

THE CONDITION OF THE LOVERS OF ALLAH
IN THIS WORLD

Allah ﷻ states:

و تلك الأيام نداولها بين الناس

We keep alternating the days (good and bad) among mankind.
(3:140)

Like the tides of an ocean, the tides of life are perpetually changing. At times life is stormy; at other times life is calm. At times everything appears to blossom; at other times everything appears dismal. At times a person feels close to his Lord; at other times he feels distant. At times there is vitality; at other times there is listlessness. At times there is sickness; at other times there is health. Human conditions never remain the same. According to the poet *Allamah* Iqbal:

*Serenity is difficult in the workings of fate,
Change is the only stable thing in time.*

The state of the one who loves Allah ﷻ [*‘āshiq*] is affected by the changing conditions of life. Hence, at times he is happy and at other times he is sad. At times he feels close to his Creator and at other times he feels distant. At times there is affection and grace from the Beloved ﷻ and at other times there is anger and reproach. At times there is fervor and excitement and at other times there is peace and contentment. Whatever the circumstance, a sincere *‘āshiq* always remains pleased with his Beloved ﷻ.

*The Beloved’s favors are regular, but His anger is occasional,
My Beloved is to be lauded under all circumstances.*

Traversing the sea of love, an *‘āshiq* experiences various states. These are briefly mentioned below.

Restlessness

The *‘āshiq* is so anxious to reach [*mas*] Allah ﷻ that he is unable to find rest, even for a moment. So occupied is he in the remembrance of his Beloved ﷻ.

*I am not conscious of myself, nor of the world.
I sit entranced by Your beauty,
Ask the stars about the state of my life,
I remain awake at night, in Your contemplation.*

Despair

When sadness and despair overcome an *‘āshiq*, there is no outlet except for crying. This increases the beauty of one’s love and wins over the seemingly distant Friend ﷻ.

Anticipation

The 'āshiq desires that the Beloved ﷻ look at him with love. He anxiously awaits the mercy of the Creator of the universe. He knows that his aim would be fulfilled with a single glance from the Beloved ﷻ.

*Cast at least a slight glance toward the lovers,
If not always, at least every now and then.
With one glance, what hopes You plant in me,
The hope for just one glance of You.*

Sacrifice

There can be no greater blessing than reaching [*wasl*] the Beloved ﷻ. In comparison, everything else seems futile and trivial. For the realization of this *wasl*, the 'āshiq is prepared to forego everything else.

*Except for wasl, everything is useless,
One wasl in exchange for one hundred worlds is graciously
accepted.
You ask me, 'What is entry into Heaven?'
Meeting with the Friend is itself entry into Heaven.*

Development

Wherever Allah's ﷻ grace is directed, things begin to flourish. In contrast, (spiritual) withering away indicates Allah's ﷻ indifference.

*What is this season of autumn? It is only His veiling,
If He casts His gaze, it would soon be spring.*

Ecstasy

When the Beloved ﷻ showers His blessings, a sincere 'āshiq cries. These are not tears of sorrow, but tears of joy. Both the happiness and sadness of love are expressed through tears. The

heart of man is made of flesh, while the gaze of the Beloved ﷺ affects even stone.

*A beautiful being glanced in my direction,
Now I can only sigh - speechless and bedazzled.
What fault is it of mine? My heart is but a piece of flesh,
His gaze would make a hole even in stone.*

Separation

The heart of a sincere 'āshiq is torn apart by separation and he can never find any solace in this condition.

*O Beloved, my heart is mad about You,
Without worry, come into Your home, it is indeed Your home.
Sweeter You are to me than sugar and honey,
From Your separation, my heart is torn to pieces,
And these pieces were made for You.*

Insignificance

Worldly objects do not attract the heart of the sincere 'āshiq, nor does he give these things any importance. Compared with the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and of reaching Him, this decadent world has no significance.

Obsession

If anyone advises the sincere 'āshiq that obsession is not appropriate he considers this person his enemy. In fact, he wishes that this person would catch just a glimpse of the beauty and splendor of the True Beloved ﷺ, so he too would become insane with love.

*They ridicule my love for You.
O Beloved, cast a slight glance upon them too.
So they become like me, mad for You.*

Measure

For a sincere 'āshiq, his Beloved ﷺ is the only criterion by which he gauges his friends and foes. If his own enemy were to fall in love with the Beloved ﷺ, he would begin to regard him as a friend. If someone were to have no affection for his True Beloved ﷺ, then he would regard him a foe.

Comfort

The 'āshiq finds comfort in the remembrance of his Beloved ﷺ. By taking His name again and again, his heart gains peace.

*How much peace is attached to this name of Yours,
Comfortable sleep can be found on a bed of thorns.*

Remembrance

An 'āshiq cannot imagine one moment of his life devoid of the remembrance of his Beloved ﷺ. His waking moments are full of thoughts of Him and his sleep is full of dreams of Him.

Thirst

Love for Allah ﷻ is such that even if continuously sipped glass after glass, neither the thirst of the 'āshiq would be quenched, nor the drink diminished.

