

The Spiritual Guide(MURSHID) & The Seeker(MUREED)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

by
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FOREWORD

All Praise is due to Almighty Allah, Peace and Salutations upon our beloved Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), his noble Companions and his exalted Family (radi Allahu anhum).

Allah Ta'ala states in the Holy Quran: "Undoubtedly, he attained to his goal who purified". (Al-A'la: 14)

The body and the soul together make up a complete person. While the body belongs to this world, the soul's origin is the realm of Divine Power. Allah Ta'ala by His Divine Power has united them and made provisions for their growth. Just as Allah Ta'ala has provided various foods for the nourishment of the body, He has also provided sustenance for the soul. This vital sustenance, which invigorates the soul, is the Remembrance of Allah.

At times the body is prone to ailments, the cure of which is available in various medicines. The soul also falls ill in which case Allah Ta'ala has provided remedies. Doctors treat the body at times of illness and Friends of Allah Ta'ala are healers of the soul. As we consult doctors for our physical ailments, we should consult the Awliya Allah for our spiritual ailments.

The body and the soul each have their particular impurities. Impurities of the body are urine, faeces, pus, and so forth. Similarly, impurities of the soul are lying, cheating, polytheism (associating partners with Allah), and any other activities that is against the Shari'ah (Islamic Law). Just as we dislike any filth to defile our bodies and if this happens we immediately remove it, it is incumbent on every Muslim to cleanse and purify his soul from any impurities. The impurities of the body are cleansed with water, and the water to cleanse the soul is sincere repentance. The tear of a repenter purges his soul and cleanses his heart.

Allah Ta'ala declares: "Undoubtedly, he attained to his goal who is purified". The cleanliness and purity intended in this Aayah is of a comprehensive and inclusive nature. Hence, Islam calls us to physical as well as spiritual and mental cleanliness; both outer and inner cleanliness. To realise this complete purity in a balanced manner, Islam offers comprehensive guidelines. Other religions lack this balance and symmetry found in Islam. Some religions focus only on the mind and neglect the physical dimension. However, the heart, mind and body are so interwoven that they mutually affect each other. Hence, purification of the body affects the purity of the mind and heart. In the light of this, the Holy Quran teaches: "Glorify your Lord and keep your garments clean" (Mudaththir: 4-5). The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) informs us that cleanliness is part of faith (Mishkaat, Book of Cleanliness, Chapter 1).

To attain purity of the soul one needs knowledge relevant to this purity. This particular knowledge is the science of Tasawwuf, which the faculties governing the conduct of the Murshid (spiritual guide) and the Mureed (disciple), and the knowledge and practice of Awraad (special prayers).

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WHAT IS TASAWWUF

Tasawwuf is the concept, which embodies the purification of the heart by sincerely, and obediently practising the lifestyle of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in all spheres of his life.

Hazrat Sheikh Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajweri (radi Allahu anhu) (400-465 A.H.) narrates from Hazrat Murtaish (radi Allahu anhu). "Tasawwuf is refined character. This refined character may be attained in three ways: Firstly, to obey the commandments of Allah Ta'ala and his Rasool (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) with utmost sincerity,

Secondly, to respect all those senior to us in age, knowledge and piety; love the young; observe justice at all times and not to expect any return for our good actions.

Thirdly, to avoid all evil desires and Satanic attractions.

By complying to the aforementioned regulations one attains piety." (Kashful Mahjoob, pg. 106)

SUPPORTING THE CAUSE OF TASAWWUF

Those who have devoted themselves completely to the service of Almighty Allah do not even bother to obtain a means of substance. Such people are being provided with financial help from anonymous sources. These pious people do not have hopes of material gain from people. They have complete trust in Allah. When they receive some gift from the public, they receive it with the Niyah (intention) that Allah Ta'ala is the Giver and the donor is the means. To be of any assistance to such people is actually to do good to us.

Ghausul A'zam, Sayyiduna Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (radi Allahu anhu) states that Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has recommended giving food to ascetics and pious persons and giving clothing to the Believers. By assisting such a person with worldly necessities we minimize his burden and enable him to devote himself completely to Allah Ta'ala. In this way, we will receive the reward of his good deeds since we have provided him with necessary physical nourishment and helped him furthering the cause of Allah Ta'ala. (Al-Fat'hur Rabbani, pg. 192)

The general public at times present Mashaa'ikh and Ulama with gifts. This is a good practice as it frees them from worldly trivialities, enabling them to dedicate themselves fully in the work of Allah Ta'ala.

However, there are fraudulent persons amongst the Ulama and Mashaa'ikh who are involved in sinful deeds and practice acts refuted by the Shari'ah. These people should not be given assistance or gifts since it makes the donor, if he is aware of the nature of such a person, an accomplice to the sin. The onus lies on the public to exercise discretion and judgement and decide if the person is deserving of any form of assistance.

