

AN ANSWER TO A UNIVERSITY STUDENT

The following is the simplified translation of a letter written as an answer to a university student by Abdulhakim Arwasi (quddisa-sirruh) as he was the senior professor of Tasawwuf at the Madrasat al-mutahassisin (Faculty of Theology), which was located at Sultan Selim Mosque in Istanbul during the declining years of the Ottoman Empire:

Go out of the area of the omnipotence of Allahu Taala with all your strength, if you can! But you cannot. Outside of this area is nonexistence. And the realm of nonexistence is also under His omnipotence!

On an occasion, somebody asked [the great Wali] Ibrahim ibn Adham (quddisa-sirruh) for advice. He said:

“If you accept six things, nothing you do will harm you. These six things are:

“1) When you mean to commit a sin, do not eat the food He gives! Does it befit you to eat His food and to disobey Him?

“2) When you want to rebel against Him, go out of His Domain! Does it befit you to be in His Domain and to be in rebellion against Him?

“3) When you want to disobey Him, do not sin where He sees you! Sin where He does not see you! It simply is unbecoming to be in His Domain, to eat His food and then to sin where He sees you!

“4) When the Angel of Death comes to take away your soul, ask him to wait till you repent! You cannot turn that angel back! Repent before he comes, while you are able, and you have the chance at this very hour, for the Angel of Death comes unexpectedly!

“5) When the two angels Munker and Nakir come to question you in the grave turn them back! Do not let them test you!”

“It is impossible,” said the person who asked for his advice.

Shaikh Ibrahim said, “Then prepare your answers now!

“6) On the Day of Rising, when Allahu Taala orders: ‘Sinners, go to Hell!’ say that you will not!”

The person said, “Nobody will listen to me,” and then repented, and he did not break his repentance till death. There is Divine Effect in the words of Awliya’.

Ibrahim ibn Adham (quddisa-sirruh) was asked, “Allahu Taala declares: ‘O My human creatures! Ask Me! I will accept, I will give. However, we ask but He does not give?’” Prophet Ibrahim said: “You entreat Allahu Taala, but you do not obey Him. You know His Prophet (sall-Allahu taala alaihi wa sallam), but you do not follow him. You read the Quran al-Karim, but you do not follow the way it shows. You utilize Allahu Taala’s blessings, but you do not thank Him. You know that Paradise is for those who worship, but you do not make preparations for it. You know that He created Hell for the disobedient, but you do not fear it. You see what happened to your fathers and grandfathers, but you do not take warning. You do not see your own defects, and you search for defects in others. Such people must be thankful because it does not rain stones on them, because they do not sink into the earth, and because it does not rain fire from the sky! What else could they want? Would not this suffice as a recompense for their prayers?”

[Allahu Taala declares in the 60th verse of Maida sura as **(Pray, and I will accept)**, ask and I will give. There are five conditions for a prayer to be accepted: The one who is praying must be a Muslim, they must be in the path of Ahl as-Sunna, they must avoid committing haram and they must especially avoid eating and drinking those things that are haram, they must practice the fard, particularly to perform salat five times a day, to fast during Ramadan, to give obligatory alms (zakat), and they must learn the means which are demanded by Allahu Taala and seek them out. Allahu Taala creates everything with means. When something is asked for, He will send the means for that and will bestow effect to that means. A person that uses that means, will reach what is asked for. When a prayer for something is made with the intention of it being for the sake of an Awliya (Muslim beloved by Allahu Taala) or Awliya kiram (Awliya that have achieved an exceptional degree of honor and greatness), Allahu Taala will break His custom, for the sake of His Awliya, and as a **Keramet** (super natural wonder) of that Awliya, He suspends the necessity of a means, He will directly give what has been asked for.]

