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Q: 267 ? Title: Q1. I fully understand the concept of a sheikh and i have no proboem with it. It is just that i have many people who are mureeds ...Q2. another problem i have is the group of sunni & tabliqh. I am being put under alot of pressure from both parties to foll

Question

Mufti saheb & all ulama of darul iftaa, may allah grant you all great reward for your services &?long life with excellent health?so you all?can continue?all this good work.?i have two questions.

Q1. I fully understand the concept of a sheikh and i?have no proboem with it. It is just that i have many people who?are mureeds and they insist on me becoming a mureed?of someone. And they tell me that?if i donnot have a sheikh then shaythaan will be my sheikh and lead me the wrong way,?Is?this true?

As i have very strong faith in allah and i have trust in all our authenthic ulema but i donnot have the desire to become mureed of any one. My faith is in Quran, Hadeeth, Zikr and all ulema that comply. will this belief be ok???

Q2. another problem i have is the group of sunni & tabliqh. I am being put under alot of pressure from both parties to follow they life style. But i want to live a moderate life with out being extreme on any path. which ever group does sincere permissable acts of worship i will

participate with them both but will not classify myself to any particular group. I just want lead a life of moderate basis and follow what my faith & heart is at ease with?

Answer

In the name of All?h, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Assal?mu ?alaykum wa Rahmatull?hi Wabarak?tuh

Regarding your first query:

From the outset, it is essential to understand two issues:

1) The need for Spiritual reform.

2) Taking the *Bay?at*, the pledge of allegiance.

1) THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL REFORM

Apart from the Ambiyaa *alayhimus salam*, the Sahabah *radi allahu anhum* were those individuals who attained the highest form of excellence in all aspects of Din. They were embodiments of virtue and piety, imbued with perfection in the matters of Din relating to both, the external and internal self. Their sincere commitment and sacrifice for Din was unparalleled. They were the torchbearers of Islam, who spread the light of Din and impressed it on others by mere character and honest practice. Their actions really spoke ?louder than words!? However, the question to be asked, what was the secret and backbone leading to this unmatched excellence and effect of theirs? We too are Muslims; does our practice also impress others and reflect the great cause of Islam which we proudly represent?

Nevertheless, all these achievements were ***primarily*** due to them been in the auspicious company of the most supreme of mankind, in the company of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam). Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) was their mentor, tutor and guide in every aspect of their lives. They accompanied him at all times, whether in the city of Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarh or out on journeys, studying his lifestyle, fervently serving him and most importantly, implementing his priceless teachings. Their fervor for Din knew no bounds and resulted in them progressing and mastering the various sciences of *Din*, i.e. the branches of *Hadith, Fiqh, Tafsir, Qira?ah*, etc.

However, ***a very interesting point to note here is that***, though the Sahabah *radi allahu anhum* were experts in the various aspects of Din, we do not know them by such terms. We do not refer to them as Hafiz so and so, Qari so and so, Mufti so and so, etc. rather, we merely suffice on the word ?Sahabi or Sahabah? (the companion/s of Rasulullah Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam). When referring to them; don?t we usually say, ?Abu Bakr *radi allahu anhum*, the ***Sahabi*** of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), Uthman *radi allahu anhum*, the ***Sahabi*** of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), etc.? The reason for adopting this form of reference is because *suhbah (companionship of Rasulullah* (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam)*,* was the highest form of achievement featuring in their lives. To accompany a saintly person is undoubtedly beneficial, imagine accompanying Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), the greatest personality of mankind? Therefore, there was so to say, no better quality in portraying their superior caliber other than terming them ***?Sahabah?radi allahu anhum.***

Furthermore, the term, ?Sahabah?, would later serve as a lesson and reminder for the forthcoming generations that, ?Should you, the Ummatis of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), also desire to become like the Sahababradi allahu anhum, then tread this path of ?Suhbah?, companionship!?

