

# IN THE SHADE OF THE MASJID

## Faith, Focus and the Flourishing of Muslim Life

**Hadhrat Shaykh Abdul Mu'eed Saheb**
*(Damat Barakatuhum)*

*Khanqah Maseehiyyah - Sukkur - Pakistan*

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Faith, Focus and the Flourishing of Muslim Life

*An enlightening discourse on the role of the Masjid in preserving our faith, reforming our ways and developing our community. The talk was delivered at Masjidus Salaam, Durban, South Africa, on 28 August 2023.*

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## OPENING SERMON



*All praise is for Allah Ta'ala alone. We praise Him and seek His assistance. We seek protection from the evil of our own souls and the evil of our deeds.*

*Whomsoever He guides, none can misguide; and whomsoever He allows to go astray, none can guide.*

*We testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allah. He is alone and has no partner.*

*We testify that our Leader is Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). He is our Messenger and our Beloved. He is the Beloved of our Creator, our Healer and the Healer of our hearts. He is our Master.*

*May the blessings and salutations of Allah Ta'ala be upon him, his family, and his companions in abundance. He is the Beloved through whom we hope to receive intercession on the Day of Judgement.*

## THIS MASJID HAS BEEN BEAUTIFULLY BUILT

All praise belongs to Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon His noble Messenger ﷺ.

We are grateful to Allah Ta'ala, who once again, granted us the honour of gathering in this house of His, Masjidus Salaam, here in Musgrave, Durban. May Allah Ta'ala accept this gathering, make it a means of earning His pleasure and success, in this world and the Hereafter.

Last year also, I had the opportunity to visit this Masjid and performed the Asr Salah here. I was delighted then and I am delighted now, to see how much effort has been made in this Masjid, with such love and passion. This Masjid has been beautifully built, well designed and wonderfully maintained. The facilities are wonderful and it is clear that a great deal of love and effort went into its construction. May Allah Ta'ala reward those who contributed to it and those who maintain it. May Allah Ta'ala keep all those associated with its upkeep well and bless their progeny with goodness and prosperity. May Allah Ta'ala keep this Masjid flourishing until the Day of Judgement.

After observing the great strides taken to make this Masjid what it is today, a thought entered my heart. When we embark on a construction project, we make every effort to make it special. We consult the best architects, engineers, builders, plumbers, electricians and interior designers. We seek the best expertise available to ensure that the structure meets the highest standards. We do everything possible to ensure that the amenities are of the highest standard and that the Masjid is comfortable, beautiful, safe and convenient for those who attend. We select good-quality materials to ensure that it lasts a long time.

## ARE WE BEAUTIFYING THE INNER?

The effort to make the Masjid beautiful, convenient and comfortable is indeed noble. Initiatives to enhance the Masjid's aesthetics are commendable and rightly so. At the same time, this should remind us of something greater. Just as we make a concerted effort to beautify the exterior of the Masjid, we must also consider the inner development and beautification of our own hearts. The concern we show for the Masjid's outer structure must also be directed towards our inner selves.

The question we should ask ourselves is: what effort are we making to develop the traits required for our inner beautification? Each one of us should answer this question. Generally, a lot of effort is made to acquire the best in terms of material development. We strive to outdo others in worldly acquisitions.

## THE DANGER OF MATERIALISM

In this world, people are caught up in a race; the race for more. It is a race for material acquisitions that have no limit or point of satiation. We compete for bigger houses, better cars, greater wealth and more possessions. One person competes with another; a neighbour competes with his neighbour; one family competes with another. But, my dear friends, this race has no end. If you win today, someone will surpass you tomorrow.

This chase after material wealth is so captivating that it eventually consumes a person and controls his life. The glitter of this world enchants us and gradually overtakes us. Man was not created for this! When we become trapped in the quest for more, we gradually lose sight of the Hereafter.

## ARE WE MISSING THE PURPOSE?

Let us ask, 'For whom has this Masjid been so beautifully decorated?' The answer is: for the *Musallis* (worshippers). 'And what is the purpose of a *Musalli*? It is to frequent the Masjid and perform Salah there regularly.'