Let us come to the point:

As you have not come out of nonexistence to this world of existence on your own, so you cannot go there on your own. The eyes with which you see, the ears with which you hear, the organs with which you perceive, the intellect with which you think, the hands and feet which you use, all the roads you will pass, all the places you will be, in short, all the members and systems connected with your body and soul, all of them, are Allahu Taala's property and creatures. You cannot misappropriate anything from Him! He is Hayy and Qayyum, that is He sees, knows, and hears, and every moment He keeps in existence everything that exists. Even for a moment, He is never unaware of the state of all things, nor does He ever fail to control all of them. He does not let anybody steal His property. He is never incapable of punishing those who disobey His commands. It would not make any difference if, for instance, He had not created any human being on this globe, as He did not on the moon, on Mars or on other planets; His greatness would not have diminished for this reason.

A hadith qudsi says: **“If [all of] your ancestors and descendants, the young and the old, the alive and the dead, human beings and genies, were like My most devoted, Most obedient human creature (alaihi-salam), My Greatness would not be increased. Conversely, if you all were like My enemy, who opposes Me and despises My**

Prophets, My Greatness would not ever decrease. Allahu Taala is free from needing you; He does not need any of you. As for you, in order that you might exist and keep on existing and in everything you do, you always need Him.”

He sends light and heat by means of the sun. He makes the moon reflect waves of light. Out of black soil, He creates many vivid-colored, sweet-scented flowers and beautiful sights. From the breeze, He pours out the breath which gives relief to hearts. From the stars that are at a distance of myriads of years' way, He makes it rain haloes on to the earth, out of which you came about and under which you will be buried in the end. Through many vibrations, He creates affectivity in particles. [On the one hand, by turning dirt, which you dislike and are disgusted with, into soil by means of His smallest, most trifling creatures (micro-organisms), He turns this soil, which you tread on, into a white-of-egg-like substance, protein, the constructive matter of your body, through the factory of plants. On the other hand, by combining the water in the earth with the suffocating gases in the air, again in the factory of plants and by storing in them the energy which He sends from the sky, He creates starchy and sugary substances and oils, the source of energy, that will operate the machine of your body.] Thus, in plants, which He causes to grow in fields, wildernesses, mountains, in streams, and in animals, that He enables to live on the earth and under the seas, He prepares food which will go into your stomach and nourish you. By establishing chemistry laboratories in your lungs, He separates poison from your blood and puts the useful matter of oxygen in its place. By establishing physics laboratories in your brain, the information coming from your organs of perception, through your nerves, are taken there and, as He has placed a magnetic power into the stone of iron, so with the effect of intelligence, which He has placed into your brain and other immaterial powers, which He has placed into your heart, various plans, commands and actions are prepared simultaneously through His creation. By making your heart work through very complex mechanisms, which you consider very extraordinary, He makes rivers of blood flow in your blood vessels. He weaves many a dumbfounding net of roads through your nerves. He conceals stocks in your muscles. By means of many other phenomena, He equips and completes your body. He establishes and fits all of these in an order and harmony to which you give such names as the laws of physics, chemical reactions or biological events. He places centers of power within you. He

projects the necessary precautions into your soul and conscience. He also gifts a treasure called the intellect, a gauge named reason, a means named thought, and a key which you call will. In order that you might use each of these correctly, He gives you sweet enticements and bitter warnings, hints, inclinations and goals. And as a greater blessing, He clearly sends instructions through faithful and dependable Prophets (alaihimus-salatu was-salam). In conclusion, operating the machine of your body and giving you the necessary instructions, He hands it over to you so that you may use and utilize it conveniently. He does all these things not because He needs you, your will or help, but to make you happy by giving you a distinguished position and authority among His creatures. If instead of leaving it to your hands, your feet and all of your limbs, which you can use at will, He used them without you knowing it, as is the case with the beating of your heart, the expansion of your lungs and the circulation of your blood, if He controlled you by force, with reflex actions, with paralyzed hands or feet, if each of your actions were a vibration and every movement were a twitch, could you claim to possess yourself and the things He has lent you? If He made you move under the influence of external powers, like the lifeless or irrational and senseless exterior and interior powers like pack animals, and if He put into your mouth a morsel of the blessings – which you take in large amounts to your houses now –, could you take and eat that morsel?

