

مدارج السلوك

MADARIJ AL SULUK

(RANKS OF SPIRITUAL WAYFARING)

*An exposition of the Thirty-Five Lessons of the
Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Tareeqah*

By

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وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِيْنَا نَهْدِيْهِمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

As for those who strive in Us, surely We will guide them to Our paths; And verily Allah is with those who excel. (Qur'an 29:69)

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the *Mashaikh* of *Naqshband*,
In particular to our spiritual guide,
The Beloved of the 'Ulema and the Righteous,
Hazrat Shaykh Hafiz Zulficar Ahmad Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi.

نقشبندیہ عجب قافلہ سالارانند کہ برند از رہ پنهان به حرم قافلہ را
از دل سالک رہ جاذبہ صحبتشان می برد وسوسہ خلوت و فکر چلہ را
همہ شیران جهان بستہ این سلسلہ اند روبہ از حیلہ چہ سان بگسلد این سلسلہ را ؟
مولانا عبدالرحمن جامی

The (*Mashaikh* of the) *Naqshbandiyya* are such amazing caravan leaders,
That they take the caravan through a hidden route to the Sanctuary,

From the heart of the traveller (*salik*), their blessed appealing company (*subbah*),
Erases in an instant all delusion and thought for solitude (*khalwah*).

All the (spiritual) lions of the world are connected to this blessed chain,
With what cunning will the fox-like person be able to break this chain!

- *Maulana AbdulRahman Jami (ra)*

Foreword

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَ
إِتْبَاعِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ - أَمَّا بَعْدُ!

The *ẓahiri* (esoteric) and *batini* (exoteric) sciences of the *deen* were all gathered within the blessed person of Allah (swt)'s Beloved Messenger (saw) and he transferred both types of knowledge to his noble companions (ra) Just as the Prophet (saw) taught the noble companions (ra) about the outer form of *salah* (ritual prayer), he also taught the noble companions (ra) about the realities of *salah*, about humility and submission in *salah*, about the station of *ihسان* and even about the spiritual condition in which one "meets" one's Beloved Friend. Just as the Prophet (saw) helped the companions (ra) get rid of the impurity of alcohol when it was declared impermissible, in the same manner, because *'ujub* (vanity) and *takabbur* (arrogance) are impermissible, he (saw) helped to rid them of these spiritual diseases. Where the Prophet (saw) taught the companions (ra) to say the words of *AlhamdUlillah* (praise be to Allah) with the tongue when receiving a blessing from Allah (swt), he also taught them to keep their hearts ever-grateful before the True Giver. So we learn that the Prophet (saw) gave the knowledge of the form (صوره) and the reality (حقيقته) of the *Shari'ah* to his companions (ra).

Through the noble companions (ra), these sciences reached the rest of the *Ummah* generation after generation but that comprehensiveness of personality that existed in the noble companions (ra) did not stay in the *Ummah* after the time of the companions (ra). It was no longer possible for all of these sciences to be gathered in one single person. Therefore, different specializations in the *deen* began to be formed and the beginning of such specialization occurred during the time of the companions (ra) itself. Therefore, we know that *Hazrat Ubayy ibn Ka'ab* (ra) became the Imam of the *Qurra* (*Qur'an* Reciters), *Hazrat 'Abdullah ibn Abbas* (ra) became the Imam of the *Mufasssireen* (scholars of *Tafseer*), *Hazrat 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar* (ra) became the Imam of the *Muhadditheen* (scholars of *Hadeeth*) and *Hazrat 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud* became the Imam of the *Fuqaha* (scholars of *Fiqh*).

After the noble companions (ra), due to the weakness in strength and tribulations of the time, Allah (swt) chose several experts in each age for the purpose of protecting the Prophetic sciences. These experts formulated rules in relation to learning and made a system for learning and teaching that made it easy to protect these sciences and to easily transmit these sciences to the next generations. The purpose of all of this was to seek the pleasure of the True Creator. However, when the greatest teacher the Noble Prophet (saw) passed away and the students were no longer like the noble companions (ra), in order to achieve these objectives of learning, the *'ulema* of the *Ummah* began the work of systematically organizing the sciences of the *deen* in the time of the first three generations whose spiritual standing was confirmed by the Prophet (saw) himself.

