or beliefs, or make a mockery of Islam. ...Sarcasm or mockery with regard to Deen is extremely dangerous. It takes one to the threshold of Kufr; sometimes even out of the fold of Islam.

Imaan is “*bil ghaib*” (in the unseen). There are many things which we do not see but which we believe exist. The air that we breathe, the different bacteria and germs in the atmosphere, which the eye does not see, but science has informed us of its existence or we see the signs of it. The signs of Allah Ta’ala are all around us, even within us.

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ ۖ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ۚ

**“ON THE EARTH ARE SIGNS FOR THOSE OF ASSURED FAITH, AS ALSO
IN YOUR OWN SELVES: WILL YOU NOT THEN SEE?”**

[SURAH AZ-ZARIYAT 51 : 20/21]

We may not see the angels, Pulsiraat, Jannat and Jahannum, but Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam was the one who saw the unseen. And our Imaan is in whatever Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam conveyed to us.

Just as it is the duty of the blind person to put his hand into the hand of the one who sees – that is, if he wants direction, guidance and wants to reach his destination safely, so too, it is our duty to place our hands into the hand of Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam – meaning that we hear, accept and obey. In doing so, we will reach our destination safely Insha-Allah.

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ط
وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

**“...AND WHOSOEVER OBEYS ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER
(MUHAMMAD SALLALLAAHU ‘ALAYHI WASALLAM) WILL BE
ADMITTED TO GARDENS UNDER WHICH RIVERS FLOW (IN PARADISE),
TO ABIDE THEREIN (ETERNALLY), AND THAT WILL BE THE GREAT
SUCCESS.**

[SURAH AZ-ZARIYAT 51 : 20/21]

Criticising and mocking any aspect of Deen is mocking or finding fault with the Creator of the Deen, with grievous consequences. May Allah Ta’ala grant us understanding, as well as appreciation for the beautiful, perfect Deen of Islam.

5. GEOLOGY AND THEOLOGY

On one occasion, during my student days, I was sitting in a restaurant in Delhi. There was a student sitting at another table so I started talking to him.

I asked him: *‘Where are you from?’*

He said: *‘Kashmir.’*

I asked: *‘What are you doing in Delhi?’*

He replied: *'Studying geology.'*

He then asked my name and asked where I came from. I said: *'South Africa.'*

He asked: *'What are you doing here?'*

I replied: *'I am studying theology.'*

He expressed his surprise and said: *'You mean to say that you came all the way from South Africa to learn about the existence of God?!'*

His name was Farouq but he did not believe in the existence of Allah Ta'ala.

The secular environment of the colleges and universities, throughout the world, offers a deathblow to many people's Imaan. It is unfortunate that we don't take into consideration the safety of our Deen and that of our children, in our pursuit for education. The secular system opposes and rejects religion – therefore foolish and illogical ideologies were devised such as Darwin's theory of evolution. Subscribing to these beliefs totally uproots Imaan. May Allah Ta'ala guide us all and protect us.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) was told to refute the theory of evolution. Hazrat (*Rahmatullahi*

'alayh) replied: "Everyone has the right to claim his ancestry. If the advocates of Darwinism are proud that their lineage goes back to an ape or monkey, that is their choice. They are happy in their belief! We are happy in our belief that we are from the progeny of a Nabi of Allah Ta'ala, Hazrat Aadam (Alaihis Salaam)."

Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib said, disproving this theory: *"Why is it that we do not see the process of evolution in monkeys and apes today? There are so many apes, but we do not witness this change and evolution!"*

6. INEXPERIENCE

On one occasion, as a young student on my way home, I visited someone. In that home, there were frames and pictures of animate objects on the walls. The first thing I said was: *'All of this is Haraam. You should take it down!'*

The lady of the house gave me such a tongue lashing which was a tremendous lesson: *When the root is infected, it causes the plant to rot and even die. To solve the problem, one cannot just water the leaves.*

A person, who has some knowledge of gardening, knows that there are different reasons why a plant dies. Sometimes, fungus in the soil attacks and infects the root. This causes the

root to rot. Sometimes, the environment is unfavourable – poorly drained or overwatered – and this harms the root. Similarly, when exposed to a bad environment, fitnah and sins infect the spiritual heart and cause it to rot – unless some measures are taken to treat the problem quickly.

If a person is far from Deen and involved in sins, this is a clear indication that a different approach has to be adopted in correcting and guiding towards what is right. We will have to start with the root or foundation and work on developing Imaan, before addressing other aspects of Deen.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) related that once, while travelling during his young days, he saw someone who was clean-shaven and his pants covered his ankles. Hazrat (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) told the person to pull up his pants, above his ankles. He arrogantly retorted: “Who says so?”

Hazrat (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) replied: “*Shari’ah* says so.”

The person then uttered vulgar words, rejecting the advice. Hazrat Maulana (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) said that he realised his approach of Amr-bil-Ma’roof and Nahy Anil Munkar was not correct in the situation. The person was far from Deen – so there was no appreciation for the Sunnah and teachings of Deen. Hazrat (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) said: “*I will not correct*

anyone with whom I have no affiliation unless I know that he has the temperament to accept.”

If a person is involved in sins, his Imaan is still intact. However, when the person condemns, swears or criticises Shari’ah, he loses his Imaan. May Allah Ta’ala protect us all.

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) had mentioned of a person who came to the Majlis, clean-shaven. When he asked him: ‘Why don’t you keep a beard?’, the brother left. Hazrat searched for him and brought him back. Hazrat Maulana (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) explained: ‘I made a mistake. ...If you have to put the roti on a tawa which is not heated, the roti won’t come out right. First heat the heart with the love of Allah Ta’ala. It takes time before people will listen and accept. ...When the person will regard your shoes as bread, you have the right to be harsh.”

On one occasion, when we were taking a walk with our Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib, a person came to meet him. The person’s pants were well below his ankle ... which is a grave sin. The Hadith warns very clearly that whatever portion of the trouser is below the ankles will be in the fire²⁷. It is necessary that the lower

²⁷ Sahih Al-Bukhari

garment or trouser be above the ankles and the ankles are exposed.

Hazrat did not address the brother directly or cause any embarrassment to him. After making some conversation, Hazrat asked if each one could check if his own pants were above his ankle. In this manner, Hazrat discreetly made Amr Bil Ma'roof and Nahy anil Munkar.

This is the benefit of the company of the Mashaa'ikh; we learn how to reach out to people in the correct manner, which will yield positive results and not chase them away. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding and Taufeeq.

7. SIGHT OF THE HEART

One of my Asaatiza at the Darul Uloom told me himself: *"I was reading Surah Ikhlaas 10 000 times ..."*

That is, in 24 hours, he would complete the recitation of Surah Ikhlaas 10 000 times together with other Wazaa'if. Allah Ta'ala gave Barakah in their time. With all the teaching, they still read so much.

He said: *"The effect of this recitation was that whenever a person met me and spoke to me, I sort of x-rayed him. When he spoke, I was*

able to gauge that he came with a certain intention or motive, or the kind of character he had.”

I heard directly from my Shaykh, Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib: *“The effect of casting lustful gazes is that the soorat of the person changes and he looks like a pig. This is the effect of badd nazri (evil / lustful glances). The Ahlullah see with the eyes of their hearts – and they see pigs.”*

This does not happen every time otherwise life would become difficult for the person. However, because they exercised control of their physical eye, Allah Ta’ala gave them a spiritual eye. ...This is nothing new. We read of similar incidents in the life of Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu), Hazrat Uthman (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) and other great personalities. This is also not Ilmul Ghaib. The knowledge of the Unseen is exclusively for Allah Ta’ala.

8. MEMORY

There were blind students studying at the Darul Uloom in Deoband. Allah Ta’ala took away their sight but their memories were fresh. They did not see the filth and dirt which so many of us watch today.

Qari Nu'maan would read the lesson and then repeat it. The students, who were blind, would thereafter read from memory. Qari Sahib would recite one or two Rukus at a time but when they read after his second recitation, they knew 90% or more by-heart.

They would just sit and listen to the Bukhari Shareef lessons. If we wanted to find out something the Shaykh had said, we asked them and they would tell us. ...Masha-Allah, they would just listen to the lessons and remember everything. They were gifted with such strong memories and were excellent Huffaaz.

9. USTAAZ OF DEOBAND

There was one elderly Ustaaz of Deoband. He was exceptionally pious. Every Jumu'ah, he would leave home early and take a basket to buy vegetables from the market. ...In that, we can see that there was no pride. He did not consider it below his dignity to do so. He would express happiness and joy. He would buy vegetables and then give to those who were poor and in need. ...This generosity of the heart will be found in all the Auliya Allah.

One Jumu'ah morning, he took a ghusl, changed his clothes, applied Itr and Surma, read the Kalimah, closed his eyes and passed away.

On that note, there is an incident mentioned of a woman who would cook beetroot and barley every Jumu'ah. Although a very simple and humble meal – vegetable and grain – she would give this to the Sahabah (*Radhiyallahu 'anhum*) after they completed the Jumu'ah Salaah. They were so happy to accept and eat it, and looked forward to Jumu'ah because of that meal. That was the contentment of the Sahabah (*Radhiyallahu 'anhum*). Unlike us, there was no fussing or complaining about food; rather, there was gratitude and appreciation.

10. HAZRAT MUFTI MAHMOOD SAHIB

What a great personality Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Sahib was! He was a great 'Aalim, Muhaddith and Wali of Allah Ta'ala. ...Masha-Allah.

We studied the second volume of Sahih Bukhari under Mufti Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*). I remember he was extremely fit and healthy in those days and would teach us for three or four hours at a time. When he explained, it seemed as if he was directly reading and giving quotations and quotations from other Hadith Kitaabs and literature – yet there were no other books in front of him. Subhanallah.

In the latter part of his life, he was physically weak and frail yet he continued to serve Deen until his dying day. He travelled throughout the world with great dedication in the cause of Deen. South Africa is very fortunate that Allah Ta'ala made his resting place here. May Allah Ta'ala give him the highest stages and grant us the Taufeeq to follow and emulate his noble example: dedicated and devoted in serving Deen, without seeking material gains or having worldly motives.

11. FOCUS

When Mufti Mahmood Hasan (Rahmatullahi 'alayh) was undergoing an eye operation in Calcutta, the doctors told him that he would have to be given anaesthetic, which would put him off for some time. He said to them: *“Do not worry about it. You just tell me when you are going to commence.”*

They said: *“It will be very painful. Without anaesthetic, you will not manage the procedure.”*

Mufti Sahib said: *“Just tell me when you are going to commence – that is all.”*

They knew that he was a Wali of Allah Ta'ala and conceded finally. When they were to commence the procedure, they informed him: *“We are ready to start.”*

There are hundreds of people in Calcutta who were witnesses to it, and those doctors may still be alive, and may still be operating in the same theatre. It is not a fairy tale. After the operation, people asked him about his decision not to take the anaesthetic. I too asked him: *“Hazrat, tell me, what was it? How could you have put your mind completely off from what they were doing on your eyes – without the anaesthetic?”*

Hazrat Mufti Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) replied: *“I imagined that I am standing in front of the Raudha Mubarak and I am conveying Salaam to Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam.”* ...What must have been the concentration and focus for him to be totally unaware and oblivious of what was being done on his eyes!

A similar incident transpired in the life of Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Hasan (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) Amritsari. The doctors had to amputate his leg. However, he requested that there be no anaesthetic administered. He too said: *“Just tell me when you are beginning.”* When they commenced, he commenced with Zikrullah and was so absorbed in the Zikr of Allah Ta’ala that he did not feel any pain when the amputation was done.

12. CONNECTION WITH THE QUR'AAN SHAREEF

Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) would walk from Saharanpur to Gangoh, which is about 30 or 40 kilometres away. He would leave early in the morning, after Fajr, on a Jumu'ah... no matter what the weather.

Once I asked Mufti Sahib: *"How long does it take you to reach Gangoh?"*

Hazrat Mufti Sahib replied: *"I do not know ... but Alhamdulillah, I finish ten to fifteen paras on the way."*

Hazrat Qari Tayyib Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had the daily practice of reciting one Para in the six Rakaats of Awwabeen. That was his habit without fail ... whether there were visitors or whether he was invited somewhere. His condition for accepting the invitation was that he be able to follow through with his practice.

This was the kind of connection our Akaabir had with the Qur'aan Shareef. It was not reserved for Ramadaan. A Hafiz must be able to read at any time ... not only in Ramadaan. He should maintain his connection with the Qur'aan Shareef at all times.

13. TAUFEEQ

The father of Maulana Haamid Sahib was a great and distinguished Ustaaz of Darul Uloom Deoband, Hazrat Maulana I'zaz Ali Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*). He passed away in the 1950s. He was known as Shaykhul Adab (master in Arabic literary skills). He was a very dedicated teacher. He was never found whiling his time away. At 11 p.m. and at midnight, he would be teaching. The same quality was in his son, Maulana Haamid Sahib, who had instructed me to come for lessons at midnight.

Allamah Ibraheem Balyawi (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), another very respected Ustaaz, would say: *“Looking at the students now, I get the flu. I don't find that standard in them as found in the students before them. However, the condition of Hazrat Maulana I'zaz Ali is that he would get fever if he does not see students.”*

Hazrat Maulana I'zaz Ali Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) would just be occupied in teaching and teaching, and with great Ikhlāas he served Deen. He would barely get 3 or 4 hours of sleep; such was his dedication and commitment.

Hazrat (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had given a very beautiful definition of Taufeeq. ...We are always making Dua that Allah Ta'ala grants us Taufeeq. What is Taufeeq?

Hazrat (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) explained as follows:

1.) *“When a person is desirous of achieving something, Allah Ta’ala causes the asbaab (means) and conditions to turn in his favour. Allah Ta’ala creates the conditions in the direction the person wants to go.*

2.) *Allah Ta’ala makes easy the road towards khayr (goodness) and makes the road towards evil, difficult.*

...Allah Ta’ala shuts the doors of evil and mischief, or creates barriers as protection.

3.) *Allah Ta’ala gives the person the himmat (courage) and strength to undertake the action of khayr and obedience.”*

We must ask Allah Ta’ala for Taufeeq. ...Little children ask for toffee; we must ask Allah Ta’ala for Taufeeq.

14. MOCKERY OF THE SUNNAH

On one journey to India by ship, a very intellectual person was sitting with us and eating his food with his left hand. He was using a fork as well.

