

TRANSLATOR'S FORWARD

The subject of this book “*Majalis-Zikr*” - the noble gatherings where loud and collective *Zikr* of Allah Ta'ala is made by the lovers of Allah and the *Saalikeen* (persons desirous of spiritual reformation) - is an extremely important subject. The need for the establishment of such blessed gatherings in every Muslim locality throughout the world is almost tantamount to stating the obvious. The contents of this book and many other such writings of the *Ulama-Haqqani*, past and present, are emphatic on this score.

In June 1999, I had the good fortune of accompanying the author of this book, Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Hafeez Makki (hafizahullah)¹ on one of his lecture tours to various regions of the former Western, Northern and Eastern Transvaal Provinces in South Africa. Two other persons accompanied us on this journey, my dear friend Yusuf Jassat of Azaadville and Hazrat's *Khadim* Bhai Ahmad Zaman. This lowly servant was charged with the task of translating Hazrat's discourses from Urdu to English. Among the precious pearls of knowledge, wisdom and advice that he showered upon the eager congregations on this journey was the importance of the *Majalis* of *Zikr*. Not only did Hazrat suffice with mere advice, but every morning after the *Fajr Salaah*, Hazrat held a *Zikr Majlis* in the Masjid of the area/town being visited. During the course of this visit, a number of persons raised the question of loud *Zikr* in the Masjid with Hazrat. It appeared as though people were confused regarding this matter and were sincerely seeking some sort of ruling regarding it. Everyone seemed to have read or referred to 'a certain pamphlet' by a certain Maulana that created the impression that loud *Zikr* was not allowed in the Masjid and that it was some form of *bid'ah* (innovation) in Islam. Hazrat Maulana cleared the doubts of people with clear and effective explanations and also expressed his disappointment about 'this pamphlet' that led to so much of confusion and misunderstanding regarding a unanimous practice of our *Akaabireen*. Many persons intimated to him to respond to this in writing for the benefit of those who were not knowledgeable about the subject of loud *Zikr* in the Masjid.

Alhamdulillah, Hazrat Maulana undertook this task most graciously and here before the reader is the result thereof. Upon my recent meeting with him in early February 2000, on his present tour of the country, he requested this lowly servant to urgently render this work into English before the imminent arrival of Hazrat Maulana Talha Sahib, son of Hazrat Shaikhul-Hadith (R) in this country. I am indebted to Hazrat for honouring me with this task and I set about the translation at the first opportunity. May Allah Ta'ala accept the efforts of the author, translator and all others connected with the publication, printing and distribution of this book. *Aameen*.

Zubair Bayat
Stanger, South Africa
2 Zil-Qa'dah 1420 / 6 February 2000

¹ Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Hafeez Makki is considered among the top-ranking *Khulafa* (spiritual successors) of Shaikhul-Hadith Maulana Zakariyya (R). He is a graduate of Mazahirul-Uloom, Saharanpur. Hazrat is a citizen of Makkah Shareef, where he is presently Professor of *Hadith* at the renowned Madrasah-Salotiyyah. He is a well-traveled scholar and *Da'ee*, well connected in the East, West and Arab worlds, an accomplished author and researcher, a public speaker, a patron of many organisations and a spiritual guide to hundreds of persons in numerous countries of the world. May Allah keep his shadow upon the *Ummah* with grace. *Aameen*.

FORWARD

ÇáÍāī ááá æĪā æÇáŌáæÉ æÇáŌáÇā Úáí āā áÇ äÈí ÈÚĪā æÚáí Çáá æ Ç ŌÍÇÈā ÇĪāÚĪā - ÇāÇ ÈÚĪ

All praises belong solely to Allah Ta'ala and salutations and peace be upon the final Messenger and upon all his family and companions. Amma-b'adu:

On my recent visit to the Republic of South Africa, many people in various places queried regarding the permissibility of loud *Zikr* gatherings in the Masjid.² I responded to this question briefly in accordance with the viewpoint of my *Akaabireen* (pious elders) that there is nothing wrong with it and I also cited various instances of my beloved and honourable Master, Qutbul-Aqtaab, Hazrat Shaikh Zakariyya (R) in support of these *majalis* of loud *Zikr*.

I was then informed by some persons that a certain Maulana had published a pamphlet in which he severely condemned the practice of loud *Zikr* in the Masjid. I noted this information with a sense of deep regret and disappointment. Disagreement with a matter which is so clear-cut and unanimously accepted by our *Akaabireen*, should not have been publicised through a pamphlet aimed at the general public. These type of publications result in greater harm than benefit and cause confusion and division in the *Ummah*. Persons who are not favourably inclined towards the gatherings of *Zikr* are then further driven away by the deception of *shaitaan* and *nafs* and are thus deprived of the blessings of these gatherings to their own detriment.

I also learnt of certain objections that were previously raised against the *Majalis-Zikr*, all of which prompted me to compile a detailed treatise in which a comprehensive and detailed account of all relevant verses of *Qur'an*, *Ahadith* and the practice of *Sahabah* (RA) and the *Salaf-as-Saliheen* (pious elders) would be collected on this subject. When I expressed my intention of writing this detailed work in response to the said 'pamphlet' to some sincere friends, they impressed upon me to set it aside for some future opportunity but that I should respond swiftly, even though briefly, to the individualistic view of this Maulana which conflicts with the unanimous view of our *Akaabireen*. At that time I did not respond to them, but when I reached Makkah Mukarramah, numerous phone calls from South African friends further impressed upon me to set about redressing the wrong impressions created by 'the pamphlet'.

In September 1999, I undertook a journey to Pakistan to arrange for the printing of Hazrat Shaikh Zakariyya (R)'s Arabic commentary of *Bukhari*, "*al-Kanzul-Mutawaari*". The discussion of this issue (of loud *Zikr*) was even raised before some of the leading and pious elders there. Some of them also impressed upon this unworthy servant to prepare something briefly on this subject in defense of those who had established these *Majalis-Zikr* and also as a means of encouragement for those who had fallen into doubt or were not aware at all about the great virtues of these auspicious gatherings.

Placing my reliance and trust upon Allah Ta'ala and imploring Him for assistance, I set about writing this booklet. May Allah Ta'ala accept it, make it a means for the establishment of the *Majalis-Zikr* and a means for the removal of doubts and misgivings that may have arisen on this subject. *Aameen*.

² *Zikr Majlis* is when a few persons gather in a Masjid or elsewhere and make loud (or soft) *Zikr* of Allah's name, the *Kalimah*, 40 *Durood*, etc.

CHAPTER 1: VERSES OF THE QUR'AN ...

The many verses in the Qur'an that exhort towards the *Zikr* of Allah are *Mutlaq* (unrestricted) and thus encompass all types and forms of *Zikr*; whether individual or collective, loud or silent, in the masjid or elsewhere. Some of these verses are as follows:

Verse 1:

ÝÇÐÑÑæäì ÇÐÑÑÑæ æ ÇÔÑÑæÇ àì æáÇ ÊËÝÑæä

“So remember Me (with *Zikr*) and I will remember you and be grateful unto Me and do not be ungrateful” 2:152

Verse 2:

ÇáÐíä ÌÐÑÑæä Çááá ÞíÇäÇ æ ÞÚæÏÇ æÚáí ÌäæÈää æíÊÝÑÑæä Ýí ÍáÞ ÇáÓæÇÊ æ ÇáÑÑÖ

“(The intelligent ones are) Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining and they ponder in the creation of the skies and the earth” 3:191

Verse 3:

ÇáÐíä ÄääæÇ æÊËæÆä ÞáæÈää ÈÐÑÑ Çááá ÇäÇ ÈÐÑÑ Çááá ÊËæÆä ÇáÞáæÈ

“Those who believe (in Allah) and their hearts acquire tranquillity with the remembrance of Allah. Hear well! It is only through the remembrance of Allah that hearts acquire tranquillity” 13:28

Verse 4:

ÑÌÇá áÇ Êááíää ÈÌÇÑÉ æáÇ ÈíÚ Úä ÐÑÑ Çááá

“(People of perfect Imaan are those) Men whom trade or business does not distract from the remembrance of Allah” 24:37

Verse 5:

íÇ ÇíÇ ÇáÐíä ÄääæÇ ÇÐÑÑæÇ Çááá ÐÑÑÇ ÒÈíÑÇ æÓÈÍæä ÈÑÑÉ æÄÖíáÇ

“O Believers remember Allah in great abundance and glorify Him morning and evening” 33:41/42

Verse 6:

æ ää íÚÔ Úä ÐÑÑ ÇáÑíää äÞíÖ áá ÔíËÇäÇ Ýäæ áá ÞÑíä

“And as for him who (purposely) ignores the remembrance of Rahman, We assign a devil for him who is his (constant) companion” 43:36

Verse 7:

Çáá íÇä ááÐíä ÄääæÇ Çä ÊÏÔÚ ÞáæÈää áÐÑÑ Çááá

“Has the time not dawned for the people of faith that their hearts should submit to the remembrance of Allah?” 57:16

Verse 8:

