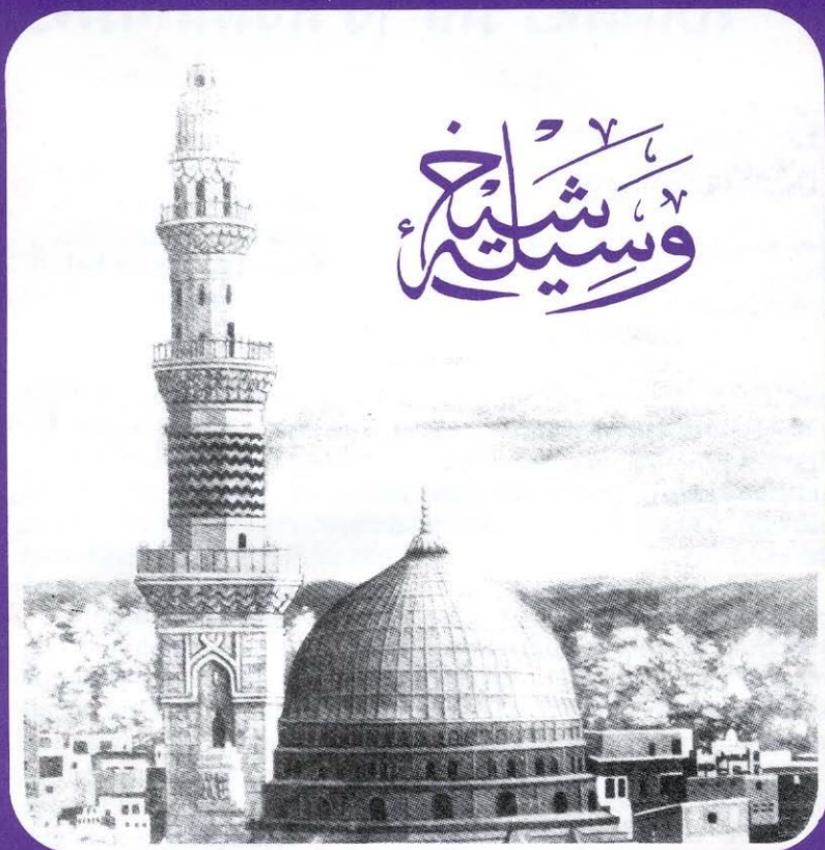


Mediation of the Shaikh

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ
 اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَعِزَّتِهِ بِكَدِّ
 كُلِّ مَعْلُوْمٍ لَكَ أَسْتَعِيْزُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
 الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ وَآتُوْبُ إِلَيْهِ -

Mediation of the Shaikh

O, you who believe!
 Do your duty to Allah
 Seek the means
 Of approach unto Him,
 And strive with might
 And main in His cause:
 That you may prosper.

—(Al-Qur'an 5:38)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَ
 جَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تُفْلِحُونَ -

المائدة : ٣٨

THE sufi commentators have interpreted the word *Wasila* (meaning to achieve the nearness of Allah the Almighty) in this Verse, as the perfect *Shaikh* (spiritual guide). The ordinary man, however learned or accomplished he may be, cannot reach that goal of spiritual enlightenment by himself. Indeed, there is no such precedent of a man who could have attained perfection in any field without the help of a specialist in any particular sphere.

Just as all the arts, and skills in the modern world today, need proper training to acquire them, similarly in *Saluk* (nearness to Allah the Almighty) each *Salik* (Wayfarer) depends on the experience of the one higher up, for a true and effective guidance. Proficiency in multitudes of knowledge, pertaining to the material life, has nothing to contribute towards the making of progress in the spiritual field. The *Shaikh* in this context means the living *Shaikh* who can be approached in person for guidance in all spheres.

In learning a skill, books cannot replace the teacher, both study and the teacher are essential. The *Shaikh* is a tutor, who teaches how to achieve the nearness of Allah the Almighty. Everything else is none of his concern. He can teach the religious do's and dont's, and inculcate in

you the obedience and *Dhikr* (Remembrance of Allah). All other matters, religious or otherwise, should best be entrusted to Allah the Almighty. So the *Shaikh* should be approached for the purification of one's soul only.

The difference between the *Shaikh* and the devotee is that of the station, wherein the devotee tends to be supercilious, in matters undesirable, the *Shaikh* would accept everything cheerfully.

Everything is ordained. One's circumstances are but the true reflection of what there is in store for one. In submission to the Divine ordinances lies your perfection and not in arguments. You perform the *Zikr* of Allah the Almighty, and do not run after the reward. As one gets nearer to Allah the Almighty so one moves away from this world. As one moves further away from this world, one reaps pleasure and contentment.