Since the person was a Muslim, one ‘Aalim politely brought it to his attention that it is not permissible for us to eat with

our left hand and it is a Sunnah to eat with the right hand. He made a joke of it and at the same time – Allah Ta’ala’s Qudrat – the fork he was using pierced his tongue.

This mockery of Deen is very dangerous. A person can lose his Imaan. It is related that a person was eating with his left hand. Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam told him to eat with his right hand. He said: *‘I cannot eat with the right hand’* – but this was said out of pride. [There was nothing wrong with his hand.]

Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam said: *“You will never be able to do that (eat with your right hand.)”*²⁸

After that, life long, he could not make use of his right hand.

15. MALARIA

In the 1960s, I was traveling from Bombay to Durban. I contracted malaria on the ship. It was not an easy journey and not easy to survive in those conditions. I had very high temperature. A doctor gave me quinine – which was very, very bitter. Quinine is a medication that was used to treat malaria. I had to take it. ...Sometimes, the medication that has to be taken is extremely bitter.

²⁸ Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2021

The Mashaa'ikh have to also give us medication for our spiritual ailments. Some medication is bitter but it makes the person spiritually better. A mureed should be prepared to be corrected, no matter how bitter the prescription.

Malaria is spread through mosquitoes carrying the disease. It is a serious disease which can be fatal. When the infected mosquito bites into the skin, it injects parasites into the bloodstream, leading to sickness that can last for months if left untreated. The nafs-ammarah is like that infected mosquito. It carries spiritual disease and causes great harm to the heart and soul. If left untreated, it can be spiritually fatal and can destroy a person's Imaan and Akhirah.

16. ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

In the 1960s, when we were in India, some of the Jalsas were held at the grounds in Delhi. Massive crowds of people – hundreds of thousands of people – would attend. There would be no arrangements for tents, etc. Those Jalsas were open-air events. The people hosted the Jalsas in that way because they said that the monsoon would only start on a certain day in June or July. They expected the rains on time. For many years, that is exactly what would happen. There would be no rain when the Jalsas were hosted. If there was

rain, it would be a slight drizzle which cooled the atmosphere.

I spent seven years there. During the holidays, we would go to one of the villages. When they planted and reaped their crops, everything happened for them on time. That was when people were obedient to Allah Ta'ala. People engaged in Ibaadaat; the entire village would be occupied in Tilawat during the early morning. There was hayaa, shame and good character. Allah Ta'ala made everything work in their favour.

Since our sins have increased and our obedience to Allah Ta'ala has decreased – and instead of Ibaadaat, there is Bollywood, Hollywood and so much of immodesty – the entire system changed. Now, when hot weather is expected, it is cold; when it is to be very cold, it is very hot; when no rain is expected, there are floods and when rain is expected, there is drought.

Everything has changed because of our actions. Our actions bring about reactions. If good actions go up, good reactions come down. And if we send up bad actions, so a bad reaction follows. If we make Taubah and we return to Allah Ta'ala's obedience, we will enjoy harmony and balance in everything.

17. REMAIN DEEP IN THE OCEAN

When we were in India, the people would catch fish from the taalaabs (ponds) with their hands. Due to the heat, the water would evaporate and the fish would be left flapping about, due to the lack of water. This made it very easy to catch the fish. The shallow water became even more shallow with the heat of the sun.

We must take lesson. If the fish is deep down in water, there is protection. If it swims near the surface, it is easily caught. In the Dua, we ask Allah Ta'ala: *“O Allah, make us the fish that swim deep down in the ocean of your Ma'rifat...”* so that nafs and shaytaan cannot trap us.

18. I'TIKAAF

Alhamdulillah, we were granted the opportunity to make I'tikaaf in Saharanpur with Shaykhul Hadith, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*). This was in the 1960s. The Masjid was small and the crowd was big. Due to the very limited space, those making I'tikaaf could barely turn left or right. We just had a sheet or blanket. There was no such thing as mattresses for I'tikaaf. Despite the situation, people spent the time as it should be spent. Despite being with everyone, there was still seclusion.

*“Whilst occupied in the world, he is still with Allah.
And in spite of being with everyone,
he is still away from everyone.”*

With that kind of I'tikaaf, Alhamdulillah, there was change – there was a difference in the person's life after the I'tikaaf. Today, I'tikaaf has become like a feast for us, with more focus on the food, or more time to spend on the cell phone. The person must think: *I have placed myself at the door of Allah Ta'ala. These nights are opportunities for me to shed tears and beg Allah Ta'ala for reformation and forgiveness, for myself and the entire Ummah.*

May Allah Ta'ala give us the concern to spend the I'tikaaf as it should be spent.

19. INCIDENT IN A VILLAGE

There was a time when it was difficult to get even one person to sit in I'tikaaf. Once, during Ramadaan, in my student days, I was in one of the villages there in India for a while. It was the 20th fast and the village people were struggling to get someone to sit for I'tikaaf. Somehow, they got hold of a person and told him that he would have to sit in I'tikaaf otherwise the whole town will be sinful. They brought him to

the Masjid, arranged his bedding and assured him: *“Don’t worry. We will provide food and whatever you require.”*

They then told him: *“Make your intention. ...Make it quickly.”*

They were so afraid that he may not make the intention and would leave the Masjid that they insisted he do so. He made his intention and sat for I’tikaaf. However, there were some mischievous youth ... which we deal with everywhere. During the night, they started throwing stones on the Masjid roof. The poor man got so frightened that he ran out of the Masjid, and that was the end of his I’tikaaf

To find someone to sit in I’tikaaf was and still is the condition in some remote areas. Alhamdulillah, we are so fortunate. With all the work of Deen taking place, the Darul Uloom, the Khanqahs, the work of Tabligh, etc. so many are now interested in I’tikaaf and sit in I’tikaaf.

20. CHOOSING A SHAYKH

We were on the platform of the Surat station, waiting for a train. I saw, with my own eyes, hundreds of people coming forward to shake the hands and kiss the feet of a person who was seated there. He was clean-shaven and was smoking away. The people were presenting their requests to him and

he was informing them that their requests were presented and replied to.

I asked someone: “*Who is that person?*”

He replied: “*The peer of this area. These people present their requests to him and he tells them that he presents them to a Buzurg who is in his grave. He tells the people that he gets replies for them and then informs them of those replies.*”

He was deceiving the people. ...When it comes to choosing a Shaykh, we must not be blind. We must be wide awake. The person we choose as our mentor should have the Khauf and Ma’rifat of Allah Ta’ala. In his life, there should be the fulfilment of Allah Ta’ala’s Commandments. His character should be a resemblance of what is found in the Sunnah and there should be abstinence from all the prohibitions.

21. MIRACLE OF THE QUR’AAN SHAREEF

A massive Jalsa was held in Muzaffarnagar, which is about 100 kilometres from Delhi. There must have been about one hundred thousand people attending. While delivering one of the talks, the speaker, who was an ‘Aalim, stopped mid-sentence. He said: “*I am having a little difficulty with this Aayah... What is the correct Aayah?*”

After being told, he asked: “How many Huffaaz are there in this programme? Stand up.”

The Jalsa was not a Hifz Qur’aan Jalsa. The Jalsa comprised of other issues. This question was asked by the way. Hundreds of people stood up. The ‘Aalim said: “Is this not the miracle of the Qur’aan Shareef? We have not gathered for this but there are hundreds of Huffaaz present who can correct me if I make a mistake.”

Allah Ta’ala preserves the Qur’aan Shareef:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ۝

“VERILY, WE HAVE SENT DOWN THE REMINDER (THE QUR’AAN SHAREEF), AND WE ARE THERE TO PROTECT IT.”

[SURAH AL-HIJR 15: 9]

The Qur’aan Shareef is not given to the Hafiz through ‘election’, rather by Allah Ta’ala’s selection. Allah Ta’ala selects the hearts. One of our Akaabir beautifully said: “It is not the Hafiz who protects the Qur’aan Shareef; rather it is the Qur’aan Shareef that protects the Hafiz.”

22. A FAMOUS POET

There was a Hindu person who was a great poet. He had accepted Islam after studying the life of Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam*. He knew Urdu extremely well and composed many beautiful Naat Shareefs, Hamd, Ash’aar and Nazms.

In 1963, I was present at a massive programme of the Jami’atul Ulama Hind. It was an open-air programme in one of the largest parks in Delhi. More than 150 000 people attended. That poet, who had accepted Islam, was requested to recite some poetry. ...Because he had come from a Hindu background and was well-known, his family and others came down on him very hard. They told him that he had made a big mistake by accepting Islam. Many rejected and shunned him, taunted, humiliated and troubled him. It seemed as if all the doors had closed for him.

...If a person is weak in his faith and not convinced within his heart, then on small tests also, he becomes shaken and can give up Islam. We are not like Hazrat Bilal (*Radhiyallahu ‘anh*) who was persecuted and whipped, yet continued saying ‘Ahad, Ahad’... Allah is One. Sadly, our weakness is such that if someone laughs at us, we become despondent; instead of pleasing Allah Ta’ala, we then seek to please people.

I can still hear the words of that poet ringing in my ears, as if he was reciting just a little while ago. He came onto the stage. The poem that he read on that occasion was a reflection of what trials he was undergoing. Some of those words stuck to my heart. He said:

“O Allah, I have accepted Islam for my salvation.

*I have believed in You as an All-Powerful, All-Mighty, All-Seeing,
All-Hearing, All-Knowing, Omnipresent, Omnipotent Allah.*

*I truly believe that You are The Wise and whatever difficulties,
hardships, pain and suffering I go through are a test and trial.*

*I am unconcerned, irrespective of what kind of difficulties
I have to face.*

I am not even complaining to You.

*If everyone - the entire creation of Yours - has to turn away from me
because I have become a Believer in You, I am unconcerned.*

*My beloved Allah, if You have to turn away Your glance of mercy, I
will have no ground to stand on.*

I acknowledge that I am a very, very sinful servant

But O my beloved Allah, don't drop me from Your Sight.”

This poetry was from a Hindu person who had come into Islam, facing great difficulties. Look at the humility. Look at his love for Allah Ta'ala and his trust in Allah Ta'ala. ...Those who come into Islam appreciate Islam and Imaan despite the

tests and trials that come their way. May Allah Ta'ala grant us strong Imaan and Tawakkul.

23. SICKNESS AND CURE

Once, I was travelling to Bombay by ship – The Karanja. I had a very high temperature after we passed Mombasa. It was my first trip to India. A Muslim doctor on board advised me: *“Drink some brandy. It will cure you.”*

Naturally, I was surprised by his suggestion. Not only was this coming from a doctor, but from a Muslim doctor. To the extent of what I know, doctors always advise avoiding alcohol. Here was a doctor advising the opposite. I did not follow through with his advice and Alhamdulillah, I recovered. There are natural and Halaal ways of treating fever.

It is stated in a Hadith that for every sickness there is a cure. Allah Ta'ala has sent sicknesses and cures. However, the right medicine must be taken for the right period of time, in the right quantity, with the right diet, etc. If not, one may not get cured. There are medicines which have not yet been discovered. Moreover, cure is only on the permission of Allah Ta'ala.

Rasulullah *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam* said: “Allah Ta’ala has sent down both the disease and the cure, and He has appointed a cure for every disease. So treat yourselves, but use nothing unlawful.”²⁹

Taking medicine is Sunnah but we should not place our trust in the medication. Shifa is from Allah Ta’ala. This should be our Yaqeen (conviction).

24. VISITING A MAZAAR

It is permissible and rewarding to visit the graves of the pious. However, the problems arise with regard to what happens at these places, which are known as mazaars. Many are racketeers, who are there to just milk gullible people of their money. In India, there was a government report that stated that from amongst the richest people were those managing the mazaars. They make millions of rupees from people, from all over the world.

So many go there and are told to write down their wishes, and they will get a reply from the deceased ... but they will have to also give some money. In their gullibility and ignorance, they believe that and give. The person says to

²⁹ Sunan Abi Dawood

them: *“I will then make a personal presentation of your request to the Buzurg.”*

We obviously do not believe that the person who is in the grave can fulfil our needs or that we should pray to him. To believe this is Shirk.

At one mazaar, the building is very big and a person does not see the entire set-up. There, they have a box. When a person visits, someone will ask: *“Do you want to shake hands with the Shaykh in the grave?”*

Again, an ignorant and gullible person will fall for that charade. If the person says: ‘Yes’, he is told to put his hand inside. He does not know what is below the box. Then his ring is pulled out and his watch is taken out. If he complains that his watch or ring was stolen, the person says: *“You are so fortunate that Hazrat liked your watch and accepted your ring!”*

In the meantime, they are just running a racket there, swindling the people of their money and valuables.

There is a great Wali buried in Agra, where the famous Taj Mahal is. There, a person came with rings made of string and said to me: *“Wear this ring and seek what you want from Hazrat.”*

I asked him: *“When Hazrat was alive, did he have any needs?”*

The person said: “Yes.”

I asked: “Who did he ask?”

He replied: “Allah.”

I then said: “Should we then not ask Allah Ta’ala? Why must we ask Hazrat?”

He got very angry with me.

25. ALLAH TA’ALA’S SYSTEM

In the late 1960s, I spent the Madrasah holiday – which was in Ramadaan – in a village. On the 27th night of Ramadaan, a son slapped his father in an argument. It really shocked me.

I was staying with my aunt. She did not seem surprised by the incident and mentioned to me: “*The father (who was slapped), had hit his own father on the 27th night of Ramadaan many, many years ago. Now, exactly the same has been done by his son.*”

This is Allah Ta’ala’s system. What goes around, comes around. How we treat others is how we will be treated. And when it comes to one’s parents, the dangers are much more – because punishment descends in this world as well.