N.B: ?Suhbah? refers to the concept of accompanying a pious or scholarly personality. In latter days it became a more popularly used term to refer to accompanying and, communicating ones spiritual difficulties and ailments, to a Sheikh, a pious person, for the sake of reform. This method of reform became the common and established practice of people in the latter eras. [1]

It was this suhbah which transformed the lives of Sahabah radi allahu anhum to becoming the foundation and unshaken pillars of Islam. In fact, this was what kindled and supplemented their remarkable concern (fikr), love and sacrifice for Islam; characteristics which are the core and essence of Islam and hallmark evident in their lives!

Moving on? Experiencing and cherishing the remarkable benefit acquired through the company of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam), his advices, etc., once Nabi (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) had passed away, the Sahabah *radi allahu anhum* immediately renewed their submission and obedience on the hands of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr
radi allahu anhum
, thereafter on the hands of Sayyiduna Umar
radi allahu anhum
, and so on. This was done through the Bay?at (pledge of allegiance). The Bay?at was not to merely facilitate the management and smooth running of the Muslim empire. Instead, it was an allegiance to serve him, obey his instructions
and also for internal purification
[2]
; hence, compounding the spiritual gain they were once receiving from Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam).

N.B: *Self Reformation, internal purification, and other similar terms, basically refer to the effort of ridding oneself of evil qualities such as, jealousy, hatred, self centeredness, etc. whilst persevering to inculcate praiseworthy qualities like, generosity, compassion, humility, etc. The easiest technique of doing so is by inculcating an intense and burning feeling of love for Allah Ta?ala which will naturally make the saalik (it refers to the individual who applies himself in this path of suhbah) accomplish his goal in an extremely short span of time.*

This practice of *suhbah* then became the common feature in the lives of the people, especially the religious divines coming thereafter despite their immense academic expertise. It became a

deep-rooted trend and technique of acquiring spiritual benefit. The personality whom one corresponds with and communicates his spiritual difficulties is termed as
Sheikh; mashaikh
being the plural form,
translated as
mentor or guide
in English.

We will enlist the names of a few great Ulama and personalities, right up till this day and age, who also adopted *suhbah* as a means of spiritual advancement. These names will provide ample testimony and only overwhelm one to the credibility and benefit one attains in this path:

HEREUNDER FOLLOW THE NAMES OF A FEW FORMER AND LATTER DAY ULAMA

1) Thabit Al-Bunani *rehmatullah alayh*, accompanied Sayyiduna Anas *radi allahu anhum* for 40yrs.

2) The famous Imam Muslim *rehmatullah alayh*, accompanied Imam Bukhari *rehmatullah alayh* for 6yrs.

3) Imam Al-Qa?nabi *rehmatullah alayh*, accompanied Imam Malik *rehmatullah alayh* for 30yrs.

4) Hajee Imdadullah Muhajir Makki *rehmatullah alayh*.

5) Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi *rehmatullah alayh*.

6) Hazrat Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi *rehmatullah alayh*.

7) Hazrat Maulana Qasim Nanotwi *rehmatullah alayh*, founder of Darul Uloom Deoband

8) Hazrat Maulana Khalil Ahmed Saharanpuri *rehmatullah alayh*

9) Hazrat Sheikh, Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandelvi *rehmatullah alayh*.

10) Hazrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi *rehmatullah alayh*.

HEREUNDER FOLLOW THE NAMES OF A FEW PRESENT DAY ULAMA

1) Hazrat Maulana Yunus Patel Saheb, Khalifah of Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb.

2) Hazrat Maulana Abdul Hamid Ishaq Saheb, Khalifah of Hazrat Maulana Shah Hakim Muhammad Akhtar Saheb.

3) Hazrat Mufti Ebrahim Salejee Saheb, Khalifah of Hazrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi Saheb *rehmatullah alayh*.

4) Hazrat Maulana Ebrahim Pandor Saheb, Khalifah of Hazrat

5) Hazrat Maulana Zul Fiqar Ahmed Naqshbandi Saheb, Khalifah of Hazrat Maulana Gulam Habib Saheb *rehmatullah alayh*.