*I die when I think of You, then I come back to life,
If the water of Your wasl did not exist, I would not be alive.
Hope keeps me alive and desire kills me,
For You, how many times have I lived, how many times have I died.
I drink love, cup after cup,
Yet the drink does not diminish, nor am I quenched.*

Eagerness

The name of the Beloved ﷺ always remains in the heart of an 'āshiq and the conception of Him always lingers before his eyes.

Thus, the heart and eyes of an *'āshiq* always remain eager for the Beloved ﷺ.

لي حبيب خياله نصب عيني
و اسمه ضمائري مكنون
إن تذكرته فكلي قلوب
و إن تأملته فكلي عيون

*I have a Friend whose thoughts remain before my eyes,
And whose name is hidden in my heart.
When I remember Him, my entire body becomes my heart,
And when I look at Him, my entire body becomes my eyes.*

Consolation

When a sincere *'āshiq* senses that his every sigh and lament is reaching his Beloved ﷺ, his heart gains consolation.

*The heart of an 'āshiq finds contentment in the fact
That he has sent his sighs to the heavens.*

Progression

An *'āshiq* advances toward his Lord with each tear. Just as distances in the physical world are crossed by foot, distances in the spiritual world are traversed by the shedding of tears.

Tearfulness

The condition of an *'āshiq* is truly worthy of pity. When there is separation, he cries craving for nearness [*wasl*]. And when there is *wasl*, he cries in profound gratitude. Perhaps intense love [*'ishq*] and crying go hand in hand.

To cry is the duty of the 'āshiq,
 Without crying, there is no acceptance.
 Whether the heart cries, or whether the eyes cry,
 In love crying is necessary.
 Some cry to see You, others cry at seeing You,
 In profound love one must cry, whether in wasl or in distance.

Verbal Praise

When the eyes are in constant search of the Beloved ﷺ and the heart is flooded with His love, the tongue of the 'āshiq remains engaged in singing His praise.

خيالك عيني و ذكرك في فمي
 و مثواك في قلبي فأين تغيب

Your image is in my eyes, and Your remembrance on my lips,
 Your abode is in my heart, so where can You hide?

Constant Reflection

When the sun rises, the 'āshiq is reminded of his Beloved ﷺ. When it sets, he is reminded of his Beloved ﷺ. When an 'āshiq sits with friends he speaks of his Beloved ﷺ. And were he to receive an invitation to meet his Beloved ﷺ, he would go walking on his head.

و الله ما طلعت الشمس و لا غربت
 إلا و أنت في قلبي و وسواسي
 و لا جلست إلى قوم أحدثهم
 إلا و أنت حديثي بين جلاسي
 و لا ذكرتك محزوننا و لا طربا
 إلا و حبك مقرون بأنفاسي
 و لا هممت بشرب الماء من عطش
 إلا رأيت خيالا منك في الكأس
 فلو قدرت على الأتيان ذرتكم
 سحبا على الوجه أو مشيا على الرأس

*By Allah, the sun does not rise nor set,
 But that You are in my heart and in my thoughts.
 I do not sit in the gathering of friends,
 But that You are my conversation among the people.
 I do not remember You in grief or joy,
 But that Your love is woven into my breath.
 I do not intend drinking water in thirst,
 But Your image I envision in the glass.
 If I had the strength to come
 I would, dragging my face or walking on my head.*

Sincerity

When Muslims perform acts of worship [*ibādāt*] they are motivated by the reward [*thawāb*] they will receive for their righteous deeds. Although this is a noble objective, the condition of the *‘āshiq* is extraordinary. He does everything purely for the pleasure of his Beloved ﷻ.

Renewing Fervor

Allah ﷻ states:

كل يوم هو في شأن

Every day there is a new glory for Him. (55:29)

The beauty of the Beloved ﷻ gains new luster and charm with each passing day. In response the love in the heart of the sincere *‘āshiq* also grows in fervor and adds dimensions. There is neither a limit to the beauty of Allah ﷻ, nor a limit to the intense love of the *‘āshiq*. Thus, there remains no possibility of being attracted toward another. In the words of a poet:

*My love is You, my companion is You,
My religion is You, my faith is You,
My body is You, my soul is You,
My heart is You, my life is You,
My Ka'bah, qiblah, masjid, pulpit, and Quran are You,
My worship- Hajj, alms, prayer, fasting- and adhan are You,
My remembrance is You, my reflection is You,
My pleasures are You, my existence is You,*

*My support, hopes, and trust are You,
My religion and faith are You, my honor is You,
My shame is with You and my glory is with You,
My pains, sorrows, tears, and laughter are You,*

*My pain is You and my respite is You,
My reasons for my happiness are You,
My reasons of comfort are You,
My beauty and youth are You,*

*O Farid,¹⁵ if only the Friend accepts you,
Then you are the king and you are the ruler.*

Establishment of the Night Vigil

The sincere *'ashiq* longs to intimately converse with his Beloved ﷺ. There is no better time for this than during the darkness of night. Therefore, it becomes the habit of the *'ashiq* to wake at the time of the night vigil [*tabajjud* prayer] to delight in its secrecy and to win over the Beloved ﷺ through his sighs and tears.

*O sleeping Farid, awake and sweep out the masjid,
You are sleeping and the Lord is awake!
How will your friendship continue?*

¹⁵ "O Farid" refers to the poet himself, *Hadrat* Baba Farid.

