

MALFUZAT

Sayings & Discourses of the Promised Messiah

VOLUME I

*Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
(on whom be peace)*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

MALFUZAT

————— of —————

The Promised Messiah & Mahdi^{as}

Malfuzat — Volume I

Sayings and Discourses of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, on whom be peace,
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

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MALFUZAT

*Sayings and Discourses of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community*

Volume I

A collection from 1891 to October 1898

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

*Published under the auspices of Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Imam and Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,
Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah^{as},
May Allah be his Helper*

Contents

About the Promised Messiah^{as}	xxi
A Note About the Translation	xxiii
Preface	xxv
Introduction	xxix
Foreword	xxxii
1891	
The Purpose of the Advent of the Promised Messiah ^{as}	1
The Types of Faith.....	1
1895	
The Oath of Allegiance and Repentance	2
The Reality of Sin and Repentance.....	3
Prayer is an Antidote	4
Repentance is an Essential Component of the Oath of Allegiance	4
A Superficial Oath of Allegiance is Useless	4
An Exhortation to Offer <i>Tahajjud</i>	5
To Bear Hardship for the Sake of Allah the Exalted.....	5
Do Not Adopt Hypocritical Ways	6
An Injustice Against Islam.....	6
Islam is a Benefactor of Other Religions	6
1896	
One Ought to Pray for One's Opponents.....	7
1897	
December 1897.....	8

**The First Address of the Promised Messiah^{as} at the
Annual Convention on 25 December 1897**

An Exhortation on Righteousness.....	9
Harmony in One's Words and Deeds.....	10
The Blessings of Righteousness.....	10
Spiritual Provision for a Righteous Person	11
Obligations and Voluntary Deeds.....	12
Every Action Ought to Be in Accordance with the Will of God	13
Even Those in the Company of the Righteous Are Safeguarded.....	13
The Righteous Receive Glad Tidings in this Very World.....	14
Trials Are Necessary	14
The Perfect Moral Example	15
A Righteous One Beholds the Hereafter in the Present Life.....	17
Three Stages of Knowledge	18
Who is Blind?.....	19
A Righteous Person	19
A Virtuous Servant.....	20
Good Deeds Are Best if Concealed.....	21
The Battle Between Ostentation and Forbearance	22
Two Blessed Parties that Tread the Path of God.....	22
Sincerity and Patience	23
Steadfastness.....	23
One Must Bear Trials to Become a Saint	24
Two Paths of Progress.....	25
The Spiritual Quest.....	25
Spiritual Magnetism	26
Faith in the Unseen	27
The Observance of Prayer	28
Spending from the Provision of Allah	30
Provision.....	31
Learning Reaches Perfection in Stages	31
A True Religion is One that Nurtures the Human Faculties	32
The Meaning of the Islamic Veil.....	33
Disciplined and Proper Use of the Human Faculties	34
Live a Life of Humility and Modesty	35

Distinction Amongst Castes	36
Who Are the Righteous?	36
The Holy Quran Is a Perfect Guidance.....	37
A Magnificent Miracle of the Noble Prophet ^{sa}	38
The Holy Quran Possesses Every Truth	38
The Messiah and the Mahdi.....	39
The Similarity between the Dispensations of Moses ^{as} and Muhammad ^{sa}	40
The Rank of the Holy Prophet ^{sa} and His Companions.....	41
The Reality of Jihad	43
An Exhortation for the Community.....	44
The Advent of the Messiah in the Israelite and Ishmaelite Dispensations.....	46
The Death of Jesus ^{as}	46
What Special Relation Does the Messiah Possess with This Age?.....	47
A Universal Sign in Support of the Promised Messiah.....	49
The Promised Messiah's Place of Advent.....	50
Heavenly and Earthly Calamities.....	50

**The Second Address of the Promised Messiah^{as}
at the Annual Convention on 28 December 1897 after *Zuhr* Prayer**

Everyone Prepare Themselves for their Journey to the Afterlife	52
Belief in the Existence of Allah Almighty	52
Belief in the Hereafter.....	53
The Lives of the Pious.....	54
The Meaning of ' <i>Ribat</i> '	54
Spiritual Struggle and Exercise.....	55
A Distinction of the Arabic Language.....	56
Islam was Granted Two Strengths in War	57
The Present Era Calls for Feats in Spiritual Battle.....	57
Jihad in the Present Age.....	57
The Present Era Calls for the Pen.....	58
The Purpose of the Advent of the Promised Messiah	59
One Ought to Make Use of Reason	60
Every Commandment of the Quranic Teaching is Underpinned by Purpose and Wisdom.....	60
The God of Islam	61

The Imprint of God’s Unity is Present in Every Aspect of Nature	62
The Teaching of the Quran is Attested by the Law of Nature.....	63
The Need for Revelation.....	63
True Insight.....	64
The Radiance of Revelation.....	65
How to Attain Success in this World and the Hereafter.....	65
Harmony in One’s Words and Actions.....	66
Act Upon My Counsel.....	66
The Study of Modern Sciences.....	66
True Philosophy Lies in the Quran	67
Make the Modern Sciences Subserving to Islam.....	67
The Proper Time for Religious Education and Training.....	68
The Effect of Company	69
Become Virtuous and Righteous So that Your Reason May Be Illumined and Enlightened.....	70
One Virtue Begets Another.....	71
The Reward of a Good Deed is Never Wasted	72
What is Virtue?.....	72
Who is a True Muslim?.....	73
The Manner in which to Attain the Honour of Serving Islam.....	74
True Gratitude Is in Adopting Righteousness and Purity.....	75
Righteousness Fills Others with Awe.....	76
The Aspects of Righteousness	77
The Miracles of Our Noble Prophet ^{sa}	78
The Eloquence and Articulacy of the Holy Quran	79
The Comprehensive Nature of the Holy Quran	80
A Challenge of the Holy Quran.....	80
The Excellence of a Miracle.....	82
The Teaching of the Gospel was Specific to Its Era.....	82
The Quran Is for All Eras.....	83
The Need for the Holy Quran after the Torah.....	83
The Second Difference between the Teaching of the Holy Quran and the Torah.....	84
The Holy Quran Presents Arguments and Proofs by Itself.....	85
Physical and Spiritual Miracles	86

The Law of Nature Cannot be Restricted	86
It Is Unwise to Consider the Powers and Wonders of God to Be Limited.....	88
The Purpose of Prophetic Miracles.....	90
Intelligent is He Who Recognises a Prophet.....	90
The Reason for Naming the Quran ‘The Reminder’	92
The Present Era Has Brought a Heavenly Teacher	93
The State of the Present Age and the Need for a Reformer	94
The Advancement of Today is Also a Miracle of Islam.....	95
Ill-Thinking	96
The Moral Miracles of the Holy Prophet ^{sa}	96
Our Community Ought to Make Progress in Morality.....	98
A Magnificent Glad-Tiding for the Ahmadiyya Community	99

**Third Address of the Promised Messiah^{as}
at the Annual Convention on 30 December 1897**

Sympathy and Compassion for Friends	101
Principles of the Acceptance of Prayer	101
Conditions for the Acceptance of Prayer	104
Save Our Prayers from Being Wasted.....	104
Three States of the Human Soul.....	105
Nothing in the World is Empty of Benefit	105
Without a Soul at Rest One Cannot Attain Salvation.....	107
The Purpose of Human Existence	108
Miracles.....	109
Two Schools of Thought Among the Mystics—Oneness of Being and Oneness of Witnessing.....	111
The Servitude of the Holy Prophet ^{sa}	113
Two Forms of Divine Power.....	113
The Stage at which the Godly Perform Actions of Divine Nature.....	114
Fear the Insight of a Believer.....	115
The Unparalleled Status of the Unlettered Prophet	117
Before Praying One Must Exert their Faculties to the Fullest.....	120
The Properties of Things Are Another Name for Knowledge.....	121
The Purpose of the Supplication ‘Guide Us in the Right Path’	121
A Community Blessed with God’s Mercy	122

The Affinity of Muslims with Heavenly Knowledge	123
Morals Are the Sign of a Person’s Virtue.....	124
The Graciousness and Mercy of God	125
To Beg is Human and to Bestow is Divine	126
Guidance to Seek True Insight.....	127
The Meaning of Wisdom	128
What Are Morals?	128
The Lofty Morals of the Noble Messenger ^{sa}	130
The Purification of the Soul and Success	131
For Every Illness There Is a Cure—The Broader Connotation.....	133
Two Forms of Old Age	133
A Transformation of Morals Is Possible Through Struggle and Prayer.....	134
Two Perspectives on the Transformation of Morals.....	134
Three Conditions of Repentance	135
Who is Truly Mighty?.....	136
High Moral Excellences Are a Magnificent Miracle	137
Do Not Disregard My Advice.....	139
A Sinner is One Who Severs their Relationship with God Almighty in This Life	140
A Person Who Strives Towards God Never Fails	140
The Miracle of Morals.....	142
Safeguard the Dignity and Honour of the Community	143
The Pure Example of Ikrimah	144
Sound Doctrine and Good Deeds	145
The Timings of Prayer Are an Illustration that Reflect Man’s Spiritual Conditions.....	146

14 January 1898

Remember the Hereafter.....	148
-----------------------------	-----

14 January 1898

The Sign of a Truthful Person and a Liar	150
--	-----

15 January 1898

Doctrines of the Shia Faith.....	150
The Food of the People of the Book	151

15 January 1898

Worldly Achievements and Joys Are Not Everlasting	151
The Difference between the Success of a Believer and a Non-Believer.....	153
Blessed Is the One Who Adheres to Righteousness at Times of Prosperity and Joy	154

An Address by the Promised Messiah^{as} Delivered on 18 January 1898

Divine Decree.....	155
Worship Has Been Invested with Pleasure and Delight.....	156
The Reality of the Relationship between Man's Servitude and Divine Providence	158
The Cause for Not Deriving Pleasure in Prayer and Its Cure	159
The Spirit in the Essential Parts of the Prayer.....	161
True Prayer	162
Turning towards Anything besides Allah.....	163
Making Recourse to Means Is Also an Aspect of Prayer	164
The Secret Behind a Divinely Commissioned One's Call for Help.....	166
The Philosophy of Sin and Methods of Safeguarding Oneself.....	168
The 'Greatest Name' of Man is Steadfastness.....	171
A String of Reformers within the Muslim Community	174
The Means for the Acceptance of Prayer	175

19 January 1898

The Reformer of the Fourteenth Century and His Task.....	178
A Magnificent Prophecy of Divine Succour and Assistance for the Holy Prophet ^{sa}	179
The Defence of Islam Through Ahmadiyyat	180
Islam Can Benefit from the Sedition Act	181

19 January 1898

Atonement.....	181
Belief in the Atonement Emboldens a Person to Commit Sin	182
Atonement Contradicts the Law of Nature	184
Good Deeds and Righteousness.....	185
A Righteous Person and One Who Does Good.....	186
The Spiritual Power of the Holy Prophet ^{sa}	187

The Actual Purpose of Man's Creation.....	188
A Life Devoted to God.....	189
The Purpose of Man's Creation Is Worship.....	190
Two Classes Mentioned in Surah Asr.....	192
The Right Path.....	193
The Breast of Man Is the House of Allah and the Heart Is the Black Stone....	194
Obey Me and Follow Me.....	195
Guidance of the Holy Quran for the Perfection of Knowledge and Practice	196
The Opponents of One Divinely Appointed by Allah Lose Their Faith.....	197
Exhort One Another to Accept Truth.....	198
Exhort One Another to Be Steadfast.....	199
The Company of the Truthful.....	200
All the Insights of the Holy Quran	
Are Comprised in Surah Fatihah.....	201
The 'Mother Attributes' of Allah Almighty.....	202
Graciousness and Mercy.....	205
The Mutual Relationship between	
Prayer and the Law of Nature.....	205
The Hindu Concept of God.....	208
The Christian Concept of God.....	209
Guidance is Received by the Graciousness of God.....	210
The Light and Blessings of the Holy Prophet ^{sa}	211
Guidance to Save Oneself from the Ways of Those	
Who Have Incurred Divine Displeasure and Those Gone Astray.....	212

21 January 1898

Seeking Forgiveness Is a Shield in the Face of Divine Chastisement and Grievous Calamities.....	214
How to Save Oneself from Divine Chastisement.....	215
A Course of Morality for the Community.....	216
The Essence of Ramadan.....	217

29 January 1898

Man's Spiritual Capabilities Are Affected by that which He Worships.....	217
Provisions by Way of Trial and Provisions by Way of Anointment.....	218

30 January 1898

The Truth About the World and Its Pleasures218

An Address Delivered by the Promised Messiah^{as} on 31 January 1898 After *Fajr* Prayer

Man Inherently Seeks to Follow Perfection.....	220
What Causes the Divinely Commissioned to Be Opposed?.....	221
The Effect of Apparent Grace.....	221
The Truth Behind the Holy Quran Taking Oath on Created Entities	222
Is India <i>Dar-ul-Harb</i> ?.....	223
What Does Indignation for Islam Demand?	224
Why Does Christianity Oppose Islam?.....	226
The Philosophy of the Holy Quran Taking Oath on Created Entities.....	227
Hidden Insights in the Oaths of God Almighty	229
The Meaning of Giving a Loan to Allah.....	232
The Reason for the Decline of the Christians	233
A Succession of the Recipients of Revelation and the Reformers.....	234
The Wisdom Behind a Temporary Cease in Revelation.....	235
The Jihad of This Era.....	236
Gratitude is Part of My Nature.....	237
The Weapon of This Era is the Pen.....	238
Victory Demands Righteousness.....	238
Financial Sacrifices Are Needed for the Propagation of Islam	238
Improve in Your Morals and Actions	239

January 1898

An Instruction to Visit the Centre.....240

1 February 1898

Special Guidance for Those Travelling Abroad.....	240
A Prayer of the Promised Messiah ^{as}	241

24 February 1898

The Relationship between a Disciple and a Spiritual Guide.....241

February 1898

Polygamy.....242

The Diverse Nature of God Is a Mercy	242
A Delay in the Acceptance of Prayer Leads to Success	243
The Reason that Punishment Was Averted from the People of Jonah ^{as}	243
The Interpretation of Offering Eid Prayer in the City	244
The Meaning of ‘The Father of Fire’ and ‘The Woman Carrying Firewood’ ..	244
Prayer Ought to Evoke Desire	244
Excessive Literalism Results in Misguidance	245

February 1898

Those Who Are Mindful of the Hereafter Are Forever Blessed.....	245
Develop in Yourselves a Pure Transformation	246
An Aspect of God’s Oneness.....	246

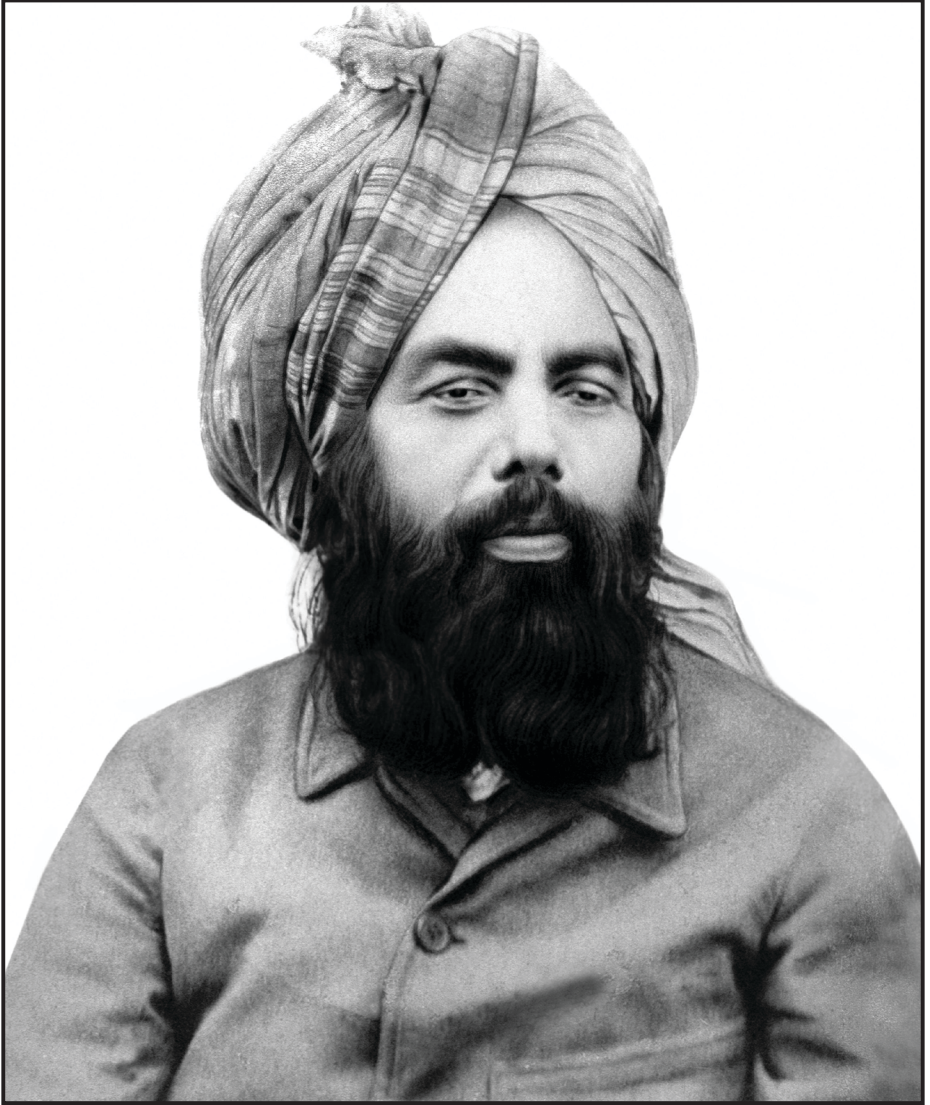
1 May 1898

The Confiscation of Books Against Islam	247
---	-----

2 May 1898

The Temporary World.....	248
Three Arguments in Support of the Hereafter	248
The Meaning of a ‘Loss of Fruits’	250
The Plague Is a Sign of Divine Wrath.....	250
The Reason for the Emergence of the Plague.....	252
The Plague Is a Punishment	253
Unhealthy Environments Give Rise to the Plague	253
The Effect of Physical Cleanliness upon the Inner Self.....	254
The Properties of Camphor.....	254
To Make Use of Apparent Means Is Not Forbidden	255
Depend on Allah Almighty Alone.....	255
Prophecies Warning of Divine Punishment Can Be Averted Through Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness.....	256
The Measures of the Government in These Days of Plague Are Correct	258
What is Plague?	259
Current Scientific Research Supports Islam	260
The Causes of Plague.....	261
Obedience to Those in Authority.....	262
Adopt the Ways of Prosperity	263
Observe Your Prayers with Strict Regularity.....	264

The Trial of Abraham ^{as}	264
Bring About a Change in Yourselves.....	266
16 May 1898	
Join the Beloved of God.....	267
25 July 1898	
The Best Response to Abusive Language.....	268
1 August 1898	
Insights Descend upon the Heart through Divine Succour.....	269
Consideration for Apparent Means	270
The Evening of 23 August 1898	
Why Does Modern Philosophy Give Rise to Irreligiousness?	270
25 August 1898	
Present-Day Persian.....	271
The Breadth of the Arabic Language.....	272
The Spiritual Revolution Brought About by Islam	273
26 September 1898	
Glad Tidings of Success.....	274
The Excellences of the Arabic Language.....	275
Four Categories of Signs in Favour of My Truthfulness	276
3 October 1898	
A Dream	278
The Acceptance of Thirty Thousand Prayers.....	279
The Effects of Prayer in My Arabic Works.....	279
Glossary.....	281
Index.....	287
Index of Verses of the Holy Quran.....	285
Index of Subject Matter	289



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah & Mahdi
(on whom be peace)

About the Promised Messiah^{as}

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, on whom be peace, was born in 1835 in Qadian, India. From his early life, he dedicated himself to prayer, the study of the Holy Quran and other scriptures. He was deeply pained to observe the plight of Islam, which was being attacked from all directions. In order to defend Islam and present its teachings in their pristine purity, he wrote more than ninety books, thousands of letters and participated in many religious debates. He argued that Islam is a living Faith, which can lead humanity to the achievement of moral and spiritual perfection by establishing communion with God.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, on whom be peace, started experiencing divine dreams, visions and revelations at a young age. In 1889, under divine command, he started accepting initiation into the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He continued to receive divine revelations and was thereafter commanded by God to announce that he was the divinely appointed Reformer of the Latter Days, as prophesied by various religions under different titles. He claimed to be the same Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is now established in more than two hundred countries of the world.

After the demise of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, in 1908, the institution of *Khilafat* (successorship) was established to continue his mission, in fulfilment of the prophecies made in the Holy Quran and by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, may Allah be his Helper, is the Fifth Successor to the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, and the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

A Note About the Translation

References to the Holy Quran contain the name of the *Surah* [i.e. chapter] followed by a chapter:verse citation, e.g. *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:4, and counts *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim* [In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful] as the first verse in every chapter it appears.

Explanatory footnotes are clearly marked as being from the Publisher throughout the book.

The name of Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *sallallahu alayhi wa salam* (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The names of other Prophets and Messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for *alayhis-salam* (on whom be peace).

The names of the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} or of the Promised Messiah^{as} are followed by the symbol ^{ra}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *radiyallu anhu/anha/anhum* (may Allah be pleased with him/her/them).

The names of deceased pious Muslims who are not companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} or of the Promised Messiah^{as} are followed by the symbol ^{rh}, which is an abbreviation for *rahmatullahi alayhi/alayha/alayhim* (may Allah have mercy upon him/her/them).

In instances, the actual salutations have been set out in full, but wherever this is not the case, they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case.

Preface

It is by the sheer grace and mercy of Allah Almighty, and the blessings and guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) that the first volume of *Malfuzat—Sayings & Discourses of the Promised Messiah*^{as} is being published in English. This translation is based on the new ten-volume typed edition of *Malfuzat* prepared and published by Nazarat-e-Isha'at Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya in 2016; and the present volume in English spans from 1891 to October of 1898.

A collection of sayings and discourses of the Promised Messiah^{as} was first published in the form of a complete set by Al-Shirkatul Islamiyyah in ten volumes. Subsequently, Nazarat-e-Isha'at published the content of this ten-volume set in five volumes.

Following this, Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) instructed that a computerised typeset edition of *Malfuzat* be prepared. He stated that the books in the five-volume set of *Malfuzat* were heavy and uneasy to handle; therefore, the five-volume *Malfuzat* should be printed in ten volumes again. In light of these instructions, a new typeset edition of *Malfuzat* was prepared and published in ten volumes.

In the preparation of this most recent typeset edition, the original sources from *Al-Hakam* and *Al-Badr* Qadian were studied and every effort was made to include any spoken words of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, which had been missed from inclusion previously. Hence, due to this effort there were certain sayings and discourses of the Promised Messiah, which had not previously been included in the collection known as *Malfuzat*; and so they have now been added to this new edition.

In view of the guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper), wherever there are differences in the reports of *Al-Hakam* and *Al-Badr*, these have been recorded in footnotes. The relevant words have been recorded as footnotes in a manner that the context of the respective text is clear. Therefore, in

view of this, footnotes have been added in the new edition as required.

In the earlier edition of *Malfuzat* there were certain sayings of the Promised Messiah^{as} which had not been placed correctly in terms of chronological order. All such sections have been appropriately rearranged. In certain instances, notes from the Editor had been misplaced; this has been corrected as well.

This English translation is a rendering of pp. 1-255 (or the first half) of volume 1, from the new 2016 edition of *Malfuzat* prepared by Nazarat-e-Isha'at. In accordance with the instructions of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper), this was done so that the size of the English volume could be kept lightweight and as easy to read as possible.

In various sections throughout the Urdu text, it was found that there were misprints or errors in reporting, which had followed through since the old edition of *Malfuzat*, and in fact, even existed in the original sources as recorded by *Al-Hakam*. All such instances were presented with detailed reports to Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih V (may Allah be his Helper), and after his approval, were corrected in the English translation within the main text. No footnotes stating the original misprint and the correction were given in light of guidance from Huzoor-e-Anwar (may Allah be his Helper).

Ayyaz Mahmood Khan was blessed with the good fortune of rendering this English translation from the Urdu. The tireless efforts of Abdul Quddus Arif are also worthy of mention, who worked with the translator to check the English work against the original source text. The selfless devotion of Syed Muhammad Tahir Nasser and Nadia Mahmood must also be highlighted, both of whom edited the final manuscript and offered invaluable improvements to the overall style and readability of the translation. Immense gratitude is also due to Farhan Naseer who designed the layout of the book and prepared it for print.

Additionally, we are grateful to Faisal Mahmood Khan, Shahzad Ahmed, Mansoor Ahmad Clarke, Zafir Mahmood Malik, Ataul Fattir Tahir, Nauman Ahmed Hadi, Atif Rashid, Syed Muhammad Umar Nasser, Rabeeb Ahmed Mirza, Sadia Safdar Rana, Syed Taalay Ahmed, Qudsi Rasheed, Ahmad Nooruddeen Jahangeer Khan, Hammad Ahmad and Fatima Amatullah Naseer for assisting in proofreading various sections of the manuscript.

The indexes were prepared with the help of Basil Raza Butt, Mohammad Ibrahim Syed, Hassan Ahmad Minhas, Munib Harun Iqbal, Sohaib Ahmad, Junaid Aslam, Falahuddin Ahmad Bin Abdul Latiff, Samiullah Ahmed, Atta ul

Hai, Syed Zeeshan Ahmad Akif, Mahir Ahmad—all students of Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada. The verses of the Holy Quran and other Arabic references were checked in the final stages by Hafiz Tayyeb Ahmed and Hafiz Ihtsham Ahmad Moman, from Jamia Ahmadiyya United Kingdom. Hafiz Muzaffar Ahmad also assisted in researching difficult passages and Abdul Ghany Jahangeer Khan also provided unrelenting assistance whenever he was called upon.

The Central Arabic Desk also offered their full assistance in various capacities. Throughout the course of this project, Malik Khalid Masood, Nazir Isha'at, offered constant and invaluable support in addressing any queries that were directed to him. From India, if ever any research was required Mamoon Rasheed Tabrez of Qadian, offered his full cooperation.

May Allah the Exalted reward all those who assisted—in any capacity—to bring this work to fruition; may He shower His mercy and grace upon their families and accept their services. *Ameen*, and again, *ameen*.

Publisher

1 July 2018

Introduction

Written for the Five-Volume Set of Malfuzat

Malfuzat refers to the holy and insightful words of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, on whom be peace, which he expressed verbally from time to time in his pure and holy gatherings or before congregations at the Annual Convention, for the purification of his followers and for their spiritual and moral training, thus enabling them to forge a living relationship with God; to teach the knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Quran; to revive the religion of Islam and to establish the shariah of Muhammad^{sa}.

These blessed sayings and discourses of his Holiness, on whom be peace, are an invaluable source of content that presents decisive verdicts issued by the divinely appointed Arbiter of this age regarding theological debates that had confused the Muslims for 1300 years and also sheds light on other matters of religion; it provides a rebuttal to the allegations levelled against Islam by the Christian priests and the Aryas; it provides evidence for the existence of God and refutes the objections of atheists and western philosophers with relation to life after death, revelation and prophethood; it provides for new converts, who have joined the Ahmadiyya Community, heart-warming advice and guidance of the Promised Messiah^{as}; it showcases the unparalleled love that the Promised Messiah^{as} possessed for his Master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; it covers the divine claims and teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as} and also various incidents from his day to day life; and also sheds light on the life and character of his Holiness and the important milestones in the history of Ahmadiyyat.