CATEGORIES OF AHLUS SAFA (PEOPLE OF PURITY)

"People of Purity", also known as "Ahlus Safa", are characterised as follows:-

1. SUFI: Sufi is that person who has overcome his self-ego as well as all human weaknesses, whilst at the same time being aware of the reality of all existence. Truth is the hallmark of his life. The term Sufi refers to an established and completely realised Wali Allah (Friend of Allah). In "Kashful Mahjoob" a Sheikh is quoted as saying "one who is emerged in the friendship of Allah and has freed himself from all other than Allah, is a Sufi". (Kashful Mahjoob, pg.97)

Ghausul A'zam, Hazrat Sheikh Qadir Jilani (radi Allahu anhu) explains that until a person has not reached the rank where he is graced by the vision of Nabi Muhammed (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in his dream and is given commands and prohibitions, he cannot be regarded as a Sufi. If this fortunate incident does occur, then his heart

gains promotion and his innermost being is cleansed and he attains the proximity of Allah Ta'ala while his hands are in the hands of Nabi Muhammed (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). (Al Fath-ur-Rabbani, pg. 389)

2. MUTASAWWIF: One who is striving to attain the status of a Sufi through Mujaahidah (Continuous struggle against evil desires). He follows the examples of the Sufis to better himself.
3. MUSTASWIF: One who impersonates a Sufi for monetary gain, power, and worldly honour. He does not have any of the qualities of the Sufi or Mustasawwif. (Kashful Mahjoob, pg. 98)

THE NECESSITY FOR A MURSHID

If a person wants to learn any art form or gain knowledge/science he will seek help from an expert in that field. Knowledge of Allah Ta'ala's Zaat (Being) is the most difficult secret in the universe. It can only be achieved with the help of its experts, the Awliya Allah. Only these people can be accepted as Murshids (guides). The following quotation define the need and guidance of a Murshid.

Ghausul A'zam, Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani (radi Allahu anhu) brings home the necessity of a Murshid in a beautiful metaphor. He says: "The heart is the plantation for the Aakhirah (Hereafter). Sow the seeds of Imaan in your heart. Irrigate, fertilise and mature it with regular good deeds. If there is kindness and energy in the heart it will be fertile and an abundant harvest will result. Should the heart be harsh and contemptuous, the soul becomes infertile and barren and no crop will be able to grow. Learn this art of farming by its farmers/experts, the Awliya Allah. Do not think your opinion to be sufficient. Our Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) says, 'Seek help in every field from an expert in that field'". (Al-Fath-ur-Rabbani, pg. 202)

Ghausul A'zam (radi Allahu anhu) said: "Arrogance, hypocrisy, egoism, are all arrows of Shaitaan aimed at your hearts. One should formulate a strategy to defend oneself from this attack. The correct strategies are explained and demonstrated by the Mashaa'ikh (Guides). You should heed to their commands and act on them. They will guide you on the path of Allah since they have already travelled on this path. Ask their advise on matters relating to the Nafs (carnal desires), cravings and other weaknesses because they have also suffered their consequences and are well aware of the dangers and harms of evil desires. They have battled these over a long period of time and can confront, control and defeat them". (Al-Fath-ur-Rabbani, pg. 150)

SEARCHING FOR A MURSHID

Ghaus-ul A'zam (radi Allahu anhu) says: "If a person is unable to differentiate between a true and false Murshid, he should read 2 Rakaats Nafil for achieving recognition of Allah at Tahajjud time. Then he should ask Allah to inform him of those pious people who will be able to guide him on the Right Path. He should beseech Allah to show him the person who will intoxicate him with Allah's love and adorn the eyes of his heart with the light of Allah's closeness and inform him of unseen happenings that he personally witnessed". (Insha-Allah by doing so, one will receive the answer)(Al-Fath-ur Rabbani, pg.146)

If someone is unable to do this then he should seek the advise of a well versed Sunni Aalim. At times, people take advice from the ignorant and become Mureeds of Shaitaan. May Allah Ta'ala protect us all. Aameen.

THE MURSHID AND HIS COMMITMENT TO SHARI'AH

The Murshid is obligated to follow the commands of Shari'ah with absolute respect and dedication. The role of the Murshid is to enlighten the path of those who are astray with righteousness and guidance. A "Murshid" who does not respect and follow the Shari'ah is himself in darkness and totally incapable of illuminating (rating someone else's path or guiding them). Such people are disciples of Shaitaan and the enemies of Islam. Some Murshids go about sowing doubts in the minds of their followers. They teach that Salaah and Saum (Fasting) are outward forms of worship and should be left to the Ulama. They claim that they practice and worship with their hearts only. Such Mushids are astray and mislead their followers too. They feast in Ramadaan openly mocking the Shari'ah and Tariqah. Yet, ignorant Mureeds are convinced that these people will transport them into Jannah. It is strange that bodily requirements like eating, drinking, sleeping, taking medication and other physical activities are done promptly. It is only those physical

duties commanded by Allah Ta'ala and Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) that strain their bodies and they choose to perform it with their heart. Why do they not perform other functions like eating and drinking with the heart? "True Saints only feel hungry once in forty days". (Kashful Mahjoob, pg. 444)

It should be remembered that Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), his Noble Companions, the Tabi'in, Taba Tabi'in, the true Saints, and the Allah-fearing people never performed such "heartly" Salaah or Saum. These are physical forms of Ibaadah, which have to be performed bodily. They should be performed not just with the heart; they should be carried with the heart and mind completely engrossed in Allah's worship.