Humility


In spite of his nightly worship [*'ibādab*], a sincere *'āshiq* never feels he has done as much as he should. Even a dog remains awake at night guarding its master's home. As such, he does not regard spending the night awake as any great accomplishment.

*You remain awake at night and are called 'Shaykh'
The dog that remains awake at night is better than you,
It eats bland, dry food and sleeps during the day under the tree
shade,
It is better than you,
It leaves not the doorstep of its master, even if beaten a hundred
times,
It is better than you,
O ingrate, you sleep upon a soft bed, whilst the dog sleeps on stone,
It is better than you.
Rise and win over your Friend,
Otherwise, the dog will have outdone you.*

Another poet stated it differently:

*By spending the nights awake, do not presume
That you have attained the ranks of the awliyā.
Brother, a dog spends its nights awake on guard,
It remains awake in exchange for a small morsel of food,
Whilst you have received thousands of blessings,
The dog has outdone you, O faqīr, hang your head in shame,
Erase yourself until effaced, O faqīr, efface yourself until erased.*

Appreciation

The *'āshiq* even regards the sadness inflicted upon him by his Beloved  as better than any (worldly) happiness.

*Even Your grief is very dear to me,
As it is something given by Thee.*

The more the Beloved ﷺ rebukes the *'ashiq*, the more the *'ashiq's* zeal increases. At times, in this state of immersion [in love], the *'ashiq* even proclaims, "Is there more?" [*Hal min mazid?*]

Vitality

When Allah ﷻ bestows His attentive gaze, the world resounds with vitality. When this happens anyone could lose themselves.

*Do not raise a finger against those entranced in their captivation,
Look, is there any sense to be found even in a sensible one?*

Pleasure

An *'ashiq* finds such pleasure in talking about the Beloved ﷺ that his heart desires to speak of Him all the time. If he finds a friend whose heart is also full of such passion, then what remains? Both spend their time merrily.

Yearning

When the *'ishq* of an *'ashiq* is enflamed by the remembrance of the Beloved ﷻ, his heart yearns to see the Beloved ﷻ.

*Lift the veil and reveal Yourself,
I have come to see Your face.*

Struggle

The *'ashiq* tries to restrain his feelings and emotions. In this struggle, his entire life is spent.

*Day and night is a struggle between desire, and suppressing desire,
My heart agonizes me, and I agonize my heart.*



A STORY ABOUT PROPHET IBRAHIM

Once, when Prophet Ibrahim ؑ was grazing his flock of sheep, a man passed by loudly reciting the following words in praise of Allah ﷻ:

سبحان ذي الملك و الملكوت سبحان ذي العزة و العظمة و الهيبة و القدرة و
الكبرياء و الجبروت

*Glorified is the Master of the Earthly and heavenly
kingdoms. Glorified is the Honored One, the Exalted
One, the Venerated One, the Powerful One, the
Magnificent One, and the Omnipotent One.*

When Prophet Ibrahim ؑ heard his Beloved ﷻ praised with such beautiful words, his heart leaped in exultation. He requested the man to kindly recite the words one more time. The man asked what he would give him in return. Prophet Ibrahim ؑ replied that he would give half of his flock of sheep. The man complied and repeated the words. Prophet Ibrahim ؑ was so captivated by these beautiful words that he asked him to repeat the words again. The man asked what he would be given in exchange this time. Prophet Ibrahim ؑ replied that he would give the remaining half of the flock. The man complied and repeated the words for a third time. Prophet Ibrahim ؑ was so overcome with ecstasy by these words that he once again implored the man to repeat his words. The man responded, “You have nothing left. Now what will you give me?” Prophet Ibrahim ؑ replied, “O brother, I will tend your sheep forever if you recite these praises of my Beloved ﷻ one more time.” The man then said, “Ibrahim *Khalilullah* [friend of Allah], I bring you glad tidings. I am an angel sent by Allah ﷻ, who told me, ‘Go and take

My name before My *kehalil* and see how much he values it.”
Subhān Allāh.¹⁶

*Not for a moment could love be concealed,
when Your name was taken.*

THROWN INTO BOILING OIL

Once two Successors [*Tabi'in*] were taken captive during battle. The enemy soldiers presented them before their king, a Christian. When the King saw the faces of the two *Tabi'in* (rah), he found signs of bravery. He decided that instead of killing them, he would entice them to convert, thereby making them an asset for his army. They were promised luxurious lives, beautiful women, and high ranks in the army. They replied that the attractions of this transitory world held no importance in their eyes and that they would never leave Islam. Despite the King's persuasion they remained firm. When the King saw this he tried threatening them with severe punishment. He finally threatened to throw both of them into boiling oil if they did not convert. However, they remained steadfast and told the King to do as he pleased.

