

The Perfect Spiritual Guide

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Translated

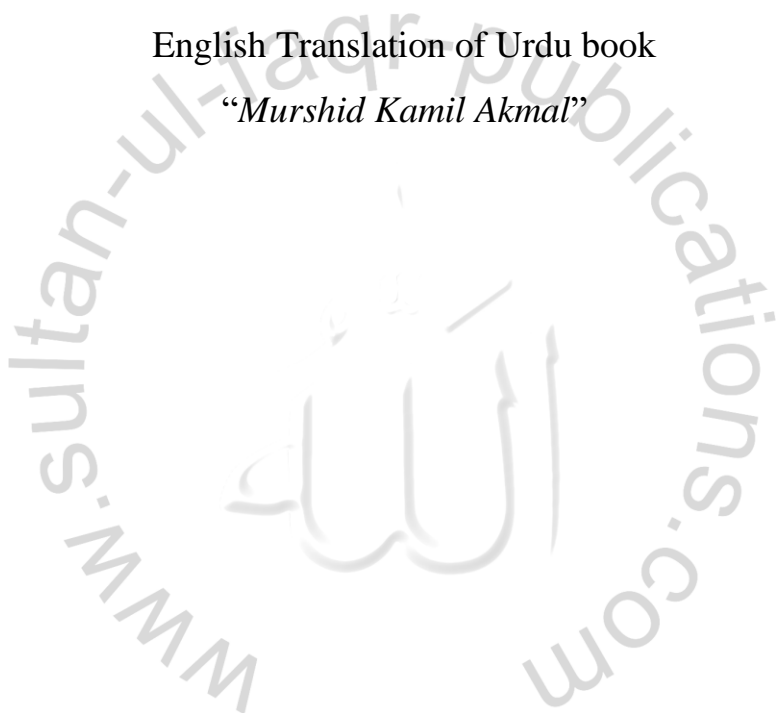
Sahibzadi Muneeza Najib Sarwari Qadri



THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

English Translation of Urdu book

“Murshid Kamil Akmal”



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To the light of my life, my beloved father and
perfect spiritual guide

SULTAN-UL-ASHIQUEEN

SULTAN MOHAMMAD NAJIB-UR-REHMAN

Who has taught me that every breath is a prayer
and to seek the Divine is most often the feat
accomplished by the ordinary and the humble.



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PREFACE

This work is the English translation of the esteemed Urdu book '*Murshid Kamil Akmal*', penned by the noble, humble and sage spiritual guide, Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen Sultan Mohammad Najib-ur-Rehman. With boundless generosity and a heart devoted to unveiling the truth, he has freely distributed this book on numerous occasions—not only as an act of kindness but as a Divine effort to illuminate the path of the umma in the maelstrom wrought by impostors who seek to plunder the faith of Muslims.

From the depths of my heart, I extend my utmost gratitude to Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen Sultan Mohammad Najib-ur-Rehman, whose boundless benevolence bestowed the sacred opportunity to translate this illuminating work of his. His unwavering guidance throughout this endeavour has been a beacon of wisdom and light.

Verily, this second edition would not have seen the light of day without his gracious support. My esteemed spiritual guide is the radiant light that envelops my existence. Through trials and tribulations, he illuminates my path with Divine favour.

None can surpass his magnificence, nor shall there ever be one like him. He is not merely my spiritual guide but the very essence of my being—my guide, my father, my life itself.

This book is for all who embark upon the sacred odyssey in search of a true spiritual guide. A must read for those who set forth upon the arduous yet noble straight path, laden with trials, tribulations and the many hurdles that accompany the pursuit of truth. In the tempest stirred by false guides, let the luminous wisdom of this book serve as a beacon for your soul.

With the advent of AI and technological advances, it would have been unfair to not use it for grammar corrections. It is my ethical obligation to mention here that for this particular book, I have used AI only as a helping tool for improvement and not for the entire translation.

Ambreen Moghees Sarwari Qadri proofread this book thoroughly giving valuable suggestions. She also checked Persian throughout the text. Sultan Mohammad Ahsan Ali Sarwari Qadri formatted this book and checked Arabic of Quranic verses and Hadiths. I thank them both for hard work and dedication.

Sahibzadi Muneza Najib Sarwari Qadri

March 2025

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MEANING OF MEDIATOR AND HIS SIGNIFICANCE IN SHARIA

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ﴾ (5:35)

Meaning: O believers! Fear Allah persistently and keep looking for a mediator towards Him. (5:35)

In this verse, Allah commands to attain piety and to seek a mediator to recognize Him.

Literally piety means to fear Allah, abstain from sins and adopt pious deeds but mystically, it is the state of inward closeness to Allah. The more a person's inward is close to Allah, the more pious he will be. Hence, it is an esoteric state which ultimately leads to Divine vision. This fact is endorsed by the Hadith that once Prophet Mohammad was asked about piety, he pointed towards his chest and said, "Piety is here." (Muslim 6541)

Mediator (*vaseela*) is a means or pathway that leads to a desired destination. Mediator should be so helpful that all the desires are fulfilled and one is content by achieving the goals of his life. The Arabic dictionary, *Lisan al-Arab* (Vol. XI p. 725) defines mediator (*vaseela*) as, "By means of whom closeness to someone is achieved."

According to sharia, mediation means to find closeness to Allah through a person who is Allah's beloved and is already close to Him, who has travelled the mystic path and knows its ups and downs. In Sufism, such a person is known as Murshid, Pir or

Shaikh i.e. the spiritual guide. A true spiritual guide is the one who perfectly knows the path to Allah, who has crossed the waystations of *Faqr* reaching the court of Allah and is now fully proficient to guide people who do not know the Divine path. The perfect spiritual guide saves them from the satanic illusions, distractions of the self and all the other obstacles of the path towards Allah. Now the verse may be translated as, “O believers! Find the (perfect spiritual) guide to reach Allah.”

Some people think that ‘mediator’ refers to faith but the words, ‘O believers’ (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا) are already addressing the faithful so mediator cannot mean faith. According to some people, mediator means pious deeds but the argument against this opinion is that Allah has ordered to ‘find’ mediator, since deeds are intangible, they cannot be found. Hence, it must refer to the perfect spiritual guide because being a physical entity he can be searched and found. Another argument which supports this opinion is that all the good deeds are not perfect and pure enough to bless the seeker with closeness and Divine vision. Only those deeds are acceptable in the court of Allah that are completely free from the impurities of pride, arrogance, jealousy, narcissism, pretence and hypocrisy. To keep religious deeds free from such impure and unacceptable acts is possible only by the guidance and beneficence of the perfect spiritual guide. Thus, it is justified to take mediator as the perfect spiritual guide who is the righteous guide on the path to Allah. Hence, the verse means that every true Muslim should eagerly find the perfect spiritual guide who would sanctify him by his spiritually effective sight and enlightening company so that all his esoteric and exoteric deeds are corrected and purified. Then by making the seeker desirable in the Divine court, he takes him to the destination of Allah’s vision and union.

اللہ اللہ کرنے سے اللہ نہیں ملتا

یہ اللہ والے ہیں جو اللہ سے ملا دیتے ہیں

Explanation: One cannot reach Allah by invoking His name (either verbally or secretly) and through physical prayers, only the perfect spiritual guide can take the seekers close to Him.

The Poet of the East, Allama Mohammad Iqbal says:

اگر کوئی شعیبؑ آئے میر

شہابی سے کلیسیا دو قدم ہے (بالجبریل)

Explanation: Finding the perfect spiritual guide is the only way to achieve the spiritual elevation from the level of a common person to the one who converses with Allah like Prophet Moses. Perfect spiritual guide is to the disciple as Prophet Jethro was to Moses. His beneficence is everything. (Iqbal and Faqr)

- ❖ Shah Abdul Rahim, Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlvi and Shah Abdul Aziz al-Muhaddith Dehlvi who are renowned among Sufis and the people of Hadith¹, also deduced ‘spiritual guide’ from the word mediator (*vaseela*). The chief of opposers of Sufism, Shah Ismail Dehlvi who was the paternal grandson of Shah Waliullah, also deduced ‘spiritual guide’ from the Quranic word ‘*vaseela*’ in his book titled *Mansab-e-Imamat*. He writes in the explanation of said verse:

مراد از وسیلہ شخصے است کہ اقرب الی اللہ باشد در منزلت

Meaning: Mediator means the person who is closest to Allah (in spiritual ranks and levels).

In the following verse, Allah has clearly defined the word mediator leaving no room for doubt:

¹ People of Hadith is a sub-sect of Sunni Muslims not following the four Sunni juridical schools and relying on Quran and Hadith directly.

◀ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ (١٤:٥٠)

Meaning: Those that they worship look for mediation to their Lord (themselves) as to who amongst them is the most intimate (in the court of Allah). (17:57)

Shah Ismail who is intransigent in his views narrates the interpretation of this verse in *Mansab-e-Imamat*:

◀ واقرب الى الله باعتبار منزلت اول رسول الله ﷺ است بعد ازاى امام كم نائب اوست

Meaning: According to the levels of closeness to Allah, the highest is Prophet Mohammad *sall'Allahu alayhi wa'alihi wasallam* and then the Imams (spiritual guides) who are his representatives.

Prophet Mohammad has also ordered to find a spiritual guide in the following Hadiths:

◀ اَلرَّوْبِقُ ثُمَّ الطَّرِيقُ (عين الفقر)

Meaning: First find the companion (perfect spiritual guide) and then set on the (spiritual) journey. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

◀ لَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا شَيْخَ لَهُ (عين الفقر)

Meaning: One who does not have a Shaikh (spiritual guide), has no faith. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

◀ مَنْ لَا شَيْخَ يَتَّخِذُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ (عين الفقر)

Meaning: Verily, one who is not guided by a Shaikh (spiritual guide), Satan surrounds him. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

◀ مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً (مسلم ٤٩٣)

Meaning: One who died in a state that he had not pledged allegiance to the Imam (perfect spiritual guide) of his time, died in complete ignorance. (Muslim 4793)

◀ مَنْ مَاتَ بِغَيْرِ إِمَامٍ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً (مسند احمد ابن حنبل ١٤٠٠٠)

Meaning: One who died without the Imam (perfect spiritual guide), died in complete ignorance. (Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 17000)

◀ الشَّيْخُ فِي قَوْمِهِ كَنَبِيِّ فِي أُمَّتِهِ (عين الفقر)

Meaning: A Shaikh (spiritual guide) is among his people (disciples) as a Prophet is among his nation. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

No one has ever had Divine vision, gnosis or became a Sufi without the guidance of the perfect spiritual guide. Al-Ghazali became renowned after he left teaching the religious lessons and came in the servitude of Shaikh Fadl ibn Mohammad al-Farmadi to experience mystical states. Rumi became legendary after becoming a disciple of Shams of Tabriz. Iqbal detangled himself from the lyrics of birds and flowers and became a famous Sufi poet after he received spiritual beneficence from Rumi. There are countless such examples. Briefly said, no one has ever reached Allah in the history of *Faqr* and Sufism without pledging allegiance to a spiritual guide and without following his guidance.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE (AL-BAYAH) ACCORDING TO QURAN AND SUNNA

Taking an oath (*al-bayah*) to a spiritual guide is a fundamental aspect of religion, supported by the Holy Quran and Hadith collections. In the era of the Holy Prophet, pledging allegiance to him was a prerequisite for Muslims before advancing in other facets of faith including declaration of Oneness, salat, fasting, zakat and other obligations. A person professing Islam was not considered a Muslim, despite declaring faith in the Oneness of God and the Prophethood of Prophet Mohammad, unless he formally pledged allegiance. Hence oath was compulsory. No act of Allah and the Holy Prophet is without wisdom rather every act holds a special guidance for the umma. The oath of allegiance was mandated, supplementing verbal declaration of

faith, to facilitate spiritual guidance from the Holy Prophet, enabling gradual progression and deepening of one's faith. Undoubtedly, the Holy Prophet instituted the oath of allegiance as a complement to verbal affirmation, in accordance with Allah's will. It is explicitly declared in the Holy Quran.

◀ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٥٣-٥٤﴾

Meaning: And he does not speak out of his (own) desire. His speech is nothing but Revelation, which is sent to him. (53:3-4)

None of the Holy Prophet's acts are out of his own desire! All his acts are as per the Divine revelation and oath was also Divinely ordained. Therefore, it must hold importance alongside shahada to accomplish in religion, otherwise the Holy Prophet would not have taken pledge from them with declaration of the faith. Moreover, an oath is a binding Sunna², whose rejection tantamount to rejecting Islam. The oath of allegiance, emphasized in the Quran through clear verses with underlying wisdom, is an obligatory Sunna. Allah says:

◀ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۖ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ عَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٨﴾

Meaning: (O Beloved!) Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you in fact pledge allegiance to Allah alone. Allah's Hand is over their hands. Then whoever breaks his pledge breaks it only to his own harm. But he who fulfils what he has promised to Allah, He will bless him with immense reward. (48:10)

² There are two types of Sunna quoted in the book *Fuyuz al-Bari Fi Sharah Bukhari: Al-Sunna al-Huda* (Binding Sunna) and *Al-Sunna al-Zawaid* (Non-binding). *Al-Sunna al-Huda* are related to guidance and worship. They are mentioned in the Quran e.g. salat, fast, zakat, hajj, speaking the truth etc. Their denier is the denier of the Quran and Sunna. Whereas *Al-Sunna al-Zawaid* are related to daily life of the Holy Prophet e.g. conversing, eating and sitting etc. Adopting them is virtuous but not obligatory.

This verse is a proof of the sacred status held by the Holy Prophet. His action is indeed the action of Allah and oath of allegiance to him is the oath to Allah. The revered status of oath is also evident from this verse. Allah associated the pledge to the Holy Prophet with Himself hence the oath is not only Sunna of the Prophet but the Sunna of Allah. Moreover, Allah has not associated any other form of worship with Himself except sending salutations on the Holy Prophet, “Surely, Allah and (all) His angels send blessings and greetings on the Holy Prophet. O believers! Invoke blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation of peace abundantly.”³ Therefore, sending salutations to the Prophet is the Sunna of Allah and not the Holy Prophet because he never invoked salutations for himself. Other forms of worship are a Sunna of the Holy Prophet and not of Allah. Hence, oath of allegiance is the only part of faith that is Sunna of both Allah and the Holy Prophet.

Previously cited verse 10 of sura *al-Fath* emphasizes that the pledge to Allah is a holy oath, representing a bond with Him. Therefore, He commands strict adherence to it, for man will be held accountable and questioned if failed, and rewarded on fulfilling it. Allah says:

◀ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا (١٦:٩١)

Meaning: And always fulfil the promise of Allah when you promise, and do not break oaths after making them firm, whilst you have already made Allah a surety over you. (16:91)

At another point in the Quran, He says:

◀ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا (١٤:٣٣)

³ Sura *al-Ahzab*; verse 56

Meaning: And always fulfil the promise. No doubt, the promise will be questioned about. (17:34)

Allah also said that oath is a source of gaining His pleasure and it brings peace to believers creating a bond with Him. He says:

◀ لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ (٢٨:١٨)

Meaning: Surely, Allah was well pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you (O Prophet) beneath the tree. And He knew what was in their inwards, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them. (48:18)

Several Hadiths that are agreed upon and related in almost all the credible Hadith books, give evidence of oath being a sacred Sunna. In the initial years of Islam, a few people from Madina came to Makkah and pledged to the Holy Prophet. It is remembered as the first oath of *Aqabah* and the following year there was the second oath of *Aqabah*. It is narrated by Ka'b ibn Malik:

- ❖ We spent the early hours of the night sleeping. We got up while others were in deep slumber and gathered at *al-Aqabah*. There was no one with the Holy Prophet. He preached, recited verses from the Quran and invited to the religion Islam. We accepted his invitation and pledged our allegiance, requesting him to extend his hand. The Prophet instructed us to appoint twelve representatives from our group. We selected one from each group, totalling twelve. The Prophet then administered the oath to them.

Hence, oath of allegiance to the Universal Divine Man who is the perfect spiritual guide is a religious act substantiated by both the Quran and Sunna. If oath of allegiance with Prophet Mohammad was necessary, then oath with his spiritual successors also holds the same importance. Rather it became vital after his

passing because in his absence the mediation and source towards Allah is needed even more.

Moreover, in sura *al-Fath* (verse 10), Allah has told the Companions that when they pledged allegiance to the Holy Prophet, their covenant was not only with him rather through his mediation they had in fact pledged allegiance to Allah. After the Prophet, people who pledged allegiance to any of the Rashidun Caliphs who were also the spiritual successors of the Holy Prophet and the spiritual guides of his nation, they pledged allegiance to the Prophet through their mediation and reached Allah in two steps of mediators. Hence, as the chain of spiritual guides continued, the number of mediators increased. In this age when fourteen centuries have passed since the initiation of oath of allegiance, if a Muslim pledges allegiance to a perfect spiritual guide, he reaches the Holy Prophet and Allah through many steps.

The pure and perfectly accomplished people who are spiritually bound by the oath of allegiance, their lineage in Sufism goes back to the Prophet. Such virtuous people are linked spiritually and there is no discontinuity in their link to Prophet Mohammad. These fortunate ones spiritually connect their disciples to the Prophet through pledge of allegiance. In terms of *Faqr*, it is considered that their disciples have in fact pledged allegiance to Prophet Mohammad and have reached Allah through his mediation. The Holy Prophet advised to take oath to his spiritual successors and representatives and stay loyal to them.

◀ قَالَ : كَأَن تَبْنُو إِسْمَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ تَسْوِسُهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ كُلَّمَا هَلَكَ نَبِيٌّ خَلَفَهُ نَبِيٌّ، وَإِنَّهُ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي وَسَيَكُونُ خُلَفَاءُ فَيَكْثُرُونَ ، قَالُوا: فَمَا تَأْمُرُنَا ، قَالَ : فُوا بِبَيْعَةِ الْأَوَّلِ
فَالأَوَّلِ أَعْطَوْهُمْ حَقَّهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَائِلُهُمْ عَمَّا اسْتَرْعَاهُمْ (بخاری ۳۲۵۵)

Meaning: The Holy Prophet said, “The Prophets of Children of Israel guided them in political affairs. When a Prophet died, another would take his place. Remember! There will be no Prophet after me rather (my) representatives and they will be many.” The Companions sought the advice of the Prophet, “What is your order regarding them?” The Holy Prophet advised, “Obey the one whom you pledge and stay loyal to him. Fulfil their rights as Allah will ask them about their people on the Judgment Day.” (Bukhari 3455)

CATEGORIES OF OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

There are many categories of oath of allegiance:

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO EMBRACE ISLAM:

The Muslims recited shahada as well as pledged allegiance to the Holy Prophet to enter Islam. The sacred text is:

◀ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Meaning: There is no God but Allah, Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah.

This pledge of allegiance is called the pledge to embrace Islam.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE FOR REPENTANCE AND PIETY:

The pledge to repent from past sins, to adhere strictly to sharia and to cultivate piety for the sake of drawing closer to Allah is the pledge of repentance and piety. After this starts the journey of spiritual progress. At the time of Prophet Mohammad, the pledge to enter Islam (as quoted above) and this pledge were one, however, there are traditions that indicate many believing men and women took a separate pledge of repentance and piety on the Prophet's hand. Today, when a Muslim takes a pledge on

the hand of a spiritual guide to draw closer to Allah and attain spiritual progress, it is essentially this same pledge of repentance and piety.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO A CALIPH:

This pledge signifies acceptance of the caliph's leadership. Until the caliphate of Imam Hasan ibn Ali, the pledge of piety and the pledge of allegiance to the caliph were combined into a single oath. Subsequently, the two pledges were separated, a practice that continues to this day.

4. PLEDGE TO LISTEN AND FOLLOW

As the name suggests, this pledge means to listen and follow the Imam, caliph or a spiritual guide. Its evidence is also found in the Hadiths.

5. PLEDGE TO JIHAD

This pledge was with the commander to sacrifice one's life. It was taken before going to war with the forces that were a danger for Islam. It also continued in the army for a long time.

6. PLEDGE OF SUFISM

This is a form of pledge of allegiance for repentance and piety. It is named so because Sufis have kept it alive. It also means to submit to a spiritual guide for purification of self and inward. After taking this pledge, a person's spiritual journey begins, marked by repentance for past sins and a dedicated pursuit of piety to draw closer to Allah.

In the era of the Rashidun Caliphate, oath of allegiance to enter Islam became obsolete since many new lands were being conquered that resulted in innumerable people accepting Islam. It became impossible to distinguish between those accepting with the pure intentions for Allah and others hypocritically

because of Islam's power and honour. The pledge to a caliph stayed popular until he was accepted unanimously by the umma. People from far off areas who were the representatives of their people would come to the court to pledge on behalf of everyone. The Rashidun Caliphs were the Imams, spiritual guides, Caliphs and Mystics of their times therefore the pledge of allegiance to them was also the pledge of piety. That is to say, the caliph of the Muslims was their ruler, leader as well as the spiritual benefactor who would make his followers travel spiritual stages just like Prophet Mohammad was to the believers. The Holy Prophet established for them a welfare state as well as led them towards spiritual progress. The Rashidun Caliphs were the heirs of perfect authority and spiritual powers of the Holy Prophet therefore they fulfilled the responsibilities of the physical as well as the spiritual successors and representatives of the Holy Prophet simultaneously. Hence, the pledge for the worldly people was to a caliph only whereas for the pious and believers, the pledge was not only to a caliph but also of repentance and piety. People got beneficence according to their intentions. In all the books of Hadiths, it is narrated that after the death of the Holy Prophet, the Muslims pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Siddiq who was titled as the Caliph of the Prophet (*Khalifa tur-Rasool*) and his representative. Abu Bakr said at the time of taking oath, "Follow me as long as I follow Allah and the Holy Prophet." Therefore, this pledge of allegiance to a caliph was also considered pledge of allegiance to the Holy Prophet and the pledge for repentance and piety.

Anas ibn Malik narrates, "When Abu Bakr passed away and Umar ibn Khattab was appointed as the Caliph, I said, 'Bring forth your hand, so that I can pledge to listen to and obey, as you yourself did to Caliph of the Prophet, Abu Bakr'."

Salim ibn Abi Amir narrates that a delegation from Hamra came to the court of Usman ibn Affan and pledged that they will only

worship Allah, offer salat, pay zakat, observe fast and will not celebrate Zoroastrian events.”

