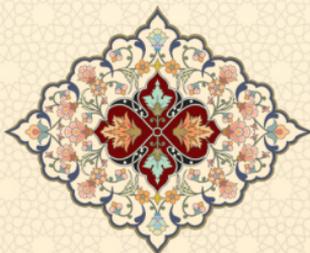


WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

*Imam*  
*al-Rabbani*  
RAHMATULLAHI ALAYH

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ



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# *Imam al-Rabbani*

(Rahmatullahi Alayh)

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## PREFACE

All praise be to Allah the Exalted who has honored us with the blessings of Islam and true faith and showed us the kindness of making us recipients of His Noble Qur'an and blessed us with the happiness of being among the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) who was the living commentary of the Noble Qur'an and our guide to the straight path...

Endless peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad who is our guide in this life, means of intercession in the Hereafter, and a mercy to all the worlds; Peace also be upon the pure members of his family and Companions...

After the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions, the zenith of exemplary individuals are Muslim scholars and gnostics who are friends of Allah because they are in the position of "the inheritors of the Prophets" in terms of their knowledge, wisdom, and exemplary character.



### **The Friends of Allah:**

- ✓ Are the ones who thoroughly combine the spiritual and temporal aspects of religion in themselves;
- ✓ Are the ones whose behavior has reached perfection by passing through the stages of ascetism (zuhd) and piety;
- ✓ Are the ones who have obtained the taste of faith and true certainty by extending their understanding and perception over both worlds;
- ✓ Are the ones whose efforts are to save humanity from bad deeds and selfish ambitions and to help them to achieve good character and full spiritual maturity;
- ✓ Are knowledgeable, wise and righteous believers, who consider themselves responsible for the whole Muslim community.

Allah Almighty says in Chapter al-Tawba verse 119:

**“O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with the truthful.”** (al-Tawba, 9: 119)

Shaykh Ubaydullah Ahrar -may Allah sanctify his secret- says in this regard:

“The expression ‘be with’ in the command of the Qur’an ‘to fear Allah and be with the truthful’, means



a continuous accompaniment. As it is mentioned in an absolute sense, 'being with' has two aspects, one physical and the other spiritual. Physical accompaniment is to be physically present in the assembly of the righteous, while spiritual accompaniment is to evoke the presence in the heart while in physical absence."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the first step towards truthfulness is to be with the truthful, in other words to continue accompanying them in the heart even when absent in the body. Achieving righteousness is a natural consequence of this state.

By means of this humble book, we make intention to be with Sheikh Imam al-Rabbani - may Allah sanctify his secret - spiritually.

Allah Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an:

**“As for those who believe and do right actions, the All-Merciful will bestow His love on them.”**

(Maryam, 19: 96)

Allah Almighty bestows on His beloved servants a secret of affection which, like a magnet, attracts all the hearts that possess faith.

Indeed, every man comes and goes from this world like people come to a guesthouse and leave in few days and after a while their names are forgotten.

1. See *Rashahat*, p. 453.



However, Allah Almighty does not let His friends be forgotten.

Those friends of Allah do not truly die even after the death of their temporal bodies. Many of the friends of Allah, who continue glorifying and praising their Lord in their graves, live among us spiritually today and guide us. They will continue to live in the hearts even after we die. In proportion to their closeness to Allah, their life of guidance transcends the physical boundaries of time and space.

If we think about it, the number of visitors to the tombs of those great friends of Allah is a sufficient proof in this matter.

Moreover, the following event is a beautiful example of the love which Allah has placed in the hearts of His beloved servants:

According to a narration, while the Abbasid caliph, **Harun al-Rashid**, was living in luxury and grandeur in Raqqa, **Abdullah Ibn Mubarak** came to the town. All the townspeople went out to meet him. The caliph was left almost alone in the whole city. A female slave of Harun Rashid was watching this scene from her balcony. When she asked:

“What is this? What is happening?” She was told:

“A scholar came from Khorasan. His name is Abdullah Ibn Mubarak. People are welcoming him.”



Thereupon, the female slave said:

“This is the true kingdom; it is not the kingdom of Harun! Because in the sultanate of Harun, not even the workers can be gathered without police enforcement!”

Indeed, this is the true sultanate... Because the sultanates of this world are going to come to an end one day, but the sultanate of the hearts continue in the hearts in the same splendor after death. Humanity always needs those sultans of the hearts, to look for them and walk in the traces of their luminous steps.

Even though centuries have passed, there is still a special interest in Bahauddin Naqshiband, Shaykh Abdulqadir Al-Jilani, Yunus Emre, Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi and many other friends of Allah. Allah Almighty does not let us forget the great scholars of hadith or Qur’anic commentary or the famous imams of the schools of Islamic law and Sufis who served Islam.

Imam al-Rabbani is undoubtedly one of the great sultans of the spiritual world who continues to live in the hearts of the believers. This friend of Allah was born four and a half centuries ago in the town of Sirhind, India. Thanks to his exemplary life which was spent in struggle, defending the knowledge of the unity of Allah, Allah Almighty made all Muslims love



him. His love exceeded the borders of India in a short time and spread across the whole world.

Today, many Sufi paths, especially the Naqshibandiyya order, benefit from Imam al-Rabbani's guidance and spiritual light. Even after his temporal life, this great spiritual guide has been an actual criterion for the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. From his grave, he continues his service of delivering the message of Islam and guidance as a torch guiding to the straight path from the time he lived into the future.

As expressed in a hadith:

“A man will be with those whom he loves.” (Al-Bukhari, Adab, 96)

If we love the beloved servants of Allah, and if we desire to be resurrected with them in the hereafter, we should try to benefit from their strong belief, character and guidance. The sign of true love is to live in accordance with the beloved.

In this respect, we should live as the friends of Allah lived and take them as the model for ourselves to receive a share from their spiritual guidance.

**Dear readers!**

By means of this booklet formed from the letters of “Imam al-Rabbani” published in Altınoluk maga-

zine under the title “Wisdoms from Friends of Allah”, we wish to make a visit to the lodge of wisdom in the hearts of the friends of Allah.

We should not forget that we are also the current friends, followers and disciples of the friends of Allah, such as Bahauddin Naqshiband, Shaykh Abdulqadir Al-Jilani, Mawlana, Yunus Emre, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi, Imam al-Rabbani, and many more, who led the world with their guidance and passed from this temporal world to the eternal world. It is our wish that Allah Almighty give us such friends on earth who will celebrate our souls by remembering us with goodness while we wait for Judgment Day in our graves after our temporal life. What a great happiness it is to be able to leave a pleasant memory to the generations after us...

**May Allah Almighty make us all able to be on the path of the ones whom He loves, to do the deeds that He accepts, and be raised in the hereafter with the servants whom He loves and is pleased with.**

**Amin!**<sup>2</sup>

Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ  
November 2015  
Uskudar

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2. I would like to thank M. Akif Günay, who contributed to the preparation of this booklet, and I ask my Lord Almighty to make his efforts be a continuous charity.







*Imam al-Rabbani*

*Ahmad Faruqi*

*Sirhindi*

(May Allah have mercy on him)







**IMAM AL-RABBANI**  
**AHMAD FARUQI SIRHINDI**  
(May Allah have mercy on him) [1564 - 1624]

**Imam al-Rabbani** (May Allah have mercy on him) was born in the town of Sirhind in India in the month of Shawwal in 971 AH. Since his lineage goes back to the great Companion and the commander of the believers, Umar Ibn al Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him) he is known by the title “Faruqi”.

His father, **Abdulahad Efendi**, was a knowledgeable shaykh of great virtue, who was known for both external and internal qualities, and who had spiritual authorization from both the Chistiyya and Qadiriyya Sufi orders.

**Ahmad Sirhindi** (May Allah have mercy on him) started his first education by memorizing the Qur’an in a short time. He learned most of the sciences from his esteemed father and from the great scholars of his time. After a while, he moved to Siyalqut, a major center of knowledge in that time. He received educa-



tion in both rational and revealed sciences from various scholars. He gave particular importance to the sciences of Qur'anic commentary, hadith and Islamic law.

By seventeen, he had covered a great distance in external sciences and went back to his father's house and started teaching. Meanwhile, he got formal permission from **Qadi Bahlul Badahshani** to teach the sciences of Qur'anic commentary and hadith.<sup>3</sup>

When he was around 18 to 20 years old, he wrote a work titled *Ithbat al-Nubuwwa* against the ignorant scholars of the palace who admired the philosophers and inclined to see them as almost superior to the Prophets. He proved the central importance and necessity of Prophethood with rational and revealed evidences. In the meantime, he also wrote other books.

After a while, he entered his father's tariqah (sufi order) and became a regular in his sohbahs (spiritual talks). He focused all his energy on Sufi training. In order not to fail in the service of his venerable father, he always stayed with him and did not go anywhere else. His father Abdulahad Efendi passed away in 1007 AH (1599 CE). Shortly before his death, he ordained his son Imam al-Rabbani Ahmad Faruqi to be his successor.

3. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 128; Badr al-Din al-Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Quds*, II, 31-32.



**Imam al-Rabbani** (May Allah have mercy on him) set out from Sirhind to go on Hajj (pilgrimage to the sacred city of Macca) in the month of Rabi al-Akhir in 1008 AH, after the death of his father when he was 37 years old. When he came to Delhi, he visited **Baqi Billah** upon the recommendation of a friend. After attending the sohbahs of Baqi Billah for a while, he became a disciple of him.<sup>4</sup>

**Imam al-Rabbani (May Allah have mercy on him)** stayed with Baqi Billah for about two and a half to three months. As the time of pilgrimage had passed, he returned to his hometown. By exchanging letters with his master, he informed his master about the spiritual states he experienced. After a while, he visited his master again. During this visit, he was given permission to guide people in the spiritual path. He stayed with his master for about two months and returned to his hometown and started to guide his people in accordance with the Naqshbandi way. During this period, he felt spiritually incomplete and thought to retire to seclusion, but he continued to provide guidance upon the persistent requests of his followers.<sup>5</sup>

On his third visit to his shaykh, his shaykh greeted him on the way, gave him great compliments and

4. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 138-140; Badr al-Din al-Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Quds*, II, 34.

5. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 726, no. 234; II, 319, no. 290.



left the task of most of his followers' spiritual training to Imam al-Rabbani (May Allah have mercy on him).<sup>6</sup>

He was of very high states and virtues and he treated his masters with unprecedented respect and good manners. Once, his master sent one of his disciples and summoned him to his side. Hearing that his master was calling him, the color of Imam al-Rabbani's face immediately changed and he began to tremble with the violent trembling of a poor person out of fear. Likewise, his master would also treat him with great respect and fondness.<sup>7</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him), who continued giving spiritual training in Sirhind after the death of Baqi Billah (may Allah have mercy on him), wrote letters to his followers and to statesmen from far away. In the letters that he sent to his disciples, he dealt with the subtle issues of Sufism and in the ones that he wrote to the statesmen, he dealt with general issues such as devotion to the Islamic creed and the principles of Ahl al-Sunnah.

Every year in the month of Jamaziyal Awwal, the month when his master passed away, Imam al-Rabbani would visit his master's grave.<sup>8</sup>

6. Badr al-Din al-Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Quds*, II, 37-38.

7. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 144, 148-152.

8. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 144.



### Imam al-Rabbani's Relations with Sultans

Akbar Shah, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mughal sultan, used to be a devout Muslim with pure faith. However, was he left uneducated and illiterate due to political circumstances and migrations caused by them. Consequently, he adopted some false ideas under the influence of the self-seeking scholars around him. These scholars were trying to get into his favor and look nice to the sultans and administrators. By making all kinds of compromises, they were creating doubts and hesitations about Islam in people's minds. They were leading the rich astray by bringing up controversial issues.<sup>9</sup>

9. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 30, no. 67. Regarding such scholars, Imam al-Rabbani states the following: "Muslims should deem assisting the Muslim sultan as their duty. It is necessary for them to guide the sultan in regards to exalting the Shari'ah and strengthening the religion. Their support for the sultan can be either verbal or actual. The most urgent support is the verbal one. The best of such support is to inform him about the religious issues and explain the principles of Islamic creed in accordance with the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus of Muslim scholars. In this way, the emergence of deviants and innovators who would block the path and distort the religion will be prevented. This kind of help is pertained to the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah who observe the hereafter. For, being with the scholars whose all efforts are to pursue worldly things and to obtain simple benefits, is a deadly poison. The mischief of such scholars also permeates others.

As a matter of fact, whatever misfortunes we lived through in the last century were all due to their evil. These were the ones who led the previous sultan off the righteous path. Not only did they lead the sultan astray but also the leaders of all seventy-



Akbar Shah, who lost his religious direction as a result, entrusted important duties in the state administration to non-Muslims; He admitted some Hindu women into his harem. With the encouragement of the people around him, he invented a new religion called “Divine Religion (Din-i Ilahi)” under the guise of uniting Islam and Hinduism. In some places, mosques were demolished and Hindu temples were built in their place.

Akbar Shah ordered people to prostrate him in respect. This was not an issue for the Hindus. However, the situation was very difficult for the Muslims. The world-loving, self-seeking and heedless scholars who wanted to win the sultan’s favor issued fatwas stating that there is no harm Islamically in prostrating before the sultan with the intention of saluting, as long as not done with the intention of worshiping.

Imam al-Rabbani went to the capital Agra (Akbarabad) and met with some of the Sultan’s relatives. He told them:

“The Sultan has rebelled against Allah and His Messenger. Remind him that his reign and power will

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two groups who deviated from the straight path were these evil scholars. There is almost no one whose deviance influences other people as bad as these scholars’. Today, most of the ignorant people who pretend to be Sufis are also similar to these evil scholars. Because their corrupt ideas also affect others.” (Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 243, no. 47)



fall apart. Tell him to repent and follow the path of Allah and His Messenger!”

Some high-ranking statesmen showed great respect to Imam al-Rabbani. No matter how hard they tried to bring the Sultan back to the straight path, Akbar Shah was lost in the contradictions of the religion that he had invented and did not take heed of their advice. Then Akbar Shah’s astrologers informed him that his sultanate and power would soon collapse. The Sultan, who was sad about this news, also had a terrible dream around this time. Upon this, he issued a decree stating:

“Whoever wants may embrace Islam, and whoever wants may adhere to the Dîn-i Ilahî (man made religion meaning Divine Religion) let them do it. There is no compulsion and obligation.”

However, he kept discriminating against the Muslims, once he had tents set up for an upcoming festival. He filled the tents of those who believed in his false religion with fine fabrics and delicious food. Whereas he allocated Muslims with tents poorly made in order to show Muslims lowly.

Imam al-Rabbani (May Allah have mercy on him) came and settled in the Muslim tents with his followers. He took some soil in his hands and threw it towards the tents of the adherents of false religion. Upon this, a strong wind started to blow giving Akbar



Shah and his followers a very difficult time and Muslims did not suffer at all. After this clear divine warning, some state officials and commanders became disciples of Imam al-Rabbani.<sup>10</sup>

In 1605, Akbar Shah died and his son Jahangir took the throne. Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) was very happy about this situation because Jahangir was a good person devoted to Islam.

**Imam al-Rabbani** (may Allah have mercy on him) sent many of his representatives (khalifa) to different regions to guide people. For example, he sent **Mir Muhammad Numan** to Deccan by giving him authorization to give spiritual training to people and appointing him as his representative. Hundreds of people would gather in his dervish lodge, chant the names of Allah, contemplate and study. He appointed **Shaykh Badiuddin Saharanpuri** as his representative and first sent him to his hometown and then to Agra. Thus, many statesmen joined his spiritual gatherings, and thousands of military officials repented by means of Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him).

**Imam al-Rabbani** (may Allah have mercy on him) sent 70 people to Turkestan under the leadership of **Mawlana Muhammed Qasim**. He sent 40 people to

10. Al-Mujaddidi, *Rawdat al-Qayyumiyya*, I, 221-227; Muhammed Halim Sharkpuri, *Imam-i Rabbani* (trans. Ali Genceli), Konya 1978, p. 29-33.



Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Anatolia under the leadership of **Mawlana Farruh Husayn**. He sent 10 of his well-trained disciples towards Kashgar under the leadership of **Mawlana Muhammad Sadiq** and 30 of them to Turkistan, Badahshan and Khorasan under the leadership of **Shaykh Ahmad Barki**. These people achieved great success in the places they went and great numbers of people benefited from them.<sup>11</sup>

The community around **Imam al-Rabbani** was growing day by day. The congregation had increased so much that the notables and rulers of the time had a hard time visiting the Imam due to the size of his followers. **Sultan Jahangir**, who was disturbed by the people's strong affection to him, called Imam al-Rabbani to the capital Agra in 1619. The Sultan questioned the Imam about some of his mystical expressions he used in one of his letters then was convinced by the reasonable explanations of Imam al-Rabbani.

However, some people who were near to the Sultan said:

“This shaykh did not prostrate before you to greet you. He has many followers in the army as well. Soon, he may cause a strife with his followers and harm your authority. Shaykh Ahmad has so many followers in the military that he may even claim sultanate for himself if he wants to.”

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11. Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 156.



At the time, the chief advisors and servants of the Sultan were mostly followers of heretic sects. Since Imam al-Rabbani had written letters criticizing these deviant sects, they felt fierce anger towards him. These were the ones who provoked the Sultan.<sup>12</sup>

As a result, Jahangir imprisoned Imam al-Rabbani, who was 55 years old at the time, in Govaliyar Castle. He confiscated Imam's books, garden, well and house and exiled his family to another place.

Imam al-Rabbani, who was imprisoned for a year, taught Islam to the people there and guided them. In this way, he became the reason for many people to embrace Islam.<sup>13</sup> Due to the suffering he endured there for the sake of Allah, his spiritual state became stronger.<sup>14</sup>

A year later, Sultan Jahangir regretted what he had done and released Imam al-Rabbani on the condition that "he had to stay in the military barracks."<sup>15</sup>

Jahangir asked Imam al-Rabbani to be his advisor on religious matters. When Imam al-Rabbani thought

12. Al-Badahshi, *Manaqib al-Hazarat*, folio 39a-40b.

13. Al-Badahshi, *Manaqib al-Hazarat*, folio 41a; Muhammed Murad al-Qazani, *Tarjumatu Ahwal al-Imam al-Rabbani, Mu'arrab al-Maktubat (al-Durar al-Maknunat al-Nafisa)*, Mecca circa 1317, I, 58-59; Necdet Tosun, *İmam-ı Rabbânî Ahmed Sirhindî*, Istanbul 2005, p. 29.

14. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 180, no. 5; III, 182, no. 6.

15. Al-Badahshi, *Manaqib al-Hazarat*, folio 41a-41b.



about it for a while and realized that Jahangir was sincere, he accepted this proposal with the following conditions:

- 1) The prostration to salute the Sultan will be abolished,
- 2) All destroyed and demolished mosques will be rebuilt,
- 3) Orders prohibiting slaughtering cows will be canceled,
- 4) Qadis, muftis and administrators will pay attention to the application of Islamic law,
- 5) Poll tax will start to be collected again,
- 6) All religious innovations will be abolished and Islamic law will start to be applied again,
- 7) Those who were imprisoned due to their piety will be released.

Imam al-Rabbani did not have any personal request. His only goal was to repair the damage done during the reign of the previous heretic ruler and to prevent the earlier troubles from happening again.<sup>16</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) regarded being near the Sultan as a good oppor-

16. Halil İbrahim Şimşek, *Osmanlı'da Müceddidilik*, İstanbul 2004, p. 66-67.



tunity to encourage him to embrace the truth. He attended the assemblies of the Sultan and talked about religious issues with him. Those who were present in those assemblies would listen to him with great interest.<sup>17</sup>

Jahangir, who had remained silent about the demolition of mosques in the early days of his reign and had been criticized by Imam al-Rabbani for this reason, later committed himself to Islam so much that he built mosques and sacrificed cows thanks to the speeches of Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him).

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) stayed with Sultan Jahangir for four years. Meanwhile, he continued to write letters to his friends. Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him), who was fully released in 1033 AH, returned to Sirhind together with his sons who came to visit him and spent the last year of his life in his hometown.

### **Full Commitment to Shari'a Before Anything Else**

Observing with great pain that many innovations and false beliefs had entered into the lives of Muslims, **Imam al-Rabbani** (May Allah have mercy on him) made great efforts for the commands of Allah

Almighty to be practiced again. He frequently touched upon this issue in his talks, letters and books and said:

“Shari’a has three parts: **Knowledge** (*‘ilm*), **action** (**‘amal**) and sincerity (*ikhlas*). Shari’a will not be fully realized until these three are realized. Whenever Shari’a is practiced, then the pleasure of **Allah Almighty**, which is above all worldly and otherworldly pleasure, is attained. The following is stated in a verse:

“... the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of **Allah...**” (al-Tawba, 9: 72)

Shari’a provides all worldly and otherworldly happiness. There is no other goal we need beyond the Shari’a.

**Sufi order (tariqah)** and **the ultimate truth (haqiqah)**, upon which the Sufis concentrate their attention, are the servants of the Shari’a. These two complete the third pillar of Shari’a, i.e. *ikhlas*. Therefore, the purpose of obtaining them is nothing but to complete the Shari’a.

