



A
HEARTFELT APPEAL
TO
STUDENTS

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Foreword

Any person blessed with the company of Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb (Hazratji/Abbaji), Quddisa Sirruhu, is aware of the loving care Hazrat showed to students; and fortunate indeed were the students who felt the warmth of his heart, hand and words of encouragement.

Hazrat would say: “*I am a student (Taalib-e-Ilm). I speak the language of students.*” For this reason, till the end of his gracious and auspicious life he showed immense compassion to students of Deen and constantly encouraged and advised them; and what encouragement and advice would Hazrat impart!

Hardly any Dars or Majlis or meeting with Hazrat would pass by without him speaking on the virtues of Ilm, the status of the Ulama and the duties of the Talabah [students] in as far as their studies are concerned. Accordingly, on the occasion of Khatm-e-Bukhari Shareef Hazrat would pour out his heart of compassion before the audience, particularly to the students. We have selected passages from one such Khatm-e-Bukhari Jalsah of our Hazrat in Jalalabad and have translated it for the benefit of not only our dear students studying in the Arabic Madaaris, but for the benefit and guidance of the entire Ummah. *The subject is Ilm-e-Deen or Islamic Education which is indispensable to any Muslim.*

May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the taufeeq to understand our Deen and Shariah and reclaim our lost position as *Beacons of Guidance* for the world. Aameen.

Was-Salaam

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An Indispensable Condition for Acquiring Knowledge

Alas, we do not appreciate the loving care of our predecessors and seniors and their dear and accepted ways and practices! The majority of our students have discarded the indispensable condition for acquiring knowledge and what acquisition of knowledge is subject to, viz. study (*mutaala'ah*) and reflection.

They sit contented with the name and designation of 'students of Deen' and mere outward motions, whereas it is not hidden and obscure to any human being—by word or deed everyone acknowledges and admits—that *acquisition of something is subject to acquiring and obtaining its preliminaries, requirements, first principles and preconditions.*

Then just anybody's set of first principles and preconditions is not worthy of consideration. Success in achieving the object of desire and ultimate goal is not gained by sitting back with self-concocted ideas, i.e. by thinking to oneself and trusting that, "this and that thing was necessary and I have obtained them." Nay! In fact, *true success and achievement is to learn and understand the necessities and preconditions from successful people and from those who are experts, accomplished and experienced in the field, together with total submission to their directives and teachings.* Otherwise nothing will be achieved besides toil, hardship and squandering of time. And such disorderly and haphazard effort and exertion can never be called 'seeking knowledge'. Though such a person may visibly and ostensibly be dressed in the uniform of a student, in actual fact he is a mere illusionist and dreamer.

It is therefore surprising that where everything else and all objectives are regulated with first principles and preconditions

leaving no scope for self-concoction, here in the august field and sublime goal of knowledge there should be no set of first principles nor preconditions, or just anybody's idea and formula are in order!!! *There can be no escape from the fact that this grand qualification of knowledge too has a set of first principles and preconditions which can be ascertained from the Bearers of knowledge—the practising Ulama, the experts and perfectionists, the experienced scholars.*

Three First Principles of Acquiring Knowledge

In this regard they [the experts in the field of Islamic Knowledge] have laid down the first principles and preconditions, which interalia are:

1. Mandatory study and reflection of work
2. Strict observance of Taqwa
3. Veneration and respect towards knowledge, the people of knowledge and the instruments of knowledge

Rigid observance of these [rules] is of utmost importance. Discarding them or tampering with them brings in its wake deprivation and misfortune.

A Complaint and Its Answer

It is precisely for this reason the complaint generally nowadays is that, why are there no Ulama like those of the former times? A vacuum is left whenever a senior Aalim passes from this world. There is no reason to be surprised. When they are not emulated in the acquisition of knowledge and their ways and practices are not adopted then how can their like be produced in fulfilment of the objective?

There can be no escape from the fact that in proportion to the effort the results are seen.

لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

[*Man gains only that which he strived for.*]

This is precisely what the experts mean when they say:

إِنَّمَا حُرْمُوا الْوُصُولَ بِتَرْكِ الْأَصُولِ

“*People do not reach their goal on account of discarding the principles.*” They are left deprived. They gain no perception. They gain no flair for knowledge.

Our Akaabir [elders] were well aware [of the first principles in acquiring knowledge] and hence they applied pressure on their followers to study and reflect saying: “*It is Fardh for a student to make mutaala’ah.*”

A Perpetrator of Impious Acts is Expelled from the Association of Students

Furthermore, they [the Akaabir] would regard a perpetrator of impious acts as expelled from the association of students and where appropriate they would even disclose it. Accordingly, in a conversation between a police superintendent and Hazrat Thanwi over a case of theft by a student in Kanpur, when the police superintendent said, “Moulana! It is astonishing that a student of Deen also steals!” Hazrat Wala spontaneously responded: “A student of Deen does not steal; rather a thief joins the ranks of students.”

Look! From this statement of Hazrat Wala we learn that a true student of Deen, a real seeker of knowledge does not commit a crime and offence such as theft. This militates against his lofty position. Yes, some actually are not students. But they disguise

themselves as students. They are recognized by the lack of a student's features in them. They are caught up in acts and actions of ignoramuses and laymen.

Disrespect is Deprivation

Similarly, *disrespect and rudeness are barriers in the path of knowledge*. Even though ostensibly some knack of reading and teaching the Kitaabs is gained and eloquency in speech is attained, they are of no benefit. Moulana Roomi (Rahmatullahi alaih) addresses such students and says:

أَيُّهَا الْقَوْمُ الّذِي فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ كُلُّ مَا حَصَلْتُمْوَهُ وَسَوَسَهُ

He says: "This which you have learnt staying in the confines of the four walls of the Madrasah is nothing but illusion, deception, false notions and corrupt ideas. This is not Ilm at all."

In other words, that which is Ilm, it comes with humility, respect and honouring [ones tutors]. With haughtiness, proudfulness, disrespect, rudeness, troubling and hurting it can never be acquired. Hence the Akaabireen have stated:

الْعِلْمُ حَرْبٌ لِلْفَتَى الْمُتَعَالَى كَالسَّيْلِ حَرْبٌ لِلْمَكَانِ الْعَالَى

[Ilm is utter destruction to a haughty young man
Just as floodwater is ruin to a lofty mansion]

Words of Gold by the Pupil of Saahib-e-Hidaayah

Allaamah Burhaanud Deen Zarnooji, the dutiful pupil of Saahib-e-Hidaayah writes:

إِنَّ طَالِبَ الْعِلْمِ لَا يَنَالُ الْعِلْمَ وَلَا يَنْتَفِعُ بِهِ
إِلَّا بِتَعْظِيمِ الْعِلْمِ وَأَهْلِهِ وَتَعْظِيمِ الْأَسْتَاذِ وَتَوْقِيرِهِ

“Without honouring Ilm and the Bearers of Ilm, especially honour and respect for the Ustaaz, Ilm can never be acquired nor can one benefit from it.”

Then he records a golden rule and universal principle from the early predecessors which deserves due attention and much reflection. He says:

مَا وَصَلَ مَنْ وَصَلَ إِلَّا بِالْحُرْمَةِ، وَمَاسَقَطَ مَنْ سَقَطَ إِلَّا بِتَرْكِ
الْحُرْمَةِ

“Whoever reached his destination [in the Path of Knowledge], reached it via respect, honouring, reverence and deference and whoever fell on the way; whoever was left disgraced and rejected his downfall was disrespect and impudence.”

He goes a step further, a step forward and says—as if he is saying, “You do not know what honouring, deference, respect and reverence is. This is something unique. Open your ears and listen attentively:

الْحُرْمَةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ

“A heart devoid of deference and reverence, even if it had to possess thousands of years of Ibaadat and Taa’at everything is in vain, lost and futile.”

Such a person gains no recognition. And if there is reverence in the heart then through the Barkat of this all one’s shortcomings are pardoned. The Hadeeth also mentions this.

Ponder deeply! This rule is employed and is the standard procedure by the Creator as well as with creation.

In any case, these things were mentioned by the way and incidentally as a matter of necessity. These statements of the Buzrugan-e-Deen [Saints of Islam] and Akaabir-e- Muhaqqiqeen [Expert Seniors] should be appreciated.

An Appeal to Graduates and Non-Graduates

My Dear Friends! Those who ostensibly are graduating and returning home, in actual fact they too are not complete and hence all—graduates and non-graduates—should *observe all the first principles and preconditions, especially sincerity (Ikhlāas) and correction of intention. The intention should be the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala.* Anything else—money, glory, etc.—should not be the aim and purpose. *Mandatory and wholehearted observance of mutaala'ah should be maintained and complete reverence and perfect observance should be shown towards the Ahkaam [Laws] of the Shariah, be they related to the physical body or to the heart.*

Ilm is Spiritual Nourishment

My Dear Friends! Ilm is spiritual nourishment. It is obvious that discarding what is necessary and indispensable of nourishment will lead to gradual physical weakness and debilitation culminating in death and extinction. An example of this is to discard the necessary items and the necessary quantity of external, material and physical nourishment sufficing and only drinking water and breathing air, or merely providing one's tastebuds with sauces.

