

ARTICLE

A Life of Piety

By Hadhrat Moulânâ Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sâheb (db)

Compiler's Note

Some people regard the urge to sin to be contrary to piety. They remain in complete anxiety due to these urges. Shaytân misleads led them by saying that a person can never become a saint if he has these urges. How many ignorant ones have not been able to differentiate between the urge to sin and sin itself. Due to this, they lose all hope, fulfil their urges and become deprived of the proximity of the Creator.

May Allâh grant Hadhrat tremendous reward for proving from the Qur'ân that the urge to sin does not contradict the path of tasawwuf. It is harmful to practise on these urges. Had there not been any urge to sin, no one would have been pious because the meaning of taqwâ is to curb and control the carnal self from fulfilling an illegal urge. Therefore, taqwâ is dependent on the substance of sin, namely the urge to commit wrong. The existence of these urges is essential for taqwâ. One should not be perturbed by these urges at all. One should not fulfil these urges. The substance of sin is of two types: status and sexual sins. If we do not practise on these urges, we will obtain the proximity of Allâh. The method of obtaining this proximity is to live with the pious.

This discourse is a bright sun of hope for those who have become hopeless. Hadhrat has explained the topic with proof from the Qur'ân and hadith and he has also used numerous examples from the MathnawT of Moulânâ Rûmî (Rahimahullâh). Hadhrat delivered this discourse with complete emotion and love which is his distinguishing characteristic. May Allâh grant us the ability to appreciate him and may He grant him a long life.

He delivered this discourse in Musjid-e-Ashraf on Friday 5 Shawwâl 1414 A.H. (18 March 1994). Brother Suhail Ahmad transcribed it from cassette while I compiled it. It has been called Hayât- Taqwâ (A Life of Piety).

Compiler: Muhammad Ishrat Jamil Mir

Introduction

After taking an oath of the sky, earth and other great signs, Allâh took an oath of the nafs.
"I take an oath by the nafs and the One that corrected it."
"He inspired the nafs with evil and piety."

Allâh has created the ability to sin as well as to be pious in man. Man now has a choice of accepting the slavery of the nafs and preparing his way to hell or he could muster some courage, become pious and thereby become a friend of Allâh. He could either become Abdur Rahmân (the slave of the Merciful) or Abdus Shaytân (the slave of satan). Allâh has granted man a choice to either adopt the path of piety or the path of sin. Retribution and punishment will be based on this choice.

Now the question arises why Allâh mentioned taqwâ after mentioning sin. Normally a good thing is mentioned first. When you enter the masjid, you step in with the right foot first. You eat with the right hand. Every good thing is placed first but Allâh mentioned sin first in this verse. This has a very great secret and if one comes to know this secret, one will not be grieved by the urge to sin. The urge to sin is not harmful. Fulfilling the urge is however sinful. If you do not have the urge to sin, you cannot become pious.

The Blood of Hopes

The blood shed by sacrificing one's desires is the horizon of becoming a saint. Taqwâ means to curb the fulfilling of the desires of the heart. Shed the blood of all your desires and all the four horizons of your heart will become red. The sun of this world rises from one horizon, that is from the east. But when the saints adopt piety by sacrificing all their desires and enduring grief in the path of Allâh, then all the horizons of the heart become red and the sun of Allâh's friendship and relationship rises in the heart.

And if one did not sacrifice his desires, then what will he achieve? He will attain darkness upon darkness and pollution over pollution. He will get a foul odour and a disgraced name. No one on earth will call him Hadhrat. When the creation comes to know that a person is the head (of evil), they snatch all noble titles away from him. One of the punishments of sin in this world is that all titles of honour are snatched away from one in this world.

What will be the condition of that heart whose every horizon has the sun of Allâh's proximity rising from it? When a man called Khurshîd (sun) came to me one day, I recited the following couplet to him:

When Khurshîd obtained the creator of Khurshîd (the sun) in his heart,
then ask Khurshîd the condition of his world.

The Secret of Mentioning Sin First

The fact that Allâh took an oath of the nafs is proof that He wants to explain something very important. I was travelling from Lahore to Karachi by train with a very great scholar. On the way, he recited this verse in Fajr Salâh. During salâh the thought occurred to me why Allâh mentioned sin first. I asked the scholar who smiled and told me to explain.