The Sufi orders originating from the Rashidun Caliphs is a proof that they were bestowing spiritual beneficence to the umma apart from fulfilling the responsibilities and obligations of caliphate. In the spiritual orders that are continued till date, especially in the *Sarwari Qadri* order, the spiritual training does not complete unless beneficence from all the Rashidun Caliphs is received. Truthfulness is achieved by the disciple from the spiritual sight of Abu Bakr Siddiq, justice and self-accountability from Umar ibn Khattab, modesty from Usman ibn Affan and *Faqr* from Ali ibn Abi Talib, Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ When a seeker enters the Mohammadan Assembly, first his being is blessed with four kinds of efficacy through the spiritual attention of four sacred personalities. By the efficacy of spiritual attention of Abu Bakr Siddiq, the seeker is blessed with the attribute of veracity, as a result, hypocrisy and lie are removed from his being. By the spiritual attention of Umar ibn Khattab, the seeker adopts the attributes of justice and self-accountability, hence the sensual desires and satanic apprehensions are eliminated from his inward. By the efficacy of spiritual sight of Usman ibn Affan, he becomes modest and obedient and gets rid of immodesty and disobedience. By the spiritual attention of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the seeker is blessed with the Divine knowledge, righteousness and *Faqr*, as a result he is relieved from ignorance and love of the world. Thereupon, the seeker becomes eligible for spiritual persuasion. The Holy Prophet takes oath of allegiance from him personally and grants him the eternal and non-declining rank of the perfect spiritual guide which is the level where there is no fear or grief. (**Kaleed-ul-Tauheed Kalan**)

Hence, the spiritual beneficence of the Rashidun Caliphs that started in the era of their caliphate is present till now.

Today's Muslim who is born in the family of Muslims does not need to pledge to enter Islam but he does need to pledge allegiance to a spiritual guide for repentance and piety, of which there are proofs in the Sunna. The pledge mentioned in sura *at-Tawbah* verse number eighteen that has been referred before was not the pledge to enter Islam rather pledge of Muslims for a specific purpose.⁴ A few Hadiths regarding pledge of repentance and piety are as follows:

➤ Ubadah ibn al-Samit relates:

◀ قَالَ وَحَوْلَهُ عَصَابَةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ : تَعَالَوْا بَايِعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا تَسْرِقُوا ، وَلَا تَزْنُوا ، وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ ، وَلَا تَأْتُوا بِبُهْتَانٍ تَفْتَرُونَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ ، وَلَا تَعْصُونَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ ، فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَالِكَ شَيْئًا فَعُوقِبَ بِهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَهُوَ لَهُ كَفَّارَةٌ ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَالِكَ شَيْئًا فَسَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ ، فَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ عَاقِبَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا عَنْهُ ، قَالَ : فَبَايَعْتُهُ عَلَى ذَالِكَ (بخارى ٣٨٩٢، نسائي ٣١٦٦)

Meaning: The Holy Prophet said to the Companions who were with him, “Pledge to me that you will not make partners with God, will not steal, will not commit adultery, will not murder your children, will not slander and will not disobey in performing good deeds. Those who will stay true to this pledge, their reward is due on the favour of Allah and those who disobey (and do a haram act) then if Allah keeps it a secret then it is to Him alone, and if He wills, He will punish or forgive.” The

⁴ This allegiance was before the Treaty of al-Hudaybiya and was taken by the Holy Prophet from the Companions to avenge the rumoured martyrdom of Usman ibn Affan who had gone to Makkah as an envoy.

narrator of the Hadith said that he pledged to the Holy Prophet to obey him in all these matters. (Bukhari 3892; Nisai 4166)

➤ It is also related from Ubadah ibn al-Samit:

◀ **بَايَعْنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ فِي الْخَيْرِ وَالْإِسْرِ، وَالْمَنْشَطِ وَالْمَكْرَهِ، وَأَنْ لَا نُنَازِعَ الْأَمْرَ أَهْلَهُ، وَعَلَى أَنْ نَقُولَ بِالْحَقِّ حَيْثُ كُنَّا (ابن ماجه ٢٨٦٦، بخارى ٤١٩٩، نسائي ٣١٥٤)**

Meaning: We pledged to obey and listen to the Holy Prophet in good and bad times. We pledged (that we will obey and listen) in happiness, sorrow and when others are given preference over us. We pledged that we will not fight over those in charge to rule and will speak the truth wherever we are. While obeying Allah or doing anything for His sake, we will not fear from reproach of anyone. (Ibn Majah 2866; Bukhari 7199; Nisai 4157)

➤ Jarir ibn Abdullah narrates:

◀ **بَايَعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَى إِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَالنُّصْحِ لِكُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ (بخارى ٥٤، ترمذى ١٩٢٥)**

Meaning: I pledged to the Holy Prophet to offer salat, pay zakat and be good to Muslims. (Bukhari 57; Tirmidhi 1925)

These Hadiths confirm that Muslims pledged allegiance for repentance and piety after embracing Islam. This tradition forms the foundation for the practice of pledging allegiance to spiritual guides, who aim to inspire Muslims to genuinely repent for their sins, invoke Allah's name, worship wholeheartedly, detach from worldly desires, and patiently persevere on the spiritual path towards Allah, crossing its various stages.

The practice of pledging allegiance for repentance and piety has persisted among believers since the time of Prophet Mohammad, albeit in forms adapted to the needs of each era. Its original form

involved pledging allegiance to the spiritual guide or the caliph, a practice rooted in the Sunna of the Prophet. This tradition continued during the Rashidun Caliphate and was adopted by Ali ibn Abi Talib and subsequently by Imam Hasan during his brief caliphate. Both pledges of allegiance to the caliph and of repentance and piety were combined in this initial form. However, given the turmoil and discord caused by Yazid regarding the pledge taken by Imam Husayn, eminent spiritual guides decided to separate the pledge of repentance and piety from the pledge of allegiance to a caliph. It was the era when caliphate was assumed by such rulers who were not at all capable to provide spiritual beneficence to the umma, instead were harmful for the faith. Hence, it was not legit to take pledge of allegiance for repentance and piety to them. Therefore Imam Husayn refused to pledge to Yazid. After the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, both the pledges to a caliph and for repentance and piety were separated. Pledge to a caliph went to the worldly rulers and pledge for repentance and piety to the perfect and accomplished spiritual guides. Hasan of Basra even altered the form of pledge so that the superficial rulers do not feel threatened. Instead of taking pledge on the hand, he started to bestow any symbol which meant that the person has become a disciple and will be bestowed beneficence. This form was prudently adopted but it was the same as the pledge of repentance and piety, that is, to repent on the sins and to strive towards Allah.

Shah Mohammad Zauqi says:

- ❖ After that blessed era, this oath (of repentance and piety) could not be continued in its original form because of the fear of getting confused with the oath to caliphate, which could give rise to fitna and discord causing people's suffering. Hence, Hasan of Basra, his successors and Sufis started bestowing (different) symbols to denote oath. After some time, when

the oath to caliphate discontinued among emperors and kings, the Sufis enlivened this Sunna in the form of oath to piety. Since the Sufis revived the oath to piety that included cutting off from everything other than Allah and other requisites, it became known as ‘pledge of Sufism’. **(Sirr-e-Dilbaran)**

Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi says:

- ❖ Bestowing a cloak (in Sufism) is a (symbol of) connection that symbolizes oath. It is a gateway to the company of the spiritual guide and its ultimate purpose is the same as always i.e. gaining everlasting beneficence from the spiritual guide. **(Awarif-ul-Ma'arif)**

Hence, oath of piety is the Sunna which is practised in various forms throughout the ages. The ones who kept the practice alive were the caliphs and successors of the Holy Prophet. The honour to bring back the oath of repentance and piety in its original form is of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani who also revived the religion. Though, he was bestowed a cloak from his spiritual guide Shaikh Mubarak Makhzoomi and while doing so he said, “O Abdul Qadir Jilani! This symbol was given to Ali ibn Abi Talib by Prophet Mohammad who gave it to Hasan of Basra and ultimately it reached me after passing from one spiritual leader to the other.” **(Bahjat-ul-Asrar)**

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani is the sun of the sky of spirituality. His powers and strength are as strong as the mountains and can be imagined from the fact that the Abbasid rulers during his era did not dare object to his reviving the original form of oath of allegiance. This form of oath is continued till date.

Shaikh Nadwi writes in his book *Rijal al-Fikr Wa'l-Dawa Fi'l Islam*:

- ❖ Muslims from all over the world truly entered Islam when Shaikh Abdul Qadir opened the doors of repentance and oath

of allegiance. They renewed the Divine covenant and promised not to engage in polytheism, tyranny, sins, immorality and heresy as well as not consider haram as halal. They pledged that they would not renounce religious obligations, would not indulge their inward in worldliness and would not forget hereafter. Many entered the door (of piety) opened by Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. Their behaviours and states improved making them better Muslims. He guided, trained and purified their selves. His students became better citizens after pledging for renewal of faith and repentance. This proves the fact that this pledge by Sufis has a deep impact on collective and individual purgation and reformation.

All the given references make it clear that the pledge of repentance and piety is proven from the Quran and Hadith as well as it is a Sunna and the way of the Companions of the Prophet and Saints. It is continued just like other obligations of Islam i.e. declaration of Oneness, salat, zakat, fast, hajj and jihad. Narrow-minded individuals and those with shallow understanding oppose oath of allegiance and call it polytheism. They do not understand that calling something polytheism when it is proven by the Quran, Hadith and true scholars is in itself polytheism. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

◀ اَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ (٢:٨٥)

Meaning: Do you believe in some parts of the Book and deny others! (2: 85)

Scholars agree that denier of a part of the Quran is in fact denying it completely. Such people follow parts of the Holy Quran which they prefer and ignore those that they disagree due to arrogance. They themselves refuse to follow and prevent others too. It is stated in *Fuyooz al-Bari Fi Sharah Bukhari*, “When someone prevents others from following something or call it haram then remember that providing its evidence is on him and until he proves through logical arguments in accordance

with sharia, objection of that reprobate returns to him.” The deniers of oath of allegiance have no evidence against it hence they are among the reprobates. They try to misguide public by a hollow claim that there is no need of oath to a spiritual guide in the presence of Quran and Sunna. The truth is that with a book, a teacher is required as a doctor is necessary with prescription. I ask those who claim that spiritual guide is not required in the presence of Quran and Sunna, why the Holy Prophet was sent with the Quran and Sunna? If Allah had opted to descend the Quran through an angel would then Islam had reached its heights as it did? Would the illiterate and ignorant Arabs had converted? No! It was the Holy Prophet who guided and reformed them. They could truly follow Quran and deduce guidance from it only after the Holy Prophet purified their selves through his enlightening company. Today, Quran is read in all the Muslim homes and at many homes, it is read with translation and exegesis; in every nook and corner institutes to impart Quranic knowledge have opened; then are we a rightly guided society? Quran guides onto the straight path which is only one, then why are there so many sects based on it and the new generation has lost faith in religion? The reality is that just as the Companions needed guidance from the Holy Prophet, nowadays we too need guidance from his representative who would purify and take us to the soul of the Quran. It is astonishing to find that Muslim scholars who only have apparent knowledge of the religion feel their need among people but do not feel the need of such a perfect spiritual guide who has reached closest to Allah and has the honour of achieving His gnosis after manifold devotional prayers and mystic endeavours than scholars. Those who deny oath of allegiance to a spiritual guide, taking the Quran and Sunna as their guide, in fact negate both the Quran and Sunna because oath of allegiance is proven by both the sacred sources. In other words, they deny their own source and words.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE OF WOMEN

Deniers of oath to a spiritual guide raise more objections regarding women than men, even though both the Quran and the Hadith separately mention women's oath. Perhaps Allah separately mentioned women's oath in the Quran to pre-empt such objections. Allah says:

◀ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٠:١٢﴾

Meaning: O Prophet! When the believing women come to you to take the oath of allegiance to you that they will ascribe nothing as partner to Allah and will neither steal nor commit adultery nor kill their children nor produce any lie which they have devised between their hands and feet, nor disobey you in (any) matter pertaining to law, then accept their allegiance and seek forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful. (60:12)

This verse serves as irrefutable evidence of women's oath. Only the jealous, the arrogant and the deniers of the Quran would question it. This verse clearly indicates that this oath is not for those entering Islam but rather for those who, having already accepted Islam, are seeking repentance and piety. The initial reference to the 'believing women' confirms their Islamic faith and their subsequent pursuit for spiritual purity. Additionally, the oaths of believing women are amply referenced in the Hadith collections.

- ❖ Aisha bint Abi Bakr narrated, "When Muslim women came before the Holy Prophet, they were judged as per the verse,

‘O Prophet! When the believing women come to you to take the oath of allegiance to you that they will ascribe nothing as partner to Allah and will neither steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor produce any lie which they have devised between their hands and feet, nor disobey you in (any) matter pertaining to law, then accept their allegiance and seek forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful.’ When believing women would affirm complying with it, the Holy Prophet would say that he had taken their pledge.” (Muslim 4834)

- ❖ Umaimah bint Ruqaiqah narrates, “I went to the Holy Prophet with a few women among the *Ansar*. Pledging to him, we said, ‘We will not ascribe partners to Allah, steal, commit adultery, will not kill our children, will not produce any lie and will not disobey in goodness.’ We further said, ‘O Prophet, you are benevolent upon us than ourselves, give permission to pledge on your hands.’ The Holy Prophet said, ‘I do not (pledge women) by touching them. My conversing with a hundred women (for pledge) is like conversing with them individually.” (Nasai 4186, Tirmidhi 1597, Ibn Majah 2874)
- ❖ Izzah bint Khabl narrated that she was honoured to pledge to the Holy Prophet. He pledged her on the terms that she would not commit adultery and would not steal. She would also not bury girls when they are born, whether openly or secretly. She understood what burying openly meant but not secretly hence she said to the Prophet, “O Messenger of Allah, a thought occurred to me that secretly means to abort the child in pregnancy.” She swore to God that she would never do that. (Tabarani 21591)
- ❖ Ubadah ibn al-Samit narrated that the Holy Prophet said, “Why do you not pledge to me on the terms the women have pledged, ‘You will not ascribe partners with Allah, neither steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill your children, nor slander

or disobey in good deeds.' We said, 'Why not, O Prophet of Allah.' Then we pledged to him. The Prophet said, 'If any of you does the (forbidden) acts and gets punishment then it will erase his sin. One who does not get punishment in the world then his matter is with Allah, whether He punishes him (in the hereafter) or pardons him'." (Nasai 4167)

Those who object the pledge of women, despite its authorization in the Quran and the Hadith, reveal a narrow-minded and prejudiced perspective. They view women as inferior beings born to serve men and deny them the right to excel in both the worldly and religious pursuits. Their fear stems from the prospect of women acquiring worldly and religious knowledge and asserting their rightful place, granted to them by Islam. Then those men who pride themselves on their intellect and wisdom, what will become of them? Allah has not differentiated between genders in the bestowal of intelligence, He distributes it as He wills. These misguided individuals fail to understand that when women become aware of their rights, they will also become aware of men's rights and their responsibilities towards them. This will lead them to fulfil their marital responsibilities more effectively, considering it as the will of Allah.

Secondly, the lustful gaze of such men speaks of their own hypocrisy. They mistakenly believe that Allah's Saints who are authorized by the Holy Prophet to take pledge of Sufism, are ordinary men like them (God forbid) and that women should not seek spiritual guidance from them, despite the Prophet's authorization for women to take pledge to them. Their own moral corruption has clouded their judgment, making them perceive the purity and light of the Saint's countenance as mere filth, reflecting their own tainted nature. As a matter of fact, the Saint appointed by the Holy Prophet for the Divine guidance and persuasion is not an ordinary man like them rather his grand status is unconceivable. Therefore, it is unjust to prevent women

from seeking spiritual guidance and knowledge by pledging allegiance to a Saint. While it is necessary to verify the authenticity of a Saint in this age of deception, it is equally unjust to deny the opportunity to pledge allegiance to true Saints due to the presence of frauds. It is also true that women who set out with honesty for the gnosis of Allah, their Protector is Allah Himself and He never lets them get caught in deceptions.

Another falsity associated with women's pledge is that they require permission from their father or husband before doing so. If these individuals truly follow the path of Allah and the Holy Prophet, and possess wisdom and guidance, they will not hinder their daughters or wives from pledging allegiance to a Saint. Conversely, if a man is misguided and ignorant; should women be deprived of true guidance because of him? Not at all. A woman will not be saved from questioning in the grave because of her father or any other relative. Additionally, they cannot use the excuse of parental or spousal prohibition, as women often engage in various activities without seeking permission from either. According to a Hadith:

◀ طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَمُسْلِمَةٍ (مشکوٰۃ- ۲۱۲)

Meaning: It is compulsory for every man and woman to acquire knowledge. (Mishkat 212)

Women are specifically and separately mentioned in this Hadith as they have their own individual responsibility. They do not require permission from a man, nor can a man prevent them from seeking knowledge, including gnosis. Like a man has no right to stop a woman from fasting, salat etc. similarly they cannot stop her from a pure act of allegiance to a spiritual guide that is proven in the light of the Quran and the Hadith. The one condition to oblige is that the pledge is to a perfect and accomplished spiritual guide and not a fake pseudo guide.

A woman possesses the same right as a man to love Allah and the Holy Prophet, to embrace Islam, and to acquire religious knowledge. Allah created all souls equal and His relationship with them is based on this equality. While souls manifest in this world as men and women to fulfil specific roles within the system of the world, a soul is neither male nor female. The relationship between each soul and its Creator is one of love, regardless of whether it manifests in a male or a female body. Similarly, the right to Divine vision and ascension to Allah is of both the genders. Therefore, to stop women from this righteous spiritual beneficence is injustice and cruelty.

It is paradoxical that many families permit women to frequently visit restaurants, bazaars, cinemas and other public places, even socializing with male friends, colleagues and strangers in various professional and social contexts. Yet, when a woman seeks guidance from a spiritual guide, objections arise, as if she were engaging in a sinful act. In fact, those who stop from the true path are Satan themselves. Women who genuinely seek Allah should not allow these obstacles to deter them from their spiritual journey and should steadfastly pursue the path of Truth. Indeed, Allah will soon remove these obstacles when they are persevering and with patience continue the spiritual journey.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Allah says in Quran:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ (٩:١١٩)﴾

Meaning: O believers! Fear Allah persistently and be with the truthful (men). (9:119)

Who are these truthful men whose company we are commanded to keep? We all are Muslims and the majority of us

offer salat. During prayer, we recite sura *al-Fatihah* and supplicate Allah:

◀ إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ
لَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝ (1:6-7)

Meaning: Show us the straight path. The path of those whom You have favoured, not the path of those who earn Your wrath, nor of those who go astray. (1:6-7)

Now, the question of the ‘straight path’ arises. This is true that the straight path is the Quran and Sunna but all the religions of the world, every community and then every sect within Islam claims that they are on the straight path. Among Muslims, some cite Quranic verses to support their claim of greater knowledge and assert that as they frequently recite the Quran therefore they are on the straight path. Contrarily, the Quran states:

◀ يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا ۖ وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا (2:26)

Meaning: He misleads many by it, and He guides many by it. (2:26)

People recite Quran but they do not get guidance, gnosis, closeness and union with Allah. Furthermore, for some, direction of thoughts is converted and they go astray like Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (the accursed).⁵

Some Muslims are expert in the knowledge of Hadith and claim that since they are the people of Hadith that is why they are on the straight path. All sects have determined the straight path on their own terms and are following the path that they think right. If Allah willed, He could have explicitly guided us to the straight path by announcing in sura *al-Fatihah*, “O Almighty! Show us

⁵ He declared himself a Prophet even though Prophet Mohammad is the last Prophet. The Parliament of Pakistan declared the group who follows him as non-Muslims and all over the world Muslims consider them as non-Muslims.

the straight path which is the way of Your Book and the Sunna of Your beloved.” Instead, Quran has ordered to follow the path of those upon whom Allah has bestowed His favour. The question arises, “Who are the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed His favour and whose path we are ordered to follow?” Allah says in the Quran:

◀ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ (٣:٦٩)

Meaning: And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger are the people who will be in the company of those whom Allah has blessed with His favour: the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the most pious. (4:69)

The first group consists of Prophets, the favoured ones upon whom Allah has bestowed his grace. There are three other groups who are not Prophets. The second one is of truthful men. In verse one hundred and nineteen of sura *at-Tawbah*, Quran says to adopt the company of truthful men while traversing the straight path but who are these individuals?

Mohammad Karam Shah al-Azhari writes in *Tafsir Zia-ul-Quran*:

- ❖ The literal meaning of truthful is of a person who is extremely true to his words and true in his conversation. It is an attribute and the person who has it, holds one of the many high stations of proximity to Allah.

Shaikh Mohammad Abduhu says:

- ❖ Truthful are the people whose nature and inward are pure of all the intricacies of ignorance (of self and Satan) such that when the reality of Islam is presented before them, they would accept it immediately. They are not confounded between good and evil. They can easily differentiate between right and wrong. This rank was enjoyed by many Companions of the

Prophet and Abu Bakr is 'the most truthful' whose life is the perfect example of outright truthfulness. (Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan)

Truthful are those who endorse the truth. Whose inwards have become pure to such an extent that revelations received by Prophet Mohammad and the orders of Allah are obeyed by them immediately.

After the Prophets, the truthful men are ranked the highest because now none can be blessed with the physical company of Prophet Mohammad. Therefore, even the greatest Saints such as the *Quth* or *Ghawth*, cannot attain the spiritual heights reached by the Companions of Prophet Mohammad. The unique privilege of being in the physical presence of the Prophet ended with his departure. However, through the truthful men, we can still be spiritually connected to the Prophet. By associating with them, we can receive blessings and guidance, as if receiving from the Prophet through their mediation. Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani says:

- ❖ Physically, there is no Prophet present among you to follow but you have indeed followed Prophet Mohammad if you follow his steadfast and true followers (the truthful; spiritual guide). Looking at their countenance is like looking at the Prophet. (Al-Fath ar-Rabbani: Ch. 14)

The perfect spiritual guide who is the embodiment of truth, becomes the perfect reflection of spiritual aspects of Prophethood. He receives beneficence of Allah through the mediation of Prophet Mohammad and performs the duty of distributing it among the seekers of Allah. Truth is the highest station of piety. When a person accomplishes it, he is conferred with sainthood and appointed at the rank of the truthful. It becomes obligatory upon him to spiritually persuade and guide people on the straight path. The Quran has ordered to keep their company:

◀ فَسَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (٢:٤)

Meaning: So (O people) if you do not know (yourselves), ask the people of invocation. (21:7)

If one ponders over this verse, he will quickly understand a sublime point that Allah has not ordered, “Ask the people of knowledge” (فَسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الْعِلْمِ) rather He ordained, “Ask the people of

invocation” (فَسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ). People of knowledge are scholars

whereas the people of invocation are Sufis and Fakirs, that is, the perfect spiritual guides. Those who have knowledge can go astray because intellect is from brain which can mislead while the real invocation of Allah arouses from the inward which never deceives. Knowledge is recorded in brain whereas invocation affects and gets imprinted inwardly.