It is an immense favour of Allah the Almighty that in this day and age, He has made available such means that these spiritually rejuvenating and faith-inspiring, blessed words of the Imam of the Latter Days have been preserved until the end of

time. May Allah Almighty elevate the station of pure-hearted, loyal, unrelenting and revered men such as Hazrat Maulvi Abdul Karim^{ra}, Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra} and Sheikh Yaqub Ali Irfani^{ra}, whom Allah had granted a unique fervour, passion and strength in this regard. Fulfilling their oath of giving precedence to the Faith over worldly affairs, these great men worked tirelessly, day and night, with immense toil and effort to preserve in writing the *Malfuzat* of the Promised Messiah^{as}, exactly as he had spoken them; and continued to publish these blessed words in *Badr* and *Al-Hakam*, during the lifetime of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

Efforts to compile *Malfuzat* in book form were undertaken in the past, but it was Hazrat Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Shams^{ra} who received the honour of first publishing them in the form of a complete set. Under his supervision, ten volumes of *Malfuzat* were compiled and published in the short time spanning from 1960 to 1967. Albeit, the first volume of *Malfuzat* which comprises the blessed words of the Promised Messiah^{as} from 1891 to 1899, was published by Nazarat Talifo-Tasnif, Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya Qadian. This volume was compiled by Chaudhary Ahmad Jaan Sahib, Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Sahib and Maulvi Abdur-Rashid Sahib Zerwi. The second and third volumes were compiled by Chaudhary Ahmad Jaan Sahib. The subsequent parts from volume 4 to volume 10, comprise the blessed words of the Promised Messiah^{as} from 15 October 1902 to the date of his demise on 26 May 1908; the honour of collating the content for these volumes was received by Hazrat Maulvi Muhammad Ismael Sahib Fazil Diyalgarhi.

The index for the first four volumes was compiled by Hazrat Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Shams^{ra} and the index for the remaining six volumes was prepared by Hazrat Maulana Abdul-Latif Bahawalpuri. This set was published in England some years ago. However, in light of the guidance of Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (may Allah be his Helper):

- i. The ten-volume *Malfuzat* has been printed in five volumes, and benefits from high quality script and binding.
- ii. All verses of the Holy Quran quoted in the text have been referenced.
- iii. As required, new subject headings have been added.
- iv. For the ease of readers, a new index of subject matter, Quranic verses, names and places have been included.

Wassalam,
Humbly,
Syed Abdul Hayee

Foreword

Written for the Ten-Volume Set of Malfuzat (First Edition)

After we had finished publishing all the books of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, we initially planned to begin publishing a new series of the *Rubani Khaza'in* (Spiritual Treasures) comprising the announcements, letters and blessed words of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace. However, on the request of our friends and especially on the extreme insistence of Hazrat Sahibzadah Mirza Nasir Ahmad, may Allah protect him, who were of the view that *Malfuzat* ought to be printed quickly, Al-Shirkatul Islamiyyah Limited is now publishing *Malfuzat*.

One reason for our change of plan is the strong feeling of our community that there is a dire need for spiritual training at present. The second reason is—as stated in the foreword to the first edition of *Malfuzat*, Volume 1—that the *Malfuzat* of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, is a valuable treasure of extraordinary content that commands the power to teach and train not only us, but also our future generations.

The words of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, may be divided into four categories:

Firstly: The books, written treatises, and announcements of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, which he wrote himself for publication.

Secondly: Letters of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, which he wrote with his own pen and sent to his friends, dear ones and others.

Thirdly: The *Malfuzat* of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, referring to those of his words that he spoke in the form of an address or discussion in the presence of a congregation or gathering, or during leisurely moments, etc., and which were noted down by scribes and published in the form of a diary, etc., in the very lifetime of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace.

Fourthly: Narrations are also a form of *Malfuzat*, but they were not immediately put to writing; in fact, they are collected and recorded from the memory of narrators.

As mentioned in the foreword to the first edition of *Malfuzat*, Volume 1, the reliability and authenticity of the four categories just mentioned ought to be taken in the sequence that they appear above. That is to say, in terms of authenticity, the books of the Promised Messiah^{as} stand first, then his letters, followed by his *Malfuzat*, and finally, narrations.

Having said this, as far as the spiritual and moral training of the community is concerned, in a way, *Malfuzat* stands first from among the words of the Promised Messiah^{as}. The reason being that the *Malfuzat* of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, are those of his words that he spoke directly to his friends and followers. Moreover, these words of his Holiness, on whom be peace, were spoken by him mostly in such settings when he had the education and training of the community in view. Hence, from among the categories mentioned above, *Malfuzat* comprises the greatest treasure as far as moral training and the reformation of one's inner self is concerned. As such, in his book *Fath-e-Islam*, the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, sheds light on the significance and need of such words in the following manner:

There can be no doubt in the fact that these verbal discourses which have taken place in the past or even now, or if I make an address of my own accord at an appropriate time and place—in certain cases—proves more beneficial, effective and swifter in touching people's hearts than reaching them through books. That is why all the Prophets have relied on this method. With the exception of the Word of Allah Almighty, which was recorded in writing with special care and published, whatever else the Prophets preached has always been in the form of discourses and addresses made at the appropriate time. The general practice of Prophets was to find strength from the soul and make addresses like wise lecturers at times of need, in various gatherings and assemblies, in view of their specific circumstances. However, they did not do so like the speakers of today, whose only purpose is to flaunt their wealth of knowledge in their speeches, or who speak to ensnare simple people through their own false logic and sophistries—making those people more worthy of hell than even themselves. On the contrary, Prophets speak with immense simplicity and whatever would gush forth from their own hearts, they would

fill into the hearts of others.

Their holy words would always fit the occasion perfectly and fulfilled the needs of the time. They would not speak to entertain their addressees or tell them false tales. They find the people ailing, drowned in diverse spiritual afflictions, and give them counsel in order to cure them, or dispel their doubts through conclusive arguments. Their words are few, but house a treasure of vast meaning. Thus, it is this very principle that my humble self keeps in view. As such, the door of dialogue and discourse remains open so that I may speak to my guests and visitors in accordance with the respective capacities, requirements and ailments which afflict them. To view evil as a target towards which one shoots the arrows of one's vital counsel in order to prevent sin and reform the morals of others just as dislocated limbs must be restored is not possible fully unless people are cured face to face. (Ruhani Khaza'in, Volume 3, Fath-e-Islam, pp. 15-17)

Therefore, in view of the education, moral training and reformation of our community, Al-Shirkatul Islamiyyah has changed its initial plan and is now publishing the blessed *Malfuzat* of the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, earlier than what was previously decided.

About the Present Volume

The text of this volume has been reproduced from *Malfuzat*, Volume 1, published in December of 1936, by the community's central directorate of publications in Qadian. This first edition was arranged and compiled primarily by the efforts of Chaudhary Ahmad Jaan Sahib (Director Finances of Tahrik Jadid), Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Sahib (Maulvi Fazil and currently serving as missionary in Lahore) and Maulvi Abdur-Rashid Sahib (Maulvi Fazil). May Allah grant them the best of rewards. This edition of *Malfuzat* comprises a collection collated from various newspapers and periodicals that spans from 1891 to 1899.

Malfuzat-e-Ahmadiyyah, Part 2, which was compiled by the late Raja Manzur Ilahi (from the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement) contained extracts from the following sources: *Al-Hakam*, vol. 13, no. 19, pp. 3-4 (under the title 'Before 1873'); *Al-Hakam*, vol. 7, no. 36, pp. 10-11 (under the title 'Near 1879'); *Al-Hakam*, vol. 6, no. 23 (under the title, 'Near the Time of 1879'); *Al-Hakam*, vol. 6, no. 44-45 (under the title 'Before 1879'); *Al-Hakam*, vol. 6, no. 46 and *Al-Hakam*, vol. 7, no. 3 (under the title 'Prior to 1879'); *Akhbar-e-Aam Lahore*, printed on

10 May 1885 (under the title '8 May 1885'); a treatise entitled, '*The Responses to Three Questions by Abdullah James, the Christian*'. Since all of these writings were treatises penned by the Promised Messiah^{as} himself, they have not been included in *Malfuzat*. We shall include these sources when the announcements of the Promised Messiah^{as} are compiled. As mentioned, *Malfuzat* refers to those words of his Holiness which he expressed verbally and which were then recorded by writers who kept a diary of his words.

May Allah the Exalted make these blessed *Malfuzat* a source of benefit for not only members of the community, but for others as well.

Humbly,
Jalal-ud-Din Shams
Currently in Quetta
20 August 1960

Hence, I loudly proclaim once again, and my friends ought to take heed that they must not disregard my words of advice and view them as the tales of a story-teller. Everything that I have said to you, I have said with a burning heart and true sympathy, which are inherently a part of my soul. Heed my words with the ear of your heart and act upon them.

— *Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian*
The Promised Messiah & Mahdi^{as}

*In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Ever Merciful
We praise Allah and invoke blessings upon His Noble Messenger^{sa};
And upon his servant, the Promised Messiah^{as}*

Malfuzat of the Promised Messiah^{as}

1891

The Purpose of the Advent of the Promised Messiah^{as}

Hazrat Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib^{ra} states: ‘I remember well—and I have written this in my notebook—that a person posed a question to His Holiness, our Truthful Imam, Hazrat Mirza Sahib^{as}, in Jalandhar about the purpose of his advent in the world. The Promised Messiah^{as} said: “I have come to strengthen people in their faith.”

The Types of Faith

There is another incident that is recorded in my notebook as well. This incident also took place in Jalandhar. A member of our community, our brother, Munshi Muhammad Arura Sahib inquired: “Your holiness, how many types of faith are there?” The Promised Messiah^{as} gave an immensely beautiful and subtle response: “There are two kinds of faith—rudimentary and refined. Rudimentary faith is to remain firm in practising the fundamental principles of religion without any deep insight (*din-ul-aja'iz*) and refined faith is to follow me.”¹

¹ Taken from a speech by Hazrat Maulana Abdul-Karim Sahib^{ra} delivered on 29 December 1897. Refer to report on the Jalsa Salana of 1897, pp. 106-107.

1895

Respected Mufti Muhammad Sadiq Sahib^{ra} writes: ‘Even in 1895 when I would visit the Promised Messiah^{as}, in my eagerness, I would record his holy words on a piece of paper and take them to Lahore where I would read them out to Ahmadi friends in our weekly meetings. I present here some of my recollections from that time to readers. In those days, since exact dates were not recorded, I put forth all of these words undated.’

The Oath of Allegiance and Repentance

One should understand the benefit and need of swearing an oath of allegiance to a spiritual guide. Until the benefit and worth of a thing is known, its value cannot be appreciated. For example, a person possesses diverse forms of wealth and property around their home, comprised of rupees, *paise*, *cowries*, and firewood, etc. Everything is safeguarded according to the degree of its worth. A person would not tend to the safekeeping of a *cowrie* as carefully as one is compelled to look after a *paisa* or rupee; firewood and the like is usually left lying around in the corner of one’s home. In the same manner, a person is more protective of that which inflicts more harm if lost. Likewise, the outstanding aspect of swearing allegiance to a spiritual guide is repentance (*tawbah*), which means to turn back (*ruju*). Repentance refers to the state when man forsakes the ties that bind him to sin. When a person is indulged in a life of sin, he begins to dwell in this state and sin becomes his homeland, as it were. So, *tawbah* is to leave one’s homeland and *ruju* means to purify oneself. It lies heavy on a person to leave their homeland and one is faced with thousands of difficulties in doing so. There are a myriad of problems that one is confronted with even when he leaves his home. But when it comes to migrating from one’s native land, an individual must sever ties with friends and loved ones, and bid farewell to everything, such as his hearth and home, his neighbours, the streets and alleys of his prior homeland, and its place of business. He is compelled to move to a new country and he never returns to his homeland. This is called *tawbah*. The friends of evil are different from those who befriend righteousness. The Sufis have named this transformation ‘death.’ A person who repents is compelled to sustain a heavy loss. Indeed, true repentance demands great sacrifices, but Allah the Exalted is Merciful and Munificent. God does not let a person die until He bestows upon them a better substitute for all

such losses. This is the very indication in:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ¹

Allah loves those who turn to him.

When one repents, they become destitute and helpless and this is why Allah the Exalted holds love and affection for such a person, and includes them among the community of the righteous. Other nations do not consider God to be Merciful and Munificent. The Christians effectively hold God to be a tyrant and His son to be merciful, for the father refused to forgive sin, while the son gave his own life to have others forgiven. It is absurd for there to be such a stark difference between father and son. Father and son always carry a resemblance in morals and habits, but here the case is exactly the opposite. If Allah was not Merciful, man could not survive for even a moment. How can one imagine that He who has created thousands of things for the benefit of man, even prior to his performing any action, would disregard his repentance and good deeds?

The Reality of Sin and Repentance

The reality of sin is not that Allah first created it and then thousands of years later conjured up the idea of forgiveness. For example, a fly has two wings, one containing poison and the other its antidote. Similarly, human beings have two wings, one of sin and the other of shame, repentance and remorse. This is a general rule. For example, if someone were to violently beat a slave, remorse would overwhelm such a one. It is as if both wings move in unison. Poison is not without its antidote. Now the question is, why was this poison created in the first place? The answer is that although this is a poison, if harnessed, it possesses remedial properties. If sin did not exist, the venom of vanity would surge forth within man and lead to his ruin, but repentance prevents this from happening. Sin protects man from the calamity of arrogance and conceit. When the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} would seek forgiveness seventy times in one day—despite being sinless—how great an effort should we exert? Only one who is content with sin does not repent; an individual who considers sin to be evil will ultimately refrain from it.

It is narrated in a Hadith that when a person weeps before Allah time and again

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:223

to seek forgiveness, ultimately, God says, 'We have forgiven you, now do as you please.' This actually means that the heart of such a one has been transformed and thereafter he shall feel an innate aversion towards sin. No one who observes a sheep eating filth is driven by greed to consume it as well. Similarly, a person who is forgiven by Allah will never commit sin. Muslims instinctively abhor the flesh of swine though they may be indulged in thousands of other unlawful and forbidden things. The wisdom in placing this form of disgust in Muslims is to illustrate that mankind should develop a similar revulsion towards sin.

Prayer is an Antidote

The thought of having committed a plethora of sins ought not to hold back a sinner from supplication. Prayer is an antidote. Ultimately, such a one will observe how prayers serve to foster within him an aversion towards vice. In the end, those steeped in sin who despair of the acceptance of prayer and do not seek recourse to repentance, lose faith in the Prophets and their effects.

Repentance is an Essential Component of the Oath of Allegiance

This is the reality of repentance (which has been mentioned above). But why is repentance an integral part of swearing allegiance to a spiritual guide? The fact of the matter is that man is given to negligence. When an individual takes the oath of allegiance at the hand of one upon whom Allah the Exalted has bestowed this transformed state, the same divine grace and light—that exists in this transformed individual—begins to emerge in the individual just as a graft changes the properties of a tree. The condition, however, is that one should possess a true relationship with this person as though they were a branch attached to his very being; not a lifeless branch. The greater a person's affinity with this spiritual leader, the better.

A Superficial Oath of Allegiance is Useless

A superficial oath of allegiance to a spiritual guide brings no benefit and it is difficult to derive any gain from such an oath of allegiance. A person shall truly reap benefit only when they abandon their ego and attach themselves to this person with abiding love and sincerity. Since the hypocrites did not possess a true relationship with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him,

and his progeny, ultimately, they remained bereft of faith; they were left devoid of pure love and sincerity. And so, the mere proclamation *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* (*There is none worthy of worship except Allah*) was of no avail to them. Thus, it is very important to forge these bonds. If a follower does not strengthen these ties and fails to make an effort in this cause, any expression of grief or regret would be unwarranted. One should nurture a relationship of love and sincerity with one's spiritual guide and insofar as possible, adjust the hue of one's disposition to that of one's master, both in terms of action and belief. The inner self of man promises him a long life, but this is deception. There is no telling how long a person will live. One should hasten to adopt piety and worship, and introspect on one's condition from morning to evening.¹

An Exhortation to Offer *Tabajjud*

If our entire lives are spent in worldly engagements, what will we have accumulated for the hereafter? Make a special effort to wake up for *Tabajjud* and offer it with fervour and joy. At times, the Prayers to be offered during the day pose a challenge to those who are in employment, but Allah the Exalted is the Provider. The obligatory Prayers ought to be offered at their prescribed times. On occasion, it is permissible to combine the *Zubr* and *Asr* prayers. Allah Almighty made provision for this, for He knew that some would be weaker than others. However, this permission does not allow for three Prayers to be combined.

To Bear Hardship for the Sake of Allah the Exalted

When disciplinary action is meted out to people in employment and in other matters—and they are reprimanded by rulers—how wonderful would it be if they were to bear hardship for the sake of Allah the Exalted.

Those who shoulder pain and difficulty so that righteousness may be upheld find favour amongst people as well. This is the way of the Prophets and the Truthful. Allah the Exalted never remains in debt of an individual who sustains material loss for His sake, and always grants a full reward.

¹ *Al-Badr*, volume 1, nos. 5-6, dated 2 November 1902 and 5 December 1902 — I recall that the Promised Messiah^{as} delivered this speech when *Muhammad* Nawwab Khan Sahib^{ra} Tehsildar took the oath of allegiance at the hand of the Promised Messiah^{as}. (Editor)

Do Not Adopt Hypocritical Ways

It is incumbent that man not adopt the way of hypocrisy. For example, if a Hindu (despite being a ruler or high official) were to suggest that Ram and Rahim are one and the same, a person should not agree with such an opinion thoughtlessly. Allah the Exalted does not forbid one from treating others with civility. One should always respond politely. It is not wise to make comments that unnecessarily enrage others and which result in pointless conflict. But, a person should never conceal the truth. An individual who pliantly accepts the false statements of others eventually becomes a disbeliever.

يار غالب شوکه تا غالب شوی

*Become the friend of he who is dominant,
so that you too may become dominant.*

Allah the Exalted should always be honoured and respected. There is not a single aspect of our religion that is at odds with civility.

An Injustice Against Islam

Alas for Islam! Islam has always been wronged. When two brothers are in dispute, the elder brother, on account of his age and rank, oppresses the younger one for no reason whatsoever, because the former believes he commands a greater right due to his having been born first. However, both are entitled to equal rights. A similar form of injustice is being committed against Islam, which came after all the past religions. The errors committed by these religions were corrected by Islam and since they consider themselves greater, they have become displeased with Islam just as it is customary for an ignorant person to grow hostile towards the one who means them well. A large family, ancient ancestry and wealth often make a person arrogant. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, belonged to an impoverished, small and newly formed group of people. So in the beginning, people of other faiths did not accept him. People always act unjustly towards the truth.

Islam is a Benefactor of Other Religions

Islam is such a pure religion that it does not permit the use of abusive language

against any religious founder. The followers of other religions let out a stream of invective at the drop of a hat. Just look at how the Christians use foul language against the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. If he had been alive today, even in view of his worldly status, they would not have had the courage to say a word against him. In fact, they would have treated the Holy Prophet^{sa} with a thousand times more reverence. Such people would not dare curse or insult the Amir of Kabul or the Sultan of Rome, who are humble followers of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. But when the name of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is mentioned, they revile him with a thousand obscenities. Islam is a benefactor for other religions because it vindicated every Prophet and divine scripture of the past. But despite this, Islam is abused. The essence of Islam *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* (*There is none worthy of worship except Allah*) is to be found in no other religion.¹

1896

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: The word which has been used for the advent of the Messiah is *nuzul* (i.e. to descend) and not *ruju* (i.e. to return). Firstly, the appropriate word for someone who is expected to return is *ruju* and this word has never been used for Jesus^{as}. Secondly, the word *nuzul* does not infer a return from the heaven. A person on journey is referred to as a *nazeel*.

One Ought to Pray for One's Opponents

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: I have only ever sternly addressed my opponents in order to purge them of arrogance. This is not an act of retaliation for harsh words; rather, it is a bitter pill meant to cure them—as the proverb has it: *الْحَقُّ مُرٌّ* (*The truth is bitter*). However, it is not justified that anyone should feel at liberty to pen such harsh words. The community ought to exercise caution. Each and every individual ought to first delve into their heart and see whether they write such words with pure intention or merely out of obstinacy and enmity.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: One should not harbour malevolence against one's adversaries. Instead, a person ought to pray for such people more than anything else and use other means to reform them.²

¹ *Al-Badr*, vol. 1, no. 8, 19 December 1902, p. 59

² *Badr*, vol. 11, no. 6-7, dated 23 November 1911, p. 3

1897

The Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, said: I never call myself a 'maulvi', nor do I approve of anyone ever referring to me as such. In fact, when someone calls me a *maulvi* I am so grieved that I feel as if they have sworn at me.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: People shall give you grief and inflict upon you all sorts of pain, but the people of my community must not become incensed. Do not say hurtful words in the heat of emotion, for Allah the Exalted does not like such people. Allah Almighty desires to make my community a model for others.¹

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: My mission is heavenly in nature and divine work cannot be frustrated. In this undertaking I have no vested interests and my own efforts amount to nothing.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: Abusive language does not stoke my anger. Moreover, he said: The affluent tend to be arrogant, but the scholars of this age are worse than them. Their conceit stands before them like a wall that obstructs their way. I desire to demolish this wall. When this wall crumbles, they shall come and join us with humility.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: Allah the Exalted loves a righteous person. Everyone ought to keep in mind the majesty of God and remain fearful, and remember that all people are the servants of God. Do not oppress or act harshly towards anyone. Do not deride another person. If even a single member of our community is evil, they defame us all. If your disposition veers towards emotions of anger, examine your heart to identify the source from which these emotions have gushed forth. This is a very delicate state.²

December 1897

News was received from Qadian, the Abode of Peace, that members of our community ought to profusely recite the following prayer in the last *rak'at* of their formal Prayers after the *ruk'u*:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ³

*Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.*⁴

¹ *Badr*, vol. 11, dated 2 November 1911, p.3

² *Badr*, vol. 11, nos. 8-9, dated 30 November 1911, p. 3

³ *al-Baqarah*, 2:202

⁴ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 1, no. 7, dated 9 December 1897, p. 5

The First Address of the Promised Messiah^{as} at the Annual Convention on 25 December 1897

An Exhortation on Righteousness

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: I deem it most appropriate, in the best interest of my community, to advise them on righteousness, because a sensible person obviously knows that nothing pleases Allah the Exalted more than piety. Allah Almighty states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ¹

Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good.

It is particularly incumbent upon my community to adopt righteousness, especially in view of the fact that they associate themselves with and swear allegiance to a man who claims to be divinely commissioned. In this way, they shall be delivered from any of the diverse forms of malice, rancour, associating partners with God, and worldly attachment that may plague them.

It is a well-known fact that irrespective of whether an individual is suffering from a minor illness or a more serious one, they cannot be cured until remedy is sought and trouble is taken to find a cure. Even if a small black blemish appears on a person's face, this causes serious apprehension, lest the mark should spread to cover the entire face. Similarly, sin is a blemish that blackens a person's heart. Disregard for minor trespasses steer an individual to greater evil. A minor sin is like the small blemish which spreads to disfigure a person's entire face.

Just as Allah the Exalted is Merciful and Munificent, He is also Mighty and punishes those who do wrong. When He observes a community boasting and making tall claims while their practical state is quite the opposite, His fury and wrath are provoked. God decides to punish such a community at the hands of disbelievers. Those who are familiar with history know that Muslims have on many an occasion been defeated by disbelievers. Genghis Khan and Hulagu Khan devastated the Muslims, and even though Allah the Exalted had promised to protect and support the Muslims, they were still overpowered. Instances like these have often transpired and the very reason for this is that the might of Allah Almighty manifests its power when He sees that although a group of people recite: *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* (*There is none worthy of worship except Allah*), yet their hearts are

¹ *an-Nabl*, 16:129

disposed to other interests and their deeds are of worldly bent.

Harmony in One's Words and Deeds

True fear of Allah demands that a person examine the degree to which his words and actions accord with one another. A person whose words and actions are at odds with one another should know that they shall incur the wrath of Allah. If one's heart is impure, it will never find favour in the sight of God no matter how pure one's words may be; in fact, this arouses the wrath of God. My community ought to realise that they have come to me so that I may sow the seed which transforms them into a fruitful tree. So, everyone ought to examine their selves to become cognisant of their inner and outwardly state. If, God-forbid, the hearts of my followers are not in harmony with their words, they shall not be met with a blessed end. Allah the Exalted does not care for a community with hollow hearts who make empty claims, for He is Self-Sufficient. The victory at Badr had already been prophesied and there was every reason to believe that the Muslims would triumph. But the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, continued to weep and pray to his Lord. Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq^{ra} inquired as to the need for such fervent supplication when victory had already been promised. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, 'God is Self-Sufficient.' That is to say, perhaps hidden conditions lay beneath the surface of this divine promise.

The Blessings of Righteousness

We should always appraise the degree to which we have progressed in righteousness and piety. The criterion for this is the Quran. From among the hallmarks of the righteous, one sign manifested by Allah the Exalted in favour of a pious one is that He frees them from the unpleasant things of this world and Himself becomes the Guardian of their affairs. Allah the Exalted states:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ¹

*And he who fears Allah — He will make for him a way out,
and will provide for him from where he expects not.*

Allah the Exalted delivers a person who fears Him from any affliction that may

¹ at-Talaq, 65:3-4

befall him, and grants him provision from where he expects not. In other words, one sign of a righteous person is that Allah the Exalted does not enslave him to the recourse of immoral ways and means. For example, a shopkeeper believes that his business cannot operate without the support of falsehood; for this reason he does not refrain from deception and expresses the need for speaking lies. However, this so-called need is completely unjustified. God Almighty becomes the Protector of a righteous person and saves him from such instances as would compel them to speak untruths. Remember, when a person abandons Allah the Exalted, God forsakes such a person as well. Moreover, when the Merciful God leaves a person, Satan definitely develops a relationship with such a one.

Think not that Allah Almighty is weak. Indeed, He is the possessor of immense power. When you put your trust in Him for support in any matter, He shall come to your aid.

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ¹

And he who puts his trust in Allah — He is sufficient for him.

However, those who were first addressed in these verses were people of faith. All of their thoughts revolved around religion and they left their worldly affairs to God. This is why Allah the Exalted reassured them and told them that He was their support. And so, one of the blessings of righteousness is that Allah the Exalted grants security to a pious person from the afflictions that impede upon his religious affairs.

Spiritual Provision for a Righteous Person

Similarly, Allah the Exalted grants special provision to a righteous person. I shall now proceed to shed light on the provision of divine insight.

Despite being unlettered, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was to confront the entire world, which included the People of the Book, philosophers, the highly intellectual, scholars and the learned. However, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was so amply blessed with spiritual provision that he prevailed over them all and rectified their errors. This spiritual provision is unparalleled. In praise of the righteous, at another instance the Quran states:

¹ at-Talaq, 65:4

إِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِلَّا الْمُنْتَفُونَ¹

Meaning, the saints of Allah the Exalted, that is, the friends of God, are those who are righteous. How great a blessing that one should be granted nearness to God by suffering even a little pain in His cause. The people of this age are so low-minded that if a ruler or official refers to them as a friend, confers upon them an office or honours them, they begin to boast and swell with pride. But, how superior in rank is the person who is deemed a saint or friend by Allah the Exalted Himself. Allah the Exalted has conveyed this promise through the tongue of the Noble Messenger^{sa}, as recorded in a Hadith related in *Bukhari*:

لَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالتَّوَافِلِ حَتَّىٰ أَحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطَيْتَهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأَعِيذَنَّهُ

Meaning, Allah the Exalted states that through voluntary worship a friend of Mine attains such nearness to Me that I become the ears with which he hears, I become the eyes with which he sees, I become the hands with which he grasps, I become the feet with which he walks. When he asks of Me, I grant him his wish and when he seeks My refuge, I grant him refuge.²

Obligations and Voluntary Deeds

All the virtuous deeds performed by a person may be divided into two categories: obligatory and voluntary. Obligatory deeds refer to that which is compulsory on man, such as the repayment of a debt or goodness in kind. In addition to these obligations, every good deed is accompanied by an aspect of voluntary service, that is to say, virtue which is above and beyond the call of duty. An example of this would be for one to reciprocate greater benevolence than that shown to him by another. This serves to complete and perfect compulsory actions. This Hadith expounds that the saints of Allah perfect their religious obligations through the observance of voluntary acts of worship. For example, in addition to zakat, they also give charity. Allah the Exalted becomes the friend of such people and states that this relation grows to such intimacy that He becomes the hands, feet, etc. of such a person; in fact, He even becomes the tongue with which such a person speaks.