A person who admires the beauty of this Masjid, speaks about it and praises those who constructed it, but never performs Salah inside it, has missed its purpose. He has gained no benefit from the Masjid. However, if he comes to the Masjid and performs Salah regularly, he fulfils the purpose for which it was built. The Masjid was not built merely for decoration or photography; it was built so that Allah's name is remembered here and His servants bow before Him.

Similarly, our lives were not given to us merely to accumulate wealth, possessions, or titles. Allah created us for a noble purpose. Allah created the entire universe for man, but He created man for Himself.

Allah Ta'ala says, *"I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me."*

(Surah adh-Dhariyat - 51:56)

Allah Ta'ala did not create us to chase material wealth or become its prisoners. Allah Ta'ala created us for His love and recognition. He granted us the great honour and responsibility of being His *khalifah* (representative) on this earth.

If we are His representatives, our lives must conform to His will, not our desires. Allah Ta'ala is our Owner and Creator. We are His servants. Let us ask ourselves: are we fulfilling our responsibilities as servants?

The Masjid comes alive through the presence of *Musallis*. What then, will bring life to our hearts? If we eat, drink and live well, we are merely adorning our outward lives, just as the Masjid is furnished with beautiful decor. These are external aspects of our lives. We do many things to improve our outward appearance and feel satisfied with our lives. We lose sight of the reality. We begin to think that the purpose of life is to improve our appearance and aesthetics. Our

efforts often fail to reflect the life that lies beyond this fleeting world. This is a mistake. We need to broaden our understanding and extend our concern and efforts to the various stages of the Hereafter.

Just as this Masjid comes alive with *Musallis*, our hearts will come alive with the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala. Zikr is not limited to reciting the Qur'an or taking the name of Allah Ta'ala. A deeper form of Zikr is to embrace the very purpose for which Allah Ta'ala gave us life.

## RETURNING TO ALLAH WITH A SOUND HEART

The Qur'an reminds us not to place our hopes in wealth and children. Allah Ta'ala says:

*"On that Day, neither wealth nor children will benefit anyone, except one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."*

(Surah ash-Shu'ara - 26:88–89)

What is meant by *'Qalb Saleem'*? The name of this Masjid is Masjidus Salaam, the Masjid of peace and safety. May peace and safety be upon its founders, *Musallis* and well-wishers. In a similar way, there is a Masjid within each one of us; which is the heart. This heart is also described as a 'the

residence of Allah' within a person, accompanying him at all times.

The body has its basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and transport. We strive day and night to provide these needs to the body. But beyond the body, a person possesses something far more precious: the heart and the soul. Their nourishment is not food or drink; their nourishment is the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala.

Zikr (remembrance) is not merely moving the *tasbeeh* between one's fingers or reciting words with the tongue. True Zikr means, to live with an awareness of why we were created and shaping every action according to that purpose.

Allah Ta'ala calls on us to reflect in the Qur'an:

"Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and Allah has with Him a great reward."

(Surah At-Taghabun - 64:15)

On that Day, when the scales are set, no bank account, business, family name will matter. What will matter is; did you return to Allah Ta'ala with a pure heart? A pure heart is a heart devoted totally to Allah Ta'ala.

My friends, let us think of the heart as a house. Who is meant to reside in it? Allah Ta'ala. Yet we often allow other guests into the house of the heart. We allow love of wealth, status and people to enter, until the Owner Himself is pushed aside.

Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat, Moulana Maseehullah *(Rahimahullah)* used to say that every house has a resident. You are the resident of your house and I am the resident of mine. Would any of us tolerate a stranger taking over our home while we were locked outside? Never! Yet this is what happens when our hearts, that were created for Allah Ta'ala, become filled with everything except Him. The heart is also a dwelling and Allah Ta'ala is its rightful resident. We should ask ourselves: is the rightful resident of the heart truly in His residence?

The heart being the reciprocal of Allah's love and mercy, should be reserved for Allah Ta'ala. Have we emptied this heart and purified it for Allah Ta'ala or not? Our constant effort must be to clean and purify this heart, to make it worthy of Allah's presence. We should constantly engage in assessing what is contained in our hearts?