Hazrat Umar Faruq (radi Allahu anhu) demonstrated the importance of Salaah when he was fatally wounded by Abu Lulu. He performed Fajr Salaah even though bleeding profusely and said that those who do not perform Salaah have no part in Islam. (Izaalatul Khifaa, Vol. 4, pg. 281)

Some "Murshids" deny the Absolute Unity and Oneness of Allah Ta'ala (Tauheed). They believe Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) to be the "Lord" and regard this as the supreme secret of Tasawwuf. To justify their evil beliefs, they misuse terms like "Anal Haq" which is sometimes uttered by Saints in a state of spiritual intoxication. (The nature of the "Anal Haq" phrase will be explained later on.)

When the Ulema-e-Haq challenge such blasphemous claims, these fraudulent "Murshids" hide behind false claims that the Ulama are mere followers of Shari'ah and un-informed of inner knowledge. To protect their fraudulent practices, they instruct their Mureeds not to publicise their teachings because others would not understand the finer points and implications of this so-called "inner knowledge". They do this so that they may not be exposed. They also keep their Mureeds away from the Ulama so that the Mureeds must not become aware of their tricks and their means of income is not terminated.

Sultaanul Aarifeen, Hazrat Sultaan Bahu (radi Allahu anhu) affirms that when a person steps in the area of Tasawwuf (Durwesh-hood) he should diligently follow the demands of the Shari'ah. He should follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah at every step and he should keep the company of the Ulama and Fuqara. He should only do those things advised by the Shari'ah and refrain from those actions that are prohibited by the Shari'ah. He should not allow either carnal desires or evil temptation to influence him. (Mihakul Foqaraa, pg. 93)

Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hujwari (radi Allahu anhu) writes: "A group of heretics have joined the Sufis. They preach that once obedience to Shari'ah is intensified to such an extent that Wilaayah (Sainthood) is achieved, Ta'at (obedience to the Laws of Shari'ah) is no longer necessary. This is an incorrect and false claim. In the path of truth, there is absolutely no stage where Ta'at becomes redundant". (Kashful Mahjoob, pg. 312)

Hazrat Data Saahib (radi Allahu anhu) emphasizes that to achieve Wilaayat, the compliance to the Sunnah of Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is definitely required. (Kashful Mahjoob, pg. 455)

Hazrat Data Ganj Baksh (radi Allahu anhu) explains the relationship of Haqiqah and Shari'ah as follows: "Shari'ah without Haqiqah is a farce and show and Haqiqah without Shari'ah is hypocrisy. Pretence and hypocrisy are both the ruination of Imaan. Allah Ta'ala says: 'Whoever exhibits Mujaahidah (continuous striving) towards us, We will show them Our path'. Mujaahidah is Shari'ah and guidance towards the path of Allah is Haqiqah. Shari'ah functions to protect the outward and Haqiqah guards the inner conditions of the Believer". (Kashful Mahjoob, pg. 526)

One should note that Shari'ah is established on the firm foundation of Quran, Sunnah, Consensus and analogy of the Jurists. If a person disputes any particular analogical Mas'ala and is equipped with substantiating evidence, then the matter is not so serious. However, when a person openly defies the Quran, Hadith and 'Ijma (consensus), he not only gives up any claim to being a Murshid, but of also being a Muslim.

EXPECTATIONS THAT A MUREED SHOULD HAVE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MURSHID

Some people become Mureeds hoping for financial prosperity, release from the worldly hardships and living a comfortable life. At times, the Awliya Allah bless their Mureeds with worldly favours. The Mureed should avoid worldly

motives and take Bai'at (pledge allegiance) solely to attain Allah Ta'ala's Ma'rifah, cure the soul and express true repentance. He should have the pure intention of complete obedience to Allah Ta'ala and The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMPETENT AND AN INCOMPETENT MURSHID

Sultaanul Fuqara, Hazrat Faqir Nur Muhammed Sarwari Qaadri (radi Allahu anhu), defines a perfect Shaikh as one who discards the Nafs (carnal desires), purifies the soul and cleanses the mind of his Mureed for the sole purpose of guiding his disciple on the correct path and delivering him to Allah. A perfect Murshid does not attain worldly gain.

A false Sheikh takes Mureeds so that his worldly status is boosted. The Mureed gives his hard-earned income to his Murshid who lives a luxurious lifestyle, which cannot even be afforded by the affluent people. These "heavens-marketers" have furnished their homes with the trappings of Hell and have they become the Fuel of Hell.

A disciple must first evaluate the Murshid in the context of worldly transactions. As soon as he is convinced of a selfish or worldly motive he should immediately disassociate himself from such a Murshid. The Murshid should not claim his status because of lineage, rather, he should have been under training of a perfect Sheikh and practiced upon the spiritual exercises, travelled the inner paths and be well versed with all the stages of spiritual progress. Acquiring oneself with books of Tasawwuf or attaining superficial knowledge of Jurisprudence or logic or being born in the household of a pious person or claiming Khilafat (permission to take Bai'ah) from a false Murshid does not qualify one as a Murshid. One cannot hope for any guidance (Hidayah) or grace (Faiz) from such a false Murshid. Unfortunately, these pretentious Murshids roam our streets in abundance causing mayhem and chaos. May Allah Ta'ala grant Hidayah to these customary Sheikhs (Peers) and bless the Mureeds with better judgement. (Irfaan, pg. 326)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MUREED AND THE MURSHID

