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Zikr-e-Ilahi

(Zikrullah i.e Remembrance of Allah)

This portion highlights the importance and method for Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance of Allah in heart) in the light of Holy Quran and Sunnah (life & teachings) of Holy Prophet (S.A.W). Zikr-e-Qalb is undoubtedly the basis of the most important objective of all Islamic Sufi orders that is spiritual purification of the soul.

1. Zikrullah is a form of Ibadah (Worship)

Allah has ordained all Muslims in Holy Quran to perform Zikr:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

“O ye who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance”

(Soorah Ahzab Aya 41)

Following is a quote by Allama Ibn-e-Kathir interpreting this verse of Quran:

“Hadhrat Ibne Abbas R.A (Companion of the Prophet S.A.W) while interpreting this verse pointed out that all forms of worship have two characteristics. First, there are certain exceptions in terms of time and situation that serve to limit the extent of such worship. Second, personal incapacity or inability to perform the worship has been accommodated. The only exception is Zikrullah which is limited by no condition or incapacity. All Muslims are ordained to perform Zikrullah at all times, in all conditions: while traveling; both in happy and troubled times, in health and in sickness; while walking, standing. Do Zikr in every condition.”

2. Various Forms of Zikrullah (Remembrance of Allah)

1) Zikrullah through Pious deeds: All form of worship such as offering Salah (Prayers), Zakat (Obligatory Charity), Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca), Fasting and even working honestly to earn livelihood etc are all forms of Zikrullah (Remembrance of Allah). Further details can be found in books of Islamic Jurisprudence.

2) Zikrullah through Supplications: Remembering Allah through reciting His book The Holy Quran as well as other recitations such as Durood Sharif and Kalima. Many such supplications (tasbeehaat) are recorded in books of Hadith.

3) Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance in heart): Remembering Allah quietly in the heart. It is also called Zikr-e-Khafi (Hidden Zikr) because it involves no recitation of words through tongue but only in the heart. Not even the Kiraman Katibeen (Two Angels recording human deeds) can know about it. This kind of Zikrullah will be explained further.

However it is important to understand the concept of Noor-e-Nubuwwat SAW (Prophetic Lights) before that.

3. Noor-e- Nubuwwat (Prophetic Lights)

Noor-e-Nubuwwat is also referred to as Baraket-e-Nubuwwat (Prophetic blessings). Receiving these Prophetic blessings is an important objective of all Sufi orders. Following illustration comprise detail of Noor-e-Nubuwwat.

(ا) أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا يُنِيرُ بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنُ قُلَّةٍ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا ؕ
(سوره العاَم ركوع ١٥)

“Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life, and a light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness, from which he can never come out?”

(Al Anaam, Section 15)

Maulana Zakriya has explained the meaning of this verse as following:

“The person mentioned first is a faithful and his soul is illuminated with the Noor (Light) of love and cognition of Allah. The person mentioned later is devoid of these. This Noor is infact a great blessing of Allah. Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) used to pray to Allah to receive this Noor in all aspects of his life. Many prayers of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) have been recorded in Hadith requesting Allah for this Noor. It is this Noor which brings Noor (blessings) of Allah in all human acts. Pious Deeds reflect this Noor as these are lifted to the heavens (to Allah). The same Noor will be reflected from the faces of the faithful on the Day of Judgment.” (Fazail-e-Aamal Page 446)

Hadith Sharif written in Bukhari related by Hazrat Abdulla Ibne Abbas is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ فِيْ قَلْبِيْ نُورًا وَفِيْ
بَصَرِيْ نُورًا وَفِيْ سَمْعِيْ نُورًا وَعَنْ
يَمِيْنِيْ نُورًا وَعَنْ شِمَالِيْ نُورًا وَفَوْقِيْ
نُورًا وَتَحْتِيْ نُورًا وَاَمَامِيْ نُورًا وَخَلْفِيْ
نُورًا وَاجْعَلْ لِيْ نُورًا.
بخاری شریف (کتاب الدعوات جلد سوم)
حدیث ۱۴۴۳

“O Allah, fill my heart with Noor, and fill my eyes with it, and my ears. And put (this) Noor on my right and my left. Below, on top of me and ahead of me. Make this Noor a (source of) big light for me.”