Spiritual Death

Similarly, the consequence of not making mutaala'ah and not observing and upholding the first principles and preconditions; to content oneself with just going through motions of learning and studying is that one will be an Aalim only in name and in reality

one will be deprived of the acquisition of Ilm caught up in the calamities of ignorance, negligence and spiritual death.

The Life and Death of the Rooh

The issue of spiritual life and death is not that intricate. Just as the essence of the Rooh [soul] is not seen by anyone, nevertheless every learned person and layman accepts its existence. Leave alone ever doubting its existence the mind finds no place for even the thought of it [not existing.] Why is it so? It is precisely for this reason that although the Rooh is not visible, however its essentials and effects are apparent and conspicuous to such a degree that they freely and vociferously proclaim the existence of the Rooh.

So, just as there are effects of the existence of the Rooh in a physical body and its connection to the body, similarly when the Rooh's connection to a body ends then this termination and non-existence of the Rooh with the body is also recognised through its effects and essentials. The connection of the Rooh to physical and material bodies is termed *life* and the severance of this connection is termed *death*. In short, the effects of life and death differ.

However, this is the condition of the Rooh of animate objects and the life and death of animate objects. Nevertheless, the rule is established here that *when anything exists and flourishes it necessarily carries essentials and effects*. If those effects and essentials become non-existent then the existence of that object also changes to non-existence and that object becomes non-existent and extinct. Accordingly, expert philosophers and accomplished intellectuals state:

الشَّيْءُ إِذَا ثَبَتَ ثَبَتَ بِلَوَازِمِهِ وَإِنَّارِهِ
وَإِذَا انْتَفَتِ اللَّوَازِمُ وَالْإِنَّارُ انْتَفَى الشَّيْءُ بِأَسْرِهِ

[When something is confirmed, it is confirmed with its essentials and effects.

And when the essentials and effects are not found, the object will not be found altogether.]

A Human is Composed of Body and Soul

Now, it is evident, in fact very much evident that according to the entity so will its Rooh be and so will its life and death be.

Animals only possess physical life and the animal soul. Human beings on the other hand have been created the noblest, loftiest and most exalted of all living creatures and of all creation. Allah Ta'ala declares:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

[Indeed we have created man in a most beautiful form.]

Hence, apart from the animal soul and physical life, *human beings have been conferred with the human soul and spiritual life which are much nobler and more exquisite than the animal soul and animal life, and whose nourishment is Ilm and Ma'rifat [knowledge and Divine perception]. By virtue of this nourishment he [man] remains healthy, strong, flourishing and alive.*

Thus, a human being who lacks in entirety in Ilm and Ma'rifat, the human soul in him does not survive. He only possesses an external form and image of a human. In view of his physical features he is called a human being. Moulana [Roomi Rahmatullahi Alaih] states:

گر بصورتِ آدمی انسان بدے
احمد و بوجہل ہم یکسا
ن شدے

[Had man been a human being by virtue of appearance
There would have been between Ahmad and Abu Jahl then no
difference]

Who is Worthy of being called a Human Being?

Thus, looks and appearances are one thing and being a human is something else. One who is bereft and devoid of humanity is not fit to be called a human. He is in reality not a human. He is an animal in the form of a human.

A statement of Hazrat Thanwi (Quddisa Sirruhu) comes to my mind here. Hazrat would say: “Logicians have defined a human being as ‘a speaking animal’. However, in my opinion this definition is incorrect.” Hazrat elaborately proved and verified his view. Then he stated: “For this reason in my opinion the correct definition of human being is ‘a rational living being’.

A human being who does not reason; who does not think of different possibilities and various solutions is not in actual fact a human being. Calling him a human being is just like a certain land creature is called ‘apeman’ and a certain sea creature is called ‘merman’ due to similarity and resemblance. They are animals, however, due to their limbs and bodies resembling that of a human the word ‘man’ is attributed to them.

So without knowledge and reasoning one does not become a human being. This is the beginning and origin of being a human being. In this regard it has been said:

علم ہی سے انسان انسان ہے
وہ حیوان ہے
فکر ہی سے انسان انسان ہے
حیوان ہے
اسے جو نہ سیکھے
جو بے فکر ہو وے وہ

*[By virtue of knowledge is a human a human
He who does not learn is some other creation
By virtue of reasoning is a human a human
He who is irrational is some other creation]*

The Life of an Animal

Consider the life and occupation of an animal. Its instincts govern its limbs—eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, etc. All the time physical and material actions and movements are seen from it. In precisely the same manner, a human being lacking in knowledge and reasoning; an ignorant and indifferent person, carries out material acts and actions and instinctive and egoistical urges and desires. He is completely out of touch with academic and gnostic human activities. Thus what difference is there between such a human and an animal besides looks and appearance? Nothing!

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا ۖ
وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ

[They have hearts which they do not think with; they have eyes which they do not see with; they have ears which they do not hear with. These people are just like animals.]

يَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ

[They eat like animals.]

Worse than Animals

In fact, such specimens of the human race are even worse and more worthless than cattle and animals because animals carry out their lives naturally according to how Allah Ta'ala created them. But this human chooses ignorance and negligence in opposition to the natural way and creation of Baari Ta'ala!

Allah Ta'ala has declared the purpose of human creation to be as follows:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

[I have created man and jinn solely for my Ibaadat.]

In Jalaalain the Tafseer of لِيَعْبُدُونَ [for my *Ibaadat*] is given as لِيَعْرِفُونَ [for my *Ma'rifat*] We thus learn that the purpose of a human is *Ma'rifat* and *Ibaadat*.

[*Ma'rifat* in simple language means to get to know and recognize Allah Ta'ala. *Ibaadat* refers to the specific acts of worship ordained in the Shariat.]

Thus, an ignorant and negligent human chooses ignorance and negligence thereby corrupting and discarding the Divine Will and the Divine Natural Path. He disappreciates and darkens such priceless and magnificent jewels and brilliant jems as the heart and mind. Moulana portrays this as follows:

حرس و شهوت عقل را احمق کند قلب را بے نو

ر و بے رو نق کند

[*Greed and lust result in inanity*

They leave the heart dark and gloomy]

Thus, a thoroughly ignorant and negligent person is even worse than an animal. Haq Ta'ala declares:

بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ط أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعَافِلُونَ.

[In fact they are more astray. These are the heedless.]

Summary

Thus, it is comprehensively proven that negligence, carelessness, ignorance and lack of education are highly despicable and evil qualities. Therefore, *it is imperative to engross oneself and remain engrossed in Ilm and Ma'rifat with care, concern, total effort, true pursuit and perfect exertion.* The human soul and spiritual life can endure only in this way. Departing from this is spiritual death and ruin and extinction of the human soul.

Another name for this reasoning and reflection is mutaala'ah. Solely by virtue of mutaala'ah do mysteries come to light and manifest and by reflecting and reasoning continuously one advances very rapidly and significantly.

Condemnation of Ignorance

There is no greater fault than ignorance (jahl). Precisely for this reason the time preceding Huzoor (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) in which all types of faults, evils and extremely vile obscenities and shamelessness were endemic and customary is designated with 'ignorance' (jahaalat). Zamaana-e-Jaahiliyyah or the Times of Ignorance is the complete and perfect designation fixed as its introduction. The reason for this is that this word [jahl or ignorance] includes all faults, is comprehensive of all evils and indicates all nonsensicalities. In fact, there is no other word more inclusive, more comprehensive and more indicative [to the aforementioned evils] than it. No other word can adequately describe the state of that time. Other words only indicate specific types of faults. Thus, if that time was designated with any other word it would not have presented a complete picture of the time's circumstances and condition.

It is thus proven that being uneducated and being ignorant are very detrimental and are exceptionally evil and vile faults. Hence the ignorant one's sin of ignorance and his crime of illiteracy are recorded all the time in his Document of Deeds to the extent that the sin of ignorance is continuously written and recorded in his Document of Deeds even after receiving reward over a lawful act. In fact, even over an act of Taa'at, in proportion to the deed.

And why not, when it is this very ignorance which is the source, matter, root and foundation of kufr and shirk—the worst of rotten things—and takabbur [haughtiness]—the mother of evil things.

Hence the jaahil [ignoramus] is consistently condemned in the explicit texts of the Qur'aan and Hadeeth. In contrast, the one who has knowledge—the Aalim—is lauded with praises.