1. The Mureed should not harbour any objections against the Murshid. This would cause the Mureed destruction if the Mureed has some doubt about the Murshid. He should keep in mind the example of Hazrat Khidr (alaihis salaam) because he did things that were apparently quite objectionable, for example, making a hole in the boat belonging to poor people and taking the life of an innocent child. It later became apparent that these actions were justifiable. Similarly, the Mureed should be convinced that even if some of the Murshid's deeds do not seem appropriate, the Murshid knows better and he has justifiable reasons for his actions.
2. The Mureeds will not benefit from his Murshid unless he (the Mureed) is convinced that from all the Saints of the time, his Murshid is most advantageous to him.
3. One should become a Mureed for the sole purpose of purifying one's heart. To achieve Faiz (Grace) from one's Murshid, one's intentions and heart must be clear.
4. If a fellow Mureed gains more spiritual benefit from the Murshid then one must not envy or grudge him. This will lead him or her to Jahannam. Allah Ta'ala endowed Nabi Adam (alaihis salaam) with such a high status that he asked all the Angels to prostrate to him. Shaitaan, due to his jealousy refused and was thrown into Jahannam. If someone has more worldly possessions than ourselves, we should be thankful that we have fewer burdens than him. If someone is greater than you spiritually, you should recognise his greatness by reverence. Envy is actually an affront to Allah Ta'ala Who has given him more grace.
5. All doubts and hesitations must be revealed to the Murshid because the Murshid is a spiritual healer. To conceal any illness from the doctor (healer) would result in self-destruction.
6. It is incumbent upon the Mureed to regard his Murshid with utmost respect and reverence. If one attends the Majlis (gathering) of his Murshid, but does not really respect him, he will be punished. Allah Ta'ala will render the heart of such a person devoid of truth and he will become oblivious of Allah Ta'ala. According to some Saints, it is said that when a Mureed is disrespectful towards his Murshid, then the Noor (light) of Imaan (Faith) is snatched away from him.

7. It is recommended that the Mureed kiss the Murshid's hands, feet, hair, clothing, etc. The Ahadtih and the conduct of the Noble Companions (radi Allahu anhum) support this practice. Hazrat Zar'ah (radi Allahu anhu), who was from the delegation of Abdul Qais narrates: " When we arrived in Madina we hurried from our transport so that we could kiss Nabi's (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) feet and hands". (Mishkaatul Masaabih, Babul Musafaha Wal Muaanaqa, Second Section)
8. A Mureed should not expect to see any miracles from his Murshid. Diligent obedience/observance of the Shari'ah and his continuous authentic Silsila (chain) is a sufficient requirements for the Murshid. Karamat is not a precondition for Wilaayat.
9. The Mureed should be like a deceased in front of his Murshid. As a lifeless person is completely at the mercy of those performing his bath/Ghusal, so should the Mureed place himself before the Murshid. The Murshid has to guide his disciple through the thorny path of Tariqah. If the Mureed is "alive" he is actually interfering in the tasks of the Murshid.
10. When the Mureed is in the company of his Murshid, he should maintain an order similar to that when one is amongst sharks and beasts. The Mureed must not look at the poverty of the Murshid or think low of his lineage. He must not doubt the Ibaadah (worships) of the Murshid since he cannot see the heart of the Murshid or cross any limitation set by the Murshid. (Al Fathur Rabbani, pg.411)
11. In Tariqah, it is necessary that the Mureed conduct himself with his Murshid in the most dignified manner. Then only will he gain the benefit of the Murshid's attention. If the Mureed is enriched either in knowledge or spiritually he must not credit himself, but accept it as the Murshid's grace (Faiz).
12. The Mureed must strive to achieve the status of "Fana-Fish Sheikh" or emersing oneself into the Sheikh. A'la Hazrat, Imam Ahmed Raza (radi Allahu anhu) has explained the way to achieve this. He said: "The Mureed must imagine the Murshid in front of him and place his heart below the Murshid's heart. He must imagine that Faiz (grace) and Barakah (blessing) is flowing from Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) into the Murshid's heart and then flowing into his own heart. After a while he will see his Sheikh's image everywhere. It will not disappear; even at the times of Salaah the Mureed will always find the Sheikh with him". (Malfoozaat A'la Hazrat, pg. 169)
13. The daily Wazaa'if (special prayers) prescribed by the Murshid must be read diligently and the Mureed must not object to anything the Murshid has advised. As far the rest of the Shari'ah Laws are concerned, he (Mureed) may learn them from any Ahlul Fatwa Sunni Aalim. In fact, these commandments can be learnt from any Murshid. The Murshid too can learn from any Aalim, from another Murshid or from his own Mureed.
14. After pledging allegiance (Bai'at) with a Murshid, the Mureed can only change the Bai'at if he finds any Shari' faults in his Murshid. However, renewal of Bai'at with his Murshid or Bai't-e-Taalab (becoming any Sheikh's student while having one's own Sheikh) with any Murshid is permissible. Sheikh Ibnul Arabi (radi Allahu anhu) said: " Just as the world is not between two Gods, the Mukallaf (duty bound with Shar'i laws) is not between two different Shari'ahs of two Rasools. A wife is not between two husbands. A Mureed cannot be between two Sheikhs (Murshids) as well".
15. If the Murshid commands the Mureeds to disobey the Shari'ah, for example, not to read Salaah, or not to fast, or if he tries to diminish the important of the Shari'ah and its practices, the Mureed should immediately disassociate from such a Murshid. The Mureed does not even need to consult anyone prior to his disassociation from such a false Murshid.
16. After the Murshid's demise, the Mureed should visit the Qabr (grave) of the Murshid and conduct himself in the following manner. He should stand four hand lengths away from the grave facing it with one's back towards the Qibla and read Fatihah. He must be just as respectful as he was prior to the demise of the Murshid. He must enter the Mazaar from the front. He must visualise the Murshid's face and visualise that the Murshid is seated in front of him. Keep in mind that the Faiz (grace) received previously is being received now too, since a Wali is alive and transmits grace even after his demise. This reality is explained by Ghausul Aa'zam (radi Allahu anhu) who said: "Those remembering Allah Ta'ala are eternally alive. They merely pass from one life to another and except for one moment, they do not die. Their death is a formality which is fulfilled by Allah". (Al-Fathur