íÇ ÄíáÇ ÇáÐíä ÄääæÇ áÇ ÊáááÇ ÇææÇááæ æáÇ ÄæáÇÏÑä Úä ÐÑÑ Çááá æ ää íÝÚá Ðáb ÝÄæáÆä ää ÇáÍÇÓNæä

“O Believers let not your wealth and your children distract you from the remembrance of Allah. Those who do so, they are certainly great losers” 63:9

Verse 9:

ÇÓÈÍæÐ Úáíää ÇáÓíËÇä ÝÇäÓää ÐÑÑ Çááá ÄæáÆä ÍÒÈ ÇáÓíËÇä ÄáÇ Çä ÍÒÈ ÇáÓíËÇä ää ÇáÍÇÓNæä

“Shaitaan has overpowered them (the hypocrites) and hence made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the gang of Shaitaan and know well! The gang of Shaitaan are the (real) losers” 58:19

Verse 10:

æÇDCÇ ÞÇãæÇ Çáí ÇáÕáæÉ ÞÇãæÇ ÞÓÇáí íÑÇÁæä ÇääÇÓ æáÇ íÐÑæä Çááá ÃáÇ ÞáíáÇ

“And when they (hypocrites) stand up to offer *Salah*, they stand up with lethargy. They put up a show before the people (of offering *Salah*) and do not remember Allah but very little” 4:142

These verses regarding *Zikr* have been enumerated by my spiritual mentor Shaikh Zakariyya (R) in his work *Fadhail-Zikr*. Readers are requested to resort to an earnest and repeated study of this work to acquaint themselves with the virtues of the remembrance of Allah.

May Allah Ta’ala in His infinite mercy bless us with the propensity of abundant, rather, perpetual *Zikr* and may He save us from a life of heedlessness. May it be that at every given moment of our existence, in all postures, we are constantly engaged in His *Zikr*, our hearts are enveloped in His effulgence, our lives in His obedience, thereby attaining the everlasting wealth of His pleasure. *Aameen*.

CHAPTER 2: FROM THE AHADITH ...

After having enumerating certain verses of the Holy Qur'an, I now mention certain *Ahadith* relating to the subject of *Zikr* some of which are of a general nature (whether loud/soft, masjid/home, etc.) and some are quite specific i.e. *Zikr* in the Masjid (or loud *Zikr*) to which I will allude under the explanation of the said *Ahadith*, *Insha-Allah*. I have once more selected ten *Ahadith* for inclusion in this chapter.

Hadith 1:

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates from Rasulullah (ﷺ) that there is a group of angels who patrol the earth and wherever they find any gathering of *Zikr* they call out to each other and form a circle around this gathering that reaches to the sky. When this gathering disperses, they return to the sky where they are questioned by Allah Ta'ala, although He is All-knowing: Where have you come from? They reply: We come from a gathering of Your servants who are engaged in *Tasbeeh*, *Takbeer* and *Tahmeed*. Allah Ta'ala asks them: Have they seen Me? The angels reply: No. Allah Ta'ala asks: And what if they had seen Me? They reply: Then they would have engaged even more excessively in Your *Ibadah* and in *Tasbeeh* (glorifying of) You. Allah Ta'ala says: What are they asking for? They reply: They ask of You *Jannah*. Allah Ta'ala then asks: Have they seen *Jannah*? The angels reply: No. Allah Ta'ala asks: And what if they had seen *Jannah*? They reply: Then they would have been even more desirous, eager and keen for it. Allah Ta'ala says: What are they seeking refuge from? They reply: They ask refuge from *the Fire* (of Hell). Allah Ta'ala asks: Have they seen *the Fire*? The angels reply: No. Allah Ta'ala asks: And what if they had seen it? They reply: Then they would have tried harder to escape from it and they would have been more fearful of it. Allah Ta'ala says: I make you witness that I have pardoned them. One angel exclaims: A certain person was not from them. He came (coincidentally) for some work. Allah Ta'ala says: They are such a people that even those who sit with them (for other work) will not be deprived - *Bukhari, Muslim, Baihaqi*

* Shaikh Zakariyya's (R) commentary:

This subject has also been narrated in numerous other traditions that the angels look for, listen to and sit with the 'gatherings' of *Zikr*.

Hadith 2:

Hazrat Mu'awiyah (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) once came forth to meet a group of the *Sahabah* (RA). He said: What has caused you to congregate here? They replied: We have congregated here to remember Allah Ta'ala and to praise Him for guiding us to Islam and blessing us with it. He said: By Allah! Is this the only reason for your gathering? They replied: By Allah! This is the only reason for our gathering. He said: I had not made you swear an oath because I disbelieved you but Jibraeel came to me and informed me that Allah Ta'ala is boasting about you before the angels." - *Muslim, Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn-Abi-Shaibah, Ahmad*

* Hazrat Shaikh Zakariyya's (R) commentary:

Mulla Ali Qari (R) explains that Allah boasts about these people because despite having worldly engagements, natural desires, temptations and the *shaitaan* trying to mislead them, they do not neglect and turn away from My remembrance; then the *Zikr* of the angels who are faced with none of these obstacles is no comparison to their *Zikr*.

Hadith 3:

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said that Allah Ta'ala says: I treat my servant according to his opinion of Me and I am with him when he remembers Me; if he

remembers Me privately, I remember him privately and if he remembers Me in public, I remember him in a gathering (of the angels which is) better than his gathering - *Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn-Majah, Ahmad*

Hadith 4:

Hazrat Abu Hurairah and Hazrat Abu Sa'eed (RA) testify (upon oath) that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said:

Any group of people who engage in the *Zikr* of Allah, the angels envelop them and mercy cascades upon them, tranquillity descends upon them and Allah remembers them in the presence of those who are by Him - *Muslim, Tirmizi, Ibn-Abi-Shaibah*

* This *Hadith* applies to *Zikr* in the Masjid and elsewhere

Hadith 5:

Hazrat Anas (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: When you pass the gardens of paradise then graze well. They asked: What are the gardens of paradise? He replied: The gatherings of *Zikr*

* Hazrat Shaikh's (R) commentary:

It means that the fortunate one who has an opportunity of reaching such a gathering must feel privileged that he had an opportunity of going into a 'garden of Paradise' in this world. 'Grazing well' means that just as an animal enjoys grazing in a pasture and cannot be moved away easily even if it is beaten by the owner, so too the person 'grazing' in the 'gardens of paradise' must not be quickly distracted by worldly concerns or fears but should try to remain there as long as possible. Just as *Jannah* is a place that is free from all sorts of calamities, so too the gatherings of *Zikr* are 'safe-havens'; free from all worldly calamities. This *Hadith* is general and applies to a Masjid or any where else

Hadith 6:

Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Sahl bin Haneef (RA) reports that Rasulullah (ﷺ) was in one of his homes when the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

﴿وَمَنْ يُؤْمِرْ بِكُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَاذْعَبُوا لَهُ﴾

"and attach yourself with those who call out to their Rabb morning and evening" 18:28

Rasulullah (ﷺ) came forth in search of the people mentioned in this verse. He found a group of engaged in the remembrance of Allah; among them were those with disheveled hair and parched skin and dressed only with a single garment. He came close to them and sat down among them exclaiming: All praise belongs to Allah for having made in my Ummah such people whom (even) I have been instructed to sit with - *Tabrani, Ibn-Jareer*

* Hazrat Shaikh's (R) commentary:

In one *Hadith* it has been narrated that he searched for them and found them at the back of the Masjid, engaged in the remembrance of Allah. He stated similar words to the above *Hadith* and said: You (really) are my companions in life and after death. Hazrat Ibrahim Nakhai (R) says: ﴿وَمَنْ يُؤْمِرْ بِكُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَاذْعَبُوا لَهُ﴾ refers to those who are engaged in *Zikr*.

Hadith 7:

Hazrat Abu Darda (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: On the Day of Qiyamah certain people will be raised by Allah Ta'ala in such a manner that their faces will be illuminated and they will be seated upon thrones of pearls, envied by the people; they will neither be Messengers or

Martyrs. A bedouin exclaimed: Describe them to us so that we may recognise them. He replied: Those who love each other for Allah's sake, coming from diverse tribes and different places, they gather for the remembrance of Allah - *Tabrani* (as reported in *Targheeb* and *Durr*)

* Hazrat Shaikh's (R) commentary:

These days, lots of criticisms are hurled against people who spend time in the *Khanqah* (centers for *Zikr* and spiritual training). Let the critics condemn as much as they wish, but *tomorrow* when people's eyes will open, will they realise the value of the people of the *Khanqahs* who will be sitting on thrones made of pearls!

In one *Hadith* it has been narrated that the building wherein the *Zikr* of Allah is done, begins to shine for the inhabitants of the sky just as the stars shine for the people on earth.

Abu Razeen (RA) a companion narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: I will show you such a thing which will strengthen you in your *Deen* thereby causing you to succeed in both worlds; hold fast to the gatherings of *Zikr* and when you are in privacy, continue to engage in *Zikr*.