Who is an Aalim in the Shariat and Who is a Jaahil?

Here there could be a misconception and a deception. The misconception and deception are to regard only one who has studied Arabic Kitaabs to be a man of knowledge—an Aalim—and one who has not studied Arabic Kitaabs to be a non-Aalim and jaahil. This is not at all correct.

Wherever there is mention of an Aalim and jaahil in the Ahadeeth and Aayaat; wherever the merits of an Aalim and the demerits of a jaahil are cited, there our usage is not intended. The technical Aalim and technical jaahil are not meant there.

On the contrary, Aalim there refers to one who acquires knowledge in any recognized way, whether by studying Arabic or Persian Kitaabs [at the feet of recognized Ulama], or studying/listening to Deeni Urdu books, or he has served and stayed in the company of expert Ulama, or he has communicated with expert Ulama from time to time.

A Comparison between a Customary Aalim and a Allah-fearing Aalim

In any case, in whichever way possible, Ilm-e-Deen and Ilm-e-Shariat should be acquired. This is an Aalim. Consider Hazrat Shah Abdul Azeed Dabbaagh (Rahmatullahi alaih) and Hazrat Shah Qutbud Deen Bakhtiyaar Kaaki (Rahmatullahi alaih). In spite of them not being Aalims in name and conventionally, but as a matter of fact they were great Aalims. *They were in the*

service of their Shaikhs for a period of time diligently listening to their discourses and statements in their Majaalis [assemblies/gatherings]. In this way they achieved awesome knowledge.

Our Hazrat Haji [Imdaadullah] Saheb [the Shaikh of Hazrat Thanwi] wasn't either a conventional Aalim. Nor was Hazrat Mianji Noor Muhammad Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaihi) [the Shaikh of Haji Saheb] a conventional Aalim. But, Allahu Akbar, forget about being awesome Aalims, they were producers of Aalims. They weren't Aalims technically, but in the true sense of the word they were Moulanas, i.e. Allah Walas. In fact, they bred Moulanas.

Take the illustrious Sahaabah as well. They became Aalims by virtue of the gracious companionship of Huzoor-e-Anwar (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). And their knowledge was not ordinary. They possessed exceptionally lofty, extensive and deep knowledge. They were honoured with true knowledge and they were perfect and accomplished.

Difference between Knowledge by Study and Knowledge by Company

Here we learn that knowledge by company surpasses customary knowledge gained through study. One who has gained the distinction of having spent time with a Man of Allah does not remain in need of Kitaabs, whereas Kitaabi-Aalims [i.e. Aalims who have only superficial book-knowledge] are in need of the knowledge by the Awliya.

Customary, superficial and book-knowledge become true knowledge through the spiritual effulgence of the company of the Kaamileen [those who have achieved perfection in Deen; the Awliya]. *In the absence of the spiritual effulgence of the*

Kaamileen it is difficult, in fact practically impossible for one's knowledge to avail oneself and to be accepted and recognized [by Allah Ta'ala, in fact by creation as well], regardless of how many Kitaabs one may have committed to memory. And not only that, worse than that is the deterioration and destruction of such an Aalim due to him becoming self-conceited over his extensive superficial 'knowledge'.¹ Hazrat Moulana Roomi (Rahmatullahi alaih) said it beautifully:

اے عالم زدا نش بے نصیب
حافظ علم است
او کہ نہ حسیب

خو تو نہ دانی جز یجوز و لا یجوز

د نہ دانی تو کہ حوری یا عجز

[Besides jaaiz and na-jaaiz what do you know?

Whether you are a Jannati of Jahannami do you know?]

جان جملہ علمہا این است و این کہ بدانی من کیسم در

یوم دین

[The soul of all knowledge A to ZEE

Is that you know who you are on the Day of 'Nafsi, Nafsi'.]

And he says:

¹ Perhaps the reason for this ruin is that a customary Aalim, i.e. one who has not gained the benefit of the company of the Awliya, has in his mind a treasure-house of facts. He sees his treasure-house filled all the time. This produces vanity in him and from vanity to proudfulness (*kibr*); and *kibr* destroys him.

In contrast, the Aalim who has gained the suhbat (companionship) of the Awliya has inspirational and Allah-given knowledge. This knowledge is inspired into his heart on special occasions and in times of need. He does not therefore see his mind filled and replete with knowledge. He depends on Allah Ta'ala for guidance. The sterling attributes of *ijz* and *inkisaari* (humility and humbleness) are the features of his character. And this *humility and humbleness are the causes of success and achievement and they secure the Proximity and Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala*. This is the reason for the ruin of one and the success of the other. Wallahu A'lam. May Allah Ta'ala honour us with the suhbat of the Awliya. Aameen.

أَيُّهَا الْقَوْمُ الّذِي فِي الْمَدْرَسَةِ كُلُّ مَا حَصَلْتُمُوهُ وَسَوَسَتُهُ
[O Association Residing in the Madrasah!

Whatever you have acquired is waswasah]

علم نبود غیر علمِ عا شقی
ما بقى تلبیسِ۔
ابلیسِ۔ شقی

[There is no Ilm besides the Ilm of Divine Amity

Everything else is the deception of Iblees the Nasty]

علمِ۔ رسمی سر بسر قیل است و قال
نه ازو کیفیتی
حاصل نه حال

[Customary knowledge is nothing but discussion and squabble
Neither is any spiritual state gained through it nor elevation of the
fettle]

Hazrat Thanwi's Parting Advice to Talabah and Ulama

This is the mystery of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Mujaddidul Millat Jaami'ul Mujaaddideen (Quddisa Sirruhu) writing with much concern, care and sympathy and very fervently and compassionately in his priority bequests:

"I leave students and Ulama with this advice that they should not be proud over formal teaching and education. Its benefit is subject to association with and service to the Ahlullah and their gaze of favour. Hold onto this incumbently and diligently."

بے عنایاتِ حق و خاصانِ حق
گر ملک
با شدسیہ بسستش ورق

[Without the favours of Allah and the Special Friends of Allah
Even if one becomes an Angel one's end will be fatal]

Aalim in the True Sense of the Word

This shows that for a person to consider himself an Aalim only on the basis of having studied technical knowledge, i.e. the exclusive Arabic text books taught in the Madaaris, is a colossal error. Considering oneself fit for all the virtues and excellences mentioned in the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth is not correct for this reason that the experts have declared fear for Allah and piety together with its external and internal effects and essentials as obligatory.

It is furthermore obvious, in fact very much obvious, and it is accepted and acknowledged by intellectuals—even the public and hierarchy know and accept unanimously in all mundane affairs—that everything is worthy of consideration and desired with its use and essentials. In the absence of use and the essentials people take and declare the object to be as good as nothing. It is said: “That is a strong man.” Or it is said: “Where is he strong? He is nowhere near being strong.” It is said: “This is something you are saying.” And: “There is nothing worthwhile in his talk.”

From these statements and considering their usage it is quite evident that *without benefit, effects and essentials an object is as good as nothing*. It does not remain loved, dear and desired. For instance, one picked a flower to derive the scent. One kept it next to one. Once the scent goes away then it does not remain dear and it does not remain an object of desire. It is therefore thrown away. This is echoed in the following poem:

نکل جاتی ہے جب خوشبو تو گل بیکار ہوتا ہے
 [When the fragrance goes away the flower is of no use.]

In this way hundreds of similar instances are found and seen where this rule is applied. Then it is astonishing and surprising that with regard to IIm-e-Deen this rule and principle is disregarded.

When a real lion possesses some effects and essentials—awe, terror etc.—that even a big crowd cannot even bear the awe of the look of an angry lion though it may be in a cage—the mere look instils such fear into their hearts that they fall back and disperse—then even though the lion cannot break the iron-bars and come out and almost every one is sure of this, but the lion, living and real, is nevertheless in front of them. When its reality does not become non-existent due to being in a cage and behind thick iron-bars then its essentials and effects will certainly be with it, not separated. Therefore, in all cases its awe and its terror will assert their effects on the crowd.

Now, these effects will not be found in a mere picture, image, painting or statue of a lion. A large group will not even venture to confront a real and living lion, whereas even an infant will tear to pieces a picture of a lion. Just see! Why is it so? This is despite the fact that the picture or statue is also called a lion. However, regardless of this appellation neither is it considered to be a real lion nor are the effects and essentials found. Why? It is for this reason that one is just a picture, image and a fake lion, whereas the other is a real killer lion. Thus the effects and essentials of the real thing are non-existent in a picture and unreal object.