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani states the difference between the scholars who have outward knowledge and the people of invocation who are the Saints with Divine knowledge and appointed to guide mankind as spiritual guides:

- ❖ The perfect Saint has the sainthood of Prophet Mohammad which is the spiritual part of his Prophethood. The Prophet himself entrusts this sainthood to the Saint. The religious scholars who only have the superficial knowledge of religion should not be taken as the ‘perfect Saints’ because if we do consider them as the ‘heirs of the Prophet⁶’ then they would just have uterine relation with him. True heirs are those who are the children of a father because they are more related to the father than all the other uterine relatives. That is why Prophet Mohammad said, “One portion of knowledge is kept secret which is known only to the Divine scholars (perfect spiritual guides).” (Sirr al-Asrar, Section 5)

⁶ It is a reference to the Hadith:

إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ◀

Meaning: Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets. (Tirmidhi 2682, Abu Dawud 3641)

The Quran has forbidden to follow those who do not invoke.

◀ وَلَا تُطِيعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ دُكْرَانَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطَا (١٨:٢٨)

Meaning: And (also) do not follow him whose inward We have made neglectful of Our invocation and who follows but his desires (inciting self) and his case has exceeded all bounds. (18:28)

The Quran says about Saints who are the people of invocation and the truthful men (perfect spiritual guides):

◀ وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ (٣١:١٥)

Meaning: But follow someone who adopts the path turning to Me. (31:15)

◀ الرَّحْمَنُ فَسْأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا (٢٥:٥٩)

Meaning: (Allah) is most kind. (O aspirant of His gnosis!) Ask of Him (from) someone who has attained to His awareness. (25:59)

◀ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ (٤:٥٩)

Meaning: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those who are *Ulil Amr* (اولي الامر) amongst you. (4:59)

These verses are pointing towards the truthful, the perfect spiritual guides, telling us to follow them. Some people derive the meaning ‘worldly leaders’ from the term *Ulil Amr* in verse fifty-nine of sura *an-Nisa* but Saints take it as the truthful who is representative of Prophet Mohammad and the perfect spiritual guide of his time. Following this guide is, in essence, following Allah and the Holy Prophet. Therefore, the verses guide towards following the spiritual guide who is on the footsteps of the Holy Prophet.

The truthful men, Fakirs and Saints are chosen as representatives by Allah in the world and are spiritual successors of Prophet

Mohammad. To have proximity of Allah, it is indispensable to come in their servitude, pledge allegiance to them and have beneficence of their company. Rumi says:

اندین عالم نیرزی باخے
تا نی آویزی بہ دامنِ کسے

Explanation: You do not have any worth in this world unless you get associated with the perfect spiritual guide.

Union with Allah is impossible without the perfect spiritual guide. Therefore, many great scholars searched and sought the guidance of the spiritual guides for gnosis and union despite being adept in knowledge.

- ❖ Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was once known for his disapproval for mysticism and Sufis but afterwards when true faith adorned his inward and soul through the blessed company of Bishr al-Hafi, he would answer queries about sharia himself but would refer the seekers of Truth and Reality to Bishr al-Hafi. Seeing this, students of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal felt embarrassed and asked him why he would refer people to a Sufi when he himself was a great scholar! He replied that he only had the knowledge of Allah's ordains but Bishr al-Hafi knew Allah Himself therefore he directed seekers of Allah to him.

According to another tradition Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal would often run after Bishr al-Hafi. Once someone asked why he ran after a Fakir despite being such a great scholar himself? He answered, "Bishr al-Hafi knows God whom Ahmad ibn Hanbal worships."

- ❖ Bahloul (Wahab ibn Amr) was apparently a *majdhub*⁷ but is counted among the Shaikhs of Imam Abu Hanifa. One is

⁷ Here it means lost in Divine meditation.

surprised what the great Imam would have been learning from him! The Imam himself was well-versed in all the branches of knowledge such as Fiqh, Hadith, syntax, grammar, eloquence etc. Certainly, he visited Bahlool for purity of the self and for the ardent love of Allah. If a person reads the biography of Imam Abu Hanifa, he will find the name of Bahlool at the top of the list of his spiritual guides. It is the saying of Imam Abu Hanifa, "If I had not remained in the blessed company of Bahlool for two years as I did, my soul would have been wasted."

The importance of a spiritual guide is evident from these examples. Hence to achieve Allah's closeness, the company and guidance of men who are already close to Him is prerequisite. Worship and knowledge are not everything.

METHOD OF GUIDANCE OF THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

The method of guidance of the perfect spiritual guide for the seekers of Allah (disciples) is the same as was of Prophet Mohammad towards his Companions. Quran describes this pattern as:

◀ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ (٣٢:٢)

Meaning: (Prophet Mohammad) who recites to them His revelations and cleanses and purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom. (62:2)

In this verse of sura *al-Jumu'ah*, calls of Prophet Mohammad mentioned by Allah are as follows: (1) Recite verses unto them, that is, invite them towards Islam and convey commands of Allah (2) Purification of the self (3) Bestowing wisdom (through inspired knowledge).

Nowadays Muslim scholars do the same, they recite verses before people, invite them to Islam, convey the meanings of the Quran and persuade to follow them. Then why masses accepted Islam in the age of Prophet Mohammad but not nowadays? The reason is that he had immeasurable spiritual powers hence he raised spiritual ranks of people who visited him by the efficacy of his sacred company, countenance and conversation. Before accepting Islam, Salman the Persian had met spiritual leaders of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians but was influenced by none but as soon as he reached the court of the Holy Prophet, he recited shahada upon seeing his sacred face.

Once Umar ibn Khattab said to the Holy Prophet, “O Prophet of Allah, I swear on Allah that you are dear to me above everything but my life.” The Holy Prophet said, “None of you will accomplish faith till you love me above your life.” Just on listening to these words, Umar ibn Khattab exclaimed, “Now you are dear to me above my life.” **(Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 22870)**

One day Prophet Mohammad was designating Muadh ibn Jabal (or some other Companion) as the governor of Yemen. Muadh ibn Jabal said to the Prophet, “O Prophet! I do not have the ability to become a governor.” When the Prophet touched his shoulder, he at once exclaimed, “Now I feel the ability within me.” This is called purification of self and exalting by the spiritual sight. After Prophet Mohammad, his spiritual successors execute the same responsibility. They purify inwards and selves with their spiritual sight. This is the reason why rhetorical scholars’ speeches go in vain while a minute attention from the perfect spiritual guide cleanses devotees’ selves and as a result their souls become strengthened reaching close to Allah crossing many waystations. Allama Mohammad Iqbal also says that to accomplish faith, the cure of Muslims lies in the powerful sight of a spiritual guide:

خرد کے پاس خبر کے سوا کچھ اور نہیں

ترا علاج نظر کے سوا کچھ اور نہیں (بال جبریل)

Explanation: Verbosity is the only thing that intellect has, it can just inform but cannot give awareness. The cure (for diseases of the soul) is found in the mystical glance of the perfect spiritual guide. (Iqbal and Faqr)

فقط نگاہ سے ہوتا ہے فیصلہ دل کا

نہ ہو نگاہ میں شوخی تو دلبری کیا ہے (بال جبریل)

Explanation: The (perfect spiritual guide's) powerful (mystical) glance opens the way of inward. What is the point to be called a beloved (spiritual guide) if one cannot enlighten the inward! (Iqbal and Faqr)

In *Bal-e-Jibril*, Iqbal seems worried about the conditions prevailing nowadays:

دل سوز سے خالی ہے، نگہ پاک نہیں ہے

پھر اس میں عجب کیا کہ تو بے باک نہیں ہے (بال جبریل)

Explanation: Your inward is empty of passion (of Divine love) and eyes do not give the sheen of purity, then why should it be strange that you are not fearless!

اٹھا میں مدرسہ و خانقاہ سے غمناک

نہ زندگی، نہ محبت، نہ معرفت، نہ نگاہ! (بال جبریل)

Explanation: I disappointedly left madrasas and fake *khanqahs*. Alas! There was no life for spiritual being and no gnosis, love or spiritual sight (to alter inwards). (Iqbal and Faqr)

The guidance and glance of the spiritual guide has such alchemic abilities that it eliminates ignorance to enlighten. What is the difference between education and guidance? Through education one becomes equipped in knowledge whereas through spiritual guidance one's inward is enlightened, self is purified, inward is sanctified and one attains Divine proximity.

In short, attaining true knowledge of the Book (Quran) and wisdom is not possible without the perfect spiritual guide. It is he who manoeuvres a devotee from the scams of Satan and inciting self, taking him close to Allah, the ultimate Shelter. Common people have not even heard the name of this mystic way and knowledge let alone become adept in it.

SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

When the seeker of Allah starts his journey towards Allah, the first step is to find the perfect spiritual guide. One must cross the door of sharia to reach the destination of gnosis, vision and union. Satan with his army has set an ambush on this door because the way to Allah's gnosis, proximity and union passes through it. Firstly, he does not let any man come to this level. If a courageous man reaches the door of sharia (salat, fasts, hajj, zakat) then the satanic group tries to stop him on the threshold of sharia to absorb him into its superficial elegance. He lets no one reach its reality. The biggest problem of today's age is that people outwardly comply with sharia but do not try to reach its core. If a lucky few seekers of Allah try hard and cross the basic level of sharia to approach the next levels of gnosis of Allah then Satan tries more forcefully to stop them and makes them go astray. He tries every trick and ruse to stop them. When a seeker of Allah reaches the esoteric world crossing the door of sharia, he must go across the vast and dangerous jungle of fame among people. They are inclined towards him for the solution of their

worldly problems. At this point, if the seeker of Allah does not have the guidance of the perfect spiritual guide then he goes astray in this jungle and is spiritually demoted forever. Like the knowledge of sharia cannot be learned without a teacher similarly esoteric knowledge is impossible without the perfect spiritual guide.

However, the problem is how to recognize the perfect spiritual guide as it is narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas:

- ❖ Gnosis of Allah is easy but gnosis of the reality of a Saint (perfect spiritual guide) is difficult for the simple reason that Allah is known for His perfection and marvels, but the Saint is a human therefore obtaining gnosis of a human by a human is difficult as he is also bound by sharia like others. However, esoterically he is forever with Allah. **(Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan)**

Suhayl, the Companion of the Prophet, said:

- ❖ Everyone sees his (perfect spiritual guide's) appearance but no one knows the reality. A fortunate few come to know his reality who will become successful if they venerate him according to his prestige but if they make the mistake to oppose him, be disrespectful or insolent, no matter how minute it is in nature, they will be destroyed and their hereafter will be ruined. **(Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan)**

Every seeker or disciple does not have the ability to recognize the Fakir who is annihilated in Allah, immortal with Him and the perfectly accomplished spiritual guide possessing the light of guidance. This is because every seeker or disciple does not truly seek Allah. Many are the seekers of the world or the hereafter. The call of the perfect spiritual guide is to show the path of Allah to its travellers as well as simplify it for them as he is their leader and guide. Only those can recognize the reality of spiritual guide who have set out on the journey with pure intention to seek

Allah. Common people cannot recognize him. Firstly, their intentions are not pure as they do not seek Allah. Secondly, because the spiritual guide looks and lives like an ordinary man. It is impossible for the seekers of world and seekers of hereafter to recognize his reality with intellect. Inherently, intellect only finds flaws and arguments therefore it cannot reach spiritual guide's reality. If one tries to identify him with mere intelligence, he will be left with arguments only. The incident of Prophet Moses and Khidr narrated in sura *Kahf* is an enlightening lesson for the seekers of Allah that arguments bifurcate the path.

The second problem is how to distinguish between a genuine, imperfect and fake spiritual guide, given the prevalence of deception and fraud nowadays. It is discussed in detail with explicit answers ahead.

SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE IS FOR CLOSENESS OF ALLAH

If the seeker is true in his intentions to have Allah's recognition and proximity, then he should be assured that he will find the perfect spiritual guide because Allah says:

◀ وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا (٢٩:٦٩)

Meaning: And those who strive hard for Our cause, We certainly guide them to Our ways. (29:69)

In Sufism, a seeker is always directed towards a spiritual guide according to his longing, desire and disposition as Allama Iqbal puts it:

هست این میکده و دعوت عام است اینجا

قسمت باده باندازه جام است اینجا (پیام شرق)

Explanation: The world is a tavern and it is open for all to drink (the wine of Divine vision). Hence, everyone gets his share of wine according to his cup (desire). (Iqbal and Faqr)

Hence, if a disciple desires to find a spiritual guide who is perfect then first, he must purify his intentions and seek only Allah.

THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE HAVING THE LIGHT OF GUIDANCE

If search for a spiritual guide is meant to recognize Allah and attain His proximity then one will find two kinds of spiritual guides. The first is the bearer of the Divine Trust. He is the one who is the spiritual successor and representative of Prophet Mohammad hence he is the Imam of his time, the perfect spiritual guide having the Divine light of guidance and all others are his junior successors. The details follow ahead.

BEARER OF THE DIVINE TRUST - THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE MAN

Allah says in the Quran about the Divine Trust:

◀ إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا (٣٣: ٧٢)

Meaning: Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear this and felt scared of it, but man took it on. Verily he is ever so cruel (towards the self) and ignorant (of his highest rank near Allah). (33:72)

Sultan Bahoo says:

اسم اللہ بس گرانست بس عظیم
 ایں حقیقت یافتہ نبی کریم

Explanation: *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* is the priceless and grandest holy treasure. Its reality is known only to the Holy Prophet. (**Kaleed-ul-Tauheed Kalan**)

Mystics say that the Trust is *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*, that is, the treasure of *Faqr*. The person to whom the Divine Trust or the treasure of *Faqr* is transferred is the embodiment of the status of:

◀ إِذَا تَمَّ الْفَقْرُ فَهُوَ اللَّهُ

Meaning: When *Faqr* is accomplished that is Allah.

The Holy Prophet is the epitome of *Faqr* and has its complete authority. It is his sacred assembly from where all the decisions of *Faqr* are issued. He orders transference of the Trust from the Universal Divine Man of an era to the Universal Divine Man of the next era. Whoever claims this status on his own accord is doubtlessly a reprobate and his end will be horrendous.

Ibn Arabi writes in his book *Fusus al-Hikam*⁸:

- ❖ Since *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* is comprehensive of all the Divine attributes and is the fount of entire marvels hence it is the origin of theophanies and is called the Lord of all the lords. The person who is its perfect embodiment is the manifestation of Divine Essence-the true man of Allah upon whom everything is revealed. In every era, one person is on the footsteps of Prophet Mohammad and he is ‘the absolute man of Allah’ of that era. He is called the leading Saint of all the Saints or the *Ghawth*. His way is exactly that of Prophet Mohammad. He involuntarily follows the commandments and

⁸ Translated in Urdu by Abdul Qadeer Siddiqi; Publisher Nazeer Sons Lahore.

remains absorbed in Divine love and obligations. Allah does whatever He wishes through him.

Shaikh Moid-ud-Din Jindi says:

- ❖ The greatest name of Allah which has become famous all over is meaningfully related to the world of reality and soul (the universe of Command). While literally, it is related to this world of physical existence and apparent words. All the Hadiths which encompass the truth of the marvels are called 'the reality' and they refer to the Universal Divine Man (perfect spiritual guide) who is present in every era. He is the leading Saint of all the Saints. He holds the Trust and is the ultimate representative of Allah. The greatest name is the physical countenance of that perfect Saint (spiritual guide). (Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan)

Allah says in the Quran:

﴿وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ (٣٦:١٣)

Meaning: And We have encompassed everything in the *Imamim Mubin*. (36:12)

In this verse, *Imamim Mubin* is the perfect spiritual guide, the Universal Divine Man and the Imam of the time. Allah has kept all His wills, commands and the created universe in the Guarded Tablet which is in fact the inward of the perfect spiritual guide possessing the light of guidance (Universal Divine Man). His inward is where the light of the Divine Essence manifests and its vastness can neither be explained nor imagined.

Rumi said in *Mathnawi* (Vol III):

- ❖ Just as treasures are found in deserted places, Allah entrusts His Trust to that person's inward who is not popular.

Sayyid Abdul Karim ibn Ibrahim al-Jili writes in his literary work *al-Insan al-Kamil*:

- ❖ The Universal Divine Man is the celestial pole around whom the whole universe revolves from pre-existence till eternity. Ever since the advent of existence till eternity, he is a unique entity. Then there are different physical dresses for him in different ages (this entity appears in a different physical appearance in each era). In accordance with that physical dress, he is given a name that would not go for another of his dress. His actual name is Mohammad, his teknonym is Abu al-Qasim, his attribute is that he is a man of Allah and his epithet is Shamsuddin. He has a name in accordance with each physical dress. In every era he has a new name which suits to the physical dress in which he appears. (p. 388)⁹

This reality is further explained by Ibn Arabi in his book *Fusus al-Hikam*¹⁰:

- ❖ From pre-existence till eternity, the Holy Prophet keeps changing his physical dresses in every era and only in the beings of 'perfect individuals' does he manifest himself. (p. 97)
- ❖ The Universal Divine Man is a unique entity from pre-existence till eternity and that is the lord of the universe Prophet Mohammad who has been appearing in the beings of Prophets, Messengers and their spiritual successors from Prophet Adam till Prophet Christ and after the seal of Prophethood he (the Universal Divine Man) would be manifesting in the beings of *Ghawth*, *Qutbs*, *Abdals* and Saints according to their respective spiritual levels and ranks. (p. 165)

In every era, there is a man who bears the Divine Trust and is in fact the heir of the treasure of *Faqr*. Prophet Mohammad is its owner and has its complete authority. He is the one who transfers this Trust and treasure. Without his permission, the Trust of

⁹ Translated in Urdu by Fazal Meeran, publisher Nafees Academy Karachi.

¹⁰ Exegesis by Riaz Qadri

Allah cannot be entrusted to anyone. He transferred the treasure of *Faqr* to his daughter Fatimah-tuz-Zahra who is venerated as the first Sultan of *Faqr* among the Mohammadan umma. This treasure was also transferred to Ali ibn Abi Talib from whom it was transferred to the nation therefore he is titled as 'the gateway of *Faqr*'. The chain continued and the treasure reached the mighty Saint Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani and then to Sultan Bahoo.

At present, when someone is selected by the Mohammadan Assembly for bearing this Divine Trust, Prophet Mohammad entrusts that person to Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani for training who afterwards sends him to Sultan Bahoo. From there, he is sent to the court of the perfect spiritual guide of the era. This treasure of *Faqr* will be transferred only by the approval and permission of Prophet Mohammad till the doomsday.

The bearer of the Divine Trust who is called the man of Divine Essence is in fact the perfect and accomplished spiritual guide having the light of guidance. If a seeker finds such a spiritual guide, then it is not hard to reach the highest pedestal of *Faqr*. He gives the seekers the king of all the invocations, *Hoo* (هُو), on the very first day of allegiance. He also bestows the seekers with a printed *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* for contemplation. Since the spiritual guide is himself the manifestation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* therefore the disciple gets the contemplation of his guide from it. This confirms that he is indeed perfect in his calling. If an imperfect guide grants *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* then such people have gotten the name not the Essence. Even if they gain the contemplation of the name, it is by the theophanies of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and not by the beneficence of the imperfect guide. The perfect spiritual guide is essence for the *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and his countenance is *Ism al-Azam* (manifestation of the greatest name).

There is a tradition narrated in *Maktubaat Imam Rabbani*, the collection of letters of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, that once his disciple questioned him through a letter stating that the contemplation of spiritual guide has overpowered him to the extent that he only sees his countenance during salat and even on trying to negate it, the countenance stays before him subconsciously. He wrote back answering, “O lover! This wealth is the desire of the seekers of the truth and few among many reach there. One with this (spiritual) state is a capable seeker who is completely connected with the spiritual guide. It is likely that he may absorb and acquire the marvels of the spiritual guide on attaining just a little beneficence of his company. What’s the need to negate this contemplation of the spiritual guide as he is not the one who is prostrated to rather is the direction for prostration (the mediation from where beneficence is received). Why are not the mosques and niches negated (as the wall, tower, arch and many other things are in the front while offering but do not corrupt salat). Only the fortunate disciples are blessed with this felicity so that they always think of the guide as their mediator and stay focused towards him in each of their acts (to recognize and reach Allah) rather than being one of those unfortunate people who consider themselves as free from it (i.e., any kind of mediation) and divert focus from their spiritual guide thus ruining themselves. (Letter no. 30; Vol 2; Part 1; p. 101)

Rumi says:

بشکل دیدم شیخ مصطفیٰ را
ندیدم مصطفیٰ بل خدا را

Meaning: I beheld the Holy Prophet as well as Allah through the countenance of my spiritual guide.

One should hurry towards the spiritual guide who takes from the contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* to that of the Essence.

However, such a spiritual guide is hard to find as he stays away from fame but is present in every age. This pattern will continue till the doomsday.

Only that seeker reaches the court of a perfect spiritual guide who searches with sincere intentions of Divine recognition, vision and presence in the Mohammadan Assembly. Seekers of world and seekers of hereafter cannot reach him. Even if such people find him, they do not stay steadfast and hence leave. If one finds an imperfect spiritual guide due to his impure intentions, then he must not object as fault lies within him. Contemplate carefully! If one seeks Allah, He will Himself protect him then how could he get trapped by Satan! Contrarily, such people seek wealth, riches, fame and ranks and these are the legacies of Pharaoh, Korah and Abu Jahl. The heritage of Prophets and Saints is to seek Allah. A person reaches the guide in accordance with his desires and it is because Allah sees intentions and inward. For a pure seeker, is a pure spiritual guide whereas for an imperfect seeker, is an imperfect spiritual guide!