(Kitab-Dawat, Bukhari Volume III Hadith 1243)

أَقَمَّنْ صَرَخَ اللّٰهُ صَدْرَهُ
لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَجِيءَ عَلَى نُورًا مِّنْ رَبِّهِ ط
(سورة الزمر ذكوع ٣)

What! Is he whose heart Allah has opened for Islam so that he is in a light from his Lord (like the hard-hearted)?

(Az Zumar Section 3)

Shaikh-ul-Mukarram Ameer Muhammad Akram Awan has explained the meaning of this verse of Quran as following:

“(Zikr of Allah) makes effects of Remembrance of Allah and Noor-e-Nubuwat (Prophetic Lights) permeate deep in the heart. The heart is thus illuminated creating feelings and desire for piety and righteousness. Such feelings motivate a person to follow the Shariah in practical life. But in case Zikr Allah does not illuminate the heart then such deprivation of Prophetic Light is a sure sign of a misguided life.”

Allah (However) is merciful and has provided humanity with guidance through this Holy Book (Quran) which reiterates its wisdom in a manner that those who are blessed with the light of faith are deeply influenced by it. So much so that Zikrullah (Remembrance of Allah) permeates their body and soul.

Hadhrat Isma binnat Abu Bakar has related that most companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) were blessed with these spiritual feelings. Whenever they heard recitation of Quran, they shed tears of love of Allah and even hair on their bodies resonated with these emotions.

May Allah again bless faithful Muslims with the desire to obtain this Noor-e-Nubuwat (Prophetic blessings) and thus illuminate their hearts with His Zikr (Remembrance)

يَهْدِي اللّٰهُ نُورَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ
(سورة النور ذكوع ٥)

“Allah guides to His light whom He pleases”

(Al Noor Section 5)

Every faithful Muslim is blessed by Allah to have a natural ability to illuminate his soul with Noor-e-Nubuwat (Prophetic blessings). Whenever the light of faith touches his heart, his soul is illuminated as if a lamp is lighted. Such a person’s life is indeed on the right path. What can be more; he also becomes a source of guidance for humanity. When such a person reaches in the company of an accomplished Sufi Sheikh then this illumination of soul is increased manifold. Then his heart is illuminated like a bright sun and he becomes a source of spreading these blessings in the world. This is the essence of Islamic Tasawuff (True Islamic Sufism); that inner souls be purified and illuminated with this Noor-e-Nubuwat (Prophetic blessings) to turn people into better human beings. A Sufi is thus an example of following the Shariah (Islamic way of life) and making best efforts to spread the light of Islam.

4. Outcome of Zikrullah

I- Faith and pious deeds lead to the spiritual state of Zikr-e-Katheer (Continual Remembrance of Allah). Continuous Zikrullah spiritually purifies the heart in a way that values of virtue and piety are imbibed in a person. He turns into a living example of following verse of Holy Quran.

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ
وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَائِلِينَ
الْقَائِلَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ
وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ
وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ
فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً
وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (سورة احزاب آیت ۳۵)

“Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember-- Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.”

(Al Ahzab, 35)

These values of virtue can be listed as:

- Understanding the reality of Islam;
- Understanding the meaning of faith;
- Humility towards Allah;
- Being truthful;
- Patience in all circumstances;
- Devotion in all pious deeds;
- Spending energy and resources in the right causes;
- Comprehending the reality of Fasting;
- Being able to guide temporal temptations in the right direction;
- Continuous remembrance of Allah.

II- Developing Wisdom & Insight

Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire:

(Al-e Imran, 191)

III- Contentment of Heart

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.

أَلَا يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (سورة الرعد آيت ٢٨)

(Ar ra'ad V 28)

True contentment can only be achieved by something when it is at peace with its reality, when it achieves its true objective. The only objective of the spiritual heart is the remembrance of Allah. Hearts are at peace only when they are filled with the light of remembrance of Allah. All manifestations of material success such as wealth, power, and knowledge can be means to achieve this end but not an end in themselves.

IV- Avoiding Negligence (from remembrance of Allah)

Remembrance of Allah helps a person avoid the state of negligence. Holy Quran ordains all Muslims to remember their Lord with humility in their hearts without raising their voice; at both ends of the day that is morning and evening thus making best effort to avoid being a negligent (from Remembrance of Allah)..

V- Receiving Continual blessings of Allah

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me.

لَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُونِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ (البقره آيت ١٥٢)

(Al Baqarah 135)

Continuous remembrance of Allah invokes continuous blessings of Allah in terms of fulfilling all material and spiritual needs of a person and awarding him or her with the greatest reward of His love.