The states, inspirations, spiritual knowledge and abilities given to the Sufis during the steps of *sayr wa sulûk* (Sufi training) are not the main purpose. On the contrary, they are the delusions and dreams which the adherents of the Sufi orders are trained to wake up from. It is necessary to pass through all these trials and



reach **the level of contentedness**, which is the final stage of spiritual advancement (*sulûk*) and divine attraction (*jadhb*). The purpose of passing through the stages of the Sufi path and the awareness of the truth is nothing other than the attainment of **ikhlas** (pure sincerity) that is necessary to reach the stage of contentedness.”<sup>18</sup>

Knowledge is essential for human beings. However, it is necessary for that knowledge to make the servant reach *taqwa*, that is fear of Allah, and lead him to *marifatullah* (direct knowledge of Allah). For, it is stated in the Noble Qur’an:

**“...Only those of His slaves with knowledge have fear of Allah.”** (Fatir, 35: 28)

A servant should act in accordance with his knowledge. However, it is necessary for him to act with *ikhlas*. For, actions are accepted on account of the amount of *ikhlas* they are performed with.

**Dhulnun al-Misri** states the following:

*“All people are dead (spiritually) with the exception of the scholars. All scholars are asleep with the exception of those who act in accordance with their knowledge. Those who act in accordance with their knowledge also have the possibility to be deceived, but those who act with sincerity are exempted. The people*

*of ikhlas also face a great danger (every moment in the world) ...*<sup>19</sup>

In short, **knowledge**, **action** and **ikhlas** are vital elements that complement each other.

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted the following words of Bahauddin Naqshiband in order to explain that the Shari'a and Sufism should not be separated from each other:

*“What is meant by sayr wa sulûk is to make the basic knowledge of Islam more detailed for the disciple, to know what is known through evidence also by unveiling.”*<sup>20</sup>

Accordingly, following a Sufi path means to reach the true understanding of the Shari'a. The **Bâtin** (what is internal and hidden) complements and perfects the **zâhir** (what is outwardly apparent).<sup>21</sup> For this reason, any spiritual unveilings (*kashf*) that are contrary to the Shari'a and the consensus of the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah are immediately rejected and deemed of no value.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, Imam al-Rabbani states the following:

19. Al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, V, 345.

20. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 346, no. 84.

21. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 219, no. 41.

22. Imam al-Rabbani, *Mukâshafât al-'Ayniyya*, p. 29.



“Spiritual states depend on the Shari’a; but the Shari’a does not depend on spiritual states because the Shari’a is sound and definite, its correctness is confirmed by revelation. Whereas spiritual states are assumptions, known only by certain spiritual unveilings and inspirations.”<sup>23</sup>

“My dear brother! We should always spend our time in remembrance of Allah Almighty, even when we are shopping, anything in accordance with the Shari’a can be accepted as remembrance of Allah Almighty. Therefore, let us obey the religious provisions in all our states and actions so that all of them may be considered remembrance of Allah Almighty. For, remembrance means to turn away from heedlessness. Whenever we obey the commands and prohibitions of Islam in all of our actions, then we will not be heedless of the Owner of those commands and prohibitions and we will achieve the state of continuous remembrance of Him.”<sup>24</sup>

Likewise, Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) advised us to turn to Sufism after learning the basics of our religion and said as follows:

“One of the aims of engaging in Sufism is to be able to do righteous deeds comfortably and easily, and

23. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 197-212; Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 182-188.

24. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 540, no. 25.



to eliminate laziness, stubbornness and contradiction arising from the evil-commanding self (*al-nafs al-ammara*).”<sup>25</sup>

“After decorating our outward with the righteous actions of the Shari’a, we should turn to our inward states in order to protect our deeds from being infecting with heedlessness. For, it is a very difficult task to get our outward selves accustomed to religious provisions without the support of inner selves.

The scholars’ task is to issue fatwas. The task of the friends of Allah is to act. Giving importance to the inner world makes it more possible to act. A person who neglects the outer actions while trying to deal with the inner self is deluded and any internal state that he acquires is pretention or *istidraj*.<sup>26</sup> The best measure of the strength of our inner states is the conformity of our outer actions to the divinely revealed Shari’a. That is the straight path.”<sup>27</sup>

25. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 174, no. 266.

26. Istidraj: means to give blessings one after another and to make those who have gone astray from the righteous path assume that their acts are righteous in order to increase their deviance as a test by Allah. Istidraj also means that unbelievers, sinners and mutashayyih, i.e., those who pretend to be sheikhs even though they are not, show extraordinary wonders similar to the ones shown by the real sheikhs. These kinds of states make their inner selves (*nafs*) grow stronger and do not bring them closer to Allah, but rather drive them further away from Him.

27. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 87-88, no. 87.



In short, outer self and inner self are two elements that complement each other. One is incomplete without other one.

### **Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah**

In the time of **Imam al-Rabbani**, corrupt ideas and false movements had increased intensity. Many Muslims' belief in Islam had been shaken, and their worship and deeds were corrupted too.

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him), who was very disturbed to see this, worked with all his might and taught people the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wa Jamaat again. With the letters he wrote, he encouraged people repeatedly to commit to the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah without getting tired, and explained it to them in all its details. He would leave the details of the legal matters to the books about the acts of worship and Islamic law.

According to Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him), a murshid (Sufi master), should warn his newly initiated disciples not to give any importance to spiritual inspirations and dreams which contradicted the Qur'an or hadith. Moreover, he should advise his disciple to correct his belief according to the creed of Ahl as-Sunnah, learn the rules of Islamic law

that are obligatory for him to learn and act accordingly.<sup>28</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) also had his disciples read various books on Islamic sciences, and insistently reminded them to read such books in the letters he sent to his representatives in distant regions. Some of those books are as follows:

Al-Baydawi in Qur'anic commentary, *al-Bukhari* and *Mishkat al-Masabih* in hadith, Pazdawi and Hidayah in Islamic law, Sharh al-Mawakif and Hashiya al-Adudi in Islamic creed, and Awarif al-Ma'arif in Sufism.<sup>29</sup>

Even though Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) had memorized the principles of Islamic law, knew them very well, and had full authority in Islamic law, whenever a new issue occurred, he would refer to reliable books and would always keep these books close to him. He would act in accordance with the view that became the basis of fatwas and preference of the great Muslim jurists.<sup>30</sup>

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28. Imam al-Rabbani, *Mabda wa Ma'ad*, p. 36, section 10.

29. Badr al-Din al-Sirhindi, *Hazarat al-Quds*, II, 89.

30. Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 182.



## His Sensitivity about Following Sunnah al-Thaniyya

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) strictly followed the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in all his actions, no matter how little or big they were, and advised everyone to do so.

One of his disciples asked permission to write down the Imam's daily prayers, regular invocations (awrad) and supererogatory prayers. Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The deeds that are worthy of being followed are the deeds of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Look into the hadith books and learn from there!”

When his disciple insisted by saying:

“Sir, your deeds would also be in accordance with the deeds of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).” Imam al-Rabbani replied:

“Well then write! But be very careful! Write only the ones that are in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet, and do ignore the ones that are not!”<sup>31</sup> (Qishmi, *Barakat*, p. 427-428)

31. Muhammad Salih al-Kulabî, who received this permission, published a book under the title of *Hidayat al-Talibin* or



## His Life of Worship

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) gave great importance to acts of worship and advised his disciples to worship a lot and said:

“Even though he was the most beloved servant of Allah and reached the highest ranks, Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) would worship so much that his blessed feet would become swollen. The friends of Allah, who follow the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in the best way, have always done so ... The more a person obeys and worships Allah, the more spiritual progress he makes.”<sup>32</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) also stated that in addition to the obligatory acts of worship, one should seize every opportunity to perform supererogatory acts of worship. In summer and winter, in wartime and peacetime, he would get up to pray mostly after midnight and sometimes after two-thirds of the night. He would recite the supplications, which were Sunnah to recite at that time of the night, and carefully perform wudu (ablution) in accordance to the Sunnah. He would not want someone else to pour the water for him. He would use water very economically and would face the direction of qiblah while

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*Hadiyyat al-Talibin*. See Beyazıt State Library, Beyazıt section, no. 3823, folio 1a-17a.

32. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 201.



doing wudu. He would use a miswak to brush his teeth evertime. He would carefully wash his limbs and wipe the water over his limbs with his hands until there was no dripping. He would do this just to be cautious because it was disputed whether the water used in wudu was clean or not. He would recite the supplications reported in hadith while performing his obligatory ritual washing.

After completing his wudu he would recite the supplication for *tahajjud* prayer and perform the prayer. He would perform the *tahajjud* prayer in complete peace and serenity by reciting long chapters from the Qur'an. In his early days, he used to recite the chapter Ya Sin repeatedly while performing the *tahajjud* prayer. In his final days, he was busier with reciting the whole Qur'an in prayer. After completing the *tahajjud* prayer, he would contemplate and meditate in awe. Before the dawn prayer, he would go to bed for a while, following the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Then he would get up again before dawn and observe the dawn prayer.

He would perform the Sunnah cycles of the dawn prayer at his house and quietly repeat the following supplication between the Sunnah and obligatory prayer:

After performing the morning prayer in congregation, he would complete his invocations (*awrad*) with his companions in the mosque until sunrise. Then, he would perform four cycles of prayer with two greetings with long chapters from the Qur'an, and he would then become busy with the recitation of supplications and glorifications that were recited at that time of the day.

He then would go to his house, attend to the well-being of his wife and children. Then he would go to his room and read the Qur'an. After that, he would call his disciples and ask about their states. He would advise them to keep their targets high, to follow the Sunnah, to continue to remember Allah and contemplate, to keep their spiritual states secret and to read books on Islamic law.

Most of his talks would pass in silence. He would strongly avoid looking into the faults of others and backbiting. People near him would not talk behind the back of anyone in his presence out of the respect they felt for him and his grandeur. He would carefully keep his spiritual states secret. He would perform eight-cycles of the *duha* or mid morning prayer secretly in his room, and he would then eat with his family and children. If one of his sons or servants was absent, he would save their portion of food.



During the meal, he would mostly be concerned with feeding others and asking about their health and well-being. Sometimes he would make it look like he was eating something when he wasn't just to obey the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

After lunch, he would sleep for a while, following the Sunnah, and after the noon prayer, he would listen to a portion of Qur'an recitation from a student who was memorising. He would then teach if there was a lesson to be given to the students.

He would perform the late afternoon prayer at the start of its earliest time and never abandon the Sunnah prayer after it. After the performance of the late afternoon prayer, he would be busy with meditation in silence with his disciples.

He would also do the evening prayer at the start of the time and recite the following invocation ten times after.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ

After performing the Sunnah prayer, he would perform the awwabin prayer.

In the first cycle of the *witr* prayer, he would usually recite the chapter al-'Ala, the chapter al-Kafirun in the second cycle, and the chapter al-Ikhlās in the third cycle. He would sometimes do the *witr* prayer



after the night prayer and sometimes after the *tahajjud* prayer.

He would observe all the Sunnah and recommended acts of prayer, after doing wudu and every time he entered the mosque, he would do two cycles of prayer.

He would go to rest immediately after the night prayer, recite the supplications recommended to be recited while lying down, remember Allah, and send greetings on the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He did this especially on Friday and Monday mornings and nights. He insistently advised those who served him and those who did not to leave his side to continue remembrance of Allah and pay attention to the meditation.

Those who listened to him while reading the Qur'an would reach the depth of feelings with the secrets and wisdom of the Qur'an. While he was reading the verses of fear or astonishment inside and outside the prayer, he would read them according to the proper style and attitude, as if the meaning of the verses would appear in his voice and in his blessed face. Even while travelling, he would always recite the Qur'an, putting it on a pillow on his mount.

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) gave a tremendous amount of attention to the month of Ramadan, he recited the whole Qur'an at



least three times in this blessed month. As stated in the hadiths, he would hurry to break his fast and delay the meal of sahur and he would retire into seclusion in the last ten days of Ramadan.

He would pay careful attention to the payment of zakat. When a gift came from somewhere, he would not wait for a year to pass over it and give its zakat by immediately calculating it. While giving zakat, he would prefer those who were engaged in activities of people's improvement and guidance, widows and his relatives in need.

He would visit the sick and the graves and read the supplications that are Sunnah to be read in such places. He would accept invitations, but did not go to any assemblies that were known for any kind of wrongdoing.

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) would not stop praising Allah and asking His forgiveness for his mistakes. He would express his thanks even for a small blessing. When he had the opportunity to do a better thing in a matter, even if he was busy with something beneficial, he would praise Allah abundantly because of that opportunity. If he suffered a misfortune, he would say "It is because of our bad deeds and wrong behavior." However, he would regard that misfortune like a soap cleaning all kinds of dirt, and say that enduring misfortunes with consent



and devotion was the reason for spiritual development.<sup>33</sup>

While living a life of good deeds and worship, he would live in a state of great humility and nothingness, and would always see himself as deficient.

### **His Praise-worthy Character**

Beautiful character, softness towards others, grace, compassion and kindness towards Allah's creatures, and contentment with whatever Allah decreed – these and many other virtues reached their peak in **Imam al-Rabbani's** character. Oppressive rulers did great wrong to him, his family and those close to him. However, never was there any complaint heard coming from him. He was in a constant state of contentment and he also advised those close to him to be patient.

He behaved with great courtesy towards all people. Whenever someone came to see him, he would stand up out of respect and sit him at the head of the assembly and speak pleasing words in accordance with his state. He would always be the first to greet others. He would not rise for those who were not Muslim – be they high-standing rulers or men of great position and rank.

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33. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 217.



**Imam al-Rabbani** (may Allah have mercy on him) was extremely vigilant about other people's rights. Whenever he heard news of the death of someone, he would immediately invoke Allah's mercy and recite the verse:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

**“We belong to Allah, and to Him we will return.”** (al-Baqara, 2: 156) He would participate in the funeral prayer, pray and recite Qur'an, sending the reward of reciting to the soul of the deceased.

He would wear his best clothes for the Friday prayer and for the Eid prayers. Whenever he received a new item of clothing, he would first allow his servant or a member of his family to wear it. Most of the time, there would be about 50-60 or even 100 people around him. There were always scholars, gnostics (arifun), guides (murshidun), huffaz (people who have memorized the whole Qur'an) and high-ranking people in his assemblies. He would serve food to all of them from his kitchen.<sup>34</sup>

He was extremely **respectful** towards the religious symbols. One time he saw one of the *huffaz* recite the Qur'an whilst sitting on a cushion that was thinner than the cushion, he himself was sitting on.

He immediately threw aside his own cushion and sat in a position lower than that of the *hafiz*.<sup>35</sup>

**Imam al-Rabbani** (may Allah have mercy on him) was extraordinarily **modest**. The style in his letters and books clearly reveals his great humility. He always referred to himself as “*poor*” or “*dervish*.”<sup>36</sup>

He stated the following in one of his letters:

“... This poor man wishes to present himself forth in order to support Islam and struggles in this way, the best that he can. In accordance with the rule “*Whoever makes a group seem more crowded he is considered to be one of them*”<sup>37</sup> it is hoped that this poor and weak slave will be admitted to that pious group. My state is like that of the old woman who went to the market with a ball of wool in her hand in order to buy Yusuf (may be peace on him) with it.”<sup>38</sup>

### **The Incapacity of the Mind and the Need for Prophethood**

**According to Imam al-Rabbani** (may Allah have mercy on him), **intelligence** and **inspiration** are incapable of properly comprehending Allah’s Essence and

35. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 199.

36. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 120, no. 261.

37. Ibn Mubarak, *Kitab al-Zuhd*, I, 12; al-Zaylā’i, *Nasb al-Raya*, IV, 346; al-Ajluni, *Kashf al-Hafa*, II, 374.

38. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 244, no. 47.



attributes, or of knowing the reality completely or attaining knowledge that is beyond the capacity of human perception. The knowledge put forth by the intellect can never be free of doubt.

In that case, correctly comprehending the meaning of life and the universe and knowing Allah, is only possible by means of the Prophets who have been blessed with revelation, which is our access to the absolute truth. Just as the capacity and power of understanding of the mind is beyond senses such as seeing and hearing, so the capacity and competence of the Prophets is beyond the intelligence. Only the Prophets can show us the best way to know Him and obey His divine commands, and how to revere and worship Him.

The philosophers who judge everything solely by the intellect have utterly failed in the essential matter of knowing Allah. Just as there is no such thing as pure and unbiased intelligence, so too we cannot speak of pure inspiration which is free from the misguidance of the desires of the *nafs* or lower self. In fact, this resembles the imaginary phoenix, present in the imagination but absent in reality. The followers of the *ishraqi* movement, which claimed that reality was born within a person, and certain people who purified only their *nafs* through certain acts of abstention were both subject to the traps of deceitful satanic whisperings.



It is impossible for the mind to be uncontaminated, without fault and taint, for the mind is affected by opinions and thoughts, and other factors. It can never be free of weaknesses such as greed, anger and animal desires; nor from faults such as forgetfulness, and absentmindedness. Many of the rulings that it has reached are tainted by these problems. This is why reason is not a source that is free of error and is inescapably inadequate.

In contrast, the angel who brought revelation to the Prophets is free from all of these faults and is not influenced by any negative factors. This is why the only unerring and perfect source is that of Prophethood. It is also not possible for true purification of the *nafs* to occur without Prophethood.<sup>39</sup>

**Ibn Khaldun**, the great Islamic scholar, historian and sociologist, writes on this matter:

“Reason is a sturdy scale. However, you cannot measure matters related to Allah and the hereafter, the reality of the Prophets, and truths which are beyond the mind with it. This is a vain pursuit and resembles the one who wishes to weigh mountains using the scales of a jeweler, thinking that these scales are very sensitive. **We cannot say anything about the robust-**

39. See Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 150, no. 266; III, 239-242, no. 23; Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 203-204, 227.



**ness of the scale but it has its limits.** In the same way reason has its limits in the matter of ‘knowing, finding and comprehending’.”<sup>40</sup>

Philosophy and other similar methods claim that they can find the truth through their own efforts without the teachings and guidance of the Prophets. However, these truths cannot be learned without these vehicles; these extraordinary men whom Allah bestowed with Prophethood. They are the greatest favor of Allah to mankind. Human beings can never attain even an atom’s weight of that magnificent knowledge given to us in regards to Allah’s Essence and attributes by the Prophets, using the philosophical ideas, or by researching, examining, witnessing and cleansing their nafs even those activities continued a thousand years. **“...that is how Allah has favored us and all mankind, but most do not give thanks.”**

(Yusuf, 12: 38)<sup>41</sup>

### ***Kalimah al-Tawhid and Constant Dhikr*** **(Remembrance of Allah)**

When describing the elevated reality of the statement of *tawhid*: “La ilaha illallah Muhammadun Rasulallah - لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -” Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

40. Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, p. 473.

41. Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 211-212.



“I see that the phrase ‘La ilaha illallah - لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ’ is the key to ninety-nine out of a hundred parts of Allah’s mercy reserved for the next world. I know that there is nothing more effective than this phrase in destroying the darkness of unbelief and cleaning up the residue of *shirk*...

There is no wish or desire in this world that is equal to a person retreating into a corner and occupying himself with this blessed *dhikr*. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to have one’s hopes fulfilled. More often than not the state of heedlessness prevents this and one is required to mix with people.”<sup>42</sup>

Another advice that Imam Rabbani gives about being in a constant state of *dhikr* is as follows:

“Let the one who wishes to enter this path, correct his belief and bring it into accordance with the people of truth, learn the rulings of Islamic law and act in accordance with them, and then spend the rest of his time in remembrance of Allah. However, this must be learned from a perfected and perfecting shaykh, for one who is lacking cannot guide another to perfection... They must be occupied with *dhikr*, whether in a state of ritual purity or not, while standing or sitting. They should never abandon *dhikr* whilst walking or sitting, while eating or sleeping.”<sup>43</sup>

42. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 591-594, no. 37.

43. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 454, no. 84.



“Know this, that your happiness and salvation, and the happiness and salvation of all mankind is dependent on *dhikr* of Allah. One should pass all of one’s time as much as possible, in remembering Allah. Even one moment of heedlessness is unacceptable.”<sup>44</sup>

### Halal/Lawful Provision

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“My advice to you is that you must be careful about the food that you eat. It is not right for a person to eat whatever they find without considering where it came from, and whether it is halal or haram. The human being has not been left carefree to do whatever he wants. He has a Lord who has commanded certain things and forbidden others. He has made clear the things which please Him and those which do not through the Prophets who are a mercy to the worlds. The one who chases after desires which are contrary to His pleasure, will be deprived of eternal happiness...”<sup>45</sup>

“One should perform the five daily prayers in congregation and distinguish between what is halal and what is haram...One should not turn back and look at the fleeting pleasures and bounties that will fade away.”<sup>46</sup>

44. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 569, no. 190.

45. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 44, no. 69.

46. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 467, no. 143.

## The Importance of *Suhbah*

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently remind people that ‘*suhbah*’ (companionship) was an extremely important principle of the Naqshibandi path. He relates the following words of Khwaja Ahrar (may Allah have mercy on him):

“We were once together with the dervishes. We were discussing which prayers should be made during the time of the Friday prayer since they are guaranteed to be accepted. The following question was asked:

“If one is able to locate this time, what should one pray for from Allah, Most High?”

Everyone said something. When it was my turn, I said:

“At that time, one should ask for the *suhbah* of the masters who achieved *jam’iyya*<sup>47</sup> for this togetherness contains all of spiritual felicity.”<sup>48</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) stated the importance of *suhbah* in one of his letters as follows:

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47. *Jam’iyya*: This is a state in which the traveler (*salik*) puts all his efforts and aspirations into turning to Allah and abandons everything other than Him (*masiwa*) and occupies himself solely with Allah. In other words, it is spiritual focus feeling oneself in the presence of Allah and being with Him that arises in the heart.

48. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 398, no. 70.