Do you think of your state before and after you were born? Where were you, in what were you, during the creation of this globe, on which you live, eat and drink, go about, amuse and divert yourself? On this planet, you have discovered the means that are remedies for your diseases and the ways of defending yourself against the attacks of your enemies and the harms of wild and poisonous animals. Where were you while the stones and soil of this globe were being baked on fires in the ovens of creation and while its water and air were being distilled in the chemistry laboratories of the Omnipotence? Have you ever thought: Where were you while the lands, which you claim to be yours today, were gliding away from the seas, while mountains, rivers, plains and hills were being laid down? Where and how were you while, with Allahu Taala's Omnipotence, the salty waters of the seas evaporated and formed clouds in the sky, while the rains, falling from those clouds, took substances [of nourishment prepared by lightning and waves of power and energy in the sky] into the

motes of burnt, dried soil, and while these substances, stirred [by the influence of the rays of light and heat], vibrated and nourished the cells of life? Today, they say that you have descended from monkeys, and you believe it. When they say that Allahu Taala created you, gave you life, will make you die and that He alone makes everything, you don't want to believe! Oh man! What are you? What were you in the veins of your father? At one time, in the veins of your father, whom you insult with such terms as imbecile, old-fashioned and fuddy-duddy, you used to make him feel uncomfortable. Who made you move then, and why did you disturb him? If he had wished, he could have thrown you into a rubbish-heap, but he did not. He hid you like a deposit. While he was so kind as to entrust you to a chaste woman, where you would be nourished unsparingly, and struggled to protect you for a long time, why do you insult your father by holding him responsible for your inconveniences, instead of reserving a share of gratitude for him and your Creator for the blessings you have been given? Moreover, why do you throw your own deposit into the rubbish-heaps dirtied by everybody? When people around you follow your wishes and desires you believe that you are creating everything with your intellect, knowledge, science, power and strength, and that you are inventing all accomplishments. You forget about the task which Allahu Taala has assigned to you, and you refrain from that high official duty and attempt to claim ownership of the deposit. You want to regard and introduce yourself as the owner and the dominant one. On the other hand, when those around you do not follow your desires, when the external forces seem to overcome you, you can see inside you nothing but regret and frustration, incapacity and despair. You claim that you own no will or option, that you are under the slavery of everything, that you are like a machine, automatic but with a broken spring. You understand fate not as **al'ilm al-mutaqaddim** (the eternal knowledge) but as **al-jabr almutahakkim** (the despotic compulsion, forced by authority). While saying this, you are not unaware of the fact that your mouth is not like a record-player.

When your favorite meals do not come to your table, you hold out your hand and tongue and eat the dry bread which you are able to obtain, though you are free to eat or not and die of hunger. You eat the dry morsels that are not crammed into your mouth by force! You eat but also think that you are deprived of doing everything. You do not think that your hand and mouth have

moved under your own control, and it has not been caused by involuntary movements. But, though you possess your self-control even at such times as this, when you have to, you deem yourself compelled, a slave, in short, nothing against external effects.

Oh man! Which of these are you? You claim to be 'all' when you thrive well and when success and victory are with you, and 'nothing' under the force of fate when the affairs turn out bad and contrary to your wishes? Are you 'everything', or 'nothing'?

Oh mankind! Oh man who is floating on deficiency and stupidity! You are neither 'all' nor 'nothing'! At any rate, you are something between these two. Yes, you are far from being inventive, dominant and victorious over everything. But, you have an irrefutable freedom and option and a wish and choice rendering you authoritative. Each of you is an official undertaking individual and collective duties under the command of Allahu Taala, who is the Unequalled Authority and Absolute and Unconditional Owner without a partner! You can do your duties under the rules and regulations established by Him, within the limits of your ranks assigned by Him, within your responsibilities and means which He has created and entrusted to you as deposits. He alone is the Sole Commander, the Unique Ruler and the Single Owner. There is no other commander besides Him, nor a ruler resembling Him, nor a partner with Him. Unless the aims and purposes which you lay claim to and rush upon so zealously, the struggles which you set about, the glories which you take pride in, and your accomplishments are for Him, they are false and vain. Then why do you give a place to lies in your hearts and turn towards polytheism? Why do you not obey the commands of Allahu Taala, the Unequalled Ruler, and know Him as the Creator? But instead you run after thousands of imaginary idols and get drowned in distress? Whatever you run towards, isn't it an idea, an option or a belief that drags you on? Why do you look for that ideal belief in someone other than Allahu Taala? Why do you not direct your belief to Allahu Taala and place your option in this belief and in the deeds which are the results of this belief?