## THE KHULAFA OF HAKIMUL UMMAT IN SINDH

Near Sukkur, Pakistan, there is a small village called Shikarpur. Two *Khulafa* (disciples and representatives) of Hakeemul Ummat, Hadhrat Thanwi *(Rahimahullah)*, used to live there, namely, Moulana Ilahi Baksh Awaan and Hakeem Fazlullah *(Rahimahumullah)*. Two other *Khulafa* were in Sukkur and another two in Ghotki, a nearby village. Thus, there were six *Khulafa* of Hadhrat Thanwi *(Rahimahullah)* in the entire district of Sukkur. Even today, we continue to experience the blessings of these great personalities in the area.

Moulana Ilahi Baksh Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* travelled to Thana Bhawan for his *islah* (reformation). People ask, what is the need for people travel to a spiritual mentor for their reformation? The response is: just as you call on a doctor when you are unwell, or an engineer when a building has defects, or you engage the services of an interior designer for refurbishment, similarly, you need the guidance of the righteous guide when the heart becomes diseased.

Allah Ta'ala has placed special blessings in the company of His friends *(Auliya)*. Sitting with them is never a wasted

effort. Even if you feel weak and unworthy, their influence can reach you. When grain is weighed in the market, stones or bits of mud are sometimes mixed in. The merchant does not remove them; he weighs everything together and the stones are lifted onto the scale as well. In the same way, if we attach ourselves to the gatherings of the righteous, we too may be raised with them, even if we are weak and have not yet reformed. When the deeds of the pious are weighed, the 'stones and mud,' so to speak, will be weighed with them. The Hadith teaches us that a person will be with whom he loves in the Hereafter.

This is why we must seek out the company of the reputable scholars and Mashaikh (spiritual guides). By sitting with them, we learn how to identify the diseases of the heart. We shall gain the understanding of spiritual diseases like pride, arrogance, greed, jealousy, etc. and how to cure them.

The poet says: *"The odour of a well fermented drink is sufficient to intoxicate one - and so the one deprived of being in the tavern is not deprived of benefit altogether."*

In the company of the friends of Allah, the pure 'drink' of Allah's love is imparted. And this 'drink' is not served in a

goblet. The 'drink' of Allah's divine love is explained in the following words poetry:

*"Divine love is extracted from the heavens and immersed into the hearts. The 'drink' of divine love is not served in a goblet, rather it is transmitted through the glance (of the friends of Allah)."*

Some attain great spiritual benefit through the gaze of the pious and some glances are harmful. Allah Ta'ala make us from those who benefit from the glance (company) of the pious.

## THE NEED FOR A SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Our elders in every land guided people in the path of reformation. In Sindh, in Shikarpur and throughout the Muslim world, the spiritual masters would listen to people's conditions and give them practical remedies.

In Sindh, there was a personality by the name of Hadhrat Moulana Taj Muhammad Amroti *(Rahimahullah)*. He was an accomplished scholar and Shaykh of the *Qadiriyyah Silsila* (spiritual order). In his youth, Hadhrat Moulana Ilahi Buksh

Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* would frequent the company of Hadhrat Moulana Taj Muhammad Amroti *(Rahimahullah)*.

Over time he developed the affinity for Zikr. However, he expressed his feelings of a 'fish in his belly,' (an idiom for nervousness and discomfort) to Hadhrat Moulana Taj Muhammad Amroti *(Rahimahullah)*. Sensing this, Hadhrat Moulana Taj Muhammad Amroti *(Rahimahullah)* advised him to rather seek his spiritual direction from Thana Bhawan. This meant he should turn to Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi *(Rahimahullah)* for spiritual guidance. This was the sincerity of our pious elders. They did not hesitate in directing disciples to where they will benefit more effectively. Moulana Ilahi Buksh Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* set off for Thana Bhawan.

This incident regarding Hadhrat Moulana Ilahi Buksh Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* was narrated to us by my father (Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Farooq). Once, Hadhrat Moulana Ilahi Buksh Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* was making wudhu in the pond at the *Khanqah* in Thana Bhawan, seated next to a local resident. The local asked Moulana from where he was. Moulana responded, that he was from the 'land of Sindh'. The

local person expressed astonishment, that Moulana had travelled such a long distance and questioned him whether there were no spiritual guides in his part of the world from whom he could benefit?

We learn from this, that the true servants of Allah have people who are envious of them, residing in their locality and neighbourhood. So we should not fear the jealousy and enmity of others. We should remain focused on our efforts.