“Whatever it may be, do not equate anything with this *suhbah* (companionship). Do you not see that the blessed Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) were elevated above all others, with the exception of the Prophets, due to their Companionship with the Messenger of Allah? Those who were not Companions, be they **Uways al-Qarani** or **Umar ibn Abdulaziz**, are all below the Companions. Whereas these righteous people had attained the highest of degrees and, with the sole exception of not having been in the company of the Prophet, they had reached the peaks of perfection ...

If Uways al Qarani knew the superiority of this Companionship with the Prophet, nothing would have prevented him from this and he would not have preferred anything over it.”<sup>49</sup>

### Making Use of One’s Opportunities

Imam al-Rabbani perceived the short life of this world to be a great opportunity and advised his students to make use of it in the best way. In one of his letters, he writes:

“Oh youth! Opportunity is like a treasure. One should avoid spending even an instant of one’s life in vain pursuits. Instead, one should spend one’s entire



time in the direction that will lead to the pleasure of Allah, Most High. One should hold fast to the five daily prayers in congregation and in compliance with all their rulings and courtesy. One should never neglect the *tahajjud* prayer and make use of the opportunity to seek forgiveness during the predawn hours. One should not be deceived by napping and not allow oneself to be caught up by momentary pleasures. We should remember death often and always be anxious about and fearful of the hereafter.

In short, we should turn our faces from this world to the hereafter. Our relationship with the world should be only that which is absolutely necessary and we should spend the rest of our time working for our hereafter.

In conclusion, we can say: we need to free our hearts from being slaves to anything except Allah, and adorn our actions and behavior in accordance with the rulings of the Shari'a. This is the essence of the matter, and the rest is futility"<sup>50</sup>

In another letter he writes:

“In accordance with the maxim **“what you cannot achieve completely you should not completely abandon,** “we should spend our short life following **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon

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50. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 552, no. 31.



him), to the best of our ability. Being freed from the punishment of the hereafter and finding eternal happiness is dependent on following him.”<sup>51</sup>

“The best time to perform good deeds is undoubtedly in one’s youth. The intelligent person makes full use of this time. For one thing, we do not know whether we will reach old age or not. Even if one does, it will be more difficult to properly perform good deeds due to the weakness and frailty of old age. But in one’s youth, one can attain the state of giving one’s heart to Allah much more easily...

This time is the time of taking this opportunity and it is a time of power over one’s abilities. In that case, what excuse do we have for leaving aside today’s task for tomorrow and being deceived by the thought, “I will do it later”. Which excuse can legitimize this neglect?”<sup>52</sup>

“My dear brother! This is the time for work and not the time for talk. One should devote one’s heart to Allah, both inwardly and outwardly. One should not look to any other than Allah without His permission. This is the essence of the matter and the rest is futile”<sup>53</sup>

“My dear friend! The time that we can spend in good deeds is passing by. Every moment we are losing

51. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 298, no. 70.

52. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 307, no. 73.

53. Imam al-Rabbani, *Mukashafat al-Ghaybiyya*, section 20.



time from our lives, and the moment of our death, determined by Allah, is approaching. If we do not wake up today, what will be left for us tomorrow is loss and regret.

In these numbered days let us take extreme care in performing good deeds in accordance with the Shari'a so that we can have some hope of salvation. This is the time for deeds, not the time for rest. Rest is the fruit of performing good deeds. Our deeds are yet in front of us. To rest when it is time to work is to lose one's harvest and dry it up."<sup>54</sup>

### **Abandoning the Inner Self (*Nafs*)**

Abandoning the ego or the *nafs* is the first condition in spiritual growth. Without doing this one cannot be subject to divine love. Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) expresses this reality as following:

“The heart cannot love two things at the same time. When the heart devotes itself to one thing there is no room left to love anything else. When a person has many desires and their love is divided up between their wealth, their children, leadership, praise, and being superior to others, then what they really love is only one thing, their own selves. Their love for these things is in fact a reflection of their love for their *nafs*.”

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54. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 91, no. 89.



A person loves these things not for what they are but for their own *nafs*. When a disciple eliminates love of his *nafs*, then love for worldly things also disappears.

This is why it has been said: “**The veil between a servant and his Lord is not the world, but rather the person’s own *nafs***”, since the sole aim and desire of a person is his *nafs*. So, the necessary result of this is that the veil becomes the person’s *nafs*. When a person cannot totally free themselves of their desires, then love for their Lord cannot take its place in their heart”.<sup>55</sup>

As **Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (may Allah have mercy on him)** said:

“Closeness to Allah is achieved neither by rising up to the skies nor by descending down. Closeness to Allah is only achieved by being free of the bond to one’s own *nafs*.”<sup>56</sup>

In order to be free from the love of fleeting creatures and turn towards divine love, **Imam al-Rabbani** would give the following advice to his spiritual children:

“Do not be content with anything other than what Allah is content with and do not desire them. Since they will all end when we leave this world, let us

55. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 163-164, no. 24.

56. Mawlana, *Mathnawi*, vol. 3, verse 4514.



abandon them now. Let us not exaggerate them. The friends of Allah abandon them out of their own will.”<sup>57</sup>

### His Death

A few months before his death, Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) began to suffer from shortness of breath. During his last days he said to his children:

“My dearest children! I have no bond nor ties left to this world. The eternal world now dominates my thoughts. I see that the day of my journey is near”.

He then cut off all relations with the outside world and chose to be alone. He did not leave the house except to perform the five daily prayers and to attend the Friday prayer. He spent all of his time in *dhikr*, asking forgiveness from Allah, in rectification of his affairs of the *zahir* and the *batin*. This state of his was an embodiment of the verse: **“Remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him completely.”** (al-Muzzammil, 73: 8)

He would often weep out of his desire to be reunited with Allah and the following words were constantly heard from him:

“اللَّهُمَّ الرَّفِيقَ الْأَعْلَى: “O Allah! To the highest Companion”. During this time, he passed a few days in

57. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 170, no. 2.



good health and the saddened hearts around him were soothed a little. However, he said:

“During my days of health, I do not feel the spiritual pleasure that I received during my illness.”

He gave away much in charity during those days. When a close friend saw all of this he asked:

“Is all of this in order to remove the calamity?” Imam al-Rabbani replied:

“No, indeed. On the contrary it is due to my enthusiasm for the reunion.”

One day his children saw him crying. When they asked him the reason, he replied

“I am weeping out of happiness at being reunited with Allah.”

His sons asked:

“It was not your habit to deprive us from your company. What is the reason that lately you do so?”

“Allah, Most High, is more beloved to me than all of you.”

During his last days he continually spoke of the infinite bounties and countless favors of his Lord. He donated all of his clothes to the needy. His temperature then began to rise once more due to the cold weather since he had given all of his cotton clothes

away just as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) had recovered for a short time during his final illness, the same happened to Imam Rabbani and then he lost his health once more. He thus practiced the Sunnah even at his last breath.

Even during those days when he had lost all strength, he did not abandon praying in congregation. He was constantly occupied with prayer and *dhikr* and did not take a break from the deep inner contemplation known as *muraqaba*. He was not heedless of the commands and principles of the Shari'a and Tariqa for an instant. He continued to pray the *tahajjud* prayer until his final night.

He advised those around him to devote themselves to the Sunnah, of shunning innovation, and of continuing *dhikr* and *muraqaba*:

“The owner of this Shari'a, **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Religion is *nasiha* (good advice)” (Muslim, Iman, 95) and never for an instant did he leave striving for the good of his community and reforming them. One should follow completely the well accepted books of religion and act according to them. When it comes to preparing me for my burial make sure you act according to the Sunnah practices and do not abandon even a single one of them!”

To his wife he made the following request:



“My journey to the hereafter will be before you. Take care of my burial costs out of your own dowry.” This is because one of the most lawful of properties is the dowry of a woman.

He would remain in a state of ritual purity in order to be sure of dying in that state. When he was placed down on his bed he would place his right hand under his right cheek, in accordance with the Sunnah, and busy himself with *dhikr*. When his sons saw him begin to breathe rapidly, they asked:

“How are you?” He replied:

“I am fine”. After that he did not speak any word other than the Most Majestic Word - Allah. He passed away a short time later.

**Imam al-Rabbani** died at the age of 63 on 28 Safer 1034 (10 December 1624).

When his blessed body was brought to be washed the people saw that Imam Rabbani’s (may Allah have mercy on him) hands were bound together as if in prayer. They untied his hands however, after washing him they saw that his hands came back together in the same position. After they had shrouded him, they saw that his hands were still bound. His children said:

“Since this is what the Imam desires, let us leave them in that way.”



People around him were weeping while the Imam's blessed face was lit up with an indescribable smile. The following beautiful description of a poet described his state:

*The day your mother gave birth to you and brought you into this world*

*You were weeping; while the whole world was laughing*

*Now live such a life that you will laugh when you die;*

*While the world around you sheds tears behind you ...*

The process of washing and shrouding of his body was carried out completely according to the Sunnah and was he buried in the town of Sirhind in India, where he was born.<sup>58</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani (May Allah have mercy on him) was a true Friend of Allah who did not merely guide the people of his own time, but rather a great multitude of people centuries after him, whose names are known throughout the world. He still continues to guide them to this day, with his works.

58. See al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 300-315; Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 174-179; Badr al-Din al-Sirhindi, *Wisal al-Ahmadi* (ed. Gulam Mustafa Han), Karachi 1388/1968, p. 6, 12, 26.



### A Selection from the Words of His Wisdom

“My Child! The main issue is to stay away from indulging too much in permissible things and to be content with only as much as necessary. It is also necessary to use that necessary amount with the intention of gaining strength and vigilance of heart in order to be able to observe our worship of Allah properly.”<sup>59</sup>

“It is necessary not to waste our time with futile games and entertainment... Let alone the prohibited deeds, one should not waste his life by occupying himself with useless deeds. Do not be dragged into a big deception by demanding musical instruments and getting satisfaction from them! Because a musical instrument (that stimulates the lower-self to destructive desires) is a poison drenched in honey.

Avoid backbiting and tale bearing! Because there are serious threats against those who commit these two crimes. It is also very important to avoid lies and slander as they are clearly forbidden in all religions. Those who commit them face great threats.

Covering people’s faults and the faults of the creation and forgiving their mistakes is one of the great deeds.”<sup>60</sup>

59. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 306, no. 73.

60. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 292, no. 34.



“Following the Prophets elevates a person to the highest of ranks; following the *asfiya*, those whose hearts are pure, helps a person to achieve great ranks. **Abu Bakr As-Siddiq** (May Allah be happy be with him) followed our **Beloved Prophet** in everything and attained happiness due to his confirming of the Prophet and became the head of the *siddiqin* (the loyal ones). Whereas the cursed **Abu Jahl** wasted his potential by following his own evil desires and became the head of those who are condemned to ruin.”<sup>61</sup>

“A scholars’ devotion to worldly desires is a stain on his beautiful face. The knowledge of scholars who indulge in this world may benefit the people but it will not benefit scholar. Even though the strength of the religion is raised upon their shoulders, this will not be taken into account. The strengthening of this religion may occur through the oppressor and the sinner... But if the scholars do not over indulge in this world and rid themselves of the love for position, leadership, wealth and superiority over others, then they can become the heirs of the Prophets. Moreover, they are the best of creation.”<sup>62</sup>

“This world is a place of harvesting for the next world. Woe to those who do not plant in that field and abandon such fertile land, wasting their seeds of good

61. Imam al-Rabbani, *Mabda wa Ma'ad*, section 51.

62. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 197-199, no. 33.



deeds! Know that abandoning such land and wasting it occurs either by not planting anything there or by planting rotten and decayed seeds (That is, a person faces eternal loss by either wasting their lives away, or spending their lives satisfying the desires of their *nafs*). Everyone knows that the loss of the second kind is greater than that of the first.”<sup>63</sup>

“Know that a verse or chapter that was sent down following a particular event will benefit a person who reads it facing a similar event. For instance, reading a verse about purification of the *nafs*, has a great effect in purifying the *nafs* of its evil traits. Other verses are similar in their effects.”<sup>64</sup>

“In my opinion the reason for the superiority of a person is that they lead the way in supporting the religion, and sacrificing their wealth and their lives in teaching its rulings. Since **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) was above all others in these matters, he is an unparalleled example for the believers. In the same way, those who lead the way in supporting the religion and teaching it are examples for those who come after.”<sup>65</sup>

(Almighty Allah has taught his servants to read the following prayer:

63. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 159, no. 23.

64. Imam al-Rabbani, *Mukashafat al-Ghaybiyya*, section 11.

65. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 141, no. 99.



**“... Our Lord! Give us joy in our wives and children and make us a good example for the godfearing”** (al-Furqan, 25: 74)

That is, it is not enough to have *taqwa*. One needs to strive to become a leader in *taqwa*.)

“The purpose of man’s creation is to carry out his duty of worhiping Allah. Whoever has been given love and ardor at the beginning of the path or in the middle, the aim of this is to cut the connection with all other than Allah. Otherwise, the actual aim is not the love itself, love is only a means for attaining the station of perfect servanthood.

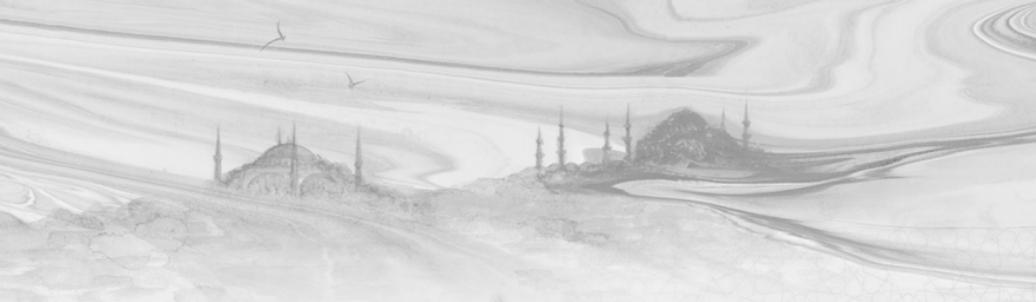
It is only when the traveler (*salik*) is free of the slavery to all that is other than Allah that He can be a true servant of Allah. The highest degree of sainthood is the degree of ‘*ubudiyah*, that is, servanthood. There is no degree higher than this”<sup>66</sup>

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66. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 180, no. 30.







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

# *Imam al-Rabbani*

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Abdullah Ibn al-Daylami (May Allah have mercy on him) expressed the importance of devotion to the Sunnah with complete obedience and surrender as follows:

“... The beginning of the disappearance of religion happens with the abandonment of the Sunnah. Just as a rope will unravel and eventually break, the religion will disappear with the abandonment of the Sunnah bit by bit.” (al-Darimi, Muqaddimah, 16)





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## **Imam al-Rabbani -1-**

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“What is the share of our efforts in our success (to achieve servanthood for which Allah will be pleased)! Whatever we have is all by the grace of Allah. However, if it is absolutely necessary to present a reason for this, I would say that the reason for all favors is following the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the master of all humanity - past, present and the future - and following in his blessed footsteps...

If a Muslim is deprived from a spiritual blessing, the only reason for this is his lacking in following the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

Once, I fell into heedlessness and entered the toilet with my right foot. I was deprived of many spiritual states that day (due to this behavior that does



not comply with the Sunnah, one should enter the toilet with the left foot).”<sup>67</sup>

The blessing and spirituality that brings the servant closer to his Lord can only be achieved by complete obedience to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

Because Allah Almighty states the following in the verses of the Majestic Qur’an:

**“Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...”** (al-Nisa, 4: 80)

**“Say, ‘If you do love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you your wrong actions’ ...”** (Al Imran, 3: 31)

In other words, we can only reach Allah’s love through obedience, surrender and love for His Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). For those who have the slightest negligence, hesitation or doubt on this path, the door of divine love remains closed. Because it is evident in the verses of the Mighty Qur’an that love of the Prophet is love of Allah; obedience to him is obedience to Allah; and the rebellion against him is rebellion against Allah.

Therefore, in every action, be it big or small, believers are obliged to be careful following the exam-



ple of the Messenger of Allah, namely the **Sunnah of Thaniyya**, which is the actual interpretation of the Qur'an.

Those who embrace the Sunnah of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) do not have any compromise, deficiency or negligence in fulfilling the obligatory acts (*fard*) and those who neglect the Sunnah are susceptible to falling short when it comes to observing the obligatory aspects of Islam.

In other words, following the Sunnah is like a strong armor, which at the same time protects the *fard* that are the fundamental pillars of life. Therefore, when the devil and his comrades start attacking a person's religion and faith, they try to keep him away from the Sunnah because they know that if they abandon the Sunnah, they will not be able to meet the obligatory duties.

For this reason, Abdullah Ibn al-Daylami (May Allah have mercy on him) expressed the importance of devotion to the Sunnah with complete obedience and surrender as follows:

*"... The beginning of disappearance of religion happens with the abandonment of the Sunnah. Just as a rope will unravel and eventually break, religion will disappear with the abandonment of the Sunnah bit by bit."* (al-Darimi, Muqaddimah, 16)



Therefore, if the Sunnah comes out of our lives, God forbid, our eternal salvation will hang by a thread.

As a matter of fact, the deformation of Judaism and Christianity in history started in this way. First, the traditions (Sunnahs) of the Prophets were ignored then the creed and the worship was deformed. Eventually ritual prayer was abandoned and replaced by rites; fasting was abandoned and replaced by abstinence; the ruling about headcovering was done away with and it was reserved only for priests, and today, even the rule about the veiling of nuns has begun to be sidelined.

In this regard, we, as believers, should all pay attention to the following point with great effort and prudence: Today, secret and open enemies of religion, who try to apply the same Christian deformation to Islam, are working with all their might. In order to hide their true intentions, they do not attack the basic principles of Islamic creed and obligatory rulings of the religion in the first place, but try to discredit the Sunnah which serves like an armor protecting those principles.

What is even worse than this is that some so-called Muslim scholars in theology faculties spread ideas contrary to the path of the traditional Islam of the Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and generate grave



doubts in people's belief, and their acts of worship, so much so that these so-called scholars make people's minds confused even in matters that have come down to us through the consensus of Muslim scholars for over 1400 years.

These men may even deny miracles which they cannot fit into their deficient minds. Even though they know the maxim that there is no place for independent reasoning (ijtihad) in matters about which there is a definite and a clear textual source, they argue the need to make amendments in the law of inheritance, trifle with headcovering, reject the Prophet's hadiths that do not comply with their views, and consider the Sunnah insignificant.

Saying that "the Qur'an is enough for us," which seems a very attractive and correct slogan, they ignore the Sunnah, which provides the details, interpretation, commentary and application of the Qur'an, and try to invent the so-called "Qur'anic Islam."

Whereas the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) speaks about these "deformers of religious" who disguise themselves with the masks of "religious scholars" and try to conceal their true agenda by placing the Qur'an at the forefront as follows:

*"Beware! I have been given the Qur'an and something like it, yet the time is coming when a man replete on his couch will say: Keep to the Qur'an; what you find*



*in it to be permissible treat as permissible, and what you find in it to be prohibited treat as prohibited. Beware! The domestic ass, beasts of prey with fangs, a find belonging to confederate, unless its owner does not want it, are not permissible to you If anyone comes to some people, they must entertain him, but if they do not, he has a right to mulct them to an amount equivalent to his entertainment.*<sup>68</sup>

In another narration, our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) expresses the necessity to adhere to the Sunnah as follows:

*“... Does any of you, while reclining on his couch, imagine that Allah has prohibited only that which is to be found in this Qur’an? By Allah, I have preached, commanded and prohibited various matters as numerous as that which is found in the Qur’an, or more numerous...”* (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 31)

The following verses also draw attention to the fact that the Qur’an can only be understood correctly by means of the Sunnah:

**“The Faithful Ruh brought it down to your heart so that you might be one of the Warners in a clear Arabic tongue.”** (al-Shu’ara, 26: 193-195)

68. Abu Dawud, Sunnah 6, hadith no 4604, 4/200; Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah 2, hadith no. 12, 1/6; al-Tirmidhi, ‘Ilm 10, 2663, 2801; 5/37; Ahmad b. Hanbal, 6/8.



Therefore, the secrets and wisdom of the Noble Qur'an can only be understood by benefiting from the spiritual world of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The Prophet's 23-year long Prophetic life is also a living interpretation of the Qur'an.

In this respect, understanding the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) is the most important step in worshiping Allah. Without knowing and understanding the Prophet, without following in his footsteps and without taking inspiration from his spiritual states, we can neither have a complete belief, nor fully understand the Qur'an, nor can our servitude be complete.

As a matter of fact, the application of many divine orders in our lives has not been explained in the Qur'an. We learn about them only from the practice of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

For example, it is stated in the Qur'an that eating carrion is prohibited. In this regard, we learn from the Sunnah that the fish that dies on its own after being caught is an exception and can be consumed.

Likewise, in the Qur'an, the prayer is repeatedly commanded to be performed, but the details of how to perform it, how many of cycles of bowing and prostrating, which supplications and chapters from the Qur'an to be recited while performing it, and many



other details are only possible to be learned from the Sunnah.

Moreover, the Noble Qur'an reveals its secrets and wisdom to "the godfearing." As is stated in the famous verse:

**"That is the Book, without any doubt. It contains guidance for the godfearing."** (al-Baqara, 2: 2)

For this reason, those who comprehend the Qur'an best are the ones who live in right action and elevate their hearts. Anybody can kneel in front of a reading desk and read the Qur'an. However, the real benefit from the Qur'an takes place in accordance with the level of their hearts.