There is an incident of a son who was dragging his elderly father in a violent manner. When he reached a tree, the father said: *‘O my son! You should stop here. If you drag me any further, it will be zulm.’*

The son replied: *‘Was I not making zulm all this while?’*

The father said: *“No. When I was your age, I did the same to my father but I dragged him to this tree and stopped. If you go further, it will be zulm.”*

26. A FATHER

One day, an elderly father and his son were sitting in their garden. A crow landed on a branch of a tree. On seeing the bird, the father asked his son: *“Son, what is that?”*

The son replied: *“A crow.”*

After a little while the father asked: *“Son, what is that?”*

The son replied: *“A crow.”*

After some time had passed, the father asked for the third time: *“Son, what is that?”*

The son, extremely annoyed, asked: *“How many times are you going to ask the same question? How many times do I have to tell you that it is a crow?!”*

The elderly man then told his son: *“Son, bring me my diary.”*

The son went into the house, brought back an old book and gave it to the father. In the diary, the father had written certain incidents and their dates. The father opened his diary and turned to a particular page. He said to his son: *‘I wish to read an incident out to you, so listen...*

Today, my little son was playing in the garden when he saw a crow. Pointing to the crow, he asked me: “Dad, what is that?”

I replied: “Son, it is a crow.”

After a while, my son asked me: “Dad, what is that?”

I again replied, with love: “Son, it is a crow.”

My beloved son asked me the same question eleven times that day while he played in the garden: “Dad, what is that?”

Each time, with love and kindness, I said: “Son, it is a crow.”

Then the father turned to his son and said: *“I asked you only three times and you became so impatient and irritated. You asked me eleven times, yet I did not show any displeasure... because you are my son.”*

Of course, rights go both ways. Parents have rights and children also have rights. Unfortunately, we have brought so much of Haraam into our homes and have given our children so much of freedom, that for some parents, the children are now like a nightmare.

There is a well-known incident of a man who came to Hazrat ‘Umar (*Radhiyallahu ‘anhu*) and complained of his son’s disobedience. Hazrat ‘Umar (*Radhiyallahu ‘anhu*) called for the boy and chastised him for being disobedient to his father.

The boy asked: “O Ameerul Mu’mineen, does a child have any rights over his father?”

Hazrat ‘Umar (*Radhiyallahu ‘anhu*) replied: “Yes, of course. The father should choose the mother of his children, give them good names and teach them Deen.”

The boy said: “O Ameerul Mu’mineen, my father has done none of this.”

Hazrat ‘Umar (*Radhiyallahu ‘anhu*) reproached the father, saying: “You complain to me about the disobedience of your son, yet you failed in your duty to him before he failed in his duty to you. You wronged him before he wronged you.”

27. FINAL YEAR

May Allah Ta’ala safeguard from any riyaa or kibr. ...In the last days before our examination, of our final year in Darul Uloom Deoband, our entire day went in studies. After Fajr Salaah, we would prepare to go to class. We would have a quick cup of tea if that was possible; otherwise head for class since the lesson commenced at 6 a.m.

From 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. we had lessons in Bukhari Shareef. Before that lesson, we were taught other Kitaabs. Then, there were lessons after Zuhr and after Maghrib. At night, from 8 p.m. until midnight, we again had our Bukhari Shareef lesson. We used to get tired – but our Shaykh Fakhruddin would sit and discuss one or two Hadith for the entire lesson without any indication of tiredness, until one minute to midnight. Allah Ta’ala had blessed him with such spiritual strength.

28. BOGUS PEERS

There are many bogus Peers and con artists. They play the roles of Auliya but their “Karamat” was and is only to extract money from the pockets of others.

In our student days, we were shown a man and told that he is the Peer of the people of Punjab. When he goes there, he is treated with great honour. They carry him, kiss his feet and give him gifts ... but believe me, I saw myself ... his pocket was so big and had about twenty packets of cigarettes. He would smoke and give his cigarettes as “tabarruk”³⁰.

That was the Jahalat and ignorance of the people; that they just accepted him as a Peer. ...However, there are people here in South Africa and in other parts of the world who are also very naïve.

One person was serving a fraudulent ‘Shaykh’ and the Shaykh would have a kind of flame burning and would say that he sees certain things in the flames. When people would come to see him, he would keep his face covered. However, there was a hidden camera by the door. He could see the person who had arrived and his khaadim would also describe him and discreetly give information of the person before they met.

When the person would sit down, the Shaykh, who had his face covered, would begin to describe the person and relay the information as given by the khaadim. The person would get carried away, whereas the Shaykh picked up the

³⁰ Tabarruk: An item or relic which is regarded blessed

description from the camera, and the khaadim secretly conveyed the person's problems to him. The khaadim would also tell the person to remain silent since the Shaykh is so gifted and will be able to tell him what he came for. These are the tricks which people play. Allah Ta'ala protect us from falling for all these deceptions and scams.

29. CIVILISED THEFT

Once, we walked out of one of the hotels in Bombay, heading for the airport. This was around 1970. One of my family members was with. He was from Surat. I had one bag with some belongings. When we came out of the hotel, Allah Ta'ala put it into my mind, to take out my wallet and small hand luggage, which was in the main bag and carry it separately. ...I was going to just leave both in the main bag until we got to the airport and take them out there.

After taking out the wallet and small bag, I locked the main bag. A porter came to me and offered to carry the bag. He had a basket. ...They used to put the bag in the basket and carried it on their heads. I agreed and we walked on. When we came to the taxi, I turned to the man to get my bag. Another man was walking with us. That man had disappeared with my bag and someone else was walking alongside us with an empty

basket so that we would not realise that the bag was gone. That is how they carried out their theft.

Although I travel very light, it was a lesson. We were students at the time and perhaps it was an experience by which I could caution my colleagues. ...In a civilised manner, those thieves “lighten your burden”.

We went to report the incident to the police. The police officer said: *“This is the 20th (or 25th) case of the day ... of the same method of theft.”* ...How many people were victims!

He then said: *“If you want to get your bag, go to a certain gulley. You will find someone there. You can buy it from him.”*

I replied: *“I have to get to the airport.”*

From the manner in which I was being advised, it was as if the police were working hand in hand with them. He knew exactly where I would find the bag and wanted me to go and buy my own bag and items back, yet was not interested in making an arrest.

30. ADVERTISEMENTS

There was a magazine – a decent magazine – which was published in India in our student days. There was an

advertisement: *“Coat hanger: Use it anywhere. ...Hang your coat in the room, office, etc. ... 1 Rupee.”*

At that time, one Rupee was about 10 cents.

Many Madrasah students ordered it and perhaps many other readers who had seen the advertisement. I was going to order one but decided to see what the others got. It came well wrapped and when it was opened it was a 4-inch nail ... with instructions: **Knock the nail anywhere you want, to hang your coat.**

Now, can anyone report the person? What he advertised was not a lie, but it was deceptive. People come up with some ‘excellent’ business ideas ... tricking and deceiving people in such a way that you cannot catch them out. But generally, they meet their match at some time and have the experience of being deceived as well.

Many people market products deceptively. They know fully well that it is a useless product and does not meet the description given, but they sell it to make money. Many use the great bounty of Aql (intelligence) to usurp, cheat, loot, etc. They may make some easy money but a time comes when the bubble bursts. ...That same Aql could have been used for so much of good. On the other hand, people work hard for

their money and then lose it in seconds ... because of different types of temptations. As such, they are easily fleeced.

31. FALSE TRADE

There were many gold sellers in the bazaars of Delhi. The gold market is famous there. People engaged in the speculation kind of selling. The person would sell stock which was not in his possession. They did not have the actual commodity to trade. They did not have the gold in hand but they sold it for so many Dollars. For example, the first person would sell it for \$100 and the second would sell it to another for \$110 and the third would sell it to another for \$115. However, nothing was traded. Then, when someone would agree to the price, pay for it and ask for his gold, the reply would be: *"It has not been delivered to me."* The seller pays the previous seller and the previous seller pays the seller before him. Whether he does pay is another matter ... but nothing arrived.

Hazrat Maulana Saeed Khan Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) and the Muftis in that time said to them that their dealings were not correct. They were told it was Haraam and Allah Ta'ala's Azaab will descend if they do not make Taubah and give that up. They made a joke of it and said in response that is how they make money ... and continued doing so.

It was not long after those warnings that the riots started and Muslim shops were burnt and completely destroyed. Millions and millions were lost.

A Muslim cannot digest Haraam without being punished. Hazrat Maulana Thanwi (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had explained that a dog gains nourishment from bones, but if a human being eats bones, thinking he will also get nourishment, he will land up in the Qabrastan. What is good for the dog's nutrition is not good for the human being. Similarly, what seems good to the Kuffaar is not good for the Muslim. The Kuffaar consume interest, wine, swine and are involved in other Haraam ... and they seem to enjoy and benefit. This is, after all, their Jannah. If the Muslim engages in Haraam, he will face punishment and destruction. In this world as well, he will taste the disastrous consequences of Haraam.

32. DEATH AND FUNERALS

When we were in India, there was an incident where a person went to the market and bought a watermelon. ...The watermelons in Delhi were very sweet and also very big. He took it home and invited his friends to share it with. He sliced the melon and had everything ready for entertaining. When they arrived, he picked up one slice of the watermelon to

taste. When he brought it to his mouth, he collapsed and passed away. ...No one enjoyed that watermelon. His friends also did not eat because everyone was in shock and grief. ...Death is any time.

Of course, nowadays, we have a very different outlook on funerals. We have a feast and a nice, good party when someone passes away. We even ask what the menu is, or we anticipate a good meal. Sometimes an announcement is made in the Qabrastan that food will be served. There is just no balance. We then give many excuses to justify our behaviour. We say that the family is big and we need to cater for all, including friends and neighbours. However, this is not Sunnah. It is very much against the Sunnah.

The Sunnah is that we should take some food to the bereaved, to relieve them of that concern, or we can take a few of the guests home and feed them, but no ... we, who live in the neighbourhood, who are local; we will sit to eat first. There is just no consideration and feeling.

Nowadays the Qabrastan too has become a fish market; worldly matters and business deals are discussed there. We form our groups and chat away until the burial is over. We talk of everything but we don't reflect and think of our own death. May Allah Ta'ala guide us.

33. MAULANA NASEER AND THE JINN

Many years ago, when I went to Hyderabad, I met an ‘Aalim, Maulana Naseer. He has passed away. He lived in a house which was known as a ‘haunted’ house before he purchased it. Anyone who went there had some bad experience and could not live there. Maulana Naseer was not afraid by the stories that circulated regarding the ‘haunted’ house. He purchased the house at a very cheap price since no one wanted to live there. After buying the house and going inside, he found that there were many Jinns living there.

There was an old person present during our conversation. Maulana Naseer said to me: *“Ask this old man what happened.”*

The old man said: *“Maulana asked me to bring a pot and to bring oil and light a fire. Maulana then addressed the Jinn and told them to either disappear or they will be burnt. One by one, they all left because they were afraid.”*

There was an old lady – who was a Jinn – and she was also residing there. She said to Maulana Naseer: *“I have been living here for 190 years. Where am I going to go? I have a daughter who is also very old. Allow us to remain here. We will appreciate it.”*

The house was a very big building. Maulana said to the old lady: *“You are welcome to stay here on condition that you do not trouble my guests and you do not make mischief.”*

Both mother and daughter agreed.

After relating the story, Maulana Naseer asked me: *“Are you interested in meeting the old lady and her daughter?”*

I replied: *“Jazakallah khayr ... but I will pass on this meeting.”* Light-heartedly, I added: *“I am not sure if I will sleep tonight and I will be catching the first train tomorrow.”*

Maulana replied: *“They will not trouble.”*

The Jinnaat are afraid of us. We should not be afraid of them. Read the Quls and Ayatul Kursi for protection, but do not become paranoid or become obsessed about the Jinn. We are not here to fight with them or even take control of them.

34. TWO JINN STUDENTS

One night, there were two students studying on the roof garden of the Madrasah in India. They had their lamp burning while they were studying. There were another two students nearby and they requested those two students: *“Please reduce the light of your lamp.”*

The students remarked: *“Carry on with your studying and leave us alone!”*

The two students, who had made the request, began to rise up into the sky from where they were seated. They were Jinn. The other two students got such a fright that they ran from the top, down the stairs. One even fell and broke his leg.

In Rander, there is a very big Madrasah. In one room, there were about five students staying. One night – around midnight – each one was telling the other to go and switch off the light. Finally, one student extended his hand from where he was sleeping to the switch which was at the other end of the room. Of course, the others did not remain in the room when they observed that. All of them ran for their lives.

We had seen a lot in India ... and perhaps when our great-grandfathers came to South Africa, they brought some of their friends with!

35. KHUDA BAKHSH LIBRARY

There is a library in Patna, which is about one thousand miles from Delhi. I had the opportunity to go to that library. It is called the Khuda Bakhsh Library. It is a massive library with

thousands of Islamic books, many of which are not available today.

In that library, there is one section which preserves the different hand-written copies of the Qur'aan Shareef and other printed copies. There is one copy which the library authorities do not show to visitors. This is a copy which the Shias claim is their 40 Para 'Qur'aan'. We got to see this copy.

In it, many Aayaat were extended; many Aayaat were deleted and many Aayaat were introduced. The Shias find it very difficult to publish, propagate or distribute because the people will not accept it. They know this. Therefore, they say that they will leave it to their Imam Mahdi to come out with it before Qiyamah.

The Mahdi of the Shias is different to the Mahdi that we believe in. Hazrat Maulana Manzoor No'maani (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) of Lucknow wrote a book which became very popular – “Khomeini, Iranian Revolution and the Shi'ite Faith”. In this book, he exposed the false beliefs of the Shias.

It is important for us to be aware of these fitnahs. Of course, the Shias employ Taqiyya. They lie a lot and claim to follow true Islam. They have created a great deal of mischief and still do, and are a very dangerous sect. May Allah Ta'ala safeguard us from all fitan.

36. PRIORITISING TILAWAH

Like in all Madaaris, in Darul Uloom Deoband, it was customary that all the students read Qur'aan Shareef every morning.

In our student days, during the holidays, we would go to the villages. There was so much of security that in the summertime, the menfolk would place their beds outside and sleep outside. The doors of the homes would just be left open ... very different to our situation these days. At the time of Fajr, if a person took a walk after the Fajr Salaah, he would have found all the men sitting on their beds outside, reciting the Qur'aan Shareef.

This recitation of Qur'aan Shareef is the hallmark of the Muslims. Unfortunately, it is now absent in the lives of the majority of us. Today, we prefer to check what is on CNN, BBC, our email, the messages on our phones – or listen to music or other Haraam. We moved away from Deen, we left off these great, righteous deeds – and we can see our lamentable condition throughout the world.