The King then ordered that a huge pot of oil be heated. Soon, the oil began to boil. He offered them one last chance to change their religion in order to save their lives. However, both of them adamantly refused. With a signal of the King's hand, one of them was flung into the pot. From the spurting oil steam arose and soon this Successor (rah) was charred beyond recognition. The King then looked toward the second Successor (rah) and noticed that tears were falling from his eyes. The King thought that perhaps he had become scared and was now ready to forsake his religion. Thus, in a sympathetic tone, the King said, “Your friend

¹⁶ *Subhān Allāh* literally means, “Glory be to Allah.”

did not accept my proposal. You see his outcome! Even now if you accept my offer, you will be saved.” The Successor (rah) retorted, “O you wretched creature! Do you think that I fear death? Verily, it is not so!” The King asked, “Then why do you cry?” The Successor (rah) replied, “It occurred to me that I have but one life. And, if you throw me into this oil, it will end. How I wish that I had as many lives as the number of hairs on my body so that I could be thrown into this oil repeatedly and present each life as a sacrifice before my Lord, Allah ﷻ.”

AN OLD 'ASHIQ

Once Prophet Musa ﷺ was on his way when he saw an old man busy conversing with Allah ﷻ. Prophet Musa ﷺ overheard him saying, “O Allah ﷻ, I have heard that You do not have a wife. O Allah ﷻ, if You come to me, I would attend to You. I would serve You food, wash Your clothes, give You yogurt, and feed You butter. O, when You fall ill, who takes care of You?” Prophet Musa ﷺ explained to him that to use such words for Allah ﷻ was disrespectful, insolent, and contrary to the greatness of Allah ﷻ. The old man grew apprehensive and cried profusely, seeking Allah’s ﷻ forgiveness. Allah ﷻ then sent divine revelation [*wahy*] to Prophet Musa ﷺ, “O My dear messenger! I sent you to bridge the distance between Me and creation, not to increase it.”

*You have come to present the Creator to creation,
Not to create separation.*

THE LIFE OF HADRAT SHIBLI

During the Abbasid period Muslim rule had reached far and wide. Each territory had its own governor who handled its law and order and ran its internal affairs. Overall, most territories were

governed honestly and justly, but a few territories needed reform. The Caliph of the time decided to gather all the governors at the capital to publicly honor and reward the successful governors and thereby motivate the others toward reform. A royal decree was issued and an invitation was sent for all the governors to gather at the capital on an appointed day.

When the day finally arrived, the Caliph assembled all of the governors in a special hall. Those who had proved to be good administrators were commended and rewarded, while the remaining governors were given constructive advice. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Caliph bestowed a robe of honor to each of the governors and invited them to a royal gathering the next day.

The following day the governors arrived dressed in their robes of honor. They enjoyed an extravagant feast of dishes and exotic fruits. After the meal, the atmosphere became lighthearted and the governors began to socialize. Even the Caliph appeared relaxed and content.

At this moment one of the governors sensed that he was about to sneeze and tried to suppress it. But, after struggling for a while, he sneezed two or three times. For a moment, the spirit of the gathering changed. Everyone looked towards him, and the governor sensed that perhaps some mucous was dripping from his nose. When everyone reverted their attention towards the feast, the governor discreetly wiped his nose with the sleeve of his robe. By the will of Allah ﷻ, at that very moment, the Caliph looked at him and saw him wiping his nose with the new robe. When he saw the robe being used to clean mucous from someone's nose, the Caliph became enraged. He severely chastised the governor for displaying such ingratitude toward his robe of honor and in the presence of the entire gathering, he stripped him of his robe and expelled him from the hall. The good spirit of the

gathering had now died and the governors became afraid of facing a similar punishment. Sensing the change of atmosphere, the Caliph's vizier advised him to bring the gathering to an end. The crowd then dispersed and only the Caliph and his vizier remained in the hall, silently contemplating the unpleasant incident.

Soon thereafter, the doorkeeper entered and told them that the governor of the Nahawind Province sought their audience. The Caliph granted him permission to enter. Upon entering, the governor greeted him and asked whether a sneeze is a voluntary or an involuntary act. The Caliph, sensing the delicacy of the question, said, "What is the use of asking such a question? Go and attend to your work." However, the governor asked another question. "Regarding the governor who wiped his nose with the robe, was it necessary to disgracefully throw him out of your court, or could he have been given a lesser punishment?" When the Caliph heard this question, he replied, "I detect the implications of your questions. I warn you not to continue to ask such questions, otherwise you will regret it." The governor persisted, "O Caliph, I realized something through this incident. You bestowed someone a robe of honor and when he handled it with ingratitude you openly humiliated and expelled him. It occurred to me that the Most Generous Lord bestowed upon me the robe of humanity and sent me into this world. If I fail to pay due respect to this robe [of humanity], then on the Day of Judgment, Allah ﷻ will also disgrace and expel me in the same way." Saying this, he took off his robe and threw it on the table, adding, "I will first pay due respect to the robe of humanity, so that on the Day of Judgment I will be saved from humiliation." The governor thus spurned his governorship and left the hall. When he began reflecting about what he should do next, it occurred to him that he should seek the guidance of *Hadrat* Junaid Baghdadi (rah) to develop himself spiritually.