Essentials of True Ilm

Similarly, when textbook, customary, superficial, figurative and verbal Ilm do not produce the effects and essentials of Ilm—fear for Allah, piety, tolerance, humility, reflection, reasoning, resolution, courage, perseverance, forbearance, dignity, tranquility, self-control, tongue-control, mind-control, body-control [i.e. safeguarding the mind and body from sub-human usage]—then how can this be Ilm in its true sense and in its real and original form? Since it is not Ilm then how can the bearer of

such imitation ‘Ilm’ be called an Aalim? He is in fact bereft of the attributes and essentials of Ilm.

Procedure of Lessons—The Original Approach

Here another point comes to the fore, which is that the original procedure of studying and teaching the Qur’aan and Hadeeth is that which produces and nurtures those effects and attributes.

Nowadays, just like other sciences and subjects, studying and teaching the Aayaat and Ahadeeth are limited to mere technical knowledge and gathering of information. Attention is not directed to practical application to one’s external and internal [bodily and character-related] deeds, whereas *the prime purpose of the Kitaab and Sunnat—the Qur’aan and Hadeeth—is to deflect the heart and body in the direction of Haq Ta’ala’s Pleasure and utilize them accordingly.*

Now whether one calls this *Tazkiya-e-Nafs* [Self-Purification] or *Tasfiya-e-Qalb* [Purification of the Heart] or one designates it *Ta’meer-e-Insaaniyyat* [Cultivation of Humanity] or *Tehzeeb-e-Akhlaaq* [Refinement of Character] or one names it *Islaah-e-Nafs* [Self-Reformation] or *Islaah-e-A’maal* [Practical-Reformation]. The reality is one and the same and it is the objective of Allah Ta’ala’s Kalaam and Rasoolullah’s (Sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam) Kalaam.

The Primary Nourishment of the Rooh

Man is made up of two things. A human being has come into existence by virtue of the formation of two things; one is a material component, i.e. the elemental and earthly body and the other component is non-material and free from matter.

The material component requires material forms of nourishment and is dependent on the various types of matter. This material and elemental body can only be nurtured and preserved with those things which are from the earth, from soil. Now whether it is milk or nourishment made from any type of grain or prepared from fruit, or any other kind, but it has to be material and coming from soil, from the earth. If these material forms of nourishment are not delivered to it then it will turn to skin and bones and dryness will overcome it extinguishing the natural body heat and culminating in death.

This is unlike the Rooh [Soul], for it is not material. It is free from matter. Its work is to direct and control the elemental body. In view of it not being material its nourishment can therefore not be material. It serves no purpose in giving it sugar/syrup. Give it milk and nothing happens. Its nourishment is non-material and can only be an essence free from matter.

Among non-material things *the first and foremost nourishment of the Rooh is Ilm*. Namaaz, etc. all righteous acts (A'maal-e-Saalihah) come thereafter. *Practical life depends on knowledge*. Every practice—be it minor or major—requires knowledge. Without knowledge practice certainly causes damage. Accordingly, when Namaaz is read without knowledge of it then either it will be totally invalid, or valid but deficient and unacceptable. In the former case such mistakes will be committed through ignorance which will render the Namaaz fit only to be flung back at one's face. In the latter case, without knowledge complete observance of the Aadaab and Mustahabbaat is extremely difficult, in fact not possible. Deficiencies and irregularities will thus invariably transpire. In this case it will not be accepted wholly.

Thus, the primary and foremost nourishment of the Rooh is Ilm and hence when Allah Ta'ala created our Father and Ancestral Progenitor, Hazrat Aadam (Alaa Nabiyyina wa alaihis Salaatu was Salaam) He granted him the nourishment of Ilm after blowing the soul into him.

The reason for this is that the Rooh is an essence which is abstract/non-material. Thus, its nourishment will appropriately be a non-material/abstract essence. And Ilm is just such a thing. It is a non-material essence, free from matter.

Haq Ta'ala has mentioned this first nourishment in this Aayat-e-Shareefah:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

“That Supreme Being and Creator conferred the knowledge of everything’s name to Aadam (Alaa Nabiyyina wa alaihis Salaatu was Salaam).”

Here only names such as jujube, violet, sheep, goat, cow, buffalo, etc. is not the purport. An hour’s lecture, rather several hours of lecturing, in fact a few days of lecturing is required here.

The Nature of Ilm

Be that as it may, it was only appropriate that the nourishment of such a delicate and exquisite substance such as the Rooh should be delicate and exquisite. Ilm is precisely that which goes with it, as it is not visible just as the Rooh is not visible.

And these Kitaabs which you study and the writings you see in the Kitaabs, these are not Ilm. The nature of Ilm is something else. Ilm is actually something else. And what is it? It is Noor.

An Illustration of Noor

To make this more understandable consider Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam). Prior to being raised in this world he had been created in the world above the heavens before Hazrat Aadam (Alaa Nabiyyina wa alaihis Salaatu was Salaam), as mentioned in the Hadeeth Shareef:

كُنْتُ نَبِيًّا وَآدَمُ بَيْنَ الْمَاءِ وَالطِّينِ

[I was already a Nabi whilst Aadam was in between water and clay].

Not just that, in fact Rasoolullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) had been created before the entire creation, even before the earth and heavens. He states:

أَوَّلُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ نُورِي

This is a popular Hadeeth which means: “The very first thing which Allah Ta’ala created was my Noor.”

From Noor to Rasool

However, when Haq Ta’ala wished to send the Noor-e-Muhammadi to this human and material world for spiritual munificence and benefit, then He did not send it directly without a medium. The reason for this is that we would not have been able to derive benefit from it. Its spiritual munificence would not have been passed onto us. Even if there were to be some, it would have been unconsciously and involuntarily, just as creation is graced with the light of the sun. But learning and teaching cannot be carried out in this way; and education was the actual purpose of sending that Noor to this world. Therefore, that Supreme Being gave the Noor-e-Rasool (Sallallahu alaihi wa Sallam) a corporeal body and sent him to this world for our education and benefit.

The Garments of Noor-e-Ilm

Similarly, Ilm is also Noor. It was given corporeity in the form of words and imprints and sent here for our benefit. Thus, Ilm is not mere imprints and words. On the contrary, *Ilm in actual fact is a Noor sent to this world with the garments of imprints and words for the benefit of us learning true realities, transcendental beliefs, practical laws, rules and the Law of Allah.*

How this Noor is Acquired

Now it is necessary to know, to understand and to learn how this Ilm or Noor can be acquired. Listen and remember that it will be acquired through diligent, rigid and continuous observance of *Taqwa* and *Taa'at*.

[*Taqwa* literally means 'piety'. In the Shariah, *Taqwa* means to abstain from all Allah Ta'ala's prohibitions and to carry out all His commandments. *Taa'at* means acts of obedience; acts of Ibaadat.]

This is precisely what Imam Wakee (Rahmatullahi alaih) said:

فَإِنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ مِّنْ إِلَهٍ وَتُورُ اللَّهِ لَا يُعْطَى لِعَاصٍ

[For verily Ilm is a Noor from Allah
And the Noor of Allah is not given to a sinner.]

Therefore understand well and remember that if one had to spend one's whole life in effort and hard work without *Taqwa*, this Ilm will not be gained. Therefore, either bring along *Taqwa* when coming along to learn Ilm, or else concurrently remove the base qualities of the nafs [self; ego]. Then only will this Ilm be achieved.

The Treasure of Ilm when Discovered

Then this Treasure of Ilm will be so magnificent that the entire world's riches, diamonds, jewels, gold and silver—heaps upon heaps—cannot compare and cannot equal it, to the extent that the kingdom of the seven continents also pales into oblivion in front of it. The reason is simple. All these things are going to perish and be lost, whereas *the Treasure of Ilm is eternal and non-perishable; it is a perpetual bounty*. It does not dwindle by spending and using. In fact, the more it is used the more it increases. [‘Using’ Ilm means to study, teach and propagate.]

People of other qualifications, the rich and wealthy and even rulers and governors bow down to one who has acquired the Treasure, Excellence and Noor of Ilm which is an attribute of Divine Noor.

A Summary

To summarize, sin and disobedience are forms of darkness, whereas Ilm is an exquisite and celestial light (Noor); and light and darkness are opposites. Therefore, both cannot gather in one place as this is a combination of two opposites which is impossible. Thus, it is impossible to acquire Ilm when one is a sinner.

So how can true Ilm which is an exquisite and celestial light be acquired together with the darkness of sin? Thus, *if you wish to acquire that Noor of Ilm, it is incumbent upon you to adopt Taqwa, i.e. to forsake sin, outwardly and inwardly*. Adopt this then True Ilm, i.e. Noor will be acquired.