When you know Allahu Taala as the Absolute Ruler and work without violating this trust and responsibility, indeed, you will love one another and be attached brothers! What wouldn't the Mercy of Allahu Taala create from this brotherhood? Every favor you gain is the result of a brotherhood produced by the belief in Allahu Taala and of His mercy and benevolence. And every trouble or calamity you experience is the result of fury,

resentment and hostility, which are infused in you as a retribution for not paying attention to Allahu Taala, for cruelty and injustice. And this is the result of attempting to make laws by yourselves or by following others who will compete with Allahu Taala; in short, of not believing only in Allahu Taala with a true belief in His Unity.

Briefly, the chief reason for the suffering of humanity is the crime of polytheism committed against Allahu Taala. The darkness of corruption that has surrounded the horizons of humanity, despite the improvements in knowledge and science, is the result of polytheism, disbelief, lack of belief in Allahu Taala's Unity and lack of mutual love. Unless they love one another, however hard human beings may try, they will not escape sufferings and disasters. And, unless they know Allahu Taala, love Him, regard Him as the Absolute Ruler and worship Him, men cannot love one another. Whatever might be thought of other than Allahu Taala and the path of Allahu Taala, all of them are paths leading to divisiveness and wretchedness. Can't you see that those who attend the mosque love one another and those who haunt the tavern fight?

Whatever you give your heart to, or whomever you worship besides Allahu Taala, each of them can be opposed and equated. And all of them are under the omnipotence and will of Allahu Taala. He is the Single Ruler who does not have a partner, match, like, opposite or equivalent, and He alone is the One whose equivalent is non-valid, false, a nonexistent equivalent, the existence of which is impossible.

Whatever you follow, worship, love or regard as the absolute ruler besides Allahu Taala, be it known that it will burn together with you.

(In the middle of bankruptcy, absolutely I am with no good fortune. Pre-occupied with my woes, trying to save myself, I lack the expertise)

as-Sayyid Abdulhakim Arwasi

A BIOGRAPHY of
SAYYID ABDULHAKÎM EFENDI
1281 [1865 A.D.] — 1362 [1943 A.D.]

Immured within the smothering haze of complacency pampered by a smattering of science somehow acquired in the name of knowledge, we were bluntly unconscious of the existence of great Islamic scholars and their gigantic works, and especially of the so many highly exalted savants and Walîs who were compared to the Israelite prophets ‘salawâtullâhi ta’âlâ ‘alaihim ajma’în’, and all we possessed in the name of religious knowledge was a precariously diminutive assortment which consisted of whatever we had heard from our parents and which was being gnawed away piecemeal by the storms blowing around us; and the pitiable situation would have become no better, if not worse for the sake of most unflagging optimism, had it not been for Sayyid Abdulhakîm Efendî ‘quddisa sirruh’; a great genius, a gift that Allâhu ta’âlâ bestowed upon the Turkish nation and who made us hear about the names of innumerable Islamic books each and every one of which is a treasure of values and virtues and a key to the eternal felicity, and who caused us to attain the fortune of reading and understanding their contents which have a curing effect on psychopaths; a savior of the innocent and credulous people who had been fooled into lethal heresies and perdition by the sequinned fallacies of unbelievers and renegades; a learned psychotherapist who forearmed the younger generations with panacea by making people suffering from mental perplexities taste the existence of Allâhu ta’âlâ, the superiority of our Prophet ‘sall-Allâhu ‘alaihi wa sallam’ and the inner nature of imân and Islam; the refreshing morning breeze that swept away the clouds of unbelief and apostasy which had been blackening the hearts and obscuring the sacred path of our noble ancestors; a sun of

knowledge and ma'rifat that cleared the horizons of the gloom of irreligiousness that had thoroughly enveloped the sources of îmân; a noble descendant of the Best of Mankind 'sall-Allâhu 'alaihi wa sallam' and a profoundly learned Walî possessed of an expertise in all the subtle particulars of the four Madhhabs and in the sublime facts about the (spiritual grades attained through various paths and called) Wilâyat. It has therefore been seen fit to present a brief biography of that virtuous worldly and next-worldly guide and thereby to leave a keepsake for those happy people who have had the fluke of reading his books.