(Israr-ut-Tanzeel)

VI- Gentleness of Heart

“(Such People, that) when Allah is remembered before them, their hearts melt in (feeling of) His splendor and magnificence”

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ

(Al Quran)

Zikrullah also helps in anger management and stress relieving as it softens the heart and turns a person into humble man or woman.

VII- Love of Allah

Continual Zikr Allah blesses a person with exalted feelings of love of Allah

يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ (القران)

“...He loves them and they love Him...”

(Al Quran)

VIII- Wisdom of Understanding the Truth

Holy Quran links wisdom with the ability of heart to perceive the truth. Illumination of heart through Zikr Allah imbues in it the ability to understand the ability to comprehend the truth. He/she can understand the rationale behind correct beliefs and virtuous deeds. An illuminated heart blesses a person with the wisdom to understand the true meaning of life.

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا (الاعراف دكوع ٢٢)

“They have hearts with which they do not understand...”

(Al Araaf section 22)

XI- Differentiation of right and wrong

Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has said, “*What (an act or a thought) strikes as doubtful in your heart is a sin*”. An illuminated heart develops the perceptive ability to recognize every act that can invoke displeasure of Allah and then it guides a person to quickly repent over it.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاجِرَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ
(سورة آل عمران دكوع ١٣)

“And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults”

(Surah Ale Imran, section 14)

X- Close Relation with Allah

An accomplished Shaikh guides a person to build a very close and personal relationship with Allah. Following the Sunnah (teachings) of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is the only method for building such a relationship. Zikrullah provides a person with the energy to pursue such a relationship. Stages of sulook (spiritual path) all reflect different stages of development of this relationship, which is the essence of a successful life.

5. Importance of Zikrullah

I

“Hadhrat Ayesha (R.A) has related that Prophet Muhammed (S.A.W) said that Zikr-e-Khafi (hidden Zikr), which even the Angels cannot hear, is seventy times superior to other forms of Zikr. On the day of judgment Angels will present record of every deed of people. Allah will ask the Angels if there is any other deed left to be presented. Angels will reply that there is nothing left anymore. Allah will then inform them that there is still one deed of people remaining and that is the Zikr-e-Khafi (hidden zikr).”

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لَقَطَطَ الْمَلَكُ
الْحَفِيَّ الَّذِي لَا تَسْمَعُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تَبْلُغُونَ جَهَنَّمَ إِذَا كَانَ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَجَمَعَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ لِجَسَدِهِمْ وَجَمَعَتْ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ بِمَا سَيِّئُوا وَكَبُرُوا فَيَقْرَأُ لَهُمْ أَنْظُرُوا هَلْ بَقِيَ
لَهُمْ شَيْءٌ. فَيَقُولُونَ مَا تَرَى مَا تَرَى يَا رَبَّنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ عَمَلِنَا
إِلَّا قَدْ أَحْصَيْتَهُ وَكُنْتُمْ تَقْرَأُونَ تَعَالَى يَا رَبُّ كَمْ عَمَلِنَا لَا
تَعْلَمُهُ وَأَخْتَرْتَكُ بِهِ وَهُوَ الْخَيْرُ الْخَفِيُّ.
(تفسير مطهرى بحواله دلائل السالكين ص ٩٩)

(Tafseer-e-Mazhari. Quoted in Dalael-e-Sulook Page 99)

II

“Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) once said to his companions,” Should I tell you of something that is the best of the deeds and is most pure and raises you stature highest before your Lord. It is even better than spending Gold and Silver (in the way of Allah) and fighting the enemies (of Islam) in a way that you kill them and they kill you. It is the Zikr of Allah.”

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرْدَاةٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَلَا أَنْبِئُكُمْ
بِخَيْرِ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَوْفَرِهَا جَدَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفَرِهَا بِي
قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ وَخَيْرِ لَكُمْ مِنْ بِنْفَاقِ الْفَلَسْ وَالْزُّبْرِ وَ
خَيْرِ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْ تَلْقَوْا عَدُوَّكُمْ فَتَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَهُمْ وَ
يَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
(المرجه احمد والترمذي)

(Ahmad & Tirmidhi)

Shaikh-ul-Hadith Mualana Zakriya has illustrated, “Some Sufies have pointed out that above mentioned Hadith refers specifically to Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance of Allah in heart) and not Zikr through recitation of supplications. The essence of Zikr-e-Qalb is that the heart feels like fully absorbed in Allah. The author of Majaalis-e-Abrar writes that this Hadith refers to Zikr-e-Qalb as higher form of worship than charity and Jihad because charity, Jihad and all such acts are means for an end and that end is the Zikr of Allah.