SPIRITUAL SUCCESSION

In the path of *Faqr*, the perfect spiritual guide appoints some of his chosen seekers at different places after training them spiritually and blessing them with one or more of his attributes in order to guide people. They are 'junior' spiritual successors¹¹. The fount of guidance and righteousness is the spiritual guide who bears the Trust while junior spiritual successors work as his subordinates and execute the duty of guiding people. It is not necessary for these successors to be stationed at the level of annihilation in Allah and immortality with Him. They are only trained according to the requirements of their responsibilities. The relation between the spiritual guide and these junior successors

¹¹ Singular *Khalifah* (خليفة); Plural *Khulfa* (خلفاء)

can be understood by the example of a powerhouse and transformers. The powerhouse supplies electricity to the whole city but every area of the city has its own transformer. The actual source of electricity is the powerhouse which produces thousands of volts of electricity but power is supplied to all the areas of city through the transformers according to the potential of the transformers. Similarly, the actual source of all the esoteric powers is the spiritual guide possessing the light of guidance. These powers reflect on the mirror of inward of these successors from the spiritual guide's inward. If a junior successor commits a mistake his spiritual powers are seized and he is demoted. The Divine light coming from the inward of the spiritual guide to his inward ceases. However, the perfect spiritual guide holds the Divine Trust and his status is that of a beloved therefore his spiritual powers never stop and he is never demoted rather it should be said that he never commits a mistake as he is the manifestation of the Divine Essence.

In the *Sarwari Qadri* order, junior spiritual succession is seldom granted. When it is, it can take two forms: physical and spiritual. The spiritual guide holds the status of the Universal Divine Man and has the Trust that means he is the man of contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*. Hence a seeker must contemplate *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* under his guidance. The blessings of exalted stations of *Faqr* that a seeker can have directly from the spiritual guide can never be accessed from junior successors. Only the spiritual guide can directly bless a seeker with the Divine favour. However, after the death of the spiritual guide, their spiritual power is increased manifold (for the sake of seekers at that place) because usually the Universal Divine Man does not appear twice at one place and the seekers recognize him after a long time at the new place.

There are two kinds of spiritual guides of the *Sarwari Qadri* order:

MAN OF RECITALS (*SAHIB-E-ISM*): He can only grant the invocation of the name of Allah and holds the status of common creation. He is merely a junior successor.

MAN OF DIVINE ESSENCE (*SAHIB-E-MUSAMMA*): He is the Fakir who is annihilated in Allah and has become immortal with Him. He is the bearer of the Trust, the representative of Allah and holds the status of the Universal Divine Man. He is the perfect spiritual guide having the light of guidance. His disciples are blessed with his contemplation through *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*. Sultan Bahoo says about such a spiritual guide:

- ❖ An immortal Fakir is the one who is annihilated in Allah, annihilated in the Prophet, annihilated in *Faqr* and annihilated in *Hoo* (هُو). (*Ain-ul-Faqr*)

He says about the man of recitals and the man of Divine Essence in *Ain-ul-Faqr*:

- ❖ What is the difference between the man of recitals and the man of Divine Essence? Man of recitals is the spiritual guide who possesses only the invocation of name of Allah whereas man of Divine Essence is the perfect spiritual guide who is submerged in the Essence. Man of recitals holds the status of creation while the man of Divine Essence is above the level of creation. He holds the status of non-creation. Invocation is forbidden for the man of Divine Essence because his inward and outward are annihilated and always submerged in the Divine presence. (*Ain-ul-Faqr*)

In *Mehak-ul-Faqr Kalan*, Sultan Bahoo describes the reality of spiritual guide who is the man of Divine Essence as follows:

- ❖ This path (of *Faqr*) is not related to the apparent (fame and respect) but to the recognition of the Reality. Whomsoever Allah grants *Faqr*, reaches the station of absolute annihilation in Allah and becomes the man of Essence. The path to

recognize Allah cannot be covered just by verbal discussions rather this blessing is conferred by Allah Himself. On whomsoever He confers it, becomes the Mystic immortal with Him and only he knows and recognizes the Lord.

مستی آں کہ باشد لازوالی نہ آں جا ذکر و فکر نہ وصالی

بود غرقش بہ وحدت عین دانی فنا فی اللہ شود بر نہانی

Explanation: The status of man of Divine Essence is eternal where there is no room for invocation, reflection or union as he is already one with Allah. When a seeker reaches this level, he is annihilated in Allah and the concealed secret (of the Divine Essence) is revealed upon him. (Mehak-ul-Faqr Kalan)

In chapter seventy-eight of *Tazkirat al-Awliya*, it is written that Abu Bakr Shibli heard a voice from the hidden that said, “For how long will you stay associated with *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* (only)! If you are sincere then find the man of Divine Essence (the perfect spiritual guide as well).”

FAKE AND IMPERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDES

Some people have defamed Sufis by disguising as them for merely selfish purposes to gain worldly wealth, fame and respect. They are indeed corrupt but remember a piece of wisdom that fake currency is printed where there is real currency, similarly fake items are imitated from original items. The more the demand and worth of a thing is, the more likely its fake will ensue. That is why the number of fake spiritual guides have increased nowadays. They are like a bandit in the guise of a guide, thief as a sadhu, enemy of life claiming to be a well-wisher, men worse than devils pretending to be Saints. Prophet Mohammad said, “Satan appearing in the form of a man is more dangerous than Satan in the appearance of djinn.”

Once Prophet Mohammad advised Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, “Seek refuge in Allah from the devils in djinns and humans?” Abu Dharr al-Ghifari asked, “Are there devils in humans as well?” He replied, “Yes.” (Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 21885)

According to the Imams, a human in the form of a devil is more dangerous than a djinn with devilish nature. (Tafsir al-Tabari)

Rumi says:

- ❖ Many humans are inwardly Satan so a seeker should not follow anyone without authenticating first. Hunter sings in the voice of a bird to deceive the prey. That bird listens to its kind and gets trapped. Likewise, tricksters guise as a Dervish. These wicked people steal the words of Fakirs so they could deceive the innocent. The call of a man (perfect spiritual guide) is to shower Divine light so that the soul gets relief whereas wicked people’s task is deceiving. They disguise themselves to claim sainthood or Prophethood like Musaylima¹² but history proved his title to be ‘The Arch-Liar’ (کذاب *al-Kadhab*) and Prophet Mohammad is always remembered as the man of wisdom. He has the Truth while the fraudulent have filth and hell torment. The true Fakir follows the sharia of Prophet Mohammad because without sharia, Fakirism is nothing but a deceit. (Mathnawi)

This is comprehended by Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali ibn Usman al-Hajveri in the following manner:

- ❖ Sufis can be divided into three categories:
1. SUFI (THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE): He is the one who is accomplished in all stations of *Faqr*, annihilated in Allah and immortal with Him. His being is free from

¹² He was a false prophet who was killed in the Battle of Yamama as part of a series of military campaigns called Ridda Wars launched by the first Caliph, Abu Bakr Siddiq against rebellious tribes and false prophets.

everything that is other than Allah (Allah makes persuasion and guidance obligatory only upon such Sufis).

2. **MUTASAWWUF (IMPERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE):** He is the one who is well-versed in the outward knowledge of Sufism and spirituality. He has acquired knowledge of the Divine path but is not accomplished (due to his own imperfect intentions. Though after reading books of Sufis, he has become familiar with it).
3. **MUSTASAWWUF (FAKE SPIRITUAL GUIDE):** He is the one who pretends to be a Sufi (spiritual guide) for worldly gains and riches. He is certainly unaware of the path of spirituality and is indeed lustful.

Allah! Save mankind from such people who are like Satan. Now their advertisements are regularly published in newspapers and magazines which is ludicrous. In these advertisements, each one of them claims to be an accomplished spiritual guide who is worried for the entire world and just for the sake of removing people's worries he has settled in a small shack in your city leaving Europe and America. Some even claim to have spent at least forty years in seclusion in Himalayas. All these so-called spiritualists claim that they have received beneficence from a perfect spiritual guide and quite often link their spiritual lineage in the *Qadri* Sufi order. Only if they knew the grandeur of the *Qadri*! They would not have falsely claimed link to it. They also boast that they can do anything, djinns and supernatural beings are under their command and can perform any task upon their authority. Dear readers! Just think, are not human beings superior to djinns and supernatural beings? Is not Allah Omnipotent! Can djinns or supernatural beings interfere in His authority? Such false claimants rob the people of weak faith and use different methods of deceptions for it. They are of many kinds, a few of them are:

- ❖ Many people are not spiritual guides and have no knowledge about the Sufi path. They act just like one to plunder simple people and perform different trickeries to aggrandize themselves. Many among them have never pledged allegiance to a spiritual guide and others have been spiritually demoted. Some among them do perform mystic struggles but have gone astray by getting caught in satanic deceptions. While others have followed imperfect spiritual guides whose predilection is world therefore they also incline their disciples towards it from the very first day and henceforward the fake guides and their disciples both plunder the world. They advertise to become famous. Advertisements include claims such as: solve any problem by one night's incantation; get answer to any question; heartless lover is yours; expert in astrology; king in palmistry; expert in Bengal's black magic; expert in African black magic; reform your husband; five hundred thousand to the one who can reverse my work; the expert palmist who reverses black magic etc.

Due to these wretched men, people avoid the honourable path of *Faqr*, *tariqa* and Sufism. The sole aim of these villains is gaining wealth for which they deceive people and many of them even keep a Hindu name. Constantly newspapers and magazines print their traps. These so-called Saints name their magic tricks as miracles and practise all sorts of trickery. Open letters published along with their advertisements have the same pattern and that is:

- I was worried to death, after being disappointed of everyone I contacted so-and-so spiritualist and my all worries were resolved.

If the readers ponder and calculate the facts of these open letters, they would be astonished to find out that this is just one letter published with the advertisement of different self-styled spiritualists with only change in name of the writer and

the remaining structure of the letter is the same. In fact, these people commit blasphemy and become a polytheist when they say, “After disappointed from everyone, I contacted so-and-so spiritualist and all my problems were solved.” These foolish people even negate Allah (I seek refuge in Allah) by saying that a person was disheartened from God but the (fake) spiritualist did his task! They are shamelessly fearless from questioning on the Judgment Day. They only love wealth and riches. They have also impinged on the reputation of shrines and mausoleums of Saints by making these blessed places their hunting grounds where they hunt humanity making populaces distrust the Saints.

- ❖ Second category is that which makes a fool out of people by staying within the boundaries of sharia. Such a person uses the shrine of a Saint and create opportune moments. His deceiving style is of a person who is seemingly fulfilling all the requirements of sharia and is sitting cross-legged with closed eyes. People gather around him in a circle. His two henchmen are asking people to make a place so that supernatural beings of this fraud can sit. After some time, the man shakes his head and opens his eyes and says to someone sitting in the front, “Ask! All your questions shall be answered.” Upon this a strange pattern starts. On every question, the man converses with the supernatural beings whom the audience are trying to locate by popping their eyes so that they can see them somehow. Upon every question a similar reply is received that so-and-so relative or a neighbour has done black magic on him. Then it is concluded that the person should meet the so-called holy man at his personal place and hence get plundered.
- ❖ Now a new category of these fake guides is becoming common who have made the shrines of Saints their den to entrap people. On every Thursday and Friday, they come to

the shrine with a few of their henchmen and sit among their followers. These followers start attracting people towards their guide. Some among these frauds have power of knowing secrets of the inward and therefore they can tell a person about his worries. A depressed man becomes impressed and is hence lured.

- ❖ Sometimes a group of henchmen with their pseudo-spiritualist gathers at a place and starts some kind of invocation loudly. People become attentive and gather around them. A person who is invoking in the group acts fanatic and starts to display that he is overwhelmed by a spiritual state. People get impressed by this act hence are tricked. Although people should know that true Saints invoke in solitude. In sharia, supererogatory prayers have been ordered to be performed in solitude to conceal it from other people. The Holy Prophet said, “Do not make your homes a graveyard and offer some part of salat there.” **(Bukhari 1187, Muslim 1820, Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal 4653)**

Sultan Bahoo said:

- ❖ When you see a (so called) Fakir who toils hard in austerity, asceticism and abstinence but is unaware of spirituality and the inward way to Allah, get to know that he is depraved and his end will also be among the depraved ones. **(Ain-ul-Faqr)**

In these circumstances, it is easy to say that there is no perfect spiritual guide in this age of fraud. Similarly, it is not difficult to say that there is no truthful devotee these days. Though, there are a lot of devotees but they visit their spiritual guide so they could ask him to pray for them or for talismans. This behaviour is not correct as one does not entrust himself to a spiritual guide for such worldly affairs. The need for the spiritual guide is for esoteric correction, purification of the self, sanctification of inward and for the enlightenment of the soul. The perfect spiritual guide makes a

truthful devotee cross the path of *Faqr*, station after station and eventually takes him close to Allah.

In comparison to the contemporary times, every person in the past was in search of the perfect spiritual guide so that he could be spiritually guided. His servitude towards the spiritual guide could lead him closer to Allah and grant him gnosis. People would search and find the perfect spiritual guide and through his persuasion and guidance achieved Allah's gnosis and proximity. Gradually man became materialistic and was ensnared by worldly desires. Wish to become close to Allah began to decline. Observing these circumstances, the perfect spiritual guides (the Universal Divine Man of different ages) concealed themselves from the world and went into solitude. This created a void which was capitalized by fake spiritual guides and swindlers who started the business of giving talismans and knotted strings (used as charms by blowing on them). Even palmists, astrologers and magicians started calling themselves spiritual guides. They distribute pages and tablets with verses to change destiny though spirituality has nothing to do with it. Although palmistry and astrology are fields of knowledge but are not Sufism. Now, even women claim the title of a spiritual guide and surprisingly are successful in deceiving people. Likewise cunning, sly and knave men attracted and trapped people through sleight of hand and skilful deception. Hence, mutilated form of spirituality became a business and reached its peak through faux disciples and guides. People started inclining towards these fake guides for benefits in worldly affairs and to find solutions for their problems. Thus, the trade of incantations and giving talismans to increase wealth and to have success in business started. The trend of foretelling numbers for lotteries and bonds also became a part of it. Shops were decorated which claimed to bless the childless and to resolve matters and fights with in-laws. At some places started the occult functioning to dark magic and at others to undo this magic. Many started the business of this magic as well as

talismans to keep people in powerful position or to win in elections. Crowds started to pour at the doors of fake guides as well as their gatherings for the desires of their inciting self and for the solution of their problems. When they paid attention towards conduct of these fake guides, they found contradiction and deceit in their words and deeds, lies and backbiting in their habits, saw crowd of women in their chambers and carnality in their eyes. It was observed that these frauds just wanted accumulation of wealth by any means. Simple men and innocent women were seen getting trapped. Unfortunately, some people who had the coincidence of visiting these wicked and contemptible guides perceived this as the actual way and manner of bona fide Sufis. On the other hand, those who found the perfect spiritual guide but were not fortunate enough to stay in his company because they waited for miracles to believe in him or their worldly wishes were not getting fulfilled, hence became distrustful and did not stay in the blessed company any longer. Eventually all such people followed the fake guides who themselves were bounded by sensual desires.

It is the saying of Sultan-ul-Faqr II Shaikh Hasan of Basra:

◀ إِنَّ صُحْبَةَ الْأَشْمَارِ تُورِثُ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ بِالْأَخْيَارِ

Meaning: Undoubtedly the company of depraved people (fake and imperfect guides) will develop mistrust towards the virtuous ones (the perfect spiritual guides).

The approach should have been that people ought not to have followed these frauds and rebuked the wishes of the self but on the contrary, they started abusing the attributes of Saints and the path of Sufism. Consequently, people started mistrusting the path of Sufism and left it for superficiality. People became more concentrated towards exotericism that led to sectarianism and gave rise to different schools of thought. When Sufism, the soul of Islam, vanished from Muslim society they became disintegrated

and started killing each other in the name of religion. Due to disintegration, they lost their worth in the whole world as well because:

تن بے روح سے بے زار ہے حق

خدائے زندہ، زندوں کا خدا ہے (بال جبریل)

Explanation: Allah does not like those who have a dead soul as He is God of the living. (Iqbal and Faqr)

SHRINE CARETAKERS: The Muslims failed in worldly affairs when the children of political leaders started to succeed politically instead of selecting the candidate on merit. Similarly, succession among descendants of spiritual guides made us fail in faith as well. This does not mean that sons of Saints do not deserve spiritual succession, in fact they do deserve it and sometimes more than anyone else but in the contemporary age often incompetent people are seen as shrine caretakers. Certain number will be of those who have no knowledge of the spiritual path. However, it can be said that they are blessed to be born in a family and lineage that belonged to a Saint whose position they have inherited as well as devotees. This pattern of succession continues for centuries until someone dethrones them. Before the British rule in India, it was mostly considered among people that the most capable spiritual successor of the Saint was the shrine caretaker and that was true. However, the British rulers made a law to destroy the *khanqah* system of Muslims by making the shrine a part of inheritance. Now according to the laws of inheritance, it is also inherited just like any other property by the sons of the Saint even if they do not deserve it. If before death the Saint himself appoints his actual spiritual successor as the caretaker of his shrine, then he will be evicted in a few months through the court and the authority will be transferred to the sons as their inheritance. The land, property and income are also linked with the shrine therefore shrine caretaking became

inheritance. The fight for this is usually seen in the courts or read in the newspapers. Now it has intensified so much so that it has become a matter of life and death because people also get political influence as well as designations through these seats of shrines. Allama Iqbal has pointed towards this fact:

میراث میں آئی ہے انہیں مسندِ ارشاد

زبانوں کے تصرف میں عقابوں کے نشین! (بال جبریل)

Explanation: The throne of Divine guidance (of Sufis) is now passed on as an inheritance. It is as if falcons' abodes are under the thumb of crows. (Iqbal and Faqr)

قُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كَهَمْ سَكْتَتِهِ جَوْ رَخَصْتِ هَوًى

خانقاہوں میں مجاور رہ گئے یا گورکن (بال جبریل)

Explanation: The ones (perfect spiritual guides) who breathed life into the dead souls can no longer be found. The *khanqahs* and shrines of the late spiritual guides are occupied by (their descendants who are just selling their forefathers' religion with the connivance of) attendants of the shrine and gravediggers. (Iqbal and Faqr)

I question the reader that who were the shrine caretakers among the great Saints like Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Ali ibn Usman al-Hajveri, Moinuddin Chishti, Fariduddin Ganjshakar, Bahauddin Zakariya, Nizamuddin Auliya, Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Bari Imam Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi, Shams of Tabriz, Rumi, Sultan Bahoo, Sayyid Abdullah Shah, Pir Abdul Ghafoor Shah, Pir Bahadur Ali Shah and Sultan Mohammad Abdul Aziz or other Saints who are no longer among us? They earned respect and honour in the world of Sufism on their own and not as a shrine caretaker.

اپنی دنیا آپ پیدا کر اگر زندوں میں ہے (باغِ درا)

Explanation: If you are alive, you must build your own world (and create your own name instead of relying on inheritance or by taking advantage of others).

Sultan Bahoo considers an independent Fakir as the bona fide Fakir implying that he is not bound to a *khanqah* only, rather he spreads beneficence by travelling. I have myself travelled all over Pakistan and was astonished to find that people are worshipping the descendants of a Saint for as long as even seven generations. Although the descendants have no clue what Sufism is, they have crammed a few of its lessons to fool people and are openly acting against sharia but people still do not understand. They spend summers in Europe and America and get their medical treatment from there as well at the expense of the offerings of devotees. They take part in politics, make money and gain respect through it, and so on and so forth. Opposers of Sufism have led people astray by quoting their examples.

HERESY IN SUFISM

A few of the many heresies associated with *Faqr* and Sufism are discussed in the topic of fake and imperfect guides in the previous pages. These are mistakenly known to the common people as saintly. Some more are mentioned below:

NOT FOLLOWING SHARIA AND CALLING IT FAQR

You will find odd men in corners of many streets who would either be in a strange appearance or would have adopted a new style for instance wearing strings of beads around the neck, hands and feet and call themselves mendicants. Several know a few magic tricks which when performed would make people sit before them devotedly. These tricks result from incantations. By observing such people abandoning sharia, people falsely interpret it as some station in *Faqr* where sharia has to be neglected. In the

path of Sufism, this particular heresy ends faith. Remember that whosoever turns back from the sharia of Prophet Mohammad, will no longer be blessed with Allah's favour. Sultan Bahoo says:

خلاف پیغمبرؐ کسے راہ گزید
کہ ہرگز بہ منزل نخواہد رسید

Explanation: Whoever will adopt the way opposite to the path of (sharia of) Prophet Mohammad, will never reach the destination. (Kaleed-ul-Tauheed Kalan)

WIN OVER BY GIVING TALISMANS

People take keen interest in breaking relationships and creating bonds through talismans. Talismans are used to win over people to ultimately exploit them and bring them under subjugation. They are also used to bring a person's enemy under charm to break the enemy's relationships with his loved ones. It also includes making voodoo dolls of enemies and poking needles in them. All of these are occult undertakings and are satanic. Satan brings people to do such evil acts by coining a noble cause for them. In fact, it is in itself a heresy to give pure intention to satanic work. A crowd can be seen around these fake guides who give talismans and charms. To run their business, they have made some henchmen who spread word among public about their magic tricks. Moreover, their words become equivalent to revelation in public eye, God forbid, which cannot be negated. The Holy Quran calls these magic tricks infidelity. Allah says:

﴿فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۚ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَآرِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا يَأْذِنُ اللَّهُ﴾ (۲:۱۰۲)

Meaning: They (the Jews) used to learn such (magic) from both of them (Harut and Marut) by which they caused separation between

husband and wife. Yet they cannot harm anyone by this except under the command of Allah. (2:102)

People should reflect upon the fact that could such haram acts be associated with *Faqr*, Sufism or Saints of Allah? To associate such foul acts with *Faqr* or Sufism is an extreme blunder. People treading the path of *Faqr* and Sufism are the purest people in the umma and the leaders on the straight path whereas the practitioners of black magic are even deprived of the basic faith.

GAMBLING THROUGH DJINNS

Djinns are used to guess prize bonds and lottery winning numbers. Similarly, they are used in betting and gambling. People (Hindu ascetics, Christian monks and pseudo guides) who are involved in black magic, at times through their satanic sources, come to know that a particular number will be announced in the lucky draw of lottery, bond or in gambling. That number is informed to the most trusted henchman. Sometimes instead of djinns this task is accomplished through numerology and *ilm-e-Jafr*.¹³ It is not that the number predicted by them is correct but sometimes by coincidence it is. People are plundered who instead of earning livelihood through halal and legit ways opt for prize bonds and lotteries. They think of such swindlers as their guides and these activities spread ineffable polytheism and heresy that only Allah can save us from their evil.