Replacement of Lost Energy through Roohaaniyyat

Just as milk is physical nourishment Ilm is spiritual nourishment. And it is a rule that energy is burnt up continuously in the body and through food and nourishment the lost energy is replaced until man reaches his total lifespan. Nevertheless, when spiritual nourishment and spirituality are dominant then physical nourishment decreases and quite significantly, to the extent that it becomes on par to nothing, or in certain cases there is no physical nourishment at all. Then too, without replacement of lost energy through food intake, man survives and stays alive. Haq Ta'ala supplies the replacement with spirituality (Roohaaniyyat) through His special succour.

To understand this, the example of an ailing person is adequate. Due to sickness and weakness the patient becomes helpless, incapacitated, debilitated and weak. He is overcome with helplessness, meekness and a state of forlornness. Hence Special Divine Mercy descends on him. Now in spite of his sickness, extreme weakness and total abstention from food, what is the reason for him not suffering that peculiar weakness which a healthy person experiences on account of hunger? The reason is simply that Haq Ta'ala supplies the replacement within him.

This is not something I have conceived. It comes in the Hadeeth Shareef that Allah Ta'ala feeds and nourishes the sick person. From this we learn that the sick person receives internal source of life and strength [i.e. his energy is being replaced by Divine intervention].

Thus one who is nourished and strengthened internally and spiritually by Haq Ta'ala, what need and necessity is there for him to be regular with external and material nourishment; being dependent and unable to make do without it? [According to the strength of Roohaaniyyat of a person he can survive without food.

The stronger his spiritual side is the longer duration he can endure without food and without him becoming weak and debilitated. Accordingly, the Malaikah are totally independent of material food due to the exceptionally strong spiritual fibre they possess. Similarly, it is said that a kaafir army marches on its stomach. Due to the kuffaar lacking in almost entirety, or in entirety, in spiritual strength their morale and physical strength are crushed when they are deprived of food.]

He [the one with strong spiritual fibre] will definitely not be dependent on these material sources of nourishment and hence if he shows lack of want for any of these things; if his disposition is not inclined to any of it then he should not be forced; it should not be insisted upon him just as there is no insistence when a sick person refuses to eat.

Allah Ta'ala's Nusrat upon Helplessness and Humbleness

Now reflect over why this treatment is given to the sick person; the reason for the supply of internal and subtle nourishment and strength and the deliverance of unseen succour and Divine aid?

Either you say that in view of Allah Ta'ala inflicting the sickness He therefore bestowed the means and strength to bear as well.

Or, it is for this reason that a state of helplessness and humbleness, meekness and forlornness settled over him [the ailing person], even though it may be non-volitional and involuntarily.

Be that as it may, this attribute [of humbleness, etc] is found in him and in any case Haq Ta'ala dearly loves this attribute, similar to the helplessness, inability, weakness and feebleness of a child being involuntarily. Nevertheless, Haq Ta'ala directs his special favour upon it [the child] and hence He places the responsibility

and arrangement for the upbringing, nourishment, comfort and ease of the child on His other creation [like the parents, guardian, etc.] and they are inspired to render a beautiful service in turn. Love and desire to serve the child are instilled into the hearts of others by Allah Ta'ala and thus the child does not need to do anything for itself. In fact, it has no cognisance of all that is transpiring.

The Position and Station of the Ahlullah Ulama

This is precisely the case with the Ahlullah Ulama. Either you say that their work has been given to them by Allah and they have a special relationship with Allah Ta'ala; therefore He directs His special aid and exclusive favour unto them.

Or you may say that *the Ahlullah Ulama do not have their gaze on creation, on material agencies, on the friendship of anyone, or on the co-operation of anyone. They see themselves and others—the entire creation—feeble, destitute, helpless, weak and powerless in front of His Will and Power.* Allah Ta'ala loves this humbleness, submissiveness, lowness and forlornness of their's and hence Haq Ta'ala showers them with His special and very special torrents of Mercy (Rahmat). He grants them exclusive aid and succour. He instils in the hearts of creation love for them and a burning desire to serve them. In this way they find ease, freedom from problems and liberation from concern.

Where can laymen attain, reach or even understand their rank and stages! I therefore aver that Aalims are in a different class. Don't ever think yourself to be on par with them! Their position is such that even if any farmer or worker gets up early in the morning, at dawn break and in the dark goes out and labours and toils with difficulty till the night; then too he can never equal Moulanas and Aalims. Now where does anyone have the right to level

objections and accusations at them? [In conjunction with what was and what will be mentioned it is obvious that reference here is to those Moulanas and Aalims who have fear for Allah Ta'ala in their hearts, not to those who have sold their Ilm for the carrion of the world, i.e. the ulama-e-soo.]

The Work of the Ulama is Exceptionally Lofty

It is surprising and regrettable that some people say: “The Moulanas do nothing. They eat through the sweat of others. They cannot earn and work for their own daily bread.”

Our response is that this is absolutely erroneous. Doing careless and superficial jobs you labour under the notion that you do everything! No! No! Your work and job is nothing. The work of the Ulama is exceptionally lofty and extremely arduous, so much so that there are such Ulama-e-Haqqaani and Ulama-e-Rabbaani who appear to be comfortably and idly sitting at home, but sitting there they oversee the fields, orchards and fruit. It's just as I am saying, whether anyone accepts or not. And since you take me to be truthful then accept this also to be the truth.

And my dear friends! I was saying on Jumah that it is not limited to overseeing the fields, orchards and oceans. Greater and furtherer than that, some among these Moulanas and Aalims are such that they are occupied with looking after and protecting the entire country; the mountains, the rivers the dams and the borders, in short the whole of the country. If they relinquish their protection there will be utter destruction.

The Power of Electricity and Lightning

There should not be cause for astonishment at how they take care of such monumental tasks sitting at home. Does the world not know of the power of electricity whose reality is either a form of fire or light?

Be that as it may, it is of earthly origin, not related to the sky. In spite of this its speed and power is so amazing that in a mere second, in no time from where till where it reaches and in an instant it leaves its effects in remote and distant places. Its existence is not visible, yet its power is incredible.

When this earthly electricity is so powerful then how powerful must the electricity or lightning of the sky be? Accordingly, in spite of the lightning of the sky being so many miles away its flash and glare comes close to blinding the eyes of those on earth and its thunderbolt and thunderclap make huge mansions and castles shake and reverberate. This proves that where there is power, the effects of it are far-reaching.

The Power of Noor

And of all forces the power of Noor is the greatest and the most overwhelming. It comes in the Hadeeth Shareef that when a Mu-min passes over Jahannam it will say:

جُزْ يَا مُؤْمِنُ فَإِنَّ نُورَكَ أَطْفَأَ نَارِي

“O Mu-min! Pass by quickly for your Noor is extinguishing my flames.”

The fire of Jahannam is the fieriest of all fires. The heat there, the fury, the intensity and the strength is extremely harsh and very

severe; in fact, very very severe. However, it still seeks refuge from Noor. We thus learn that the power of Noor overpowers the fury of fire. This establishes that Noor is much more intense and stronger than a substance such as fire.

The Effects of Noor of the Heart

So these Ulama-e-Rabbaaniyyeen and Illustrious Aalims possess this Power of Divine Noor and hence they execute major tasks from far a field by virtue of the Noor of the heart.

From this is proven that the Ilm which the Ulama possess and the Ilm intended by milk in the Hadeeth of the dream of Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) drinking milk is Noor of the heart and inner and spiritual life, not just this superficial [book] knowledge.

When this [Noor] comes into the heart its effect is that one is attracted and drawn towards Nooraani [celestially illuminated and holy] things and one becomes connected and associated with Nooraani things. In other words, one becomes punctual of outward and inward Taqwa and the practices of the Shariah. The reason for this is that when the heart has this [Noor], it will become Nooraani [illuminated and holy] and in consequence this internal Nooraaniyyat [illumination and holiness] will attract one towards external Nooraaniyyat. The principle is:

الْجِنْسُ يَمِيلُ إِلَى الْجِنْسِ

“Everything inclines towards its species, its kind, its like-nature.”

Noorun Alaa Noor

Furthermore, *when one Noor, i.e. the internal Noor, becomes infused with another Noor, i.e. the practices of the Shariat, then*

the Noor intensifies in strength, power, brightness, clarity, brilliance and radiance. This is like you have learnt close to the end of Kitaabul Imaan here in Bukhari Shareef under ‘Baabu Fadhli Manistabra-a Li Deenihi’ that by abstaining from doubtful things perfection of Taqwa followed by stimulation of Imaan and adornment lustre, clarity and brilliance in it [Imaan] are acquired.

How the Noor of Imaan and Noor of Ilm become Extinguished

Now when the Noor of Imaan is magnified and further purified with A’maal-e-Saalihah [righteous deeds], then similarly corruption and contamination in Imaan and weakness in Imaan through evils and sins and dimness and darkness settling on Imaan and Noor through the darkness and rottenness of sins are all very obvious. In fact, sometimes it ends in extermination and eradication of that Noor. Hence it appears in the Hadeeth Shareef that a person sometimes utters in carelessness and negligence such things which efface his Imaan and he is not even aware of it. Due to his carelessness he feels nothing. Allah Ta’ala declares:

أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

[...you will lose your actions whilst you do not even perceive it.]

