

THE LIFE OF HAKEEMUL UMMAT

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi
(Quddisa Sirruhu)

(A translation of Seerat - e - Ashraf)
Volume One



*View of the southern section of the Khaanqah of
Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi Alaih)*

*Follow the way of the one who turned to Me.
(Qur'aan)*

**THE LIFE OF
HAKEEMUL UMMAT
HAZRAT MOULANA
ASHRAF ALI THANWI
(Quddisa Sirruhu)**

VOLUME ONE

**Author
Munshi Abdur Rahmaan Khan
(Rahmatullahi Alaih)**

**Dedicated to those who,
in this age of academic
and practical excesses
and neglects, wish to see
a true and perfect
portrait of humanity**

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PREFACE

A sincere devotee of Hazratji – Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih) – mentioned once to Hazrat that there is a *qaht* (severe drought) in South Africa of the Life and Teachings of Hazrat Thanwi (Nawwarallahu Marqadahu). Hazrat (Rahmatullahi alaih) responded:

“May Allah Ta’ala shower the necessary rain.”

The Kitaab in your hands is our humble effort to water our *Ilmi and Roohaani* drought stricken land with the inspirational life story of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi.

This book is invaluable to every Student of Deen and every Seeker of the Spiritual Path.

We humbly implore Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta’ala to accept this work and benefit entire creation through it. That, for Allah Ta’ala, is a simple matter.

Was-Salaam

JAMIATUL ULAMA GAUTENG
SOUTH AFRICA

1 SAFAR 1441
30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Translation commences hereunder:

Important Impressions by Some Prominent Figures

A Brief Word

Hakeemul Ummat, Ashraful Ulama, Hazrat Thanwi (Nawwarallahu Marqadahu) was, in this age, a sign of the Signs of Allah Ta'ala. He was on his own a torch of guidance, a lamp of the path and an embodiment of a number of external and spiritual excellences. There was a need for diverse and numerous biographies to be written about him and every aspect of his life to be brought to light.

Undoubtedly, *Ashrafus Sawaanih* with its completing volume is a kitaab par excellence; benefiting, reliable and worthy. However, modern day needs required something else. To fulfill this 'something else' the compiler of *Seerat-e-Ashraf* raised his pen and Allah Ta'ala conferred *barkat* to his courage.

The total worth and benefit of the kitaab can only be gauged after its publication and study. The writer of these lines has up to now viewed its beautiful and comprehensive table of contents and also its first published pages. On the whole it is praiseworthy. The whole pot can be judged by a few grains of rice. With this as a yardstick it can safely be said that the kitaab will, *Insha Allah*, be interesting, comprehensive and revealing.

[Hazrat Moulana] Abdul Maajid [Saheb Daryabadi Rahmatullahi alaih]

A Lesson on Life

The wholesome life, academic and practical excellences and comprehensiveness of the external and inner spiritual effulgence and blessings of Ashraful Awliya, Qutbul Irshaad, Shaikhul Mashaaikh, Mujaddidul Millat, Hakeemul Ummat, Hazrat Moulana Shah Ashraf Ali Saheb Thanwi, Chishti, Saabiri, Imdaadi (May Allah Ta'ala illuminate his resting place) enjoy a distinguished and unparalleled pedestal. Every statement and action of his was a pathway of light for humanity and hence the Prince of Khaanqa-e-Ashrafiyyah, Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob (Rahmatullahi alaih) would say:

کہیں نہ دیکھا کہیں نہ پایا

جمال ایسا کمال ایسا

*Nowhere did I see; nowhere did I discover
Such beauty, such perfection*

دکھائے کوئی اگر ہو دعویٰ

جمال ایسا کمال ایسا

*Let him who ventures to aver
Show such beauty, such perfection*

Apart from being a born poet and college graduate, Khaajah Saheb was a distinguished *khaleefah* and special *khaadim* of Hazrat Thanwi. In Hazrat's very life he wrote his biography titled, *Ashrafus Sawaanih* which is all-encompassing of authentic details and endorsed personally by the celebrity portrayed. However, in view of its peculiar language, style and arrangement it proved to be more beneficial to the learned class than to the masses. The need,

therefore, was for such a *Seerat-e-Ashrafiyyah* to be written which, in the light of historical facts and in a new style, can be of advantage and benefit to the ordinary learning class as well.

My respected and dear friend, Janaab Munshi Abdur Rahmaan Khan Saheb Multani (May Allah Ta'ala keep him safe) perceived this need and he has compiled on the foundation of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*, together with additions, such a comprehensive and detailed yet authentic and authoritative *Seerat-e-Ashraf* which in the opinion of scholars, after *Seeratun Nabi*, its like in Urdu Literature is difficult to come by.

The beautiful lay-out has made it, together with a picture of life, a lesson of life. Reading it leaves one astounded and it becomes difficult to conclude whether this biography is that of a super-human being created of *Noor* and shaped in the mould of holiness, or that of one composed of water and bouquets possessing a heart of a man and human feelings?

Not only did the author (May Allah Ta'ala keep him safe) fulfil an important need of the times in the compilation of *Seerat-e-Ashraf*, he has furthermore rendered a favour to the *khuddaam* of the *Court of Ashraf* in particular, and for all Muslims in general.

In addition to educating a useless and wrongdoer like me, he has conferred me the good fortune of studying [the kitaab] word for word and he even accepted my suggestions in matters where advice was sought. This brought comfort to my heart and *du'aas* emanated from the heart that, may Haq Ta'ala bestow *taufeeq* to his esteemed Munshi Saheb for more Deeni service. May He make all his Deeni books and compilations accepted and beneficial and may He grant him Divine Pleasure and Proximity by changing his words to experience. *Aameen, thumma Aameen.*

Servant of the Students and Destitute

Khair Muhammad Jalandhari (May Allah Ta'ala pardon him)

Khairul Madaaris, City of Multan

26th Ramadhaanul Mubaarak 1374 A.H.

[Hazrat Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb was the founder and principal of Khairul Madaaris, the second largest madrasah in Pakistan.]

A Blessed Biography

What must this fortunate soul say about how much happiness and how much *du'aas* emanate from the heart for your compilation of Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's (Rahmatullahi alaih) biography. I have read with fervour and enthusiasm the few parts of the biography which you have graciously sent. *Masha Allah*, the style of speech and the layout, both are very good.

Under the caption *The First Vision of Pakistan* whatever Janaab wrote, was written with exceptional balance. To write on this topic was quite testing, because the facts are to be revealed without exaggeration, there is to be no disparagement of past figures and whatever is written is to be backed by proof.

No matter how rare and precious scattered pearls may be, they do not individually possess that attraction and nor are they so captivating as they appear orderly, strung together; priceless and beautiful. The toil and effort with which you are completing this blessed biography is truly your lot. May Allah Ta'ala increase the power of your pen.

It pleases me that you are employing total honesty in this work and the *khuddaam* of Hazrat Thanwi are satisfied and happy that Baari Ta'ala has taken the work of compiling and authoring *The Life of Ashraf* from such a *bandah* of his who is in all regards fully competent for rendering this very important service.

You are a blessed being, for Allah Ta'ala has taken such a lofty work from you. The like of this cannot be found with respect to the dunya and Aakhirat. All the devotees of Hazrat Wala are thankful to you that you have timeously taken the responsibility of this task. May Allah Ta'ala grant a grand reward and may He accept this Deeni *khidmat* of yours. *Aameen, thumma Aameen!*

In need, Jamshed
Baghpat, District Meerath
18th July 1955 AD

Model of the Character of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

It pleased me immensely to learn that you are almost complete with the compilation of the life of Moulana Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih).

My first meeting with Moulana Maghfoor [Hazrat Thanwi] was in Thanabawan during the initial campaign of the *Muslim League*. I presented myself in his service along with my friend, Nawab Jamshed Ali Khan as he gave me the assurance that Hazrat Moulana is sympathetic to the objectives of the *Muslim League* and he wishes to acquire detailed information regarding the campaign.

The first meeting was after Zuhr Namaaz in the Masjid where Moulana Thanwi was seated in an assembly. Upon seeing us he stood up and dismissed those that were there. Till Asr Namaaz our

conversation continued. Thereafter he promised that he will announce his sympathetic feelings of the *League* in the papers.

At night he hosted us for meals. Here we experienced an enthralling company. What I wish to put forward is that the mere sight of Moulana left a deep impression of his greatness on my heart and all my reservations [about Moulana Thanwi] were dispelled; the reservations which settled on my heart during the *Muslim League* campaign arising from the tales of Thanabawan.

The second occasion Moulana himself called me to Thanabawan. He also invited me that day and night to have meals at his home. When I reached there with my associates Moulana was adamant to wash my hands himself [i.e. pour the water], which we could never bear. Then he spread the *dastarkhan* with his own hands and brought the food. His venerable wife would bring warm rotis, at intervals, from behind a screen. When all the food was set then Moulana said: “*Come let us do something heavenly*”. Upon my query: “*What?*” he said:

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا

“*Eat and Drink!*”

He embodied the Prophetic Character fully. Only on one other occasion did I have the impression as the impression left on my heart by his meeting. That was when I first had the honour of meeting Shaikhul Hind Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan.

In between the campaigns of *Khilaafat* and the *League* there were many occasions of meeting with many Ulama. However, none left such an impression on me as Hazrat Thanwi’s meeting.

His letters would come to me. They are presently with my son. I am writing to him to send the letters to you.

In need

Muhammad Isma'eel Khan

Mustafa Kasal, Meerath

10th June 1955 AD

Lamp of the Road

I am very pleased that you are writing a biography of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali (Rahmatullahi alaih). This is a very important work because by knowing the life sketch of such people, individual members of the population are greatly aided in moulding their lives. The biographies of such illustrious personalities serve as lamps on the road of the existence of the nation. In the light of the life and works of such illustrious souls people become discerning of good and bad and they gain strength in inclination towards good acts and abstention from evil things.

Not only have I had the honour of personally serving Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat (Rahmatullahi alaih), in fact, family-wise my ancestors and I have had the honour of serving all those illustrious personalities with whom Hakeemul Ummat was attached to; the likes of Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi (Rahmatullahi alaih) and Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih).

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Saheb, *marhoom* and *maghfoor*, was *Hakeemul Ummat* in the true sense of the word. He would lecture on the Ahkaam of the Shariat with the spirit which was seen in the Islamic World during the age of the *Taabi'een* and *Tab'e Taabi'een*. As an illustration I will mention one anecdote.

A person came to Moulana *marhoom, maghfoor* and expressed his idea of going for Haj. Hazrat enquired: *"You don't perhaps have some debt on your shoulders?"* He replied in the negative. Then Hazrat asked: *"You don't perhaps have an adolescent daughter still to marry?"* He replied: *"Yes, one daughter."* Hazrat said: *"First see to your daughter's marriage, and then go for Haj."*

Now where will you find such illustrious personalities who understand the real necessities of Islam and bear in mind the aim of the Shaari' [Law Maker, Allah Ta'ala] appropriately?

It is my hope that the biography of Hazrat (Rahmatullahi alaih) will be a torch of guidance for Muslims.

In need, Ahmad Sa'eed
Raahat Manzil, Aligarh, 16th May 1955 AD

Foreword

Portrait of the Biography

Allah Ta'ala, *Jalla Shaanuhu*, has stated in His *Kalaam-e-Paak* one objective of the Qur'aan to be:

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ ۖ
وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ۝

(Surah Yusuf, 3)

***“We relate to you a wonderful story, by means of the Qur’aan
which We have revealed to you.
Prior to this you were unaware (of it).”***

Thus, apart from being a code of life, the Qur’aan-e-Kareem is also a history of previous nations presenting their life and actions for the sake of insight, lesson and guidance — these also being the primary purpose of historical writings.

Although the general trend is that the life-sketcher or biographical writer presents the amazing feats of revolutionary figures merely to show what part they played in bringing progress to the world; however, this principle serves little benefit in the presentation of Islam’s celebrated personalities because the History of Islam is entirely different to the history of the *kufir* world.

The most glorious epoch of Islam commenced from the advent of the Leader of the universe, the Pride of all existence, Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and it ended with the *Khilaafat-e-Raashidah*. The Qur’aan-e-Kareem illustrates all past history to endorse and show the merit of this period, and it offers an invitation to prepare all future events in the light of this period. Therefore,

when presenting the celebrated and laudable personalities of Islam it is futile to endeavour to show what records they have set in the progress of the world. What has to be shown, rather, is the part they played in conveying the *Light of Nubuwwat* [that is, the teachings of Nabi Sallallahu alaihi wasallam] to the world through their academic and practical efforts and strivings.

A thorough study of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem brings to the fore the pattern that has come down from the beginning of creation, that Allah Ta'ala, on the basis of وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ [for every nation there is a guide] sends to each nation a guide and leader who oversees the guidance of his people. As long as the *Agency of Nubuwwat* was open, Ambiya would come. When this was closed then from time to time such reformers and thinkers would be sent who would strive to bring back the nation of Islam to this Path of Deen – the Path of the Ambiya – which they [Muslims] have strayed from thus landing themselves in the pits of innovation, customs and nonsensical practices.

History forever repeats itself. As long as a reformer (Muslih) remained in the midst of a people they energetically pursued *Siraat-e-Mustaqeem*. However, as soon as he completes his mission and passes on [to the Aakhirat] then in a short time the effects of his teachings and reformation start to dwindle and people retrogress to the point whence they were brought to the *path of hidaayat*. This can best be illustrated by the first epoch of Islam itself.

“The adherents of that Deen which came to efface the influence of the Caesar and the Khosrau [that is, to break the power of the kufr empires of Byzantine and Persia], after forty years slowly became inclined to the lifestyle of the Caesar and the Khosrau, to such an extent that its leaders and governors boasted of being the heirs of Kaiser and Kisra instead of priding themselves with being the

successors of the Khulafa-e-Raashideen. That same lifestyle of indulgence in luxury, gold, silver, silk, brocade, peacock feathers and music [of the Byzantine and Persian Emperors] became the goal of life for Muslim leaders and governors. The Baitul Maal [Public Treasury] became their private safe and the government became their inherited property. Instead of property and land-ownership under Islamic Principles the law of the Caesar and Khosrau was implemented.” (Jaami’ul Mujaddideen, p. 29)

In consequence, Islamic History saw ages when reformers and guides were born to reform and correct. In recent history famous personalities as Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sarhandi, Hazrat Moulana Shah Waliyyullah Muhaddith-e-Dehlwi, Hazrat Moulana Shah Isma’eel Shaheed and Hazrat Moulana Sa’eed Ahmad Bareilwi (Rahimahumullahu Ta’ala) were important figures in this line. According to the dictates of the times they fulfilled the duty of service to Deen and creation by keeping alive the *Sunan* [Traditions of Rasulullah Sallallahu alaihi wasallam] and rebutting *bid’aat* [innovations in the Deen]. History deservedly praises their efforts.

After them, however, a period of secular education dawned which made western civilization appear to be respectable in the eyes of Muslims and which made Islam appear to be low in the eyes of the very adherents of Islam. As a result, they have abandoned the principles and fundamentals of Deen and they have commenced to restructure the mansion of their lives on European plans. In everything, western style of life and politics began to be emulated. The nakedness and immorality of London and Paris began to appear everywhere. Innovations and futilities began to be thought of as Deen. Dancing and music, singing and musical instruments started to lead their lives and almost from the heart and mind of every Muslim the picture of Islam started to fade.

When the *Deeni* [religious] and *Akhlaaqi* [moral] condition of Muslims dropped to that level, Allah Ta'ala, according to His Eternal Way, sent such a sage and reformer who pointed out to the world that Deen is not just *Salaat, Saum, Haj, Zakaat, Nawaafil and Awraad* [devotional practices of *Zikr*, etc.]. Character, social-behaviour and dealings are in fact also integral measures of it. Keeping in sight all the chapters and portions of the Perfect Deen, he [the sage sent by Allah] began to reconstruct the Creed of Islam and he reminded the world of that forgotten lesson which one *Ummi* (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) gave, that:

"In reality, progress, which is being clamoured for nowadays, is not lofty mansions, packed safes, expensive garments, exquisite household items, big companies, eminent professions, huge wages, royal honours, rewards and titles. No! As a matter of fact, it [progress] is lofty character, noble ways and a pure and clean heart carrying out the Ahkaam [Law] of Allah Ta'ala. It is not attached to comfort and luxury. Progress is not the lot of a seeker of the transitory or one obsessed with wealth and enamoured with fame. It [true progress] is the passion of serving creation sincerely for the pleasure of the Creator." (Jaami'ul Mujaddideen, p. 29)

That reformer and sage was Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih).

Circumstances Which Led to Writing This Biography

He left behind for the Deeni and worldly reformation and individual and collective prosperity and progress of Muslims a precious Treasure of Ilm [academic and literary works] that can serve till Qiyaamat. However, it is regrettable that whilst the religious class is well cognizant of his name, works and message, the present western-educated class are almost all unaware. A major reason for this is that the condensation, simplification, dissemination and

publication of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's teachings are not being carried out on the scale of other literature which are being spread and nor has his life-story been revealed in such a way as to attract the modern-educated class.

Although Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Majzoob compiled the *Ashrafus Sawaanih* of Hazrat Thanwi which he [Hazrat Thanwi] personally proof read and which is in all regard comprehensive, however, the modern-day educated class find a barrier in studying it in view of its style not being chronological and historical. The thought, therefore, repeatedly came to my heart that some writer should revise and simplify it so that our English educated people can derive benefit from it.

Towards this end I firstly drew the intention of Moulana Abdul Baari Saheb Nadwi, the Ustaad of Philosophy in *Jaami'ah Uthmaaniyah* who is among the distinguished *Khulafa* of Hazrat Thanwi. He informed me in his honourable letter dated 16th April 1947 AD:

"The biography of Hazrat (Alaihir Rahmah) with which style you have in mind, Moulana Sayyid Sulaimaan Nadwi has firmly made his mind to write it accordingly. In all probability he has commenced it. May Allah Ta'ala complete it.

It is also ahqar's wish that Hazrat's works are published in a way which can benefit the newly-educated class. However, together with making the external [i.e. the wording] enticing, internally as well there is a need for an edit, new layout and simplification. It is a source of happiness that your esteemed self has turned his gaze in this direction. May Allah Ta'ala accept and confer aid."

After this notification I referred to Hazrat Moulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi. He replied to my letter as follows:

28th June 1947

Bhopal

Assalaamu Alaikum,

Honourable

There was a delay in replying to your letter. Your letter became displaced among piles of pages. Today it has surfaced. I ask for *maaf* for the anguish of the delay.

Indeed, I had commenced work on editing *Ashrafus Sawaanih*. After writing a part or two I took ill. Circumstances forced me to come to Bhopal and that work was left in abeyance. There is no hope of resuming it in the near future. In such circumstances, if someone else wishes to do this work then he should certainly do it. May Allah Ta'ala keep you people under his protection and safety and may He enrich you with His *tauwfeeqaat*.

Was-Salaam

Sayyid Sulaiman

Thereupon, I knocked at the door of the Researcher of Islam, the *Sultan of the Pen*, Sayyid Munaazir Ahsan Geelaani, the Head of the Department of Deeniyaat at *Jaami'ah Uthmaaniyah* and I wrote to him: "*I am taking out a journal in memory of Hazrat Thanwi, Paighaam-e-Islam. Kindly confer some material regarding Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi and take out some time to write his biography.*"

In reply, he sent an essay titled, *The Balanced Path of Hakeemul Ummat* (which is documented in this biography) and he wrote:

Jaami'ah Uthmaaniyyah

Wa Alaikumus Salaam wa Rahmatuhu wa Barakaatuh

Due to lack of time I couldn't prepare any material. The main reason being that presently I do not have the stockpile of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's Kitaabs by me. Nevertheless, after your demand, remaining still seemed to be a ghunaah. I am preparing and sending a short article with the aid of Kamaalaat-e-Ashrafiyyah. What else must I say? Make du'aa that I come by some free time.

Munaazir Ahsan Geelaani

Thereafter the winds of change blew and neither could the journal be published and nor did the atmosphere of ease and contentment prevail for me to petition elsewhere. However, the thought could not be forgotten.

After sometime news came from Lucknow that Moulana Abdul Baari Saheb Nadwi was writing *Jaami'ul Mujaddideen* about Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. This brought some satisfaction. However, after its release, when it came I found it to comprise of only Hazrat Thanwi's revivalist exploits. In it was explained how Hazrat Thanwi accomplished the magnificent work of bringing together, on the pattern of the Ambiya, different groups in this age. However, this could not serve as a biography.

Then I was informed that Muhtaram Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi the editor of *Sidq-e-Jadeed Lucknow* was portraying the humanity of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi with the title, *Hakeemul Ummat*. Now I awaited this. When it came after being

published then I found it comprising of Moulana Muhtaram's personal sketches and impressions substantiating Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi to be the best human of this age. Although this exquisite compilation throws light on many aspects of Hazrat Thanwi's life, however, it still could not fit the definition of 'biography' and hence I did not see any other alternative other than attempting to accomplish this work myself reposing my trust in the Special Grace of Haq Ta'ala notwithstanding my lack of *Ilmi [academic]* capital.

When Muhtaram Molvi Thanaa'ullah Khan Saheb, Publisher of Kitaabs, Lahore learned of this intention of mine he showed me the red flag to stop me from putting my foot in this field. He said:

"Hazrat Thanwi absolutely dislikes his biography to be written."

This caused great consternation. To remove this worry, the disciple of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, Muhtaram Haji Abdus Salaam Saheb Hoshyarpuri wrote to me:

"Definitely go ahead and compile a concise biography of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi on the new pattern. There is great need for this. The current biography is lengthy and complex which ordinary folk cannot bear."

The reason for Hazrat (Quddisa Sirruhu) prohibiting was that compilers either exaggerate or show neglect. Now, as there is Ashrafus Sawaanih which was prepared during Hazrat's (Quddisa Sirruhu) life, in Hazrat's presence, there is no harm then in compiling those anecdotes in another style. Only the style of speech will be an easier one; the episodes will be the same. If anything is augmented then it will be from that which Hazrat spoke of in his Malfoozaat."

Support for these words of Haji Saheb is found in the preface of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*, *Kashful Haqeeqat* which Hazrat wrote himself. In it he writes that since:

“Many adorers exaggerate; therefore, I have strongly refused that my biography be written.”

In spite of this, permission for writing *Ashrafus Sawaanih* was given because in overseeing this work, *“the possibility of excesses and omissions diminishes considerably as the person responsible can review it. Furthermore there is no doubt regarding the wisdom in it [the biography].”*

Another benefit of permitting the writing of his life-sketch during his life and under his direction was that reports of his life story could not be clouded and the road would become easy for future historians to write his biography. The reason for this is that apart from his biography, compilations and writings, his daily practices right up to his lectures and statements (Mawaa’iz wa Malfoozaat), all are available with his review and endorsement. In these, every aspect of his life appears clear as day.

Commencing on this work I examined Hazrat Thanwi’s academic and practical feats and found them to encompass more than nine hundred Kitaabs. I felt sort of scared at diving into the raging ocean of this knowledge, wisdom, understanding of reality, and perception of the Divine. Muhtaram Asad Multani saw me hesitant and remarked:

“In contrast to the writing of ‘Daastaan-e-Amal’ this is not such a difficult task as you think it to be.”

This gave me some courage. However, prior to commencing I deemed it necessary to take permission from the *Qutb of the times*, the *Shaikh of the age*, Hazrat Moulana Mufti Hasan Saheb (Mudda

thilluhul aali), the *Chief of the Court* of Hazrat Ashraf's *Khulafa*. Hence I informed him of this intention. He wrote this *du'aa*:

"May Haq Ta'ala grant you barkat with every step in this endless ocean you have stepped into."

This added strength to my courage. His *du'aa* was like acceptance from the Divine Court and the pen went into motion. From the Unseen, gradually such mediums of ease were found that the giver of the *du'aa* himself was amazed. These were the circumstances under which this biography was written.

Amazing Revelations

During the course of writing this biography wonderful and amazing things unfolded. After living for ages with Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, the *Prince of the Court of Hazrat Ashraf*, Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzooob came to the conclusion that:

ہم جس پہ مر رہے ہیں، وہ ہے بات ہی کچھ اور

Who we are dying over, there is something else about him.

عالم میں تم سے لاکھ سہی، تم مگر کہاں

There may be in the world millions of others, but where like you!

He was adamant at this. In fact he repeatedly would say:

بسیار خوباں دیدہ ام، لیکن تو چیزے دیگری

I have seen many beautiful people, but you are something else.

The portrait sketcher of the humanity of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, the famous writer and philosopher, Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi, notwithstanding being the *mureed* of a *Buzrug* with different ideals, would ecstatically proclaim:

اب نہ کہیں نگاہ ہے، اب نہ کوئی نگاہ میں

“Now the eyes are not elsewhere; now no one is in the eyes.”

And he would often say:

نہ ٹھہرا جائے ہے مجھ سے ، نہ بھاگا جائے ہے مجھ سے

I cannot stop (praising Moulana Thanwi).

Nor can I run away (from his praise).

He came to this conclusion:

“In my lengthy experiences and encounters I found him to be an excellent human being.”

However, I [Munshi Abdur Rahmaan Khan Saheb, the author] came to the following conclusion after diving into this ocean which has no shore, that just as the speech of Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was *Pure Wahi* and his character was the practical commentary of the Qur’aan, similarly every statement and act of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was an illumination and explanation of the *Kitaab and Sunnat* and taking this into regard, Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was not only “an excellent human being” he was also in this age an unmatched human being. Every page of the book of his life enjoys the status of a lesson on life. The destination and road become clear through it. Every statement and action of his can be seen throwing light on some aspect or the other of life and opening up the pathways of *Ilm and Amal*.

Another amazing point learnt was that Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was the first to present the *Vision of Pakistan*. Hazrat had already drawn up a programme for its formation and preservation and he had proposed the sketch of its running when Pakistan’s idealists, viz. Iqbal and others had not even thought about it.

The third mystery which unfolded was that Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi sent delegations of *tableegh* and letters to Muhammad Ali Jinnah making him punctual on Namaaz in the *Masnoon* way and engendering in him some understanding of the Deen. The Islamic colour seen in Jinnah's final years was the product of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's spiritual benefits.

The fourth clue that came to light was that top ranking governors, nawaabs, leaders, judges and attorneys kept their *islaahi ta'alluq* with the *Court of Ashraf*. An account of them is given in *Ashrafus Sawaanih* without their names being disclosed. I wished to write about them stating their names but Moulana Shabbeer Ali Saheb Thanwi stopped me from doing that. According to him, when Hazrat never disclosed their names for some reason or the other than why should I disclose their names. It is possible that they prefer not to have their names published. For this reason I, in obedience, left their names under the veil of secrecy.

Among the pious remnants of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi are outstanding scholars and writers who are unmatched in their knowledge and excellences. If they had directed their attention to this task then with certainty they would have accomplished it in a better and more beautiful way and they would have included their personal knowledge, observations and revelations. This was, however, not possible for me because when my ears heard the auspicious name of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, a year thereafter he departed from this abode. In consequence, I was not honoured with his *ziyaarat*. I saw his dignity and awe, and his beauty and perfection on the mirror of this biography and I have seen it with such fervour that regret for not visiting remains no more. Yes, however, in this mirror I see my Deeni appearance and I see each

and every blemish and stain on it which drowns me in the ocean of shame.

I had a stockpile of so many of Hazrat's *ilmi capital* that a separate kitaab could be written on every aspect and every quarter of his life with the available material. I, therefore, did not take from those *ilmi memoirs* which are preserved by Hazrat's *khuddaam*. However, for clarification of the abovementioned revelations which are to be found in Hazrat's written publications, but not detailed, I had to refer to Hazrat's sincere and trustworthy devotees: Moulana Shabbeer Ali Saheb Thanwi, Moulana Zafar Ahmad Saheb Uthmaani, Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi, Nawab Jamshed Ali Khan Saheb and Nawab Muhammad Isma'eel Khan Saheb who were acquainted with it.

For fear of transcending limits and exaggeration I, as far as possible, abstained from their lengthy expositions and details of review and their critical examination of the episodes and anecdotes presented so that the volume of the kitaab does not increase and that it is not considered to be the recruiting agency of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. Due to the rarity or prolificacy of the episodes and anecdotes, in drawing and formulating, repetition like other common biographies has been avoided. Yes, you will certainly find incidental topics of a similar nature appearing in various chapters. However, you will find the episodes mentioned thereunder completely of a different flavour casting light on approximately all aspects and quarters of his life.

In view of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* being the fundamental capital of *Seerat-e-Ashraf*, its passages have therefore been documented without reference and in most places the wording has been borrowed from it. However, the passages taken from Hazrat's or his devotees' and disciples' printed matter have been documented with

reference. Although these additions may raise the eyebrows of Hazrat's old-fashioned *khuddaam*, yet if they reflect over its worth and benefit then they will, out of urgency and impartiality, find me on the path of rectitude.

To the best of my ability I remained within the confines of Hazrat's stipulated parameters of caution in compiling this biography and as a further measure of caution of authenticity I entrusted it for further examination to the righteous *Khaleefah* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, Hazrat Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb (Mudda thilluhu) and Molvi Abdur Rasheed Saheb Naseem, a graduate of Deoband. I adopted their suggestions in deed. After this, if somebody's notion is that I have not honoured Hazrat's bequest or that I have overstepped his stipulated parameter, then just as Hazrat said to those personalities:

مجھ کو پہچانا نہیں گیا

"I have not been recognized",

similarly, I humbly say that he [the critic] has not gained *ma'rifat* of the essence of Hazrat's statements.

The circumstances which constrained an unworthy person as me in writing on this subject have been presented to the dear reader with all sincerity, and the painstaking effort with which I compiled it you will evaluate from the layout. Thereafter, if you find this biography of interest then consider it to be the *Fadhl* of *Moula-e-Kareem*. If you benefit from it then understand it to be the *faiz* of Hazrat. And if you see deficiencies and irregularities in it, then forgive me for it, as I am neither a historian nor a literary master and nor do I really have the sophistication of authoring. Therefore, instead of looking at the good and bad of my writing, look at the statements and anecdotes of the biographical figure whose introduction is the purpose. And do make *du'aa* that *Moula-e-Kareem* accepts and grants acceptance to

this insignificant effort and that He raises the readers to the correct level of humanity just as the personality of the biography. *Aameen, thumma Aameen!*

السَّعْيُ مِنَّا وَالْإِتْمَامُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

Effort is from our side and completion is from Allah Ta'ala.

Chehlake, City of Multan

14th August 1955 AD

The lowest of servants

Abdur Rahmaan Khan

نہ گنجد در بیان وصفِ کمالش

*A bayaan cannot adequately cover the description of his
perfection*

کنم طبع آزمائی باخیالش

I have tested myself according to his way of reflection

An Introduction

The Biographical Character's Life in His Own Words

A commissioned police officer in Thanabawan requested *bai't* from Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaihi). In response, Hazrat Thanwi wrote, introducing himself:

“I am a dry student. Nowadays, things which are considered to be necessities of being a *durwaish*, like the gatherings of *meelaad*, *urs*, *aghyarwi*,¹ *niyaaz*, *Faatihah*, *qawwaali* and the like, I am aloof from all of it and I prefer to keep my friends on this *dry path*.

Neither am I one who receives *kashf* and performs *karaamat*, nor am I a person who has some mystical powers and nor am I an *aamil*. I only make known the Ahkaam of Allah Ta'ala and His Rasool (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam).

¹ The *bid'ah* custom of feeding for the sake of Shaikh Abdul Qaadir Jeelaani on the eleventh of Rabee'ul Aakhir

I do not inconvenience my friends in any way with regard to my condition or any of my teachings, and neither do I wish to conceal any suggestion or advice about matters pertaining to the Deen. I do not force anyone to make *amal*. Yes, I certainly become happy seeing someone make *amal* and sad at someone remain aloof from *amal* [practice].

I do not ask anyone to intercede on my behalf nor do I intercede on anyone else's behalf. For this reason some people have the opinion of me of being dull. My outlook is that, for the sake of one person another should not be troubled, even if it is verbal.

The greatest care I exercise for myself and for my friends is that no one should be troubled in anyway. Whether it is physical; like fighting, or monetary; like suppressing the right of someone or taking something without right, whether it has to do with honour; like belittling someone, back-biting someone or whether in feelings; like troubling someone or dealing in an unbecoming way causing grief. If by mistake something of this sort transpired, then one should not sneer at seeking forgiveness.

I pay so much attention to these things that seeing someone's dress and appearance in conflict with the Shariah I merely have a cause for complaint. However, seeing wrongs in these things, horrifies me and I make *du'aa* that Allah Ta'ala grants salvation from it. This is my life in full.

People think:

منش کرده ام رستم پهلوان

I have displayed myself as the wrestler, Rustam

وگر نہ بلے بود در سیستان

But, where was I in Seestaan (the home of Rustam)?

[End of Hazrat Thanwi's account of himself.]

ہم جس پہ مر رہے ہیں، وہ ہے بات ہی کچھ اور

Whom we are dying over, he is something else

عالم میں تم سے لاکھ سہی، تم مگر کہاں

In the world there may be millions of others, but where like you!

Part One: Early Life

ذره ذره میں ہے پنہاں ایک دنیائے عمل

In every single atom is hidden a world of deeds

خواب سمجھا ہے جسے تو، ہے وہی تعبیر خواب

*What you have understood to be a dream, it is in fact the
interpretation of a dream
(Rushd)*

1. Thanabawan

1.1 Background to the Name

In *Aaein-e-Akbari* the name of this town is recorded as Thana-Bheem which during the period of Rajah Bheem was attributed to him. Although in papers of the Moghul Empire its name appears as Muhammadpur which the local Muslim inhabitants called it after a son of theirs 'Fatah Muhammad', however, it did not enjoy approval and its name remained Thanabawan.

In the *Imperial Gazette*, Volume 23, 1908AD another reason is given for its name. In it is written that in some period of its history there was a temple here, *Bhawaani Mandir*, which was quite famous. In relation to it the name 'Thanabawan' came into vogue. Rationally also, it would appear that from Bhawaani it became Bhawan, not Bhawan from Bheem.

1.2 Location

This town is situated in the constituency of Keranah in the district of Muzaffar Nagar in the Union of Agra Owdh states [known today as Uttar Pradesh or U.P.]. It lays 18 miles [28,9km] north-west of Muzaffar Nagar on a tarred road. [To get to Thanabawan by road these days, one could take a taxi or bus on the Delhi—Saharanpur route. On this national road Thanabawan lies between the towns of Shamli and Jalalabad.]

Surrounding it are the famous towns of Deoband, Gangoh, Kandlah, Keranah, Jhinjanah and Panipat which have produced illustrious personalities and are locations of important historical sites. [The closest towns to Thanabawan are Jalalabad which is approximately 5km north of Thanabawan, and Shamli which is approximately 15km south of Thanabawan. Jalalabad was the home of Hazrat Thanwi's *Khaleefah-e-Arshad* Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb, popularly known as Hazrat Jee whilst Shamli is the site of the famous Battle of Shamli between Muslims and the British.]

1.3 Historical Importance

In the 1857AD war of independence this town served as a base for the Mujaahideen. The inhabitants there joined the war of independence under the leadership of Qaadhi Mahboob Ali Khan and his paternal nephew Qaadhi Inaayat Ali Khan. Very daringly they took control of the constituency and then Shamli [from the British]. The one hundred and thirteen regimental troops guarding it were killed. However, Sikhs and Ghurkhas thereafter launched a sustained seven hour attack and captured it under the command of a certain magistrate. They razed the town to the ground.

Historically, this entire area is recorded to be the home of illustrious personalities. In this town [of Thanabawan] and the nearby towns major Deeni educational institutions are situated. The abundance of *Ulama, Fuzala [Graduates] and Mashaaikh* who were raised in this area is unparalleled in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. Accordingly, a British supervising officer praising the intellectual skills of the natives of this area called the people of Thanabawan in his report *Aaqilaan-e-Thana* or *Intellectuals of Thanabawan*. This is corroborated by these words of the pious Buzrug and anthropologist, the noble Shaikh Ma'shooq Ali of Qanooj, which he stated on one occasion to Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi:

“People around here are ahead of people by us in everything. Thus, the Aalim here is better than the Aalim there, the jaahil here is better than the jaahil there and even the kaafir here is better than the kaafir there.”

1.4 The Railway Line

Earlier, no railway line passed by this town. It was Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's great desire that the railway passes through his town so that there is no inconvenience for people coming there. Since Haq Ta'ala wishes to see His obedient servants happy, the *du'aa* was accepted and a railway track was laid there coming from Saharanpur.

The station that was built, however, was some two miles [3,2km] from the actual town, whether a person was coming from Delhi or from Saharanpur. The visitor was required to then travel by some means a further two to three miles [3-5km] on a desolate and uninhabited field road to reach the town. [This station lies on the outskirts of Jalalabad, although it is

designated 'Thanabawan Station'.] This was also cause for inconvenience and difficulty which was not accepted by Haq Ta'ala.

In consequence a second thought occurred to Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi that the station should be built alongside the town so that people coming and going do not experience difficulties. *Insaan* can never wish for anything until his Owner and Master (Maalik wa Maula) does not wish. The beauty is that only that transpires which He [Haq Ta'ala] wishes, but He creates the wish in the heart of man, grants it the pedestal of acceptance and creates the satisfactory means for the desired end.

تو چنیں خواہی خدا خواہد چنیں

What you want, Allah Ta'ala grants that desire

می دہیزداں مراد متقیں

Allah Ta'ala gives the Muttaqeen what they require

1.5 The New Station

With the entry of this thought in his heart he firstly tapped at **the Door of the Master** [Allah Ta'ala] for the new station to be built, and then he formerly requested the medium of the *du'aas* of the *Zaakireen* and *Shaaghileen* at the *Khaanqah*.

After lodging the petition to **Musabbibul Asbaab** [the Creator of Causes] he sought the attention of the managers of the *asbaab* [causes] by sending letters to the Traffic Manager. The letters were signed by him in person.

In this manner, for the comfort and ease of those coming to the *Portals of Ashraf* he employed the Sunnat method of *du'aa and dawa* [medication and means]. The fruits were borne when on the 18th November 1928 AD the new station opened opposite to the *Khaanqah*. A *mureed* of Hazrat proposed the name *Thanabawan Shareef*. However, with a smile Hazrat begged to differ and rather settled for *Thanabawan Town*. It carries this name today.

1.6 Population

In the first war of independence of 1857 AD the population here was close to forty-eight thousand. Thereafter it decreased to approximately thirty-six thousand. A further decrease brought the figure down to a mere six or seven thousand. However, of late it has started to rise.

1.7 Renewed Importance

Although earlier on, together with being the centre of academic professionals it remained the centre of business and political professionals, however, the changing times did not maintain its wonder and prestige. In view of being the birthplace and home of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali it gradually regained its honour. The *Khaanqah-e-Imdaadiyyah* has assured for it a distinct place in History.

2. Name and Genealogy

2.1 Celebrated Name

The name given to Hazrat Thanwi by his father's family was **Abdul Ghani**. However, the chosen and popular *Majzoob*, Hazrat Hafiz Ghulaam Murtadha Panipati (Rahmatullahi alaihi)

who devoted special attention to his mother's family proposed his name to be **Ashraf Ali**. You will find details on this under Hazrat's 'Birth'. It was the result of his [Hafiz Ghulaam Murtadha Saheb's] focus of attention that Hazrat's name from his father's side did not enjoy wide acceptance and the proposed name of this *Majzoob* was sealed on the tongues of Ulama and ordinary folk alike.

Since no action is devoid of reason the name proposed by the father's family was, not therefore, futile. The hidden benefit and underlying wisdom of the father's family's proposed name became clear when Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi utilized that name in a certain place in his treatise *Al-Khutoobul Mutheebah* where using the customary name was against discretion. If he did not have a second name then he would be constrained to resort to a pseudonym and this was unbecoming of the lofty rank of the Heir of the *Seat of Nubuwwat*. Thus, at the very onset, in accordance to the beautiful running of creation, a second name for him was proposed.

2.2 Honourable Title

His title is *Hakeemul Ummat* which was firstly inspired in the heart of Molvi Mirza Muhammad Beg, the owner of *Mahboobul Mataabi' Printers*, Delhi. He wrote it exactly like that in the address of Hazrat. Similar to this is how Moulana Abdul Hakeem Siyalkoti wrote alongside Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sarhandi's (Rahmatullahi alaih) name, "*Mujaddid-e-Alf-e-Thaani*". This title automatically became the Horn of Allah Ta'ala on the tongues of creation and came into vogue. The reformational works of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi have made him true to the title.

Whenever Hazrat Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb Saharanpuri (Quddisa Sirruhu) would not find *Hakeemul Ummat* written with Hazrat's name he would become very angry and he would say that the title which Allah Ta'ala inspired in the hearts of His Special Servants should not be discarded, as this is showing disrespect to Hazrat-e-Haq [Allah Ta'ala].

2.3 Exalted Lineage

The family lineage of Hazrat-e-A'la is, in his own words, reproduced below:

Ashraf Ali, the son of:

Munshi Abdul Haq, the son of:

Hafiz Faiz Ali, the son of:

Ghulaam Fareed Shaheed, the son of:

Muhammad Jalaal, the son of:

Rahmatullah, the son of:

Amaanullah (around 983 AH), the son of:

Ateequllah Khateeb (the Royal Herald in the Court of Aalamgeer 8th Jumaadal Awwal 922 AH)², the son of:

Hafiz Habeebullah (the Royal Herald during the era of Jahangir), the son of:

Shaikh Aadam (the Royal Herald during the era of Akbar Awwal in partnership with his younger brother Fareed), the son of:

Moulana Sadr-e-Jahan (the ancestor of the *Khateeb*s, alive in 970 AH during the era of Akbar Awwal according to one Royal Edict in which they are given the title *Taqwa Shi'aar*)
(*Mawaaidul Awaa'id*)

² The Urdu version only has 2 written. Perhaps it follows on the previous date and implies 982 AH.

2.4 Family Hallmarks

In Thanabawan there are four well-known families of the Farooqis. They are called: Khateeb, Qaadhi, Naa'ib (Naa'ib Qaadhi) and Muhtasib. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi is linked to the Khateeb Family. He is thus a hereditary *Khateeb*. [*Khateeb* literally means: speaker/orator.] They were in the words of their proclamations called *Taqwa Shi'aar*. Thus *taqwa* [piety] was his family's hallmark.

Moulana Sadr-e-Jahan's family tree goes up to Sultan Shihaabud Deen who was among the *Awliya-e-Kaamileen*. His title was *Farrukh Shah* and he served as governor of Kabul. The Shuyookh of Thanabawan as well as Hazrat Shaikh Mujaddid Alf-e-Thaani, Hazrat Shaikh Jalaalud-Deen Thanesri and Hazrat Fareedud Deen Shakr Ganj; all of them are the descendants of Sultan Shihaabud Deen nicknamed Farrukh Shah. He is portrayed in *Zubdatul Maqaamaat* with these words:

“He was an Allah-Wala, a scourge of the worldly, formerly a distinguished minister and Sultan of Kabul who settled in Hindustan. He came from Ghazna and Kabul to the Land of Hind. It is said that he possessed blessed attributes. He is credited with the propagation of Islam and the subjugation of the idolaters. (Transcribed from the seventh completion of Tambeehaat-e-Wasiyyat)

In this way *wilaayat*, [authority, sainthood] is also his family inheritance. This is supported by the following rhyme of the former Mufti of Darul Uloom Deoband, Moulana Mufti Azeezur Rahman:

از گروہ اولیاء اشرف علی

Ashraf Ali is from the Awliya Group

Further in his genealogical tree the name of Hazrat Farooq-e-A'zam [Sayyidina Umar] (Radhiyallahu anhu) appears whose intelligence and insight are universally accepted. Thus Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's understanding and insight are also hereditary.

His maternal grandfather, Peer Najaabat Ali was very famous owing to his distinction in the Persian Language, writing, humour, instinctive replies and witticism. He was an outstanding attorney-general of the semi-autonomous district of Kanjpora. Although he was *bai't* to Moulana Shah Niyaz Ahmad Bareilwi's *Khaleefa-e-Khaas*, however, the gaze of *tarbiyat* [spiritual nurturing] fell on him of Hazrat Hafiz Saheb Majzoob. As a result, the effects of *ziker and shaghl* overwhelmed him to such a degree that he made himself independent of concern for livelihood and discharging of rights. Hafiz Saheb was, therefore, constrained to snatch away this spiritual condition of his through *tawajjuh* [a spiritual special effect]. However, close to his demise Hafiz Saheb cast such a glance at him that the former spiritual condition returned.

Similarly, Hazrat Thanwi's real maternal uncle, Peer Jee Imdaad Ali became an emotional and outspoken Buzrug through Hafiz Saheb's *tawajjuh*. His outbursts and Divine-Love knew no bounds and according to the words of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi himself:

“A sort of flame could be perceived from his words and this poem of Hafiz Shirazi would aptly describe it:

غلام آں کلماتم کہ آتش افروزد

Those words of mine ignite a fire

نہ آب سرد زندر سخن بر آتش تیز

In speech cold water cannot put off a burning fire

Similarly, the ancestral-patriarch of his maternal family is Hazrat Ali (Karramallahu Wajhah) who is the final link in the *Chains of Tareeqat*. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi therefore received the bounty of Divine-Love from his mother's family and the virtue of *Tareeqat* or *Tasawwuf* from his ancestral-patriarch.

His respectable father, Munshi Abdul Haq was an influential nobleman and estate owner of Thanabawan. He, in the words of the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*: "possessed excellent skill in the Persian Language. Although he was not a Hafiz, however, his *naazirah* was so fluent that at times he would even correct Hafizes. He was the sole authority over a sizeable semi-autonomous district in Meerath and with the permission of the Head of Commissariat or Ministry he used to lease out as well. Allah Ta'ala conferred so much *barkat* in this that his income would run into the thousands. [In today's money value it would be equivalent to hundreds of thousands.] With this income he purchased many new properties. When it came to spending he showed big-heartedness."

In this way, Hazrat Thanwi acquired riches, nobility and influence from his father. This instilled independence in him. In consequence, no one could exert their authority over him. In fact, he himself would say:

"Bifadhli Ta'ala, I am not enamoured by even the richest of aristocrats merely on account of their estates and power. This is because I think to myself that where is he

rich? We are also, through the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala, from a wealthy home. We are not sons of paupers.

Alhamdulillah! I have always lived in extreme luxury and I have spent thousands of Rupees with these hands of mine. Therefore, I have no such regret any more for money and commodities due to which I may look with a gaze of need at any rich man. When one is satiated with something then naturally greed and desire go away."

In short, he inherited insight and wisdom, sainthood and Tasawwuf, the position of *Khateeb* and influence, riches and land, Divine-Love and Piety; such bounties from Allah Ta'ala by virtue of which he was an exhibition of the *Farooqi and Alawi Grandeur*. For him to be like that was precisely in conformity to the Tradition of Allah Ta'ala, because who Haq Ta'ala seats on the *Pedestal of Irshaad*, He bestows him with noble lineage and family honour so that he may be a person people turn to, and high class people do not find embarrassment in following him.

3. Miraculous Birth

3.1 The Divine Will

Human desires play no role in the Divine Will. It is for this reason that, notwithstanding this being an age of radical advancement in medicine and science, the experts of birth control have failed to stem the ever increasing population explosion of the world through their pills and potions. Whoever has to breathe the air of this earth, they [birth controllers] cannot prevent him from the position of existence in spite of their birth

control methods and instruments designed to avoid pregnancy. This [the clash between man's will and Allah Ta'ala's Will is the turning point whereupon big and prominent heretics and rejecters are forced to proclaim upon reaching it:

عَرَفْتُ رَبِّي بِفَسْخِ الْعَزَائِمِ

I have recognized my Allah by the breaking of resolutions.

3.2 The Infertility Attempt

The episode pertaining to his birth is also a lesson to learn about this material world which seeks to change the natural order of creation by interfering with it through its science and intelligence. His honourable father became afflicted with scabies. No medication seemed to be of any help. In fact, the malady deteriorated the more it was treated. This made him very worried. In fact, he became despondent.

His condition led a certain doctor to prescribe for him an alchemic medication that rendered the user infertile. He gave preference to preservation of the individual to preservation of the kind and consumed the medication. "Forget progeny, at least one is cured." Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi himself mentioned this incident in the preface to *Humaam-e-Ibrat*.

When his honourable mother learnt of this incident she became very much disturbed because prior to this too, none of her male offspring would remain alive. Slowly the news reached his maternal grandmother. Coincidentally, during that period the most virtuous of the Majzoobs, Hafiz Ghulaam Murtaza Panipati came to visit his mother's family according to his former association. His grandmother complained to Hafiz Ghulaam Murtaza Saheb about what transpired.

3.3 Glad Tidings of Birth

It is the timeless way of Allah Ta'ala that when He selects someone for righteousness and guidance then even before sending the righteous guide He gives glad tidings of the coming via His accepted servants. When Hafiz Saheb heard the complaint he made *du'aa* and said:

“They die in the tug-o-war of Umar and Ali. The next time hand it over to Ali. It will stay alive.”

No one could comprehend this *Majzoobi conundrum*. However his mother, who possessed unusual understanding and insight, understood at once and said:

“Hafiz Saheb means that the boys’ father is Farooqi and mother Alawi. Previously the names that were kept, viz. Fadhl-e-Haq, etc. were after the father’s name. The next occasion when there is a boy his name should be kept after the names on the mother’s side. The ending should be Ali.”

[*Majzoobs* are a class of Awliya whose actions and statements are at times incomprehensible to even Ulama, let alone the masses. *Famous Majzoobs* include Hazrat Bahlool (Rahmatullahi alaihim) who lived during the time of Imaam Abu Haneefah (Rahmatullahi alaihim), Hazrat Shaybaan the shepherd who lived during the time of Hazrat Imaam Shaafi’ and Imaam Ahmad Bin Hambal (Rahmatullahi alaihim).

Hazrat Haafiz Ghulaam Murtaza who said the cryptic words above simply gave glad tidings of the coming birth of two sons and he furthermore advised on what their names should be. He did not say that Umar and Ali are gods and that they are enemies of each other fighting over the names of the offspring

of Hazrat Thanwi's father. Such an averment is fallacious and is the product of a warped or bigoted mind.

This is the simple interpretation of the above statement. There is neither myth nor superstition associated with the above episode, contrary to what one writer has stupidly and laboriously endeavoured to portray. By way of *kashf* Hafiz Saheb was informed of the birth of two sons; one destined to be a guide for the Ummah and the other a layman. A denier of *kashf* is a *jaahil and muftadi*'. The *kashf* of the Awliya literally run into the millions.]

3.4 Determining the Name and Profession

Hafiz Saheb smiled at her comprehension of this puzzle and commended her, saying:

"Truly this is what I mean. This girl seems to be very intelligent. Insha Allah, she will have two sons and they will live. Keep the one's name Ashraf Ali Khan and the second Akbar Ali Khan. Both will be fortunate. One child will be mine. He will be a Molvi and he will be a Hafiz. The second will be a worldly figure."

In this manner, Haq Ta'ala manifested his name and even profession with the words of a chosen servant of His before pregnancy; when he was as yet in the *Aalam-e-Arwaah*.

When that Buzrug proposed this name, another woman requested Hafiz Saheb at that same time to give a name for her grandson. Hafiz Saheb rejected this very scornfully with these words:

"Am I a bard who goes around giving names?"

From this it is clear that his pre-birth augury and the name given by that Buzrug was through inspiration from the unseen and it was something special.

3.5 Clash of Planning and Fate

After taking the infertility medication his honourable father felt content that cure will be forthcoming instead of offspring. However the Omnipotent had willed something else and hence He sent down the glad tidings of the birth immediately after the medication was taken. That **Musabbibul Asbaab** [Creator of all causes; the First Cause; Allah Azza Wa Jall], made the infertility medication a cause for the generation of progeny. On the one side Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi came to the world of creation and on the other side his father was comforted [from the disorder]. As though from the time he was born he was a challenge to the material world.

3.6 Date and Place of Birth

He was born on the 5th of Jumaadal Ukhra 1280 AH on a Wednesday at the time of Subh Sadiq at his maternal grandfather's home, which is situated in the Khail neighbourhood in the town of Thanabawan. According to the directive of that Majzoob his name was kept Ashraf Ali. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi would therefore say:

“Sometimes the funny things I say are the effect of the spiritual gaze of that Majzoob Saheb through whose du’aa I was born. Since my tab’iat [nature] is free like Majzoobs I cannot stand problematic things.”

In accordance to the glad tidings he became a *Hafiz, Qaari, Moulana, Mu’allim, Mutakallim, Faqeeh, Mufasssir, Muhaddith*

and *Muslih*. His younger brother, Munshi Akbar Ali Marhoom became the secretary of Bareilli Municipality.

3.7 A Magnificent Grace

Just as the *Du'aa of Khaleelullah* [the Friend of Allah Ta'ala; title of Ibraheem (Alaihis Salaam)] was a cause of *Rahmatullil Aalameen* [the Mercy of the universe; title of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)] coming, similarly by virtue of the *Du'aa of that Majzoob*, *Karam-e-Azeem* came. The historical root of the year in which he was born turns out to be *Karam-e-Azeem*³ which in every aspect is a magnificent grace. The magnificent grace of Allah Jalla Shaanuhu upon him is that he left behind a precious and magnificent practical and academic treasure which can serve as directions for the Road [to Allah Ta'ala] for centuries to come.

4. Childhood

4.1 Reason for Hot-Bloodedness

Mother's milk has an extraordinary effect on the nurturing of children and the effects remain from the cradle till the grave. Only fourteen months had passed from his birth that his younger brother Akbar Ali was born. In view of his honourable mother's milk not being sufficient for two children a milking-mother was hired for him. She was a butcher's wife from a village in the district of Meerath. Consequently, he was brought up with her milk.

³ This is a system of codifying numbers in the Urdu Language. The code name derived from the year Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was born is 'Karam-e-Azeem' which means: magnificent grace.

No work of the Omnipotent is without reason. Being taken off the milk of loving-care of the mother after fourteen months and thereafter arranging with a butcher's wife for his milk was not without reason. As the Omnipotent was to utilize him for the reformation of the Ummat for which at times, together with softness there is a need for hotness, therefore, in childhood he had to drink the milk of a butcher's wife. The hotness in his disposition was a result of this. Often he would thus say humorously:

"I drank the milk of a qasaain. For this reason I am hot-blooded. However, Al-Hamdulillah, my heart is so soft that I cannot bear to see anyone in the slightest of difficulty. If I see someone in the slightest of difficulty my heart melts and turns to liquid."

In view of the natural relationship [with the milk-mother] and in *ittibaa'* [obedience] to the *Sunnah* he went to great lengths to ascertain the whereabouts of his milk-mother's offspring so as to see to their needs. Their whereabouts, however, could not be ascertained.

4.2 Virtue over Brother

He was just five years of age when his mother passed away and he became deprived of his mother's loving-care. After his mother passed away he started living with his father's elder sister.

His father loved him even more than what he loved the mother of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. Due to excessive affection he brought him up very gracefully. In spite of his father being stern, he dealt with Hazrat Thanwi very leniently. Even if he would be naughty, very seldom would his father

spank him. Once his paternal aunt lodged a complaint to his father of this preferential treatment to which his father replied:

“Bhabhi Sahebah! In the first instance the younger one teaches the older one naughtiness. Secondly, the older one learns his sabaq, for this reason I love him more. And the younger does not learn his sabaq.”

