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THE SIGNS OF A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

A Shaykh is one who has full knowledge and experience of spiritual ailments (amradhul batinah), attributes of vice and virtue (akhlaq razeelah and akhlaq hameedah), their characteristics (khawas) and their effects (ta'theerat). He should further be able to distinguish between their similarities and he must have perfect ability in devising plans and prescriptions for the acquisition of the attributes of virtue and the elimination of the attributes of vice. He has to be aware of the progress and retrogress of these attributes. He must be well versed in the hazards of the nafs and shaitān, the intuitive senses and feelings pertaining to the angels and the Divine Being. He must be able to distinguish these various intuitive and extra-sensory feelings and perceptions. It is therefore imperative that the Shaykh of tareeqat be one who is qualified in this knowledge, be a mujtahid in this field and possesses natural ability and inherent propensity. If he has acquired the Tareeq by a mere self-study of books on Tasawwuf or by listening from others, he will destroy the mureed whom he is attending, because he will not be in position to correctly diagnose the various states of the mureed.

Shaykh Ibn Arabi (R) briefly summarises the signs of a Shaykh Kamil (the perfect and qualified Shaykh) to be three:

1. Deen resembling the Deen of the Ambiya.

2. Prescribing like the physicians.

3. Management and control like that of kings.

The exposition of the above summary is as follows:

1. He should possess the necessary knowledge of the Deen which he must have acquired by either academic pursuit of such knowledge or from companionship with the Ulama Muhaqqiqeen .

2. He must be a deputy (Khalifah) of a Shaykh Kamil attached to an authentic Silsilah.

3. He should be up righteous and pious.

4. He derived spiritual benefit by remaining for an adequate period of time in the company of the Shaykh. Such "companionship" is either by means of correspondence or by physical presence in the association of the Shaykh.

5. The people of knowledge (i.e. the Ulamā) hold him in high esteem, and refer to him.

6. The effect of his companionship (suhbat) is increase in the desire for Akhirat and Divine love as well as detestation for the love of the world.

7. The majority of his mureeds are followers of the Shari'ah, their conditions conforming with the demands of the Shari'iah.

8. He is devoid of greed and desire (for worldly gain and benefit).

9. He engages in Zikr and devotional practices.

10. He does not leave his mureeds unfettered, but reprimands them when the need arises. He treats everyone according to their respective abilities.

The one in whom these attributes exist is worthy of being a Shaykh and he should be considered a wonderful alchemy. His companionship and service to him are in fact priceless treasures. Once these attributes or perfection are found in a Shaykh, one should not be concerned about karamat (miracles) and kushf (inspiration). It is not necessary that these states exist in the Shaykh Kamil nor is it necessary that he be one who does nor himself earn his livelihood.

M U N A S A B A T (CONGENIALITY) WITH THE SHAYKH

Experience has proven that for gaining spiritual benefit (fuyudhbatini), mutual munasabat (congeniality) between the Shaykh and Mureed is a natural condition. Normally benefit is dependant on affection which is the reality! of natural congeniality (munasabat fitri). Sometimes a Shaykh will refer a mureed to another Shaykh because of the lack of such munasabat between them. In doing so the Shaykh establishes either by deduction or kashf (inspiration from Allah Ta'āla) that the mureed has munasabat with a certain Shaykh. In this Path it is essential that munasabat exists between the Shaykh and Mureed

otherwise the latter will not benefit. Such munasabat is the basis for the acquisition of benefit and passing on faidh (spiritual grace) to the mureed. Munasabat envisages that there exists between the Shaykh and Mureed compatibility and harmony to such a degree that the mureed discerns no rejection in his heart for any word or act of the Shaykh although he (the mureed) may be afflicted by mental disagreement with any word or act of the Shaykh.

Nevertheless such mental disagreement will not countenance any rejection for the Shaykh in the heart of the mureed. In short, harmony and compatibility are conditional for bay't. It is therefore essential to first inculcate munasabat. This need is imperative. In the absence of this essential condition, mujahadāt (strivings), riyadhāt (certain forms of exercises designed to subdue the nafs), muraqabāt (meditations) and mukashafāt (intuitive revelations) are all futile. In the absence of natural munasabat (tab'i munasabat), the mureed should endeavour to inculcate intellectual (aqli) munasabat, because benefit is dependant on it. For this reason, one should refrain from entering into the bay't contract until total munasabat has been inculcated.