With time, a curriculum was finalized for learning and teaching. Therefore, if a person wants today to obey the Qur'anic commandment of ﴿وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا﴾ ("Recite the *Qur'an* in slow, measured rhythmic tones" (Al-Muzammil: 4)), he or she would start from the first page of *Noorani Qaidab* (a beginner's book on reading the Qur'an). This person would have to recognize the *makharrij*, and learn to recognize the *Huruf-e-Qamariyyah* and *Huruf-e-Shamsiyyah*, and the rules of *idghaam*, *ikhfaa*, *izhaar*, and *iglaab*. In the same manner, the person who wishes to learn *fiqh* in order to obey the commandments of Allah will have to learn the difference between *ẓanni* (speculative) and *qat'i* (definitive) proofs, the way to deduce analogically (*qiyas*) and the problems related to *istihsaan*.

Just as Allah (swt) has kept the *ẓabiri* teachings of the *Shari'ah* of the Prophet (saw) safe through the *fuqaha*, in the same manner, the *batini* spiritual states of the Prophet (saw) were kept safe in the chests of the *Mashaikh* and these spiritual states were transferred from chest to chest. This reality is clear as the day that just as it is necessary to obey the *ẓabiri* commandments in order to enter Islam completely, it is equally important to fulfil the *batini* commandments. In fact, the outward actions follow the inward spiritual states like the Beloved Prophet (saw) said that there is a piece of flesh in the body of the children of Adam, if it is rectified, the whole body will be rectified and if this is ruined, the whole body is ruined and know that this piece of flesh is the heart. So when the scholars of *hadeeth* recite to us those blessed ahadeeth in which the Prophet (saw) taught us to say *AlhamdUlillah* in every situation, the scholars of *fiqh* give us the details of these commandments. And the noble *Mashaikh* transfer this feeling of *shukr* (thankfulness) from their chests into our chests.

Just as Allah (swt) opened up the methodology of acquiring *ẓabiri 'ulum* (outward Islamic sciences) to the *'ulema* of the *Ummah*, in the same manner, Allah (swt) opened upon the noble *Mashaikh*, the steps to take to obtain these praiseworthy spiritual feelings of the *batin*. These include that:

- the love of the world is removed from our hearts and we have great love for Allah (swt) in our hearts;
- we leave sinning and that we are blessed with a life of righteousness and purity;
- our hearts are cleansed from the desire to show off and hypocrisy and are filled with *ikhlas* (sincerity);
- our hearts are cured from such deadly spiritual diseases such as greed, envy, hatred, miserliness, constantly suspecting bad from others, arrogance, vanity and anger and that our hearts are filled with the characteristics of generosity, sacrificing, well-wishing for others, humility, forbearance and forgiveness;
- we are freed from doubts and are blessed with the wealth of *yaqeen* (certitude);
- our gaze is averted from the worldly causes and our gaze is fixed on the Causer of Causes, i.e. Allah (swt);
- our heart desires to follow the Sunnahs of the Prophet (saw); and
- we are blessed with the beautiful taste of worship and that we obtain the *ma'rifa* of Allah (swt).

If all of these blessings are obtained, then a person will go to *Jannah* (paradise). Othwerwise, if there is even the equivalent of a mustard seed of arrogance in our heart, this will be the cause for

us to be deprived of *Jannah*. In order to obtain all of these objectives, the noble *Mashaikh* systematically ordered the *asbaaq* (lessons) of *zikr* (remembrance of Allah) and *fiker* (contemplation).

Just as there are four schools of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and each one has as its objective to fulfill the commandments of Allah (swt) but there is a difference in jurisprudential color and taste, in the same manner, there are four *silsilas* in *tasawwuf*. Each and every one of these *silsila's* objective is to obtain the *ma'rifah* of Allah (swt) although there is a difference in how *zikr* is done in each and every one of them. From amongst these four *silsilas*, three, i.e. the *Chishtiyyah*, the *Qadriyyah* and the *Suburwardiyyah* reach us from the Prophet (saw) through *Hazrat Ali* (ra). Similarly, the *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah* reached us through *Hazrat Abu Bakr* (ra). The summary of the *Naqshbandi nisbah* was transferred from chest to chest until Allah (swt) willed that its details were opened upon *Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband Bukhari* (ra).