We thus learn that sins and vices weaken and harm one’s Imaan; and this we do know that Imaan is a Noor. And Ilm being a Noor we have all ready learnt and it has been proven.

Thus, just as these sins and vices are harmful to Imaan, in precisely the same way they are harmful to Ilm as Imaan and Ilm share the common denominator of Noor. Hence Hazrat Imam Shaafi’i (Rahmatullahi alaih) said:

شَكَّوْتُ إِلَى وَكَيْعِ سُوءِ حِفْظِي فَأَوْصَانِي إِلَى تَرْكِ الْمَعَاصِي

فَإِنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ مِّنْ إِلَهٍ وَنُورُ اللَّهِ لَا يُعْطَى لِعَاصٍ
 [I complained to Imam Wakee about my poor memory
 So he emphasized the forsaking of sins upon me
 For verily Ilm is a Noor from the Divinity
 And the Noor of Allah is not granted to one who is unholy]

True Life and Death

In short, *Ilm is Noor by virtue of which life and strength come to the heart and soul and hence Ilm is spiritual nourishment.*

And here in this world of material causes and agencies Haq Ta'ala has connected everything to material agencies. Thus the survival and life of everything is dependent on appropriate nourishment for it. Thus, in view of Ilm being spiritual nourishment and the pivot of life, therefore a human being who possesses no Ilm is deprived of human soul and spiritual life and hence an ignorant person is dead, as Hazrat Ali (Radhiyallahu anhu) states:

النَّاسُ مَوْتَى وَأَهْلُ الْعِلْمِ أَحْيَاءُ

“Besides those who have Ilm, all humans are dead. Only those who have Ilm are alive.”

Then out of sheer joy and happiness at the acquisition of the treasure of Ilm he gratefully exclaims:

رَضِينَا قِسْمَةَ الْجَبَّارِ فِينَا لَنَا عِلْمٌ وَالْجُهَّالُ مَالٌ
 فَإِنَّ الْمَالَ يَفْنَى عَنْ قَرِيبٍ وَإِنَّ الْعِلْمَ بَاقٍ لَا يَزَالُ

“We are extremely happy over this Divine-allocation; He has made us Aalims and the jaahils wealthy. Riches and the bounty of wealth are nothing great. It is not worthy of becoming elated over because it is not something that remains. It perishes; it comes and goes. Thus, if such a thing comes one's way, at any time it can be lost. What reliance can be reposed on it?”

لَا تَتَّقِ بِالدَّوْلَةِ فَإِنَّهَا ظِلٌّ زَائِلٌ

The bounty of wealth is unreliable for it resembles a passing shadow. The bounty of Ilm on the other hand is a major bounty and a wonderful and durable excellence. For this reason we are extremely happy over receiving it; for being greatly favoured with it.”

This has been echoed precisely in these couplets of one of the Akaabir:

أَلْجَهْلُ قَبْلَ الْمَوْتِ مَوْتُ لَاهِلِهِ فَأَجْسَامُهُمْ قَبْلَ الْقُبُورِ قُبُورٌ
وَإِنَّ الْمَرْءَ لَمْ يَحْيَ بِالْعِلْمِ مَيِّتٌ وَأَلَيْسَ لَهُ حِينَ النَّسُورِ نُسُورٌ

He states that ignorance and being deprived of Ilm are death. One lacking Ilm and an ignoramus have dead hearts and dead souls. Thus the bodies of these jaahils are moving graves, for a human is not just the physical body. The first element is the Rooh. When it is dead, then undoubtedly one who does not choose to live with acquiring Ilm and Ilm does not correspond to his life, he is a dead man. Now it is extremely difficult for him to come out of his drunken stupor of ignorance and negligence (jahaalat and ghaflat).

Truly well said! Regarding such people it comes in the Hadeeth Shareef:

النَّاسُ نِيَامٌ فَإِذَا مَاثُوا انْتَبَهُوا

“People are inebriated with the intoxication of negligence and ignorance. They are out of their senses and are unconscious. When death stares them in the face and they will be compelled to turn to the Aakhirat; when the scenes there will appear before them then they will awaken, i.e. they will come to their senses and to realization. Realities will then dawn upon them.”

The Effects of True Ilm

It is furthermore evident from this that *Ilm is only that by virtue of which one becomes a cultured human being, the heart becomes lustrous and purified, darkness and corruptness are effaced and Nooraaniyyat [lightness and holiness] settle in [the heart].*

The effects of that will manifest themselves in the form of beautiful character and wholesome actions leading to peace, serenity, safety and tranquility becoming widespread in the world. People will not face an iota of harm, terror, mischief and trouble from such a person. Everyone will be comforted by him. No-one will face danger from him. Everyone will be at ease with him and will have trust in him. People will receive peace, ease, comfort and rest from him.

The Effects of Secular Education

Now look at secular education and worldly sciences and their institutions and centres. Do we find teachings of this nature? Look, and look carefully! Look over and over again! Make a thorough inspection. Leave alone education of these things you will never even find the slightest attention and concern for it.

In fact, you will find the opposite. You will find engrossment and indulgence in such things; such fervour and frenzy which drive those who pursue such education and sciences to attain heterogenous carnal desires, self-honour, status, power, glamour, comfort, wealth, luxury, pleasure, name, fame, following, service, learning ways and schemes to make others subservient and servants, authority and rule over others, etc. You will find them engrossed in these thoughts and dreams day and night, morning and evening, whilst sleeping and whilst awake.

Now, it is clear, and abundantly clear that besides egotism, self-interests, sensual pleasures, selfishness and insensitivity, crime and anarchy instead of sympathy, troubling and harming instead of peace and safety, instead of providing comfort and besides ruin and destruction what else will be achieved?

It is for this reason that as this kind of education and sciences [secular] expands, as such institutions increase and classes of society turn in more and more numbers to it [secular education], the more crime, anarchy and every sort of danger are accelerated to the extent that thinkers, intellectuals and governments are helpless and powerless to curb its high tide stemming from being nurtured in all these colleges and universities.

Leaving the portals of those institutions, becoming posted to some office and gaining some sort of authority leaves them with access to pleasures, money, glory and beauty which they zealously and ambitiously pursue. They loudly pronounce their invincibility and authority. In this case there is no question of them having any regard for the responsibilities on their shoulders and sparing any thought for the problems and difficulties encountered by the general public and creation. They have nothing to do with their [creation's] sufferings and coming to their rescue and aid.

They are perennially engaged in acquiring the latest for themselves and at most for those close to them. They think only about themselves and their close ones. In this state of affairs it is obvious that in acquiring, securing and fulfilling their goals and ambitions they will never look at the sufferings or comfort of others. They will be totally indifferent to that. They won't have time for others no matter what; be there crime, anarchy, rising cost of living, ill-treatment, injustices and oppression. [The vivid picture painted here by Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Saheb (Quddisa Sirruhu) is witnessed on a daily basis, with governments

at the forefront of this horrible culture of bestiality nurtured and promoted by western education. May Allah Ta'ala protect us.]

They have absolutely no concern for that. Even if they render some meager service then it is either due to some fleeting exigency or personal benefit of blocking of criticism and objection, or through bribe-taking, hoarding money is their idea. Besides accumulation of wealth and glory they perhaps cannot care in the least for others—for the oppressed and for the distressed— save a few.

What is the reason for this ruin and rot nowadays? For no reason other than being trained from the age of discretion in bestial, material and sensual objectives and goals. No one showed them even a sign of cultured human behaviour. Whence will they then gain lofty human attributes and traits? How will they then become proper human beings? How are they then going to inculcate lofty character, righteous deeds, sterling ways and admirable practices?

And how are the dark tides of injustice and oppression going to be stemmed? How will peace, order, safety and tranquility settle in the land and on earth? How is salvation from local and global problems and disturbances going to be attained?

Indeed when this trend of uncontrollable bestiality, barbarity and satanity and gross human rights abuses, injustice, usurpation of rights, vices and ignorance become widespread then this world will be a spectacle of Hell. Life here will be pervaded with much anxiety, misery and profound bitterness.

So the clamour nowadays for western education and culture and the spread of secular knowledge and culture to apparently every big and small, major and minor town, village, settlement, city and all classes of the social strata—close to every person male and female, is pursuing and obtaining this education and culture—yet

the lofty goals and standards of proper human behaviour mentioned earlier are not realized is manifest proof of this [western] culture and [secular] education being mere hollow terms bearing no substance and essence. In fact, it does not come remotely close to real education and culture. They [secular and western educated modernists] have not even dreamt of true education and culture.