Hazrat Thanwi himself would say:

“Very seldom would I receive hiding. And rarely did I get hiding from Ustaads; almost zero. The reason was that I would learn my sabaq and I would remain with adab.”

4.3 Inculcation of Self-Respect

In the month of Ramadhaan it is custom to distribute confectionary, etc. on the occasion of *Khatm-e-Qur’aan*. Neighbourhood boys on such occasions attempt to extract maximum benefit [by taking as much of the delicacies as they can]. However, his father could not tolerate him being a beggar. To make him independent in temperament, therefore, his father would not allow him to go to the Masaajid on such occasions. Children incumbently feel offended at such refusals. To ward this off his father thought up an amazing plan. Hazrat gives details of this in his own words. He says:

“He would never allow me to participate during the distribution of sweetmeats in the Masaajid at the Khatm of the Qur’aan. Rather, he would purchase sweetmeats instead on that day from the shops and give me even more to eat. He would say: ‘To go to Masjids for mithai is disgraceful. In this beautiful manner he saved us from greed and protected our self-respect.’”

4.4 Disgust for Loafing

The foundation for loafing is generally laid during childhood when children are given all the opportunity to associate and play with others. In his nature he disliked this. Thus he would play at home with his sister, rather than play with the neighbourhood boys. The neighbourhood boys would view this as an insult to them and they would run behind him with knives to intimidate him to play with them. For his protection, therefore, a butler would be sent to accompany him to Madrasah.

When this did not restrain them [the louts] and they continued with their intimidation, then as a last resort a report was handed in to the local police station. The station commander summoned all the boys and gave them a good hiding with his stick which he was carrying with him coincidentally. The station commander warned: *“If in future any of you force him to play with you then I am going to give you such a punishment that you will never forget for the rest of your life.”* Thereafter, no one invited him to play with them.

4.5 Love for Namaaz

He would not even play anything futile with his sister at home. For instance, he would gather everyone's shoes, place one pair in front and make rows with the others behind. Out of joy he would enthusiastically tell the others: *“See, the shoes are also reading Namaaz.”*

4.6 Habit of Tahajjud

It was the effect of enthusiasm and love for Namaaz that in childhood he was in the habit of *Tahajjud*. He was only twelve years of age when he started reading *Tahajjud*. His elder paternal aunt who loved him dearly would moan at seeing him

engaged in *Nawaafil and Wazaaif* in the middle of the night. Thinking that he is yet a child and he may be overcome by fright she would stay awake with him at the time of Tahajjud. She would affectionately and caringly say: *“Son! You are not as yet obligated to read Tahajjud.”* However, this did not deter him. He would remain engaged in *Tahajjud and Wazeefahs*. But she would keep guard of him as long as he was engaged.

4.7 Accepted and Loved

The effect of his love for the Deen was that Allah Ta’ala created love for him in the hearts of people right from his childhood. Not only was he beloved in the eyes of *Buzrugs* and his own people, others would also maintain silence at such actions of his which would belittle their customs and practices. He thus states:

“Through the Fadhl of Allah Ta’ala from childhood wherever I stayed, whether with relatives and family or strangers and non-family I was dear to all. Whereas I would be very playful during my childhood, but not like the dirty pranks of boys of today. For this reason instead of detestation it would appear nice to people.

During the period of Diwali in Meerath Chowni Bazaar lamps would be lit and placed in two rows on both sides of the road. We two brothers would start walking from the two sides of the road and shake our roomaals [headscarves] to extinguish all the lights. No one would take offence, not even the Hindus.”

As if he was, from childhood, a manifestation of:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ۝

**Verily those who have Imaan and they do righteous deeds,
Rahmaan will instil (in the hearts of others) love for them.**

(Surah Maryam, 96)

4.8 Exquisite Nature

Haq Ta'ala bestowed him with such an exquisite nature that in childhood he could not bear to look at the exposed stomach of anyone. Looking at the exposed stomach of anyone would immediately induce him to vomit.

The neighbourhood boys came to know of this. To trouble him they would open their stomachs and reveal it to him. He would vomit and become nauseous.

This was the amazing arrangement of the All-Powerful, that He made this exquisite nature a means of him not associating with local boys. In this manner he was made a homely boy and saved from bad company.

System and order were instilled in his nature. He himself would say:

“From childhood my mind is unaccustomed to comprehending anything explained unsystematically, even though it may be something minor. Neither do I speak confusingly nor do I understand anyone else’s confusing talk because since childhood my mind is accustomed to a set pattern.”

It was the effect of this exquisite nature that if someone spoke something confusing to him or did something haphazardly in

some work pertaining to him then at once he would become feverish and get a headache. Whereas his mind was so strong that he would work tirelessly the entire day and even during sleeping time. He would not become tired at all.

4.9 The Shadow of the Cloud of Mercy

It is popularly believed that:

در جوانی توبه کردن شیوہ پیغمبری

To make Taubah in youth is the nature of a Prophet

However, it was not something major for the Being through Whose special grace Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi passed his childhood and youth with good character and *Taqwa*, to make the means for his comfort and ease in accordance to the promise:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ۝

Verily the pious are in a safe abode.

(Surah Dukhaan, 51)

By the virtue of this, at times Allah Ta'ala's special mercy would even appear in the form of the shadow of a cloud. The author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* elucidated this with these words:

“Another sign of piety worth mentioning is that which Hazrat Wala's paternal aunt by whom Hazrat stayed in his childhood, mentioned to Hazrat Wala himself. She said that when he was young, often it was noticed that if he had to incidentally travel clouds would invariably appear and the journey would be covered in comfort. Hazrat would say: ‘I also remember this to have occurred on several occasions.’”

[This would happen to Rasool-e-Akram (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as we find in the life-story of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). In conclusion, even the childhood of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi resembled the noble childhood of the Nabi of Allah Ta'ala. And that is the Grace of Allah Ta'ala. He grants it to whomever He wishes.]

5. Acquisition of Knowledge

5.1 Wonderful Selection

Just as the Directives of the Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam) were based on Divine Revelation, similarly the glad tidings of the Awliya-Ullah enjoy Divine Support and from the unseen means are forthcoming for their completion.

The augury which Hazrat Hafiz Ghulaam Murtaza Panipati made of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi becoming a Molvi and Hafiz was realized through the unseen in the following way: His honourable father, who was a wealthy person of his time, selected him for Deeni Ta'leem and his younger son, Munshi Akbar Ali Marhoom for secular education, namely English studies. Whereas, the rich and famous on a large scale regard it to be of honour and pride to send their children for worldly education while they consider *Deeni Ta'leem* to be a cause of embarrassment.

The grand and pure childhood of Hazrat, furthermore, demanded that he should be taught a pure education by virtue of which the honourable qualities which the All-Powerful embedded in his nature come to the fore.

5.2 Arabic Education

His educational course commenced with *Ta'leem of the Qur'aan* of which a few *paarabs* he did by Akhun Jee, a resident of Khatoli in the district of Meerath. Thereafter he did Hifz of the Qur'aan by Hafiz Husain Ali who was from Meerath and residing in Meerath.

He learnt the elementary Arabic text books in his hometown of Thanabawan by Moulana Fatah Muhammad. However, only upon reaching Darul Uloom Deoband did he systematically pursue the course with *Mishkaat Shareef*, *Mukhtasarul Ma'aani*, *Noorul Anwaar* and *Mulla Hasan*. He enrolled at Darul Uloom at the end of Zul Qa'dah 1295 Hijri and early in 1301 Hijri, that is the duration of approximately five years when his age was just 19 or 20 years, he graduated.

5.3 Persian Education

His initial education in the Persian Language was at the hands of Ustaads from Meerath. The intermediary text books were studied in Thanabawan by Moulana Fatah Muhammad who was an accomplished teacher in Persian Literature. The higher text books till *Abul Fazl* were studied by his maternal uncle, Waajid Ali who was also an accomplished Persian teacher.

When he came to Deoband he studied *Panj Ruq'ah*, *Qasaa'id-e-Urfi*, *Sikandar Naamah*, etc. by Moulana Manfa'at Ali Deobandi and thus completed his Persian studies.

Whilst studying, at the age of only 18 years he compiled *Mathnawi Rezobam* [a poetical composition of rhyming couplets on Divine Love] and with this his career as an author began.

5.4 Perfection in Logic

In Logic he achieved perfection. In this regard he says himself in an expression of gratitude:

“Al-Hamdulillah! I am proficient in Mantiq. And why must I not say something that is true as I am neither one who flaunts humility nor one who shows arrogance. Why should I deny something which Haq Ta’ala bestowed? It is the Deen of Allah Ta’ala; none of my greatness. And, in fact, I do not regard it to be anything great because by virtue of straightening the shoes of Buzrugs it has become embedded in my mind that:

فہم و خاطر تیز کردن نیست راہ

Sharpening the mind and intelligence is not the way

جز شکستہ می نگیرد فضل شاہ

Only a broken-heart gains the grace of the Almighty

5.5 Comfortable With the Rational Sciences

He had much interest and understanding of the rational sciences [philosophy, maths, geometry, physics, etc.]. On account of this he would peruse intricate kitaabs such as *Sadra*, *Shams-e-Baazighah* without need for translating. Challenging texts would appear straightforward to him.

However, notwithstanding this skill he never stopped at the rational sciences like others. On the contrary, he always regarded it to be just a tool for *Deeniyyaat* [Islamic Sciences/Deeni Studies].

Since moderation and sound-thinking were part and parcel of his nature and hence he would maintain everything in

equilibrium, in comparison to the traditional sciences [Tafseer, Hadeeth, Fiqh, etc.] he would always dislike the rational sciences in spite of his profound ability in those subjects. Therefore, when commencing a lesson of Philosophy, instead of *Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem*, he would recite *A'oothu Billaahi Minash Shaitaanir Rajeem*. This is proof of his foresightedness because Shaitaan invariably makes inroads through this path [the path of rational and modern science]. As a matter of fact, he would say:

“Al-Hamdulillah! I never allow my feelings to dominate my intelligence and I never allow my intelligence to dominate the Shariat.”

The above episode testifies to his foresightedness being divinely bestowed, not personally earned.

5.6 Qiraat Training

He did Hifz of the Qur’aan-e-Kareem at an early age. *Mashq* of Qiraat, however, he did by the renowned, Qaari Muhammad Abdullah Muhaajir-e-Makki at *Madrasah Saulatiyyah* in Makkah Mu’azzamah. Qaari Muhammad Abdullah Saheb was an excellent and accepted expert in the Art of Qiraat, even among the Qurraa of Arabia.

In regard to Qiraat his Ustaad disclosed to him an exceptionally wonderful rule: *“Don’t pay any attention to the tune. All your attention must be focused on the correction of the Makhaarij [and Sifaat], because after correcting the Makhaarij [and Sifaat] the tune that is produced will be meritorious.”*

Hazrat, in consequence, never focussed his attention on tune, whereas, by and large the *Qurraa* are at great pains to enhance

their tunes. As a result of not focussing his attention to tune, his sound became so captivating that when he would practice Qiraat on the top-storey of the Madrasah, pedestrians would halt at the attraction of the sound. Furthermore, they would be unable to say whether the Ustaad was reciting or the student.

5.7 Power of Debating

In his student days he found the power of debating within him. During the course of his education in Deoband when he was still a youth he scaled such heights in instinctive replies, articulate speech, intelligence, brilliance and logic that whenever any preacher would come there to debate he would immediately make his way to him. In a matter of minutes he would render the opponent speechless.

Ustaads on the one side would be apprehensive of him being overawed due to his young age, yet he would be fired up to floor his opponent. It was as if during his student years he was training in:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ ۚ

He (Allah) sent His Messenger with guidance and the True Deen to raise it (the Deen of Islam) above all other religions.
(*Surah Baraa-at*, 33)

He engaged in dynamic debates in his student days with Christians, Aryans, Shiahs, Ghair Muqallids and the lot. However, never did he discard the rules of debating in any debate nor did he ever evade accepting of the truth.

Upon hearing his logical reasoning the Chief of Debaters, Moulana Sayyid Murtaza Hasan would become ecstatic and he would proclaim:

“You have such skill in Munaazarah [debating] that top debaters cannot hold their seat against you.”

5.8 The Secret to Honour

Although the wise have declared:

“One percent of honour is endowed and ninety-nine percent of it is obtained through toil and struggle,”

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was among those esteemed personalities of the human race whose honour and awe were not the product of toil and struggle. Rather, it was Allah-given. In this regard Hazrat would say:

“I never made effort in learning. Whatever Allah Ta'ala bestowed was bestowed by virtue of maintaining a relationship of respect and love for Ustaads and Buzrugs. And, Al-Hamdulillah, I can say that not for a minute did I make any Buzrug of mine unhappy. The degree of respect I have in my heart for the Buzrugaan-e-Deen, perhaps there may be no one today who has that much in his heart.”

5.9 Gaze of Asaatizah

The special gaze of his Asaatizah on him was also the product of his honour. In fact, his life and his ways in his student days automatically put the special gaze of his Asaatizah on him. They would be honoured that of thousands there is one [student] ready to take their place. Appearing hereunder are anecdotes in this regard.

5.10 Appreciation of Time

In this world there is nothing more precious than time. Time is such an astonishing bounty that once passed it cannot be reclaimed even by spending the entire world's treasures. Whoever appreciates it is looked upon in high regard.

In his student days he considered it to be a sin to waste even a minute. He would not mix with anyone. All the time he was engrossed in his studies.

[Clarification: In section 5.8 *The Secret to Honour*, Hazrat Moulana Thanwi's statement of him never making effort in his student days, was mentioned. This seems contradictory to what is mentioned here. Actually there is no contradiction. According to Hazrat Thanwi, he made no effort. For him his continuous engrossment in his studies required no effort. It was natural. He had an inborn fervour for studies. It did not require any special effort on his part.]

If he had some free time he would go and sit in the service of his special Ustaad, Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob the most senior *Mudarris*.

Once, Moulana was out of town. Now he had a valid reason for being unoccupied. However, he could not bear being unoccupied and he went to sit in the service of another of his Ustaads, Moulana Sa'eed Ahmad. He [Moulana Sa'eed Ahmad] was surprised at this irregular visit and enquired the reason to it. In perfect simplicity he [Hazrat Thanwi] honestly said:

"Hazrat Moulana Ya'qoob Saheb has gone out. Therefore I have presented myself in your service so that my time is not wasted."

5.11 Abstention from Squandering of Time

In his student days he would stay at the boarding of the Madrasah notwithstanding that in Deoband some of his distant family were also residing there. Often they would urge Hazrat to have meals at their home. They would say that it is his home; there is no need for formalities. Leave alone meals, he would not even associate with them considering it to be squandering time.

Finally after much persistence from their side he wrote to his honourable father as he did not wish to do anything without the prior consent of his father. The thought also occurred to him that his relatives may complain about him to his father, therefore he wrote. In response his father wrote the following caution:

“Did you go there for family ties or for Ilm?”

This much was sufficient for him and as long as he studied in Deoband he never went to any family member. Thus he would say:

“Al-Hamdulillah! Just as I went there unscathed I returned after five years unscathed. When I completed my studies then without any restraint I went to meet all my relatives and I even accepted their invitations to meals. Prior to this I did not associate with anyone, neither with relatives nor with students and nor with the townsfolk. If anyone wished to strike up a relationship with me I would ignore the person for which people regarded me to be haughty, whereas, this was not the case. Actually I loathed squandering my time in futility.”

5.12 Avoiding Trivialities

Generally in educational institutions special and light-hearted gatherings and get-togethers are organized where students freely engage in fun and games. He would, however, avoid participation of such occasions to his utmost.

On one occasion students of the Madrasah were invited during the mango season. [People owning mango farms generally invite others to enjoy the mangoes of the season.] His Ustaads, Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob and Moulana Muhammad Qaasim were also invited. When a few mangoes remained Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob departed knowing that now they are ready for a '*peel and pit fling*'. He too perceived this and departed from the gathering with his Ustaad. Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb remained out of politeness. When he too left then it was free for all and the students started causing chaos. So much so that Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb was forced to return and stop them. Upon seeing Moulana they ran away in shame.

From this it can be adequately gauged how much he would avoid trivialities during that period.

5.13 Habit of Solitude

In addition, he was in the habit of remaining in solitude which is imperative during student years. Otherwise, through disturbances one's studies cannot be carried out at ease and with peace.

Whenever he would see boys coming to his room he would immediately close the door so that his studies were not interrupted and his time was not wasted. Students are generally

offended by this. Hence, on the same day of the mango-eating invitation when he departed early, the boys considered it to be against the festive mood and after the invitation they headed straight for his room to throw him with peels and juice in revenge. Without saying a word to them he merely shut the door in their faces.

In short, just as he was homely in childhood, in his student days he would prefer privacy which is a safe haven for humans from evil company.

5.14 Fervour for Ilm

It was through the *barkat* of solitude that he remained totally engrossed in acquisition of knowledge. His fervour for acquiring knowledge can be gauged simply from this that he learnt some Kitaabs which were not included in the Madrasah syllabus due to a tight schedule, by some Asaatizah whilst they would make wudhu and he would be reading. This extraordinary passion and fervour caused the Asaatizah to have a high regard for him. In fact, they would even boast about him.

5.15 Brilliance and Wit

Where the fervour for knowledge distinguished him above all his fellow class students it also made him brilliant and witty. Even his Asaatizah acknowledged this. In consequence, when Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Quddisa Sirruhu) came to take *imtihaan*, Shaikhul Hind Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan (Rahmatullahi alaihi) lauded praise of his brilliance and wit. Due to the words of Hazrat Shaikhul Hind, that is the praise lauded on Hazrat Moulana Thanwi, Hazrat Moulana Gangohi posed extremely difficult questions to him. The answers he gave, however, pleased Moulana tremendously.

When his Ustaad, Moulana Sayyid Ahmad Saheb took his examination of *Sikandar Naamah* he could not recall the explanation which the Ustaad gave of a certain poem. He therefore gave his own explanation. Moulana enquired: “*Can there be another explanation?*” Upon this he put forward another explanation from his own side. Moulana asked again: “*Besides this can there be another explanation?*” He gave a third explanation. Thereupon Moulana commented: “*None of the explanations you gave was correct. However, I will pass you solely on account of your brilliance.*”

His reputation among the students was largely on account of this brilliance, wit and his memory.

5.16 Power of Retention

By virtue of his extraordinary memory he was bestowed the power of retention through which he drew excellences from his accomplished Asaatizah to perfection. For a stranger it became difficult to recognize the Ustaad from the Shaagird. An example of this was given under *Qiraat Training* [5.6]. Thus, he was the complete manifestation of his honourable tutors and why not, when the Asaatiza-e-Kiraam whom Haq Ta’ala gave him were the *Ghazaalis and Raazis* of their time. This will be expounded on in the following chapter.

5.17 Natural Taste for Tasawwuf

Since his Asaatizah were paragons of practical and spiritual virtues, therefore, in his student days a natural taste for *Tasawwuf* developed in him. Together with academic studies he commenced studies in *Tasawwuf* during that period. He became obsessed with the way of *Tasawwuf*, which the *Junaid and*

*Shibli of the time, Shaikhul Arab wal Ajam, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhul Azeez) picked up through his illuminated insight sitting thousands of miles from Deoband, in Makkah Mu'azzamah. For observation he called him there. Details of this will appear in the **Chapter on Bai't**.*

During his student days when the nobleman of Meerath, Shaikh Ilaahi Bakhsh (who had appointed Hazrat Thanwi's father as manager of his semi-autonomous region) came to visit Moulana Shah Rafee'ud Deen Saheb, the Principal of Madrasah Darul Uloom Deoband, he became astounded at his [Hazrat Thanwi's] appearance and student image. Spontaneously he remarked to Hazrat Muhtamim Saheb:

"Hazrat, you have made the lad totally Fana fish-Shaikh!"

[*Fana fish-Shaikh* is a term in *Tasawwuf* meaning: to be a complete replica of the spiritual mentor.]

5.18 Total Simplicity

The foregoing was precisely the reason for him adopting total simplicity in the Madrasah. Not only did he take from his Asaatizah academic knowledge, he moreover embraced their way of life. Thus, in emulation of the illustrious staff of Madrasah Deoband he abandoned his family's style trouser and started wearing the style of his Asaatizah.

In his dress and appearance, ways and habits, in short in everything simplicity stood out. Once, during his student years he came home during holidays. In total simplicity he wrapped himself in a blanket. He had not donned the blanket properly with both sides equal; without any side hanging. His honourable

father was astonished at this sight and said to him: *“Don’t you know how to put on a blanket?”*

Notwithstanding that he would have a lot of fear for his father; he would show a great amount of respect to him, on that occasion, however, he spontaneously responded:

“Hazrat! If you had in mind that I must learn how to put on a blanket then you shouldn’t have sent me to Madrasah Deoband. There, no one knows the art of putting on a blanket. All are haphazard.”

His father said nothing to him despite his hot temperament. Nor did he reprimand him over such things.

Looking at his student days of simplicity and the extravagant and stylish dress of students in the era of his *Masheekhat* [Spiritual Mentorship] he laments much and says:

“This is proof that their gaze is not sublime and they are out of touch with Ilm. Otherwise they would never pay attention to such frivolous and inferior things.”

5.19 Preaching at Home

He would similarly beg to differ with his honourable father in general household matters and in particular regarding *Masaail* of permissibility and non-permissibility.

Once, his father kept someone’s land in mortgage. This was whilst he was still pursuing *Ilm*. When this news reached him then in execution of the duty of *Tableegh* he wrote to him that this is *na-jaaiz*. Upon this his honourable father complained to a Hindu acquaintance:

“We sent our son to learn Arabic. Over everything he criticizes us, that this is against the Shariat and this is na-jaaiz. He advises us to leave mortgage, and so forth.”

The Hindu said upon hearing this:

“Munshi Jee! This is something to be very happy about. It seems that your son is very able. He wishes the best for you. If you had sent him to learn astronomy he would have spoken to you about the stars; if you had taught him constitutional law he would have told you about the law of the land; if you had taught him medicine he would have informed you of harmful and healthy things. You sent him to learn Deen. So obviously he is going to tell you about Deen. Make shukr. He is very able; very concerned. He saves you from the chastisement of the Aakhirat. You ought to be happy that whatever you are spending in his education is bearing fruit.”

In his student days caring for Tableegh and opposing the ideals of his family, *Subhaanallah!* This was proof of him being a Man of Allah Ta'ala.

5.20 Issuing Fatwa

Then he was not only a *Muballigh*. In fact, he was a Mufti even during his study days. This was due to his Special Ustaad, Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb entrusting the work of *Fatwa* to him considering his extraordinary brilliance and intelligence, and his knowledge and piety.

He would answer difficult and lengthy questions with extreme ease and thoroughness, but concisely. Once, he brought a lengthy, exhaustive and proof-packed answer to a similar

lengthy question for Moulana's endorsement. Moulana perused the entire answer and upon signing remarked:

"It seems that you have plenty of time at your disposal."

From then on he would suffice with concise and precise answers.

5.21 Perceiving Reality

In spite of possessing such Allah-given capabilities in his student years his perception of reality was so lofty that in 1300 Hijri when a grand *jalsah* was inaugurated in Deoband in which he was to be crowned with the turban, he and some of his fellow students upon hearing of the '*dastaar bandi*' came to Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb and humbly said:

"Hazrat! We have heard that a 'turban-tying ceremony' will be held for us and certificates will be issued to us, whereas we are not at all worthy of this. Therefore, do cancel this proposal. If not then the Madrasah will be defamed, truly; such misfits have been issued with certificates!"

Having listened to this Moulana became emotional and declared:

"Your thought is erroneous. Here, since you are in the presence of your Asaatizah, therefore you do not see yourself to be anything. And it should be like that. But when you go from here then you will come to know of your worth. Wherever you go it will be you and only you. The field will be clear for you. Rest assured."

This forecast was fulfilled to the letter. Leave alone the general public and ordinary Ulama, even eminent *Ulama and Fuzala* respected his worth and rank.

5.22 Spiritual Training

Since Haq Ta'ala bestowed him with such extraordinary capabilities which were automatically nurturing him spiritually and He granted him such an illuminated insight which showed him *Siraat-e-Mustaqeem* from childhood, there was no need for anyone to concentrate on giving him special spiritual training from childhood till he completed his studies. All his work automatically was being carried out correctly. Therefore, there was never the need for reprimand and rebuke or warning and cautioning. The need for encouragement, as a matter of fact, did not even arise. If there was some deficiency left, which escaped the gaze of anyone, the All-Powerful made special arrangements for its fulfilment. This is endorsed by the following episode which he himself wrote in *Sidqur Ru'ya*:

“During my study days in Madrasah Aaliyah Deoband I saw a Buzrug in a dream. He asked me: ‘What is your age and when is your birthday?’ I told him my age and that my birth date is 5th Jumaadath Thaani. That Buzrug went on to say: ‘Two days before your birthday keep two fasts. There will be barkat.’ I practised on it and for several years I continued until I became complacent. Once, during that period I practised on that deed. However, I must have kept one fast. I mentioned the dream to one of my close relatives. He asked me the description of the Buzrug. After listening to the description he said: ‘That was Hafiz Ghulaam Murtaza (Quddisa Sirruhu)’.

He was Majzoob, but a pure Buzrug. The Shuyookh of Tareeqat have praised him. In fact, Hazrat Murshidi Haji Saheb (Quddisa Sirruhu) also praised him.”

Similarly, Hazrat Moulana Shaikh Muhammad Muhaddith-e-Thanwi who was amongst the elite Khulafa [Vicegerents] of Miaji Noor Muhammad (Nawwarallahu Marqadahu) and the Peer-Bhai [Co-Mureed] of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhu), when he used to see him [Hazrat Thanwi] going to primary Madrasah he would comment:

“After me this boy will take my place.”

That is exactly what happened. After him [Hazrat Shaikh Muhammad Saheb], in that town Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali became the embodiment of academic and spiritual knowledge. After Hazrat Shaikh Muhammad Saheb’s demise, in the realm of dreams he said to Hazrat Thanwi:

“Even now our gaze is on you just as it was in our lifetime.”

To summarize, his student days were also a manifestation of Haq Ta’ala’s limitless favours. Otherwise, chances are rare of seeing so many excellences in one person, that as a student he is a Muballigh,⁴ a Mufti,⁵ a Musannif,⁶ a Muttaqi,⁷ a Munaazir,⁸ a Ma’qooli,⁹ a Mu’tadil,¹⁰ a Maahir¹¹ and then Munfarid¹² above all.

⁴ preacher

⁵ authorized in issuing religious verdicts

⁶ author

⁷ devout

⁸ debater

⁹ philosopher and logician

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ط

**That is the grace of Allah Ta'ala
which he gives to whomever He wishes**
(Surah Jumu'ah, 4)

6. Asaatiza-e-Kiraam

6.1 Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi did not acquire any prescribed and particular education by him. However, he would occasionally join Moulana Qaasim Saheb's *Jalaalain Class* out of good faith, eagerness and in pursuit of *Ilm*. Moulana passed away just a year after his admission. Yet, Moulana picked out this *Rising Star* of the Madrasah early on in his studies. He recognized him to possess some natural and inborn wonders. Therefore, he directed his special care to him.

He taught him one lesson which forever remained his way. That was when one day Moulana asked him: "*What kitaabs are you studying?*" He was so awed and overwhelmed with respect for Moulana that he forgot the kitaabs' names. To remove this fear Moulana changed the subject, and he opened up. Then Moulana said to him:

"See! One is parhna [to learn] and one is gunna [to master]. Mere learning is not sufficient. There is a need for mastering as well."

¹⁰ having a balanced nature/temperate

¹¹ expert

¹² unique

To illustrate this Moulana said:

“There was an Aalim who memorized Hidaayah. Another Aalim who was not a Hafiz of Hidaayah, however he studied Hidaayah properly with understanding, mentioned a mas-alah to the Hafiz of Hidaayah. The Hafiz of Hidaayah asked: ‘In which kitaab is this mas-alah?’ The Aalim replied: ‘In Hidaayah’. The Hafiz of Hidaayah said: ‘No! I know Hidaayah by heart. It is nowhere in Hidaayah.’

The non-hafiz of Hidaayah replied: ‘This mas-alah is in Hidaayah’. He called for a copy of Hidaayah and opened up to a passage and showed the Hafiz of Hidaayah. The mas-alah was not cited explicitly, but it was inferred from the passage.

After elucidating, the Hafiz of Hidaayah conceded: ‘Really this is Hidaayah’s mas-alah.’ With much regret he exclaimed: ‘Really, Hidaayah, in actual fact, you have studied. It is as if I did not study Hidaayah! What purpose does mere memorization serve?!’

After relating this anecdote Hazrat Nanotwi said:

“This is precisely the difference between parhna and gunna.”

6.2 Moulana Fatah Muhammad Saheb Thanwi

He was an eminent and excellent Aalim, perfect dervish, embodiment of the Deen, exceptionally blessed and a *Saahib-e-Nisbat Buzrug* [a saintly person with a strong bond with Allah Ta'ala]. First he was *bai't* to Hazrat Nawab Qutbud Deen Khan Dehlwi (Rahmatullahi alaihi). After Nawab Qutbud Deen's

demise, for perfection in *Sulook [Tasawwuf]* he turned to *Shaikhul Arab wal Ajam*, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Muhaajir-e-Makki and he was conferred with *Khilaafat*.

He was the first Ustaad of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, by whom Hazrat studied the elementary Persian and Arabic text books. It was the good fortune of Hazrat, or the beautiful order of creation, that in his early age when his heart was pure from all contamination Hazrat received such a perfect Ustaad whose *Ta'leem and Tarbiyat* proved to be a key to blessings and fortune and a handle for goodness and piety for Hazrat. Through the spiritual blessings of his company, love for the Deen was inculcated in his heart. Thus Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi in acknowledgement says:

“The true capital, that is Love for Deen, I acquired through the faiz of the suhbat of Moulana because Moulana was an Aashiq of the Deen. Through the barkat of Moulana my enthusiasm for Deen increased to such a level that as a minor I started to read Tahajjud.”

6.3 The Ustaad's Display of Special Honour

Where Moulana Fatah Muhammad Saheb was so comprehensive in his academic and spiritual knowledge, in physique and stature he was slight. Furthermore, he was humble in nature and simple in dress. Outwardly therefore, it was not a simple matter to gauge his rank. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi also had a special inclination and affection for his Ustaad.

Once, a visitor came to Hazrat. He took the visitor to meet his Ustaad. In view of Moulana being a person with insight and he could see that today's student will be the Ustaad of tomorrow,

therefore, notwithstanding him being the Ustaad he would honour and respect Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi much. Accordingly, when Hazrat came in the presence of Moulana along with the visitor, Moulana met him with the usual honour and respect; as one meets a Buzrug. They spoke casual talk and close to Maghrib he returned. The visitor said: *“You told me you are taking me to your Ustaad. Are you not going there?”* Hazrat replied: *“That’s where we have been.”* The visitor was astonished and he remarked: *“That’s your Ustaad!!! He cannot be distinguished from even a Shaagird [pupil].”*

6.4 Apology of the Ustaad

In student days the Ustaad, out of care and urge for improvement, sometimes raises his hands on the student. Moulana Fatah Muhammad, who was an all-out *Muttaqi*, once came to his dutiful pupil and said:

“When two people live together then a relation develops between them and due to this relation some rights are also established. These rights tend to be neglected. Therefore, I must have been also neglectful. For this I apologise.”

Hazrat understood at once that reference was to his student days when Moulana may have on a rare occasion hit him. For this he was apologising in this subtle way. He therefore replied:

“Hazrat! I understand what you are asking maaf for. Hazrat! Taubah, Taubah! That was the essence of care and mercy. There is no need to ask maaf for that. This little which I have learnt was through the barkat of that.”

Moulana said: *“Just make maaf.”*

Hazrat tried to evade, however Moulana relented, to which Hazrat said: “*I have made maaf.*” Moulana then became very pleased.

6.5 The Janaazah of the Ustaad at the Home of the Student

In all humility and care it was Moulana’s practice that he would go and visit his *Shaagird*. The rank of his *Shaagird* can be adequately gauged from this.

When Moulana Fatah Muhammad Saheb passed away during the period when there was a severe outbreak of pestilence, the day of his demise saw heavy thundershowers coming down. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, therefore, was unable to attend the Janaazah Namaaz. Moulana’s family were also people of knowledge and understanding and they were well aware of the teacher-student relationship. For this reason they considered Hazrat Thanwi to have a valid reason for not attending and, instead, brought the Janaazah to him. It was as if Moulana Fatah Muhammad lived up to his practice [of visiting his student] even at the time of departure from this world.

6.6 Directing Special Attention from the Aalam-e-Barzakh

From the foregoing episode it can be understood to what degree the Ustaad’s attention was on the pupil. This is further corroborated from this incident: Once, Hazrat returned from a journey to Kanpur. The son-in-law of Moulana Fatah Muhammad, Hafiz Ismatullah Marhoom who, in childhood attended lessons with Hazrat, saw Moulana in a dream telling him in regard to Hazrat:

“He has returned from Kanpur. Why do you not invite him for meals? Invite him and slaughter the fowl which has been raised at home and feed him.”

6.7 Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb Nanotwi

This was Hazrat Thanwi’s most special, dearest and most honourable Ustaad. He was the number one teacher in Darul Uloom Deoband; unique in teaching and academic sciences; one who possessed great spiritual powers and inspiration and he could demonstrate miracles. He is ranked among the *Awliya-e-Kaamileen*. He was among the eminent *Khulafa* of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhul Azeez) and he commanded the position of *Qutub-e-Takween* [the Head of the Awliya charged with supervision over events of the world].

6.8 Confidence of the Pupil

Moulana’s spiritual rays of light fell onto Hazrat Thanwi’s pure heart to such a degree that he developed utmost confidence and love for Moulana. So much so that when Hazrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Gangohi commenced Hadeeth lessons in Gangoh, many students went there. They tried to talk him into going as well, saying:

“Moulana is absent too often. Therefore, you also come [to Gangoh].”

He replied:

“I do understand that Hadeeth classes will be better there, but I view it to be unfaithful to leave my Ustaad. Until Moulana does not tell me that his Ilmi Capital is depleted and he cannot teach me further, I will remain with him. Although he is absent often, but when he teaches then he thoroughly satisfies one.”

6.9 Loving-Care of the Ustaad

The effect of this faithful attachment was that his Ustaad would have special care and devotion for him in contrast to other students. He would, in his presence, expound more on experiences and divine mysteries, and on academic points and subtleties. On the other hand, Hazrat Thanwi, through his extraordinary retentive power, would derive more spiritual grace and blessings than others and he would continue to learn wonderful and amazing knowledge. He would describe the *dars* [lesson] of Moulana thus:

“What was his session of dars? It was a session of tawajjuh. The state of it was that a lesson of Tafseer was being imparted; he would be explaining the meanings of the Aayaat and from his eyes tears would be streaming down.”

6.10 Honour of Ifta and Imaamat

His love and potential, produced in the heart of his Ustaad confidence. As a result, Moulana started taking Ifta work from him in his student days. Sometimes he would also put him forward to make Imaamat in his place.

Once, he told him to perform Zuhr Namaaz. He put forward the excuse: *“Hazrat! I haven’t read my Sunnats yet.”* Moulana gave an amazing reply. He said:

“We are going to follow you in the Fardh. Where are we going to follow you in the Sunnats?”

[The rank of *Fardh* is greater than the rank of *Sunnat*. Hazrat Moulana Ya’qoob Saheb implied by his statement that Hazrat Thanwi was destined to reach the highest stage of leadership in Deen; that is he will be the *Imaam* of the time. *Wallahu A’lam.*]

6.11 Shaikhul Hind Moulana Mahmood Hasan Saheb Deobandi

He was also among the elite Asaatizah of Hazrat by whom he studied many kitaabs in his student days. Moulana was the fourth most senior teacher in Darul Uloom Deoband. He progressed to become the most senior teacher. He was the righteous student of Hazrat Moulana Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi and the distinguished *Khaleefah* of Hazrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Gangohi.

Hazrat Moulana Thanwi also had much good thoughts and affection for him. Often he would extol his virtues. In fact, he compiled and published a treatise on his practical and academic excellences titled, *Zikr-e-Mahmood*. During the period of political campaigning, although Hazrat differed with him, he continued to speak well of him and their relationship was not ruptured or spoilt at all.

6.12 Extreme Loving-Care

Moulana also was greatly attached and fond of him. Since he was always eager in his student days to debate, therefore, whenever he heard of a challenge to debate he would take it up immediately.

Once, a European Christian set up tent close to Deoband Station for debating. When Hazrat came to know, he became restless and hastened to take up the challenge. Somehow Moulana heard of this. Fearing that his pupil was yet young, new and inexperienced and will thus be disadvantaged he immediately set out to aid his dutiful student. Upon reaching there he took the seat of Hazrat and proceeded to debate. In just a few words he had the missionary packing up his belongings and leaving.

6.13 A Show of Utmost Respect

In *Zikr-e-Mahmood* Hazrat Thanwi writes with great regret:

“It was my neglect or weakness that very seldom did I correspond with Hazrat (Rahmatullahi alaihi). Some occasions I did and he invariably bestowed me with replies, but necessary arrangements were not made to preserve it.

Now I can recall only three letters preserved. One is in connection with a question on Tafseer and its answer. It has been published in the supplement to Volume Four of Fataawa Imdaadiyah, p. 326. The other two [letters], I am reproducing hereunder for barkat. These are not less than two righteous witnesses to Hazrat’s temperament of humility and loving-care.

In the two letters Hazrat Shaikhul Hind addresses his righteous pupil with these titles:

- a. Embodiment of virtue and excellence. May Allah Ta'ala honour you and place you above multitudes of people.
- b. Gold-Mine of goodness and piety. May your shadow be extended.

In *Zikr-e-Mahmood* Hazrat Thanwi writes regarding the words used by Moulana for him before others:

“Hazrat used some words which are much loftier than my status. Hence I have not reproduced them as:

چہ نسبت خاک را با عالم پاک

What relation does sand have with the universe!

6.14 The Pupil's Difference

Moulana was a big supporter of the Congress Party. However, his righteous pupil, the embodiment of virtue and excellence, the gold-mine of goodness and piety strongly differed in this matter. In other words, how much Moulana supported the Congress Party so much Hazrat Thanwi was against it. And what an opposition! On the one side, all the Elders of Deoband and on the other side this solitary *Durwaish of Thanabawan*.

In view of the difference of opinion of the two Buzrugs – *Ustaad and Shaagird* – being of an *ijtihaadi nature* [personal understanding and judgement] and based purely on sincerity and *Lillaahiyat*, just as was the difference among the *Aimma-e-Mujtahideen* and *Salaf-e-Saaliheen* from antiquity, therefore, notwithstanding this difference the personal relationship between the two was not harmed at all.

Their unacquainted friends and unintelligent devotees, however, became embroiled over this. The faithful of Hazrat Moulana Thanwi did not have the courage to utter anything in this matter. Moulana's devotees, however, would complain to him often whilst Moulana would pass good opinions of Hazrat [Thanwi], commend his Deeni services and stop those short-sighted persons from their objections. Once, he went so far as to say to one Aalim from Panipat:

“Bhai! To differ with one's own people does not seem right. Why don't I change my stance and agree with him [Hazrat Thanwi] because I don't receive Wahi that my opinion is the correct one.”

On another occasion when Hazrat Thanwi, in spite of the on-going difference, came to meet Moulana in Deoband, a devotee

of Moulana seized the opportunity and incited Moulana by saying: *“He [Hazrat Thanwi] has come. If these matters of difference are discussed with him perhaps he will be in agreement with us.”* Moulana answered:

“No! It is not appropriate. One who shows due consideration should not be argued with. Furthermore, opinions do not change through conversation; they change through circumstances.”

In spite of these differences the bond between the teacher and pupil remained as before; intact and firm, and whenever Moulana would write a letter to his *Shaagird* he would address him with words such as: Master, Honourable, etc. Hazrat Thanwi petitioned Moulana not to write such words and save him embarrassment. However, Moulana only used such titles. Thereupon Hazrat Thanwi wrote:

“By my request not being accepted it appears that Moulana is comforted by this even though I am uneasy. However, I take Hazrat’s comfort above my comfort. Now, whatever is desired let it be used. I will bear.”

Such examples of respect for the *Ustaad* and regard for the *Shaagird* can only be found among *Men of the Truth*. It cannot be conceived from slaves of desire and carnal pleasures.

6.15 Moulana Sa’eed Ahmad Saheb Dehlwi

He was also among the *Asaatizah* of Hazrat Thanwi. He did not study mathematics by any *Ustaad*. Solely by his Allah-given intellect and understanding he pursued this science and acquired it. He achieved perfection in mathematics to such a degree that the *Chief of the Intelligent*, Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb said about him:

“If Iqleedas, [Euclid, the renowned Greek mathematician of the 3rd B.C.], was intelligent then just this much. Not more than him.”

6.16 Other Asaatizah

Hazrat would also name Mulla Mahmood and Moulana Abdul Ali among his Asaatiza-e-Kiraam.

6.17 Qaari Muhammad Abdullah Saheb Muhaajir-e-Makki

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi practised the art of Qiraat by him. He was accepted by the *Qurraa* of Arabia to be an exceptional and highly qualified Qaari. He was reputed to be an Imaam of the art.

He, too, saw some extraordinary talent in his righteous pupil. Thus, he instructed Hazrat to teach the students of the Madrasah several lessons of some works on Qiraat. This was all in nurturing Hazrat’s practical skill and making him familiar with the books on the subject.

6.18 Glad Tidings of Deeni Honour

Hazrat Moulana Rafee’ud Deen Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaihi) was the *Khaleefah* of Hazrat Moulana Shah Abdul Ghani Dehlwi who was among the Asaatizah of Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Gangohi and Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi (Rahimahumullahu Ta’ala). During the period of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi’s pursuit of *Ilm* in Darul Uloom Deoband, he [Moulana Rafee’ud Deen Saheb] was the principal. Although he was not an Aalim, yet he was a paragon of spiritual insight and an administrator of the highest calibre.

He viewed Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi with great favour.

One day, Hazrat Thanwi went to meet him. Moulana Rafee'ud Saheb, the Muhtamim [Principal] was sitting on a *chaarpai* [the traditional bed in India with wooden framework] in such a manner that there was barely any place left at the feet side. Out of respect Hazrat went to sit at the feet side [as sitting at the head side is reserved for elders]. Moulana took his hand and drew him to the head side. Hazrat politely excused himself. However, Moulana stated:

“One should obey one’s elders. Where they seat one, one should sit there.”

Thereupon Hazrat sat at the head side, albeit reluctantly.

On this occasion Moulana related to Hazrat the story of Dara Shakooch and Aalamgeer [the sons of Shah Jahaan the fifth Mughal Emperor of India] when they went to meet a Buzrug. Both of them, one after the other, went to request *Du’aa* for ascendancy to the throne. Dara Shakooch never sat at the Buzrug’s seat in spite of the Buzrug persisting and out of respect he sat below. When he requested *Du’aa*, the Buzrug replied: *“I wished to place you on the throne, however, you did not accept.”* He was now overcome with much regret. He, however, did not disclose this incident to Aalamgeer.

When Aalamgeer presented himself then the Buzrug told him to sit in his place. Immediately, in compliance to the instruction he sat. And when he too requested *Du’aa* for ascendancy to the throne and being crowned the king, the Buzrug replied: *“I have placed you on the throne. As far as the crown is concerned, it is*

not in my control. It is in the hands of so-and-so attendant of yours.”

In this subtle way Muhtamim Saheb gave glad tidings to Hazrat of Deeni honour which, besides Hazrat, no one in this age received. This was due to that Buzrug of insight perceiving that this student is pious by birth. He would, therefore, take him along on journeys now and again.

In fact, often he would appoint him as the Imaam of the Masjid and he would read Namaaz behind him. Hazrat considered it to be lack of respect for him to have such a *Buzrug* as his *muqtadi* and hence he would put forward excuses. To avoid insistence he started reading his Namaaz in another Masjid.

In short, by virtue of the pupil being *saalih* [pious], the student too received such accomplished Asaatizah.

6.19 Underlying Reason for the Honourable Treatment

These perfect personalities, however, did not show respect and honour for their righteous pupil solely on account of his piety. Rather, it centred on a peculiarity which will be mentioned in the *Chapter of Mujaddidiyyat*. Otherwise, in his class Hazrat Thanwi had such fellow students who shone like the sun and moon in the sky on account of their knowledge, excellences, abstinence and their piety. They, however, did not receive that special attention as Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi received.

7. Teaching

7.1 Taking the Seat at Faiz-e-Aam

The oldest Deeni Institution in Kanpur was *Madrasah Faiz-e-Aam*. [*Faiz-e-Aam* literally means: widespread Deeni or spiritual effulgence.] Its head-teacher was Moulana Ahmad Hasan Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih) who was among the renowned Ulama of his time. He was an expert in the rational sciences and very popular among students.

Since Haq Ta'ala wished to place Hazrat Thanwi on *Masnad-e-Hasan* [literally: *the Seat of Beauty*. Figuratively: the position of Ustaad, or: in the place of Moulana Ahmad Hasan. Hasan means: beauty and beautiful], **Muqallibul Quloob** [the Rotator of Hearts] put something in the heart of Moulana Ahmad Hasan Saheb due to which he left the Madrasah very bitterly and established his own Madrasah by the name of *Darul Uloom*.

In view of the fame of his knowledge and virtues no one had the courage to take his place and rug. Hazrat Thanwi was totally unaware of developments there. So when a request from there came for a *Mudarris* [teacher], he left under the instruction of his *Asaatiza-e-Kiraam* and with the permission of his honourable father towards the end of Safar 1301 Hijri. He commenced teaching there. Thus, after graduating from Madrasah he was firstly honoured with being a *Mudarris* which is the most respected and honourable profession.

7.2 The Effect of Noor-e-Ilm

Not only was Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi adorned with *Jewels of Ilm*. In fact, together with outward beauty and inner perfection he possessed a passion to serve the Deen and a

tongue that flowed with wisdom. In view of this, in spite of his youth and early manhood he received great acclaim among all the *mudarriseen* and city-folk. He became so much adored that Moulana Ahmad Hasan Saheb, the one whose place no one dared take, also started meeting Hazrat Thanwi with affection and dignity. This enhanced his position and status among people all the more.

7.3 Encouragement from the Unseen

The difference between studying and teaching is like the difference between the heavens and the earth. For an Ustaad who previously has not been trained in teaching, to be seated as an Ustaad and handed the higher kitaabs to teach immediately after being a student, it only follows that he will be overcome with worry. Similarly, Hazrat Thanwi was initially very apprehensive with this task. He thought: “*Yaa Allah! How am I going to teach these kitaabs?*”

In this state of concern he raised his hands before Allah Ta'ala, conforming to:

اجابت از در حق بہر استقبال می آید

Acceptance from the Portal of Allah Ta'ala has arrived.

After making *Du'aa* when he sat to teach then through the Grace of Allah Ta'ala he experienced no difficulty and with extreme ease he went about teaching.

Besides this, occasionally from the Unseen he would be consoled and encouraged as is clear from his true dreams mentioned hereunder. It is reproduced from *Sidqur Ru'ya* in Hazrat Thanwi's own words:

1. *“When ahqar commenced dars of Hadeeth then I was honoured with ziyaarat of my Ustaad, Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih). It was like this that before me there was a class of Saheeh Bukhari students. A copy of Bukhari was in front of me and I am teaching from it. Beside me my celebrated Hazrat Ustaad was seated. In front of him there was perhaps a copy of Bukhari Shareef too. The lecture I would impart was approved by Moulana...*

2. *I saw a place, such as the small printing office in Kanpur of Janaab Abdur Rahman Khan Saheb, the founder of Madrasah Jaami’ul Uloom Kanpur. There, alongside the well Hazrat Ibn Abbaas (Radhiyallahu anhu) was standing and I was close by. Thereupon I sensed strongly that I will become well-versed in Tafseer.”*

7.4 The Demand of Deeni Self-Respect

Only three or four months had passed of Hazrat Thanwi fulfilling his task at *Madrasah Faiz-e-Aam* when the administrators of the Madrasah, thinking of his extraordinary talent, wished to engage him in collecting funds for the Madrasah through his lectures. Hazrat considered it against Deeni self-respect for the *Mudarris* [Teacher] to give *dars* on Deen and then go about delivering *wa’z* [lectures] for his wage. He, therefore, blankly refused.

The Madrasah Board Members convened a meeting to discuss this non-participation in collection. Someone informed Hazrat about this. Hazrat remarked:

“If I have to lecture for funds then why should I not collect for myself? This is not my duty. It is the duty of the board members. My work is simply to teach.”

This, however, did not change the mind of the board members and they started making a big issue about it which he completely disliked. He, therefore, resigned.

Afterwards they apologized, but Hazrat preferred not to stay on there, for this reason that these people appeared to be unappreciative and to endure with such people was not possible for him.

As far as this episode was concerned, Hazrat would say:

“That was a time of youthful vigour and emotion. And the actual reason was that being employed went against my grain. When I wrote to my dear father complaining about the situation, he sent a reply in which he put forward excuses for them and added: ‘Stay on there. It is not appropriate to be hasty in separation. Employment was not our purpose. Allah Ta’ala has given us everything. I merely permitted you [to take up the teaching post] as it was a good opportunity to solidify your knowledge as your kitaabs are still ‘hot from the oven’. If you leave this employment then your teaching stops and you will forget all that you have learnt. Without punctuality you won’t teach and if you stay on in the Madrasah then you will have to be punctual.”

However, as his mind had switched off from there, he therefore severed his relationship with *Madrasah Faiz-e-Aam* and resolved to return home.

7.5 Honourable Return

Prior to departing for home he went to Ganj Muradabad to visit Hazrat Moulana Shah Fazlur Rahmaan Saheb Ganj Muradabadi lest he did not come that way again. Although Moulana Fazlur Rahmaan Saheb was not a Buzrug of the same school and way of his, as he was linked to the *Naqshabandi Order* and Hazrat Thanwi to the *Chishti Order*, nevertheless he deemed it necessary to visit that Man of Allah Ta'ala as he was the *Qutb* [highest ranking Wali] of the time.

Although those incompetent Board Members lost the priceless jewel that was Hazrat Thanwi, the city folk however could not tolerate the tragedy of him departing as they were deeply touched by his sincerity for the sake of Deen. Hence, they started thinking of plans to bring him back.

Among the influential people of the city, Abdur Rahmaan Khan and Haji Kifaayatullah had special love and faith in Hazrat. What they also observed was that in all the Madrasahs of the city *ma'qoolaat* was given emphasis and *Deeniyyaat* was relegated to a back-seat. They, therefore, decided to open a new Madrasah at the *Jaami Masjid* of Mahallah Patkapur of Kanpur and they agreed to jointly pay the fifty rupees monthly salary which Hazrat Thanwi would receive from *Madrasah Faiz-e-Aam*. “*When will we get such a Molvi again,*” they thought. “*He should not be left to go from here.*”

In consequence, when he returned from Ganj Muradabad to Kanpur then those two personalities insisted on him staying on. Owing to their sincerity and the directive of his honourable father he agreed to conduct lessons by the Masjid. In this way a new Madrasah was established at that Masjid by the name of

Jaami'ul Uloom. The Madrasah was *Jaami'* [all-encompassing – a university] of Deeni sciences and rational sciences.

Initially students were shy to learn by him as he was still of a tender age and only in the beginning of his manhood. For this reason the roll of the students remained slight for some years, and when his beard grew then the student roll also grew.

Although those two personalities took responsibility for Hazrat's wage, but thereafter collections also began. However, never did Hazrat involve himself in collecting funds.

7.6 Effect of Lillahiyat

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was from the very beginning an embodiment of sincerity and considerateness. On the one hand employment was against his nature and on the other he did not view it correct to do the work of Allah Ta'ala taking a wage. Notwithstanding the fact that *fatwa* by the later Fuqaha exists on its permissibility, *taqwa*, however, demanded that if Deen is to be taught it should be taught *Li Wajhillah* [for nothing else but the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala]. He, therefore, came to the conclusion of acquiring education in *Tibb* at the consulting office of Hakeem Abdul Majeed Khan Marhoom Dehlwi so that together with teaching he can practise traditional healing and earn his livelihood.

Prior to going there, however, he sought the permission of his honourable father who happily consented to the idea. In fact, he was duly affected by the good fortune of his bright offspring and [later] fixed the income of one of his lands, *Gadai Khairah* for his expenses so that he can execute the service of Deen with peace of mind, without concern for his livelihood.

7.7 Education in Tibb

Out of fervour for teaching Deeni Education for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala, he came to Delhi from Kanpur and commenced his studies in *Tibb* by Hakeem Abdul Majeed Khan Dehlwi. Hakeem Saheb was very independent in view of his affluence and nobility. But, despite being a nobleman and renowned, he was also touched by Hazrat's *Akhlaaq* and *Aadaab* [character and etiquette]. He thus showed love and care for him.

Meanwhile the people of Kanpur were again unsettled at his departure and the Madrasah authorities came to him in Delhi. Putting forward the significance of the Madrasah they implored him to return. His colleague of student days, Hakeem Molvi Jameelud Deen Ghazipuri gave him this advice:

“Don't engross yourself in Tibb at all. It is my experience that by practising the art of healing one can never do service to Deen and Ilm-e-Deen.”

Honouring the desires of these sincere friends he decided to return. However, following the adage:

آمدن بر ارادت رفتن به اجازت

Come on your own accord and take permission when leaving, he regarded it to be against politeness and culture to merely abandon his tuition, moreover, in view of Hakeem Saheb's excessive love and care. He, therefore, said to those that came to call him that if Hakeem Saheb grants permission then he is prepared to go. They came to Hakeem Saheb and requested him to allow Moulana Ashraf Ali to leave. Reluctantly Hakeem Saheb gave permission, saying:

“Well, if he does not want his own progress then he is free to leave.”

And so, after just fifteen days of studying *Tibb* he returned to Kanpur and resumed his teaching commitments. Muslims of Kanpur were overjoyed. Their barren garden started to bloom again.

7.8 Joy of the Spiritual Mentor

When news of this reached his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb (Quddisa Sirruhul Azeez) then he expressed his happiness of the return in these words:

“I have learnt of your abandonment of medicine-practice and returning to Kanpur for Deeni Educational Practice. I am very happy. May Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu grant you barkat and may he shower grace and benefit upon all Muslims through your barakaat and faiz.

Previously I did give you mashwarah to hold onto the Deen firmly. The dunya will automatically present itself to you in a beautiful form. Nevertheless, you – the Ulama – are the heirs to the Ambiya. Allah Ta'ala created you [the Ulama] to guide creation and in this way He has conferred great favours upon you. Therefore, keep the thought of the goal before all else.” (Maktoob-e-Imdaadiyah, No. 3)

Thereafter, he commenced his work with peace of mind and remained engaged in teaching for a full fourteen years.

7.9 Exquisite Way of Teaching

Hazrat Thanwi's style of teaching was so fine, exquisite and simple that students who took a few lessons from him would thereafter not find contentment in any other Ustaad. The reason for this is clear from the following explanation of Hazrat:

“When I used to teach, I would endure much hardship, in that I would firstly preserve the lesson in my mind, then I would teach. For this reason my whole lecture would be very straightforward and orderly. On account of this, students would find the most difficult of topics to be simple as ABC. It would easily be grasped by them. Although I would undergo hardship in simplifying the lecture, however, the students would have no problem in understanding any portion.