The virtues of the gatherings of *Zikr* have been mentioned in numerous *Ahadith*. In one *Hadith* it has been narrated that the best safeguard is *Salaah* and *Majalis-Zikr*. All of these *Ahadith* are *mutlaq* (non-specific); they could refer to *Zikr* gatherings in the Masjid and elsewhere

Hadith 8:

Hazrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: Engage so excessively in *Zikr* until they (wicked people) say He is mad! - *Ahmad, Abu Ya'la, Haakim, Ibn-Hibban*

* Hazrat Shaikh's (R) commentary:

In another *Hadith* it has been narrated that engage so excessively in *Zikr* that the hypocrites call you an ostentatious person. From this *Hadith* it is clear that the hypocrites or foolish people may refer to you as a madman but this should not stop you from this wealth of *Zikr*. In fact, it is *only* loud and excessive *Zikr* that it will cause ignorant persons to regard him as a 'madman'. Silent *Zikr* will not lead to this situation.

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (RA) narrates that Allah did not make anything compulsory without setting a limit for it or accepting an excuse for it except *Zikr*. As for *Zikr*, there are no limits and no excuses are acceptable until a person is sane; hence Allah Ta'ala mentions that engage excessively in the '*Zikr* of Allah' this is under all possible circumstances.

Hadith 9:

Hazrat Anas (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: To sit with a group of people who engage in *Zikr* after *Fajr* until sunrise is more beloved to me than all that upon which the sun rises (i.e. all the things of this world) and from after *Asr* to sun set is more beloved to me than the whole world and whatever it contains - *Baihaqi, Isbahani*

Hadith 10:

Hazrat Abu Sa'eed Khudri (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: Allah Ta'ala will say on the Day of Judgment: Today the multitudes shall know who are the people of esteem and honour. It was asked: Who are the people of honour O Messenger of Allah? He replied: The *Majalis* (gatherings) of *Zikr* in the Masjid - reported by Imam Suyuti in *Natijatul-Fikr* and Allamah Lucknowi in *Sabahatul-Fikr* on the authority of *Ahmad, Abu-Ya'la* and *Ibn-Hibban*

LOUD ZIKR IN THE MASJID FROM THE HADITH

(After enumerating ten *Ahadith* on the subject of *Majalis-Zikr*, one *Hadith* on the issue of loud *Zikr* in the Masjid will now be mentioned)

Hazrat Zaid bin Aslam reports from a *Sahabi* (RA) that one night I walked with Rasulullah (ﷺ) when he passed by a person in the Masjid who was engaged in loud *Zikr*. I said: O Messenger of Allah perhaps he is showing-off! He replied: No but in fact he is an *Awwaah* - Baihaqi

* Allamah Hafni (R) explains: *Awwaah* is that person who experiences pangs of pain in the heart due to overwhelming and ardent love for Allah. The name of that *Sahabi* was Abdullah Zul-Bujadain (RA)

* Hazrat Shaikh (R) comments on the incident narrated in this *Hadith* in greater detail. He states: Hazrat Abdullah Zul-Bujadain (RA) was a *Sahabi* who became orphaned and was brought up by his uncle when he surreptitiously accepted Islam. When the uncle gained knowledge of this, he drove his nephew out of the house without a stitch of clothing on. His mother was equally angry at him but she was after all his mother so she spared him a coarse sheet to cover himself. Cutting the sheet into two pieces, he tied one around his waist and the other he draped around his shoulders and migrated to Madinah Shareef. Here he spent his days lying at the doorstep of Rasulullah (ﷺ) engaging in excessive *Zikr* in a loud voice. Hazrat Umar (RA) remarked that he was insincere. Rasulullah (ﷺ) replied in the negative saying he was from the *Awwaheen* (check explanation above). He passed away at the occasion of Tabuk. *Sahabah* (RA) saw a light burning close to the grave and Rasulullah (ﷺ) inside the grave, instructing Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar to pass the body of the deceased companion over to him. Thereafter, he prayed to Allah: "O Allah! I am pleased with him, You too be pleased with him." Observing this honour Hazrat Ibn-Mas'ud (RA) exclaimed: I wish I was in his place.

Some people opine that loud *Zikr* is an innovation and forbidden in Islam. This is due to unawareness of the *Hadith* corpus. Maulana Abdul Hayy Lucknowi (R) has enumerated close onto fifty *Ahadith* on this subject in his work *Sabahatul-Fikr* which establishes the permissibility of loud *Zikr*. However, it is necessary to uphold the conditions and limits of the *Shari'ah* so that a person may not cause inconvenience to anyone - *Faza'il-Zikr*

Hadith such as:

اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْرُورُ فِي الْغُرُفِ الْمَلَكُوتِ - an authentic tradition of *Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn-Majah, Ahmad*. Loud *Zikr* in a gathering is permitted. Similarly, the circles of *Zikr* and the surrounding of the angels of these gatherings are all established from the *Hadith*. Yes the practice of silent *Zikr* is also established from some traditions. These traditions which support silent or loud *Zikr* can easily be reconciled in this way that they apply to different persons under different circumstances and states, as is the case of the traditions that support loud or silent *Tilawah* of the Holy Qur'an. As for the *Hadith* that states: اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ اَلْخَيْرُ (The best *Zikr* is silent *Zikr*) this tradition is also not contradictory of the practice of loud *Zikr* as it refers to the situation when ostentation or disturbance to *musallis* or sleeping persons is feared. Some scholars opine that loud *Zikr* is preferable as it benefits not only the one engaged in *Zikr* but also serves as encouragement for those around him, thus it is superior”

VIEW OF IMAM SUYUTI (R)

Hafiz Suyuti (R) writes in his work *Natijatul-Fikr* on the authority of Imam Nawawi (R) that just as the traditions of loud and silent *Tilawah* maybe combined according to varying circumstances, so too is the case of loud and silent *Zikr*. In case of fear of *riya* (show) or disturbance to *musallis* or sleeping persons, silent *Zikr* will be preferable; but where such situations do not exist, loud *Zikr* will be more estimable and meritorious as loud *Zikr* arouses others as much as it enlivens the heart of the *Zakir*, focuses his thoughts, drives away sleepiness and reinvigorates him. Hence it has been recounted from the Sufis that loud *Zikr* has a very powerful effect in eliminating vile thoughts and evil whisperings from the mind and heart.

Hafiz Suyuti (R) commences his work *Natijatul-Fikr* with the following lines:

“May Allah honour you! Your question on the practice of the Sufis forming circles of *Zikr* in the Masjids and reciting the *Kalimah* in a loud voice refers; is this permitted or not?”

Reply: There is nothing objectionable in this at all; in fact the *istihbaab* (approval) of loud *Zikr* can be established from many *Ahadith* ... Thereafter, Imam Suyuti (R) recounts 25 *Ahadith* with detailed commentary regarding the subject of loud *Zikr*.

Imam Suyuti has further narrated a tradition from *Kitabuz-Zuhd* of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (R) on the authority of Hazrat Thabit al-Bunani (R) that the *Zakir* sits down (in a gathering of *Zikr*) with heaps of sins upon his head and leaves the gathering without a single sin (as he is forgiven due to the *Zikr -Majlis*)

VIEWS OF ALLAMAH IBN ABIDEEN SHAMI (R)

My respected friend, Maulana Nisar Ahmad al-Husaini quotes Allamah Ibn-Abideen Shami (R) from his work *Raddul-Muhtar* in his important article³ on *Majalis-Zikr* as follows:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ اَلْخَيْرُ فِي الْغُرُفِ الْمَلَكُوتِ - اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ اَلْخَيْرُ فِي الْغُرُفِ الْمَلَكُوتِ - اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ اَلْخَيْرُ فِي الْغُرُفِ الْمَلَكُوتِ

“On the commentary notes of Hamawi it is reported on the authority of Imam Sha'rani (R): The Ulama', past and present are unanimous upon the *Istihbaab* (meritoriousness) of *Zikr* gatherings in Masjids and elsewhere, except if their loud *Zikr* disturbs the rest of a person, a *Musalli* or a *Qari* (Reciter of Qur'an)”

VIEW OF SHAH WALIULLAH (R)

³ *al-Irshad*; Attock, Pakistan; Rajab 1418

Hazrat Shah Waliullah (R) writes in his renowned *Hujjatullah-al-Baalighah*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اٰلِهِٖ وَسَلَّمَ
اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى اٰلِهِٖ وَسَلَّمَ

“There is no doubt that the gathering of Muslims for the purpose of *Zikr* is a source of blessing, tranquillity and proximity of the angels” (v.2/p.70)

CHAPTER 4: VIEW OF THE LEADING SCHOLARS OF DEOBAND ON LOUD *ZIKR*

In this chapter, we cite the incidents and quotations of the leading scholars of erudition and piety of the renowned university of Deoband and it’s school - may Allah illuminate their graves - on this subject.