¹ *al-Anfal*, 8:35

² *Bukhari, Kitab-ur-Riqaq, Bab-ut-Tawadu*

Every Action Ought to Be in Accordance with the Will of God

The fact of the matter is that a man who becomes pure of selfish passions and acts in accordance with the will of God whilst abandoning his ego, never commits an unlawful deed. On the contrary, his each and every action is in accordance with the will of God. When people fall into trial, it is always the case that their actions are not in accordance with the will of God and are ones that cause His displeasure. Such a one follows his passions. For example, swayed by anger, at times one will commit an action that leads to legal and criminal proceedings. However, if a person determines that they will perform no action whatsoever that is against the mandates of the Book of Allah and turns to it in all their affairs, they can be certain to find guidance in it. Allah the Almighty states:

وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ¹

There is nothing green, nor dry, but is recorded in a clear Book.

So if we resolve that we shall always seek counsel from the Book of Allah, we shall definitely receive guidance. But he who follows his selfish passions will always suffer a loss. Often, he shall be called to account on such instances. Allah states that the saints are a contrast to the people just mentioned, for they remain attached to Him in all circumstances. They become absorbed in Him completely. The lesser a person's assimilation in God, the more distant they are from Him. However, if a person is lost in Allah as God desires, then the faith of such a person is beyond description. In support of such people, Allah the Exalted states:

مَنْ عَادَى لِيُؤْتِيَا فَإِنَّهُ بِلِحْزَمِي

In other words, he who opposes a friend of Mine, actually wars with Me. One can see how great the eminence of a righteous person truly is and how lofty they are in stature. A person of this nature enjoys such nearness to God that their grief is the grief of God. How mighty, then, would the succour and assistance of God be for such a person?

Even Those in the Company of the Righteous Are Safeguarded

People are victim to a host of afflictions, but the righteous are safeguarded. In fact, even those who are in their company find refuge. Hardship has no end. Even

¹ *al-An'am*, 6:60

from within, man is plagued so severely by affliction that it is beyond imagination. Even if one takes the example of various illnesses, they are enough to result in countless other afflictions. But those who are within the fortress of righteousness are free from such affliction as distances one from God. However, those who are beyond its walls sit in a jungle teeming with ravenous beasts.

The Righteous Receive Glad Tidings in this Very World

A righteous person enjoys another promise as well:

لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ¹

Meaning, those who are righteous receive glad tidings in this very world by means of true dreams. In fact, even more so than this, they begin to experience visions and receive revelations; they are so honoured as to experience converse with Allah. Despite being human, they are able to see the angels, as is stated:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا
وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ²

Meaning, those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then show steadfastness, the angels descend upon them, saying: ‘Fear ye not, nor grieve; and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised.’

In other words, at a time of trial such people demonstrate through practice that they have fulfilled the promise they earlier made to God by word of mouth.

Trials Are Necessary

As indicated in the following verse, trials are necessary:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُلَاقُوا رَبَّهُمْ قَوْمًا لَا يُفْتَنُونَ³

Allah the Exalted declares that those who say: ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then remain steadfast, the angels descend upon them. The commentators of the Holy Quran have erred in their belief that the angels descend only when a person is struggling through his last breaths—this is not true. In actuality, those who cleanse their hearts and keep their souls free from filth and impurity—which

¹ Yunus, 10:65

² Ha Mim As-Sajdah, 41:31

³ al-Ankabut, 29:3

distance a person from Allah—develop the capacity to receive revelation, and then actually do receive it as well. Then, at another instance, Allah speaks of the greatness of those who are righteous in the following words:

إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ¹

Meaning, the friends of Allah are confronted with no grief for which God is not a Protector, and they suffer no real hardship. None can harm such a person by opposing them if God becomes their friend. Then, Allah states:

أَبشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ²

Meaning, rejoice for the paradise that you have been promised. The teachings of the Quran indicate that there are two paradises for mankind. How can a person who loves God live a life of hell? In this world, if even the friend of a government official enjoys a kind of heavenly life on account of his worldly relations, why then should the gates of heaven not be opened to those who are the friends of Allah? Although the world is full of difficulties and afflictions, who can know the pleasure that the friends of Allah experience? If they truly suffered from such circumstances, even half an hour of such pain would be difficult to bear, yet they go on bearing such hardship for their entire lives. Even if they are offered grand kingdoms to prevent them from carrying out their mission, they do not lend an ear to such offers. Even if mountains of affliction fall upon them, they do not stand down from their objective.

The Perfect Moral Example

Our Perfect Guide was required to confront both situations. At one time, a shower of stones was rained down on him in Ta'if. A large majority afflicted upon him the most brutal physical harm, but the perseverance of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, faltered not. When his people witnessed that these trials and tribulations did not affect him in the least, by collective agreement they offered him sovereignty and desired to make him their ruler. They promised him all sorts of luxuries, even the most beautiful of women. And all this was on the sole condition that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah, refrain from speaking ill of idols. However, just as the Holy Prophet, peace and

¹ Yunus, 10:63

² Ha Mim As-Sajdah, 41:31

blessings of Allah be upon him, did not care during the tribulation of Ta'if, so too, he demonstrated an indifference to this promise of sovereignty and preferred to be stoned. Hence, unless the Holy Prophet^{sa} experienced a special kind of pleasure in this, what was the need for him to abandon comfort and bear hardship?

No other Prophet, except for our Messenger, peace and salutations be upon him, was confronted with a situation where he was promised something in exchange for refraining from carrying out the work of his ministry. The Messiah^{as} was not faced with such circumstances. In the history of the world, only the Holy Prophet^{sa} was met with an offer of sovereignty to step away from performing his duty. This honour is specific to our Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Similarly, our Perfect Guide experienced both eras of hardship and triumph, and in this way he was able to manifest a perfect example in both times.

Allah the Exalted desires that the righteous experience both these forms of pleasure. On certain occasions, they experience this in the form of worldly pleasures, comfort and bounties, and on other occasions, in the form of difficulty and hardship, so that their morals may grow towards perfection in both respects. Certain morals are manifested in times of authority, while others come to light in times of affliction. Our Noble Prophet^{sa} experienced both these situations. Therefore, the extent to which we are able to present the diverse morals of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is not within the power of any other nation to present in favour of their own Prophet. For example, the Messiah^{as} can only be shown to have exhibited patience. He continued to suffer brutality, but how will it be established that he attained a station of power? There is no doubt that he was a truthful Prophet, but it cannot be proven that he exhibited a moral example in all respects. Since he is mentioned in the Quran, we believe in him to be a Prophet. Otherwise, the Gospel alone does not prove that the Messiah^{as} demonstrated a moral character that accords with the grandeur of the Prophets who are strong in determination. In the same way, if our Perfect Guide had died in his initial thirteen year period of hardship, many aspects of his lofty character would have remained hidden as was the case with the Messiah. However, when he was later blessed with an era of triumph and those who had oppressed him were presented before the Holy Prophet^{sa}, it was then that his attributes of mercy and compassion were truly proven. This also demonstrates that the deeds of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were never the result of restrictive circumstances; he never acted under duress; rather, all his deeds were natural. Similarly, there are many other moral qualities of the Holy

Prophet^{sa} which can also be proven. Allah the Exalted has stated:

نَحْنُ أَوْلَىٰ بِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ¹

This means, We are the friends of those who are righteous, both in this world and in the next. As such, this verse refutes the notion of those foolish people who deny the descent of angels in this life. If angels only descend when man is to depart from this world, how is God Almighty a friend in this life?

A Righteous One Beholds the Hereafter in the Present Life

So, one bounty that the saints are blessed with is that they see the angels of God. The life of the hereafter is based completely on faith. However, a righteous person beholds the hereafter in the present life. It is in this very life that they find and witness God, and He speaks with them. So if a person is not blessed with such a state of affairs, his death and passing on from this world is not a promising prospect. A certain saint is reported to have said that a person who has not been blessed to experience even one true dream all their life is to be met with a perilous end. The Quran also says that this is the hallmark of a believer. Take heed! One who does not possess this sign is bereft of righteousness. So, we all ought to pray that this condition is fulfilled in us. May Allah the Exalted bless us with the grace of revelation, dreams and visions. For these are characteristic of a believer, and thus, should exist in us.

There are many other blessings that are also conferred upon a righteous person. For example, at the beginning of the Quran, in Surah Fatihah, Allah Almighty instructs the believers to supplicate:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ²

Meaning, show us the straight path of those upon whom thou hast bestowed thy favour and bounty. This prayer has been taught so that human beings develop a high resolve and understand the will of their Creator. God does not desire to see the people of this community live their lives like beasts, but rather, He wishes to see all the veils that obstruct their path to be removed. The Shias believe that the institution of sainthood (*walayah*) ended after the twelve Imams. Contrary to this, however, the prayer just mentioned demonstrates that God has decided

¹ *Ha Mim As-Sajdah*, 41:32

² *al-Fatihah*, 1:6-7

that whosoever is righteous and acts in accordance with His will, shall be able to achieve the ranks attained by Prophets and saints. This also establishes that humans have been endowed many faculties that are to be nourished and nurtured to make great progress. Of course, since a goat cannot be compared to a human being, its faculties, therefore, cannot develop in the same manner. Whenever a person of high resolve hears about the lives of the Messengers and Prophets, they desire not only to develop a faith in the bounties that were conferred upon this pure community, but they also long to partake of these blessings; first through the stage known as knowledge by inference, then certainty by sight and finally by true certainty.

Three Stages of Knowledge

There are three stages of knowledge: knowledge by inference, certainty by sight and true certainty. For example, to believe in the existence of a fire somewhere at the sight of smoke is knowledge by inference. However, to see the fire with one's eyes is certainty by sight. After this, there is true certainty, which is akin to putting one's hand into the fire and to know for certain that the fire exists by experiencing its heat and burning sensation. How unfortunate is the one who has attained neither one of these stages. According to the following verse, a person who is deprived of Allah's grace is entangled in the practice of blindly following others. Allah the Exalted states:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا¹

Meaning, a person who strives in our cause shall be shown the ways that lead to Us. Along with this promise, we have also been taught the prayer:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ²

Guide us in the right path.

Therefore, man ought to keep this in mind and supplicate fervently in their formal Prayer, lest he departs from this world blind and bereft of insight. Allah Almighty states:

¹ *al-Ankabut*, 29:70

² *al-Fatihah*, 1:6

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ¹

Meaning, whoso is blind in this world shall be blind in the hereafter. This demonstrates that we must take our ability to see from this very world, so that we may be able to witness the hereafter. In order to experience the next life, our senses are to be developed in this very world. Can it be conceived that Allah the Exalted would make a promise and then break it?

Who is Blind?

A blind person is one who is bereft of spiritual insight and pleasure. A person who blindly follows the practices of their family just because they are born into a Muslim household is called a Muslim. Similarly, a person who is born to a Christian family becomes a Christian. This is the very reason that such people give no regard to God, the Messenger or the Quran. Even the love such people possess for religion is questionable. Some remain in the company of those who act insolently towards God and His Messenger. This is wholly due to the fact that such people do not possess a spiritual eye. They are empty of love for religion. Does a person who is full of love desire anything that is at odds with the liking of their beloved? Hence, Allah the Almighty teaches that He is prepared to bestow His bounties if a person is prepared to receive them. The offering of this supplication prepares one to receive divine guidance.

A Righteous Person

After this prayer, Allah the Exalted states the following towards the beginning of Surah Baqarah:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ²

It is a guidance for the righteous.

In other words, God Almighty has furnished the means by which He bestows His blessings. That is to say, this Book (i.e. the Holy Quran) promises to elevate a righteous person to the pinnacle of excellence. These words imply that this Book is beneficial to those who abstain from evil and give heed to exhortation. A righteous person (*muttaqi*) of this degree is one who rids themselves of preconceived

¹ Bani Isra'il, 17:73

² al-Baqarah, 2:3

bias and is willing to hear the truth. For example, when a person accepts Islam, they follow a course of righteousness. Whenever favourable days dawn upon a person belonging to another faith, righteousness takes root in them; they are cleansed of pride, arrogance and conceit, for these are hindrances in their path, and when they are removed, the windows of their dark house are opened, as it were, and rays of light shine through.

Here, Allah Almighty states:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ¹

It is a guidance for the righteous.

Meaning, this Book is a guidance for the righteous (*muttaqin*). The word *ittiqā* is in the measure of the form known as *ifti'āl* in Arabic and this grammatical form signifies a meaning of forced effort. In other words, Allah the Exalted indicates here that the degree of righteousness He requires of a person at this stage is not empty of strain. However, this Book contains various forms of guidance to preserve an individual's righteousness. This demonstrates that in order to perform good deeds, a *muttaqi* suffers travail.

A Virtuous Servant

When this state passes, a seeker of God becomes a virtuous servant. The element of difficulty vanishes, and a *salih* (i.e. a virtuous person) begins to naturally and inherently perform virtue. They enter an abode of security, which is safe from all danger and all their battles against their selfish desires come to an end. Such a person finds refuge from all forms of peril. Our Perfect Guide, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, alludes to this very fact when he states: 'Satan dwells within all, but my Satan has become a Muslim.'

Thus, a *muttaqi* remains forever at war with Satan but when he becomes a *salih*, all battles come to an end. Take the example of ostentation—a person remains in combat with this ill throughout the entire day. A *muttaqi* stands in the field of battle, as it were, where a war ensues without end. Victory cannot be attained without the supporting hand of God. Ostentation creeps up on man as subtly as an ant. At times, a person allows ostentation to enter the heart, completely unaware. For example, let us presume someone loses a knife that belongs to them

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:3

and asks another individual about its whereabouts. In this instance, the individual who is questioned about the knife begins to war with Satan if he is at the level of a *muttaqi*. Satan will instigate the person to feel that the owner of the lost knife has dishonoured him by questioning him about his lost property. It is even possible that the individual being questioned becomes inflamed and the two fall to altercation. In the event of such a situation, a *muttaqi* battles with his own ill emotion. If the individual being questioned is honest purely for the sake of Allah, what reason has he to be angered? The more one keeps their piety hidden, the better. If a dealer of jewels was confronted by some robbers, and they consulted amongst themselves, some asserting that the jeweller was a rich man and others perceiving him to be empty-handed, the jeweller would be more pleased with those robbers who suggest that the dealer has nothing.

Good Deeds Are Best if Concealed

What more is this world than an abode of trial? A person who keeps his virtues secret and saves himself from ostentation is best off. Those people whose deeds are solely for the sake of Allah do not allow for their deeds to be seen by others. It is these who are the righteous.

I have read in *Tadbkira-tul-Awliya* that once a noble man asked for some money in a gathering, as he was in need. One person gave him a thousand rupees, considering him to be a righteous man. The noble man took the money, and praised the generosity and munificence of the person who had helped him. At this, the person who had offered the assistance was saddened by the thought that he may well be deprived of his reward in the hereafter as he had been praised before the people here on earth. Shortly thereafter, he returned and said that the money belonged to his mother and she was unwilling to give it to anyone. So, the money was returned. Everyone cursed the man and said that it was he who actually did not wish to give his money to the man in need. Later that evening, when the noble man returned home, the same person brought his thousand rupees to him and said: ‘You deprived me of my reward in the hereafter by praising me in public. This is why I made an excuse. Now this money belongs to you, but please do not mention my name to anyone.’ The noble man began to weep and said: ‘Now, you have taken upon yourself until the Day of Resurrection the curse and reproach of the people, because everyone is aware of the incident that occurred earlier today, but no one knows that you have now returned the money to me.’

A righteous person wars with their inner self that incites to evil in order to veil and conceal their good deeds. However, God Almighty always manifests their hidden deeds. A wicked person, after committing an evil deed, desires to remain hidden. Similarly, a righteous person observes the Prayer in hiding and fears lest someone sees him. A truly righteous person desires to remain hidden. There are many stages of righteousness, but in any case, righteousness requires a forced effort and a righteous person (*muttaqi*) constantly remains in a state of war with himself, while a virtuous person (*salih*) is no longer engaged in such a battle. In this relation, I have stated above the example of ostentation, which must be fought against by a righteous person throughout the day.

The Battle Between Ostentation and Forbearance

Often a battle ensues between ostentation and forbearance. At times, in contradiction to the Book of Allah, man shows anger. Upon hearing abuse, his inner self becomes incensed. Righteousness demands that one ought to suppress their anger, as stated in the Quran:

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا¹

And when they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity.

Many a time, an individual is also required to fight against impatience. This means that a person is confronted with such a multitude of difficulties whilst treading the path of righteousness that it is difficult to attain one's objective, and thus, such a one becomes impatient. For example, if someone wanted to dig a well fifty cubits deep, but they stopped digging after a mere two or three cubits, this is mere pessimism. Now, the condition of righteousness is that one should fulfil the commandments that have been enjoined by Allah the Exalted to the end and not become impatient.

Two Blessed Parties that Tread the Path of God

There are two blessed parties that tread the path of God. Firstly, those who adhere firmly to the fundamental principles of religion without any real insight (*din-ul-aja'iz*), or in other words, those who follow the shariah and thus attain salvation. Then, there are those who advance even further still. Whatever the odds, they do

¹ *al-Furqan, 25:73*

not tire and continue to march forward until they reach their ultimate objective. However, truly unsuccessful are those who advanced forward from the rank of *din-ul-aja'iz* but did not complete their spiritual quest; such people always fall prey to atheism. In this context, some people assert that they have observed their Prayers and undertaken periods of reclusion for spiritual exercise, but to no avail. For example, a man named Mansur Masih states that the reason he become a Christian was due to the fact that he turned to various spiritual preceptors and went into 40-day retreats but none of this bore any fruit; so he became averse to Islam and accepted Christianity.

Sincerity and Patience

Those people who are impatient fall into the clutches of Satan. A righteous person must battle with impatience as well. In *Bustan* there is mention of a worshipper. Whenever this individual stood for worship, he would hear an angel's voice from the unseen saying: 'You have been rejected and forsaken.' On a certain occasion, one of his disciples heard this voice from the unseen and said: 'Now the verdict has been passed. What then is the use of futile action?' The man wept profusely and said: 'If I am to leave God, where else should I go? If accursed I am, then so be it. At least I am fortunate enough to be called accursed.' These discussions were still underway with his disciple, when a voice was heard saying: 'You have been accepted.' So all this was the result of sincerity and patience, which is a condition for one who is righteous.

Steadfastness

Allah the Exalted states:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَهُمْ سُبُلَنَا¹

Meaning, those who strive in Our cause shall be guided. In other words, a person must join God's Messenger, and strive and endeavour in this path together with him. It does not behove one who strives in the cause of Allah to flee within an hour or two. In fact, the task of such a person is to remain forever ready to give their life. So, the hallmark of a righteous person is steadfastness. In this regard, Allah the Exalted states:

¹ *al-Ankabut*, 29:70

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا¹

Meaning, they say our Lord is Allah, then show steadfastness; and turn away from all else to find God. In other words, success depends on steadfastness. And steadfastness is to recognise God and stand unshaken in the face of all difficulty, trial and tribulation. If a person is able to do this, they will surely become the recipient of divine communion and converse like the Prophets.

One Must Bear Trials to Become a Saint

There are many who come here hoping—by some magic spell—to reach the highest spiritual heights and attain communion with God. Such people are guilty of mockery. They ought to cast a glance upon the lives of the Prophets. It is false to assert that hundreds of people were instantly transformed into saints by merely visiting a certain religious divine. Quite the contrary, Allah Almighty states:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ²

Do men think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and that they will not be tested?

In other words, until man is tried and made to face affliction, how can he become a saint? Once, Bayazidth was exhorting the people in a gathering. The descendant of a long line of saints, who harboured malice in his heart for Bayazidth, was also present. It is the way of God that He chooses newer families for older ones. For example, he selected the Children of Ishmael over the Children of Israel, as the latter had fallen prey to worldly pleasures and enjoyment, and thus had forgotten God.

وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلْهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ³

And such days We cause to alternate among men that they may be admonished.

So, the thought crossed this person's mind that Bayazidth belonged to a lower-class family. How then could he possibly be a man of miracles who attracted so many people to himself? The other man realised that people did not flock to him the same way. God Almighty disclosed the thoughts of this man to Bayazidth and so, he began to relate a story. He said that once, in a gathering, a lamp containing oil

¹ *Ha Mim As-Sajdah*, 41:31

² *al-Ankabut*, 29:3

³ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:141

diluted with water was burning at night. The oil and water began to quarrel. The water addressed the oil and said: ‘You are heavier and dirtier than I, yet despite your thickness you float up above me. For I am a pure and refined substance that is used for cleansing purposes, but I still remain below you. Why is this so?’ The oil responded: ‘You have not experienced even minutely the degree of difficulty that I have endured. It is for this reason that I have attained this lofty position. There was a time when I was sown in the earth, I remained hidden and was humbled. Then, by the will of God I began to grow, and had not grown much before I was cut down. After great pains, I was then refined. Further still, I was ground in an oil press, whereafter I was transformed into oil and finally set aflame. After all this, was I not to attain a lofty position?’

The above-mentioned parable is an example which expounds that the people of God attain lofty ranks only after enduring trial and tribulation. It is an absurd notion to suggest that such and such person simply went to some individual and, without any effort and purification, became one from among the Truthful. Study the Holy Quran to see that the pleasure of God cannot be attained until trials and difficulties befall you just as in the case of the Prophets. At times, even the Prophets would express a sense of apprehension, as mentioned below:

حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلاَ إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ¹

Until the Messenger and those who believed along with him said: ‘When will come the help of Allah?’ Yea, surely the help of Allah is nigh.

The servants of Allah have always been subjected to calamity. It was then that Allah accepted them.

Two Paths of Progress

The Sufis have written that there are two paths for attaining progress. Firstly, the spiritual quest and secondly, spiritual magnetism.

The Spiritual Quest

The spiritual quest is to embark upon the path of Allah and His Messenger^{sa} as a result of one’s own understanding and sense. For example, Allah the Exalted states:

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:215*

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ¹

Meaning, if you desire to become the beloved of God, then follow the Noble Prophet, on whom be peace. It was this Perfect Guide and Messenger who shouldered such afflictions as are unparalleled in the history of the world. He did not rest even a single day in his life. Now, those who truly emulate their Master can only be ones who follow his every word and action with assiduous toil and labour. Only he is a follower who obeys the Holy Prophet^{sa} in all respects. Allah the Exalted does not like those who flock to comfort and flee from hardship. Rather, such a one shall incur the wrath of Allah Almighty. In this verse, Allah the Exalted has commanded obedience to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The task of a seeker of God ought to be to first study the entire life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and then follow him. This is called 'the spiritual quest.' There are great trials and tribulations in this path. It is only after these difficulties are shouldered that a person becomes a seeker of God.

Spiritual Magnetism

The rank of those who are absorbed in God is greater than those who are seekers on the path of God. Allah Almighty does not leave the former group of people to go on as mere seekers; rather, He casts them into adversity Himself and then pulls them towards Himself through his eternally spiritual magnetism. All the Prophets were absorbed in God as such. When the human soul is faced with hardship it is strained and gains experience, and as a result, begins to glow. For example, iron or glass possess the inherent quality to shine but only become clear after repeated polishing to the extent that one is eventually able to see their own face reflected in these materials. Spiritual efforts also serve as a polishing agent. One ought to polish the heart, to such an extent that one is able to see in it a reflection of their own face. What is implied by seeing one's own face? It means to embody the following:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Develop within yourselves the attributes of Allah.

The heart of a seeker of God is like a mirror, which is polished by trial and tribulation to such extent that the character of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings

¹ Aal-e-Imran, 3:32

of Allah be upon him, begins to be reflected in it. This occurs when, after much spiritual effort and purification, no traces of filth and impurity remain. It is then that this rank is conferred upon an individual. Every believer is to a degree in need of such cleansing. No believer can attain salvation until they become a mirror. A seeker of God polishes themselves of their own accord and bears difficulty by virtue of their own effort. But a person absorbed in God is thrown into tribulation. God Himself refines such a person and bestows upon them the qualities of a mirror by subjecting them to countless forms of adversity and affliction. In actuality, the end result of a seeker of God and one who is absorbed in God are the same. There are two aspects which relate to the righteous: the spiritual quest and spiritual magnetism.

Faith in the Unseen

As I have mentioned above, righteousness requires a certain degree of forced effort. This is why Allah Almighty states:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ¹

It is a guidance for the righteous; who believe in the unseen.

This implies a sort of intentionally exerted labour. In comparison to witnessing something, belief in the unseen requires a kind of extra effort. Therefore, a *muttaqi* (or a righteous person) must, to a certain degree, make an intentional struggle. For when such a person attains the rank of a *salih* (or a virtuous servant), the unseen no longer remains hidden to such a person. A stream gushes forth from within such a one and reaches God. An individual of this nature witnesses God and His love with their eyes.

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمًى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمًى²

And whoso is blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter.

From this it is evident that until a person attains enlightenment in this world they shall never be able to see the countenance of God. And so, the task of a righteous one is to prepare diverse collyriums, which may rid them of the spiritual cataracts in their eyes. Now, this demonstrates that a *muttaqi* is blind at first and they attain light through various forms of effort and purification. When such a person gains

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:3-4*

² *Bani Isra'il, 17:73*

vision and becomes a *salih*, they surpass the state of having to believe in the unseen and forced effort also ceases to exist. In the same way, the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was given the ability to behold with his eyes the heaven and earth etc., as well as other hidden matters in this very world. All the things that a *muttaqi* must believe in by virtue of belief in the unseen were actually witnessed by the Holy Prophet^{sa} in this very world. This verse indicates that although a *muttaqi* suffers from the pains of consciously forced effort, a *salih* enters an abode of security and enjoys the state of the soul at rest. A *muttaqi* remains in a state where they must have faith in the unseen, and blindly follows a course of action without knowing much, and believes in all spiritual matters by virtue of faith in the unseen. This is the very sincerity of a *muttaqi* and as a result of this sincerity, God Almighty promises that such a one shall prosper.

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ¹

It is they who shall prosper.

The Observance of Prayer

After this, in honour of a righteous person, Allah the Exalted states:

وَيَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ²

Meaning, he sets upright the Prayer. Here, 'to set upright' has been stated. This also alludes to the forced effort that is specific to a righteous person. When such a person begins the Prayer, he must ward off countless evil whisperings, due to which his Prayer falls repeatedly as it were, and he must hold it up. When he says *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest) to begin the Prayer, a swarm of evil temptations rush to dissipate his heart's concentration. These thoughts lead a person to a far off place, causing him distress, but he goes on fighting to the death in order to acquire this concentration and contentment in Prayer. With great anguish, such a person forever remains concerned about keeping erect his falling Prayer. He repeats the words:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help.

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:6*

² *al-Baqarah, 2:4*

In this supplication, man implores that his Prayer may be established and seeks to be guided to the right path so that his Prayer may be set upright. In the face of these evil whisperings, a *muttaqi* is like a child who implores earnestly and humbly before God. He weeps before Allah and concedes that he falls true to the following:

أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ¹

But he inclined to the earth.

This is the war that a *muttaqi* must wage with his inner self during the Prayer and this is what results in the acquisition of spiritual reward.

There are some who in the Prayer desire to rid themselves of evil distractions immediately, although *يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ* (*He establishes the Prayer*), indicates something quite the opposite. Is Allah unaware? Hazrat Sheikh Abdul-Qadir Jilani, may Allah have mercy on him, states that spiritual reward is earned only until strenuous efforts remain. When these efforts cease to exist, spiritual reward no longer remains either. In other words, fasting and Prayer are considered deeds only as long as one is required to struggle against evil temptation to perform them. However, when these deeds attain a higher status, and the one who fasts and observes the Prayer escapes the clutches of forced effort and develops an inherent inclination to virtue, fasting and observing Prayer no longer remain to be deeds. Then, Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilanith goes on to raise the question himself: ‘Does this mean that such a person is exempt from observing Prayer? For spiritual reward was only attainable until a person was required to make a forced effort.’ The fact of the matter is that Prayer no longer remains to be a deed, rather, it becomes a reward in itself. This Prayer becomes the nourishment of such a person and the delight of their eyes; it is paradise on earth.