Accordingly, there is a famous piece in *Sadra* known as *Muthannaat bit takreer*. It is regarded to be a very difficult portion. When the lesson came in the kitaab, then without warning the students beforehand, on the day of the lesson I imparted a straightforward explanation. I did not, however, alert them to this being the difficult portion. In a casual way I lectured. Since I simplified the explanation quite a bit, the students readily understood the lesson. Once they admitted to having understood then I told them that this is the same place which is known as *Muthannaat bit takreer*. When they heard this they became startled. I said to them: ‘*No need to fear now. It’s all over*’. I then posed them the question: ‘*Tell me. Is this something difficult?*’ They replied: ‘*Other students made us scared of this portion, but it is not at all difficult.*’

The portion was in fact difficult. However, I lectured it in such a casual and simple way that they understood it with ease. I had to put up with a lot of difficulty in simplifying it however, as I placed their load on my shoulders. I always aim for this in teaching.

Nowadays Ustaads do not wish to bear any difficulty. As a matter of fact they do not have sympathy. A ritual undertaking of the work is all that remains [among Asaatizah nowadays].

When I taught, I never lectured anything unnecessary. I sufficed with unravelling of the kitaab. I never wasted students' time with superfluous details and I would emphasise this to the *Mudarriseen* under me. In fact, at times I would go and inspect their teaching.

Asaatizah mainly lecture on subtleties and intricacies to show their greatness. The actual purport of the kitaab is clouded thereby. Some offer the excuse that until this is not included in the lecture, students are not contented with the ability of the Ustaad. Be that as it may, should we see to this contentment of the students or what is of benefit to them? The benefit is in solving the kitaab well, because *isti'daad* [aptitude in understanding the texts] is only produced through that. And when *isti'daad* is produced then subtleties and intricacies will be understood naturally. The focus of the Ustaad's gaze should therefore be on this.

These new-fangled programmes of weekly practice of speaking and debating that have been concocted are unnecessary. In fact, they are harmful because the entire week is spent in preparation for it instead of attending to lessons. In the first place there is no need at all for this type of training because when kitaabs are learnt with understanding, then ability to speak, write and debate will automatically follow.

If the inclination [to have weekly *anjumans*/student programmes] is too strong however, then the student should be

told to speak on the kitaab he is studying. In this way practice of speaking will be done and there won't be any harm. In fact, their kitaabs will be consolidated further."

7.10 Directives for Students

On the basis of his experience Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi would state to students:

"If you make incumbent upon yourself three things then I guarantee and take responsibility that you will achieve *Ilmi potential*.

1. Without fail make *mutaala'ah* of the *sabaq* you are going to take. And *mutaala'ah* is no stiff task because the purpose of *mutaala'ah* is simply to recognise what you know from what you do not. Don't dig further than that.
2. Understand the lesson thoroughly from the Ustaad. Don't go forward without understanding. If the Ustaad is not in a mood to explain then ask on another occasion.
3. Thereafter lecture the lessons once yourself.

That is all. After abiding to these three principles then rest at ease, whether you remember or not. Insha Allah, *isti'daad* [aptitude] will certainly be inculcated.

These three things are mandatory. And there is one other thing which is preferable. That is, to revise previous work (*aamokhta*) daily."

7.11 Asaatizah Joining the Talaba

Hazrat Thanwi had a command over teaching. It was as a result of perfect skill in academic knowledge that after taking the *Seat of Irshaad* [Spiritual and Deeni Guardianship] many students, and in fact, Asaatizah as well would come to Thanabawan during Madrasah vacation. This was because Hazrat would speak, there too, on many things invaluable to students. He would touch on such academic intricacies and subtleties that would solve the problems of the Asaatizah.

Seeing Ulama and Asaatizah departing for Thanabawan during the Madrasah holidays some ignorant ones would question the Asaatizah saying:

“Why do you go to Thanabawan during the Madrasah vacation? Why don’t you stay here and make mutaala’ah through which your wealth of knowledge will increase?”

This question was also posed to our *Mufti-e-A’zam of Pakistan*, Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ Saheb Deobandi who related it verbatim to Hazrat. Hazrat posed the question:

“Well, leave aside the benefits pertaining to spiritual matters, tell me, after your relationship with us, have you found help in teaching your kitaabs compared to before?”

In answer Mufti Saheb replied:

“Hazrat, I have found immense help and perceived a glaring difference.”

Thereupon Hazrat said:

“It is sufficient to tell them: “I go there also for mutaala’ah.”

7.12 The Importance of Ma'qoolaat

For the good of students Hazrat Thanwi was very desirous that students, as a matter of must, be acquainted with *ma'qoolaat*. It was his view that:

“If just one kitaab of Mantiq [Logic] is studied by me then there remains hardly any need for any other kitaab [of the rational sciences]. Through Mantiq one becomes adept.”

Therefore, even after giving up formal teaching it was Hazrat's practice in his stay in Thanabawan to teach the first text-book [of *Mantiq*], at least, to his close acquaintances. They would thus be well versed with *Mantiq*. Then they would not falter in any other kitaab.

7.13 Curriculum for Students Lacking Time

Similarly, he formulated a special course for students wanting in time entitling it *Zamaanut Takmeel fee Zamaanit Ta'jeel* [Guarantee of Completion in Quick Time]. For this he had to author ten new kitaabs which collectively are known as *Talkheesaat-e-Ashr* [The Ten Condensations].

Teaching according to this syllabus, he tested its efficacy on his close relatives, rather than on other students. Here too he observed caution. If it proved unsuccessful, the time of his family would be wasted, not the time of others. But, in actual fact there was nothing of time being wasted. After all, their knowledge would have increased more or less.

7.13 Acknowledgement of Love

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi came to Kanpur in Safar 1301 Hijri and until the end of Safar 1315 Hijri, that is a full fourteen years he served the people of Kanpur with his teaching,

lecturing, writings, directives and suggestions. Love and faith in Hazrat was not only grounded in the hearts of his supporters, it even took root in the hearts of his opposition. The effect of this love was that whilst there he never thought of his dear hometown, Thanabawan. He says:

“The people of Kanpur treated me with such love, honour and respect that I even forgot of my hometown. How much my heart was attached there, it would not have been in my hometown. My love for Kanpur was also so great that instead of engraving on my dishes my name, I engraved the name ‘Kanpur’. Now too, when I look at those dishes I think of Kanpur. Had it not been for the gesture of Hazrat Haji Saheb I would have never left Kanpur my entire life.

And truly, the fame I received was by virtue of Kanpur’s people. Otherwise, I was not really that status of a man at all and nor at present. Even now I have great love for the people of Kanpur and I am very much indebted to them. Sort of Minjaanibillah [from Allah Ta’ala] love for me settled in the hearts of the folk there on such a wide scale that difference of thought too was no impediment.”

8. Dutiful Pupils

8.1 Number of Beneficiaries

How many Students of Ilm quenched their thirst at the *Fountain of Ilm* at *Jaami’ul Uloom* during Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi’s fourteen year stay in Kanpur? The exact number could not be ascertained. What is certain is that there were many.

The author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* has produced the names of fifty four students in the light of a list compiled from papers of Hazrat Thanwi's period of being head-teacher. These names were of fifty four such students who even after graduating continued to draw from the *Blessings of Ilm* and spread the *Light of Ilm*. Those that glittered like radiant stars in the *Firmament of Ilm* are mentioned here with some particulars:

8.2 Radiant Stars

i. Moulana Muhammad Is-haaq Saheb Burdawani

He possessed a phenomenal memory and was an excellent Aalim. He completed Hifz of the entire Qur'aan in just six months. In his student days he memorized entirely the famous Nahw kitaab *Kaafiyah*. After Hazrat Thanwi relinquished his teaching post Moulana became Hazrat's successor and the head teacher. He furthermore maintained the beautiful system of Hazrat Thanwi fully. After some time he became the lecturer of *Deeniyaat* at *Madrasah Aaliyah*, Calcutta and from there he went on to become *Mudarris* of *Madrasah Aaliyah* in Dhaka receiving a monthly income of five hundred rupees. Thereafter he taught *Uloom-e-Deeniyaat* without pay; *Liwajhillah*. In the Path of Tasawwuf Hazrat Thanwi authorised him as *Khaleefa-e-Mujaz*.

ii. Moulana Muhammad Rasheed Saheb Kanpuri

He was brilliant and very intelligent. His perception and character were of a high degree. He was a humble Aalim. He became a *Mudarris* before the eyes of Hazrat Thanwi and he ascended to the number two *Mudarris*. Due to affinity with *Ilm-e-Fiqh*, the work of Ifta was entrusted to him. He discharged it

fairly well. Finally he received promotion to *Madrasah Aaliyah*, Calcutta.

iii. Moulana Ahmad Ali Saheb Fatahpuri

He was an embodiment of *Uloom-e-Zaahiri and Baatini* [academic and spiritual knowledge] and a Buzrug of excellent attributes. He was well-versed in Fiqh. He was the first *Khaleefa-e-Mujaaz* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. He compiled the first five parts of *Behshti Zewar* under the auspices of Hazrat Thanwi and to this day countless of Muslims are reaping the benefits of it. He taught *Ilm-e-Deen* in his hometown of Fatahpur and in Barah Banki.

iv. Moulana Saadiqul Yaqeen Saheb Kursawi

He was of exquisite nature. He was brilliant, a practising Aalim, devout and he possessed fine perception. He was the *Khaleefa-e-Mujaaz* of Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaihi). He was so much averse to innovations and customs that he strongly differed with his father on the question of *Mouloud*. In fact, their relationship was broken. Hazrat Thanwi solved the matter through beautiful diplomacy, resulting in his father abandoning the custom. Thus, the two of them reconciled. He paid much attention to reduction in food and sleep. As a result he became frail and weak.

v. Moulana Fadhl-e-Haq Saheb Barah Banki

He was the first student of Hazrat Thanwi to graduate. He was an Aalim of exceptional potential. He was outstanding in philosophy due to which he wrote such a beautiful commentary of the difficult portion of *Muthannaat Bit Takreer* that it was preserved in the Madrasah archives. For many years he kept the *Torch of Ilm* shining in Qanooj.

vi. Moulana Shah Lutfur Rasool Saheb Barah Banki

He was exceptionally brilliant and witty. He had an acute sense of understanding, intelligent, able Aalim and he possessed a strong spiritual state. He was a *Zaakir* and *Shaaghil Durwaish*. He became *ba'it* to Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah through correspondence. *Ta'leem of Tasawwuf*, however, he received by Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi and he received the honour of being Hazrat Thanwi's *Khaleefa-e-Mujaaz*. Divine Fear overwhelmed him. He would receive Divine Inspirations. Notwithstanding his hot temperament he was humble. He simplified the popular treatise of Hazrat Thanwi, *Qasdu Sabeel ilal Mowlal Jaleel*. He was the first to be buried in Hazrat Thanwi's *waqf qabristaan*.

vii. Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb Bijnori

He was an expert in Arabic Literature and the rational sciences. In shorthand he would note down the lectures of Hazrat in Arabic and then publish it in full Urdu. In this manner he recorded innumerable lectures of Hazrat. The Urdu translation of the Arabic of *Munaajaat-e-Maqbool*, the fine annotation of Hazrat's well-known writing *Al-Intibaahaatul Mufeedah anil Ishtibaahaatil Jadeedah*, simplification of Hazrat's treatise *Shauq-e-Watn*, the 9th part of *Behshti Zewar*, the proven formulae listed in *Behshti Gohar*, *Ma'loomaat-e-Ashrafiyyah*, *Majaalisul Hikmat*, *Amthaal-e-Ibrat* and other works are all the product of his pen.

He was so conscious of *Taqwa* that on the occasion of Haj when he told the driver to stop the vehicle for Namaaz and the driver refused, he was ready to jump out of the vehicle. However, simultaneously, the vehicle developed a fault and came to a halt. In this way he read his Namaaz on time with Jamaat.

Not only was he an *Aalim*, *Hafiz*, *Muttaqi*, *Mukhayyir*, [*philanthropist*], *Musannif* [*author*] and the *Khaleefa-e-Mujaaz* of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, he was also an outstanding *hakeem*. He would recognize the character and temperament of a person through the person's handwriting, and by merely looking at the urine sample he could say whether the person was a *faasiq* or a *Muttaqi*.

viii. Moulana Sayyid Is-haaq Ali Saheb Kanpuri

He was of a very sound nature and humble, a *Saahib-e-Nisbat Buzrug* and *Khaleefah-e-Mujaaz* of Hazrat Thanwi. He was among the very able and skilful Asaatizah. For many years he remained Head of Arabic at Darul Uloom Ilahabad.

ix. Moulana Mazharul Haq Saheb Ramwi (Chaatgam)

He was a master of literature, skilful in Arabic and Persian prose and poetry and ranked among the top Ulama of Bengal.

x. Moulana Zafar Ahmad Saheb Uthmaani

He is the nephew [sister's son] of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi and an Aalim of great intellect and insight. He is ranked among the elite Ulama. Initially he was head of the Department of Deeniyaat at Madrasah Aaliya Dhaka. Presently [1955 AD] he is the Shaikhul Hadeeth of Darul Uloom Tandu Allah Yaar in the district of Hyderabad in Sindh.

Hazrat entrusted the difficult task of completing *I'laaus Sunan* to him placing complete assurance on him. Hazrat was overjoyed with this work. This comes in twenty one volumes and it is a showpiece of his expertise and depth of knowledge in Fiqh and Hadeeth.

8.3 Bond with Pupils

The bond between *Ustaad* and *Shaagird* resembles that of father and son, and strength in this relationship is confined to respect and obedience, by virtue of which the care and love of the *Ustaad* intensify. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi took his pupils to be dearer to him than his *mureeds*, and he would meet them with much love and care. He would see that others also respect and honour them, and he would not allow anyone to look down upon them. He would neither take personal work from them nor would he allow others to take work from them. He would not allow them [students of his Madrasah] to go and fetch food from other peoples' homes or allow them to go to *da'wats* like needy and poor people. In short, he would promote their respect and dignity. And often he would say:

“The degree of bond I have with my pupils, I do not have that much with my devotees. This is because one does not feel free with devotees as one feels with pupils.”

This was also due to the fact that students would have almost passionate love for Hazrat.

9. Suhbat of the Buzrugs

9.1 The Effect of Suhbat

Experts on education and psychology, who are slaves of human intelligence, have only now uncovered the mystery that minds cannot be changed solely by writings and speeches, as long as special surroundings and training centres are not established for this purpose. Here, students would have to learn to stay for a period of time alone, following one central way and thought. For this reason in today's administration of education provision

is made for a system of training. However, the lovers of the *Candle of Nubuwwat* [i.e. the Sahaabah] found this mystery from the first day. For this reason they devoted much of their time in the *Majlis-e-Nabawi* and thus acquired practical skill in the Teachings of Islam.

In fact, the *As-haab-e-Suffah* adopted permanent residence there for the same reason, that they derive as much benefit from the *Suhbat of Nabi* (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as possible. From then on the foundation was laid of searching for the *Suhbat of Buzrugs*, for the mysteries and lessons of knowledge and divine-perception that can be derived from them, cannot be gained from pages, and the stages that can be ascended through the gaze and attention of Buzrugs, cannot possibly be reached by just struggling against the *nafs* and engaging in spiritual exercises, even after years.

Even Hazrat Thanwi discloses the secret to his success to be the *Suhbat of the Buzrugs*. He says:

“Neither did I ever make effort in my student days nor did I undergo mujaahadah and riyazaat in the Path, [the Path of Sulook or Tasawwuf]. Whatever Allah Ta’ala has bestowed is the fruits of my illustrious Asaatizahs’ and Mashaaikhs’ du’aas and tawajjuh, and the excessive respect and good faith from my side. I never for a moment also, trouble any Buzrug.”

9.2 Love for the Saaliheen

He had abundant love for and good faith in the *Ahlullah* from childhood. Although he was not over-enthusiastic at looking at kitaabs, however, he would study the lives of the Buzrugs with great interest. He would mostly study *Tabaqaatul Kubra* [of

Allaamah Abdul Wahhaab Sha'raani, Rahmatullahi alaih] which contains the anecdotes and statements of Buzrugs. Notwithstanding shortage of time, after Asr till just before Maghrib he would take out time to read such kitaabs whereas letters would be even difficult to make out due to the fading light. Concurrently, he would select from the kitaab stories which were subsequently published with the title *Nuzhatul Basaateen*. It contains a thousand stories of the *Ahlullah*.

9.3 Speaking About the Buzrugs

He would on many occasions passionately and fervently speak about Buzrugs in the *Majlis*. This would induce in the hearts of the listeners love for the Mashaaikh, Soofiyah, Ulama and Fuqaha. He would say:

“These illustrious personages were intoxicated with Divine-Love. Speaking about them has the same effect; a state of intoxication settles over one. The mere names of these Buzrugs revitalize the rooh [soul] and illuminate the heart. These illustrious personalities were madly in love with Allah Ta'ala. It is not possible that one reads about them and Divine-Love not settling over the heart.”

9.4 Attention Directed to Him by the Buzrugs in Absentia

The result of maintaining passionate love and faith in the *Awliya-Ullah* was that they started loving him and caring for him behind the scenes. This is supported by the following incidents:

a. Hazrat Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih), who was a great Buzrug, would say: *“I had love for Ashraf, from even before he was aware of it.”*

b. *Shaikhul Arab wal Ajam*, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhu) Muhaajir-e-Makki, who made *Hijrat* from Hindustan many years before Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's birth and settled in Makkah Mu'azzamah, called him to Makkah Mu'azzamah in his student days.

c. During that time there was a Buzrug by the name of Hazrat Khaleel Pasha who would reside in Makkah Mu'azzamah. Many Ulama who proceeded for Haj would present themselves in his service. Hazrat Moulana Thanwi, however, considered it to be unwise to visit any other Buzrug during Haj right in the presence of his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah. Hence he did not present himself in the service of Hazrat Khaleel Pasha. At night he saw in a dream someone telling him: "*Are you not going to meet Khaleel Pasha!*" In that realm of dreams he answered:

"There is no need. Its similitude is like people come for Haj. The goal is the Ka'bah Shareef to which there are many routes. Some come from the route of Bombay, some via Karachi. Similarly in this Path of Sulook the goal is Haq Ta'ala and the Shuyookh are the routes. When we have taken Haji Saheb as our Shaikh of Tareeqat then it obviates the need to go to any other Shaikh. He is sufficient for realization of the goal."

According to Hazrat Thanwi the person kept quiet at this answer. The next morning he mentioned the dream to Hazrat Haji Saheb. Hazrat Haji Saheb replied: "*Why, is there any harm? He is a saintly person. Go and meet him.*" Thus he went to meet him.

d. Not only was the *tawajjuh* of earthlings on him, in fact the *tawajjuh* of souls from the next world was also on him with the Permission of Allah. In this regard, on the occasion of his marriage when he gave his first *wa'z*, one night in a dream Hazrat Moulana Shaikh Muhammad Saheb Muhaddith-e-Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaihi) came to him and after congratulating him over his marriage he said:

“The attention I had for you in my life has remained unchanged even now.”

These realities testify to the fact that his position, work, innate prodigy and natural capacity became revealed to the Awliya-Ullah of that time by virtue of which they all were captivated by him.

9.5 Approach of Buzrugs of the Same Path

Hazrat Thanwi in his status as *mureed* of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb was tightly knitted to the principle:

یک در گیر و محکم گیر

Grab hold of one door and hold on tightly.

Nevertheless he did not regard that relation as an obstacle to associating and visiting the Buzrugs of the time. And neither did his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Saheb ever take offence at this. In consequence, he became the centre of attention of both types of Buzrugs – *ham maslak* [of the same path] and *mukhtaliful mashrab* [of different school].

Among Buzrugs of the same path and same order, previously the names of Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi, Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb Nanotwi

and Hazrat Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan Saheb Deobandi (Rahmatullahi alaihim) have been mentioned. Besides them, the illustrious personalities from whom he would derive spiritual training were:

i. Hazrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Gangohi

He was the *Grand Khaleefah* of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb Muhaajir-e-Makki (Quddisa Sirruhu). He was the *Qutbul Irshaad* of his time, a *Muhaqqiq Aalim* and perfect *Durwaish*. Already during student days Hazrat Thanwi was so much drawn by his [Hazrat Gangohi's] special *tawajjuh* that he requested Moulana for *ba'it*. But, he could see that: 'This is not my *mureed*; this will be my *peer-bhai*.' He thus turned down the request. Nevertheless he went out of his way for him. In spite of being the senior in all regards he would treat him in a way one treats one's esteemed seniors.

Early on when Hazrat Thanwi took up residence in Thanabawan he once went to meet Hazrat Moulana Gangohi. Moulana was at that moment on a *chaarpai* [traditional Indian bed with wooden framework] and the rest of the gathering were seated on the ground out of respect. Hazrat Thanwi sat with the rest of the gathering on the ground. The moment he sat on the ground Moulana too got off the *chaarpai* and sat below on the ground where others were sitting. This caused him much embarrassment and he humbly said:

"Hazrat! Now the opportunity to be present will be frequent and I will present myself in the way of a khaadim. Therefore, adopt the way as shown to a khaadim."

Moulana removed his embarrassment by saying: *"No, I was reclining for quite some time. That is why I came to sit down."*

Thereafter, whenever he came Moulana did not change his posture. However, he showed utmost honour and respect to him. A *khaadim* of Moulana thus said:

“Hazrat! He regards himself to be an inferior khaadim of Hazrat, whereas he is shown treatment given to a Peer!”

Moulana replied: *“You may be blind; I am not blind.”*

[Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaihi) alluded to spiritual blindness. Whilst Hazrat Moulana Gangohi could see with his spiritual eyes the lofty status of Hazrat Thanwi, the other *khaadim* was blind to this.]

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi furthermore had love and good faith in Hazrat Moulana Gangohi, just as he had for his Shaikh. Hence he would say:

“I never saw such an all-round practical and spiritual Buzrug. For this reason my faith in others is through reasoning whilst in Moulana self-evident. My mind refuses to think of reasons. It says that Moulana is obviously a Buzrug. There is no need to furnish reasons about it.

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The rising of the sun is proof of the sun

In fact, thinking of reasons [for his greatness and saintliness] seems to be disrespectful. I had even sought permission from Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Quddisa Sirruhu) of asking any problem I experience; academic or spiritual. However, all my life only on three or four occasions did the need arise to ask. Then, the barkat of

Moulana's answers were such that by virtue of it all problems would be solved. There was no need to question further."

ii. Hazrat Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb Saharanpuri

He was the *Grand Khaleefah* of Hazrat Moulana Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Gangohi and an exalted *Saahib-e-Irshaad Buzrug*, as mentioned previously. He had love in absentia for Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. Looking at his excessive attention for Hazrat Thanwi, some jealous ones whom Hazrat would always name: '*inaayat farmao*' [people doing me a favour], attributed some false reports to Hazrat. This was for his respect and status to fall in the eyes of Buzrugs. He immediately wrote a letter to Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb explaining the true state of affairs. Moulana replied:

"I don't know what pleasure people get in spreading false reports and hurting the hearts of the righteous. The love and relationship which this non-entity had before is Bihamdillah, intact even now.

آں نیست کہ حافظ رامہرت رود از خاطر

آں وعدہ پیشینیں تاروزِ پسین باشد

*It is not of such a nature
That it will dispel your love
From the heart of Hafiz
It will remain till tomorrow
The promise made earlier*

The love in my heart and that which I take to be my provision for the Akhirat, it will never, Insha Allahu

Ta'ala, change. The reports that have reached me are ridiculous."

Once, he was returning with Moulana on a journey from Bahawalpur. Coincidentally these two illustrious personalities were in one compartment and besides them there was no one else in that compartment. Travelling companions were seated in another compartment. It was Zuhr time and summer season. Hazrat Moulana Thanwi was perspiring profusely. Upon seeing this Moulana very informally and out of pure humility started to fan him. Hazrat Thanwi could not, however, bear this due to sheer respect. Troubled by this he at once grabbed hold of the hand fan. Moulana enquired: *"What's the harm? No one is watching. There is no third person present."*

He replied: *"The Being for Whom I respect you is watching."*

Moulana laughed.

Hazrat Thanwi published a treatise about his relationship with Hazrat Moulana entitled, *Khaan-e-Khaleel [The Meal of Khaleel]*. In it he writes:

"The strange thing is that in spite of me being smaller in all regards; in age, in stage, whilst in Ilm and Amal there is absolutely no comparison – citing a comparison of lesser and greater in this is tantamount to proclaiming Ilm and Amal – yet Moulana's treatment of equality is certain whilst sometimes he would show such treatment as juniors show to elders.

Ahqar had a difference in some matters of an ijtihaadi [based on reasoning and understanding] and zowqi

[based on personal taste and preference] nature pertaining to social life and administration. With this difference I thought that I can only possess rational confidence in Moulana, not natural attraction. But, the state of affairs was that leave alone being in his presence, mere thought [of him] realized so much attraction [to him] that I would be defeated. And perhaps by virtue of this effect whenever I make ziyaarat of him in a dream then it is in the same grand way. This is manifest proof of love. It is not only suspicion of being a lover; it is an open possibility. However, it is my weakness that I move sluggishly [in relations].”

iii. Hazrat Haji Sayyid Muhammad Aabid Saheb Deobandi

He was among the special *Mujaazeen* [authorized disciples] of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb (Quddisa Sirruhu). He was particularly renowned for his *amaliyyaat*. He even served as principle of Darul Uloom Deoband for some time.

He was so punctual in time and devotional practices that once Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb commented:

“A person who is acquainted can all the time say exactly what work Haji Sayyid Muhammad Aabid Saheb is engaged in at that precise moment of time. If someone goes and sees at that time then he will find him engaged in exactly that work. It can never be to the contrary.”

During student days Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi would mostly read his Namaaz in *Chatta Wali Masjid* where Haji Saheb would mainly reside. Due to Haji Saheb’s good faith and good thoughts he would on most occasions make him the Imaam.

Understanding the degree of special attention he showed for Hazrat Thanwi is possible simply through this episode: In Ramadhaan Shareef Haji Saheb would distribute *iftaari* to everyone. During Haji Sayyid Aabid Saheb's stay in Makkah Mu'azzamah Hazrat Moulana Thanwi also happened to be there. Whenever he would be in the Haram at the time of *iftaar* Haji Aabid Saheb would send a share for him.

Hazrat Moulana Thanwi would also show great respect to him. In this regard, during the time friction developed between Haji Aabid Saheb and the administrators of the Madrasah, coincidentally Hazrat Thanwi came there. Since he had a special relationship with the Asaatizah and the principle, all of them, their respect and regard held him back from meeting Haji Saheb, and this left him very uneasy. He mustered up the courage and spoke to Hazrat Moulana Mahmoodul Hasan Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaihi) about the effects of this friction. He said:

"If I do not go to meet him it will be totally inconsiderate and unfaithful. And if I do go, then it is possible that it is against the best interests of the Madrasah."

Moulana replied:

"No, not at all! Certainly go. It isn't against the best interests of the Madrasah. In fact, it is in the interest of the Madrasah, in that the friction will subside."

In other words Moulana praised him over his wisdom and foresightedness. In fact, he admitted to him being a real peacemaker.

iv. Hazrat Moulana Sayyid Ahmad Hasan Saheb Amrohi

He was very dear and among the dutiful students of Hazrat Moulana Qaasim Saheb Nanotwi. In the spiritual path he was the *mujaz* of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah. He is ranked among the elite Ulama of Hindustan. His eloquence and rhetoric, his speech and writings and his command in debating were widely recognized. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi accompanied him on many occasions.

Although Hazrat Thanwi was younger in age than him, Hazrat Amrohi Saheb would, however, show much consideration and respect for Hazrat. So much so that one day when Hazrat by chance stopped over by him at Amroha, he forgot to ask where the toilet is. In the latter part of the night when the need arose to relieve himself, he became extremely perturbed. Now who should he ask?

Moulana Amrohi saw through his illuminated insight that Hazrat was troubled. Immediately he came out of his home, outside and setting up *pardah* he took him to the ladies quarters [where the toilet was situated]. With his own blessed hand he placed a clay stone and jug of water in the toilet. This put Hazrat under immense strain [that Moulana was serving him]. He said: *“This clay stone is for tabarruk. Now with what should I make istinja?”* [In other words, how can I take *khidmat* from you?] Moulana very humbly said: *“What is wrong with what I have placed!”*

Narrating this incident Hazrat Thanwi once said:

“In our circles Moulana would dress in very exquisite garments which ostensibly appeared to be extravagant. And I also laboured under that notion. But after the

incident that day, I became truly convinced of Moulana's humility, informality and simplicity, and I understood that the underlying reason for Moulana's beautiful garments was his exquisite and delicate temperament; not extravagance."

v. Hazrat Moulana Ahmad Hasan Saheb Kanpuri

He was also the *Peer Bhai* of Hazrat, that is, he was among the *Khulafa-e-Mujaaz* of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Rahmatullahi alaih). He however differed in practice to Hazrat Moulana Thanwi with regard to *ijtihaadi masaail*. He was renowned in Kanpur by virtue of his knowledge and excellence, and he was looked on with great esteem. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was still of a young age then and it was the early stage of his residence [in Kanpur] when Moulana confounded people by eating the food placed in front of Hazrat as *tabarruk*, to show their special relationship and acknowledge his [Hazrat Thanwi's] degree of honour.

vi. Moulana Shah Muhammad Husain Saheb Ilahabadi

He was also the *Khaleefa-e-Mujaaz* of Hazrat Shaikhul Arab wal Ajam, Haji Imdaadullah (Rahmatullahi alaih), and a Buzrug with a strong spiritual gaze. He would show respect and regard for Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi in a special way. Although in regard to the contentious *mas'alah of samaa'* he had a different inclination to that of Hazrat, however this difference did not spoil their mutual affection and attachment.

In this regard, once a person invited Moulana for meals together with Hazrat Thanwi. It was Moulana's practice, that after meals he would arrange for a *majlis of samaa'* which he would call 'spiritual food' for his self-reformation. On account of this

Hazrat Thanwi excused himself from the *da'wat*. [It should be borne in mind that this *samaa'* was not the *fake samaa'* of *fake buzrugs* bedevilled with the accompaniment of *haraam music*. It was purely a session of singing divine love poems. But the *Muhaqqiq Soofiyah* declare this, too, as *haraam and rejected*.]

Thereafter Hazrat participated on the condition given by the inviter that in Hazrat's presence there will not be any *majlis of samaa'*. Out of consideration and respect for Moulana, Hazrat hastily prepared to leave after the meal. But Moulana Ilahabadi, too, got up. Hazrat thought that perhaps he is seeing him off. However, he also left for home together with Hazrat and, not only did he consider it inconsiderate, he took it to be disrespectful to participate in a gathering in which Hazrat had dissociated himself from. In this manner, for the sake of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi he changed his practice and deprived himself that day of his '*spiritual food*'. Besides Hazrat he never showed such regard for anyone else.

vii. Hazrat Moulana Shah Abdur Raheem Saheb Raipuri

He was among the top *Khulafa* of Hazrat Moulana Gangohi, and a *Buzrug* abounding in spiritual grace. The hue of his simplicity, piety and humility could be seen in even his *khuddaam*. In proclaiming the Haq he never showed regard for anyone. Whatever he wished to say, he would cast his gaze down and speak candidly. And for this reason Hazrat Moulana Thanwi had love for him. He would say:

"With Shah Saheb also my trust is intuitive and without the need for rational proof."

The wonderful favours, attention, honour and respect of his were of such a nature that during the period of his illness,

Hazrat came to Raipur to visit him. He had recovered but was still feeling weak and he was staying in a private quarter in the top-storey of his home. Hazrat was staying in a room in the courtyard of the garden below. Hazrat Raipuri was so much concerned of Hazrat's comfort that he would come down repeatedly and ask if there was anything required. Hazrat Thanwi states:

"He was so watchful that whenever my eyes opened during the night I would find Shah Saheb present. Almost the whole night he was engaged in this."

Hazrat Shah Saheb would attend the lectures of Hazrat Thanwi very enthusiastically and eagerly.

viii. Hazrat Haji Muhammad Anwar Saheb Deobandi

He was the *Khaleefah* of Hazrat Sayyid Muhammad Aabid Saheb Deobandi, and a great *Saheb-e-Nisbat Buzrug*. Some opined that he was greater than his Shaikh. After returning from Haj the *spiritual state of sukr* [intoxication with divine love] would remain over him. In consequence, he would give his belongings to people for free. He would arrange for food to be cooked and distributed. People would think that he was insane.

During that time Hazrat Thanwi went to Deoband. He went to meet him. Walls of stone and brick and screens of flesh and skin never were barriers for the gaze of the *Ahlullah*. Haji Muhammad Anwar Saheb at once picked up that Hazrat was also endowed with spiritual mysteries, hence he said:

"I am telling you a secret which I have not disclosed to anyone to this day. Do not reveal it to anyone in my lifetime."

Hazrat disclosed it after his demise saying:

“In the Haram Shareef I [Haji Muhammad Anwar Saheb] made ziyaarat of some illustrious Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam) in the state of being awake. This present condition of mine is the effect of the gaze of those illustrious personages.”

9.6 Favours of Buzrugs from Different Sufi Orders

Besides Buzrugs of the same path Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi never held himself back from visiting and deriving the *suhbat* of Buzrugs of different Sufi Orders.

[However, Hazrat Thanwi (Nawwarallahu Marqadahu) in later life warned against meeting all Buzrugs and sundry. *“I pass on mashwarah to my friends that this is dangerous,”* he said. Refer to *Al-Ifaazaatul Yaumiyyah*, V.6 p.238, *Idaarah Taaleefaat-e-Ashrafiyyah* print. And in his lecture, *Taqleelul Ikhtilaat Ma'al Anaam* Hazrat Thanwi thoroughly discouraged this practice. Refer to the lecture for all the details.]

Hearing of a *Saheb-e-Nazar* [Buzrug with a strong spiritual state and powerful spiritual gaze] he would be restless to come to his service to gain spiritual grace. Towards this end he withstood the austerity of *safar* as well, on many occasions. This indicates his sincerity and impartiality. Hereunder we will reproduce details of meetings with some of these Buzrugs.

i. Qutbul Aalam Hazrat Moulana Shah Fazlur Rahmaan Saheb Ganj Muradabadi

He was a Buzrug who received abundant *kashf* and he would remain completely absorbed in divine-contemplation. He was independent in disposition and free thinking. He would not keep

anything in his mind, nor would he turn to anyone. His dress, appearance and lifestyle were plain and unrestricted [to custom and trend]. Although there was no show and make-belief in his temperament at all, however his tone was somewhat harsh and stern in view of his total simplicity and instinctiveness. He was neither in the habit of giving anyone special treatment, nor would he exaggerate in praise of anyone. But the degree of respect he had was that when mentioning Buzrugs he would emotionally stand up.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was yet a youth when he graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband and came to Kanpur as *Mudarris* of *Madrasah Faiz-e-Aam*. However, after just two months when he quit employment and made preparations to return to Thanabawan, he thought of going to Ganj Muradabad for *ziyaarat* of Moulana, lest he did not receive the opportunity of coming that way again. At once he took a student and set out. Unaware of the way he wandered and drifted until he reached at such a time when Isha Namaaz was over and Moulana had returned to his quarters. He sent a message with the *khaadim*. Moulana called him inside and unexpectedly asked angrily: “*Who are you? Where have you come from?*” Respectfully and briefly he replied: “*I am a Taalib. I have come from Kanpur for ziyaarat.*”

Not knowing the reason for the delay Moulana again spoke in that harsh tone: “*Is this, time for ziyaarat! If one comes early then the host can prepare some food.*”

The embodiment of respect and culture that was Hazrat Moulana Thanwi, however, took it to be disrespectful to offer any excuse for the delay and stood as an accused. Moulana

asked: “*Do you have money with you?*” “*Yes*”, he replied. He instructed: “*Go buy something from the bazaar and eat. And leave tomorrow.*” He told the *khaadim* to put him up in a certain room.

Hazrat Thanwi interpreted this severity to be care and upbringing and he left thinking about going to the bazaar. He had just come outside when he was called back. Perhaps Moulana Ganj Muradabadi Saheb received *kashf* of Hazrat Thanwi’s status. He ordered Hazrat to sit. Instead of sitting on the bed he sat down on the straw-mat. Moulana seated him on the bed. He arranged for food to be brought from home and placed it in front. He got up himself and brought some fruit which he served. He praised his [Hazrat Thanwi’s] Ustaad, Moulana Muhammad Ya’qoob Saheb highly and engaged in conversation for quite some time. When he completed his meal then Moulana, against his usual practice, accompanied him to his resting quarter. In the morning he put Hazrat’s goods on a pony and bid him farewell.

Although Moulana’s state of *istighraaq* [absorption in divine-contemplation] was such that after meeting a person if the same person appeared before him after a short while he would never recognize that this is the same person that came just now, but remembrance of this *Taalib-e-Ilm of Thanabawan* became so embedded in his heart that he would now and again send *salaams* to him via people visiting.

Several years thereafter Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi found the opportunity to come to his service during Madrasah closure. As a gift he took along with him the beautiful, sweet tasting and fragrant *pairas* [a kind of sweetmeat] of Kanpur.

Although this was not a favourite of Moulana, but contrary to his standard practice he accepted it very happily, as Hazrat's lofty position then and in future dawned upon him. He said: *"This is something we can do with. We are going to drink its sharbit [sherbet]."*

That day Hazrat Thanwi was fasting. The same time another travelling companion of his, an elderly man, arrived. Moulana asked him: *"Are you fasting?"* He replied: *"Yes"*. Moulana became angry over this and said: *"Travelling and fasting in such intense heat! Go away right now."*

Apprehension of being rebuked gripped Hazrat Thanwi and Moulana turned to him and asked: *"Are you fasting?"* Disregarding rebuke he honestly said: *"Yes"*. Moulana became very happy and said: *"Right! Very good! You are young. Fasting is appropriate for you."*

Now he treated him with compassion and affection and he spoke very intimately. For instance, he said:

*"It's not something to say, but I will tell you. **When I go into Sajdah then it is like Allah Ta'ala is embracing me lovingly.** Bhai! The pleasure of Jannat is true. The pleasure of Hauz-e-Kauthar is true. But the pleasure that is in Namaaz is not found in anything else. Bhai! We will just read Namaaz in the qabr. We make du'aa that Allah Ta'ala gives permission, that: 'Go ahead. Just read Namaaz.'"*

When after a day or two Hazrat Thanwi sought permission to return, Moulana said: *"Why the hurry! Madrasah is still closed. Stay on longer."* As no one even received permission to stay

there, Hazrat took advantage of this concession and stayed on several days. Not only did Moulana serve him lavish meals during this time, he in fact gave him a treat of *Ilm and Ma'rifat* [knowledge and divine mysteries].

ii. Hazrat Sufi Shah Sulaimaan Saheb Lajpuri

He was a very august Buzrug. By good coincidence, one day Sufi Saheb was coming from Surat to Rander and Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was travelling from Rander to Surat. On the way they encountered each other on a bridge. Sufi Saheb immediately alighted from his transport and met Hazrat Thanwi who was in a vehicle.

This first meeting alone left such an impression on him that when he reached Rander he went to sit in the Masjid and in front of his devotees and disciples he shed tears for quite some time. Finally one of them mustered up some courage and asked: "*What happened?*" Spontaneously he replied taking the name of Hazrat Thanwi: "*I don't know what he did with his eyes to me.*"

iii. Hazrat Moulana Shah Abu Ahmad Saheb Mujaddidi Bhopali

He was a famous Buzrug of his time. During Hazrat Thanwi's journey to Bhopal Hazrat went to visit him. Coincidentally he was sleeping at the time. Therefore, Hazrat waited outside rather than disturb his sleep. After quite some time when Moulana Shah Bhopali woke up, Hazrat Thanwi sent a message of his presence through some attendants. When Moulana Bhopali learnt that Hazrat Thanwi had come and due to him sleeping he had waited, he became very angry with the

attendants for not waking him up. Hazrat spoke on their behalf saying: “*I was sitting very relaxed.*”

His anger subsided by that and for long he spoke affectionately with Hazrat.

iv. Names of Others

Hazrat Thanwi, similarly, visited and derived spiritual grace from the following illustrious personalities:

*Hazrat Shah Abdul Lateef Saheb, the *taarikud dunya* [ascetic] Buzrug of Kanpur

*Hazrat Hafiz Abdur Rahmaan Saheb – the Khaleefah of Saain Tawakkul Shah, from Muradabad

*Hazrat Bahadur Ali Shah Saheb of Deoband

*Hazrat Mullah Shihaabud Deen Saheb Wilaayati

*Hazrat Gheesan Shah Saheb

*Hazrat Peer Ahmad Saheb, the *Saheb-e-Kashf* [receiver of inspirations] and *Saheb-e-Haal wa Qaal* [emotional and outspoken] Buzrug of Panipat

*Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ali Khaleefah Saheb of Moongeer

*Moulana Shah Fazlur Rahman Saheb

*Hazrat Hafiz Tafazzul Husain Saheb of Baghra, in the district of Muzaffar Nagar

*Hazrat Shah Ihsaanul Haq Saheb, the renowned Buzrug of Kanpur

*Shaikh Abdul Wahhaab Saheb, the *Saheb-e-Kashf* of Baghdad

*Hazrat Shah Abdul Hasan Saheb, the recluse Buzrug of Saharanpur

*Saain Tawakkul Shah Saheb, the reputed Buzrug of Ambalah

*Hazrat Moulana Khaleefah Ghulaam Muhammad Saheb, the famous Shaikh of Deenpur

*Moulana Muhammad Aadil Saheb of Kanpur

*Moulana Abdul Hay Saheb Farangi Mahalli of Lucknow

*Moulana Muhammad Na'eem Saheb Farangi Mahalli

*Moulana Ainul Quzaat Saheb

Ghafara Lahumullahu Ta'ala!

9.7 Reason for the Recognition

The extraordinary respect and honour shown to him by *Buzrugaaan-e-Kiraam* and *Awliya-e-Izaam* of every spiritual order in spite of his young age; by them approaching him as with a Buzrug, without formal introduction to him; the outmost consideration accorded to him and without prior meeting reposing total confidence in him are ostensible proofs of him being respected, honoured, loved and accepted. But, in reality its nature was something else, from which the veil was removed by Hazrat Moulana Gangohi's (Rahmatullahi alaihi) *Khaleefa-e-Mujaaz*, the emotional and ecstatic Buzrug Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Roshan Khan Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaihi).

This was when Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi went to visit the said Buzrug at a time when he was preparing for his journey to the Aakhirat. After explaining his illness, unexpectedly he requested *du'aa* from Hazrat Thanwi emotionally and with tears in his eyes. He said:

“Well! This is the state of my illness. Now you make du'aa for me that Allah Ta'ala makes my ending with Imaan. Allah Ta'ala has made you the Mujaddid of this century. May Allah Ta'ala cast light to this world through your faiz and barakaat and at your hands may He uproot customs and bid'aat.”

10. The Du'aa of Buzrugs

10.1 The Importance of Du'aa

In a statement of Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), he says:

“Should I tell you of that act which will make you victorious over your enemies and increase your livelihood? During the day or night, when you have the opportunity, make *du'aa* [supplicate] unto Allah Ta'ala for your need.”

Du'aa is the weapon of Muslims. For this reason the sinless body of Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam) would frequently and commonly engage in *du'aa*. Among the causes of the calamities and destruction which have hit Muslims this day and age is that they do not resort to *du'aa* in their affairs.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi was yet in the world of the souls [Aalam-e-Arwaah] when the *Ahlullah* became engaged in *du'aa* for him. When he came to this world then not only did the *du'aa* in absentia of the Buzrugs of that time remain with him, the occupants of the world of *barzakh* [life in the grave] maintained their focus of attention to him.

Similarly, when he would go to any Buzrug he would request *du'aa*.

What sort of *du'aa* would the Buzrugs make for him and what effects did it yield? A brief account is presented here.

10.2 Divine Love

Hazrat Shah Sher Muhammad Khan was the renowned Buzrug of Peeli Bheet. Hazrat Thanwi went there for a wedding and thus went to visit him as well. He [Hazrat Thanwi] requested him to make *du'aa*, that *“Love of Allah Ta'ala is created in my heart.”*

Shah Sher Muhammad Khan Saheb replied: *“Rub both your hands.”* Without hesitation, in compliance with the instruction and with total confidence he rubbed his hands. When he had rubbed then Shah Saheb asked: *“Has it become a little hot?”* He replied: *“Jee Haa [Yes].”* Upon this Shah Saheb said:

“In the same way, rub your heart [with the Zikr of Allah Ta'ala]. Insha Allah, love of Allah Ta'ala will be produced in your heart.”

During his student days he read in a kitaab that a *peer* asked his *mureed*. *“Do you know Allah Ta'ala?”* The *mureed* replied: *“Where do I know Allah Ta'ala! I know you.”*

Hazrat Thanwi's face turned red in anger over this statement and he went to Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Saheb to narrate it. He said:

“See Hazrat! Foolish Soofis worshipping their peers to such a degree that having a peer they, Na'oothu-billah, consider themselves independent of Allah Ta'ala.”

Moulana alluded to its interpretation very exquisitely by posing the question: *“Do you know Allah Ta'ala?”*

Immediately Hazrat's mind went to the fact that no one has knowledge of the essence of Allah Jalla Shaanuhu. This he put forward in answer. Moulana then said:

*"Then why is his statement not interpreted in this light?
Why is a fatwa of kufr passed?"*

It can be gauged from the above episode that although Divine Love was present in his heart from childhood, however, the *du'aa* of that Buzrug [Hazrat Shah Sher Muhammad Khan Saheb] added glitter to it. Accordingly, when he went to Makkah Mukarramah he wrote a treatise during his stay there entitled *Anwaarul Wujood fee Atwaarish Shuhood* dealing with the six stages of Haq Ta'ala's manifestation – *Tanazzulaat-e-Sittah* – which have a distinct relationship with the real existence of Unity.

[For the benefit of the average reader a readily understood explanation of the concept of *Tanazzulaat-e-Sittah* follows:

Tanazzulaat-e-Sittah

This is a technical term in *Tasawwuf*. Literally it means the six stages of descent. It denotes the six stages of the manifestation of Allah Ta'ala.

As everything is recognized and understood by its attributes and actions, similarly, Allah Ta'ala is recognized and understood through His attributes and actions. And, His actions and attributes manifest themselves either:

- (i) concisely (in brief)
- (ii) elaborately (in detail)
- (iii) in the world of souls

- (iv) in the intermediary world between the world of souls and bodies
- (v) in the corporeal world
- (vi) in Insaan [man]

The Divine Manifestation, i.e. Allah Ta'ala's appearance in these six spheres is thus known as *Tanazzulaat-e-Sittah*.]

Tauheed and Wahdatul Wujood

One part of the treatise is *At-Tajallilil Atheem fee Ahsani Taqweem* in which the comprehensiveness of man is researched. When he read the contents of this treatise to his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Saheb (Quddisa Sirruhul Azeez), he [Hazrat Haji Saheb] exuberantly and ecstatically exclaimed:

“You have given an absolute exposition of what is in my heart.”

That was a fact, for the concept which Hazrat Haji Saheb cast into the blessed heart of Hazrat Thanwi was *Tauheed* and the contents were written during a period of overwhelming *Tauheed*.

In the treatise *Tambeehaat-e-Wasiyyat*, in the appendage named *Thaaniyatut Taabi'ah* – Part 10, Number 1 – published in *An-Noor* of the month, *Shawwaal Al-Mukarram* – Page 20 – Hazrat therefore prohibited laymen from studying it. [Its contents were beyond their comprehension.] He cautioned the Ulama too; not to transcend it further than intuitive experience.

In Makkah Mukarramah there was one scholar, Molvi Muhammad Hasan, a Tawaaf guide. He cast scepticism over the issue of *Wahdatul Wujood* by saying that it was absolutely

contrary to Imaan [Islamic Faith]. Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi became emotional and he spoke non-stop for two hours on the *mas-alah*, whereupon Molvi Muhammad Hasan Saheb proclaimed:

“Truly, this mas-alah has been substantiated in such a way that leaves no doubt that without it [the belief of Wahdatul Wujood] Imaan can never be confirmed.”

Some illustrious Ulama have confined perfection of Imaan to it and Molvi Muhammad Hasan Saheb went further to declare Imaan dependent on it. From this it is clear what amazing Divine Love was embedded in Hazrat’s heart.

[Since ignorant non-entities and unqualified orientalists have proffered weird interpretations of the concept of *Wahdatul Wujood*, we present herewith a concise explanation of the term:

Literally it means ‘one existence’. In the field of *Tasawwuf and Sulook* it means: **the near non-existence of everything besides Allah Ta'ala, the One and only Incumbent Being.**

Every created object depends on Allah Ta'ala for its existence. Its existence is furthermore highly insignificant in comparison to the Supreme Being’s existence. All creation, therefore, are comparable to being non-existing. They merely represent the existence of the True Being. This concept is known as *Wahdatul Wujood*. A detailed explanation can be found in *Shariat and Tasawwuf, Part Two*, by Hazrat Moulana Maseehullah Khan Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih).]

10.3 Word and Mood

Hazrat Muhammadi Shah Wilaayati was a Buzrug of Ilahabad with a dervish-like nature. Once, Hazrat's father fell ill and he thus sent for him. Upon regaining his health he took Hazrat to Shah Saheb. Introducing his son he said: *"This is my son. He is a graduate from Deoband. He has written a poetical duet in Farsi."* After listening to some of the rhyming couplets he made *du'aa*:

"May Allah Ta'ala convert the words into feelings."

His feelings were apparent from childhood though, in that he would read Tahajjud regularly and he remained under the spiritual gaze of Hazrat Moulana Shah Rafee'ud Deen Saheb (Rahmatullahi alaih), the result of which Hazrat states himself in these words:

"During that time I felt like I had absolutely no personal feelings and as if I was a total Farishta. Thereafter, however, I became highly emotional."

In other words, he became so lost in emotional spiritual states that he adopted a *nom de plume* and started to compose poems.

During his stay in Makkah Mu'azzamah, under that spiritual state he said a highly arousing poem of love, the content matter of which was replete with *Tauheed-e-Wujoody* [the existence of the Oneness of Allah Ta'ala]. However, he understood it to be detrimental to the general public and, therefore, did not consent to it being published. Upon the exclusive request of the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*, however, permission was granted to reproduce just two couplets, which are:

خودی جب تک رہی اسکو نہ پایا

As long as the ego remained I never found it

جب اسکو ڈھونڈ پایا خود عدم تھے

When I searched for it, non-existent I found it

حقیقت کیا تمہاری تھی میاں آہ

Aah! Mister, what were you really?

یہ سب امداد کے لطف و کرم تھے

This was all through Imdaad's grace and beauty

During that time at the gathering of Qaari Abdul Haq Saheb, Hazrat was requested to give a *wa'z*. Due to being overwhelmed by his spiritual condition he regarded it to be impertinent to give *wa'z* in the land of emotion, that is Makkah Mu'azzamah, and he refused. However, through the mediation of Hazrat Haji Saheb he was compelled and he took his seat. Preceding his talk a Turk with a melodious voice commenced *Tilaawat* to begin the programme. Upon the Turkish Qaari commencing his recital Hazrat became totally overwhelmed by an emotional state that words disappeared. He would say:

"In my entire life I never heard such a passionate and provocative tune. The whole gathering fell into a sort of trance, and I was breathless.

Then, upon being requested to deliver the lecture I replied: 'If you wanted me to deliver a lecture then he should not have been told to recite. Now I am unable to give a bayaan.' And truly his qiraat had such a heavy impact on me that I didn't have the strength to say a wa'z at all. I lost control of my limbs, my heart and my tongue. They also discerned that truly I was excused."

In this way Haq Ta'ala created the means through the unseen of a rational and an acceptable excuse for him not giving a *wa'z*; true to the saying:

میدہدیزدال مراد متقیں

The Creator of good and virtue grants the Muttaqeen their desire.

Thus, respect for him was preserved, and in general, for each word of his a corresponding emotional state was apparent.

10.4 Comfortable and Ascetic

The former Peer of Hazrat Moulana Shah Abdur Raheem Saheb Raipuri, who was the Khaleefah of Aakhun Saheb Wilaayati and the namesake of Hazrat Shah Saheb, would show great affection for Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. When Hazrat went to meet him in Saharanpur then upon Hazrat's request for *du'aa* he said:

"May Allah Ta'ala keep your body comfortable and heart ascetic."

Through the grace of Allah Ta'ala his entire life passed like that. What favour did Haq Ta'ala not bestow him with! Among the favours, one was that physical ailments bestowed to him would not hamper his work in any way. [Physical sickness is also a bounty or blessing in disguise from Allah Ta'ala. The Hadeeth mentions great *thawaab* in the Aakhirat for one who undergoes physical hardships in this world. Sickness being a bounty can readily be understood in the light thereof. This, off course, is conditional to a person not bringing sickness and disease upon

himself by indulging in *haraam* and *mushtabah*, and in over-indulging in *halaal*.]

In spite of hernia, for thirty consecutive years he travelled for *wa'z* and *tableegh*. Deterioration in the sickness was simply for this reason that the Divine Will was for him to take the seat of *Qutbul Irshaad* [the principle position of Deeni guidance, by being stationed in a particular place].

Another ailment was head fever due to which his sleep would mainly be disturbed and nights upon nights would pass in that state. But then he would find so much sleep that all the pain would go away.

According to Hazrat, in the case of sleeplessness his head temperature would become more intense with the result that he would work more vigorously. This was the product of the body being wealthy; that in spite of his physical ailment he was not harmed and the reward ever increased.

Like that through the *Fadhl* of Allah Ta'ala his health was remarkably good. Through the *barkat* of this, Hazrat accomplished centuries of work in a matter of years. The mind is astounded! Was this the work of just one working man! Such an example can rarely be found. And the beauty is that he would carry out many tasks at once. For instance, his recitation by heart [of the Qur'aan-e-Kareem] would continue, he would attend to correspondence, sometimes daily and sometimes on alternate days, he would reflect over intricate *masaail* and he would solve the problems of the seekers of spiritual purification.

Furthermore, the state of his body being wealthy is clear from this as well, that those sicknesses from which others would take months to recover he would recover from such sicknesses in a few days. His wonderful health was so talked about that one Moulana said to the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*:

“Moulana [Thanwi] is aware of some magic potion which he uses and his health, Masha Allah, remains excellent. You should find out the magic potion.”

He [the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*, Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob] thus brought this question before Hazrat. Hazrat laughed and said:

“It is actually utter devotion. Come I tell you of that magic potion. That magic potion is Ta'alluq Ma'Allah [a bond with Allah Ta'ala] whereby all the time the heart finds strength and serenity and one feels happy and joyous, and this is the secret to good health.”

It was the effect of this *Ta'alluq Ma'Allah* that even in sickness there was no change in his daily practices. In this regard, one day – the 11th of Jumaadath Thaani 1353 AH [at the age of 73] – Hazrat was afflicted by severe intestinal pains which had reached his kidneys. With complete restraint, however, he performed Fajr Salaat, notwithstanding the pain, in such a way that no one became aware of his difficulty. He did reduce the length of the *Qiraat* though. After fulfilling the Namaaz he carried out his other work and he presented himself for the morning *Majlis* and imparted spiritual advice to the *Taalibeen*. Close to eight o' clock the *Khuddaam* became aware of his pain. They brought some medicine and through it, *Bifadhlihi Ta'ala*, after an hour the pain went away. For an average person so much work would not have been carried out as usual.