***ZIKR* OF HAZRAT MAULANA RASHID AHMAD GANGOHI (R)**

Hazrat Maulana Aashiq-Ilahi Meeruti (R) writes in *Tadhkiratur-Rasheed* (p.48) regarding the initial meeting of Hazrat Gangohi with his spiritual guide, Hazrat Hajee Imdadullah Makki Farouqi (R). Describing the first evening, he writes:

“Finally, he awoken, performed *wudhu* and entered the Masjid where Hazrat Hajee Sahib was already engaged in his spiritual occupations in one corner of the Masjid. Hazrat Gangohi went to the other corner, offered his *Tahajjud* (night prayers) and engaged in loud *Zikr* of the *Kalimah (Nafi-Ithbaat)*”

Hazrat Gangohi (R) explaining the above incident in his account states: “Finally, I commenced the loud *Zikr*. My voice was clear and good, my body healthy and strong. That morning Hajee Sahib retorted: Your *Zikr* was very much like that of an accomplished, old-time *Zakir*. From that day on, I developed a deep attachment for loud *Zikr* that I never felt inclined to discarding, nor is there any *Shari’* reason of prohibition that I came to know of for leaving it. When an attendant asked Hazrat what happened then? He replied with an amazing reply: “After that I was annihilated.”

This incident is a clear indicator of Hazrat Gangohi’s love for loud *Zikr* from the very inception, his lifelong devotion to it and the effect it had upon him. This love for loud *Zikr* is a common heritage of all his followers, disciples and admirers.

In one of his discourses, this humble one heard from Hazrat Qari Tayyib (R) that outside the *Khanqah* of Hazrat Gangohi (R) there was a large pond. On the opposite side of this pond was a little Masjid where Hazrat Maulana Yahya (father of Shaikhul-Hadith) used to live with a few associates. In the latter part of the night, loud *Zikr* used to start-up in the *Khanqah* as well as the Masjid of Hazrat Maulana Yahya. The entire environs and surroundings of the pond area used to reverberate with the sound of loud *Zikr*. Such was the effect of this *Zikr* that the washermen around the lake also used to join in and it became their lifelong practice to make loud *Zikr* while occupied in their work of washing clothes.

A similar version has been written by my Shaikh, Maulana Zakariyya (R) in his impressive work *Shariat-wa-Tariqat-ka-talazum* (p.4):

“Even the most unlettered persons among the disciples of Hazrat Gangohi adhered strictly to the *Sunnah*. They were so steadfast on the practice of *Tahajjud* that such firmness I did not encounter even among great men. Even the fifty to sixty washermen around the pond of the *Khanqah* would engage in loud *Zikr* in the latter part of the night instead of making other noises or sounds.”

***ZIKR* AT BANGLA-WALI MASJID - TABLIGH JAMAAT MARKAZ IN**

NIZAMUDDIN

I have directly heard innumerable accounts from many persons who had met Hazrat Maulana Ilyas (R) that it was the standing practice at Bangla-Wali Masjid in Nizamuddin for the people to awaken in the latter part of the night to offer their *Tahajjud Salaah* and then engage in loud *Zikr* in the Masjid and the courtyard, right until the time of *Fajr Jamaat*.

In 1959 and 1960, in the era of Hazrat Maulana Yusuf (R), I personally witnessed many people engaging in loud *Zikr* before the *Fajr Jamaat* inside and outside the Masjid. The entire Masjid area would reverberate with the sound of their loud *Zikr*.

ZIKR AT KHANQAH IMDADIYYAH ASHRAFIYYA IN THANABHAWAN

In his article⁴ entitled *Khanqah Ashrafiyyah Imdadiyyah* Mufti Abdur-Rauf Sukkarwi describes the details of the *Khanqah* under different headings. He writes under the sub-heading 'Practices of the people of the *Khanqah*':

"The people would recite their *Wazaif* in the Masjid after *Fajr* and some would recite the Holy Qur'an, while others would engage in loud *Zikr* until sunrise. Then lessons would commence."

Shafiqul-Ummah, Hazrat Hajee Farouq (R) writes in his *Majalis-Zikr* (p.3): "When Hazrat Thanwi would engage in his *Zikr* after *Tahajjud*, Khwaja Sahib and others would join him in his *Zikr*; Hazrat would not prevent them from doing so."

Hazrat Mufti Shafi (R) writes in his work *Aadabul-Masajid*: "It is impermissible to make loud *Zikr* in the Masjid and to recite the Qur'an loudly.."

At the time of the second edition, Hazrat Mufti Shafi requested Hazrat Thanwi (R) to review certain sections ear-marked for this purpose. Hazrat Thanwi undertook the reviewing and wrote an addendum to this entitled *Da'bul-Masajid-fi-Aadabil-Masajid*. In this section he comments on this *mas'ala*: "It is impermissible to make loud *Zikr* in the Masjid and to recite the Qur'an loudly..." There are numerous views on this issue. The summation of all of these views is what has been mentioned by Allamah Ibn-Abideen Shami (R) as follows:

æ ÝÍ ÍÇÔÍÉ ÇÁÍáæì Úä ÇáÇäÇä ÇáÔÚÑÇäí ÇÌäÚ ÇáÚáãÇÁ ÓáÝÇ æ ÍáÝÇ Úái ÇÓÊÍÈÇÈ
ÐBÑ ÇÁÍäÇÚÉ ÝÍ ÇáãÓÇÏ æ ÚíÑäÇ ÇáÇ Çä ÍÓæÔ ÍãÑãä Úái äÇÆã Çæ ãÓá Çæ ÞÇÑÆ

"On the commentary notes of Hamawi it is reported on the authority of Imam Sha'rani (R): The Ulama', past and present are unanimous upon the *Istihbaab* (meritoriousness) of *Zikr* gatherings in Masjids and elsewhere, except if their loud *Zikr* disturbs the rest of a person, a *Musalli* or a *Qari* (Reciter of Qur'an)."

In the above synopsis, all views are covered and those who have prohibited it, have most probably done so on the basis of *saddan-lil-baab* (as a preventative measure) - this prohibition applies to the Masjid particularly. As for loud *Zikr* by itself, the preferable view is it is allowed if it is not excessively loud. And Allah knows best.

ZIKR OF HAZRAT MAULANA FAQEER MUHAMMAD AT KHANQAH ASHRAFIYYAH IN PESHAWAR

Hazrat Thanwi's (R) senior Khalifa, Hazrat Maulana Faqeer Muhammad (R), like Hazrat Shaikh (R) was greatly concerned in the latter years about the revitalisation of the *Khanqah* system. Hence in his *Khanqah-Ashrafiyya* in Peshawar, the *Majalis* of loud *Zikr* were commenced in his lifetime and continue even after his demise. Hazrat used to participate himself and used to encourage others also. Maulana Azizur-Rahman Hazarwi, Khalifah of Hazrat Shaikh (R) narrates: "Mufti Mukhtar, Prof.

⁴ *al-Balaagh*; v.34; Jumad-al-Awwal 1420

Masarrat Hussain and myself would go together to visit Hazrat at his *Khanqah*. He would inquire if we had completed our *Zikr* and we would reply in the affirmative. He would urge us to make more *Zikr* and he would also join us in *Zikr*. At times he would call upon the students to join in and at times he would get the students and *Musallis* to join him in loud *Zikr* after *Fajr Salaah*. Once Hazrat (R) went to Rawalpindi to visit Hazrat Maulana Najmul-Hasan (R). Prof. Masarrat Shah was with him. He called for me and in that one day, loud *Zikr-Majlis* was held in three Masjids. After *Fajr* at Masjid-Siddiq, after *Zuhr* at Saddar Masjid and after *Asr* at Wah Cantt. After *Zuhr* there was a huge gathering and Hazrat had the entire congregation join him in *Barah-Tasbeeh Zikr*. Hazrat then emphasised upon me and Maulana Najmul-Hasan to continue this practice here and called upon the gathering to continue inviting us to conduct such *Zikr-Majlis* programs.”

Once Hazrat was engaged in loud *Zikr* in the Haram of Makkah, when some person tried to prevent him from doing so, he recited the verse:

⊗āā ÇÜáā āāā āāÜ āÓÇĪ Çááā Çä ĪBÑ ÝíÇ ÇÓāā ⊗ÓÚí Ýí ĪÑÇÈāÇ

“Who can be a greater oppressor than the person who prevents the *Zikr* of Allah’s name in the Houses of Allah” 2:114

VIEW OF SHAIKH-UL-ISLAM HAZRAT MAULANA MADANI (R)

An article⁵ appeared in the monthly journal *Anwar-Madinah* entitled: *The Shari’ position of Zikr Majalis* in the light of a letter of Hazrat Madani (R) from *Maktoobat v.2/p.11*. We reproduce this letter here due to its general benefit:

Question: A narration of Abdullah bin Abbas (RA) in *Musnad Darimi* (p.38) states:

“We used to sit at the door of Ibn-Mas’ud (RA) before *Fajr* to accompany him to the Masjid for *Fajr Salaah*. One day, Abu Musa Ash’ari (RA) suddenly arrived appearing disconcerted and perturbed, enquiring if Ibn-Mas’ud had already left for the Masjid or not? We said he had not left as yet. When Ibn-Mas’ud appeared, Abu Musa explained: I have just come from the Masjid-Nabawi and I observed an innovated practice there, though superficially it appeared to be good. I saw a number of people seated in circles, awaiting *Salaah*, with pebbles in their hands (for *Zikr*); one person in each circle would call out: Read a hundred *Takbeers* and they would do so. Then he would call out: Read a hundred *Tahleel* and they would do so and he would say: Read a hundred *Tasbeehs* and they would follow. Ibn-Mas’ud asked what he said to them. He replied that he said nothing as he was awaiting Ibn-Mas’ud to address them. When they arrived at the Masjid, they found the group engaged in their *Zikr* as described by Abu Musa. Ibn-Mas’ud asked them what they were doing. They replied that they were counting their *Zikr* on the pebbles. He said to them: Instead of counting *Zikr* rather count your sins on these pebbles. Lamentable is your situation, O Ummah of Muhammad (Ōáí Çááā Úáíá ⊗Óāā)! How quickly have you deviated! The companions of Rasulullah (Ōáí Çááā Úáíá ⊗Óāā) are still in your midst in large numbers! The utensils of Rasulullah (Ōáí Çááā Úáíá ⊗Óāā) have not as yet broken! Have you gone on a way that is better and more rightly-guided than that of Muhammad (Ōáí Çááā Úáíá ⊗Óāā)? The people apologised profusely for their action, saying: By Allah! We had not intended anything but good! Ibn-Mas’ud retorted: How many desire good but are unable to attain good!”