On the contrary, those engaged in strenuous effort are in a state of battle, while the other has already attained salvation. This means that when a person’s spiritual journey finishes, their trials also come to an end. For example, if a eunuch were to say that he has never cast a glance upon a woman, of what favour or spiritual reward is he deserving? Such a person does not even possess the characteristic of casting lustful glances. However, if a man possessing virility were to restrain his glances, he would indeed be worthy of spiritual reward. Similarly, an individual must pass through thousands of stages. In certain cases, his constant practice in-

¹ *al-Araf*, 7:177

vests within him a strength. When a person makes peace with his inner self, he enters a sort of paradise; but the same degree of spiritual reward is no longer warranted. Such a person has already engaged in a transaction of which he continues to reap benefit. However, this does not possess the same state as before. An action performed repeatedly by forced effort eventually takes on the form of a natural disposition in man. A person who inherently attains pleasure in something cannot be deterred from it. He finds himself naturally inclined. And so, when a person is at the level known as ‘righteousness’ (*ittiqa*) where they must force themselves to perform good with strenuous effort, they are still impaired, as it were, and the nature of their virtue is still incomplete.

Spending from the Provision of Allah

After this, in praise of a *muttaqi*, Allah the Exalted states:

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْتَفِقُونَ¹

And they spend out of what We have provided for them.

Here, the words ‘*mimma*’ (i.e. from out of what) have been used when referring to a righteous person because he is still in a state of blindness. And so, he dedicates for the sake of God only a portion from among that which God has given him. But the truth is that if he possessed a discerning eye, he would see that nothing belongs to him at all and that everything belongs to God Almighty. This lack of understanding is like a veil, which is a necessary element in the state of ‘righteousness’ or *ittiqa*. The demands of this state push one to give a portion from that which is endowed to him by God. In his last days, the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, inquired of Hazrat Ayeshah, may Allah be pleased with her, if there was anything in the house. It came to light that there was one dinar at home. At this, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that an individual cannot attain true nearness to God if they do not sacrifice everything in His cause. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had surpassed the level of righteousness or *ittiqa* and had attained unto *salahiyyat* (i.e. a level of higher virtue). Therefore, the words ‘*mimma*’ were never used for the Holy Prophet^{sa}, for blind is the one who keeps some for himself and gives some to God. Nonetheless, as mentioned, this is part and parcel of a righteous person, because for such a

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:4 [Publisher]

person, even giving in the cause of God first required a battle with the inner self. As a result, he gave some and kept some. Of course, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, gave everything that he had in the way of God and kept nothing for himself.

As has been expounded in the treatise that was read out in the Conference of Great Religions (*Dharam Mahautsav*), there are three states that man traverses through, from the beginning of life until the end. In this context, the Quran, which was sent down to lead man through all the stages of progress, starts with the state of righteousness (*ittiqa*), which is a path of forced effort. It is a perilous arena, as it were, in which man stands against a foe—both with swords in hand. If one is able to escape death, salvation is his; otherwise, he becomes the lowest of the low. As such, when describing the attributes of a *muttaqi*, Allah has not stated that they spend in entirety all that He has bestowed upon them. A *muttaqi* does not possess the same faith that characterises the grandeur of a Prophet, so that like our Perfect Guide, they are able to return to God, whatever He bestowed on them in entirety. And so, initially, man is taxed insignificantly so that the sweet taste of this sacrifice motivates him to an even greater degree.

Provision

Allah the Exalted states:

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ¹

And they spend out of what We have provided for them.

Provision does not only imply wealth. In fact, it connotes everything that is endowed to humans, whether knowledge, wisdom or experience in medicine. All of this is considered ‘provision’ and man is to spend out of all this in the way of God.

Learning Reaches Perfection in Stages

Man is to progress on this path gradually and step by step. If, like the Gospel, Muslims were taught to offer the other cheek when slapped on one, or to give away everything they possessed, they too like the Christians would, as a result, have been deprived of spiritual reward due to an impractical teaching.

The Quran, however, leads man to progress in degrees, and this accords with the

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:4*

nature of man. The case of the Gospel may be likened to a young boy who is compelled to study an immensely difficult book as soon as he begins his schooling. Allah the Exalted is Wise and so His wisdom demanded that teaching reached perfection gradually.

After this, Allah states with reference to a righteous person (*muttaqi*):

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْآخِرَةَ هُمْ يُؤْتُونَ¹

Meaning, righteous are those who believe in the books that were revealed in previous times and in the book that was revealed to you. Moreover, they believe in the hereafter. This affair is also not free from forced effort. At this stage, belief is still somewhat deprived. The eyes of a *muttaqi* lack divine understanding and insight. Such a one wars with Satan and manages to believe only in fundamental terms and this is the case with our community at the present time. Indeed, our community has also believed, but they still remain unaware of the extent to which it will soon flourish in the hands of Allah. Hence, such belief ultimately yields benefit.

When the word ‘*yaqin*’ is used in a general sense it implies the lowest level of belief. That is to say, the lowest stage among the three stages of knowledge is knowledge by inference (*ilm-ul-yaqin*)—at this stage a person possesses righteousness (*ittiqah*). After this, their advances in degrees of righteousness lead them to certainty by sight (*ayn-ul-yaqin*) and true certainty (*haqq-ul-yaqin*).

Righteousness is no insignificant thing. For it is through righteousness that man fights all the devils within, which command ascendancy over his every inner strength and faculty. In the state of the self that incites towards evil, each of these faculties are a Satan which dwells in man. If not reformed, they shall enslave man. Even knowledge and reason, if misused, become satanic. The task of a *muttaqi* is to correctly put these and all his other faculties to good use.

A True Religion is One that Nurtures the Human Faculties

As for such people who consider retribution, anger or marriage to be unacceptable in all cases, they too disregard the Book of Nature and defy the faculties of man.

A true religion is one that nurtures the human faculties, not one that uproots them. To forsake virility or anger, which God Almighty has invested in man, is

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:5

to war with God—as if one were to become a hermit or a monk. All such things are an infringement of the rights due to fellow man. If human faculties were to be relinquished completely, this would result in objection against God who invested us with them. Hence, the teachings in the Gospel—which result in the ruin of one’s faculties—lead a person to misguidance. Allah the Exalted orders their proper use, not for them to be wasted away. As such, He states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ...الْعَمَلِ¹

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others.

Justice is a thing which all ought to benefit from. For the Messiah^{as} to teach that ‘the eye which offends thee be plucked out,’ also brings about the destruction of one’s faculties because he did not teach that a person must not look at a *non-mahram* woman at all. On the contrary, one is permitted to very well do so, but not with an adulterous eye—there is no prohibition in looking at the first place. If a person looks at such a woman, it should be taken into account how this affects a person’s faculties. Why, like the Quran, was the eye not forbidden from looking at what causes a person to stumble in the first place, so that one would not mourn the loss of something as beneficial and valuable as the eye?

The Meaning of the Islamic Veil

In the current day, objections are raised against the veil. However, people do not realise that the Islamic veil is no prison. It is only a barrier which prevents the free mixing of men and women. The veil saves them from stumbling. A just-minded individual would appreciate that if *non-mahram* men and women were to mix without any hesitation and concern, and if they were to go about together, they would surely succumb to the flare of their inner-passions. It has often been heard and observed that certain people see no ill in a *non-mahram* man and woman remaining alone behind closed doors. Civilisation they call it. It is to counter these very adverse effects that the Founder of Islam has forbidden an individual altogether from approaching anything that may lead them to stumble. In this relation, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has stated that where a *non-mahram* man and woman sit in seclusion, the third of them is Satan. Just reflect on the harrowing outcomes that Europe is having to bear as a result of this non-restrictive and unbridled teaching.

¹ *an-Nabl*, 16:91

In certain places, an utterly shameless life of promiscuity is led. This is due to teachings of the sort just mentioned. If you wish to protect a thing from misuse, it must be safeguarded. However, if one does not watch over a possession—and considers the world to be innocent—then keep in mind that it will surely be ruined. The Islamic veil is a truly holy teaching indeed, which through segregation, saves man and woman from stumbling. It has delivered mankind from a grievous and bitter life, on account of which Europe has seen domestic disputes and suicides every other day. The fact that noble women drift into lives of promiscuity is the practical outcome of the permission to gaze freely at *non-mahram* women.

Disciplined and Proper Use of the Human Faculties

None of the faculties endowed by Allah Almighty have been granted to man so that they may be wasted; rather, their discipline and proper use is the true means by which they are nourished and developed. This is why Islam has not taught that the faculties of virility be slaughtered completely or that the eye be gouged out. Instead, it teaches their proper use and the purification of one's inner self. In this respect, Allah the Exalted states:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ¹

Surely, success does come to the believers.

Then, after illustrating the life of a righteous person, God Almighty draws a conclusion in the following words:

وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ²

And it is they who shall prosper.

That is to say, those who tread the path of righteousness; those who believe in the unseen; those who establish or set upright their Prayer when it begins to fall as it were; those who give from that which is bestowed to them by God; those who, irrespective of their own thoughts and fancies, believe in all the divine scriptures sent by God, ultimately attain to the level of certainty. It is these very people who are truly guided and who tread a path that goes on to lead a person to success. Therefore, it is such people who are triumphant and who shall reach their final destination, and who have been delivered from the perils of the journey before

¹ *al-Mu'minun*, 23:2

² *al-Baqarah*, 2:6

them. Hence, from the very outset, Allah the Exalted has given us a teaching of righteousness and bestowed upon us a book, which also provides counsel on how to develop piety.

And so, let my community grieve, more than anything else, over whether they possess righteousness or not.

Live a Life of Humility and Modesty

It is necessary for the righteous to live a life of humility and modesty. This is an aspect of piety by which we must combat undue anger. To refrain from anger was the final and most trying stage experienced by many a great saint and the Truthful. Vanity and pride stem from anger; and in certain cases, anger itself is the result of arrogance and conceit. For anger comes about when an individual gives superiority to themselves over another. I do not desire that members of my community should consider themselves superior or inferior, behave arrogantly, or look down upon one another. God knows who is superior or inferior. This is a form of neglect that reeks of contempt. I fear that this contempt may grow like a seed and ruin such a person. Certain people meet those of high standing with immense respect, but truly great is the one who listens to a lowly person with humility, comforts them, gives importance to their opinion and does not rebuke them in a manner that would cause them grief. God Almighty states:

وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِيْسَ الْإِيسْمِ الْفُسُوقَ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ¹

Do not call one another by nicknames. Bad indeed is evil reputation after the profession of belief; and those who repent not are the wrongdoers.

Do not call upon one another in a hurtful manner out of irritation. For this is the way of the sinners and the transgressors. A person who scoffs at another shall not meet death until they too are subjected to the same. Do not look down upon your brethren. When all drink from the same stream, who knows which of you are destined to drink more than the other. Worldly definitions cannot afford a person honour and greatness. In the sight of God Almighty, great is the one who is righteous.

¹ *al-Hujurat*, 49:12

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ¹

Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

Distinction Amongst Castes

The various castes are no cause of honour. God Almighty has only made these castes a means of recognition. In these days, even after four generations, it becomes difficult to confirm a person's lineage. It does not behove a righteous person to fall into disputes over caste. Allah the Exalted has decreed that castes are no means of preference in His estimation. True honour and greatness comes from righteousness alone.

Who Are the Righteous?

The Word of God states that the righteous are those who walk with humility and modesty, and do not speak arrogantly. They speak as though they were a lowly person addressing their senior. In any case, we should act in a manner that brings about our prosperity. None can claim a monopoly over Allah Almighty, for He desires righteousness alone. One who adopts righteousness shall attain a lofty status. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, or Abraham, on whom be peace, did not receive honour by any inheritance. Although we believe that Abdullah, the revered father of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was not an idolater, but it was not on this account that the Prophet of Islam was conferred his prophethood. Prophethood was endowed to him by divine grace due to the virtues present in his nature. This is what drew in God's grace. It was sincerity and righteousness which led Abraham, on whom be peace, the Father of the Prophets, to sacrifice his son without hesitation. Even he himself was cast into a fire. Just reflect upon the sincerity and devotion of our Chief and Master, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The Holy Prophet^{sa} stood firm against all forms of evil. He bore diverse trials and tribulations, but did not care in the least. It was this sincerity and devotion which moved Allah the Exalted to shower His grace. It is for this reason that He states:

¹ *al-Hujurat*, 49:14

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا¹

Translation: Allah Almighty and all His angels send blessings upon the Messenger. O ye who believe! You also should invoke blessings and peace upon the Prophet^{sa}.

This verse establishes that the deeds of the Noble Messenger^{sa} were such that Allah Almighty did not use any specific word to praise them or outline his attributes. Although words could be found, God Himself chose not to use any in particular. For the pious deeds of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were beyond the confines of praise. A verse of this nature does not exist in praise of any other Prophet. The soul of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was imbued with such sincerity and purity, and his deeds were so praiseworthy in the sight of God that Allah the Almighty decreed for all times to come that all future generations would send blessings upon the Holy Prophet as an expression of gratitude. The resolve and devotion of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is such that we would find no equal, either before him or after him, who could match him. One may reflect upon the time of the Messiah^{as} to see the extent to which his resolve, or spiritual sincerity and devotion impressed an effect upon his disciples. Anyone can appreciate how difficult it is to put right an ill habit. It is truly challenging to relinquish firmly rooted habits. However, our Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, reformed thousands of people who were worse than animals. There were some who, like animals, thought nothing of having relations with their mothers and sisters; they would devour the wealth of orphans and usurp the inheritance of those who were no more. Some worshipped the stars while others were atheist and others still worshipped the elements. What was the Arab Peninsula? It was home to diverse religious thought.

The Holy Quran Is a Perfect Guidance

One benefit of this is that the Holy Quran possesses within itself every necessary teaching. Its tenets are more than sufficient to uproot every false doctrine or ill teaching that could possibly exist in the world. This is the deep wisdom and power of Allah the Exalted.

Since this perfect book was destined to bring about perfect reformation, it was necessary for spiritual disease to be at its peak at the time and place of its revelation as well. This was so that a perfect remedy could be provided for each and every malady. As such, this peninsula was home to ailing people of all sorts, who

¹ *al-Ahzab*, 33:57

suffered from every spiritual illness that was to afflict the people of that age or those of future generations. This is why the Quran brought all religious law to its perfection. At the time of the revelation of other books, neither was this needed, nor did they possess such a perfect teaching.

A Magnificent Miracle of the Noble Prophet^{sa}

Of all the blessings that were manifested by our Perfect Prophet^{sa}, and if all his other miracles are put to one side, the reformation that he brought about is simply a magnificent miracle in itself. If one reflects upon the prevailing circumstances at the time of his advent and the state that he left behind, one must accept that this influence in itself is a miracle. Although every Prophet is worthy of honour, but as stated in the Holy Quran:

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ¹

That is Allah's grace; He bestows it on whom He pleases.

If the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had not appeared, prophethood aside, even proof of God would not have existed in the way that it does now. For it was through the teaching of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that we came to know of the following:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ²

Say, 'He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Independent and Besought of all.

'He begets not, nor is He begotten; 'And there is none like unto Him.'

If such a perfectly clear teaching of God's Unity had existed in the Torah, and the Quran had only come to elaborate it further, there would be no Christians in the world today (who believe in the Trinity).

The Holy Quran Possesses Every Truth

Therefore, the paths of virtue chalked out by the Quran provide guidance on how to foster people of all types and of all intellectual ability. It provides methods to train people of all intellectual levels, whether an ignorant person, a scholar or a philosopher, and answers the questions of people from all classes. In short, meth-

¹ *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:5

² *al-Ikhlās*, 112:2-5

ods to reform people from all walks of life have been provided in the Holy Quran. This is a Book of Nature, as it states itself:

فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ¹

In other words, this is a book which contains every truth. What a blessed book indeed. For it contains all that is needed to attain the greatest of heights.

The Messiah and the Mahdi

As stated in the Hadith, it is unfortunate however, that a time known as the Era of the Misguided would dawn. In other words, the Holy Prophet, on whom be peace, said that one era is my blessed era and the other is that of the Messiah and Mahdi who would appear. The Messiah and Mahdi are not two separate individuals, rather, both titles refer to the same person. The term *Mahdi* means ‘The Guided One’ and it cannot be said that the Messiah is not divinely guided. Irrespective of whether the Mahdi has Messianic qualities or not, in the least, no Muslim can suggest that the Messiah is not guided by God. In actuality, Allah the Exalted has used these two words to defend against the slander and reproach of the people, and to establish that the person in question is not a disbeliever, misguided or one who leads others astray, rather, he is divinely guided. For Allah knew that the Messiah and Mahdi who was destined to come would be branded an Anti-Christ and one gone astray, and so Allah named him the Messiah and Mahdi. The Anti-Christ was best described as *أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ*² (*one who inclined to the earth*) but the Messiah was to be raised to the heaven. And so all that Allah the Exalted had desired was destined to come about in two eras: firstly, the era of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, and secondly, the era of the latter-day Messiah and Mahdi. To elaborate, in one era the Quran, a true teaching, was revealed, but then the Era of the Misguided veiled this teaching; and this veil was destined to be lifted in the time of the Messiah^{as}. It is stated that the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, purified a community in his lifetime, i.e. the revered companions, as well as another group of people in praise of whom it is said:

لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ³

Those who have not yet joined them.

¹ *al-Bayyinah*, 98:4

² *al-Araf*, 7:177

³ *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:4

It is clear that God gave the glad-tidings that when misguidance would prevail, Allah the Exalted would not allow this religion to be ruined. As a matter of fact, in the era that was to come, God would unearth the verities of the Quran. It is related in a narration that one hallmark of the Messiah who was to come would be that he would possess understanding and insight of the Quran. Moreover, through his insight derived from the Holy Quran alone, he would warn people of the errors that would have taken root within them due to their ignorance of Quranic verities.

The Similarity between the Dispensations of Moses^{as} and Muhammad^{sa}

In the Quran, the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has been described as the likeness of Moses^{as} in the following words:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا¹

Meaning, We sent a Messenger just as Moses^{as} who was sent to Pharaoh. Our Messenger is the likeness of Moses^{as}. Then, in another instance, Allah the Exalted states:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ²

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them.

In other words, the successors who would follow after this likeness of Moses^{as} would also be from his very dispensation, just as was the case with the successors of Moses^{as}. This succession lasted for 1400 years and successors continued to appear. This was a prophecy from Allah the Exalted that just as the first chain of succession began, so too would this one. In the beginning, just as Moses^{as} manifested signs of glory and released his people from Pharaoh, the Prophet who was to appear after would also be like Moses^{as}.

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا السَّمَاءُ مَطْفُورَةٌ بِهَا كَأَنُ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا³

How will you then, if you disbelieve, guard yourselves against a

¹ *al-Muzzammil*, 73:16

² *an-Nur*, 24:56

³ *al-Muzzammil*, 73:18-19

day which will turn children grey-headed? On that day the heaven will be rent asunder and His promise will be fulfilled.

In other words, just as was the case when God sent Moses^{as}, in the time of the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the disbelievers of Arabia were full of traits that resembled Pharaoh. They too, like Pharaoh, did not refrain from transgression until they witnessed a sign of glory. The work of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was like that of Moses^{as}. Apparently, it would seem that the work of Moses^{as} was not commendable, but the Holy Quran established otherwise. In the era of Moses, on whom be peace, although the Children of Israel were saved from Pharaoh, they were not delivered from sin. They fought and developed crooked hearts, and even attacked Moses^{as} himself. But our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, granted true and complete salvation. If the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had not secured strength, grandeur and rule for Islam, the Muslims would forever remain oppressed and would not have been saved from the hands of the disbelievers. And so, one form of deliverance granted by Allah Almighty was that an independent Islamic sovereignty was established and another was that Muslims were blessed with deliverance from sin. God Almighty has illustrated both conditions to describe what the state of the Arabs was like in the beginning and how it was transformed. If both states are compared, the initial condition can be fully realised. Hence, Allah the Exalted blessed the Muslims with both forms of salvation. They were delivered from Satan and also from worldly oppression.

The Rank of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and His Companions

The sincerity and purity demonstrated by the Holy Prophet^{sa} and his noble companions is unparalleled. They did not hesitate in even laying down their lives. Jesus^{as} was not confronted with any real difficulty. None of his people rejected the concept of revelation. What is so difficult in exhorting a few from one's own kinsfolk? The Jews had already read the Torah and believed in it; they already believed in God as being One and without partner. At times a person thinks: what did the Messiah^{as} come to do anyway? Even today, the Jews possess indignation for the Unity of God. At most, one could perhaps say that there were certain moral deficiencies that had crept into them. But the teaching, nonetheless, was already present in the Torah. Despite the facility that his people already believed

in this book, the Messiah^{as} learnt this book from a teacher, lesson by lesson. In contrast, our Chief and Master, our Perfect Guide, was unlettered. He was never taught by a teacher and this is a fact which even adversaries have not been able to deny. Hence, Jesus^{as} benefited from two facilities. Firstly, he came to preach to his own kinsfolk and secondly, the main thing that he had come to teach the people, they accepted already. Indeed, they were guilty of certain moral flaws. However, despite all this ease, even the disciples themselves could not be reformed. They remained covetous. Some of the disciples even stole from the wealth that Jesus^{as} owned. As such, the Messiah^{as} said, 'I have nowhere to lay down my head.' However, I am astonished as to what this statement implies, especially when one has a shelter, a home, and such ample wealth that if someone were to steal a portion of it, this would go undetected. In any case, mention of this is incidental. The main point is that despite all these facilities, no reformation took place. Peter was given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, but he could not refrain from cursing his teacher.

In contrast, let one fair-mindedly reflect over the sacrifices made by the companions of our Perfect Guide, for the sake of their God and Messenger. They were exiled, persecuted, made to bear all sorts of misfortune and gave their lives. However, they continued to advance with sincerity and devotion. So what was it that made them so truly devoted? It was the ray of the fervour of that true divine love which had penetrated their hearts. Therefore, no matter which Prophet one compares him to, the Holy Prophet^{sa} cannot be matched, whether it be with respect of his teaching, his purification of souls, turning the hearts of his followers cold to the world, or valiantly sacrificing blood for the sake of truth. This is the rank of the companions of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Moreover, the mutual love and affection that existed amongst them has been illustrated by Allah in two sentences:

وَالَّذِينَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لَوْ انْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلْفَتْ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلْفَ بَيْنَهُمْ¹

And He has put affection between their hearts. If thou hadst expended all that is in the earth, thou couldst not have put affection between their hearts, but Allah has put affection between them.

In other words, the affection between them could never be fostered even if a mountain of gold had been spent for this purpose. Now another community is

¹ *al-Anfal*, 8:64

that of the Promised Messiah^{as}, which is to develop within itself the hue of the companions. The companions were a pious community for whom the Quran is full of praise. Are you like them? God says that the people who will accompany the Promised Messiah^{as} would stand shoulder to shoulder with the companions. The companions were those who sacrificed their wealth and homeland in the way of truth. They abandoned everything. Most would have heard the incident of Hazrat Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him. On one occasion when people were instructed to sacrifice their wealth in the way of God, he brought all the possessions he owned at home. When the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, inquired of him as to what he had left at home, he said: 'I have left God and His Messenger at home.' Hazrat Abu Bakr^{ra} was a chief of Mecca who lead an ascetic life and wore the most simple clothes. So the companions may be considered as ones who were martyrs in the cause of Allah. For them, it was decreed that paradise lay beneath the shadow of swords. But we are not faced with such trying circumstances because for us it was decreed that *يَضَعُ الْحَرْبَ*, i.e. there would be no war in the era of the Mahdi.

The Reality of Jihad

In consonance with the dictates of various points of wisdom, Allah the Exalted performs a certain action but later in specific circumstances, when the same action is inappropriate, He no longer acts in the same manner. Our Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was not the first to take up the sword, yet he was made to suffer the severest of cruelties. A period of thirteen years is enough for a child to mature. And even if the period of the Messiah^{as} is taken into account by subtracting ten years from the above, this too is quite a long time. Hence, during this lengthy period, there was no pain that the Holy Prophet^{sa} was not compelled to bear. Ultimately, when he left his homeland and took refuge in another land, even then he was pursued and not left alone. When this state of affairs arose, in order to save the oppressed from the persecution of their oppressors, it was commanded:

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ الَّذِينَ
أَخْرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ¹

Meaning, war was wrongly made against a people and they were unjustly driven

¹ *al-Hajj*, 22:40-41

out of their homes, only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah' and therefore, it was necessary to take up the sword. Otherwise, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would never have taken up the sword. Indeed, in this era the pen has been taken up against us. It is by the pen that we have been abused and severely pained and so in return, the pen is our weapon.

An Exhortation for the Community

I have repeatedly said that a person becomes proportionally accountable as they increase in their nearness to Allah. The household of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was more accountable than others. Those who are further away are not accountable, but surely, you are. If you are not greater than others in faith, then what is the difference between you and them? You are under the watch of thousands. These people survey your every movement as though they were spies of the government. And they are right in doing so. When the followers of the Promised Messiah^{as} are to walk shoulder to shoulder with the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, are you and they alike? If you are not like them, then you shall be called to account. Although this is an elementary state, but who knows when death shall arrive? Death is inevitable and every single individual must confront it. When this is the case, why do you not take heed? When a person has no relation to me, this is a different matter completely. However, when you have come to me and you have accepted my claim and believe in me as the Messiah, essentially you claim to be like the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Now did the companions ever exhibit reluctance in demonstrating faith and sincerity? Were they overcome by sloth? Were they hurtful? Did they not command control over their emotions? Were they not humble? Indeed, they were immensely humble. So pray to God that He enables you to be the same because no one can adopt a life of humility and modesty until Allah Almighty helps them in doing so. Delve into yourselves and if you find yourself weak in the likeness of a child, then do not worry. Like the companions, continue to pray:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ¹

Guide us in the right path.

Rise up during the nights and pray that God may guide you to His path. The

¹ *al-Fatihah*, 1:6

companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were also trained gradually. What was their initial state? They could be likened to the seeds sown by a farmer. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then watered these seedlings. He continuously prayed for them. The seed was healthy and the soil fertile, and so this watering brought forth excellent fruits. Be it day or night, the companions emulated the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. You ought to wholeheartedly seek repentance, wake up for *Tahajjud*, pray, purify your heart, forsake your weaknesses, and mould your words and actions according to the will of God Almighty. Be certain that Allah the Exalted shall bless one who tirelessly follows this advice, and actively prays and brings their plea before God. The heart of such a person shall be transformed. Do not lose hope in God.

با کربماں کار ہا دشوار نیت

No task is difficult for the valiant.

Some people say: ‘Are we out to become saints?’ Regrettably such people have shown no regard whatsoever. There is no doubt that one is to become a saint. If one treads the right path, God shall also move towards such a person, and ultimately, he shall receive communion with God. Even if a person moves slowly in His direction, God Almighty shall move towards him with far greater swiftness in response. Hence, the following verse alludes to this very fact:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا... الخ¹

*And as for those who strive in Our path —
We will surely guide them in Our ways.*

So bear in mind all the counsel I have given you today, for it is on this that salvation depends. Divine pleasure ought to dominate your interaction with God and His creation. Through this you must become an embodiment of the following:

وَالْآخَرِينَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ... الخ²

And among others from among them who have not yet joined them.