[**A Note from the Answerer:** Our Respected Ustad, Hazrat Mufti Ebrahim Desai Saheb is also deeply linked with this field and is the senior Khalifah of Hazrat Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi

Saheb *rehmatullah alayh*.]

Along with these names, there are numerous other Ulama, speaking for South Africa alone, who have adopted this line and have such relationship with Mashaikh. This selection and preference of theirs is motivated solely by their sound and deep-rooted knowledge and understanding of the Shariah.

A point to note here is that, many of whom were mentioned above had both, a student-teacher based relationship, as well as one of gaining spiritual purification.

Hence, if Ulama and high ranking personalities such as the above felt the need to adopt *suhbah* for their reform, one can well imagine the more intense urgency for uneducated spiritually ailing individuals like us, to apply ourselves in the field of
suhbah!
Adopting these means will also, to a great extent enhance ones sincerity in all matters. At times a person does make
taubah
(seek repentance) however, with the benevolence of Allah Ta?ala and the blessing of a true pious
Sheikh
, a person will now be endowed with the quality of steadfastness and loyalty in remaining true to this
taubah
(trying his best to abstain from the sin).

In fact, consider this motivating and captivating statement of the Honourable, Sheikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah *rehmatullah alayh*, a great Syrian scholar of the past century. [3] While commenting on the phenomenal affect which over came the Sahabah
radi allahu anhum
, the Sheikh states that a similar affect exists today by virtue of even merely glancing at a pious person; the Sheikh comments:

?? Even if someone from the latter eras (meaning, those who did not see people in the likes of the Sahabah radi allahu anhum, etc.) sees a pious and virtuous Aalim, this gaze at the Aalim even though it be for a few seconds, will serve as spiritual nutrition the affect of which will be felt for one?s entire life. The mere glance will now propel him to acts of virtue and obedience

whenever he cherishes and thinks of this moment.? [4]

(Risalatul Mustarshidin ? pg.19, Darus Salam)

Conclusively, understand that the quest for spiritual reform is a Fardh, an incumbent duty upon every individual. A very easy and accepted practice of doing so is adopting the path of *Suhbah*. Also, whilst an earnest attempt is made to elaborate on the immense benefit one may achieve in the path of
suhbah
, and that a great amount of latter day people adopt
suhbah
for spiritual reform, we in no way wish to sideline and degrade the benefit one may achieve from the other commonly practiced efforts of Din.

2) TAKING THE BAY?AT, THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mufti Muhammad Shafi *rehmatullah alayh*, the author of the tafsir entitled ?Ma?ariful Quran? states:

?Bay?at means to, take a promise for performing some special deed. Its customary method according to the Sunnah of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) *is to place the hands of both persons one on top of the other.?*

In the event where this Bay?at is taken, the disciple gives an assurance that he will act upon the advices and instructions of his Sheikh.

As for the status that bay?at holds in the Shariah: It is essentially important to know that bay?at is indeed a sunnah of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) but in no way a wajib (obligation). (Though it is extremely meritorious to enter into a bay?at) it is neither sinful to leave it out. [5] Reformation, which is the actual aim and purpose of accompanying and communicating with a Sheikh, may be achieved without even taking the Bay?at. Bay?at is not a requirement for reformation. However, becoming a disciple (mureed) of a sheikh in the customary manner also

has its advantages; one of which is that the spiritual teacher pays more attention to his disciple, and in turn, the disciple takes special care in obeying his spiritual teacher.