GRANTING SPIRITUAL SUCCESSION TO ANYONE

Granting spiritual succession is to establish vicegerency and is a critical responsibility. It is included in Sufism and is considered a pious deed if the vicegerent is well-intentioned and worthy of it. It is a sin to grant succession to an unworthy person as it leads to chaos. Sufis grant it only to the deserving devotees. They never grant it to the disciple on the basis that he fawns over the spiritual guide, forces people to follow him and accumulates wealth for

¹³ A form of numerology.

the spiritual guide, neither is granted so that the disciple works towards reduction of circles of other guides. The (fake) guide who grants succession for the sole purpose to increase his influence, creates heresy which defames both sharia and Sufism.

MAKING SUCCESSION AN INHERITANCE

If succession is granted to the meritorious devotee then it does not matter whether he is from the progeny of the Saint or outside the family. It is a heresy in Sufism to grant succession to the descendants just to keep it within the family or to avoid a person who is not from the progeny to succeed. Allah bestowed Prophethood only upon the worthy ones, never ever an incapable was chosen for this honour. It is deduced that granting succession to any incompetent person due to his family connections is not the way of Prophets and Saints hence it is a heresy in Sufism.

The pioneer successor of *Naqshbandi* order, Salman the Persian was not progeny of its leader Abu Bakr Siddiq. The pioneer successor of *Qadri*, *Chishti* and *Suhrawardi* orders, Shaikh Hasan of Basra was not from the family of Ali ibn Abi Talib. Rashidun Caliphs who were the Companions of Prophet Mohammad succeeded on account of their competency without being discriminated on lineage. They were Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar ibn Khattab, Usman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abi Talib. Likewise in prior eras, spiritual succession was given on the basis of proficiency and not on authority or lineage. If someone is blessed with sainthood it does not mean that his sons and grandsons start to call themselves a Saint and get the right to spiritually lead.

Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki who was the spiritual successor of Moinuddin Chishti of the *Chishti* order was not his son. Fariduddin Ganjshakar, the spiritual successor of Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki was not his son and likewise Nizamuddin Auliya, the spiritual successor of Fariduddin Ganjshakar was also not his son. In *Sarwari Qadri* order, the Divine Trust that was transferred from

Sultan Bahoo¹⁴ also had no intervention of lineage. Sultan Mohammad Abdullah Shah Madni Jilani¹⁵ came from Madina to whom the blessing of Trust was transferred by Sultan Bahoo. From him it was transferred to Pir Abdul Ghafoor Shah¹⁶ who further transferred it to Pir Bahadur Ali Shah¹⁷ after whom it was transferred to Sultan Mohammad Abdul Aziz¹⁸ and it is not the lineage which relates all of them. Sultan-ul-Faqr VI Sultan Mohammad Asghar Ali¹⁹ was the son of Sultan Mohammad Abdul Aziz but he was also his most deserving disciple for the Trust of *Faqr* and it had been decided since eternity that he would be its possessor. If transference of Trust was to be decided according to the lineage then Sultan Mohammad Asghar Ali's elder brother and Sultan Mohammad Abdul Aziz's eldest son Sultan Safdar Ali had been the one to whom it would have been transferred.

KEEPING DISCIPLES IN THE SAME FAMILY AFTER THE DEATH OF THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE

This is another heresy which has appeared in Sufism nowadays. It is very important that there is a connection between the spiritual guide and the disciple. Connection brings a lot of beneficence and spiritual progress but it is a heresy to force and induce people to pledge allegiance to the sons of the late spiritual guide or his junior spiritual successors to prevent them from taking oath to someone else. If the successor of the spiritual guide is perfect, he will not attempt any of this but if he is imperfect then he will try any ruse to convince the devotees to stay in his circle.

^{14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19} The book *The Spiritual Guides of Sarwari Qadri Order* has details of all these Saints as well as the sequence in which Divine Trust was transferred.

GUIDANCE TO AVOID AN IMPERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

I have elucidated about the imperfect spiritual guides. Similarly guides of all other orders have also warned about them. A sinful Muslim due to his vile acts cannot represent Islam, correspondingly a fake and imperfect spiritual guide cannot represent *Faqr* and Sufism. It is not allowed in sharia that a person is penalized because of the wrongdoings of his neighbour. Likewise, it is not right to blame pure religion Islam due to sinful acts of a few groups of Muslims or distrust Sufis of pure disposition due to fake guides.

Shaikh Ahmad Zarruq says:

- ❖ Fake guides are the people of lust. Their sayings should be rejected and actions disregarded. However, due to their presence in the circle of Sufism, true Sufis should not be renounced. Good and bad people are present in every field and this will continue till the Judgment Day. All the Islamic jurists, teachers, judges as well as traders, rich people and leaders are not the same, likewise are the Sufis. Islamic scholars also have two categories: vicious savants and true scholars. One cannot renounce the true scholars because of vicious savants. In Sufism also, some are appointed at highest spiritual stations while others at moderate and there are also fake spiritual guides. This fact is so obvious that everyone knows it and there is no room for doubt. A person should first recognize Allah so that he can recognize His people.

Sultan Bahoo has set the standard for a true seeker that he is the one who seeks only the Essence and for the spiritual guide that he has supreme authority of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*. He must grant the seeker on the very first day the sultan of invocations (*Hoo هو*),

contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*, method to inscribe Allah's name on body and take him to the paramount level. He says:

- ❖ The seeker must take spiritual persuasion only from the perfect spiritual guide and get rid of the imperfect and fake guide. How can the perfect spiritual guide be distinguished from the imperfect one? The perfect spiritual guide instantly elevates the seeker to the Divine presence by his spiritual attention and the inscribing practice of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* while the imperfect guide makes false promises. (Nur-ul-Huda Kalan)

Sultan Bahoo has amply warned about fake guides in his renowned quatrains:

آپ نہ طالب بین کہیں دے، لوکاں نوں طالب کر دے ھو
چانوں کھپاں کر دے سیپاں، قہر اللہ توں ناپیں ڈر دے ھو
عشق مجازی تلکن بازی، پیر آوے دھر دے ھو
اوہ شرمندے ہوسن باھو، اندر روز حشر دے ھو

Explanation: To become a spiritual guide and accede to the throne of Divine guidance and persuasion, it is compulsory to first become disciple of the one who is perfect and accomplished in it. Imperfect guides could not even attain to the level of a seeker of Allah, failed in *Faqr*, never pledged allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide nor were granted permission to guide and persuade yet call themselves 'spiritual guides'. It is self-deception that since their forefathers were guides hence they hold the same title and that spiritual guidance is inheritance. These fakes have made it a business to sell gnosis and succession hence pledging allegiance to them is proscribed and forbidden. No guidance can come from the imperfect. They are playing a dangerous game opposite to Divine love therefore on the Judgment Day they will be disgraced. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

پیر ملیاں جے پیڑ ناں جاوے، اُس نوں پیر کی دھرناں ھو
 مُرشد ملیاں ارشاد نہ مَن نوں، اوہ مرشد کی کرناں ھو
 جس ہادی کولوں ہدایت ناہیں، اوہ ہادی کی پھڑناں ھو
 جے سر دیتاں حق حاصل ہووے باھو، اُس موتوں کی ڈرناں ھو

Explanation: If oath of allegiance to a guide does not give relief to the pangs of separation by unifying with Allah then the sincere seeker of Allah should break the oath with such a pseudo spiritual guide. Avoid him if no peace is felt by the soul or guidance in the inward. Do not pledge allegiance or follow those who have failed to guide and cannot lead on the straight path but if you find the perfect spiritual guide who can bless with Divine vision by giving death before dying then do not hesitate from such a death. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ The perfect spiritual guide is like the pure soul whereas imperfect guide is like a dog. (Majalisa-tul-Nabi Khurd)

Allama Iqbal exhorts to get associated with the perfect spiritual guide because without him one cannot unfold the secrets of *Faqr*. His poetry also persuades people to avoid the company of fake guides and shrine caretakers because they have nothing but verbosity and altercations. According to his teachings one should protect oneself from these hunters and their traps because if the seeker is misguided by them, he can even lose his faith instead of accomplishing in it. The great poet seems disappointed from both madrasas and *khanqahs* of his age. He says:

اٹھا میں مدرسہ و خانقاہ سے غمناک

نہ زندگی، نہ محبت، نہ معرفت، نہ نگاہ!
 (بال جبریل)

Explanation: I disappointedly left madrasas and fake *khanqahs*. Alas! There was no life for spiritual being and no gnosis, love or spiritual sight (to alter inwards). (Iqbal and Faqr)

گلا تو گھونٹ دیا اہل مدرسہ نے ترا
کہاں سے آئے صدا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
(بال جبریل)

Explanation: The teachers in madrasas have crushed the soul of youth instead of enlightening it. How can one hear the echo of (inward verification of) shahada! (Iqbal and Faqr)

مکتبوں میں کہیں رعنائی افکار بھی ہے؟
خانقاہوں میں کہیں لذتِ اسرار بھی ہے؟
(بال جبریل)

Explanation: The present-day educational institutions lack the embellishment of thoughts (of Divine love and gnosis). Similarly, the devotees no more relish secrets of the Divine in so-called *khanqahs*. (Iqbal and Faqr)

باقی نہ رہی تیری وہ آئینہ ضمیری
اے کُشتہ سلطانِی و ملّاکی و پیری
(ارمغانِ حجاز)

Explanation: There is no purification of inward and enlightenment of soul nowadays. Muslims are going astray because they are misguided by kings, leaders, clerics and spiritualists. (Iqbal and Faqr)

جاننا ہوں میں کہ مشرق کی اندھیری رات میں
بے ید بیضا ہے پیرانِ حرم کی آستین
(ارمغانِ حجاز)

Explanation: In the dark night of ignorance that prevails in the east, there is no true spiritual guide having the Divine powers to erase this darkness with the enlightenment. (Iqbal and Faqr)

خداوند ایہ تیرے سادہ دل بندے کدھر جائیں

کہ درویشی بھی عیاری ہے، سلطانی بھی عیاری (بال جبریل)

Explanation: O Allah! In this age of deception where there are a number of fake dervishes and cunning sultans, where should your seekers go for guidance? (Iqbal and Faqr)

غضب ہیں یہ مرشدان خود ہیں، خدا تری قوم کو بچائے

بگاڑ کر تیرے مسلمانوں کو یہ اپنی عزت بنا رہے ہیں (بانگ درا)

Explanation: These fake guides seek only their own benefit and plunder wealth from people. May Allah save the umma from them! They want to be respectful in society by claiming to be the guide of Muslims but the reality is that they are impairing and ruining them. (Iqbal and Faqr)

ہو نکو نام جو قبروں کی تجارت کر کے

کیا نہ بیچو گے جو مل جائیں صنم پتھر کے (بانگ درا)

Explanation: The caretakers of the shrines are after the offerings of devotees of the late Saints. Trading on the sacred ancestors' shrines is how they gain respect. It is even expected from them to start selling idols owing to their lust for money. (Iqbal and Faqr)

یہی شیخ حرم ہے جو چرا کر بیچ کھاتا ہے

گلیم بوڈڑ و دلقِ اولیسؑ و چادرِ زہراؑ (بال جبریل)

Explanation: The ostensible spiritual guide generates respect among people by using the name and status of his grand and sacred forefathers. He is shameless and can even sell Abu Dharr al-Ghifari's tattered quilt, Uwais al-Qarani's saintly clothes or shawl of Fatimah bint Mohammad for his benefits. (Iqbal and Faqr)

نذرانہ نہیں، سود ہے پیرانِ حرم کا

ہر خرقةٴ سالوس کے اندر ہے مہاجن (بالِ جبریل)

Explanation: The offerings which are taken by fake guides and by those who claim sainthood on account of their lineage is like interest.²⁰ They are usurers hidden in the disguise of Sufis. (Iqbal and Faqr)

فقیہہ شہر بھی رہبانیت پہ ہے مجبور

کہ معرکے ہیں شریعت کے جنگِ دستِ بدست (ضربِ کلیم)

Explanation: Muslim scholars from various sects are battling over the laws of sharia. They have been reinterpreted and given numerous different forms which has confused even the jurists so they have stopped engaging in pointless debates and taken on a monastic lifestyle. (Iqbal and Faqr)

سکھا دیئے ہیں اسے شیوہ ہائے خانقاہی

فقیہہ شہر کو صوفی نے کر دیا ہے خراب (بالِ جبریل)

Explanation: Since the fake Sufis have set such a poor example, even Islamic scholars and jurists have begun taking oath of allegiance in the manner of the real ones. Neither they are eligible nor entitled to spiritually guide. (Iqbal and Faqr)

Iqbal seems to be disappointed of both the so-called Mystics and theologians.

صوفی کی طریقت میں فقط مستیِ احوال

ملا کی شریعت میں فقط مستیِ گفتار

²⁰ Interest on borrowings is forbidden in Islam.

وہ مرد مجاہد نظر آتا نہیں مجھ کو

ہو جس کے رگ و پے میں فقط مستی کردار (ضربِ کلیم)

Explanation: There is nothing left but euphoria in pseudo-Sufism where a person becomes oblivious to his whereabouts. Sharia is interpreted by theologians in such a way that there is only left the elation from verbosity and sermons with no effect on their own behaviour. I cannot find any true believer who endeavours on the path to Allah, declares war on his self and is engrossed in Divine love. (Iqbal and Faqr)

In short, in the path of *Faqr*, guidance of the perfect spiritual guide is pivotal, but one should beware of thugs and fake guides. Those who set out to the journey with sincere intention to search Allah are safeguarded from the frauds. Allah Himself is their Protector in Whose search they have set out and those protected by Allah Himself cannot be misguided.

FINDING THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

A seeker will have no difficulty in finding the perfect spiritual guide after acknowledging the prerequisite for the one. A beginner cannot measure the powers of the perfect spiritual guide neither it is required. A seeker or devotee as a beginner should keep in view the following matters before pledging allegiance:

- (1) Present oneself in the assembly of a Saint and observe whether in that duration occurrence of satanic apprehensions and evil suggestions in the inward minimized? Did he experience love and fervour for Allah and Prophet Mohammad? It does not matter if on leaving the assembly of the Saint his state returned to what it was before meeting him. It is important to notice whether he experienced even a minor change in him or not during his stay in the company of the Saint.

- (2) That Saint's devotees or at least some of the devotees have improved or not. Before they became disciples what were they like and afterwards what kind of changes transpired in them?
- (3) As long as the seeker sat in the Saint's company, did the Saint utter any words related to his inward state from which he received guidance and felt spiritual assistance for solving any of his confusions or tenacious problems?
- (4) According to the teachings of Sultan Bahoo, a spiritual guide should not only himself be accomplished in the contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* but should also instantly after oath of allegiance grant the disciple invocation of *Hoo* (هو) and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*. If no spiritual development ensues from the invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and the contemplation of spiritual guide is not blessed with, then he is not the perfect spiritual guide. Perfect spiritual guide is the one from whom a disciple feels spiritually benefitted, his views and ideas start to alter and he inwardly renounces world and becomes absorbed in Allah.

If a person feels said positive changes then he should take oath of allegiance fully trusting that Saint because he cannot find anyone better than him as far as his spiritual reformation and development is concerned.

RULES FOR RENEWING OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Oath of allegiance is likened to marriage and obligations of oath correspond to the provisions of marriage that is, if the husband is alive, it is prohibited for the wife to consider any other man her husband. Similarly, referring to another spiritual guide in the life

of one's spiritual guide is forbidden. However, in following conditions taking oath again or renewal of oath is allowed:

- ❖ If after oath a devotee comes to know: the spiritual guide is imperfect; he is not from a Sufi order; he does not have the abilities of the perfect spiritual guide; he is not the spiritual successor of the perfect Saint; the disciple pledged allegiance for proximity and union with Allah but none was achieved; he did not find the straight path; his soul was not vivified; he was not transformed spiritually and remained the same before and after the oath; then the devotee has the right to break the oath of allegiance. If guide is imperfect and is not linked to any spiritual order then there is no need to even break the oath as there was no oath to begin with. Nowadays as per inheritance law, caretakers of shrines are from the family of the Saint. They get to hold the seat through courts if needed. This category of fake Saints come under the aforesaid types. If a person pledges allegiance to them then according to mysticism no oath was pledged.
- ❖ The spiritual guide passed away and the disciple could not cover the path of *Faqr*. The disciple's journey went in cessation and he is incompetent to further progress in *Faqr* through beneficence from the shrine of the late Sufi then it is not only right but obligatory to pledge allegiance again.
- ❖ If allegiance was pledged in childhood on the persuasion of parents or someone else without adequate understanding then on adulthood or upon reaching maturity, the person is free to pledge allegiance to the spiritual guide towards whom he feels inclined.
- ❖ If the spiritual guide neither blesses nor trains the seeker spiritually and continuously remains indifferent towards him then he can recourse to another spiritual guide. It would be right for the perfect spiritual guide to take him under the oath and spiritually train him.

- ❖ If spiritual guide is missing and the disciple could not stay in connection even spiritually, neither he knows the whereabouts of the spiritual guide then allegiance can be pledged to another spiritual guide.
- ❖ If an unaccomplished Saint was given spiritual succession and the right to take oath of allegiance on the condition that he will complete the journey of *Faqr* and would accomplish whatever remains unaccomplished but even after the opportunity he could not do so then his disciples have the right to break the oath of allegiance.

According to the teachings of Sultan Bahoo, the perfect spiritual guide is the one who gives the disciple sultan of invocations (*Hoo* هو), *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* for contemplation and the practice of inscribing Allah's name on body to purify the self. The spiritual guide who cannot do this should not be followed and oath to him must be broken. Then allegiance should be pledged to the spiritual guide who is man of contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and can grant it to his disciples too.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE ACCORDING TO SUFIS

SHAIKH ABDUL QADIR JILANI

- ❖ If fate is kind and takes you to the court of the perfect spiritual guide who is aware of the Divine secrets then devote yourself in making him happy. Follow his orders and leave all those matters which were expedient for you once. Refrain from questioning the affairs of the perfect spiritual guide that are beyond your understanding for objection only

leads to discord. The incident of Khidr killing a child to which Prophet Moses opposed should be sufficient.²¹

- ❖ Attend the assembly of the perfect spiritual guide for it imparts the sweetness of faith. In his celestial company, fountains of pure Divine love flow whose value is only known to those who have been blessed with the invocation of the Divine name (*Ism-e-Allah Zaat*). **(Ghunyat al-Talibeen)**
- ❖ O men of God! As you reside in (a material world) of means and sources, you need a mediator. Ask God to grant you a spiritual healer (guide) who will cure the afflictions of your soul. Request a physician (spiritual guide) who will provide the spiritual medicine you require. Seek a spiritual guide who will take your hand and lead you (towards the path of salvation). Draw close to the beloveds of Allah, who are nearest to Him and most obedient. They are the custodians of the Divine entrance. **(Al-Fath ar-Rabbani, Malfoozat-e-Ghausia)**
- ❖ You are (spiritually) blind, find the one (perfect spiritual guide) who holds your hand. You are ignorant, find a man of wisdom. When you find him, remain in his company, follow his counsel, accept his opinions and ask him to show you the straight path. Once you are on the righteous path under his guidance, remain steadfast and strive to attain gnosis. **(Al-Fath ar-Rabbani, Section-4)**
- ❖ Find a man (spiritual guide) who is like a mirror to your faith. Just as you gaze into the mirror to behold your reflection, adjust your hair and secure your turban, you should look at him (for spiritual reflection). Be wise! What is the point of being lustful? You claim that you do not need anyone for tutelage (spiritual guidance) but the Prophet has said, “The believer is other believer’s mirror.” When a believer’s faith is perfected, he becomes a mirror for

²¹ Narrated in *sura al-Kahf*

humanity. People can reflect on their own faith by observing the guided believer's conversations, gatherings and company. **(Al-Fath ar-Rabbani, Section-61)**

- ❖ It is obligatory on a person to revitalize his soul in this world before death through a man qualified to guide (the spiritual guide) because in the hereafter one reaps what is sowed in this world. Sowing is for both the outward and the inward existence of the man. **(Sirr al-Asrar, Section 8)**
- ❖ Connection is necessary in (spiritual) training as a novice at initial stage has none either with Allah or the Prophet. Hence, it is of utmost importance that a Saint (spiritual guide) first trains him because the connection they have is of physical existence like the Prophet during his life (trained his Companions through physical connection). No one other than the Holy Prophet was needed for training and persuasion but when he passed away, the training and persuasion also ended and he went in complete solitude (physically). When Saints depart from this world, they do not train and persuade anyone to attain the aim of life (Divine vision). If you are a man of wisdom then comprehend. If not then obtain the light of wisdom through mystic endeavours that overcomes the darkness of sensuality because where light enters, that place becomes exalted and adorned. Hence, he (the Saint after death) and the novice no longer share physical connection. However, he can connect to the Saint who is physically present (and be spiritually trained) as the Saint has authority to bless because he has connection with the spiritual chain being perfect inheritor of Prophet Mohammad. Hence, a Mystic who is in servitude of the Prophet and is blessed with sainthood and spiritual help during his life can exercise authority over the creation. Understand these affairs devotedly. Beyond this lies an important secret that can only be unfolded upon those who deserve. Like Allah says in the Quran:

◀ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٦٣:٨)

Meaning: But in fact honour belongs to Allah alone and His Messenger and the believers. (63:8)

As far as the training of soul is concerned, the bestial soul is trained in the body. The battles of celestial soul are in the inward. The battles of kingly soul are much deeper in the inward and the Divine soul's battles are in the secret (*sir'r*) and it is the Divine soul (the perfect spiritual guide) that is a connection between man and Allah. It is the representative of Allah to mankind, capable to have presence in His court and be His confidant. (Sirr al-Asrar Section 22)

- ❖ If you desire salvation, seek the company of the perfect spiritual guide who is well-versed in the Divine orders and proficient in gnosis. He will impart knowledge, teach you the etiquettes of the Divine court and enlighten you with His path. For a disciple, having a guide and custodian is essential because this world is akin to a treacherous jungle including numerous ferocious beasts, snakes, scorpions, disastrous hurdles as well as hunger, thirst and other perils. Without a perfect spiritual guide, a disciple who ventures into this jungle alone with beasts, snakes, scorpions and hurdles will face harm.
- ❖ O traveller of this world! Do not stray from the caravan, guide and the companions lest you lose life, wealth and all other assets. O traveller of the hereafter! You must stay devoted to the perfect spiritual guide, he will take you to the destination. Serve him with devotion, respect his opinions and never be negligent of his counsel. He will impart knowledge and draw you closer to Allah. (Al-Fath ar-Rabbani, Section-50)

SULTAN BAHOO

Sultan Bahoo says in his book *Ain-ul-Faqr*:

- ❖ One must know that who is worthy of being called the perfect spiritual guide? What qualities and attributes does he possess? How does he submerge the seeker in the Oneness and bless him with presence in the Mohammadan Assembly? What can be acquired from the spiritual guide? What is his own status and rank? Spiritual guide has Divine powers as he is the Fakir who is annihilated in Allah and immortal with Him. Spiritual guide is the giver of life (to the soul) and death (to the inciting self) and is indifferent to all the needs. He is like the philosopher's stone and also a touchstone. His glance is beneficent like the sun which changes all the bad qualities of the seeker into good ones. He is like a dyer (who changes the inward colour of seeker by diverting his attention from worldliness to Allah). Spiritual guide is a well informed person and is aware of all the qualities of a seeker just like a betel leaf chooser is aware of the qualities of betel leaves.