Thus, the one and only conclusion we come to is that the education and courses imparted in these colleges and universities are human concoctions of progress in self-interests, perfection in self-aggrandizement and pecuniary carnal desires and incitement to haughtiness and proudfulness. For this filling one's belly, pampering one's body, adorning one's body and name, fame and acclaim are key requisites which are fountainheads of violation of human rights due to which infliction of harm, etc instead of provision of aid is inescapable. Therefore, instead of peace, crime and corruption are the order of the day as a result of these colleges, universities and this 'education'. These are the effects and fruits of this concocted 'education'.

The Guarantee of Ilm-e-Deen

On the contrary, *Ilm-e-Ilaahi [Divine Education] via Wahi [Divine Revelation] takes full guarantee of peace and safety. The reason for this is that this Ilm firstly and primarily produces recognition, apprehension, affection and devotion to the Sublime Creator, the True Master, the Lord of the world. This is followed by man treating creation with affection, compassion and giving due consideration for their rights in proportion to their rank and status by virtue of the following and other Qur'aanic and Hadeeth texts, commandments, laws and ordinances:*

خَلَقُ اللهُ عِبَالَ اللهِ

[The creation of Allah are children of Allah]

إِرْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مِّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ

[Show mercy to those on earth, mercy will be shown to you by those in the heavens]

He [man] will become aware of and discharge their [creation's] rights according to the Sovereign Command and Divine Decree observing the approval of the Best of Judges [i.e. Allah Azza wa Jall].

In the light of the teachings and directives of Khaaliq Ta'ala he [man] will understand and recognize proper from improper, appropriate from inappropriate and precedent from contingent with proper application.

Catalogue of Deeni Education

The reason for this is that Deen and Ilm-e-Deen are not confined to just Namaaz, Roza, Tilaawat of the Kalaam-e-Paak, Zakaat, Sadaqaat, and Hajj. On the contrary, *Deen and Ilm-e-Deen are connected to the life of a human being from the cradle to the grave, in every age and in every state, in action and inaction, in privacy and in company, in sadness and in happiness, in short, in every avenue and in every condition of life. Even a split moment of life can not be isolated from Deen.*

Thus, Ilm-e-Deen is to learn and to know the Divine Constitution in regard to all affairs—thoughts, beliefs, acts of worship, practical deeds and dealings together with all their detailed laws pertaining to the individual and to society—marriage divorce, Zihhaar-repudiation, waiting period after termination of marriage, business and commerce, partnership enterprise, expressed profit

resale, profit-share business partnership, hiring an attorney/agent, bail, pawning, gifting, borrowing, endowment, deposit, trust, guarantee, household management, law enforcement, collection of revenue, district administration, provincial administration, justice administration, civil courts, criminal courts, army administration, country administration, financial administration, home affairs, foreign affairs, departments of forestry, water and fisheries, accommodation for travellers, building of bridges, border security, department of defence, military operations, and similarly internal affairs, enforcement of court orders, politics, department of education, department of finance, department of research, department of agriculture, department of mineral resources, laws pertaining to foreign visitors and mutual trade, passport, visa revenue from non-Muslim citizens, foreign visitors, enemies, etc, etc.

Similarly, differentiating and discriminating between good and bad character whereby one distances oneself from bad traits and strengthens and grounds oneself in proper human culture by inculcating sincerity and honesty and abstaining from hypocrisy, ostentation, show, display, boasting and fame. Ostentation is the norm of the day. It has been elevated to the pedestal of the rule and goal of life, whereas in the Hadeeth refuge has been sought from things which fall under the classification of show and fame and dire warnings have been sounded for its adoption. Therefore, it is obligatory and imperative to refrain from these things.

Yes [I was saying], abstention from the antithesis of sincerity, viz. ostentation, exhibition, fame, etc, inculcating perseverance and contentment, avoiding greed, avarice, inordinate cravings, impatience, agitation, hastiness and recklessness, to be grateful and appreciative, eradicating ungratefulness and disappreciation from one's disposition, forming the habit of humility, humbleness and submissiveness, to be disgusted and to keep aloof from the extremely vile qualities of proudfulness, vanity, self-

conceitedness and self-praise, to make the attributes of trust, tolerance and forbearance one's nature, to keep one's heart and gaze away from self-satisfaction and material causes and agencies, to be particularly watchful and aloof from anger, rage, harshness, cruelty and tyranny and in social matters to adopt unity, harmony, enjoining of kinship, pardon, graciousness, mercy, compassion and kindness towards juniors, respect, honour, veneration and service towards elders, and good character and consideration with relatives, non-relatives, acquaintances, strangers, neighbours, friends, associates, the rich, the poor, Ulama, Talabah, Muslims, non-Muslims, with all commensurate to their respective ranks.

In short, there is no state of a human's life—circumstances, periods, statements, actions, conditions, movements, rest periods, sitting, walking—beyond the spectrum of Deen.

The Touchstone and Examination

Deen has bestowed man with purity, clarity, beauty, lofty dignity and impeccable culture in everything. And this is not mere rhetoric. Whoever wishes let him examine and see for himself that *no programme and no education teach culture and humanity in the true sense of the word on par to Ilm-e-Deen.* Accordingly, take a person upon whom Ilm-e-Deen has left its full impression and another upon whom modern culture and secular education have left their full impression. Then compare the character, social behaviour and dealings of the two; you will find a difference as vast as that of the heaven and earth.

It is an entirely different matter that someone may have in mind a deendaar [person of Deen] who lacks in true [Islamic] culture. Well, the reason for that is that Uloom-e-Deeniyyah [Islamic Sciences] have not pervaded his life, as *there are briefly and*

principally five branches of Deen, viz. beliefs, acts of worship, dealings, social behaviour and character pertaining to the heart. So some people understand the laws of Namaaz, Roza to be Ilm-e-Deen and they name a person who is punctual on those laws (Ahkaam) ‘Deendaar’. This is in itself erroneous. They have looked at an incomplete picture of Deen. They therefore labour under the misconception that Deen or Deendaari is an incomplete and weak concept, whereas in actual fact the person whom they have named ‘Deendaar’ and declared him to lack culture does not bear all the branches of Deen. And our conversation is about that person whose life has been permeated with all the branches [of Deen]. Such a person will be on such a lofty pedestal of politeness and culture that others will not even come remotely close to him.

Hazrat Moulana Sayyid Sulaimaan Saheb Nadwi’s Confession

This is precisely the reason for Moulana Sayyid Sulaimaan Saheb Nadwi who was an accomplished litterateur, author, speaker, widely-acclaimed by the contemporary educated class and in his own opinion gifted with culture and politeness clearly realizing after turning to Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih), frequenting Thanabawan and attending the Majaalis-e-Shareefah [Assemblies of Moulana Thanwi] that hitherto he was labouring under deception thinking of himself to be cultured and enlightened. Then he realized he was not even remotely close to enlightenment, knowledge and culture. In his own words: “I used to think that I knew a great deal. But now I know that I am not even a kindergarten kid.”

The Effect of Ilm-e-Deen on Our Predecessors

In short, on par to Ilm-e-Deen there can be no Ilm that teaches correct humanity and true cultured life. *It is this selfsame Ilm-e-Deen which produced such character and politeness in our predecessors that Europe itself was left with no other choice but to confess, nay wholeheartedly accept and advocate the many practices and ways of our predecessors.* Accordingly, they have adopted many principles of politics from the reign of Khilaafat of Hazrat Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu).

Similarly, it is an established fact that the Three Epochs vouched for its nobleness and piety, i.e. the eras of the illustrious Sahaabah, Taabi'een and Tab'e Taabi'een saw the renaissance of commercial, social and moral life. In fact, one just needs to look back at the life of our recent predecessors and seniors (Aslaaf and Akaabir). One will find out that in every age Ilm-e-Deen brought the highest form of culture and true humanity to its associates.

The Lofty Spirit, Beautiful Social Conduct and Sublime Culture of Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi Alaih)

It this regard there is an incident of Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih). He was in marazul mowt [the final illness preceding death]. He had diarrhoea and had become extremely weak; bedridden. It was night time and everyone at home was sleeping when he suddenly had an urge to go to toilet. He did not wake up anyone. He did not tolerate disturbing anyone's sleep at all, whereas he was so much loved and furthermore in such a case of extreme weakness and severe sickness it is obvious that no one would have been burdened and taken umbrage over being woken up.

Nevertheless, he went to the length of avoiding even an outer façade of causing difficulty and troubling others on his part by mustering up courage and going to the toilet with much difficulty.

On his return his weakness became aggravated and taking a few steps he became dizzy and collapsed in the courtyard. He fell unconscious. After a short while he regained consciousness, got up and returned to his bed where he laid down.