Continuing with the incident, Hadhrat Moulana Ilahi Buksh Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* says, "When this person expressed his astonishment at my travelling such a long distance for my reformation, I responded to him with a poetic expression:

*'My love is for who I wish to love and Majnoon loves Laila - every person chooses his beloved and admires who he loves. The heart is inclined to what the eye holds beloved.'"*

Hadhrat Moulana Ilahi Buksh Awaan *(Rahimahullah)* accomplished his reformation and attained the friendship of Allah. He returned home and continued to reflect upon the condition of his heart to ascertain his spiritual condition.

After deep reflection, he ascertained that the love for his daughter was overwhelming his heart. Keep in mind, loving one's daughter is a permissible. So he writes a letter to his Shaykh, explaining the outcome of his reflection and the feeling of his heart about his daughter.

Generally, the response to such a concern would be that such love is permissible and there shouldn't be an issue with it. However, Hadhrat Hakimul Ummat, being the master spiritual physician that he was, issued an incisive diagnosis. He explained, *"This love is natural, but it must remain within the permissible limits. Too much attachment even to lawful things distracts the heart from Allah Ta'ala. Your remedy is to meditate on the eventual destruction of this world. Reflect over the reality that everything in this world will one day perish. This will restore balance in your love."*

This remedy was prescribed as a safeguard from the heart being overtaken by a love which, in principle was permissible, but (if not balanced), could become an obstacle to attaining the eternal love of Allah Ta'ala. So even good things like wealth, family, children; if excessive, unsettles the

heart. And the task of the Shaykh is to help us find the right balance so that the heart remains reserved for Allah alone.

## DEVELOP THE SPIRITUAL HEART

The effort to develop and reform the heart is paramount. In the Qur'an, Allah Ta'ala speaks of a heart that has been purified and developed, which will be a means of salvation on the Day of Qiyamah. Let us reflect on whether we have spiritually moulded and shaped our hearts. Every field has its experts. Those who specialise in spiritual development can guide us in shaping our hearts and reforming our lives.

Our primary concern should be to wean our hearts from becoming overly engrossed in the pursuits of this world, and to cultivate a greater awareness and concern for the Hereafter.

## WHEN NO WEALTH OR CHILDREN SHALL BENEFIT

In order to develop and beautify our inner selves, we must remember what Allah Ta'ala says:

*"The Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit, except one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."*

(Surah Ash-Shu'ara - 26:88–89)

On that day, the heart that has been developed and refined will be of benefit. Therefore, we should examine whether we have developed and refined our hearts or not.

For every task, there are specialists. The righteous servants of Allah are the specialists in developing the heart. They are capable of guiding a person towards developing the heart.

Today, we have the opportunity to forsake the glamour of this world and develop within our hearts a concern for the Hereafter. We must be concerned about our reformation.

Today, we are deeply engrossed with construction, expansion and accumulation of all material resources. We are very busy, but if there is one thing we are neglecting, it is the effort of developing the heart. We are not devoting sufficient energy to this effort. We are not focusing on the purification of this vessel.

Due to this negligence, our hearts remain undeveloped and unrefined. When we do not work on our heart, it remains undeveloped. A person may appear outwardly human, while animalistic tendencies gradually overtake him.

The heart is rigged with envy, hatred and malice. A person appears to be respectable, but these diseases of the heart are present within him. He worships his ego and cannot free himself from it. Everything begins with himself and ends with himself. There is no consideration for anyone else.

How do we explain this behaviour? These are spiritual illnesses deep within the heart. They are not connected to his clothing or to what he eats and drinks. They are connected to his heart.

## THE DISEASE OF ENVY

Despite the fact that Allah Ta'ala has bestowed countless blessings upon a person, when he sees someone else's progress, blessings, or good children, he burns in his heart.

In today's era, jealousy and envy have become widespread.

Suppose you mention some of your blessings to someone. You say, "I am grateful to Allah who has given me this new car or I have purchased this new house." You hope your Muslim brother will be happy for you. Instead of becoming happy and praying for increase in goodness and protection of the bounty, this Muslim becomes jealous and envious.

Now, if a person were to die in such a condition, in what state will he meet Allah? We should reflect over this. What kind of meeting will it be? Will we meet Him with this filth in our hearts?