Rabbani, pg.93)

17. The Mureed should always conduct himself ethically and morally. A Mureed is a reflection on his Murshid. If a Mureed is a sinner, people will cast doubt and unwarranted suspicion on the Murshid.
18. The Mureed should always respect the Sheikh, his family and friends. Such (civil) conduct is pleasing to the Sheikh. A true lover even respects everything related to the beloved.
19. In the gathering of the Murshid, the Mureed must sit with respect. He should not sit at a place higher than the Murshid or raise his voice above that of the Sheikh. He must avoid unnecessary chatter and queries. He must listen attentively when the Murshid speaks and spread the message amongst others. He should also seek advice from the Murshid.
20. When the Murshid is a guest of a Mureed, the Mureed should not take him to visit worldly people or engage the Murshid in hosting others. If there is an Aalim, Murshid or Islamic organisation present in the city the Murshid should be taken to visit them if he is willing.
21. A Mureed must not speak ill of other Murshids, as it may invoke the Mureeds of the other Murshid to retaliate. This is not a practice of Islam.

THE ONE WITHOUT A MURSHID HAS SHAITAAN AS ONE'S MURSHID

Murshids are two types:

- A. Murshid Aam (General Guide,) and
- B. Murshid Khaas (Specific Guide)

The Murshids Khaas comprises of the Sheikhul Ittisaal and the Sheikhul Isaal.

The Murshid Aam comprises of the Quran, Hadith, the writings of the Jurists, the Murshids, authorities of Tasawwuf, the writings of the scholars, and the writings of the people of guidance and righteousness. The guide of the general public is the Kalaam (Speech and Writings) of the Scholars. The guide of the Ulema or Scholars is the writings of the Imaams of Fiqh. The guide of Imams of Fiqh is the Sunnah and Hadith of Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). The guide of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is the Quran/Speech/Revelation of Allah.

From this it can be seen that the Murshid Aam is an absolute necessity. A person without guidance of both the Murshids, i.e. Khaas and Aam is under the reign of Shaitaan. It is in this sense that A'la Hazrat, Moulana Ahmed Raza Khan Barelwi (radi Allahu anhu) writes that Sayyiduna Baayazid Bustaami's (radi Allahu anhu) declaration in "Awaariful Ma'arif" that those without a Murshid (Khaas and Aam) have Shaitaan as their guide. (Fatawa Afrika, pg.124)

TWELVE SECTS TO BE AVOIDED

A'la Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi (radi Allahu anhu) has identified 12 cults which have Shaitaan as their Murshid. Muslims should avoid such groups, as taking guidance from them will invite the Wrath of Allah. The Cults identified by A'la Hazrat (radi Allahu anhu) are:

1. The evil jesters who mock the Ulama and jeer at the teachings of the Shari'ah. They (falsely) claim that the Ulama and the Fuqara have always been at odds with each other. These ignorant idiots cast doubts over the most eminent Ulama and question their integrity. They slander them by calling them (Ulama) "pundits" and say that the Ulama should exhibit/perform miracles like those of the Prophets of Bani Israel.
2. Heretics who are self-proclaimed Faqeers and Walis (Saints). They claim that Shari'ah is a path, which is no longer needed once the destination is reached.
3. Those who are actually unlettered, uncultivated and uneducated. They skim through a few books and feign to

be most knowledgeable. They disregard the Imams of Fiqh like Imam Abu Hanifa, Imaan Shafi'i... and consider themselves more learned than them and find faults with their rulings and decrees. They consider themselves greater scholars of the Quran and Hadith than the Imams. Such persons are misguided - Ghair Muqallids.