After some days of travel, he reached *Hadrat* Junaid Baghdadi (rah) and said, “*Hadrat*, you have been endowed with tremendous spiritual blessings. Please guide me to the same, whether for free or for a price.” He replied, “If you are charged for it, you will not be able to afford it, and if it is given to you for free, then you will not value it.” The governor said, “Then, I am prepared to do whatever you ask of me.” He was told to remain there for a period of time and when his heart’s reflection was found clean, he would receive the desired blessing. After a few months, *Hadrat* Junaid asked the governor about his past occupation. He replied that he used to be the governor of Nahawind Province. He was then told to go to the city of Baghdad and to open a shop selling sulphur. The governor did as he was told. Both the foul smell of sulphur and the daily bickering with the general public greatly distressed the governor. He completed a full year in this condition and presented himself to *Hadrat* Junaid saying, “*Hadrat*, I have completed one year.” *Hadrat* responded, “Oh, so you were counting the days? Go and run the store for another year.” This time the governor’s mind was cleared to such an extent that more than a year passed, but he had not kept an account of time.

At last, one day *Hadrat* called him and told him that his second year had been completed. He responded that he had not realized how much time had passed. Then *Hadrat* handed him a beggar’s bowl and told him to go to Baghdad to beg. The governor grew perplexed. He was told, “If you seek this blessing, do as you are commanded. Otherwise, return to the path from which you came.” The governor immediately took the beggar’s bowl and proceeded to the city of Baghdad. He saw people gathered in an area and extending his hand, he asked them to give something in the name of Allah ﷻ. Observing his face, they did not find it to be that of a beggar. They scolded him, “Lazy man! Aren’t you ashamed of begging? Go and work for your keep!” When the

governor heard these harsh words, he swallowed his anger and behaved like a true pauper.

Surprisingly, a whole year passed without his receiving anything. Wherever he begged he received the same treatment. This was a method for his spiritual reformation. *Hadrat* Junaid Baghdadi (rah) wanted to remove all vestiges of pride and arrogance from the heart of the governor. Thus, after a year of extending his hand before creation, he realized that he had no value; if one must beg, he should beg solely from the Creator. To attain this realization, it had taken an entire year of struggle.

One day, *Hadrat* Junaid Baghdadi (rah) called the governor and asked him his name. He replied, "Shibli." *Hadrat* then told Shibli that he may now sit in his gatherings. Hence, after three solid years of struggle [*mujāhadah*], *Hadrat* at last permitted him to attend his gatherings. As the heart of Shibli (rah) had already been purified, each and every word spoken by *Hadrat* Junaid (rah) illuminated his heart with *nūr* [spiritual radiance] and endowed him with much insight. Within a few months his spiritual state rose to such great heights that his heart was overwhelmed with love for Allah ﷻ.

Around this time, *Hadrat* Junaid (rah) called *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) and asked him, "Shibli, when you were the governor of Nahawind, you must have treated someone unjustly or deprived someone of their rights. You must make a list of those whose rights you violated." After three days, *Hadrat* Shibli had compiled a lengthy list. *Hadrat* Junaid (rah) explained that one's internal reformation was not complete until all his affairs were settled. He then told him, "Go and seek the forgiveness of all those people."

Thus, *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) went to Nahawind and sought the forgiveness of each and every person on his list. Some forgave him readily. Others said that he had disgraced them considerably and that they would not forgive him until he stood in the sun for

extended periods of time. Still others would not forgive him until he worked as a laborer in their homes. And so it continued with everyone on his list. He fulfilled each condition according to the wishes of every person in return for their forgiveness such that two years had passed by the time he returned to Baghdad.

By now, it had been five years since he had first arrived at the sanctuary [*khānaqah*] for his spiritual reform. After enduring all these physical and spiritual struggles, the desires of his lower self [*nafs*] were annihilated and his ego erased. His spirit cried out “You, only You Allah ﷻ!” The mercy of Allah ﷻ descended, and one day *Hadrat* Junaid (rah) gifted him with spiritual connection [*nisbah*]. His way of seeing changed. His way of walking changed. His way of thinking changed. His chest became a treasury, and illuminated with the recognition [*ma’rifah*] of Allah ﷻ, he became a knower of Allah [*‘arif billāh*]. His heart was overcome with love for Allah ﷻ. The following are some significant episodes of his life.



Once *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) was sitting alone remembering Allah ﷻ when a seeker [*sālik*] passed by and said, “Connect me to Allah.” *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) said, “To Allah?” The name of Allah ﷻ emerged from his lips with such reverential love that the young man’s heart could not withstand it and he collapsed and died on the spot. *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) was arrested and charged with murder. When he arrived in court, the judge asked, “Shibli, did you kill a young man?” He replied, “Most certainly not. The boy asked me to connect him to Allah, and I only said ‘To Allah?’ but he could not handle these words.” When the judge heard *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) say the word “Allah,” he too felt a strange effect upon his own heart. As a result, he dismissed the case and honorably exonerated *Hadrat* Shibli (rah).



Whenever anyone took the name of Allah ﷻ, *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) would place sweets in that person's mouth. Someone asked why he did this and he replied, "If I cannot fill the mouth of a person who takes the name of my Beloved ﷻ with sweetness, what else can I do?"



Once people saw *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) furious, standing with a sword in his hand. When asked the reason for his strange behavior, he replied, "I will kill whoever takes the name of Allah ﷻ in front of me!" When asked why, he replied, "I have discovered that people take the name of my Beloved ﷻ negligently and in my eyes taking the name of the True Beloved ﷻ negligently is disbelief [*kufri*]!"