(The purpose of posing this question to Hazrat Madani (R) was to get clarification regarding the many practices of the Sufis which appear to be innovations in the light of the above *Hadith*. Hazrat responded in a manner that dispels all misgivings surrounding the practices of the Sufis)

Answer: Hazrat Madani quotes three narrations; Hadith 1 & 3 of this booklet and a third narration of *Darimi* as follows:

Üä ÜÈĪ Çááā Èä ÜāÑæ Çä ÑÓæá Çááā Ōáí Çááā Úáíá ⊗Óāā āÑ ÈāĪáŌíä Ýí āŌĪā ÞÇá BáÇāāÇ
 Úáí ĪíÑ æÇĪĪāāÇ ÇÝŌá āä ŌÇĪÈä ÇäÇ āÆæáÇÁ ÝíŪæä Çááā æĪÑÛÈæä Èä ÝÇä ŌÇÁ
 ÇÜŌÇāā Çä ŌÇÁ āäÜāā æÇäÇ āÆæáÇÁ ÝíÈÜáāæä ÇáÝÞā æÇáÚāā æ ĪÜāāæä ÇáÇáá Ýāā

⁵ Jumadal-Ula 1417; Lahore, Jamia Madaniyya

ÇÝÖá ÄääÇ ÈÜËÊ ãÚääÇ Èã ÍáÓ Ýíãã

Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (Õáí Çááá Úáíá æÓãã) passed by two groups of people in his Holy Masjid and stated: Both of them are meritorious but one group is superior to the other. This group is engaged heart and soul in *Dua* (supplication) to Allah Ta'ala; if He wishes, He may grant them and if He wishes, He may withhold from them. As for the other group, they are engaged in learning and understanding (of Islam) and teaching the ignorant, they are superior, and I have only been sent as a teacher. Saying so, he sat down with them (the group engaged in teaching and learning). Thereafter, Hazrat Madani (R) writes:

“These (three) and numerous other traditions of this nature are narrated by *Shaikhain* (Imams Bukhari & Muslim) and others. In the light of these authentic *Marfu'* (prophetic) traditions, what is the merit of the *Mau'quf* traditions⁶ of *Darimi* cited by you, more so when the narrators are not even unanimously accepted? Even if the narrators are considered authentic, on a comparative basis, the above narrations will certainly be given preference, moreover when these traditions are endorsed by verses of the Holy Qur'an such as the verse:

ÇáÐíä íÐÑæä Çááá ÞíÇãÇ æ ÞÚæíÇ æÚáí ÍäæÈää æíÊÝÑæä Ýí ÍáÞ ÇáÓææÇÊ æ ÇáÃÑÖ

“(The intelligent ones are) Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining and they ponder in the creation of the skies and the earth” 3:191; and the verse:

íÇ ÁíáÇ ÇáÐíä ÄääæÇ ÇÐÑæÇ Çááá ÐÑÇ ÞËíÑÇ æÓËÍæä ÈÑË æÃÖíáÇ

“O Believers! remember Allah in great abundance and glorify Him morning and evening” 33:41/42 from which the individual and collective and all other forms of *Zikr* are established. If an attempt is made to reconcile this narration (of *Daarimi*) with the Qur'anic verses and authentic *Ahadith*, then it could be surmised that these leading companions noticed some abnormality or deviation from the norm which prompted their censure of this group, not the fact that collective *Zikr* itself was the action worthy of censure. If it is not understood in this light (above explanation) then would it not lead to a situation where verses of the Holy Qur'an and confirmed *Ahadith* will have to be rejected and renounced? This prohibition (of the two *Sahabah*) will thus be taken on the basis of some unusual misdoing of these people that they observed. And Allah knows best.” - Hussain Ahmad, 22/11/1370

ZIKR OF HAZRAT MAULANA GHULAM MUHAMMAD DEENPURI (R)

Maulana Hafiz Nisar Ahmad, Khalifa of Hazrat Qazi Zahid al-Hussaini (R) writes in his article *Majalis-Zikr* regarding Hazrat Deenpuri (R):

He was rated among the senior *Awliya* (saints). He played an invaluable role in the *Reshmi Rumal* movement⁷ of Shaikhul-Hind (R). He was the spiritual mentor of Hazrat Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi (R). Hazrat Madani (R) was honoured with *Khilafah* (spiritual vicegerency) by him. Hazrat Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori (R) was his *Khalifah*. In his *Khanqah* at Deenpur, a *Zikr-Majlis* used to be held daily. Haami Ubaidi writes in his biography:

“After *Maghrib* Hazrat Deenpuri used to conduct the loud *Zikr-Majlis* on the *Qadiriyyah*⁸ method which is referred to as *Halqa-Zikr*. Hazrat used to participate in this gathering himself, at home and on journey. The duration was between twenty to twenty-five minutes. In Ramadhan, after every four *Rak'ats* of *Taraweeh Salaah*, one *Tasbeeh* (count of hundred) used to be completed. Upon the completion of the *Zikr-Halqa*, *Muraqabah* (contemplation) and *Dua* used to take place” - *Yade-Baidhaa*

ZIKR OF HAZRAT MAULANA AHMAD ALI LAHORI(R)

⁶ *Mau'quf* means a tradition attributed to a *Sahabi* (RA); not directly to Rasulullah (Õáí Çááá Úáíá æÓãã)

⁷ The powerful under-ground movement to free India from British rule

⁸ One of the four major Sufi orders; other three being *Chishtiyya*, *Naqshbandiyyah* & *Suhrawardiyyah*

Hazrat Lahori (R) is regarded among the senior saints of this era. In the *Deeni*, political and other fronts, he was an acclaimed guide of the *Ummah*. He was the *Khalifah* of Hazrat Deenpuri (R). Thousands of *Ulama* and laymen were spiritually linked to him. On the pattern of his *Shaikh* he held a loud *Zikr-Majlis* every Thursday evening after *Maghrib Salah*. This was his lifelong practice. He established numerous such *Zikr-Majalis* on his authority, and even to this day, besides Indo-Pak, his *silsilah* (spiritual following) is found in the Middle-East and Europe.

After his demise, his spiritual successor (and his son), Hazrat Maulana Ubaidullah Anwar (R) continued with the *Zikr-Majlis* every Thursday in the Sherawala-Masjid and this humble one also had on several occasions joined his *Zikr* gathering in which about two hundred people participated.

ZIKR OF HAZRAT MAULANA QAZI MUHAMMAD ZAHID AL-HUSAINI (R)

Maulana Nisar Ahmed writes: Qutbul-Aalam, Shaikul-Hadith-wat-Tafseer, Hazrat Qazi Muhammad Zahid al-Husaini Sahib (R) is regarded among the leading scholars of this era. He was the student of Shaikhul-Islam Hazrat Madani (R) and the *Khalifah* of Hazrat Lahori (R). He combined in himself the sciences of *Shari'ah* and *Tariqah*⁹ and was equally adept at writing and oratory, in which his services will always be remembered. Excessive *Zikr* was ingrained in his life and he always impressed this upon his disciplines as well. He considered *Zikr* and *Majalis-Zikr* as the panacea of all evils in this era and was very active in establishing the *Zikr-Majlis*. The Madinah Masjid, Attock is witness to his engrossment with *Zikr*. He used to regard the *Zikr-Majlis* as the cure for all spiritual and social maladies. Towards the latter part of his life, he was very active in the propagation of *Zikr-Majalis*.

THE DAILY ZIKR-MAJALIS OF HAZRAT SHAIKH MAULANA ZAKARIYYA (R)

My spiritual mentor, Qutbul-Aqtab, Shaikhul-Hadith, Hazrat Maulana Zakariyya (R), in the years of his teaching, used to engage in writing from seven to eleven in the morning, in his upstairs room. In the courtyard, outside his room, floor mats were laid out, on which various persons used to come and complete their stipulated *Zikr*.