37. FRAGRANCE OF JANNAH

Hazrat Maulana Ahmad ‘Ali Lahori (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) was a great ‘Aalim who passed away in the 1950s. He was extremely particular about the food he ate – that it must be 100% Halaal. This should be every Muslim’s concern. Hazrat was blessed with Kashf³¹ and Karamaat³².

There was a college nearby and Hazrat would often invite the students from the college. He would tell them to stay with him, eat his food for forty days, and thereafter they will understand the realities of Deen, life after death, Aakhirah, etc. This was because some of them did not believe in the Azaab and rewards in the Qabr. Many took all of this in jest and did not take his advice seriously. Due to the influence of the secular education and secular environment, they trivialised the teachings of Deen. This is what happens in such places: Religion is just trampled upon.

When Hazrat passed away and was buried, for days and days, there was such a beautiful fragrance that emanated from his grave – which was not a fragrance of this world. Allah Ta’ala showed those same students also, that he was inviting them to Haq. They did not believe in the life of Barzakh, but what

³¹ Kashf: unveiling of some hidden knowledge

³² Karamaat: miracles at the hands of a Wali of Allah Ta’ala.

explanation could they give regarding the unique fragrance coming forth from his grave?

Thousands in Lahore were witness to the incident. Many people took the sand from the grave. Some of that sand was taken to the laboratory for testing. They too could not find where the fragrance was coming from. Since so many people were coming and taking the sand, the Auliya of the time made Dua and the fragrance disappeared.

One ‘Aalim mentioned to me: *“In that emotional state, I also took some of the sand from the grave because of the beautiful and unique fragrance. I wrapped some up in my handkerchief and went home. However, I knew it was not permissible. I thought: How could I do something like this? I took it back and emptied out the handkerchief. Since then, the handkerchief has undergone dozens of washes but the fragrance has not decreased in the least.”*

38. ALLAH TA’ALA’S PROTECTION

When we think of security, we think of burglar guards, electric fencing, security systems, laser beams and so forth. However, during our 24 hours, so many misfortunes can strike us, which are not hindered by burglar guards and security systems. We are not even aware of the different ways that Allah Ta’ala offers us security.

When we are fast asleep, we require security in the ears, nostrils and even the mouth. Some sleep with their mouths open. Allah Ta'ala forbid, an insect or cockroach can enter, but Allah Ta'ala is protecting. Whilst asleep, bees could have entered the room and caused harm. We have heard of insects entering the ears of people or the mouth...

Here, in South Africa, we live differently. In India, we would get up from our sleep and see a scorpion or more than one scorpion coming out from the wall or the floor. Bugs, fleas and mosquitos were so common. Who protected from all these creatures? Who protected from the stings of those scorpions? ...Allah Ta'ala protects. In so many different ways, Allah Ta'ala extends His protection. We should continuously make Shukr to Allah Ta'ala.

39. TRAVEL IN THE EARLY DAYS

In our days, in India, they had a tradition of a wedding season – which is according to the Hindu beliefs. There were a lot of people travelling in that time. If we had to travel at the same time, we just jumped in on the Express train with luggage and baggage. It would take 18 – 20 hours to travel from Delhi to Bombay.

If we could not get the Express train, we had to opt for the Dehradun Express which took 36 hours from Delhi to Bombay since it stopped at every station. Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl that He gave us the strength and energy to undertake such travel. Now, I cannot even imagine travelling like that.

When we travelled by ship, we were in third class. It would take twenty-one days to reach South Africa. Third class was the lower deck, which was also dark. There were just bunk beds ... like the prison beds. One hundred beds in a line and double bunks. There were no separate compartments. If anyone became seasick and started vomiting, you can imagine the problem. Sometimes a few passengers would become seasick. ...We would come out from the lower decks like roasted chicken.

Once, on the way back to South Africa from Bombay, the month of Ramadaan commenced. Alhamdulillah, we managed to keep the fasts. The ship then reached Maputo, which was then known as Lourenço Marques ... the port city and capital of Mozambique. The area was well-known for its storms. The ship was caught in a storm and was in one place, going around and around. You can imagine!

The time of Isha set in and the storm was not abating. In those dire conditions, we could have read our Salaah sitting, in our places. However, about five of us decided to perform

Salaah in another area. We got up and managed to make Wudhu in those conditions, holding on to whatever was near us to complete Wudhu.

Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl, the moment we commenced with Salaah in Jamaat, there was so much of calm. The ship also began to move forward. We then told the others to join us since the conditions had become calm and there was no excuse. Alhamdulillah, we read Isha, Taraweeh and Witr in Jamaat. Due to the blessings of Salaah in Jamaat, all was well and we finished without difficulty. We then went down to our bunks. As soon as we did, the storm developed again and gripped the ship. The situation became very frightening.

There were Muslims, Christians, Hindus and others in the lower deck. Everyone started praying desperately. People were crying aloud and praying, thinking that death had arrived. Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala's Ihsaan, the ship got out of the storm and we reached Durban.

Sometimes Allah Ta'ala puts us in these circumstances so that we make His Ibaadah, Taubah and Dua. Sometimes, you are made to turn to Allah Ta'ala and this too is a Rahmah from Allah Ta'ala.

40. SPRING

In the days when we were in India, we found the Hakeems to be excellent in their field. They would just have to feel one's pulse to diagnose the sickness. We were told that the best season to detoxify was the season of spring.

Whilst spring is the season for detoxifying the physical body, Allah Ta'ala has given us the beautiful 'season' of Ramadaan, which is spring for the Believers. It is the time when we can detoxify our souls. Unfortunately, our spiritual sinuses are clogged and we don't sense the fragrance of this spiritual season. Often, we go back to what we were once Ramadaan passes. Whereas Ramadaan is to spring-clean and detoxify our spiritual hearts, to remove the impurities, to unclog our arteries of sins, and rejuvenate and revitalize our souls.

41. HAZRAT MAULANA ABRARUL HAQ (RA)

After completing the Darul Uloom course, I travelled around India for another six or seven months. I spent some time with Hazrat Maulana Abrarul Haq in Hardoi. On arrival, Hazrat (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) said to me that I must take a copy of Noorani Qaidah and go to the Qari Sahib. I joined the class and did the Noorani Qaidah. I sat with the little children ...

and went through the kitaab. Qari Sahib started me with ‘Alif, Baa, Taa ...’

[Another example of Hazrat Maulana’s humility. Despite completing the ‘Aalim course and having already learnt to read the Qur’aan Shareef as well as memorize part of it, Maulana (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) followed the instruction and again did the Noorani Qaidah in a class of little children.]

Chapter Five

RETURN FROM INDIA

1. THE GRAVEYARD

In 1969, after about seven years, I returned from India. In those days, communication was not easy. It took about twenty-one days by surface mail, for a letter to reach home and another twenty-one days for the reply to reach India. Once in two months there was communication... not like today, with the technology and cell-phone.

At that time, there were no Darul Uloom in South Africa. If a student left home for Darul Uloom, he would return after three years and then after four years. This was obviously a test for the parents – to be separated from their children. However, they sacrificed so that their children learn Deen. May Allah Ta'ala reward them abundantly.

For the student, going to a Darul Uloom there, he would have to adapt to the different conditions ... and also be prepared for the barrage of mosquitoes, bugs and fleas. There were also scorpions which would sometimes come out from the walls or the floor of the rooms. The temperatures were sometimes between 45 degrees and 55 degrees. It was really Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl that took us through those days.

When I returned in 1969, the first place I went to was the Qabrastan. Four years had gone by since my last visit and in that seven-year period so many people had left the world and were in the Qabrastan. When I went there, I looked at the names of those who were buried there. There were ‘Ulama, Sulaha, cricketers, footballers, business people, professionals, elderly people and children. Some notices stated that the person was visiting the town and was from a foreign country. ...The graveyard offers such a lesson.

Irrespective of who we are, the destination is the Qabrastan. Even if a person drowns and is eaten by a fish or the person was burnt, everyone goes through the phase of ‘Barzakh’.

We have been sent in this world and have to prepare for our stay in the grave and hereafter. This is not about purchasing a grave or digging the grave ... and making those worldly preparations. Our preparation is implementing the teachings of the Qur’aan Shareef and Sunnah, following Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam*. We have to exercise some discipline and become practical on Deen. We will have to walk the path of Shari’ah if we want our graves to be a place of comfort, and if we want salvation and success in the Hereafter.

2. IMAMAT

In 1969, I returned home from Deoband. I had just arrived in Stanger and the next morning, a few minutes before the Fajr Salaah, the Imam Sahib told me to make Imamat.

It was my first time making Imamat and I had no experience. We did not get that opportunity at the Darul Uloom. The Madrasah had over 2000 students and the Imams were fixed Imams. Since I knew Surah Kahf very well, I decided that I will read that Surah and began practicing Surah Kahf in my mind. When I took my place on the Musallah, I was very nervous. I said the Takbeer and I started off with Surah Kahf, forgetting to read Surah Fatihah. The Musallis said: '*Alhamdulillah...*'

I thought: *I am reading 'Alhamdulillah...'*, and began with Surah Kahf again, not realising that I am reading Surah Kahf instead of Surah Fatihah. This happened three or four times before I realised my error. That was because my mind was not in the Imamat; it was on the Surah that I had selected to read. ...Hence the wisdom in the Mas'alah that an Imam should not prepare as to which Surahs he will be reciting in the Salaah.

...Although of a different kind, an incident comes to mind of a Shaykh of Tafseer, who had thousands of students. On one occasion, after the Asr Salaah, he, together with some of his students took a walk. They reached another Masjid just before Maghrib. The people there insisted that the Shaykh lead them in Salaah.

In the first Rakaat, after Surah Fatihah, he read Surah Alam Nashra. Immediately upon reciting the first verse, he began to give the Tafseer of Jalalain in Arabic. He was so proficient in teaching Tafseer and it was so instinctive in him that he mistakenly brought the Tafseer into the Salaah!

3. THE ROSE GARDEN

One of my uncles – Chota Mota – was an artist. Amongst his paintings, he had a picture of a rose in a hand. The thorn from the rose flower had injured the person's thumb and blood trickled down the thumb. When I returned home from India, he asked me to choose any painting. I chose this particular one since it conveyed a message with deep meaning. ...What is the message?

Don't think that there is no danger in the rose garden. That garden may be filled with all kinds of charming, colourful and fragrant rose flowers, but don't go in thinking that there is no

danger. Beneath the petals of those beautiful, fragrant and sweet-smelling flowers are thorns. Safeguard yourself and your garments when you walk through the garden, for those thorns cannot be trusted. They could cause you injury.

This world is like a beautiful garden. Smell the fragrance – i.e., make use of the things of the world. Use and enjoy everything Halaal but beware of sins... the thorns of sins. These cannot be trusted, for they will definitely cause harm and injury. Don't fall for the temptation to touch, see, hear, speak or walk towards Haraam.

The thorns of sins not only scratch and wound our bodies, they also pierce and damage our Imaan. The detrimental consequence of these thorns can even lead to destruction in the Hereafter. How many have lost their health to AIDS and other such diseases? How many have forsaken their religion for a beautiful or handsome face, or some wealth, power, name and fame – at the great cost of their salvation in the Hereafter?

The message conveyed by that painting is that we need to take the walk of life, through the garden of this world, with great caution and care. This caution is what is termed Taqwa (piety).

Once Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) asked Hazrat Ubayy bin Ka’b (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu): ‘What is Taqwa?’

He, in turn, asked: *‘Did you have the experience of walking through thorny shrub?’*

Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) replied: ‘Yes.’

Hazrat Ubayy (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) asked: *‘How did you walk?’*

Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) replied: *‘I rolled up my garment and walked very carefully and cautiously so as not to be harmed by the thorns.’*

Hazrat Ubayy (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) responded: *‘That is Taqwa.’*

4. DIFFERENT TESTS

Allah Ta’ala takes us through different routes. Tests and trials are to bring us to the door of Allah Ta’ala. In His Wisdom, Allah Ta’ala keeps us in certain conditions so that we remain connected to Him ... otherwise, we easily forget Allah Ta’ala. Poverty, sickness and other adversities come our way – out of Allah Ta’ala’s Love and Kindness. In such conditions, we must maintain good thoughts of Allah Ta’ala – the best thoughts – and believe that there is khayr.

Rasulullah *Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam* said that Allah Ta’ala said: “I am as My slave expects Me to be.”³³

As Believers, we have good expectations of Allah Ta’ala and hope that Allah Ta’ala will alleviate hardships. Sometimes, the test is part of Allah Ta’ala’s Tarbiyyah process for us.

When I think of the early days, those were hard and difficult times. Now, I cannot imagine how we lived through those days. Allah Ta’ala protect from fakhrr or bragging: For three years, we lived in a wood and iron cottage, in a place which had freezing temperatures. Sometimes, there would be snow. The toilet was outside and if you wanted to go to the toilet late at night, it was very difficult. I also did not have a car for those years. Although I was offered work elsewhere with better conditions, but there were hardly any ‘Ulama in the area. I reassured the trustees that I would not leave unless it is for more Deeni work or due to health reasons – but I would not leave because of a salary.

After four years, I was able to buy a VW Beetle for R400 – which somebody called “Hitler’s spook”. That car used to get stuck everywhere. Alhamdulillah, we passed those days and Allah Ta’ala granted ease after difficulty, as is His Promise. We can only make Shukr.

³³ Sahih Al-Bukhari

5. ALLAH TA'ALA'S PLAN

When I returned from India, I had no car for three or four years. Since I was in one of the towns, I had to look for a lift to visit my parents and family. On one occasion, an uncle arranged for me to travel with a certain person to Durban. I did not know the person but accepted the lift. The first thing that the person asked me was: *'Have you qualified?'*

I replied: *'No, I will always remain a student, but Alhamdulillah, I had the opportunity to study Deen.'*

He then said sarcastically: *'I have got a master plan. In five years, all these Molvis will be put in their place. I will get the Shaykhs of Egypt and other Scholars with degrees and qualifications to come to South Africa and the Molvis will be out!'*

Allah Ta'ala only knows, but within a few days, I witnessed his entire empire collapse. He had to go begging for loans. He was very rich but there was no one to assist him. May Allah Ta'ala forgive him and all of us. However, we take lesson: His master plan became a completely failed plan. Allah Ta'ala's plan overrides all plans.