¹ *al-Ankabut*, 29:70

² *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:4

The Advent of the Messiah in the Israelite and Ishmaelite Dispensations

As I have mentioned earlier, the profound wisdom of God desired for two dispensations to be established on earth: the Israelite and the Ishmaelite dispensations. The first succession began with Moses^{as} and ended with the Messiah^{as}. This spanned an era of 1400 years. Similarly, there are indications of the advent of a Messiah in this day and age, who would appear 1400 years after the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. One significance that the number fourteen holds is also that a human being attains to maturity at the age of fourteen. Moses^{as} was informed that the Messiah would appear when the Jews would become divided into many sects and their beliefs would differ with one another to the extreme. Certain sects rejected the existence of angels, while others rejected the Day of Judgement and the Resurrection of Bodies. In short, when irreligious ways would run rampant, at such a time the Messiah was to appear as an Arbiter. In the same manner, our Perfect Guide, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, informed us that when, in the likeness of the Jews, countless sects would develop amongst you; various false beliefs and ill-practices would begin to take root; and like the Jewish scholars, when some would declare others to be non-believers; at that time, a Messiah would appear as the Arbiter from among the Muslims in this blessed community. He would settle every matter in light of the Quran. He would be tormented at the hands of his people just like the Messiah and would be labelled a disbeliever. It was inevitable that these people, out of their ignorance, were bound to call this person the Anti-Christ and a disbeliever, because it had already been foretold in the Hadith that the Messiah who was to come would be branded as such. However, the belief which is taught to you is perfectly clear and evident. In fact, it does not even require any argumentation; rather, it already comes buttressed by conclusive proof.

The Death of Jesus^{as}

The first bone of contention relates to the death of Jesus^{as}. There are clear and lucid verses that support this. Allah the Almighty states:

يَجِيئُ ابْنُ مَتَوْفِيكَتِ وَرَافِعَكَ إِلَى¹

O Jesus, I will cause thee to die a natural death and will exalt thee to Myself

Then He states:

فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ²

But since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them.

The argument that *tawaffi* means something else is completely false. Ibn-i Abbas and even our Perfect Guide, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, have already defined this word to mean ‘death.’ Even those who oppose us, define the word to mean death or to take one’s soul. In every instance, the Quran has also defined this word in the same way and so, no one can prove otherwise. Hence, when it stands proven that the Messiah of Nazareth^{as} has died, it necessarily follows that the one who is to appear as Jesus^{as}, should be from this ummah. The Hadith *إِمَامُكُمْ مِنْكُمْ* (He will be your Imam from among you) also expounds the same. Naturalists are fortunate as they are immune from this predicament because they already believe in the death of Jesus^{as}. Moreover, the Promised Messiah^{as} is mentioned so frequently in narrations that it is impossible for one to turn a blind eye in this respect. Furthermore, Quranic testimonies also allude to the person who is to appear. Hence, an intelligent individual cannot reject the fact that the Messiah will appear.

What Special Relation Does the Messiah Possess with This Age?

Indeed, there are some who are justified in raising the question as to why the Messiah possesses a particular relationship with this age. The answer is that the Holy Quran clearly and markedly draws a parallel between the successorship of both the Israelite and Ishmaelite dispensations. This is apparent from the following verse:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفْنَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ³

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them.

¹ Aal-e-Imran, 3:56

² al-Ma'idah, 5:118

³ An-Nur, 24:56

The last successor of the Israelite dispensation who appeared in the fourteenth century after Moses, on whom be peace, was the Messiah of Nazareth^{as}. In parallel to this, it was necessary for the Messiah of this ummah to also appear at the head of the fourteenth century. Additionally, those blessed with visions have declared this century to be the one in which the Messiah would appear. Shah Waliyullah^{rh} and others have from among the Ahl-e-Hadith all agree that all the minor signs (*alamaat-e-sughra*) and to some extent the major signs (*alamaat-e-kubra*) have been fulfilled. However, they have erred somewhat in this respect. All of the signs have been fulfilled. The major sign or hallmark of the one who is to appear can be found in *Bukhari* as follows:

يَكْسِرُ الصَّلِيبَ وَيَقْتُلُ الْخَنَزِيرَ ... الخ¹

He will break the cross and kill the swine.

In other words, the era in which the Messiah shall descend is marked by the dominance of Christianity and prevalent worship of the cross. Is this not such a time? Has there been such a time from the era of Adam^{as} until now when such harm was ever inflicted upon Islam by the Christian priests? Division has plagued every country. There is no Muslim family who has not lost a member or so to their hands. Hence, the era of he who was to come is one in which worship of the cross would be dominant. What could be more dominating than what we see now? Vicious attacks like those of ravenous beasts have been made against Islam. Is there a single group that has not made the most savage of remarks against the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and hurled abuse at him? If now is not the time for the advent of the awaited one, the earliest that he can appear now is after a hundred years. For a divinely appointed Reformer (*Mujaddid*) must always appear at the head of the century. Now does Islam possess enough strength to combat the ever-increasing dominance of the Christian priests for another century? This ascendancy has reached its pinnacle and the one who was to appear has come. Now, he shall destroy the Anti-Christ with clinching argumentation. For it is recorded in the Hadith that nations will be overturned, not people themselves or the individuals that comprise these nations. And so has it occurred.

¹ *Bukhari*, Kitabu Ahadithil-Anbiya', Babu Nuzuli Isa Alayhis-Salam

A Universal Sign in Support of the Promised Messiah

Another sign in support of the awaited one is that in his era, during the month of Ramadan, the solar and lunar eclipses will occur. Those who ridicule divine signs in fact mock God Himself. For the solar and lunar eclipse to take place after the claim of the awaited one is something that no one could possibly forge or fabricate. Before this, no such solar or lunar eclipse has taken place. This was a sign by which Allah the Exalted was to proclaim the arrival of the awaited one throughout the entire world. And so upon witnessing this sign, the Arabs have also proclaimed its truth, as is their nature. Wherever our announcements could not reach to serve as public pronouncements, this solar and lunar eclipse announced the coming of the era of the awaited one. This was a sign of God completely free from human machination. No matter how strictly philosophical a person may be, they ought to reflect and contemplate that when the appointed sign has been fulfilled, it necessarily follows that the one in whose favour the sign was manifested, must also be present. This was not a matter that could have been predetermined, because it was stated that the sign would be manifested after a person who claimed to be the Mahdi had appeared. The Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also said that no such incident would have occurred from the time of Adam^{as} to this Mahdi. If anyone can historically show otherwise, I shall accept.

Another sign of the era was that the star *Dhus-Sinin* would emerge, i.e. the star of years gone by. In other words, the star which emerged in the time (or years) of the Messiah of Nazareth^{as}. Now, even that star has appeared, which gave heavenly news of the coming of the Jewish Messiah. Similarly, we find in the Quran:

وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ وَإِذَا الْبِهَارُ سُجِّرَتْ وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ
وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُدَةُ سُئِلَتْ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ وَإِذَا الصُّحُفُ نُشِرَتْ¹

And when the she-camels, ten-month pregnant, are abandoned, And when the beasts are gathered together, And when the seas are made to flow forth one into the other, And when people are brought together, And when the girl-child buried alive is questioned about, 'For what crime was she killed?' And when books are spread abroad.

Meaning, in that era, she-camels, which previously were the best means of trans-

¹ *at-Takwir*, 81:5-11

port and conveyance, shall become useless. In other words, during that era, the mode of transport will become so advanced that these earlier forms would be rendered useless. This alluded to the age of locomotives. Those who believe that these verses speak of the Resurrection do not stop to reflect how a she-camel could remain pregnant at such a time. The word *ishar* refers to pregnant she-camels. Then, these verses state that streams shall be made to flow forth in all directions and books shall be published abundantly. Hence, all of these signs relate to the era under discussion.

The Promised Messiah's Place of Advent

As for the place of the Promised Messiah's advent, it ought to be remembered that the emergence of the Anti-Christ has been foretold to take place from the East and this refers to our country. The author of *Hujaj-ul-Kiramah* writes that the disorder of the Anti-Christ is manifesting itself in India. And it is obvious that the Messiah must also appear in the same place that the Anti-Christ emerges. Then, it is narrated that the Messiah will appear in the village of *Qad'ah*, which is short for 'Qadian.' It is possible that in Yemen a village by this name exists, but one ought to remember that Yemen is not to the east of Hijaz, it is to the south. In fact, there is another Qadian, in the Punjab near Ludhiana as well.

Furthermore, the name given to me by divine destiny and decree is also a subtle indication to this very fact. The numerical value of the letters in 'Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani' equal 1300 exactly. In other words, the Imam whose name this is, was to come at the start of the fourteenth century. Hence, it is to this fact that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, alluded.

Heavenly and Earthly Calamities

Calamities were also to serve as a sign. Heavenly calamities took on the form of famine, plague and cholera. The plague is an affliction so vicious that it has even shaken the government, and if it continues to grow, it shall devastate the entire country. As for earthly calamities, there are wars and earthquakes, which have destroyed the land. It is necessary for a person commissioned by Allah to manifest heavenly signs in support of their truth as well. Was the sign of Lekhram not a magnificent sign? This contest ensued for many years with the term outlined in advance. This encounter went on for five years without fail. Both parties

published announcements and the matter gained publicity—unmatched publicity. Then, the events unfolded exactly as prophesied. Is there any other example of such an occurrence? Similarly, well before the Conference of Great Religions (*Dharam Mahautsav*) I announced many days in advance that Allah Almighty had informed me that my essay would be superior to all others. Those who witnessed this grand and awe-inspiring conference can reflect and understand for themselves that to foretell one's triumph over all others in a conference of such stature could not have been a mere conjecture or guesswork. Ultimately, the prophecy was fulfilled.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*And our final submission is that all praise belongs
to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.¹*

¹ Report on the Jalsa Salana of 1897, Compiled by Sheikh Yaqub Ali Irfani^{ra}, pp. 33-61

**The Second Address of the Promised Messiah^{as}
at the Annual Convention on 28 December 1897 after *Zuhr* Prayer**

Everyone Prepare Themselves for their Journey to the Afterlife

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: At this time, the purpose of my address is that since there can be no guarantee of one's life, I feel that the number of people who are gathered around me now may perhaps not be with us in the following year. Moreover, during these days, I saw in a vision that in the coming year certain friends would no longer be with us, but I cannot say who of them was referred to in this vision.

I am certain that this is because everyone individually ought to prepare themselves for their journey to the afterlife. As I have just mentioned, no names were disclosed to me, but I know for certain by knowledge given to me from Allah the Exalted that divine destiny and decree has its time. All must leave this transient world at some point or other. And so it is absolutely imperative to state that every individual and friend who is present now must not hear my words as though they were a storyteller's tale. Rather, I counsel you from Allah and have been commissioned by Him. I address you with immense sympathy, true goodwill and with a burning heart.

Belief in the Existence of Allah Almighty

Hence, I call on my friends to heed my counsel. I reiterate that you ought to listen attentively and take my words to heart. Allah is the most Supreme Being and He is the Light, for He has established His existence and Oneness in the Holy Quran with powerful and simple arguments. Those people who express doubts and harbour suspicion regarding His existence, despite witnessing the powers and miraculous wonders of this Magnificent Being, are truly the most unfortunate. In proof of His Magnificent and Powerful Being, Allah the Exalted has stated:

أَفِي اللَّهِ شَيْءٌ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ¹

Meaning, can there be doubt in the existence of Allah the Exalted, who is the Creator of the heaven and earth? Now reflect, is it not perfectly clear and obvious that a created thing leads one to accept the existence of a creator? When a person sees a well-crafted shoe or chest, they are left with no choice but to immediately

¹ *Ibrahim*, 14:11

accept the existence of its craftsman. In the same way it is inexplicably astonishing that there should be any room for denial in the existence of Allah Almighty. How can one reject the existence of a Maker who has created thousands of wonders with which the heaven and earth are replete?

Hence, know for certain that a foolish person who doubts the Being and existence of God, even after observing these works and wonders of nature, which are beyond the power, mind or intellect of man to create, is an unfortunate person caught in the grip of Satan. Such a one ought to seek forgiveness from God. To reject the existence of God has no basis in argument or observation. In fact, to reject the existence of Allah, the Glorious, despite witnessing His powers, and the wonders of His creatures and creation at large, which fill the heaven and earth, is the height of blindness.

There are two forms of blindness: the blindness of one's eyes and the blindness of one's heart. A person's physical blindness does not affect their faith. But a blinded heart does affect a person's faith. Hence, it is necessary and absolutely imperative that every single individual constantly beseeches Allah Almighty with humility and submission so that He may grant them true divine understanding, insight and vision, and so that He may protect them from the evil whisperings of Satan.

Belief in the Hereafter

The evil whisperings of Satan are abundant, but the most dangerous doubt and suspicion that develops in the heart of man and causes him to lose in this world, as well as in the afterlife, relates to the Hereafter.

For belief in the hereafter— among other ways and means—is a strong catalyst which moves an individual to perform good and virtuous acts. An individual who considers the Hereafter to be nothing more than a fable or tale, becomes one who is rejected, and loses in this world and the next. This is because awe of the Hereafter also arouses fear in a person, drawing them in towards the true fountain of divine understanding. And divine insight cannot be attained without the awe and fear of God. Hence, remember that when a person begins to doubt the Hereafter, this puts a person's faith in danger and taints the prospects of a good end.

The Lives of the Pious

The pious, holy and righteous personages who have passed throughout history, spent their nights standing and in prostration until the sun would rise upon them. Do you believe that they possessed extraordinary physical strength? Were they well-built, strong, muscular wrestlers? Not at all. Know well that physical power and strength can never accomplish that which spiritual power and strength can. You must have observed many people who eat three or four times a day and consume many fine and nutritious foods like *pilau* rice, but what is the outcome? They remain asleep and go on snoring until the sun rises. They become so completely overtaken by sleep and sloth that even to offer the *Isha* prayer becomes an arduous and incredibly difficult task, let alone *Tabajjud*.

Do reflect, did the revered companions of the Holy Prophet, may Allah be pleased with all of them, prevail over the disbelievers because they were taken by a life of luxury, and exquisite food and drink? Of course not. It was foretold in earlier scriptures as well that they would stand in Prayer during the nights and fast often during the day. They would spend their nights in the remembrance of God and in contemplation. How else did they spend their lives? The following verses of the Holy Quran are a vivid illustration of the manner in which the companions spent their lives:

وَمِنْ رَبَّاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ¹... يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا²

Meaning, tie your horses on the frontier so that the enemy of Allah and your enemy remain in fear of your preparation and readiness. O believers, be steadfast and strive to excel in steadfastness and be on your guard.

The Meaning of 'Ribat'

The word '*ribat*' refers to those horses that are tied at the enemy frontier. Allah the Exalted instructs the companions to remain prepared to fight the enemy. The word '*ribat*' draws their attention towards the fact that they should remain fully prepared in all respects. The companions were given two responsibilities. Firstly, to fight their apparent enemies and secondly, a spiritual war. The lexicon states that '*ribat*' also refers to a person's soul and heart. A subtle point to note is that only those horses can be brought into service that are schooled and trained. In

¹ *al-Anfal*, 8:61

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:201

these days, horses are trained and instructed, and schooled and taught just as children are educated in schools with great care and attention. If they are not trained and taught, they would turn out to be completely useless and instead of being beneficial, would prove to be dangerous and harmful.

This is an indication of the fact that the souls, i.e. *'ribat'* of human beings ought to be trained as well. Their faculties and strengths ought to function within the limits set by Allah Almighty. Otherwise, they shall not be able to serve in the inner war and battle that wages on at every second and every moment between man and his arch-enemy, Satan. In war and on the field of battle, in addition to one's physical strength, skill is also necessary. Similarly, human souls must be trained and appropriately taught for this inner war and struggle. Otherwise, as a result, Satan shall gain victory over man. Such a person shall in turn be disgraced and dishonoured. For example, if an individual possesses an arsenal of artillery such as canons and other guns, etc., but is completely ignorant on the use of these weapons, such a one can never succeed in fighting the enemy. Similarly, if a person is equipped with weapons of war and guns, etc., and knows how to use them, yet they have no strength in their arms, such a one will also be unsuccessful. This demonstrates that merely learning the method and technique required to wield a weapon is also insufficient until a person exercises and trains in order to develop power and strength in their arms. Now if there were a person who is knowledgeable in the art of swordsmanship, but they have not trained and exercised, upon entering the field of battle, after three or four manoeuvres and a few strikes, their arms will fall lifeless and they shall render themselves useless by exhaustion. Ultimately, such a one will fall prey to the enemy out of their own weakness.

Spiritual Struggle and Exercise

So understand full well that mere knowledge of tactic and theoretical training are of no avail, until they are coupled with action, effort and practice. One ought to observe that it is precisely for this reason that governments do not allow their armies to sit idle. Even in a time of peace and comfort, they create war scenarios to keep their armies engaged, and target practice and parades, etc., are a daily routine.

As I have just mentioned, just as knowledge and skill in the use of weaponry and the like is required on the one hand, in order to gain victory in the field of battle, on the other hand, exercise and knowledge of best practice is also impera-

tive. Similarly, in war and battle, trained horses are required—horses that do not fear the sound of guns and canons, and do not scatter and retreat at the sight of chaos; rather, advance, come what may. Similarly, the souls of mankind cannot triumph in the field of battle against the enemies of Allah without tireless exercise, rigorous practice and the best of training.

A Distinction of the Arabic Language

The Arabic language is extraordinary and truly matchless. The word ‘*ribat*,’ which appears in the aforementioned verse relates to the philosophy of physical conflict, battle and the art of warfare on the one hand, but also conveys the essence and worthy nature of one’s inner spiritual war and struggle of self-purification. This is a remarkable phenomenon. This is why the Arabic language is the Mother of Languages. It expresses that which cannot be expressed by other languages. God-willing, these insights shall be revealed with immense clarity and with all its subtleties in my book *Minan-ur-Rahman*, which I have begun writing to prove the superiority of Arabic and its being the Mother of Languages. As a result, it shall become evident that the research conducted by the Europeans on this subject is completely flawed and hollow. Such researchers will also come to know that the lost mother of languages has been found in this era, just as other religious verities have been uncovered, and that lost language is Arabic. Hence, the Arabic language manifests the spiritual realm in the vocabulary it uses to describe elements of the physical world. This is because the physical and material are observed through external means and we can comprehend their reality effortlessly with the utmost ease. And so it is not difficult to comprehend the philosophy of the spiritual realm and matters divine by reflecting on the material world. It is due to the special grace and blessings of Allah Almighty that in this era of darkness and misguidance, He has sent down the light of divine insight to guide those who have lost their way, and in doing so He has revealed a path and means which until now was secret. What exactly is that way? It is this process of deriving truths from the philosophy and essence of the Arabic language. Blessed are those who hold dear the bounty of Allah Almighty and remain forever ready to partake of it.

Islam was Granted Two Strengths in War

Now reflect that this very word ‘*ribat*’, which refers to horses that are tied at the border for defence against the enemy, is also used to refer to those souls which are trained in preparation for the inner battle against Satan that constantly wages on within. It is absolutely true that Islam was granted two strengths in war. The first strength was used in the early period of Islam for the purpose of defence and to seek retribution. When the idolaters of Arabia oppressed and persecuted the Muslims, a party of one thousand valiantly took on a hundred thousand disbelievers and exhibited this pure strength and grandeur in every trying time. As this time passed, the philosophy of the word ‘*ribat*’ pertaining to physical strength and skill in war became manifest.

The Present Era Calls for Feats in Spiritual Battle

Now, in the era that we are passing through at present, there is absolutely no need for any physical war. As a matter of fact, in the latter days, precedents were to be set in battles that would ensue within—spiritual battles. For in the present age, an elaborate arsenal of equipment has been prepared to fuel apostasy and irreligion within the hearts of people. And so it is necessary to combat these forces with similar weaponry because this is a time of peace and harmony. We enjoy every kind of comfort and security. Everyone is free to preach and propagate their religion and to follow its injunctions. Given that Islam is a true advocate for peace, rather, when Islam is the foremost religion that truly disseminates peace, harmony and safety, how can it seek to establish its earlier practice in this era of peace and freedom? Hence, it is the latter practice, i.e. the undertaking of spiritual struggle, that is needed in this day and age. As the Persian proverb goes:

که طوا چو یکبار خوردند و بس

Halwa once partaken of is enough.

Jihad in the Present Age

There was another factor underpinning the practice of earlier times and it was to exhibit bravery, which in that era was deemed to be the most commendable and cherished quality one could possess. In the present day, war has become a science where even a person who sits at a distance can fire a canon or a gun. However, in

those days, a truly courageous man was one who stood firmly under the shadow of swords. However, the art of war in this age is nothing but a mask for cowards. Now, courage amounts to nothing and those who possess advanced weapons of war and modern canons, and who are trained in their use prevail in war. The purpose and objective of war in earlier times was so that the hidden quality of bravery within the believers could come to light. And as God Almighty had willed, He manifested this quality of the believers to the world most magnificently. This is no longer required because now war has taken on the form of skill, strategy and tactic. Advanced weaponry and intricate strategies have mixed this precious and honourable merit to dust.

In the early period of Islam, defensive wars and physical battles were also necessary because those who preached the message of Islam were countered, not with reason and argumentation, but by the sword. And so, left with no other choice, the Muslims were forced to respond to the sword in kind. But now Islam is not countered with the sword, rather, it is criticised by the pen and through argumentation. Hence the reason that in this day and age God Almighty desires for us to use the pen to accomplish that which was previously done so by the sword—so that the opponents may be defeated through written argumentation. Therefore, it is inappropriate for anyone to respond to the pen by the sword.

گر حفظ مراتب نکلی زندیقی

If you are not considerate of rank, you shall lose your faith.

The Present Era Calls for the Pen

Know for certain that in this age it is not the sword that is needed but the pen. Our opponents have spread doubts about Islam and have sought to attack the true religion sent by Allah Almighty through various sciences and strategies. I have thus been moved by God to enter this battlefield of science and academic advancement armed with a literary arsenal, and also to exhibit the spiritual valour of Islam and demonstrate the marvel of its inner strength. How could I have been capable to enter this field of battle? It is only due to the grace of Allah Almighty and His boundless beneficence that He desires to manifest the honour of His religion at the hands of a humble man like myself. On one occasion, I began to count the allegations and attacks levelled against Islam by our opponents and as I recall, their number equalled 3,000 or thereabout. And I am certain that now their

number must have increased even further. No one ought to entertain the thought that it is due to Islam's inherent weakness that it is susceptible to 3,000 allegations. This is definitely not the case. These allegations are objections in the view of the unwise and those who are foolish. However, I truthfully say that where I have counted these allegations, I have also reflected and found that in reality, many distinct truths can be discovered at the point of these very allegations, but they cannot be seen by those who raise these objections due to their lack of insight. Truly, it is the wisdom of God Almighty that wherever a blinded critic has raised an objection, it is there that a hidden treasure of verities and divine insights lie to be discovered.

The Purpose of the Advent of the Promised Messiah

God Almighty has appointed me so that I may reveal these hidden treasures to the world, and so that I may purify and cleanse the filth of those impure allegations that have been smeared upon these shining gems. The jealousy of God Almighty is vigorously roused at this time in order to clear and absolve the honour of the Holy Quran from the objections attributed to it by every malevolent enemy.

Therefore, in the case that our opponents seek to attack Islam by the pen, and indeed they do, how foolish would it be for us to come prepared to engage in physical battle against them? I tell you clearly that anyone who retaliates by way of war or conflict in the name of Islam, shall only defame the Faith. Islam has never sought to unnecessarily take up the sword without just cause. As I have said, war has turned into a mere art and no longer serves a religious objective. In fact, worldly motives have now become the centre of war. Hence, how unjust would it be to threaten critics with the sword as opposed to responding to their objections? Now, with time, the manner of war has changed. And so firstly and foremost, it is necessary that one makes use of one's heart and mind, and purifies one's soul. Seek support and victory from God Almighty through virtue and righteousness. It is an unchangeable law and firm principle of God Almighty that it is impossible for Muslims to succeed and gain victory over others through mere words and statements. Allah the Exalted does not value boasting and empty words, rather, it is true righteousness that He desires and it is sincere purity that He loves. In this regard, Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ¹

Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good.

One Ought to Make Use of Reason

We should also make use of reason because it is on account of this faculty that a human being is held accountable. No person can be compelled to accept things which stand against reason. The shariah has never compelled a person to bear anything beyond the strength and capacity of their faculties.

لَا يَكْفِي اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا²

Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity.

From this verse, it is clearly evident that the commandments of Allah Almighty are not such as are beyond the ability of one to fulfil. Furthermore, God Almighty has not disclosed His injunctions and laws to the world so that He may exhibit His eloquence and articulate speech to man, or to flaunt His lawmaking and story-telling ability—as if He had determined from the very beginning that foolish and weak human beings would never be able to act upon these injunctions. God Almighty is above and beyond such vain practices. Christians do believe, however, that no person on earth can follow divine law and fulfil the commandments of God. These foolish people do not even realise that what need then was there for God to reveal divine law at all? In their view and belief, God-forbid, it was a vain and futile act for Allah Almighty to reveal religious laws to the past Prophets. In actuality, the Christians were forced to attribute such a flaw to the Holy Being of God in order to craft the concept of the Atonement. I am amazed and astonished that in order to establish the foundation for a self-invented doctrine they did not even bother to consider the sort of vile criticism to which God's Being becomes susceptible.

Every Commandment of the Quranic Teaching is Underpinned by Purpose and Wisdom

Indeed, a quality of the Quranic teaching is that its every commandment is underpinned by purpose and wisdom. And for this reason, there is emphasis throughout the Holy Quran to make use of reason, understanding, contempla-

¹ *an-Nahl*, 8:129

² *al-Baqarah*, 2:287

tion, intellect and faith. The clear distinction between the Quran and other scriptures is that no other scripture has dared to put its teachings up against the heavy and unrestrained criticism of rationality and reflection. The sly followers of this inarticulate Gospel and its supporters know well that the teaching of the Gospel cannot withstand the test of reason in the least. And so they have cunningly interpolated their teachings to suggest that the Trinity and Atonement are such secrets that their essence cannot be understood by the human intellect. In contrast to this, the teaching of the Holy Quran states:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالاٰخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيٰتٍ لِّاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ الَّذِيْنَ يَذْكُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ... الخ¹

Meaning, the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of night and day, furnish to those who are wise, clear proof of Allah, to whom the religion of Islam invites the people. This verse explicitly commands the wise to use their mind and intellect.

The God of Islam

It ought to be known that the God of Islam is not an indecipherable being, in whom one can believe only when one discards one's intellect or for whose existence the Book of Nature does not furnish any proof. In fact, the extensive pages of nature's law contain signs so abundant that they clearly demonstrate that God exists. Each and every creation of this universe is like a symbol and signpost, erected at the start of a street or alley, in order to provide information about the name of a certain road, locality or city, guiding a person towards God. Moreover, these signposts not only inform us that this Ever-Present Being exists, but also provide evidence that satisfies the hearts of people. The testimonies of heaven and earth do not support the existence of some artificial or fictitious God. On the contrary, the God that Islam presents is Living and Self-Sustaining; He is one and without partner; He begets not, nor is He begotten.

Hence, Reverend Pfander, who was among the first in India to engage in religious debates and level criticism against Islam, raises the question himself in his book *Mizan-ul-Haq* that if there was an island where the doctrine of Trinity had not been conveyed, would the inhabitants of such a place be called to account on the Day of Judgement in accordance with the doctrine of Trinity? He then proceeds to provide an answer himself and states that such people would be ques-

¹ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:191-192

tioned in light of belief in the Unity of God. So one may deduce from this that if the imprint of God's Unity was not found to exist in every aspect of this universe and if the Trinity was not a false and unnatural doctrine, why would people be judged in accordance with belief in the Unity of God?

The Imprint of God's Unity is Present in Every Aspect of Nature

The fact of the matter is that the very nature of man possesses the imprint of:

الَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ¹

Allah says, 'Am I not your Lord?' They say, 'Yea, we do bear witness.'