One time while *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) was walking, a few boys began to follow him. Believing him to be insane, they started harassing him. He did not pay any attention to them and continued walking. One of the boys threw a stone striking him on the shin, which began to bleed profusely. Upon seeing this, a man scolded the boys and chased them away. He then approached *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) to tend to his wound. He was astonished to see that whenever a drop of blood fell from his wound onto the ground, it would form the word "Allah." Imagine how much love for Allah ﷻ must have been infused in a body from which a drop of blood would form the word "Allah!"



Once on Eid day, *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) wore black clothing. When people asked him why, he replied, "People are negligent of

their Lord and due to their excessive sins their hearts have become as black as my clothes.”



Once after performing *wudu* [ritual ablution], a divine inspiration [*ilhām*] entered *Hadrat* Shibli’s heart (rah), “Shibli, are you going to My house (i.e. the *masjid*) after performing such a careless *wudu*?” *Hadrat* Shibli immediately turned back to repeat his *wudu*, but again received an inspiration, “Shibli, where will you go after leaving My door?” Suddenly in the state of *wajūd* [Divine Presence], he loudly exclaimed “Allah ﷻ.” At this moment, another inspiration came, “Shibli, are you showing Me your fervor?” *Hadrat* Shibli then stood silently. Soon the thought arose, “Shibli, are you showing Me your patience?” Finally, *Hadrat* Shibli raised his hands in supplication and began to weep. In actuality, Almighty Allah ﷻ wanted to see *Hadrat* Shibli in humility.



On another occasion, Allah ﷻ inspired [*ilhām*] *Hadrat* Shibli’s (rah) heart, “O Shibli, do you want Me to reveal your faults to the people so no one will ever again look in your direction?” *Hadrat* Shibli (rah) candidly said, “O Allah ﷻ, do You want me to reveal Your mercy to the people, so that no one in the world will remain who would prostrate to You?” Immediately, Allah ﷻ responded, “Shibli, do not tell anyone about Me, and I will not tell anyone about you.”

These incidents demonstrate the profound love for Allah ﷻ that arises in one who erases the desires of his lower self [*nafs*] through intense spiritual struggle.

AN INNOCENT QUESTION

In his childhood, *Hadrat* Husain asked his father *Hadrat* Ali ؑ, “Do you love Allah?” He replied, “Yes.” Then he asked, “Do you love my maternal grandfather (i.e. the Prophet ﷺ)?” He again replied, “Yes.” He then asked, “Do you love my mother (i.e. *Hadrat* Fatima ؑ)?” Again, he replied, “Yes.” Finally he asked, “Do you love me?” And *Hadrat* Ali ؑ replied, “Yes.” *Hadrat* Husain ؑ innocently asked, “Dear Father, how have you combined so many loves in one heart?” *Hadrat* Ali ؑ explained, “Son, your question is an excellent one. The love I have for your maternal grandfather, for your mother, and for you is because Allah ﷻ has commanded all these loves. Hence, all these loves are in fact branches of love for Allah.” Upon hearing this, *Hadrat* Husain ؑ smiled understandingly.

THE CONDITION OF SAMNUN MUHIBB

Hadrat Samnun Muhibb (rah) was a handsome young man who was deeply immersed in his love for Allah ﷻ. Once he was asked to deliver a lecture and share some words of wisdom. He spoke about the importance of love for Allah ﷻ. During the lecture, a bird came and sat on his shoulder. After a while, it moved down and sat on his lap. He continued talking about having love for Allah ﷻ while the bird continued fluttering about. Finally, at one point during his talk, the bird suddenly died on his lap. After this incident, people added the title, “Muhibb” [the lover] to Samnun’s name.

UNABLE TO RECALL A NAME

Hadrat Maulānā Asghar Husain Kandhlawi’s (rah) grandfather, *Shaykh* Ahmad Hasan (rah), was among the most pious people of

his time. When the foundation of Dar al-‘ulūm Deoband¹⁷ was to be laid, *Hadrat Maulānā* Nanotwi (rah) announced that the first stone would be placed by someone who had never *committed* a major sin. In fact, this person had never even *made an intention* to commit one. People were astonished to hear this. *Maulānā* Nanotwi (rah) then requested *Shaykh* Ahmad Hasan (rah) to lay the first stone.

Shaykh Ahmad Hasan (rah) would absorb himself completely in *dhikr*. During the two years that his son-in-law stayed in his company, *Shaykh* Ahmad Hasan (rah) was never able to recall his name. Whenever his son-in-law passed, *Shaykh* Ahmad Hasan, (rah) would ask, “Who are you?” He would reply, “I am Abdullah.”¹⁸ *Shaykh* Ahmad Hasan (rah) would respond, “All of us are Allah’s ﷻ servants, but *who* are you?” He would reply, “I am Abdullah, your son-in-law.” *Shaykh* Ahmad Hasan (rah) would then say, “Very good, very good.” Every time he saw his son-in-law the same dialogue would occur, and this continued for two years. Allah’s ﷻ name had permeated his heart to such an extent that he could no longer remember the name of anyone else.

THE SINCERE REPENTANCE OF JIGAR MURADABADI

Ustādh Jigar Muradabadi was a famous poet in his time. Although he was a drunkard early in his life, he was renowned for his exquisite poetry. Once he went to meet his friend Abdur Rabb Nishtar, the well-known politician. When the orderly at the office saw him dressed in simple attire, he denied him entry. *Ustādh* Jigar tried to explain that he was an old acquaintance of the governor,

¹⁷ Dar al-‘ulūm Deoband, located in India, is one of the foremost institutes of Islamic learning in the world.