Alhamdulillah, we saw how Allah Ta'ala opened up so many doors whereby 'Ulama-Haq were nurtured and were used to establish Darul Uloom, Madaaris, Makaatib and

various works of Deen in South Africa. Today, from all parts of the world, people flock to South Africa to learn Deen and quench their spiritual thirst for Ilm. Alhamdulillah.

6. GUIDANCE

In 1970, I was invited to a college in Mooi River. The name of the college was Treverton College. There, I spoke to the audience for 1 – 1 ½ hours on one verse from Surah Al-Baqarah. The verse was:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ ۚ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۚ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ۚ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۚ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالصَّرَآءِ
وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ۝

“RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT THAT YOU TURN YOUR FACES TOWARD THE EAST OR THE WEST, BUT (TRUE) RIGHTEOUSNESS IS (IN) ONE WHO BELIEVES IN ALLAH, THE LAST DAY, THE ANGELS, THE BOOK, AND THE AMBIYAA AND GIVES WEALTH, IN SPIRE OF LOVE FOR IT, TO RELATIVES, ORPHANS, THE NEEDY, THE TRAVELLER, THOSE WHO ASK (FOR HELP), AND FOR FREEING SLAVES; (AND WHO)

ESTABLISHES PRAYER AND GIVES ZAKAAH; (THOSE WHO) FULFIL
THEIR PROMISE WHEN THEY PROMISE; AND (THOSE WHO) ARE
PATIENT IN POVERTY AND HARDSHIP AND DURING BATTLE. THOSE
ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE BEEN TRUE, AND IT IS THOSE WHO ARE
THE RIGHTEOUS.”

[SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2 : 177]

Alhamdulillah, after asking a few questions, a lecturer accepted Islam, saying: *‘This is the most beautiful verse I’ve heard. It must be Divine!’*

At another time, while travelling to Pietermaritzburg, I saw that a person had stopped on the side of the road and was having a problem with his car. I stopped and offered him a lift to Pietermaritzburg so that he could make some arrangement to fix his car. ...In those days, there were no cell phones, nor was there fear like we have today.

The person was a lecturer and not a Muslim. Our conversation led me to mention and discuss the last verse of Surah Luqman:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ ط
وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا ط وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ۚ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ۝

“VERILY ALLAH, WITH HIM (ALONE) IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOUR (QIYAMAH), HE SENDS DOWN THE RAIN, AND KNOWS THAT WHICH IS IN THE WOMBS. NO PERSON KNOWS WHAT HE WILL EARN TOMORROW (THE NEXT DAY), AND NO PERSON KNOWS IN WHAT LAND HE WILL DIE. VERILY, ALLAH IS ALL-KNOWER, ALL-AWARE (HE IS ACQUAINTED WITH ALL THINGS).”

[SURAH LUQMAN 31 : 34]

The lecturer said that he found the verse very interesting and requested literature on Islam. He left his contact details and Alhamdulillah, three months later, accepted Islam.

Just one verse of the Qur’aan Shareef, its beauty and its Noor lit the flame of Imaan in their hearts. Alhamdulillah. This is what we will find in our beautiful history. Single verses were sufficient as guidance for many, many people coming into the fold of Islam. Sadly, we do not appreciate the Qur’aan Shareef. We don’t value the Qur’aan Shareef. We don’t take and follow the guidance of the Qur’aan Shareef. If we did, there would be a revolution in this world.

7. AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

In the early days, I was based in Mooi River. However, I travelled a lot. Once I visited a town, and there I was told by one of the Musallis that no one sits for any programmes.

Surprisingly, the people had no interest in talks of Deen. They would just attend the Salaah and return home or to their engagements and work of dunya.

After having completed the Salaah, I said to the congregation: *‘Insha-Allah, a very important announcement will be made after the remaining Salaah.’*

Alhamdulillah, all remained seated and I commenced with the Ayah:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اِفْتَرَقْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ۝

“SAY [O MUHAMMAD SALLALLAAHU ‘ALAYHI WASALLAM], "IF YOUR FATHERS, YOUR SONS, YOUR BROTHERS, YOUR WIVES, YOUR RELATIVES, WEALTH WHICH YOU HAVE OBTAINED, COMMERCE WHEREIN YOU FEAR DECLINE, AND DWELLINGS WITH WHICH YOU ARE PLEASED ARE MORE BELOVED TO YOU THAN ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGER AND JIHAD IN HIS CAUSE, THEN WAIT UNTIL ALLAH EXECUTES HIS COMMAND. AND ALLAH DOES NOT GUIDE THE DEFIANTLY DISOBEDIENT PEOPLE.”

[SURAH AT-TAUBAH 9 : 24]

I briefly explained the verse. Alhamdulillah, they sat and listened. They also expressed their appreciation. May Allah Ta'ala accept. Insha-Allah, it became a means for them to sit for or attend Deeni programmes thereafter.

May Allah Ta'ala guide us to reach out to the community and invite to Him.

8. SALAAH IN JAMAAT

In the early days, there was a doctor who was also a trustee of a Masjid. I was informed that he did not perform Salaah and was requested to speak to him. That was common in those days and sadly it is common today as well.

In the discussion with him, he said to me: *'What is the purpose of Salaah? ...It is to get an attachment to Allah Ta'ala. In the Masjid, in the big crowd, I cannot get that attachment. So I sit five times a day and think of Allah Ta'ala.'*

That was his understanding of Salaah, to just meditate five times in a day. ...There are many others who do the same; who worship Allah Ta'ala according to their own perceptions and not in accordance to the Qur'aan Shareef and Sunnah. We are to worship Allah Ta'ala as He wants us to worship Him.

Alhamdulillah, after some explanation, he became punctual with Salaah in Jamaat. Without a word of lie, he is now a very good Namaazi. ...There is potential in everyone. However, take lesson! When we use our Aql (intelligence) and make our own deductions, how far it can take us from Deen, from Siratul Mustaqeem, from Jannah – from Allah Ta’ala. Aql, on its own, can be very dangerous. It has to be guided by Qur’aan Shareef and the Sunnah.

Salaah in Jamaat is Waajib (obligatory) and has many rewards, benefits and merits. Amongst its benefits is that it creates the Muslim brotherhood and establishes unity. There are grave warnings for those who abandon performing Salaah in the Masjid, in Jamaat. ...Imam Ghazali (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) had said that if our pious predecessors missed the first Takbeer, they would grieve for three days and if the Jamaat Salaah was missed, they would mourn for an entire week. They understood the greatness and importance of Salaah in Jamaat. Unfortunately, we look for excuses. May Allah Ta’ala bless us with the devotion and love for Salaah and make our hearts strongly attached to the Masjid.

9. SOME HUMOUR

In the 1970s, a delegation of students from a hostel came to meet me. They did not have a cook for some time and employed someone as a cook, but encountered a problem. They said: *“We have a big problem with food.”*

I asked them: *“What is the problem?”*

Their grievance was: *“On Mondays, we are given baked beans to eat; on Tuesdays, we get sugar beans; on Wednesdays, we get kidney beans; on Thursdays, we get broad beans and on Fridays we get a combination – a mixture of all the beans!”*

That was the problem. Every kind of bean was rizq from Allah Ta’ala. We don’t say you must not ask for something else – but that was the complaint.

10. THE SALAAH HAD TO BE REPEATED

In 1969 or 1970, once, when performing the Jumu’ah Salaah in Mooi River, I choked in the Salaah and just could not proceed. The Mas’alah is that you pull the person behind you to the front and let him continue with the Salaah. ...This is why it is important to know basic Masaa’il otherwise a person who does not know gets a shock, and if a person is a heart patient, he could have a heart-attack.

There was one person behind me, whose name was Ahmad. I pulled him forward and I went back. That was a shock for Ahmad and he did not know what to do. I was reciting a Surah which he thought that he had to continue with, and he did not know the Surah. ...In those years, Mooi River was a small town and there were only about 25 – 30 Musallis for Jumu'ah.

His father – a very elderly man – was also in one of the Saffs. He raised his head and saw that his own son was in the front, on the Musallah, and I had moved back. In his excitement, he called out loudly, saying to him in Gujarati: '*Ahmad! Read, read! ...*' but Ahmad did not know what to do. The Salaah had to be repeated.

11. TATA MUYE!

In the early 70s, the Imam of a Masjid in one of the Northern Natal towns was leading the Salaah. He recited Surah An-Naas in the first Rakaat. In the second Rakaat, he remained silent since he did not know what to read. He was not learned enough to know what to do when Surah An-Naas is recited in the first Rakaat.

When he remained silent for that while, the Muazzin, who was at the back, started shouting: ‘*Tata Muye! ... Tata Muye!*’ (i.e., Take another one; that is, read another Surah).

Those who laughed, their Salaah and Wudhu broke since laughing out aloud nullifies Salaah and Wudhu. The Mas’alah is that if a person mistakenly reads Surah An-Naas in the first Rakaat, he should read Surah An-Naas in the second Rakaat as well.

12. AN IMAM

In the early years, there were not many Huffaaz. In the one Masjid, the Imam was reputed to know the Qur’aan Shareef very well. Then a Hafiz moved into the locality and started to attend the Salaah at the same Masjid.

Being a Hafiz, he began to point out the errors of the Imam. ...When there is no other Hafiz to correct the mistakes, it is taken for granted that the person who is reading, knows his Qur’aan Shareef very well, although he may not be reading correctly. Up until then, there was nobody to correct the Imam’s mistakes and he was making many mistakes. The Hafiz knew his Qur’aan Shareef very well and every little while, corrected the Imam.

The people also realised that the Imam was not reciting correctly. One night, he made a mistake – and the Hafiz corrected him. The Imam broke his Salaah and said: “You watch out! I’ll fix you up!” ... He then commenced the Salaah again with ‘Allahu Akbar’.

This is a true incident. Instead of admitting, “Yes, I made some mistakes.” and appreciate the correction, the person got very offended.

If there is humility, we will not be offended. Where there is pride or ujub (conceit), we will say – as mentioned in Urdu: *“O You who are giving me advice, do not give me any advice. When you give me advice, my heart experiences palpitations. ...I consider that person to be my enemy, who corrects my mistakes or tries to advise me.”*

13. EXPLAINING ISLAM

When I was in Estcourt in the 1970s, I was told that someone wanted to accept Islam and had asked a Muslim brother what was required of him. The brother – though very well-wishing – began to go into such details of Salaah, Zakaat, Hajj – explaining that he will have to carry out all of these duties, although the person was not even in a position to pay Zakaat or make Hajj. He then told him that it was

Ramadaan and he will have to fast every day and also read twenty Rakaats every night. The person got frightened and became reluctant.

That was mentioned to me, so I requested to meet the person. On meeting him, I explained the requirements of Imaan and Islam in a simple way. The person said himself: *"That is easy."* I told him not to worry about all the details of Zakaat, at that stage as he was not in the category to pay Zakaat nor was Hajj Fardh upon him.

We should explain Deen on a simple level ... and Insha-Allah, everything else will follow. Explain the beliefs of a Muslim – as we find in Imaan-e-Mujmal and Imaan-e-Mufassal, and the obligations or pillars of Islam. If the person says that he is ready to believe and he accepts, don't delay the person's Shahadah. After this, then of course, the learning will follow. We too are still learning. The basics should be taught – of Istinja, Wudhu, Ghusl, Salaah, etc.

...Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib advised that if someone – who is far from Deen – is being encouraged towards Salaah or he asks regarding Salaah, then say that Isha is nine Rakaats – 4 Fardh, 2 Sunnah and Witr. Start off like this. If you say Isha is seventeen Rakaats, and the person is not aware of Fardh, Waajib, Sunnah and Nafl, he may consider it too much and not read at all. This

is a start. Insha-Allah, the Ghair-Mu'akkadah and Nafl will follow in time.

14. CIRCUMSTANCE

On one occasion, when I was in Maseru – the capital city of Lesotho – all the telephone lines were down and no calls could be made. This happened many, many years before the age of cell phone technology. I had to make an urgent call to South Africa and was finally directed to a call box, which was situated just outside a casino. There was a hotel with a casino. It was quite late at night when I had to go to make the call. However, it was a very important, urgent call. Since it was not inside, I quickly made the call. Now, imagine if someone saw me there? ...The assumption could have been that Maulana was seen at the casino. Allah Ta'ala forbid. But it was due to the circumstances.

Sometimes these situations arise - so we should also not jump to conclusions. Of course, we should be cautious in our actions and undertakings - where we are and who we are with – and avoid any suspicion, doubt and slander. Hazrat 'Umar (*Radhiyallahu 'anhu*) had said: "Whoever puts himself in a suspicious position should not blame others for applying suspicion on him."³⁴

³⁴ Rawdatul 'Uqala of Imam Ibn Hibban

In these times, with the cell phone technology, digital photography, etc., all the more caution has to be exercised otherwise a person's reputation is easily jeopardized and even ruined.

15. LEARNING DEEN

When I went for my first driver's test, I tried to show the inspector that I was very alert and sharp. While driving, I also adjusted the rear-view mirror. He failed me on that – “Adjusting rear view mirror while driving”. I had to do the test again.

For the learners and licence, we have to study the book and fill out forms. We do all of this and also spend so much of money – especially in these days. However, when it comes to Deen, we do not make an effort to learn even the basics; we are sometimes not prepared to spend a little money to secure our Aakhirah. We need to learn how to ‘drive’ the vehicle of the body in the direction of Jannah. We need to learn how to fulfil the Commandments of Allah Ta’ala and the various good deeds which we are encouraged towards, to earn the Pleasure of Allah Ta’ala. ...May Allah Ta’ala protect us. If a person fails that test, there is no re-application or re-test.

16. AKHLAAQ

Many years ago, we lived in another area. Two or three doors away, we had a neighbour who was known to be very hard in his nature. Early one morning, about 2 a.m. we heard a loud commotion in his yard. Since we did not know what was happening, I went to find out in case help was required.

The domestic helper was in labour and was about to deliver her baby. She was pleading with the neighbour to take her to the hospital. However, he was not prepared to do so. He just flatly refused to assist her.

It was only the Taufeeq of Allah Ta'ala ... and I am mentioning it for Targheeb, to give some kind of encouragement; I went back home and told the wife to get ready. Allah Ta'ala gave us an opportunity to be of some assistance and Insha-Allah, gain rewards.