In another Verse of the *Holy Qur'an*, Allah the Almighty says:

.....
Allah the Most Gracious:
Ask you, then, about Him
Of any acquainted (with such
things).

الَّذِينَ فَسَّلَ بِهِ خَيْرًا -
 العنقرتان ٥٩٠

—(*Al-Qur'an* 25:59)

At another place it is stated,

..... if you
Realise this not, ask of those
Who are Ahl-e-Zikr (those engaged
in remembrance).

فَسَلُّوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ
 كُنْتُمْ أَرَادْتُمْ أَنْ تَقْلَمُونَ -
 النحل : ٣٣

—(*Al-Qur'an* 16:43)

All these Verses in fact point to the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his immediate successors, the four *Rashidin Caliphs*. The *Rashidins* also include the perfect *Shaikhs*. The *Shaikhs* of different grades get their spiritual enlightenment from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He alone has the full knowledge of those after him who directly benefited from him. One who himself is not fully aware cannot

inform the other. Knowledge here means full knowledge, outward as well as inward. Similarly people of *Dhikr* know the Almighty, and only they, no one else, can inform about Allah the Almighty.

May Allah the Almighty help us to find such a person, who could help us to follow the straight path and guide us to Allah the Almighty!

Ya-Hayyoo, Ya-Qayyum!

*Verily, those who plight
Their fealty to you
Do no less than plight
Their fealty to Allah:
The Hand of Allah is
Over their hands:
Then anyone who violates
His oath, does so
To the harm of his own
Soul, and anyone who
Fulfils what he has
Covenanted with Allah,—
Allah will soon grant him
A great reward.*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبَايِعُونَكَ
إِنَّمَا يَبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ
يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
فَمَنْ تَكَفَّرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَّكِفُ
عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ
عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسِيْرَتِيْهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا
(الفتح : ١٠)

—(Al-Qur'ān 48:10)

So it is quite clear from the above Verse that after swearing allegiance it becomes incumbent on the *Talib* (the seeker) to obey his *Shaikh* completely. There remains little choice for him to choose in-junctions of his likings, and show consistency in his behaviour as if he was responsible to no one. The *Shaikh* is somewhat like a doctor. In order to get well the patient should take the prescribed medicine with care, taking all the necessary precautions. If we had no intention to use his prescription and observe the necessary precautions he should not have taken the trouble to go to his doctor. Yet this disease is much more complicated than the physical ailments.

As it has been made clear earlier on, one should not go to the *Shaikh* seeking help or guidance in matters regarding the every day life. Thousands of years before your birth, your destiny was already written down. Everything in this world is subject to the Divine ordinance. Even the system of prayers, also, comes into the same category. As for example somebody's prayers for someone else, and their acceptance by Allah

the Almighty is subject to his destiny. The *Shaikh's* prime job is to shift the love of this world from your heart, and instead fill it up with the love of Allah the Almighty and His beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Tear open the shroud of negligence and make yourself alert to follow the way of Allah the Almighty.

Ya-Hayyoo, Ya-Qayyum!

The Perfect Shaikh

All the multitude of machines in the modern world today were made by the servants of Allah the Almighty, whose brains were stimulated by the Divine light. They were granted the intelligence and wisdom. By making the proper use of their intelligence, they made useful gadgets to help the whole of mankind. They made railways, radio telegraph, aeroplanes, ships, sewing and weaving machines. In short, they made machines for all purposes and all occasions. Then they wrote comprehensive books about each machine, explaining the function, location and degree of pressure regarding each and every component. Because, unless a machine is installed according to the manufacturer's directions, it cannot function properly. If the whole machine is properly fixed, apart from a minor component, which is slightly loose, so that the air and steam can leak in or escape out, the whole machine will come to a standstill for the looseness of that particular component. The mechanic will have to make a thorough check to pinpoint the loose bit, withholding the entire machinery, consequently tightening it up to the requirements of the workshop manual. This proves that all the components regardless of their size are the integral parts of the machine, without which, it would be incomplete and good for nothing. After the assembly there is another important consideration in order to make it work properly; that is, it would need a special kind of oil, also recommended in detail by the manufacturers. They would be quite explicit about the quality of the oil to be used, because the usage of the low grade oil would shorten the life of the machine by clogging various pipes by the unsuitable density of the oil. Therefore they would specifically mention the name of the company which prepares the oil and the names of their agencies throughout the world.

Accordingly, if the machine is properly fixed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and filled with the right kind of oil, it should give the standard performance under the supervision of a qualified operator.

From the above analogy we can draw the conclusion that to get the maximum output from any machine, the following three basic necessities are to be complied with:

- (a) It should be assembled according to the manufacturer's plan.
- (b) The right kind of oil suggested by the manufacturer should be used.
- (c) The operator should be qualified to run that machine.