The instinctive nature of man and all the elements of the universe have no relation whatsoever to the concept of Trinity. Even if one observes a droplet of water, it emerges round in shape and does not fall in the form of a triangle. This also clearly establishes that the Unity of God is etched into every aspect of nature. One ought to reflect closely that a droplet of water is round. Spherical form bears the hallmark of oneness because it is free from the confines of orientation. A three-sided figure however is bound by relative direction. Similarly, observe fire and you will find that it is cone-shaped and possesses a round abstract figure. Even fire radiates with the light of God's Oneness. If one were to take the earth for example and inquire of the Europeans as to its figure, they would say it is round. Hence, the further our investigations into the natural world advance, it is the Oneness of God that shall continue to emerge in every instance. Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ²

In this verse, Allah expounds that the God presented by the Quran is one in support of Whose existence the earth and heaven are full of proofs. There is an adage by a sage that I like very much where he states that if all the books in the world were thrown into the ocean, the God of Islam would still remain because He is not part of a trinity of three or a tale. In essence, a reality can only be considered firmly established if its truth does not hinge upon some other specific factor insofar that if the latter ceases to exist, then so does the former. Tales and fables leave an impress neither on the heart and nor on the Book of Nature. In fact, such tales existed only until Hindu divines, pundits and the Christian clergy retold them,

¹ *al-Araf*, 7:173

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:191

but sooner or later, these stories were forgotten as unlikely tales.

The Teaching of the Quran is Attested by the Law of Nature

Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ¹

*That this is indeed a noble Quran, In a well-preserved Book,
Which none shall touch except those who are purified.*

This means that the whole of the Quran is preserved in the resolute chest of the law of nature. What is implied by the fact that this Holy Quran is preserved in a Hidden Book? This means that it is not only confined to paper, rather it is safeguarded in a Hidden Book, known as the Book of Nature. In other words, the entire teaching of the Quran is attested by every strand and fragment of the law of nature. Its teachings and its blessings are not tales and stories that may be forgotten.

The Need for Revelation

Since every individual does not have the capability to reach the heights of certainty through mere reason alone, it is for this reason that we require revelation, which guides our reason through darkness in the likeness of a brilliant lamp. It is for this reason that even the greatest of philosophers were unable to find the true God depending on reason alone. As such, even a philosopher the likes of Aristotle said in the last moments of his life that he was afraid. He asked for a rooster to be sacrificed for a certain idol. What greater example can there be? The philosophy of Aristotle, and his intelligence and wisdom could not afford him the peace and tranquillity that believers enjoy. Bear well in mind that revelation is extremely essential in attaining heartfelt peace and steadfastness. What I mean to say is that first and foremost, make use of your intellect and bear in mind that a person who employs their reason shall definitely come to behold the God of Islam. For His name is written in bright letters on each and every leaf of every tree, and across the heavenly bodies. However, do not become a follower of reason alone so that the worth of divine revelation is lost to you. For without it, neither can true satisfaction be attained, nor lofty morals. The Brahamos too cannot attain peace and

¹ *al-Waqi'ah*, 56:78-80

the true light of salvation because they do not believe in the need for revelation. I am true in my statement when I say that those who become the slaves of reason and claim that revelation is worthless, are people who do not even make use of reason itself. Those who make use of their intellect are referred to as 'people of understanding' in the Holy Quran. Then after this, in the same verse, Allah states:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقَعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ¹

Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides.

In this verse, Allah Almighty has elaborated upon another aspect, namely, that the people of understanding and those who possess good sense are ones who remember Allah, the Glorious, at all times. Do not entertain the belief that sense and wisdom are qualities that one can attain without effort. Not at all.

True Insight

In fact, true insight and true wisdom can never be attained until one turns towards Allah the Exalted. This is why it has been stated that one ought to fear the insight of a believer, for they see with the light of God. As I have just stated, true insight and real wisdom can never be attained without righteousness.

If you wish to succeed, then utilise your reason, reflect and contemplate. The Holy Quran repeatedly emphasises the importance of reflection and contemplation. Reflect on the Hidden Book to which I have just alluded and on the Holy Quran, and develop a pious disposition. When your hearts become purified and along with this, you make use of sound reason and tread the path of righteousness, all this together shall give rise to such a state whereby the following voice will resonate from your heart:

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ²

Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; nay, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.

At such a time, it will become clear to you that this universe has not been created in vain, but rather provides evidence in support of the existence and reality of the True Creator, and brings to light the diverse forms of knowledge and science, which lend support to religion.

¹ Aal-e-Imran, 3:192

² Aal-e-Imran, 3:192

The Radiance of Revelation

God Almighty has not only blessed Muslims with the gift of reason, but has also graced them with the radiance and divine light of revelation. They should not tread the paths that dry logic and philosophers seek to lead them to. Such people are eloquent in speech but their spiritual faculties are immensely frail. Observe, therefore, that God Almighty praises His servants in the Holy Quran in the following words:

أُولَى الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ¹

Men of strong hands and powerful vision.

He does not say they are men of eloquent speech. This establishes that God Almighty loves those who observe both His works and words, and reflect on them, not only with their physical eyes but with their inner sight as well, and then act accordingly. And all this can never be attained without purification of the self and without cleansing our inner faculties.

How to Attain Success in this World and the Hereafter

If you desire to attain success in both worlds and seek to conquer the hearts of people, then strive to purify yourselves, make use of reason and follow the guidance given in the Word of God. Reform yourselves and serve as an example for others by demonstrating your sublime virtues. Then will you attain success. How wonderful a statement by someone who says:

سخن کز دل برون آید نشیند لا جرم برون

*A word which springs from the heart invariably
finds place in the hearts of others.*

So first and foremost, mould your own hearts. If you desire to touch the hearts of others, then develop the power to do so by practising what you preach. Without practice the force of words and human influence can be of no benefit. There are hundreds of thousands of people who make hollow statements. Many so-called Muslim clerics and scholars stand on pulpits and preach to others, declaring themselves to be representatives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the heirs of the

¹ Saad, 38:46

Prophets. They exhort people to refrain from arrogance and safeguard themselves from evil deeds, but one can gauge the quality of their own actions and behaviour by the degree to which their words have an influence on you.

Harmony in One's Words and Actions

If these people also possessed the power of action and first acted upon the things that they preach to others, what need was there for the Quran to say:

لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ¹

Why do you say what you do not do?

This verse itself demonstrates that there have always been such people in the world who do not act in accordance with the counsel they give others. Such people exist even today and shall exist in the future.

Take heed of my words and remember well that a person's speech can never influence others if it does not spring from a sincere heart and if it is bereft of the power of action. This is a great proof in favour of the truthfulness of our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The success and influence that he commanded over the hearts is unparalleled in the history of the children of Adam^{as}. All of this was achieved because there was perfect harmony between the words and actions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Act Upon My Counsel

I have given you this advice because you who hold a relationship with me have become my limbs. Act upon my words and make use of reason and the Word of Allah, so that the light of true insight and certainty develops within you, and so that you may become a path that leads others from darkness into light. For in this era, various allegations are raised on the basis of natural science, medicine and astronomy; it is necessary, therefore, to acquire a knowledge of the scope and background of these sciences so that we are able to understand such allegations before responding.

The Study of Modern Sciences

I consider those Muslim clerics who oppose the acquisition of knowledge in the

¹ *as-Saff*, 61:3

modern sciences to be in the wrong. For in doing so, they seek to veil their own error and weakness. Their minds are set on the fact that research in the field of modern science distances people from Islam and misguides them. They assert that reason and science are, as if, completely at odds with Islam. Since they do not possess the ability to demonstrate the flaws in philosophy themselves, in order to hide their own incapability, they have formed the notion that it is unlawful to study the modern sciences at all. Their souls tremble in the face of philosophy and submit helplessly before modern research.

True Philosophy Lies in the Quran

However, such people have not been granted knowledge of that true philosophy which comes forth from the Word of Allah and with which the Holy Quran is full to the brim. This is granted to those—and only those—who throw themselves at the threshold of Allah with extreme humility, effacing themselves; those from whose minds the stench of pride has been eliminated; those who being cognisant of their own weaknesses, fervently profess complete devotion to God.

Make the Modern Sciences Subservient to Islam

Hence, in this day and age, it is imperative that you learn the modern sciences and study them with toil and effort for the purpose of service to the Faith and the supremacy of God's Word. However, it is my experience—and so I would like to warn you—that those who became entangled in secular knowledge alone, and became so absorbed and engrossed in such study that they did not receive an opportunity to sit in the company of spiritual and saintly people, and were also themselves devoid of spiritual light, they too have usually stumbled. They became distanced from Islam and instead of looking at these sciences in light of Islam, they made useless attempts to bend Islam to secular thought. And by doing so, in their own fancy, they became defenders in the cause of service to country and nation. But remember, no one can accomplish this task, i.e. of serving the Faith, unless they possess within themselves heavenly light.

The fact of the matter is that education in these sciences is influenced by Christian theology and philosophical thought. As a result, people who are fond of these studies continue to instinctively adhere to the traditions of Islam on account of their favourable view of the religion. However, as such a person continues to take

further steps towards secular knowledge, they continue to leave Islam further and further behind. Finally, nothing is left but mere rituals and the essence of religion is lost. This outcome does, and has previously come about, due to people becoming engrossed in one-sided investigation and education. Many who are even dubbed leaders of their nation have been unable to understand the point that acquiring knowledge in modern sciences is only beneficial when done so with the sole intention of serving religion, and if one benefits from the company of a holy and divinely inspired man of God.

It is my firm belief that the spread of atheistic naturalism is due to the fact that in order to counter or respond to those satanic onslaughts that are laced with the poison of disbelief and waged against Islam by naturalists, philosophers and astronomers, Muslims employ hollow rationalism along with conjectural and hypothetical argumentation because they deem the teachings of Islam and heavenly light to be inadequate. Consequently, such apologetics are led far away from the deeper meanings and aims of the Holy Quran. They cover their hearts with the hidden veil of irreligiousness, which sooner or later—if not for the grace of Allah Almighty—takes on the guise of atheism, leaving a tinge on the heart, which then leads to such a person's ruin.

Another affliction which plagues the secular academics of today is that they are absolutely ignorant of religious knowledge. And so when they come across an allegation levelled by an astronomer or philosopher, they begin to harbour doubts and objections in relation to Islam. As a result, they either become Christians or atheists. In such circumstances, the parents of such people also commit a grave injustice against their children for not giving them the least bit of time so that they may be educated in religious knowledge; and they involve them in such tasks and engagements from a very young age, which deprive them of pure religion.

The Proper Time for Religious Education and Training

Another point to bear in mind is that the most appropriate and advisable time for the acquisition of religious education is during the period of childhood. How much can one achieve if they begin to learn the basics of Arabic grammar in old age? Retentive faculties are sharp in childhood. The memory is never as firm in the later stages of one's life. I remember vividly certain things from my childhood even now, but have forgotten many instances from fifteen years ago. The reason for this is because the imprints of learning in the early stages of life become so

finely impressed and deep rooted, due to this being the age in which the faculties are developing, that they can never be erased. However, this is an extensive discussion.

In short, in the practice of education, it ought to be considered and especially remembered that religious education should begin from the very beginning. I have always had a desire and this is the case even now; may Allah fulfil this wish. Observe how your neighbouring nations, such as the Aryas, have given importance to education. They have accumulated hundreds of thousands of rupees, if not more, to construct a magnificent building for a college and its necessities. If the Muslims do not take a keen interest in the education of their children, then they should take heed that a time will come when even their children will be lost to them.

The Effect of Company

There is a famous adage:

تتم تاثیر صحبت را اثر

The seed bears influence and one's company carries effect.

The first part of this proverb may be debatable, but the second portion which states that one's company possesses an effect is such an established fact that we need not engage in a lengthy discourse on this matter. You have witnessed the children of many noble families falling into the snare of the Christians, as well as Muslims—even the children of saints, holy men and descendants of the Holy Prophet—dishonour the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. I have seen the progeny of Syeds whose lineage cannot be doubted and who link their ancestry to Imam Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, embracing Christianity and God-forbid, raising all sorts of allegations against the Founder of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him. If even in such circumstances, a Muslim does not possess honour and jealousy for their religion and their Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then who could be more wicked?

If you do not safeguard your children from the company of the Christians, Aryas and others, or if you have no desire to protect them, then remember that you do not gravely wrong your own souls alone, rather you wrong your nation and Islam. This can only mean that you are not the least jealous for Islam and your

hearts are devoid of respect for the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

Become Virtuous and Righteous So that Your Reason May Be Illumined and Enlightened

Comprehend and reflect! For the sake of God, make use of reason; become virtuous and righteous so that your reason may be illumined and enlightened. Pure reason comes from heaven and brings a light with itself, but it remains in search of gems that are worthy of it. The law of this pure system is in complete accordance with nature's law. Rain descends from heaven and certain lands bring forth flowers, whereas others still grow nothing but thorns and bushes, and in other places, the same droplet of rain falls into the depth of the ocean and becomes an exquisite pearl. As they say;

در باغ لاله روید و در شوره بوم خس

In the garden it grows flowers but on barren land, only weeds and thorns.

If the land is uncultivable, rain is of no benefit; in fact, it is damaging and harmful. And so, heavenly light has descended and it is illumining the hearts of the people. Prepare yourself to accept it and benefit from it so that in the likeness of barren land that gains no benefit from rainfall, you too do not walk in darkness and stumble, and consequently perish, falling into a dark abyss, despite the presence of light. Allah the Exalted is more merciful than a compassionate mother. He does not wish for His creation to be wasted. He reveals to you the paths of guidance and light. But in order to tread these paths, you must utilise your reason and purify your souls. Just as planting does not occur until the soil is ploughed to prepare it, so too pure reason cannot descend from heaven until souls are purified through strenuous effort and rigorous self-discipline.

In this age, God has shown immense grace and as He is jealous for His religion and His Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, He has sent a man, who speaks to you now so that He may invite you towards this light. If the present era had not been plagued by such corruption and disorder and efforts to expunge religion had not been undertaken, then there would be no issue whatsoever. However, at present you can observe from east to west that nations are preoccupied in removing all traces of Islam. I remember, and I have stated this

in my book *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyyah* as well, that 60 million books against Islam have been written and compiled, and printed already. It is strange that the Muslim population in India is 60 million and the number of books written against Islam are also equivalent in number. If we disregard the number of books that have been added to this figure, even still our opponents have handed one book to each and every Muslim in India. If the jealousy of Allah the Exalted had not surged forth and were it not for His true promise ¹ *إِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ* (*Most surely We will safeguard the Quran*) know for certain that today Islam would have been wiped off the face of the earth and all traces of it would have been effaced. But no, this can never happen. The hidden hand of God is protecting it. What disappoints and pains me is that the Muslims do not care for Islam even to the extent that one cares for their marital relations. I have often had the opportunity to read that even Christian women, on death, bequeath hundreds of thousands of rupees for the propagation and spread of the Christian faith. And as far as devoting their lives for the dissemination of Christianity is concerned, this is something we observe daily. Thousands of lady-missionaries go from home to home and street to street, and strip the people of their faith in any way possible. I have yet to see a single Muslim who has bequeathed even 50,000 rupees on their deathbed for the propagation of Islam. In contrast, at marriages and for worldly customs, they spend extravagantly and even incur debt to squander their wealth relentlessly. But when it comes to Islam, they have nothing. Alas! What a pity! Could the state of the Muslims be any more deplorable?

One Virtue Begets Another

The fact of the matter is that evil actions result in further evil actions. The natural law of God Almighty in Islam is that one righteous act gives birth to another. I remember once reading about an old fire-worshipper of ninety years of age in *Tadhkira-tul-Awliya*. It so happened that in a period of extended showers, the man was feeding seeds to the birds on the roof of his house. A noble man approached him and said: ‘Old man, what are you doing?’ He responded: ‘Brother, the rain has been falling incessantly for six or seven days now and so I am feeding the birds some grain.’ ‘You do so in vain,’ said the noble man, ‘You are a disbeliever, what reward can you attain for such action?’ The old man responded, ‘I will surely receive my reward.’ The noble man relates that he went for Hajj and saw the same

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:10

old man circuiting the Ka'bah from a distance. The noble man was astonished to see this and relates that when he approached him, the old man was first to say: 'Did my feeding seeds to the birds go in vain or have I received my reward?'

The Reward of a Good Deed is Never Wasted

Now one ought to reflect that Allah Almighty did not even waste the good deed of a disbeliever, then would He let the virtuous deed of a Muslim go in vain? I am reminded of a companion who asked the Holy Prophet^{sa} whether he would be rewarded for the substantial amounts of charity that he gave during the time that he was a disbeliever. The Holy Prophet^{sa} responded: 'These very alms have become the cause of your accepting Islam.'

What is Virtue?

Virtue is a ladder that lifts one towards Islam and God. But remember, what is virtue? On every route, Satan raids the people and leads them away from the path of truth. For example, let us presume that one night more bread is cooked than necessary and the following morning there is some leftover. Just before the first morsel, as one is about to begin their meal and many delicious foods are placed before them, a beggar comes to the door and calls out asking for bread. If the person says: 'Give the leftover bread to the beggar,' would this be deemed a good deed? The left over bread was going to remain unused anyway. Why would an indulgent person eat such bread? Allah the Exalted states:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا¹

And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner.

It should also be remembered that the Arabic word *ta'am* used here refers to desirable food. Stale leftovers are not referred to as *ta'am*. Therefore, if at the sound of a beggar, the person were to give away their desirable and delicious food freshly placed in their plate just before they began to eat it, this is what constitutes a good deed.

No individual who spends that which is useless and worthless can claim to have done a good deed. The door of virtue is narrow, so bear well in mind that no one can enter it by spending things of no value. There is a clear statement in the

¹ *ad-Dabr*, 76:9

Quran as follows:

لَنْ تَكُنَالُوا الدِّرْحَمَ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِنْهَا تَوْجُونَ¹

Meaning, until you spend those things which are most beloved to you and most dear, you cannot attain the rank of being loved and held dear by God. If you do not wish to bear hardship and do not seek to adopt true piety how can you succeed and triumph? Did the noble companions reach the ranks they achieved for nothing? A person must shoulder many expenses and pains to attain worldly titles and only after this, does a person manage to secure a minor title, which does not even bring about inner satisfaction and comfort. Now reflect, was the title ‘Allah was pleased with them’, being a sign of inner comfort, tranquillity of heart and the Lord’s pleasure, attained easily without effort?

The fact is that the pleasure of God Almighty, which is the cause of true happiness, cannot be attained until one bears temporary hardships. God cannot be deceived. Blessed are those who do not care for suffering sustained in order to acquire the pleasure of Allah. For the light of eternal bliss and everlasting comfort is granted to a believer after this temporary hardship.

Who is a True Muslim?

I openly proclaim that a person who does not give precedence to God over everything and until God can look into that person’s heart and confirm that it belongs to Him alone, they cannot become a true believer. Such a person is a believer or Muslim only by name, inasmuch that they are from the community of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, just as a person belonging to the scheduled caste is commonly referred to in society as a *musalli* or *mu’min*.² A true Muslim is one who becomes an embodiment of the following:

أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ³

He submits himself completely to Allah.

The word *wajhun* refers to the face, but the word also applies to one’s person and

¹ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:93

² Historically, in the subcontinent, Hindus belonging to the lowest, socially disadvantaged class were officially referred to as the scheduled caste and considered ‘untouchable’ according to Hindu scripture. A Hindu of the scheduled caste who converted to Islam was referred to as a *musalli* (literally, one who prays) or a *mu’min* (a believer), even if they were not practising Muslims. [Publisher]

³ *al-Baqarah*, 2:113

being as a whole. Hence, only such an individual who dedicates all their strengths to Allah is worthy of being called a true Muslim. I am reminded of a Muslim who once invited a Jew to accept Islam and become a Muslim. The Muslim himself was engrossed in sin and vice. The Jew told the impious Muslim to worry about himself first and to not pride himself at being called a Muslim. God Almighty desires the essence of Islam, not a mere label or name. The Jew related his own account and said that he named his son Khalid (i.e. one who lives long), but the next day he had to bury his son in his grave. Now if names were the mere cause of blessing, then why would he have died? If someone asks a Muslim whether they are Muslim, they will respond by saying, *alhamdulillah* (all praise belongs to Allah).

Hence, remember that mere words and verbosity can be of no use until there is action. Mere words have no value whatsoever in the sight of Allah. As such, God Almighty has stated:

كَبِيرٌ مَّقْتَضِعٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ¹

Most hateful is it in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do.

The Manner in which to Attain the Honour of Serving Islam

Now I return to my initial point, which is:

صَابِرُونَ وَرَاطِبُونَ²

Excel in steadfastness and be on your guard.

Just as it is imperative to station horses at the border to fend off the enemy so that it is unable to cross its limits, similarly, you too ought to prepare yourselves, lest the enemy encroaches the border and inflicts harm upon Islam. I have stated earlier as well that if you desire to support and serve Islam, you must first adopt piety and purity yourselves, so that you may enter the resolute fortress of God's refuge. Then will you be granted the honour and right to offer this service. You can observe how weak the external strength of the Muslims has fallen. Other nations look towards them with abhorrence and contempt. If your inner force and strength of heart also weakens and withers away, then know that the end is nigh. Purify your souls so that they are imbued with spiritual power and so that

¹ *as-Saff*, 61:4

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:201

they become firm defenders like horses that are stationed at the frontier. It is the righteous and pure who are always accompanied by the grace of Allah Almighty. Let not your morals and practices become such as would blemish Islam. Evildoers and Muslims who do not act upon the teachings of Islam stain the religion. When a Muslim consumes alcohol, at times he is found vomiting somewhere with his turban wrapped around the neck; he is found falling here and there in sewers and gutters. The police disciplines such a one, and Hindus and Christians laugh at this. Now this action, which is against the Islamic shariah, not only brings ridicule upon the Muslim who does so, but ultimately the effects of this reach Islam itself. It gives me immense pain to read such news or prison reports, when I find that such a large number of Muslims have been incarcerated for their criminal actions. My heart becomes restless to think that these people who possess direction to the right path do not inflict harm upon themselves alone due to their own misdeeds, rather, give others an opportunity to laugh at Islam as well. It is for this reason that in a previous census, Mr Ibbetson has written much on the Muslims. In this, I seek to point out that the Muslim people call themselves Muslims yet become implicated in unlawful and prohibited actions which not only bring them into question, but also Islam. In short, mould your character and conduct in such a manner that even disbelievers (who actually seek to criticise Islam) are unable to find fault in you.

True Gratitude Is in Adopting Righteousness and Purity

Your true expression of gratitude is by adopting righteousness and purity. To merely respond by saying *alhamdulillah* (all praise belongs to Allah) when asked if you are a Muslim does not constitute thankfulness and appreciation. If you pay true gratitude, i.e. if you tread the ways of purity and righteousness, I give you glad tidings that when you stand at the frontier, as it were, no one can gain dominance over you. I remember that a Hindu head clerk named Jagan Nath, who was a very prejudiced man, mentioned that he was serving as head clerk in Amritsar or some place else and there was an employee—apparently a Hindu—who secretly observed the Islamic Prayer. Jagan Nath says that he along with the other Hindu employees disliked him greatly and all of them decided to have the man dismissed. Jagan Nath says that he harboured the most ill-intent at heart and lodged complaints against the Hindu many times, saying that he had committed this mistake or broken that rule, but no attention would be given to these

complaints. He goes on to say: 'However, we had determined that we would have this man dismissed and in order to succeed in our objective, we had even gathered a list of complaints and from time to time I would present these complaints to the officer in-charge as well. If ever our officer became furious and finally summoned the man, as soon as he appeared before him, his rage would subside just as water puts out a fire. The officer would lightly rebuke him in a very soft manner, as if the employee had committed no mistake at all.'

Righteousness Fills Others with Awe

The truth is that righteousness fills others with awe as well and God Almighty does not waste those who are pious. Syed Abdul-Qadir Jilani, may Allah have mercy on him, was an illustrious saint who had a very pure soul. I read in a book that on one occasion he told his mother that his heart was greatly dismayed by the world. 'It is my desire to search for a leader who can show me the ways of attaining tranquillity and comfort,' he said. When his mother observed that her son was not interested in worldly matters, she agreed and said: 'Alright, I relieve you.' After saying this, she went inside and returned with eighty coins that she had saved. Then she said, 'Of these coins, in accordance with the Islamic shariah, forty belong to you and forty to your elder brother. And so I give you your share of forty coins.' Then, she sewed the forty coins into the underarm of his shirt and advised him to take out the coins upon reaching a safe destination and to use them as he so required. Syed Abdul-Qadirth requested his mother to give him some advice. 'Do not lie my son,' she said, 'This will bring with it immense blessing.' With this advice, he embarked on his quest. It so happened that there were some robbers and pillagers who lived in the jungle that he passed through, who would loot travellers. These robbers spotted Abdul-Qadir Jilanith from afar and when they came close, they found a simple ascetic. One of them mockingly inquired: 'Do you have anything in your possession?' A short time ago, he had just heard the advice to not speak falsehood, and so he immediately said: 'Yes, there are forty coins in my underarm, which my mother has sewn to my shirt as a pouch.' The first robber thought that he was only retorting sarcastically. But when the second robber inquired the same, he gave the same response. Hence, Abdul-Qadir Jilanith responded to every robber in the same manner, who then took him to their leader and said that this person has been giving us all the same response. The leader said: 'Alright, why do you not search his clothes?' When they finished

their search, the robbers found forty coins. They were astonished that this was some strange person, and that they had never seen such an individual before. The leader inquired: ‘What is the reason behind you revealing the whereabouts of your wealth?’ ‘I have set out in search of God’s religion,’ said Abdul-Qadir Jilanith, ‘and my mother advised me to never speak falsehood; this was my first test, so why would I lie?’ Upon hearing this, the leader of the robbers began to weep and said: ‘Alas! I did not obey God even once.’ The leader addressed the other thieves and said: ‘These words and the steadfastness of this person have transformed me. I cannot be a part of you. I repent.’ At this, the other robbers repented as well. I believe that the legendary ‘making saints out of thieves’ or چوروں قطب بنایا ای refers to this very incident. Hence, Syed Abdul-Qadir Jilanith states that the first people who repented on his hand were thieves. This is why Allah the Exalted states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا¹

O ye who believe! Be steadfast.

Patience begins as a speck and then takes on the form of a large circle which ultimately encompasses all to the extent that it even transforms the wicked. Therefore, it is imperative for man to never let go of righteousness and tread firmly on the paths of virtue. A righteous person surely influences others and even fills the hearts of opponents with awe.

The Aspects of Righteousness

There are many aspects of righteousness. To abstain from arrogance, conceit and unlawful wealth and to safeguard oneself from immorality is also righteousness. Even the enemies of those who demonstrate exemplary morals are turned into friends. Allah Almighty states:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ²

Repel evil with that which is best.

Now contemplate, what does this guidance teach? The will of Allah Almighty in this injunction is that if an opponent uses abusive language, one ought not to respond in kind, but rather ought to demonstrate patience. As a result, the abuser will be won over by your greatness and feel remorseful and ashamed of them-

¹ Aal-e-Imran, 3:201

² al-Mu'minin, 23:97

selves. And this punishment is far greater than any punishment you can inflict through retribution. In situations like these, even an insignificant person may go as far as attempted murder, but the demands of humanity and righteousness dictate otherwise. Good morals are a merit that affect even the most viperous of people. How wonderful a statement someone has made:

لطف کن لطفت که بیگانه شود ملتمس بگوش

Compassion! Show compassion! So that even the stranger begins to serve you.

Those wicked individuals who opposed the Prophets, peace be upon them, especially those who fought against our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not accept Islam due to miracles, nor were miracles and extraordinary happenings enough to satisfy them. On the contrary, it was upon witnessing the exemplary morals of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that they were convinced of his truthfulness. Miracles of a moral nature can achieve that which other extraordinary happenings cannot. This is exactly what is meant by:

الْإِسْتِقَامَةُ فَوْقَ الْكِرَامَةِ

Steadfastness is greater than showing a miracle.