Despite the condition of the lady, she was able to get into the car. We took her to the hospital and waited there until she delivered. The next day, we tried to assist her with whatever was required. Alhamdulillah, that lady could not

stop talking about how good Muslims are. ...This was just a small deed – but Subhanallah, she accepted Islam.

I am not here to brag about these things ... and we should keep some actions secret. Sometimes it becomes necessary. What I am trying to get across to you is that we need to adopt good character and win people over so that they can come into Islam and gain najaat³⁵. Just like how we wish to reach Jannat, we should want the same for others. The key is good character and good treatment to others.

Alhamdulillah, many domestic helpers worked at the Madrasah. Almost all of them accepted Islam. Due to different reasons, they had to leave the Madrasah at some time, but Alhamdulillah, they left as Muslims. Alhamdulillah, the teachers and students set good examples. The domestic workers got exposure to Islam, saw the beauty of Islam and accepted Islam. Alhamdulillah.

[The first incident reminds of an incident during the Khilafat of Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu), when he came across a man seated outside his tent. It was late at night and he could hear a woman’s voice, in pain and distress. On enquiry, he was informed that the lady in the tent was in labour, with no one to help her. Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu) immediately went home and

³⁵ Najaat: salvation

said to his wife: “Allah Ta’ala has brought us an opportunity, by which we may gain rewards. Are you up for the task?” His wife gladly offered to assist the lady, taking the necessary items and accompanied Hazrat ‘Umar (Radhiyallahu ‘anhu).]

17. UNITY

When I was teaching in the Northern Natal area, there was one family. They lived in one home – thirty-two family members. They were like a community on their own and would regularly slaughter a goat. Though they lived together, there was such unity and happiness amongst them. There were eight brothers with their wives and children, as well as the sisters and their families. They had a very big place on a farm.

Many people blame living with in-laws and the extended family as a cause for their problems. However, nowadays, many live separately and still have problems. Between husband and wife, there is dispute and disunity. There is sometimes complete disintegration and breakdown of family ties, despite living separately. ...Why? We may be doing much Ibaadah but the issues are not getting solved. The reason is because we are not giving up our sins. When there is disobedience to Allah Ta’ala, He separates the hearts.

18. THE ENVIRONMENT

In the 1970s and early 80s, I would frequently go to some of the universities to address the students – on a Jumu'ah or at some other time. That exposure, together with so many cases that we now deal with, gives a clear insight into the dangerous environment found at secular institutions. It is very difficult for the majority to maintain their Deen due to the influences there and the individual's weakness. Besides the various compromises on Deen, the immorality, integration with the opposite gender, people of other faiths and atheists, secular education has been formulated and established for the destruction of religion.

As an example: A Muslim girl who was attending a university, telephoned. She said to me that she is in love with a non-Muslim man and wants to marry him. She said further: *“He believes in a god so I don't see anything wrong in marrying him.”*

I explained: *“To believe in ‘a god’ is not sufficient. Everyone believes in ‘a god’– even the atheist when he is drowning. The Hindus believe in a god and many gods. The Christians also believe in a god – who is nailed to a cross – and others believe in ‘a god’ too. Belief in Allah Ta'ala is covered in Imaan-e-mujmal. We*

believe in Allah Ta'ala as He is with all His names and qualities. He is All-Living, All-Seeing, All-Hearing, All-Knowing and all the beautiful qualities as we have been taught. So, it is not permissible for you to marry this person unless he is prepared to accept the Islamic belief in Allah Ta'ala. Otherwise, to say that he believes in 'a god' could be just to trap you and give you satisfaction that he is a kind of believer."

Either she was ignorant or merely trying to appease her own nafs. However, these cases are on the rise and there are many students and others who get caught up in so much of Haraam. May Allah Ta'ala protect her and all of us from falling into all sins.

19. JUMU'AH AT THE UNIVERSITY

Many years back, I used to go to the Westville University, the medical college and other institutions. At the one university, they used to have two Jumu'ahs: at 1 p.m. and the second at about 1.30 p.m. I used to give the talk for the first one and not make the Khutbah and Salaah. One of the Huffaaz made the Khutbah. After they finished, the others would arrive and I would give another bayaan, then Khutbah and Salaah.

I used to sit there and wait until both Jumu'ahs were over, once a month ... with Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl. Alhamdulillah, we now have enough people to go.

20. UN-ISLAMIC WILL

Many, many years ago, there was an inheritance matter in which I was asked to get involved in and assist with the distribution of the estate. The family was divided and at loggerheads. Since the will was un-Islamic, those members who would be getting more were adamant that the will be upheld and they get their share, as stated in the will. Others wanted an Islamic distribution. The family was split and embroiled in arguments.

There were some members who were getting a considerable amount from that estate if they had to lay their claim in accordance to South African law; but the same would not be received according to Islamic law.

Following the South African law meant that other members would be deprived of their shares. There were thus those who chose to follow Islamic law and others who were keen to go by the will of the deceased, which was not Islamic. There were approximately 45 heirs. It had been a long-drawn dispute over some years. Of course, this is a common

problem these days, when it comes to wills and inheritance.

With the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala, everything worked out as required by Shari'ah. I called a meeting of all the heirs. There were perhaps forty members who attended since it was to be the final decision. Everyone arrived and settled down. Before I commenced with allotting the respective shares, I took the Qur'aan Shareef in my hand and I asked them the question: *'What is this?'*

They responded: *'The Qur'aan Shareef.'*

I then asked: *'Whose Word is this?'*

They replied: *'Allah Ta'ala's.'*

I thereafter asked: *'What is your opinion of the person who says that he likes everything of the Qur'aan Shareef but he does not accept one verse?'*

From amongst them, they answered: *'He is no longer a Muslim.'*

I then said: *"Listen carefully. Let us read what Allah Ta'ala apportions as shares to the heirs."* I opened the Qur'aan Shareef and began to read the verses of inheritance. Thereafter, I said: *'We will all have to agree that this will was drawn up un-Islamically. Is there any person who is unhappy with*

the decision of the Qur'aan Shareef? Is there any person who is not prepared to accept the decision of Allah Ta'ala'?

Who will have the courage to voice a disagreement? All kept quiet and the shares were correctly allotted, according to Shari'ah. I thereafter made every person sign that they are accepting the decision of Allah Ta'ala and His Nabi Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam.

If everyone accepts the Qur'aan Shareef and the teachings of Nabi Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam, there will be no problem. If there is a problem, it will be easy to resolve. Unfortunately, we go by tradition, custom and the dictates of society and also the demands of the nafs ... and then we have to contend with numerous problems.

21. TEST OF FAITH

Some years back, in Pietermaritzburg, a Muslim converted to Christianity. He was not prepared to follow Islam anymore. Someone then brought him to meet me.

When I asked him: *"Why did you give up Islam?"*

He replied: *"My mother was very sick. A Maulana made Dua, a Hafiz also made Dua - but there was no improvement. I went to a*

pundit and a sangoma. Nothing happened. Then I went to a Christian priest and he prayed for my mother. After that prayer, she recovered. So which Deen is right – Christianity or Islam?”

Look at the daleel³⁶! I explained to him: “*Even shaytaan’s Dua was granted (when he asked for respite until the Day of Qiyamah). Does this mean that we follow him? These are tests of our Imaan and faith.*”

Was that not a very severe test for the person – that he even lost his Imaan? In the first place, it was a grave wrong to go to a pundit, sangoma and priest. If the brother had some knowledge and education, he would have understood that Allah Ta’ala accepts Duas in different ways. As a respite and test, Allah Ta’ala sometimes even accepts the Dua of non-Muslims. ...Of course, there is Barakah in the Duas of the pious and righteous.

It is a serious weakness if we consider that other religions have something better to offer or can be a means of benefit to us, over and above Islam. *Na’uzu Billah*. This should be a lesson for us.

³⁶ Daleel: evidence

22. FOR SHOW

Some years ago, a person mentioned to me that someone owed him R60 000. In those years, that was big money. He said: *“He is owing me R60 000. He went into liquidation but within a few days he invited over a thousand people for a feast. He invited me also. He arranged a five-course meal and provided the best food. Whilst we were eating, he walked around and said to the guests: “Eat well! ... Eat well!” I said loudly: “Yes, eat well because it is our money. Don’t worry; it is all our money! ... Make sure you eat well!”*

How long are we going to please people? Will people help us to pay the bills? How many, just for show, their pride did not allow them to simplify at the time of Nikahs, etc. They borrowed from the banks, borrowed from their families, or borrowed from here and there, and now they are in financial difficulties. Nobody wants to know them. After the wedding is over, does anybody enquire: *“You have run into large amounts of accounts and debts; can I help you pay them?”*

Somebody said: *“Let the bells ring! Let the bells ring! Do it in a grand style.”* I say: *“When the bills will start ringing, at that time you won’t find anybody around.”*

Pride takes the person to that level – of spending beyond one's means – but when the bills start 'ringing', nobody is to be seen. The person suffers humiliation, disgrace and embarrassment. People are demanding payment and he can't pay. Live within one's means. Live simply. And you will be at peace.

23. RETURNING RIBAA

A person from one of the neighbouring countries attended one of the Tafseer lessons that we were having many years back. I did not know that he was present for the lesson.

On that night, the lesson related to Ribaa (usury) and there was a detailed discussion. I mentioned that those who have been taking interest need to repay that interest money to those whom it was taken from. If they make sincere Taubah and return what has to be returned, Allah Ta'ala will grant Barakah.

Two years later, after the Maghrib Salaah, the person was introduced to me and said he wanted to talk to me. He mentioned that he was a famous money-lender in the country that he resided in. Most of the Muslims borrowed from him on interest. He also had a lot of properties because of his interest earnings.

He said to me: “I heard so many bayaans on interest but on that night, when I attended the Tafseer lesson, that is where I made Taubah. I wanted to do as you said – repay everyone. I wanted to prove for myself how Allah Ta’ala gives Barakah – as you stated. I went back to my country, took out my old books and checked who I could trace to return the interest money.

The money ran into a great amount. I looked at my assets – properties in the UK and money in Swiss and other banks – and the majority of my income was from interest. However, I made up my mind to pay back. I sold my properties and got my money from overseas and began to return the money that I had taken from the people, as interest. I also returned that which was taken from the non-Muslims as interest - so they said that Christmas came early. They were very surprised that he who was taking, was now giving. I also sold my businesses, but I kept one.

Alhamdulillah, within one year, I was able to make payment to everyone with whatever was sold, etc. I paid everyone out – to the best of my ability. Believe me, in the one year after that, with just the one business, Allah Ta’ala granted so much of Barakah. It was unbelievable. Whatever was returned to the people, Allah Ta’ala gave back in a Halaal way. Deals were made that I have never made in my life. The deals were just pouring down. There is now so much of Barakah. I attribute this to the lesson that you gave.”

Hidayat is from Allah Ta'ala. He opens hearts and guides. I replied: *"May Allah Ta'ala make it a Sadaqah-e-Jaariya for me and make you an example for others."*

He took the courage to fulfil Allah Ta'ala's Command. Allah Ta'ala is Ash-Shakoor and appreciates the efforts made. Look at the returns in this world; much more than what he took in Haraam. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to give up all Haraam, because Haraam invites loss and destruction. Empires have collapsed due to interest, adultery and other Haraam.

Chapter Six

TABLIGH

1. ANALOGY

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) had given a very apt analogy regarding the work of Jamaat. He explained that this is like a laundry, where all types of clothes are given in. The laundry man does not say: “*This is too dirty*”, “*I cannot wash that...*”, he accepts all the clothes and uses the right detergents to remove the dirt and then he returns it clean.

This work and effort are for our Islaah and Tazkiyah. Our intention must be for our own Islaah and Tazkiyah. We will then see a revolution in our own hearts and lives, and thereafter in the hearts and lives of others – Insha-Allah.

2. FIRST IJTIMA

My first return to South Africa from Deoband was after three years. This was during our holiday. Hazrat Maulana ‘Umar Palanpuri, Hazrat Mufti Zainul Aabideen, Hazrat Maulana Musa Samrodi (Rahmatullahi ‘alayhim) and others had arrived to prepare for the first Ijtima in South Africa. Haji Bhai Padia (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) was at the harbour to

receive us. Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl, some plus minus 500 attended in Dundee. Alhamdulillah, I was fortunate to spend ten days with that Jamaat, spending time with our Akaabir, to learn from them.

3. PEOPLE OF HEART

Allah Ta'ala makes arrangements for His Deen to spread and reach people in different ways. Allah Ta'ala chooses people as instruments of Hidayat for others.

This effort of Tabligh took root in South Africa due to the efforts, sacrifices and Duas of Haji Bhai Padia (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*). The tears of Haji Bhai Padia were seeds which germinated, and this noble effort was established in South Africa. I have not seen anyone cry as he would cry in Dua. He would make Dua for 2 to 2 ½ hours for this work of Tabligh to spread, as well as Dua for all.

In the first Ijtimaa, here, in South Africa, about 500 or 600 people attended. Hazrat Maulana Umar Palanpuri (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), Hazrat Maulana Ubaidullah (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), Hazrat Mufti Zainul Aabideen (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) and Hazrat Maulana In'aamul Hasan (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) were present. People of that calibre were participating in the Ijtimaa. ...I can remember them in

that small Masjid. At the time of Tahajjud, they would be in different corners of the Masjid ... occupied in Ibaadah and Dua.

They were “people of the heart”, who laid the foundation, planted the seeds and were a means of people changing. They were people of piety and great Ilm, and had Ta’alluq with Mashaa’ikh. They were Bay’at to Hazrat Shaykh Zakariyya (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh). They purified themselves and were blessed with the qualities of Roohaniyat, Ilm and Fikr. They also had Ikhlaas. Sometimes a person has Ilm, but does not have the other qualities whereby he can reach out to the people. When these ‘Ulama invited people towards Deen, it was with these qualities – Roohaniyat, Ilm, Fikr, Ikhlaas – and people accepted their invitation; people changed their lives. When they said: *“Come out for three days; your life will change.”* ... that is exactly what would happen.

In that Jamaat; in their Suhbat, there was change. In this manner, people took to the work of Tabligh. They were encouraged to do the work and Alhamdulillah, the work spread – and we see today, thousands of Jamaats going out.