4. Worse than the first three cults are those who believe in the Book "Taqwi'atul Imaan" by Ismail Dehlawi and have turned their backs on the Quran and the Hadith. According to their principles and beliefs contained in the afore-mentioned text, even Allah and His Rasool (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) are Mishriks! The text "Taqwi'atul Imaan" is the source text and root of Deobandism.
5. Worst than all those are the Deobandis who have rationalized Kufriah teachings of Gangohi, Nanotwi and Thanwi, etc, and colouring it in as an Islamic context. They have transgressed to such an extent that they have accepted insults of Allah Ta'ala and the beloved Rasool (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam).
6. Qadiyanis
7. Nechri (atheist)
8. Chakraalwi (Ahle Quran or Quraani group)
9. Rawaafiz (Shi'te dissenting sect)
10. Khawaarij (a sect dissenting from Hazrat Ali)
11. Nawaasib (a sect dissenting from Hazrat Ali and Ahle Bait)
12. Mo'tazelah, etc. (rationalistic sect of dissenters) (Fatawa Afriqa, pg 138/139)

SALAASALE ARB'AH (4 SILSILAHS)

1. Qaaderi Silsilah - Imam of which is Hazrat Sayyiduna Abdul Qadir Jailani (radi Allahu anhu)
2. Chishtia Silsilah- whose protogonist is Hazrat Khawja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri (radi Allahu anhu)
3. Soharwardi Silsilah - founded by Khawja Shahaabuddin Suharwardi (radi Allahu anhu)
4. Naqshbandi Silsilah - established by Hazrat Khawja Bahaauddien Naqshbandi (radi Allahu anhu)

These Silsilahs originate from Quran and Sunnah and are motivated by the Shari'ah. Their purpose is to uphold the Quran and Hadith. Islam is like the ocean and these four Silsilahs are like canals, which originate from the ocean and finish into it. The Silsilahs are linked to their founders.

MIRACLES - AF'AALE KHAARIQAH

Saints perform miracles at times, however miracles are not necessary a condition of Sainthood. The Saints (Awliya) regard obeying the Shari'ah conscientiously as the biggest miracle. Ghau'al A'zam said: "The miracle of a Wali is his complete compliance to the teachings of Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam)".

Sheikh-e- Akbar, Muhayyuddin Muhammed Ibnul Arabi (radi Allahu anhu) explains the phenomenon of miracles. One type of miracle is the Hissi (apparent) miracle, that is, it is evident and clearly seen by the general public. For example, flying in the air, walking on water, fore-telling the future, traversing hundreds of miles in one step. Another type of miracle is the Ma'nawi (spiritual) miracle, which can only be seen and perceived by special people. For example, control of carnal desires, adopting virtues by Divine Guidance, refraining from bad habits, practicing all Waajibaat (compulsory acts) punctually and diligently. These types of miracles do not contain any connivance while it is probable those Hissi miracles to contain connivance. (Futuhaate Makkiyah, Vol. 2, pg. 488)

The steadfast adherence to the Shari'ah is the best Karaamat. A true Saint is righteous and follows the path laid down by Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam).

Hazrat Bayazid Bustaami (radi Allahu anhu) cautions us: "If you see a person sitting cross-legged in the air, don't be fooled by his act! Observe his approach/attitude to the compulsory acts (Fardh, Waajib) and prohibited acts (Haraam, Makruh Tahreemi) and detestable acts (Makrooh) and other restrictions and etiquette's of the Shari'ah". (Risaalah Qushayriya, pg. 81)

TYPES OF SHEIKHS

Mashaa'ikh are of two categories, that is, Sheikhul Ittisaal and Skeikhul Isaal.

Definition of a Sheikhul Ittisaal:

When a person pledges Bai'ah to him he is able to connect the person to a spiritual order leading to the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). He is a key link in the chain. A Sheikhul Ittisaal meets the following four conditions: -

1. The Sheikh's spiritual link to the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) is true and real. There should be no discontinuity or termination at any stage in the spiritual chain from his Murshid to Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Some people accept a Mureed without actually being authorized and having the capacity to do so. They may themselves have pledged Bai'ah to a Sheikh or be from progeny, but lack the authority and spiritual capacity of taking Mureeds. Such Bai'ah can under no circumstances attain Ittisaal - Linking one spiritually to the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam).
2. The Sheikh has to be a Sunni, holding correct beliefs. To follow a misguided Sheikh will lead one directly to Shaitaan, instead of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Many disbelievers, agnostic and enemies of the Awliya Allah like the Wahabis are openly practising Tariqah and pledging Bai'ah, creating confusion and bringing disrespect to this noble art. Sultaanul Aarifeen, Hazrat Sultan Bahu (radi Allahu anhu) affirms that the way of Ahlus Sunna wal Jama'h is the way of Allah Ta'ala and those not on this path are astray. The Holy Prophet's (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) path is the Path of Allah and those deviating from it or against it are misguided. (Mihakul Fuqara, pg. 233)
3. The Sheikh must be an Aalim educated in the Shari'ah. He must be well-versed with the beliefs of the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'h and be able to distinguish between the straight path of Islam and misguidedness and Kufr. Without these qualities there is always the possibility of him faltering. There are several words and deeds, which lead one to Kufr. An ignorant person, when saying such words or doing such deeds, is unaware that he is committing an act of Kufr, hence repentance will not be forthcoming from such a person.
4. The Sheikh must not be an open sinner (Faasiq Mo'lin). While it is compulsory to revere the Murshid it is obligatory to oppose a sinner. It would be impossible to apply two conflicting approaches to one person.

Definition of a Sheikhul Isaal:

Sheikhul Isaal must have the four qualities of the Sheikhul Ittisaal. In addition to these, the Sheikhul Isaal must also be aware of the evils of the Nafs, the many tricks of Shaitaan and the seduction of desires. He should be able to guide his Mureeds with fatherly affection and advising them of their weaknesses and cures to them. The Sheikhul Isaal should solve whatever difficulties the Mureed faces in the path of attaining the realisation of Allah. It is in the hands of such a Murshid that Baitul Iradah is taken. (Fatawa Afriqa by A'la Hazrat, pg. 123)

MEANING OF BAI'AT (PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE)

"Bai'at" means "to be sold". When one becomes Mureed of a Murshid, he sells his heart, life and wealth to his Murshid. After this sale he no longer has a say in these matters nor can he do as he pleases.