Taqwa's Dependence on the Ability to Sin

I replied that Allâh has inspired me with the answer. Just as salâh cannot be performed without wudhu, similarly one cannot study Sahih Bukhârî without doing the pre-final year. In the same way, taqwâ is dependent on the substance of sin. Had this substance not been existent, how could one prevent it? Every prohibition requires the existence of the prohibited act. For example, I tell you not to look at the tasbTh in my hand. The existence of the tasbTh is essential. If I do not have a tasbTh in my hand and tell you not to look at it, everyone will say the statement is wrong. There is no tasbTh in the hand.

The Urge to Sin

Allâh has exhorted man to curb the urge to sin. Man has to obey Allâh and become His slave because Allâh has created man and not the nafs. This indicates that the urge to sin is essential. That is why He is commanding us to prevent the nafs. Had there been no urge to sin, taqwâ would not have existed because taqwâ means to subdue the urge of the nafs to sin and to endure the grief that follows.

The Greatness of the Grief of Allah's Path

Allâh is reached by this grief. But how regretful it is that man is prepared to endure the grief of the entire world, but he hesitates and fears undergoing the grief of Allah's path. The grief of Allah's path is so honoured that if all the crowns and thrones of the kings of the world are placed in one pan of the scale together with the beauty and love of all the lovers of the world, the entire wealth of the world and all the deliciousness of the shâmT kababs and biryânT of the world cannot equal one atom of the grief of Allah's path. How aptly Allâmah Sayyid Sulaimân Nadwî (Rahimahullâh) has said,

When I obtain the wealth of Your grief
I become independent of the grief of both the worlds.

The grief of Allah's love and the grief of abstaining from sin is better than the whole world. You can attain heaven by this grief. This is the grief that brings one into close proximity to Allah, makes one a walTullâh, keeps one at ease in this world and makes one reach jannah. Who can pay the price of this grief? If all the joys of this world present a guard of honour to the grief of Allah's path, they cannot fulfil the rights of this grief. I implore you with a painful heart that this grief is extremely valuable. This grief leads one to Allah.

My crown is hidden in the lap of poverty.
One atom of Your grief is not less than both the worlds.

Allâh is not so oppressive so as to neglect the one who undergoes so much pain and worry by not committing sin. Allâh is most merciful. He knows that first His servant did not have a beard. Now he is sporting a beard in spite of the fact that people are mocking him. Today the people can mock and jest but on the day of Qiyâmah, Allâh will not mock at me.

The Rule of the Moustache

Initially he had a long moustache. After hearing the rule, he trimmed it. It is mentioned in a hadith that Rasûlullâh will not intercede on behalf of the one who keeps a long moustache. A long moustache is one that conceals the upper lip. It is not permissible to sport such a moustache. If the hair is short and does not conceal the upper lip, it is permissible. However, Sheikhul Hadith Moulânâ Zakariyyâ (Rahimahullâh) has written that it is best to trim the moustache with a scissors so that no hair remains. According to some scholars, it is an innovation to shave off the hair with a blade. Therefore, a scissors or machine without a blade is best.

Similarly, Allah's slave had a habit of listening to music. Now he has abandoned it and undergone the grief of abstention. But who can fulfil the right of the honour of this grief?

A True Incident

One of my friends who is also my khalîfah in the island of Reunion initially had a habit of listening to music. He was such an expert that he used to put all the European tourists to sleep with his flute at the foot of the mountain. But when Allâh chose him and granted him guidance, he broke all the instruments and buried them. Now he is pious from head to toe. He has the attire of a pious man and all praise is due to Allâh that his heart is also attached to Allah. If you listen to him, you will think that he is a very great saint. But did he not endure the grief? He still undergoes grief. If he hears the voice of anyone singing, his heart undergoes pain. His heart wants to listen but he suppresses his urge to do so.