In the time of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh), Hazrat Maulana addressed a gathering at an Ijtimaa in Muradabad. When he called on people to go out locally, to Delhi and other nearby places,

hardly anyone responded. He said: *“You are not getting up now. The time will come when you will go to England, America ...”*

The people thought it was just a claim. However, it was that Roohaniyat and Fikr, and it happened. Hazrat Maulana Ilyas (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) had a vision – to see the whole of Deen in the lives of all ... in the lives of everyone in the world. Alhamdulillah, the effort has spread. There are changes and the work continues.

Whilst the Fikr and concern of the Ummah is in its place, we must not forget ourselves. There should be an ongoing effort to reform and improve our own Akhlaaq, Mu’asharaat, Mu’amalaat, etc. This is what will attract the people to Deen.

4. TABLIGH IN EUROPE

In 1982, some Jamaats from South Africa prepared to join the elders from Raiwind and Nizamuddin. They were travelling to the European countries to conduct Ijtimas and establish the work of Da’wah and Tabligh there.

Alhamdulillah, I accompanied Haji Bhai Padia Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) on that journey. Haji Sahib was fully occupied in Fikr, Dua and Da’wah. No time was wasted. Haji Sahib told us to walk in the streets and just make Salaam.

In this way, if someone responds, we know that he is a Muslim. Alhamdulillah, by doing so, we met Arabs and other Muslims who were far from Deen. We spoke to them, invited them to the Masjid there and encouraged them to attend the programmes.

An Ijtimaa was held in an exhibition hall in Belgium. Alhamdulillah, some of those brothers attended. They thereafter went out in the path of Allah Ta'ala and Masha-Allah, changed their lives.

5. TABLIGH IN PARIS

In the 1980s, we were in Jamaat, in Paris. The Jamaat was working in those areas. We went with a group of 'Ulama. Whilst we were there, there was a Mashwarah. The late Hazrat Maulana Saeed Khan Sahib (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) was the Ameer.

The Ameer of the Paris Jamaat said that there were lots of tourists coming to Paris. They were just tourists and not visiting for any Deeni work. Many just came to sleep and eat at the Masjid and did not participate in the programmes. They were using the Masjid as tourist quarters, as free board and lodging. The Ameer asked: "*What must we do?*"

Hazrat Maulana Saeed Khan Sahib (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) replied: *“Make Shukr that at least they come to the Masjid. It makes the effort a little easy. Although they have come to Paris for other purposes, you work on them, talk to them, and employ Hikmah and gentleness. Treat them as Allah Ta’ala’s guests.”*

This Akhlaaq is the key to drawing and winning people over.

6. A SIGN OF ALLAH TA’ALA

When we went to France, in one area, no one knew English. No one could speak English or Arabic or Urdu. They only knew French. It was then that we realised what a blessing it is to have people who understand your language – with whom you can communicate with ease.

If we use our intelligence, we will say that a child will speak the language of his parents – and in this way, all will speak the language of Hazrat Aadam (Alaihis Salaam) and Hazrat Hawwa (Alaihas Salaam). But Allah Ta’ala created various languages and in those languages, there are so many dialects; even the accents are different.

We should never make a mockery of someone’s language ... because language is a sign of Allah Ta’ala. It is a means of

gaining His Ma'rifat. Allah Ta'ala informs us that these different languages are from His signs.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالاٰخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ط
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝

“AND OF HIS SIGNS IS THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE
EARTH AND THE DIVERSITY OF YOUR LANGUAGES AND YOUR
COLOURS. INDEED, IN THAT ARE SIGNS FOR THOSE OF
KNOWLEDGE.”

[SURAH AR-RUM 30:22]

7. HINDUSTAN OR PAKISTAN

During the India-Pakistan War in the 1960s, it was difficult for the people to travel. The Jamaats that went out were also arrested and questioned. The perception was that if a person was wearing the Kurta, had a beard and was Muslim, he was supporting Pakistan – and that was a problem. If a person said that he supported India, he was in a problem, and if he said that he supported Pakistan, he was also in a problem.

Hazratji Maulana Yusuf Sahib (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) selected a Jamaat ... not everyone and anyone can be sent to certain places. There is a need to **select** ... those who can deal with certain situations; people of wisdom and knowledge.

We were students at the Darul Uloom and had another two years to complete. One of my colleagues – who was witty and wise – spent a considerable time in Nizamuddin. He was always going there. Looking at his qualities and his knowledge, he was chosen as the Ameer. He was efficient and capable as Ameer and was also from Kashmir. That Jamaat went out during the Ramadaan holiday.

It was a very dangerous trip that they were undertaking and they were questioned wherever they went. ...In our time, we hear of people going to America, Britain, France and other places. They are questioned and sent back. Some are black-listed. That Jamaat had the fear of being arrested.

As we know, Kashmir is the bone of contention. ...Bombs were flying whilst the battle was raging. In those conditions, the Jamaat was sent by Hazratji Maulana Yusuf (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), from Nizamuddin. He advised them to go there, work amongst the people, engage in a lot of Zikr, Fikr and Dua and with Hikmah try and propagate the message of Deen there; and inform the people there that if they want to be protected, they will have to make Rujoo ilallaah – turn to Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala is the Protector. That advice was given.

When they were crossing the border, a colonel or general in charge at the post saw the group, saw their dressing, and he asked them: *'Who do you support? Who do you sing praises for – Hindustan or Pakistan?!'*

That was a difficult question considering the situation. The Ameer, Maulana Muneer Sahib, related the incident to me when the Madrasah re-opened, and he said: *'The brothers were told that whenever they are asked anything, they should say, 'Refer to the Ameer'. At the time, I made Dua that Allah Ta'ala guide me to the right answer. Allah Ta'ala put a very beautiful reply into my mind and I said: 'We do not sing for Hindustan or Pakistan. Wherever we go, we tell the people to prepare for the Qabrastan – the life after death.'*

Governments have nothing to do with the Qabrastan. They have no infrastructure in the Qabr. Their Hukumat (rule) is on the surface of the earth only. They have no control beyond that. No one can object to the effort of preparing for the Qabrastan.

Alhamdulillah, it was a beautiful reply. They were thereafter not interrogated or harassed.

8. MAULANA UMAR PALANPURI (RA)

What a personality Hazrat Maulana ‘Umar Palanpuri (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) was! Hazrat mentioned to me that when he joined Hazratji, Maulana Yusuf (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh), he would see Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam in his dream every night.

Had it been one of us, we would have been very excited and would have perhaps even thought of ourselves as really pious. However, he said – and that was his humility and concern: *“I expressed my fear to Hazratji, Maulana Yusuf (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh), that pride must not come into my heart. That it must not be Istidraaj.”*

Maulana Yusuf (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) replied: *“This is not so in your case.”*

What a great ni’mat! Masha-Allah!

9. INTENTION

When it comes to conveying the message of Deen to others, we must not think that we are doing the people a great favour and benefiting them with our knowledge. Unfortunately, our thinking is generally such that we

believe that we are better Muslims; that we are practising and others are not, and we need to guide them. Whereas the work of Deen is for our own individual reformation.

Our Akaabir (pious elders) used to advise and instruct us that our Niyyat (intention), when going out in Jamaat, should be for our own Islaah (reformation)... not with the thought that we are in a position to reform other people. Similarly, with other forms of Ta'leem and Khidmat; the intention should also be for our own Islaah.

One Jamaat was going to Palestine and from there, there were going to proceed to Saudi Arabia, to work amongst the people there. There were also some 'Ulama in that Jamaat. Before departure, they came for some advice.

Since they were seeking some advice, I said to them: When you go to these people in Saudi Arabia or in Palestine, don't go with the mindset that we, in South Africa, have made tremendous progress in our Deen, and we are very practical Muslims. Don't go to them with the approach and thought: *Unfortunately, their Imaan and Islam is very weak, so we have come to teach them Imaan and Islam.* ...Don't go with that kind of an opinion.

Tell them: *We have come to you to tell you of your forefathers' great, great favour upon us. They made sacrifices at a time when*

communication was extremely difficult; when travel was very, very dangerous; when they did not have the kind of radar systems and technology as we have now. ...Traversing the lands and crossing the oceans was not easy. It was not like how we have today, with ships having such technology and apparatus whereby they easily navigate through the waters of the oceans. Nowadays, travel is mainly by plane, which offers ease and convenience.

Your forefathers did not have such equipment but they had deep desire that this beautiful Deen of Allah Ta'ala must not only remain within the four walls of their homes. It must reach people all over the world; that everyone should worship Allah Ta'ala and gain salvation in the Hereafter. They left their homes; traversed all kinds of land and terrain and crossed the oceans. With sacrifice, hardship and difficulty, they took the message of the Deen of Allah Ta'ala to Africa, Europe, China and different parts of the world. Your fore-fathers have done a great Ihsaan upon us, that they had brought Deen to us. They were the means of the light of Imaan entering the hearts of our forefathers, which then became a great blessing for us; that today we are the reciters of the Kalimah. What we have come here for is to revive this Deen of ours. We seek your assistance and help because you are from that blessed progeny. You also teach us this Deen and from the little that we have learnt, from your noble forefathers, we will share it

again with you. You can correct us if you think we are making a mistake.

In this way, humble yourself and go to them. Insha-Allah, you will find the difference in your own Tabligh and propagation, as well as in your own lives.

On another level, *sometimes*, our Da'wah to the indigenous communities here is because: "*If only they become Muslim, we will be protected.*" – because they are in the majority. This motive is not correct. In this kind of Da'wah, we are seeking to establish our own security, whereas we have to be seeking the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. We should thus rectify our intentions. Invite so that others bring Imaan in Allah Ta'ala and become successful in both worlds. This is true Fikr (concern), which must be followed by the correct effort and work, within the parameters of Deen and under the guidance of the 'Ulama-e-Haq.

Hazrat Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Uthmani (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*), the author of Tafseer Usmani, had presented invaluable and extremely effective advice, which we should keep before us when undertaking Ta'leem, Tabligh or 'Amr bil Ma'roof and Nahy anil Munkar.³⁷ Hazrat Maulana (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) said that the words of advice which we

³⁷ Amr bil Ma'roof and Nahy anil Munkar: Enjoining good and forbidding evil

share with others should be **true**, the intention and motive behind the advice tendered should also be **true**, and the manner and approach should also be **true**. This will then draw positive results.

We should remember and always keep in mind that Allah Ta'ala looks at our hearts and intentions. In whichever field of Deen we serve, we must invite to Allah Ta'ala with sincerity, truth and humility. May Allah Ta'ala grant us these qualities, use us for the Khidmat of Deen, forgive our shortcomings and make our humble efforts a means of khayr.

10. IKHLAAS

Once someone said to Hazratji, Maulana Yusuf (Rahmatullahi 'alayh) – the Ameer of the Tabligh Jamaat: *“There are thousands of Jamaats going out in the world but this has not created a revolution in the Ummah, as anticipated.”*

Hazratji replied: *“Just 313 are needed and a revolution will be seen in the world.”*

Three hundred and thirteen were the number of the Sahabah (Radhiyallahu 'anhum) who participated in the Battle of Badr. They were small in number compared to the enemy who were one thousand in number, but they were

sincere. Their sincerity drew the help of Allah Ta'ala and they defeated and crushed the enemy.

What is needed is sincerity. We have large numbers in all works of Deen – but generally, we lack in the most important ingredient, which is Ikhlaas ... that is, to do only for Allah Ta'ala. May Allah Ta'ala make us Mukhlis.

11. BECOMING ABDAAL

When I was in Nizamuddin, we would often go out in Jamaat. At the Markaz, one great 'Aalim used to always give a talk after the Maghrib Salaah. One day, when addressing us, he said: *“Many of us Jamaat brothers, after spending 40 days or four months, think we have become Abdaal³⁸. Dear brothers, after 40 days, we have not even become ‘daal’; how then can we be ‘Abdaal’?”*

To reach that kind of high rank, there must be 'Abdiyyat (servitude). The heart, mind, soul and body must all be in the submission of Allah Ta'ala. The fragrance of humility must emit from the physical and spiritual self.

When a tree becomes laden with fruit, the weight of the fruit causes the branches to lower themselves. In a similar

³⁸ Abdaal: A special group of forty Auliya Allah (Friends of Allah Ta'ala)

vein, the more progress a person makes in Ilm and ‘Aml’, the more humility there should be.

12. THE DECEPTION AND OUR NAIVETÉ

Our Akaabir were blessed with great insight and wisdom and cautioned us in different ways. Hazratji, Maulana Yusuf (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) had explained: “The foundation of the life of Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam is purity, simplicity and modesty...” - These are the qualities of an Aashiq of Rasulullah Sallallaahu ‘alayhi wasallam.

An effort must be made on all aspects of purity – physical and spiritual; body and heart. The qualities and virtues of simplicity and humility as well as the noble trait of modesty in dress, speech and actions should exemplify the Muslim.

Hazratji further said: “On the other hand, the lifestyle of the Jews and Christians is based on the opposite: immorality, indulgence, extravagance and luxury. Unfortunately, most of us prefer the way of life of our enemies, those who shed the blood of our great and righteous predecessors, who dishonoured our people and usurped our land. They now extend their help to us in a manner that a person feeds chickens – for slaughter.”

We have not recognised our enemies and gullibly take them as friends. Like chickens that run about as they eat the grain thrown to them, we take whatever is thrown in our direction by our enemies. In taking from them their degenerate way of life, their immoral and filthy actions, we distance ourselves from Allah Ta'ala and our beautiful Dien. This sets in motion our destruction. ...There are wide-ranging strategies which have been adopted so that we end up under the heel of the enemies and at their mercy. When they offer their assistance, it is only to increase the destruction of the Ummah. Just a cursory glance at the Ummah should be sufficient for our understanding. Unfortunately, we lost our spiritual bearings and we are so intoxicated by the love of dunya, we don't take understanding. May Allah Ta'ala open the eyes of our hearts.

13. THE SUN

Hazratji, Maulana Yusuf (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had presented a beautiful likeness to the sun. He mentioned: "The sun has three qualities:

- 1.) It rotates with Noor
- 2.) It rotates continuously, all the time
- 3.) It does not take any benefit from those upon whom it provides its light.

Similarly, we will acquire Noor through Imaan, A'maal and Akhlaaq. Like the sun, we should continuously be engaged in the work of Deen and should keep before us, the Ayah: "*I do not seek any reward from you for this work...*" We should not seek worldly benefits from the effort of Deen."