Sayyid Abdulhakîm bin Mustafâ Arwâsî 'qaddas-Allâhu ta'âlâ asrârahumâ', one of the greatest scholars in the (chain of scholars called) Sôfiyya-i-aliyya and a model of excellence among those scholars who faultlessly practised their religious knowledge, was a personified treasure of faculties well above his colleagues and contemporaries in the accomplishment of Islamic services such as terwîj-i-dîn and nashr-i-'ilm and seha-i-tâbi' and in the enactment and practice of the shar'i sherîf-i-Ahmadî 'sall-Allâhu 'alaihi wa sallam'.

He was born in Başkal'a (Bashqal'a), a town within the limits of Van, (an Eastern Turkey) province, in 1281 [1865 A.D.]. He received an ijâzat [a diploma] in the earlier half of the hijrî year 1300. Not only did he receive an authorization from the Allâma Sayyid Fehîm 'quddisa sirruh' in sciences such as 'ilm-i-sarf and nahw (the Arabic grammar); mantiq (logic); munâzara (argumentation); wadî', (which means, literally, posture, attitude, legislation); bayân (expression, discourse); ma'ânî (lexicology, semantics); bedî' (rhetoric); kalâm (speech, branch of science helpful in understanding the Qur'ân al-kerîm); usûl-i-fiqh (methodology employed in fiqh); tafsîr (explanation of the Qur'ân al-kerîm); tasawwuf; nush-i-li-l-muslimîn; iftâ-'alal madhhabîn; 'ulûm-i-hikamiyya, or hikmat-i-tabî'iyya, [which covers sciences such as physics and biology]; hikmat-i-ilâhiyya; riyâdiyya (mathematics); hay'at [astronomy]; and 'ulûm-i-zâhiriyya. The same profoundly learned scholar taught and gave him full authorization in the orders of Tasawwuf such as Mujaddidî; Qâdirî; Kubrawî; Suhrawardî; and Cheshtî. His father was Sayyid Muhyiddîn, whose father was Sayyid Muhammad, whose father was Sayyid Abdurrahmân, who was at the same time Sayyid Fehîm's father's father 'rahmatullâhi 'alahim ajma'in'.

That his paternal chain traces back to Alî Ridâ bin Kâzim, one of the twelve imâms 'rahimahumullâhu ta'âlâ, is written in the registers of canonical lawcourt in Iraq, which is a document bearing the blessed signature of Sayyid Abdurrazzâq 'quddisa sirruh', a grandson of Sayyid Abdulqâdir Geylânî 'radiy-Allâhu 'anh'.