Hazrat Naqshband Bukhari (ra) was born in *Qasr-e-'Aarifan* near *Bukhara* in the year 708 *Hijri*. At the age of eighteen, he pledged his spiritual training to *Khawaja Sayyid Ameer Kulal* (ra), a venerable *Shaykh* of the *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah*. During his *suluk* (spiritual wayfaring), *Hazrat Naqshband Bukhari* (ra) was afflicted with *qabz* (spiritual constriction) for a period of six months until he felt that perhaps the doors of further progress have been closed for me. He finally decided to go to the market in order to earn a livelihood to support his wife and children. But on the way to the market, he read the following poetry on the door of a mosque which is translated as: "Oh my friend, come here, for I am yours! Don't be a stranger, where are you going far away?"

When he read this poetry, his spiritual state was given to him again and he entered the mosque. In this state, Allah (swt)'s mercy became directed to him and he was inspired with the following from Allah (swt): "Oh my servant! Ask from me, what do you ask of me?" *Khawaja Naqshband Bukhari* (ra) prayed that "Oh Allah, give me such a *nisbah* (spiritual connection) the obtaining of which would be easy." The prayer was accepted and Allah (swt) blessed him with the details of the *Naqshbandi nisbah*.

Another incident is mentioned in the books that one day *Khawaja Naqshband Bukhari* (ra) was passing by somewhere and he saw a dog on the path who was very hungry and thirsty but was handicapped because of which the dog was deprived of food and drink. *Khawaja Naqshband Bukhari* (ra) treated this creation of Allah (swt) in a merciful manner and he wanted to fulfill this dog's need but he did not have enough money to buy food for it. Therefore, he went to the city and worked for a few days. Whatever he earned, he spent it on the medical treatment of this dog and gave it food and drink. Allah (swt) liked *Khawaja Naqshband Bukhari* (ra)'s merciful treatment of the dog so much that he blessed him with the details of the *Naqshbandi nisbah*.

Therefore, Allah (swt) opened up the first sixteen *asbaaq* (lessons) of the *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah* on *Khawaja Naqshband Bukhari* (ra). He himself used to say that I have received such a *tareeqah* from Allah (swt) which is the closest *tareeqah* in terms of connecting to Allah (swt). In this path, there is less of an emphasis on rectifying the *nafs* through the *zahiri* struggles of eating and drinking less but more of an emphasis on struggling to follow the commands of the *Shari'ah* in every situation.

This *nisbah* arrived in Subcontinent from Transoxania (in present day Central Asia) through *Hazrat Khwaja Baqi Billah* (ra) and this *nisbah* was then transferred into the chest of *Imam al-Rabbani Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (the Renewer of the Second Hijri Millenium) *Shaykh Ahmad Sirbindi* (ra). Allah (swt) blessed *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (ra) with an amazing spiritual potential and capacity. Allah (swt) opened up further details of this *nisbah* upon *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (ra). Rather, we can say that Allah (swt) caused an outpouring of *ma'rifah* and *'ulum* upon *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (ra). Therefore, *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (ra) added the details of nineteen more *asbaaq* (lessons) to *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah* and in this manner, the number of the *asbaaq* (lessons) reached thirty-five. As *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (ra) was the gatherer of the *nisbahs* of all of the *silsilahs*, the *kamalaat* (perfections) of all the *nisbahs* were gathered in one place in these *asbaaq* (lessons).

It is through working hard on these very same *asbaaq* of the *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah* that our elders attained the highest degrees of closeness to Allah (swt). If the *salikeen* of today work hard in relation to these *asbaaq* with sincerity, they will reach the desired objective. This *faqeer* is as certain about the benefit of these *asbaaq* as he is certain that two plus two equals four. In the special *majalis* of *Ramadan Itikaf* of 2012, this *faqeer* explained the details of these *asbaaq* so that the *salikeen* are able to complete these *madarij* (ranks) and are motivated to obtain the associated *kamalaat* (perfections) and *kayfiyyaat* (spiritual feelings). Then I gave my dear *Mustafa Kamal* the responsibility to bring these lectures into book form so that more people can have access to these lectures. May Allah (swt) reward him that he completed this task in the best of manners. May Allah (swt) enable us to appreciate this blessing and give us the opportunity to traverse these *manazil* (spiritual stations).