Then every Friday, between *Asr* and *Maghrib*, Hazrat Shaikh's practice was to sit for *I'tikaaf* (seclusion) in the Masjid. At this time, many of his associates and disciples used to join him. Most of them used to engage in loud *Zikr* at this time as a result of which the Masjid used to reverberate with the sound of their *Zikr*. It was common knowledge that Hazrat Shaikh used to dedicate this time in the Masjid every week and as such many people from all over used to join him. Lecturers and students from Deoband used to come and Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Gangohi (R) used to attend with utmost punctuality. This after *Asr* gathering of loud *Zikr* in the Masjid on Fridays continued all year round. The leading *Ulama* and *Muftiyan* of India (and elsewhere) used to occasionally attend these gatherings and none is reported to have objected to it at any time.

The time fixed for loud *Zikr* during the period of *I'tikaaf* of Hazrat Shaikh's (R) Ramadhan Khanqah Program used to be between *Zuhr* and *Asr*. Leading *Ulama*, *Muftis*, *Mashaikh* and luminaries used to participate in this gathering of loud *Zikr* in the Masjid. The Ramadhan of 1400 was spent at the

⁹ The exoteric and esoteric aspects of Islam

Masjid of Hazrat Mufti Zainul-Aabideen in Faisalabad, Pakistan. On this occasion, besides the multitudes of common people, great personalities such as Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Gangohi, the Mufti A'azam (the grand Mufti) of Pakistan, Hazrat Mufti Wali Hasan (R) and other great persons were not only present but actively participated in the loud *Zikr-Majalis*.

In 1968, Hazrat Shaikh (R) gave up teaching and commenced his travels the year after this, right until his demise on 1 Shabaan 1403 (1982). In this entire duration, it was his heart-felt desire and burning concern that somehow, the gatherings of *Zikr* must become established everywhere so that people could move away from materialism and carnality towards the *Zikr* and obedience of Allah.

Not only did Hazrat Shaikh (R) consider this practice to be extremely beneficial for the *Awaam* (general public), but he also considered it important for the *Khawaas* (the elite) and the *Madaris* (Institutes of higher learning). Hazrat was not only a great *Alim* and *Mudarris* (teacher), but he was a patron and benefactor of innumerable *Madaris*, he therefore, drew the attention of the leading authorities of his time towards this.

HAZRAT SHAIKH (R) MEETS HAZRAT MUFTI SHAFI (R) IN PRIVACY TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERNS

In this respect, he once met privately with the late grand *Mufti* of Pakistan, Hazrat Mufti Shafi (R) and expressed his concerns in this regard which was recorded by the son of Mufti Shafi, Mufti Rafi Usmani, present Rector of Darul-Uloom, Karachi under the heading *An important advice of Hazrat Shaikh*. He writes: "It was the norm with Hazrat Shaikh (R) that whenever he came to Karachi, there would be huge multitudes of people around him at all times. He however, emphasised to his attendants to set aside some time for a visit to Darul-Uloom Karachi. On his last visit to Karachi, he requested a private meeting with my father (Mufti Shafi). The room was cleared and they held their private meeting. After he left, my respected father told me: Hazrat Shaikh (R) mentioned to me that the practice of *Zikr* and *Shagl* (spiritual exercises) was almost extinct in the *Madaris* resulting in *Fitnahs*, power-struggles and in-fighting. It is my humble appeal that just as you have arranged for the board and lodge of students here, also make similar arrangements for your spiritual disciples to come and stay over here so that they could engage in *Zikr* and *Shagl* and for a short period daily, even the *Asaatiza* (lecturers) and students should participate in the *Zikr* program" - *Akabir-ka-Ikhlās* p.33

Similarly, Hazrat Shaikh's (R) letters to Hazrat Maulana Binnori in this respect have been printed in *al-Bayyinat* and in his *Aap-Beti*. It appears as though it was Hazrat's mission now to re-establish the decrepit *Khanqahs*, to establish new ones and in the interim period, to at least establish daily or weekly *Zikr-Majalis* in Masjids or homes even. Hazrat used to weep sorrowfully upon the opposition or disinterest shown to the importance of *Khanqah* and *Zikr-Majalis* from opponents, but more so, even from certain associates and friends. He used to engage in lots of *Dua* upon this. This matter has been covered in captivating detail by the senior *Khalifah* of Hazrat Shaikh, Hazrat Sufi Iqbal Muhajir-Madani in his *Majalis-Zikr-aur-Hazrat-Shaikh*. It is worthwhile reading this work, especially about the famous dream wherein Rasulullah (ﷺ) gave certain instructions to Hazrat Shaikh, after which he concentrated his full attention on this aspect (of *Zikr-Majalis* and *Khanqahs*).

THE DREAM OF HAZRAT SHAIKH (R)

Hazrat Sufi Iqbal writes narrating from Hazrat Shaikh (R): "Once I was blessed with the vision of Rasulullah (ﷺ). Hazrat Gangohi (R) was sitting close by. He said: Zakariyya is very desirous of being in your presence (in Madinah) but I wish that more work should be taken from him. Rasulullah (ﷺ) echoed these very words. After this dream I was very perplexed, seeing my helpless condition and in view of the fact that my whole life was spent in this hopeless way, what work can I do now? And what face do I have to present myself before Rasulullah

(ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ)? Then a few days later I remembered the incident of my uncle Maulana Ilyas (R) when he came to Madinah Munawwarah and wished to settle here, an indication was made to him to return to India as work would be taken from him. My uncle says he was perplexed for many days as he thought of his inability to lecture or speak, what work could he do? When the brother of Hazrat Madani (R) noticed his state of consternation he remarked that there is no need to be worried as it was not said to you to do some work but rather that work would be taken from you by the one who takes work from people. My uncle was greatly pacified by this reply. When he returned to India, the great work of Tabligh and Da'wah was taken from him and it really flourished. I reflected on this that it was also said to me that work will be taken from me and I thought deeply about this.”

Ponder on this! Who was thinking deeply? The *Wali* (saint) of the times whose thinking is for Allah and from Him. Regarding such high-ranking saints Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani Hambali (R) has remarked:

“The hearts of the *Awliya* (saints) are the doorways of Allah’s plans. The elders have said that their thoughts and concerns are attuned to and connected with the Will of Allah; their hearts are the receptacles of Divine Effulgence.”

Once a *Zaakir Shaghil* (pious) person was informed from the *Rawzah-Mubarak* (Grave of Rasulullah (ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ) regarding the elevated spiritual station of Shaikh Zakariyya (R): “Whatever thoughts cross his heart is all inspiration from above” and (it was said regarding the journeys to establish *Zikr-Majalis*) “What could be greater than this work?”

Hazrat Shaikh (R) now writes further: “A few days later the thought occurred to me that the effort of *Zikr* and *Shaghl* (spiritual exercises) has virtually become non-existent and most of the *Khanqahs* (spiritual centers) in India and Pakistan are ruined. Perhaps this is why Hazrat Gangohi (R) appeared (in the vision) as *Zikr* and *Shaghl* were the primary objectives of his *Khanqah* and his occupation of teaching was replaced by this alone after his loss of sight. This is why I became strongly inclined towards the establishment of *Zikr* and *Shaghl* and despite my busy schedule and physical disabilities, I have undertaken and will undertake journeys where ever the people have promised to establish the *Khanqahs* such as Pakistan, London and now Africa; somehow to reach there and hope that Allah will take some work and if this was the intent of Hazrat (Gangohi) then by His grace some form of success is anticipated.”

In the *Safarnamah*, he (Sufi Iqbal) records another dream of Hazrat Shaikh wherein he is bestowed the rank of ‘*Qutbul-Aqtaab*’ by Rasulullah (ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ ﻭﺍﻟﻰ ﻗﺎﺩﻳﺮ) and he is instructed to make this glad-tiding known to others.

Nevertheless, in the very last stages of his life when a new Islamic century was dawning, Hazrat Shaikh (R) applied all his energy and strength towards enlivening this branch of Islam. Despite his infirmity, old-age and being unaccustomed to traveling all his life, he undertook long and arduous journeys for the sake of this great mission. Untold sacrifices were made in this direction. The result and outcome of this effort will be explained further on.

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF HAZRAT’S JOURNEYS

This is no secret or riddle, but a known reality, that the very purpose of Hazrat’s journeys was for the establishment of *Zikr-Majalis*. Though many *Makatib* and *Masajid* were established; many organisations formed or strengthened by his visits, but the main objective was none other than the establishment of *Zikr-Majalis*. An example of this is when a person undertakes the journey of Hajj, the sole purpose is to perform the Hajj but in the process, many historical places are visited and many important personalities are met and many benefits are acquired, but despite all of this, the main purpose of the journey remains the performing of Hajj. In the same way, the main objective of Hazrat’s momentous journeys was the establishment of the *Khanqah* system, *Bay’ah*, *Majalis-Zikr* and related matters as is repeatedly emphasised in his *Safarnama* (Chronicles of his Journey).