Nevertheless, once reading the above and realising the importance of adopting a *Sheikh*, let us now focus on your queries:

A) You mention regarding the insistence of your friends:

Well! Understand it in this light; it is only normal and in fact courteous, that once a person witnesses the benefit of a particular commodity, venture, etc. he wishes others to reap the same. In a similar way, the insistence of your friends should be viewed in the same light. They have realized and achieved great benefit in the line of suhbah (for spiritual purification), and expressing the sentiments of a true Muslim, also desire that you receive the same benefit.? In fact, this is a very good sign for Allah?s Rasul (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) has stated:

?No person can become a true believer until he likes for his fellow Muslim that which he likes for himself.? [6]

(Ibn Majah p.8; Qadimi)

Yes, at the same token, it is extremely important that the attitude and approach of your friends be in correct measure. They should encourage you with much tact and wisdom, explaining the benefits they have achieved, in a kind gentle manner. Never should they adopt a contemptuous harsh, mean and ?better than thou? attitude. Islam encourages the spreading of good and at the same time teaches us the art of accomplishing the same.

B) As for *Shaytan* becoming your *Sheikh*:

Remember! Just as how a student acquires his knowledge from a qualified teacher, so too is the case with developing perfection in character, morals and spirituality, this should also be

acquired under the tutorship of the *Mashaikh*, the experts in this field. Spiritual maladies such as pride, jealousy, etc. are at times easy to detect but the diagnosis will be in accordance to an individual. Sometimes, the malady is obscure and discrete. Only an expert in this field can detect it. In such instances, if one eventually does identify a malady, he may adopt the incorrect therapy. There are numerous incidents mentioned of this sort, where the diagnosis and treatment was incorrect. At times, this even proved fatal. There is an Arabic proverb to encapsulate and illustrate this point, it says:

?????? ??????????? ????????

The spiritual diagnosis of a spiritually ill person is also diseased and ailing.

One should therefore submit to a pious personality, continuously adopt his company, communicate ones spiritual difficulties and adhere strictly to his diagnosis. If you hold fast to the above *?formula?*, Allah Ta?ala will soon bless your endevours, Inshallah. Allah Ta?ala has affirmed this promise of His by stating:

???????????? ????????? ??????? ???????????????? ?????????

We will most definitely open up our avenues of insight and guidance (hidayat) for those who exert themselves in our cause. [7]

C) As for averring to have ?very strong faith in Allah?; Remember! Though it is laudable to express gratitude to Allah Ta?ala for endowing one with the great wealth of Iman, at the same time, it is totally inappropriate for a Muslim to brazenly claim strong belief in Allah Ta?ala. Nabi (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) has constantly exhorted a Muslim to have concern and fear of his Iman. Nabi (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) has stated in a hadith:

?A Muslims (concern and fear of his Iman is such that) he considers his sins to be like a mountain near which he is stands fearing the mountain falling onto him (destroying him, i.e. his sins are burdensome to him like the weight of a mountain). On the other hand, a sinful Muslim (is so unaffected by his sins that) he considers it to be like a fly which sits on his nose (the

seriousness of sin and disobeying Allah Ta?ala has as yet not dawned upon him).? [8]

(Sunan Tirmizi # 2497; Maktabuth Thaqafiyyah, Beirut)

I.e. he never has the ?guts? to profess having strong faith for at the same time, he is a perpetrator of many sins too. Islam advocates moderation; so be grateful for your faith, make an earnest attempt to strengthen it and, at the same time fear over your sins!

Regarding your second query:

It is rather unfortunate that the once united Ummah of Rasulullah (Sallalahu Alayhi Wasallam) has now been fragmented so extensively. Islam advocates and teaches us to adopt the path of moderation. Allah Ta?ala has given us clear guidelines that in all aspects of our lives, we should use the Quran and Sunnah as our model. Whatever conforms to it, we guard and follow and whatever is opposed to it we disregard. Most of the time, because our minds and hearts become so clouded and murky because of sin, not every individual is capable of deciding what is right from wrong, or who ought to be followed and who ought not to follow.

In such a case, just like how one would seek guidance at night by the stars, similarly, in religious issues as this, one should acquire guidance from the Ulama. We should follow those Ulama who are considered to be righteous and reliable; follow whatever they say and be sure that you are being rightly guided.

And All?h Ta??la Knows Best

Wassal?mu ?alaykum

D?rul Ift?, Madrasah In??miyyah