The ascetic state of his heart was such that he would say:

“The mere thought of me having anything unnecessary in my possession makes me shudder. Even if I don’t see those things again the thought occurs that why are such surplus things in my possession? What are they for after all? I am greatly perturbed at having something in my home which is not used. Guarding something without return! Being a porter! Becoming a labourer! Needless headaches! Saaib [a poet] said it very well, that:

حرص قانع نیست صائب ورنه اسباب معاش

آنچه مادر کارداریم اکثرے در کار نیست

Greed will not give Saaib contentment

Worldly possessions we have more than requirement

If something comes to me as a gift then upon receiving it the worry overcomes me that, what must I do with it. Until I do not find a need for it I keep on thinking about it. What must I use it for? I fear also, lest it be ungratefulness for the bounty of Haq Ta’ala: ‘Useless! We give you and you become agitated!’

Some things, well, are useful upon receiving. However other things that come are such that one has to think of what to do with them. Either I give it to someone, or if niggardliness overtakes me then I think: ‘Oh, why must I give it to anyone for free. Let me sell it. Then I sell it and utilize the money in necessary avenues. That’s the end of it. It is a burden to have it with me.’ ” (*Raahatul Quloob*, p.25)

10.5 Blessings in Time

During his stay in Makkah Mu'azzamah Hazrat translated *Tanweer* with the title, *Ikseer fee Ithbaatit Taqdeer*. He wrote this, following the request of Hazrat Haji Saheb. Daily he would recite to Haji Saheb the amount he had translated. Haji Saheb would be delighted at what he would hear, and commenting on the volume of work he would say: “*Allah Ta'ala has granted barkat in your time.*”

Truly, this comment of Hazrat Haji Saheb revealed an accepted fact. The *barakaat* in Hazrat Thanwi's time would be observed on a daily basis. Up to this day the hundreds of his writings and compilations are fair witnesses to this fact.

Daily he would receive forty to fifty letters requiring a reply. They would be very lengthy and related to *Fiqh*, *Sulook*, *Kalaam*, etc. Merely going through the letters required so much time and added to that the time required to reply!

One day, close to fifty letters came in the post. After perusing them, when he sat to answer the letters, less than two minutes were calculated as the average time he spent with each letter.

Similarly, when he would occupy himself in some Deeni work then through the *Fadhl* of Allah Ta'ala nothing would interfere with his work. For instance, the day more post came then less people came for *ta'weez*, and so forth.

In regard to the time he was compiling *Tafseer Bayaanul Qur'aan* Hazrat explains:

“*Bifadhlihi Ta'ala, in the lengthy period of two and a half years I did not have the slightest of physical complaints*

and not a day did I miss out. I did not even have a common cold to bother me, whereas during that time right in Thanabawan there was a severe outbreak of pestilence which lasted for some time. It did cause some problems but not such a problem which could not be compensated thereafter. During that time I used to make du'aa that I should not die before the completion of the Tafseer."

Then *barkat* in time was also realized in this way that when he would sit down to write something the content matter would spontaneously appear. He would answer very difficult letters easily and with an adequate and satisfying answer. He would not discard any necessary and hidden aspect of the letter. In his compilations he would write on very intricate academic topics with so much comprehensiveness.

On many occasions the *barkat* in his time occurred in this way that the material he wished to search for in a kitaab, its location came to him immediately, or simply by turning some pages it appeared before him.

Many times whilst walking or reading Namaaz, speaking, sitting, etc. important *Masaail* automatically came to his mind. And above all he saved on time through strict regulation of his time and beautiful management.

When he used to commence any work then until he was not complete with it he would not rest. So much so that nearing the completion of some compilations he would sit the whole night and write. Not for a minute would he rest. Together with that he would remain in thought of Allah Ta'ala. He would say:

“Even though I may not get the taufeeq of Zikr but on my part I continuously strive to keep my heart free so that, if I do get the taufeeq at any time then I can turn my heart to Haq Ta’ala. Then there won’t be any impediment to Tawajjuh Ilallah. This is the reason why I become frustrated and angry over complicated matters. I want to finish a matter quickly to gain peace of mind and my tabi’at is not tied down, whereas people complicate matters and needlessly keep me tied down and confused.”

10.6 Du’aa-e-Imdaadiyah

When Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi commenced his spiritual relation with Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhul Azeez) then Hazrat Haji Saheb remained at all times with his hands in *du’aa* for him. No letter of his would come without *du’aa* being conferred upon Hazrat Thanwi. This is clear from the *du’aas* reproduced hereunder. They have been taken from various writings of Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhul Azeez).

1. May Allah Ta'ala promote your external and spiritual life.
2. May He grant *barkat* in your life and wealth.
3. May He grant you a good ending.
4. May Allah Ta'ala make you among His protected servants.
5. May Allah Ta'ala turn you away from everything besides Him.
6. May **Khudawand-e-Ta’ala** keep you in His pleasure and protection and grant prosperity to you in both worlds.

7. May Allah Ta'ala give you to drink from the *Cup of Ishq* [Divine Passionate Love] and keep you thoroughly quenched.
8. May Allah Ta'ala perpetually keep you satiated and intoxicated in His remembrance with enthusiasm, eagerness and ecstasy.
9. May Allah Ta'ala make you a diver of His Ocean of Love and may He fulfil your aim.
10. May Haq Subhaanahu confer His grace to creation through you.
11. May He grant you prosperity through the blessings of the *Buzrugaa*n and through your aim.
12. May **Khudawand-e-Ta'ala** through the medium of His beloved, Ahmad Mujtaba Muhammad Mustafa (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), fulfil all your desires and fill the lap of your wishes with the gems of your objectives.
13. I make *du'aa* of success in your steadfastness and trust in Allah.
14. May Allah Ta'ala daily increase your practical and spiritual grace.
15. May Allah Ta'ala grant you more knowledge and grace through which the creation of Allah Ta'ala derives complete benefit, and your writings are beneficial and accepted.
16. I always think of you. May lofty stages be conferred to you.
17. May your spiritual effulgence remain for always.

When Haji Saheb, who remembered him all the time in his *du'aas*, commenced his departure from this world, he turned to the *Portals of Ashraf* with *du'aa* and wrote to him:

“In the service of the Exalted Grace, the Wonderful Saalik, the Selected Waasil, Hazrat, Aalim, Hafiz, Haaj, Qaari, Shah Muhammad Ashraf Ali Thanwi

May Allah Ta'ala perpetuate your Divine-Recognition and Love

Assalaamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuh

Your letter has been received. I experienced immense joy and exuberance at heart. May Allah Ta'ala grant your honourable self, elevation in the external and the spiritual, and may He grant benefit to khalqullah [the creation of Allah Ta'ala] through your outward and inward powers, Aameen. Insha Allah, I make du'aa all the time. Multitudes of people will benefit from you, and the Silsilah [the Chain of Tasawwuf] will continue.

This is my last. I seek du'aa of a noble ending.”

(Extracted from Maktoob 38)

Aah! How severe the final moment is! He [i.e. Hazrat Haji Saheb] who was a constant source of abundant spiritual effulgence for the world, moving from the transitory world to the eternal world, finds himself in need of du'aa.

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's entire life itself is fair testimony to the acceptance of the *du'aas* and wishes of the

Buzrugs. Which *du'aa* and what wish did Allah Paak not fulfil through His special grace!

11. Preaching and Propagating

11.1 The Incumbent Duty of Propagation

This is such an important task that Allah Ta'ala sent the Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam) for this purpose. After the termination of their arrivals this duty was handed over to the Ulama-e-Kiraam who are the *Heirs of the Ambiya*. It is the timeless way of Allah Ta'ala that whoever He sends on an assignment He creates the natural qualities in the person whereby the person commissioned can easily and readily carry out the assignment.

11.2 Practice of Preaching

Since Haq Ta'ala wished to place Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi on this grand pedestal [of preaching and propagating] thus eagerness for *Wa'z and Tableegh* was embedded in his heart in childhood. When he used to see a Masjid empty he would climb onto the *Mimbar* and commence reciting something or the other.

During student days he formed a small and nameless association of his co-students for this purpose. Every Thursday night they would gather and each member would take turns on the *Mimbar* to impart words of advice. In this manner, together with acquisition of *Ilm* he gained perfection in speaking and propagating.

[The guidelines which Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaihi) set for such associations should however be implemented. These

were mentioned in Section 7.9 of this book. Furthermore, a detailed explanation of the running of such speech classes can be found in Hazrat Thanwi's discourse titled *Ta'leem-e-Bayaan* or *Teaching the Art of Speaking*.]

11.3 First Wa'z

He was still engaged in pursuit of *Ilm* and in the 18th year of his life when arrangements were made for his marriage. For this he had to go to Thanabawan. It was the *Day of Jum'ah*, and his honourable father said to his maternal uncle, Munshi Waajid Ali Saheb:

"I am quite busy; therefore I am going to read my Namaaz in Hauz Wali Masjid. You go with Ashraf to the Jaami Masjid and after Namaaz introduce his wa'z."

When his uncle informed him about this then out of shyness he refused to speak before a crowd. But, immediately after Namaaz his uncle announced his lecture. Now it was a matter of:

نہ جائے ماندن نہ پائے رفتن

No place to stay, no feet to go.

Finally, in obedience he was constrained to speak. However, he would say:

"I was so shy that I did not even sit on the Mimbar. Rather, I sat down and kept my gaze down. I spoke on the opening verses of Surah Baqarah."

Thus the auspicious function of *Nikaah* turned out to be the medium for his connection with the general public.

11.4 Format of Lectures

Hazrat Thanwi would always commence a *wa'z* by reciting the *Khutba-e-Maathoorah* [the Sunnat Khutbah] and then an Aayat or Hadeeth. Thereafter he would mention related and important issues which were studded with articulate, impressive, essential and sophisticated words. In conclusion he would repeat the translation of the Aayat or Hadeeth and express a *du'aa*. [This *du'aa* was not the customary lengthy, loud, ostentatious, hand-risen 'du'aa' in vogue nowadays. It would be a short supplication related to the topic and in the language of the address.]

Every lecture was a collection of facts pertaining to realities and divine perception, and bore the hue of *Tasawwuf*. Although he would not think of a topic or prepare beforehand, rather he would commence the *wa'z* informally with whatever that came into his heart, it would not be haphazard, however. In fact he would speak with such sequence and fluency as though he was reading from a book.

Neither would he delve into unnecessary topics and poems, nor flowery speech to kill time for the sake of the listeners. In fact, time would run out with the contents yet incomplete. In this regard, Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb who would record Hazrat's lectures, said:

"Ahqar heard a Hadeeth being spoken about on fifty occasions at least. Yet the content matter was not at all repeated."

In the course of the lecture he would also, as encouragement or warning, mention anecdotes and parables in the pattern of Hazrat Jalaalud Deen Roomi (Rahmatullahi alaihi). Even from

common jokes and folk tales he would, in a cultured and sophisticated way, deduce such conclusions and lessons that would at times reduce the audience to tears and at times bring it to laughter. Adorning Hazrat's lectures in Fiqhi-order, Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb has published the stories separately in two volumes with the title *Amthaal-e-Ibrat* [Parables of Admonition]. It contains over five hundred stories.

Similarly, in the course of his talk he would recite such opportune Arabic, Persian and Urdu poems that added life to the contents. The listeners would be moved. They would become ecstatic and emotional. They would say: "*When Hazrat recites poems he captivates the heart.*"

It would appear then as if the poem was said for that occasion. However, he did not adopt musical tones in his poems. If he recalled a poem on an appropriate occasion he would recite it naturally in his own distinct way. Although Hazrat never made it a point to memorize poems, then too, Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb counted close to one thousand three hundred poems from Hazrat's lectures. They have been published with the name *Abyaat-e-Hikmat* [Odes of Wisdom].

11.5 Effect and Impression

Every *wa'z* of his was a display of:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ط

"Call to the path of your Rabb with wisdom and beautiful admonition, and argue with them in a beautiful way."

(Surah An-Nahl, 125)

In his *wa'z* there would be wonderful contents discussed with extreme sagacity in the light of strong proofs and convincing self-evident facts. For the above mentioned reasons, laymen and Ulama would become ecstatic and, in consequence, the *wa'z* would be at times adjourned.

At times Hazrat would continue lecturing for up to six and seven hours whilst high society, affluent and influential people would remain sitting, or standing. Even though the sun may be beating down upon them, but they would not be bothered. The audience would be so much absorbed that:

كَانَ عَلَى رُؤُوسِهِمُ الطَّيْرُ

“As if birds were perched on their heads,”

– said in regard to the Sahaaba-e-Kiraam (Radhiyallahu anhu) in the Majlis of Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) – would be recalled.

Top philosophers would see their ‘philosophy’ fade away, and in contrast to the Divine Mysteries elucidated by Hazrat their academic knowledge would appear trivial to them. Stony-hearts would crack open, dead hearts would come to life, the despondent would cherish new hope, sombre and dejected faces would become cheerful and smiling, people of divergent ‘sufi-paths’ would consider him to be their own and opponents would instead of fighting, be constrained to reconcile.

If an idiot had to be antagonistic then not long thereafter he would grab hold of Hazrat’s feet in apology. For this reason, Hazrat’s rivals would stop people from attending his lectures, saying:

“Don’t go there. He casts a spell over the audience.”

In Kanpur, Hazrat spoke for two months uninterruptedly in each neighbourhood on Namaaz. As a result there would be no place in the Masaajid in view of the crowd of *Musallis*, and eagerness for Namaaz assumed such proportions that cart drivers [who were notorious for their negligence in offering Salaat] would ask their passengers about the times of Namaaz.

11.6 A Fascinating Occurrence

Shortly after his marriage he was obliged to go to the town of Gangoh to his in-laws. During that period *urs celebration* [the *bid'ah* anniversary celebration] of Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Quddoos Gangohi was in progress. People there insisted on him giving a lecture. He thus acceded to their plea and spoke on the virtues of the *Awliya-Ullah*, considering the occasion. Simultaneously, he passionately refuted *bid'aat* in a wonderful way and he also explained the harms of the *customary sama'* [singing sessions of neo-soofis].

In this *wa'z* big *Peer Zaadahs* [hereditary gurus] were in attendance. Although much of what was said was in refutation of their practices, but they were happy at the way it was delivered. They never took offence. They listened to everything at leisure and attentively. Hazrat Thanwi performed the Maghrib Namaaz there. Many, undeterred by the difference in dogma, read behind him.

One *peerji* however did not read behind him under the pretext that Hazrat Thanwi “reviles the Buzrugs.” Everyone was astounded at the *peerji* and asked him: “*Which Buzrug does he revile? He spoke on the virtues of the Buzrugs!*” The reply from the *Peerji* was: “*The tom-tom.*” People asked: “*Is the tom-tom*

your Buzrug?" "Yes! The tom-tom is my Buzrug," the peerji said bluntly. People burst out in laughter. Wildly excited the peerji blurted out: "Even if Jibraeel (Alaihis Salaam) comes and says something else I will not accept. Thank goodness he did not take the blessed name of Huzoor (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)." Upon this the gathering rebuked the peerji and the Peer Zaadahs there who had some intelligence explained to him:

"These are the Venerable Ulama. They have the right to tell us the Laws of the Shariat. The Soofiyah have always maintained respect for the Shariat. They bowed their heads before the Ahkaam of the Shariat. Never did they stage an opposition."

When he saw that his fellow *Peer Zaadahs* were speaking for Hazrat and in his defence, he came to his senses and asked: *"Did he make ziyaarat of the Jubbah Shareef [Holy Mantle]?"* People replied happily: *"Yes! Hazrat did make ziyaarat of it."* Thereupon the *peerji* became embarrassed and he went to Thanabawan to apologize to Hazrat Thanwi.

Relating this incident afterwards Hazrat would comment:

"The Peer Zaadahs of former times were also a boon, because they were people who would engage in, 'Allah, Allah', although they were caught up in error [over their innovations and customary practices]. However, they had the barkat of taking the name of Allah Ta'ala [i.e. making zikr]. Nowadays the majority are frauds."

11.7 Style of Speaking

Whenever Hazrat would speak on contentious issues he would never at all attempt to detach the *mureeds* and associates of

other Buzrugs of different thought. In fact, he would speak the matter in such a beautiful manner that even after listening to bitter and sour things they would be under the impression that Hazrat was friendly with them.

In a certain place, Maarwaar, Hazrat was due to give a lecture. The *peer zaadah* there feared that Hazrat Thanwi will try to take the *peer zaadah's mureeds* away from him. He, therefore, discreetly took an Aalim of his kind and liking and sat for the *bayaan*.

The reason behind bringing his 'own' Aalim was to stage a protest debate at anything which Hazrat puts forward against his ideals. Hazrat was blissfully unaware of this. However, *Minjaanibillah* – with the Direction of Allah – a befitting topic came under discussion in which Hazrat very subtly drew the attention of people away from these *peer zaadahs*. He stated:

“The offspring of the Buzrugs deserve the right to be served financially. However, Deeni service should not be taken from them at all. Don't trouble them by asking masalah masaa-il. This service should be taken from the Ulama as they are learned. But don't serve the Ulama financially as they are not in need of it. All are earning a livelihood to the degree of necessity, whereas the Buzrug Zaadahs have no means of livelihood. Therefore, they should be served financially and work should be taken from the Ulama.”

Upon hearing this, the *peer zaadah* became very happy and after the *wa'z*, instead of initiating an argument, he kissed the hands of Hazrat, whereas Hazrat had in fact severed his legs. [In other words, Hazrat Thanwi had drawn the attention of people

not to follow the *peer zaadahs* in Deeni matters as they were *jaahil and bid'atis* ensnaring the ignorant masses into committing acts of *bid'ah and shir'k* at the graves of their ancestral Buzrugs.]

11.8 Proclaiming the Truth

In the words of the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*:

“On occasions of necessity Hazrat Wala engaged in momentous discussions and contentious *masaail* with such beauty that neither did he hesitate at all in proclaiming and proving the Haq (Truth), nor did he leave anything left to be desired in refuting and exposing baatil, nor did he hurt the feelings of anyone and nor did he let go of the reins of culture. He would personally say:

‘I serve karela [bitter melon], spiced up however with relishing spices, and I administer quinine pills coated in sugar. In this way, instead of distaste, it goes down enjoyably and with ease down the throat.’”

In this regard, it has been seen on many occasions that he spoke bare facts to modernists and so-called ‘enlightened thinkers’ with such attraction that, instead of them becoming unhappy, they smiled and readily accepted.

In the *Mu'tamarul Ansaar* gathering in Meerath, a virulent speaker hit out against the secular educated class. He went so far as to call them “*mal'oon*”, and they obviously took offence. The following day Hazrat Thanwi, introducing the same topic, said:

“Due to lack of time whatever Moulana said was ambiguous. As the topic is urgent, I will therefore present a detailed address of it today.”

The poor souls [the secular educated class] looked on with even greater consternation and concluded that Hazrat Thanwi was going to saw them to bits and pieces. This apprehension of theirs, however, turned out incorrect. This was because Hazrat spoke with such decorum and refinement that not a single provocative word came out of his graceful tongue, notwithstanding the fact that he detailed and elaborated on the heretic and *kufr beliefs* of the modernists, unlike the previous speaker. Thereafter, he left the conclusion to them saying:

“Keeping the Shariat-e-Muqaddasah in front of you, what do you say of a person with such beliefs and practices?”

They were forced to accept, not in a distasteful manner, rather fully satisfied and repentant: *“Truly we are of that nature.”*

Thereupon, Hazrat dealt the *final islaahi* [reformatory] blow saying:

“If you truly wish to reform yourselves then stay as guests for at least forty days at one whom you regard to be an expert [in Deen; that is by an Aalim of the Haq]. However, maintain silence and write down all your queries and hand it over to him. Then listen to the talk in the Majlis gatherings, and in privacy reflect over it. I repose my trust in Allah Ta’ala and promise, in fact I venture to claim, that in this manner, Insha Allahu Ta’ala, your doubts will be dispelled and at least your Aqaa-id [Islamic Beliefs] will be totally corrected. Once your Aqaa-id have been corrected then by virtue of that, your A’mal [Islamic Practices] will gradually be corrected.”

This had an even greater impact on them, “that he is not only making a claim, he is prepared to take them through an experience”.

This was purely the *barkat* of the beautiful art of speech; that the people’s faults and mistakes would reflect before them in a mirror, and instead of staring at Hazrat, they would see the ghastly sight of their life and become stupefied and ashamed.

11.9 Miracle Speech

Hazrat had an uncanny knack of speaking appropriate for the occasion. During his stay in Kanpur when Hazrat saw that the *Ahlus Sunnat wal Jamaat* were also attending the mourning gatherings of the Shiahs during the 10 days of Muharram, then that *Hakeemul Ummat* felt their pulse and treated them by him too commencing in his *Majlis* daily talks during the first ten days of Muharram on the demise of the Leader of Creation (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and the *Khulafa-e-Raashideen*.

Hazrat’s *Majlis* was so enthralling that people started to converge there. Not only Sunni, many Shiahs started to attend Hazrat’s *Majlis*. The gatherings of the Shiahs thus became dull.

Now, when Hazrat spoke he painted the portrait of the life of the first three *Khulafa-e-Ithaam* [Grand Khaleefahs] in such a manner that all, including the Shiah audience, wept in tears.

He depicted the martyrdom of Hazrat Husain (Radhiyallahu anhu) so beautifully that people started for the first time to perceive the greatness of Hazrat Husain (Radhiyallahu anhu). This accomplishment of Hazrat was mystifying.

Similarly, on one occasion speaking on the responsibilities and difficulties of the task of *Khilaafat*, Hazrat said to the Shiah audience:

“You people should be grateful to the first three Khulafa that they kept Hazrat Ali (Karramallahu wajhahu) in comfort for twenty four years. Otherwise, instead of six years he would have to undergo thirty years of hardships, because from the beginning of the Khilaafat for thirty years Hazrat Ali (Radhiyallahu anhu) was alive. He only served six years thereof as Khaleefah.”

This speech resulted in many of them changing their minds.

11.10 Proof of Love

The system of the Omnipotent is that every person is made to feel and observe some recompense for his actions in this world so that he pays more attention to his reformation and progress. Although every happening is the result of some action or the other, however those endowed with insight attribute it to **Musabbibul Asbaab** (Allah Ta'ala Who is the First Factor of all causes).

The blind masses, however, take it to be coincidence. Such happenings often occur to those desiring proximity to Allah Ta'ala because the more a person is loved the narrower the path he treads. To illustrate this, once, Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) inadvertently left out '*Insha Allah*' in regard to some work. As a result, *Wahi* stopped for several days.

Sensing that thousands of people were reaping the benefits of his lectures and words, one day whilst discussing, these words came from Hazrat Thanwi's tongue:

“In whichever way I can, I speak. There is no need to think beforehand or look at any kitaab [prior to the wa’z]. Whatever I speak is the inspiration at the time.”

About this instinctive inspiration the thought occurred to Hazrat:

“I may not possess the power of speech as the masters of the language; nevertheless I am able to say something.”

Merely on account of this his power of speech was snatched away. Instead of “*I am **able** to say something,*” if he had said: “*I am **enabled** to say something,*” then that Master and Creator Who made him beloved from among His creation would have been better pleased.

11.11 Admitting Weakness, Sensing Reprimand and the Wonder of Life

The result of that notion was that when he sat to give a wa’z in Garhi Khaam then those words and topics which would appear before him for selection to be recorded on pages upon pages, were nowhere in sight. Now Hazrat was sitting blank. He said:

“I thought and deliberated for long. I scratched my head but I could not give a bayaan and words could not come out. No topic at all came to mind. I read an Aayat and translated it, but then I switched off. I repeated the translation in a synonymous version in the hope of ‘switching on’ and continuing further but it proved fruitless. In desperation I thought of speaking on a former topic and theme as, after all, I gave bayaans before on many topics and even revised them. But nothing of that sort came to my mind. My mind had ceased to operate.

Then I understood that now I, in actual fact, lack the power to speak. I was forced to tell the crowd: 'Fellow Friends! Right now I cannot think of anything to speak on. Finish! Make du'aa.'

The du'aa was made and the bayaan was over before it even started. I was embarrassed that arrangements were made for the wa'z; carpet, chair, etc., everything. People also gathered eagerly to listen to the lecture but I could not speak. Everyone was amazed as it never transpired as such before. However I was not surprised. This was due to the fact that I realized that Allah Ta'ala cured my feeling of greatness in this way and He countered that thought of mine which occurred to me prior to this incident; the thought that I have the ability to speak.

Allah Ta'ala demonstrated that this was all His taufeeq. More than that, I have no ability at all. In consequence, I repented from that thought. Then, never again did such an occurrence happen. In my entire life just once such an incident took place. Allah Ta'ala taught me a lesson for my entire life and He showed me that what bayaans were given were through His taufeeq."

This is precisely the sign of great people. They do not delay in admitting their faults. Otherwise on such occasions people generally resort to interpreting their actions in good light. They put forward excuses of not feeling well, etc. and seek to conceal their faults in such fashion.

11.12 A Nonsensical Letter

There wasn't any Nabi or Wali in this world who, on account of propagating the Divine Commandments was not targeted for insult and abuse by the opposition. Hazrat Thanwi was no exception. He refuted *bid'aat* without fear of:

لُؤْمَةٌ لَّا ئِمَّ

“the criticism of any critic.”

Snakes would thus hiss in the chests of the opposition. However, due to the Allah-given awe of Hazrat no one had the courage to raise a voice during lectures.

In Kanpur, however, before a *wa'z* Hazrat received a letter by post in which it was written:

“You are a julaaha, jaahil and kaafir. Watch what you speak!”

[*Julaaha*: weaver; of low breed, *Jaahil*: ignoramus, *Kaafir*: infidel]

11.13 A Befitting Response

Before the *wa'z* Hazrat informed the gathering of the contents of the letter and thereafter said:

“I wish to consult you in the following matter. This that has been written that I am a julaaha; even if I am a julaaha then what harm is there in it? I never came here to boast of my family ties. I only came to propagate the Divine Commandments. What has this to do with family affiliation?

Secondly, this is something which is non-volitional. Allah Ta'ala created whoever He wished in whatever nation He

wished. All nations are the creation of Allah Ta'ala. All are good if their actions and character are good. This is as far as the actual mas-alah is concerned.

As far as the truth of the matter is concerned then there is absolutely no need for investigating the reality after verifying the mas-alah. Nevertheless, if you have faith in me then I disclose that I am not a julaaha. If you are eager to investigate then it could be ascertained from prominent people of my hometown. I do, however, acknowledge that I am a jaahil, in fact an ajhal [a big jaahil]. However, whatever I have heard from Buzrugs and read in the kitaabs I pass it on. If anyone suspects anything to be erroneous then let him not make amal on it.

As far as being a kaafir is concerned then there is no need to argue over this. I declare before all of you:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Regarding the threat, I humbly state that lecturing is not my profession. If you people do not wish me to speak then I will not speak. Regarding, 'Watch out what you speak,' I unequivocally state that my personal habit is not to interfere. I do not wilfully speak on something which hurts someone or causes anarchy. However, in the course of bringing the Verdicts of the Shariat is concerned; in regard to a mas-alah related to innovative customs then I do not hold back, because that will be open breach of the Trust of the Deen.

Bearing these facts in mind, now whatever you feel please do inform me. Even if an insignificant person tells me now not to give a bayaan then I will not give a bayaan. However my mashwarah is that you allow me to go ahead with the bayaan. If I start saying anything against your grain then stop me immediately. At once I will sit down. It is best that the writer of the letter stops me. If he is ashamed or lacks the courage then he should gesture to another who can stop me on his behalf.”

In consequence, even *bid’ati* hardliners present in the gathering reviled the letter writer. Hazrat, however, stopped them and cautioned them not to swear and to observe the sanctity of the Masjid.

11.14 Rejection of Bid’aat

Thereafter, Hazrat gave a passionate speech on *Rejection of Bid’aat* according to his normal cultured and logical manner without hurting the sentiments of anyone. In spite of receiving the option of stopping Hazrat, none could muster the courage to do that.

Over talk of Tasawwuf the *bid’atis* exclaimed “*Subhaanallah, Subhaanallah*”. And when it was the turn of rejecting *bid’aat* they sat with their beaks lowered, notwithstanding that among them there was one hard-core influential *bid’ati* who was a *ma’qooli* [logician], *molvi* and to top it off, a *Pathan*. His habit was to grab the hand of anyone who spoke against his liking and unceremoniously remove the speaker from the *mimbar*. Through the *Fadhl* of Allah Ta’ala, he too did not open his mouth and listened to everything quietly.

11.15 Acknowledgment of Wisdom

After the *wa'z*, however, when everyone stood up to leave then that *Pathan Molvi* said just this much: *“What was the need to speak on these masaail?”*

Another influential *Molvi Saheb* of *bid'ati leanings* came out in Hazrat's defence. Hazrat stopped him, saying: *“I am being addressed. Don't speak. Let me respond.”*

Hazrat then said to that *Ma'qooli Molvi Saheb*:

“Why did you not tell me this earlier when I sought direction? Moreover, why did you not stop me in the bayaan when I gave you the option? Now nothing can be done, other than this that the gathering is still here, therefore call out right now that there was no need for this bayaan. Although in my opinion it was necessary, nevertheless I will not belie you.”

People ridiculed that Saheb and out of fear for disgrace and having assessed Hazrat's practical wisdom he departed.

11.16 Respect and Comfort

Narrating these episodes Hazrat would say:

“Alhamdulillah! It so happened that I gave wa'z among major opposition but never did anything distasteful transpire and nor was I put to shame. That is, shame which is generally regarded to be shame. I went to different places and encountered people of divergent thoughts. Nowhere did I conceal my way and thought. In spite of that Allah Ta'ala kept me everywhere and all my life in respect and comfort. There were two occasions,

however, that I was faced with a problem which did not reach the point of distress.”

11.17 Reading the Situation

Once, Hazrat Thanwi went along with Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saharanpuri to Jodhpur at the request of a hometown friend. There, many lectures were given with satisfying results and which left an impact on the minds of even the *Ahl-e-Bid'at*.

One day, the host announced Hazrat's *wa'z* at such a place where not only were the people there anarchists and antagonists, they even harboured malice at Hazrat's host. To top it off, this announcement was made without their consent and prior consultation. They, therefore, took it to be an insult upon them that he [i.e. the host of Hazrat Thanwi] was presenting Hazrat's *wa'z*. Since they had not requested the *wa'z* they, therefore, planned to disrupt the proceedings. The host was alerted to this and he thus arranged for police protection to avoid strife.

When Hazrat Thanwi learnt of this he announced the cancellation of the lecture, as it was not his practice of delivering lectures at trouble spots. However, Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb stated: *“Even if that happens, one should not bother about such things in the propagation of the truth.”*

Upon this statement of Moulana, Hazrat agreed owing to the following reasons:

“Firstly, this view [of Hazrat Moulana Khaleel Ahmad Saheb] stems from Deeni principles, though it is a point of individual reasoning. But it is not na-jaaiz. Secondly, since Moulana was prepared to go then who am I to save my skin?”

When these illustrious personalities arrived at the Masjid everyone faced them without *salaam* and speech; with threatening looks. These illustrious personalities sat down. After Namaaz when they commenced with *Sunnats* then noise erupted from this and that side. People forgot about their *Sunnats*. The idea was to stop the *wa'z* from taking place. One person took control of the *mimbar*. With the *mimbar* occupied then on what platform will the *wa'z* be given? Some even took out daggers from their sleeves.

Moulana was at ease for he was sure that Hazrat will take control of the situation. Hazrat on the other hand was apprehensive of something bad occurring as the police protection was nowhere to be seen.

After the *Sunnats*, Hazrat read the situation and understood that this display of anger and outcry was simply to stop the *wa'z*. He, therefore, called the leader of the troublemakers to his side. In awe for Hazrat he came, but angrily said: "*Say what you want!*"

Hazrat replied:

"You are perhaps under the impression that there will be a wa'z. Listen! I am the waa'iz. My wa'z is not so cheap that I am going to sit on someone's head and speak. I deliver wa'z only after much pleading. In the present climate I can never give a wa'z. Be at ease. I will never give the wa'z, even if the entire neighbourhood request. Don't pick a fight. The announcement was made without my consultation and against my disposition."

Not only did he [the chief troublemaker] cool down, everyone fell silent. With the atmosphere calm, Hazrat together with Moulana and their associates departed from the Masjid.

On the way they met a security unit under the command of a sub-inspector. He said: *“Hazrat go. Continue your wa’z.”* Hazrat replied: *“Subhaanallah! What a time to arrive! There would have been blood spilt here. Now your arrival serves no purpose.”*

Upon this, Moulana said with a smile: *“How enjoyable is such pain in the way of the Haq!”*

Meanwhile the leader of the trouble makers was saying:

“It is not their fault. We will place their shoes over our heads. The blame for all this trouble lies squarely on the shoulders of their host. He unilaterally gave notification. We were not dissatisfied with the wa’z. What dissatisfied us was this takeover bid. If we were dutifully informed we would have presented ourselves and requested the wa’z. We would have made special arrangements for the visitors; carpet, ice, sweet beverages. We were out-rightly disgraced by that approach. That was intolerable.”

The trouble was sort of the product of the short sightedness of the host.

11.18 Attempted Murder

Similarly, he once faced a problem in Bombay [Mumbai]. He went there to receive his younger wife who was returning from Haj. There he would normally stay by Hakeem Muhammad Sa’eed Saheb. On that occasion, due to Hakeem Saheb’s

absence someone else hosted him out of affection. Hazrat read Maghrib Namaaz at the neighbourhood Masjid of the host.

Since the ship docked quite late the captain therefore did not allow anyone to disembark. Rather, in the morning. In view of this Hazrat had to stay over there for the night.

Coincidentally a debate was due to be held around that time and some debaters were expected from out of town. The people of the neighbourhood who were affiliated to troublemaking groups thought that Hazrat also came to debate. Without verifying they planned to assassinate him.

چو جت نماںد جفا جوئے را

بہ پُر خاش در ہم کشر روئے را

*When the persecutor lacks evidence
Then he finds it easier to resort to violence*

They armed themselves and after Isha they forcefully made an entry into the home where Hazrat was staying over. They broke the lantern and attacked Hazrat. An attendant of an accompanying wealthy person came to Hazrat's rescue. In the darkness Hazrat made his way to a veranda by the road. From there the owner of the house shouted for the police. The intruders hastily beat a retreat, and in this way Haq Ta'ala protected all.

In the morning Hazrat's devotees reported to the police commissioner. By then it had become evident that the attackers were under the false impression that Hazrat was to take part in

the debate. Hazrat, therefore, did not view it wise to stay on there.

He writes:

“I did not approve of this for two reasons: One, for this reason that I wished to take the Hujjaaj quickly home. Secondly, the action of those people [the attackers] was not wilful [in the Shariat]. Like an accidental homicide it was not punishable by life. Then such revenge action was contrary to the way of our Buzrugs. However I changed my location and moved on. Their mistake became evident and I returned safe and sound to my home town.

This episode was falsely reported to such an extent that reports of my death spread. Friends wrote letters for verification. After being notified of the actual happening they were put at ease.

In short, Bifadhlihi Ta’ala, in no travel did anyone express dissatisfaction or anger over any action of mine. The incidents that transpired in those two places, i.e. Bombay and Jodhpur, were as a result of the actions of others. And Allah Ta’ala’s protection prevailed even from the consequence of their actions.”

11.19 Decision to Travel to Europe

Since Hazrat Thanwi had made *Tableegh of the Deen* the object of his life, he therefore, would be prepared to go to every place for this objective. He would not entertain the thought of length of time and distance of place.

One of his native towns' people, Babu Habeeb Ahmad Saheb Thanwi, went to Europe for some work. As his awareness increased there he started to speak to people from time to time about the beauty of Islam. As a result some people converted to Islam. Some of the new Muslims were from high standing and notable classes and families. In this regard he would often correspond with Hazrat Thanwi enquiring about *Masaail* and he would seek guidance in the naming of these new Muslims.

In view of this correspondence some new Muslims developed a bond with Hazrat in absentia. Through the medium of Habeeb Ahmad Saheb they even expressed their desire to visit Hazrat.

In further correspondence Babu Habeeb Ahmad Saheb invited Hazrat to Europe for *Tableegh purposes* and he put forward his service as an interpreter. As there were aspirations of large scale benefit in propagating there, Hazrat at once decided to travel to Europe. Towards this end he arranged his own expenses and the service of a responsible and skilled translator.

Prior to departure he wrote to Babu Habeeb Ahmad Saheb:

“Before coming, it seems appropriate that you write some of their queries and send it. The response from this side should be read out to them. This is to gauge whether my response appeals to them or not. If it is beneficial then coming is worthwhile. Otherwise, there is no need to undergo such a distant journey.”

However, before this letter even reached Babu Habeeb Ahmad Saheb the latter passed away and Hazrat's journey was cancelled.

11.20 The Strife of Apostasy

In 1341 AH the *fitnah of irtidaad* or apostasy spread in the vicinity of Agra. To curb this, Hazrat Thanwi sent Moulana Abdul Kareem Saheb Gumathalwi and Moulana Abdul Majeed Saheb Bachrayooni. He emphasized to them that the *muballigh* should not impose his meals or any other burden on people. He is permitted just this much that he can give money for flour, etc. and have his food prepared. This too, on the proviso that it was not against any local practice and nor was there any Shar'i obstacle. He also granted permission that items which the *muballigh* was unable to take along, for instance a bed, etc. if anyone happily presented it to him then there was no harm in utilizing it. However, he should not ask for those things himself. Also, it was another matter if he went to someone upon being called, ate there and took some travelling expenses. This approach was to be for all, because favouring one person over another would lead to complaints from others.

Along with these guidelines Hazrat made special arrangements for the comfort of the *muballigheen*. He gave them a liberal amount in travelling expense so that they could render their task joyfully. He did not, for this reason, ask for any detailed account of the expenses as he did not keep unreliable people at all as *muballighs* and nor did he deem it necessary to ask for a detailed account from reliable people.

Apart from dispatching *muballigheen* to areas stricken with *irtidaad* he also undertook a journey in which he delivered the lecture *Al-Itmaam Fee Ni'matil Islam [The Conclusion Detailing the Bounty of Islam]* in three parts; in Riwardi, Narnol and at Ismailpur neighbouring Alor. Another journey was planned for the towns of Nooh, Firozpur, Jharka and others but

some excuse cropped up due to which the journey was cancelled.

During that period he published the treatises: *Al-Insidaad li Fitnatil Irtidaad* [Stemming the Tide of Apostasy], *Husn-e-Islam ki Ek Jhalak* [One Glimpse at the Beauty of Islam] and *Namaaz ki Aqli Dalaail* [Rational Proofs of Namaaz]. The latter two were also published in Hindi. In one treatise he substantiated the slaughtering of the cow from the Veda.

He paid so much attention to *tableegh* that when a friend of Moulana Abdul Kareem Saheb wished to take him along for Haj and Moulana Saheb was very eager to make Haj of the Baitullah and thus sought permission from Hazrat, Hazrat replied:

“The work which you are engaged in here is foremost and more virtuous than Haj.”

Very passionately he proclaimed: *“For such occasions did Hazrat Mas’ood Bak say:*

اے قوم بہ حج رفتہ کجائید کجائید

معتشوق دریں جاست بیائید بیائید

O People going for Haj!

Where are you going? Where are you going?

The Beloved is here. Come! Come!

Within the first two years of this important *tableeghi* operation *irtidaad* was curbed to a great extent. Thereafter he sent Moulana Abdul Kareem Saheb to Punjab for the movement of *Justice in Inheritance* and Moulana Abdul Majeed Saheb

fulfilled the task of *Tableegh* on behalf of the *Khaanqah* for a full twelve years. The benefits realized were tremendous.

11.21 Concern for Propagation

Hazrat consistently drew the attention of the *Madaaris-e-Islaamiyyah* [the Darul Uloom] that just like teaching, care and concern should certainly be given to propagating. This being due to the fact that the prime purpose of learning and teaching is to propagate. And this was the actual task of the Illustrious Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaatu was Salaam).

In this regard, he enacted the process of *Tableegh* from the *Khaanqah* and for this purpose *muballighs* were dutifully held. *Hayaatul Muslimeen* [The Life of Muslims] was compiled with the particular intention of *Tableegh*.

In 1350 Hijri he prescribed a distinct format for the orderly running of this programme of preaching and propagating. It proved highly beneficial and simple. With the title of *Aathaar-e-Rahmat* [The Signs of Mercy] it was printed and published.

11.22 Special Address

To summarize, the major part of Hazrat's life was devoted to *Tableegh-e-Deen* and he delivered thousands of lectures. However, during his last few years he had almost entirely stopped lecturing. If by chance he had to speak then he would take a *kitaab* in his hands and speak. He would say:

“Now, that desire is no more; the reason being that, Bifadhlihi Ta’ala, all important things have been delivered. Furthermore, due to old age weakness is another factor. I have a problem now with lengthy bayaans. I prefer now to suffice on special addresses [i.e.

to a confined gathering and specific issues]. And as a matter of fact, a special address is more beneficial as it is restricted to essential things.”

11.23 Divine Spiritual Showers

The author of *Ashraful Ma'moolaat* writes:

“What benefit this pitiable Ummat reaped through Hazrat Wala’s blessed self is not in need of commentary. Among the overall spiritual effulgence of Hazrat Wala are Hazrat’s *mawaa’iz* [lectures] which are his clear miracles. Articulating knowledge and divine realities according to the occasion is a divine spiritual shower. All the beauties that can be envisaged, outward and inward, in any work, in totality were found in Hazrat’s *mawaa’iz*.

Ulama, Tulaba and Awaam [Scholars, students and the ordinary public]; all sorts of people would participate in Hazrat’s lectures. All of them would pick fruit according to their tastes. For instance:

1. Beholding the academic points and divine realities Ulama would become ecstatic. They would be overjoyed at finding the solutions to masaa'il.
2. Disciples of Tasawwuf would convey *du'aas* from the bottom of their hearts at finding remedies for their spiritual sicknesses.
3. Laymen would derive pleasure at listening to things of benefit to them.
4. Modernists would repent over their false impressions after listening to the rebuttal of their corrupt thoughts.
5. Where there seemingly appears to be a contradiction between the Qur'aan-e-Kareem and Ahaadeeth-e-Shareefah, he would reconcile the two in the best of ways. Wonderful and amazing subtleties and points would come to the fore.

6. He would discuss academic knowledge and *Fiqhi Masaail* wonderfully.
7. He would touch on *Masaail of Tasawwuf* and the errors of ignorant Soofis so that laymen could be saved from the traps of the ignorant Soofis.
8. He would respond to the objection of the kuffaar in such a manner that there would be no scope for a second objection.

11.24 The Preference of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

As a result of these peculiar traits the ***Pride of Existence, the Leader of Creation*** (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) expressed his preference for the lectures of Hazrat Thanwi. This is evident from the dream reproduced hereunder from *Sidqur Ru'ya*. It was seen by a pious man from the town Gugaran in the ward of Kerana on Thursday night the 5th of Sha'baan 1353 Hijri. He writes:

“Huzoor Rasool-e-Maqbool (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was present. In attendance was our Hazrat [Moulana Thanwi] and other illustrious Ulama. It was a spacious house. All the Ulama requested Huzoor (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) to give a wa'z. Huzoor (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) replied: ‘There are many Ulama here to give wa'z.’ The request was repeated by the Ulama to which Huzoor (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) indicated to our Hazrat Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Saheb (Mudda thilluhul aali) saying: ‘He should deliver a lecture. He delivers good lectures.’ All the Ulama fell silent.”

From this it is apparent that the pleasure of Huzoor Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was the factor of the acceptance of his lectures.

11.25 Impressions of the Audience

All classes of people; scholars, professors, physicians, governors, poets, attorneys, etc. would attend the lectures of Hazrat Thanwi. Like-minded people being influenced is understood, even people of different persuasions would leave thoroughly impressed. Here are some comments from which the extent of their impressions can be adequately gauged:

1. One English-educated civil servant said to the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*: *“We did not think that among Molvis there are also such speakers who substantiate everything logically and rationally.”*

2. Once, Hazrat Majzoob was reading out the *wa’z*, *Raahatul Quloob* [Contentment for the Heart] to some friends whilst on a train. Some Hindus who were listening commented: *“This kitaab is surely written by a highly qualified person.”*

3. During Hazrat Majzoob’s journey to Burma the captain of the ship said upon listening to Hazrat Thanwi’s lecture, *Tareequl Qalandar* [The Way of the Soofi] being read out by Hazrat Majzoob: *“If this man learnt English he would have become a judge.”*

4. In Bhopal a foreign educated Marathi remarked after listening to Hazrat’s lecture: *“I have listened to great speakers in Hindustan and abroad. But, I did not see that which I saw today in this man’s lecture. Without preparation such a lengthy talk,*

so thoroughly backed up by proofs, systematic and furthermore so fluent! I never heard something like this before!”

5. In the self-governing state of Deg in the town of Bharatpur a secular educated Aryan officer remarked after listening to Hazrat’s lecture: *“I was astounded! The lecture was on a purely religious issue, that is Roza [Fasting], yet the contents were such that every religious affiliate could apply it to his principles.”*

6. In Kanpur an attorney commented after listening to Hazrat’s wa’z: *“How did you land up with the Molvis? If you took up Law then you would have been peerless.”*

7. One emotional intellectual portrayed Hazrat’s wa’z as follows: *“What is Hazrat’s wa’z? It is an assembly of the Mashaaikh.”*

8. One bid’ati molvi of Jodhpur, having listened to Hazrat’s wa’z said to his fellow people: *“You know that I am a moulodi and I am a qiyaami. However, in all fairness and in truth the facts which Molvi Saheb [i.e. Hazrat Thanwi] explained today are absolutely correct.”*

11.26 Printing of the Lectures

As Hazrat’s lectures were proving highly beneficial and accepted by all classes – scholars and laymen, supporters and detractors – Hazrat’s devotees thus started to direct their efforts in transcribing the lectures, without the suggestion or persuasion of Hazrat. Since Hazrat would speak fluently and fast, expounding on intricate academic points, a person was sent to

learn shorthand transcribing of the lectures. This, however, turned out unsuccessful.

Then Molvi Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb started to record Hazrat's lectures in Arabic shorthand. Thereafter he would rewrite it in Urdu and all that was recorded would be brought before Hazrat for proof reading so that errors could be corrected if there were any. After the proof reading it would be published with the title prescribed by Hazrat. Simultaneously a table would be included giving details of the following particulars of the *wa'z*:

Where:

When:

Duration:

Manner (sitting or standing):

Upon the request of:

Topic:

Title Prescribed:

More beneficial to:

Transcriber:

Number of Listeners:

Miscellaneous:

Although the urge among Hazrat's devotees to record the *mawaa'iz* developed quite sometime after the commencement of his lecturing, nevertheless 363 lectures are to be found bearing the endorsement and checking of Hazrat. These are, up to today, being published in the journal *Al-Ibqa* from *Kutub Khaanah Ashrafiyyah, Molvi Musaafir Khaanah, Bandar Road, Karachi*. They are published regularly and continuously. In this journal there is nothing other than the *wa'z* of Hazrat.

Reading these lectures, thousands of lost souls are finding the way. Each lecture leaves such an impression on the readers that their lives are transformed. For instance, after looking at the *wa'z*, *Roohul Arwaah* some dervishes who regarded **Shariat and Tareeqat** to be at odds and apart, so much so that they would not even read Namaaz, repented from their beliefs and became punctual on Namaaz.

Regarding *moulood*, the wrong notions of some fanatics were eradicated after reading the *wa'z*, *Thaljus Sudoor*. Their beliefs were corrected. In fact, they started to reform the beliefs of others too, whereas they neither visited Hazrat nor did they have contact with him.

Similarly, many people whose lives became bitter through misfortunes and calamities, by studying the *wa'z*, *Raahatul Quloob* such stressed and worried people became relaxed and devoted to Allah Ta'ala.

11. 27 Acceptance of the Lectures

It has been seen that the lectures of Hazrat published are generally read with much interest in even the gatherings of proudful people, heretics, modernist Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Shiahs and Wahhaabis.

Some 'mujtahideen' of the Shiahs would order from the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* Hazrat's published lectures and they would add life and lustre to their gatherings with its recital. Many speakers would by-heart Hazrat's lectures and lecture before people. They would receive acclaim and monetary compensation as a result. This trend has not stopped. Even from

us some venerable attorneys borrow Hazrat's lectures for perusal.

11. 28 Honour and Distinction

Only Hazrat Thanwi achieved the honour and distinction that Haq Ta'ala put in the minds of some of Hazrat's devotees the thought of recording and publishing his *mawaa'iz* for the reformation of the Ummat of Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and, as a result, today we have such a vast quantity of Hazrat's lectures of admonition, statements of wisdom and arguments of justice present and preserved. Whereas, none among the famous personalities of Islam had so many of their talks published and recognized in this way.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

*That is the grace of Allah Ta'ala.
He grants it to whomsoever He wishes.*

12. Routine for Lectures

12.1 Appearing in Simple Dress

Hazrat Thanwi was not in the habit of wearing extravagant garments for a *wa'z* as is common among speakers and orators. He would appear as he would normally dress.

In Shimlah, on the occasion of a *wa'z*, one 'enlightened' person said to the organizer of the *jalsah* upon seeing Hazrat in simple garments:

"Look at the dress of your Ulama! It is as if they have come out from the jungle."

The organizer replied:

“Instead of focussing your gaze on their dress, focus your attention on the talk.”

After the wa’z when he was asked for his comments he replied:

“It was my foolishness. I was under the impression that the lecture will be like the garments. But it turned out completely different. Subhaanallah! What a bayaan! From his dress it could never have been judged that he is such an eminent person.”

Somehow or the other this episode reached the ears of Hazrat Thanwi. In a following wa’z he responded to the objection in a beautiful manner. He said:

“It has been brought to my notice that some people do not take a liking to our dress. Well, I am not going to debate now whether good dress is necessary for giving a wa’z or not. This is up to individual preference. For their sake I accept that the waa’iz should dress well when giving a wa’z and I take the reason for this to be that by nice garments honour is received and by the honour of the speaker the speech is acclaimed. In this way its effect is enhanced. However, the question is: where are the garments going to come from? Obviously, for fine garments one requires a substantial amount and the current income of Molvis can never suffice for this.

The easy solution, therefore, is that where a wa’z is to take place the organizers there should prepare garments of their preference. When a waa’iz comes he should be dressed in those garments for the lecture. And when he departs the garments should be taken back so that it can be used for another occasion.”

12.2 Sincerity in Speech

He was an embodiment of sincerity. He would always keep in mind the benefit of others over his own. Therefore, whatever he said, he would say it with sincerity so that the listeners were duly affected and benefited, as words which emanate from the heart leave an impression.

Once he was scheduled to speak in Jodhpur. A concerned person advised him:

“Since people here call the Deobandis, ‘Wahhaabis’, therefore, speak on the virtues of Imaam Abu Haneefah (Rahmatullahi alaih) so that their misconception is cleared.”

Hazrat blankly refused, saying:

“This implies that I should speak for my own interest so that people understand me to be a Hanafi, whereas a lecture should be for the good of the listeners.”

12.3 Avoiding Specifically Requested Topics

Hazrat was not at all comfortable to speak on specifically requested topics and nor would he, in the course of his *bayaan*, intentionally speak on something requested. Rather, he would speak on whatever was inspired into his heart at the time. If, however, during the course of the *bayaan*, something pertaining to a specific request turned up he would mention it without making a play of it.

Once, a person requested: *“Hazrat! Do take the tom-tom players to task.”*

Hazrat excused himself saying:

“I do not take anyone to task. This is against my habit. What comes to my mind, I will speak.”

12.4 Not Taking Remuneration

He would not take remuneration for his lectures, so much so that he would even turn down a *hadyah* [gift] which conveyed the impression of being remuneration.

Once in Kanpur, the daughter of Nawab Siddeeq Hasan Khan Saheb, Safiyyah Begum, sent a request for a *wa'z*. After the *wa'z* she presented a huge sum, which Hazrat did not accept. She said that it is not remuneration. Hazrat replied:

“Its form is that of remuneration. Onlookers will labour under that impression. Then people will not have the courage to request wa'z without giving hadyah.”

Thereupon she said: *“Very well! Have meals then.”* Hazrat replied:

“Send it to where I am staying so that it does not give off the impression of being remuneration as I am someone else's visitor.”

Hazrat said this to please her owing to a longstanding relation. Otherwise this was not his habit as well.

12.5 Offering a Wonderful Exchange

He was so sensitive that whoever rendered some service to him, no matter how minute, he would surely deliver some form of benefit to him or the other. For this reason it became his practice to deliver *wa'z* on journeys without fail. He mentions the reason: *“Without giving a wa'z to eat food there puts me to shame.”*

12.6 Abstaining from Unnecessary Lectures

It was furthermore his practice that where another Aalim delivered an appropriate lecture then out of consideration and acknowledgement he would never lecture, as the important points were relayed. There remains then no need for formalities. Besides the *Ahl-e-Haq* no one can display this. The one who was called to give the *wa'z* is deprived of the opportunity of giving, and instead of remorse, he expresses happiness.

Once in Ilahabad, notice was given of Hazrat's *wa'z* due to which many people gathered. Prior to the *wa'z* Molvi Sulaiman Phulwardi took Hazrat's permission to say something. In a state of zeal the speech became lengthy. After he completed his *bayaan* Hazrat refused to give *wa'z* in spite of the audience persisting. Hazrat frankly stated the reason:

"Moulana spoke on all essential matters. What need is there for my bayaan? Pressing me to speak implies that I should search for something which Moulana omitted and which is better than his. This is putting up a challenge and competition. Therefore, I am not going to give a bayaan now."

12.7 Avoiding Bias

Hazrat was faced up on many occasions with lecturing at such places where groups or two Madrasahs were having some rivalry. The inviters would think that Hazrat would say something in their favour. However, Hazrat would be very cautious at such sensitive venues, and to avoid the possibility of picking sides he would not say anything on contentious issues. This is because the consequence of speaking on contentious issues is that the party on the receiving end of the talk, regard the speaker to be partisan of the rival party and bought over by

them. There is no benefit therefore in it. In this regard, Hazrat would say:

“Besides a common cause and benefit in wa’z there should be no other motive.”

12.8 Preference for Encouragement

Encouragement would always be prominent in his lectures. He would say:

“Considering the disposition of people today, experience shows that encouraging contents are more beneficial in contrast to fearsome contents. For this reason I do not speak on fearsome topics. Mostly I speak on topics of encouragement.” (Al-Baatin, p. 61)

Elsewhere, he says:

“This much I do affirm that, Bihamdillah, I have the intention at the time of bayaan: ‘O Allah! Let the bayaan be on something which is of need to these people, through which their Islaah is made.’

As He possesses knowledge of the unseen, He knows the condition of everyone. After this intention He puts into my heart the necessary and appropriate topic to speak on for that day.” (Zammun Nisyaan, p. 15)

13. Years of Travelling

13.1 Need for Travelling

Hazrat Thanwi was by nature a lover of solitude. For this reason, in his childhood he would mainly play at home with his sister, and during his student days he would remain in his room

in his free time. His nature would be averse to general association and gatherings as this disrupts devotional practices and peace of mind. Hence, he would prefer home to journey.