¹⁸ Abdullah is a name in Arabic which literally means, “servant of Allah.”

but the orderly refused to listen. *Ustādh* Jigar then wrote two lines of poetry on a small piece of paper: “I have come to meet Nishtar, look into my *Jigar*.” He asked the orderly to at least show his note to Nishtar. Upon reading the note Nishtar immediately recognized it to be written by *Ustādh* Jigar. He went out to personally welcome his old friend leaving the orderly dumbfounded. Such was the poetic excellence of *Ustādh* Jigar.

The turning point of *Ustādh* Jigar’s life came after meeting *Hadrat* Khwaja Majdhub (rah) at a poetry recital. Jigar was deeply affected by the words of *Hadrat* Majdhub (rah). He was also surprised to find someone with a modern education and high status to be so imbued with love for Allah ﷻ. Jigar asked him how he had changed from his secular ways. *Hadrat* Majdhub (rah) told him that he had been influenced by *Hadrat Maulānā* Ashraf Ali Thanwi (rah) and offered to arrange a meeting with him if he so wished. Jigar agreed to meet *Maulānā* Thanwi (rah) but warned that he would drink wine, even in his presence.

Hadrat Majdhub (rah) requested *Hadrat* Thanwi (rah) to meet Jigar and told him about his drinking problem. *Maulānā* Thanwi responded that it would not be permissible for a drunkard to stay at his *khānaqah* [sanctuary devoted to spiritual reform]. However, he agreed to host *Ustādh* Jigar at his home where he could do as he pleased. So, *Hadrat* Majdhub brought *Ustādh* Jigar to the residence of *Maulānā* Thanwi (rah). A short period of time in the company of this friend [*walī kāmil*] of Allah ﷻ was enough to transform the heart of *Ustādh* Jigar. Jigar asked *Maulānā* Thanwi (rah) to make three prayers for him. The first was that he renounce drinking; the second that he adopt the *sunnah* of the Prophet¹⁹ ﷺ as a way of life; and the third that he be able to per-

¹⁹ The *sunnah* includes both the external (e.g. lengthy beard) and internal (e.g. mannerisms) acts of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Such was the

form *Hajj*. When *Ustādh* Jigar returned home, he renounced drinking and completely embraced the internal and external aspects of the *sunna*. Shocked by this sudden and immense transformation in his life, people would come from far and wide to meet him. Regarding people's reaction to this change, Jigar composed a couplet about himself:

*Let's go see the spectacle of Jigar,
That infidel has become Muslim, is the rumor.*

Jigar's health deteriorated considerably due to his sudden abstinence from alcohol. His doctors advised him to leave this habit slowly. But, he replied that it was better to quit once and for all. If death were to seize him now, his repentance would be accepted, Allah willing, and he would be successful in the Hereafter. Love for Allah ﷻ had begun to overwhelm Jigar.

*The miracle of my love is only this, O Jigar,
Allah has overcome me and I have overcome the day.*

REMEMBERING [MURAQABAH] ALL NIGHT

Hadrat Maulānā Husain Ali (rah) was the authorized deputy [*kehalifah*] of *Hadrat* Khwaja Sirajuddin (rah). After the night prayer [*'ishā*] at his *kebānaqah*, it was common for *Hadrat* Husain (rah) to gather the seekers [*salikin*] to perform *muraqabah*²⁰. They were permitted to leave if they felt tired. Thus, as the night progressed, people would leave the gathering of *dhiker*. *Hadrat* would raise his head and end his *muraqabah* after more than half the

understanding of the Companions [*Sahabab*] of the Prophet, the scholars, and the pious persons of this *ummah* until the present day.

²⁰ *Muraqabah* is a devotional exercise in which the *salik* clears his mind of all foreign thoughts, reflects on the state of his heart, and focuses his concentration on the constantly descending mercy of Allah ﷻ.

night had passed, such that no one remained except him. He would then stand to offer the night vigil [*tabajjud*], thereby spending the entire night in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ.

*My heart yearns for those leisurely days and nights,
When I would remain in reflection, thinking of my Lord.*

HIS HAND WAS IN YOURS

A *shaykh* once came across a fire-worshipper occupied in worship. The *shaykh* explained that fire should not be worshipped as it is a part of creation and not the Creator, but the man refused to believe. The *shaykh* resolved to help him realize the truth and proposed that they make a fire and place their hands in it. He suggested that the fire would not burn the hand of the person whose belief was true. The fire-worshipper agreed to the proposal. The *shaykh* took hold of the fire worshipper's hand and placed both of their hands in the fire. After a moment, they realized that the fire did not burn either of their hands. The *shaykh* was baffled, as he had been certain that the fire-worshipper's hand would burn. At that moment, Allah ﷻ inspired his heart [*ilhām*], "How could We burn his hand, when it was held in yours?"