May Allah Ta'ala grant us these noble qualities and use us in the service of Deen with Ikhlāas and Maqbuliyat.

ADVICE TO WORKERS IN THE EFFORTS OF DEEN

A transcription of some nasihah (advice) which was given to a group of students of a Darul Uloom, who were out in Jamaat.

In the early days³⁹, Hazrat Maulana ‘Umar Palanpuri (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) was once making Tashkeel⁴⁰ for Jamaats to go to England and America. ...In those days, the work of Tabligh Jamaat had not caught on as much as it has presently. The world was not a small, global village as it is today, where events and happenings are immediately communicated to other parts of the world.

Nowadays, the fashion trends, cultural lifestyles, as well as the fitnahs which go along with them are speedily communicated from one part of the world to another – through the Internet and different avenues of media. In those days, it sometimes took years for fitnahs to reach other parts of the world.

People were also keen to know about or see the different lifestyles and cultures. As a result, people were very desirous to travel to foreign countries, especially places

³⁹ referring to the early 1960s, when Hazrat Maulana (RA) was studying in India.

⁴⁰ Tashkeel: a term commonly used to encourage people to spend time with the Tabligh Jamaat.

like London, Paris or the major cities of America. Therefore, when Tashkeel was made for local areas such as Kashmir, there were not many people who raised their hands. However, when Tashkeel was made for foreign locations, there were many more who volunteered.

Hazrat Maulana Umar Palanpuri (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had given a bayan, at that time, to those wishing to go out to foreign locations, and it was a talk full of wisdom and insight.

Hazrat Maulana (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) mentioned that when a person goes to America or England, he should not be one who is influenced by what he will see there; for example: the dress, culture, lifestyle, homes, buildings and so forth. If the person becomes influenced, then instead of shedding tears for the Hidayat (guidance) of the people, the person will be inclined to their way of life – which would defeat the purpose and objective of his travel. Instead of inviting towards the beautiful Deen of Islam and towards the Ishq and love of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah *Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam*, the person may accept the invitation to the foreign lifestyle he is exposed to. ...And this was the concern when Jamaats were sent out to foreign countries.

There were extremely strict guidelines with regard to the type of people who would be allowed to go out in Jamaat to

America, France and other parts of the western world. The person had to have spent a certain number of chillahs⁴¹, and had to be firm with his Tasbeehaat⁴², Ta'leemi⁴³ programmes and so forth. ...I recall that there was one brother who was not allowed due to the fact that on just one or two occasions, he had not attended the Ta'leem in the Masjid.

Nevertheless, it was the sincere efforts, deep-hearted concern and the tears of those pious elders which resulted in the work spreading far and wide, with thousands now participating and thousands more having changed their lives on the noble efforts made by those involved in the work of Tabligh Jamaat.

THE SACRIFICE, SINCERITY, DUA AND TEARS OF OUR ELDERS

It was not easy in the early days: Foreign countries did not have many Masaajid and in some countries, there were no Deeni organisations. Much sacrifice had to be made by the Jamaats. Today, we are seeing the fruits of their sacrifices and their sincerity in different parts of the world. Alhamdulillah.

⁴¹ Chillah: 40 days in Jamaat

⁴² Tasbeehaat: recitation of glorification and praise of Allah Ta'ala

⁴³ Ta'leemi: programmes where teachings of Islam are explained.

When we go out for the purpose of Dawat⁴⁴ and Tabligh, and if, in our humble efforts, there are signs of acceptance, we must immediately think: This is Allah Ta'ala's Fadhl (favour) and due to the efforts of our elders who re-initiated the work of Nabi Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam. If we are not successful in our efforts, we must think: **It is my weakness that I was unable to deliver the message correctly, with Ikhlāas (sincerity).** Insha-Allah, in this way, we will strive to improve our intentions and efforts.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NOBLE WORK OF DAWAT AND TABLIGH IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the 1960s, in South Africa, there were very few people who responded to us when we went out in Jamaat. They asked a number of questions about this work but did not really respond positively. They asked whether a person would become a Hafiz or 'Aalim by going out for four months in Jamaat. When they were told that this would not happen, they generally responded: *"What then is the point of going out in Jamaat?"*

At that time, Haji Bhai Padia (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) did not lose hope. He continued to invite people with warmth,

⁴⁴ Dawat: Invitation (to Islam)

kindness and compassion – and in that manner, we moved from town to town. With Allah Ta’ala’s Fadhl, three of us went to different parts of the country, and Haji Sahib, with his Duas and tears, planted the seeds of the fruits which we see today in South Africa and other parts of the world.

THE EFFORT IN FRANCE

In the old days, there were many Arabs in France. They had become absorbed by the environment and culture there, to such an extent that a person would not even recognise an Arab. It was extremely difficult to make *gusht*⁴⁵ in those areas. The brothers would take the telephone directories and look up the names of those who seemed to be Muslim – and make *gusht* in this way.

Hazrat Maulana ‘Umar Palanpuri (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) and Hazrat Maulana Ubaidullah (*Rahmatullahi ‘alayh*) related that they would go and sit in the local park and read out the Ta’leem aloud, in Arabic, from Riyaadhus-Saliheen⁴⁶. In this manner, people who were in the park and who were acquainted with Arabic would hear the familiar sound of Arabic and would come to listen to what was being read.

⁴⁵ Gusht: Visiting Muslim brothers in any locality

⁴⁶ Authentic book of Ahadith

Sometimes, those people were not even properly attired. After reading a little, those who had sat to listen were invited towards Deen. In this manner, Deen spread, and now you will find so many Masaajid and Maraakiz⁴⁷ in these same areas.

There were great sacrifices made in those days. There was no question of invitations for meals, easy living conditions, etc. Sometimes when leaving from home, they did not even know what would happen on the other side. It was extremely difficult. Nowadays, especially in South Africa, even before we leave home, a phone call is made, accommodation is arranged, a five-course meal is prepared, a car is at our disposal and there is ease and comfort. In those days, it was not at all like this. Sometimes, they did not even know where the food for the day would come from.

THE UNSEEN HELP OF ALLAH TA'ALA

That is when the ghaibi madad (unseen help) of Allah Ta'ala came. Allah Ta'ala's Nusrah (help) came when there was no e'timaad on asbaab⁴⁸ - i.e., trust was placed on Allah Ta'ala alone to open the means for them, not when the trust was placed on the means itself.

⁴⁷ Maraakiz (plural of Markaz): Centres established for the work of Tabligh Jamaat

⁴⁸ E'timaad on asbaab: reliance on the means

On the other hand, when a person has money in his pocket, it is against the principles of means that he does not use it on the pretext that he is waiting for Allah Ta'ala's Madad (help). If a person, who has money to purchase a ticket, goes and sits at the airport and says that he is going to London, but when questioned about the time of his flight, he says that he is waiting for the ticket to come from the heavens – then the person has the asbaab but he is not using it.

We must not have Yaqeen (conviction) on the asbaab (means); rather full conviction should be on Allah Ta'ala. This is something which only a few people have been blessed with.

All of us have this weakness: the moment the asbaab are at our disposal, our Yaqeen goes onto that. In this case, Allah Ta'ala's ghaibi madad does not come. There are so many incidents of Jamaats that were lost in the jungle. There were no asbaab available, yet somehow provisions were made for them. Allah Ta'ala assisted in unique ways.

KEEPING THE GAZE ON ALLAH TA'ALA

On one occasion, I was on my way from Delhi to Bombay. There was a Jamaat at the station, on their way from Delhi

to Calcutta. There was a man in the Jamaat who was extremely pious. ...I learnt this later on, after meeting him.

That Jamaat had left from Nizamuddin and they were waiting on the platform to purchase their tickets. Due to the large crowds, the man's money was stolen by some pickpocket. The Jamaat decided that one person would collect everyone's money and purchase their tickets. When the man put his hand in his pocket, he realised that his money was missing. Without saying anything about his loss to the others, he told them to purchase his ticket and he would give them the money in a short while. He then went to make Wudhu, came back and performed two Rakaats of Salaatul Haajah⁴⁹ and made Dua.

When I came to the station, I met the Jamaat as I was passing by, and I requested them to make Dua for me on their journey. I then asked for the Ameer⁵⁰, and the same brother was pointed out to me. He gave no indication of his loss, but something in my heart made me feel like giving him 50 or 100 rupees. In those days, the price of a ticket was only 10 rupees. ...I gave the amount to the Ameer and said that he should spend it on the journey.

⁴⁹ Salaatul Haajah: Prayer, presenting one's needs before Allah Ta'ala.

⁵⁰ Ameer: leader

After I left them, he came to me and narrated the story. He did not want to tell anyone of his loss due to his wanting to ask only from Allah Ta'ala. ...This is what I am saying: When the asbaab are taken away, at this time one's nazr (gaze) must remain on Allah Ta'ala. Allah Ta'ala will open the ghaibi madad for the person. In order to develop this, a lot of mehnat (effort) is required.

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (*Rahmatullahi 'alayh*) had expressed a concern for the workers of Jamaat: That a person, who has the means, will travel a lot and think he is doing a lot of work, but in fact he won't be because his Yaqeen is on the asbaab. So many already know, before they leave, that the intizaam (preparations) will be made at the next destination and so their Yaqeen is not on Allah Ta'ala, but on the means. This is a point that I continually highlight to students, but it helps me personally as well. Sometimes, as a test, Allah Ta'ala takes something away, but in place of that we get Allah Ta'ala's ghaibi madad. Alhamdulillah.

DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS OF DEEN

Another important point is that all the different departments of Deen must be appreciated.

As a student, one must direct maximum effort on one's studies and pass with flying colours. No one should object

that the students of Deen are going out in Jamaat and neglecting their studies. Therefore, it is advisable for the students to go out in Jamaat during the holidays, and engage in their studies during the rest of the academic year.

Once you are *faarigh* (graduated), then whichever *sho'ba* (branch) of Deen your heart is inclined towards, you should give all your time to it. Dedicate yourself to it, but appreciate the other departments as well, and contribute where possible.

There is no such thing as *mera kaam* (my work). All branches are *Deen ka kaam* (the work of Deen). Those in the Madaaris⁵¹, Khanqahs⁵², Jihad⁵³, Masaajid, Tabligh, etc. are all doing their work. A person should choose the branch that he wishes to be a fruit of.

IKHLAAS

Sometimes, there are many fruit on one branch, while on other branches of the tree, there are very few fruit. Have you not seen such a thing?

⁵¹ Madaaris: Religious Institutions

⁵² Khanqahs: facility exclusive for spiritual nurturing

⁵³ Jihad: Striving in the path of Allah Ta'ala

There are some guava or mango trees where some of the branches are laden with fruit, while other branches are barren, due to the sun not shining on that part of the tree. In the same way, it depends on which branch of Deen, Ikhlaas is directed on. That branch will bear the most fruit, where the Khidmat is accompanied with Ikhlaas.

Sometimes, there are lots of branches on a tree. In the same way, there can be lots of Madaaris, Makaatib⁵⁴ or Muballigheen⁵⁵ but this quantity does not affect the quality of the fruit. The quality depends on the level of Ikhlaas.

A person who is out in Jamaat and he has Ikhlaas, will bear sweet fruit – in his efforts. The people who then join that Jamaat will be attracted towards the person and will change their lives, Insha-Allah.

THE SWEETNESS OF IKHLAAS

The same effect is found in other works of Deen. We often find a branch with fruit which is extremely sour. You will find on a grapevine that some bunches of grapes are sweet while others are sour. In Deen also, the sweet “grapes” will be found on the branch which was touched by the

⁵⁴ Makaatib: Primary level madrasahs

⁵⁵ Muballigheen: Those who propagate and preach Islam

“sunlight” of Ikhlaas. This is what we need to become: like sweet grapes. This is attained by adopting Ikhlaas.

The taste of sweet grapes is such, that whoever enjoys those grapes will talk about them to others and will recommend the same kind of grapes to those who wish to buy grapes.

In the same way, when people interact with those who are in the Khidmat of Deen, and find them to be Mukhlis⁵⁶, they will recommend others to such company. Why? Because the Mukhliseen have a sweetness which others desire to also enjoy. They have beautiful, noble character and spread goodness wherever they go.

If our Mu`amalaat⁵⁷, Mu`asharaat⁵⁸ and Akhlaaq are like “sour grapes”, people will distance themselves and will also warn others to stay far away from us.

But if we have the qualities of sweetness, it will be said: *You should join these people as they exhibit good character, mild temperament, honesty and truthfulness, lower their gazes when out in the bazaars, etc.*

⁵⁶ Mukhlis: sincere

⁵⁷ Mu`amalaat: business and trade dealings

⁵⁸ Mu`asharaat: Social Interaction

If a person is out in Jamaat or involved in other Khidmat of Deen, and when he is at the airports or on the plane, he does not restrain his gaze from the airhostesses and other strange women, then what is the use of his efforts?

All that Noor is lost with the indulgence of sins. And instead of acquiring Allah Ta'ala's Pleasure, the person earns the anger and curse of Allah Ta'ala. ...Lowering the gaze results in Noor accumulating in the heart; casting lustful gazes destroys whatever Noor is in the heart, and the person places himself under the curse of Allah Ta'ala.

Rasulullah Sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam said: 'May the curse of Allah Ta'ala be upon the one who casts lustful glances as well as the one who emerges in such a manner that lustful glances are cast at one.'⁵⁹

At that time, if the person wants some tea, he does not have to stare in the face of the airhostess. ...This is where the real test is.

The test of the young soldier is on the battlefield. He may be trained to carry heavy bags and ammunition and climb mountains, and he can brag about his strength, but he has to show this strength when he is out in battle. If at that

⁵⁹ Mishkaat

time, he runs away from the battle, he has failed. ...The test of the Muslim is in the colleges, bazaars, airports, etc. When a person can maintain his Noor in these places, and when he adopts Ikhlaas in his activities and service of Deen, he will become a sweet grape.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the understanding, Taufeeq of amal and may Allah Ta'ala use us in the khidmat of Deen, with Ikhlaas and Maqbuliyat. May Allah Ta'ala grant us those beautiful, noble qualities of our elders, together with their commitment, dedication and love and sacrifice for the Deen of Allah Ta'ala, and may Allah Ta'ala forgive us all, our shortcomings and failings.

To be continued, Insha-Allah.