Disobedient Limbs

Whoever does not have the habit of this grief is useless. His foot is worth chopping off. Moulânâ Rûmî (Rahimahullâh) states that it is better for the feet that do not walk in the path of Allâh or towards the mosque to be cut off. It is better to amputate the hands that do not worship Allah, do not touch Hajre Aswad or shake hands with the saints. The ears that do not listen to Allah's talk should be torn off. The eyes that do not appreciate Allah's manifestation and disobey Him should be thrown away.

The one who disobeys Allâh should not remain alive. However, this does not mean that you should go and kill someone or tear off his eye or cut off his ear. What is meant here is that a disobedient person has no value in the eyes of Allah. Allah, through His forbearance and grace grants him the opportunity to repent. But our insistence in sinning has no limit. Had Allâh not been forbearant, we would not have existed.

What is Taqwa?

Allâh did not mention taqwâ first. He first mentioned the fact that He created the ability to sin within man. Now it is your duty not to fulfil the urge to sin. This will create taqwâ (piety) in you. If you want to obtain piety, then all you have to do is abstain from sin.

Achieve Reward without Doing any Work

The owners of factories first make their employees work and then reward them. But in this case, Allâh is granting reward for not doing any work. Do not steal, speak lies and do not look at women. By not doing these things, you will be rewarded with piety and Allah's friendship. What is taqwâ? Taqwâ is when you have the urge to sin but you abstain due to the fear of Allah. Then you must endure the pain and not regret adopting piety. Do not say, "I wish I should have looked at least once." Remember that it is shaytân's ploy to make you regret. One who regrets has an undeveloped heart and his Imân is weak. Imân will be complete when he abstains from sin, endures grief, thanks Allâh and becomes ecstatic with joy.

Who is a Muttaqi?

A muttaqi is one who protects himself from sin, protects his gaze from women, protects himself from speaking lies, from bribery, from disobeying his parents, from oppressing his wife and neighbours. He keeps away from all impermissible acts and does not regret. He does not regard Islam as oppressive. Islam has protected him from troubles otherwise if he had to eat from every farm like a cow, people would beat him so much that it would be impossible for him to stay alive. Go to the villages and have a look at the cow that grazes from everyone's farm. It is beaten by everyone. Not an inch of its back is safe. When it falls ill, there is no one to cure it. When it dies, there is no one to bury it. Vultures and crows feed on its corpse.

The Reality of Bay'at

Is this life? The one who becomes free from the limits of Allâh has a cursed life. And the one who is pious is actually sold on the hand of the saints. Allâh has kept His representatives on earth who 'buy' the people and make them reach Allah.

An Example of Bay'at

If the prime minister wants to send some wheat somewhere, he does not go himself to the farmers. He appoints a commissioner as his representative in every area to contact the farmers, buy the wheat and pay them using official money. Then they must send the commodity to Islamabad, the capital city.

Similarly, the Ahlullâh are the representatives of Allâh. They 'purchase' people and 'send' them to Allâh, that is, they show the path of becoming a saint. By treading this path, one becomes a walTullâh. They do not purchase them for themselves.

The Ahlullâh make bay'at to teach the worship of Allâh. The meaning of bay'at is to be sold. He is actually sold to Allah. The hands of the Ahlullâh are representatives just as Allâh says that those who make bay'at on the hand of Rasûlullâh ?, that is actually not the hand of Rasûlullâh ?. It is the hand of Allâh. The hand of the Nabi is a representative. The one who makes bay'at is sold on the hand of Allâh. He then joins the group of the Ahlullâh and becomes a walTullâh.

Do not be perturbed by the urge to sin. These urges are steps to your sainthood. The one who does not have these urges becomes a hermaphrodite. He can never attain sainthood.

The Superiority of the Ahlullah

Therefore the Ahlullâh are superior to the angels because they have the urge to sin within them. By not fulfilling this urge, they endure the grief of abstention in their hearts. Angels do not have any urge and they see man continuously enduring grief. In spite of the urge, they do not obey their nafs and remain engrossed in the worship of Allah. Piety is obtained by not acting on the urge to sin.