Surviving the oppressions and massacres perpetrated by the Armenians, who were emboldened when the Russian army reached a spot only an hour's march from Başkal'a on the first day of the blessed month of Rajab, 1332 [1914 A.D.], Sayyid Abdulhakîm Arwâsî and seventy of his kith and kin, women, children and all, set out on a middle-eastern migratory odyssey which carried them via a number of Iraqi and Anatolian towns and cities such as Ruwandiz, Erbil, Mosul, Adana and Eskişehir, and which eventually ended in the township of Eyyûb Sultân, Istanbul, in the early Shawwâl of 1337 [1919 A.D.]. First they were accomodated in the Yazılı Madrasa, a school building in the market-place. Then he was appointed as imâm in the mosque called Murtaâ Efendi, which was in the vicinity of Idris Köşk at Gümüşsuyu. He had made hajj twice before the migration. He has a number of letters in the form of pamphlets. Among them are such extremely valuable masterpieces as his work telling about the commencement of religious practices such as Mawlîd and the using of the (prayer beads termed) Tesbîh and their canonical lawfulness; his booklet entitled **Râbita-i-sherîfa**; his book entitled **er-Riyâd-ut-tasawwufiyya**, which he wrote during his career as a mudarris [professor] of Tasawwuf in the Islamic university called **Madrasa-i-mutahassisîn** during the reign of Sultân Wahîdaddîn Khân; his books **Sahâba-i-kirâm** (Sahâba 'the Blessed') and **Ajdâd-i-Peygamberî**; and his work on the Islamic jurisprudence; in addition to his poems in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. He neither ventured into politics, nor involved himself in any political complications. He was against all factions, especially those which were being carried on in the disguise of mystic orders. He was never heard to mention words such as 'shaikh' and 'murîd' after the enactment of the law banning tekkes. Not only was he himself an ideal model in strict law-abidingness, but also he would always advise his company to follow his example. However, his sermons on the pulpits of various mosques of Istanbul such as Eyyûb Sultân, Fâtih, Bâyezîd, Bakırköy, Kadıköy and Ağa, Beyoğlu, wherein he

reiterated his disapproval of a group of impostors who were exploiting the Islamic values for their worldly advantages, incurred the ire of the iniquitous rogues, who had recourse to calumny in counteraction. So vigorous was the smear campaign they waged against him, that eventually he was arrested in his home in Istanbul on the eighteenth of Ramadân, 1362, which coincided with the eighteenth of September, 1943, a Saturday, and transported to Izmir, where he was first lodged in a hotel, Meserret, and then moved to a private house. After an almost three months' sojourn there, he left for Ankara on the tenth day of Zilqa'da, Monday, and, arriving in the city on Tuesday, he went to his nephew Fârûk Işık's place, where he stayed bedridden for eighteen days. It was eighteen minutes before sunset, twelve according to the adhânî time and six-thirty by the zawâlî time, on the twenty-ninth of Zilqa'da, 1362, which was the twenty-seventh of Teshrîn thâni [November], Saturday, 1943, when he attained his eternal palace in the Hereafter. A light earthquake was recorded during the night. That day his blessed corpse was taken to his son-in-law Ibrâhîm's house at Keçiören, where he was washed and shrouded, the (prayer termed) janâza salât was performed, and the blessed corpse, (which had served one of the darlings of Allâhu ta'âlâ for eighty-one years,) was interred at Bağlum, a township twenty-four kilometres north of Ankara, at sunset. Husayn Hilmi Işık was the lucky person who was honoured to join the janâza salât for him, to enter his blessed grave, and to undertake the duty of talqîn. (Please see the thirteenth through nineteenth chapters of the fifth fascicle of **Endless Bliss** for information about death and terms, duties and services connected with death.) His grave is on the north-eastern part of the cemetery, which in turn occupies a gentle slope some fifty metres west of the township. Beside the entrance to the mosque of Bağlum is the blessed grave of Hadrat Sayyid Burhânaddîn Mûshî. May Allâhu ta'âlâ make his rank even higher! May He make us attain his shafâ'at! May He bless us with reading his books, following the path he guides, and always reaping spiritual fruits from his blessed soul! Âmîn.

***Let each Muslim weep and shed tears of blood,
For Sayyid Abdulhakîm has left the world!
Âlim-ul-âmil and Walî-i-kâmil he was,
And a wealth of sublime, occult secrets.***

***All were suddenly orphaned, so destitute
Are now, both Islam and truth, no doubt.
My eyes reject what they themselves see;
Has that noble received the Divine Command 'Be'?***

***The earth danced with joy throughout the night,
And embraced him the next day, with delight.
Alas, our blessed Sun has declined;
Unique is the time that his being defined!***

***He was, in his latest days, so grief-stricken,
Afflicted with pains'n sorrows, a sign for the woe-be-gone;
By the Islamic world it must be seriously taken:
Apathy whose issue with bloody tears cannot be undone!***

***In the name of eternity that has embraced his soul,
I have summarized a life that'd make a history.
Society without him is a carcass without a soul;
Islam bemoans, and heavens weep over this story!***

Mehmet Timuroğlu