A'la Hazrat, Imam Ahmed Raza Khan (radi Allahu anhu) writes that it is mentioned in "Suba Sanabil" that a person

was sentenced to death by an Emperor. As the executioner unsheathed a sword to behead the person, the person faced the grave of his Murshid. The executioner said, " At times like this you should face the Qiblah." The person answered: "Do your duty, I have faced the Qiblah. It is true that the Kaaba is the Qibla of the body, and the Qibla of the heart and soul is the Murshid." This is real Iraadah (to become a disciple). If one persists with one's Sheikh with this kind of sincere devotion then benefits will definitely be received.

If the Sheikh is lacking, the Sheikh's Sheikh may not be inadequate. Otherwise, Ghausul A'zam (radi Allahu anhu), who is the source of spiritual grace and fountain of lights, will provide you with grace as long as the Silsilah (spiritual chain) is authentic. (Malfoozaat A'la Hazrat, pg.189)

A'la Hazrat (radi Allahu anhu) has mentioned that people regard Bai'at as a custom and do not really comprehend its meaning. A good example of Baiat is that of a certain Mureed of Sheikh Yahya Munayri (radi Allahu anhu). This Mureed was about to drown when Khizr (alaihis salaam) appeared to him and said, " Give me your hand so that I can rescue you". The Mureed replied, "I have already given this hand to Sheikh Yahya Munayri. Now I will not give it to anyone else". Khizr (alaihis salaam) disappeared and Sheikh Yahya Munayri (radi Allahu anhu) appeared and rescued him from drowning. (Malfoozat A'la Hazrat, pg.164)

TYPES OF BAI'AT

There are two types of Bai'at - Bai'atul Barakah and Bai'atul Iraadah:

Bai'atul Barakah (Allegiance of Blessing):

One pledges Bai'atul Barakah by joining a Sisilah (spiritual order) for attaining Barakah (spiritual grace). Bai'atul Barakah is more widely pledged. However, one must be absolutely sincere in pledging to this Bai'ah. For the Bai'atul Barakah to be complete, it is necessary that the four conditions of a Sheikhul Itisaal be met. (The four conditions has been explained). This Bai'ah is also very auspicious. To be amongst those who are loved by Allah Ta'ala and linking to their spiritual order is an honour itself.

Bai'atul Iraadah (Allegiance of Devotion)

In Bai'atul Iraadah one pledges to detach oneself completely from one's self-will wholly, and unconditionally place oneself in the hands of the Murshid such that one may be moulded through the ways of Tariqah (the path to Allah through spiritual training). No action or decision may be taken without the consent and approval of the Sheikh. This Bai'ah is pledged and carried out by the Saalikeen (Travelers on the path of Tasawwuf), hence it is also called Bai'atus Saalikeen. It is also the purpose of the Mashaa'ikh and a conveyance to Allah Ta'ala. The Holy Prophet Muhammed (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) took this Bai'ah from the Noble Sahabah (radi Allahu anhum).

The Noble Companion, Abaada Ibnu Saamit Al Ansaari (radi Allahu anhu), narrates: "We pledged Bai'ah to the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in all our matters of good and misfortunes, in all trials and tribulations. We pledged to consult the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in all our matters and to unflinchingly follow his orders and not to query his commands". (Fatawa Afrika by A'la Hazrat, pg.135)

From this discussion one can deduce that Bai'ah should be done on the hands of such a person who is worthy and meets with the criteria of a Murshid.

THE ISSUE OF ANAL HAQ

The various Attributes of Allah Ta'ala are magnified in the Ambiya (Prophets - alaihimus salaam), which explains why their conditions are so different. Some Prophets are Jamaali (manifesting Divine Mercy) while others are awe-inspiring. Some Prophets held royal positions while others were detached from the world.

The Saints follow the footsteps of the Ambiya (alaihimus salaam). Hence, some Saints are in splendor while others lead an ascetic's existence. Ghausul A'zam (radi Allahu anhu) was very wealthy while Hazrat Ibrahim Adham (radi

Allahu anhu), after deserting his kingdom, lived austerely. Some Saints are always in the state of Jazb (when the consciousness is over whelmed by the Majesty of Allah) and other Saints are in the state of Jazb for a while. In this state of Jazb any rulings of the Shari'ah are not binding on them. Allah Taala says: "And Moosa (alaihi salaam) fell down unconsciousness". It is this very unconsciousness that the Awliya (Saints) inherit from Moosa (alaihi salaam). The women of Egypt, in a state of rapture, cut their fingers when they saw Yusuf's (alaihi salaam) unique beauty.

Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has mentioned, "Three types of people are exempted from the laws of Shari'ah - the children, the sleeping and the mentally retarded". The Majzoob falls in this Hadith. In that state of unconsciousness they utter the words like "Anal Haqq" (I am the Truth) "Anallah" (I am Allah). At this stage the person has destroyed his ego and is oblivious of his self. Like the tree which said, "O Moosa, I am Allah", a person that says such words in a state of Jazb is not a transgressor.