It is mentioned in a Hadith that envy destroys good deeds just as fire consumes dry wood. Similarly, resentment and ill feelings for others have become widespread in society. Yet, we are not concerned about treating these spiritual sicknesses.

## EXPECT OPPOSITION IN THE WORK OF DEEN

Hadhratji Maulana Ilyas *(Rahimahullah)* would say that those who are involved in the work of Deen should expect opposition while carrying out the work of Deen. Opposition

is inevitable. The *Ambiya, Sahabah, Tabi'een, Auliya* and those who followed them faced opposition. Why will we not face opposition?

If there is no opposition, we should reflect. Could it be that there is some deficiency or weakness within me? However, one should not be frightened by the opposition of others.

Sadly, today, instead of placing a balm on the wounds, people sprinkle salt on them. They make a spectacle out of another person's difficulties.

In the era in we live in, one should adopt privacy and maintain confidentiality. Do not divulge what you possess and also do not reveal your grief and difficulties to others. Maintain your trust and reliance with Allah Ta'ala.

## BE IN THE COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL

Allah Ta'ala says: *"O you who believe, fear Allah and remain with the truthful."*

(Surah At-Tawbah - 9:119)

Allah has commanded the Believers to adopt *Taqwa* and remain in the company of the truthful.

This is known as *maiyyat-e-sadiqeen,* accompanying those who are truthful and firm in their Deen. We should adopt the company of those who are firmly grounded in Deen and who are sincere and truthful.

In other words, the one who wishes to change his heart, the treatment is not difficult. He should sit at the feet of a true servant of Allah and attach himself to that person's company. Then see how change begins to occur, even without consciously intending it. The heart will begin to change from within.

Adopting the companionship of the righteous causes their noble qualities to gradually transfer to you.

It is mentioned in a Hadith that Allah Ta'ala does not look at your appearances or wealth; rather, He looks at your hearts and your deeds. Allah Ta'ala looks at the condition of the heart. Therefore, we must focus on developing our hearts into true hearts.

Zikr and the various forms of remembrance are also prescribed and taught to us. Today, however, people undertake these practices according to their own wishes.

I explain it this way: if people are going to do that, they might as well take medicine according to their own wishes. But if they do not take medicine without proper guidance, why do they undertake Zikr and other spiritual practices according to their own wishes?

The purpose of Zikr is not merely to routinely move the tongue and repeat words. Its purpose is to establish remembrance in the heart, so that awareness and consciousness of Allah become firmly rooted within it.

A true sign of this is that, as awareness of Allah Ta'ala deepens, the greatness of Allah is understood better.

When awareness and recognition of His greatness become firmly established in the heart, then the heart softens. Humility grows, one becomes modest and begins to regard himself as insignificant.

## LET US BEGIN WITH OURSELVES

Today, we have no eagerness to correct ourselves. We want to correct others while remaining heedless of our own faults.

We must begin with ourselves. When we do so, others may be inspired to change. But, if you manage to change others and do not change yourself, then what benefit have you gained?

The reform of one individual leads to the reform of other individuals and the reform of many individuals leads to the reform of society. However, in our approach, we have reversed the order. We want to correct others first. We do not want to correct ourselves.

Allah Ta'ala calls upon us to: *'...save yourselves and your families from the fire.'* This effort must begin with ourselves.

The reality is that when a person changes himself, the good within him does not remain confined to himself. His good manners, habits, character and speech begin to influence those around him. This is the effect of goodness being transmitted from one to another.

The person who was treated well begins to reflect over this noble character. He observes that this person speaks so well and thinks he should also learn to speak in this way. An urge develop similar habits is created.

Our *nafs* (ego) is very mischievous. It whispers: 'Correct everyone else first. Correct yourself later.' In this way, the *nafs* deceives us. We become preoccupied with correcting others and remain heedless of ourselves.

Let us consider an example. There is a person who speaks rudely. After speaking to him once, you will try to avoid him the next time. You are not inclined to speaking to a person who uses foul language.

Then, there is another person, who speaks gently and chooses his words carefully. He does not ridicule or humiliate others, nor does he trample upon their dignity. When such a person speaks, it is as though he is scattering flowers. You feel like being with and speaking to him.

Therefore, we must begin with ourselves. Do not concern yourself with correcting others before correcting yourself.

Correcting others can come later. Your first concern must be yourself.