You may experience for yourselves and observe the wonders that are manifested by steadfastness. In fact, a miracle does not really attract a great degree of attention, especially in these days. However, if people realise that a certain individual is a very moral person, the manner in which people are inclined to such a person is no hidden matter. Praiseworthy morals will affect even those who cannot find peace and comfort by witnessing signs of any sort. It is true that some people do believe upon witnessing apparent miracles and extraordinary happenings, while others are moved by divine truths and insights. However, the majority of people are those who find guidance and peace through lofty morals and courtesy.

The Miracles of Our Noble Prophet^{sa}

It is for this reason that our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was blessed with all sorts of miracles and wonders. How shall I even begin to speak of their grandeur? In any aspect that you observe, countless miracles can be found. The Holy Prophet^{sa} collectively partook of all the three categories of

miracles just mentioned. There were miracles that could be observed apparently, such as the splitting of the moon, and others which exceed 3,000 in number. Furthermore, the Holy Quran is replete with miracles of divine truth and insight and in this respect, fresh miracles are manifested anew in every era. As far as miracles of moral character are concerned, the very person of this blessed Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was an embodiment of:

أَنْتَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ¹

Thou dost surely possess high moral excellences.

The Holy Quran speaks of its own miraculous nature in the following words:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّمَّنْهُ²

And if you are in doubt as to what We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a Chapter like it.

These miracles are spiritual in nature. Just as the Holy Quran furnishes irrefutable evidence in support of God's Unity, so too it has presented such wisdom, eloquence and clarity of language that man cannot create the like of it. At another instance, Allah the Exalted states:

لَمِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ³

If mankind and the Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof.

The Eloquence and Articulacy of the Holy Quran

Hence, in the context of spiritual miracles, no one ought to surmise that these are miracles only in the view and fancy of Muslims. Not only the naturalists of today, but even those who oppose naturalism, do not believe that the Quran is a miracle. Syed Ahmad has also faltered in this respect and does not accept the eloquence and articulacy of the Holy Quran to be a miracle. When I reflect, it is disappointing that Syed Ahmad rejects miracles. The fact of the matter is that Syed Sahib cannot accept this miracle in any case because he says that an individual of any calibre—high or low—can produce the like thereof. However, it is regrettable

¹ *al-Qalam*, 68:5

² *al-Baqarah*, 2:24

³ *Bani Isra'il*, 17:89

that he does not even know that the man who brought the Quran is so great that the book he brought is described as such by God:

صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ¹

That is to say, it is a book which is a compendium of all books and of every truth. The word ‘book’ here generally implies and refers to those admirable principles that a human being naturally finds worthy of adherence.

The Comprehensive Nature of the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran is a compendium of wisdom and insight. It is not an indiscriminate collection of ideas. It expounds every matter itself and contains provision for requirements of every kind. It is a sign in every respect. If someone denies this, I am prepared to demonstrate its miraculous nature in every respect. In the present age, many vigorous onslaughts are being waged against the Unity of Allah and His existence. The Christians have also exerted their best efforts and written extensively, but everything they have stated and written is with relation to the God of Islam and not about the dead god who was crucified and is but helpless. I can confidently claim that anyone who endeavours to write in defence of the Being and existence of Allah Almighty will ultimately have no choice but to accept the God presented by Islam. For every page of the Book of Nature testifies to His Being and man naturally bears the impress of the very same God in his person. Hence, when such people take a step, they invariably advance towards the field of Islam. This too is a magnificent miracle.

A Challenge of the Holy Quran

If a person rejects this miracle of the Holy Quran, one method alone is sufficient to put such people to test. In other words, if someone does not accept the Quran to be the Word of God, then in this age of enlightenment and science, such a claimant ought to write arguments in favour of the existence of God; and I shall demonstrate that all such arguments already exist in the Holy Quran. Further, if someone were to pen arguments in support of the Unity of God, we shall present the same arguments from the Holy Quran as well. Such people ought to present arguments that they claim are not to be found in the Holy Quran or put forth

¹ *al-Bayyinah*, 98:3-4

such truths and pure teachings, which they deem are found nowhere in the Holy Quran and we shall clearly demonstrate to them how truthful and clear the following claim of the Quran is:

فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيَمَةٌ¹

Therein are lasting commandments.

Moreover, if a person seeks to write arguments in support of the true religion that accords with the nature of man, I shall demonstrate the miraculous nature of the Holy Quran in every respect and shall prove that every truth and pure teaching is present in the Holy Quran. Therefore, the Holy Quran is a book that contains insights and secrets of every kind. But I say once again, that in order to discover them, that very same spiritual power which is referred to by Allah Almighty Himself in the following verse, is required:

لَا يَمَسُّهَا إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ²

Which none shall touch except those who are purified.

Similarly, in respect of eloquence and articulacy, if the sequence of the verses in Surah Fatihah, for example, were altered, the superlative meanings and lofty objectives in the current sequence could never be expressed in any other manner. Take any chapter of the Holy Quran, even if it is Surah Ikhlas: ³ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ (Say, 'He is Allah, the One'). The insights and verities that have been expounded in the Holy Quran in such an exquisite and subtle manner cannot be matched by anyone. This too is a miracle of the Quran. I am astonished when certain ignorant people, in their attempt to attack the unparalleled nature of the Holy Quran, assert that the *Maqamat-e-Hariri* and *Sab'ah Mu'allaqah* are matchless and peerless. They do not even understand that the author of *Hariri* has never claimed that his work is unequalled, and further, even he himself was convinced of the miraculously eloquent nature of the Quran. Such critics disregard the truth and virtue present in the Holy Quran and give preference to mere words. Books of this nature are devoid of truth and wisdom.

¹ *al-Bayyinah*, 98:4

² *al-Waqi'ah*, 56:80

³ *al-Ikhlās*, 112:2

The Excellence of a Miracle

The excellence and grounds for a miracle is that it takes every aspect into consideration. It ought to maintain eloquence and articulacy but preserve truth and wisdom as well. This miracle is specific to the Holy Quran alone, which shines like the sun and which possesses a miraculous power in every sense. The Quran is not composed of mere words and expressions like the Gospel, which states that one ought to turn the cheek after being struck on the first. This does not consider or take into account whether such a teaching brings about wise action and whether it accords with man's nature.

In comparison, if one reads the teachings of the Quran, it becomes clear that the human mind does not have the power to address all issues, and a complete and flawless teaching of such nature can neither be the result of the human intellect, nor the product of the human brain. If there were a thousand people in need before us, and we were to provide for one or two, would this be deemed sufficient? In a similar manner, the Gospel focuses on a single aspect and has not given the least consideration to other situations. For this, we do not blame the Gospel, rather, this was on account of the evil deeds of the Jews. The Gospel was sent down in accordance with their capacity. As the proverb goes: 'The soul determines the sort of angels that accompany it.' How can anyone else be blamed?

The Teaching of the Gospel was Specific to Its Era

I should like to elaborate that the Gospel was a law specific to a particular time, place and people. In a similar fashion, the British also impose laws that are specific to a particular time and place; after a certain period in time these laws are no longer applicable. In the same manner, the Gospel is also a specific law, limited in its scope. The expanse of the Holy Quran, however, is very far-reaching. Until the Day of Judgement it shall remain an unchanged law, serving all people in every era. As such, God Almighty states:

وَلَا يَنْزِلُ إِلَيْنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِلُ إِلَّا بِالْقَدَرِ مَعْلُومًا¹

Meaning, We go on revealing our treasures in determined measure. The need for the Gospel was limited to its own time—its entire teaching could be summarised in one page.

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:22

The Quran Is for All Eras

The task of the Holy Quran was to reform people of all eras. The objective of the Quran was to transform mankind from an animal state to a human state, and thence to make of humans civilised individuals by inculcating good manners, so that a transformation could be brought about by acting within the dictates of the shariah and its injunctions; and finally, so that they could be made into godly people. These words are brief, but they encompass thousands of facets. Since the Jews, naturalists, fire-worshippers and other nations were engrossed in evil practices, it is for this reason that upon the instruction of Allah, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, addressed all the people, saying:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا¹

Say, 'O mankind! Truly I am a Messenger to you all.'

And so it was necessary for the Holy Quran to gather within itself all those teachings that had been instituted at various points in time and to possess all the truths that were conveyed from heaven to the people of the world in various times through numerous Prophets. The Holy Quran had the whole of humanity in view, not a specific people, country or era. The Gospel, on the other hand, had a specific people in view and this is why the Messiah, on whom be peace, repeatedly said: 'I have come in search of the lost tribes of Israel.'

The Need for the Holy Quran after the Torah

Some assert, what has the Quran brought? Nothing more than what is already contained in the Torah. It is this very misconception which has moved certain Christians to write treatises on the uselessness of the Holy Quran. If only they had partaken of true wisdom and real insight, they would not have gone astray. Such people state that the Torah forbids one to commit adultery and likewise, the Quran too forbids adultery. The Quran teaches the Unity of God and the Torah also teaches a person to worship the One God. So what then is the difference? At face value, this seems like a complicated question. If this question was posed to an uninformed person, he would be flustered. In actual fact, intricate and twisted questions like these can only be resolved by the special grace of Allah Almighty. It is these very Quranic insights, which are revealed at their appropriate time. In

¹ *al-Araf*, 7:159

reality, there is definitely a similarity between the Holy Quran and the Torah—we do not deny this. However, the Torah has only presented a mere text without any argumentation, proof or commentary. However, the Holy Quran takes a rational approach on all matters. This is because the faculties of the people of that time possessed an uncultivated nature. And so, the Quran adopted the practice of expounding the benefits of worship and morality. Moreover, it not only puts forth the benefit, but rather presents them with the support of argumentation and proof in a rational manner, so that those who possess a sound intellect are left with no room for denial. As I have just mentioned, in the time of the Quran, faculties were bent towards rationality, whereas in the time of the Torah, a more primitive state existed. From the time of Adam^{as} humans continued to develop and when the Quran appeared, this development had reached its completion, in the likeness of a circle. It is related in the Hadith that the age assumed the form of a ‘full circle.’ Allah the Exalted states:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رُّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ¹

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets.

Necessity is the engine that fuels prophethood, as it were. Dark nights draw in the light that delivers the world from darkness. It was due to this need that the system of prophethood began, and upon reaching the era of the Quran, it attained to completion. Now every need has been fulfilled. This establishes that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was the Seal of the Prophets. Indeed, one significant and evident hallmark of this is that the Quran presents reasoned argumentation, while the Torah has not done so even to a minor degree.

The Second Difference between the Teaching of the Holy Quran and the Torah

The second difference is that the Torah has only addressed the Children of Israel and never had any concern for, or association with, any other nation. This is the very reason that it has laid no emphasis on argumentation and evidence, because the Torah did not have in view any other denominations such as atheists, philosophers or Brahamos. Since the Quran considered every community and every nation, and since no further needs were to arise, the Quran provided sound

¹ *al-Ahzab*, 33:41

argumentation to support its doctrines and practical injunctions. As such, the Quran states:

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْضُوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا أْفْرُوجَهُمْ¹

Meaning, say to the believers, do not lustfully look at the private parts of others and also safeguard your other *furuj* or organs as well. It is necessary for a man to keep their gazes low, lest they succumb to temptation at the sight of a woman that is a *non-mahram*. Even the ears are implied by the word *furuj*, which may lead one to temptation by listening to ill-natured stories. This is why it is generally instructed that you ought to safeguard all your *furuj* or ‘openings’ and keep them closed because:

ذَلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ²

In other words, this is best for them and such practice bears the hallmarks of the highest level of purity, which if possessed shall keep you away from evildoers.

The Holy Quran Presents Arguments and Proofs by Itself

Just observe how the Quran has expounded in its own words and manner this one concept alone—an injunction that is present in the Torah as well—with such clarity and detail, supported by arguments and proofs. This is the very miracle of the Quran, in that it does not leave its follower to depend on anything else, rather makes them independent of all else, by putting forth its own arguments and proofs as well. The Holy Quran has put forth its injunctions along with their reasoning and has furnished sound logic for each and every commandment individually. As such, these are two clear differences between the Torah and the Quran. The former book does not stand by a methodology that encourages rationality and when it makes a claim, one is compelled to search for the arguments themselves. The latter, however, reinforces its claim with arguments of every kind and then presents them as well. It does not force others to believe in the commandments of God, but rather moves them to proclaim with their own mouths that they concede to the truth of its teachings. It does not compel and force others, rather wins them over by its use of subtle argumentation; its commands are accepted instinctively. The addressees of the Torah are a specific group, whereas the

¹ *an-Nur*, 24:31

² *an-Nur*, 24:31

addressees of the Quran are all those who shall be born until the end of time. Then tell me how the Quran and Torah can be one and the same and how can there be no need for the Quran after the Torah? When the Quran instructs one to abstain from adultery, it addresses all of humanity; but when the same words are stated by the Torah, it refers to and addresses only the Children of Israel. This also demonstrates the limited scope and unrefined nature of the Torah, but only to one who possesses foresight and a God-fearing heart.

Physical and Spiritual Miracles

Another stark difference between the Torah and the Quran is that the Quran possesses all sorts of miracles within it, whether physical or spiritual. For example, the miracle of the splitting of the moon falls under the category of miracles that are physical in nature.

The Law of Nature Cannot be Restricted

Certain ignorant people hide behind the law of nature and object against the miracle of the splitting of the moon. But they are oblivious to the basic fact that the powers and laws of God Almighty cannot be fully encompassed and measured. Alas! On the one hand they believe in God, but on other occasions, when their hearts and souls ought to fall prostrate upon witnessing the magnificent and immensely hidden powers of God Almighty, they forget Him completely. If the Being of God and His capabilities are limited in power and strength to the extent of our own thoughts and estimations, then what need is there for prayer? But nay! I disclose to you that God's powers and objectives cannot be encompassed by anyone. A person who makes such a claim is a disbeliever in God. How unfortunate is the ignorant person who considers Allah Almighty to be the possessor of infinite powers, yet asserts that the miracle of the splitting of the moon is against the law of nature. Know that such a man is bereft of intelligence and insight of the heart. Bear well in mind that you ought not to build your foundation on the law of nature; that is to say, do not place a limit on the law of nature, as if the secret of God's divinity are restricted to this. For in such a case, the entirety of God's divine nature would be within your grasp. Nay, man ought not to show such audacity and boldness that leads him to fall from the rank of servitude to God, the result of which is ruin. No believer can be so foolish and senseless as to

limit and confine the powers of God. Imam Fakhr-ud-Din Razi is very true in his statement that an individual who intends to judge God Almighty with the measure of reason is foolish. Now reflect how it is with a mere droplet of sperm that Allah the Exalted has created man. It is very easy and simple to say this, and this seems to be a very insignificant thing, but it is a wondrous secret and mystery that God creates man from a mere droplet of fluid and then through it, vests in him wondrous faculties. Can the power of reason reach the depth and detail of all this? Naturalists and philosophers have exerted their best efforts but have not been able to fully understand this phenomenon. Similarly, each and every particle is subservient to God Almighty. And Allah the Exalted is powerful enough to manifest a miraculous event despite the apparent system remaining unchanged. Insightful people understand such facts well and derive a pleasure from them. Certain people raise objections over the most trivial matters and fall into doubt. For example, the fire did not burn Abraham, on whom be peace. This event was also like the splitting of the moon. God knows full well the threshold at which fire burns and the factors which cause it to subside. If such an element, which prevents fire from burning was discovered, or disclosed by someone, the people would accept its efficacy immediately. However, in such a case, how would the worth and merit of belief in the unseen and thinking well of God become manifest? I have never suggested that God does not create means, but certain means are apparent, while others are not clearly visible. The purpose is because the actions of God are diverse. The power of God Almighty is never incapable nor does God tire. His greatness may be expounded as such:

وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ¹... أَفَعَيَّبْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ²

*And He knows every kind of creation full well... Have
We then become weary with the first creation?*

Irrespective of how discerning and knowledgeable a person may be of God's infinite powers and actions, man cannot fully gauge them and must concede his own humility and incapability.

I remember an incident of which doctors are well aware. A man named Abdul-Karim visited me. There was a tumour in his body that was growing towards his rear. The doctors told him that there was no cure for this and it was better for

¹ Yasin, 36:80

² Qaf, 50:16

him to be euthanised by gun-shot. There are many illnesses of this sort, the nature of which doctors cannot fully grasp. For example, the plague and cholera are such illnesses that if a medical official is assigned to plague duty, they contract diarrhoea themselves. A human being may study insofar as possible and become absorbed in philosophical investigation, but ultimately he will realise that he has encompassed nothing. It is related in a Hadith that we come to encompass the insights and mysteries of God's words and actions, to the extent that a bird on the edge of the ocean is able to fill its beak with water. Then how can insignificant humans and ignorant philosophers, by virtue of their deficient knowledge, go on to boastfully object against the splitting of the moon, which is an action of God Almighty, and declare it to be against the law of nature. I do not say that one should not object. Nay, one may freely object. Rather, gladly object with pleasure, but keep two things in mind: firstly, fear of God; and secondly, even the greatest of philosophers have ultimately been forced to concede that they were ignorant. The human intellect even at its pinnacle must concede to its utter ignorance. For example, although physicians know of the optic nerve and understand its intricacies, let someone inquire of them as to the substance and reality of light. If someone asks them about the essence of sound, they will explain that the ear drums are affected in such and such way, but will be unable to explain even remotely the actual inherent nature of sound itself. If they are asked why fire is hot and water is cold, they will be unable to answer. To discover the deeper essence of things is not the work of a physician or philosopher. One may observe that our face is reflected in a mirror, but our head does not sever itself from our bodies and physically enter into the mirror. We remain physically sound and our face can also be seen in the mirror. So remember, Allah the Exalted is well aware that it is possible for the moon to be split, and despite it being rent asunder, for no disruption to take place in the system of the universe. The actual fact to note is that these matters relate to the inherent qualities of things and who can claim to know all these intricacies? Therefore, only those who are impatient and ignorant deny and hasten to reject the wonders and miracles of God Almighty.

It Is Unwise to Consider the Powers and Wonders of God to Be Limited

It is unwise to deem the powers and wonders of God to be limited. Man does not even know and comprehend his own intrinsic nature yet passes judgements on

matters divine. It is such people to which the following refers:

تو کار زمیں را نکو ساختی

کہ با آسماں نیز پردازستی

Have you put in order your earthly matters;

So that you have now turned to heavenly matters?

It is incumbent on man to not interfere in a manner that is beyond his reach. Doctors do not know of the causes and symptoms of many illnesses and diseases. When this is the extent of man's weakness, does it befit him to pass judgements on matters that are beyond him? Not at all. In fact, servitude to God demands that one remains with those who proclaim:

سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا¹

Holy art Thou! No knowledge have we.

One may observe that stars—such vast bodies—are suspended in the sky without any pillars and even the sky itself has been raised without any apparent support for many millennia. Every night, the moon reveals itself in immaculate form. The sun rises every morning and follows a well-timed and proper course. We tend to commit some error or other in our own tasks, but just observe the work of Allah Almighty in that this very sun and moon follow their course without fail. If one ponders on these matters daily, in that the sun rises according to a fixed routine day in and day out, and gives us a sense of direction, one is confounded. We go through a multitude of varying states, but the sun does not. If a person were to purchase a watch for 2,000 rupees and at 12 o'clock it showed the time to be 10 o'clock for example, or vice versa, it would be deemed worthless and faulty. But the watch of God Almighty is such that it does not move off course even slightly; it neither requires a key, nor cleaning. Can anyone enumerate the powers of such a Creator? Man is astonished when he observes that his possessions, clothes, vessels, etc., which remain in constant use eventually begin to wear in. Children grow to adolescence and then die in old age. However, the sun that rose the day before, is still the very same sun we see today. It has carried through as such for countless ages and shall continue as such. However, despite this, it is not ruined, nor does it falter with the passage of time. How insolent it is for a mere insect to

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:33*

attack the Exalted Being of God and hastily pass the judgement that God does not possess all power.

The Purpose of Prophetic Miracles

The God of Islam is a powerful God. No one has the right to object against His powers. The miracles manifested by Prophets, peace be upon them, are also for the very reason that they are beyond the understanding of human experience; and when a person witnesses these extraordinary happenings, they are compelled to admit at the outset that these miracles are from God Almighty. However, if such a person employs his reason alone, and does not benefit from divine understanding, both avenues are blocked completely. On the one hand, a person will reject miracles, and on the other hand, flaunt his own defective reason. As a result, these foolish people toil to comprehend the intricate reality at the heart of miracles, the philosophy of which cannot be discovered by earthly intellect and superficial logic. This then drives an individual to further denial until such a one begins to reject the very essence of prophethood itself and gathers a collection of doubts and objections that become the cause of his misfortune. At times, they state that this man is also one like us, he eats, drinks and has physical needs. How then can his faculties be greater than ours? How can his spiritual power and influence in the acceptance of his prayers be so distinct? Alas! These people make such statements and level allegations, which as I have mentioned, cause them to reject the very nature of prophethood as well. This example requires contemplation and comprehension in that the belief of such people is scant, and yet they vigorously raise objections. Now if such behaviour is not a deliberate and clear rejection of the existence of Prophets then what is? Do they pride themselves on such intellect and learning whereby they have become atheists and idol-worshippers after being dubbed philosophers? The hidden powers of Allah Almighty cannot manifest their marvel without revelation and divine inspiration. It is only through revelation and divine inspiration that they are brought to light.

Intelligent is He Who Recognises a Prophet

It is due to the grace of God Almighty and His mercy that He has sent Prophets to the world. Intelligent is the one who recognises the Prophet, for in doing so they recognise God. And foolish is the one who rejects a Prophet because to

deny prophethood is to deny God. One who recognises a saint recognises the Prophet. In other words, one could say that the Prophet is like an iron nail that underpins divinity, and a saint serves the same purpose for a Prophet. Now, one ought to reflect upon the fact with an objective mind that God established this religion on earth 1,300 years ago through the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. But today 1,300 years have passed; in fact it has been 15 years since the dawn of the fourteenth century. If one mentions these facts to the Aryas, Brahamos, naturalists, atheists and Christians, they laugh and mock. But nonetheless in this time of peril, on the one hand there is enlightenment in the modern sciences, and on the other hand, the dispositions of people have undergone a significant transformation, and various denominations and religions have abounded. Hence, it has become a very difficult task to present these matters to the people so that they might accept them. People began to consider Islam and what it presents to be nothing more than tales and fables. However, Allah the Exalted had promised the following:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ¹

*Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation,
and most surely We will be its Guardian.*

As such, God Almighty took it upon Himself to safeguard the Quran and Islam, and saved the Muslims from ruin and did not allow them to fall prey to trial. Blessed are those who value this institution and derive benefit from it. The fact is that in the absence of evidence—as the human disposition tends to immediately incline towards scepticism—even people within the fold would renounce their belief in the Quran and Islam, considering both to be nothing but tales and fables. For example, if a sound comes from within a room, a person outside would assume that there must be someone inside the room. However, when the person observes that no one has exited the room for three or four days, their initial thought begins to change. Moreover, without even entering the room, the person infers that if someone was in the room, they would require food and drink, and exit the room. And so, in this era of philosophy and secular enlightenment, if the light and blessings of prophethood, which come in the form of divine revelation, had not been manifested, Muslim children living in Muslim homes would have taken Islam and the Quran to be tales and fables, and they would have become

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:10

completely detached and distanced from Islam. In this way, a constant means to destroy Islam would have been secured. But no! How could the jealousy of God and His passion to fulfil His promise have allowed for this to happen? As I have just stated, God Almighty has promised:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ¹

*Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation,
and most surely We will be its Guardian.*

The Reason for Naming the Quran ‘The Reminder’

Now observe how the Quran has been named ‘The Reminder’ (*Adh-Dhikr*), because it reminds mankind of the law present within. When a subject-noun is converted to the infinitive form, this also brings it to the measure of the superlative degree. Let us presume that someone said:

زَيْدٌ عَدْلٌ

What would this mean? This means that Zayd is exceedingly just. The Quran has not brought a new law, but rather reminds man of the inner law present within man in the form of various faculties. There is forbearance, kindness, bravery, might, anger, contentment, etc. Hence, the Quran has reminded us of the nature vested within us. Just as Allah the Exalted states:

فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ²

In other words, this is the hidden scripture present in the Book of Nature, which all people did not have the ability to see. As such, this book was named ‘The Reminder’ so that when it is recited, it reminds us of the inner, spiritual faculties, and the light of the heart vested in man from heaven. Hence, Allah the Exalted has manifested a spiritual miracle by sending down the Quran, so that man may discover the insights, verities and spiritual wonders of which he was previously unaware. The ultimate cause of the Quran is:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ³

A guidance for the righteous.

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:10

² *al-Waqi'ah*, 56:79

³ *al-Baqarah*, 2:3

It is unfortunate, however, that this has been forgotten and the Holy Quran is considered to be nothing more than a collection of a few stories. Like the idolaters of Arabia, they indifferently and insolently declare the Quran to be tales of the past and turn a blind eye to this book. The previous age was the era in which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, appeared and in which the Quran was revealed, reminding people of that age of their inner strengths. Now that era has arrived about which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had prophesied that the people would recite the Quran, but it would not go beyond their throats. You can now see with your own eyes how people melodiously and beautifully recite the Holy Quran, but the Quran does not go deeper than their throats. Therefore, the Holy Quran, which is also named ‘The Reminder’, came in this early period to remind people of the hidden and forgotten truths and innate qualities within man.

The Present Era Has Brought a Heavenly Teacher

In light of the firm promise made by Allah the Exalted ¹ *إِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ* (*Most surely We will safeguard the Quran*) even in the present era a teacher has come from heaven who is the awaited one, in fulfilment of the following verse:

اٰخَرِيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوْا بِهِمْ ²

Among others from among them who have not yet joined them.

That man is the one who speaks to you now. Once again, I return to the prophecy of the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and say that it was this very era about which the Holy Prophet^{sa} foretold that people would recite the Quran but it would not go beyond their throats. Now our opponents—nay, those who disparage the promises of Allah Almighty and those who pay no heed to the words of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—strain their throats and read the verses of the Quran ³ *يٰٓجِسِيْ اِنِّيْ مُتَوَفِّيْكَ وَرَافِعَكَ اِلَيَّ* (*O Jesus, I will cause thee to die a natural death and will exalt thee to Myself*) and ⁴ *فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِيْ* (*But since Thou didst cause me to die*) in such a strange accent. However, they do not understand the true meaning. And what

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:10

² *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:4

³ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:56

⁴ *al-Ma'idah*, 5:118

is most unfortunate is that if a well-intentioned counsellor graciously seeks to advise them, they do not make the least effort to understand. So be it, but the least they can do is listen to the other person's point of view! But why would they bother? For this requires ears that are willing to hear. This also requires them to demonstrate patience and think well of others. If God Almighty had not turned to the earth with His grace, the religion of Islam would have also become lifeless, like a mere tale, just as the other religions have become. A dead Faith cannot give life to anyone, but Islam, in this day and age, is capable of granting life. It is the custom of Allah that He does nothing except through means—however, it is another matter as to whether we can observe them or not—but there is no question that God most certainly utilises means. In this manner, light descends from heaven and takes on the form of means when it reaches the earth. When Allah the Exalted found the era of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, plunged in darkness and misguidance, with dark clouds of wrongdoing and gloom sweeping over the earth in every direction, He raised the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, shining forth as a brilliant lamp from the mountains of Paran, to dispel the darkness, and to transform misguidance into guidance and virtue.