For the purpose of the reformation of the Ummat-e-Muhammadiyah (Alaa Saahibihis Salaatu wat Tahiyah), however, he travelled great distances as a 'Proof of Allah Ta'ala' on earth for propagating the Divine Commandments. He travelled to the furthestmost corner of Hindustan and Pakistan to refute *bid'aat and rusoomaat* [evil innovations and bad customs] in the light of the Kitaabullah and Sunnah of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). When out on one journey he would return only after months in view of the continuous requests [of his presence].

Although his travels were largely in the line of *tableegh duty*, nevertheless, several journeys were for *ziyaarat* of the *Buzrugaaan-e-Deen*, for curing and visiting the sick, and for Haj of the **Baitullah**. Without a real Shar'i or worldly necessity, or succumbing to the influence of an influential senior he never travelled.

13.2 Early Travels

After completing his academic career his first journey was to Kanpur on the 18th of Safar 1301 Hijri. He went there as a *mudarris* [teacher]. During that period he travelled to Rangoon, Calcutta. Bombay, Karachi, Gujerat, Marward, Dhaka, Hyderabad Deccan, Sindh Province, Bahawalpur, Azamgarh, Gorkhapur, Gazipur, Banaris, Shimla, Lahore and hundreds of other cities and towns where he benefited and passed on the grace of directions, statements, admonition, advice, his company and beautiful character to people.

13.3 Travel Importance

He would never, as is custom, travel unmindfully. During his journeys, not only would he rigidly impose upon himself the Laws of the *Shariat-e-Muqaddasah* and principles of beautiful social-behaviour, he would also impose it upon his travelling associates and acquaintances. By virtue of this, reflecting travelling companions would take lesson and learn the rules and etiquettes of travel. Thus, every *harkat* [action] of his was a source of *barkat* [blessing] and it would bring lost ones to the Path of Deen.

13.4 Travel Requests

Since fame of the all-pervasive spiritual grace of Hazrat Thanwi had spread far and wide, enthusiasts and seekers would send so many requests for his presence that these requests would pile up before him. The magnitude of these invitations can simply be understood from him not having the opportunity of staying for even a day in his dear hometown out of 365 days of the year had Hazrat accepted even ten percent of the invitations. This is ample proof of how he was loved and accepted. Hence, he would only accept important and special requests after much persistence and with certain conditions and restrictions.

13.5 Tumultuous Travels

The final moments of life are exceptionally precarious and testing. At that critical time Shaitaan is restless to shoot the last arrow from his quiver at even eminent *Ulama and Fuzala* [seniors]. Therefore, it would be the immense desire of certain devotees of Hazrat that at this time of journeying to the Aakhirat, they pass away in the presence of Hazrat.

When requests of journeying would come from such ailing people then Hazrat would become totally restless. Although he would generally offer acceptance to very few requests of his presence, but requests from those who were on their death beds he would never turn down unless out of sheer helplessness. He would set out on journey reciting this poem:

خستگان را چو طلب باشد و قوت نبود

گر تو بیدار کنی شرط مروت نبود

*When the injured seek help and they lack energy
Then stipulating conditions is not part of chivalry*

Many ailing people saw their wish fulfilled, of their last breath being in the presence of Hazrat. When learning of the wish of the sick for his *ziyaarat* only after them passing away, Hazrat would feel very unsettled and he would say:

“If I was notified earlier I would have certainly gone and fulfilled their wish.”

Once, an eminent and educated nobleman of Bareilli was so overcome by satanic stray thoughts on his death bed that he feared an evil ending. In consequence, Hazrat was called. Without delay he set out for Bareilli from Thanabawan. Ascertaining the nature of the stray thoughts he counselled the nobleman in such a satisfying manner that the nobleman joyfully departed from this world in Hazrat’s presence.

13.6 Travels to State Governors

In view of Haq Ta’ala bestowing Hazrat with widespread acceptance, therefore, on occasions state governors would eagerly and adamantly request Hazrat to bear the difficulties of

travel and honour them with his presence. Merely due to their pressure and power he would never accept their requests. Rather, engendering in them a sense of importance of the Ahkaam of the Shariah he would convey acceptance to their requests laying down particular conditions.

13.7 Conditions of Acceptance

Once the renowned and reputed Nawab of Dhaka, Saleemullah Khan whose invitations were eagerly awaited by even the Viceroy and governors, and unconditionally, invited Hazrat Thanwi with great expectation. Bearing in mind his authority and influence Hazrat listed the following conditions of acceptance:

1. No sort of *hadyah*, cash or kind, will be given.
2. Request is not to be made for *wa'z* on any particular topic.
3. Arrangements for accommodation will be made apart from the royal palace, at such a place where the general public can come unhindered.
4. A time should be allocated for your meeting in which no one else is present. This is so that both of us can easily, without any formalities benefit from each other.

The Nawab Saheb was also a very intelligent, sound-natured and a model of his own name.¹³ Having read the conditions and exclaiming “Wonderful, Wonderful” at Hazrat’s wisdom, uniqueness, correctness and reasoning he accepted out of excessive eagerness the conditions without any question.

¹³ Saleem means: sound and safe.

13.8 Royal Welcome

Hazrat Thanwi was not at all in favour of grand welcomes, processions and chants of “*Zindabad, Zindabad*’ as with political leaders and religious figures. If someone out of affection had to arrange such a welcome then Hazrat would disallow it.

The Nawab of Dhaka also wished to welcome Hazrat with such pomp and glamour as he would welcome the Viceroy. That is, a welcome with soft velvet carpet on the platform, colourful flags on all roads, doors decorated and a royal entourage escorting Hazrat to the palace. Truly Hazrat was deserving of such a welcome. In fact, even more that that because he was the Mujaddid of his time. However, since this was all against the Shariat, Hazrat did not, therefore, permit the Nawab Saheb to do it.

Now he sent another request which was: “*Grant us permission to welcome you with a large party comprising of officials of the state and leading figures of the city.*” Hazrat wrote back: “*This too is against my nature.*”

Thus all their expectations evaporated. However, with each step the sagacious and lesson-giving directives of Hazrat intensified the Nawab Saheb’s adoration. Not only that, Hazrat’s reverence was enhanced in his heart.

So the Nawab Saheb personally, without elaborate preparations, received Hazrat at the station. He seated Hazrat in his special car. In spite of Hazrat’s desire he tendered an excuse for not sitting with Hazrat. He sat in another car following Hazrat’s vehicle from behind. Whereas when the Viceroy would arrive

he would sit with the Viceroy. He could not, however, muster the courage to sit with Hazrat and he said: “*Sitting with Hazrat was disrespectful.*”

When reaching the palace the Nawab Saheb stood like an attendant in service to Hazrat. He served Hazrat to such an extent that at meals he would carry everything and place it before Hazrat.

13.9 Haughtiness of the Co-ordinator

Iqbal [the poet] in one of his writings, declared this age to be “*the age of rudeness*”. Thus we see that in these times of rebelliousness and proudfulness the *Ahl-e-Deen* and *Ulama-e-Haq* are looked on with scorn and contempt. Hazrat Thanwi, however, could not tolerate anyone doing anything to belittle the *Ulama-e-Haq*. This he would take to be an insult to the *Ahl-e-Deen* and to Deen itself. For this reason, if someone made such a blunder he would teach that person a lifelong lesson.

After the first journey to Dhaka a consultation was to be held and owing to the longing of the Nawab of Dhaka and the persistence of the Ulama-e-Deoband Hazrat had to return to Dhaka. This time however he perceived that something distasteful will transpire because of which he would be unable to stay till the end. Hence he undertook the journey at his own expense so that, whenever he wishes, he could return.

Those illustrious personalities were to travel to Calcutta en route to Dhaka. The Nawab Saheb, therefore, arranged for stately accommodation and meals for them in Calcutta. The co-ordinator was a nobleman and friend of the Nawab Saheb.

In conversation the nobleman said to Hazrat:

“Nawab Saheb is very happy at your honourable coming after your initial refusal. He was saying that your conditions were extreme, making it difficult to accept. For instance, no hadyah should be presented.”

Hazrat replied:

*“What difficulty is there in not giving? Giving may be difficult. Is it difficult **not** to give?”*

The nobleman answered:

“Saheb! One feels like giving to one for whom one has love. How can one not make khidmat on one’s beloved?”

Hazrat replied:

“What, is it obligatory to call one’s beloved to one’s home and then give hadyah? If one is so enthusiastic then one can go to his home or send to his home the hadyah.”

To be a nobleman is one thing. To speak sensibly is another. That co-ordinator was not an intelligent speaker and in haughtiness he blurted out:

“Janaab! I beg yours! The thirsty come to the well. The well does not go to the thirsty.”

13.10 The Cure for Haughtiness

These words grieved Hazrat Thanwi deeply. But without displaying annoyance he addressed the nobleman very dignified and said:

“You think that you people are wells and we are the thirsty? Whereas we have it imbued in our minds that we are the wells and you are the thirsty. We have proof for

this as well, that there are two essential things: Deen and Dunya. Between these two, one thing of our need is by you and the thing of your need is by us. The only difference is that the thing of our need which is by you, that is the Dunya, Allah Ta'ala has given us to the degree of necessity. But the thing of your need which is by us, that is Deen, you do not have it even to the degree of necessity. Thus, you are in need of us, or us of you? You are the thirsty and we are the wells. Or are we the thirsty and you the wells?"

This striking wisdom at once smashed the haughtiness out of the nobleman. He became embarrassed and lowered his head.

After this disappointment Hazrat decided to cancel his journey there and then. Someone informed the Nawab Saheb of this by phone. Calling Hazrat to the phone would be disrespectful. Therefore, the Nawab Saheb sent an urgent telegram. Hazrat's travelling companions urged him to rethink. However, he did not forsake his principles on account of anyone. He went on his own expense, therefore he returned unhindered. Upon reaching Ilahabad he replied to Nawab Saheb's telegram.

This episode furthermore reveals the reality of *firaasat* [intuition]. *Kashf* in contrast to it falls way back. Therefore, in the Hadeeth the virtue of *firaasat* is mentioned.

13.11 Teaching Dignified Ways

Hazrat Thanwi was an expert in psychology. In minutes he would extract confessions from so-called civilized modernists of their uncouth ways. In this he was totally unique. His disgust, displeasure and firmness were not for his own self. It was rather

to educate others of correct and appropriate behaviour. He would proclaim:

“Let that person come and stay with me who claims his modernist ways are more refined than Islamic culture. I repose my trust in Allah Ta’ala and say that, Insha Allah, he will admit with his own tongue that they lack culture and ways and that true culture and civilized behaviour is that which the Sacred Shariah has taught.”

In his travel to Muzaffar Nagar Hazrat Thanwi crossed paths with a aristocrat who was highly audacious and outspoken, so much so that he did not fear top governors, and he was not someone to bow down before them. Since this had become his habit he thus started to speak impolitely before Hazrat. Hazrat felt hurt at this. He therefore cautioned him in decent language.

Intoxicated in his power and wealth, however, the aristocrat did not understand and the situation became unpleasant. Hazrat then asked him to leave the gathering, but he remained seated. Hazrat then stood up himself saying:

“If you are not going to get up then I myself will get up. I can never tolerate sitting with such a person.”

These words of Hazrat instilled such fear in the aristocrat’s heart that he pleaded with Hazrat: *“Hazrat you sit. I will get up.”* Saying this he got up and went away.

After this incident he [the Muzaffar Nagar aristocrat] said to Hafiz Sagheer Ahmad Saheb:

“My ways were cured for life. I used to look down upon the Aalims and Moulanas. Now I respect and have regard for every Aalim and Moulana because the thought occurs

to me that lest this one turns out to be like that one. I would not be enamoured by top governors, yet that day I became so awestruck by Moulana that after his rebuke not a word could come out of my mouth.”

For this reason Hazrat Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob would say:

“The one deprived [that is, thrown out] of this retreat [that is, the company of Hazrat Thanwi] is not deprived.”

13.12 Lesson of the Shariat to the Nawab of Rampur

Once, the Nawab of Rampur organized a debate with the Qaadiyaanis. For this purpose he invited the Ulama of Deoband. In consequence, many senior Ulama attended. Hazrat Thanwi participated due to the strong urging of fellow Ulama, albeit reluctantly.

After the debate when all the illustrious personalities were on their way home the Nawab Saheb wished to give Hazrat a large sum. Hazrat returned it with the message:

“The riyasat [semi-autonomous state] does not hold the right in the Shariah to spend in excess of necessity from the Baitul Maal.”

The Nawab Saheb was touched by this strict adherence to the principles of the Shariah by Hazrat. Though he could not practice on it, however, Hazrat taught him a lesson which no one did. This opened up the path for the Nawab’s worldly and afterlife success and salvation.

13.13 Teaching Deen to the Ameer of Bahawalpur

Once, the Ulama of Deoband were invited by the Nawab of Bahawalpur, Hazrat Thanwi included. Upon returning all the esteemed personalities were conferred a hundred and fifty rupees in reward and twenty five rupees for accepting the invitation. Out of respect for the Nawab, Hazrat accepted the sum along with the others. However, in privacy he excused himself to the vizier saying:

“Please take this sum back from me as this was given from the Baitul Maal and I am not an avenue for its disbursement.”

The vizier replied:

“Since this sum has already been recorded in official papers there is no need, therefore, to return it.”

Hazrat responded:

“Well, if it cannot be returned to the treasury then give it to the local Ulama and Tulaba as they are in the Shariat more entitled to it.”

In short, whatever Hazrat received, he returned all of it, but decently and properly. When news of this reached the Nawab Saheb he expressed regret instead of indignation over:

عطائے توبلقائے تو

The reward from you is sent back to you.

13.14 Return of the Reward

A similar experience he encountered in the state of Khairpur, Sindh. There, too, he excused himself from the reward. Upon this the minister in charge said that returning the reward will

have an adverse effect on the Nawab Saheb. To this Hazrat replied:

“If there is fear for this then why notify him in the first place? Instead, the money that has been given as reward should be distributed among the poor as they are validly entitled to it.”

In view of Hazrat's intention being pious, Allah Ta'ala would therefore inspire into his heart opportune, comprehensive and compact answers to such incidental questions. Thus, the other party was left with no alternative other than acceding. Hence Hazrat would say:

“Alhamdulillah, I was not forced to accept anywhere anything against the Shariat and against my tabiat.”

13.15 A Nawab's Confession of Bad Policy

One ancestral, influential, feared, nobleman and Nawab sent the amount of two hundred rupees in aid to *Madrasah Imdaadul Uloom*, Thanabawan. This Madrasah was established and run under the auspices and care of Hazrat Thanwi inside the *Khaanqah* proper, solely in trust unto Allah Ta'ala without any collection of funds.

Together with this contribution a request was made for Hazrat's honoured presence. Hazrat returned the money and wrote:

“If the invitation was not given along with this amount then it would have been taken for the Madrasah. Now this inclusion gives off the impression that the money was sent to persuade me to accept the invitation. Though this may not be your purpose, however, naturally it affects me in this way that I cannot freely make a decision of coming or not, as refusing then will make me ashamed.”

The Nawab Saheb was also intelligent and experienced. He at once understood that the contribution should not have been sent along with the request. Without delay he wrote an apology stating:

“From your note I have learnt that truly I adopted an inappropriate policy. I now retract my request of your honourable presence and once again send the money in your service. Kindly do accept it on behalf of the Madrasah.”

Hazrat then happily accepted and wrote back to the Nawab Saheb:

“Hitherto you were desirous of meeting me. Now your cultured and noble way has made me desirous of meeting you.”

After some time the Nawab Saheb again sent an invitation to Hazrat which Hazrat consented to on condition that no form of gifts will be presented.

13.16 Collision of Love and Reason

When Hazrat was about to return [after visiting the said Nawab Saheb] then the honourable mother of the Nawab Saheb who was Hazrat's peer-sister [in other words she was also *ba'it* to Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb] wished to present approximately a hundred rupees to Hazrat. Hazrat apologized on the basis of it being in violation of the condition set. The Nawab Saheb offered the excuse that the condition was applicable to him, whilst the gift was from his mother.

Hazrat replied:

“What is the difference between mother and child? The home is one.”

The Nawab Saheb said in desperation:

“Hazrat if someone desires to render service then what must he do?”

Hazrat replied:

“I am not a nomad who has no fixed abode. It is possible to come to my place.”

As the Nawab Saheb, *Masha Allah*, was very sound in disposition and nature and he was a celebrated offspring of a pious family he, therefore, did not persist like people generally do. He chose to maintain silence. After quite some time elapsing, he personally went to Thanabawan. There he presented three guineas as *hadyah* which Hazrat very happily and honourably accepted.

The intelligence of the Nawab Saheb is praiseworthy in that he did not take Hazrat's mind to the earlier episode and put pressure on Hazrat's heart by presenting the same gift. Instead, he changed the amount so that it did not seem like mere formality. In view of the respectful and cultured ways of the Nawab Saheb and his worthiness and devotion a special bond was established between him and Hazrat. This was due to the fact that Hazrat received great joy over meeting an organized person.

13.17 Invitation to an Englishman

In *Malfooz No. 371 of Al-Ifaadhaatul Yaumiyyah* the following statement of Hazrat is recorded:

“I coincidentally travelled on many occasions with Englishmen. However, I never met any evil character.

Once, I travelled second class to Calcutta out of a friend’s persistence. An English railway officer boarded the train in the same compartment. He received place on the top bunker. He said: ‘Give me a little place by the window on the bottom seat. I have to keep a check on the train and for this I will have to come and go.’ I replied: ‘Very well. I have no problem with that. Take a seat.’ He sat.

When it was time for meals I enquired through that friend whether he [the Englishman] would have something to eat. He replied: ‘I don’t have any reason to refuse.’

We bought food from the bazaar which was placed on leaves. We also placed his food on those leaves and gave him thinking that, who is going to go around washing dishes now? He accepted very happily and ate.

Someone asked: ‘Why wasn’t the food given to him in a plate?’ I replied: ‘He was a travelling companion and therefore we fulfilled the right of the travelling companion. We did not honour him as he was deprived of Islam.’

He alighted at Burduwan Station expressing his thanks and saying: ‘You were very inconvenienced due to me, while I was in much comfort due to you.’

An associate commented: ‘If you gave him food in a plate he would have been even more thankful.’ I replied: ‘It is possible that he would not have done that. By serving him

in a plate he would have thought highly of himself; that he was being served and honoured. Then he would not have felt the need to express thanks."

13.18 End to Ritual Customs

In every region customs and practices on occasions of meeting, eating and drinking differ in standards and forms of honouring and showing respect. During his travels wherever Hazrat Thanwi would see such customs and practices [which were contrary to the Shariat] he would immediately draw people's attention to its eradication and effacement. He would explain to people accustomed to those practices with such politeness and dignity that they would at once understand and abandon the customs.

In A'zamgarh it was custom to invite a huge crowd along with an eminent guest. Hazrat Thanwi was not accustomed to burdening the host in any way. For this reason he would not resort to any form of request. Instead of extravagant and lavish meals he would be contented with simple dishes. To break the custom there he stipulated to whoever invited him:

"I will eat alone and only boiled rice and arad dhal, because the custom here is to eat rolled rotis which are a bit hard and which do not agree with me."

In this manner he saved the host from much trouble.

In Bengal the custom was that whoever would come to meet him would touch his feet. This is also witnessed in Punjab by most *peers*. To stop this custom he would firstly tell them not to do so. Thereafter if anyone still persisted in touching his feet he would treat the person the same. In other words, he would also

go down to touch the other person's feet. When that person would become embarrassed and plead to Hazrat not to do so he would say:

"If this is something good then why do you stop me from doing it? And if it is bad then why do you do such a thing?"

Doing this a few times was sufficient. People came to know about it and they abandoned this nonsensical practice.

In the district of A'zamgarh it was also the practice that when a leading figure's vehicle passes then a group of people would move ahead and say, *"Move out of the way,"* and whoever was approaching from the other side would be stopped. Hazrat told those people:

"The road is not anyone's property. Everyone has equal right to it. This action is against the Shariat. Leave this action and in future don't ever do it."

People understood and thereafter this practice was discarded.

In one place it was the practice that people would run alongside the palanquin to the right and to the left. Hazrat prohibited them saying: *"I am inconvenienced by this."* They replied: *"Out of muhabbat we are doing this."*

Hazrat said:

"Then why are you trying to attract my attention. Don't run on the side. Run at the back of the carriage where I cannot see."

After a while Hazrat turned around to see and there was no one there. It appeared that this practice was out of show. What were the poor things supposed to do? No senior stopped them before from this.

According to the custom at one place the headman of the village made a collection of two hundred rupees and offered it to Hazrat. He did not, however, disclose that he collected it from the village folk. Hazrat mused over the headman's financial position. He could not have given so much from his own pocket. Hazrat, therefore, asked: *"Is this from you or are others partners in this?"* The answer came that others are also part of it. Thereupon Hazrat commented:

"Hadyah is given out of muhabbat. When I am unaware of the identity of those that have given then how am I supposed to have muhabbat for them? Therefore, return everyone's money. Then whoever wishes to give let him come himself and give. In this way I will know that this is my benefactor and I will have muhabbat for him."

The headman said: *"But you are leaving now."*

Hazrat replied:

"I am going to a place which is close by. It is easy for anyone to come there. Whoever is inclined should come there and give."

However, no one came. There the custom was that when any Molvi came and he was not offered a good sum he would take offence. And when the taker refuses then who is going to run after him to give?

Regarding these episodes of A'zamgarh Hazrat would say:

“I effaced many customs there, but one custom I was unsuccessful in effacing. That is, when any Aalim comes then most of the people at that place, even young children, come far out to meet. Similar is the case of departure. The people there are very potential and Deeni conscious. The secular educated class there are also good followers. It appears that they simply resort to secular education for their livelihood.

13.19 Debates on Journey

On journey Hazrat had to face people of different ideologies. Brief debates would thus ensue which would be confined to a few points. For instance, Hazrat met the famous writer and professor of mathematics, Molvi Zakaa-ullah Marhoom in Delhi. He asked Hazrat:

“Do the students in your Madrasahs develop some potential or not?”

Hazrat counter-questioned:

“Firstly explain to me the definition of ‘potential’ then I will answer.”

This quietened him, for he knew that had he answered he would have had to prove his claim for whatever definition he gave for ‘potential’.

بولونگا تو دلدل میں پھنستا چلا جاؤنگا

If I speak then I am going to be caught in a quagmire

13.20 An Aryan's Acknowledgement of Kufr

During one travel a lecturer of the Aryan Party, after listening to Hazrat's talk, questioned:

"There are two people. One is a Muslim and the other a non-Muslim. Both rendered a good deed with good intentions. Will both of them receive equal reward for this deed or varying?"

Hazrat: This question is unlike your intelligence and civilized nature, because you have posed a question which you have the answer to in your mind.

Aryan: How do you know that I have the answer in my mind?

Hazrat: When all the premisses of the answer are in your mind then obviously the answer will also be in your mind. When the necessitated is found then obviously the necessary will also be found.

Aryan: How do you know that all the premisses are in my mind?

Hazrat: Take hold! I will make you admit that all the premisses are in your mind. Are you not aware that of all religions, the true religion can only be one? Right now, we are not discussing which one is the true religion.

Aryan: Certainly, only one religion can be true.

Hazrat: This is one premiss, which was in your mind before. Secondly, I ask, is not the example of a follower of the true religion like that of a follower of the government, and the example of a false-monger like that of a rebel of the government?

The Aryan acknowledged this as well. After accepting this second premiss Hazrat then said to him:

“Is not all the excellences of a rebel brushed aside solely on account of him being a rebel, and is he not sentenced in the court in spite of him possessing excellences, and is that sentence of punishment contrary to reason and justice?”

When the Aryan admitted to all these points being correct Hazrat said:

“There you have it! All three premisses were in your mind beforehand. Thus the conclusion is certainly in your mind, and that is the answer to your question. Thus in the light of this the clear import of your question is that I should call you kaafir with my tongue. Well, our Shariat does not permit us to call anyone a kaafir without any reason.”

Aryan: Truly, I was desirous of listening to this word about me from your tongue. It is a pleasure to hear the word *kaafir* attributed to me from such a tongue.

Hazrat: Well that may be virtue for you, but for me it is highly reprehensible.

13.21 Quitting Safar

For everything a time is ordained. After bearing the rigours of travel for such a long period, suddenly the pain caused by Hazrat's hernia deteriorated. As a result he was forced to call off all future travel and he published the following letter of apology for the sake of those desiring to see him and who sent letters of invitation. Thereafter no one had the courage to call him and force him.

13.22 Letter of Apology

“Many acquaintances are aware that I have experienced hernia for more than thirty years now. As long as I was physically strong the pain was slight. Now due to failing health, for a period in excess of three years in spite of wearing a stiff truss which at times is very disturbing, and if air does not filter through then due to that or through perspiration pustules develop which leave a burning sensation. Such a truss has to be tied all the time. Nevertheless, I find that often it happens that due to coughing, clearing the throat, sneezing, speaking loudly, standing for long and walking for long my hernia problem is exacerbated.

Sometimes in just an hour, twice or thrice I experience this problem which if not remedied immediately then the pain becomes severe, almost unbearable. Sometimes the hernia pulls the stomach and chest muscles causing severe pain. To remedy this it becomes necessary to go into privacy, lie down, remove that part of my clothing, move the truss and with hand pressure push the intestine up again. Thereafter the truss is tied again. It is evident that all these states combined render *safar* impractical.

On the basis of this, Hakeems and Doctors have pointed out that excess walking and moving about, in fact even standing too long, are harmful. I myself observe and experience this harm day and night. For this reason I have not undertaken any short or lengthy journey for over three years now. In fact, if a relative passes away in another neighbourhood then through the medium of a written message I offer condolence. I cannot go myself.

Since the reason for this [illness] is bursting of the sac, and as a rule, to replace it is practically impossible; therefore, there is no hope of this ailment being cured in future. In this regard, several Hindustani, Bengali and European doctors agree that besides an operation there is no other remedy. It is also agreed that an operation at this age is very risky. Collectively all these factors clearly confirm my perpetual excuse for not travelling.

Since some friends who have not witnessed this condition of mine are still active in calling me for their ceremonies, etc. this notification is published for their information. Thus, considering this strong reason of mine they should not initiate any such call.

Was-Salaam

Ashraf Ali, Thanabawan

10th Jumaaduth Thaani 1337 AH”

13.23 The Reality of the Apology

Since the Almighty saw the completion of Hazrat’s mission associated with travelling, and now the Divine Will was to raise Hazrat to the position of *Qutbul Irshaad* [the Pivotal Saint of Guidance] and fix his seat in a specific place, as was **the Way of Allah Ta'ala** with many *Awliya*, therefore from the unseen an excuse came about. Through the *Fadhl* of Allah Ta'ala the difficulty was not that imposing [in that Hazrat was unable to do anything] and for the satisfaction of others a reasonable and acceptable excuse was found. Thereafter, he remained seated at his centre [the *Khaanqa-e-Imdaadiyah* in Thanabawan] as the *Qutb* of his time and became engrossed in showering his spiritual effulgence on the creation of Allah Ta'ala more than ever.

13.24 The Journey to Lahore

After Shawwaal 1343 Hijri, Hazrat firmly resolved to give up his travels owing to sheer helplessness, old age and weakness. Thereafter, he did not accept anyone's request in any way. However, still he had to undergo the difficulties of travel on four occasions for his own needs or to save others from hardship.

The first journey was probably in Zul Qa'dah of 1353 Hijri and the second on the 18th of Jumaadal Ukhra 1354 Hijri; both till Saharanpur, merely to leave the daughter of his elder nephew, Molvi Sa'eed Ahmad Saheb Marhoom on her journey for Haj and on the second occasion to receive her from Saharanpur. He bore the hardship of travel solely out of compassion and love for her.

After these two short journeys a third and significant journey was undertaken to Lahore. The reason for this journey was that for some time Hazrat had digestion problems due to which his intake of food was reduced, and that too would not be digested properly. Since some of his top and bottom teeth had broken, it occurred to him that perhaps due to not chewing the food properly he had digestion problems and a weak stomach. He, therefore, thought of making new teeth. He thus decided to go to Lahore to make artificial teeth by his sincere devotee and a reputed and experienced doctor of Lahore, Azeez Ahmad Jalaalud Deen Saheb who was an expert and accomplished dentist. Although Doctor Saheb was prepared to go to Thanabawan and render this service, however, Hazrat's nature of self-respect and discipline could not allow this. Accordingly, on the 29th Safar 1357 Hijri corresponding to 30th April 1939

AD, on a Saturday, he left Thanabawan on the morning train to Saharanpur on his way to Lahore.

13.25 Travelling Companions

His travelling companions were just his nephew, Moulana Shabbeer Ali Saheb Thanwi and Shaikh Faarooq Ahmad Saheb of London. Shaikh Faarooq Ahmad Saheb had embraced Islam in London two years previously after reading Hazrat's writings, books on Tasawwuf and stories of the Awliya published in English. He was eager to meet Hazrat. Allah Ta'ala created the means and he travelled from London to Hindustan. In Hindustan he settled in the semi-autonomous state of Bahawalpur. There he substituted his native dress for Islamic garb. With a *topi* on his head, a *kurta* instead of a shirt, a *shirwaani* instead of pants, Indian shoes instead of English ones and a full grown beard he came to *Khaanqa-e-Imdaadiyah* in this holy appearance.

Although he did not comprehend Urdu, Faarsi and Arabic, nevertheless the effects of the words emanating from Hazrat's blessed tongue falling in his ears, setting gaze on the holy countenance, and the spiritual direction, effulgence and blessings of Hazrat gave his heart so much satisfaction that he would attend every Majlis. Translators would relay his eagerness, spiritual condition, impressions and questions to Hazrat and Hazrat's answers and statements to him. Words fail to describe how much he benefited in this manner.

13.26 An Important Lesson

In view of this journey being undertaken owing to a personal necessity Hazrat, therefore, kept his departure confidential. From the onset he made such arrangements that besides his nearest and dearest others were unaware of the journey. Thus

when he disembarked at Saharanpur he went straight with his nephews, Haamid Ali Saheb and Mahmood Ali Saheb who came to receive him at the station, to Haamid Ali Saheb's home. From there he went to *Madrasah Mazaahirul Uloom* without notification.

He had barely arrived there that crowds of people eager to make his *ziyaarat* converged in the Madrasah like a magnet had attracted them. The old building of the Madrasah was inadequate to hold the huge gathering and it was difficult for Hazrat to even move a few paces. Everyone was over eager to meet and make *musaafahah*. Hazrat gave his hands for everyone to easily make *musaafahah*. The crowd swelled with each minute and the time to depart became less and less.

Meanwhile Hazrat was tiring at keeping his hands stretched out. Observing this Moulana Hafiz Abdul Lateef Saheb, the Supervisor (Naazim) of the Madrasah came forward to stop the crowd. However, Hazrat stopped him saying:

"No, don't stop anyone. Love for me has brought them here. I came here to meet and be met."

Naazim Saheb replied: *"Hazrat Wala will be inconvenienced."*

Hazrat replied:

"Does anyone become inconvenienced at meeting friends?! What other work do I have here? In Thanabawan there are other things to take care of. Hence regulation of time is necessary there. Otherwise nothing can be accomplished. All this work that has been accomplished was by virtue of regulation of time."

When the matter became worse Naazim Saheb became a bit stern. Then too Hazrat stopped him. Upon this Naazim Saheb said:

“We can see that Hazrat is receiving difficulty and these people refuse to listen. This is not being civilized and human.”

Hazrat remarked:

“Take note. Whoever is in charge of administration has to adopt sternness lest the work cannot carry on. People who call me harsh should see now that, in actual fact, am I harsh or soft? Hafiz Saheb is very soft, but he had to resort to harshness. If a stranger had to see this then he would be surprised to observe that how soft he is who is reputed to be harsh, while he who is soft is being harsh. The point is that as long as I am in Thanabawan the management and work is my responsibility. If I am not going to be stern then no work can be done. Here the only work is to meet and greet. Therefore, there is no need for sternness. I am soft. Naazim Saheb on the other hand is the supervisor here. Therefore, he seems to be very stern here.” (Armughan-e-Jawedan, p. 14)

13.27 Consideration for Others

Hazrat was scheduled to depart at two o'clock from Saharanpur. Friends appealed that the heat will be extreme in the two o'clock train. *“Therefore, leave in the express mail after Maghrib,”* they said. Hazrat replied: *“Make mashwarah with Molvi Shabbeer Ali. However, bear in mind that in Lahore people will be waiting for this train [i.e. the two o'clock one].”*

The Madrasah authorities desired for some sort of arrangement whereby Hazrat's stay could be extended. No one desires to let go in a hurry of a *visiting ni'mat and barkat*. Therefore, someone suggested that a telegram be sent to Lahore. The difficulty in this [extended stay] was that due to the overcrowding of the night train Hazrat would be discomforted, not forgetting the anxiety of the people in Lahore. Therefore, departure was settled at two o'clock daytime train, as Hazrat desired. When Hazrat was informed of this he commented:

"The best comfort of all is in resigning one's will and obeying."

Hazrat thus departed from Saharanpur at the scheduled time. From here Haamid Ali Saheb, Molvi Wali Muhammad Saheb Batalwi and Molvi Hafiz Sulaiman Saheb Rangooni joined the party taking Hazrat's permission.

Hazrat maintained secrecy of his proposed journey due to certain necessities and the people of Punjab were not given prior notice. Only Dr Azeez Ahmad Jalaalud Deen Saheb and Hazrat Moulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Saheb (Mudda thilluhu) Amritsari had knowledge of Hazrat's coming. It was impressed upon them, however, not to divulge any information of Hazrat's planned trip.

On the train however, one or two people who were on their way to Lahore came to know of Hazrat's presence on the train. When they came to meet Hazrat he said to them:

"Don't tell anyone in Lahore that I have come there. If you tell, you will be committing a sin, because by you informing, people are going to come to me and I will experience difficulty through the crowds and by them not

meeting me they will be hurt, and to cause a Muslim to be hurt is a sin.” (Armughan-e-Jawedan, p. 17)

These people were puzzled that wherever their *Mashaaikh* and political leaders travel, before departure they notify the public of their programme in newspapers so that they receive a grand reception. They are grateful to those who publicize their programme and to those who receive them. Here with Hazrat Thanwi, on the other hand, was the opposite.

13.28 Series of Malfoozaat

According to his perpetual practice, he travelled in third class. Through the grace of Allah Ta'ala they found a compartment which, although was small, but passengers were few. There were a few Hindus and one or two Muslims sitting there. They were very courteous to Hazrat and Hazrat's travelling associates. All Namaazes were fulfilled with *jama'at*.

When the train reached Amritsar then Hazrat Moulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Saheb also boarded. He was under the impression that Hazrat would be in the second class. He, therefore, purchased an second class ticket. When he came and sat close to Hazrat then out of sheer joy he did not even sense that he was in third class. This he only learnt in Lahore.

From Amritsar to Lahore the series of Hazrat's *Malfoozaat* continued. Hazrat Mufti Saheb explains:

“It seemed as if it was the inside veranda of Khaanqah Imdaadiyah Thanabawan. The very seat of guidance and direction; the same audience; the same needy ones; the same posture; the same awe; the same scene; and the same Hazrat Wala as usual speaking.”

Much of the conversation centred on the writings and memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Saheb's pupil, Molvi Faqeer Muhammad Saheb. Apart from that, *academic and spiritual uloom* were also discussed.

The train reached Lahore at eleven o'clock night time. Dr Saheb's son was present, not Dr Saheb. Upon enquiry it was learnt that he went for *raf'e haajat*.

[*Raf'e haajat* literally means: to put forward or present one's need. It also means: to cast away one's need. Here it means: relieving himself, i.e. going to the toilet.]

"*He will be here soon,*" the son said. Hazrat and his companions disembarked from the platform and sat on a bench on the platform. After the luggage was gathered and counted, Dr Saheb arrived. Hazrat said humorously:

"Hitherto I heard that in fear there is need for raf'e haajat. However, here in Lahore I learn that in excitement there is also a need for it."

[Hazrat used a pun here. The first *raf'e haajat* refers to *d'uaa* at the time of fear whilst the second refers to Dr Saheb's case of *raf'e haajat*.]

Thereafter Dr Saheb escorted those illustrious personalities to his bungalow where his family at home were also not informed of Hazrat's coming.

13.29 The Dental Examination

In the morning Dr Saheb examined Hazrat's teeth. Hazrat told him: *"I wish to keep the remaining teeth."* Dr Saheb found only one tooth that required extraction. Lengthwise it was intact, but its depth and portion of its width had worn off leaving it broad on top and sharp at the bottom. Besides being decayed it did not appear attractive and with the new set of teeth it would appear even more unattractive. Doctor Saheb, therefore, extracted the tooth in the presence of Moulana Shabbeer Ali Saheb without informing Hazrat in such a delicate way that Hazrat did not even feel it.

After extraction when Hazrat looked in the mirror he found the tooth missing. Puzzled he enquired: *"Where is this tooth gone?"* Dr Saheb showed the tooth. Hazrat remarked: *"My inner desire was also for this tooth to be extracted. But I couldn't bring myself to say it."*

13.30 The Stay in Lahore

He stayed the entire week in Lahore. All his mail would orderly be sent to his address in Lahore. He would fulfil all his daily *ma'moolaat* just as in Thanabawan. He devoted the first six days to his treatment. The last day he left for open meetings.

In the meantime news of his arrival gradually reached the ears of everyone. His unexpected arrival played havoc with the minds of people and all sorts of presumptions were being made. People mainly thought that he came to arbitrate between the Congress and the Muslim League.

From here Mufti Saheb notified Hazrat Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb of Jalandhar of Hazrat's arrival. He too was

puzzled at this unexpected arrival. The next day Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb set out, and with the evening train on the 6th of May he reached Lahore. He reached the bungalow at a time when Hazrat had completed his *Namaaz*, *Nawaafil*, *Awraad*, *etc.* and was retiring to his room. He humbly made *Salaam*. Out of sheer compassion Hazrat embraced him. After *mu'aanaqah* and *musaafahah* Hazrat smiled and said: "*I did say, why must I be mannaa'ul lil Khair.*"

[Yet another pun of Hazrat! *Mannaa'ul lil Khair* is a term used in the Qur'aan Shareef describing Waleed Bin Mugheerah an arch-enemy of Islam and the Muslims. He was *mannaa'ul lil khair* which means: an out-and-out impeder of good.

Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi Alaihi) uses the word *Khair* in the context of Hazrat Moulana Khair Muhammad's name implying that why must he resist and bar Moulana Khair Muhammad from coming.]

Moulana still had to read Namaaz. After Namaaz he came inside [to Hazrat's room]. Hazrat offered him milky treats and upon the request of Hazrat Moulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Saheb and Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb, Hazrat promised to stay over in Amritsar and Jalandhar on his return.

13.31 Visit to the Mazaaraat

In the course of his stay in Lahore Hazrat Thanwi firstly went to the holy grave of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (Rahmatullahi alaihi) to read *Faatihah* [Isaal-e-Thawaab]. He went there in the morning and reached at a time when visitors were aplenty.

According to his practice he stood at a slight distance from the holy occupant of the *qabr* at the feet side. With his hands on his sides he engaged in *Isaal-e-Thawaab*. Dr Saheb stood behind Hazrat.

Looking at Hazrat standing in this stance a sturdy built caretaker called out in a loud and threatening voice: “*Fold your hands in front.*” Hazrat totally ignored the call. Dr Saheb tried to reason with the caretaker but to no avail. As usual he called out in a blank tone the same thing and with each call he amplified his voice. Hazrat, however, continued focussing his attention to the grave. After completing *Faatihah* he remarked about Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh:

“A very lofty personality! Commands amazing awe! Even after his demise he is like a king governing.”

After that he went to the other historical sites of Lahore, viz. Shahi Masjid, the Fort, Khaanqa-e-Mian Meer, etc. Dr Saheb gave an account of their historical importance and historical events related to them with Hazrat casting a reflective and investigative gaze over everything and expressing his views.

13.32 Departure for Amritsar

On the 8th of May 1938 AD after reading Fajr Namaaz Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Hasan Saheb took Hazrat and his travelling companions by motor vehicle to Amritsar. They had barely reached there and crowds converged. Admirers were falling over each other in their attempt to meet Hazrat. Like moths around a light they swarmed to listen to Hazrat’s words. They gave full attention to Hazrat and displayed the sight of:

كَأَنَّ عَلَى رُؤُوسِهِمُ الطَّيْرَ

As if birds were perched on their heads.

[This is the description given of the Sahaabah Kiraam, Radhiyallahu anhum, in the *Majlis* of Rasulullah, Sallallahu alaihi wasallam.]

They were on their way to read Asr Namaaz in Masjid-e-Noor when upon the request of Gama the Wrestler they stopped at his home for a few minutes. Very close by was the *mazaar* of Hazrat Molvi Noor Ahmad Saheb. They went there to recite *Faatihah*.

After reading Asr Namaaz in Masjid-e-Noor they went by vehicle to the home of Khaajah Muhammad Saadiq. From there they passed Hall Bazaar and after viewing Masjid-e-Khairuddeen they left for Lahore. Maghrib Namaaz they read in Lahore.

After returning from Amritsar he remained in Lahore till the 11th of May. During this period Hazrat gave permission for all to come and meet. Everyone was able to attend unrestricted. The visitors and admirers thus took full opportunity of heartily gaining Hazrat's vision and deriving *fuyooz and barakaat* [spiritual grace and blessings] from him.

13.33 Preference to Amritsar over Lahore

Since his purpose in Lahore was medical treatment he, therefore, endeavoured fully to keep secret his arrival and stay. So much so that for his walks too he would emerge at night time. He would say:

“If someone sees then the news will spread throughout the city. Then, in view of the gathering of the public peace of

mind, informality and ease will be lost. Where do I get rest in Thanabawan! At least I can have a few days rest here. Nowadays people are not cultured. They start asking upside down questions. Needless trouble will ensue. Therefore, it is best to be cautious [by keeping my visit unpublicized].”

When Dr Saheb, upon the gesture of Hazrat Mufti Saheb requested Hazrat to honour Amritsar with his presence, Hazrat accepted the request saying:

“There will be no need for secrecy there. The stay will only be for a day. Furthermore, I find within myself a sense of friendship with the people of Amritsar, not so Lahore where the condition is that when passing by car on the public road people’s appearance and condition smack of haughtiness and self-esteem. For this reason my heart is not attached to people here on the whole.”

A comment was made that it was the good fortune of the people of Amritsar that Hazrat placed his blessed feet in Amritsar and granted open permission for meeting, whereas in Lahore there was no open permission. Upon this, Hazrat said humorously:

لاهور لا حول، امرتسرا مراۃ برسر
Lahore, Allah Ta’ala forbid
Amritsar, with pleasure

Then he said:

“I have also become a mukhtalaf feeh mas-alah [contentious issue]. People of Amritsar will say: ‘Very kind. He doesn’t prohibit anyone from meeting.’ People of Lahore on the other hand will say: ‘He is so snobby. He

doesn't give permission to meet.' Whereas the reason is that my stay in Lahore was for a few days for some work while in Amritsar besides meeting and greeting there was no other work."

One night Hazrat was being taken through Lahore by car. All over there were lights. Lights were plenty and could be seen in rows. Hazrat commented:

"In this light there is darkness upon darkness, for it is not the natural light of Allah Ta'ala."

Passing the lights when the car came to an open field which was dark, Hazrat commented: *"In this darkness there is Noor."*

[It is simple to understand Hazrat's comment. The lights at night in the cities have opened up gateways of sin and immorality, and have cast spiritual and moral darkness over everyone.]

Before leaving for Amritsar [on his return journey] he said on several occasions:

"I smell the fragrance of love emanating from the people of Amritsar, and in Lahore besides atheism and materialism nothing can be seen."

The people of Amritsar were intentionally not informed of Hazrat's return from Lahore as Hazrat would be discomforted by the crowds. Nevertheless when the train from Lahore reached Amritsar a substantial amount of people were present to receive and visit Hazrat. Some entered Hazrat's compartment. Hazrat gave his blessed right hand and started to make

musaafahah to those inside whilst for those outside Hazrat put his left hand which people started to kiss.

Whilst at that Hakeem Abdul Khaaliq Saheb presented some water. Hazrat remarked: *“How must I drink? Both hands are engaged.”* With some pressure the right hand inside the compartment was released and Hazrat drank water whilst continuing his *musaafahah* with the eager ones. He did not prevent anyone from making *musaafahah*. This was purely the result of the sincerity of the people of Amritsar which was the fruits of Hazrat Moulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Saheb’s efforts. May Allah Ta’ala prolong his blessings. When Hakeem Saheb wrote: *“The people of Amritsar are so happy over Hazrat’s letter,”* Hazrat replied: *“I myself am deeply impressed by their love.”*

13.34 Arrival in Jalandhar

On the 11th of May he left for Jalandhar on the afternoon train. Hazrat Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb had arrived beforehand at Jalandhar. He only informed exclusive people of Hazrat’s coming. Neither was a public notice given and nor was permission given for it. However, when the train arrived at the station the crowd of people that came to receive Hazrat was in the thousands. People from outlying villages had travelled scores of kilometres by foot to the station, notwithstanding that the train reached there at half past eight at night. Moulana was puzzled as to who notified them. No clue was forthcoming. It seemed as though someone had announced in the surrounding areas of Jalandhar of Hazrat’s visit.

Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb stated:

“Nothing can be said of this besides it being a karaamat of Hazrat Wala and his Divine Acceptance. Otherwise, it cannot be recalled in Jalandhar’s history of such a huge reception and vast crowd. Whereas, I can remember clearly when the mureedeen of Punjab’s famous Peer and Molvi, Jama’at Ali Shah gave announcements and rallied for people to attend his arrival then the number of people on the platform was not much.”

Upon disembarking from the train Hazrat learnt that the secular educated class wished to put up a customary reception. He thus said:

“I am no political figure. I am a Taalib-e-Ilm. There is no need for any special arrangement for my sake.”

Both hands of Hazrat were occupied as admirers had engaged Hazrat in shaking hands. In this state a secular educated man dressed in western garb gave flowers to Hazrat. In a stern voice Hazrat said:

“Appearance is like that of a civilized person, but is this being civilized that someone is occupied and you wish to occupy him with something else? Can’t this be done when I am free?”

When Hazrat got into the car then Hazrat saw the same flowers in the car. Upon this he said:

“If I never stopped that modernist saheb then he would have put this garland around my neck.”

When Hazrat made his distinguished presence at *Madrasah Khairul Madaaris*, Isha Azaan had been given. Upon completion of the Namaaz he went with Hazrat Moulana Khair

Muhammad Saheb to the top storey of the Madrasah. There Moulana had arranged supper and about sixteen pious people were invited.

In the morning after *Ishraq* he came outside. Visitors were crowding in the Masjid. Everyone got up to meet Hazrat. Someone said: *“If Hazrat accepts sitting on a chair then everyone will be honoured with Hazrat’s ziyaarat from their places?”* Hazrat replied:

“This is against my habit and it is not reported [in the Shariat]. However, during lecture it has been reported.”

[In other words, it is not reported of the Salafus Saaliheen that they sat on elevated places for crowds of onlookers to view them.]

The crowd was swelling by the minute. Permission for a *chaarpai* [a traditional Indian light wooden frame bed] was thus sought. Hazrat replied:

“There is nothing wrong in that. It is a village style. But I am not going to sit alone on it. A few people will sit.”

In consequence, a *chaarpai* was immediately brought. When something was spread over it then Hazrat prohibited them. Hazrat settled at the head side and on the other side he seated Hazrat Moulana Muhammad Hasan Saheb and Hazrat Moulana Khair Muhammad Saheb saying: *“Sitting alone makes me feel uncomfortable.”*

There the sincere devotee of Hazrat, Mia Toor Shah Saheb presented *hadyah* of two rupees and a handful of *sattu* [a kind of cereal]. Hazrat accepted it as *tabarruk* [the gift of a pious

person]. However, he did not accept the *hadyah* of anyone else as it was not his habit of accepting *hadyah* on journey.

For a full hour a *majlis* was in session and a series of *malfoozaat* continued. At quarter to nine in the morning he left by train to Thanabawan. Without exaggeration, the home there in which he stayed, for one month rays of celestial light could be perceived from its walls and doors.

13.35 A Severe Bout of Sickness

After returning from his journey to Lahore, not even a month had passed of his stay in Thanabawan when on the night of the 11th or 12th of June 1938 AD close to 2am he woke up to go to toilet. After *istinja* he intended standing up when all of a sudden he had a blackout and fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness he found himself on the floor. He could not, therefore, determine whether he fell unconscious from a standing position or from a sitting position. In whichever way he fell, the fall was so bad that he hurt his right ribcage, head and elbow. Therefore, he most likely fell unconscious from a standing position onto the ground he was getting up from. Otherwise there would not have been so much injury.

After waking up again during the night he had an urge to relieve himself again. However, he was feeling extremely weak. With much difficulty he got up himself and went to the toilet. He did not inform anyone as it was his practice that as long as he could do the work himself or he was not in dire straits he would not inform anyone, so that others are not inconvenienced.

He came out of the toilet safely, *Bifadhlihi Ta'ala*. He did not even feel dizzy. But immediately upon stepping outside he felt

so weak that it seemed impossible for him to put one foot forward. Out of helplessness he sat there, on the ground. However he could not even sit and was constrained to lie on the ground. After a while he took up the courage and made his way to the Namaaz terrace which was nearby. He went there and lay down. Now he was conscious but powerless. In this state, he took a reading of his pulse. He could not make out his pulse rate. His whole body was cold, but he was perspiring profusely. When he regained some sort of strength he slowly and with much difficulty made his way to the bed.

Up to this stage he utilized the courage endowed in him thinking of the trouble to others if he calls out for aid. However, the sand which soiled his clothes through his fall, and lying down made him nauseous. He was, therefore, constrained to give a call to Choti Begam Sahebah [his younger wife] to wake her up for arranging water for a *ghusl*. It was not necessary to have a bath then for fear of physical harm. However, he could not tolerate his body to be *napaak* for one moment. In this debilitated state he made *ghusl* lying down.

Even in this delicate hour, extreme weakness and dizziness he constantly bore in mind principles and order. So much so, that after completing *isntinja* he placed the water jug at its precise place, where he took it from, in spite of his extreme debility. He saw to it that the water container from where he took water was covered. He did not leave the water jug where he made *istinja*, nor did he leave the water container uncovered. In fact, Begam Sahebah was worried and wished to notify the family. However, Hazrat did not allow her to inform anyone for the simple reason that a portion of the night remained and they would be inconvenienced. Then too some family members came to find

out and Moulana Zafar Ahmad Saheb, Moulana Shabbeer Ali Saheb and a few others came before Fajr Namaaz.

As soon as it was morning the Hakeem was called. Then the doctor was called for a check-up. Hazrat would not use English medicines due to the doubtful contents. The doctors took his blood pressure and strongly emphasised to him not to do any work, any movement and not to bear any type of worry or grief. He was forbidden from talking too much unless out of sheer necessity. He was told to be very careful with food intake. They took the onlookers to one side and said: *“There is a possibility of stroke. The threat is real. Utmost caution is essential.”*

13.36 Management of the Post

Since the Dr Saheb had seen the volume of Hazrat’s correspondence work, he strongly prohibited Hazrat from it. Therefore, the post was not sent to Hazrat the day he had a blackout. Moulana Shabbeer Ali Saheb instead looked at the letters and wrote the following note:

“Doctors and Hakeems have given Hazrat Wala mashwarah of complete rest for a few days. Hazrat Wala does not, therefore, peruse letters these days. Send this letter after ten days. It is hoped that Hazrat provides an answer then. Like that Hazrat’s tabiyat is fine, Bihamdillah.”

For two days this was the arrangement. However, Hazrat did not feel at ease with this at all and said:

“My relationship with some people is such that this type of notice will cast them in deep worry. They will then come here to find out my health. The doctor has put a ban on excess meeting and speaking. By these people coming here

there will be a big crowd and carrying out doctor's directive will not be possible. Then, instead of benefit more harm will accrue. The effect of this on my mind is in itself dangerous. Therefore, the appropriate procedure to follow is to show me the post. Letters of such a nature, I shall personally answer. And in answer to the remaining letters that notification shall be sent."

Thus, from the 14th of June till the 24th of June 1938 AD this was the procedure. Thereafter, the letter reproduced hereunder was published. It was sent in answer to the letters of the *Saalikeen* [Devotees of Tasawwuf] whilst Hazrat would personally respond to the letters of the *Muqarrabeen* [Close Acquaintances].

The Notice

Assalaamu Alaikum

Due to several reasons, like old age, etc. for some time I lacked the strength to do work. I, however, employed my courage. Finally this gave rise to much harm and in consequence some dangerous complications developed. Through this I have sensed personally, and doctors and hakeems have also strongly emphasised that I stop all work. I have, therefore, stopped correspondence.

For the benefit of the *Taalibs* I am writing the names of several of my *Mujaazeen* [authorized disciples] hereunder. I have confidence in their mode of *Ta'leem*. With whomever you wish among them you may start your relation of *Tarbiyat* [spiritual upbringing]. Permission is, however, given to enquire about my

health and request for *du'aa* in brief. That is all. After completing the requisites, permission is granted to write two lines requesting *Bai't*.

Was Salaam

These are the names and their addresses:

Molvi Muhammad Isaa Saheb – Town Muhyiddeenpur, Post Office Mendara, District Ilahabad

Molvi Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb – Mahalla Karam Ali, Meerath City

Moulana Zafar Ahmad Saheb Uthmani – Thanabawan, District Muzaffar Nagar

Molvi Muhammad Hasan Saheb – Masjid Khairuddeen, Amritsar

Molvi Abdul Ghani Saheb – Madrasah Raudhatul Uloom, Phulpoor, District A'zamgar

Molvi Khair Muhammad Saheb – Madrasah Khairul Madaaris, Jalandhar City

Molvi Wasiyyullah Saheb – Fatahpur, Taalnarja, District A'zamgarh

Haqdad Khan Saheb – Molvi Ganj, Lucknow

Molvi Wali Ahmad Saheb – Molvi Ganj, Lucknow

Molvi Maseehullah Saheb – Madrasah Arabi, Jalalabad, District Muzaffar Nagar

Molvi Khuda Bakhsh Saheb – Nawakhalwi, Madrasah Soofiyyah, Post Bherwarhat, Chatgam

There are other esteemed names. A list of them is published at the end of *Part Three of Ashrafus Sawaanih*. However, as a sample, names of those have been written above from whom there is good reason to believe that response will be given

quickly. Permission is also granted to turn to other *Mujaazeen* with whom one has *munaasabat* [congeniality]. End.

Ashraf Ali, Thanabawan

13.37 Departure for Lucknow

Treatment continued thereafter by Hakeem Khaleel Ahmad Saheb Saharanpuri and Hakeem Muhammad Mustafa Saheb Meerathi. The advice of Doctor Abdus Samad Saheb Kanpuri was also implemented. However, the benefit of their treatment did not surpass its limit of benefit and in view of none being aware of the treatment for high blood pressure, Hazrat therefore resolved to go to Lucknow for treatment upon the *mashwarah* of sincere friends. There was a medical college and a tibbiyya college there. Thus both types of treatment – conventional and herbal – could easily be received.