The true sign of a Majzoob is that he neither defies nor refutes the Shari'ah. In the condition of Jazb (ecstasy), if any unlawful word or action was manifested, he never instructs others in it. When someone rebukes him for his words or actions he accepts it without any debate. Ghausul A'zam (radi Allahu anhu) narrates: "A person mentioned to Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi (radi Allahu anhu) that a person in the state of Wajd (religious ecstasy) is like a spinning millstone. He does not eat or drink anything. Hazrat Junaid (radi Allahu anhu) asked about that person's conditions during Salaah times. The enquirer answered that when the Mu'ezzin gives Azaan the person becomes calm and performs his Salaah respectfully. Hazrat Junaid (radi Allahu anhu) then declared that there is no problem, this type of Wajd (religious ecstasy) is a gift from Allah".

DISEASES OF THE SOUL

Various diseases affect the soul. A perfect Murshid can only treat them. We should study ourselves and upon finding ourselves affected by any of these ailments, seek a remedy from a perfect Murshid.

The diseases of the soul are: (1) Showing off (2) expirity (3) jealousy (4) hate (5) pride (6) love of praise (7) love of status (8) love of showing off (9) love of fame (10) reverence of the rich (11) disrespect of the poor (12) following desires (13) flattery (14) ingratitude (15) greed (16) stinginess (17) desire too much (18) thinking ill (19) hostility against truth (20) persistence in falsehood (21) convenience (22) rationalizing laziness (23) breach of trust (24) laziness (25) hard heartedness (26) greed (27) reliance on creation (28) forgetting the Creator (29) forgetfulness of death (30) committing sins openly and not fearing Allah (31) hypocrisy (32) obeying Shaitaan (33) self worship (34) inclination to idle matter (35) sloth (36) lack of fear of Allah (37) impatience (38) lack of humility (39) self - wrath in which case the anger could be used in the Path of Allah (40) being lax in Allah's commands and prohibitions, etc. (Fatawa Afriqa by A'la Hazrat, pg. 129)

CONCLUDING WORDS OF ADVICE

Those brothers stepping on the path of Tariqah should accept Taqdeer with joy. When hardship befalls a person as part of the Decree of Allah and one objects directly upon Allah Ta'ala this will be the death of one's faith. This objection is also a destruction of one's trust in Allah (Tawakkul) and Ikhlās (sincerity). A person with Imaan does not ask "why" and "how" in relation to the Will of Allah. He always accepts the Will of Allah open heartedly.

It is the nature of the Nafs (carnal self) to cross swords with Taqdeer. Those who wish to conquer and rectify or purify the Nafs will be engaged in a constant struggle before they are immune to the Nafs. Those who submit to the Will of Allah with perseverance are covered with His Bountiful Mercy in this world and in the Hereafter. For the Pleasure of Allah, one should accept the Tests which come from Him. Patience is a great virtue and a deed of great bravery. Allah is indeed with those who are patient. Dear friends, awaken for the sake of Allah. Do not be oblivious of His Might!

Let us not procrastinate till death is upon us, as it will be of no avail. We should re-examine and revive our hearts, as the heart is the centre of our being. If the heart is purified, our whole self is enhanced. But if the heart is blemished, our body too will decay. The heart can be purged with abstinence and complete faith in Allah Ta'ala.

We must admonish our own Nafs before assessing others. A true nominee does not pay homage to his Nafs or the

Shaitaan, nor is he obedient to them. He is not obsessed with the world and considers it to be lowly. He knows Allah to be the Power of everything. If we need to ask for something let us talk to Allah Ta'ala. Is there anything that is not available in the treasures of Allah Ta'ala?

O friends! Let us practice piety. We must maintain the restrictions of the Shari'ah, constantly fight the Nafs, Shaitaan, and avoid bad company. Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with many bounties but we have stopped thanking Him. Where has our appreciation gone? At times, we credit others for these blessings or consider ourselves deserving of these blessings. We even utilise His Rewards to disobey His Commandments.

We are constantly worried about what to eat, drink, whom to marry, where to rest, what to amass. These are all ravings of the Nafs. Where is our anxiety for the state of the heart and our innermost self and the pleasure been written by Allah Ta'ala in an absolute and unchangeable manner? Why should we seek something that is not in our Taqdeer. Is it not self-defeating? Its only when we accept and realize that we belong to Allah Ta'ala, will the treasures of Allah Ta'ala become ours.

Wealth and worldly possessions have made people haughty. Let us get rid of our pride before we are, humiliated and punished. We should appreciate our possessions. After all, everything that we have has only been entrusted to us. We are not born to accumulate and enjoy them in the world. We have to obey Allah Ta'ala's Commands. We should not fool ourselves with empty verbal declarations. Let us avoid people obsessed with the world and seek the company of the Faqeers. Friendship with the world obsessed is harmful in every way.

We must strive to acquire the outward (Zahiri) I'lm and advance to obtain the enlightenment of the inside (Baatini) I'lm. We need to practice the Shari'ah, as this is the path that will lead us to Zahiri and Baatini I'lm. The more we practice on our I'lm, the closer we may get to Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala bless us in this world and in the Hereafter and may He save us from the torment of Jahannum. Aameen. (Al-Fathur-Rabbani)

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