آہن کہ پیارس آشنا شد
فی الحال بصورتِ طلا شد

Explanation: The iron which touches philosopher's stone at once turns into gold.

The perfect spiritual guide is virtuous like Prophet Mohammad and is more kind than one's parents. He is the great leader and guide on the path to Allah, bestower of jewels just like a mine of diamonds and gems, a wave of munificence like an ocean filled with pearls, patron of every destination like a key for every lock, indifferent to worldly wealth and free of greed. He loves the seekers of Allah more than his own life. Spiritual guide is the Dervish having none

of material luxuries. He is like a corpse washer. He is always in search of a seeker whose self is dead and who wishes to reach the stage of 'death before dying' where his soul becomes alive and material body dies. Only such a true seeker can bear the hardships on the way of *Faqr* while the disobedient seekers are stubborn and follow their own will. The perfect guide can also be compared to a potter who makes pots out of clay. Clay does not dare to object before the potter who holds or moulds it to whatsoever form.

گل را چه مجال است که گوید بکمال
از بهر چه سازی و چرا می شکنی

Explanation: How can the clay dare to ask the potter why is he moulding it and what is he making out of it?

The spiritual guide must be the gnostic and the seeker should have complete trust upon him. He is the real companion of the seeker about whom the Holy Prophet said:

◀ الرَّفِيقُ ثُمَّ الطَّرِيقُ

Meaning: First find the companion and then set out on the journey.

باهو! مرشدانِ این زمانه زر بگیر
هر که نظرش زر کند آن بینظر

Explanation: O Bahoo! The (fake) spiritual guides of this age want to grab more and more wealth. The perfect spiritual guide whose glance can turn soil into gold (a common person into a lover and beloved of Allah) is rarely found.

باهو! مرشدانِ این زمانه زر پرست و زن پرست

زن پرست و زر پرست و دل سیاه و خود پرست

Explanation: O Bahoo! The (fake) spiritual guides of this age are the lovers of wealth and women. They are lewd, egoistic, arrogant and dark inwardly.

باهو! مرشدانِ واصلانِ حق عشق سوز

هر ساعتی هر دم بسوزد شب بروز

Explanation: The true spiritual guides who are one with Allah, burn in the fire of His love every moment day and night.

Listen! The existence of a human is like milk. Just like curd, lassi, butter and ghee are in milk (as they all are made after processing the milk) similarly the self, inward, soul and secret all are present at particular points in the existence of humans. When a little curd is added to the milk and it is left over night, the milk thickens to curd. When the curd is churned, butter is produced which comes up and lassi is left below. Then the butter is heated on fire which removes the impurities from the butter and pure ghee is obtained. Just as a woman completes her job by converting the milk into ghee, the spiritual guide should also accomplish his task. He should show his disciple the points of the self, inward, soul and secret separately in his existence and should also reveal upon him the point of Divine favour and the points of knowledge of station of sharia, station of mysticism, station of reality and station of gnosis. He must also make the disciple aware of the points of evil, Satan and the inward diseases like greed, jealousy, arrogance etc. in disciple's being, all separately. Just as a butcher slaughters a goat, removes its hide, separates the veins and other useless things from the

edible meat and throws them away, the spiritual guide should also separate the evil from the existence of the seeker. **(Ain-ul-Faqr)**

- ❖ There are two kinds of Fakirs. One are those who are the men of exoteric ways and others are the men of esoteric ways. Those who struggle exoterically by eating less but are unaware of the inner, will end up in falsehood. Whatever the men of esotericism eat, converts into Divine light twice as much as they eat. The food of Fakirs is light, their esoteric being is like a stove, their inward is the heavenly Kaaba, their sleep is the presence before Allah and their end is forgiven. To them the ascetics are the labourers who struggle to get a place in paradise. **(Ain-ul-Faqr)**
- ❖ Spiritual guides are of two kinds; one is the man of effective spiritual sight and the other is the (fake) guide who seeks wealth. The former grants eternal union with Allah and the latter demands his portion of wealth from the annual income of his disciples. **(Ain-ul-Faqr)**
- ❖ True spiritual guide is like a shady tree who endures the severity of weather himself and provides shade and comfort to those sitting beneath it. The spiritual guide should be against the (attractions of) world and the perfect scholar of religion, while the seeker should trust him and should not hesitate to sacrifice his wealth and life for him. The spiritual guide should be like the messenger of Allah and the seeker should be like a friend of Allah. **(Ain-ul-Faqr)**
- ❖ Mediation (of the spiritual guide) is better than excellence gained by knowledge. When one is committing sin, knowledge or excellence cannot stop him but mediation (spiritual guide) can. Just as Prophet Joseph was saved from the evil of Zulaikha due to the mediation (of his spiritual guide and father, Prophet Jacob). The Holy Prophet said:

◀ الشَّيْخُ فِي قَوْمِهِ كَنَبِيٍّ فِي أُمَّتِهِ

Meaning: The spiritual guide is among his people as a Prophet is among his nation. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

- ❖ Mystics are also of three kinds; Mystic of the world, Mystic of the hereafter and Mystic of Allah. The Mystic of the world seeks worldly wealth, fame, respect, inclination from people and wants to increase the number of his disciples. He uses the name of his pious ancestors to earn respect from devotees, builds *khanqahs*, wanders the earth and skies, shows miracles and supernatural acts to attract people and wishes to have relations with the kings. These are the attributes and ranks of eunuchs. The disciples of such eunuch spiritual guide are also the same. Second are the Mystics of hereafter who worship a lot just for the sake of heaven and adopt austerity and abstinence out of the fear of hell (none of their act is purely for Allah). They are the men of outward knowledge (of religion). Their level is (inferior and weak) like that of women and their disciples are also the same.

زاهدا! از بیم دوزخ چند ترسانی مرا
آتش دارم که دوزخ نزد آن خاکستر است

Explanation: O ascetic! Why do you frighten me of the fire of hell! There is such an intense fire (of love for Allah) inside me which can burn even the hell.

Third is the Mystic immortal with Allah, he is drowned in Oneness and is blessed with the presence before Allah. Indifferent to the world and hereafter, he is happily occupied with Allah. Only Allah! Everything other than Allah is just lust. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

- ❖ Who is a spiritual guide? He is one who can give life to the inward and death to the inciting self. When such a spiritual

guide becomes angry with a disobedient disciple, he gives life to that disciple's self and death to his inward by his wrathful attraction. Spiritual guide is the one who is so much accomplished in *Faqr* that he has forbidden everything upon himself except Allah. He is an eternal pilgrim upon whom everything is unveiled. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

- ❖ Spiritual guide is like a doctor and the disciple is like a patient. When a doctor treats a patient he gives him bitter and sweet medicines and the patient must take those medicines so that he is cured and becomes healthy. (Ain-ul-Faqr)
- ❖ Without the perfect spiritual guide none of the efforts of the seeker is fruitful even if he spends his whole life in hard mystic practices. No one has ever reached Allah without a spiritual guide because he knows every waystation of the inward way. He has the solution of every problem. In fact, spiritual guide is another name for the Divine favour, without the Divine favour no job can be accomplished. He is like a vigilant and skilled captain of the ship who is aware of all the hazards of the way and knows all the methods to overcome them. Without the captain, the ship would surely sink. For a seeker, perfect spiritual guide himself is the ship as well as the captain. One who understands, will understand. (Ain-ul-Faqr)
- ❖ Get to know and understand that verily Allah is in the inward of the possessor of Divine secrets (the perfect spiritual guide). (Ain-ul-Faqr)
- ❖ The Divine ocean of Oneness of Allah is present in the inward of a believer. Whosoever wants to gain the Truth and have union with Allah, must first find a perfect and supreme spiritual guide who is actually the possessor of all the treasures of the inward. By the efficacy of contemplation and invocation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*, the existence of perfect

Fakirs is all Divine light. Whoever is blessed with the treasures of inward does not remain deprived of the vision and closeness of Allah. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

- ❖ Spiritual guide is an embodiment of kindness, he is the confidant of Divine secrets and the granter of Allah's love to his disciples. Spiritual guide is like a sword, only that seeker may go near him who is ready to get himself beheaded. Spiritual guide is like a knife, only that seeker goes near him who can slaughter himself with his own hands. Spiritual guide is the angel of death like Azrael, only that seeker goes near him whose life is not dear to him. Spiritual guide is the house of hunger, one who can bear starvation may go near him. Spiritual guide is like a gibbet, one who can hang himself to death may go near him. Spiritual guide is like fire, one who can burn his infidel self may go near him. Whoever comes to the spiritual guide with sincerity should only keep in view the love of spiritual guide and must not judge him. Detecting good and bad is the job of spies, not of the true seekers of Allah. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

بَہُوُ طالِبَانِ اِیْنِ زَمَہِ دُونِ بَدُونِ
 طالِبَانِ رَا نِیْسَتْ طَلَبِشِ بِي چَکُونِ

Explanation: O Bahoo! The disciples of this age are mean and cowards, they do not want to attain closeness of Allah. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

What is the sign of the perfect spiritual guide?

- ❖ The perfect spiritual guide gives the seeker a beautifully written *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and advises him to inscribe it on his inward. When it gets engraved on his inward and sustains there, the spiritual guide says to him, "O seeker! Observe the theophanies radiating from the alphabets of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* like rays of the sun." Then, the seeker observes a grand and

magnificent kingdom around his inward. There he sees such a vast and spacious plain that if the fourteen layers of both the worlds are placed in it, they appear like a seed of wild rue. **(Nur-ul-Huda Kalan)**

- ❖ The perfect spiritual guide grants *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* to the seeker of Allah on the very first day. **(Kaleed-e-Jannat)**

The perfect spiritual guide is the one who not only blesses the seeker with invocation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* but also grants its contemplation as well as Divine vision and presence. Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ What are the signs of a perfect spiritual guide? He converts the entire existence of the seeker into Divine light from head to toe by his spiritual attention and the effects of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and elevates him to the observation of Divine presence. The spiritual guide who cannot grant Divine presence and its observation to the seeker of Allah on the very first day is imperfect and incapable to give spiritual persuasion. **(Nur-ul-Huda Kalan)**
- ❖ The spiritual guide who cannot give (invocation and contemplation of) *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* to the seeker is not a true spiritual guide. **(Nur-ul-Huda Kalan)**
- ❖ You must know that there are neither any mountains or walls nor a long distance between Allah and His slave. Rather there is only a thin veil of self which can easily be removed by the contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and the attention of the spiritual guide who is the man of Divine secrets. If you come, you will find the doors open for you and if you do not then Allah needs none. **(Kaleed-ul-Tauheed Kalan)**
- ❖ Know that true spiritual guide is the one who is completely aware of all the states, words, deeds, acts, level of gnosis and closeness to Allah, thoughts, arguments, considerations and *waham* of the seeker. Spiritual guide should be so much vigilant that he ever keeps his hold upon the seeker to the

extent that the seeker speaks his words and breathes with his breath. Such a spiritual guide has a thriving inward and his seekers find him omnipresent, inwardly as well as outwardly, by the power of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and keep perfect faith in him. **(Kaleed-ul-Tauheed Kalan)**

- ❖ The spiritual guide imparts gnosis and Divine vision to the seeker. He makes the seeker disgusted of the carrion world and repent thousand times from it. Perfect spiritual guide is the one who manifests the gnosis and Divine vision through the contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and then returns to *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*. From beginning till end nothing is out of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and it never will be. **(Nur-ul-Huda Kalan)**
- ❖ Even if one spends his whole life in mystic struggles and keeps standing on one leg for hundred and thirty years as a strenuous devotion he can never know anything about the real Sufism, gnosis of the inward, Divine vision, annihilation and immortality, without the favour of the perfect spiritual guide. Single spiritual attention of the perfect guide is better than hundreds of years of devotion as it reveals the vision of Allah in a moment. **(Ameer-ul-Kaunain)**

Sultan Bahoo says about a *Sarwari Qadri* spiritual guide:

- ❖ *Sarwari Qadri* spiritual guide is comprehensive and complete. He is such a book inwardly as well as outwardly which has the status of 'book of all the books'. By reading this book, the seeker is annihilated in Allah in such a way that there remains no veil before him.

طالبان را ہر مطالب خوش نما

اعتقاد صدق خواں و ز دل صفا

Explanation: The seekers who read this book with complete faith, sincerity and purity of inward, all their objectives are achieved easily. **(Kaleed-ul-Tauheed Kalan)**

عارف کامل قادری بہر قدرتے قادر و بہر مقام حاضر

Meaning: The perfect Mystic of (Sarwari) Qadri order is omnipotent and omnipresent. (Risala Roohi Sharif)

He says in his Punjabi poetry:

کامل مُرشد ایسا ہووے، جیہڑا دھوبی وانگوں جھٹّے ھو
نال نگاہ دے پاک کریندا، وِچ سَبّی صَبون نہ گھتے ھو
میلیاں نوں کر دیندا چٹّا، وِچ ذَرّہ مِیل نہ رکھے ھو
ایسا مُرشد ہووے باھو، جیہڑا لوں لوں دے وِچ وِستے ھو

Explanation: The perfect spiritual guide should be like a laundryman who does not let even the faintest stain stick to clothes turning dirty into white. Likewise, instead of involving in forty days seclusion or unnecessary endeavours and struggles, the guide shows the path of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* along with casting spiritual glance which purifies the self and cures the diseases of soul and inward. His marvel lies in the fact that he eradicates the love of the world from one's inward and removes its vicious desires as well as that of the inciting self replacing with Divine love. Such a spiritual guide manifests in the entire being of the seeker. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

مُرشد وانگ سَنارے ہووے، جیہڑا گھت سُکھالی گالے ھو
پا سُکھالی باہر گڈھے، بُندے گھڑے یا والے ھو

Explanation: The goldsmith melts raw gold in a crucible and then alters it into many forms of jewellery giving it a lustrous look. Such should be the spiritual guide who burns the seeker in the kiln of ardent Divine love and moulds his spiritual being with *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* purifying it from the love of other than Allah.

Old habits and wishes are altered, moulding the seeker as he desires. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

ایہہ تن میرا چشماں ہووے، تے میں مُرشد ویکھ نہ رَجّاں ھُو
 لوں لوں دے مُڈھ لکھ لکھ چشماں، ہک کھولاں تے ہک کجّاں ھُو
 اتنا ڈُھیاں صبر ناں آوے، میں ہور کتے وَل بھجّاں ھُو
 مُرشد دا دیدار ہے باھُو، مینوں لکھ کروڑاں جّاں ھُو

Explanation: I wish that my entire body turns to one big eye so that I may behold my beloved spiritual guide to my heart's content. This might not be enough because what if it blinks! I desire lakhs of eyes on every hair of the body so that if a few of them blink, I could still behold him. Beholding him with so many eyes is not lessening the desire rather it is intensifying making me restless. This restlessness is showing signs of proceeding to the next stage of *Faqr*. A single look at the spiritual guide is equivalent to billions of hajj. May Allah bless me with this condition eternally! (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

اَللّٰہ چنبے دی بوٹی، میرے مَن وِچ مُرشد لاندّا ھُو
 جس گت اُتے سوہنا راضی ہوندا، اوہو گت سکھاندّا ھُو
 ہر دم یاد رکھے ہر ویلے، آپ اُٹھاندّا بَہاندّا ھُو
 آپ سمجھ سمجھیندا باھُو، آپ آپ بَن جاندا ھُو

Explanation: The perfect spiritual guide has unveiled all the powers and secrets of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* within me by imprinting it inwardly. Now he teaches and enhances those of my habits, states and conditions which he is fond of and are acceptable in the court of Allah. I am not left for a moment when he is not showering love, affection and beneficence. I have annihilated in

him to such an extent that none of my words, deeds and gestures are without his will. He teaches the secrets and powers of the path of *Faqr*. At times, when I am completely annihilated, it is he who is manifested in my being. I do not exist; it is him and this is how he ends the difference of 'you and I' between us.
(Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

تو تاں جاگ نہ جاگ فقیر، اَنت نوں لوڑ جگایا ھو
اکھیں میٹیاں نہ دل جاگے، جاگے جاں مطلب نوں پایا ھو
ایہہ نکتہ جداں کیتا بُختہ، تاں ظاہر آکھ سنایا ھو
میں تاں بُھلی ویندی ساں باھو، مینوں مرشد راہ دکھایا ھو

Explanation: Merely closing one's eyes for meditation does not enlighten the inward rather this piece of show is for your own need and to attract audiences. Inward awakes from the slumber of negligence when *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* is invoked and contemplated, consequently Allah is beheld. I was lost as I believed in the long seclusions and meditations until my spiritual guide showed me the path of Truth, since then I have rightly understood the point.
(Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

جتنے رتی عشق وکاوے، اوتھے مناں ایمان دوپوے ھو
کُتب کتاباں ورد وظیفے، اوتر چا کچیوے ھو
باجھوں مُرشد کُجھ نہ حاصل، توڑے راتیں جاگ پڑھیوے ھو
مریئے مرن تھیں اگے باھو، تاں رب حاصل تھیوے ھو

Explanation: If a few grams of Divine love is being sold better barter maunds of faith for it because the heights where love can take you, faith is unaware. Nothing is possible without the perfect spiritual guide even if you spend your entire life studying books, doing litanies, recitals or staying up at nights. Remember! Union

with Allah is not possible without 'death before dying'. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

جل جلیندیاں جنگل بھونڈیاں، میری ہکا گل نہ پگی ھو
چلے چلیے مکے حج گزاریاں، میری دل دی دوار نہ ڈکی ھو
تریسے روزے پنج نمازاں، ایہہ وی پڑھ پڑھ تھکی ھو
سبھے مراداں حاصل ہویاں باھو، جداں مُرشد نظر مہر دی بکھی ھو

Explanation: I wandered in swamps and jungles, opted for long seclusions, offered five daily salats, fasted for thirty days and even went to Makkah for hajj, until I got tired but Divine gnosis was unachieved. All my worries faded and veils were lifted by an affectionate glance from my perfect spiritual guide. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

جو پاکی بن پاک ماہی دے، سو پاکی جان پلیتی ھو
ہک بت خانے جا واصل ہوئے، ہک خالی رہے مسیتی ھو
عشق دی بازی لئی انہاں، جنہاں سر دیندیاں ڈھل نہ کیتی ھو
ہرگز دوست نہ ملدا باھو، جنہاں ترٹی چوڑ نہ کیتی ھو

Explanation: The so-called purity gained through excessive worship and spiritual exercises without oath of allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide is filth and impurity. All the levels, stations and spiritual experiences gained without perfect spiritual guide are in fact a deceit. The one who is endowed with the sacred slavery of spiritual guide gains union with Allah even at a church or temple. This is because he safeguards him every moment. On the other hand, the person who has not taken oath to perfect spiritual guide will remain deprived even if he spends entire life worshipping in a mosque. In the game of Divine love, only those gain victory who are ready to get beheaded. The Divine vision and

union are not achieved unless a person sacrifices his entire household for it. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

عشق آسانوں لیاں جاتا، کر کے آوے دھائی ھو
 جتول ویکھاں مینوں عشق دسیوے، خالی جگہ نہ کائی ھو
 مُرشد کامل ایسا ملیا، جس دل دی تاکی لاہی ھو
 میں قربان اس مُرشد باھو، جس دسیا بھیت الہی ھو

Explanation: Divine love swiftly came enfolding and overpowering me. Now wherever I turn I see theophanies of the Essence. This beatitude showered by my spiritual guide has enlightened me with secrets of Allah and unsealed the locks inwardly. I wish to sacrifice myself for the perfect spiritual guide who confided secrets to me. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

کی ہويا جے بُت اوڈھر ہويا، دل ہرگز دُور نہ تھیوے ھو
 سے کوہاں تے میرا مُرشد وسدا، مینوں وچ حضور دسیوے ھو
 جیندے اندر عشق دی رتی، اوہ بن شرابوں کھیوے ھو
 نام فقیر تنہاں دا باھو، قبر جنہاں دی جیوے ھو

Explanation: Although my spiritual guide is not in front of me but that is not the case of my heart. He lives remote still I see him like I am in his presence. A seeker who loves Allah even minutely will seem drunk without wine. Fakirs are those who are immortal and their graves are the epitome of beneficence and blessings. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

مرشد مینوں جج کئے دا، رحمت دا دروازہ ھو
 کراں طواف دوالے قبلے، نیت ہووے جج تازہ ھو

کُن فیکون جدو کا سُنیّا، دُٹھا مُرشد دا دروازہ ھُو
 مُرشد سدا حیاتی والا باھُو، اوہو خضر تے خواجہ ھُو

Explanation: In this quatrain, Sultan Bahoo symbolizes seeing the countenance of the spiritual guide as hajj, calls him the gateway to compassion and mercy of Allah and considers meeting him as circumambulating Kaaba.