An Example of the Inspiration of Sin and Piety

The example of virtue and piety is that of a match. A match only produces fire if it is rubbed. The match of virtue and evil which we have within ourselves has virtue on the one side and evil on the other. Allâh has kept both these capabilities within us. He has given us the ability to sin as well as commit good acts. But neither will the evil be ignited nor the virtue until they are rubbed. Both have their matchsticks. If you live in the company of the pious saints, then you have rubbed the matchstick of virtue. Now the lamp of piety will be illuminated. When the urge to sin is aroused in you, you stamp it out. You have thus rubbed the matchstick of virtue. Now the light of piety will be created. But if you cast evil glances, and began sitting by ghair mahrams and soothing yourself with attractive women, you have rubbed the matchstick of evil. The fire of evil will be lit. You will burn in the fire of love affairs. You will be uneasy and worried. This is not the oppression of Allah. Allâh is pure of oppression. We have oppressed ourselves. No harm is caused by the urge to sin. The one who acts on his urge to sin is caught out and he is the one who has lit the match of evil. Allâh has commanded us to refrain from fulfilling these urges. The match cannot do anything itself. These urges are not harmful as long as you do not fulfil them. Do not adopt the causes of intensifying these urges otherwise a fire will be lit. Then in spite of a beard and round hat, this person will run behind beauty. This is a dangerous disease because he has cast evil glances and removed the shadow of Allâh's mercy. He has now entered the curse of Allah.

Earning Sin

Therefore Allâh says, "Shaytân has misled them due to the sins they committed." Shaytân cannot mislead anyone unless the person commits a sin and goes far away from Allah's mercy. It is impossible that the shadow of Allâh's mercy be present and shaytân destroys a person. Allâh has created the nafs. It urges man to sin excessively. It creates severe urges to sin. But remember, O people of the world, if Allah's mercy exists, then the nafs cannot cause any harm. But when you commit a sin, the shadow of Allah's mercy moves away.

When a person commits one sin, then he commits the second and the third and so on. If a person casts an evil glance once, for example, at a bus stop in Gulshan Iqbal, then he will continue casting evil glances the whole way until he reaches the final stop, Keamari. And if he protected his gaze the first time, then Inshâ Allâh, his gaze will be safeguarded the whole way. Some people delay in repenting because they feel that the enjoyment experienced at the next stop of staring at attractive females will be terminated. In order to eat faeces, he does not repent from faeces in order to continue his enjoyment at the next stop.

A Benefit of Repenting Quickly

Allâmah Âlûsî (Rahimahullâh) states in Tafsîr Rûhul Ma'ânî that one should repent immediately after committing a sin because sin creates darkness and due to this darkness, Iblîs makes the heart his headquarters. If you keep him in control for a long time, many sins will be committed. Therefore, illuminate the heart by repenting quickly and shedding tears of regret. Shaytân will then have to flee. Just as a bat survives in darkness, similarly, shaytân also has the same nature. He survives in the darkness of sins. If you delay in repenting, he will remain there for longer. Do you wish to keep your enemy for a long while in your home? Therefore, if you repent quickly, shaytân will flee due to the nûr of taubah.

Allah's attribute of Grace

At this point, Allâmah Âlûsî has narrated the incident of Ibrâhim Ibn Adham (Rahimahullâh). He was a king who sacrificed his kingdom for Allâh's sake. He worshipped Allâh for ten years in a cave in Nishâpfr. Due to his blessing, the tafsîr of Allâh's words is being presented to you.

Now my name will also be mentioned with Your name.

Many kings have left their kingdoms but no one blesses them with Allah's mercy. But this king abandoned his kingdom on Allah's name due to which Allâh granted him the honour of being mentioned on the tongue of the Auliya. Allâmah Âlûsî has narrated his incident in the fourth part of the Qur'ân. After worshipping Allâh for ten years, Ibrâhim Ibn Adham set off for hajj. Whilst making tawâf, he requested Allâh to make him sinless. He heard a voice saying within himself, "O Ibrâhim, I know that you have abandoned the kingdom for My sake. I appreciate your love. But all of mankind is making the same request as you have made. O Ibrâhim, if We accept everyone's duâ, then on whom will Our grace and honour be manifest? On whom will My attribute of forgiveness be shown? Supplicate in this manner that Allâh should protect you from sin and grant you the ability to repent. Seek steadfastness and if you commit any sin, immediately resort to repentance.

