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**JOURNEY TO ALLAH**, by Hafiz Abdul Karim (translated by Musharraf Hussain). Nottingham: Invitation Publishing, 2022 (2nd ed.), 225pp. ISBN: 978-1902248035.

The main body of the book under review is the translation by Musharraf Hussain of the book 'Guidance of Mankind Towards the Path of Wisdom' by Hafiz Abdul Karim (1848-1936). The latter is a summary of the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah* which describes methods of self-purification in pursuit of Divine nearness. The author, Hafiz Abdul Karim, was a spiritual guide and teacher and the translator, Musharraf Hussain, is a scholar and an author. As explained by the translator in the introduction, the author wrote the book as a summary of the Naqshbandī Sufi *tariqah* and a manual for his disciples. The book includes six appendices dealing with the life and works of the author Hafiz Abdul Karim, his daily prayers and spiritual lineage and a brief account on the life and merits of Shaykh Aḥmad Fārūqī of Sarhind and Shaykh Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī. The last appendix is a short account on *Eidgah Shareef*, which is an institution for spiritual retreat founded in 1896 by Hafiz Abdul Karim.

Chapter One, "Discovering the Deceptions of the Self", deals with self-development, with reference to the Qur'anic concept of the reproaching self and the contented self. The rebellious self is not explicitly mentioned, however, it is referred to in the context of developing the reproaching self by reforming the ego/self. A suggested method in this reform is 'dialogue with oneself' which readers may also identify as 'self-talk'. In the second chapter, "Love Allah more than anything else", the author discusses reforming the self which is expected to lead to the desire of developing one's love of Allah. Logical premises are used effectively in this chapter to arrive at that conclusion.

As an effective method of cultivating love of Allah, chapters three to five deal with the excellence of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) and the virtue of being in the company of the people of remembrance. Chapters three and four primarily deal with the categories of performing *dhikr* and the benefits of remembrance. In chapter five, the author discusses criticisms levelled at the gatherings of *dhikr* which has discouraged some people from joining those gatherings. The author provides examples from the Sunnah and sayings of scholars regarding the merit of gathering to remember Allah. However, as some of that criticism is not of the validity of gathering to remember Allah but of the manner those gatherings are conducted, it would have been informative if a discussion on the manner of conducting *dhikr* gatherings was presented.

Another point of contention that the author dealt with is the *bay'ah*. Chapter six, "The Excellence of Bay'ah and its Recommendation", begins by explaining the importance of *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) to a spiritual guide or a teacher by attempting to draw a parallel with the Companions who had a *bay'ah* with Prophet Muḥammad (blessings and peace be upon him) when he was alive. It could be argued that the discourse presented does not robustly lead to the conclusion that *bay'ah* with the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) necessitates doing the same with a spiritual guide. However, according to the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah*, attachment to a teacher is stated as one of the three paths to Allah in chapter eight, emphasising its significance in the practices of the *ṭarīqah*. The other two paths mentioned in the chapter are remembrance of Allah in a specific manner and *murāqabah* (guarding the heart or waiting for "the benevolence of the Lord").

Guarding the heart and mind, attentiveness, seclusion and remembrance are some of the eleven principles of the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqah* explained in chapter seven. In general, it can be said that practising these principles would require discipline and an internal striving for excellence hopefully leading to developing the self and reforming one's interaction with oneself and others, which is the objective of the author in writing the book. The author continues the practical approach by focusing on Shaykh Aḥmad Sarhindī, one of the main teachers of this *ṭarīqah*, describing his devotion and how he performed *wuḍū'* and his daily prayers. The final

chapter in the book is on the *Ḥizb al-Baḥr* litany: a litany in which one invokes Divine protection from the sufferings, hardships and trials of life. According to the author, this is a prayer that Shaykh Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī saw on his journey to perform *Hajj* when at sea. The source of the narrative of the *Hajj* journey is not stated, though the permission to recite the prayer with its chain is included for authority. As this book is on the Naqshabandī Sufi order and its practices, the reason for including a prayer by a Sufi master of a different *ṭarīqah* is not explained.

An addition that could have enhanced the experience of the reader would have been including a glossary of terms for ease of reference. Numerous terms, such as *kashf*, *tajjalī*, etc., are likely to be unfamiliar to those interested in Islamic practices related to purification and self-development. It is noted that while all Qur'ānic verses are referenced with chapter and verse numbers, some Prophetic sayings are stated without any reference or classification. Having said this, the book is sufficiently brief to allow it to be a manual which one may consult again and again. Many of the prayers are included in Arabic (using Indo-Pak script) to allow for proper reading and pronunciation and the translation is included for understanding. The translator has done an excellent job because the book is readable and fluid and it is easy to forget that the main body of the book is a translation.

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