Remember, that we have control over our own selves. We can change ourselves, but we do not have control over others. So, begin with the work which you have control over. When you start with yourself, Allah will then open further avenues of work for you. He may allow others to benefit from you.

So, the discussion is about developing this heart into a *Qalb Saleem,* a sound and pure heart and a *Qalb Muneeb,* a heart that turns to Allah in repentance and devotion.

How will this become a reality? It will, by joining the company of the righteous servants of Allah Ta'ala and the remembrance of Allah Ta'ala. It will happen by adopting humility and modesty and by regarding oneself as the least of Allah's creation.

## THE HUMILITY OF OUR ELDERS

Hakimul Ummat, Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi *(Rahimahullah)* was indeed a great personality. Yet, he

would consider himself inferior to every Muslim, even to those who were wrongdoers.

He went further to assert that as far as disbelievers were concerned, if they were to accept *Iman* in the future, they too would become better than him.

He would say, when asking for Jannah, he does not ask for it on the basis of entitlement, as though he has a right to enter Jannah and deserved it. Rather, he asks Allah for Jannah because he will not be able to bear the punishment of Jahannam.

He would say something to the effect, *"O Allah, grant me a place even at the lowest level of Jannah. Even if I am given a place at the very lowest level, that will suffice me, because Ashraf Ali cannot bear the punishment of Jahannam."*

He would also use the analogy of the place where people remove their shoes outside a masjid. He would say, *"O Allah, grant me a place where the shoes of the people of Jannah are removed, because I cannot bear the punishment of the fire."*

This is what it means to regard oneself unworthy and to rid oneself from the feeling of superiority. Arrogance gives rise to many other evils. A person becomes a prisoner of his own ego. With pride and arrogance, no one else has any real value in his eyes.

You may have observed how a person behaves towards others when he becomes a prisoner of his ego. Some people come to the Masjid to perform Salah, yet they behave badly towards the *Muazzin*. They argue with the *Imam.* This is total disregard for the dignity and value of the person serving the community.

This is why people do not appreciate them. And whose loss is it when they fail to appreciate them? It is their own loss. The *Imam* is occupied with his service. What harm does he suffer? The person who behaves badly is the one who harms himself. He is effectively striking his own feet with an axe.

Had he approached the *Imam* in good faith, sat with him lovingly and exchanged a few kind words, how much benefit he could have gained and what joy he could have brought to the *Imam's* heart!

Today, hurting others' feelings and trampling upon their dignity, has become common in society.

Our elders have taught us that even children have dignity. We should treat children with kindness and affection. We should not hurt their self-respect, otherwise, these children will also become distant from us.

We need to reflect on the direction of our lives.

## RESPECT AND DIGNITY LIE WITHIN A PERSON

Our personality is not reflected by the brand of clothing we wear, by what we eat or drink, nor the house or car we have. Personality is connected to the heart.

Hadhrat Hakimul Ummah *(Rahimahullah)* explained this by way of an example. When a person returns home and removes his clothes, he hangs them on a peg or places them in a wardrobe. What does this mean? Has he removed his dignity and hung it on a peg? Can dignity be something a person takes off and hangs up?

Of course not. A person's dignity is not realised from his clothing or house. Dignity and respect is what lies in the heart. If dignity, nobility and honour are found within him, they form part of his character and personality. They remain within him regardless of his external circumstances. They have nothing to do with outward possessions.

We come across many incidents concerning the servants of Allah Ta'ala who lived very simply. They lived lives of poverty and hardship. They wore patched clothing. But did their dignity and respect diminish because of this? Did people degrade them for their simple appearance? No.

Consider the great personality of Hadhrat Umar (Radiyallahu anhu). When *Baytul Maqdis* was conquered, what was it that contributed to the recognition of his greatness?

The Christian priest identified him in the light of what was recorded in their books, wherein it was stated that the leader of the believers will have patches on his clothing. The priest saw the patched clothing of Hazrat Umar (Radiyallahu

anhu), but this did not diminish his status. Rather, it was part of what led to his recognition.

Let us reflect! Does a person's dignity depend on his attire? Does wearing patched clothing diminish his honour? Not at all! We should develop good character and cultivate good habits. Above all, we should love the creation of Allah.