Thus on the 10th of August 1938 AD after a full fifteen days, Hazrat together with his family, Molvi Shabbeer Ali Saheb, Molvi Jameel Ahmad Saheb and their wives and daughters left for Saharanpur en route to Lucknow. Peer Jee Zafar Ahmad Saheb, Deputy Ali Sajjaad Saheb and Moulana Abdul Baari Saheb Nadwi accompanied by their wives and children also set out on this journey. After a day's stay in Saharanpur, on the 11th of August they reached Lucknow on the Toofaan Express.

13.38 The Stay in Lucknow

In Molvi Ganj he stayed at the home of Molvi Muhammad Hasan Saheb, the owner of *Anwaar Book Depot Lucknow*. Prior arrangements had already been made for this stay. There *Shifaa-ul Mulk*, Hakeem Abdul Majeed Saheb commenced Hazrat's treatment taking the advice of Dr Abdul Majeed Saheb,

Professor of Lucknow Medical College. The work of preparing Hazrat's medicine exquisitely and conforming to his disposition was entrusted to Hakeem Samee'ullah Khan. He would prepare the medicine so exquisitely that the end product would make one feel to use it. Hazrat would often say:

"Looking at this exquisiteness I feel like using this medicine even without necessity."

Even during his stay in Lucknow crowds of people eager to catch a gaze of him would gather. Hazrat then put up an important notice outside his apartment upon the advice of his health practitioners. The contents were:

"Those with whom I have a former close relationship, I will meet and speak to them. My apologies to others because I have stopped free meetings. Therefore, do not wait at the door and cause problems. This will hurt me. Furthermore, it is nugatory of muhabbat."

Special visitors, in consequence, would gather outside from nine o'clock to eleven o'clock and again late in the afternoon at five o'clock for an hour. Whoever Hazrat wished to call inside he would call. Those deprived would give preference to Hazrat's wish and leave peacefully.

Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb writes:

"Hazrat's arrangements in even this period of sickness was worthy of observing. Meeting times were specified. For every visitor, taking permission was necessary. In every minor and major thing there was order and arrangement. In spite of his ailment his Majlis was as beneficial as ever. Regarding the morning Majlis, it could be said that it was confined to close and special people."

The afternoon Majlis was sort of open. Words of hikmat and ma'rifat rained down, just as in Thanabawan.”
(Hakeemul Ummat, pp. 532, 535)

When the treatment here started to take effect and he started to regain his health then he would as a practice, go to *Masjid-e-Khawaas* for Asr Namaaz. He would remain there till Maghrib. He would peruse the correspondence there, take his medicine there and keep the audience absorbed and spellbound with his *Malfoozaat*. Moulana Abdul Baari Saheb Nadwi and Dr Abdul Ali Saheb, the *Naazim of Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow* would attend the *Majaalis* almost daily. If due to some unforeseen circumstance they were unable to attend any *Majlis*, they would be deeply grieved.

During this period from far and wide eminent Ulama, lords, noblemen and attorneys would constantly pay visits to him. Among them the names of Moulana Sayyid Sulaiman Saheb Nadwi, Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob, Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi, Moulana Jamaal Mia Saheb the son of Moulana Abdul Baari Farangi Mahalli, Nawab Hafiz Ahmad Sa'eed Khan Saheb Chatari, Nawab Jamshed Ali Khan Saheb Baghpat and Nawab Muhammad Isma'eel Khan Saheb Barrister of Meerath are worthy of mention.

Once he felt well he even accepted the invitations of close acquaintances. To others he would go upon receiving an invitation, however, to Dr Abdul Ali Saheb, *Naazim Nadwatul Ulama* he went even without the latter's request, purely out of friendship and special feeling. This was two days before he left Lucknow. During this time he also went to Kanpur.

Upon the consultation of *Shifaa-ul Mulk*, Hakeem Abdul Majeed he departed from Lucknow on the 20th of September 1938 AD and the people of Lucknow bid him farewell. Their condition at the time of his departure is vividly portrayed in this poem:

ہر کہ در محفل تو آمد خنداں آمد

ہر کہ از بزم تو برخاستہ گریاں برخواست

Whoever comes to your gathering comes cheerful

Whoever you depart from is left grieving

Through the earnest efforts of Hakeem Shifaa-ul Mulk, Hakeem Abdul Majeed Saheb and through the Grace of Allah Ta'ala he reached Thanabawan in good health, cheerful and joyous.

13.39 Full Acceptance

In 1940 and 1941 AD he happened to go to Lucknow again for treatment. On each occasion the people of Lucknow welcomed him with full enthusiasm, sincerity and love. They left no stone unturned in providing him with comfort and hospitality. Painting a portrait of this extraordinary acceptance and appreciation Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi writes:

“Hazrat’s coming was not the coming of some statesman. Neither were posters published, nor notices distributed, nor ceremonious speeches given, nor were people canvassed to sing his name in chorus and nor were headlines splashed in local papers of his arrival. In spite of all this, a festival of creation would take place morning and afternoon. Some would come to benefit from his blessed statements; some would rush to make musaafahah

and kiss his hands and some would be drawn to ziyaarat simply out of eagerness.

The distinct form of attraction, being loved and being the centre of attraction which is found in the Awliya-Ullah, we saw with our own eyes. And we saw this repeatedly, in '38 AD as well as in '40 AD and '41 AD when Hazrat had become very much indisposed. He had become extremely lean and the effects of weakness and old-age were much apparent on him.” (Hakeemul Ummat, p. 571)

14. Travel Formalities

14.1 Preparation for Travel

Hazrat Thanwi would say:

“It is my habit to quickly discharge whatever work there is to be done so that it is off my shoulders.”

On the basis of this rule, before travelling he would scrutinize all the circumstances of every related thing, the purpose of the journey, distance and period. Thereafter he would wrap up all those essential works which he was engaged in day and night and which were to be affected, obviously, due to travel. This was done in order that no left over work impeded the departure of the journey. Days before departure, he would arrange for the means of his travel. If there was no means of conveyance he would go by foot.

14.2 Luggage

A day before his departure he would pack necessary luggage so that there was no difficulty at the last moment and something

was not forgotten. Normally his luggage for winter would be: bedding which would include a bed sheet, shawl, blanket of soft colourful texture and a cap with ear-flaps and a string, which would be worn at night whilst sleeping and in the morning until he was complete with necessities, wudhu, etc. Thereafter he would tie a turban.

In his luggage he would have a bag made of thick cloth in which there would be an extra pair of shoes which he would use for walks. The other pair of shoes would be worn on all other occasions. He would keep some bedding, tied with leather straps.

He would also have a leather bag on which the name *Muhammad Ashraf Ali* was engraved. Due to this he would be obliged to show respect to even the bag and as far as possible he would not leave it down on the ground or in an inappropriate place.

In the bag there would be two or three sets of clothes, a copy of *Munaajaat-e-Maqbool* and other sheets of paper.

He would keep a small handbag in which miscellaneous items such as Miswaak, watch, medicine if necessary, lota, surma, a packet of letters, two cups – one for drinking water and one for drinking medicine – and if necessary he would also take along road food.

He was not in the habit of keeping a watch in his hand. He would rather keep it in a paan-type metal box in his handbag. At night he would keep it at his bedside.

If there was a need to take food along he would take *puris*,¹⁴ some *chapaatis*¹⁵ and *aalu qeemah curry*¹⁶. This was the desired food of Hazrat during travel.

14.3 Baggage Checking

He placed great care on inspection of baggage. When alighting at a station, first of all he would count his luggage. He would be restless until it was entrusted to someone in particular. He would not leave things disorderly with just anyone carrying anything. Only one or two people were given the responsibility of looking after the luggage. Only then would he make *musaafahah*, etc. When reaching his accommodation too he would firstly inspect the luggage. Putting the baggage in an appropriate place he would thereafter ask where the toilet was so that no problems arose when necessary to go to the toilet and particularly at night.

14.4 Handling Fees

Before the porters could carry the luggage he would settle their fee. Only after agreeing on a price would he allow them to pick it up. He would consider the stipulated fee of the Railways to be impermissible, saying:

“Regulation is of no bearing. Pleasing the labourer is essential.”

14.5 Paying the Overweight Duty

He would not take along anything without paying duty for overweight luggage. If a slight doubt occurred to him about

¹⁴ A puffed soft fried roti

¹⁵ Dry unleavened bread

¹⁶ Potato and mince curry

anything being overweight then he would immediately ask for it to be weighed and he would pay the overweight duty.

He was so particular with this that once travelling to Saharanpur he had some sugarcane. When he sought to weigh it to determine the amount payable no one was prepared to weigh. Even the non-Muslim workers said: *“Hazrat! Take it like that. There is no need to weigh it. We will notify the guard.”*

Hazrat asked: *“Where is the guard going till?”*

They replied: *“Till Ghaziabad.”*

Hazrat asked: *“From Ghaziabad onwards what’s going to happen?”*

They replied: *“He will tell the next guard who will take it to Kanpur where your journey ends.”*

Hazrat said: *“No! That is not the end of it. Further on there is another journey; a journey to the Akhirat. What arrangements have been made for that?”*

Listening to this all were silenced. Among them was one educated Hindu Babu [railway official]. He remarked:

“In this day and age too there are such devout servants of Allah who are cautious, out of fear for Allah.”

14.6 Paying the Travel Fare

On journey he was furthermore very cautious not to travel without a ticket and without paying the travel fee. Otherwise he would not travel at all and nor would he allow anyone to do so.

Once, a student of Deen came to visit Hazrat in Thanabawan. At that time Hazrat was ready to leave on journey. The student

spoke to the guard and boarded the train without a ticket due to scarcity of time. At the next station, Nanota, he wanted to give the guard the fare. The guard said: *“It’s a small fare. Leave it, you are poor.”*

The student came to Hazrat and explained the whole episode. Hazrat replied:

“The guard is merely an employee of the Railway Company. He is not the owner of the Railways. Therefore, the fare until here is obligatory upon you. Buy a ticket equivalent to the fare and tear it so that the right of the company is discharged and you will be acquitted from the right of Allah Ta’ala’s servants.”

In the compartment there was an English educated Aryan preacher sitting. After hearing the whole conversation he said:

“I was happy that he [the guard] took pity on a poor person. After listening to your [i.e. Hazrat Thanwi’s] talk I realized that my joy was unethical.”

14.7 Trust of the Railways

On the basis of the foregoing the trust of Railway Personnel in Hazrat and Hazrat’s devotees increased so much that whenever they saw any person travelling to Thanabawan with upright features they would not inspect his ticket or compel him to weigh his baggage and nor would they stop and harass him. With confidence they would say:

“He is going to the Moulana of Thanabawan. People going there neither travel without a ticket and nor do they board the train without weighing their baggage.”

14.8 Keeping a Travelling Companion

Hazrat Thanwi states:

“It is my practice that when I travel I take along with me just one person. I notify the inviter beforehand of this so that he is not burdened with anyone else’s load, besides me and that person.”

14.9 Not Burdening the Host

Hazrat continues:

“Then on the way if others join in out of muhabbat I tell them clearly: ‘Make your own arrangements. Where I am accommodated you will not be accommodated. Rather, you will have to book in at a guest house, etc. wherever you are at ease. Your food arrangements should be made from the bazaar. You may come in the morning and afternoon to meet me. In this way the host will not find out that you are with me. Thereafter, if he invites you out of his own accord then take a look at your relationship with him and either accept the invitation or refuse.

Don’t come uninvited for meals holding onto me. If the host says to me: ‘I wish to invite these companions of yours,’ I will straightforwardly respond: ‘There is no one with me. I never called anyone. If you wish to invite them then do so personally. Act purely on the basis of your relationship with him. The favour will not be rendered to me. I do not wish to tell them.’

This is my general habit. Yes if someone is very sincere then on such occasions I do not carry out this rule.”
(Eawaa-ul Yataamaa, p.26)

14.10 Not Incurring Favours

Similarly, Hazrat says:

“The Railway Station personnel of Thanabawan, the guards, etc. said on many occasions before the new station was built that they will drop me by the town. However, I refused for three reasons:

1. To avoid taking favours

2. To avoid being distinguished, as I will stand out in the eyes of others. People will say: ‘Who is this for whom the train has stopped out of station.’

3. And the fare for that distance will not be calculated.”

(Khairul Uboor, p. 7)

14.11 Prior Arrangements for a Travel Guide

Once, Hazrat was called somewhere. According to the arrangement when Hazrat alighted at the station he found that there was no one present who could guide him to his intended destination. He, therefore, returned from the station home on another train. Thereafter he made a rule:

“It is the responsibility of the inviters to send their man to accompany me. He should remain continuously with me so that no problem arises anywhere. But that person should not be so esteemed that when there is a need to take work from him his status stands as a barrier. He should not be one who is served, rather one who serves. Or he should be a friend with whom there are no formalities.”

By adopting this practice Hazrat would receive much comfort in his travels.

14.12 Simplicity of Travel Dress

Hazrat Thanwi was not in the habit of wearing any special dress for journeys; neither a cloak, nor a turban; only a kurta, trouser and topi. Whatever he wore at home he would wear on journey.

Once he was ready to leave on a journey dressed in his normal attire when Bari Peerani Sahebah [his elder wife] suggested: *“Wear a new set of clothing.”*

Hazrat enquired: *“Why? Must I show off to anyone?”*

She replied: *“This is not what I mean. The benefit I see is that if you travel in such clothes [i.e. smart and new] your devotees will be at rest looking at you and they will say: ‘Masha Allah! Hazrat is well to do. He is not poverty stricken.’ If they see you in a pitiable condition they will think that you are poor. Then thoughts of them presenting gifts will occur to them which could have been avoided.”*

Hazrat replied: *“Truly, that is a good intention.”*

Notwithstanding the fair suggestion his natural inclination remained dominant and in journeys he continued to utilize the simple dress of home.

14.13 The Fruits of Simplicity

Since he was not in the habit of travelling in a grand and pompous way as that of political leaders and big name Molvis, and instead he would travel like an ordinary traveller, strange and amazing episodes would therefore be encountered often.

Once, upon returning to Thanabawan he was sitting with a basket in front of him waiting for the train at Saharanpur Station. In the basket was Indian celery which someone gave to him as *hadyah*. The Indian celery of Saharanpur is very popular. One villager passing by asked: “*How much are you selling the celery for?*” Hazrat simply replied: “*These are not for sale.*”

Similarly, once he was returning from Panipat. Along with him was only one acquaintance. Like the other *musaafirs* he was sitting in a compartment. In the same compartment a Punjabi was travelling. He asked Hazrat: “*Where do you reside?*” Hazrat replied: “*Thanabawan.*”

When the Punjabi heard the name of Thanabawan he eagerly asked: “*Do you know Moulana Ashraf Ali Saheb?*” Hazrat replied: “*My name is Ashraf Ali.*”

The Punjabi was confused. He scrutinized Hazrat from top to bottom. He had heard of Hazrat’s fame and he had read of Hazrat’s quality writings. He thus formulated a unique portrait of Hazrat – with a flowing robe, black woollen cloak, fine tunic, and surrounded by aides. He therefore, was not convinced and repeated his question: “*Are you really Moulana Ashraf Ali Saheb?*”

Hazrat replied: “*Does he possess some peculiar features which you cannot fit on me?*”

Although he fell silent upon this but he was not satisfied. His doubt lingered on. To remove the doubt he tested Hazrat with an academic question. After receiving a logical and detailed answer he then believed it to be true. Now he confronted Hazrat

with great honour and respect. At the station he off-loaded Hazrat's luggage. He made *musaafahah* and was thrilled to have met Hazrat Thanwi.

14.14 Scheduled Discharge of Namaaz on Safar

Always on journey he would be regular with Namaaz and, *Bifadhlihi Ta'ala*, he never experienced any problem in this regard. In fact, many a time on the train Namaaz would be read with sizeable congregations. Notwithstanding the number of passengers in Hazrat's compartment, there would frequently be place available and the journey would be undertaken with comfort.

On journey he would obviously make *qasr* of Namaaz. Sometimes he would forgo the *Sunnats* due to lack of time and he would say:

"On journey the status of a Sunnat Namaaz is that of a Nafl. In a case of necessity it is permissible to completely forgo it. Not to avail oneself of Shar'i concessions when the occasion necessitates is to needlessly put strain upon oneself. This is, in a way, ungratefulness to Allah Ta'ala."

14.15 Travel Occupation

He would arrange for all his mail to be sent to him for the duration of his travel. He would respond to all correspondents so that no one is left in anxiety. Furthermore, those visitors who came [to Thanabawan] during Hazrat's absence would be informed. Thus, he would predominantly be occupied on train journeys answering correspondence, and where time was available, writing *Kitaabs*. Compilation of *Kitaabs* would continue on his travels and for this he would at times take along an assistant and a calligrapher.

14.16 Strict Adherence to the Programme

Whatever programme schedule he drew up for his journey he would rigidly adhere to it. He would not change it for the sake of anyone.

Once he was returning to Thanabawan from Kanpur. On the way a *khaadim* pleaded to Hazrat to stop for a day in Khurja. Hazrat replied:

“I have already written for transport from Muzaffar Nagar. If I do not arrive on time there will be immense confusion. Bifadhlihi Ta’ala, to this day it has not happened that I did not arrive as promised.”

The *khaadim* said: “I will send a telegram,” to which Hazrat replied:

“Then too, it will be disorderly as the transport will be a hired one and who knows whether it will wait or not? Then will I get other transport or not? Whatever the case, nothing but confusion will arise. Furthermore, even upon notice in appropriate time, there will surely be some sort of misery and regret. Yes, if you told me before I wrote the letter then I would have scheduled my programme accordingly. This strict adherence to schedule is out of consideration for others, not for my own sake.”

14.17 Preference to Third Class

In view of his utter simplicity he neither fancied nor was he accustomed to sitting in higher classes. Typically he would prefer travelling third class and explaining the reason he says:

“The enjoyment and comfort found in third class, where is that in the upper classes? This is due to the fact that third class travellers go out of their way for us, whereas second

and first class travellers act supercilious. We, therefore, have to consider them. One cannot joke and speak freely with them.

When he travelled along with his seniors to Rampur for a debate with the Qaadiyaanis everyone had second class tickets. However, they saw a compartment on the train empty and hence all sat in it. Someone said: *“This is third class.”* Hazrat replied:

“Ease is the objective and we have found this compartment empty. Where can there be more ease in the inter-class then.”

All thus sat in that compartment and the journey went comfortably.

14.18 In Search of Comfort

To come to the point, even on journey he would always be on the lookout for comfort. He would say:

“I am obsessed with comfort. And for others too I choose the same.”

Therefore, he would travel on the class which he saw to be most comfortable.

Leave alone higher stages of this world, his gaze was not even on the higher stages of the Aakhirat. He would say:

“I say on oath that I never craved for high stages; receiving a high stage in Jannat. I am perfectly happy and satisfied at just being saved from the chastisement of the Aakhirat, even if that means only receiving a place where shoes are kept in Jannat. If punishment is waived, that is a great thing in itself.” (Al- Khudhoo’, p.19)

14.19 Unseen Arrangements for Comfort

As he did not travel out of personal interest, rather for service to the creation of Allah Ta'ala and for their prosperity, Allah Ta'ala therefore endowed him with such resolve and power that lengthy travels would not even tire him resulting in a breakdown of essential duties. Often it would be seen that he would be travelling the entire night in which he would receive a token of sleep, yet in the morning he would deliver a lively *wa'z* for hours standing. Then he would take care of the mail assembled. Whereas travelling companions would be finished due to lack of sleep. That would not hinder Hazrat much however, through the grace of Allah Ta'ala, and he would remain engrossed in speeches, talks and answering correspondence.

If a slight problem had to occur anywhere then from the Unseen arrangements would be set into motion. An episode of this transpired when Hazrat was bringing Choti Peerani Sahebah back from Bombay [Mumbai] after her Haj. Hazrat's step-daughter who was still very young at that time became completely restless due to severe thirst. The station was yet far. The matter worsened. What was to be done? All at once the train came to a stop at such a place where beneath a river flowed. A bucket was lowered and water brought up. The young girl was thus given water to quench her burning thirst. All travelling companions were left gaping at this Divine Bounty.

14.20 Easy Musaafahah

Wherever Hazrat would present his honourable self, enthusiasts would flock from everywhere to see him. Stations would be so crowded at times of his arrival and departure that there would be hardly any place to move. Everyone's wish would be to

make *musaafahah* as far as possible. For their ease Hazrat would stretch out both his hands in opposite directions and people would shake and kiss his hand. Hazrat would cast his gaze all around. This would continue until the train was in full motion.

14.21 No Hadyah on Journey

On journey he would not accept *hadyah* from anyone. He would not transgress this practice in any situation. Befittingly and beautifully he would turn down the gift.

Prior agreement with the Nawab of Dhaka had been made that there would be no sort of exchange of gifts, either in cash or kind. The Nawab Saheb, however, was on the lookout to render some sort of *monetary khidmat* or the other. The day when Hazrat taught the Nawab's little daughter the opening verses of the Qur'aan the Nawab Saheb requested Hazrat in a note:

"We have a time-honoured tradition in our family to serve the teacher of Bismillah with cash money. If this tradition is not upheld it will be a big shame on me. I do hope that my shame will not be tolerated and permission will be granted to present some hadyah."

Hazrat responded:

"An easy way to avoid shame is that I take from you in front of others and in privacy I return it. In this manner your status will remain intact and my interests will be preserved. And I promise you that I will not inform anyone lifelong of this return."

The Nawab Saheb could not accept this and he humbly said:

“Hazrat! I sacrifice my status at the altar of your interest.”

14.22 Taking Lesson from Travels

He would furthermore take lesson from travel. Citing travel as an example he would thought-provokingly say to others:

“Frequently the thought occurs to me during travel that: ‘O Nafs! Essential things are just this much which I kept with on journey – a few sets of clothing, bedding and a water jug in the hand.’

It is two months now that I am on journey and there has been no need for those things which crowd the house. In fact, during travel when some things turn out unessential then they are sent home. But what must I do! I try hard to abstain from collecting a variety of things but Haq Ta’ala sends a lot to me. He puts it in the hearts of my friends and acquaintances. Hence they send all those things which, if I return, then they will feel bad. And if I do not return then I feel the load. For this reason I scrutinize my possessions from time to time and dispense with unessential items.”
(Al-Israaf, no.43)

15. Bai’t and Istifaadhah

15.1 Preliminaries to the Bounty

In the foregoing pages it has been evidently seen that, *Bifadhlihi Ta’ala*, from a home of parents despondent of offspring a chosen Buzrug – Hazrat Thanwi – was born, through the *du’aa* of a Buzrug. Hazrat’s greatness was even apparent in his childhood. Once he crossed the border of childhood, he set foot

on the plains of academic knowledge and received Asaatizah who were the *Ghazaalis and Raazis* of the time. Not only were they experts and unmatched in Islamic arts and sciences, they were masters of spiritualism and accomplished Shaikhs.

In this way, the attraction of the *Kaamileen* [Spiritual Masters] and the spiritual gaze of the *Buzrugs* engulfed him. By virtue of this, the effects of:

انجذاب الی الحق اور انقطاع عن الخلق

“Drawing close to Haq Ta’ala and dissociating from people,” magnified.

It appears that from the onset his academic and spiritual nurturing was entrusted to such Buzrugs who were themselves engrossed in service to the Deen. They were preparing him for the task of reforming the Ummat and reviving the Deen. All this was, however, mere preliminaries.

15.2 Murabbiy-e-Baatin

Completion and perfection [of his academic and spiritual potential], however, Haq Ta’ala entrusted to such a Buzrug who was seated a thousand miles from Thanabawan and over several oceans, at the *Baitullah*, and who was observing every movement and action of Hazrat through his *intuitive telescope*. This was the Shaikh of Arabia and the rest of the world, the one accomplished in *Shariat and Tareeqat*, the retreat of Ulama and Mashaaikh, the Imaam of Tasawwuf, the model of the predecessors, the Junaaid of the time and Shibli of the age, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Thanwi Chishti Saabiri Muhaajir-e-Makki (Quddisa sirruhul azeez).

Hazrat Thanwi was yet acquiring academic education at Madrasah when Hazrat Haji Saheb, prompted by signs from the Unseen, sent a message to Hazrat Thanwi's honourable father that when he comes for Haj he should bring along his eldest son. This was, despite the fact that Hazrat Haji Saheb migrated from Hindustan and took up honourable residence in Makkah Mu'azzamah even before the birth of Hazrat Thanwi. Furthermore, no such episode apparently transpired by virtue of which Hazrat's fame could have reached Makkah Mu'azzamah.

15.3 Yearning for Bai't

A heart finds inroads to a heart. After all, the gaze which focused on him from Makkah Mu'azzamah had to produce its effect. It thus manifested itself in this way that Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaihi) the *Grand Khaleefah* of Hazrat Haji Saheb went to Madrasah Deoband for some work. Partly due to having heard of his name and fame and partly due to the rays of his Shaikh's *Anwaar* [spiritual effulgence] reflecting from his [Moulana Gangohi's] mirror-like heart onto him [Hazrat Thanwi], Hazrat ran to him for *musaafahah* instinctively upon seeing him.

Bricks for constructing the Madrasah's new wall were laying in the way. Out of haste and vigour he thrust himself forward and started to jump and climb over the bricks instead of taking a detour for the pathway. At one spot his feet slipped and he was about to fall. Hazrat Gangohi stepped forward and held him, thus saving him from falling. Someone said in all truth:

مزه توجہ ہے کہ گرتوں کو تھام لے ساقی

Pleasure is when the Beloved grabs hold of the stumbling Lover

As soon as that *Cupbearer of Ma'rifat* [Repository of the Mysteries of Allah Ta'ala] grabbed hold of that *Tareeqat-thirsty* one he gave him such *drops of ma'rifat* to drink merely through eye-contact that Hazrat Thanwi uttered: “*Please make be bai't.*” Whereas, in Hazrat's words:

“At that stage I had no idea what the nature and purpose of bai't was. Moulana, however, refused to take bai't on the basis of engagement with the path of spiritual purification during student days being an impediment to one's academic studies. But then right before me he accepted the bai't of one of my co-students upon his request.”

Although this hurt the delicate heart of Hazrat Thanwi, nevertheless he took it to be for some reason or the other and kept quiet. That reason was nothing other than Moulana Gangohi watching with the *eye of intuition* that “*he is destined to be my brother peer*”. How then could he have made him a *mureed*? Otherwise, just as he held him from falling, what excuse was there for not uniting his heart with him?

It is said:

شنیدہ کے بودمانند دیدہ

Seeing is better than hearing

Hazrat had only heard of the reputation of Haji Saheb. He had not seen with his own eyes that *Qutbul Irshaad*. Hence, in 1299 Hijri when Moulana Gangohi was departing for his third blessed Haj, Hazrat wrote a letter to Haji Saheb sending it with Moulana Gangohi. The gist of the letter was: “*Please intercede on my behalf for Moulana to make me bai't.*” However:

تشنگاں گر آب جویند از جہاں

آب ہم جوید بہ عالم تشنگاں

*If thirsty people seek water from the world,
Water will also seek the thirsty ones of the world.*

15.4 Bai't in Absentia

After Hazrat Haji Saheb confided with Moulana Gangohi about the letter he [Hazrat Haji Saheb] took the *bai't* from Hazrat Thanwi where he was seated, in Hazrat's absence. At that time Hazrat's age was 19.

15.5 Voyage of Haj

After graduating, at the end of Safar 1301 Hijri, Hazrat Thanwi went to Kanpur. Although his *bai't in absentia* took place in 1299 Hijri, however, since there was a need for further spiritual upliftment prior to taking the seat of teaching, his honourable father took him along for Haj in Shawwaal according to the wish of Haji Saheb.

They had just reached Ghaziabad Station when an acquaintance of his honourable father, a district superintendent there told them:

"Presently there is a storm out at sea. Continuous reports are coming of the storm. Are you going to travel in such conditions?"

He said this much to which Hazrat's father replied:

"Bhai! We have set out already. Make du'aa. Allah Ta'ala is our protector."

On the other side Hazrat became emotional and replied:

چه غم دیوار امت را که باشد چو تنو پستیباں
چه باک از موج بحر آنرا که دارد نوح کشتیباں

What grief does the structure of the Ummat have with a Pillar like you?

What fear of ocean waves does that person have whose Captain is Nooh?

They continued with their journey. That lover [Hazrat Thanwi] received a ship befittingly designated *Haidari*; *Haidar* being the title of the *Imaam of Tareeqat* [viz. Hazrat Ali Radhiyallahu anhu].

Just as Hazrat's feelings were raging like a storm and crashing like waves, the same could be seen out in the ocean. The small vessel bore the brunt of the raging waters. The waves splashed on board drenching the passengers and luggage.

The Hujjaaj on board resorted to *du'aa*. Seeing them engrossed in *du'aa* some seamen uttered blasphemy, saying that, *Na'oothubillah*, what is Allah going to do now? Hazrat would afterwards say:

"Since we were going in the Path of Allah Ta'ala, therefore Alhamdulillah, despite the possibility of sinking there was absolutely no dread or consternation in my heart. Bifadhlihi Ta'ala, the ship reached its destination safely and we alighted on safe ground in complete wellbeing."

15.6 Respect for Makkah Mu'azzamah

Stepping onto the soil of Makkah he was overwhelmed with respect and awe for that **Pure Land and Holy Haram**.

When his gaze first fell on the **Baitullah** such an ecstatic and electric condition overcame him that he would say:

“Never in my entire life did such a condition befall me.”

15.7 Longing of the Murshid

Hazrat Thanwi's arrival gave Hazrat Haji Saheb inner joy. In light of this he, out of his own accord, said to Hazrat after completion of Haj and *Ziyaarat* of Madinah: *“Stay with me for six months.”*

Hazrat sought permission for this from his honourable father. However, out of parental care he refused permission for this separation. When Hazrat regretfully informed Hazrat Haji Saheb, Hazrat Haji Saheb consoled Hazrat saying:

“Obedience to your father comes first. For now carry on. We'll see again.”

15.8 Bai't by Hand

Although Hazrat Haji Saheb honoured him with *bai't* through correspondence and *in absentia* even before the Haj, nevertheless he granted him the honour of *bai't by hand* now that he was present in person.

When Hazrat Haji Saheb was taking *bai't* from devotees he said to Hazrat's honourable father:

“Mia Abdul Haq! You also said that you wish to become mureed. Come! You also come.”

Out of straight forwardness he replied:

“Err Hazrat, err. I am not ready to be mureed. I will afterwards.”

Saying that he bought a tray of sweetmeats, a beautiful turban and with a fifty rupee note on top he respectfully presented it saying: *“Make me bai’t now.”*

Bearing in mind his sincerity, Hazrat Haji Saheb accepted the *hadyah* and took *bai’t* from him. In this manner, father and son, both became *bai’t* and returned to their native country.

In 1302 Hijri, after returning, Hazrat Thanwi became engrossed in teaching, educating, lecturing and propagating. This academic occupation of his, continued up to 1307 Hijri. Simultaneously he would engage in *zikr and shaghl* as well.

Hazrat Thanwi was enthusiastic of the path of spirituality from a young age and after *bai’t*, that is from the year 1299 Hijri he became occupied in *zikr and shaghl*. The difficulty present, however, was that he was not able to derive spiritual benefit from his Shaikh at that time due to the Shaikh being seated over many oceans, thousands of miles away in Makkah Mu’azzamah. Also being separated was becoming unbearable.

Haq Ta’ala therefore created the means for the fulfilment of his honest search in this way that his maternal uncle, Peer Jee Imdaad Ali (Rahmatullahi alaih) stopped over at Kanpur on his way home from Hyderabad. He was among the *Awliya* that had self-annihilated themselves. He was a person packed with emotion and outspoken. In fact, he was a *durwaish* given to

spiritual states. His nature was playful and instinctive. He was immensely bold and carefree. Apart from being regular with *Salaat and Saum* he had conducted such rigorous spiritual exercises and self-control practices in search of the *Real Object* that fluid from the cerebrum would flow down his nose. His ecstasy and emotion was so intense that just by sitting with him a sort of flame was ignited in the heart and one would start to detest the world and become horrified with contacts.

Taking into consideration his spiritual state he did not stay over at his sober nephew. He booked in at a traveller's inn and sent a message:

"If you do not regard it to be in conflict with your status then meet me at the traveller's inn."

This was in spite of the fact that due to his eminence and family relationship he could go to Hazrat and stay there. However, respect for *Ilm* was a barrier. [In other words, since his emotions and practices sometimes transgressed the limits of the Shariat, which Hazrat Thanwi was a die-hard follower of, he therefore honoured Hazrat's *Ilm* and obedience to the Shariat and chose not to put Hazrat under pressure.] He therefore did not go straight to Hazrat.

Hazrat on the other hand could not tolerate him staying at the traveller's inn and therefore forced him to come home. Upon this Peer Jee Imdaad Ali Saheb said:

"Mia! You are an Aalim who practices on his knowledge. Don't take me with you. Onlookers will say: 'He has brought some lecher and rake to his home.'"

Hazrat, however, refused to give in and took him home.

His fiery talk and arousing speech fanned that fire which was smouldering in Hazrat's heart from student days. In view of the agitation in the heart of Hazrat Thanwi and his dire search, and also looking at the ocean-barrier between him and his Peer and Murshid, he felt helpless and made *rujoo* ' to Peer Jee. [*Rujoo*': turning to another Shaikh for spiritual guidance.]

15.9 Notification of Rujoo'

Although Hazrat Thanwi's bond of *bai't* had been directly set up with Hazrat Haji Saheb, however, the inner faith which developed in Hazrat Haji Saheb's *Grand Khaleefah*, Moulana Gangohi remained firm as ever. This was partly due to Moulana Gangohi's eminence, partly due to him being Hazrat Haji Saheb's deputy and partly due to grabbing hold of a falling one. Hazrat Thanwi, therefore, regarded him to be like a *Murshid* [Spiritual Guide].

Whenever he was faced with any problem – external or internal, academic or practical – he would refer to Moulana Gangohi just as any *mureed* without formalities. Moulana too would out of affection always treat him as a *mureed* and out of respect approach him as a *peer bhai*.

In view of that bond of giving and taking spiritual grace with Moulana Gangohi and overwhelmed by the emotions of *Ishq* [Divine-Passion], instead of his Shaikh he informed his Shaikh's *Khaleefa-e-A'zam*, Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi alaih) of his *rujoo* ' to his maternal uncle Peer Jee Imdaad Ali (Rahmatullahi alaih). However, concealing the letter from the unenlightened public he wrote the letter in Arabic. The translation is reproduced hereunder:

“O Moulana! I swear by Allah Ta'ala that I was in due course drowned in the oceans of wonder and quest for Allah. I was searching for a person to deliver me from this difficulty and worry. All of a sudden, without my intention and will, a caller called out to me: ‘Place your hand in my hand. I will rescue you from this raging ocean. Since a drowning person clutches at even a straw because of his worry and anxiety, and I was displaced from my beloved, my comforter and my physician in such a manner that an ocean stood between us, I therefore said Labbaik to the call of the caller and placed my hand in his hand. Notwithstanding this, Bihamdillah, I never for even a day abandoned practice on the statement of the Akaabir:

خُذْ مَا صَفَا وَدَعْ مَا كَدَّرَ

‘Grab hold of that which is clear and shun that which is contaminated’.”

15.10 Result of the Rujoo’

The result of making *rujoo’* to such a vibrant and ecstatic person as Hazrat Peer Jee was that the *flames of ishq* intensified. Now he became more engrossed in *zikr and shaghl* and this changed Hazrat’s colours altogether. He buried all desires of worldly connections. His condition was transmitted to others and a revolution among people came about through him.

Hazrat sent a letter to Hazrat Haji Saheb seeking *mashwarah* over giving up employment. Although his yearning for *Wusool Ilallah* [Union with Allah Ta'ala] was on the increase, however, Hazrat Haji Saheb for the sake of benevolence to the creation of Allah Ta'ala prohibited him from leaving employment. In his honourable letter of 22nd Muharram 1308 Hijri he thus writes:

“The letter of your distinguished self has been received bringing joy to me. Listening to your condition of ever-increasing vibrancy and enthusiasm has made me immensely pleased. May Haq Ta’ala grant greater barkat. Delivering Deeni-grace to the creation of Allah Ta’ala is the shortest path to Wusool Ilallah.”

In this way not only did he stop Hazrat from severing ties with creation, he explained the reality of the Path thus distinguishing and determining the *Path of the Ahlullah* from the *errant soofis*. That is, for us departure from the **Kitaabullah and Sunnah** and evasion of the Shariah is not permissible. In fact, the means of *Wusool Ilallah* is simply living in this world and serving the Deen of Allah Ta’ala.

15.11 Second Voyage of Haj

In accordance to the instruction of his Shaikh, Hazrat Thanwi continued with his life of teaching and education. However that searing heat of Divine Love which was somewhat put under control through the spiritual gaze and effect of Hazrat Peer Jee, in view of not being extinguished, ignited again. As a result he started to become unsettled. Furthermore the touching words of Hazrat Haji Saheb: *“Mia Ashraf Ali! Stay with me for six months,”* was like a shot of blood to his condition. Nor was there any impediment from his honourable father as he had passed away and thus the reason for him not staying with Hazrat Haji Saheb for the desired period was no more. Hence he took time off from teaching duties with the intention of spending six months in the service of Hazrat Haji Saheb, and after a full ten years he returned to Makkah Mu’azzamah.

Immediately upon entering the presence of Hazrat Haji Saheb all that agitation and pulsation changed to peace and tranquility of the heart, whilst the joy of Hazrat Haji Saheb by Hazrat's arrival can be compared to that of Hazrat Ya'qoob (Alaihis Salaam) at meeting Hazrat Yusuf (Alaihis Salaam).

15.12 Yearning from Both Sides

Upon reaching, at once Hazrat Thanwi became the centre of Hazrat Haji Saheb's special attention. In fact not just centre, they became united in soul, differentiated by body. The Shaikh was uneasy without the Mureed and the Mureed was restless without the Shaikh. When one would disappear from the sight of the other all the uneasiness started to show and as if the call was sounded of:

تو من شدی و من تو شدم

You have become mine and I have become yours.

The yearning for *ziyaarat* would compel Hazrat Thanwi to visit Hazrat Haji Saheb in his time of privacy. He would apologise: "*I am encroaching on Hazrat's privacy*". Hazrat's response would be:

خلوت از اغیار نه از یار

Privacy from a stranger; not from a friend.

When Hazrat Thanwi would visit holy sites Hazrat Haji Saheb would count the minutes anxiously waiting for him to return. Upon returning he would ask the reason for the delay. Hazrat would say: "*I went to visit the holy graves and historical sites.*" Contented with that Hazrat Haji Saheb would say:

جائے بزرگان بجائے بزرگان

The places of Buzrugs take the place of Buzrugs.

In short, taking and giving *faiz* commenced in this manner. Witnessing the exceptional compassion of Hazrat Haji Saheb [for Hazrat Thanwi] people would ask in astonishment: “*Who is this?*” He would reply: “*This is my grandson.*” Hazrat Haji Saheb was a distant relative of Hazrat Thanwi. Hazrat did not deem it necessary to investigate the relationship because the spiritual relationship between the two made the family relationship pale into oblivion.

15.13 Beginning of the Spiritual Upbringing

It was the heartfelt desire of Hazrat Haji Saheb that Hazrat Thanwi becomes his replica. Therefore, Hazrat Haji Saheb commenced Hazrat’s *tarbiyat* in the same manner as a father keeps his son with him all the time for the sake of nurturing him, and the son holds on to the hand of the father and is ready to go along with him all the time. For this reason, Hazrat Haji Saheb scrapped the rule of open and private times for him. Nevertheless, he would show much regard for maintaining the rank of Hazrat Thanwi. As Hazrat says:

“Hazrat Haji Saheb showed a lot of regard for his devotees. He ensured that no one looks down upon them. Hence he was very compassionate with the khuddaam and greatly attached to them.”

15.14 Teaching Gratitude

Out of love Hazrat Haji Saheb would address Hazrat Thanwi with the title *Mia Ashraf Ali*, and say:

“When drinking water, drink it cold so that Alhamdulillah springs out of every pore of your body. Otherwise the tongue will say Alhamdulillah, but the heart will not join in when saying Alhamdulillah.”

[Mia is a respectful title given to a young person. The English equivalent is: Master.]

15.15 The Effect of Passing on Spiritual Grace

The author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* writes:

“By virtue of Hazrat Haji Saheb’s dynamic passing on of spiritual grace on the one side, and on the other Hazrat Wala’s potential of taking spiritual grace, in a short span of time the two of them attained such a level of mutual compatibility that Hazrat Haji Saheb expressed intuitively: *‘You are entirely on my path.’*

As has been mentioned previously, whenever Hazrat Haji Saheb was afforded the opportunity to look or hear any writing or speech of Hazrat Wala, he would become pleased and say: *‘Jazaakumullah! You have elaborated what was in my heart.’*

If in the course of speaking on academic subtleties and perceptions of the Divine someone posed any question, then instead of answering personally he would indicate to Hazrat Wala saying: *‘Ask him [indicating to Hazrat Thanwi]. He understands well’*. Whereas Hazrat Wala would say: *‘Out of sheer adab I would always remain silent in front of Hazrat and only occasionally when there was a necessity would I speak.’*

This was the wonder of Hazrat Haji Saheb's inner perception. Through the *Noor* of his comprehension and the *Firaasat* of his Imaan he would read Hazrat's mind and grasp his intent.

15.16 The Flames of Jealousy

The excessive compassion, favour and attention of Hazrat Haji Saheb made others jealous of Hazrat Thanwi. They intensified their flames of jealousy when the bond between Shaikh and Mureed, out of sheer compatibility, reached the stage of:

من تو شدم تو من شدى

من تن شدم تو جاں شدى

*I have become you and you have become me
I have become your body and you have become my soul*

تا کس نگوید بعد ازیں

من دیگرم تو دیگرى

*So much so that no one will say after this
That I am someone and you are someone else*

Some attendants, purely out of a corrupt inside, endeavoured to get Hazrat Haji Saheb to see Hazrat in bad light.

Once, Hazrat Haji Saheb wished to write a letter of admonition to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan Marhoom. For this he asked his *khuddaam* for drafts to be prepared. Many attendants submitted their drafts. Hazrat Haji Saheb, however, did not take a liking for any of those. Then he asked Hazrat to submit a draft. His preparation was much liked by Hazrat Haji Saheb. The *haasideen*, however, played on shadowy fears that Sir Sayyid

will think that the letter was written at the gesture of Hazrat Moulana Gangohi and this will be detrimental to Moulana. *“Sending the letter, therefore, was not a wise move,”* they said.

Although Hazrat Haji Saheb persisted that the letter will prove beneficial, however, they made the most of Hazrat Haji Saheb’s gentle nature and managed to persuade him not to send the letter. Despite all that, Hazrat Haji Saheb would maintain:

“If that letter was sent then there was hope of Islaah, [in other words, Sir Sayyid reforming his errant ways and beliefs]. However, friends did not concur with the idea.”

Since it was not predestined for Sir Sayyid to benefit from that letter, the plan of the jealous ones succeeded.

15.17 The Letter to Sir Sayyid

[Sir Sayyid Ahmad was the founder of Aligarh University and the architect of modernism and secularism among Muslims in India.]

The draft of the letter is reproduced hereunder as published by Hazrat at the end of the treatise *Islaahul Khiyaal*:

To His Eminence, the Embodiment of Character and Grace
(May Allah Ta'ala keep him safe)

Assalaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakaatuh

Although I have not had the distinction of meeting you, however, the attributes of your character that have reached my ears have struck up a relationship in absentia and this has given me the courage to humbly put forward this epistle.

Do not pay attention to my anonymity and lack of mutual acquaintance. Rather, bear in mind:

اُنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَا قَالُ وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ قَالُ

Look at what is said; don't look at who said

Now, in the Name of Allah Ta'ala, I commence:

Respected Friend! Pondering over your efforts and works, it appears that your object is confined to two things, viz. the welfare of Islam and the welfare of Muslims.

The welfare of Islam has induced you to answer the objections raised against Islam by its opposition, while the welfare of Muslims has given urgency to promote Muslims to an elevated position from their present abysmal fall into degeneration.

No unbiased person can find fault in these two objectives. However, the matter to reflect is: What are the means and agencies to this? Determining this has exposed a difference of thought between yourself and the *Jamhoor Ahl-e-Islam* [overwhelming majority of Muslims].

The way to throw off objections from Islam you have formulated is not to criticize scientific findings. Rather, to bring Islam into conformity with it, in whichever way suitable.

This idea is simply backed by the argument that scientific findings conform to reality, and Islam does not oppose reality.

There is no scope for any Muslim not to accept the second proposition. The first proposition is debatable.

What proof is there of all modern research being correct? To illustrate this I wish to put forward some points:

1. A finding of philosophy is that the sky is not a physical body. Good grief! What proof of the correctness of this finding has been uncovered? If this colour which is apparent is not the sky, then much further than this, according to the Saheeh Hadeeth, at a distance of five hundred years the First Heaven is existent. Further ahead are the other Heavens. Now what categorical rational proof does this militate against?

2. Their research says that the *As-haab-e-Kahf*, *Yaajooj Maajooj* and *Jinnkind* which form part of Islamic Tenets of Faith, are non-existent. What is the proof for this? If it is said that in spite of searching, Jinn are not found or not seen, it will be countered that not finding or not seeing anything in the universe is no proof of its non-existence. The American Continent was not known before. Voyagers had no idea of it and reliable news confirms that new parts of it are regularly being discovered. Were these places hitherto non-existent?

As far as not finding them (*As-haab-e-Kahf*, *Yajooj*, *Majooj*, *et al*) in the cities whose names the *Mufasssireen* [Commentators of the Qur'aan] have written is concerned, then firstly, Haq Ta'ala has the power to conceal them in spite of being in those places. Accordingly, this topic will appear soon in the discussion of *Mu'jizah*.

Assuming that they are not in those locations then too they may be elsewhere. Why must the *Nusoos* [Scriptures of the Shariah] be misinterpreted?

Modern Science has rejected the *Mu'jizaat* of the Ambiya on the basis of it being contrary to nature. What satisfying proof is there for this claim which diverts the *Nusoos* from their apparent meanings?

As far as contrary to nature is concerned, then the nature of this nature has not been determined up to this day. No rule can thus be set on that basis. Furthermore it is not proven through any categorical proof that contrary to nature is impossible.

If the nature of nature is determined to be the Divine Way and the proof for the impossibility of the contrary is determined to be that the Divine Order is a practical promise and thus contrary to that will be impossible just as the contrary to a Divine Verbal Promise is, then in the first instance both these premisses are contentious.

The Divine Order is not a promise. Whoever claims the contrary should bring forth his proof.

Secondly, it is not incumbent for the Order to occur daily. In some things the Order is that occasionally it transpires. *Mu'jizaat* belong to this category.

From the foregoing the answer to the contention with the following verses is also clear:

فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ط لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ط

This is the nature from Allah Ta'ala on which He has created mankind. There is no change in the creation of Allah Ta'ala.

وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۝

And you will never find a change in the tradition of Allah Ta'ala.

Objections to the Aayaat can only be levelled if that meaning is taken which you aver. If, on the other hand, another explanation is given, as the *Muhaqqiq Mufasssireen* [Expert Commentators of the Qur'aan] have given, well that explanation is poles apart from your interpretations. In this case recourse cannot be taken from these Aayaat. Thus the need to answer is obviated.

Furthermore, railways, telegrams, monographs, telephones, etc. have been invented. Be impartial and answer this question: If someone did not see these things, and your precept, viz. contrary to the established way is impossible, is accepted by him then he will reject the existence of these things in the light of that precept, or not? Obviously he will reject. Thus, if that precept is correct then it devolves upon you to reject those things. In fact, it will not be obligatory to accept the Designer of the Universe, [*Al-Iyaazu Billah*].

If the existence of those things is accepted then it is obligatory to dissociate from that precept.

If the doubt creeps into your mind that these things are associated with causes, whereas *Mu'jizah* is an action that comes into being without a cause then the response is that it should firstly be proven that worldly causes which are volitional to humans are confined to causes.

The Will and Command of Haq Ta'ala is such a great cause. What rational discrepancy is there in taking that to be the cause?

It is thus proven that all sorts of *Mu'jizah* enacted at the hands of the Ambiya are possible. Then why should the *Nusoos* be tampered with?

The same applies to other modern day discoveries. Many are tarnished and based on conjecture and blind acceptance.

Yes, if there is some rational proof whose entire structure is emphatic or correct observation, in which there is no scope for misunderstanding, and thereafter some *Nass* [Scripture in the Shariah] ostensibly disagrees with it, then it is necessary to give an appropriate interpretation to the *Nass*.

For instance, hand, face, etc. are ostensibly understood from the *Nusoos-e-Qur'aaniyah* to belong to Allah Ta'ala. Whereas a *daleel-e-qat'i* [categoric proof] proves that parts are negated. [In other words, Allah Ta'ala is not made up of parts.] These words have, therefore, been interpreted appropriately.

Interpretation also has a condition attached to it. It should be in conformity with the Laws of the Arabic language and the Shariat. Otherwise it will amount to interpolation.

Your interpretations are primarily uncalled for. This can be understood from the preceding elaboration.

Secondly, there is neither strict observance of the Laws of the Arabic language and neither for that matter of the Laws of the Shariah [in your interpretations].

The former Ulama also responded to the heretics. Their way, however, was firstly to demolish the opposition's findings, and where some finding was found to be absolutely valid, an appropriate interpretation would be given [to the *Nusoos*].

From here we learn that your exercise of classifying many *Ahaadeeth-e-Nabawiyyah* to be unreliable is groundless.

If the proof for differing is a rational proof then it has already been said that by rational proof is meant a *daleel-e-qat'i*¹⁷, not a *daleel-e-wahmi*¹⁸. Otherwise it will be extremely difficult to determine what a *daleel-e-aqli*¹⁹ really is.

Thus, who are the 'enlightened ones' who are going to determine its yardstick since intelligences vary much? To top it off, every person's rational findings differ. [In the light of your argument] all will have to be accepted as valid and true, and in this, combination of contradictions and unification of opposites will follow.

For example, Ptolemy and Pythagoras differ with regard to the motion or motionlessness of the earth and sky. Plato and

¹⁷ *Daleel-e-Qat'i*: absolute proof

¹⁸ *Daleel-e-Wahmi*: imagined proof

¹⁹ *Daleel-e-Aqli*: rational proof

Aristotle argue over the transitory nature or eternity of souls. Surely, one theory is incorrect.

All over the possibility exists that rational findings can be incorrect. So what makes you so confident that your rational proof is correct, that [you regard] interpreting the *Categoric Nass* to be obligatory?

Thus in such matters the intelligence of such people is unreliable. The reports of those esteemed personages whose *Nubuwwat* and revelations are undisputed are accepted.

The work of the intelligence is only to understand *Tauheed and Risaalat*, as these are rational dogmas. Next, in the field of particulars, the reins of discretion should be handed over to the True Governor [Allah Ta'ala] and His Grand Vicegerent [Rasulullah Sallallah alaihi wasallam].

Look! When the ruling monarch implements a law in the land via a governor and after careful consideration and reflection, citizens do require ascertaining that this is the monarch and so-and-so person is his governor so that they do not comply with a false announcer – a rebel or a joker. When both aspects are confirmed, now to ponder over the law whether it is rational or irrational is illegal.

If they did that and they followed their intelligence, thus rejecting the law, or they misinterpreted it, they will not be excused. If this door is opened then implementing laws for the land will become void and wide spread rebellion will take place.

Similarly the Laws of the True Governor should be understood.

If rejection of the Hadeeth is on the basis of there being a degree of difference then reflect: Are there not differences in historical and news reports? Everywhere we find differences. [Thus according to your standard] no historical and news report will then be reliable.

Just as the historians study the reliability of the reports of events and accept their reports disregarding the difference, similarly verify the credentials of the narrators in the chain of Ahaadeeth from the *Asma-ur-Rijaal* [Biographical Works on the Narrators] and put the Hadeeth in operation. Is there any harm in this?

From what we have said probably all your views which prompted those writings of yours have been answered.

Furthermore, for every work in time there are men. Speaking on Deeni research is the work of others. Do not misunderstand from this statement that I am a disclaimer of your knowledge and intelligence. This is not the case. Rather, the point of the matter is that in every field, respect and influence of that person can be seen who is trusted from before. The findings of the *Ulama-e-Muhaqqiqeen* [Expert Ulama] have been regarded to be reliable among Muslims. They are on the whole engaged in this work. Their services for this task are sufficient.

Secondly, for everything in every age there are suitable necessities, characteristics and effects. Leaving aside all other ages we see in our time that for researching *Masaail* these things are essential:

- The researcher is a reputed Aalim
- He is devout and abstemious

- This is his major occupation
- People regard him to be Deeni-conscious and intelligent
- He is not drawn much into the Dunya.

A person not possessing these qualities should not step into this arena, as his efforts will be futile and his toil will be fruitless.

Thus in present day circumstances, assuming that any of your findings are even correct, then too you should adopt silence because to speak in such a case [when one lacks the qualifications and requirements], and that speech too which is against the whole world, is nothing but sowing the seeds of discord among the Muslim Ummah for no reason whatsoever.

You love to speak on these matters yet, surprising, you have not reflected over the major cause of this discord.

Up to this point the subject of Islam's welfare was discussed.

The second point is the welfare of Muslims and ways to make them progress. No one argues the fact that this is laudable. Yes, the ways resorted to achieve this goal are, however, subject to scrutiny.

The summary of all your dossiers is that potential and ability in the English language par excellence should be inculcated and lofty posts, contact with government officials and honour in the nation should be acquired.

I do not wish to speak about the position of studying English in the present times and the palpable effects it has wrought on

Deen; one, for this reason that it entails a lengthy discussion, and secondly it can be ascertained from the Ulama.

I will humbly mention this much that progress for the nation is not confined to English.

In my opinion, if the progress of honour is desired then the means to this is monetary progress.

We witness in these times that no one looks at academic skills and excellences, *Illa Masha Allah*.

Among the public and among officials the wealthy person is regarded; he is respected; he receives honourable titles and addresses. In most objectives he is successful. He receives posts such as that of honorary magistrate. He is included in the meetings of officials and all this, regardless of him not knowing a single letter of English.

If monetary progress is desired then there is no better way than business and profession. Every one is in need at all times of the businessman and the professional.

English educated people may only be ten percent who are at ease, whereas there are, probably only ten percent of professionals and businessmen who are in difficult straits.

If, instead of English education, career education is imparted with care it will be of greater benefit to people. [This sage observation of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih) is worthy of implementation. In schools many subjects are taught which have no practical benefit to

students. If, instead of those subjects, practical skills and arts are imparted the student will benefit more and will be more able and independent in his future life. English, however, is indispensable in countries and places where English is the medium of communication.]

Secondly, if we take for granted that the progress of the nation is confined to English education, are secular schools insufficient ushering in the need for Janaab's college [Aligarh University]?

If it is argued that in secular schools religious ideology is corrupted. Therefore, there is a need for such schools where religious education is also imparted, then Respected Sir, I say the truth and your heart bears witness to this fact that secular educated students are not so corrupt in their beliefs than the majority of those educated at this college [Aligarh University].

If you present the excuse of there being arrangements of Namaaz and *wa'z* then take proper note that as long as your thoughts do not change your followers will be the same.