6. Learning Zikr –e-Qalb

Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance of Allah in heart) is learnt by staying in the company of an accomplished Sufi Shaikh. Company of the Shaikh leads to spiritual purification of soul. This is in accordance with the example set by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

عَنْ أَبِي بِن كَعْبٍ قَالَ
 كُنْتُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَدَخَلَ رَجُلٌ
 يُضَلِّي قَرَأَ قِرَاءَةً اِتَّكْرَتْهَا عَلَيَّ ثُمَّ
 دَخَلَ آخَرَ قَرَأَ قِرَاءَةً أُخْرَى قَرَأَ قِرَاءَةً
 صَاحِبِيهِ. فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا الصَّلَاةَ دَخَلْنَا
 جَمِيعًا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقُلْتُ
 إِنَّ هَذَا قَرَأَ قِرَاءَةً اِتَّكْرَتْهَا عَلَيَّ وَدَخَلَ
 آخَرَ قَرَأَ قِرَاءَةً أُخْرَى قَرَأَ قِرَاءَةً صَاحِبِيهِ فَأَ
 مَرَّمَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَرَأَ قَرَأَ قَرَأَ
 النَّبِيُّ ﷺ شَانَهُمَا فَتَقَطَّ فِي نَفْسِي
 مِنَ التَّكْذِيبِ وَلَا إِذْ كُنْتُ فِي
 الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَلَمَّا رَأَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ
 مَا قَدْ تَغَيَّرَ فِي صَدْرِي
 قَبِضَتْ عِرْقًا وَتَجَا نَمَا أَنْظَرُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
 تَعَالَى (المسلم حديث تمر ١٩٠٣)

“Hadhrat Abi bin Ka’ab has related that once I was in the mosque and a man entered (the mosque). He offered salat (obligatory prayer) but I could not comprehend his recitation of Quran. Then another person came in and he also offered salat. He recited Quran in yet another different manner. After we all had finished our prayers we went to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and I told him (S.A.W) what I had seen. The Prophet (S.A.W) asked both of them to recite Quran again and when they did, he (S.A.W) appreciated both of them. I felt a kind of revulsion in my heart which was a characteristic of me before I had accepted Islam. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) immediately realized how I felt and he (S.A.W) put his hand on my chest. I started sweating and my feelings changed so much that I felt as if I was in audience with Allah.”

(Muslim, Hadith 1904)

Author of Mirqat has explained the above hadith by writing that blessed hand of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) caused all negative feelings of revulsion dissipate and instead extremely pure feeling of having an audience with Allah were created.

(Mishkat)

This proves:

- Spiritual attention of the Shaikh can purify the soul;
- A brief time spent in the company of the Shaikh can lead to greater spiritual progress than years of worship alone.

(Dalael-e-Sulook)

7. Method of Zikr-e-Qalb (In Naqshbandia Owaisiah)

Zikr-e-Qalb is the source of receiving spiritual blessings from the Shaikh. This process constitutes three parts.

- Zikr through recitation;
- Zikr-e-Qalb;
- Dua (Prayer)

Part I:

- Sit facing the direction of the Ka'aba;
- Recite the third Kalima once;
- Recite Asthagfar once: **أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَ أَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ**
- Recite second Kalima once:
- Tazuz (Auzu Billah.....) **أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ**
- Tasmia (Bismillah.....) **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ**

Part II

Close you eyes and clear your mind of all thoughts and concentrate on the heart. Recite the name of Allah repetitively in the heart as ordained in the Holy Quran as, “And remember the name of your Lord”. So it is the repetition of “Allah Hu” coordinated with your breath. That is why this method of zikr is also called “Pas-e-Infas” i.e. guarding your breath.

Breathing is only used to coordinate the thought process of repeating “Allah Hu”. Zikr is done in the heart. Breathing helps coordinate and doing Zikr fast and with momentum and thus results in quick progress.

Explained simply, Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance in heart) involves focusing the mind on the heart and thinking that when the breath goes in, the word “Allah” penetrated the depth of the heart. When the breath goes out, the word “Hu” strikes the heart. This process is continuously repeated.