The company of my spiritual guide is hajj for me, he is the door to Allah's mercy and I am in constant state of circumambulating him. I had recognized him in pre-existence when I heard the Divine command, 'Be and it becomes'. My spiritual guide is like Khidr, immortal, he is my guide and leader. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

مُرشد کامل اوہ سہیڑیے، جیہڑا دو جگ خوشی وکھاوے ھُو
 پہلے غم کلڑے دا میٹے، دت رب دا راہ سمجھاوے ھُو
 اِس کَلر والی کندھی نوں، چا چاندی خاص بناوے ھُو
 جس مرشد ایستھے کُجھ نہ کیتا باھُو، اوہ کوڑے لارے لاوے ھُو

Explanation: The perfect spiritual guide is the one who gives salvation in both the worlds. He directs the perception and focus to Allah from merely the challenge of earning livelihood which has bothered man's inward for long. He transforms radically the turbulent and inexperienced spiritual being of seeker through *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* into silver, that is, blesses with gnosis of Allah. A guide who fails to do all this in the physical world and cannot direct a seeker of Allah on the path towards His gnosis is inexperienced, a notorious liar and a cheat. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

مُرشد مکہ تے طالب حاجی، کعبہ عشق بنایا ھُو
 وِچ حضور سدا ہر ویلے، کریئے حج سوایا ھُو

ہک دم میتھوں جدا نہ ہووے، دل ملنے تے آیا ھو
مرشد عین حیاتی باھو، میرے لوں لوں وچ سما ھو

Explanation: The perfect spiritual guide is Makkah, the seeker is pilgrim and his love is Kaaba. Such a seeker is eternally present in front of Allah in the state of circumambulation out of love which is his hajj. I am not separated from my guide even for a moment and now my inward yearns for complete union. My immortal guide is like a soul to this body. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

مرشد ہادی سبق پڑھایا، بن پڑھیوں پیا پڑھیوے ھو
اُنگلیاں وچ کٹاں دے دتیاں، بن سُنیوں پیا سُنیوے ھو
نین نیناں وَلوں تُر تُر تکرے، بن ڈٹھیوں پیا دسیوے ھو
باھو ہر خانے وچ جانی وسدا، کن سر اوہ رکھیوے ھو

Explanation: The perfect spiritual guide has taught me such a lesson of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* that my soul invokes it all the time. If I cover my ears I could still hear my soul invoking the name of Allah. My condition is that my eyes keep on beholding the spiritual guide even when I close them. The beloved guide is manifesting through my entire existence. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

مرشد باجھوں فقر کماوے، وچ کفر دے بُدے ھو
شیخ مشائخ ہو بہندے حجرے، غوث قطب بن اڈے ھو
تسبیحاں نپ بہن مسیتی، جوں موش بہندا وڑ کھڈے ھو
رات اندھاری مشکل پینڈا باھو، سے سے آون ٹھڈے ھو

Explanation: Man without the guidance of the perfect spiritual guide not only stays deprived of union with Allah but also goes astray

and becomes a heathen. This is because his intellectual struggle fails to grant him Allah's union so he believes that God never existed. He is engulfed by the darkness of self-conceit and egotism becoming the victim of inclination of creation. Then he sits in a small chamber in the guise of a spiritual guide and makes himself known as *Ghawth* and *Qutb*. Some fashion themselves with a chaplet and sit in a mosque or an enclosure like a mouse hides in a corner. All their prayers and mystic exercises are just a pretence to attract people. Without the perfect spiritual guide, no one can travel this difficult path filled with hurdles and therefore stays in the darkness of ignorance. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

سے روزے سے نفل نمازاں، سے سجدے کر کر تھلے ھو
 سے واری مئے حج گزارن، دل دی دوڑ ناں مئے ھو
 چلے چلیے جنگل بھونا، اس گل تھیں ناں پکے ھو
 سبھے مطلب حاصل ہوندے باھو، جد پیر نظر اک تئے ھو

Explanation: I left no stone unturned to accomplish gnosis by performing various religious rites. I offered supererogatory prayers, placed my plea while prostrating in salat hundreds of times, performed hajj, forty-day seclusions and then wandered off into the woods to find Allah but failed due to lack of guidance of the perfect spiritual guide. I remained deprived of Allah's gnosis unless I came in the servitude of my guide. The moment he cast his eyes upon me with beneficence then and there I accomplished the purpose of my life. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

ناں میں سنی ناں میں شیعہ، میرا دوہاں توں دل سڑیا ھو
 مک گئے سبھ خشکی پنیڈے، جدوں دریا رحمت وچ وڑیا ھو

کئی مَن تارے تر تر ہارے، کوئی کنارے چڑھیا ھو
 صحیح سلامت چڑھ پار گئے اوہ باھو، جنہاں مُرشد دا لڑ پھڑیا ھو

Explanation: I am neither a Sunni nor a Shia as there is prejudice, intolerance and belligerence in different schools of thought. When I was blessed with union of Allah and dived into the vast ocean of Oneness, I found no disagreement there hence achieved the essence of the religion. Only the person who associates himself with the perfect spiritual guide, elevates from sectarianism to this destination of truth. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

ناں رب عرش معلّٰی اُتے، نان رب خانے کجے ھو
 نان رب علم کتابیں لبھا، نان رب وچ محرابے ھو
 گنگا تیر تھیں مول نہ ملیا، مارے پینڈے بے حسابے ھو
 جد دا مرشد پھڑیا باھو، جھٹے کل عذابے ھو

Explanation: I searched for Allah and when I found Him I came to know that He is neither seated on His Throne nor resides in Kaaba. He cannot be found in mosques and different places of worship. He is also not found by reading books and gaining intellect. He is neither found by secluding into woods nor by performing hard devotional and mystic exercises. The place where He resides is the inward of the perfect spiritual guide, the man who knows the Divine secrets. Since I came in the servitude of the perfect spiritual guide, all my endeavours and worries have faded away. (Sultan Bahoo - Punjabi Poetry)

ABU HAMID MOHAMMAD IBN MOHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

Al-Ghazali emphasized that to enter the congregation of Sufis (to take oath of allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide) is an

obligation because there can never be a man who is not affected with the diseases and vices of soul except the Prophets. He further said:

- ❖ I was a denier of the spiritual states experienced by the righteous ones as well as of the various Sufi stations accomplished by the Mystics until I received beneficence from the assembly and servitude of my spiritual guide Fadl ibn Mohammad al-Farmadi. He cleansed my inward through mystic endeavours hence I was exalted by experiencing Divine observations and was blessed with His vision in a dream. Allah said, “O Abu Hamid! Leave all your preoccupations and opt for the company of those who are the centre of My attention. These are the people who have traded both the worlds for My love.” I entreated, “Almighty! Bestow me with good faith about them.” Allah said, “I have bestowed.” Then Allah said, “Do not get absorbed in the love of the world, it is the barrier between you and them. Renounce the love of the world before you have to abandon it after experience. O Ghazali! I conferred My sacred proximity and Holy lustre upon you.” As soon as I woke up, I presented myself in the assembly of my spiritual guide and narrated the dream. My spiritual guide smiled and said, “O Abu Hamid these are the initial signs (of my spiritual powers) for you. If you continue your servitude towards me, this sacred discernment will be adorned with the support of the Lord.”

SHAIKH ABD AL-WAHHAB AL-SHA'RANI

He said:

- ❖ The marvel of the (perfect) spiritual guide lies in his ability to shorten the path to Allah. One who embarks on this path without a spiritual guide will go astray and despite a lifetime of struggle will be unable to reach his destination.

A spiritual guide can be likened to a leader who guides seekers along the most challenging paths.

- ❖ If it were possible to reach this destination solely through reading books and without the guidance of a spiritual guide, then renowned Muslim scholars like Shaikh Ghazali and Shaikh Izzuddin Abdul Aziz ibn Abdul Salam would not have felt the need for one. Before entering the circle and servitude of a spiritual guide, they would assert that anyone claiming there was a way to gain religious knowledge beyond their own method was lying about God. However, upon embracing Sufism and joining the assembly of a spiritual guide, they were blessed with the sweetness of Allah's love. They would then confess, "We squandered a significant part of our lives in idle pursuits and spiritual veils."

SHAIKH AHMAD ZARRUQ

Shaikh Ahmad Zarruq said:

- ❖ It is preferable to acquire knowledge and learn righteous deeds from great spiritual guides rather than from others, as Allah says about them:

◀ بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ (29:49)

Meaning: But these are the clear verses that are in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge. (29:49)

◀ وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ (31:15)

Meaning: But follow someone who adopts the path of turning to Me. (31:15)

Do not embark on an unknown path without a spiritual guide, lest one fails to grasp its intricacies. Only the spiritual guide can lead one to the shores of success.

SHAIKH MOHAMMAD AL-HASHIMI

He said:

- ❖ Give your hand in the sacred hand (for oath of allegiance) of such a spiritual guide, a Mystic annihilated in Allah who has sincerity, truthfulness, true knowledge and is of pure nature. He should have traversed the path to Allah under the guidance of a perfect spiritual guide. He should be well-versed in the intricacies of the Sufi path, so that he can protect you from the difficulties, apprehensions and spiritual pitfalls encountered along the way and teach you how to detach from everything other than Allah. Only such a spiritual guide can eradicate the flaws of the self and make you aware of Allah's blessings upon you. When you come to recognize his reality, you will begin to love him. As you grow in love for him, you will willingly obey his commands, striving for closeness to him. In this way, he will guide you to Allah.

SHAIKH IBN HAJAR AL-HAYTAMI

Spiritual guide, jurist and well versed in the traditions of the Holy Prophet, Ibn Hajar said:

- ❖ It is advised that to obtain proximity to Allah, a devotee should hold on to the words of his spiritual guide, for he is the great doctor who recommends remedies tailored to each devotee's nature and soul's ailments, thereby nourishing their soul with what benefits them.

SHAIKH IBRAHIM IBN MOHAMMAD IBN AHMAD AL-BAJURI

He said:

- ❖ Pledging allegiance to a spiritual guide is the most rewarding precursor to embarking on the path of mystic endeavours as

is quoted by Sufis, “Single spiritual glance of a perfect spiritual guide upon a thousand men is far better than the effect of sermons of thousand scholars to a man.”

- ❖ The seeker should remain respectful in the presence of his spiritual guide, for he may be fortunate enough to have the mirror of his inward cleansed by the sacred glance of the spiritual guide.

SHAIKH HUSAYN IBN ABDULLAH IBN MOHAMMAD TAYYABI

Shaikh Husayn ibn Abdullah ibn Mohammad Tayyabi said:

- ❖ It is inappropriate for a scholar to consider his knowledge sufficient regardless of how unparalleled and credible he may become. Rather, it is obligatory for him to join the assembly of accomplished Sufis, so that they may guide him along the straight path that leads to Allah. Hence, he attains the level of those whose inwards are inspired by Allah due to their purified inner state. He must rid himself of worldly impurities and strive to abandon greed, lust and filth of the self, which have tainted his knowledge. To attain complete purification and inspired knowledge, he should surrender himself to the servitude of a perfect spiritual guide who possesses the knowledge to cure sensual diseases and purify the impure self. He liberates him from the conceits of the self and its subtle deceptions. Those accomplished in Sufism are in consensus that it is obligatory for a person to pledge allegiance to a perfect spiritual guide who teaches him to abandon vile habits that hinder his presence in the Holy Court.

SHAIKH IBN ATA-ALLAH AL-ISKANDARI

Ibn Ata-Allah said:

- ❖ A person determined to excel in Sufism and mysticism should seek a spiritual guide who is well-versed in this path, familiar with its secrets and has got presence in the court of Allah. When he finds a spiritual guide possessing these attributes, he must obey his instructions and refrain from everything the spiritual guide prohibits.
- ❖ Your true spiritual guide is not the one from whom you (merely) hear words but the one from whom you attain spiritual growth and realization. A person's true spiritual guide is not the one whose sermons he listens to but the one whose (even subtle) guidance resonates deeply within his soul. A true spiritual guide is not the one who merely invites you to the door (of this path), but the one who lifts the veils (of ignorance). A true spiritual guide is not the one who elevates the seeker to a position above himself but the one who liberates him from the captivity of greed, lust and sensual desires, and unites him with Allah.
- ❖ Your true spiritual guide is the polisher of your inner mirror. He refines it to such an extent that it is illuminated by Divine light and theophanies. He leads the devotee to the court of Allah and accompanies him throughout the journey. The spiritual guide grants the devotee the blessing of presence in the Holy Court, and after revealing the Divine vision to him, proclaims, "This is Allah." Do not opt for the company of such a person who cannot lead you to Allah and elevate your level in His court.

KHAWAJA HAFIZ SHIRAZI

آناں کہ خاک را بہ نظر کیا کنند
آیا بود کہ گوشہ چشمے بہا کنند

Explanation: I yearn for a glimpse from those who can transform dust into gold with their alchemy; may they glance towards me!

JALLALUDDIN MOHAMMAD RUMI

ہیچ کس از نزد خود چیزے نہ شد ہیچ آہن خنجر تیزے نہ شد
 ہیچ حلوائی نہ شد استادِ کار تاکہ شاگردے شکر ریزے نہ شد
 مولوی ہرگز نہ شد مولائے روم تا غلام شمس تبریزے نہ شد

Explanation: One cannot attain spiritual accomplishment alone, just as iron cannot be forged into a dagger without the expertise of a blacksmith, and a confectioner cannot become skilled without being apprenticed to a master confectioner. Similarly, I was merely a Muslim scholar until I came under the guidance of my spiritual guide, Shams of Tabriz, and was transformed into Rumi.

ALLAMA MOHAMMAD IQBAL

Allama Iqbal, the disciple of Rumi, writes:

صحبتِ پیرِ روم سے مجھ پہ ہوا یہ رازِ فاش
 لاکھ حکیم سرِ بجیب، ایک کلیم سرِ بکف
 (بالِ جبریل)

Explanation: It dawned upon me through the company of my spiritual guide Rumi that a million wise men submerged in philosophical thoughts trying to unfold the Divine secrets through intellect are nothing in comparison to one individual who converses with Allah inwardly and takes Allah's secrets directly from Him, for he is ever engrossed in jihad with his self. (Iqbal and Faqr)

حدیثِ دل کسی درویش بے گلیم سے پوچھ
 خدا کرے تجھے تیرے مقام سے آگاہ
 (بالِ جبریل)

Explanation: Acquire the secret states of inward from an unconventional Dervish who is not bound by apparent customs of Sufism. Being independent of all bounds, he is close to Allah. May Allah enlighten men with their own reality! (**Iqbal and Faqr**)

DATA GANJ BAKHSH ALI IBN USMAN AL-HAJVERI

- ❖ Without the companionship and servitude of a perfect spiritual guide, no one can attain the level of a Sufi and Mystic, achieving immortality with Allah.

IMDADULLAH MUHAJIR MAKKI

Imdadullah Muhajir Makki emphasized that a person without a spiritual guide is, in fact, guided by Satan. He said in *Shamaim Imdadiya*:

- ❖ The servitude of an accomplished spiritual guide is essential for correcting one's beliefs in the Oneness of Allah and Messengerhood, attaining piety and for refining one's spiritual practices, observations and invocations. It is impossible to progress even for a short distance on the path of *Faqr* without the spiritual guide.
- ❖ No matter how much a man is devout and pious, he cannot escape the traps of Satan. This mystic knowledge is being passed through a continuous spiritual chain of Saints.
- ❖ It is compulsory to learn the right method to invoke *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* from a perfect guide as this method is passed through generations spiritually. This knowledge originated from Prophet Mohammad and the spiritual guide serves as his representative, guiding seekers on the (straight) path to Allah.

AL-MUHADDITH SHAH ABDUL AZIZ DEHLVI

There is no other meaning of the following Divine order but to find a spiritual guide:

◀ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ (٥:٣٥)

Meaning: O believers! Fear Allah persistently and keep looking for a mediator to (approach and get closer to) Him. (5:35)

KHAWAJA SHAMSUDDIN SIALVI

He said:

- ❖ It is not possible to progress in Sufism without a perfect spiritual guide.
- ❖ The strength to obey Allah and His Prophet is bestowed by loving (and following) the spiritual guide. A disciple should absorb himself in the spiritual guide to the extent that he could witness Allah and His Prophet's manifestation.

SHAIKH ABDUL AZIZ AL-DABBAGH

He said:

- ❖ The perfect spiritual guide can make any man unite with Allah in a moment.

SHAIKH IBN HAJAR AL-ASQALANI

Shaikh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani said:

- ❖ To take oath of allegiance to a spiritual guide is absolutely in accordance with the Quran, Sunna and the religious consensus formed by Muslim scholars. A devotee is on the level of sharia for as long as he forcefully restrains the self. When he passionately worships and feels delighted during it then it is mysticism. In mysticism, a person is elevated from verbosity to spiritual states. The difference between (merely) knowledge and (spiritual) experiences is the same as that of a man of words (scholar) and the man of spiritual states (the perfect spiritual guide) who belongs to the group of lovers of Allah.

SHAIKH IZZUDDIN ABDUL AZIZ BIN ABDUL SALAM

Initially he was against the Saints. When he heard the poetry of Abul Hassan al-Shadhili, he exclaimed, “People! Listen to this poetry. It has not been revealed before.” Being impressed by his poetry, he pledged allegiance to him. When he benefitted from the company of his spiritual guide, he exclaimed that the group of Sufis form the base of religion and the proof lies in the miracles that manifest from them. He further said that the people who deny the Saints are accursed and signs of God’s wrath are visible upon their faces. Their faces are void of Divine luminosity and this reality is not hidden from the men of Divine observations.

SHAIKH ABU SAEED ABUL KHAYR

He said:

- ❖ In mysticism, inward is directly connected to Allah. The one who does not learn (and experience) it, is worthless. The foundation of mysticism is oath of allegiance.

SHAIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI (MUJADDID ALIF SANI)

- ❖ The way of Saints is the same as that of the sacred Companions. No matter how much pious a man becomes, he is not exempted from the need of benefitting from Saints. Imam Abu Hanifa benefitted from Bahlool for two years and would say that if those two years were not part of his life, he would have been spiritually wasted. It is his saying that companionship of a spiritual guide is better than any kind of invocation.

SHAIKH SAIN TAWAKAL SHAH

Shaikh Sain Tawakal Shah said in *Zikr-e-Khair*:

- ❖ By pledging allegiance to a spiritual guide, a devotee receives the benefit of Allah's protection in both his religious and worldly affairs. A devotee must submit everything to the spiritual guide, and in return, the spiritual guide is responsible for providing him spiritual support during the agonies of death, ensuring that the devotee's final words are an invocation of Allah's name thus protecting his faith from Satan's grasp. The spiritual guide facilitates a smooth interrogation by the two angels, Munkar and Nakir, in the grave for the devotee, and assists him in crossing the narrow bridge (Sirat) to paradise. Ultimately, the spiritual guide is responsible for ensuring that the seeker receives the blessing of the Holy Prophet's intercession. Devotees who are intensely in love with their spiritual guide from the depths of their soul, experience an indescribable relationship with Allah.

MIAN MOHAMMAD BAKHSH

- ۱۔ ہر مشکل دی کنجی یارو ہتھ مرداں دے آئی
مرد نگاہ کرن جس ویلے، مشکل رہے نہ کائی
- ۲۔ مرد ملے تے مرض گواوے، اوکُن دے گُن کردا
کامل پیر محمد بخشا لال بناون پتھر دا
- ۳۔ صحبت مجلس پیر میرے دی بہتر نفل نمازوں
ہک ہک سخن شریف انہاں دا کردا محرم رازوں
- ۴۔ چُجھی مار لیاون موتی وحدت دے دریاؤں
کھریاں گلاں، کھریاں چالاں، دامن پاک ریاؤں

۵۔ بخشش جتنا قدر نہ میرا، میرے صاحبِ نون وڈیاں

میں گلیاں دا رُوڑا کُوڑا، محل چڑھایا سائیاں

Explanation: (1) Solutions to all the difficulties lie with the perfect spiritual guide and when he casts an affectionate glance upon the seeker, all his problems are solved.

(2) Once a seeker finds the perfect spiritual guide, he is freed from spiritual diseases (such as greed, jealousy, egotism, lust, malice and rancour). The spiritual guide then purifies the seeker's inward. He could transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, turning stones into precious gems and rubies i.e., he can elevate common individuals and worldly seekers to revered Saints.

(3) The assembly of my spiritual guide surpasses even supererogatory prayers, for every word spoken by him and each glance he casts imparts Divine secrets.

(4) The perfect man (spiritual guide) is perpetually immersed in the ocean of oneness with Allah and with each passing moment, he emerges with new secrets. His words and actions are imbued with truth and Divinity, untainted by hypocrisy.

(5) I was once insignificant and worthless, like a tiny poppy seed. However, through the kindness and blessings of my spiritual guide, I have achieved everything in life. Previously, I was worse than the dirt on the streets but it is solely my spiritual guide's favour that he purified my soul and stationed me at present (spiritually noble) status.

SULTAN-UL-FAQR VI SULTAN MOHAMMAD ASGHAR ALI

Sultan-ul-Faqr VI Sultan Mohammad Asghar Ali is my spiritual guide. He often repeated the saying of Sultan Bahoo that the perfect spiritual guide of *Sarwari Qadri* order is omnipresent and all powerful. He said that the perfect spiritual guide never burdens

his seekers with rigorous mystic exercises, forty-day seclusions or lengthy daily recitals. Instead, he is well-versed in the spiritual path of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and the contemplation of *Ism-e-Mohammad*. He bestows upon the seeker the eternal invocation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and bestows him with the golden, engraved Divine names of Allah and Prophet Mohammad for contemplation. He lets him cover the path of *Faqr* by showing him the way of inscribing Allah's name on the body. This is not written in books as its knowledge is secretly transferred inwardly. The perfect spiritual guide sanctifies the soul and body of the seeker by engaging him in invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and inscribing it on body and then presents him in the court of Allah. The spiritual guide who cannot do this is imperfect and fake. Such an individual should not be followed or trusted. He said:

- ❖ The companionship of the perfect spiritual guide cultivates Divine love within. As the Holy Prophet was once asked, "Which friend is better?" He replied, "Whose countenance reminds you of Allah and whose conversation enhances your good deeds."
- ❖ These who profess to have beheld Allah and have become close to Him without the guidance of the perfect spiritual guide are liars. Such claims should be met with scepticism, as the history of Sufism and *Faqr* unequivocally demonstrates that no one has ever reached Allah covering the waystations of the spiritual path all by himself without the guidance of the perfect spiritual guide.
- ❖ It is said that genuine spiritual guides are rare in today's world, while fraudulent ones are plentiful. However, those who seek worldly gain or heavenly rewards rather than the Divine will inevitably be deceived by such impostors. A sincere seeker, longing for proximity to Allah, is divinely protected by the very One he seeks. Therefore, before

searching for a spiritual guide, first purify intentions, only then one will be guided on the straight path. Due to the rarity of sincere seekers, the perfect spiritual guide has concealed himself from the worldly people. For in this era, there are scarcely any genuine seekers of Allah who wholeheartedly strive for His closeness and recognition. I strongly reiterate the importance of seeking the perfect spiritual guide with a genuine intention and an open mind, free from prejudice, only then will you discover your true spiritual destination. Despite being in close proximity to Prophet Mohammad, Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab failed to recognize him. In contrast, Owais al-Qarani, driven by his genuine passion and devotion was able to recognize the Prophet even from a long distance.