عشق تیری انتہا عشق میری انتہا
تو بھی ابھی نا تمام میں بھی ابھی نا تمام

*Love is your finality, love is my finality,
You are also still incomplete, I am also still incomplete.*

*Making and requesting doas,
Faqeer Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi Mujaddidi*

دعا گوودعا جو

فقیر ذوالفقار احمد نقشبندی مجددی
كَانَ اللَّهُ لَهُ عَوْضًا عَنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

Introduction to the Urdu Edition by the Compiler

الحمد لله وكفى و سلام على عباده الذين اصطفى اما بعد

This is from the generosity and favour of our spiritual guide and benefactor the beloved of the 'Ulema and Righteous, *Hazrat Maulana Hafiz Peer Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi* (db), that in *Itikaaf* of *Ramadan* 2012 in Zambia, every day after *Salat-ul-Taraweeh*, our *Shaykh* would hold a gathering for the salikeen in relation to the thirty-five lessons of the *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah*. In these gatherings, Hazrat (db) chose passages from *Maktubaat-e-Imam-e-Rabbani Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani* (ra), *Maktubaat-e-Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Masoom* (ra) and other books of the venerable *Mashaik* of *Naqshband* and through these passages detailed each of the thirty-five lessons of the *Silsilah 'Aaliyah Naqshbandiyyah*. This book *Madarij al-Suluk* is a compilation of these lectures.

May Allah (swt) put *barakah* in the health and life of our Beloved *Shaykh* and may He give us the repeated opportunity to benefit from such *nur* and *barakah*-filled *majalis*. We ask Allah (swt) that out of His infinite mercy, He make it easy for us *fuqura* to traverse these stations and ranks of closeness (*qurb*). *Ameen*.

Faqeer Mustafa Kamal Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi

Lesson One

Beneficial Guidance for *Salikeen*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَى أَمَّا بَعْدُ :
فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ۝ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝
(الأعراف: 68) ﴿وَإِنَّا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ﴾
سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ۝ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝
وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

The Path of *Tasawwuf* and *Suluk* is a Path of *Haal*

The path of *tasawwuf*¹ and *suluk*² is *haal*³ (spiritual condition) not *qaal*⁴ (speech). That is why it is not possible to conduct an educational course for it, for example, calling people for a month or two and explaining *tasawwuf* to them. This (path) is *haal*. *Haal* means that *kayfiyyaat*⁵ (spiritual feelings) are born within a person. Therefore, this path has to be crossed. That is why it has been called *suluk*. *Suluk* refers to a path and a *salik*⁶ is one who traverses this path. So it is necessary to actually traverse this path. You have to actually take steps on this path. This path is not connected with mere talk. That is why some of our *masihaikh*⁷ spoke very little.

Someone once said to *Hazrat Khwaja BaqiBillah (ra)*⁸ that "*Hazrat*, please say something, people will benefit." *Hazrat Khwaja BaqiBillah (ra)* replied that whoever did not attain anything from our silence, he will gain nothing from our talk. So people still benefited from the silence of our spiritual elders. The *tawajjuh* (spiritual attention) of hearts used to fall on hearts. Just as a magnet affects a piece of iron, in the same manner, hearts are affected by hearts. Therefore, in these gatherings during *'itikaaf*, the first thing to understand is that *zikr* (the remembrance of Allah) and *suluk* relate to *haal* not *qaal*.

The Purpose of Establishing these Gatherings

Here, a question arises as to why we organized these gatherings. Understand that this was a necessity. Different *salikeen*⁹ wanted to ask about their *haal* and *kayfiyyaat*. People come from

¹ *Tasawwuf* (تصوف) usually translated into English as Sufism, refers to the science of the rectification of the spiritual heart. *Al-Imam al-Rabbani Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani (ra)* defined *tasawwuf* as acting upon the *Shari'ah* with *ikhlas* (sincerity) (See this and other definitions of *tasawwuf* in pages 11 through 13 of the book titled *Tasawwuf wa Suluk* (Urdu edition), by *Hazrat Shaykh Zulfikar Ahmad Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi (db)*, published by *Maktabatul Faqeer (1995)*).

² *Suluk* (سلك) meaning spiritual wayfaring refers to the spiritual journey undertaken by the *salik* under the guidance of a qualified spiritual guide (*Shaykh*).