Furthermore, the standard of our *Iman* is that we should wish for others what we wish for ourselves. None of us wish for indignity or to be treated with hatred or hostility or for our feelings to be hurt.

If we do not want these things for ourselves, then we must also be considerate about the dignity and feelings of others.

## NEVER DESPISE ANYONE

Sometimes a person outwardly appears to have a low standing in society. Outwardly it may seem that he has no honour in the eyes of people. He may even be someone who people look down upon. Due to this, we may treat him with contempt.

A Hadith mentions that some of Allah's accepted servants are such that their outward appearance and social standing is so low that, if they attend a gathering, they are not honoured and if they propose for marriage, their proposal is rejected. Yet, such people, may be so close to Allah Ta'ala that if they were to swear an oath by Allah concerning something, Allah will fulfil it.

We do not know what relationship a person enjoys with Allah Ta'ala. We do not know who is accepted by Allah and who enjoys His special closeness. Therefore, we should maintain a good opinion of everyone.

Think well of others and honour and respect everyone. Spread love rather than hatred. Allah wants us to spread love and to treat people with gentleness and compassion.

## DO NOT EXPECT ANYTHING FROM ANYONE

We should not expect anything in return from anyone. If I greet someone with Salaam, I should not expect him to greet me in return. If I expect something in return, the greeting

becomes an exchange, a form of reciprocation. That should not be our intention.

Similarly, suppose we have done someone a favour. Then, something unpleasant happens later on his part. This can happen. Never mention or bring up the favour we did for him by lamenting, "I did so much good for this person and look how he treated me!"

Seek the reward for that good deed from Allah Ta'ala. Our relationship should be maintained for Allah and Allah will reward us for it. Do not complain about people or carry tales from one place to another. Let it be. That was his responsibility and this was mine. My concern is that Allah should be pleased with me.

## DEVELOP A GENEROUS HEART

Let us improve our character and open our hearts. Our hearts should be warm towards people. We should embrace others with affection. This requires us to smash the idol of ego that lurks in us. When we show love for Allah's creation, affection towards people and overlook their mistakes, then

the heart begins to become a *Qalb Saleem* - a sound and pure heart. Humility begins to develop within the heart.

But when the ego and a sense of self-importance is held within the heart, the noble qualities cannot develop effectively.

Therefore, dear friends, today's lesson is that we must work on developing our personalities.

The beauty of our personalities does not come from our clothing. They do not require marble decor, expensive materials or the glamour of worldly possessions.

If we develop beauty and radiance within ourselves, it will also become visible on the outside. The inner radiance of the heart manifests itself through our speech, eyes and faces.

Regarding the Sahabah (Radiyallahu anhum), Allah Ta'ala says: *"Their distinguishing feature (is evident) on their faces from the traces of prostration."*

(Surah Al-Fath - 48:29)

The radiant effect of prostration was visible on their faces. No one needed to explain it to others. Their inner light was evident.

## LET US STRIVE TO BE GOOD HUMAN BEINGS

Let us strive to become good human beings. We must develop good habits, good speech and good character. We must eliminate the maladies of arrogance, pride, envy, resentment, malice, hatred and enmity from our hearts. Only then will we become good human beings and our hearts will become centres for receiving Allah's grace. The heart will experience sweetness and pleasure. It will become a heart that loves everyone and overlooks their mistakes.

The remembrance of Allah Ta'ala should become so deeply embedded within the heart that His awareness remains constantly. When a person eventually departs from this world, his heart should not be attached to the temporary attractions of this world, but rather to Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the ability to nurture and purify our hearts. May He remove from our hearts evil traits of

wickedness, malice and negativity and allow His Love to permeate it.

May Allah Ta'ala make us people who love everyone, whose hearts are filled with goodness, compassion and sincerity. May He grant me the ability to embody these qualities, and may He grant all of us the ability to do the same.

And our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

## ABOUT SHAYKH ABDUL MU'EED

Hadhrat Shaykh Abdul Mu'eed Saheb *(Damat Barakatuhum)* was born in Sukkur, a town in the Sindh Province of Pakistan, where he continues to reside. He is the eldest son of the great spiritual master and luminary, Shafeequl Ummat Hadhrat Moulana Shah Muhammad Farooq Saheb *(Rahimahullah)*, the eminent *Khalifah* and successor of Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat, Moulana Maseehullah *(Rahimahullah)*, of Jalalabad, India.