THE VIEW OF HAZRAT SHAIKH (R) ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MAJALIS-ZIKR

The views of Hazrat Shaikh (R) and his untiring efforts for the establishment of the *Zikr-Majalis* is known and was witnessed by hundreds of his disciples and servants. Hazrat (R) was eager and desirous that his *Safarnamah* should be published for this very reason (that the main purpose of his journeys must become known). In the introduction of his *Safarnamah*, his letter to the compiler, Mufti Muhammad Shahid of Karachi is included. An extract of his letter is quoted here:

“It is a source of happiness that the *Safarnamah* is being published. May Allah allow it to reach completion. Innumerable requests for me to spend the coming *Ramadhan* are being received by me in Madinah from many people. My dear ones! For how long are you people going to drag this old man along all over? Now all of you should start the work off in your own centres, establish the gatherings of *Zikr*, and get down to work. After all, it is you people who now have to take over this work.”

HAZRAT’S LETTER TO HAZRAT MAULANA ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI (R)

“It is my firm conviction that the remedy for all evils is the *Zikr* of Allah. For this very aim I am wandering from country to country, because the *Khanqahs* have become extinct all over the world.”

These types of letters were written in large numbers to many persons in different countries of the world. When ever a reply came that *Majalis-Zikr* was established in a certain place, Hazrat Shaikh (R) would write a letter to the people there, expressing his immense joy and blessing them with *Duas*. There are several hundred such letters.

THE VIEW OF HAZRAT MAULANA YUSUF LUDHIANWI

Maulana Yusuf Ludhianwi writes in the *Safarnamah* that in the modern times, due to the preponderance of materialism, Beliefs have become shaky, the value of righteous deeds have dwindled and the attributes of *Yaqeen*, *Ikhlas*, *Ihsaan* and *Zikrullah* have all but departed from the hearts of people. The *Khanqahs* are vacant and forsaken, as a result of which the *Ummah* is deprived not only of the wealth of *Ta’alluq-ma’allah* (attachment with Allah) but even in the external forms of dress, appearance, mannerism, social customs, practices, ideology and thoughts; it has become difficult to distinguish between a Muslim and non-Muslim. This pitiable and miserable condition of the *Ummah* is sufficient to fill the heart of every sensitive person with worry and concern for the *Ummah*. What could then be said about the extent of grief and worry for the *Ummah* of that person who was the carrier of the combined spiritual force of the *Akaabireen* (spiritual elders) and their spokesperson, Hazrat Shaikh (R)? Like an expert specialist doctor, he was able to diagnose the spiritual diseases and disorders of the *Ummah* and prescribe its effective treatment and cure. Therefore, in the latter part of his life, he was passionately consumed by the mission of reviving the system of *Zikrullah* and to join the broken ties of the creation with the Creator. This was the actual panacea of this spiritual sickness. It was for this purpose that Hazrat Shaikh (R) undertook his arduous journeys; this was the main topic of discussion in his gatherings, the primary subject of all his letters and correspondences; all of this was to enliven the *Majalis* of *Zikr* and to get maximum participation of people for these gatherings of *Zikr*.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MAJALIS-ZIKR IN SOUTH AFRICA

At one instance he writes regarding the establishment of *Zikr Majalis* in South Africa as follows: “A substantial amount of time was spent in South Africa (by Hazrat Shaikh). Even *Ramadhan* was spent

in the *Masjid* of Stanger. In *Ramadhan* and especially during *I'tikaaf*, Hazrat used to intensely dislike any unnecessary talk; announcements were regularly made that 'eat as much as you wish, sleep as you like, read as much as you want, but do not speak at all. I have only one restriction - Do not talk!' Despite this, in the last ten days of *I'tikaaf*, Hazrat instructed all of his South African *Khulafa* to be gathered (for consultation) to set up the system of *Majalis-Zikr* in the country; where will these be held, who will attend, how these gatherings will be established and strengthened, etc. These consultation gatherings continued for four nights and upto two hours per session were spent for these. Hazrat used to be informed regularly about the outcome of these consultations, which he listened to very attentively and used to express happiness and give lots of *Dua* for it. The following six noteworthy gatherings were setup out of these consultations:

1. Stanger Jami Masjid - Maulana Yusuf Tootla
2. Isipingo, Durban - Mufti Basheer
3. Newtown Masjid Jhb - Maulana Sulaiman Pandor
4. Lenasia Jami Masjid - Maulana Ibrahim Mia
5. Mafikeng & White River - Maulana M. Gardee
6. Germiston - Maulana Moosa Pandor

At these places, daily *Majalis-Zikr* were decided and besides these, another seven places also indicated similar intentions.

THE BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS OF MAJALIS-ZIKR

In his work, Hazrat Sufi (Iqbal) Sahib enumerates the blessings and benefits of the *Majalis-Zikr* as recounted by the *Akaabireen* (pious elders). Some of the points raised by him are summarised in the next paragraphs.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (R) writes in *at-Takashshuf* (p.329): Imam Abu Da'ud records from Hazrat Abu Hurairah (RA) that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: Never do a people gather in a house of Allah (Masjid) to recite the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and to learn and teach each other but that peace of heart, special mercies and Angels envelop them and Allah Ta'ala speaks of them before the angels.

N.B. The 'gatherings of *Zikr*' where numerous *Zaakireen* are gathered, increases the keenness for *Zikr*, the *Anwaar* (effulgence) of hearts are reflected upon each other and enthusiasm, punctuality and determination grows; while lethargy is removed and other benefits are achieved. These gatherings are referred to as '*Zikr-Halqa*' which is mentioned in this and other *Ahadith*.

Hazrat Shaikh (R) writes in *Fadhail-Zikr* that the accumulation of hearts has a special effect in drawing the help and mercy of Allah just as *Salaah* with *Jama'ah* (congregation) and the gathering of Hajeess in Arafah does. This theme has been expounded in numerous places by Shah Waliyullah (R) in his *Hujjatullah-al-Baalighah*.

No special place is required for the gatherings of *Zikr*. The objective is simply to establish the *Zikr-Majlis* (gathering) whether it be in a home or Masjid. In some senses, a home is a better place, but there is no prohibition if it is established in a Masjid; in fact it is proven to be *Mustahab* as established by the findings of the great scholars in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah. Sufi (Iqbal) Sahib also throws some light on this matter as we will now quote from his work.

MAJALIS-ZIKR IN THE MASJID

The establishment of Masjids for the purpose of Allah's remembrance and obedience is

evident; which includes actions such as *Salaah, Tilawah, Azkaar, Wa'z, Dars*, etc. Congregational *Salaah* is offered on fixed times, but the rest of the time, the *Masjid* is free for the performance of any *Nafl Ibadah* (voluntary acts). However, since the *Masjid* is a public place, it is regulated by certain etiquette in order to ensure that no person is disturbed by another in anyway. The *Hadith* clearly states that a true Muslim is one who does not cause inconvenience to the next Muslim by way of his tongue or hand.

The desirability of *Zikr*, whether individually or collectively has been established from the *Ahadith*. If the *Majlis-Zikr* is arranged in such a way so as not to cause inconvenience to those performing *I'tikaaf* or *Salaah*, there is no harm in it. This is documented by Hazrat Maulana Khalil Ahmad (R) in his *Fatawa-Khaliliyyah*. In the annexure of *Aadaabul-Masajid* Hazrat Maulana Thanwi (R) relates the famous view of Imam Sha'rani (R):

Ùá ÇáÇãÇã ÇáÔÛÑÇäí ÇlãÚ ÇáÚããÇÁ ÓáÝÇ æ ÍáÝÇ Úáí ÇÓÊÍÈÇÈ ÐÑ ÇàlãÇÚÉ Ýí ÇããÓÇÏ æ ÚíÑãÇ ÇáÇ Çä íÔæÔ ÍãÑãã Úáí äÇÆã Çæ ãÓá Çæ ÞÇÑÆ

“It is reported on the authority of Imam Sha'rani (R): The Ulama', past and present are unanimous upon the *Istihbaab* (meritoriousness) of *Zikr* gatherings in *Masjids* and elsewhere, except if their loud *Zikr* disturbs the rest of a person, a *Musalli* or a *Qari* (Reciter of Qur'an).”

A DIRE WARNING

Allah Ta'ala warns: “Who can be more oppressive than the person who prevents people from the *Zikr* of Allah in the *Masajid* of Allah”. Though this verse was revealed regarding the disbelievers, it is more dangerous for Muslims that their actions should resemble those of the disbelievers. Certain people create a variety of unfounded misgivings to obstruct the *Zikr* of Allah whereas they do not object to little children coming to the *Masjid* and making noise and polluting the *Masjid*. In fact, they encourage this and also the hosting of a variety of *Jalsas* and functions in the *Masjid*.

In summation, if a suitable room or building or even a private home is not available for the establishment of *Zikr-Majalis* then any *Masjid* of the locality where the conditions are fulfilled (of not disturbing the *Musallis*, etc.) is suitable for this purpose. If it is not possible to arrange for this in the *Masjid* of one's own locality it should be arranged in the *Masjid* of another locality respecting the rules of the other *Masjid*.