How exemplary is the following state of Umar Ibn al-Khattab:

One day, when Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was passing in front of a house, he heard the owner of the house reciting chapter at-Tur out loud. As soon as the man recited the verse:

**"Your Lord's punishment will certainly take place. No one can ward it off."** (at-Tur, 52: 7-8) Umar got off his mount and listened to his recitation while leaning against a wall. Then, because of the strong warning

mentioned in this verse, he fell sick and took him few days to recover from the effect of the verse.<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, the Qur'an is like an endless ocean in which anyone can dive according to his spiritual level. Just as a person who does not know how to swim can only swim in shallow water and a dedicated diver can dive into the deepest parts of the sea and witness completely different wonderful landscapes which the people on the shore cannot imagine, those who pass the levels of heart on the path of godfearing (*taqwa*) will encounter many manifestations of wisdom in the Qur'an, and will truly be enlightened.

Some miserable men who ignore many truths like these while outwardly appearing to follow the Qur'an, they prune the religion and try to adapt it to their own shallow views. They even dare to disrespectfully criticize mujtahid imams, who were great masters, compared to whom these miserable men are not even in the same universe.

Insisting on the over simplified view that "those mujtahids were scholars who lived a thousand years ago, now times have changed", they attempt to play with the timeless and unchangeable rulings of the religion. This is an attempt of deforming the religion, and such people are worse than non-Muslim orientalis

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69. Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, *at-Takhwif min al-Nâr*, Damascus 1979, p. 30.

and missionaries in terms of their evil work. These are the people who think that being a religious scholar means criticizing the religion instead of serving it.

In this respect, especially our young brothers and sisters who study their religion have to be vigilant about these issues and pay close attention to from whom they learn their religion. For, our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) made the following warning to one of his beloved Companions, Abdullah Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them):

*“O Ibn Umar! Hold to your religion well, hold to your religion well! Because it is both your flesh and your blood. Be careful from whom you learn your religion! Take your religious education from the scholars who are on the straight path and not from those who vacillate between right and left!”<sup>70</sup>*

As a matter of fact, the Companions scrupulousness in this matter and the righteous believers who followed them made journeys for the sake of seeking knowledge that lasted for a month under the difficult conditions of that time in order to receive a hadith from its narrator. They were exemplary men of unparalleled virtue thanks to the training they received from the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him) they considered the character of a person who deceived his

animal by showing an empty fodder bag in order to draw it near him, utterly destestable and would not accept a hadith from him. **Abu'l-Aliya** (may Allah have mercy on him), one of the great imams of the generation of the Tabi'in, (the generation immediately following the Companions) says:

“When we went to a person to receive a hadith from him, we would first pay attention to his prayer; if he carried out his prayers properly, we would think that “he would carry out his other works well too” and sit with him. If he performed his prayers without awe and proper manners (*tadil al-arkan*), we would think that “his other deeds may not be acceptable either,” and we would leave him.” (al-Darimi, Muqaddimah, 38/429)

It is also imperative for us today to evaluate whether a scholar's religious knowledge will be acceptable or not in the light of these criteria. For, Allah Almighty states in His Noble Book,

**“...Only those of His slaves with knowledge have fear Allah...”** (Fatr, 34: 28). In other words, “taqwa / fear of Allah” is the first requirement of a true scholar. Allah Almighty only calls someone who fears Him a “scholar”, but not those who are heedless think that their own reasoning is the only truth, and process the religion through the filter of their flawed minds, and accept only what fits with their reason and reject what does not!



In essence, belief is to confirm the principles of faith by the heart even though the mind cannot fully grasp them. Just as the eye has a range of vision, the mind has a limited cognitive ability and for that reason, cannot grasp everything. Isn't there any truth beyond the comprehension of the mind? Allah Almighty, the Owner of endless knowledge, has imbued the human being with a limited understanding and there are certainly countless matters that the mind cannot grasp.

The following hadith clearly indicates this point:

*“During a journey in which Khidr (may Allah be pleased with him) displayed strange behavior which had a wisdom that was unknown to Musa (peace be upon him), a sparrow came and sat on the edge of a boat and dipped its beak into the sea. Khidr said to Musa (peace be upon him), ‘My knowledge and your knowledge, compared to Allah’s knowledge is like what this sparrow has taken out of the sea.’”* (Al-Bukhari, Tafsir, 18/4)

Just as the knowledge and wisdom of an ant is close to zero when compared to the knowledge and wisdom of man, our situation compared to Allah Almighty pales into insignificance. The amount of knowledge we have is nothing in comparison to what we do not have. Therefore, the essential characteristics

of human beings is described in the Immense Qur'an as "*jahul*"<sup>71</sup> which means "very ignorant."

On the other hand, Allah Glory be to Him, declared the greatness and endlessness of His divine knowledge as follows:

**"If all the trees on earth were pens and all the sea, with seven more seas besides, were ink, Allah's words still would not dry. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise."** (Luqman, 31: 27)

As the similitude of the knowledge of all creation is like a drop in an ocean compared to the knowledge of Allah, there is a lot of wisdom that man cannot grasp with his limited mind. Some of such knowledge has been revealed to the elite of the elite (hawas al-hawas) from among the believers and some secrets beyond such knowledge were revealed to the Prophets. Some secrets beyond them were discovered only by the final Prophet, our master Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

This is why **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

*"If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and cry much..."* (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/12)

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71. See al-Ahzab, 33: 72.



In this respect, the limited reason given to us has its true value within the framework of the Qur'an and Sunnah. **Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi** (may Allah have mercy on him) stated the importance of submission to Allah and His Messenger and putting aside all doubts of reason:

*“Though the mind is successful in our worldly affairs, it is insufficient due to its nature in reaching the truth and the divine secrets, that is, the knowledge of Allah. A means is required for this lofty journey. This means is the heart, love, ecstasy and rapture. May the human reason be sacrificed to Mustafa!”*

Only with such submission can the human mind serve for the happiness of a person in this world and in the next. Otherwise, it will lead people down a dead-end road.

This is why Allah Almighty commands us to use our hearts, as a higher center of perception than our minds, in accepting the matters related to the divine realities – such as miracles, destiny and belief in the unseen – which the mind is unable to grasp in their full sense. Thus, He wishes us to ascend to the heaven of complete surrender.

True belief can be achieved as a result of confirmation with the heart in addition to declaration by tongue; not as a result of confirmation by the mind alone. Accepting only what the mind can comprehend

cannot be called “faith” but rather it is called “persuasion.” Since persuasion has nothing to do with surrendering to God, it has no value in the presence of Allah Almighty.

In short, it is necessary to learn our exalted religion, Islam, from the scholars and the gnostics (*arifun*) who have good character, do good deeds, and who live in accordance with the Qur’an and Sunnah. Being able to hold firmly to the Qur’an and Sunnah and holding to the straight path is the greatest miracle of all.

The following state of **Bayazid al-Bistami**, one of the friends of Allah, is an exemplary one in this regard:

One day, he set out with his students to see a man who was well known for being a friend of Allah. As that man left his house and was going to the mosque, he spat in the direction of the Ka’bah. Bayazid was very affected by the discourteous and lax state of that man and he returned home without even greeting him. He said to his students:

“This man is not even trustworthy in the matter of abiding by the manners that the Messenger of Allah taught us. How can he then be trustworthy in the matter of the mysteries of Allah?”<sup>72</sup>

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72. Al-Qushayri, *Risala*, p. 57, 416-417.



Imam al-Rabbani says:

“One should not be lax in carrying out the praiseworthy acts. These acts are those that Allah loves and is pleased with. A person should know that there is an action in a corner of the earth that Allah loves and is pleased with and he should know that it is a great treasure if he is able to carry it out. This situation is like that of a person who purchases precious stones with a few pieces of a broken pot.”<sup>73</sup>

Another day Imam Rabbani said to one of his students:

“Bring a few carnations from our garden”. That student went and brought six carnations. When Imam Rabbani saw this, he said sadly:

“Our students still do not pay attention to the hadith: *“Allah is one and He loves odd numbers.”*<sup>74</sup> Whereas to take care in this matter is a recommended action (*mustahab*).

What do people think of the *mustahab*? The *mustahab* is that which is loved by Allah. If the entire world and the hereafter is given in return for an act loved by Allah Most High, this amounts to nothing. We abide by the *mustahab* to such a degree that when we wash our face, we bring the water to the right side

73. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 172, no. 266.

74. Al-Bukhari, *Da'awat*, 68.



first. It is also *mustahab* to begin a task with the right.<sup>75</sup>

As can be seen, the most extraordinary marvel (*karamah*) of the scholars and gnostics who love Allah and know the Messenger of Allah well is to abide by the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), and to follow him with great care and meticulousness in all aspects of life.

We should not forget that Allah Almighty has concealed which deed His pleasure and His wrath will be manifested most so that we may strive to do all righteous deeds and avoid all forbidden actions. The pleasure of Allah Almighty and His wrath may be manifested sometimes in a great deed, sometimes in a medium one and other times in a seemingly very small one.

As stated in a hadith, a prostitute who gave water to a dehydrated dog was forgiven due to her mercy and admitted to Paradise. On the other hand, a woman who had not provided her cat with food, and drink and caused its death was thrown into Hell because of her cruelty.<sup>76</sup>

**Anas Ibn Malik** (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

75. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 198; Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, *Imam al-Rabbani*, p. 180-181.

76. See Muslim, Salam, 151-155.



*“You people do deeds which you consider to be as tiny as a hair while we used to consider those same deeds during the life-time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as destructive sins.”* (Al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 32)

Because of their love and fear of Allah, they regarded even minor wrong actions as a cause for great loss and even moral destruction. Because they paid attention not to the size of the sins but to the greatness of Allah whose command was defied.

Therefore, in order to be a perfect believer, it is not enough to just fulfill the obligatory acts and stay away from the prohibitions. It is also necessary to have a sensitive soul filled with the excitement of believing in Allah.

As a matter of fact, my deceased father Musa Efendi (may Allah have mercy on him) stated the following regarding the issue:

“Many people are at ease believing that they have carried out their religious duties because they pray and fast. However, this is not enough. In addition to abiding by and respecting the commands of Allah, we should also be compassionate towards all creatures. This can only be achieved through sacrifice and sincere service. Thus, every Muslim, with a sound mind, should benefit and serve the society they are in after having carried out their obligatory acts of worship. ...

Because, these things that we have enumerated complete the obligatory acts and are from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) ...”<sup>77</sup>

Let us conclude with the following beautiful words of **Imam al-Rabbani** (may Allah have mercy on him):

**“May Allah, Most High, save me and you from empty words and deeds without knowledge for the sake of the Master of Humanity, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that Allah sent to all races, black and white.”<sup>78</sup>**

**Amin!**

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77. See Sadık Dana, *Altınoluk Sohbetleri*, III, 117, 167; V, 78-79.

78. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 159, no. 23.







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

# Imam al-Rabbani

(May Allah have mercy on him)

*With the arrival of the Blessed month of Ramadan, if we can spread the virtue of performing acts of worship at dawn to the whole year by living in accordance with the principle “Treat everybody you see as if he is Khidr and every night you live as if it is laylat al-Qadr,” then our life will turn into the spiritual climate of Ramadan full of blessings and enriched with fear of Allah; and our last breath will turn into a shab’i arus (wedding night).*







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## **Imam al-Rabbani -2-**

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“Virtuous life is dependent on following the noble Sunnah of the Prophet while merit is dependent on living according to the Shari’a that he (peace and blessings be upon him) brought. For instance, to have a nap (Kaylulah) at noon with the intention of following the Sunnah is much better than many acts of supererogatory worship which are not in accordance with the Sunnah. Handing over a small amount of zakat in order to abide by Allah’s command is a much greater merit than spending mountains of gold according to one’s desire”.<sup>79</sup>

It is the duty of a believer to fulfill Allah’s commands just because Allah commanded them and in the way that our Prophet performed them. In this regard acting based on personal views and leaving the

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79. See Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 418, no. 114.



Sunnah - even if it is with a good intention – would lead the servant to lamentable mistakes. This is why one should learn from the Sunnah which righteous deeds should be fulfilled, when and how and to what extent and in what way they should be done.

In this regard, the following is stated in a hadith:

*“A few deeds done in accordance with the Sunnah are better than many deeds that are bid’ah (innovation). Whoever acts (in accordance with my Sunnah) is from me, and whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.”* (Abdurrazzaq, *Musannaf*, XI, 291)

How well the following incident explains this fact:

**Said Ibn Musayyab** (may Allah have mercy on him), a great scholar from the generation of the Tabi’in once saw a person pray two extra cycles of prayer after the afternoon (‘asr) prayer. (a time when it is not permitted to do extra prayers). In an attempt to defend himself, the man who had prayed said to him:

“O master! Will Allah punish me for performing the prayer?”

Said bin Musayyab responded:

“No! Allah Almighty will not punish you because you prayed, but because you acted contrary to the Sunnah.” (Darimi, *Muqaddimah*, 39/442)



In this respect, **Fudayl Ibn Iyad** stated the following:

*“If a deed is done with sincerity (ikhlas) but it is not correct, it will not be accepted. If it is correct but not done with sincerity, it will still not be accepted. Only when it is with both correctness and sincerity it will be accepted. Doing it with sincerity means that it is done for the sake of Allah; being correct means that it is done in accordance with the Sunnah.”*

Therefore, if we want our deeds to be in accordance with the pleasure of Allah Almighty, we must endeavor to make both the intention in our hearts sincere and to fulfill that it is in accordance with the Sunnah.

For example, **our Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) recommended us to say “Subhanallah” 33 times, “Alhamdulillah” 33 times and “Allah akbar” 33 times following the obligatory prayers. We cannot increase these numbers to 34 in order to earn more rewards. Such an act is not a manifestation of “taqwa”, but on the contrary, it is the stupidity of preferring our own opinion over the Prophet’s recommendations. Whereas it is stated in a verse:

**“You who believe! do not put yourselves forward in front of Allah and of His Messenger”** (al-Hujurat, 49: 1). In other words, when there is a clear instruction from Allah and His Messenger, to prefer your own opinion to the Book and the Sunnah is the most imbecilic type of heedlessness and misguidance.



One day a man said to **Malik Ibn Anas (may Allah be pleased with him)**:

“Shall I enter ihram<sup>80</sup> in the Masjid an-Nabi or at Dhu al-Hulayfa?” Imam Malik recommended Dhu al-Hulayfa which is the place to enter the state of ihram in accordance with the Sunnah. The man said:

“I want to enter in the Masjid an-Nabi.” Imam Malik told him not to.

The man insisted saying:

“I want to enter the state of ihram in the mosque right by the Prophet’s grave.”

Imam Malik said:

“If you do so, I am afraid that you will fall into trial.”

The man was surprised and so he asked:

“O Imam! Where is trial in this? I’m going to a further distance.” Imam Malik gave the following wise answer:

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80. Ihram veils can be worn before the place of miqat where ihram prohibitions started. But this is not to enter into ihram. To enter ihram means to “intend to ihram” by wrapping on ihram covers before or at the place of miqat. Ihram prohibitions also start after this intention. In this incident, what is meant by the term “to enter into ihram” is; It is “intending ihram” that initiates ihram prohibitions.

“Would there be a greater trial than you think that you have achieved a virtue that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) failed to achieve? Allah Almighty says: “... **then let those beware who withstand the Messenger’s order, lest some trial (fitna) befall them, or a grievous penalty be inflicted on them.**”<sup>81</sup> (al-Shatibi, *I’tisam*, I, 97)

As can be seen, it is necessary not to exceed the limits even in righteous deeds. Acting and doing things in an excessive manner under spiritual enthusiasm should not be regarded as “piety and observance.”

As a matter of fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited one of his Companions from fasting every day, and upon the insistence of the Companion, he advised him to fast according to the fast of the Prophet Dawud (peace be upon him) at the most, which is to fast one day and not to fast the next day. In fact, when that Companion got old, he expressed regret saying that he had difficulty in performing these duties, and that he did not follow the Prophet’s advice.<sup>82</sup>

In this respect, true righteousness is to fulfill the instructions of the Prophet, exactly as he commanded. Just like applying the exact dosage of a medicine, the

81. Al-Nur, 24: 63.

82. See al-Bukhari, Sawm 55, 56, 57, Tahajjud 7, Anbiya 37, Nikah 89; Muslim, Siyam 181-193.



real benefit is hidden in full submission to the instructions of our Prophet.

Just as it is wrong for a believer to go to extremes in righteous deeds with his own opinion, it is also wrong to reduce them. In other words, while there is a Prophetic advice about saying prayers 33 times, we cannot say “32 is enough for me.” In this regard, one should not forget what happened to the Prophet Yunus (peace be upon him):

Instead of delivering the message of Allah for forty days, as commanded by Allah, Yunus (peace be upon him) left at the end of the thirty-seventh day because he was angry with his people for not accepting Islam. There were three more days before the deadline given by Allah Almighty expired. However, Yunus (peace be upon him) left that place in order to find people who would listen. He realized his mistake after some incidents happened on the ship he boarded, but he was thrown into the water from the ship and swallowed by a whale while he was reprimanding himself in remorse. In the belly of the whale, Yunus (peace be upon him) turned to Allah in tawba (repentance) and asked forgiveness from Allah and kept himself busy with *dhikr* and glorification of Allah.

This incident is stated as follows in the Noble Qur’an:



**“...He called out in the pitch darkness: “There is no god but You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrongdoers.”** (al-Anbiya, 21: 87)

**“Had it not been that he was a man who glorified Allah, He would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are raised again.”** (al-Saffat, 37: 143-144)

Therefore, it is imperative to obey Allah’s commands with full patience. As a matter of fact, Allah Almighty tells us the following warning by giving an example from the parable of Yunus:

**“So wait steadfastly for the judgement of your Lord. Do not be like the Companion of the Fish when he called out in absolute despair. Had a blessing from his Lord not overtaken him, he would have been thrown up on the naked shore, for he was at fault.”** (al-Qalam, 68: 48-49)

As can be seen, an acceptable servitude depends on doing exactly what is commanded - neither less nor more. Because what is meant by righteous deeds is not the deeds themselves, but the submission, love and devotion shown to Allah and His Messenger through those deeds. This is why Allah Almighty commands us to obey His Messenger with full submission.

It is stated in a verse:



**“You who believe! respond to Allah and to the Messenger when He calls you to what will bring you to life! Know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart...”** (al-Anfal, 8: 24)

How perfectly the following words of **Ali** (may Allah be pleased with him) express his devotion to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him):

*“You cannot adhere to or pursue anything more virtuous and more beautiful than the Sunnah of our Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (peace and blessings be upon him)!”* (Ahmad, I, 121)

*“We saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) standing up, we got up; we saw him sitting, and we sat down.”* (Ahmad, I, 83)

The Companions were the lovers of the Prophet and obeyed him with complete submission, whether they knew the wisdom in the Prophet’s commands or not. One of them, Abdullah Ibn Umar, saw that the Prophet drank water from a fountain, and he went to that fountain from time to time and drank water; He saw the Messenger of Allah shaded under a tree, and he occasionally went there and shaded under that tree; He also saw that our Prophet sat down leaning his blessed back on a rock, and he sometimes stopped by and sat for a while leaning his back on that same rock; He said as an explanation for the wisdom of his deeds:



*“Whatever we saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) doing, we would do it exactly like him.”* (Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 73; Ahmad, II, 65, 94; IV, 78)

Taking the Companions as an example, we should strongly stay away from the illness of “ignoring the Sunnah”, one of the grave misfortunes which people today suffer from.

Allah Almighty says in the Noble Qur’an about our Prophet: **“Truly you are one of the Messengers on a straight path.”** (Ya Sin, 36: 3, 4). Therefore, the best way for us is to follow the enlightening footsteps of the Prophet like a shadow that never leaves its owner and try to resemble him as much as we can.

How magnificent is the following state of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), who obeyed the Prophet with complete devotion and submission.

After the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had signed the treaty of Hudaibiya with the Meccans, he sent Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) to Mecca as an envoy. No matter how much Uthman tried to explain to the Meccans that their only intention was to perform the Umra (the lesser pilgrimage) and then leave, they did not give permission. Moreover, they kept him under surveillance and told him:



“If you want, you can circumambulate around the Ka’bah without your friends!”

All Muslims were burning with the desire to visit the Ka’bah. Some even envied Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), thinking that he would circumambulate around the Ka’bah. However, that blessed Companion, showed them his loyalty and devotion to the Messenger of Allah saying:

“I will not go around the Ka’bah if the Prophet does not first. I will only visit the Noble Ka’bah behind him. I will not be in a place where the Messenger of Allah is not welcome...” (Ahmad, IV, 324)

In other words, although his heart was scorched with the longing for the Ka’bah, he prevented himself from going around the Ka’bah due to his heartfelt devotion to the Prophet. Even if it was a matter of worship, he prevented himself from being in front of the Prophet.

Because the loyalty, submission and love of that distinguished Companion for the Prophet required this. That blessed Companion understood and lived in accordance with the hadith “*A man is with the one he loves*” (Al-Bukhari, Adab, 96) with such a high state of mind.