- ❖ The seeker should invoke and contemplate *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* or *Ism-e-Mohammad* along with writing it on his body (as instructed by the spiritual guide) for Divine vision and presence in the Mohammadan Assembly. It is essential for a seeker to regularly visit his spiritual guide, as the guide's company is a sacred space where the light of faith is instilled in the soul of the follower. One glance of the perfect spiritual guide is more effective than the invocation and contemplation of six months as Mian Mohammad Bakhsh said, "The assemblage of my spiritual guide surpasses even supererogatory prayers." If a seeker is unable to visit his spiritual guide daily, he should strive to visit at least once a week or once a month, with genuine faith and sincerity. For even the invocation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* cannot be deeply ingrained within without regularly attending the spiritual guide's assembly.
- ❖ The perfect spiritual guide of the *Sarwari Qadri* order is omnipresent and all-powerful. Nonetheless, the seeker must approach him with sincerity.

- ❖ Initially, the invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* cultivates love for the spiritual guide. A deep phenomenon to reflect is that, although the seeker is focusing on the contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*, the love and devotion that arise within his inward are directed towards the spiritual guide. Although according to the principle, love should be created for the one who is being contemplated. The love for the spiritual guide becomes an irresistible force, drawing the seeker back to his company time and again. As this love intensifies, it undergoes the transformation of evolving into love for Prophet Mohammad. Ultimately, this love is sublimated into an ardent devotion to Allah, guiding the seeker to his (ultimate spiritual) destination.
- ❖ The sacred glance from the perfect spiritual guide has the sublime effect of cleansing the seeker's inward of all spiritual maladies including greed, jealousy, arrogance, rancour, egotism, lust, malice, worldly desires and attachment to the hereafter. Thus, purified and liberated, the seeker is empowered to embark on the path of *Faqr*.
- ❖ Although one may attain rewards and spiritual ranks through worship performed without the guidance and supervision of a perfect spiritual guide but it is impossible to achieve Divine observation, presence of the inward, recognition of Allah and His closeness without the guidance of the spiritual guide.
- ❖ The perfect spiritual guide shortens the path of *Faqr*, enabling the seeker to traverse spiritual distances that would normally take years, in just a few days. Without the guidance of a perfect spiritual guide, anyone who embarks on this spiritual journey is inevitably led astray and despite efforts, remains unable to reach his spiritual destination throughout his entire lifetime. A Hadith reveals, "Verily the one who is not guided by a spiritual guide, Satan surrounds him."

- ❖ Embarking on the path of *Faqr* without the guidance of a spiritual guide is utterly inconceivable. In fact, even taking the first step on this journey without his guidance is impossible.
- ❖ If a seeker struggles to comprehend the disclosures of the Divine lights, theophanies or the secrets which are revealed by the contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and is perplexed and doubtful then the spiritual guide should grant him the contemplation of *Ism-e-Mohammad* as it is the straight path. Prophet Mohammad said, “Whoever beheld me in fact beheld the Reality.” **(Sultan-ul-Faqr VI Sultan Mohammad Asghar Ali-Life and Teachings)**

Without the leadership and guidance of the spiritual guide who is the man of Divine Essence and radiates the light of guidance, even to ruminant union with Allah is among the impossibilities. Amidst the turbulent sea of ignorance that envelops the world and in the vortex of worries of hereafter, the perfect spiritual guide shines as a radiant beacon of hope for the seeker of Allah. With his guidance, the seeker can navigate the precarious journey of life, overcoming formidable challenges and tempests and safely reach the shore. Without the guidance of the perfect spiritual guide who is the man of Divine Essence, any aspirations to attain the lofty stations of ‘annihilation in Allah and being immortal with Him’ remain mere fantasy and self-delusion.

GLOSSARY OF SUFI TERMS

ANNIHILATION

Annihilation is translated from Arabic word *Fana* (فنا).

Annihilation and immortality are two stages that form a compound in spirituality, annihilation alone is incomplete. It is related with purification of the self which prevents man from travelling towards Allah. Annihilation has various stages and continues according to the spiritual capacity until nothing but Divine Essence adorns the man within. The three levels are:

1. Annihilation in the spiritual guide (*Fana fi Shaikh* فناني الشيخ)
2. Annihilation in the Holy Prophet (*Fana fi Rasool* فناني الرسول)
3. Annihilation in Allah (*Fana fillah* فناني الله)

ATTENTION

Tawajjuh (توجه): It is the esoteric attention of perfect spiritual guide which he casts on the seeker.

BELIEVER

The Arabic word *Mumin* (مومن) is translated as the believer or faithful. A believer can be distinguished from a Muslim as a Muslim accepts Islam verbally or just because he is born in a Muslim family. He follows Islam only outwardly but the believer reaches the essence of Islam following the spiritual path and worships Allah while beholding Him with perfect faith. Following verse explains the difference:

◀ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَكِنَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤:٣٩﴾

Meaning: The bedouins say, “We have believed.” Say, “You have not (yet) believed. Rather say, ‘We have accepted Islam.’ And the belief has not yet gone into your inwards. If you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease anything (in reward) for your deeds. Surely Allah is the Most Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.” (49:14)

COMPANIONS

The Arabic word *Sahaba* (صحابه) is translated as the Companions.

They are the group of fortunate people who had the privilege of meeting or seeing the Holy Prophet in the state of faith, whether any of them enjoyed his company for years or for a short while.

CONTEMPLATION

Tasawur (تصور): It is to contemplate *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* (الله) in a particular manner after pledging allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide. When the seeker elevates spiritually, his contemplation also elevates and becomes stronger.

Invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* are conjoined according to the teachings of Sultan Bahoo.

See invocation (*dhikr*).

DEMOTION

Rajat (رجعت): Sometimes a seeker commits a sin or mistake, resultantly he is relegated from his spiritual station. This is called

‘spiritual demotion’. This demotion is a temporary punishment for the seeker. As soon as he realizes his mistake and seeks forgiveness, his status is restored. If he does not admit his fault, he is permanently demoted.

DIVINE VISION

Divine vision is beholding Allah with spiritual sight. It is the purpose for which man was created as Allah says in a *Qudsi* Hadith:

◀ كُنْتُ كَنْزًا مَخْفِيًّا فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعْرَفَ فَخَلَقْتُ الْخَلْقَ

Meaning: I was a hidden Treasure, I intended to be recognized so I created the creation.

Recognizing Allah is not possible without beholding Him. A misconception about Divine vision is that the believers will be blessed with it on the doomsday whereas Allah says:

◀ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ (١٧:٧٢)

Meaning: And whoever remains blind (to the vision of Allah) in this (world) will be blind in the hereafter as well. (17:72)

Yearning for the vision of Allah is the foremost demand of His love. One who does not seek vision of the Beloved is not true to his love.

FAKIR

Fakir (فَقِير) comes from the Arabic word *Faqr* (فقر). He is the one who follows the path of *Faqr*.

FAQR

Faqr (فقر) is the path that leads the seeker of Allah to Divine closeness and vision. Prophet Mohammad was blessed with it on the night of Miraj and it is his Sunna. He said:

◀ الْفَقْرُ فَخْرِي وَالْفَقْرُ مِنِّي (عين الفقر)

Meaning: *Faqr* is my pride and *Faqr* is from me. (Ain-ul-Faqr)

It is worth mentioning that the Holy Prophet never felt pride on anything throughout his life other than *Faqr*. It is a clear sign of its exaltation.

Only after following this path, the salat of a Muslim becomes Miraj. As narrated in a Hadith, “Salat is Miraj for the believer.”

FAVOUR

For the Quranic term *taufeeq* (توفيق): ‘Divine favour’ means the help and strength provided by Allah to the seeker to perform a task, cross any spiritual station or succeed in a trial.

GNOSIS OF ALLAH

The Arabic word *marifa* (معرفة) is translated as gnosis of Allah,

Divine gnosis or simply gnosis. It is a vast term of Sufism that gives a new meaning at every spiritual level. Basically, it is the knowledge and recognition of Allah which keeps on increasing as the lover progresses towards His closeness. It reveals new dimensions at every stage and includes Divine vision, knowledge of His Essence and attributes, acquiring the attributes on annihilating in Him and finally becoming one with the Essence having ultimate gnosis. Since Allah is Infinite, His gnosis is also endless. The perfect spiritual guide as well as invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* are the foundations of gnosis. It can be gained from the inward sources like the intuitive and

inspired knowledge as well as the outward sources like the spiritually effective Sufi teachings and the words of the perfect spiritual guide.

GREATEST NAME OF ALLAH

Ism al-Azam (اسم اعظم): It is used for *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* as all other are attributive names of Allah but *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* is His personal name and represents all Divine attributes as well as the Essence, hence is the greatest.

HOO (هُوَ)

Hoo (هُوَ) is the Essence of Allah. It is used many times in the Quran for Allah.

◀ هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ (٥٩:٢٢)

Meaning: He (*Hoo* هُوَ) is Allah, besides Whom there is no God. (59:22)

In *Faqr* its invocation is the fourth and final stage and is called the king of invocations (*Sultan-ul-Azkar* سلطان الاذكار). The prior three being Allah (الله), *Lillah* (لِلَّهِ) and *LaHoo* (لَهُ).

IMAM

Imam (امام) literally means leader and refers to a spiritual or religious leader. It is also used for the person who conducts prayer.

IMMORTAL WITH ALLAH

Baqā Billah (بقا باللہ): At this station the seeker even crosses the station of ‘annihilation in Allah’. He gains immortality with Allah on being attributed with His attributes. At this level he is called ‘the Mystic immortal with Allah (*Arif Billah* عارف باللہ)’ and is appointed on the throne of Divine guidance and persuasion as the perfect spiritual guide.

INSCRIBING ALLAH’S NAME ON BODY

The mystic exercise *mashq murqoom-e-wajudia* (مشق مرقوم وجودیہ) is translated as the practice of inscribing Allah’s name on the body. It is the mystic exercise in which Allah’s name (اللہ) is inscribed on the body with index finger in a particular manner. The powerful theophanies of Allah’s name purify the soul of the inscriber. However, this practice is effective when performed after pledging allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide.

INVOCATION

Invocation is translated from Quranic term *dhikr* (ذکر) which means to remember Allah through repeated recitation of His name. In the *Sarwari Qadri* order, invocation is performed with breaths instead of tongue.

See Contemplation (*tasawur*).

ISM-E-ALLAH ZAAT

Ism-e-Allah Zaat (آلہ) is translated literally as ‘the personal name of Allah’. It represents the Essence and all the Divine attributes and is His most powerful name. Its invocation and

contemplation are given by the perfect spiritual guide of *Sarwari Qadri* order after a disciple pledges allegiance. It is the quickest way of closeness to Allah because of its miraculous powers.

ISM-E-MOHAMMAD

It means the name ‘Mohammad’ (ﷺ) of the Holy Prophet which is comprehensive of all his attributive names. In *Sarwari Qadri* order, its contemplation is given for the spiritual elevation of the seekers. Sultan Bahoo declares in his books that only that spiritual guide is perfect who knows the way of both *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and *Ism-e-Mohammad*. Furthermore, it is completely up to the perfect and accomplished spiritual guide of the *Sarwari Qadri* order when he decides to grant contemplation of *Ism-e-Mohammad* to the disciple. He may grant *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* in the beginning and *Ism-e-Mohammad* after sometime or may grant both at the same time.

Both the Divine names, *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and *Ism-e-Mohammad* have same powers. However, the alchemy of *Ism-e-Mohammad* is Divine beauty (*jamal*) whereas *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* has both Divine beauty and majesty (*jalal*).

KHANQAH

A place dedicated for gathering of a Sufi order where spiritual training is given under the leadership of a spiritual guide.

LIGHT

Light is for *Nur* written in Arabic as نور.

MOHAMMADAN ASSEMBLY

One of the most elevated stages of *Faqr* is presence in the Mohammadan Assembly which is beyond words. In fact, it is the

truth of certainty and is gained by the invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* provided it is granted by the perfect and accomplished spiritual guide. In his writings Sultan Bahoo condemns those who do not believe in eternal existence of Prophet Mohammad.

MYSTIC

There are three levels of Mystics (*عارف* *Arif*):

- 1) Mystic (*عارف* *Arif*)
- 2) Mystic annihilated in Allah (*عارف الله* *Arif Allah*)
- 3) Mystic immortal with Allah (*عارف بالله* *Arif Billah*)

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Al-bayah (بيعت) is the oath of allegiance to a spiritual guide. It is a pact or covenant or rite of initiation into a Sufi order. This is in fact a pact between Allah and His slave which eternally bonds the spiritual guide with his disciple. When a person becomes a disciple, he hands over himself to his spiritual guide in exchange of guidance towards Allah.

ONENESS OF ALLAH

Refers to the basic pillar of Islam *Tawhid* (توحيد). Believing in it is the prerequisite to enter Islam. The shahada ‘There is no God but Allah’ is not only the verbal proclamation of Oneness of Allah but a believer’s whole life revolves around it. Its profundity is only perceived by the Mystics.

PERSUASION

Talqeen (تلقین): The exoteric scholars guide people through religious education, discussions and arguments. However, in *Faqr* the perfect spiritual guide enlightens and enlivens the inward of the seeker by his spiritual glance in accordance to the Sunna of the Holy Prophet and this is called ‘persuasion’. Perfect spiritual guide purifies the seekers by his spiritual glance and guides towards straight path by persuasion as well as with exhortation. Difference between education and persuasion is that the former is imparted usually through books and lectures while the latter is to inspire the Divine knowledge into the inward. Both education and persuasion to a seeker are responsibilities of the perfect spiritual guide.

PRESENCE

‘Divine presence’ is translation of mystic term *Huzoori* (حضور).

It is the presence of soul and inward of the seeker before Allah specifically during prayers and generally all the time. Divine presence is gained by the invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*.

SARWARI QADRI ORDER

The *Sarwari Qadri* order is named so because *Sarwari* means to pledge allegiance to Prophet Mohammad who is the chief (*Sarwar*) of the universe and *Qadri* means to follow the path of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ *Sarwari Qadri* is actually the one who pledges allegiance to Prophet Mohammad. All the evils are removed from him and he is blessed with Divine favour to adopt the Mohammadan sharia. (**Mehak-ul-Faqr Kalan**)

It must be clarified that *Sarwari Qadri* order is the purest form of *Qadri* order and is not simply an offshoot. Moreover, this order has changed its name many times in the past.

SELF

Self is for the Quranic word *an-nafs* (النفس) and it has four layers or levels. Each layer annihilates and is elevated to the next level upon its purgation. The first layer incites man towards sin therefore it is called ‘inciting self’ (*an-nafs al-ammarah* النفس الامارة). On purification it elevates to the next layer which blames and repents on committing sin. It is called ‘repenting self’ (*an-nafs al-lawwamah* النفس الوامة). The third layer inspires before sin hence the name ‘inspiring self’ (*an-nafs al-mulhimah* النفس الملهمة). Whereas fourth layer is pure of sins and is at peace. It is called ‘the self at peace’ (*an-nafs al-mutmainnah* النفس المطمئنة).

The self is an abode of worldly and heavenly desires and is a veil between Allah and His slave. The seeker is blessed with the vision of Allah only when this veil is removed on the purgation of the self.

SIX SUBTLETIES

Six subtleties (*al-lataif as-sitta* لطائف ستة):

- 1) The self (*nafs* نفس)
- 2) The inward (*qalb* قلب)
- 3) The soul (*ruh* روح)

- 4) The secret (*sir'r* سِرّ)
- 5) The hidden (*khafi* خفی)
- 6) The concealed (*akhfa* اخفی)

In *Sarwari Qadri* order, pledging allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide and invocation of *Hoo* (هُو) with breaths, contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and inscribing Allah's name on the body under his supervision are sufficient to enlighten them. By the grace of Allah and attention of the perfect spiritual guide, the contemplation and invocation gradually shift from one subtlety to the other. Ultimately the seeker is stationed at the level of the Universal Divine Man. Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ The seeker is stationed at the level of the Universal Divine Man when the self, inward, soul and secret become one.
(*Aqal-e-Baydar*)

SPIRITUAL GLANCE

Refers to the Sufi term *nigah* (نَگاه) which is the powerful glance of the perfect spiritual guide to remove a layer or ailment of the self as well as to bestow something.

SPIRITUAL SIGHT

Refers to the mystic term *nazar* (نَظَر) which is specific for the effective sight of the perfect spiritual guide which knows no bounds. It can witness anything from station of no station to the bottom of the earth.

Though the terms spiritual attention, glance and sight have differences still at times they are used interchangeably.

STATES

The spiritual guide overwhelms the inward of a seeker with different esoteric conditions by his spiritual attention or invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat*. Such conditions are called spiritual states (*Ahwal* احوال). These are temporary and keep changing.

STATION

Contrary to the spiritual states, spiritual station (*maqam* مقام) is the point where spiritual state becomes permanent. For example at initial stage, the seeker temporarily experiences annihilation but immediately reverts to normal. It is the spiritual state of annihilation. If the state of annihilation becomes perpetual and seeker's humanly attributes are annihilated fully then he has achieved the station of annihilation.

STATIONS OR LEVELS OF SPIRITUALITY

The four stations or levels are:

1. Station of sharia (شريعة)
2. Station of mysticism (طريقة)
3. Station of reality (حقيقة).
4. Station of gnosis (معرفة)

SULTAN OF INVOCATIONS, HOO هُو

It is called *Sultan-ul-Azkar* (سلطان الاذكار) and is the final stage of invocation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* which swiftly elevates the soul to

Allah. There is no invocation superior to it. Ibn Arabi writes in *al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya*:

- ❖ *Hoo هو* is the most elevated and the ultimate invocation of Mystics.

SULTAN-UL-FAQR

The term *Sultan-ul-Faqr* (سلطان الفقر) or ‘Sultan of *Faqr*’ was first introduced by Sultan Bahoo in his famous work *Risala Roohi Sharif*. There are seven personalities who hold this status. They are ranked at the highest degree of excellence in oneness with Allah and are distinguished among all the Saints.

THRONE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE AND PERSUASION

For the mystic phrase *Masnad-e-Talqeen-o-Irshad* (مسند تلقين وارشاد). The Universal Divine Man holds this spiritual throne for the guidance of the seekers of Allah on the path of *Faqr*.

TRUST

‘Divine Trust’, ‘Trust of *Faqr*’ or ‘Trust’ (*Amanat* امانت) is the spiritual treasure of *Faqr*. When Allah offered His Trust to the skies, earth and mountains, they declined to bear it as they did not have its capability. Not only skies but their inhabitants were also unable to accept it. It was only man who accepted the Trust. Divine Trust is the manifestation of the Essence of Allah with all of His attributes. It is also called *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* as *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* is the Essence of Allah Who manifested Himself in the Universal Divine Man.

◀ إِنَّا عَزَمْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ

مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا (٣٣:٤٢)

Meaning: Indeed We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear this and felt scared of it, but man took it on. Verily he is ever so cruel (towards the self) and ignorant (of his highest rank near Allah). (33:72)

UNIVERSAL DIVINE MAN

For the Arabic term *al-Insan al-Kamil* (الانسان الكامل), the perfect Fakir who has reached the eventual level of annihilation in Allah and immortality with Him and has been blessed with all the Divine attributes. He is the absolute manifestation of the Essence of Allah. Prophet Mohammad is the Universal Divine Man and the Fakirs of his umma who are annihilated in him represent him as the Universal Divine Man of their respective era. They are appointed on the throne of Divine guidance and persuasion by the Holy Prophet to guide the seekers of Allah on His path.

WAHAM

The spiritual communication or conversation with Allah in the esoteric self whereby the seeker is truly guided by Allah in different matters. Sultan Bahoo in his book titled *Sultan-ul-Waham* states that the spiritual guide is the Sultan of *waham* which depicts that the guide can also converse with disciple spiritually.

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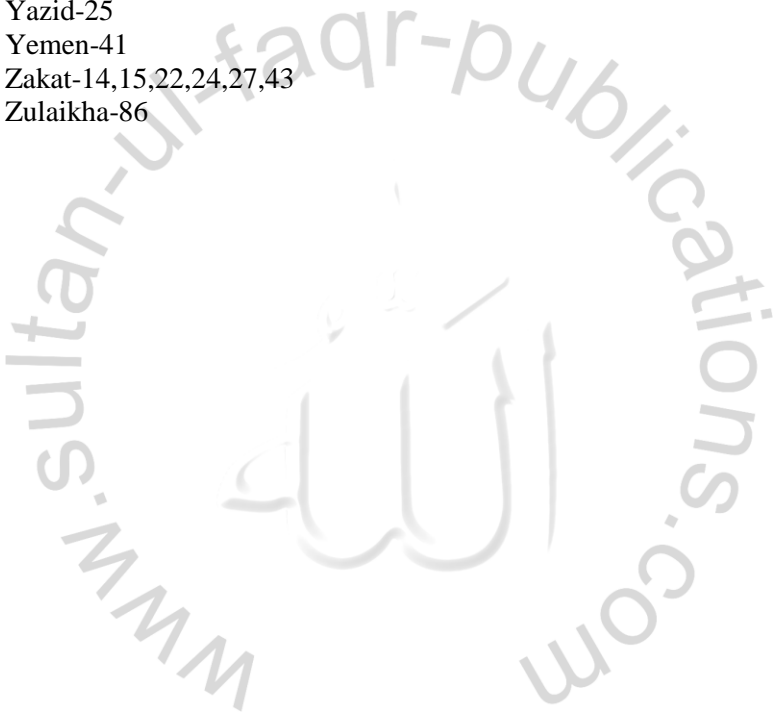
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Amidst the swirling tempest of dust of fake spiritualists that veils the sight of mankind, the light of truth of the real spiritual guide remains obscured. Why so? There was an era when men embarked upon a sacred quest, seeking a spiritual guide who could unveil the sublime truths and illuminate the path of spirituality steering mankind away from the snares of politics, wickedness and vices of the soul. Today is not the same! People oft lament that no Sufi of true worth graces this age, yet they fail to recall that the same may be said of disciples. As it is proclaimed that the straight path should be sought then how is it possible that favoured men of Allah are absent from any age or era who are the beacon of this straight path as mentioned in the Holy Quran! Verily, there have always been souls, the perfect spiritual guides, who illuminate the righteous path, guiding seekers with their celestial light.



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