The family migrated from Aligarh to Pakistan after the partition of India. Born into a religious family, he received a sound upbringing from his parents. In his youth, he accompanied his father to Jalalabad, India, to be in the company of Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat, Moulana Maseehullah *(Rahimahullah).* Because of his father's special relationship with Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat, young Abdul Mu'eed was given special attention in the *Khanqah* and was treated as a member of the household. Hadhrat Shaykh Abdul Mu'eed *(Damat Barakatuhum)* once related: "My father would advise me to drink abundantly from the borehole water of the *Khanqah* in Jalalabad, India, as the soil

there contains the special blessings of our Shaykh, Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat *(Rahimahullah)*."

Hadhrat Shaykh Abdul Mu'eed, fondly known as Bhaijaan (meaning 'eldest brother'), was the Naazim (Chief Administrator) of Khanqah Maseehiyyah, which his honourable father established in Sukkur under the guidance and instruction of his Shaykh, Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat *(Rahimahullah)*. Hadhrat Bhaijaan astutely administered the important affairs of the *Khanqah,* while his father, the spiritual fountainhead, delivered daily *majalis* and discourses, received guests and spiritual seekers, and quenched the spiritual thirst of the people. The *Khanqah's* responsibilities included ensuring that guests were comfortable and that all arrangements reflected the style and temperament of the *silsila* (noble chain of Mashaikh). This effort reached its peak during the last ten days of Ramadan, when the I'tikaf programme drew seekers from far and wide. Some 300 to 400 guests participated in the Sunnah I'tikaf each year, while many more attended programmes at different times during Ramadan. Hadhrat

Bhaijan *(Damat Barakatuhum)* shouldered all related administrative responsibilities for many years.

After the demise of his beloved father and Shaykh *(Rahimahullah)* in 1999, and of his dear friend Hadhrat Dr Muhammad Sabir *(Rahimahullah)* - his father's natural successor - in 2007, Hadhrat Shaykh Abdul Mu'eed was entrusted with the enormous responsibility of carrying forward the mission. With the instruction, duas, blessings, and permission of a great sage of the Chistiyyah spiritual tradition, Hadhrat Nawab Ishrat Ali Khan Qaisar *(Rahimahullah)*, who was a disciple of Hakeemul Ummat, Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi *(Rahimahullah)*, and a Khalifah of Hadhrat Maseehul Ummat *(Rahimahullah)*, Hadhrat Bhaijaan reluctantly but humbly and ably embraced the enormous task, drawing on the spiritual training given to him by his father.

With utmost humility, respect, courage, and steadfastness, Hadhrat Shaykh Abdul Mu'eed continues to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to him by his seniors, displaying the same fervour, punctuality, and steadfastness. He attributes

all his achievements to their blessings and spiritual *faydh* (transmission). He possesses and exemplifies many of the noble qualities of affection, love, and compassion embodied by his father and Shaykh, Hadhrat Shafeequl Ummat Moulana Shah Muhammad Farooq *(Rahimahullah)*.

The Shaykh travels extensively in Pakistan and abroad to spread the Deen. He has visited the Caribbean Islands, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, China, Zambia, Malawi, Belgium, Germany, Turkey, Denmark, and several other countries. He also travels to the United Kingdom and South Africa almost every year for the purpose of reformation.

The Shaykh has a deep love and affinity for the Haramain Sharifain and visits the sacred lands whenever the opportunity arises. For almost two decades, he accompanied his father *(Rahimahullah)* annually and served the Hujjaj, the guests of Allah Ta'ala.

May Allah Ta'ala protect Hadhrat and accept his efforts.

# ABOUT THIS BOOK

**An enlightening discourse on the role of the Masjid in preserving our faith, reforming our ways and developing our community.**

The talk was delivered at Masjidus Salaam, Durban, South Africa, on 28 August 2023.

The effort to make the Masjid beautiful, convenient and comfortable is indeed noble. Initiatives to enhance the Masjid's appearance are important and commendable and rightly so.

At the same time, this should remind us of something greater: just as we make so much effort to beautify the exterior of the Masjid, we must also consider the inner development and beautification of our own hearts. The effort and concern we show for the Masjid's outer structure must also be directed towards our inner selves.