Therefore, how significant is the following warning made by **the Prophet** to **Abdullah Ibn Rawaha**, one of his distinguished Companions:

Allah's Messenger sent Abdullah Ibn Rawahah to lead a military expedition. It was Friday and his friends left early in the morning (as commanded by the Prophet), while Abdullah stayed behind. He thought: "I will remain behind to pray with Allah's Messenger then catch up with my friends." When he prayed with the Prophet, the Prophet saw Abdullah and asked:

*"What prevented you from leaving early with your friends?"* Abdullah Ibn Rawaha replied:

"I wanted to pray with you then meet up with them." The Prophet said:

*If you give all of what is in the earth in charity, you cannot attain the same reward of leaving with them early in the morning.*" (al-Tirmidhi, Jum'ah, 28/527; Ahmad, I, 256; Bayhaqi, III, 187)

Abdullah Ibn Rawaha was a distinguished Companion, who had been at the allegiance of Aqaba, received the good news from the Prophet that he would be a martyr and thus participated in the Battle of Mu'tah with great enthusiasm, gave all his property and his life in the way of Allah, and flew to Paradise.



because he was late in obeying the command of the Prophet even though he had the good intention to pray with with the Prophet.

For this reason, the commands of Allah and His Messenger should be fulfilled as commanded and without delay, whether its wisdom is known or not. While there is a clear order of the Prophet on an issue, taking another decision on one's own - even if it is done with good intentions - may cause serious loss and harm.

It should not be forgotten that excessive excitement that prevents a person from obedience is in a way rebellion against Allah. When a person acts based on his own assumptions, he can sometimes be led to such mistakes while thinking that he is doing the right thing. For this reason, we should never put ourselves before Allah and His Messenger. In other words, one should never say “**according to me**” while there are clear provisions of the Book and Sunnah.

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“Give great importance to your *tahajjud* prayer. Those who wish to take their share from the *Maqam-i Mahmud*, the praiseworthy station, should never neglect the *tahajjud* prayer.”<sup>84</sup>

It is stated in a verse:

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84. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 291.



**“And stay awake for prayer during a part of the night as a supererogatory action for yourself. It may well be that your Lord will raise you to a Praiseworthy Station (Maqaman Mahmûd)!”** (al-Isra, 17: 79)

The Tahajjud prayer was obligatory upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). As for us, it is an important Sunnah. By commanding His beloved Messenger with this prayer, Allah Almighty gave him the good news of the **Maqaman Mahmud / praiseworthy Station**, in return for his supplications, prayers, recitations of the Qur’an and dhikr at dawn.

Maqaman Mahmud is the supreme rank of intercession for the people on Judgment Day, for which all people, past, present and future, feel envy.<sup>85</sup>

Allah’s Messenger gave a special importance to the tahajjud prayer. He never neglected it neither when he was at home nor while on a voyage, and he encouraged his distinguished Companions to perform this special act of worship.

He stated in a hadith as follows:

*“The most honorable ones of my ummah are Hamala al-Qur’an (that is, the huffaz who memorized the Qur’an and are busy in the service of the Qur’an) and who constantly get up in the night to worship.”* (al-Munawi, I, 522)

On another occasion, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave the following advice to **Abdullah Ibn ‘Amr Ibn As:**

*“O Abdullah! Do not be like so and so who used to pray at night and then stopped the night prayer.”* (al-Bukhari, Tahajjud, 19)

**Amr Ibn Abasa** narrates:

“O Messenger of Allah! Is there any moment which brings one closer to Allah than another, or any moment that should be sought out for remembering Allah?” He said:

*“Yes, the moment that the Lord is closest to His slave is in the last third of the night, so if you can be among those who remember Allah at that time, then do so. For prayer is attended and witnessed (by the angels) until the sun rises.”* (al-Nasai, Mawaqit al-Salah, 35)

One of the friends of Allah, **Bayazid al-Bistami** (may Allah have mercy on him) started to read the Qur’an at a young age. When he read the verse, **“You who are enwrapped in your clothing! Stay up at night!”**<sup>86</sup> he asked to his father:

“O Father, to whom does Allah Almighty address here?” His father replied:

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86. Al-Muzzammil, 73: 1-2.



“My beloved child, here Allah Almighty refers to our Prophet. Our Lord later lightened this rule in the chapter of Ta Ha.”

Then Bayazid continued and when he read the following verse:

**“Your Lord knows that you stand nigh two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and a group with you...”**<sup>87</sup> he said to his father:

“Daddy, I hear people talking about a group getting up to worship at night!”

His father said:

“–Yes, my dear, they are the Companions of the Prophet.”

Thereupon, Bayazid said:

“My dear father! What good can be achieved by neglecting something that the Prophet and his Companions did!”

After that day, his father started to spend his nights in worship.

One-night Bayazid awoke and said:

“Father, teach me how to do the prayer too so I can pray with you!”



His father replied:

“Go to sleep, you are too young!” Bayazid said the following:

“Father, when people rise from their graves to see their deeds on the Day of Judgment and arrive at the divine presence,<sup>88</sup> and when my Lord asked me:

“What deed have you done in the life of this world, O My servant?” I will tell Him that “O my Lord! I told my father; “father teach me how to perform prayer, so I can pray with you! but he said to me “Go to sleep you are too young.”

Upon this, his father said:

“No, by Allah, I don’t want you to say that!” and taught his son the prayer. After that, Bayazid, although he was a child, always got up at night and performed tahajjud prayers.<sup>89</sup>

In another occasion, Bayazid al-Bistami stated the following:

*“No secrets were revealed to me before the nights turn into days.”*

Whenever a believer benefits from the times of dawn, his night will be brighter than his day. In order to be able to benefit from the delightful and spiritual gifts

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88. See al-Zalzala, 99: 6.

89. Al-Safiri, *al-Majalis al-Wa’ziyya*, II, 293.



of the nights, it is necessary to extend the spiritual serenity of the dawn to the whole day and thus avoid wrong actions as much as possible during the day.

**Ibrahim Ibn Adham** told to a man who complained that he could not wake up at dawn:

*“Do not rebel against Allah during the day so that He will keep you in his presence at night.”* Hasan al-Basri said:

*“Getting up for night worship is heavy on a person who is weighed down by his sins.”*

Therefore, the inclination shown for night worship is in proportion to the strength of divine love in the hearts. Reviving the dawn with acts of worship is the best expression of love and reverence of a servant to his Lord. That is why according to the famous expression reviving the dawn “is something not everybody, but only the distinguished can do.”

Allah Almighty says about his happy slaves who interrupt their sweet sleep to pray the following:

**“The godfearing will be among Gardens and Fountains, receiving what their Lord has given them. Certainly, before that they were good-doers. The part of the night they spent asleep was small and they would seek forgiveness before dawn. And beggars and the destitute received a due share of their wealth.”** (al-Zariyat, 51: 15-19)



The sahur time of the blessed month of Ramadan is also a means of instilling “the virtue of the dawn” into us. They have the nature of annual practices that Allah Almighty has bestowed upon us.

Ramadan is a unique season for gaining spiritual rewards as it contains the famous night of power, known as Laylat al-Qadr. The night of power, which is worth 80 years of worship in one night, is a special gift from Allah Almighty to the Muslim ummah.

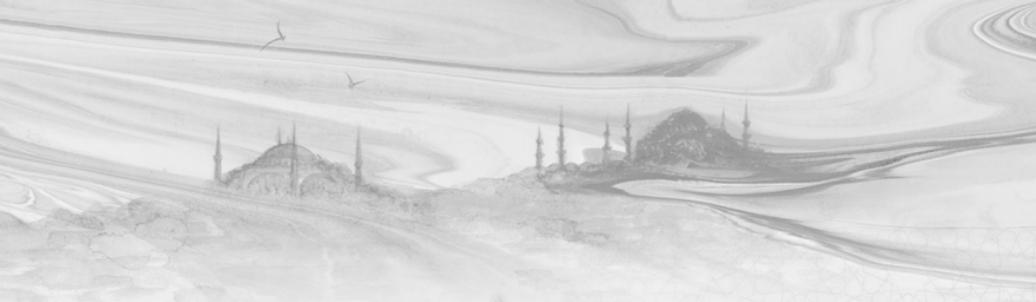
With the arrival of the Blessed month of Ramadan, if we can extend the virtue of performing acts of worship at dawn to the whole year by living in accordance with the principle “Treat everybody you see as if he is Khidr and every night you live as if it is the Laylat al-Qadr,” then our life will turn into a Ramadan atmosphere full of blessings, spiritual gifts and enriched with fearful awareness of Allah; and our last breath will turn into a shab’i arus (wedding night).

**May our Lord make it possible for us to come out of Ramadan clean and faultless. May He grant us gracefully to live a life in the spirituality of the month of Ramadan and to be able to take our last breath in the peace and tranquility of a feast morning opening to eternal bliss.**

**Amin!**







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

*Imam  
al-Rabbani*  
(May Allah have mercy on him)

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is the best time to hear the silent cries of the oppressed and the needy saying: “help us!” If we cannot raise our mercy and compassion above all of our animal desires, we will ruin ourselves. We should not forget that countries that do not sow the seeds of mercy in their soil cannot escape from the destiny of becoming places of torment and lament.





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## Imam al-Rabbani -3-

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“When we sit and stand and in all of our actions our goal should be seeking the pleasure of Allah and acting in accordance with the Shari’a’. The rulings of the Shari’a’ should be our standard in every state. We should be with Allah, Most High, both inwardly and outwardly.

For instance, when we want to go to sleep, which is itself a state of total heedlessness, then we should make the intention to strengthen ourselves for the worship of tomorrow in a better way and with more energy. When we sleep with this intention, then our sleep becomes an act of worship in itself. There is a hadith that indicates this “the sleep of the scholar is an act of worship”<sup>90»91</sup>

90. See al-Daylami, *al-Firdaws*, no. 6731.

91. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 224, no. 17, Yasin Yayinevi, İstanbul 2007-2010.



Human beings, who have been created to worship their Lord, should strive to live in the consciousness and comprehension of this truth until their last breath. A true believer should be in search of the pleasure of Allah Almighty in every moment of his life. A perfect believer does not regard any deed he does in this quest good enough and has an ever-increasing desire for goodness.

Serving Allah is not just a matter of acts of worship that are completed at certain times such as ritual prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage. Serving Allah is a life-long occupation that encompasses every moment and also includes manners and good character. That is why Allah Almighty promises to recompense all deeds, whether that be those deserving His pleasure or His wrath.

In this respect, a believer should strive to attain the acceptance of Allah Almighty by directing all his behavior for the lofty goal of pleasing Allah. Indeed because of this fact, Imam al-Rabbani states the following:

***“We should not prioritize the pleasure of the lower self (nafs) in regards to delicious food and beautiful clothes. Instead, we must have the intention of gaining power in our acts of worship, in our food and drink. While wearing beautiful clothing; “wear fine clothing in every mosque” (al-A’raf, 7: 31) we should***



***have the intention of obeying the divine command mentioned in the verse, and we should not aim to show off to people..***<sup>92</sup>

Even if a believer simply carries out his basic needs of his daily life with a pure intention in accord with the pleasure of Allah, he will be able to turn all those daily actions into worship.

In order to keep believers away from the desires of the lower self and to direct them to a Divine direction, our religion Islam has given the believers a lofty goal by giving the material and worldly matters a spiritual purpose. For human beings, Islam has elevated not only their lofty acts of worship and morality, but also the mundane actions of their physical needs.

For example, eating and drinking is a physical need. However, Islam elevates this physical need and turns it into a means of reward with the intention of being a source for physical strength to worship. Likewise, within this framework, the Prophet advises to start each meal by saying *bismillah*, mentioning the name of Allah, to contemplate the greatness of Allah's blessings and favors in each bite eaten, and to praise, thank and remember Him. In other words, it ensures the transformation of a simple act of eating a meal into an act of worship, rather than just the fulfillment of a bodily appetite.

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92. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 298, no. 70.



As in this example, Islam, our exalted religion, has offered believers opportunities to gain nearness to Allah Almighty at every moment of their lives by attaching all the necessities of human life to a lofty goal.

With the sincerity of their intentions, the eating and drinking, sitting, and even sleeping of true believers becomes worship. However, on the contrary, even the acts of worship of those who are unaware of all these divine gifts attracts the wrath of Allah Almighty, as they are mixed with selfish intentions such as hypocrisy and vanity.

Therefore, in order to bring each moment of life with the ecstasy of worship, we must pass our hearts through a spiritual training in this regard. In this way, we have to gain “**consciousness of intention.**”

Because, as it is stated in a hadith;

*“The intention of a believer is better than his deeds.”* (Al-Suyuti, *Jami al-Saghir*, II, 194)

It is known that Allah Almighty bestows exceptional favors on His servants who strive to transform their life into permanent worship. For example, due to a valid excuse such as illness, traveling, extreme tiredness, or old age, a servant may sometimes not be able to perform a supererogatory act of worship that he would normally do. In such case, according to the



sincerity of His servant, Allah Almighty rewards him as if he had performed it. Indeed, the commentators of the Qur'an interpret the verse: **“Except for those who believe and do right actions: they shall have a wage which never fails.”** (at-Tin, 95: 6) as “Even when the body of a servant cannot perform the deeds, his reward continues forever in proportion to the sincerity of his intention and the effort he shows in healthy times.” For this reason, we must strive to continue acts of worship and righteous deeds consistently while we still have the opportunity.

The acts of worship of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who was sent to us as the greatest exemplary character, covered every aspect of his life in a harmonious way. Observing his blessed life, it may be said that he spent all his life in worship.

However, our Prophet carried out his worldly duties without interruption, even in the most perfect way while continuing his state of worship at the highest level. Indeed, he continued meticulously performing his acts of worship day and night; enduring great hardships, he conveyed the religion sent to him by Allah; With his words and deeds and he explained the parts of the *wahy* or revelation that were in need of clarification, and also took care of his family, shared the misfortunes of the poor, built the foundations of an extremely strong and powerful state, and sent envoys to the neighboring kings. He invited them to



Islam, accepted foreign ambassadors and welcomed them. He commanded and led armies, and fought selflessly in order to remove the obstacles that appeared before him in conveying the religion of Allah.

In other words, no worldly occupation could prevent him from performing his acts of worship. On the contrary, our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) spent every moment of his life completely absorbed in worship because he also carried out his worldly acts in accordance with the pleasure of Allah. He perfectly fulfilled his daily duties, which were already too heavy for anyone to cope with, and at the same time worshiped Allah in a much more perfect and focused way than those who closed themselves away in temples and devoted themselves solely to worship.

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“It is more virtuous to pray one of the ritual obligatory prayers in congregation than to pass through thousands of difficult acts of Sufi training (which are done by staying away from the congregation and which are not obligatory). Remembering Allah (*dhikr*) and contemplation (*tafakkur*) which are done in accordance with the principles of the Shari’a are also very virtuous and important.”<sup>93</sup>

Islam rejects individualism, selfishness and living for one's own sake and encourages and teaches altruism, sacrifice, struggling for the religion and becoming a believer who serves others. The first manifestation of social training begins in prayers performed in congregation. In congregation, the believers' feelings of unity and solidarity sprout and strengthen.

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated the following:

*"... Adhere to the congregation, beware of separation, for indeed Satan is with the solitary, and he stays further away from those who are together even when they are two. Whoever wants the best place in Paradise, then let him stick to the congregation..."* (al-Tirmidhi, Fitan, 7/2165)

*"... A man's prayer said along with another is purer than his prayer said alone, and his prayer with two men is purer than his prayer with one, but if there are more it is more pleasing to Allah, the Almighty, the Majestic."* (Abu Dawud, Salat, 47/554; al-Nasai, Imamat, 45)

The blind Companion **Abdullah Ibn Umm Maktum** (may Allah be pleased with him) asked:

"O Messenger of Allah, there are many venomous creatures and wild beasts in Medina (I am afraid that they may harm me. So would I be excused to pray in my house because I am blind?)



The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied:

*“Do you hear the call, “Hayya ‘ala’s-salah (Come to prayer),” “Hayya ‘ala’s-felah (Come to salvation)?” (He said: Yes.) “Then you must come.” (Abu Dawud, Salat, 46/553)*

As can be seen, the Prophet, who was extremely kind and merciful to his ummah, gave this instruction to a blind Companion. Therefore, it is necessary to seriously consider what a terrible heedlessness and wastefulness is to not be involved in the congregation without a valid excuse...

Shifa bint Abdillah (may Allah be pleased with her) stated the following:

**Umar ibn al-Khattab** (may Allah be pleased with him) came to us on one of the days of Ramadan. When he saw that two family members were sleeping:

“What is wrong with these men that they didn’t join the congregation with me?” I (Shifa bint Abdillah) said,

“O Commander of the Believers! They prayed with everyone in the evening and continued to pray until the morning. Then they performed the dawn prayer and went to bed.”



Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said the following:

“It is more pleasant for me to perform the morning prayer in congregation than to pray until the morning.”<sup>94</sup>

For a believer, there are always many responsibilities of servitude that must be done. It is more appropriate for a true believer to give priority to the most important one of them and to strive to do the rest as much as he can.

Undoubtedly, “fard (obligatory) acts” are at the top of the list. It is a mistake to engage in other deeds at a time when there is an obligatory act to be fulfilled, even if they are praiseworthy deeds such as supererogatory prayers, charity or serving the people.

In a believer’s life of worship, the obligatory acts have priority above all else. The value and virtue of supererogatory prayers depend on their being built on the obligatory ones. Indeed, in a hadith qudsi, **the Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) says that Allah stated the following:

*“... The most beloved thing with which My servant draws near to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My servant keeps on coming closer to Me through*

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94. Abdurrazzaq, al-Musannaf, Beirut 1970, I, 526; Muwatta, Salat al-Jama'a, 7.



*performing Nawafil acts (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, so I become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grasps, and his foot with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give to him, and if he seeks refuge, I will give him refuge.”* (See al-Bukhari, Riqaq, 38; Ahmad, VI, 256; al-Haythami, II, 248)

Thus, Allah Almighty wishes us to approach him always with supererogatory acts after having already done the obligatory ones in order to become a servant that He loves. He informs us that there is no deed more lovable than the obligatory acts. In other words, He declares that performing obligatory acts is an essential condition for other deeds to be accepted.

Imam al-Rabbani commands:

“Know this; the heart is the neighbor of Almighty Allah. There is nothing closer to God than the heart. In that case, whether someone is a believer or a rebel, avoid harming his heart. This is because a neighbor is protected even if he is a rebel. Please avoid this, for after unbelief (kufr) there is no greater wrong than harming the heart which leads to offending Allah. The heart is the closest of all created things to Almighty Allah”<sup>95</sup>

Allah Almighty declares that He is closer to His servants than His servant's jugular vein<sup>96</sup> and that He intervenes between a person and his heart.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, we should be very careful with the heart, which is the place where Allah looks.

Shah Naqshiband says;

*"... There is no heart without Allah's gaze upon it. Whether the owner of that heart knows this or not!"*<sup>98</sup>

Thus, Shah Naqshiband draws attention not only to the fact that revived hearts will receive blessings from the divine gaze upon them, but also how severe a sin it is to hurt a heart.

The greatest effort and support of the friends of Allah Almighty is to bring the sick hearts that have fallen away from divine truth back to the light of Islam. It is also to revive the sad and grieving hearts of believers with compassion and mercy.

Imam al-Rabbani says:

*"The value of the month of Ramadan is so great that it has no end. Unity and solidarity in this month are causes of unity and solidarity that will last throughout the year. Likewise, the laziness in this month is the*

96. Qaf, 50: 16.

97. Al-Anfal, 8: 24.

98. Salahaddin b. Mubarak al-Bukhari, Anis al-Talibin, p. 100.



*reason for the laziness that will continue throughout the year.*

*How fortunate is the one whom the month of Ramadan leaves in a good state. Woe to the one whom the month of Ramadan leaves in a bad state. For this will prevent that person from reaching blessings and he is left deprived of goodness.”<sup>99</sup>*

The month of Ramadan is the spring of the other months, that is, it is the spiritual launch pad of the whole year. For, it is a time full of blessings, when the doors of forgiveness and mercy are wide open. Ramadan contains the night of power which is better than a thousand months and has a special relation to the revelation of the Qur’an.

The “unity and solidarity” in this month, that is, the union of the heart with Allah Almighty, which causes relief in the soul, is an exceptional spiritual gain reflected throughout the whole year. That is why if we act properly and fulfill our obligations after Ramadan, it is a indication that our acts of worship in Ramadan have been accepted.

Those who surrender their hearts to Allah and their bodies to acts of worship, such as fasting, tarawih prayer, recitation of the Qur’an, remembering Allah (dhikr), forgiveness, charity, serving the community

with compassion, in this blessed month will see its fruits for the whole year.

However, those who stay away from divine mercy by remaining heedless of this blessed time will be in the disappointment of this heedlessness and insensitivity for the whole year. **The Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) points to this matter as follows:

*“Gabriel (peace be upon him) appeared to me and prayed saying: “May anyone who fasts Ramadan and whose sins are not forgiven, be away from mercy!” I said “Amin!” ...”* (Hakim, IV, 170/7256; al-Tirmidhi, Da’awat, 100/3545)

The following is stated in another hadith:

*“... Shame on anyone who fasted Ramadan but could not be forgiven. If the person cannot be forgiven during Ramadan, then when can he be forgiven?”* (Ibn Abi Shayba, al-Musannaf, II, 270; al-Haythami, Majma, III, 143)

That is why, in the eyes of the devout believers, bringing the month of Ramadan to life with acts of worship is an extremely important issue. **Mualla Ibn Fadl** said:

“The Salaf al-Salihin (righteous predecessors) would pray to Allah Almighty for six months to let them reach the month of Ramadan. In the remaining six months, they would pray for the acceptance of the



Ramadan they reached.” (Qiwam al-Sunna, al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, II, 354)

On the other hand, by making people feel the pangs of hunger and helplessness through fasting, the month of Ramadan is a spiritual training that provides a better understanding of the circumstances of the needy. In fact, Allah Almighty commands us to understand the situation of the needy who are in need but cannot tell this to anybody because of their modesty and to help them as much as we can “... **You will know them by their mark...**” (al-Baqara, 2: 273). In other words, He wants our hearts to gain a heightened sense of compassion, mercy and generosity.

Therefore, the blessed month of Ramadan is a school of mercy reminding us that the poor, orphans and the helpless around us are entrusted to our care and responsibility.

One day in a Ramadan, **Sultan Mustafa III** went to the mansion of Şeyhulislam **Mehmed Emin Efendi** for iftar (fast breaking). During their conversation, he said to Şeyhulislam:

“Sir, I would like to visit you once in a while, but your mansion is far away.”



“With your command, it is possible for me to have a house close to you. However, there is no kitchen in any of the dwellings you see around.”

This response seemed strange to the Sultan and so he asked:

“How strange, don’t people cook in these houses?” Şeyhulislam Mehmed Emin Efendi replied:

“All of them come for breakfast and dinner. That is why I do not want to leave here.”<sup>100</sup>

If Ramadan is revived with such an elevated heart and an altruistic spirit, it will be one of the most beautiful witnesses for the servant in the sight of Allah.

In this respect, it is a great honor to be able to live Ramadan properly and send it off in a state that it is pleasing and to be able to reach the next year’s Ramadan without losing the spiritual gains we have attained in it, and thus to live our life in a permanent spirit of Ramadan. A real eid is basically a manifestation of this devotion. In other words:

The real **eid** is for a person who can leave Ramadan by receiving the testimonial of divine forgiveness.

**Eid** is the congratulations of Allah to His sincere servants.

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100.Süheyl Ünver, *Bir Ramazan Binbir İstanbul*, p. 64.



**Eid** is the final lesson of the month of Ramadan, which is the school of forgiveness.

**Eid** is the season of visiting friends and relatives, the sick, the poor, orphans, and the oppressed and inquiring about their wellbeing, mending their broken hearts, worrying about the troubles of the believers, and living the brotherhood of Islam at the community level.

**Eid** is a divine feast that gives heavenly coolness and life to the burnt-out hearts.

**Eid** is the time for social worship that will be lived through charity, sacrifice and service. Eid is not a time of selfish desires and pleasures by indulging in entertainment, wastful activities.

**Eid** is the time of mending resentment and broken hearts and socializing with brothers and sisters in Islam.

**May Allah Almighty grant us the ability to feel the suffering of our oppressed brothers in Islam all over the world more deeply, to turn our hearts into places of mercy that embrace them, and heal their wounds both with financial and material support and through prayer. May He bless the poor and long-suffering Muslim world of our century with the real joy of the feast ...**

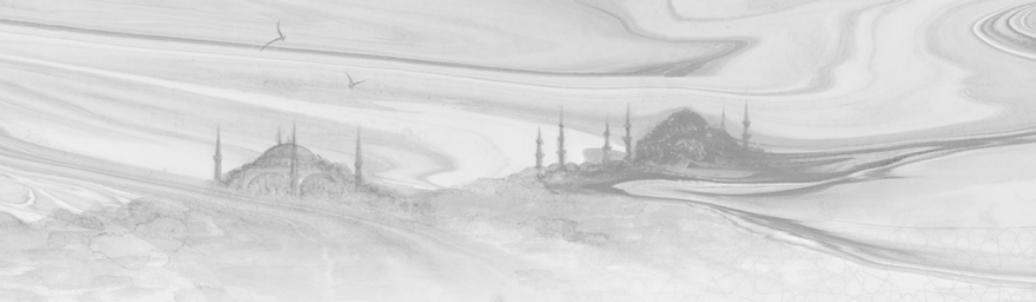


**May He grant us the ability to reach the end of this year's Ramadan, free from our sins, and to be able to see the next year's Ramadan with the same heartfelt pleasure. May He bless us to live our lives within the spirit of Ramadan and to take our last breath in the peaceful state of the feast morning opening to eternal bliss.**

**Amin!**







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

# *Imam al-Rabbani*

(May Allah have mercy on him)

In comparison with the eternity of the Hereafter, the life of this world is a drop in an ocean. Therefore, if the only answer given to the question “What is the purpose of life?” is the cold dampness of the earth and the hard silence of the tombstones, then what could be more painful than a fleeting life wasted in such heedlessness?

The late poet Necip Fazıl (may Allah have mercy on him) summarizes a life in heedlessness as follows:

My watch worked for thirty years while I was stopped;

I flew a kite unaware of the sky...





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## Imam al-Rabbani -4-

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“The aim in the creation of the human being is to carry out one’s worship as has been commanded. The aim in performing this worship is to attain ‘*yaqin*’ (certainty) which is the reality of faith.”<sup>101</sup>

Allah Almighty states in a verse:

**“I only created man and jin to worship Me”** (al-Dhariyat, 51: 56).

**Ibn Abbas** (may Allah be pleased with him) interpreted the expression لِيَعْبُدُونِ “**to worship Me**” in this verse as “لِيَعْرِفُونِ” “**to know Me.**”

For example, prostration, which is closest a servant can be to his Lord in this world, may appear something formal to someone who observes it from

101. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 369, no. 97.



outside. However, it really refers to a believer's complete awe and submission by putting his forehead on the ground in perfect humility and that he has surrendered to his Lord and submitted himself to His Will. By prostrating, the servant says "You are my Lord, I am Your servant; You are my Creator, I am Your creation!" and declares that he recognizes Him by his heart.

Indeed, the Companions of **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) used to raise their eyes to the sky in prayer. Until the following verses were revealed:

**"It is the believers who are successful: those who are humble in the prayer."** (al-Mu'minun, 23: 1-2)

After the revelation of these verses, the Companions started to bow their heads down in awe.<sup>102</sup>

By presenting their servitude to Allah, they truly comprehended the meaning of prayer, and became aware of their nothingness in the face of divine power.

Thus, the purpose of worship and servitude is to attain direct knowledge of Allah (ma'rifatullah) with the above-mentioned state and to know Allah with the heart. This means reaching "*yaqin*", or certainty, free from all doubts and illusions. It is to live with a heart that has achieved the state of "Ihsan", i.e., a heart with

a firm belief as though it is seeing Allah directly. Ihsan is the state in which the believer realises the reality that he is under the watch of divine surveillance cameras at every moment of his life.

For a devout believer, there is no greater goal in life than **servitude** as there is no greater title than **servant**. In fact, when Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) was given the choice of being a "king Prophet" or a "slave Prophet," he preferred to be "**a slave Prophet.**"<sup>103</sup> With this choice, he indicated that the peace and sovereignty brought by serving Allah is incomparably superior to whatever worldly rulers can achieve.

Indeed, even if the whole world is given to a person and he lives there for a thousand years, what good would it do someone? Will it not be a narrow trench of black earth where he will eventually go? Moreover, in comparison with the eternity of the Hereafter, isn't the life of this world is like a drop in the ocean?

Therefore, if the only answer to the question "What is life for?" is the cold dampness of the earth and the stark silence of tombstones, then what could be more painful than a fleeting life wasted in such heedlessness?

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103. See Abdurrazzak, *Musannaf*, III, 183; al-Haythami, IX, 192.



It is stated in a verse:

**“On the Day they see it, it will be as if they had only lingered for the evening or the morning of a single day.”** (al-Naziat, 79: 46)

Therefore, there can be no wiser way of life than trying to turn this short worldly life into the capital of the eternal abode. The way to do this is to serve Allah as we are commanded.

Indeed, the people of wisdom advise based on this truth:

“الدُّنْيَا سَاعَةٌ، فَاجْعَلْهَا طَاعَةً” *This world is but a moment in time, try to spend that brief moment in acts of worship!..*”<sup>104</sup>

**Abdullah al-Dahlawi** said:

*“The life of the world is a day, and we have to fast in that day.”*<sup>105</sup> and pointed to the fact that we should live in a state of turning away from our lower appetites, and focusing all our efforts on serving Allah.

Every act of worship, if properly performed, is a spiritual nourishment that brings the servant closer to Allah, strengthens his faith, and brings real peace and tranquility to the heart by cleansing it from doubts and uncertainties.

Iman (belief/trust) is like a light source. Selfish and demonic winds keep blowing at every opportunity throughout one's lifetime to extinguish this light. Acts of worship are like a lamp glass protecting the light of belief against such destructive winds.

Therefore, the more acts of worship are performed with pure intention and in a proper way, the more powerful and bright the light of the belief in the heart will be.

**Sami Efendi** (may Allah have mercy on Him) explained the heart of the believers who attain an unshakable belief with the following analogy:

“The believer on the straight path should be as upright as a mountain because the mountain has four properties:

- 1) It will not melt from the heat,
- 2) It will not freeze from the cold,
- 3) It will not fall over from the wind,
- 4) Floods will not overtake it”<sup>106</sup>

In other words, a believer who is on the straight path protects his belief despite all adverse conditions.

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

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106.M. Sami Efendi, *Yûnus ve Hûd Sûreleri Tefsîri*, p. 145.



*“There is no deception in love because the lover is infatuated with his beloved and can do nothing in opposition to Him and can never incline to those who are in opposition to Him. He can compromise nothing at the expense of his Beloved.”<sup>107</sup>*

Belief in Allah is a deep love and love is an action of the heart. There is free movement in every limb, but not in the heart. It can be forced neither to love nor to hate anything.

For this reason, a true believer protects his heart, which is the place of belief, from everything that Allah Almighty dislikes and does not let his heart incline to such things. Because, claiming loving for Allah Almighty while inclining to things that He does not love is not compatible with true belief.

**Our Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) says:

*“A person is with the one he loves.”* (al-Bukhari, Adab, 96)

We should think how much our hearts are with Allah Almighty and how much they are with our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). How much are they with those whom Allah and His Messenger love? Or, how much they are with what the lower desires? How much do they incline towards the



enemies of Allah and His Messenger, the appeals of sins, and satanic traps?

Thanks to the real love, a lover loves what is beloved to the one he loves and hates what they hate. One who loves Allah and His Messenger also loves good qualities of character such as generosity, decency, compassion, mercy and forgiveness. On the other hand, he hates bad characteristics such as immorality, arrogance, stinginess, cruelty and injustice. A true love stems from the commonality between the lover and the beloved. In a true love, the characteristics of the beloved transmit to the lover. Love becomes stronger when the beloved sees his own characteristics reflected in his lover.

For example, the exemplary character of **the Messenger of Allah** (peace and blessings be upon him) was transmitted to **Abu Bakr** at the highest level. Because the Companion, who loved our Prophet the most and annihilated himself in him was **Abu Bakr** (may Allah be pleased with him). When we look at Abu Bakr, we see our Prophet's character.

In other words, saying "I love Allah and His Messenger" is not enough. If we really love them, then we must check how much compassion we have, how much mercy we have and what our character really is deep down. How much does our character reflect the character of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon



him)? Can we get rid of selfishness/egoism? Do we have an altruistic soul that is concerned for the grievances of the ummah? Is our love reflected in our acts and behavior? Or is our love just lipservice?

Likewise, saying “I love the Qur’an.” is not enough. How much have the characteristics of the Qur’an been absorbed in us? How much do we act in accordance with the Qur’an? How many of our children do we send to Qur’an school and provide opportunities to learn the Qur’an? How much do we contemplate the fact that the Qur’an will either intercede or complain about us - due to our negligence – on the Day of Judgment? We should often ask ourselves these and other similar questions...

The measure of true love is sacrifice. Mere words that are not proven by sacrifice do not have any value. Addressing to the heedless who claim love but who are far away from the true love, Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi warns:

*“Do not be a laughing stock of words!”*

A person who loves his homeland starts to miss its air, water and soil, when he is away from it. Even if his homeland is not a very attractive place like a desert, he still longs for it. He has a heartfelt bond with every aspect of his country. True love is similar to this.

Similarly, Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi narrates a story in his Mathnawi:

Once Majnun, who had begun wandering the desert because of his love for Layla, showed love and affection to a drooling dog, tenderly caressing it and kissing it in the eyes. People criticized Majnun for his excessive love for the dog. In response, Majnun says:

“If you were to look at it through my eyes, you would understand why I did this. This is the dog of Layla’s village! Among so many villages it has chosen to dwell in the village of Layla and chosen to be the guardian of her village. How can I not love it?”

In short, every characteristic loved by Allah and His Messenger should be reflected in our acts and behavior. For this reason, the friends of Allah experience an indescribable spiritual taste from obedience to the Qur’an and Sunnah in every aspect of their lives.

On the other hand, if we love Allah and His Messenger, we should make loving for Allah and hating for Allah an innate part of our character and turn this into the natural foundation of our personality. True love necessitates loving what Allah loves, and hating what Allah hates. We should show love and respect to those who deserve it and hate those who deserve to be hated from the enemies of Allah and His Messenger.



Indeed, the fact that Abu Lahab was cursed by Allah Almighty in the chapter Al-Masad due to the severity of his disbelief and insistence on it, even though he was the uncle of the Prophet, is one of the most remarkable examples of this truth.

Therefore, we must protect ourselves from praising the enemies of Allah and His Messenger, even from looking at them with the slightest fondness because, such looks will increase their reputation and cause the wrath of Allah.

The following hadith presents a very clear example of the attitude we need to display for the sake of Allah:

*“Do not call a hypocrite” master” because if you accept him as your master, you will attract the wrath of your Lord the Most High.”* (Abu Dawud, Adab, 83; Ahmad bin Hanbal, V, 346)]

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“O my brother! There is no problem as long as one is not lax in two matters: the first is to follow the path of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), that is, the Shari’a, and the second is to harbor *ihklas* and *muhabbah* for your shaykh who guides you. As long as these two are present then there can be no harm even if darkness falls all around you. However –Allah forbid - if there is any deficiency in



either of these two matters, then there is loss upon loss, even if the person is in a state of constant *dhikr* and *muraqaba* (remembrance and vigilance).

For his state of *dhikr* is *istidraj* and his end affair is bad. One should plead to Allah with all his heart and ask for perseverance and uprightness in both of these matters. For these are the essence of the matter and the primary capital in order to attain salvation.”<sup>108</sup>

A believer should try to follow in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and the right acting scholars and gnostics who are his successors. In that case, he will arrive at the door of eternal peace by passing soundly through even the darkest paths. Otherwise, a person without a guide is like a ship with a broken rudder. He will be thrown in whatever direction the wind blows him, unable to find the path which takes him to his desired destination. Moreover, he cannot save himself from being destroyed in an unknown whirlpool.

Therefore, based on his own evaluations a believer should never admire his acts and behavior, and he should not consider his progress as acceptable. He should always try to correct his mistakes by assessing his situation in the mirror of the straight path. The mirror of the straight path in which he will look at his state and pull himself together is **the Prophet** (peace

108.Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 551, no. 30.



and blessings be upon him), who was an actual living interpretation of the Qur'an, and the mature masters of the Sufi path who are the Prophet's heirs living with utmost sensitivity by not leaving his luminous trace even a tiny bit.

Just as a patient cannot cure himself by reading a medical book, no human being can correct his lower self by simply reading from books. One cannot free himself from spiritual illnesses such as pride, arrogance and vanity. Even doctors, when they get sick, are treated by another doctor. Neither can any judge decide on a matter related to himself. It would be necessary for him to appear in the presence of another judge.

In the same way, to achieve spiritual perfection, it is necessary to follow the guidance of a mature Sufi master.

Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi (may Allah sanctify his soul) states how important it is to enter into the spiritual training of a Sufi master to attain the truth and knowledge of Allah by overcoming the barrier of the soul:

*“How can a knife shape and sculpt its handle without the aid of another knife? Show your wounds to a true surgeon of the heart. You cannot cure them alone...”*



*“Consult a medical doctor concerning your physical health and mundane feelings and thoughts, but consult a perfect guide about the health of your soul and those feelings that may elevate you to eternity.”*

It truly is as our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) expressed in one of his sayings:

*“The believer is the mirror of the believer.”*<sup>109</sup> Spiritually mature people become a clear and bright mirror for us, our soul sees its own essence and real existence in that bright mirror. Those who are deprived of such a mirror not only are unaware of their own mistakes but also cannot wake up from the heedlessness of their confusion.

On the other hand, some of those who have fallen into such a pit of heedlessness today exhibit great weaknesses in the tests of loyalty, respect and surrender to our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), by underestimating and looking down on his blessed sayings and traditions. In like manner, these heedless people, as if they had a level of heart that could evaluate them, disrespect the great friends of Allah who follow in the footsteps of the Prophet. Undoubtedly, this condition is a terrible blindness of the heart because rudeness shown against Allah’s loved ones is

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109. Al-Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, no. 238; Abu Dawud, Adab, 49/4918.



one of the very grave matters that attracts divine wrath.

In fact, Allah Almighty threatens that He will declare war against those who commit the following two sins:

The first is **Riba** (usury) The following is stated in a verse:

**“You who believe! Have taqwa of Allah and forgo any remaining riba (usury) if you are believers. If you do not, know that it means war from Allah and His Messenger”** (al-Baqara, 2: 278-279)

The second is maltreatment towards the friends of Allah Almighty, no matter how it is done. The following is stated in a hadith:

*“I declare war against him who shows hostility to a righteous worshipper of Mine....”* (Bukhari, Riqaq, 38)

It should not be forgotten that throughout the history of mankind, there is not a single entity that fought with Allah Almighty and won. In this regard, to practice riba and show a disrespectful attitude towards Allah’s loved ones will inflict a painful punishment on a person for it is offensive to Allah.

Imam al-Rabbani says:

*“Ujub (loving yourself and your deeds) burns away good deeds like fire burns wood. ‘Ujub arises*



*when one sees the deeds that one does as being pleasing to one's eye. In order to be freed from this, we need to think of our own hidden faults and defects and see our good deeds as lacking. In fact, a person should be ashamed to have their deeds and good acts heard of by others...»<sup>110</sup>*

In righteous deeds, the intention should only to seek the pleasure of Allah Almighty. A servant should thank his Lord for making him successful in righteous deeds. Boasting with righteous deeds and giving a share of honor to the self can destroy the reward of those deeds because it pollutes the intention for the deed. Belief in the Oneness and Unity of Allah (tawhid) is not compatible with any kind of associating partners with Allah.

In this regard, a believer should refrain from giving his own name to a charity, like a mosque or a Qur'an school he built. However, there is no problem in giving the name of the benefactor to the charity by his loved ones after his death. On the contrary, it is a means for him to be remembered with mercy. As a matter of fact, it is very difficult for a servant to do a good deed in a manner completely free from inner and outer flaws, no matter how hard he tries. For this reason, a servant should never glorify his deed, no matter how great it may appear, he must always con-

110. Al-Qishmi, *Barakat al-Ahmadiyya*, p. 217.



fess his deficiency and weakness and wish that Allah Almighty accept it by His kindness and benevolence. One should never forget that his righteous deeds, like his prayers, need the acceptance of Allah Almighty.

Therefore, in the eyes of observant believers, the state of the heart in offering the righteous deeds to Allah Almighty is as important as the deeds themselves. In order to make deeds purely for the sake of to Allah alone, not even the slightest inclination towards the admiration of others should be mixed with the intention. Because of this, one should try to hide the righteous deeds from the eyes of people as much as possible.

Indeed, as it is stated in a hadith, on the Day of Judgment when there will be no other shade, Allah will provide shade under His Throne for seven classes of people, one of which will be those who give charitable gifts so secretly that their left hand does not know what their right hand has given.<sup>111</sup>

If there is a necessity, or if it is useful to encourage other people to charitable deeds, it is permissible to give charity openly. However, it is necessary to protect the heart from pride and arrogance and carefully avoid harming the sincerity.

In addition, we have to disregard the appreciation of our own selves, let alone the appreciation of others, for our righteous deeds. The most effective cure for silencing the self in this regard is to never forget its hidden faults and misdeeds. Otherwise, the self cannot be saved from enjoying itself and destroying the reward of its deeds.

**May Allah Almighty accept our intentions and deeds with His contentment. May He, by His grace, make us, His weak servants, succeed with the righteous deeds, good acts and behavior that He loves and is pleased with. May He let us be steadfast on the straight path. May He protect us from being among the insolvent ones of the Hereafter by falling into mischief regarding our religion.**

**Amin!**







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

*Imam  
al-Rabbani*  
(May Allah have mercy on him)

The real aim of Sufism is not to reach mystical unveilings, work wonders or to go on a tour of the unseen worlds. Because these are the shades in the spiritual journey that may suddenly disappear.

What is desired in the Sufi path is to attain a belief experienced with love, and worship performed with the harmony of heart and body, an admirable good character and a heart that has achieved peace and tranquility. Apart from these, all the goals are empty desires that divert the servant from his true purpose...







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## **Imam al-Rabbani -5-**

(May Allah have mercy on him)

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

*“The aim of entering upon the path of the Sufis is not to be a witness to certain scenes and visions pertaining to the world of the unseen. All of these are nothing; they are mere play and vain matters. What defects are there in the manifest world that a person would want to leave these and desire to see the world of the unseen by practicing abstention and striving against the nafs? Both of these worlds are worlds created by Almighty Allah and are proofs of His existence.”<sup>112</sup>*

The main goal in Sufism, which is the knowledge of spiritual training, is to perfect the belief and thus attain the pleasure of Allah, not to reach mystical revelations, marvelous acts and to witness unseen worlds. Because these are the shades in the spiritual journey that may suddenly disappear.

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112.Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 174, no. 266.



In this regard, Bal'am bin Baura are mentioned in the Qur'an as an example. So much so that, even though that man was granted inspirations and spiritual powers to work marvelous acts, he could not escape from the divine curse because he inclined to the world and was defeated by his own ambitions.<sup>113</sup>

Exceptional states such as mystical revelations and extra powers that are given to some servants are sometimes a divine favor and sometimes a divine test; a good Muslim should transcend these. To be stuck in these steps will keep the traveler of the Sufi path away from his true purpose.

For this reason, the friends of Allah do not give importance to miraculous acts and focus all their efforts on **being on the straight path** which is the real miraculous act.

As a matter of fact, it is narrated that **Bayezid-i Bistami** said the following:

“One day I was about to cross to the other side of the Tigris River. Both sides of the river merged as a miraculous event to give me the way. I immediately stepped back and said to the River:

“I swear that you cannot cheat me by that! Because the boatmen are crossing people to the other side for half a coin. (But you want my righteous deeds



that I have been preparing for 30 years for the hereafter). So, I cannot waste my thirty years (for a miraculous deed that drags me to haughtiness). I need Karim (Allah), not karamat (miraculous acts)!”<sup>114</sup>

In other words, what is important for the servant is to walk with sincerity and humility on the way of gaining the pleasure of Allah Almighty and not to linger under the deceitful shades existing on this journey.

In addition, in the journey of piety from faith to realization of faith (ihsan), accomplishment (or non-accomplishment) of mystical revelations and marvelous states is not the only measure of spiritual progress. As a matter of fact, there are not many narrations about the miracles and apparent marvelous states of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), who is said to be the best human being ever after the Prophets.<sup>115</sup> His greatest marvelous act is his unmatched loyalty, exceptional surrender and obedience to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It is that all the characteristics of the exemplary personality of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had the highest level of manifestation at him.

114. See Attar, *Tezkiretü'l-Evliya*, p. 217, İlim ve Kültür Yayınları, Bursa 1984.

115. See Ali al-Muttaqi, *Kanz al-'Ummal*, XI, 549/32578; Ibn Majah, *Muqaddima*, 11/106; Ahmad, I, 127, II, 26.



In this respect, it has been stated that it is better to mature without mystical inspirations and marvelous acts in the journey of spiritual training. Because those who experience such states may start to boast. Because they are human beings. Assuming that they have already reached spiritual maturity, they may fall into the mistake of decreasing their good actions, that is, their spiritual efforts.

Whereas it is stated in a verse;

**“And worship your Lord until what is Certain comes to you.”** (al-Hijr, 15: 99), and we are commanded to strive until our last breath in worshipping Allah.

Those who continue to walk patiently without experiencing spiritual manifestations such as mystical revelations and marvelous states, avoid pride, arrogance and laxity more. Since they always see themselves as incomplete, feeling their own nothingness before Allah Almighty, and they desire to increase their spiritual effort and determination even more.

Indeed, Taha al-Hariri (May Allah have mercy on him) expressed this as follows:

“The state of the traveler who is of the people of unveilings (kashf) as opposed to the traveler whose inspiration is closed, is like the journey of two people to the Hijaz, one who can see and who cannot. Each of them is nearing their destination throughout their



journey. However, the reward of the one who cannot see is greater. The traveler on the path of spiritual training (*sayr u suluq*), who does not have any *kashf*, is in a constant state of progress, however much this cannot be seen, and so is more profitable than the one whose *kashf* power is open.”<sup>116</sup>

Abu al-Hasan al-Haraqani recommended “service” to his disciples on their spiritual journey and said:

“The greatest *karamah* (marvelous act) is to serve the creatures of Allah without feeling fatigue or weariness.”<sup>117</sup>

Imam al-Rabbani says:

“After attaining the two wings of *itiqad* (belief) and *amal* (deeds) the people of *taqwa* are required to enter the Sufi path, by the grace and favor of Allah. The aim of entering upon this path is not to add anything to these two aims, nor is it to reach anything that is beyond them. Such matters are expectations, which are far from the true purpose, and which lead to slips.

The true aim of entering the Sufi path is to gain *yaqin* (certainty) and *itmi’nan* (contentment), which

116.Prof. Dr. Hasan Kamil Yilmaz, *Altın Silsile*, p. 208.

117.*Name-i Danişveran-i Nasiri*, I, 297.



prevent one's belief from being shaken by doubts and illusions..."<sup>118</sup>

What is meant by Sufi training is to attain a belief experienced with love, worship performed with harmony of the heart and body, admirable good character and a heart that has achieved peace and tranquility. Apart from these, all the goals are empty desires that divert the servant from his true purpose.

On the other hand, it is a historical fact that believers who have received their share from the Sufi path held on more tightly to righteous beliefs and deeds, and were able to keep their faith more in the face of oppression.

In fact, it has been seen among those who have been subjected to both, the assimilation of atheist and communist regimes, and to the global cultural erosion and intense missionary activities, in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and African countries, that there have been believers who succeeded in preserving their Muslim identity especially amongst the Sufis. Because the aim of Sufism is to strengthen the heart of the believer to the extent that it will not be shaken even in the face of the most violent storms of disbelief.

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

*“This is the advice that I have always given to my friends and that I will continue to give until the end of my life: After correcting one’s belief in the direction of the knowledge that is to be found in the books of theology of the ahl as-Sunnah wa al Jam’ah and after shunning what needs to be shunned and doing what is required in accordance with the rulings of fiqh in the matters of the obligatory, the recommended, the lawful, the disliked and the forbidden, one should free one’s heart from occupying itself with anything other than Allah, Most High...”<sup>119</sup>*

The most important issue that the friends of Allah express is perseverance on the straight path. So much so that being on the straight path is regarded as the greatest miracle. The basis of being on the straight path is correct belief, according to the criteria of the Qur’an and Sunnah, then to stay away from haram and doubtful things and to live in accordance with good morals and continue to persevere in righteous deeds.

To be able to have the “**sound heart (qalb al-salim)**” that Allah Almighty orders us, His servants, in other words to be able to reach the presence of Allah with an untainted and purified heart, depends on our ability to fulfill our physical and spiritual duties of servitude with sincerity. In these matters, we should

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119.Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 235, no. 278.



do our best so that our hearts do not lean towards anything other than Allah Almighty, thus peace and tranquility can be achieved with the remembrance of God ...

We should contemplate on the following statement of Allah Almighty:

**“We created man and We know what his own self whispers to him. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.”** (Qaf, 50: 16)

Indeed, whatever we think about in our minds is completely hidden and unknown to all beings other than Allah Almighty. This is something that is only possible to be known by Allah, the knower of the seen and the unseen. It is necessary to live one’s life in constant awareness of this truth. As much as our acts and behavior, it is necessary for us to keep watch over our innermost states and thoughts, so that they too can be pleasing to our Lord and thus our hearts may be rescued from being occupied by anything other than Him.

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

*“Whenever I do something good, I immediately see my faults and censure myself. I accuse my nafs, and am not at ease even until I consider the angel on my right side to have not written down this good deed. When the book on my right shoulder is completely empty, I believe*



*that the angels who write in it are waiting in vain. Now how can I deserve the pleasure of Almighty Allah while in this state?*

*I know that everyone else in this universe is better than me in many respects. I am the worst of them all.*<sup>120</sup>

As the spiritual level of a person rises, his feelings of awe and reverence towards Allah Almighty also strengthen. The Prophets and friends of Allah, who have the highest level of knowledge of Allah, sincerely turned to Allah seeking His forgiveness with feelings of embarrassment, weakness and nothingness, more so than the most sinful of people. They always found themselves flawed and incomplete and repented and asked Allah's forgiveness with tears of remorse.

The Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) passed through many tests and he had to sacrifice his property, life and children for the sake of Allah Most High. He removed all the mortal thrones out of his heart. He struggled hard against a pagan tribe. With the perfect surrendering to and trusting Allah, he was honored with the name "Khalilullah (the intimate friend of Allah)". However, despite his lofty rank with Allah, he prayed as follows manifesting the state of nothingness, incompetence and awe that he felt before the Divine Majesty,

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120.Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 118, no. 11.



**“And do not disgrace me on the Day they are raised up”** (Al-Shu’ara, 26: 87).

Undoubtedly, this state of awe and reverence observed by the Prophets, the friends of Allah and righteous believers is an indication of their closeness to Allah Almighty and their high level in the knowledge of Allah.

Because it is stated in a verse:

**“Only those of His slaves with knowledge have fear of Allah.”** (Fatir, 35: 28). What is meant here by those with knowledge is the knowledge of tasting and witnessing, to comprehend the glory of His might and majesty, and to comprehend one’s own nothingness, that is, *marifatullah* (direct knowledge of Allah).

Our Almighty Lord declares the state of righteous servants who worship with such a feeling of awe in the Qur’an as follows:

**“...those who give what they have given, their hearts fearful of their return to their Lord, such people are truly racing towards good things, and they are the first to reach them.”** (al-Mu’minun, 23: 60-61)

Our mother Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) says:



“When the above verses were revealed, I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

“Can they include those who commit harams such as adultery, theft and drinking alcohol?”

He (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

*“No, O daughter of al-Siddiq. They are those who fast, perform ritual prayer, give charity but they fear whether their Lord will accept those deeds or not.”* (At-Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 23/3175; Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 20)

In fact, the friends of Allah, the righteous and the observant believers prayed to Allah Almighty as follows due to this concern occupying their hearts:

سُبْحَانَكَ مَا عَرَفْنَاكَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِكَ  
وَمَا عَبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ

*“O Allah! Glory to You! We could not recognize You properly, we could not serve You properly!”*

While the heedless servants do not feel the slightest fear even for the greatest of sins, due to the state of fear and awe resulting from witnessing the divine power and majesty of their Lord, the devout servants live in great anxiety about whether their deeds will be accepted or not.

As a matter of fact, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:



“Be more concerned about the acceptance and protection of your good actions than the actions themselves.”

In other words, it is not enough to just do actions. We should pay attention to how sincerely we do them in order not to waste their rewards. We must carefully protect ourselves from bad characteristics such as hypocrisy, vanity, pride and arrogance.

One of the most important goals of Sufi training is to help the heart gain such sensibilities by keeping a balance between “*khawf* and *raja*” (fear and hope).

For this reason, the friends of Allah, although they are in the position of the spiritual stars, always see themselves at the lowest level and behind all people. Thus, they are protected from the heedlessness of trusting their deeds and their good states. In order to attain complete eternal salvation, they only hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah Almighty.

In fact, Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) asked his students to whom he wrote letters, to pray to Allah for him to take his last breath in a good state, that is, in sound faith. He stated the following in a letter that he sent to his son:

“*Be kind to children and encourage them to recite the Qur’an. Please those who have a right over us in our*



*name. Help us by praying for the soundness of our faith.*”<sup>121</sup>

This sensitivity of the heart and servitude regarding being able to give the last breath as a believer is the common characteristic of all friends of Allah. It is necessary for all of us to adopt this sensitivity about belief as an example. In this respect, we too should not neglect the following verse in our prayers;

تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

**“... So, take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous!”** (Yusuf, 12: 101)

For, except for the Prophets and those who were given the good news by the Prophets, there is no assurance that anyone can give their last breath in faith. What a wonderful example of this is the following dream:

When Abu Bakr Warraq, one of the friends of Allah, passed away, a man saw him in a dream. Abu Bakr Warraq’s face was pale and he was crying. Upon this, the man asked:

“O shaykh! What happened to you?”

Abu Bakr Warraq explained the reason for his sadness as follows:

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121. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 169, no. 2.



“People brought ten funerals to the neighboring graves, but there was not a single believer among them...”<sup>122</sup>

**May Allah Almighty give us all the good fortune of taking our last breath in faith. May He bless us to be among the happy servants who live for His sake throughout their lifetime and have the joy of eternal bliss at their last moment.**

**Amin!..**



WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

# *Imam al-Rabbanif*

(May Allah have mercy on him)

The shroud, which is the last garment of the mortal life, will one day wrap everyone, and the fact of death will stamp the seal of annulment on all earthly transactions, pleasures and deceitful gildings!

From that point on, it will no longer be possible to do anything for the next day, and it will be useless to feel remorse. Therefore, in order to prepare an account that will bring us salvation on the Day of Judgment; the day is today ...





WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## Imam al-Rabbani -6-

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Imam al-Rabbani says:

*“There is nothing more useful than the word “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ” in soothing the wrath of Allah. If this word soothes the wrath that causes the entering into Hell, it calms other wraths even more easily. Because other wraths are much lighter than the wrath that causes the torment of Hell. Why is it so? Because, by repeating this statement, the servant turns away from everything other than Allah, rejects them, and the direction of his heart turns to Allah Almighty. In fact, the reason for the wrath is the different tendencies that the servant is addicted to. Since all those tendencies disappear by the kalimatul-tawhid, the wrath will also be calmed ...”<sup>123</sup>*

“Blasphemy, associating partners with Allah and hypocrisy” are the heaviest wrong actions that attract the anger of Allah Almighty the most and that are

123.Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, II, 591-594, no. 37.



excluded from divine forgiveness. That is, denying Allah, associating partners with Him, or pretending to believe in Him outwardly while disbelieving in Him in the heart.

The main reason why human beings, who were created with the inherent nature of Islam, leave the right path and deviate to false paths is to follow the commands of the lower self instead of following the commandments of Allah. In this regard, what veils a man's mind and heart is often the various worldly interests brought before him to test him.

The following story narrated by Fariduddin Attar is a remarkable one in this regard:

A Sultan had a favorite hunting dog. It was very good at hunting. The Sultan valued him highly and always took the dog with him whenever he went hunting. He adorned his dog's collar with jewels and put gold and silver rings on its feet. His back was also covered with a brocaded satin cloth.

One day the Sultan took his dog with him and went on a hunting trip with the court officials. The Sultan riding proudly on his horse with the silk thread of his dog's collar in his hand was very gleeful. However, suddenly something happened that took away his joy. His beloved dog had forgotten him, and was lingering with something else. Even though the Sultan pulled the rope in his hand, the dog resisted. It contin-



ued to gnaw the bone in front of it. In the face of this situation, the Sultan cried out in amazement and anger:

“Being busy with something else in my presence and forgetting me! How could that happen?”

He was extremely upset. This ingratitude, unfaithfulness and callousness of his dog affected him a lot. Even though it was just a dog, he did not want to forgive its mistake. It was not a forgivable mistake that his dog committed by forgetting its Sultan for a piece of bone considering that the Sultan had given it so much honor, and graciousness. In furor he said:

“Cast this shameless dog away!”

When the unwary dog realized what this furor meant, it was too late and there was nothing left to do. So much so that when the people around the Sultan said:

“O Sultan, let’s take all the jewelry, gold, silver and then cast it away!” the Sultan replied:

“No! Let it go like that!” Then he added:

“Let it go like that! Let it go and feel the pain of hunger and thirst in desolate and hot deserts; Let him experience the pain of the gifts and favors he lost while looking at them!”



In like manner, what merits the anger of Allah most is that the human beings lose their hearts to the temporal beings that their Lord has created for them and turn away from their Creator, forgetting the main purpose of their creation. There is no greater ungratefulness for man to forget his Creator, the real owner and giver of his sustenance and to seek help from other beings!

We should not forget that even if all humanity denies Allah Almighty, there would not be the least deficiency in His glory. By the same token, if all humanity is honored with belief in the existence and oneness of Allah, they would not increase the His Majesty and Divinity even a tiny bit. Allah Almighty does not need our servitude. He is free of all needs. Therefore, the belief or disbelief of humanity can only benefit or harm itself - not Allah Almighty.

Nevertheless, out of His mercy Allah Almighty wants the people He created to be happy and on the straight path. He desires them to be honored with faith so that they become worthy of His divine rewards. For this reason, the *kalimatul-tawhid*, which means accepting the fact that there is no god but Allah, is the best statement anyone can utter because understanding this statement properly and confirming it by the heart means:



✓ That the servant turns away from sins and all the temporal doors and takes shelter only in the mercy of Allah Almighty.

✓ Surrender to the Only Real Being, i.e., Allah by refusing all the false deities which are like dreams and imaginations.

✓ Attainment of true freedom that can only be enjoyed in the worship of Allah, by breaking all the satanic and self-idolatrous bonds that people have idolized in their eyes and hearts.

It is for this reason that simply by saying the *kalimatul-tawhid* and entering His path, Allah Most High grants His pardon and forgiveness to many people who otherwise would have deserved a painful punishment. Again just because of their uttering the *kalimatul-tawhid*, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forgave many polytheists, who had persecuted and tortured him for years, and accepted them among his Companions.

For example, Wahshi the Abyssinian, who had martyred the Prophet's beloved uncle Hamza (may Allah be pleased with him), later became a Muslim and gained the enthusiasm of belief by realizing the meaning of the *kalimatul-tawhid* and this time he killed the biggest enemy of Islam, the false Prophet Musaylima the liar. As a result, he became a blessed Companion who was remembered from then on by



the believers with the name Hazrat Wahshi (may Allah be pleased with him) until the Day of Rising.

In this respect, the most beautiful means to be used as an intercession for divine forgiveness is the statement “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ”: There is no god but Allah.” This sentence is also included in many supplications of repentance and forgiveness.

As a matter of fact, the repentance of the Prophet Yunus (peace be upon him) was accepted after he used *kalimatul-tawhid* as a means for intercession. It is stated in the verses:

**“And Dhu’n-Nun (Yunus), when he left in anger (on the thirty-seventh day by falling into despair at the insistence of his people on blasphemy, while he had been ordered to deliver the divine message for forty days): and thought We would not punish him. He called out in the pitch darkness: (in the belly of the fish), “There is no god but You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrong doers!” We responded to him and rescued him from his grief. That is how we rescue the believers.”** (al-Anbiya, 87-88)]

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

*“The entire world is worthless in the face of the virtue of the kalimatul-tawhid! If only it could have the value of a drop in comparison to a large ocean! However, the value and grandeur of this beautiful statement*





*and do what is necessary). In return, you promised me Paradise. You never break your promise!”*

Then, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his Companions:

*“Good news to you! Surely Allah has forgiven you.”*

(Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad*, IV, 124)

How beautifully the following incident expresses the high value of the kalimatul-tawhid in the sight of Allah Almighty:

The Prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him), who was given great powers at his disposal, was passing through a place along with his magnificent army made up of men, jinn and birds. They were passing through the valley of the ants. Seeing the Prophet Sulayman and his army, the chief of the ants said:

“O you ants, get into your houses, lest Sulayman and his army crush you without knowing.”<sup>125</sup> Hadrat Sulayman was given a great kingdom! Go to your nests otherwise you will be crushed.

The Prophet Sulayman (peace be upon him), who could understand the language of the animals by the grace of God, heard these words and said:

“No, my kingdom and power are not great because they are temporary! The peace and sover-



eighty brought by one kalimatul-tawhid is greater because it is eternal!... Indeed, it is stated in a hadith:

“If a person brings a word of Tawhid at the last breath, he will enter Paradise ...” (Hakim, Mustadrak, I, 503)

It is necessary to strive to live in accordance with the principles of the kalimatul-tawhid throughout life in order to be a part of this Prophetic good news and to be able to attain eternal peace and sovereignty. In other words, if the servant rejects all inner and outer deities other than Allah Almighty, fills his heart with belief in Allah and lives a life in this manner until his last moment, it is hoped that he will die with true faith and enter Paradise. With few exceptions, it is very difficult to say “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ” at the last breath for a person who lives his life contrary to this truth. In another hadith the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) states:

*“However, you lived that is how you will die and however you die, that is how you will be raised up again*  
(al-Munawi, Fayd al-Qadir, V, 663)

Ubaydullah al-Ahrar narrates:

“One time a devout man saw Shah Naqshiband (may Allah have mercy on him) in his dream after he had passed from this world and he asked him:

“What should we do for our eternal salvation? He replied:



**“Occupy yourself with whatever you should be occupying yourself with at your last breath”**. That is, just as you need to be remembering Allah completely at your last breath, then so you should throughout your life.”<sup>126</sup>

Therefore, it is necessary to prepare for a lifetime to be able to breathe the last breath with faith. Otherwise, it would only be a wishful thinking to hope to attain salvation by simply saying kalimatul-tawhid without living a life of servitude in accordance with its meaning.

Imam Zuhri, one of the great scholars from the Tabi’een generation was asked about the following hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him): “*Whoever says لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* will enter Paradise”. He replied:

“This ruling was given during the first period of Islam, before the revelation of the obligatory acts, and the commands and prohibitions of the religion.” (Tirmidhi, Iman, 17/2638)

In other words, after the completion of the religion, it is imperative to observe all the provisions of the Book and the Sunnah and to live a life within the content of tawhid. As a matter of fact, Allah Almighty declares:

**“Do people imagine they will be left to say, ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested?”** (al-Ankabut, 29: 2) The kalimatul-tawhid that is only in our words and is not applied to life cannot provide eternal salvation. On the other hand, it is reported that this verse was revealed about some Companions who were subjected to various persecutions and torture due to their beliefs. This narration clearly shows that true belief requires payment of certain costs. For this reason, Allah Almighty, tells us in the Qur’an about **Pharaoh’s sorcerers** who sacrificed their lives to save their faith, **the Companions of Uhdud** who were thrown into the trenches and burned because they did not compromise their beliefs, and **Habib al-Najjar**, who was stoned and martyred while defending the principle of tawhid.