³ *Haal* (حال) is an Arabic word meaning spiritual condition or spiritual state.

⁴ *Qaal* (قال) is an Arabic word referring to speech.

⁵ *Kayfiyyaat* (كيفية) refers to spiritual feelings.

⁶ *Salik* (سالك) refers to the seeker who traverses the *suluk* under the guidance of a *Shaykh* (spiritual guide).

⁷ *Masahaikh* (plural of *Shaykh*), in the context of this book, refers to the great *shaykhs* of the *Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Tareeqah*.

⁸ *Hazrat Khwaja BaqiBillah (ra)* was one of the greatest of *Naqshbandi shaykhs* and was the spiritual guide of *Imam al-Rabbani*, the *Mujaddid* (Renewer) of the Second Hijri Millennium. *Shaykh Ahmad Faraqi Sirhindi (ra)*. *Khwaja BaqiBillah (ra)* was instrumental in introducing the *Naqshbandi Tareeqah* into the Subcontinent.

⁹ Plural of *salik*.

very far away during the *itikaaf* but because of the large number of people, it is not possible to stay in touch. Everyone does not receive separate time (for meeting). So in what form do we fulfil this necessity? So the solution that we found is that this is not a gathering of common people. Rather, this is a gathering limited to *salikeen*. Therefore, even if we engage in talk during this gathering, this will not be considered *qaal*. Rather, this will be considered as mentioning the *haal* of the people of *haal*. Therefore, because of this necessity, we kept these gatherings. Because many of the *salikeen* are on different *asbaaq*¹⁰ (lessons), we will sometimes speak about someone's *sabaq* (lesson) and sometimes about someone else's *sabaq* (lesson), so everyone will benefit. Those who are doing a certain *sabaq* (lesson) and that *sabaq* (lesson) is discussed – *subhan-Allah!* And those who are on lower *asbaaq*, they should make *doa* to Allah (swt) that Allah (swt) also give us these *kayfiyyaat* (spiritual feelings). But just by listening to something, one should never deduce this consequence that we have learned *suluk*. That is why we are saying this in clear words that this (path) is *haal*, this is a matter of *kayfiyyaat* (spiritual feelings). Until the *kayfiyyah* (spiritual condition) of the heart changes, even a hundred thousand books will not benefit anyone. Maulana Rumi (ra) said:

صد کتاب و صد ورق در نار کن
حسان و دل را حباب دلداری کن

Fling these hundred books and hundred papers into the fire,

Turn your life and heart towards the Beloved.

Maulana Rumi (ra) himself was a knower of secrets. He was a big scholar ('*aalim*) and his father was a great *mufti* of his time. So for such elders to make such a statement is evidence that *tasammuf* and *suluk* is *qaal* not *haal*.

The First Step of the Path of *Suluk* – Correction of '*Aqidah*

The person who desires that he take steps in this path of the love of Allah must first correct his '*aqeedah* (creed). Until his '*aqeedah* is not according to that of the *Ahl-as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* elder '*ulema* (scholars) of Deoband, his matter will not be rectified no matter how much he tries. This path is a very wide path. Therefore, firstly the *salik* should correct his '*aqeedah*. Some people are in the habit of doing what they wish; sometimes they follow this *Imam*, sometimes they follow that *Imam*. The *salik* should continuously follow one *Imam* and should practice *taqleed* (following one of the four classical schools of *fiqh*). One should correct his '*aqeedah* according to the way of the elders upon which the *Ummah* has agreed. If there is any matter (in relation to '*aqeedah*) which is other than this, then it will be an impediment on the path. Therefore, no matter how hard a *salik* who is a person of *bid'ah* (innovation) tries, he cannot get that connection with Allah because ^(۳۷/۱) *كُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ (ابن ماجه)* "[e]very innovation is misguidance and every misguidance goes to the hellfire".

Therefore, keep this first point in your mind that make your '*aqeedah* according to the *Ahl-as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah* elder '*ulema* of Deoband. These elders do *taqleed* of the *madhab* of *Imam Abu*

¹⁰*Asbaaq* (plural of *sabaq*, i.e. lesson) means lessons and refers to the thirty-five lessons of the *Naqsbhndi Tareeqah* as explained by *Imam al-Rabbani Hazrat Mijaddid Alf-e-Thani (ra)* and the *Naqsbhndi-Mijaddidi Masbaikh*. A detailed explanation of the thirty-five lessons of the *Naqsbhndi Tareeqah* form the subject matter of this book.