THE BENEFITS OF THE COMPANIONSHIP OF A SHAYKH KAMIL

The benefits of association with a Shaykh Kamil are manifold. Among such benefits are:

1. The noble and lofty qualities of the Shaykh slowly develop in the mureed.
2. Even if one is not totally reformed, one will have gained

the ability to discern and recognize one's faults.

3. The mureed follows the Shaykh in character and habit.
4. Attainment of joy and pleasure in Zikr and ibādat.
5. Enhancement of courage.
6. The obtainable of clarification and contentment from the Shaykh in the event of a spiritual condition settling over the mureed.
7. The mureed will discern his own spiritual condition which becomes manifest in the talks of the Shaykh, such talks being the essence of the masa-il (rules).
8. Increase in the desire to practice virtue.
9. The mureed's ability becomes manifest to him.
10. Love for Allah Ta'āla increases.
11. Quick attainment of cure for spiritual ailments.
12. Obtaining the duā of the Shaykh.
13. Elimination of doubt and uncertainty as a result of the Noor emanating from the heart of the Shaykh. This Noor has its effect on the mureed. Spiritual darkness is dispelled by this Noor. The reality of all things thus becomes manifest.

Malfoozāt

(Statements & Anecdotes)
Shaykh Ashraf Ali Thānwi (R)

❖ *There are such clear incidents regarding the Divine Scheme controlling Rizq (mans worldly sustenance), which even liberal and sceptical intelligence cannot deny. There are many extremely wealthy persons who are completely illiterate, not being able to write even their names. However, in their employ, working under them are graduates.*

14 HARMS OF CASTING EVIL GLANCES

By
Ārifbillah Shaykh Hakeem
Muhammad Akhtar (D.B.)

Harm No. 4: An Action of Stupidity

Hakeemul Ummnat Thānwi (R) said: "Every sin is a sign of stupidity and foolishness". Anyone who commits sin, then this is a sign that there is some deficiency in his intellect. He is disobeying such a Being in whose hands is our life and death, our health and sickness, peace and comfort, good and evil end. If his intellect was sound he would never commit sin. As for the one who casts evil glances, he says that he is extremely foolish. By casting glances, he attains nothing other than restlessness in his heart. By looking at a beauty, one never attains him/her, rather one gets uneasiness and the heart becomes restless when one remembers him/her. Allah Ta'āla has granted me a new aspect of knowledge.

To cause inconvenience to any Muslim or to bother him in any way is Harām. Now that person who is casting evil glances, is he not a Muslim? Is he not causing pain to himself and making his own heart restless? Therefore, the same way it is forbidden to cause pain and harm to any Muslim, it is likewise forbidden to cause pain to one's own heart by making it restless and uneasy.

A CONNECTION WITH ALLAH TA'ĀLA

From the discourses

of:

ĀRIFBILLAH SHAYKH HAKEEM MUHAMMAD AKHTAR (D.B.)

DIMINISHING BEAUTY

In 1976, the Grand Mufti of Darul Uloom Deoband, Shaykh Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi (R) visited us. I informed him that I had just compiled a couplet.

I then went on to explain to him the background of the couplet, as follows;

A young boy or a young woman eventually have to reach old age, during old age they lose all their teeth, and their backs bend over. Their beautiful features wither away.

Just as Shaykh Jalaludeen Rumi (R) has mentioned in one of his books; "O young people! A sixteen year old girl fascinates you with her beauty, spoiling your gaze and spoiling your Imān. We admit that her beautiful hair which falls in locks, emanates a musky fragrance and possesses your mind. But when she turns eighty, she wears extremely thick glasses, and hobbles along supported by a stick. Her back is bent over and she does not have a single tooth left in her mouth. At that time, when you see her, then think over these words of mine; 'That long hair of hers which emanated musky fragrance causing your mind to be possessed, now appear like the tail of an old donkey.'"

By the way, just ponder over Shaykh Rumi's words. He compared the hair of the old lady to that of an old donkey's tail and not a young donkey, or else someone would have regarded the comparison of a young donkey as a positive feature.