Thirdly, let us assume for a moment that there is a need for this college, and religious and worldly progress can be through the medium of only this college. Take an unbiased look at who is more deserving of progress; the rich or the poor?

The rich have already secured progress, though it may not be your desired progress. However it is some sort of it. Now to make special arrangements for them falls nothing short of superfluity.

The poor, however, are more deserving of it. Indigent children should have been admitted to the college; their expenditure should have been taken care of; they should have been given education and spiritual training and in this way they should have been elevated to distinguished posts. *Du'aa* would have emanated from their hearts.

Be that as it may, if acceptance of *Du'aa* means nothing to you, at least they would be comforted. This is, even in your opinion, something laudable.

Now we learn that an indigent student will not be able to bear the expenses there. So what has happened to mutual sympathy and the welfare of Muslims?

Even if the rich studied and achieved progress, then firstly, how much was spent on that education? Particularly those who pursue education abroad, which in your opinion is the essence of goodness, their expenses are astronomical. A whole village can be set up with that sum, or in business a huge factory can be built with it.

Leaving that aside, the pinnacle of their achievements is that they become barristers or receive positions in the government. If they are barristers they start to ignite the flames of strife. Two brothers of the nation fighting is for them [the barristers] fulfilment of their needs. Their aim is realized.

If someone wished to appoint them then for one case they demand a few hundred rupees, according to their status. If the client gave anything short of the stipulated fee they evict the poor client. Crazy for money; selfish!

The client apologises for the shortfall and beseeches the barrister to take up his case, struggling to fill his hands with the fee. The Will of Allah Ta'ala determined that the case was not resolved in the first hearing and a second hearing was fixed. For the second hearing the same amount is demanded. In short, in a span of two to three hearings the client's and his families' homes are cleared out. Good grief! Is this progress, that for setting up one home, ten homes are ruined?

If they [secular educated students] receive governmental positions then with their beliefs of Islam previously corrupted, they now take *Qabr and Hashr* to be tales of the past. Is there any reason for them to fear Allah Ta'ala then?

Culture and character do not have the power to intrinsically stop reprehensible acts. This is gained solely by virtue of religion, in that some people out of fear for the displeasure of their Lord and others out of fear for the chastisement of the grave and hellfire abstain from wrongs.

The atheist does not have religion to stop him. His character is limited in its power. Then whatever he does – oppress, take bribes, pass wrongful judgements, stir up old rivalry – all that is not surprising. An intelligent person said beautifully:

'Whoever is not strict on his religion, is not worthy of position in the government'.

If someone's character has been refined to such a degree that it prevents him from all wrongs then that is a rare case.

وَالنَّادِرُ كَالْمَعْدُومِ

The rare is akin to the non-existent.

In any case, the proceedings currently in progress for the upliftment of Muslims are fraught with evils from top to bottom. Thus, neither are your principles of the welfare of Islam correct, nor the means of the welfare of Islam correct, nor the means of the welfare of Muslims [you have undertaken] proper.

Be that as it may, these were points mentioned that directly affect others. Now those points which personally refer to you are presented here in a nutshell.

Firstly, *Correction of Aqaa-id*: If man becomes somewhat doubtful, there is no course for surprise. However, through the *Fadhl* of Allah Ta'ala, there are Ulama present in these times who are *Muhaqqiqeen* [Experts], *Jaami' of ma'qool and manqool* [proficient in traditional and rational sciences] who can remove those doubts.

In my opinion the bare minimum response to your doubts in principles and particulars, can be found in the writings of Moulana Muhammad Ali Saheb Tahseeldar Marhoom. His writings are quite adequate.

Do not utilize obstinacy. Study his writings impartially and rectify your thoughts.

Don't give a thought to how you are going to go back on your popular findings. There is no room for this thought in your disposition of preference for fairness. You have admitted to

many mistakes. For instance, in the *Hadeeth of Fatima* (Radhiyallahu anha): “*So Fatima came and she was a young girl*”, there is only ‘*So Fatima came*’. Intromitted was ‘*and she was a young girl*’. You very unbiasedly and beautifully retracted from that and printed it correctly.

Now too, if you correct your thoughts and give notification then the high degree of your excellence will stand out. The *Jamhoor Ahl-e-Islam*, who are much greater in number then your followers, will love you and trust you. Then whatever ways of progress you tell them, they will wholeheartedly accept. You will be rewarded in the *Aakhirat* for your correct *Aqaaid*, for the preservation of the *Aqaaid* of many people and as well as the correction of some people’s *Aqaaid*; those who retract out of sheer love and confidence in you following your retraction.

Secondly, punctuality of Namaaz with *Jamaat* is incumbent. Punctuality of Namaaz itself is *Farz* and *Jamaat is Sunnat-e-Mu’akkadah*. Love for Allah Ta’ala and His Rasool (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) which is a requirement of Islam, requires that neither a *Farz* is left out nor a *Sunnat*.

Thirdly, reforming ones dress. I won’t delve into much *dalaail*. I hereby mention a brief point. If a man dons the dress of a woman, why is it criticized? For the very same reason will it not be inappropriate for a nation adhering to a particular religion to choose the dress and style of people of another creed?

Fourthly, Allah Ta’ala has given you all sorts of means. Haj in the categoric pronounciation of the Qur’aan is *Farz*. The demand of love for Allah Ta’ala and the Rasool is that even if attendance in the *Haramain* was not *Farz* or *Sunnat* by the Law

of Islam, then too love demands that to attend the Court of Allah Ta'ala and the Rasool be incumbent upon every person who has the means, without discriminating between attendance being *Farz* for Makkah and attendance being *Sunnat* for Madinah. Then, how inappropriate it is that one does not go at all in one's entire life. When you travelled to London, had you gone to Aden on your onward or return journey then you would have experienced no problems [in making it for Haj]. Now take up the courage and prepare for this journey.

Regarding Roza and Zakaat, these are concealed *Ibaadaat*. I have no information in this regard. Hopefully you are punctual. Otherwise, consider it to be attached to the list of petitions above.

The summary of all these petitions is that you are in the closing stages of your life. Apart from *Aqaaid* and *A'maal* there are no other travelling companions on this journey to the *Aakhirat*. Say farewell to your 'passing' companions, either openly or just inwardly, and join hands with the Everlasting Companion, that is reform your *Aqaaid* and *A'maal*, for:

إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ۝

**When their appointed time comes,
they will neither delay it nor precede it a moment.**

نسیم جاگو کمر کو باندھو
اٹھاؤ بستر کہ رات کم ہے

*Awaken, it is morning breeze, don your clothes
Gather the bedding, for the night is almost over*

Finally, I humbly mention that if any word emanating from this missive goes against the disposition of your respected self, it should please be regarded as the product of unaquaintance with your disposition and it should be overlooked. Do not take it to be prejudice and antagonism, for *Wallah*, the inspiration for this writing was purely mutual feeling and a passionate heart. If this request is acceptable and appealing to your noble self, and it is duly hoped so, then make this needy one happy by informing him. Otherwise there is no need to answer.

The one in great need

End

This letter, whose passage to Sir Sayyid was blocked by the resentful *khuddaam* of Hazrat Haji Saheb very subtly, is a capital of insight for the likeminded class of Sir Sayyid Marhoom to this day. [In other words it is a revelation for all Muslims enamoured by modernism and secularism.]

15.18 Presenting Kitaabs

Since Hazrat Thanwi was the focus of Hazrat Haji Saheb's attention, Hazrat Haji Saheb therefore wished to pass over his library to Hazrat Thanwi, out of favour. Hazrat Thanwi, however, excused himself saying:

“Hazrat! What is there in books? What am I going to do with them? Grant me some treasure from your Mubaarak heart.”

Seeing Hazrat Thanwi yearning for spiritual effulgence and overcome with spiritual sensation, Hazrat Haji Saheb said uncontrollably:

“You are right Mia, you are right. True! What is there in books?”

صد کتاب و صد ورق در نار کن

سینه را از نور حق گلزار کن

*Loads of books and loads of pages put into the fire
Make your heart a garden with the Noor of Allah Ta'ala*

[The purport of the poem is that stockpiling books is not the objective. The objective is to absorb knowledge and practice accordingly.]

Hazrat Haji Saheb, accordingly, did not persist upon Hazrat's refusal so that his heart was not broken. However, after some time parcels were made of the Kitaabs and sent via an eminent person leaving for Hindustan.

15.19 The Tentacles of Jealousy

Some jealous people, however, prepared a forged 'waqf' testament regarding those Kitaabs without delay and clandestinely put Hazrat Haji Saheb's stamp on it. Thereafter they said to Hazrat Haji Saheb:

“You cannot send these Kitaabs to Molvi Ashraf Ali as these are waqf property.”

Hazrat Haji Saheb repeatedly said that he did not make it waqf. Understanding some sinister plot to be in operation he, therefore, held the dispatch back, but in his *marazul maut* [last

illness before demise] he entrusted Moulana Muhammad Sa'eed Saheb Kairanwi to send the Kitaabs to Hazrat Thanwi with instructions that if he is not inclined to take the Kitaabs, the Kitaabs should be preserved in *Madrasah Saulatiyyah* (Makkah Mu'azzamah). Moulana accordingly wrote to Hazrat Thanwi in this regard.

The letter was destroyed or lost. The Kitaabs, therefore, remained at the Madrasah.

When Hazrat learnt of this episode afterwards he remarked:

“If I had received that letter then too my decision would have been that it remains at the Madrasah.”

In this manner he displayed magnanimity in the face of meanness, and he remained firm on what he initially said to Hazrat Haji Saheb till the end, i.e. *“What is there in books?”* All this, notwithstanding that it was a matter of taking, not giving.

15.20 Return Home

Hazrat Haji Saheb's wish was for Hazrat Thanwi to spend six months full by him. However, before six months could pass, Hazrat Thanwi had acquired all those treasures which were by Divine Permission to be gained from Hazrat Haji Saheb. In fact, apart from receiving permission to take *bai't* [from others] he had become the *Successor and Special Khaleefah* of Hazrat Haji Saheb because of which the jealous ones started to work frantically to degrade him in the eyes of Hazrat Haji Saheb. Hazrat therefore says:

“If Hazrat did not show so much compassion and favour to me in front of everyone then it would have been nice.”

Finally, Hazrat was being targeted by the *haasideen* so much that ten days before six months elapsed he left while he was still in a state of exuberance.

15.21 Two Parting Directions

Hazrat Haji Saheb imparted to Hazrat Thanwi two directions before his departure:

1. *“Mia Ashraf Ali! Once in Hindustan, you will be afflicted by a spiritual state. Don’t be hasty during that time.*
2. *When your heart becomes disenchanted with Kanpur then don’t settle anywhere else besides Thanabawan. Repose your trust in Allah Ta’ala and settle there.”*

This, in spite of the fact that in a letter dated Muharram 1308 Hijri he disallowed Hazrat from severing ties [with Kanpur Madrasah]. However, in view of the *phase of talween* [spiritual ups and downs] coming to an end and the *phase of tamkeen* [stage of resoluteness] commencing, Hazrat Haji Saheb therefore hinted to him to go to Thanabawan.

15.22 A Momentous Moment

Upon the event of Hazrat Haji Saheb appointing Hazrat Thanwi as his *Khaleefah and Jaa Nasheen* [Successor] and delegating him to take the *Seat of Irshaad and Talqeen* [Spiritual Direction and Guidance] the *Prince of the Court of Ashraf*, Hazrat Majzoob Saheb the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* writes:

“*Allah, Allah!* What a momentous, blessed and unforgettable moment that was when a *Qutbul Irshaad*,

Hakeemul Ummat, Mujaddid-e-Deen wa Millat was inaugurated to the *Throne of Irshaad* at the sacred and blessed hands of the *Shaikh of Arab and Ajam*, to:

- efface customs and innovations from the world of Islam,
- show the true picture of Islam,
- usher Muslims away from excesses and neglects,
- bring them to the straight path,
- open the gates of the ocean of academic and divine knowledge and perception,
- benefit and gratify laymen and Ulama alike,
- spread grace and blessings, external and spiritual to the east and west,
- solve very intricate and inexplicable problems and unravel knotty academic and practical Masaail,
- teach the servants of Allah Ta'ala true etiquette of being a bondservant and the rules of social life,
- make Muslims in the true sense of the word Muslims, and humans in the true sense of the word humans,
- broadcast universally the beauty and civil nature of Islamic education and culture,
- tear the artificial and deceptive veil of secular education and modern culture thus exposing its ugly face,
- reveal the concealed darkness of the Enlightenment,
- stamp the authority of people of the Deen over the hearts of people of the dunya,
- promote the veneration of Deen, the Ahl-e-Deen, Ilm-e-Deen and the Ahl-e-Ilm-e-Deen,
- lower the heads of the greatest dissidents,

- debunk modernist views on the basis of the principles of logic and rationalism itself,
- extract confessions from even so-called doctors of logic and philosophy of the veracity of the laws, messages and tenets of faith of the **Kitaabullah and Sunnah**,
- add glamour to Hanafi Fiqh by gathering supportive Ahaadeeth (as done in the kitaab, *I'laaus Sunan*),
- make countless people who are neglectful of Namaaz devoted to Namaaz,
- make usurers and other haraam income owners give up their usury and haraam income,
- bring rights back to its owners,
- extricate countless of sinners from external and internal sins,
- give absolutely simple and accurate prescriptions and unique methods of treating spiritual sicknesses,
- bring to the fore the exceptionally subtle tricks of the *Nafs*,
- draw the spotlight on perils of the path of self-reformation and save the *Saalikeen* from spiritual ruin,
- present the original one-time *Cloak of Tasawwuf* which was discarded for centuries in favour of its present day false garb,
- set the *Saalikeen* on the chosen path of the Salaf-e-Saaliheen and the Path of the Qur'aan and Sunnah, the Path which was desolate for ages,
- bring the smile back on the faces of the weeping and move the laughing to shed tears with inspirational and thought-provoking talks,
- speak on Aayaat and particularly on glad tidings of mercy,

- boost the spirits of the thousands of despondent,
- realize the hopes of the hopeless,
- deliver the hundreds of *Taalibeen* [Seekers of Allah Ta'ala] who comprise of top bracket and low income members of every class and profession, to *Mahboob-e-Haqeeqi* [the True Beloved] via the shortest possible route,
- and, in short, render beautifully and thoroughly every necessary service to all branches of the Deen, in particular Tafseer and Tasawwuf.

This was no small event by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, taking into consideration that the renaissance of the Deen of Muhammad (Alaa Saahibihis Salaamu wat Tahiyah) and the rejection of ancient evil customs and bad by-gone innovations for posterity were to be by virtue of this event, it surpassed in significance the events normally noted in this world.”

15.23 Unseen Backing

Whatever Hazrat Majzoob stated was backed by the Unseen in this manner that when Hazrat Thanwi was returning from Makkah Mu'azzamah, Bakhshi Nazeer Husain Marhoom Kanpuri who was a Deeni-conscious and pious person, saw in a dream that Hazrat Wala [Moulana Thanwi Rahmatullahi alaihi] returned to Hindustan from Makkah Mu'azzamah. When he disembarked from the ship at once light spread in Hindustan and the darkness which was perceived in the dream preceding it immediately dissipated.

This dream was related in the very *Majlis* of Hazrat by Haji Basheer Lucknowi on the authority of Bakhshi Nazeer Husain Kanpuri. Testimony to the veracity of it is the entire life of Hazrat thereafter; the life which he passed in imparting external and spiritual grace.

15.24 Enthusiastic Reception

The citizens of Kanpur who were likened to moths falling into a fire in relation to Hazrat, and who were very grieved and unsettled over his lengthy separation of six months, became overjoyed at news of his return. They commenced a grand reception for Hazrat.

15.25 Perfect Abdiyyat

Hazrat Thanwi had a strong notion that the city folk of Kanpur would make elaborate preparations for his reception. However, since he had completely annihilated his ego and he had thus been honoured with perfect *Abdiyyat* [state of being a complete servant/bondsman of Allah Ta'ala] upon his return from his Peer and Murshid, he therefore kept his arrival date confidential. He never allowed it to reach the ears of others. Thus unexpectedly, without notification, he arrived at the Madrasah.

Adorers and devotees were caught unawares and with much regret they saw all their preparations for reception go up in smoke. No one even made it to the station.

15.26 The Stage of Tamkeen

[*Tamkeen* in Tasawwuf means the stage of being thoroughly grounded in one's spiritual states.]

News of his arrival spread like wild fire in the city and people came in droves to meet him. They looked with astonishment at Hazrat's changed condition and exclaimed: "*Yaa Allah! When he left he was not like this! What has happened?*"

Now his appearance had changed because at one stage Hazrat was fair and reddish in complexion, radiant, handsome with shining parted hair and beautiful garments. As if all the time he was dressed as a groom. His young days were, as said: "*the bloom of youth*".

And when he returned after his stay in Hazrat Haji Saheb's service his face had turned pale and dejected; he became solemn and sad. He did not take care to oil his hair or comb it for that matter. No achkin, long coat, designs; just a simple *kurta and shilwaar*. In short, the bloom and beauty of the inner garden had made him absolutely independent of outward adornment. However, this forlorn state made a thousand make-ups pale into oblivion and his attraction grew more than ever. His appearance appeared to call out:

قبادا کردہ و کا کل پریشان کردہ می آید

بہ ہیں ایں بے سرو ساماں چہ ساماں کردہ می آید

*With a gown all torn up and hair dishevelled he has come
Look at this forlorn person, the treasure he has brought*

15.27 The Joy of Simplicity

People mentioned their intention and arrangement for the reception, upon which Hazrat said: "*It is for this reason that I came without prior notification.*"

People said: “*Hazrat’s family accompanied Hazrat. There must have been great inconvenience for Hazrat at the station?*”

Hazrat replied: “*No, there was no inconvenience at all. Allah Ta’ala was gracious. Right at the platform we found a sedan. The family got on to it and the luggage was given to a porter. We came out of the station and sat on the transport bringing us here. I was thus not inconvenienced, and so many Muslims have been saved from trouble. In formalities there is nothing but anguish. The joy found in simplicity can never be found in formality.*”

15.28 Continuation of Special Attention

Even after leaving Hazrat Haji Saheb, Hazrat Thanwi remained the focus of Hazrat Haji Saheb’s special attention and favour. This is apparent from the following extracts of *Maktoobaat-e-Imdaadiyyah*.

1. Hearing of your spiritual states brings great joy to me. It is the limitless favour of Allah Ta’ala that he has granted you this bounty. All your conditions are, *Masha Allah*, laudable. *Insha Allah*, you will come to know yourself of their merit. Express *Shukr* unto Allah Ta’ala and be on the lookout for more, day and night.
2. You should, without fail, give notification of your condition and any new state that occurs to your associates.
3. He is **Musabbibul Asbaab** [the Creator of all causes]. He will see to all your affairs. *Insha Allah* you will not have cause for any hesitation.

4. Stick to your work. Allah Ta'ala Himself is the Guide and Helper. If He turns sand into gold, it's no wonder.

5. Grab hold onto the Deen firmly. The world will present itself in a good form in your service. Your goal should be placed before everything else.

6. Learning of your present state I am immensely pleased. *Insha Allah*, day to day there will be an increase in *Anwaar* [spiritual effulgence and grace] and the creation of Allah Ta'ala will be benefited by you in a gargantuan way. All the time I have special thoughts reserved for you.

7. The heart of this faqeer is all the time with you, in fact by you. True love is essential. By virtue of it everything else is acquired.

8. My thoughts are with you.

9. A green cloak was sent for you via Shah Bahaa-ud Deen Saheb. Accept it and make use of it.

10. Multitudes of creation will benefit from you. This will continue. These are my final moments. I seek *Du'aa* for a good ending.

11. Make *Du'aa* of a beautiful ending for this faqeer.

A thorough reading of *Maktoobaat-e-Imdaadiyyah* reveals that the entire future of Hazrat Thanwi was revealed to Hazrat Haji Saheb through *Imaani intuition*. Proof for this can be found in the prophecies with which the *Maktoobaat* is replete.

Not only would Hazrat Haji Saheb cast his special attention through the medium of correspondence, from time to time he would convey *Salaams* to Hazrat verbally through the Haajis. He would say: “*Give Salaams to our exquisite-natured Molvi.*”

To summarize, in some regards, considering the unique nature of the special attention and favour of Hazrat Haji Saheb upon Hazrat Thanwi, no other *khaadim* received. The reason for this being that Hazrat Thanwi was destined to be Hazrat Haji Saheb’s successor.

15.29 The Distinction of Heirship

Since it was already decreed in the infinite knowledge of Allah Ta’ala that Hazrat Thanwi was to be Hazrat Haji Saheb’s heir, Hazrat Haji Saheb’s special gaze of favour, therefore, remained with Hazrat right to the end. Keeping himself informed of all Hazrat’s outward and inward conditions he waited for the time when he would be honoured with the position of *jaanashini* [vicegerency, being a successor/heir].

Thus, when Hazrat attained that *baatini stage* through the special grace of Haq Ta’ala, he informed Hazrat Haji Saheb of it. During that time Hazrat Haji Saheb was not well. However, the news from Hazrat brought him so much joy that he started to feel better. He thus writes in his *Maktoob* dated 25th Safar 1314 Hijri:

“*As-Salaamu Alaikum*

To the one who is like my mind which may be out of my sight, but not out of my heart

Your comforting letter disclosing your spiritual states and other related conditions has been received. Your thrilling spiritual progress has made me perfectly pleased. May Allah Ta'ala enhance your progress day and night. I have my hands all the time in du'aa. Although my tabiat is not well presently, however, listening to your condition I have become very happy, by virtue of which some outward signs of recovery are apparent."

A short time after achieving this grand stage he went to Thanabawan as directed by Hazrat Haji Saheb. When news of this reached Hazrat Haji Saheb, he [Haji Saheb] sent this *Maktoob* dated 12th Rabee'uth Thaani 1315 Hijri:

"It was most appropriate for you to return to Thanabawan. I have hope that multitudes of creation will benefit from you externally and inwardly. Re-establish our Madrasah and Masjid. I make du'aa for your wellbeing all the time. And I think about you."

When he had re-established the Madrasah and Masjid according to Hazrat Haji Saheb's wishes, and programmes of guidance and direction started then Hazrat Haji Saheb once again congratulated him as his heir with these words:

"Your letter refers. I am immensely pleased. May Allah Ta'ala make you successful in all your objectives pertaining to both worlds. There is no need to mention my love and thoughts. A heart has in roads into a heart..."

I have initiated my dear...to the Order through Bai't-e-Uthmaani. Impart to him shaghl-e-afkaar.

You are sufficient. Whoever is a Taalib, you have full permission to impart to him all zikr and ashghaal. My thoughts are all the time with you.” (Maktoob dated 11th Muharramul Haraam 1316 Hijri)

Subsequent to this full permission he informed Hazrat of heirship in his final *Maktoob* dated 20th Rabee’ul Awwal 1317 Hijri in the following manner:

“Now impart to each individual according to his condition. My wish now is that Allah Ta’ala calls me quickly from this ephemeral world. This faqeer makes du’aa for all friends. May Allah Ta’ala make them achieve their objectives.

I do not have the strength to speak. My weakness is such that to turn from one side to another is difficult.”

Two months following this final letter Hazrat Haji Saheb departed forever from this transitory world, and Hazrat Thanwi set into motion the programme of *faiz* exactly on Hazrat Haji Saheb’s pattern.

16. Overcome with Emotion

16.1 The Path of Sulook

Just as a human has to pass through different stages for his Deeni and worldly progress, similarly, he has to cover different stations for his practical and self-reformation. The journey through the paths of his self-reformation is known in the terminology of the Soofiyah as *Raah-e-Sulook*. The stations reached are described as *Maqaamaat*. Each *maqam* is more

elevated that the previous *maqam*. However, there is no path or station which has not been noted in the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

The first and foremost stage of this path is *Muraadiyyat*, which means to acquire complete natural affinity [with this Path], ultimate potential in reaching the destination and all out fondness for eternity. For this, Hazrat Thanwi was already cut out in the World of the Souls.

The second stage is known as *Shauq*, which means to have a natural inclination to know fully, see and furthermore inculcate love for that Desired Object which is known in a way and unknown in a way. It was this *Shauq* which brought the love of Ilm, the Ahl-e-Ilm, Deen and the Ahl-e-Deen to the heart of Hazrat Thanwi, and which took him by force to the *Masters of Wilaayat and Ma'rifat [the Awliya and the Aarifeen]*.

The next stage is *Uns*. In Hazrat Thanwi's words:

"Something is clear and known in one regard whilst being vague and obscure in another. If by looking at its aspects of vagueness there is a desire to perceive it, then this is called Shauq.

If by looking at its known aspects it brings one joy and happiness, then this is called Uns.

This joy sometimes becomes so overpowering that the jalaal [awe] of the object of desire is forgotten and by virtue of this, one's statements and actions become somewhat unchecked. This is called Imbisaat and Idlaal."
(Ta'leemud Deen, p. 68)

Thus, when Hazrat Thanwi went to spend time in the auspicious service of his Shaikh, then by virtue of his [Hazrat Haji Saheb's] gaze and attention that *Shauq* transformed to *Uns*.

These fine states also have varying stations, some being higher than others. For instance, Hazrat Thanwi explains:

“If after bast [exuberance], one was afflicted with qabz [depression] then this qabz will be higher than that bast. If bast follows the qabz then this bast will be higher than the qabz and also higher than the first bast.”

16.2 Excessive Fervour

When Hazrat Thanwi had filled his coffers with his objectives from the external and spiritual effulgence of the company of his Shaikh, he returned with his *Shauq* overflowing; a *Shauq* and *Uns* which proved more intense than the former. In this regard the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* writes:

“A short time after Hazrat returned from his Peer and Murshid the state of intense fervour descended on him animatedly and his former condition returned. However, his colour had changed.

Prior to his presence [in the company of Hazrat Haji Saheb] the state of *Shauq* was one of uneasiness. In this one there was yearning. In that one there was anxiety; in this one exuberance. The pleasure of that one was somewhat distasteful; this one was enjoyable. That was *Sair Ilallaah* [the spiritual journey to Allah], this was *Sair Fillaah* [the spiritual journey of observing the manifestation of Allah Ta'ala in His attributes]. That was a blood-sapping path; here *Tawaaf of the Ka'bah* – the goal. That was the product of not obtaining Divine Union; this was

because of the Union. That was a time of searching; this was a time of reaching. That was the period of separation; this was the period of meeting. That was a time of regret; this was a time of *Shauq*. That was *Talween*, this was *Tamkeen*. That was a condition preceding *Mushaahadah* [Vision of Allah Ta'ala in the Spiritual Realm], this was subsequent. That was the effect of *Ishq* [intense love]; this effect was of beauty, vividly portrayed by the following composition of Hafiz Shirazi:

بلبلے برگ گلے خوش رنگ در منقار داشت

A nightingale held a leaf of a lovely coloured rose in its beak

واندر آں برگ و نوا خوش ناله ہائے زار داشت

It took it to be a lovely treat and started to shout and shriek

گفتمش در عین وصل ایں کار داشت

I said to the nightingale: 'Right at this time of union, why shout and shriek?'

گفت مارا جلوه معشوق دریں کار داشت

The nightingale replied: 'The manifestation of the beloved has made me frantic'

In short, the restlessness this time was unlike the restlessness of the previous time, in that it was a restlessness of great pleasure. The reason for this was that this restlessness was the product of excessive *Uns* with Allah Ta'ala. It was like a mixture of *Shauq* and *Uns* and instead of spells of agitation, spells of longing became apparent. The result was that the atmosphere and colour of the Madrasah changed. Academic lessons were in progress and with slight affinity explosive talks on Tasawwuf followed. Students were put into emotional frenzy. Many *Mudarriseen*

and Talabah started to engage in Zikr and Shaghl and a period of amazing spiritual conditions and wondrous spiritual states commenced.” (p.210, v.1)

16.3 The Effect of Tawajjuh

The result of this mood was that Hazrat Thanwi established an *Assembly of Tawajjuh* by virtue of which the Madrasah was changed to a *Khaanqah*.

In regard to the vigour and vibrance of that time Hazrat himself said:

“Really, I desired to make the entire world Zaakir, Shaaghil and Wali-e-Kaamil.”

According to Hazrat Majzoob, during that time the strongly emotional and virtuous Khaleefah of Hazrat, Lutfur-Rasool was so overwhelmed spiritually that frequently upon some poem or some talk his hands and feet would freeze. He would scream uncontrollably and shake like a fish out of water.

Once, he was going to Mansoori with Hazrat Majzoob. Climbing up an ascent he [Hazrat Lutfur Rasool Saheb] felt exhausted and he complained. Upon this Hazrat Majzoob said:

یہ شکوہ بے وفائی کا، یہ رونا کج ادائی کا

This complaint of unfaithfulness

This sobbing of waywardness

سزا ہے دل لگانے کی، مزہ ہے آشنائی کا

Is the punishment for fondness

Is the pleasure of closeness

Immediately upon listening to this couplet his fatigue evaporated. With high-spiritedness he got up and he went into spiritual ecstasy.

In short, his emotional condition was such that Hazrat Thanwi would say:

“I never saw such overpowering fear and awe in anyone else. When he used to speak under emotion then his talk would give the impression that his heart was bursting.”

He [Hazrat Moulana Lutfur-Rasool Saheb] could not forget about the time of Hazrat Thanwi’s vigour and vibrance. In fact he would invariably seek that *tawajjuh*, upon which Hazrat would, by way of consolation, say:

“Those former states were personal and the present states are celestial. In relation to these states those are of no significance. The similitude of the effects of the tawajjuh of those times is like that of heavy thundershowers. It causes a flash flood. Thereafter, there remain neither clouds nor water. The ground is as usual dry. Whereas the similitude of the present spiritual states is that of continuous light rain, which is called soft soaking rain.

It may appear to be light rain, which is insignificant in comparison to heavy thundershowers, however look at its state. It seeps into the ground. It is not like the flash flood that flows away almost immediately and leaves hardly any impression on the ground. Rain which makes the ground fertile is such light and soaking rain.”

Since Hazrat’s *tawajjuh* induced most of the students to engage in *Zikr and Shaghl*, therefore, on a whole such spiritual states

would be witnessed from time to time. Once, a student without consulting Hazrat commenced *Zikr and Shaghl* in emulation of Hazrat. One day he was taking lesson of *Bostaan* from an Ustaad. A severe spiritual state overcame the student when the lesson reached this poem:

نه دوری دلیل صبوری بود

که بسیار دوری ضروری بود

*Being far apart
Is no proof of delay
For frequently besides being far apart
There is no other way*

He went to the bazaar saying, “*Laa Ilaaha Illallaah*”, and whoever he met, Muslim or non-Muslim, he would say: “*Read Laa Ilaaha Illallaah!*” Remarkably, even Hindus would spontaneously utter the *Kalimah*.

His maternal uncle became worried over his strange condition. Hazrat said to the uncle:

“Why the worry? You should be happy that your nephew has become a wali.”

When that state remained unchanged Hazrat sent the student to a *Saahib-e-Tasarruf Durwaish*, Mia Khaki Shah to snatch the state away. Mia Khaki Shah said to the student:

“Strange! You shot yourself and now you want me to take the bullet out!”

Nevertheless, the *durwaish* actuated some *tasarruf* [spiritual operation] and told him to return the next day. At night the

student was honoured in a dream with *ziyaarat* of the **Leader of the Two Worlds** (Nabi Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) who said:

“Tell that faqeer: ‘Has misfortune descended on you that you wish to snatch away this ni’mat?’”

When Hazrat heard of this dream he disallowed the student to go to the *durwaish* and, instead, he prescribed *sama’* for him. [This was to soothe the scorching sensation of overwhelming spiritual emotion in the student lest he loses complete control of himself and transgresses the limits of the Shariah. There was also fear for physical harm befalling the student. And, in that overwhelming state he was not fit to carry on with his studies.]

He thus said to one Soofi inclined to *sama’*:

“Take him along for sama’. Although this is against our methodology, however, this is being done as a remedial measure.”

Hazrat was, however, unaware that the Soofi would listen to *sama’* with the accompaniment of instruments. Thus when the student reached the venue he became terrified at the sight of *samaa’ instruments*. He said:

“What is this nonsense? Why am I being thrown into the den of sin? I am going to break all these.”

That ‘madman’ turned out to be wise. He turned around and came back running to Hazrat.

Thereafter, Hazrat put him in the care of a Bengali student with a melodious voice. His voice was highly rousing. Hazrat told the Bengali student: *“Take him to privacy and read some poems to him.”*

He [the Bengali student] started reciting the following love poem of Hazrat Khusru:

از ہجر تو دل کباب تا کے

How long is my heart going to be grinded due to being separated from you?

جاں در طلبت خراب تا کے

How long is my life going to be ruined in search of you?

در مصحف روئے او نظر کن

Look at His face in the Qur'aan

خسر و غزل و کتاب تا کے

Khusru! How long with love poems and books?

The emotional student became wildly ecstatic upon hearing this. He started to say vociferously: “*Taa kay, taa kay...*”, until all the inner feelings of emotion came out and he was blessed with complete tranquility.

Thereafter, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) honoured him with another visit and said: “*Become bai't to someone.*”

He asked: “*To whom?*”

Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) replied: “*To whom you have confidence in.*”

Accordingly, he related this dream to Hazrat. Hazrat also directed him to fulfil the instruction and become *bai't* to someone in whom he had confidence. He replied: “*I have confidence in you. Therefore, make me bai't.*”

As it was the directive of Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), Hazrat therefore shelved all formal rules and regulations of *bai't* and immediately made him *bai't*.

To summarize, Hazrat's *tawajjuh* was such that 'spiritually insane' people would also remain wise and climb up to the high stages of *Wilaayat*. So much so that even the Master of the two worlds (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) would come to their rescue.

16.4 The State of Perturbation

Hazrat became grounded in *definite maqaamaat*. Then a burning desire gripped him to acquire *probable maqaamaat*. The former state of perturbation and excitement which preceded his stay in Makkah Mukarramah thus recurred. There was, however, a world of difference between the two, because the first state was the product of beginning the search and the later state was the product of searching for more. Nevertheless this quest was greater notwithstanding him being aware of realities and acquainted with pleasure. He thus had a dire need for succour just as before; his *Peer and Murshid* being oceans away.

Besides his compassionate maternal uncle Peer Jee Imdaad Ali, however, he could not see any other *Wali of Allah Ta'ala* who could grant him succour in his hour of need. He thus turned to Peer Jee, being compelled by the circumstance.

The *tawajjuh* of his uncle, however, did not give him complete satisfaction. In fact it proved to be short lived because Peer Jee's condition did not freely fit the *Pattern of the Shariat*. The heir to being *Muhyis Sunnat*, *Maahil Bid'at* and *Mujaddid-e-Millat* did not, therefore, accept by nature that way.

As this uneasiness was actually the result of, according to Hazrat Thanwi, sheer hastiness in finding the objective and a strong urge and quest for non-volitional spiritual states and conditions it increased to such an extent that the heart became tired of all work. Neither was there any interest in teaching and imparting education and nor any eagerness in benefiting others practically and spiritually.

In view of receiving a monthly salary he continued to fulfil the obligation of teaching. However, he stopped all activities of lecturing, spiritual training, etc. The reason for this is that when man is overcome with his own problems then where is there time to worry about others? He thus dissociated himself from all inessential activities and adopted solitude.

16.5 Overwhelming Abdiyyat

After taking to solitude and suspending his lecture programmes the people of Kanpur raised a hue and cry as they were immensely attached to him and obsessed with his lectures. They had derived pleasure from the bayaans right from the onset of his stay in Kanpur. Those who would be quenched from this *Fountain of Uloom and Ma'aarif* were left like fish without water. Pressure from all quarters was thus exerted for Hazrat to continue his series of *mawaa'iz*.

Even the founder of *Madrasah Jaami'ul Uloom* [where Hazrat Thanwi was teaching], Abdur Rahmaan Khan *Marhoom wa Maghfoor* who was an elderly and pious figure was moved to approach Hazrat. He came and recited this poem:

نصاب حسن در حد کمال است

زکاتم ده کہ مسکین و فقیرم

*Beauty within the boundary is a virtue
Give my Zakaat (i.e. my share of your beauty)
for I am a miskeen and a faqeer*

However, overwhelmed by *Abdiyyat* Hazrat responded emotionally: “*Hazrat! I myself am a faqeer. What must I give to others?*”

Hazrat realized that delivering lectures is also a form of self-elevation and self-declaration. Out of overwhelming *Abdiyyat* he, therefore, did not have the courage to submit such a claim.

16.6 Overwhelming Tauheed

The Madrasah Board brought along them eminent Ulama to Hazrat. Through the medium of the Ulama present they requested a rethink of the decision not to giving *wa'z*. The accompanying Ulama also pressed for a *wa'z* to be given. Hazrat was comforted considerably. Out of respect and honour for them, and in view of his own state of helplessness and his excuse he could not declare or refuse verbally. He lowered his head and started to cry.

Beholding this condition of his, Moulana Zahoorul Islam Fatahpuri's heart melted and spontaneously he uttered:

عشق نے غالب کو نکما کر دیا
ورنہ ہم بھی آدمی تھے کام کے

*Love has made Ghaalib²⁰ feeble
Whereas we were also assiduous people*

He restrained his associates from further persistence saying:
“That’s enough! Don’t say anything now. Leave him as he is.”

On one occasion people sought the medium of Molvi Shah Sulaiman Saheb Phulwardi who had come to Kanpur, to persuade Hazrat Thanwi to give a wa’z. He refused to intercede on the grounds that:

“If he is forced to speak with his condition like that, when he sits on the mimbar the first words to come out of his mouth will be: اَنَا الْحَقُّ.²¹ In such a condition it is highly improper to persist.”

In short, the silence of Hazrat was just as good as:

خموشی معنی دارد کہ در گفتن نمی آید

Silence conveys a message which cannot be expressed in speech

In this regard Hazrat would say:

“During that time Tauheed engulfed me. For that reason I stopped giving wa’z. I was fearful of what would have come out of my mouth. The public would have misunderstood and as a result they would have suffered Deeni harm. I would only relate those subtleties of Tauheed which would settle on my heart to Molvi Muhammad Is-haaq Saheb Burdawani (an intelligent and

²⁰ name of the poet

²¹ Reference is to Hazrat Mansoor Al-Hallaaj’s emotional outbursts for which he was executed.

outstanding Aalim and also a trustworthy and close student of Hazrat) in privacy. During that time he was more overawed by academic knowledge whilst Tasawwuf did not affect him much. Then too, my revelations moved him so much that tears would flow uncontrollably from his eyes and he would find no other alternative other than corroborating my revelations.”

It was as if Hazrat’s sense of goodwill for the public kept his tongue in check even in that spiritually overwhelming condition.

16.7 Objection and Admission

During that period of overwhelming spiritual feelings he returned to his hometown on the occasion of Eid. After Eid Namaaz in front of a large crowd one person assailed Hazrat for turning to his uncle, Peer Jee Imdaad Ali saying:

“This is unbecoming of your Ilmi-Shaan [academic status] because Peer Jee’s ways are not in conformity with the Shariat.”

Instead of argumentation and responding to the objection Hazrat Thanwi fell at the feet of the objector before the whole gathering. Nipping the argument in the bud he admitted to be in error saying:

“Yes, my friend! Yes! I truly am wholly wrong and in error. For the sake of Allah Ta’ala, forgive me. Please don’t argue. Leave the matter. I myself admit to being worse than what you think of me.”

This condition of his was the direct result of overwhelming *Abdiyyat*. Otherwise, the *second rujoo* of Hazrat Thanwi to Peer Jee Saheb was not without valid reasons.

16.8 Grounds for the Rujoo'

1. Haji Saheb himself granted permission for this. Often he would say to his disciples:

*“Let all hear. I do not wish to make anyone my bandah. I wish to make you bandah of Allah Ta'ala. **Allah Ta'ala is the Maqsood** [Ultimate Objective], not the Shaikh. Whatever I had with me I have presented it. If you seek more, then you have unconditional permission from me to acquire **the Maqsood** wherever you wish. And if there is a need to become bai't to another Shaikh then you have permission for bai't as well.”*

2. Hazrat Thanwi would therefore say:

“During that period I endured through an intense feeling of desire. Although I had made up my mind that I will only refer to our esteemed Buzrugaan, in particular Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Quddisa Sirruhu), however the possibility of finding a treasure elsewhere incited me to look elsewhere and then to our Hazaraat [i.e. our Buzrugs]. If I had firstly made rujoo' to them and thereafter looked elsewhere it would have been irreverent.”

3. Correspondence with Haji Saheb required a lengthy period due to the distance between them. Whereas the haste in the quest here and the successive changes in Hazrat Thanwi's condition, demanded a speedy avenue for revealing his

condition; wherever that avenue may be. The *Maqsood* was required immediately.

Therefore, his *rujoo* to Peer Jee Saheb was not a wrong move, not forgetting that it was his close family, that is, his maternal uncle as well.

Hazrat Thanwi however had reached that stage which was beyond the reach of Peer Jee. Thus, instead of recovery and ease through his prescriptions, the tension and perturbation continued to increase. This worried him a lot and he informed his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Saheb of the whole affair.

16.9 Agitation of the Shaikh

The letter of Hazrat Thanwi completely unsettled Hazrat Haji Saheb. The person who delivered Hazrat's letter reports:

"When Hazrat Haji Saheb read your letter he became very worried. In his state of restlessness he would go inside his home and then come out. He would repeat: 'He is still young. He has become overpowered. He could not bear more. But I am so far away. What must I do?'"

I replied: 'I am returning quickly.' Hearing this Hazrat Haji Saheb became happy. He wrote a reply and handed the letter to me. He added: 'Tell him that as long as this khaadim is alive, what need is there to make rujoo elsewhere?'"

In spite of all that the Shaikh could not bear to see the heart-rending condition of his Mureed and appearing in a dream he said: *"Don't sit by Peer Jee. Otherwise you will develop scabies."*

16.10 Relief Pack

When the conveyor of the letter reached home, Hazrat Thanwi, hearing of his arrival, went to him at exactly midday when a severe hot wind was blowing and the sun was beating down mercilessly. Despite the intense heat Hazrat came to him and received the letter and message. He opened the letter. The contents were:

“Firstly I supplicate on your behalf for increase in peace of mind and relaxation, coupled with peace, exuberance and a heart and mind clear and unconfused.

My dear friend, your letter has been received. Your spiritual condition refers.

You have written that the prescription (of Peer Jee Saheb) has brought some relief. Such relief is nothing but presumed and on loan. It is not lasting.

You seek permission to associate with the person mentioned. From this faqeer you have permission. However, offbeat awraad and ashghaal prescribed for this changing condition are likewise harmful. The reason for this is that the effect of each one is different. The colour and fragrance of each flower is different.

You should take note that the cause for your perturbation and disturbance is manifold...

The cure is written in Ziyaa-ul Quloob pp. 52-55. Put that into practice. Insha Allahu Ta'ala your tabi'at will find good and betterment. Your mind will be at ease.

Finally, the condition here [in Makkah Mukarramah] can be ascertained from Molvi Abdur Razzaaq Saheb.”

(Maktoobaat-e-Imdaadiyyah, no. 23)

Hazrat Haji Saheb’s *du’aa, tawajjuh*, message and letter had such a profound effect on Hazrat that he used to say:

“The need did not arise to employ the prescriptions written. Merely listening to the verbal message and reading the letter I was so relieved that I felt completely tranquilized.”

In this way Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb swiftly rescued Hazrat who was many oceans away from all the raging waters of perplexity and oddity and placed him on the shores of tranquility.

16.11 Notification of Discontinuation

Immediately upon landing on the shores of the destination Hazrat Thanwi severed his relationship with Peer Jee Saheb. It was necessary for him to give notification so that Peer Jee Saheb also diverted his *tawajjuh* from Hazrat. *Adab*, however, stood as a barrier.

Finally, the demand of the Shariat took control and through an enlightening letter he expressed a clear apology for refraining from any future spiritual upliftment due to the Sacred Shariat.

Owing to his status of leadership Hazrat Thanwi even called off all visits to Peer Jee Saheb in spite of the close family link. This measure was adopted so that the public be protected from falling into error.

16.12 The Amaanat of Ali

In spite of the notification, Peer Jee Saheb wrote a letter to Hazrat in which he averred:

“I have received something from Hazrat Ali (Karramallahu Wajhah) from heart to heart as amaanat. You were young, righteous and fit for that amaanat. I wished to pass over that amaanat to you. However, you did not wish to take it. Even now if you wish to take it then I am prepared to give you that amaanat.”

In response to this letter Hazrat wrote:

“If that thing is in conformity with the Shariat then I am prepared to take it. However, if it is even a fraction contrary to the Shariat then excuse me from it.”

16.13 Acknowledgment of Haqeeqat

In short, Hazrat Thanwi severed his relationship in that way with Peer Jee Saheb indefinitely. Respect in absentia, however, he always upheld. Also, his uncle did not take offence at this break in relationship. In fact he wrote to one of his *mureeds* who afterwards showed Hazrat the letter:

“In view of the difference in dogma it is not appropriate to associate with him (Hazrat Thanwi). However, don’t ever be disrespectful. He is fulfilling his duty which he is responsible for in the light of the Shariat.”

16.14 The Effects of Uns

Through the prescription of Hazrat Haji Saheb when Hazrat Thanwi’s *Shauq* was transformed to *Uns* then it started to show its effects in this way:

هر که از حق انس گیرد

از خلق وحشت گیرد

*Whoever is gripped with Uns of Haq Ta'ala
He experiences an aversion for people*

In the words of Moulana Roomi it turned out like this:

تا بدانی هر کرا ایزد بخواند

از همه کار جهاں بے کار ماند

*For your information whoever Allah Ta'ala calls
Becomes redundant at everything of this world*

So, with this *Uns of Allah Ta'ala* his aversion for people intensified until it made Hazrat Thanwi disinclined to even such a dear place as Kanpur and such a time honoured and absorbing profession as teaching. It made Hazrat in every way complete, perfect and *Waqf in the Path of Allah Ta'ala* solely for spiritual giving.

16.15 Quitting Ties

The prophecy of Hazrat Haji Saheb thus materialized:

*“When your heart becomes disenchanted with Kanpur
then settle down in Thanabawan.”*

Initially, Hazrat Thanwi was perplexed at this prophecy of Hazrat Haji Saheb and, confused he enquired from Hazrat Haji Saheb:

*“Hazrat! Why are you saying this? Why in the world
should my heart become disenchanted with Kanpur? The
affection and treatment of the people there has made me so*

much at home in Kanpur that I have decided to settle there permanently.”

With that he pacified himself saying:

“Hazrat laid down a very nice condition. Neither will my heart ever become disenchanted with Kanpur and nor leaving Kanpur will ever materialize.”

However:

قلندر ہرچہ گوید دیدہ گوید

What the Saint says he has seen.

That which Hazrat could not believe then, Hazrat Haji Saheb could see it clearly with his intuitive eye – that one day this will definitely come to pass. It thus happened so, and after a full fourteen years of the teaching profession in Kanpur and relationship with Kanpur Hazrat left for good. The following verse adequately portrays his position then:

قال را بگذار مرد حال شو

Discard talk and become a man of action.

[In other words, stop your engrossment with words; implement those words.]

17. Quitting Employment

The Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijri, Hazrat Thanwi went to Kanpur taking up employment at a Madrasah at the beginning of the 14th century – Safar 1301. It was yet the beginning of his early manhood. His blessed beard was yet slight and as a result bearded students felt inhibited taking lessons from him. After a

full fourteen years – Safar 1315 Hijri – he finally decided to leave the profession of ‘*Qaal*’ [talk] due to the demand of ‘*Haal*’ [action, emotion].

Prior to this it was unimaginable to him that it would happen. In fact, when his Shaikh hinted at him becoming disenchanted he expressed perplexity and disbelief and said:

“How is that possible?! I, in fact, wish to make it my permanent residence.”

17.1 Forced Departure

When he was ready to sever his ties the thought of breaking the hearts of the people of Kanpur overcame him. For fourteen years they took him to be their guide and *ameer* [leader] due to his beautiful policy, beautiful character, beautiful teaching and beautiful propagation. Apprehension of the order of the Madrasah becoming disrupted also occurred to him – the Madrasah that was being run under his auspices for fourteen years.

On the other hand, his heart had become so shattered that a moment more spent in Kanpur felt like a mountain on his shoulders. He thus became extremely restless at leaving the place. Had there been anyone to take Hazrat’s place then he would have possibly sacrificed openly the interests of the public at the altar of his own interests. Hazrat, however, would invariably be accustomed to giving preference of public interests to his own good. He therefore, maintained secrecy of his intention of relinquishing his ties and quietly prepared for his departure.

17.2 Planning of the Disengagement

Since it had been settled by Divine Will that Hazrat Thanwi would leave Kanpur and go to Thanabawan, Haq Ta'ala therefore created some hidden means for this and some plans were inspired to Hazrat at the right time so that Hazrat could depart at ease and in such a manner that news of his departure would not reach the ears of people. Furthermore, persistence and trouble would not arise. The following developments thus took place:

1. Help from the unseen occurred in this way that during that period the income of the Madrasah fell. On account of this he stopped taking salary from the Madrasah. The Madrasah Board Members sensed that he will slacken his ties with the Madrasah in the case of him not taking any salary and that he will suffer monetary loss. They, therefore, opposed his move of refusing to take salary. However, he put them at ease by saying:

“The heaviest load on the Madrasah is my fifty rupees salary. Therefore, as long as the Madrasah does not receive sufficient funds I will not take a salary.”

2. At that time not only was the entire management of the Madrasah in his hands, he was also the *Sadr Mudarris* [Head Teacher]. To relinquish himself from these duties he decided to announce in the monthly bulletin of the Madrasah the following in his capacity as principal:

“The Mudarriseen (Teachers) have not received promotion for quite some time now. Therefore, the Mudarris-e-Awwal [Number One Teacher] is hereby made the Chancellor (i.e. Hazrat himself) and in his place the present Mudarris-e-Doyam [Number Two Teacher], Molvi Muhammad Is-haaq Burdawani is appointed as Mudarris-

e-Awwal. Similarly, in this pattern all Mudarriseen are hereby promoted.”

Some personalities became suspicious of this move as well and came out against it. Very discreetly Hazrat said to them:

“It seems that you people do not take a liking to my promotion and my chancellery.”

This statement silenced them.

3. In as far as the syllabus was concerned he took the responsibility of teaching those students who were close to graduating. Hence he said:

“Their lessons are by different Asaatizah who cannot put in much time. Whereas they require more time to complete quickly. I, on the other hand, have sufficient time. Therefore, I take responsibility for all their lessons.”

He did this so that no student was disadvantaged in any way by his departure, because he reasoned that after completing the syllabus of the near-complete students he would be over with his responsibility and thereafter no lessons would remain by him. Other students would continue their lessons by the other *Mudarriseen* as they were doing.

4. After taking care of these steps he adopted the following measure to change his seat: He left the Madrasah building and went to the Masjid. There he sat down and started to teach. Explaining the reason he said:

“The graduating class is big. The Madrasah classroom is small for them. Furthermore, as I do not take a salary it is permissible for me to teach in the Masjid. I shall

henceforth teach in the Masjid and Molvi Muhammad Ishaq Saheb Burdawani shall teach in my classroom as Mudarris-e-Awwal.”

5. He thus made Molvi Muhammad Is-haaq Saheb the undisputed Number One Teacher and deputy and in this manner the Madrasah was handed over to him. He even passed on to him some administrative affairs related to himself explaining lack of time as the reason and to allay suspicion of breaking ties the condition was stipulated:

“At the end [of the official documents] my name will appear, that is: ‘Ashraf Ali’, but ‘written by Muhammad Is-haaq’,”

Once his students completed and he had no further teaching responsibility left then he took leave, according to his prearranged programme, putting forward the following excuse:

“Completing the syllabus of such a large group of graduates has taken a heavy toll on me. I am now really tired. I, therefore, require time to rest.”

He put all his goods in bundles and locked it up in a room so that whoever came to collect all the goods could do so without any trouble. Furthermore, asking for the goods would be easy. He did not take it along with him as this would have created needless suspicion. In this manner he made himself free from everything and without informing anyone of his permanent departure he left Kanpur for Thanabawan.

17.3 Relief upon Returning

Hazrat would say:

“When the train left Kanpur there were no bounds to my relief. It truly seemed like I was released from prison and I expressed abundant Shukr unto Allah Ta'ala.”

When news of this reached his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Saheb then Hazrat Haji Saheb wrote to him in gladness and said:

“It was good that you have returned to Thanabawan. I have hope that multitudes of people will benefit from you, practically and spiritually. Repopulate our Madrasah. I make du'aa for you all the time and I think of you.”

(Maktoobaat, No. 36 – 12th Rabee'uth Thaani 1315 Hijri)

17.4 Chancellery Relation

After returning to Thanabawan he never informed the people of Kanpur intentionally for several months that he would not be returning. However, in his position as chancellor he kept inquiring about affairs of the Madrasah and he would pass on advice.

17.5 Severance of Ties

Once he was completely satisfied that everything at the Madrasah was going well and that there was no apprehension of disorder due to his absence he then informed them of his decision not to return. He added this poem of Hafiz Shirazi:

از قیل و قال مدرسه حالے دلم گرفت
یک چند نیز خدمت معشوق می کنم

*My heart was trapped in the politics and debates of the
Madrasah*

Now for some time let me avail myself of service to my Beloved

17.6 The Efforts of the Followers

When news of Hazrat's decision reached Kanpur a tempest of grief swept through the city. Everyone was left gaping and asking: *"What has happened?"*

They tried many ways to get Hazrat back. They even wrote: *"Leave the Madrasah work. Just stay here and take the fifty rupee wage."*

Seeing their persistence Hazrat politely responded:

"I have chosen to stay at my hometown at the gesture of Hazrat Haji Saheb. Whatever you wish to write, please send it to him."

Accordingly, the ardent desirers wrote a letter to Hazrat Haji Saheb and sent it to Makkah Mu'azzamah. In the letter they pleaded to Hazrat Haji Saheb to write to Hazrat to return to Kanpur. But how could he write something against what he himself advised? Hence in his *Maktoob No. 49*, dated 15th Muharram 1317 Hijri, he wrote to Hazrat:

"A letter has come from Kanpur about you residing there. A reply has been sent to them. You are also notified that according to faqeer your permanent residence in Thanabawan is necessary. Yes, during holidays, etc. when you have time available or when you are agitated you may travel to Kanpur and see the people there. For a Taalib [true searcher] Thanabawan is not far from Kanpur. I wrote this too in the letter to Kanpur."

After this, Hazrat would go there upon receiving any invitation from the people there, and very gladly, because Hazrat had a deep love for them owing to their love and sincerity.

To summarize, Hazrat bade farewell to employment with perfect wisdom and wonderful skill. He ended his academic teaching career and now commenced his spiritual training career.

18. The Period of Khashyat

18.1 Human Nature

Nubuwwat, Wilaayat and Khilaafat [Prophethood, Sainthood and Islamic Government] are among Divine favours. Those who are conferred with these special honours find such excellences instilled in their nature which aid and support them in bearing the load of these lofty posts and fulfilling its responsibilities.

Notwithstanding that when a person passes through the ups and downs of life, as a human being he cannot save himself from the effects of painful experiences, adversities, misfortunes and trials, and his heart undergoes changes similar to the changes in season.