SUMMARY

Hazrat Sufi Sahib (R) summarises at the end of his work from which a few points are being enumerated here:

- * The primary objective is to develop a special *Ta'alluq* (relationship) with Allah Ta'ala which requires purity and sincerity of intention which is not easily attainable without special training, as a person is easily mistaken in these matters; sincerity and purity of intention is not merely attained by wishful thinking or mere words, but it is a great spiritual deed which is not possible to achieve without rectifying the heart.
- * The way of reforming the heart is the companionship of saintly, pious persons and great abundance of *Zikr*
- * During these times, certain forms of service to *Deen* and certain movements for reformation of the *Ummah*, this important aspect (of spiritual reformation) is being entirely neglected. In fact *Zikrullah* is being opposed, resulting in a variety of *fitnah* and *fasaad* (corruption and degeneration) assailing these efforts.
- * Just as *Madaris* are essential for the acquisition of *Ilm* (knowledge), similarly, *Khanqahs* are essential for the establishment of *Zikr*, which have been generally neglected. For the establishment of *Khanqahs*, the first step is the establishment of *Zikr-Majalis* (gatherings) in homes and *Masjids* and

these can in a sense serve as a substitute or proxy for the *Khanqah*.

In conclusion it can be stated that observing the total decimation of the spirit of Deen, Hazrat Shaikh (R) strongly emphasized the system of *Majalis-Zikr* and understanding the burning need of the Ummah at this time, emphatically advised the Ummah in the correct direction and even commenced the practical implementation of this during his lifetime. May Allah bless us with correct understanding coupled with the ability of action. Aameen.

æāÇ ÚáíäÇ ÇáÇ ÇáÈáÇÛ Çáááã ÇÌÚá ÍÑ ÚãÑì ÇÎÑá æ ÍÑ Úááí ÎæÇÈãã æ ÍÑ ÇíÇáí íæã ÇáPÇB Ýíá æ ÈæÝäÇ ãÓáãíä æÇáÍPäÇ ÈÇáÕÇáíä ÚÍÑ ÎÒÇíÇ æáÇ ãÝÈæäíä æÓáí Çááá ÈÚÇáí Úáí ÍÑ ÍáPá ÓíläÇ æ ãæáÇäÇ áÍáÍ æÇáá æÕÍÈã æ ÈÇÑB æ Óáã ÈÑÍáÈB íÇ ÇÑÍá ÇáÑÍáíä

APPENDIX 1: ZIKR-MAJALIS OF HAZRAT MUFTI MAHMOOD GANGOHI (R)

Despite the extensive journeys of Hazrat Shaikh (R) and his concern and personal involvement in establishing the *Zikr-Majalis* in various countries of the world, no word of protest or objection was ever raised against this mission of his, though senior Muftis and Ulama always accompanied him and were part of his entourage. A steady stream of these learned scholars were always coming to meet him, yet never was any objection raised before him about the *Zikr-Majalis* in the *Masajid*, but in fact approval and praises were heaped upon him from all sides for the benefit that was being witnessed from these *Majalis*.

From the senior and accomplished Ulama who were associated with him, the name of Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (R) tops the list. Here some mention is being made of his involvement with *Zikr-Majalis* due to the fact that he occupies a unique position in his own right, especially in the field of *Ifta*, in which it can be said without exaggeration that he was the world renown ‘Mufti of the Ahnaf - the Grand Mufti’. Allah Ta’ala had granted him great acclaim and popularity.

Previously it was mentioned (p.41-42) that Hazrat Mufti Sahib, accompanied by a group of lecturers and students of Darul-Uloom Deoband, used to regularly visit Hazrat Shaikh (R) every Friday in Saharanpur and participate in the loud *Zikr-Majlis* that used to take place in the Masjid of the old Madrasah from Asr till Maghrib.

After the demise of Hazrat Shaikh (R), Mufti Sahib’s practice remained the same as that of Hazrat Shaikh (R) in his Ramadhan *I’tikaaf* programs. In this program, after Zuhr, all the *Mu’takifeen* and other persons used to engage in loud *Zikr* in the Masjid with intense engrossment.

During the rest of the year, this loud *Zikr-Majlis* used to be held daily in the Chattha Masjid in Darul-Uloom Deoband. Upon enquiry from the *Khadime-Khaas* (Personal attendant) of Hazrat Mufti Sahib, Hazrat Maulana Ibrahim Pandor, it was learnt that in the beginning the *Zaakireen* were not that many, so the *Zikr-Majlis* used to be held in Hazrat’s chambers (adjacent to the Masjid), but as the number of persons grew towards the last three years of Hazrat’s life, the crowd could not be accommodated in his quarters so all the *Zaakireen* used to congregate in the Masjid for the daily loud *Zikr-Majlis*. During Hazrat’s extensive journeys, *Zikr-Majalis* were held daily where ever he used to go, at times in Masjids and at times elsewhere.

ZIKR-MAJALIS IN MA’HADUL-KHALIL-AL-ISLAMI, KARACHI

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yahya Madani, who is among the *Khulafa* of Hazrat Shaikh (R) is the founder and rector of *Ma’hadul-Khalil al-Islami* in Bahadurabad, Karachi. Whenever, Hazrat Mufti Sahib would visit Karachi, he would hold daily *Majlis-Zikr* in the Masjid of *Ma’hadul-Khalil*. On this

occasion, the lecturers and students of the Madrasah and the general public of Karachi would participate in these *Zikr* gatherings and the entire Masjid would be filled with a wonderful spiritual atmosphere, reverberating with the sounds of *Zikrullah* (N.B. These *Zikr* gatherings also take place daily throughout the year at *Ma'hadul-Khalil*).

Hafiz Nisaar Ahmad describes the *Zikr-Majalis* of Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Sahib in his work, which is recounted under the next heading.

THE MAJALIS-ZIKR IN DARUL-ULOOM DEOBAND

Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi (R) is the Mufti of Darul-Uloom Deoband and among the senior most Khulafa of Hazrat Shaikh Zakariyya (R). Locally and abroad, *Zikr-Majlis* was the constant practice of Hazrat Mufti Sahib. In Darul-Uloom, Hazrat Mufti Sahib would be based at the Chattha Masjid where daily after Fajr, the *Zikr-Majlis* would be held with utmost regularity. His very being and personage was 'a mobile *Khanqah*'.

The editor of *Darul-Uloom Monthly Journal* writes: "Even towards the latter part of his life, lengthy *ilmi* (academic) and *islahi* (reformatory) Majlis-sessions were conducted by Hazrat Mufti Sahib. *Wa'z* (Discourses) and *Majlis-Zikr* were a regular feature. Long and short journeys would also be undertaken during which the administrators and management of numerous *Madaris* and spiritual associates and disciples would be met. Huge *Ijtimas* (gatherings) would also be addressed. It has been the outstanding feature of Darul-Uloom that from its very inception, effort was expended on both the branches of *Ilm* and *Zikr*. Until the era of Hazrat Shaikhul-Islam Maulana Madani (R), without any type of interruption or deficiency, this blessed arrangement and system continued at the Darul-Uloom. Upon the arrival of Hazrat Mufti Sahib in Darul-Uloom, this system has once more been revived and Chattha Masjid, Hazrat's residence at Darul-Uloom has become transformed into a *Khanqah*. In the last ten to fifteen years, such has been the attraction of people towards Mufti Sahib that Chattha Masjid virtually echoes continuously with the *Zikr* of Allah." (p.10-12)

This humble servant has hastily penned these few quotations from the lives of the *Akaabireen*. From these, it is gleaned without doubt that it was the consensus of all our *Akaabireen* that they regarded the loud *Zikr-Majalis* in the Masjid as not only permissible but in fact, *Mustahab* (meritorious). Whoever opines otherwise would be regarded as an individual view of that particular person.

However, our sincere appeal and request to this person would be to review his own position on the matter.

A view which is in contradiction with the position of so many senior scholars and elders must certainly hold the possibility of being inaccurate or erroneous. It is hoped that if the holder of this uncommon and irregular view sincerely researches and ponders carefully over this *mas'ala* (issue), he will find himself falling in line with the mainstream view of the *Akaabireen* in this matter, *Insha-Allah*.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that the actual objective is the establishment and setting-up of *Majalis-Zikr* which has been emphasised in Qur'an and Sunnah. As has been stated previously, it is better to establish these in homes or private venues due to certain factors, but if this is not possible due to space restrictions or other reasons, as is commonly the case, then there is absolutely no prohibition of holding loud *Zikr* sessions (*Majalis*) in the Masjid, but is in fact deemed to be *Mustahab* (preferable) as has been substantiated from the research and findings of the experts and authorities of *Ifta*. However, it is necessary to uphold all the conditions stipulated for loud *Zikr* in the Masjid at all times, which however are easy and simple, and to the best of our knowledge are being complied with. An appeal is also being directed towards them to further ensure that all the conditions are complied with greater regularity, as the objective is to acquire the pleasure of Allah and may it not be that due to contravention of the etiquette of the Masjid the reward of this act is diminished in anyway or in fact, Allah forbid! total deprivation of rewards occur.

As for the handful of critics and antagonists, an appeal is directed to them not to make this a flimsy excuse to oppose the *Zikr-Majalis* and not to carry the curse of this burden on their heads. Let them fear Allah! If they do not wish to participate, let them not prevent others from this, as impeding the *Zikr* of Allah