In this manner, Zikr can be performed on all Lataif (sutle points in the soul) for some time and then finally Zikr is again perfomed on the heart that is the first latifa.

Meditation:

Now stop coordinated breathing and let your breath pass in a natural way. Ignore your physical being for a while and focus on the heart. The word “Allah” rises from the heart and the word “Hu” strikes the Arsh (Devine throne). This is called Rabta (Connection). This creates a spiritual connection between heart and the Devine and forms the basis for further meditations.

Part III

Part three constitutes praying to Allah and this finished the Zikr-e-Qalb.

8. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Zikr

Question: How is it possible to do Zikr with breath?

Answer: Breathing is only used as a mechanism for Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance in heart). Just as any means of transport can be adopted for proceeding for Hajj such as Ships and airplanes or horses and camels as in the old times, however Hajj is still performed in the same manner as it was performed during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). So the essence of spiritual blessings received through Zikr-e-Qalb and spiritual connection with the Shaikh can be found in the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

The method of Zikr illustrated above is only a means to receive the same spiritual blessings that were spread by the very person of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) during his lifetime in the material world. Now these are received from his soul (S.A.W) through the Zikr-e-Qalb under the guidance of an accomplished Shaikh.

“There is no concept of tasawwur-e-Sheikh (Contemplating the person of Sheikh) in Silsilah Naqshbandia Owaisiah. We consider recitation of Holy Quran as the best verbal supplication. Besides recitation of Holy Quran, Astaghfar and Durrood Sharif are also prescribed. The only Zikr in the company of the Shaikh or members of tariqa is Zikr-e-Qalb (Remembrance of Allah in heart). There are some Quranic verses which are recited in some meditations but at all other spiritual stations, only the word “Allah” is contemplated.”

Gatherings for receiving spiritual blessing from the Shaikh and using breath for Zikr are only means to an end. A preface to the real the content. Following the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is end objective of all this exercise.”

(Dalael-e-Sulook)

“Sometimes people get confused about doing zikr with breath. Actually Zikr is not done with the breath; it is done in the heart. Breath is only taken in a manner so as to coordinate it with the Zikr. This helps achieve quick progress otherwise what can be achieved in a day may take years.”

(Shaikh ul Mukarram Maulana Akram Awan)

Further details can be seen in ‘Dalael-e-Sulook’ by Maulana Allah Yar Khan (.R.A)

9. Company of an Accomplished Shaikh

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ
 اللَّهِ ﷺ إِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ عِبَادًا لَيْسُوا
 بِأَنْبِيَاءَ يُغِيظُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْبَاءُ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ قَبِيلٌ مَنْ
 هُمْ لَعَلْنَا نُنَجِّيَهُمْ قَالَ هُمْ تَحَابُّونَ بِتَوَرُّ اللَّهِ
 مِنْ غَيْرِ أَرْحَامٍ وَلَا أَنْسَابٍ وَجُوهُهُمْ نُورٌ
 تَهْلَسُ مَتَابِرٌ مِنْ نُورٍ لَا يَتَحَافُونَ إِذَا خَافَ
 النَّاسُ وَلَا يَحْزَنُونَ إِذَا حَزَنَ النَّاسُ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ
 آيَةَ الْوَيْلَاءِ اللَّهُ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
 هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. (التَّغْهيبُ 4:5 نِسَائِي وَابْنُ حِبَّانَ
 بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى السُّلُوكِ صِلِحَةُ ٧٦)

“The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said that there are some beloved people of Allah, who are not Prophets but even the Prophets and Shuhada will envy them on the Day of Judgment. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) was asked (by Companions) about these people, so they may also be loved (by companions). He (S.A.W) replied that these people had no kinship or blood relation between them but they befriended each other only for the sake of (love of) Allah. Their faces will be lighted with the Noor (light) of Allah and they will be seated on Pedestals of Noor (light). When others will be worried; they will have no anxiety. When other will be gloomy; they will have no worry. Then the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) recited the Quranic Verse,” Lo, the Aulia Allah (friends of Allah) neither feel scared nor worry”

(Targheeb 4:5 Nisai and Ibne Huban.
 Qouted from Dalael-e-Sulook)

Outwardly, Importance of having a Shaikh (Spiritual Guide) lies in the fact that:

- It helps avoid negligence of the heart towards Allah.