A person experiences such effects, states, misfortunes and trials commensurate to his capacity and position. Hence Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said:

“Of all people the Ambiya face the most adversities and after them, in proportion to rank, those who resemble them the most.”

Such states transpire for the purpose of lesson, spiritual upliftment and as tests and trial to advance the rank of the selected servant.

The primary goal of man is acquisition of comfort. As soon as his peace and tranquility are disrupted, even the slightest bit, he instinctively becomes agitated and uneasy and he engrosses himself in removing the causes which have shattered his peace. With this concern he finds no pleasure in anything of the world.

In actual fact, this is a reminder to an inert man of his destiny. The reminder is: when you cannot bear a short lived difficulty in this transitory life; you lose control of yourself, then why are you oblivious of the perpetual life of the *Aakhirat*? If, Allah Ta'ala forbid, you are caught up in some misfortune there too then what is your fate going to be? Here it is possible to make all sorts of effort in removing the calamities, whereas there the possibility is nil. Thus, when a man focuses his attention on this focal point he trembles at the concept of Resurrection and Reckoning and he falls into an overwhelming spiritual state which the Soofiyah term *Taghayyur-e-Haal*.

Even the highest of spiritual stages is not a barrier for such states. In this regard Hazrat Thanwi himself states:

“The Kaamileen [Spiritually Accomplished] also undergo overwhelming spiritual states occasionally. It is, however, not nugatory of perfection. In fact, even the Illustrious Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam) underwent such spiritual conditions at times in accordance to their rank. Accordingly, on the Day of Badr the way the Leader of the Ambiya (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) implored and made du’aa was also the product of overwhelming spiritual feeling.

In fact, here and there we find episodes of overwhelming spiritual conditions recorded about the Farishtas [Angels], whereas, they do not possess human feelings. In this regard, the report of Hazrat Jibra-eel (Alaihis Salaam) stuffing mud in Fir'oun's mouth is documented in Tirmithi.

However, a Saahib-e-Maqaam [One grounded in spiritual states] does not over-step the limits when overcome by a spiritual condition. The Saahib-e-Haal [One who lacks stability in the spiritual sojourn] on the other hand sometimes oversteps the limits. He does not, however, sin because in his state of helplessness he is marfoo'ul qalam [absolved of accountability].”

18.2 The Effect of Kaifiyyaat

In view of Hazrat Thanwi travelling the *Stages of Sulook* and through the Grace of Allah Ta'ala a solid state of firmness and rigidity had been created in his spiritual constitution, nevertheless regardless of becoming a *Saahib-e-Maqaam* it was only inevitable for him to become affected by changing states, for this is among the incumbent experiences of *Sulook*. Accordingly, one day he was delivering a lecture in the Khaanqah Masjid Thanabawan. In the course of the lecture he recited these poems of *Mathnawi Shareef* with utmost zeal and feeling:

اے حریفان راہ ہار ابست یار

*O Associates! The Beloved has blocked all avenues of running
away*

آہوئے لنگیم واو شیر شکار

We are lame bucks while He is the Lion after the prey

جزبہ تسلیم و رضا کو چارہ

Save submission and contentment is there a remedy further?

در کف شیر ز خو خوارہ

You are like in the paw of a man-eating tiger

After reciting the second poem, involuntary he gave a scream and for a long while not only was he trembling, the audience too were left gasping. This evidently shows that the *kaifiyat* [spiritual state] was produced by overwhelming awe. In the words of the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih*:

“That state must have been some super-state which moved a mountain of resoluteness the like of Hazrat Thanwi and after him acquiring complete firmness. And, why not? There is a limit to even the patience and composure of a *Saahib-e-Maqaam*. When such a powerful state strikes him, which is beyond his power, then he immediately becomes overpowered. However, shortly thereafter he gains control over it. It does not drag on, though its intensity is severe.

Such overwhelming states occur occasionally. It does not occur frequently. If such a state strikes a *non-Saahib-e-Maqaam* then his life is at stake. In short, such overwhelming states are not nugatory of the stage of *Tamkeen*. As a matter of fact it is befitting to designate it as a stage of *Tamkeen*.”

18.3 The Effects of Divine Fear

After quitting employment Hazrat settled in Thanabawan with a permanent intention. Then the state of *Uns* [attachment,

affection] with Allah Ta'ala overcame him to such an extent that he started to become terrified at meeting people. As a result he decided to leave the town and stay in a secluded spot out of the town. Since he did not move a foot without the gesture of the *Buzrugaan* and he could not accept being indifferent to the creation of Allah Ta'ala he therefore sought permission from Moulana Gangohi to leave the town. Moulana did not give him permission and said:

“This is neither the way of our Buzrugs and nor is it appropriate. However, if one does not have the inclination to meet with people and one’s time is affected then it is not incumbent to go out of one’s way and show regard.”

Upon this he gave up the idea of leaving the town. However, he devoted most of his time to solitude with his *Mahboob-e-Haqeeqi* [the True Beloved, Allah Jalla Shaanuhu] in intimacy and love. He became fully devoted to Haq Ta’ala and he spent his time with utmost composure, ease, joy and pleasure. Since this was not the final stage [in his spiritual sojourn], after attaining the highest degree of *Uns* with Allah Ta'ala the next stage of the journey commenced.

18.4 Depression and Dread

The commencement of this stage started when the maternal uncle of his first wife was martyred by enemies. The *ghusl* and *kafn* formalities were under his supervision. Whilst giving the deceased the *ghusl*, the wounded head and the terrifying state of the murdered body dealt a forceful blow to his emotional heart.

After the burial when he returned, the sound of wailing and sobbing of the ladies added salt to his fresh wounds and his heart felt extremely weak. He started to feel palpitations.

The effect had not yet worn off when he had to go to his in-laws upon the death of another family member. The preceding effects were thus aggravated. His heart was struck once again and deeply affected.

One night he was making *wudhu* for Tahajjud. All of a sudden a reprehensible thought involuntarily entered his mind. The words that entered his mind shattered his composed and tranquil life. Fear for the *Aakhirat* gripped him to such an extent that he became fed up with life. The thought of suicide even entered his mind and he would say:

“Once, a person came to meet me. He had with him a loaded rifle. The thought repeatedly came to my mind to tell him to fire for the sake of Allah Ta’ala and rid the world of my impure existence. I considered that state of mine to be far away [from the mercy of Allah Ta’ala] and the thought of being far away made me feel worse than Fir’oun and Haamaan, whereas, there was certainty of me being a Mu’min and them being kaafir. Since this experience can only be understood fully if one undergoes it, hence I cannot elucidate more than this.

I thought that the calamity they [Fir’oun, Haamaan] were caught in could be removed by embracing Imaan whilst the calamity I was caught in could not be warded away even after years. What was really difficult was that when I would sit down for Zikr, which is a state of proximity, simultaneously that reprehensible thought would return. If I wanted to stop my Zikr which is a state of being far, to escape that thought, then my heart would not go along with that too. My condition was like:

من شمع جاگند ازم، تو صبح دل کشائی

I am a candle melting; you are merry like the morning

سوزم گرت نہ بینم، میرم چورخ نمائی

*Not seeing you is the cause of me burning; not viewing
your countenance is the reason for me dying*

نزدیک آنچنانم، دور آنچنان کہ گفتم

I am so close; I am so far that I say:

نہ تاب وصل دارم، نہ طاقت جدائی

*'Neither do I have the power of uniting, nor the strength of
separating'*

In short, I was caught up in a severe state of perplexity. It was such a severe condition that notwithstanding my physical wellbeing I preferred death a million times more than life."

18.5 Agencies of Danger

Hazrat Thanwi, whom Haq Ta'ala sent as the *Physician of the Ummat* (Hakeemul Ummat), said in regard to his diagnosis of the causes of his affliction – the reprehensible thought:

"There were three causes for that reprehensible thought being so forceful. Firstly, the successive traumas (which have been mentioned above) were the first salvos which softened and wounded my heart. As a result it became a soft target for the state of effect, feeling, and succumbing to the thought. Then when the reprehensible thought struck, the heart could not resist it or confront it due to its exceptionally weak and unstable condition.

The second cause was that after I severed my ties with Kanpur I exceeded the limits in abstention from lawful activities and I completely detached my heart from relations. Whereas, experience proved afterwards that such extremity was harmful because on the one side the heart was emptied and on the other side, in view of the Aalam-e-Ghaib [Unseen World] being something not witnessed, something else could not be filled in it [the heart] with such strength and firmness. Thus, Shaitaan found free play in whispering stray thoughts whilst the heart was vacant.

Accordingly, it comes in the Hadeeth Shareef that when the mould of Aadam (Alaihis Salaam) was prepared Iblees circled it and scrutinized it from all sides. When he saw it was empty inside he became happy that its nature being thus, it would be simple to over power. In other words, Iblees said to himself, 'Since it is empty I will easily be able to penetrate it.' Accordingly, the saying is famous:

خانه خالی را دیو میگیرد

A ghost seizes an empty house.

The third cause of the severe effect was that the reprehensible thought was ostensibly nugatory of perfect love [for Allah Ta'ala].”

Such thoughts which ostensibly appear to be nugatory of perfect love, grief and depression of this magnitude settling on a person are as a matter of fact in the words of Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam):

ذَلِكَ صَرِيحُ الْإِيمَانِ

That is clear-cut Imaan.

Those states indicate perfect love. However, a semblance of remoteness [from Allah Ta'ala] is sufficient to unsettle the one possessing perfect love.

بردل سالک ہزاراں غم بود

گر زباغ دل خلائے کم بود

*The heart of the Saalik is stricken with unimaginable grief
When the orchard of his heart loses even one leaf*

18.6 Preventive Measures

Out of good coincidence the initial attack took place at *Tahajjud time* whilst he was still in Gangoh. Therefore, early in the morning he presented himself before Moulana Gangohi and related to him the night's episode. Stating the measure to prevent it Moulana said: "*Ignore it.*" Accordingly, Hazrat Thanwi returned to Thanabawan.

As this was the first attack and the heart had become extremely vulnerable to outside effects the reprehensible thought therefore returned again and again. In fact, its intensity grew day by day and as a result his heart became more and more susceptible. It reached a stage where his heart started to palpitate and shortly thereafter he became so weak, as if he was ill for ages.

During that time Hakeem Molvi Muhammad Siddeeq Gangohi came to Thanabawan from his consulting office in Garhi Pukhta. Hazrat Thanwi consulted him for treatment and sent to

him his urine sample. When Hakeem Saheb saw the urine sample he was shaken and alarmingly he said: *“How can this man be alive!!!”* This was due to the fact that the urine sample clearly showed that the natural heat of the body was no more.

The person who took the urine sample, Molvi Muhammad Yunus Marhoom who was a student of Hazrat and also *bai't* to Hazrat, in all innocence repeated the same words. This was yet another blow on his heart which Hazrat endeavoured to neutralize by reprimanding him saying: *“Is this something to tell the patient!”*

He [Molvi Muhammad Yunus Saheb] became deeply embarrassed. He acknowledged his mistake and asked: *“Now what do I do?”* Hazrat replied:

“Take this urine sample and after a while return saying that you took the urine sample again to Hakeem Saheb and he says that his first impression was incorrect. The patient is in good health. There is nothing to worry about.”

Molvi Saheb put forward a query just as a student does. He queried: *“When you are making me do this and say these words then how is that going to help?”* Hazrat replied:

“Of what concern is that to you? You just do what I tell you to do. Allah Ta'ala has given effect to words as well.”

As his heart's condition at that time was very delicate and it became affected over minute things the shock was cushioned with this approach as compared to the initial breaking of the news. However, Hakeem Saheb's treatment did not help because he was not suffering from any physical ailment.

As he himself was, *Masha Allah*, a Hakeem of spiritual maladies and he had diagnosed the causes of the malady, he therefore commenced to treat himself now. For removing the vacuum in his disposition with a barrage of lawful occupations he borrowed a rifle and would go out with it firing without any target. The sound of the firing would soothe his disposition. He furthermore started to associate with acquaintances and occasionally he would set out on journey.

Contiguous to these practical remedies he would inform Hazrat Moulana Gangohi and Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb of his condition requesting from them *du'aa* as well. Apart from Moulana Gangohi's *du'aas and tawajjuh* [focus of spiritual attention] he was adamant over the point: "*Ignore the thoughts.*"

This, according to Hazrat Thanwi, was proof of him being an Imaam on the subject [of Tasawwuf].

He [Moulana Gangohi] would send reassuring letters as well. The letters have been published with the title *Makaateeb-e-Rashidiyyah*. In one *Maktoob* [letter] Moulana writes:

"Your letter has been received and the contents noted. If this fear and grief have to do with the Aakhirat (which in fact was the case) then it is commendable. Buzrugs have been afflicted with sever cases of depression as a result of such fear to the extent that some gave their lives. Hazrat Shaikh states:

جان صدیقاً ازیں حسرت بریخت

کاسماں بر فرق ایشاں خاک بیخت

The life of Allah's true friends became muddled due to this regret.

Like the sky due to being separated from them sifting grit

Thus, in such a condition and in this case the occasion calls for Shukr, not ghamm [sadness].

By virtue of this very same ghamm Imaam Ghazaali remained distressed and sorrowful for ten years to such an extent that physicians were helpless to cure him. Finally a Jewish physician saw him and diagnosed the illness to be not a physical one, rather the fear of the Hereafter. There was no medicinal cure for it.

Therefore, be cheerful that Haq Ta'ala has given you this treasure. Such grief commands more worth than a thousand joys. Death in this condition is a major shahaadat [martyrdom].

If there is something else to it then I cannot respond without ascertaining the nature of the state.

And as far as your question of coming here, then as said:

او خوشن گم است کرار ہبری کند

He is lost himself; what guidance is he going to give?

Nevertheless, if you do honour us with your presence then I have hope of deriving personal benefit, as association with the pious is a boon no matter how little. End.

Was Salaam”

In another letter Moulana writes:

“I have noted your condition from your letter. I make du’aa of prosperity for you.

In the stray thought mentioned apprehension of an evil ending is yet another misapprehension. As far as possible, ward it away. Reward and expiation from wrongs are certainties, Insha Allah...

15th Sha’baan 1316 Hijri”

During that period the letters which would come from Hazrat Haji Saheb, we find that Hazrat Haji Saheb would write:

1. *“Alhamdulillah! Your internal condition is very good. This is the stage of Khauf wa Raja [fear and hope]. It is also referred to as Haibat wa Uns [apprehension and acquaintanceship]. Sometimes Haibat is dominant, sometimes Uns. Take the two to be one.”* (Maktoob No. 44, dated: 19th Rajab 1316 Hijri)
2. *“Your second letter has also arrived. Your condition is very good. Insha Allah there won’t be any harm. This faqeer makes du’aa.”* (Maktoob No 44, dated: 1st Rajab 1316 Hijri)”
3. *“Your condition is very good. This has been stated before. Such upheavals do face a Taalib [searcher]. Insha Allah you will cross all. This faqeer makes du’aa. Verily Allah*

Ta'ala hears everything; He is close.” (Maktoob No. 46, dated: 8th Sha’baan 1316 Hijri)

4. *“Your condition is very good. May Allah Ta’ala make it blessed. What remains of the depression will, Insha Allah, clear up as well. May Allah Ta’ala include you among the Mukhlaseen [Specially Protected]”* (Maktoob No. 47, dated: 22nd Shawwaal 1316 Hijri)

Through these measures the condition of *Haibat* which settled on him, *Bifadhlihi Ta’ala*, left forever.

18.7 The Nature of Haibat

Just as Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) became fearful at the initial descent of *Wahi* [Divine Revelation] and *Ummul Mu-mineen*, Hazrat Khadeejatul Kubra (Radhiyallahu anha) greatly consoled Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), similarly, in this period of overwhelming apprehension when the anxiety would become too much then Hazrat would speak of his painful condition to his sympathetic, faithful, partner of life, Bari Begum Saahibah to relieve himself of the grief. She would give befitting and satisfying answers to Hazrat’s talk. Hazrat would say:

“I would be satisfied at her answers. Muhtaramah Begum Saahibah gave a very good similitude of my affliction. She said: ‘Its similitude is exactly like someone has to go somewhere and the road is inside an orchard. However, on the way he comes to some thorns. He crosses the thorns due to which his whole body becomes bruised and bloody and he undergoes sever difficulty, but he continues to move ahead and, further ahead he comes to that lush and blooming path. Such a person went through severe pain

for sure, but his progress was not hampered. The major benefit of this experience is that such a person can properly guide others. If any Saalik is afflicted by this sort of problem he [the experienced guide] will be able to easily extricate the Saalik from the difficulty.'

In the above similitude the reality is evident that undoubtedly the one afflicted with depression and apprehension undergoes severe difficulty. However, his progress [on the Spiritual Path] is not hampered."

Hazrat himself drew the veil off the nature of apprehension in answers to letters of Saalikeen afflicted with it. He writes:

"These changes are natural and personal, not spiritual and character-related. Thus, these changes are not at all harmful. They are absolutely beneficial. Ujub [Vanity] is remedied by virtue of these states and the reality of Abdiyyat [the highest stage of Sulook – complete submission and resignation to Allah Ta'ala] starts to be observed; one's nothingness and dependence become manifest."

In reality this is a type of depression which has the following benefits:

** Senior Sahaabah experienced this condition. In Saheeh Bukhari, with regard to seventy Sahaabah it appears:*

كُلُّهُمْ يَخَافُ النِّفَاقَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ

Each one of them feared hypocrisy in their hearts.

The addressee has also undergone this condition which in fact brings thousands of benefits; elimination of vanity, observation of Divine power, witnessing of one's own helplessness, and so forth.

** The Muhaqqiqeen [Experts in the Field of Tasawwuf] have declared it [qabz; depression] to be loftier than bast [exuberance]. Despicable traits are remedied much through it.*

** Although during the exact time of depression the benefits are not known, however, thereafter most of the benefits become known. And even if they do not become known, then too, they certainly are achieved. And achievement is the object not knowledge of the achievement."*

(Tarbiyatus Saalik, Chapter Five)

18.8 Severe Haibat

The condition of *haibat* [apprehension, fear of Divine chastisement] which overcame Hazrat Thanwi cannot be imagined. It was a case of:

شب تاریک و بیم موج و گردابے چنین حالت

کجا دانند حال ما سبکساران ساحلها

The dark night, the dreadful wave and a whirlpool

These are barriers for sure

Where do they understand our position,

Those who are safe on the shore?

The severity of the condition can be gauged from the following episode: A full fifteen years after that condition a *Saalik* wrote a lengthy letter to Hazrat about his extremely difficult internal troubles. In response Hazrat wrote:

“The difficulties, calamities, troubles and problems you have written are not even one percent of what others face. Some conditions come to mind at this moment shaking me from head to toe. With difficulty I have controlled myself without postponing this response...” (Al-Ibtala li Ahlil Istifa)

It is abundantly clear from this that just the thought of that state, after such a lengthy period passing, and shaking a man of grit such as Hazrat Thanwi from head to toe, what must have Hazrat gone through during its peak?

It was all Divine Help and the result of the special attention given by the *Buzrugaaan-e-Deen* that Hazrat Thanwi withstood the severity. Had it been someone else, then surely that person would have harmed his life and faith in a fit of mindlessness.

18.9 Reason for the Apprehension

This state of overwhelming apprehension was not without reason. Hazrat Thanwi was to be seated on the *Pedestal of Irshaad* [Guidance to the Ummat]. Hence Haq Ta’ala put this state of apprehension over him to give him personal experience of the ups and downs of this Path [of Tasawwuf] and to make him a perfect master in it. Thus it materialized, and after him taking the *Seat of Irshaad* he did not experience any difficulty in spiritually treating such *Saalikeen*. In acknowledgement of the Divine Favour Hazrat Thanwi would say:

“Since I have undergone extremely difficult conditions I therefore have much experience in these internal conditions. Now, Bihamdillah, I have not the slightest doubt or uncertainty when treating a Saalik no matter what problem he has and no matter what internal turmoil he may be in. Through the Fadhl of Allah Ta’ala such ways and prescriptions come to my mind that the Saalik emerges from his condition with utmost ease and speedily by employing the prescriptions. Particularly in diagnosing the nature of stray thoughts and wrong ideas, and prescribing the cure, Allah Ta’ala has granted me so much insight that few people today possess. Wa laa fakhra [And this is no boastful claim].”

Episodes to corroborate this claim can be perused in *Tabweeb Tarbiyatus Saalik, Chapter Five*.

19. Spiritual Guidance and Deeni Direction

19.1 The Importance of Inviting Towards Deen and Providing Guidance

Just as the deficiency and defect of an object are manifest to the inventor in a way that others are not aware of, similarly, the natural weaknesses and deficiencies of creation are manifest as daylight to the Creator. No one else can encompass knowledge of all this.

An exhaustive search of the Qur’aan-e-Paak reveals that *insaan* [man] is, in the Words of the Creator: **“very stingy, impatient, ungrateful, quarrelsome and foolish”** regardless of him being the noblest of creation. The *Book of Guidance* sent for his

guidance and direction is, in the very own Words of the *Master of the Book*, “**exceptionally simple, easily understood, clear, detailed and self-explanatory.**” However, in view of the aforementioned human weaknesses a *Teacher of the Book* was sent by Haq Ta’ala to teach and impart the Book so that this quarrelsome human does not elucidate and interpret it according to his desire.

Nabi-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was, in the words of the Qur’aan: “**Ra-oof and Raheem [very caring and merciful] and free from fault**”. Together with that he was soft-hearted, high-spirited, forbearing and tolerant, patient and grateful, and wise and foresighted. The *Seal of Prophethood* was visible on his back, the *Radiance of Prophethood* cascaded from his illuminated face and upon the indication of his finger the moon split. Even the opposition unanimously called him, “**Ameen [Trustworthy] and Saadiq [Truthful]**”. For humans of sound nature there was no reason not to bring faith over the Unseen at every statement of his.

There were, however, sick-natured humans as well present. Hence, Haq Ta’ala emphasised out of compassion to the *Very Caring and Merciful* that: In view of the servants natural weaknesses, when delivering and explaining *My Message* to these quarrelsome and foolish humans then bear in mind:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ط

“Call to Your Rabb with words of wisdom and good admonition and explain to them in a beautiful manner.”

From this we learn how important and how delicate the task of spiritual guidance and Deeni direction is, and what qualities the spiritual guide and Deeni director should possess.

19.2 Special Spiritual Training

Since it was Haq Ta'ala's Will to place Hazrat Thanwi on this *Grand Platform* [of spiritual guidance and Deeni direction], He therefore created distinct means for his special spiritual training. Coming to the world through the *Du'aa* and auspicious glad tidings of a *Buzrug*, spending his childhood like the pious, receiving academic education by accomplished *Asaatizah* who were the *Ghazaalis and Raazis* of the time, being the centre of attraction of senior saintly people in absentia, acquiring practical and spiritual grace from the *Buzrugaan-e-Deen*, obtaining spiritual upbringing from *Shaikhul Arab wal Ajam*, safely and soundly crossing the difficult gorge of spiritual depression and Divine apprehension and being acclaimed and loved by Allah Ta'ala and mankind are all palpable proofs that the Almighty had some extraordinary work planned for him.

19.3 Encouragement from Imdaad

With this distinct and careful upbringing his Shaikh, Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah (Quddisa Sirruhu) would very exquisitely encourage and inspire him in his letters to go to Thanabawan and take up the work of inviting others to Deen and providing spiritual guidance. He would, therefore, write:

1. *“You people (i.e. the Ulama) are the Heirs of the Ambiya. Allah Ta'ala created you people for the guidance of His creation and He has conferred great ranks to you. Just place the thought of your aim before everything else. In other words, grab hold firmly to the Deen. The world*

will automatically come to your service in a beautiful manner.” (Maktoob-e-Imdaadiyyah, No. 3)

2. *“As long as Allah Ta'ala wishes that you remain tied up there (in Kanpur), hold on. After that, place your trust in Allah Ta'ala, take the Name of Allah Ta'ala and settle in Thanabawan and thereafter do not keep any form of physical relationship with Kanpur.” (Maktoob-e-Imdaadiyyah, No. 35)*

3. *“Populate once again our Madrasah and Masjid. Multitudes of people will benefit from you, externally and spiritually.” (Maktoob-e-Imdaadiyyah, No 35)*

19.4 The Wish of Rasheed

When he severed his relationship with Kanpur and came to Thanabawan with the intention of settling permanently, then the distinguished *Khaleefah* of Hazrat Haji Saheb, Hazrat Moulana Gangohi (Rahmatullahi Alaihi) expressed his joy and wish saying:

“Bhai! My heart will be overjoyed when people engaged in ‘Allah, Allah’ [i.e. the Zaakireen and Saalikeen] gather by you and the Taalibeen [Seekers of Spiritual Purification] converge upon you.”

Not only did Moulana made *du'aa*, he commenced sending his *mureedeen* to Hazrat Thanwi for *Islaah and Tarbiyat* [moral reformation and spiritual training], and in this way he practically admitted to him [Hazrat Thanwi] being a *Shaikh of Tareeqat*.

19.5 Glad Tidings of the Night

In the meantime pious people were being given an open notice in the *World of Dreams* with the following tidings:

1. Hazrat Thanwi is the most distinguished Aalim and Buzrug of his time.
2. His *maslak* [course] is exactly according to the Sunnat of Nabi (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam).
3. In this age of futilities and innovations he is precisely the one to take the *Platform of Irshaad* [Deeni Guidance].

In support of these points the following true dreams transpired. They are cited from *Sidqur Ru-ya* and *Tabweeb Tarbiyatus Saalik*, Chapter Seven:

1. “*Ahqar [This lowly servant – reference is to a Mureed corresponding with Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi Alaihi)] saw Hazrat in a dream conversing with Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). There were many other Ulama present. However, Hazrat was asking on behalf of all and Rasool-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was answering. And I saw Hazrat the closest to Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam).*”
2. “*Ahqar saw Rasool-e-Kareem (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) walking on one path and behind him Hazrat followed by bandah [i.e the correspondent]. In other words, we all were together.*”
3. “*Last night I saw a dream. Huzoor the Embodiment of Noor, the Master of the World (Sallallahu Alaihi*

Wasallam) came. When Huzoor (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) honoured us with his presence we started to stand. Huzoor (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) instructed all of us to sit. You and those seated on an elevated place either started to come down or move from the head position. Huzoor (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told you to remain there and Huzoor (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sat on one side of the elevated place...”

19.6 Allah-Given Gifts

In light of these distinct conditions he took the *Platform of Irshaad*. Once being appointed to this exalted position there is a need to employ sagacity and diplomacy. Like Hazrat Shaikh-e-Akbar, Muhyid Deen Ibn Arabi (Rahmatullahi Alaih) states:

“Once the Shaikh possesses the Deen of the Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam), the prescription of the physicians and the diplomacy of kings then he is designated an Ustaad-e-Kaamil [a Perfect Instructor].”

Thus Haq Ta’ala made him [Hazrat Thanwi] a visible personification of these three attributes so that he could easily execute the task of spiritual guidance and Deeni direction. The result of these Allah-given gifts is mentioned hereunder.

19.7 Ambiya-Like Teaching

In the *Court of Ashraf* neither were there empty claims like that of grandiloquent *dervishes* and nor were rules handed down belonging to *majzoobs*. Neither were inspirations and miracles broadcasted and nor were the discussions centred on dreams and involuntary spiritual states. Furthermore, there was no such emphasis on *Zikr and Shaghl* as with the *Faraaidh* [the

Incumbent Duties]. On the contrary, there all the time the Qur'aan and Sunnah were taught which in actual fact is the *Soul of Tasawwuf* and the *Lifeblood of Tareeqat*. Hence Hazrat Thanwi once said:

“Here the business is to teach. I don’t know what it is to be a Buzrug. We are students of Deen; not even scholars. Our work is only to draw attention to acting on the Qur’aan and Hadeeth. Then whatever anyone has to receive from it he will receive. And, Alhamdulillah, he will receive in such a way that:

مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبٍ بَشَرٍ

No eye has seen, no ear has heard of and nor has it crossed the heart of any man.

Ostensibly, however, there is nothing. There is no ‘Huwa Haq’, [i.e. emotional outbursts], no ecstasy, no hysteria and no inspirations and miracles.

There is no Majlis-e-Zikr by me. By me it is not a little sweat and then one can meander freely. Such people should come to me who are ready to pass a saw over their Nafs day and night, and at every step they are concerned over what is jaaiz and what is na-jaaiz.”

There was not even the commitment to *tawajjuh* [casting of spiritual attention and power onto the *Mureed*] by him like with some Soofiya-e-Kiraam. In fact, he once strongly rejected it saying:

“My concern for myself leaves me no time. Where do I have the tawfeeq to direct my attention to others all the time? I consider this customary Tawajjuh an

inconvenience. I am ashamed at diverting my attention from everything and directing it to a particular person who is of creation in view of the fact that this is the sole right of Allah Ta'ala. Mental engrossment diverted from everything else should be only on the One Being. Yes, the approved Shar'i method of Tawajjuh is to educate fervently and sympathetically and hope that the Taalibeen derive benefit and their condition improves. This is the Sunnat of the August Ambiya (Alaihimus Salaam) and it is much greater in benefit and blessings than the customary Tawajjuh."

Nevertheless, many people were of the opinion, in fact they were certain that whoever turned to Hazrat for their reformation in a systematic manner would become coloured in his hue. Before their very eyes their lives would be transformed and they would find in their hearts a special feeling in his presence and even in absentia without any apparent cause. All this was as a result of Hazrat's gaze and consideration. He thus said in answer to the doubts of this class of people:

"Don't think, 'How does this effect come about without intentional Tawajjuh?' The point is that Allah Ta'ala has endowed some hearts with the attribute of transmission. Just as the sun does not form the intention of transmitting its light to others, nevertheless its light reaches others regularly. This is due to the fact that Allah Ta'ala has endowed it with the attribute of illuminating what ever comes in front of it."

It was purely the *barkat* of explicit obedience unto the *Kitaabullah* and *Sunnat*, and imparting academic and spiritual teaching and training according to the method of the Ambiya

(Alaihimus Salaam) that people would derive spiritual grace from Hazrat without his direct intention.

After forming their relationship of spiritual reformation with Hazrat they would forever be conscious of following the Shariat explicitly and all the time they would be concerned about *jaaiz and na-jaaiz*. In consequence, others would readily understand them to be *Mureeds* of Hazrat Thanwi.

In this regard, once, Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob happened to stay over by Hazrat Moulana Habeebur Rahman Saheb the principal of Darul Uloom Deoband. An elderly and widely travelled Buzrug, Ameer Shah Khan Saheb was also by chance present there. Ameer Shah Saheb had visited and benefited from the company of great Buzrugs during his lifetime.

Majzoob Saheb asked him: *“The lantern you have lit, is it not perhaps the Madrasah’s?”*

Ameer Shah Khan Saheb: *“Are you the Mureed of Moulana Ashraf Ali?”*

Khaajah Saheb: *“Yes.”*

Ameer Shah Khan Saheb: *“Consideration for these things I have seen in only Moulana Thanwi’s Mureeds, hence I understood that you are a Mureed of Moulana Thanwi.”*

[It was not permissible in those days for visitors to use Madrasah property donated or bought with funds donated, as the donors had given their funds for the benefit of the Madrasah personnel and pupils, not for visitors. Hazrat Khaajah Saheb, therefore, investigated the ownership of the lantern before sharing its benefit.]

Similarly, a person from Fatehpur who was *bai't* to Hazrat Thanwi mentioned to the author of *Ashrafus Sawaanih* about the condition of an illiterate builder of his. Since he [the illiterate builder] became *bai't* to Hazrat Thanwi he is concerned all the time of carrying out voluntary work in the same pace as he carries out his contractual work. Relating this episode the author acknowledges:

“We have definitely seen this effect of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. Whoever has a relationship with him becomes highly concerned over abiding by the Shariat and at all times the thought of jaaiz and na-jaaiz remains with him.”

This was the result of that same obedience and devotion by virtue of which close to every affiliate of Hazrat possessed the rank of a guide, *Bifadhlihi Ta'ala*. People would cite their actions as proof. Hazrat Thanwi mentioned this with joy in the following words:

“It is the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala that no one by me is oblivious of the reality of this Path. This is due to my frankness. Otherwise, there would have also been misunderstandings by me. Now I am, Bifadhlihi Ta'ala, satisfied with everyone [under my spiritual guidance]. In my opinion almost all are worthy of authorization [i.e. authorization of guiding others formally]. I would have authorized all, however, the demand of Deeni interests requires that the one authorized [to make mureeds] should have some outward influence or the other, Deeni or worldly. For instance, he should be an Aalim or a member of a distinguished class in order that people are not

embarrassed at referring to him and so that this Path is not held in contempt.

19.8 Physician-Like Prescriptions

At the *Consulting Office of Ashraf*, in the words of Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi:

“Severely handicapped [spiritual] patients would also receive prescriptions. It was not a court where only the pious and righteous came and taking just Zikr and Shaghl Ta’leem they left. Nor was it that only those that kept the vigil all night and Tahajjud performers presented themselves and finding approval for added Awraad and Tasbeehaat they returned. Here there was scope for the misfortunate and evil-doers with that same open-heartedness and that same character and grace.” (Hakeemul Ummat, p.58)

Hakeemul Ummat’s gaze was always on the sickness of the patient, not on the patient. He would never distinguish at all between related and unrelated. When it came to *Islaah* [Spiritual Reformation] he would censure his sincere friends, devotees and attendants to save them from Deeni harm according to the occasion in the same manner he would censure others. Where there was no need for censure he would adopt an attitude of affection, care, softness and encouragement. In this regard Moulana Abdul Maajid Saheb Daryabadi writes:

“It would appear as if a deep ocean of tranquillity was flowing in the heart all the time. Put forward the worst possible condition and find an answer of relief and tranquillity. It was as if he knew not how to make others despondent.” (Hakeemul Ummat, p.127)

Similarly, in his treatment he would pay special regard to the fortitude, tastes and interests of the patient. A single prescription was not handed down to all and sundry. In fact, upon the arrival of the seeker he would determine in the light of his intuition the condition of compatibility and non-compatibility and commence his treatment accordingly.

If he saw that the newcomer did not have any compatibility with him then without wasting the newcomer's and his own time he would refer him elsewhere for treatment. If someone asked for a spiritual guide he would give the particulars of a *Buzrug* according to the seeker's condition. He would not attempt to tie anyone down.

Those with whom he saw compatibility he would allow them to stay. Ascertaining from them their daily practices he would administer some increase or decrease and prescribe some devotional practice. Hazrat would say:

"In view of a person being accustomed to former devotional practices it is difficult for the person to forsake it. More interest is shown for such practices. Therefore, I do not make anyone leave their habitual devotional practices unnecessarily."

Furthermore, a special type of barkat is produced in time-honoured practices by virtue of constancy. In this regard, I merely prescribed excessive Tilaaat of the Qur'aan Shareef to Dr Abdur Rahmaan Saheb Marhoom Lucknowi and he became delighted. He exclaimed: 'You have told me something which conforms entirely to my tastes. I just love to make Tilaawat!'

Similarly, I prescribed excessive Nawaafil for a certain person and he said the same thing.”

In view of such episodes transpiring daily, people present in Hazrat’s gatherings became convinced that Hazrat was a *Saahib-e-Kashf* [one with inspirational powers] which Hazrat would unequivocally refute saying:

“The fact of the matter is that whomsoever Allah Ta’ala wishes to take work from He bestows the understanding of the particular work. It is nothing of my greatness. Since Allah Ta’ala has entrusted this work to me, He therefore helps me along. Otherwise, what am I?!”

Furthermore, Hazrat would vigilantly ensure that those engaged in *Zikr and Shaghl* do not fall for the pleasure of it and thereby abandon everything else. Rather, they were required:

- * to fulfil the Rights of Allah with all sincerity and purity of the heart,
- * to show no complacency in the *Faraaidh and Waajibaat*,
- * to maintain their ties with Allah’s servants,
- * to determine and fulfil as far as possible the rights of parents, brothers, sisters, wives, children, tutors, pupils, employees, employers, friends, associates and neighbours,
- * not to entangle themselves in world related affairs and pry into the affairs of others,
- * not to hurt the heart and feelings of others without justification,
- * to maintain a reckoning of themselves,
- * to be concerned of their *Islaah*,
- * and not to quit their present means of livelihood as long as a better means of earning was not found.

In fact, Hazrat would permit even such employments which ostensibly appeared to be questionable, provided that scope for it was forthcoming from the view of some *Mujtahid* [classical jurist] or other, for he would sense a real Deeni necessity as far as livelihood was concerned. It is for this reason that he had given permission to Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob to accept the post of *Inspector of Drug and Liqour Excise*, as he [Khaajah Saheb] had no hope of finding an alternate employment. When a better employment in the form of *Deputy Commisioner* presented itself then he gave *mashwarah* to Khaajah Saheb to accept it without delay.

Coincidentally, in his post as *Deputy Commisioner* he was required by the government to pass certain judgements in violation of the Shariah. On the one side this put strain on him and on the other side his devotion to *Zikr and Shaghl* increased. To top it off, mandatory examinations for the employment were decreed which he was averse to in view of his devotion to *Zikr and Shaghl*. He thus corresponded with Hazrat about the examination, to which Hazrat replied:

“Don’t lose courage, though naturally you dislike it. Bring your heart to focus on the examination and make an effort to pass. Do not allow worry to come close to you.

حیف باشد دل دانا کہ مشوش باشد

It is a crime for a wise heart to become perturbed

Do pass your examination so that you do not suffer disgrace in the eyes of worldly-minded people. This carrion world should be left after it has come to you. You

should kick the dunya away; not the dunya kicking you away.

If you do not pass the examination and you were dismissed then where have you left the post of Deputy Commissioner? The post itself has left you, whereas it should be the other way round."

Khaajah Saheb accordingly mustered up the courage and passed the exams. Thereafter he relinquished the post as it was not possible for him to pass judgements in violation of the Shariah. He was subsequently instated as *Inspector of Schools*. [The schools in those days and in that part of the world were rather conservative and should not be mistaken for the evil institutions of today. The former were semi-madrasahs and nothing of the vice which bedevils modern-day schools was part of those schools.]

It was just the wise prescriptions of Hazrat Thanwi that made people uncontrollably attracted to him. Wherever he would go huge crowds would gather around him. Due to congestion of the roads and ill-timed greetings he would become upset and even give rebuke. But inspite of that, people would flutter towards him like moths to a lamp and consequently he would be accompanied by a mass of people.

19.9 Kingly-Diplomacy

Just like the kingdoms of the world, the administration of Deen also follows the principles of diplomacy. Like a king, the spiritual mentor also has a private and a community life. Both go hand-in-hand within the confines of diplomacy in view of the fact that citizens generally follow the religion of their kings. It is

for this reason that as a matter of principle, it devolves upon kings to inculcate such qualities which leave a good impression on the character and ways of the public. However, order and arrangement have to be implemented concurrently and a drive to promote peace and prosperity should remain in force.

Towards this end need arises to implement an assortment of rules and regulations. Sometimes work is accomplished through gentleness and sometimes there is a need for harshness. This is due to the fact that people of different dispositions and ideas are faced.

The gaze of the ‘shepherd’ goes to such things which the ‘flock’ very seldom see. Hence, subordinates play a very minor role in the organization of the overseer. This was precisely the state of affairs at the *Court of Ashraf*.

Regardless of Hazrat Thanwi being a spiritual mentor (Muslih) he was not relieved from human and inborn weaknesses. Along with the spiritual reformation of others he would constantly be gripped with concern for his own spiritual treatment in order that such an act is not committed by him which courts the displeasure of Allah and His Rasool (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), and which brings harm and destruction in its wake to others. He thus adopted the same procedure for his spiritual reformation which he would consider beneficial for others. Accordingly he states:

“When I perceive something within me worthy of correcting then I deliver a bayaan about it. The benefit in this is abundant. The reason being, that during a lecture one’s feelings are aroused. This in turn leaves a mark on the heart and one becomes embarrassed and thinks, ‘I

myself should observe what I am giving others advice about.’ The bayaan, Al-Ghadhab [Anger] was given for the same purpose.”

Besides the general way of reforming himself and others, in particular cases his approach was different, yet stemming from the *Sunnat* [Tradition of Rasulullah Sallallahu alaihi wasallam]. By virtue of this, many and most of the renowned sages were put into the shade when it came to his specialist field of treating spiritual sicknesses. His following statement sheds light on this particular approach:

“Many a time my approach to Islaah is that I bring down a claimant of excellence from the pedestal of excellence in the field he considers himself to be great, provided that the field is an object of attaining [in the Shariat]. Then he finds no embarrassment in following. His right to debate is stripped and he finds no objection to the teachings.”

In addition, he would strongly emphasise that no one should interfere with or obstruct his methodology as this was contrary to the rules of diplomacy. For this reason he would state:

“No one should obstruct my view in matters pertaining to spiritual reformation. In whichever way I treat anyone, all my dear acquaintances should understand that the person concerned was worthy of such treatment.”

Once, in Ilahabad he [Hazrat Thanwi] got onto a cart. Along with him was Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob and Hazrat’s most beloved nephew, Moulana Sa’eed the elder brother of Hazrat Moulana Zafar Ahmad Saheb Uthmani. How much affection Hazrat Thanwi had for Moulana Sa’eed Ahmad

can be adequately gauged from this statement: *“I loved him the most. You can call it obsession.”*

But, such immense love was not a barrier in Hazrat’s approach to *Islaah*.

Owing to his family relationship Moulana Sa’eed Ahmad sat with him inside the cart whilst Khaajah Azeezul Hasan Saheb Majzoob sat alongside the driver as there was no place inside. Hazrat Thanwi was accustomed to giving advice over everything and at every step. He was well aware of his nephew’s disposition. Accordingly, he said:

“He would wear very extravagant garments and his mind was very ambitious, in that he would say: ‘If I take up employment then my salary should be at least 1000 rupees a month.’”

In light of all of this Hazrat called Khaajah Saheb inside to sit next to him and instructed Moulana Sa’eed to sit by the driver.

It is obvious that this change of position was absolutely in violation of family relationship etiquettes. However, his gaze then was not on family relationship and affection. It was on self-reformation which is the ultimate purpose. Hence he clarified the position to confused minds telling Khaajah Saheb:

“There is benefit for both in this. His benefit is that humility will be inculcated while your benefit is that you do not become more humble than required and in consequence retrogress. In other words, you do not become vain over your level of humility.”

It was the result of Hazrat's amazing diplomacy that Moulana Sa'eed's condition transformed and in the words of Hazrat:

"He obliterated his ego and started to think of himself as more disgraced and lower than the 'Untouchables'. His appearance took on much simplicity, so much so that after he passed away when his clothes were brought out for estate distribution people were astounded and grieved at the simple belongings he left behind. In fact, looking at the garments my heart started to shed tears."

Hazrat Majzoob again, by virtue of his obsession and love became Khusru²² the Second, and by virtue of the teachings and spiritual training he received he became an eminent *Khaleefah*.

The state of this 'mad obsession' can be enjoyed from the words of Majzoob Saheb himself. He writes:

"By virtue of the blessings of being honoured with bai't a great degree of concern came into ahqar for jaaiz and na-jaaiz, some episodes of which have been mentioned above [in Ashrafus Sawaanih]."

My obsession and love for Hazrat Wala was such that an unacquainted person of the spiritual path will interpret it to be madness and a dull and emotionless person will make fun of it. However, as echoed in the couplet:

گرچه بدنامیست نزد عاقلان
مانمی خواهم ننگ و نام را

²² Name of the son of Hurmuz the king of Persia and who was madly in love with a lady by the name of Sheereen; figuratively used to signify any person madly in love.

*Although we are not held in good light by the academician
We are not in a fight for name and reputation*

*Ignoring these two types of people I will certainly mention
those dear states which settled over me out of immense
love for Hazrat Wala for the pleasure of lovers and people
with such tastes. If some loveless person calls such love
craziness then what I will tell him is:*

اوست دیوانہ کہ دیوانہ نہ شد

He is mad who is not mad

*If any tasteless person makes fun of such love then tit-for-
tat I will answer him:*

چہ داند بوزنہ لذت ادراک

*What does he know of fragrance,
Who does not enjoy the gift of intelligence?*

*After this brief, but necessary preamble I now mention
some samples of my aforementioned states of love reciting
these poems in consideration for my sempiternal
condition:*

ما اگر قلاش و دیوانہ ایم

مست آں ساقی و آں پیمانہ ایم

*If we are drunk and fervid
We are intoxicated over the Qur'aan and Sunnat*

گفتگوئے عاشقان در کار رب
جوشش عشق است نہ ترک ادب

*The talk of lovers about their Rabb
Is the sparks of intense love, not contrary to worship*

Once, out of sheer passion and love I said to Hazrat Wala with a suppressed tone and very timidly and blushingly: 'Hazrat, a nonsensical thought is playing in my mind. I am overcome with extreme shame at even disclosing it. I do not have the courage to say it.'

At that moment of time Hazrat Wala had stood up from his verandah [of his Khaanqah chamber] and was on his way to the Masjid. He said: 'Say, say!'

Ahqar said very embarrassingly and with the head lowered: 'The thought is playing in my mind that I wish I was a female and married to Huzoor [Hazrat]'

Upon this disclosure of love Hazrat became extremely gleeful and spontaneously started to laugh. He said as he was entering the Masjid: 'This is your inner love. You will be rewarded. You will be rewarded, Insha Allah.'

Hazrat Wala has still not forgotten that incident. In his Majlis Shareef he continues to relate that passionate statement of ahqar and he humourously says: 'Fortunately he never desired the converse [that I be a lady].'

Ahqar was so ebullient with love for Hazrat Wala during that period that the desire was to keep Hazrat Wala's kitaabs in my arms all the time and to speak passionately about Hazrat to all and sundry; to skilled and unskilled people, in fact even to the walls, trees, stones, kuffaar and animals; everything. The desire was to read Hazrat's kitaab's to all."

[End of Hazrat Majzoob's quote.]

This love, passion and highly emotional state stemming from Hazrat Thanwi's teachings and spiritual training were the results of that self-same diplomacy which could be witnessed on a daily basis at the *Court of Ashraf*.

In reality, in mentioning the foregoing episode Hazrat Majzoob (Rahmatullahi alaihi) fulfilled the right of expressing the feelings of hundreds of *Mujaazeen and Mustarshadeen* [authorized deputies and disciples] and the thousands of *Muntasibeen* [devotees] of Hazrat.

The condition of such an eminent professor and historian of Islam the calibre of Hazrat Moulana Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi (Rahmatullahi alaihi) was exactly the same.

It was not that Hazrat would deliberately captivate people with diplomacy. Rather, love for diplomacy would constrain people to be captivated by Hazrat.

In short, Hazrat would utilize sincere and affectionate diplomacy befitting to the state of every person. Where there was a need to be stern he would be stern, and where he deemed

it necessary to be gentle he would be gentle. He was not at all accustomed to sternness and gentleness without appropriate cause.

Once, a father and some other relatives brought a lad to Hazrat complaining that the lad had struck up illicit relations with a prostitute and he was consequently ruining the family estate. *“Please speak to him,”* they implored.

Hazrat analysed the lad’s condition immediately through the *Noor* of his insight. Neither did he beat the lad, nor scold him. On the contrary, he took the boy with exceptional love and affection to the Masjid, away from his family, and sympathetically and confidentially said to him:

“My Dear Son! These people have no knowledge of falling in love. They are not aware of the state of a person’s heart when in love. You just tell me what is it that constrains you to sacrifice your self-respect and honour and not care for the destruction of the family estate?”

This conversation was taking place when the lad’s family came there and started snooping on what was being discussed in privacy. Hazrat rebuked them saying:

“What nonsense is this!!! Go do your work. This is between me and him. What business do you people have interfering with our conversation?”

The lad’s family realized their folly and went outside. Hazrat then repeated his question in a very affectionate tone. The lad was now convinced of Hazrat’s sympathy and good intent. Moved by Hazrat’s understanding he spoke openly:

“I really was in love with her before. But now I am merely maintaining the relationship because once in Peeraan-e-Kalyar at the Mazaar Shareef [the grave of Hazrat Saabir Saheb Rahmatullahi alaihi] she took a covenant from me that I will forever keep my relationship with her and never leave her. The caretaker of the dargah [the shrine] took an oath from both of us. Now I fear some calamity befalling me if I break relations with her since I took an oath at the mazaar of a Buzrug.”

Listening to the reality of the affair Hazrat questioned him: *“Do you trust me to have your best interests at heart or not?”*

The lad answered: *“Certainly”*

Hazrat then posed another question: *“Do you trust me to be truthful or not?”*

The lad acknowledged this well. Upon this Hazrat stated:

“I take an oath and say that if you do not break that covenant then a calamity will befall you. And if you break it then no calamity will befall you at all on account of it. To break such a covenant is in fact waajib. However, in view of an oath coming into effect due to the covenant you will have to compulsorily give kaffaarah for the broken oath, which is not difficult. It can be discharged with ease.”

The lad remarked:

“Okay! I am satisfied now. Now I am really going to leave her. Just give me permission to go to her only once more so that I can inform her that my relationship with her is

over. I want this permission so that she doesn't wait for me. Keeping her waiting is sort of impolite. The poor girl will wait for who knows how long?"

Hazrat permitted him to end his relationship in that way on the proviso that nothing unbecoming transpires.

When his family learnt of the permission they argued:

"Hazrat, he is putting up a cunning excuse to meet her. He is taking permission from you in this crafty manner. He is not going to leave her."

Hazrat rebuked them once more, saying: *"What do you know?! I am satisfied with his promise."*

Accordingly, they left. Just a few days later the lad's parents came to the *Khaanqah* and gave out *sheereeni* [desert]. They confirmed that their son had ended his relationship with the woman.

After reading the above episode of gentleness now look at an episode of sternness.

A person residing nearby Thanabawan and who was regular with *Saum and Salaat* fell in love with a Brahman widow. On the pretext of buying milk he would go to her daily and cast amorous glances at her.

Seeing him caught up in this misfortune a friend of his advised him to go to Hazrat Thanwi. He thus went. He wrote his condition down and handed the note to Hazrat. Amongst other things he wrote:

“I am so much in love with her that even if she gives me her urine to drink I will drink it without revulsion.”

Hazrat said to him gently: *“Don’t go there.”* He replied: *“I want to go there.”* Hazrat became furious and instinctively gave him a slap. In an angry tone Hazrat rebuked him saying:

“You useless! When you intentionally engage in self-indulgence then why did you come to me for consultation? Go burn yourself in the Fire. When you are harming yourself wilfully then what remedy must I show you?”

The slap delivered the required treatment and the devil in his mind was banished. Thereafter he stopped going there.

To summarize, Hazrat would treat everyone’s spiritual malady according to the temperament and nature of the person, either with gentleness or sternness. This was not a matter of his volition. In fact, it was absolutely non-volitional. The *Power from the Unseen* was transforming his temperament to gentle or stern according to the situation. In regard to this *Unseen Power* he once commented:

“Harshness is absolutely in conflict with my nature, and afterwards I am considerably distressed and embarrassed. I ponder over the matter and think that instead of saying in that manner it could have been said in another manner. Instead of explaining like that it could have been explained like this. Instead of that approach it could have been approached in this way as well. However, at the precise moment the thought of Islaah [reforming the wrong] so overwhelms me that no other thought remains.

This too, as long as I think it to be my duty to provide service of Islaah. If at any time I relinquish this responsibility then, Insha Allahu Ta'ala, I will display friendly character.

My actual way is not to pick on anyone. Rather, to stay aloof and in peace, as echoed by the words of Ahmad Jaam:

احمد تو عاشقی بہ مشیخت ترا چہ کار

دیوانہ باش سلسلہ شد شد نہ شد نہ شد

Ahmad you are a lover

What do you want to do with being a mentor?

Become crazy with the love of Allah

If the Silsilah remains it remains; if not, so be it

These were the circumstances wherein Hazrat Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih) assumed the *Position of Irshaad* [providing Deeni direction], and till the end he remained fully engrossed in spiritually reforming and purifying creation, and providng guidance and direction, the details of which require a separate volume.

[End of The Life of Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Volume One – Walhamdu Lillaahi Awwallan wa Aakhiran]

Glossary

Allah—Arabic Name for the One and Only God

Ta'ala—the Most High; attribute of Allah

Aameen—prayer for acceptance meaning: “*O Allah! Accept!*”

Ashraf—the most noble; very noble

Awliya—pl. of *Wali*: saint; special friend of Allah

Barkat—blessing

Chishti—linked in the spiritual path to Khaajah Mu'eenud Deen Chishti who hailed from Chisht, a town in Central Asia

Deen—religion, esp. Islam

Deeni—religious

Du'aa—prayer

Haji—title for one who has performed the incumbent injunction of Haj or pilgrimage to Makkah

Haq—truth. *Haq Ta'ala*: used extensively among Urdu speaking Ulama for Allah Ta'ala. *Haq* is also an attribute of the Supreme Being.

Hakeem—physician; sage. *Hakeemul Ummat*: the Physician of the Ummat; title of Hazrat Moulana Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih)

Hazrat—title of reverence for a senior, in the Persian and Urdu languages

Imdaadi—linked to Hazrat Haji Imdaadullah Saheb (Quddisa sirruhu)

Insha Allah—Allah willing; prayer for success and achievement

Khaadim—servant; attendant

Khaajah—title formerly used for a master in Tasawwuf

Khaanqah—the spiritual training centre of the Mashaaikh of Tasawwuf

Khaanqa-e-Ashrafiyyah—the Khaanqah of Hazrat Moulana Thanwi (Rahmatullahi alaih)

Khaleefah—one authorized by a Shaikh of Tasawwuf to initiate others in the Path; vicegerent

Khuddaam—pl. of khaadim

Kitaab—book

Maahil Bid'aat—Effacer of innovations

Mashaaikh—pl. of Shaikh

Millat—creed (of Islam)

Moulana—a qualified scholar of Islam, esp. one who has acquired his qualification from the Islamic institutions of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Africa and the United Kingdom

Muhyis Sunnat—Enlivener of the Sunnah of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)

Mujaddid—reviver of the teachings and spirit of Islam

Nabi—prophet, esp. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)

Nawwarallahu Marqadahu—May Allah illuminate his grave; a prayer for a deceased, esp. one who was saintly

Noor—celestial and holy light

Quddisa Sirruhu—May his soul or secret (in his grave) be sanctified; a prayer for a deceased saint

Qutbul Irshaad—the cardinal saint of guidance for humanity during a time

Rahmatullahi alaihi—May the mercy of Allah be upon him; a prayer for a deceased venerable person

Saabiri—linked in the spiritual tree to Shaikh Alaa-ud Deen Saabir Peeraan-e-Kalyari (Rahmatullahi alaihi)

Saheb—title of respect in the Urdu language

Sallallahu alaihi wasallam—a prayer for Nabi Muhammad meaning: May Allah shower him with special blessings and perfect peace

Sawaanib—biography

Seerat—life history

Shaikh—one qualified in an art or subject. Commonly used for an Islamic scholar and routinely used for an expert in Tasawwuf

Tasawwuf—the path of spiritual purification and union with Allah

Taufeeq—ability conferred by Allah

Thanwi—one from the town of Thanabawan situated in northern Utter Pradesh state in India

Thumma—then; again

Ulama—pl. of *Aalim*: scholar of Islam

Ummat/Ummah—nation of Islam; followers of Muhammad (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam)