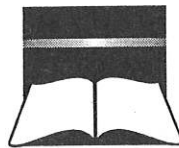


إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي حَسْبٍ

# **Guidelines for Islamic Workers**

**Abul A'la Mawdudi**



**T H E  
M E S S A G E  
P U B L I C A T I O N S**

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## Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present **GUIDELINES FOR ISLAMIC WORKERS** in North America. It is a transcript of a famous Urdu speech by Abul A'la Mawdudi, the great Islamic scholar of the 20th century. He gave this speech during the convention of Jama'at-i-Islami Pakistani held in Karachi in 1953.

Its contents and their usefulness are undisputed among Islamic workers to this day. It offers a road map for developing one's concern for the Life Hereafter. This brief speech exhibits all the passionate lucidity and the persuasive logic so characteristic of Abul A'la's style. The argument it carries remains deeply convincing and compelling in its appeal. Such a discourse does not take long to penetrate and to capture hearts and minds.

The Islamic Circle Of North America recommends this book not only to its workers but to every Muslim. A strong relationship with Allah requires motivation and sustained efforts. This book will inspire and motivate many to commit themselves to their Creator and strive to shape the whole of their lives along these guidelines.

We hope and pray to Allah that all readers will benefit from this book.

Muhammad Fayyaz Khan  
Director, **The Message Publications**

# TA'ALLUQ BILLAH

## RELATIONSHIP WITH ALLAH

The first and foremost instruction, always given by all the Prophets, the rightly-guided caliphs and the pious among the Ummah (Muslim community) to their companions, had been to inculcate the fear of Allah and to implant in one's heart His love; in short, to promote the basic relationship with Allah. Following in their footsteps, I have also chosen this as the first counsel to our workers; and in future I will continue to do so at every opportunity, for it truly deserves preferential and priority treatment.

Belief in Allah is the most important and basic of all articles of faith. Association of the heart with Allah should have priority in prayer. Fear of Allah should have priority in morals; and soliciting the pleasure of Allah should have priority in all personal dealings. In a word, the proper orientation of our entire life should rest on the desire to win the pleasure of Allah and this is the chief priority over all other motives, efforts and endeavors. And most particularly in this difficult task of ours, for which we stand as an Islamic Jama'at (organized group) and a Movement: For we can only thrive on the motivating force of our primary relationship with Allah. Our success will be strong or weak in proportion to the relationship we keep with Allah.

It is an admitted fact that whatever task a man stands for, be it worldly or heavenly, the main force behind it derives from the drive or purpose which generates it. Zeal draws its strength from deep interest and enthusiasm in achieving a goal. A self-seeker cannot succeed without being selfish.

Intense love for self leads to the service of self. A man working for his children, and devoted to their love, sacrifices his own pleasures and comforts for the welfare of his children and sometimes stakes not only his worldly gains but even the benefits of the Akhirah (the Hereafter) so they may prosper most. A man working for his nation or country is a captive of its love and for this love he endures financial loss, or the hardships of detention and jails. Day and night he works hard and sometimes even sacrifices his life for the freedom, the defense or the supremacy of his nation or his state.

Now, if we are struggling to establish the Islamic way of life, not for our own selfish ends; nor for any motive of family interests; nor for any national or state interest — but only with the sincere desire to please our Creator, Allah Almighty, alone, and if we have engaged ourselves in this work only because we are convinced that this is His work, it is obvious that this work cannot be advanced unless and until our attachment to Allah is real, deep and strong. Zeal for this work develops only when all our inclinations are concentrated on the endeavor to propagate the word of Allah. For all those who have joined hands in this work it is not enough that they be connected with “Allah also” but that their connection be with “Allah only”. In other words this is not “a connection”, but “the” only real and true connection. We must always remain vigilant and conscious that our relationship with Allah not decrease, but rather increase always and grow deeper and deeper with time.

Attachment to Allah is the main guiding spirit of our mission. Praise be to Allah, no member of our Jama'at is unmindful of this fact and ignorant of its significance. Yet

many are often confused as to what the term *Ta'alluq Billah* precisely means, what best method exists for inculcating and promoting it, and how to understand whether one truly has any connection with Allah and if so, to what degree. I have often felt that lack of knowledge and understanding in this respect leaves people as if in the wilderness, knowing not where they stand nor where they are to go nor how much distance they must yet cover. Consequently some workers lose themselves in vague ideas; Others lean towards ways and methods which never lead them to their destination. Some find it difficult to differentiate between closely related and distantly related things and some are simply baffled.

I shall not, therefore, confine myself only to advice on *Ta'alluq Billah* but shall, to the best of my knowledge and ability, attempt to present clear-cut answers to these questions.

### THE MEANING OF TA'ALLUQ BILLAH

Its meaning, according to the Qur'an, is that a person should live and die for Allah, and all his worship and sacrifices should be meant for Him alone.

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ -

*Surely my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah the Cherisher of the worlds. (An'am: 162)*

He should worship Allah with full devotion and subject his life exclusively to unqualified submission to Allah. The Qur'an says:

وَمَا أَوْفُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ -

*They had been ordered nothing but that they should worship Allah with sincere devotion and be true in faith to Him. (Bayinah: 5)*

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has, on different occasions, explained this relationship in such clear terms that there is no ambiguity left in its meaning and purpose. It is explicitly clear from his statements that the nature of this relationship is nothing but

خَشْيَةَ اللَّهِ فِي السِّرِّ وَالْعَلَانِيَةِ

*To fear Allah in all matters open or secret (Bayhaqi)*

أَنْ تَكُونُ بِمَا فِي يَدَيْ اللَّهِ أَوْ تَقُ بِمَا فِي يَدَيْكَ

*And to rely on the might of Allah rather than on one's own resources. (Bayhaqi)*

He should be ready to face the anger of men to solicit the pleasure of Allah, but never be prepared for the reverse. And when this attachment to Allah rises, to the extent that all love, enmity, giving and withholding by a person are for the sake of Allah alone, with no other motive, then he has attained perfection in his relationship with Allah. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ بِيَّهْ وَأَبْغَضَ بِيَّهْ وَأَعْطَى بِلِيَّهْ وَسَمِعَ بِلِيَّهْ فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانَ

*Whoever loved for Allah, and hated for Allah, gave for Allah and withheld for Allah, is the one who has perfected his faith. (Bukhari)*

Now look into the meaning of the Qunut which you recite every night. Every word of it points towards the connection you should have with Allah. Just ponder its words and see for yourself the promise you are making to Allah regarding the kind of connection you should have with Him.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْتَعِينُكَ وَنَسْتَهْدِيكَ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَ  
نُؤْمِنُ بِكَ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْكَ وَنُثْنِي عَلَيْكَ الْحَيْرَ كُلَّهُ  
وَنُشْكِرُكَ وَلَا نَكْفُرُكَ وَنَخْلَعُ وَنَتْرِكُ مَنْ يَفْجُرُكَ اللَّهُمَّ  
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ، وَلَكَ نُصَلِّي وَنَسْجُدُ وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْعَى وَنَحْفَدُ  
نَرْجُو رَحْمَتَكَ وَنَخْشَى عَذَابَكَ إِنَّ عَذَابَكَ بِالْكَفَّارِ  
مُلْحِقٌ -

*O Allah, we seek Your help and crave for pardon from You. We believe wholly in You and depend solely upon You, (so) we praise You in the best words, we are thankful to You and not ungrateful to You. We abandon and reject (leave) all those who transgress Your commands. O Allah, we worship You alone, offer prayers for Your sake, bow down to You and all our endeavors and efforts are meant to lead us towards You. We are hopeful of mercy from You and fear Your punishment. Surely Your punishment will fall on the rejecters.*



This attachment to Allah is also clearly reflected in the special Du'a (Supplication of the Prophet (pbuh)) which he used to recite at the time of Tahajjud <sup>1</sup>:

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ اسَلَمْتُ وَبِكَ اَمَنْتُ وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَ  
اِلَيْكَ اَنْبَتُ وَبِكَ خَاصَمْتُ وَ اِلَيْكَ حَاكَمْتُ۔

*O Allah, I have bowed down to You, declared my faith in You, placed my reliance in You, always took recourse in You, fought for You and placed my case before You.*

#### **HOW TO INCREASE TA'ALLUQ BILLAH?**

This, then, is the correct interpretation of the attachment which a firm believer should have to Allah. Now let us consider the method of acquiring and increasing it. The only method of acquiring it is to believe in Allah and accept Him as the One with no partner, as the Provider, the Deity and the Master of one's self as well as of the whole universe; to accept all the attributes, the rights, the privileges of divinity as reserved for Allah alone, thereby cleansing one's heart from all possible effects of polytheism (Shirk). When this is achieved, connection with Allah is duly established.

Now the strengthening of this relationship depends on two factors. One lies in thinking and understanding while the other rests in concrete practice.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tahajjud is an optional prayer offered late after midnight, by rising from deep slumber to pray alone in one's room.*

First you are required to fully grasp and understand your relationship with Allah in its nature along with the logical obligation it puts you under in practical life with the help of the Qur'an and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet (pbuh)). The correct perception, discernment and appreciation of this relationship are possible only through deep and intensive study of the Qur'an and Hadith, with continual repetition of this study, time and again, to retain them in your mind. Whatever aspects of your relationship with Allah dawn upon you, ponder them and look into yourself to see how deeply you are indeed meeting the demands of that relationship, or where, and to what extent, you are failing. Your attachment to Allah will increase in proportion to your self-assessment and understanding of your required role.

For example, your first and foremost relation with Allah is that of a worshiper with the Worshipped. Your other relationship to Allah is that of a vice-gerent, His custodian, responsible for innumerable trusts (*Amanat*). Your third relationship with Allah is one comparable to a deed of sale which you have executed by declaring your faith and conviction in Him and through this contract you have bartered your life and property to Him and He has purchased it in consideration of paradise for you in return. Your fourth relationship with Allah is that you stand responsible to Him. You are accountable to Him not only for those acts and deeds that are open and visible; a record is also being maintained on your intentions and aspirations. In short, these and many other relations exist between you and Allah. Hence the strength or weakness of your relationship with Allah depends upon proper understanding, realization and fulfillment of the demands of these relations. Your connection with Allah will grow

weaker and weaker if you do not care for the demands of the relationship. It will grow deeper and stronger if you are duly conscious of, and attentive to, its requirements.

But this conceptual method can neither be fruitful nor sustained for long unless it is strengthened and reinforced through practical means. And this practical method is the unqualified obedience of the command of Allah and the unstinting effort to perform those tasks which please Allah. True obedience to Allah's commands means total compliance — open as well as secret — and not unwillingly but with eagerness and zeal, with no worldly aim and solely for the pleasure of Allah. At the same time, it means to abstain openly, as well as in secret, from all activities forbidden by Allah with full abhorrence, deep contempt and fearlessness of any worldly loss, save the fear of the wrath of Allah only. This conduct of life will raise you high, to the position of *Taqwa* (abstention from the displeasure of Allah). And when you engage yourself in spreading all that pleases Allah and in suppressing and eliminating all that displeases Allah, you do not hesitate to sacrifice any single thing, including your life, your money, your time, your efforts, your intellect for this goal. And you do not, moreover, boast of any such sacrifices, nor consider them a favor to anyone. Instead you regard your biggest sacrifice short of the due right of your Creator. This, then, is the attitude that elevates you to the position of *Ihsan* (beautiful submission to the will of Allah).

### **MEANS OF DEVELOPING TA'ALLUQ BILLAH**

In reality it is not so easy to develop such an attitude. It is an uphill task which requires much energy. This energy can be generated with the help of the following four practices:

(1) *Salah* (Prayers): You should offer not only the mandatory prayers (Fard) but also the Sunnah (additional prayers) which were offered punctually by the Prophet (pbuh), as well as the Nafil (optional prayers) as frequently as is possible without incurring undue hardship. But make a point of offering the Nafil indoors and in secrecy, so that your personal relationship with Allah can increase, and sincerity of purpose may develop in you. Show of Nafil or Tahajjud prayers gives way to hypocrisy and self-importance, which are both detrimental to sincere belief. The case is the same for other Nafil deeds which are diminished by show and publicity.

(2) *Dhikr-Allah* (Remembrance of Allah): Remembrance of Allah is a continuous process throughout one's life in all circumstances. The best and most appropriate way to remember Allah is the one which the Prophet (pbuh) practiced himself and taught to his companions, not the techniques invented or borrowed from others by the Sufis in later periods. Try to commit to memory as many Du'as as possible, as taught by the Prophet (pbuh), and to grasp to the fullest their meaning; Recite them off and on, keeping their significance present in your mind. This is very effective in maintaining your attention and devotion to Allah.

(3) *Sawm* (Fasting): Apart from the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan, observe some Nafil fasts also. The easiest and most practical way is to fast for three days every month with the determination to attain the same degree of *Taqwa* during these three days that is the real purpose behind fasting according to the Qur'an.

(4) *Infaq-fi-Sabilillah* (spending in the way of Allah): This spending, be it Fard or Nafil to the extent of one's

means, should be continuously practiced. But always keep in mind that the real worth is not in the quantity of the spending but in the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of Allah. A penny from a poor man — taken from his meager food expenses — is much more precious to Allah than the thousands spent by a millionaire, which amount to perhaps one-tenth or one-twentieth of his expenses on luxuries. Realize the importance attached to Sadaqah (spending in the way of Allah), which is described by Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the best means of purifying oneself. You can experience personally the effects of Sadaqah. Suppose you unintentionally commit a wrong. When you come to realize it, you repent (Tawbah) and beg His pardon. But again the same thing happens. This time you add some Sadaqah to your repentance. You yourself will feel the difference it makes. You will note that the repentance followed by Sadaqah makes you purer and stronger in resisting the viler inclinations.

This is the purest and simplest method of getting closer to Allah, taught to us by the Qur'an and the Sunnah. If you follow this method, you can increase your relationship with Allah without adopting the typical sufic methods and techniques, while leading a normal life at home with your family and carrying on with your worldly activities as usual.

### **MEASURE OF TA'ALLUQ BILLAH**

Now comes the question of assessing the extent and degree of one's relationship with Allah and how to increase or decrease the strength of this attachment. Let me say here that one need not wait for any revelation in dreams, any divine inspiration, any supernatural power or

heavenly light in dark solitary cells. The measure has already been provided by Allah in every man's heart. You can judge it awake and in full light of day. Recall your lifelong activities, efforts and desires. Check yourself as to the extent you are honoring the commitment you have made by declaring your belief and conviction in Allah. Are you true to Allah in the discharge of trusts and responsibilities or are you flouting these trusts? What proportion of your time, efforts, ability and property is devoted to the cause of Allah and what is reserved for other activities? Compare the degree of your annoyance, grief and uneasiness when your own personal interests and passions are hit, as against your feelings and reactions when Allah's authority and commandments are flouted. In this way you can test your attachment to Allah and determine daily whether it is on the increase or on the wane.

Do not bother about the sufic technicalities of *Basharat* (glad tidings), *Karamat* (excellence), *Kashf* (inspiration) and *Tajalliat* (divine lights). In fact there is no awareness (*Kashf*) greater than the awareness of the oneness of Allah in this world of deceptions and fallacies. No excellence (*Karamat*) higher than to stand firm in the face of apprehensions and temptations created and offered by Satan and his followers.

There is no better perception of Allah's lights than to witness the truth in the groping darkness of infidelity (*Kufr*), impiety (*Fisq*) and perdition (*Dalalat*) which rises all round. The greatest possible *Basharat* that a believer can obtain is through his staunch belief in Allah and steadfastness in His way. (See the following Qur'anic verse).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ  
الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ  
تُوعَدُونَ -

*Surely those who said, Allah is our Provider,  
and then stuck to this declaration, to them Allah  
sends his angels and they said "Do not be afraid,  
nor be grieved, but be delighted to hear the  
happy news of the reward of Paradise, as  
promised to you. (Ha-Mim:30)*

## PREFERENCE OF THE AKHIRAH (HEREAFTER)

My second advice to you after *Ta'alluq Billah* is to give precedence to the Hereafter over this world in each and every matter. In every affair of life, your aim should be to attain success and blessing in the life Hereafter. The Qur'an tells us that our eternal abode is the Hereafter; we are in this world only temporarily, to be examined for our competence in winning the eternal life of Paradise by acting properly within the limits imposed by Allah, of course, within the limits of our resources, our authority, the time stipulated to us and the opportunities afforded by Him. We are here, being tested not for our achievements in industry, commerce, agriculture or state craft, not for the splendid buildings and roads we construct, not even for the extent of our success in establishing a mighty culture. The real test pertains to the extent of our ability to perform our duties as Allah's vice-gerents with respect to the trusts placed with us — and whether we lead our life as outlaws or rebels or obedient and law-abiding persons. Whether we comply with the will of Allah on His earth or the will of our own self or of other claimants to divinity..Whether we are trying to adorn and administer Allah's world according to His standard or trying to corrupt and destroy it. And whether we struggle and fight the Satanic forces for the sake of Allah or meekly lay down our arms and surrender to them. The first test of Adam and Eve in the Paradise was precisely the same one. And all who are selected for the eternal life in Paradise will have to pass this test. Thus the real criterion for determining success or failure does not lie in considering the status of the individual at the time of trial, i.e. whether



the individual's merit was tested as a king or while putting his head on the executioner's block. Or again whether that individual was given a vast kingdom or had to undergo his trial in a humble cottage. These temporary phases of success or failure in the mortal life are no proof of success or failure in the life Hereafter. The true success to strive for is that, irrespective of the position we hold in this world and with whatever bounty we have been put to trial, we should prove ourselves obedient servants of Allah and followers of His wishes, so as to achieve that position in the Hereafter which is reserved for the faithful servants of Allah.

This is the reality. It is not enough to accept it or to understand it only once — great effort is needed to refresh this state again and again. Otherwise the possibility always exists that, despite our being true believers, we step into the shoes of those who work for worldly gains and forget the Hereafter. And this can happen because the Hereafter is imperceptible and evident only after death. In this world we perceive its good or bad results only through an effort of the intellect. While this world, on the contrary, is an easily perceptible reality, offering its sweet and sour flavors at one time or another, and its achievements or failures are always there to deceive us. The loss of the Hereafter may only cause us a slight pricking of conscience, if it troubles us at all. But the loss of this world is felt palpably and physically. Our family, our relatives, our acquaintances, our friends and those who surround us not only feel the same but make this feeling real. Similarly the attainment of the Hereafter provides some comfort and satisfaction to our conscience only if heedlessness has not deadened such feelings. But prosperity in this world serves as a pleasure for our entire existence. We feel it

with our every sense, and everyone around us shares this feeling. And so it is indeed difficult to translate the faith in the Hereafter into practice and base the entire outlook of our day-to-day life upon this faith, though it may seem easy to do so as a faith and a belief.

It may be simple to say that this world is but a trifle; but to face and to reject all worldly attractions, to refuse to concede to the worldly desires, these are far less easy tasks. They only become possible after a great struggle; They can only be retained through persistent efforts.

### **MEANS FOR DEVELOPING CONCERN FOR AKHIRAH**

You might ask me the means of acquiring this quality and its particular requirements. I would again say there are two methods, one reflective, and one practical.

The reflective method calls for you not to be content to merely declare "I believe in the Hereafter", but rather to make it a habit of studying the Qur'an and fully grasp its spirit and its meaning. This method of studying the Qur'an will gradually inspire such a conviction in the Hereafter that it will seem to you that you have seen it with your own eyes. There is not a single page of the Qur'an where the Hereafter is not mentioned in one way or the other. At places you will find the Hereafter portrayed in such detail, it might almost appear as an eye witness report. In many places in the Qur'an, life in the Hereafter is projected in such an exquisite manner that the reader feels himself present as an observer. It is only when the camouflage of this world is removed that one can witness with one's own eyes whatever is being narrated in the Qur'an. So continuous study of the Qur'an with full

comprehension can gradually raise one to a position where the concern for the Hereafter takes complete hold of one's mind. One begins in actuality to feel at all times that one is to prepare oneself in this temporary worldly life for one's permanent abode of life after death.

This attitude and this perspective get stronger through the study of the Hadith, where details about life after death are often also described as eye witness accounts . And one is reminded of the fact that the conviction and firm belief in the Hereafter dominated the lives of the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions.

This conviction in the Hereafter is further strengthened by visits to graveyards, which should however be made solely to achieve the purpose of remembering one's own end as advised by the Prophet (pbuh). While living in this world of desires and passions one should remember that a day will come for us to depart from this world just as our predecessors. But one should be careful that tombs and shrines not serve any other purpose, as wayward people claim: centers where every wish is granted and all problems are resolved. Instead you should visit the graveyards of the common men or the grand mausoleums of monarchs deprived of the pomp and show of former bodyguards and aides-de camp.

Now let us turn to the practical method. While living in this world and taking part in the affairs of your community, your friends, your acquaintances, of your city or your country; or in professional or financial matters, you often may find yourself at a crossroads. Belief in the life Hereafter calls you one way while material gains and interests press you to go the other way. Try your level best to

proceed along the first path. If you have chosen the other way because of weakness or ignorance, retrace your steps as soon as you realize your mistake, without caring how far you have gone along the wrong path. Look into yourself and try to determine the frequency with which worldly interests and attractions succeeded in absorbing you, how frequently you succeeded in avoiding detraction from the right path, and how often consideration of the life Hereafter dominated your thinking. This self-assessment will tell you exactly how much your concern for the Hereafter has increased and to what extent you are required to make up for any deficiency. Whatever deficiency you feel, try hard to remedy it up through your own efforts. Outside help can only be obtained by keeping away from the company of materialists and by developing friendships with pious people who prefer the gains of the life Hereafter over those of this world. But remember, there is no way yet known to develop or discard any quality within you without your own efforts and potential.

## AVOID TAKABBUR (ARROGANCE)

My third advice to you is that you should not feel proud of the improvements you have made in your person and in your collective morality. You should not, individually or as a Jama'at and Movement, fall into the fallacy of having achieved perfection and having reached your goal with no room left for any further improvement in your practical life, or no more target to be achieved. Often I and the rest of the leadership of the Jama'at are faced with a teasing problem. Some people have been trying to belittle the position of the Jama'at and, in fact, of the Islamic Movement, which is the real purpose of the Jama'at. They label it a political party working for the same goal as that of the other political organizations. Piety, purity and spiritualism are nowhere traceable in it. They claim it utterly lacks the Divine guidance and concern for the Hereafter; its leadership has no link with any school of sufism and has received no training in any sufic center of piety and spiritual excellence. Hence there is no chance for its associates to maintain such training. The idea behind this campaign is to spread dissatisfaction among the workers of the Jama'at so that they might capitulate to the same old religious schools, which consider any partial service to Islam, even under non-Islamic rule, as a major achievement. Such people never consider the possibility of establishing Islam as a comprehensive and complete code of life. They have labeled every such attempt as "political Islam", with all the eloquence at their disposal. They have always opposed any move to establish Islam as a dominating force in society and all such attempts as purely mundane and motivated by material ambitions and worldly gains.

Under these circumstances we are obliged to explain the real difference between the concept of piety put forward by sufic spiritualism and the concept of Islamic piety and purity. We have to explain what is real *Taqwa* (fear of Allah) and *Ihsan* (excellence in submission to Allah) as desired in Islam and how they differ from the *Taqwa* and *Ihsan* which are taught by the so-called authorities on piety and religiosity. We also have to explain in detail the techniques and methods of reform and training adopted by the Islamic Movement and their benefits : those sincere to Islam, who hold a correct and unadulterated concept of the Islamic order, will easily recognize, then, that once people are convinced and impressed by the revolutionary message of Islam, they will automatically undergo a great change in concepts and outlook. And this conviction develops true piety, fear of Allah and excellence in submission to His Will. Such sincerity and conviction is missing altogether in the stereotype sufic methods of training in piety and excellence, not only in the trainees, but in their teachers and guides as well.

This point must be explained because of the unjust and unfair attitude of our critics. We do not mean to defend ourselves, but we feel this explanation necessary in the interest of the Islamic Movement. In this way we seek the protection of Allah against vanity or pride in ourselves, against any misconception we may harbor about ourselves. Allah forbid, such a misconception and such deceitful pride may deprive us of all that we have achieved so far.

To avoid this pitfall, I would like you to fully understand the following three points, and never forget them:

First, that perfection knows no limits and its point of excellence is out of sight. You go on climbing and never consider any one point the highest one. In fact you are never perfect. The moment you consider yourself perfect, your striving for betterment, and consequently your development, stops, and decline sets in. Never forget that a continuous struggle is needed not only to reach a height but also in order to remain there. The moment you stop striving upward, the downward pull begins. The wise never look down to assess their achievement but look up to know how much is left unattained, and how far their target lies.

My next point is that the standard of humanity set by Islam is so high that it starts at the point where the other 'isms' and ideologies leave off. But it is not at all some utopian ideal. It is reflected in the practical life of the Prophets as well as in the lives of the devoted companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be unto him) and of the pious among the Ummah. Always keep that standard in mind. It will save you from the misapprehension of having achieved perfection. It will make you realize your own lowliness and present before you new heights to scale. Even after a lifelong struggle you will feel that many heights are yet unattained. Never feel proud of your health while, every moment, sick patients around you are breathing their last. Look at the monuments of morality and piety of the past, which you are replacing in the fight against evil. A true believer is one who always keeps in mind those who are richer in Islamic knowledge and deeds so that the thirst for accumulating this wealth does not die out. As for material wealth, he always compares himself with those poorer than he and thanks Allah for

what He has given him, satisfying his thirst with whatever he has<sup>1</sup>.

My third point is that the qualities which we actually acquire may appear impressive, but only because deterioration has debased us and our society so deeply. The little light provided in the pitch darkness has earned us prominence; but otherwise it is a fact that we lack much in our personal lives when we come to assess ourselves by the yardstick of the minimum requirements of faith in Islam. Confession of our shortcomings should not be a formality. It must result in a thorough purging of all the faults and vices which we see in our own personal life.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Prophet (pbuh) has said: "Whoever looked to one higher than himself in case of his Din and followed his footsteps, and looked to one lower than himself in gains and thanked Allah for what He has given to him was recorded with Allah as contented and grateful. On the contrary, he who looked at one lower for his Din and at one higher for his worldly gains and felt grief for lacking in worldly gains would be recorded as neither contented nor grateful." (Muslim)*



## ATTEND TO YOUR KIN

I would also advise you to pay special attention to reforming your kin. The Qur'an says:

تُؤَاؤِنْفُسِكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

*Save yourselves and your kith and kin from Fire  
(Tahrim:6)*

You are very particular about the food and clothes you provide your families. But you should be much more particular to save them from the fire of Hell. Try your best for the betterment of their Hereafter and put them on the road to Paradise. If any one of them goes astray in spite of your efforts, you shall not be held responsible. But the point is that you should in no way be responsible for his or her failure in the Hereafter. I often receive complaints that workers of the Jama'at do not pay as much attention to the betterment and reform of their own families as they do to those of others. These complaints may be true in some cases, and may be exaggerated in some others. It is not possible for me to investigate the case of every individual. I give a word of general advice. All of us should not only have the longing and desire but sincerely strive to put our near and dear ones on the path to peace and salvation, for them to obtain real consolation.

I advise all workers of the Jama'at to take interest in each others lives and to strive not only for the betterment of their own children but for the children of their fellow workers too. Often a child is not influenced by his father but is greatly impressed by his father's friends.

## MUTUAL ISLAH (BETTERMENT)

I also advise you not only to strive for the betterment and reformation of your own self and your families but for the betterment of your fellow workers as well. Those who have joined hands to work as an Islamic Jama'at for the sake of Allah and to establish His authority and supremacy in the world need to cooperate and coordinate with each other. They must know that they cannot attain their high ideal without being strong in their collective ethics and group discipline. This understanding should result in mutual help and cooperation for their moral improvement and betterment, and their continued advancement in the way of Allah. This is the only way for collective purification (*Tazkiyah*) in Islam. If you find me deviating from the track, bring me back on track without delay; and if I find you slipping or staggering I should lend you a helping hand. If there is dust on my sleeve you must blow it away and if I find a stain on your clothes I must clean it. Convey to me what you feel is in my best interest and I will convey to you whatever I feel necessary for your betterment. We know that we flourish in our worldly life through our mutual transactions. The same is true for our moral and spiritual life; we profit and we flourish as an Islamic Jama'at when we cooperate and support each other morally and spiritually.

The correct method of reformation is to 'wait and see' and avoid any hasty action whenever you find anything wrong in your fellow worker or when any complaint crops up against him. First try to understand the situation and then contact the person concerned; talk to him directly and in confidence about the complaint without under any circumstance even mentioning the matter in the absence of the person concerned. The latter is simple back-biting and is very much abhorred in Islam.

# COLLECTIVE IHTISAB (CRITICISM)

Mutual criticism is also a fruitful way for collective reform. Bring to the notice of your fellow workers their faults and shortcomings in a very polite and sincere manner. But be careful as it may prove disastrous if the etiquette of sincere criticism is not duly observed. The etiquette of fair criticism is as follows:

1. Criticism should not be made in every circumstance.
2. Before criticizing anyone first examine your own heart, with Allah as your witness, to see whether you are criticizing out of sincerity and for the person's well being or whether the motivation is due to impulse. In the former case, the criticism is indeed fully justified. In the latter, you should hold your tongue and try to eradicate this impurity from your personality.
3. Your words and manner of criticism should make your listener feel that you really seek reform and betterment.
4. Be sure that your complaint is based on hard facts before criticizing anyone. Baseless criticism without being sure of the facts is a sin and creates disorder.
5. The person who is criticized should give a calm hearing to the complaint, then ponder it without any prejudice. He should concede the truth plainly and counter the wrong with impassive reasoning. To get annoyed over criticism shows arrogance and vanity.

6. The criticism, and its rebuttal, should not be prolonged and turn into a permanent altercation. Discussion is worthwhile until both viewpoints are duly exposed, but if the matter is not settled, postpone any discussion and let both parties reconsider the entire matter coolly and separately.

Criticism within such limits is not only helpful but also necessary to set right our social life. No Islamic Jama'at can keep itself on the right track without such constructive criticism. No one in the Jama'at should be above criticism. I regard it as indispensable for the stability of the Islamic Movement and I am sure that the day this healthy criticism is halted, the Movement would succumb to various ills leading to its destruction. This is why, since the Movement's inception, I have always convened a special meeting following the general meeting, for critical assessment of the entire spectrum of the organization's work and structure. In these special meetings I offer myself first for criticism, so that any objections or complaints against me or my performance can be brought openly before all without any hesitations. Either the criticism will correct me, or my explanation will clear the misunderstanding of the critic and those who are in agreement with him.

## SAMA'A AND TA'AT (OBEDIENCE AND DISCIPLINE)

One more fact that I consider necessary to bring to your notice is the question of lack of discipline and submission. There is no doubt that we seem to be very disciplined, when compared with other organizations. But when we look at the standard set by Islam and consider the difficulty of the task before us, we really find our discipline to be far below the mark.

You are all fully aware that you are very few in number, with even fewer resources at your command in the field. The task before you is to change, in its form and spirit, the whole system of life based on impiety and ignorance, a system which is a thousand times stronger and more resourceful. Compare yourself in number or in resources and you are no match for it. There is nothing you can bank upon in order to achieve success in this struggle but your moral superiority and strict discipline. You can succeed in your great mission only when you establish your moral credibility and demonstrate such a discipline and organization that you may be able to show your strength at any moment and in every place with full confidence.

In an Islamic Jama'at striving for the establishment of the Islamic way of life, obedience to the lawful commands of the Jama'at authorities represents in fact submission to Allah and the Prophet (pbuh). Whoever contributes his time and energy to this mission for Allah's sake only, and who submits to the authority of his Jama'at Chief (Amir or Nazim) in order to serve the cause of Allah, obeys Allah and the Prophet (pbuh). The greater the attachment to Allah

and the Prophet (pbuh), the stronger the spirit of obedience in him. Similarly, the lesser the attachment, the weaker the spirit of obedience. Which sacrifice can be more valuable than the one you offer by obeying a person who has otherwise no authority over you, but whom you have accepted as your Chief only to work for the sake of Allah; the one you offer by carrying out his orders without any grudge like a loyal subordinate, even though his orders may sometimes go against your wishes and interest. As the sacrifice is for the cause of Allah, its reward is, in consequence, very great with Allah. On the other hand, if anyone refuses to accept a subordinate position and regards this subordination below his dignity, or feels hurt when ordered to do something and displays uneasiness or hesitation in complying with these orders, receives practical proof that he has not yet surrendered to Allah and that his own self still dominates his thoughts and actions.

## ADVICE TO THE LOCAL HEADS

Along with my advice to workers I consider it necessary here to include a word of advice to the organizational heads at various levels. They too should learn the techniques of leadership. Anyone entrusted with any responsibility in the Jama'at and exercising, by virtue of this responsibility, any authority over others is not supposed to assert himself unduly and relish his authority as a sign of superiority over others. He should behave politely and courteously with his co-workers. He should take the utmost care that any misbehavior on his part not create disobedience or contentiousness among any of the workers. He must differentiate in his dealings between the young and the old, the weak and the strong, the well-to-do and the poor. He should have full knowledge of each individual's circumstances and should deal with everyone according to their position and circumstances with due regard and leniency. He should instill such a spirit in his workers that they take the advice or appeal from their Chief as an order and implement it with the same spirit. It would indeed be considered a lack of discipline if the appeal from the Chief brought no response and he were therefore compelled to issue orders. Orders are only given to mercenaries. Those who have voluntarily joined hands to work for the cause of Allah do not need any orders from the Chief of their choice. They need only a hint so that they can fulfill their mission anywhere and proceed with it. The moment this spirit is engendered among the workers and their leaders there will be no trace of bitterness or ill-will to be found.

## DEVOTION AND SACRIFICE

My last advice is this: All those who stand for this mission and this Movement should develop within themselves the inclination to spend in the cause of Allah and to give this cause absolute preference over their own personal material interests and pursuits. Try to cultivate such a deep attachment to this mission that it will not let you rest until you have spent every last bit of energy and resources in this cause.

Dedicate not only your person but your purse to the cause of Allah. Never forget that Allah has His right not only on you and your being but on your time and your money as well. Allah and the Prophet (pbuh) have prescribed a minimum limit; but there is no limit for the maximum. It is for you to decide and assess the extent you should spend in the way of Allah in order to satisfy yourself that you have paid your due. None can judge this better than yourself. The best judge is your own conviction and conscience. I need not say any more than that you must learn a lesson from those who have no faith in Allah or the Hereafter yet make such great sacrifices for their fake ideals. We, the believers in Allah and the Hereafter, should feel ashamed of ourselves.

I also find most workers lacking in the level of interest and devotion needed for the establishment of the Islamic order. No doubt some of us work with the greatest zeal; we should be content for them and I pray for them from the core of my heart. But most of the workers lack the required devotion. Only a few of us feel upset, as a believer should, at the rampant vices, wretchedness and helplessness of those who profess belief in Allah



Almighty. This state of affairs should cause at least as much concern and despair as a parent feels when his child is sick, or when a person sees his home go up in flames. Here too, it is quite difficult for an individual to fix a limit for this worry and despair or for the eagerness one should show. It is again up to the individual to decide for himself at the call of his own conscience the extent to which he should strive and satisfy himself that, as one who believes in the ultimate reality, he has indeed fulfilled his duty. Yet for the sake of contrast, let it suffice to cast a glance on the endeavors of those striving for the establishment of their fake and false ideals and who stake all that they have at their command.

## ADVICE TO WOMEN

Much of what I have said is common to both men and women. But now I turn exclusively to the women who are in any way connected with the Islamic Movement.

The first and foremost requirement for you is to acquire as much knowledge of Islam as possible. Study not only the Qur'an but also Hadith and Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) with full understanding. Limit yourselves not only to the basic knowledge of Islam and the requirements of its faith (*Iman*) but try to know the Islamic injunctions regarding your personal life, your family life and the general social environment. One of the main causes of the growth of un-Islamic customs and practices increasing in Muslim families is the ignorance of our women folk about the teachings of Islam and the Islamic injunctions.

The next thing for you to do is to try to mold your practical life, your morals and your character, as well as the life and atmosphere in your home, upon your knowledge of Islam. A Muslim woman must be so firm and strict that she should stick to what she considers right despite opposition and hurdles from her family or other relatives. She should not concede to anything wrong no matter the amount of pressure exerted upon her. Surely her parents, husband and other elders of the family deserve obedience, respect and regard and they must never be treated with insubordination and arrogance, but the rights and will of Allah and His Prophet (pbuh) reign supreme. Flatly refuse to obey anyone who presses you to adopt the path of disobedience to Allah and his Prophet (pbuh), be he your father or your husband. Never bow to anyone in this respect. Rely on Allah and bravely face the worst of the consequences, even if it leads to the destruc-

tion of your worldly life. The stronger your determination to adhere to Islam, the better its effect on your family environment, by the grace of Allah. You shall, thus, enjoy a golden opportunity to reform your homes. If, on the contrary, you yield to unwarranted and anti-Islamic demands, your own personal life will be deprived of the blessings of Islam, and you will set a bad example of weakness in faith and morals for those around you.

Your third responsibility is to give priority to your near and dear ones in the matter of reform and improvement in the Islamic way of life. Those of our sisters, whom Allah has gifted with children, are in fact undergoing a test for which, if they fail, no other success can compensate. Their own children deserve their best attention. It is their prime responsibility to train their children well in Islam and its code of life. Married ladies also have the responsibility of keeping their husbands on the right path and assisting them in remaining steadfast in their march if they are already on the right path. A daughter can also convey the truth to her parents by observing due respect and regard for them. The least she can do is to offer them Islamic books to read.

Finally, spend as much time as you can spare from your household duties in conveying the knowledge of Islam to the women around you. Impart education to young girls and uneducated elderly women. Provide useful Islamic literature to ladies who are literate. Arrange gatherings and explain the teaching of Islam to them. If you cannot speak in public, just read out relevant and useful extracts from literature to them. In short, try your level best, using all possible ways and means, to eliminate ignorance and illiteracy in the ladies around you.