Two Paths Leading to Allâh

Allâmah Isfarâînî (Rahimahullâh), the teacher of Imâm Ghazâlî (Rahimahullâh) supplicated for thirty years to Allâh to make him sinless. He wanted to be completely free from all types of sin. This was a special status he sought. Only the one who does not want to displease Allâh can make such a duâ. One day he thought that although he had been supplicating for thirty years, Allâh had not accepted his duâ despite being Karîm (generous in giving).

Taqwa and Taubah

A voice emanated from the sky saying, "O Isfarâînî, you want to become sinless when I have made two paths for becoming a walî. One is the path of piety and the other the path of repentance. Have you not recited the verse in the Qur'ân wherein Allâh says that He loves those who repent. When there are two windows, why are you specifying one? If due to human weakness, you commit a sin, come in close proximity to Me by repenting. Do not commit sins intentionally. When there is excessive mud, even an elephant can slip. Therefore, if you commit a sin, repent and become My beloved. Why do you only want to come via the route of piety when I have opened the door of repentance as well? When I have opened two doors, why are you appointing only one for yourself? Become My beloved via the path of repentance. Supplicate for protection from sin, not for becoming sinless."

Two Destructive Illnesses

If you commit a sin, do not delay in repenting. Go all out in refraining from sin. I am summarising the entire tasawwuf in two sentences. There are only two diseases that keep a sâlik away from Allâh. One is jâh (seeking status) while the other is bâh [sexual sins]. Due to bâh, one becomes overpowered by the nafs and becomes involved in casting evil glances, adultery and all sins of carnal desire. Jâh is pride and arrogance and the desire to become famous among people. If a person removes these two illnesses, he will become a walî.

Âh and the Proximity of Allâh

If you remove the jîm of jâh and the bâ of bâh, you are left with âh. This âh brings one into close proximity to Allâh. You will find this âh in the word Allâh. Allâh has included this âh in His name so that when man experiences grief in sacrificing his status and desires, he will find solace in Allâh's name. Has not the whole of tasawwuf been encompassed in two sentences. These two illnesses make one rejected and entrapped by shaytân. He then becomes distant from Allâh. Some people, due to their arrogance, think of themselves as being very great. Some people are involved with women. The carnal desires have

overpowered such people. Hâjī Imdâdullâh Sheikhul Arab Wal Ajam (Rahimahullâh) says that there are basically two illnesses of the nafs. The remaining are all branches. One is jâh while the other is bâh. Wipe out the feeling within you of becoming great. How can you decide now whether you are great or not? Allâh will make this decision on the day of Qiyâmah. Our value will be determined by Allâh. The slave that determines his own value is foolish and insane. Allâmah Sayyid Sulaimân Nadwī states,

We remained like this or like that.
There we have to see how we will be.

When Allâh will determine our value on the day of Qiyâmah, then enter jannah while expressing gratitude over His grace and bounty. But the one who determines his own value in the world and regards himself superior to others is arrogant.

The Atom Bomb of Pride

Rasûlullâh said that the one who has an atom's weight of pride in his heart will not enter jannah. He will not even get the scent of Jannah. This is the material of the atom bomb of pride that it deprives one of the scent of heaven. Therefore, one should have concern about it. We should not have this atom bomb within ourselves without knowing about it. Consult the bomb disposal squad, namely the Ahlullâh to rid oneself of this bomb.

Two Ingredients of Pride

What is pride? Rasûlullâh has apprised us of its ingredients namely, non-acceptance of the truth and regarding people as inferior. Some people don't accept the truth even though they know it is the truth. They say, "We do not accept what the Molvis have to say." This is pride. The second sign of pride is that one regards others as inferior. Rasûlullâh did not use the word 'believer' in the hadith but he said, 'an-nâs', that is all the people. Thus, even if you regard a kâfir as inferior, you have pride. Now you may ask how can we not regard a kâfir as inferior. Well remember that it is obligatory to dislike kufr [disbelief] but it is harâm to regard a kâfir as debased. It is possible that he may recite the kalimah and die with faith.

Disliking Kufr

Moulânâ Qâsim Nânotwî (Rahimahullâh) saw a Bunya (Hindu) walking in jannah. He asked the latter how he entered jannah. He replied that he had recited the kalimah at the time of death. He spent his whole life saying Ram, Ram but he was successful at the end of his life. Therefore, it is harâm to regard a kâfir as disgraced. We don't know how his end will be. Moulânâ Rûmî (Rahimahullâh) says:

Do not regard any kâfir as debased,
because there is hope of him embracing Islam before death.
It is possible that his death be on Imân. We don't know what our end result will be. We don't have any guarantee.

The Great Mujaddid

That is the reason why Hadrat Thânwî (Rahimahullâh) regarded himself as lower than all the Muslims of the world during his time. He would regard every Muslim as superior because there was a possibility that some act of his being accepted by Allâh and an act of mine not being accepted by Allâh and He becoming angry. With regards to the future, he said that he regarded himself worse than all the kuffâr, dogs, pigs and animals of the world, that is, regarding the end result because no one knows what his end result would be. When one does not know the consequence, how can one regard oneself as better. Subhânallâh, what knowledge Hadrat had and how illuminated were his words. "I regard myself lower than the Muslims now and lower than the disbelievers and animals in future." He used to say that when

he thought about the final result, he would tremble and wonder what Ashraf Ali's condition would be. He said that if he got a place where the people of jannah left their shoes, that would be indeed sufficient for him. This also, he said he was not entitled to but because he could not withstand hell. On the other hand, we perform a few raka'ât nafl salâh and think we have become the owners of jannah. This is pure foolishness.

The Bomb Disposal Squad of Pride

The disease of pride is so dangerous that it will deprive one of the scent of jannah. Even though one would have performed hajj, umrah, tahajjud and ishrâq, then too one would not smell jannah. This is the statement of Rasûlullâh. When this bomb is so dangerous, why then don't you meet with the bomb disposal squad. Who are they? They are the Ahlullâh, the friends of Allâh. Ask them whether you have pride. If you live with them, they will indicate this to you, Inshâ-Allâh. Hadhrat Hakîmul Ummat states that when a person places his foot in the khanqah, he comes to know of all his internal illnesses. It is as if he takes an x-ray of the person. He comes to know whether the person has pride in him or whether his eyes are full of lust. He knows whether the person glances at attractive faces. At the very first glance he comes to know all this. Allâh grants this ability to those who are given the responsibility of reforming people.

Salvation from Pride

Therefore refrain from two things. Firstly, do not regard yourself as great. Regard yourself lower than all the Muslims of the world. In this way you would have saved yourself from 'ghamtun-nâs' - regarding people as inferior. Sometimes as a means of precaution, utter this verbally. "I regard myself lower than the Muslims now and lower than the disbelievers and animals in future." If you continue uttering this statement verbally, you will not regard others as inferior. And secondly, always accept the truth. When you come to know that a certain fact is true, accept it immediately. You will be cured of pride because you have been freed of the two major ingredients of pride. The one who accepts the truth and does not regard himself as superior is free of pride.

The Method of not Despising Disobedient People

Do not despise anyone no matter how bad a condition he may be in, even though he may be an adulterer or drunkard. Despise the actions of the disobedient; not their persons. It is compulsory to hate the disbelief of the disbelievers and the transgression of the sinners. Hate the act, not the doer of the act. Hadhrat Thânwî (Rahimahullâh) said that this is very easy. This is similar to a situation where a prince whose face is radiant comes with ink all over his face. Will you despise the prince or his act of applying the ink. You will not hate the prince because you know that he is a prince. You don't know when he will wash his face and make it radiant once again. From this you can understand that one should hate the act and not the doer of the act. Perhaps he may repent and become a walTullâh. However, when you see someone committing a sin, supplicate to Allâh to protect you from that sin. And express gratitude to Allâh for not involving you in that sin by reading the du'â

If perchance you saw someone staring at a woman, then protect your gaze and thank Allâh for protecting you from this spiritual malady.

An Easy Way to Achieve Piety

Now I will narrate to you the statement of my Sheikh, Shâh Abdul Ghani (Rahimahullâh). He said that Allâh, due to His perfect mercy, indicated the prescription for taqwâ after making taqwâ incumbent. "Remain with the truthful ones (the people of piety)." Till when will you continue sinning. By living with them, your temperament will one day change. The one who once lived in the sewerage area but has now begun living in a garden among fragrant flowers, will find that his nature will change. Now he will not go back to the sewerage area to smell a canister of faeces. Muster up the courage and leave the sewerage for a few days.

The Prescription for Reformation

If you fear reverting back to the sewerage area and committing sin if you have to come out of the khânqah, then abandon going out for a year or two. Sacrifice even your relatives for Allâh's sake. Tell them to come and meet you in the khânqah. No matter what they say that the path to Allâh is very difficult, do not worry about them. These very relatives will eventually fall at your feet when you don the crown of piety, when piety flows from your eyes and the scent of piety is effused from your tongue. Allâh promises that He will love the one who leaves sin. He is in no need of amulets. When he belongs to Allâh, Allâh makes the creation love him. Do not worry about people saying that the path of Allâh is difficult. Tell them that you are ill and that your Sheikh has prescribed a two-year stay for you in the khânqah.

The Incident of Allamah Khalid Kurdî

Allâmah Khâlid Kurdî was a very great scholar of Syria who came to spend forty days in the khânqah of Shâh Ghulâm Alî in Delhi. Shâh Ghulâm Ali was the khalîfah of Mirza Manhar Jâne Jânân (Rahimahullâh). Shâh Abdul Azîz Muhaddith Dehlwî (Rahimahullâh) came to meet Allâmah Khâlid. The latter wrote a note to him saying that he was not able to meet anyone as he was spending time in the company of his Sheikh. After completing his forty days, he would go and meet him. This is the status of the Sheikh that one should do as he says. Until you do not sacrifice the whole creation, your relatives, businesses and desires, you cannot reach Allâh. Make yourself subservient to the wishes of Allâh and see what you achieve. Those who are deeply involved in love affairs should spend two years in the khânqah. They should not go outside even to eat pân [betel leaf]. Then see whether you become a saint or not. If a person lives among flowers but in between he also goes to the sewerage area, will not be able to change his nature. If after two months or four months you make an excuse of visiting some relative or your brother has arrived from abroad, you leave the khânqah, then you have reached the centre of sin. You have in actual fact entered the sewerage area and smelt the faeces. Your nature will also be spoiled and all your effort will be wasted. May Allâh raise the status of my Sheikh. What an amazing person he was! He used to say that one should live with the people of taqwâ and hold firmly onto them. He said that wherever Allâh revealed any command, He also prescribed an easy method of fulfilling that command. As in the case of taqwâ, He has prescribed living with the pious ones.

Allah's Independence

Allâh has revealed the word 'ahad' in Sûrah Ikhlâs and not the word 'wâhid' although 'wâhid' also means one. What is the difference between 'ahad' and 'wâhid'? The word 'ahad' is only used to refer to one entity while 'wâhid' can be used for several entities as well eg. wâhid mi'ah - one hundred and wâhid alf - one thousand. Wâhid is one but here it refers to thousand as well. When Arabs speak, they use 'wâhid' for hundred and thousand but they do not use the word 'ahad'. 'Ahad' is only used for one being. Therefore Allâh used this word to specify the unity of His being. Shâh Abdul Ghanî (Rahimahullâh) used to say that the proof of this is the following verse, "Allâhus Samad" Allâh is independent. Sharing is a proof of need. To form a coalition government or a limited company is a sign of need. When a person cannot run a company himself, he forms a limited partnership. A partnership is always a proof of need. Allâh says that He is not forming a partnership because He is independent. Abû Hurairah (Radhiallâhu anhu) states that 'samad' means one that is independent of everyone else while everything is dependent on him. Because Allâh is independent of everyone and everyone is dependent on Him, this independence is proof of His unity. Therefore, no one can be a deity besides Him. This was the inspired knowledge of my Sheikh. How amazing that he proved Allâh's unity from His independence.

An Example of Changing Sins to Virtue

Now I will present an example given by Moulânâ Rûmî (Rahimahullâh) and conclude my talk. Moulânâ Rûmî (Rahimahullâh) states that Allâh has kept the ability to sin as well as the ability to do good within man. He gives an example that when the sun shines on cow dung that lies in the forest, it becomes dry. Then the baker places it in the oven where it becomes completely red and makes the oven red. The

baker is now able to bake roti (bread). The dung became dry and pure, then it became red in the fire. Now it was used for baking roti as well as giving light. Who granted it this benefit? A mere creation of Allâh, the sun produced this effect that it made cow dung clean.

The Effect of the Sun on Impurities

The rays of the sun dried up the liquid part of the dung and converted it into fertilizer. This very fertilizer now produces fragrant flowers like the rose and jasmine. Moulânâ Rûmî (Rahimahullâh) states that the sun's rays made one part of the impure dung illuminated in the oven while the other part was converted into flowers. When this is the effect of the sun's rays, then what will be the effect of Allâh's grace on evil character? What will happen to the urge of sinning that one has? Why will it not change into good character and the desire to worship? Then he recited this verse:

O Allâh, Your sun has an effect on apparent impurities.
And Your general grace does not search for capability.

Had it searched for capability, then the sun in the sky would not have had an effect on impurities. The sun would have said that it was beyond his dignity and honour to have an effect on dung. The sun would have changed its speed.

The Sun of Mercy

When the sun in the sky can convert impurities to fragrant flowers and creating bread in the oven, then what will be the condition of Allâh's sun of grace? When the rays of Allâh's mercy shine on the evil thoughts in the heart, those thoughts are changed to the light of piety. Allâh does not require capability or a certificate for giving. When Allâh can grant filthy impurities such garments, then what will He be able to give his pure servants. Jalâhud-dîn Rûmî (Rahimahullâh) is at a loss of vocabulary to express what bounties Allâh grants those who tread His path.

The Effects of a Relationship With Allâh

When the sun of Allâh's grace rises on people's hearts, their evil character changes to virtuous character. The love which was being sacrificed for decaying corpses is now being sacrificed for Allâh in prostration. That love is expressed now by placing the head on the ground in prostration by saying, "Subhâna Rabbiyal A'la". Honour belongs to the one who places his head at the feet of the Creator of the head. He will have no difficulties.

The Light of Piety

Life is a matter of just a few days. Muster up some courage and do not fulfil your urge to sin. Make the urge of sin dry up in the rays of the sun of mujâhadah (striving) just like how the sun in the sky dries up dung. If you do not fulfil the urge to sin, the light of taqwâ will be created. But if a person does not allow the dung to dry up and lets the cattle continue defecating fresh dung, then whatever was dried up by the sun will also become soft and will not be allowed to become dry. The earth which had become hot will now become cold. The bounty of the sun's rays will be destroyed. In the same way some people waste the efforts of their Sheikh by not being cautious. To Allâh do I present my complaint.

The Meaning of Success

Allâh says,
"The one who purified himself has succeeded."

He has achieved the success of this world as well as the hereafter. 'Falâh' means all the good of this world and the hereafter. Successful is the one who listened to his spiritual mentor and obeyed him. Listen to the sheikh and do not look at your family or relatives and your habits of eating pân. The very same family will carry your shoes. Make duâ that Allâh grant us the ability to practise.

O Allâh, accept this discourse of mine. O Allâh, accept me and all the listeners. Change our criminal hearts to saintly ones. You are capable of changing fire into water and vice versa. You can change joy into grief and vice versa. Make our hearts full of pain and hearts like those of the saints. Grant us life with the safety of limbs and Imân. Take us away from this world with the safety of limbs and Imân. Accept this duâ for us, our progeny and all the Muslims of the world. O Allâh, grant us the final stage of the Siddiqîn. O Allâh, grant us such Imân and conviction so that every breath of ours is sacrificed for Your sake. We should not displease You even for one breath. Every breath of ours should be spent in actions that please you. If we commit any sin, grant us the ability to moisten our places of sajdah with tears of remorse and repentance. Make our dunyâ and hereafter.