His weakness had reached its limit. His body had become numb. Just then he remembered that he had a lota [water jug] in his hand when he fell unconscious in the courtyard. “The lota must have fallen out of my hand. If anyone at home required to go to toilet at night and did not find the lota in its fixed place then they would be unsettled and the trouble and difficulty of searching [for the lota] would afflict them.” This thought made him restless. He therefore took up courage and got up. Without regard for his pain and weakness he went and searched for the lota in the dark courtyard. Having found it he returned it to its original place. Then the agitation within him subsided and he became restful and at ease.

Allahu Akbar! Even in such a state of illness, exceptional weakness and numbness *the thought of providing comfort to others and saving them from anxiety so overwhelmed him that he became restless* until he found the lota and returned it to its place.

Look at the degree of consideration for creation and the degree of abnegation and magnanimity! What lofty culture and sublime character! He consented to much difficulty and hardship upon himself, but not even a semblance of trouble and pain, and the slightest hardship should befall them. This was purely the effect of Deen. Can secularists, modernists and western culturalists present a case like this? Never! This is not in the capacity of those who claim to represent sophisticated modern culture.

Hazrat Gangohi's Lofty Character

Similarly, there is the incident of Hazrat Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih). Once, he was imparting lessons in open air. Rain suddenly began to come down. All the students took their Kitaabs and went inside. And Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih) was gathering everyone's shoes saving them from the rain, and then only he went inside!

Look at this selflessness and true humility! Such humility is displayed to seniors, but who shows such humility to juniors, and that too to one's pupils?

This is brotherly sympathy, human feelings and giving comfort to others. What magnitude of self-purification and big-heartedness, in that he was not embarrassed in the least to pick up the shoes of others, and that too of his juniors!

This was one incident as a sample. Incidents of this nature are found in abundance in the life of these Illustrious Personages.

Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi's Humility and Selflessness

Similarly there is the incident of Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Qasim Saheb Nanotwi (Rahmatullahi alaih). Once, Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb left Madrasah Deoband having become displeased over some issue and he went away to Nanota. Moulana Muhammad Qasim Saheb came to Nanota and pleaded "Hazrat please come back!" "Never will I return," Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb replied. In this manner the one side begged and the other side refused. Finally, Moulana Nanotwi

removed his topi and put it at the feet of Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb. [In custom this was the extreme point of humility and entreaty.] This was inspite of the fact that Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb was younger and even the pupil. Nevertheless, Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb did not give it any consideration and adopted that degree of honour and respect solely on account of him [Moulana Ya'qoob Saheb] being his [Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb's] Ustaaz's son. He did not think of himself being elder and the Ustaaz. Who can do that today? This was Moulana Nanotwi's selflessness and his regard of himself to be inferior to others. An example of this cannot be cited nowadays.

Hazrat Madani's Respect and Honour

Similarly we have the incident of Hazrat Moulana Husain Ahmad Madani (Rahmatullahi alaihi). Once, he was present at a jalsah in Bhesani [a town close to Jalalabad]. Many people requested to take bai't and they persisted. However, Hazrat repeatedly refused.

A Khan Saheb from Lohari [a village in close proximity to Jalalabad] who had a special relationship with Hazrat interceded on behalf of some persons. Then too Hazrat did not make anyone bai't.

Molvi (Sayyid Aabid Husain) Saheb Marhoom [popularly known as Chote Molvi Saheb, former Ustaaz of Miftahul Uloom Jalalabad and a close friend of Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Saheb] even interceded on behalf of some people saying: "Hazrat! They are restless. They are becoming disheartened. Do make them bait." Hazrat responded sternly: "I have already spoken. They still are insisting? I am not going to make bai't here. Here [in this region] there is Molvi Maseehullah Saheb. I must make bai't with him here? Never can that happen. If they are so eager,

let them come to Deoband.” Molvi Saheb Marhoom related this incident to me.

In short, Hazrat did not initiate anyone in Bhesani into his discipleship, whereas I am just a child in front of him and his pupil. Despite this, this regard and this consideration!

This was the lofty excellence of those Illustrious Personages; towards pupils they even showed such conduct of regard. Nowadays even to one’s Ustaads students do not show that respect, honour, regard and consideration. True Ilm and Perfect Deen leave those impressions.

End of the Discussion

It is thus proven that *Ilm-e-Deen exclusively is such a thing which nurtures and refines human individuals and members, personal life and society, household affairs, metropolitan affairs and country and kingdom affairs connecting man to Allah, making him a manifestation of His infinite mercy and conferring to the whole world the treasures of peace, safety, tranquility, serenity, comfort and rest.* Just look at the reign of Khilafat of the Khulafa-e-Raashideen and their terms of office.

Besides Ilm-e-Deen all the other subjects, sciences and so-called ‘knowledge’ do not produce these qualities. In fact, as mentioned earlier, instead of Allah-consciousness impulses and cravings of self-centredness, self-interest, self-indulgence and self-adornment are produced covering the whole wide world with the darkness and blackness of injustice and anarchy. Therefore, all these are utter jahaalat and zulmat [ignorance and darkness]. Besides the token of ‘knowledge’ they have no affinity with knowledge.

In other words, knowing things and pictures has been dubbed 'knowledge', whereas in reality it is not worthy of being called knowledge at all. For instance, names are given to lifeless and inanimate pictures, paintings and statues. Pictures of animals are called ox, buffalo, horse, lion, etc for example. Now everyone knows that the work, benefit and use of original and real oxen, water-buffaloes, horses, etc can never be acquired from the lifeless and dead pictures of these animals.

The characteristics and effects of a lion can never be found in an inanimate picture of a lion. So, true realities and the attributes of these things are not obtained by giving the same names to their pictures. Similarly, dubbing the system of knowing and becoming acquainted with the aforementioned things as 'education' is merely symbolic.

A mere name does not give one the reality. By naming an entity with something else's name the former does not acquire the essentials and characteristics of the latter. Thus, in the light of reality today's education and culture are nothing other than ignorance and nescience. The effects and essentials of nescience are bonded to and unseperable from them.

In regard to such 'education' Huzoor-e-Akram (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) stated:

إِنَّ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ لَجَهْلًا

“Certain things which are called and named education, certainly and categorically they are evil and sheer ignorance.”

To think that those things are 'knowledge' is an advanced stage of nescience.

Thus, the notion that knowledge is general, no matter what type of knowledge it may be, is absolutely erroneous and totally baatil. *True knowledge is that by virtue of which a human being becomes*

the noblest of creation and the crown of the universe; by virtue of which a human being becomes a human being in the true sense of the word; by virtue of which true humanity and humanness are enculcated. This was clarified earlier on.

From this exposition there remains no scope now for that notion. Thus, science, geometry, medical science, engineering, governmental posts, etc—all sciences and fields related to capitalism, finance, state affairs, etc—none are means of nobleness and virtuousness and none can be declared to enjoy inherent glory and excellence.

With absolute certainty the only education which is a guarantee for cultivation of humanity, civilized culture and nobleness and which is the causative factor for peace and safety, Divine mercy on earth and on creation and the established beauty of the world and times is Ilm-e-Deen, Ilm-e-Shariat, Ilm-e-Wahi, Ma'rifat-e-Ilaahi, Ilm-e-Rabbaani.

[*Ilm-e-Deen*: Deeni Education

Ilm-e-Shariat: Knowledge of the Shariah

Ilm-e-Wahi: Knowledge of the Divine Revelation

Ma'rifat-e-Ilaahi: Perception of Allah Ta'ala

Ilm-e-Rabbaani: Divine Knowledge

All the above terms are synonymous.]

The reason for this is that *Ilm* in actual fact is *Noor* and through *Noor* comfort and peace prevail, lightness spreads, beauty and elegance show and injustice, darkness, destruction, perdition, vice and strife are checked and obliterated. And all this is acquired through no other science and skill other than *Ilm-e-Deen*. Thus, *Ilm-e-Deen* solely is the pivot of life, the nourishment of the human soul and the means of survival of this ephemeral world.

A Final Plea

You have now come to realize critically, exhaustively and thoroughly that the copiousness and universality of Deen and Ilm-e-Deen [Islam and the Shariah of Islam] are inclusive and encompassing of individual life, congregational life and citizen life together with all its internal, external, temporary and permanent rules and regulations the particulars of which are innumerable and unlimited. It is therefore obvious what level of proficiency and power of reasoning and deduction and what fine alertness, acumen, powerful intelligence, brilliance, excellent disposition and swift comprehension knowledge and understanding (Ilm and Fahm), drawing and deducing of so many particulars from the Qur'aan and Hadeeth require. May Allah Ta'ala grant us ever-increasing towfeeq of explicitly following his Rasool and disseminating Ilm. May He grant us barkat in Ilm and Amal and may He accept from us.

وَإِخْرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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