On the other hand, as expressed by Imam al-Rabbani, the weight of the kalimatul-Tawhid on the scale will be in proportion to the spiritual degree of the person who said it. In this respect, it is essential to strengthen the heart by much reflecting on the meaning of the kalimatul-Tawhid. The blessed Companions put this advice into practice with great passion and eagerness and arrived at such a state that, in the words of Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him), they were able to hear the glorification of Allah made by the food they ate.<sup>127</sup>

127. See al-Bukhari, Manaqib, 25.



Another time Imam Rabbani explained the meaning of this phrase as follows:

“The purpose of the *dhikr* of لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ is to eliminate all false gods, be they manifest or hidden. Those that are outwardly manifest like Lat and Uzza are the false gods of the unbelievers. Those inwardly hidden are the desires of the *nafs*. Almighty Allah says in the Noble Qur’an: **“Have you seen him who takes his whims and desires to be his god...”** (Jathiyya, 45:23).

Eliminating the outer gods is sufficient for someone to become a Muslim. This is enough according to the Shari’a’. However, in order to eliminate the inner false gods, one needs to undergo purification (*tazkiya*) of one’s evil-commanding soul (*nafs al-ammara*). Consequently, this is the aim of entering the path of the Sufis. One needs to destroy both kinds of false gods in order to attain true belief. The completion of faith is dependent on eliminating these inner gods.<sup>128</sup>

The *dhikr* of kalimatul tawhid begins with the word “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ”, that is, with negation of all false deities. Idols and false deities in the outer world are evident. It is enough to reject the false deities of unbelievers, polytheists or pagans and to believe in the One and only God, i.e. Allah, in order to have valid belief according to Islamic principles. However, this is just the beginning of the task of comprehending the true

meaning of tawhid. The most difficult and important part is to be able to reject the idols in one's inner self.

In fact, this is the meaning and wisdom of the hadith of Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) that he said to his Companions while returning from the Battle of Tabuk; "... *Now you have come back from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad, that is, the jihad against the self.*"<sup>129</sup>

Therefore, purifying the inner world from idols by cleansing the lower self is a difficult but essential task. It is stated in the Mighty Book:

﴿١٥﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ﴿١٥﴾

**“He who has purified himself will have success, he who invokes the name of his Lord and prays.”** (al-A'la, 87:14-15)

**Ibn Abbas** (may Allah be pleased both of them) interprets the word **“tazakka / purify”** in this verse as “a person's saying the statement **لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ**”<sup>130</sup> Because the first step in *tazkiya* is to purify the heart from disbelief (kufr) and associating partners to Allah (shirk).

So, what are the idols that the servant should cleanse from his inner world?

129. See al-Bayhaqi, *al-Zuhd al-Kabir*, p. 198/374; al-Suyuti, *al-Jami*, II, 73/6107.

130. Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami*, XX, 22.



✓ These are sometimes selfish desires that appear more important to the servant than Allah's commands.

✓ Sometimes, they are temporal interests that should be abandoned for the sake of Allah, but cannot be abandoned. It means to prefer the worldly attractions when one needs to choose between this world and the next.,

✓ Sometimes, it is a love of rank that drives the servant away from his Lord.

✓ Sometimes, fame and fortune make him forget Allah Almighty.

✓ Sometimes it is an excessive lust for the opposite sex.

Allah Almighty has placed a strong attraction in forbidden things due to the wisdom of divine testing. Protecting the soul from being attracted by them requires a strong faith.

In fact, once the Meccan polytheists made the following proposals to **the Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him) to stop his fight against their idols:

“If you want to be rich, let us give you as much wealth as you want! If you aspire to be a leader, let us make you our king! If you want to marry a noble woman, let us give you the most beautiful women of



the Quraysh! We are ready to do whatever you want. As long as you accept to give up your mission!”

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) gave the following answer to those pagans:

*“I have nothing to do with any of the things you mentioned! I have not come to ask with the things I have brought to you for your property, or to gain honor and glory, or to be ruler over you. Allah has sent me to you as a Prophet and sent down a Book to me. He has commanded me to be a bringer of good news and a warner. I merely convey to you what my Lord has imposed on me and give you advice! If you accept what I have brought to you, it will be to your benefit in this world and in next! If you reject it, my duty is to bear patiently all difficulties in order to fulfill the command of Allah until the Almighty God rules between you and me.”*<sup>131</sup>

Undoubtedly, these kind of offers made to the Prophet, who was sent with the task of cleansing the souls from inner as well as outer idols, did not have the slightest effect on him. However, human history is full of countless examples of those who have forgotten the Hereafter when all the attractions and temptations of this world are offered up.

Indeed, it is stated in a hadith:

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131. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat*, p. 179; Ibn Hisham, I, 295-296; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 99-100.



*“... I am not afraid that you will worship other than Allah, but I am afraid that worldly life will tempt you and cause you to compete with each other for it.”*

(al-Bukhari, Maghazi, 17; Muslim, Fada'il, 31)

In short, the most dangerous idol is our own selves. It is the arbitrary decisions and whims of our selves and their flippant desires that prevent us from fulfilling Allah's commands. It is the “**according to me**” that contradicts divine judgments. It is the “**I think**” that does not comply with the provisions of Islam. It is the mixing worldly intentions into acts of worship, such as seeking to please people and show off to them so that you gain some favor.

In fact, it is stated in a verse:

**“Have you you seen him who has taken his whims and desires to be his god? Will you then be his guardian?”** (al-Furqan, 25: 43)

It is also stated in a hadith:

*“In the sight of Allah, there is no false deity that is heavier and worse than the selfish desires (hawa) among the false deities worshiped under the sky.”* (al-Haythami, I, 188)

Therefore, it is an extremely important duty to cleanse the soul by spiritual training and purification of the lower self (nafs). Because this is the only way that one can reach the truth of the kalimatul-tawhid.



**May Allah Almighty make us all say the kalimatul-tawhid in the true sense. May He grant us all the gift to be able to understand the wisdom and reality of tawhid, to live in accordance with the principles of tawhid in all our acts and behavior, and to take our last breath with faith.**

**Amin!**







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

# *Imam al-Rabbani*

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Every suhbah full of divine light and spirituality is in fact, a breeze of mercy and joy of peace that has come down to the present day from the assemblies of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

Just like burning a candle with another candle ... The flame that lights the candles and illuminates the environment is the same flame. Even if the believer is illuminated with the last of these candles, it would be as he was at the source ...







WISDOM FROM THE FRIENDS OF ALLAH

## Imam al-Rabbani -7-

(May Allah have mercy on him)

Imam al-Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) would constantly advise his children to do *dhikr*. In one of his letters that he wrote to his son Muhammad Masum he says:

“This is the time for *dhikr*. Put all of the desires of your *nafs* into the word ‘لَا’ (no) so that you can uproot them and leave no other desire or aim behind...Be content with His decree!”

When you come to the part of the phrase that is ‘لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ’ (except Allah) let nothing other than Allah enter your heart; this Being which is beyond everything known and imagined and which is a complete unknown for us. Houses, palaces, fountains, gardens, books and other things enter a person’s mind easily. Do these things not take up your time?”<sup>132</sup>

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132.Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 169, no. 2.



With the phrase “لَا / lâ” (no) in the statement of tawhid, it is necessary to wipe clean all the ephemeral, relativistic and personal obsessions and idols out of the heart, and with the expression “إِلَهٌ ilah”, (god) it is necessary to fill it with the love of Allah Almighty. It is a must that there is no love in the heart that contradicts the love of Allah Almighty. Especially selfishness and worldly passions must be eliminated.

In fact, it is stated in a hadith:

*“As long as they do not prefer their worldly profits over their religion, then saying “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ” protects the servants from the anger of Allah. If they prefer the worldly business to their religion and then say “لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ”, Allah Almighty tells them “You lied!””* (al-Bayhaqi, Shu’ab al-Iman, XIII, 100/10015; al-Haythami, VII, 277)

True tawhid can never tolerate associating any partners with Allah at all, a Muslim who believes in tawhid should obey the meaning and spirit of the Oneness and Unity of Allah Almighty during his remembrances and other acts of worship, which refer to the most special meeting moments with Allah Almighty, just as he rejects the false gods in the outer world and accepts only Allah Almighty as his Lord. The believer should not place any mortal and selfish thought between himself and Allah Almighty and should carefully avoid the actions and behavior that hinder the heart’s capacity to grasp tawhid.



It is stated in another hadith:

*“The thing I fear the most about my ummah is shirk (association). By this I do not mean they worship the Moon, the Sun or the idol. What scares me most is their deeds and hidden desires (feelings of showing off) that they do for someone other than Allah.”* (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 21)

Since *ikhlas*, which means doing acts of worship only for Allah, can only be possible by realizing the true nature of tawhid, this issue is the issue that the friends of Allah have emphasized the most. In fact, the late Necip Fazıl deals with this matter in one of his poems in which he describes the friends of Allah as follows:

...

*The acts of worship tainted by the lower self,  
They made them up one after another.*

...

*If their eyes turn to a stranger for a moment,  
They are sentenced to the punishment of tears of  
a lifetime.*

...

*Neither the worry of Heaven nor Hell;  
They are only in the pleasure of Allah.*

The essence of the kalimatul-tawhid is to cleanse the heart from *masiwallah* (other than Allah). Only after the heart has turned to Allah completely, it starts



to receive shares from the knowledge of Allah and divine blessings.

Just as when we hold a magnifying glass to the sun and the potent beam burns and cleanses everything it touches, a believer should concentrate his heart on the luminous rays of the *kalimatul-tawhid* and let it burn up and cleanse the impurities of his selfish passions.

The following expressions of As'ad Arbili make clear the necessity of living in accordance with the essence of tawhid in our creed, acts of worship, in daily life, in morality and all in all aspects of servitude:

“This poor brother of yours is striving to complete the essence of faith. I am striving to utter the *kalimatul-tawhid* with my tongue and with my state. It is difficult to state ‘لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ’ as long as there is – in the words of the Sufis – an idol, or a beloved present in one’s heart other than Almighty Allah. Even if it is uttered it is doubtful that it will be accepted by Allah as a means of reunion with Him.”<sup>133</sup>

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

*“Opportunities are limited. In that case, one should spend this opportunity on the most important tasks. This is to be in the company of the righteous people whose hearts are always with Allah.*



*Whatever it may be, do not equate anything with this suhbah (Companionship with the Masters). Do you not see that the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) were elevated above all others, with the exception of the Prophets, due to their Companionship with the Messenger of Allah?”<sup>134</sup>*

The first condition of benefiting from “*suhbah*” is to understand its value and nature.

First of all, we should know that *suhbah* is a Prophetic means of teaching. The Prophet educated his Companions through *suhbah*.

Indeed, the fact that the words “*sahaba* (Companion)” and “*suhbah* (companianship)” come from the same root clearly reveals the importance of this issue. In other words, what makes the Companions Companions, is their Companionship with the Prophet whom they believed in.

For this reason, “*Suhbah is a Sunnah al-Muakka-da.*” In other words, although it is not absolutely obligatory in Islam, it almost is and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) constantly kept company and abandoned this only on rare occasions just to make clear that it was not obligatory.

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134. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, I, 428, no. 120.



The messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) did not give a book or notebook to his Companions in order for them to jot down everything they learnt. Rather, he attached great significance to *suhbahs* and heart-to-heart transference of knowledge in the moment, in the presence of the person.

Because *suhbah* is the face-to-face and heart-to-heart traditional way of education, in addition to the words, actions and silent approvals of our Prophet, also have an important effect on “spiritual states.” These states were reflected and felt from his face and eyes but could not be expressed in words. Thanks to the closeness in *suhbahs*, his Companions benefited from his “states” in proportion to their abilities as they benefited from the words of our Prophet. As a result of this, the Companions received shares in various degrees according to their spiritual abilities and filled their hearts with the spirituality of the Messenger of Allah.

In fact, it is because of this virtue that they gained such a high degree that none of the righteous people who came after the Companions could reach even if they did more acts of worship.

*Imam Rabbani (may Allah have mercy on him) would frequently remind people that ‘suhbah’ is an extremely important principle of the Naqshibandi path, saying:*



*“On this path, the principal way of learning and benefitting others is suhba. Words and letters do not suffice.”*<sup>135</sup>

In *suhbahs* (spiritual gatherings), along with words and knowledge, there is a flow of inspiration and spirituality from hearts to hearts. In essence, this is the most important benefit of *suhba* assemblies. In other words, the beneficial states of those in such assemblies spread to each other.

Because in *suhbahs*, a spiritual line of exchange is established between hearts, just like the law of unified containers<sup>136</sup> in physics. Spiritual states and gifts flow through this line. In time, the states of the hearts begin to resemble each other. The tastes, feelings and opinions become the same.

For this reason, Allah Almighty says in a verse:

**“You who believe! Have taqwa of Allah and be with the truly sincere.”** (at-Tawba, 9:119). Because achieving righteousness is the most natural result of this heartfelt union with the righteous people.

135. Imam al-Rabbani, *Maktubat*, III, 396, no. 69.

136. **Law of Communicating Vessels:** When either two or more different vessels are connected at the base, they are called communicating vessels. Whenever some liquid is placed into any of the vessels, there will be a flow of the liquid between vessels until each has the same level. This is because their base is the same the characteristic of one vessel becomes the same as the others.



As a matter of fact, there is a tendency to resemblance in the universe. For example, if a bottle full of perfume falls over in any corner of a room, a transmission of scent from the air particles that absorb the perfume scent to the other particles will occur until the scent emanating from it is equalized in all the particles of the air that fill the room.

This matter, which is valid for all contrasts such as hot-cold and light-dark, is not only a matter of the physical world, but is also valid for the spiritual world. Muhammad al-Khadimi a Sufi master from the Naqshi order and a great Ottoman scholar says:

“... The states and emotions are contagious, the states of the people who attend *suhbahs* and become friends transmit to each other... The natures of people tend to resemble each other and follow one another. Human nature takes the peculiarities of another person’s nature without its owner noticing it ...<sup>137</sup>

In fact, it is said in folk language “There is always a way from a heart to a heart.” However, **love** is the most important thing that increases the transmission of states between hearts. Therefore, in spiritual gatherings, it is necessary to keep the heart constantly receptive and awake with the feelings of affection, respect

137. Abu Said Muhammad al-Hadimi, “Risala al-Nasayih wa al-Wasaya al-Mubarakah”, *Majmu’at al-Rasa’il*, p. 130-131, Istanbul n.d., Matbaa-i Amire.

and decency. Not merely physical togetherness but heart-to-heart togetherness is also a requirement for this process to take place.

The assemblies of the Prophet Muhammad's *suhbahs* would be full of such a sublime spiritual atmosphere. While the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was speaking, his Companions would listen to him with full attention, and they would not want to miss a single word.

The Companions described the state of their manners and awe in the *suhbahs* of the Messenger of Allah as follows:

*"We thought we had a bird on our heads and it would fly away if we moved."*<sup>138</sup>

The following incident is a fitting example of how the Companions benefited from the assemblies of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him):

The Prophet's Companion **Thawban**, may Allah be well pleased with him, was once immersed in thought while looking at the **Messenger of Allah**, upon him be peace and blessings. The Messenger of Allah, the mercy to all the worlds, noticed his sudden change of countenance and asked compassionately:

138. See Abu Dawud, *Sunnah*, 23-24/4753; Ibn Majah, *Jana'iz*, 37; Ibn Sa'd, I, 424.



*“What is it that perturbs you, O Thawban?”*

Thawban, replied:

“May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! The thought of separation from you weighs down on me such that every moment far from you light becomes sorrow for me. When my state in this world is thus, I am grieved to think about what it will be in the Hereafter. For there, you will be in the company of the Prophets, while I know not where I will be or what will become of me. And if I cannot enter Paradise, I will be separated from you eternally. This thought gives me great pain, O Messenger of Allah!”

Upon this, the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, *“A person will be with those whom he loves”* and thus gave him these glad tidings. (al-Bukhari, Adab, 96)

Thereupon, the following verse was revealed:

**“Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger will be with those whom Allah has blessed: the Prophets and the truly sincere, the martyrs and the righteous. What excellent company such people are!”** (al-Nisa, 4: 69)<sup>139</sup>



All the efforts of the Companions were in order to keep the union that they had with the Prophet in this world continue in the Hereafter. For this reason, they always tried to live together with our Prophet at the highest level. They lived together in a state of togetherness with him in their behavior, actions, feelings and ideas. They felt an implacable taste of obedience to Allah and His Messenger. They would be happy to sacrifice everything for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. The foundations of all such spiritual evolution were laid in the circles of subhahs.

Therefore, one should attend such assemblies with an ecstasy of worshiping, and even if the topic of the talk is something already known to the listener, it should be listened to with great care and decency as if it was heard for the first time because spiritual talks are an opportunity to remind those who know, to teach those who do not know, and most important of all is the opportunity to benefit from being together with the righteous believers. The following incidents explain this fact very well:

The great jurist Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal would often visit Bishr al-Khafi and say:

“O Bishr! Tell me about Allah.”

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s disciples would say:



“O Master! You are a great scholar, why do you go to a barefoot dervish?”

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal would reply:

“I know sciences better than him, but he is closer to Allah than me.”<sup>140</sup>

In fact, the prominent scholars and personalities of his time would also attend the suhbahs of **Sami Efendi**. These people, whose scholarly knowledge perhaps was much stronger than him, would sit quietly in great courtesy, humility and awe, and they would taste in suhbahs what they could not find in scholarly discussions and in their books.

In this respect, every believer, whether ignorant or learned, is in need of spiritual gatherings throughout their lifetime. This need never disappears. How well the following incident explains this fact:

A student of Abu al-Hasan Ash-Shadhilî had abandoned the suhbahs. One day he met this student and asked to him:

“Why did you leave us, leave our suhbahs?” His disciple replied:

“What I have learned from you so far is enough for me, I do not need you anymore.” Sorrowed by this response, the Shaykh warned his disciple as follows:

“Look, my son! If it was right for a person to be content with the knowledge that he received in a certain period of time, **Abu Bakr as-Siddiq** (may Allah be pleased with him) would have been satisfied with the knowledge that he received from **the Prophet** (peace and blessings be upon him). However, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq never deemed himself satisfied with what he learned. He did not leave the Prophet until his death. (Even after the death of our Prophet, he lived in longing to be buried next to him as soon as possible.)”

The blessed Companions did not want a long time to pass without seeing the Prophet and being deprived of his blessed company and wise advice, and they would often warn their children on this matter. How much do we feel the Companions’ sensitivity for ourselves and our children? How much effort do we make to benefit from the gatherings of scholars and sufi masters who are the spiritual heirs of the Prophet?

İsmail Hakkı Bursevi says:

“Although the opportunity to attend the suhba circles of the Prophet is gone, there is still the opportunity to be with His Sunnah and talk to those who love His Sunnah. This will continue until Judgment Day. It is extremely beneficial to be in the talks of the sufi masters and to be close to those who fear Allah.”<sup>141</sup>

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141. See Ruh al-Bayan, VII, 102.



Every subbah full spirituality is in fact, a breeze of mercy and joy that has come down to the present day from the assemblies of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Just like burning a candle is lit with another candle ... The flame that lights the candles and illuminates the environment is the same flame. Even if the believer is illuminated with the last of these candles, it would be as if he is present at from original source

For this reason, those who attend spiritual gatherings should assume a great sense of decency and respect, as if they were participating in one of the circles of the Prophet himself, so that there could be a flow of knowledge and spirituality through their hearts ...

*Imam al-Rabbani says:*

*"It is known that this world is a place of work, not a place of idleness and resting. You must direct your efforts to work fully. Stop being idle and having fun!... Leave laziness and laxity to your enemy. We should perform righteous deeds, strive for this and strive even more..."*<sup>142</sup>

A believer should utilize the capital of time in the best way, aware of the fact that this world is temporal and the hereafter is eternal. It should not be forgotten that the world is like a field to work and that either



good or bad crops will be harvested in the hereafter. In fact, a person who knows this truth cannot even spare a minute to waste lazily.

However, although human beings know all these facts very well, they cannot escape their innate weakness in doing what is necessary. For this, it is not enough to know, it is necessary to act with sincerity.

One day, Ibrahim Ibn Adham was asked:

“Why are our prayers not accepted?” he replied:

“They are not accepted because of the following reasons:

- You know Allah Almighty, but you do not follow His commands.

- You know the Prophet, but you do not follow his Sunnah.

- You read the Qur'an, but you do not act according to it.

- You enjoy the blessings of Allah Almighty, but you are not grateful for them.

-You know Paradise, but you do not know how to reach it.

-You say there is Hell, but you do not stay away from it properly.



-You say there is death, but you do not prepare for it.

- You put your dead in the graves with your own hands, but you do not take any lessons from it.

How should your prayer be accepted with all this evil?!”<sup>143</sup>

That is to say, it is not enough to know, it is necessary to act with sincerity. Expecting a favorable result without making any effort, hoping for mercy without any trouble, wishing for blessings without enduring burdens. It is like hoping to fill your stomach from someone else's eating. Without carrying the burdens of the sacrifices required by Islam in this world, its otherworldly rewards cannot be attained.

Therefore, before the grace of this life comes to a close, we must strive to do the righteous deeds required by Islam. According to the divine command given by our Almighty Lord in the following verse:

**“So, when you have finished, work on, and make your Lord your goal!”** (al-Inshirah, 94: 7-8), we should be in pursuit of deeds that will help us gain the pleasure and acceptance of Allah at all times.

**May Allah Almighty grant us all a good life in accordance with His pleasure, a beautiful last breath**



Imam al-Rabbani (May Allah have mercy on him) -7- 

**coming with glad tidings and a peaceful afterlife  
that is crowned with the good news of never-ending  
happiness...**

**Amin!**







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