Haneefah (ra). Although some people of *bid'ah* also make this claim, but the way of the elder '*ulema* of Deoband is a way of carefulness. Wherever they suspect *bid'ah*, they leave that act. May Allah *ta'alah* give a good reward to our elders on our behalf.

The Path of *Faiz* closes due to Flawed '*Aqeedah*

We can understand how important it is to rectify '*aqeedah* from an incident written by *Imam al-Rabbani Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani (ra)*.¹¹ He wrote that he had a servant who served him for a very long time and *Imam al-Rabbani (ra)* felt great love for this servant in his heart (due to the servant's sincerity in serving him). One day the servant came and said that *Hazrat*, my brother is in his last moments and the signs of death are become apparent on him. Please do a favour and come to him and give him some *tawajjuh* (spiritual attention) at this juncture so that his end is good. *Hazrat Mujaddid (ra)* said that I went to the dying person's house because of my servant's request and for a whole hour, gave *tawajjuh* to this person who was close to death. However, the *tawajjuh* had no effect on this person and eventually, he left this world in such a condition. That is, a spiritual elder such as *Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani (ra)* is giving *tawajjuh* to this person for one whole hour but there was no effect on him. *Hazrat Mujaddid (ra)* says that his heart was very sad because of this incident and he felt a lot of grief. I repeatedly turned to Allah (swt) that Oh Allah, why did this happen? After crying and praying for one week, Allah's mercy turned towards me and Allah opened this on me that this person used to stay in the company of people of false '*aqeedah*. And because of the effect of the speech of these people, the way for *faiz*¹² (spiritual blessing) to reach this person was blocked. Think about this that if the effect of the companionship of a person with bad '*aqeedah* is such that the *mujaddid* (renewer) of the age gives *tawajjuh* and it has no effect. From this, we learn about how important it is to have the correct '*aqeedah*.

The Second Step of the Path of *Suluk* – Leaving Sins

The second thing is that a person should sincerely repent from all sins which he commits in his life. Remember that this path cannot be covered with sins. Sins must be left. Keep one thing in mind that the person who sins, he is a worshipper of his self (*nafs*), he is not a worshipper of Allah. Worshipping wealth, worshipping women, worshipping the *nafs*, all of these are forms of idolatry. Worshipping Allah is something else. Whoever worships Allah, he then does not worship his *nafs*. This matter is clearer than the sun that sins are the messengers of disbelief (*kufr*). Listen to this again that sins are the messengers of disbelief (*kufr*). This is not possible that a person engages in sins and also ascends the degrees of *suluk*. If you are travelling and a T-junction arises, you can turn right or left. You must choose one of the two ways. It is not possible that you turn right and left. In a similar manner, we have two ways that we can follow, one is the way of Allah (swt) and the other is the way of the *nafs*. We have to take one turn. It is clear that we will take the turn towards Allah (swt), we will turn our direction towards Him. Therefore, it is compulsory to repent from sins one hundred percent. This doesn't mean that thereafter it will not be possible for that person to sin. After all, he is human and there is the possibility of everything in life but a person should have the intention that I will not sin. When a person makes takes this oath (not to sin), then Allah (swt) makes the path easy.

¹¹ *Imam al-Rabbani Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani (ra)* refers to *Shaykh Ahmad al-Faruqi Sirhindi*, the *Imam* of the *Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi* spiritual path, who was born in India on 14 *Shanwal* 971H (corresponding to 26 June 1564G) and was a descendant of the second caliph of Islam *Sayyidna Umar al-Farooq (ra)*. He opposed Mughal emperor Akbar's unorthodox views on religion and was known as the *mujaddid* (reviver) of the second *Hijri* millennium. For more on the life of *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani (ra)*, please refer to *Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani* (published by Idara-e-Mujaddidiyyah, Karachi, Pakistan) a comprehensive biography in Urdu written by *Hazrat Manlana Sayyid Zannar Husain Shah Sabeel (db)*.

¹² *Faiz* (فيض) refers to a *nur* which when it enters the heart, positively changes the spiritual condition of the recipient.