TWO GLAD TIDINGS

Once a Muslim and a Christian, both headed in the same direction, became traveling companions. When they were still two days away from reaching their destination, their provisions ran out. Both of them became worried and deliberated about what to do. The Muslim suggested that one of them should pray for food one day and the next day the other would pray for food. The Christian agreed and asked the Muslim to supplicate first. The Muslim withdrew to privately supplicate to Allah ﷻ. After a short while,

a man came with a serving of hot food and laid it down before them. The Muslim was extremely pleased that Allah ﷻ had preserved his honor. After finishing their meal, they slept soundly during the night. The following day, it was the Christian's turn to supplicate and he appeared very confident. He retreated and prayed. After a short while, a man came with *two* servings of hot food. The Christian could not hide his happiness, but the Muslim was disturbed and did not care to eat the food. The Christian noticed this and said, "Eat, and I will give you two glad tidings." When they finished their meals the Muslim asked about the glad tidings. The Christian said, "The first glad-tiding is that I am accepting Islam. And the second is that when I supplicated, I said, 'O Allah ﷻ, if this Muslim has any standing in Your eyes, then give us food.' Hence, today Allah ﷻ has sent us a double helping of food in your honor."

Indeed, Allah ﷻ has such high regard for the sincere *'ashiq*, that Allah ﷻ accepts not only his prayers, but also the prayers of those who invoke the *'ashiq's* favored standing [*wasilah*]. According to hadith, the blessed Prophet ﷺ sometimes prayed to Allah ﷻ by invoking the standing of the Migrant Companions ﷺ [*Muhajirin*]. After the passing of the blessed Prophet ﷺ, during times of drought the Companions ﷺ would turn to *Hadrat* Abbas ﷺ and ask him to pray to Allah ﷻ on behalf of the community. After he passed away, they would request *Hadrat* Aisha ﷺ to do the same.

WHO STOPS YOU FROM EXITING?

Once, a man offered to pay a worker to deliver some goods to his home. The worker agreed on the condition that on the way, if the time for prayer entered he would first offer his prayer [*salah*] and then deliver the goods. The man accepted the worker's terms. After walking for some distance, they heard the call to prayer.

The worker told him that he was going for prayer as previously agreed. The man said that he would stand by the goods and told the worker to quickly pray and return.

The worker went into the *masjid* and became engaged in his prayer. Even though people began exiting, he remained immersed in prayer. After some time the man called out, “O you in there, it has been a long time! Who stops you from exiting?” The worker replied, “Sir, the One who stops you from entering is the One who stops me from exiting!”

Subhān Allāh such is the extraordinary condition of those who have *'isbq*. When they pray, it is as if they are intimately conversing with their True Beloved ﷺ.

A REMARKABLE SUPPLICATION

A man was on his way to the market when he saw someone trying to sell a bondwoman. She was very thin and, as a result, no buyers were interested. The man then purchased her for a nominal sum. When he woke up in the middle of the night, he saw her supplicating after the night vigil [*tabajjud* prayer]. She was saying, “O Allah ﷻ, I swear upon the love *You* have for *me*.” The man reprimanded her and said, “You should not say that! But rather you should say, ‘O Allah ﷻ, I swear upon the love that *I* have for *You*.’” Upon hearing this, the bondwoman became enraged and said, “Master, if Allah ﷻ did not love me, He would not let me spend the entire night on the prayer rug, while letting you sleep soundly.” Saying this, she broke into tears and while weeping supplicated, “O Allah ﷻ, until now my situation was hidden, known only to Thee. My Creator, call me unto Thee as now Your creation has found out.” Saying this, her soul was taken while sitting on her prayer rug.

THE ACTION OF HADRAT ALI AND FATIMA

Once *Hadrat* Hasan and *Hadrat* Husain ؑ became very ill and their condition failed to improve. *Hadrat* Fatima ؑ made a pledge to Allah ﷻ that if her two sons regained their health, she and her husband would fast three consecutive days. In His mercy, Allah ﷻ granted health to both boys and *Hadrat* Ali and Fatima ؑ began fasting. When the time to break the fast [*iftār*] arrived, there was only one serving of bread for both of them. At that moment, a beggar knocked on the door saying that he was a poor, hungry man who had come to their door with the hope that he might receive something to eat. Both husband and wife reflected and agreed that they could remain without food, but could not send a beggar away empty-handed. So they gave their bread to the beggar and broke their fast with only water. In the morning, they had only water to drink for their pre-dawn meal [*subūr*]. That day, *Hadrat* Ali ؑ was able to earn enough for a single piece of bread. When the time for *iftār* drew near, once again there was a knock on the door. This time it was an orphan begging for food. Again, both thought that they could remain without food, but could not refuse an orphan. So they gave the orphan the bread and broke their fasts with only water for a second time. On the third day, they again had only water for *subūr*. That day, *Hadrat* Ali ؑ managed to bring some food for *iftār*; however, it was barely sufficient for the two of them. This time a bondsman knocked on their door asking for food. After three consecutive days of fasting, both of them were very weak and hungry themselves. However, in their eyes it was not right to turn away someone who asked in the name of Allah ﷻ, even though it meant enduring hardship. Love for Allah ﷻ had permeated their hearts to such an extent that sacrificing their lives for Allah ﷻ, let alone their food and drink, had become easy. So on the third night they again gave

away what little food they had. Those who love Allah ﷻ are always ready to sacrifice everything for Him.