وَلَا تُطِيعُ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا
 (سورة الكهف ركوع ٣٤)

Negligence of heart is a spiritual state which is difficult to perceive. Surah Takathur of Holy Quran hints that the reason behind ‘negligence of heart’ is greed.

الهِكْمُ النَّكَارُ

Greed of wealth. Greed to increase the material status through extensive socializing etc. This greed absorbs a person’s mind in a way that his heart becomes negligent from Allah.

عَنِّي زُرْتُمْ الْمَقَابِرَ

Only death ends such a sorry state of mind. That is why it is very important to treat this disease of ‘negligence of heart’.

It is this ‘negligence of heart’ that makes a person persists on a wrong course of action and ultimately deprives him/her of religious values and faith. People of all strata of life can be affected with this negligence. Even those who regularly undertake religious obligation can be afflicted with this problem. May Allah protect us from this problem.

- It helps a person realize that his or her life will end one day and then he or she will be asked about his and her conduct in life.

فَمَنْ لُصِفَ لَنْ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

He/She will be made liable for all the blessings of Allah that the person enjoyed during the life.

Spiritually, an accomplished Shaikh helps attain high spiritual stations of (Sulook) the Sufi Path.

10. Stages of Sulook (The Sufi Path)

“The heights that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) reached in his Ma’a’raj (known as his physical journey to the heavens) can also be reached by his followers spiritually by receiving spiritual blessings from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). This spiritual journey is called sulook and the stations that come on the way are referred to as stages of sulook (the spiritual Sufi Path).”

“With Allah’s blessings His beloved persons can undertake this journey according to their own efforts and ability even while they live physically in this material world. Even a fraction of spiritual purity that was characteristic of Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is enough to enlighten a soul to be able to rise to these high stations of Allah’s love and achieving His pleasure.”

(Asrar-u-tanzil, Surah Bani Israel)

“When Lataif (sutle points in the soul) of a seeker are illuminated this means that he has developed the ability to start his spiritual journey. The Accomplished Shaikh then guides him/her through the stages by teaching him Istaghraq (Absorption in Zikr Allah), Raabta (Spiritual Connection with the Devine throne) and then Maraqbat-e-Thalatha (meditations of unity, companionship and nearness of Allah), followed by three circles of devine love, meditations of Allah’s names of Zahir (outward) and Ba’atin (Inward), Sa’air-e-Ka’aba (Spiritual journey to Ka’aba), Sa’air-e-Salat and Sa’air-e-Quran (Contemplating the deep meaning of Prayer and Quran). Finally the stage of Fana fi Rusool comes.”

Fana Baqa is followed by Salik Almajzoobi. Thereafter the stages of sulook are very subtle. In other Sufi tariqas Salik Almajzoob is the last station of the Path but in

Naqshbandia Owaisiah tariqa this is just the beginning. The last station of Wilaya –e- Auliah is Maqam-e-Taslim.”

(Dalael-e-Sulook, Chapter 8)

(Original names of these stations have been referred to as they do not find an exact meaning in another language. For detail understanding further readings of Dalael-e-Sulook be studied)

11. Characteristics of an Accomplished Shaikh

An Accomplished Shaikh can be recognized by following Characteristics:

- He is an Alim of Shariah. Taking guidance from an ignorant is forbidden;
- His fundamental Islamic beliefs are according to Quran and Sunnah;
- He follows Holy Prophet’s Sunnah (S.A.W) in his life;
- He does not involve himself in Shirk and Bidaa’ (Innovations in religion);
- He is not driven by worldly material desires;
- He is an expert in Knowledge of Tasawwuf (True Islamic Sufism);
- He has taken spiritual guidance from an authentic Teacher and is himself capable of spiritually guiding his students;
- Can help create a spiritual connection between the Seeker and Holy Prophet (S.A.W). This spiritual connection is the basis of all spiritual progress.

12. A source for Learning Zikrullah

Allah guides everyone who has a desire to know about Him.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

He guides such people to the company of those whose hearts are filled with His love through Remembrance of Allah. Real success in worldly and afterlife is to follow the Sunnah (Teachings) of Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

It helps build the correct relationship with Allah and blesses a person with the exalted wisdom to make the best of his or her life.

Dar-ul-Irfan at Munara (Pakistan) is such a source these spiritual blessings. It invites everyone to a life of such success. An open invitation to come and illuminate the hearts with the Noor of Allah, a heart filled with love of Allah and his Holy Messenger (S.A.W)

وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