Through the comparison of an old donkey, Shaykh Rumi has created a further repugnance and an aversion in the mind and the heart. These people were true psychologists!

I informed Mufti Mahmudul Hasan (R) that all the glamorous things of this world are definitely bound to perish one day. Childhood will be replaced by adolescence. Adolescence will be replaced by old age, and old age will be replaced by death.

The rising and setting of the sun, i.e. the passing of each day steals away our beauty, causing our hair to turn white, and our teeth to fall out. Our cheeks become wrinkled and sunken. Had it not been for this rising and setting of the sun, nothing would have snatched our beauty away.

It is only in Jannah that we will retain our beauty and youth, never to be taken over by old age, because in Jannah there will be no rising and setting of the sun. In Jannah there are no days, dates, weeks, months or years. There will therefore be no change or deterioration in Jannah.

After explaining this background of the couplet, I proceeded to render my poem, which follows;

*"Inform the Bulbul (bird) that this garden will,
One day also become a desert,
So that it may ponder over life,
And then render sacrifice."*

The Bulbul must not out of foolishness waste its life amidst the beautiful flowers of the garden. These flowers will one day definitely wither away. Likewise, only at the time of death will the realisation dawn that this world (this flower) was but a place of temporary pleasures.

The time for the reckoning before Allah has finally arrived.

NO BLESSINGS IN SUSTENANCE

ĀRIFBILLAH SHAYKH HAKEEM MUHAMMAD AKHTAR (M.Z.)

When you earn the anger and displeasure of Allāh Ta'āla, how will you experience blessing in your sustenance? Some people are under the assumption that they will experience blessing merely by reading some wazifah (supplication, verse, etc.). Listen! You will certainly receive Allah's mercy by reading a wazifah, but if we do not give up sins, Allah's anger will also befall us. If mercy and anger face each other, how will we find the path?

An example of this is as follows: by committing sins, the truck of Allah's anger will approach; and by reading a wazifah, the truck of Allah's mercy will approach. Neither of the two will give way to the other. If anger does not move aside, mercy will not come.

We cannot expect mercy solely from reading a wazifah, but we will receive mercy if we give up sins. Give up sins and you can undoubtedly read your wazifah.

Tell me, if excreta falls on your clothes, do you apply perfume to your clothes, or do you wash your clothes and then apply perfume? The remembrance of Allah Ta'āla is a perfume, but you must first remove the foul smell of sins. But this does not mean that you must not perform Salāh, fast, etc. as long as you have not given up sins. Salāh, fasting, etc. are compulsory, obligatory and sunnat mu'akkadah (emphasised Sunnah). Perform your salāh and fast, and also engage in the remembrance of Allah Ta'āla.

However, it is necessary to rectify this belief that merely reading a wazifah will solve everything. No! It is essential to give up disobeying Allah Ta'āla. Even if a person displeases Allah Ta'āla for a single breath, he is making the anger of Allah Ta'āla lawful to himself, unless he repents.

IMĀM SHAFI'Ī AND TASAWWUF

Imām al-Shafi'ī (R) said: "Be both a faqih and a sufi, do not be only one of them, Verily, by Allah's truth, I am advising you sincerely". [al-Shafi'ī, Diwan, p. 47]
The muhaddith al-'Ajluni also relates in his book Kashf al-khafa wa muzil al-albas that Imām Shafi'ī (R) said: "Three things in this world have been made lovely to me: avoiding affectation, treating people kindly, and following the way of tasawwuf".

Ibn al-Qayyim in his Madarij al-sālikin (3:128) and al-Suyuti in his Ta'yid al-haqiqa al-'aliyya (p. 15) also relate that Imām al-Shafi'ī (R) said: "I accompanied the Sufis and received from them but three words: their statement that time is a sword: if you do not cut it, it cuts you; their statement that if you do not keep your ego busy with truth it will keep you busy with falsehood; their statement that deprivation is immunity".



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Editor

Shaykh Mufti Zubair Dudha

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45 Boothroyd Lane,

Dewsbury. WF13 2RB.

Tel/Fax: (01924) 450422

- www.islamictarbiyah.com
- email: info@islamictarbiyah.com