Also, you might have noticed that in the selection of the candidates for a vacancy the experienced hands always receive preference. Allah the Almighty is the Architect (Creator) of this world of your hearts (inner self). You yourself know very little about your body and soul (physical and spiritual). In fact, your knowledge about yourself amounts to nothing. You know nothing about your beginning or your end. You cannot even guess about future events. In the language of religion, the *co-ordinator* of the body and soul (outward and inward) is the perfect *Shaikh*. And pure food (earned in a rightful way) is the best oil. Only the perfect *Shaikh* can bring about the co-ordination between your outer and inner self. Until and unless you are so organised and filled with the right kind of fuel, your machine cannot be expected to produce good results. The poor *Shaikh* too, cannot do anything unless you submit yourself completely into the hands of the *Shaikh*. Whenever a person surrendered completely to someone with the least interference on his part in any affair, pertaining to this world or the world of religion outward or inward, and completely discharged himself from himself in his (the *Shaikh's*) favour, surely he succeeded.

Ma sha Allah!

May the *Shaikh*, through the favour of Allah the Almighty, tighten up all the loose nuts in your being.

In Sha Allah Ta'ala il-Aziz

Your eyes, ears, nose, mouth, tongue, hands, feet, and those (the sex organs), heart, brain, mind, thoughts, meditation, attention and your imagination are all loose, and none is fixed according to the requirements of their Designer (Allah the Almighty).

O my dear, I swear by Allah the Almighty that the *Shaikh*, perfect or imperfect, can put all the system right only by the Divine favour, the Kind, The Gracious. No matter how hard you may try, you can never

fully understand yourself, nor can you put it right. That can be accomplished only if you hand over your entire self to some one. After making the proper adjustment, and filling it up with the right quality of oil, he may start it off in the Name of Allah the Almighty.

A great mystic of the Punjab, (may Allah the Almighty bless his memory) says:

“A reed is no more than an ordinary piece of firewood, but when a craftsman hollows it out and punches holes into it, and an artful player covers them all up, and blows into it the measured volume of air, with proper manipulation, it produces a sweet symphony of sounds.”

Everyone seems to be up with a screw driver, tightening his loose bits. Could they manage it? No, they still have all their nuts loose as ever.

Examine your ‘self’ and check if your body parts are in accord with the Will of your Creator. No, they are not!

The body parts of us all are busy in our own pursuits and thought. This way, nothing at all would be achieved and nobody could ever do a thing. We are like a steam engine, and an engine can never run on its own.

Ya-Hayoo, Ya-Qayyum!

An Essential Advice for the Veneration of the Shaikh.

By Shah Abdur Rahim Sarsawee (May Allah the Almighty bless his soul!)

The *Murid* (disciple) must have complete faith in his *Shaikh*, and regard him as the truthful, the righteous, and one of the favourites of Allah the Almighty, whose love, he must believe, will bring him salvation. The extent of *Kashf* and *Karamat* (the inspiration and excellence) in the *Murid* would increase to the degree of consistency and firmness of his faith in his *Shaikh*. He must not dispute over whatever the *Shaikh* says unless it is against the dictates of *Shariât* (the Islamic Law). And it must be acted upon. Having found him in confirmity with the requirements of the *Shariât* and the exalted one in all respects, outward or inward, he must not be turned away from him by anyone. The *Murid*

must guard against suspicious creeping in his faith. To proceed with a suspicious mind would simply destroy all his previous attainments. He must always wish him well. And must not allow anyone to speak ill of his *Shaikh* behind his back. He must try to stop it. If he fails, he must leave the place. Once it is confirmed that the *Shaikh* is a strict adherent of the *Shariát*, it becomes incumbent on the *Murid* to put his teaching into practice even though it may seem to be contrary to reason and beyond comprehension. All lawful pleasures must be given up if the *Shaikh* so commands, *Makruhat* (the acts which Islam disapproves of but does not invalidate) should be totally forbidden, and the *Musthabbat* (desirables) and certain *Mubhat* must be considered obligatory acts. The *Murid* must not try to make false representation or be humorous in his company, but, instead, observe the same code of discipline worthy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The *Murid* must direct all his attention towards the *Shaikh*. He must not indulge in any kind of optional prayers or *Dhikr* without his permission. He must not let his shadow fall over the *Shaikh* or any of his garments. He must not use his prayer rug. He must not use any utensil reserved for his personal use. He must not perform *Istanja* (washing after the toilet) at the place of his ablution. He must not eat, drink or talk to anyone in his presence. He must not spit in his direction. Whatever he may do, must be regarded as a source of blessing, even if it may not appear so, because all his actions are initiated at the Divine inspiration and command. It should, therefore, not be objectionable. He must be imitated in acts, big and small. But all matters of jurisprudence must be enacted according to his practice. The *Murid* must not criticise any of his movements or actions. In case of doubt he should be approached for a satisfactory explanation. If he is unable to understand, he must attribute it to his own weakness. Even if the *Murid* gains enlightenment from somewhere else, he must regard it as coming from his own *Shaikh*. And if after staying in his company for a long time the *Murid* fails to gain a degree in purification, instead of blaming the *Shaikh*, he should blame his own frailty. He must never question his perfection. And after that if he tries someone else he must always hold his previous *Shaikh* in good stead. If he deserts the second *Shaikh*, may Allah the Almighty forgive him, the blessings of the allegiance will vanish altogether. We often hear about a particular *Shaikh* having received his enlightenment from a number of other mystics. He had gone to the second only after reaping full benefit from the first and at his command. It is just like a student being sent to another college by his professor or parents to specialise in a particular branch of science. The people of the virtuous past were free from any

desire for fame. They sent their brilliant seekers to others after giving them the best spiritual training so that they became the bearers of the comprehensive enlightenment. They were not like us. We cannot tolerate our students paying respect to someone else besides ourselves. Those servants of Allah the Almighty used to train people for the sake of Allah the Almighty. This is why whoever went to them succeeded. We pray Allah the Almighty that we may meet His true servants. One who met the true servant of Allah the Almighty, I swear, met Allah the Almighty, because only the true servant of Allah the Almighty can point and guide another to reach Allah the Almighty. *Amin!* The *Murids* of the olden days were not rude or arrogant to their *Shaikhs*. They never had to look for another, having been disappointed with the previous *Shaikh*. In the book of *Tariqat* (the Islamic Mysticism) the disobedient and the arrogant have no place at all. They are like an egg taken away from underneath the wings of a hen. It rots away because no other hen will incubate it. A *Murid* would go to another *Shaikh* only to supplement his attainments from his own *Shaikh* and with his full consent. There, he would present his credentials with all due respects and regard. A disobedient person has never gained a place anywhere. May Allah the Almighty, through His grace and kindness, forgive all our sins major or minor, apparent or hidden. *Amin!* And, I swear by Allah the Almighty, this is not difficult for Allah the Almighty. For, His forgiveness is perfect and His kindness, unparalleled.

Ya-Hayoo, Ya-Qayyum!

May Allah the Almighty grant us steadfastness to walk along our path and ability to harness all our body parts!

Wa Ākhiro Da'wahna Anilhamdulillah-hay Rabb-il-'Alameen!

—(translated by *Bashir Ahmad*)

What is Dar-ul-Ehsan?

Dar-ul-Ehsan, literally meaning 'the House of Blessing', is a voluntary Islamic Institute situated in the district of Faisalabad, Pakistan. It has been defined as 'an abode of benefactors who worship Allah the Almighty as if they are seeing Him. If it is not the case, it (certainly) is true that He is seeing them.'

The Institute is busy fulfilling its aim of translating the sacred work of *Da'wah-o-Tabligh al-Islam* (Invitation to and spread of Islam) in many and various ways. Here it is humbly desired to demonstrate practically the teaching of the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* (Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the fountain head of Islam.)

People throughout the world from all walks of life, those who practise a little to those who practise their religion profusely, visit the Institute. In this way they satisfy their religious aspirations.

Sittings of incessant *Dhikr* (remembrance of Allah the Almighty) are held, missionary parties of those with religious and spiritual zeal are sent to all parts, a spacious mosque and a repository for the worn out copies of the *Holy Qur'an* have been built, a school for destitutes and orphans and a well-staffed hospital have been established, administering their services free of charge.

Abu Anees Muhammad Barkat Ali, a retired army officer, the founder and chief organiser of the *Dar-ul-Ehsan*, has written, published and distributed free of charge much literature on Islam in *Urdu*. This is now being translated in part in *Arabic*, *Persian* and *English*. *Kitab-ul-A'mal bis-Sunnah Al-Ma'roof 'Tarteeb Sharif'* (*Holy Succession*), *Makshoofat-e-Manazal-e-Ehsan* (*Manifestations of the Stages of Blessing*) and *Asma-un-Nabi il-Karim* (*The Bounteous Names of the Prophet* ﷺ) are three voluminous works of unique religious importance. A monthly magazine, *The Dar-ul-Ehsan*, is published for the benefit of the Muslim Community. It includes research articles, translations and commentaries on the *Holy Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, medical cures prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Abu Anees Muhammad Barkat Ali's own words of guidance and insight.

—Muhammad Iqbal



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