The State of the Present Age and the Need for a Reformer

In the same way, in this present era, religious capacities have died away, and sin and impiety have taken their place. The mutual interaction of people on the one hand and their worship on the other—everything has become corrupted. If this affliction was all that plagued the people, there was no harm or danger. But in addition to all these things, the greatest calamity, regarding which I am compelled to speak time and again, and which every heart possessing sympathy for Islam has already felt or can feel, is the poisonous effect of today's natural medicine, astronomy and flawed philosophy, which is attacking Islam and Muslims. The scholars pay no attention to this because they can barely find time from their wars with one another, waging internal conflicts, and declaring one another disbelievers. If the ascetics sat in seclusion and did so much as to pray, even that could bring about positive effects, but they are engrossed in debates on the worship of saints and the permissibility of the Sufi practice of *sama*, etc. A few traditions, which are not to be found in the Quran and Sunnah, have taken the place of true Sufism. Therefore, from every direction Islam is victim to the arrows of the foolish and the

ignorant. In this age, those necessary conditions, which undoubtedly call for the advent of a reformer, have reached their pinnacle. Everyone believes in their own individual religious tradition. Deducing from all these factors and circumstances, the age of Islam seemed to be at its end. When doctors and physicians find that the body of a patient struck by cholera is as cold as ice or is afflicted by a state of delirium, they slip away, declaring the person to be incurable. Upon witnessing a grim state of affairs, even the most skilled physician expresses disappointment and dismay. There is no doubt that in the present age Islam had reached a hopeless state. However, if this faith had been the result of human thought or the fruit of mortal efforts, in these times of misfortune and tribulation, on being struck from all fronts and its internal state having fallen frail due to discord within the fold, at the very least, it could not have endured; especially when its adversaries were and are exerting their best efforts to destroy it. Not a year goes by that a new means to attack Islam is not contrived. If a new invention or machine is designed, the newly discovered principles to produce that respective invention are then used to fuel attacks against Islam.

The Advancement of Today is Also a Miracle of Islam

Hence, in a time of such disorder it was inevitable that the enemies of Islam should together, with a single strike, turn Muslims away from their faith. But the mighty hand of Allah the Exalted protected Islam and this too is a proof of the truth of Islam. The advancement of this day and age is also a miracle of Islam. Simply observe how the opponents of Islam employed the sum total of their force and strength, and even their own lives and wealth to destroy Islam. However, Allah Almighty had promised:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَيِّتَ وَنُزَلِّقُ لَنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ¹

Meaning, God Himself is the one Who reminds man of the nature etched within him and shall safeguard Islam in a time of peril. The ark of Islam had sailed into peril. At the expense of tens of millions of rupees, the Christian priests waged onslaughts in an attempt to make the people think ill of Islam by luring them with all sorts of rewards and promises, and even by showing them shameless displays of sensual pleasure. Along with this, they denigrate Islamic doctrines. Reflect! At a time of drought, the Prayer for seeking rain is offered. If through some device the

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:10

people are able to induce rainfall—as some are engaged in such efforts in America and other places—this would bring about the end of an Islamic injunction. Hence, to what extent should I go on? Islam is being attacked on all fronts and efforts are being undertaken to dishonour it—indeed, unrelenting efforts. But what harm can the schemes and contrivances of these people inflict? God desires to preserve Islam from these machinations Himself and in this era of advancement, He has not left Islam without support. In fact, He has protected Islam and has proven true the promises of His Truthful Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Moreover, God has disclosed the reality of His Prophet's blessed prophecies and in the present century, He has raised a man from Himself. I proclaim again and again, that man is the one who speaks before you now and he it is who shall breathe the spirit of truth back into Islam. He is the same man that brings lost verities from heaven and conveys them to the people. He desires to dispel ill-thinking and weaknesses in faith.

Ill-Thinking

The ailment of ill-thinking is so wretched an affliction that it blinds a man and hurls him into the dark pit of ruin. It is ill-thinking which resulted in the worship of a dead man. Indeed, it is ill-thinking which moves people to strip God Almighty of His attributes of creation, mercy and granting provision, etc., reducing Him, God forbid, to an idle and useless being. Therefore, it is due to this very ill-thinking that a vast part of hell shall be occupied, rather it would not be an exaggeration to state that the entirety of it would be filled by such people. Those who think ill of the ones appointed by God Almighty look contemptuously towards the bounty and grace of Almighty God. Hence, when a person rejects this community, which God Almighty has established by His own hand, I am grieved that alas, another soul knocks at the gate of destruction. This movement is so clearly recognisable that if a person listens to my teachings for even two hours with a willing heart, they would find the truth.

The Moral Miracles of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

Now it is my desire to say a few more words and then conclude this address. I briefly return, for some time, to my discourse in the way of miracles. The first category of miracles are those of an academic nature, such as the splitting of the

moon, etc., and the second are of those which relate to divine verities and insights. The third category of miracles, is that which relates to morality.

Moral miracles possess great influence. Philosophers cannot fully be satisfied by verities and insights, but exemplary morals have a deep and penetrating impact on them. One of the miracles of the Holy Prophet, the Chief of the Messengers, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the way of moral miracles is that once the Prophet of Islam lay asleep under a tree when suddenly he was awoken by a hue and cry. Upon waking he noticed a Bedouin of the desert standing above him, sword in hand, who said: ‘O Muhammad! Tell me, who now can save you from my hands?’ ‘Allah,’ replied the Prophet of Islam, with the complete satisfaction and true repose that he was blessed with. This response of the Holy Prophet^{sa} was not superficial as others would say. The name ‘Allah,’ which is the personal name of God Almighty and which is that compendium of all perfect attributes, came forth from the mouth of the Messenger with such heart-felt emotion that it touched the heart of the Bedouin. It is said that this is the Greatest Name (*ism-e-azam*) of God and it possesses tremendous blessings. But as for one who does not even remember Allah, what benefit can such a one derive from this name? Hence, the word ‘Allah’ was uttered by the Holy Prophet^{sa} in such a way that the Bedouin was struck by awe and his hand began to tremble. His sword fell to the ground. The Holy Prophet^{sa} then took hold of the same sword and said: ‘Now you tell me, who can save you from my hands?’ Who could this weak-hearted desert-nomad of the desert name? Ultimately, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, exhibited his sublime virtues and said: ‘Go, I release you. Learn of clemency and bravery from me.’ This miracle of morality had such an influence on this man that he became a Muslim.

It is narrated in books of history that once a man came to Abul-Hasan Kharqani. On his return, the man confronted a lion to which he said: ‘For the sake of Allah clear my way.’ The lion attacked. But then the man said: ‘Leave me for the sake of Abul-Hasan,’ and the lion left him. This event disturbed the person in question spiritually, and he turned back from his journey. Upon returning, he narrated this mystery to Abul-Hasan who said: ‘This is not a difficult matter. You were not actually acquainted with Allah’s name. The true majesty and awe of Allah was not present in your heart. But as for me, you knew me well and in your heart you held me in high regard.’ Hence, there are many a great blessing and merit in Allah’s name, provided that one gives it a place in the heart and seeks to

learn its deeper essence.

Similarly, among the miracles of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the way of morality, there is another that on one occasion, the Prophet^{sa} had at his disposal a large number of sheep. One person is reported to have said that never in his life had he seen anyone possess such abundant wealth. The Holy Prophet^{sa} gave the entire flock to that person upon which the man immediately said: 'Without doubt, you are a true Prophet, for such generosity cannot be exhibited by anyone else.' Hence, the exemplary morals of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were such that the Quran makes the following statement:

أَنْتَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ¹

And thou dost surely possess high moral excellences.

Our Community Ought to Make Progress in Morality

And so, it is incumbent upon our community to make progress in morality. As the proverb has it:

الْإِسْتِقَامَةُ فَوْقَ الْكِرَامَةِ

Steadfastness is more than a miracle.

They ought to remember that if someone behaves harshly towards them, they should insofar as possible respond in a soft and gentle manner. Even at a time of retribution, they ought to avoid cruelty and severity. Humans possess an inner self as well, which is of three types: one which incites to evil, one which reproves man for evil and the soul at rest. In the state that incites man towards evil, a person is unable to restrain their emotions and inappropriate passions, and fails to remain within appropriate bounds, falling from a state of morality. However, in the state of self-reproof, a person manages to restrain themselves. I am reminded of an anecdote written by Sa'di in his book *Bustan*, in which he states that once a noble man was bitten by a dog. When he returned home, his house-folk noticed the dog bite. A simple and innocent girl who was present said: 'Why did you not bite the dog in revenge?' The man responded: 'Humans cannot behave like dogs.' Similarly, when a person is abused and cursed by a wretch, it is incumbent upon a believer to abstain from responding in kind. Otherwise, this example of dog-like behaviour shall be applicable to such people. The beloved of God have been

¹ *al-Qalam*, 68:5

abused with the worst of invectives and are grieved in the worst possible manner. However, they were always addressed in the following words:

أَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ¹

Turn away from the ignorant.

Even the perfect man, our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was given immense anguish; he was abused, reviled and insulted, but how did this paragon of morality respond? He prayed for those who inflicted this upon him and Allah the Exalted promised that if the Holy Prophet^{sa} turned away from the ignorant, He would protect and safeguard the Prophet's life and honour, and save him from the attacks of such miscreants. And so it proved to be. The opponents of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were unable to tar his honour and only humiliated and disgraced themselves, ultimately falling at the Prophet's feet or perishing before his eyes. Hence, it is a characteristic of the reproving self that even in a state of struggle, one is able to bring about reformation. It is a common fact that if an ignorant person or some wretch unleashes abuse or creates mischief, the more one distances oneself from such people, the more one's dignity is preserved. The extent to which you wrangle and contend with such people is the extent to which you will suffer ruin and disgrace. In a state when the soul is at rest, one becomes inclined towards piety and goodness, and one severs one's ties with the world and all that is beside Allah. Such a person walks about on earth and interacts with the people of this world, but in reality they are not present here on earth. They live in a different realm altogether, where the heaven and earth is of a different kind.

A Magnificent Glad-Tiding for the Ahmadiyya Community

Allah the Exalted states in the Holy Quran:

وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ²

And I will place those who follow thee above those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection

This reassuring promise was given to the son of Mary who was born in Nazareth. But I give you the good news that the son of Mary who has appeared in the name of Jesus the Messiah has been addressed by Allah Almighty and given glad

¹ *al-Araf*, 7:200

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:56

tidings in the very same words. Now reflect for yourself: can those who desire to maintain a relationship with me, and wish to be a part of this grand promise and glad-tiding, be such people who are steeped in the state that incites one to evil and who tread the path of sin and impiety? Nay! Of course not! Those who truly value this promise of Allah and do not consider my words to be mere tales and fables ought to remember this and listen with their hearts. I address the people once again and proclaim that as for those who hold a relationship with me—a relationship that is firm and unwavering; a relationship whose effects are not limited only to my person, but rather which leads one to the God; who guided even myself to the perfect, divinely chosen man, a man who brought the spirit of truth and righteousness to this world—if the whole affair were limited to my person alone I would have no fear, worry or concern, but this is not the case. This matter escalates to our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and ultimately reaches the Holy Being of God Almighty. In this case, bear well in mind and take heed that if you desire to partake of this glad-tiding and hope to be part of this prophecy's fulfilment, and if you possess a true thirst for this grand victory (that is to prevail over the disbelievers until the Day of Resurrection), then my entire message for you shall not secure this success until you advance from the state where the soul reproaches one's inner self for having committed evil, to the towering state where the soul is at rest and naturally inclines to goodness.

Apart from this, I have nothing more to say. You are bound to a man who is commissioned by Allah. Therefore, listen to his words with the ear of your heart and remain fully disposed to act accordingly, lest you become of those who fall into the filth of denial after having accepted the truth, and thus become the recipients of divine wrath.

The End

**Third Address of the Promised Messiah^{as}
at the Annual Convention on 30 December 1897**

Sympathy and Compassion for Friends

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: The fact of the matter is that my friends are a part of me, as are my limbs. We observe in our daily lives that even the smallest of parts, such as a finger for example, if subject to pain, agitates and distresses the entire body. Allah the Exalted is well-aware that in exactly the same way, constantly at every moment, I forever remain anxious and concerned about whether my friends are in a state of ease and comfort. This sympathy and compassion which I feel is not the result of any artificial effort or unnaturally. In fact, just as a mother is incessantly absorbed in ensuring that each and every one of her children are in peace and comfort, no matter their number, I find my heart replete, in the way of Allah, with the same tenderness and compassion for my friends. This sympathy is so burning that when I receive a letter from any one of my friends alluding to a grief or illness with which they are suffering, my disposition becomes restless and disturbed, and I am taken aback by grief. As our dear ones increase, this grief increases in equal proportion. There is no hour in which I am free from some form of apprehension and grief, because from among the vast number of my friends, one or the other is afflicted by some form of grief or pain. When they inform me of their worries, my heart becomes perturbed and restless. I cannot describe the amount of time that I suffer from worries. Since there is no being other than Allah Almighty who can deliver one from such worries and concerns, I engage myself constantly in prayers. The foremost prayer that I offer is for my friends to be saved from grief and worry because the thought of them overwhelms me with anguish and agony. Then, I pray in the general sense that if there is anyone who suffers from some form of grief and hardship, may Allah Almighty grant them deliverance. My entire effort and every ounce of my passion moves me to supplicate before Allah the Exalted. Much hope can be gained from the acceptance of prayer.

Principles of the Acceptance of Prayer

My Compassionate Master, God Almighty, has promised me clearly:

أَجِيبُ كُلَّ دُعَائِكَ

I will accept your every prayer.

However, I am well aware that the word ‘every’ (*kulla*) refers to those prayers which if accepted, cause no harm. On the contrary, where Allah the Almighty desires improvement and reform, rejecting a prayer is also a form of acceptance. At times, a person is unsuccessful in achieving the result of their prayer. One surmises that God Almighty has rejected their supplication, even though He has actually accepted the person’s entreaty and acceptance is manifested in the form of a disapproval. In the specific case at hand, behind the apparent veil, in reality, the real advantage and benefit lies in the supplicant’s prayer being rejected. Since man is short-sighted and lacks foresight, giving importance to outward appearance, it is advisable that when he prays to Allah the Exalted and does not receive a result that seems apparently beneficial to his own preconceived notion, he should not think ill of God and conclude that his prayer has been rejected. God Almighty hears the prayer of every supplicant.

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ¹

Pray unto Me; I will answer your prayer.

The mystery and secret is that the greatest good and benefit for the supplicant lies in their prayer being refused. This is the principle of prayer.

In the acceptance of prayer, Allah the Exalted is not subject to our thoughts and desires. One may observe how dear a mother holds her child. She desires that no harm should come to her child. But if a child should cry and insist upon the absurd idea that they be handed a sharp dagger or a bright and glowing piece of coal, would the mother, despite her true love and compassion, ever approve of her child taking hold of a flaming piece of coal and subsequently burning their hand, or cutting their hand on the sharp blade of a dagger? Of course not. The underlying principle in the acceptance of prayer can be understood in light of this example. I am myself experienced in this regard. Where a detrimental aspect exists in a certain prayer, it is not accepted in the least. One can easily understand that our knowledge is not definitive and without its faults. There are many things we do with great pleasure, considering them to be blessed, and in our own view we consider their outcomes to be blessed as well, but ultimately they turn into a

¹ *al-Mu’min*, 40:61

grief and affliction that clings to us. Hence, it cannot be said that all the desires of man are free from harm if fulfilled. Man is but a mixture of faults and errors; thus, as one would assume, and as is the case, some of his desires are injurious. If Allah the Exalted were to accept such desires, this would clearly contravene divine mercy. It is a matter quite sure and certain that Allah the Exalted accepts the prayers of his servants and confers upon them the honour of acceptance, but not every foolish desire. Inner emotion blinds a person to what is best in the long run and moves one to pray to their own detriment. However, Allah Almighty, who desires the best for us in the truest sense and sees the ultimate end of all matters, rejects the prayer which He knows would bring about harm and detriment for the supplicant if it was accepted. This rejection of prayer actually constitutes an acceptance. Hence, those prayers which do not compromise the safety of mankind from calamity and adversity are accepted, and harmful supplications are accepted by God in the form of a rejection. I have received the following revelation countless times:

أَجِيبُ كُلَّ دُعَائِكَ

I will accept your every prayer.

In other words, this means that any supplication that is in essence, beneficial and advantageous, will be accepted. When I reflect over this point, my soul becomes satiated with pleasure and delight. The first time that I received this revelation, about twenty-five or thirty years ago, I was immensely delighted that Allah the Almighty would accept those supplications of mine which I would make for my own person or my dear ones. Thereafter, I understood that even the slightest miserliness must not be exercised by me in this regard, because this is a divine favour and Allah the Exalted has described the righteous in the following words:

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ¹

And they spend out of what We have provided for them.

Hence, I follow an established practice for my friends, whether they remind me or not; whether they inform me of a serious matter or not, I regularly pray for their welfare in matters pertaining to their worldly and spiritual affairs.

¹ al-Baqarah, 2:4

Conditions for the Acceptance of Prayer

However, pay heed with an attentive heart that there are certain preconditions for the acceptance of prayer. Some of them relate to the person making the supplication and some relate to the person for whom supplication is made. It is necessary for a person who solicits someone else to pray for them to first fear Allah Almighty themselves; such people must remain in awe of God's Being as He is the Independent and Besought of all; they must make peaceful relations and worship of God a practice of life; they must please Allah with righteousness and piety. When this is the case, the gate of the acceptance of prayer is opened to such a one. If a person displeases God Almighty, ruins his relationship with Him and wars with Him, his mischief and evil deeds become an obstruction or a mountain that stands in the way of prayer. As a result, the door of acceptance is closed to such a person.

Save Our Prayers from Being Wasted

Hence, our friends must save our prayers from going in vain and must not allow for their path to be obstructed by any barrier that may be erected as a result of their own unacceptable actions. They ought to adopt a way of righteousness because it is righteousness alone that sums up the shariah. If one were to briefly describe what 'shariah' means, it could be said that its essence is righteousness. There are many ranks and levels of righteousness. However, if a seeker faithfully traverses the elementary ranks and levels of piety with steadfastness and sincerity, they ultimately attain the highest grades due to their virtue and desire to seek the truth. Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّمَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ¹

That is to say, Allah Almighty accepts the prayers of those who are righteous. This is a divine promise and God never fails in His promise. In this context, He states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ²

Surely, Allah fails not in His promise.

Righteousness is a necessary precondition for the acceptance of prayer. Now

¹ *al-Ma'idah*, 5:28

² *ar-Ra'd*, 13:32

if a person desires acceptance of prayer in their own favour, despite their own negligence and misguidance, would such a one not be foolish and senseless? And so it is incumbent upon our community that insofar as possible, each and every member must follow the ways of righteousness so that they can experience the pleasure and delight of the acceptance of prayer, and partake of an increase in faith.

Three States of the Human Soul

One learns from the Holy Quran that the inner self is subject to three states. Firstly, the state known as the self that incites to evil; secondly the reproving self; and thirdly, the soul at rest. In the state where the inner self incites one to do evil, a person is seized by the clutches of Satan and is overly inclined to him. However, in the state of the reproving self, a person feels shame and embarrassment for his ill actions and turns towards God. In this state, however, a battle ensues: at times a person leans towards Satan and at times they incline towards the Gracious God. When a person reaches the stage where the soul is at rest, they become a part of that class of people who are known as the servants of the Gracious God. This rank is the highest point in contrast to which the lowest degree is that of the self which incites one to evil. Between this spectrum there is a middle state known as the reproving self which may be likened to the needle of a scale. If a person leans more towards the lower point, they are reduced to a state that is below and even inferior to animals. However, the more a person inclines towards the higher point, the closer they come to Allah the Exalted. Such people are freed from the lower, rudimentary states and partake of higher, heavenly grace.

Nothing in the World is Empty of Benefit

It should also be remembered clearly that everything has a benefit. Simply observe the world around us. From the highest forms of vegetation to insects and mice, there is nothing in this world which does not benefit man in some form or another. All of these things, whether earthly or heavenly, are reflections and traces of the attributes of Allah Almighty. Now when even the attributes of God are nothing but good, how beneficent and advantageous is His Being itself? At this instance, it ought to be remembered also that sometimes we suffer injury from various things due to our own error and lack of understanding, and not because

there is an inherent harm in the things themselves; our own misjudgement and error is responsible. In the same vein, due to our own ignorance of certain divine attributes, we are afflicted by pain and hardship. For God Almighty Himself is nothing but mercy and compassion. The underlying mystery behind the cause of hardship and grief in this world is that humans suffer affliction by their own hands, as a result of their misjudgement and deficient knowledge. Therefore, it is through the skylight of God's attributes alone that we find Allah the Exalted to be a most Merciful and Compassionate Being—a Being whose benefit cannot be fathomed. Those who are closest and nearest to God reap the benefits of His Being to a greater degree. This rank is enjoyed by those who are righteous and who are blessed with a place of nearness to Allah Almighty. As a righteous person continues to grow closer to God, they are bestowed with the light of divine guidance, which enlightens his knowledge and reason in an extraordinary manner. When a person moves further and further away from God, a destructive darkness engulfs their heart and mind, until they become a manifestation of:

صَفْرٌ بِكُمْ عُمَى فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ¹

This means, they become deaf, dumb and blind so they will not return, whereafter such people suffer disgrace and ruin. In contrast, however, a person blessed with divine light and illumination receives comfort and honour to the highest degree. As such, God Almighty says Himself:

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنِّتَةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً²

Meaning, O soul at rest that has found comfort through God. Some people derive apparent comfort and satisfaction through leadership, others find contentment and satisfaction through their own wealth and status, while others still are satisfied on account of their good-looking and intelligent children and grandchildren. However, this pleasure and other diverse forms of worldly pleasure cannot grant humans true comfort and real satisfaction. Instead, they only give rise to a foul avarice, which breeds further greed and thirst. Their thirst is never quenched like a person who suffers from polydipsia³ and is never satiated until they perish. However, in this instance, God Almighty speaks of the soul that has found comfort in His Being. This rank may be attained by mankind. In this state, even

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:19

² *al-Fajr*, 89:28-29

³ A medical term for pathologically excessive thirst or excess drinking. [Publisher]

though a person may possess wealth and riches, and worldly honour, dignity and glory, their true comfort lies in God alone. Gold, jewels and the world with its allures are not the cause of true happiness for these people. Until a person does not feel comfort and pleasure in God Almighty alone, they cannot attain salvation, for salvation is also another word for comfort.

Without a Soul at Rest One Cannot Attain Salvation

I have seen certain people and have also read about the lives of some who possessed the wealth and riches of this world, and enjoyed the hollow pleasures of this world as well as all its diverse bounties, including children and grandchildren. When death was at hand and it dawned upon them that the time to leave this world had come, and they would be separated from its material bounties and now travel to the hereafter, the fire of regret and needless desire was ignited in them and they began to make empty cries. This too is a form of hell, which deprives a person from heartfelt peace and tranquillity, and rather hurls one into a state of anxiety and discomfort. Therefore, the fact to which my friends must not remain oblivious is that more often than not, a person becomes engrossed in the excessive and needless love of their families and wealth. It is often in the heat and intoxication of this very love that they indulge in such unlawful actions, which create a barrier between them and God Almighty; and the individual concerned is subjected to a hell. Initially the individual is unaware of this but then everything suddenly escapes them, and they are unprepared for that moment. It is then that such people suffer indescribable anxiety. One can easily understand that when a person is separated and distanced from that which they love, they are overwhelmed by grief and throbbing anguish. This issue is not only a theory; it is a logical fact, as Allah the Exalted states:

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ¹

It is Allah's kindled fire, which rises over the hearts.

And so it is this very fire of the love of all that is besides Allah which burns the human heart and turns it to ash, subjecting it to a shocking punishment and pain. I say once again that it is a true and definite fact that without a soul at rest, man cannot attain salvation.

¹ *al-Humazah*, 104:7-8

As I have elaborated earlier, when a person is in a state that the soul incites towards evil, they are a slave to Satan. In the state of the reproving self, however, an individual remains in a constant struggle and war against Satan. At times, such a one prevails, but at other instances Satan succeeds. However, in the state where the soul is at rest, a condition of calm and harmony prevails and the person sits peacefully. Therefore, in the verse: *يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ*¹ (*O Soul at rest*), the extent to which a person feels pleasure is clearly evident. The translation of this verse is: O soul at rest, return to your Lord. The apparent sense is that when a person is in their dying moments, a call comes from Allah the Exalted saying: O soul at rest, return to your Lord; He pleased with you and you pleased with Him. Since the Quran encompasses both the apparent and the hidden, the deeper meaning of this verse is: O soul that has reached the stage of comfort, return to your Lord; that is to say, the natural state to which you have arrived at, is a station of peace and tranquillity and there is no distance between you and Allah Almighty. In the state of the reproving self there is pain, but the state of the soul at rest may be likened to water that cascades down from above, where the love of God Almighty penetrates and flows into every vein and fibre of man, and he lives for the love of God. The love of all that is besides Allah, which is a burning hell for such people, is put out and replaced with a radiance and divine light. The pleasure of such a person becomes the pleasure of Allah Almighty, and whatever pleases Allah Almighty becomes his will. In this state, the love of God Almighty becomes the life of such individuals and just as the necessities of life are needed to remain alive, all that is needed by such people to remain alive is God and God alone. In other words, it is God Almighty alone who is the cause of their true happiness and absolute comfort.

The Purpose of Human Existence

A hallmark of the soul at rest is that its condition is independent of any external stimulus and it simply cannot survive without God. This is the very purpose of human existence, and so should it be. An idle person looks to activities such as hunting, chess and cards, etc. However, when the soul at rest separates itself from unlawful preoccupations, temporary enjoyments, and activities which often result in grief and pain, why then would it long for the world it has left behind? For this very reason, God alone becomes the centre of love.

¹ *al-Fajr*, 89:28

Another point which must not fade from your hearts is that there are two kinds of love: unconditional love and love which is fuelled by motives, or one could say, love that one possesses due to certain temporary factors and when they cease to exist, this love turns cold and becomes the cause of pain and grief. It is unconditional love that is the source of true pleasure, because man has naturally been created for God. Allah the Exalted states:

مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ¹

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.

Therefore, God Almighty has invested the inherent nature of man with an inclination towards Himself and through His utterly hidden means, has created him so that man turns to God. Hence, when a person shuns artificial, superficial and temporary forms of love, which end in pain, they become wholly devoted to God and naturally, all distance is removed, and they hasten towards God. It is this very point that is alluded to in the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُضْمِرَةُ²

O Soul at rest.

What is implied by God Almighty making a call in this context is that all the intervening obstructions have been removed and no distance remains. This is the highest rank of a righteous person when finally, he finds rest and comfort. At another instance, the Holy Quran has described this rest as success (*falah*) and steadfastness (*istiqamat*). In the verse³ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ³ (*Guide us in the right path*) there is a subtle indication towards this very steadfastness, comfort and success by the use of the word '*mustaqim*'.

Miracles

It is true that God Almighty does not do anything in an unnatural manner. The fact of the matter is that God is the Creator of means. Whether we are informed of those means or not, there are always some means. The miracles of the splitting of the moon or يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا⁴ (*O fire, be thou cold and a means of safety*)⁵ did not

¹ *adh-Dhariyat*, 51:57

² *al-Fajr*, 89:28

³ *al-Fatihah*, 1:6

⁴ *al-Anbiya*, 21:70

⁵ It is recorded in the Holy Quran, that when the opponents of Abraham^{as} threw him into a burning fire

occur without appropriate means. In fact, they too were the result of certain unknown and hidden means and are supported by objective and impartial science. Those who are short-sighted and inclined to the dark hollows of philosophy cannot understand this fact. I am astonished that when it is an established fact that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, why then do foolish philosophers so boldly deny miracles on the basis of their deficient knowledge of the means that cause miracles. I do believe that if Allah the Exalted so wills, He can disclose these hidden means to His servants, but this is not necessary. When a person constructs a house for themselves, where they take into consideration the provision of all other amenities, the foremost thing that they ensure is the construction of a door to enter and exit the house. If a person owns substantial furnishings, elephants, horses and carts, they will naturally construct a gate that can proportionally accommodate the inward and outward movement of their possessions, not a small opening like the one which leads into a snake's hole.

Similarly, we find by reflecting deeply and carefully on the action of God Almighty, i.e. the law of nature, that after giving birth to His creation, God has never desired for it to defy the bounds of servitude (*ubudiyyat*) and detach itself from God's providence (*rububiyyat*). For divine providence has never sought to divorce itself from the phenomenon known as 'servitude.' The true philosophy is that those who consider 'servitude' to be an agency that possesses any independent power in its own right are mistaken; for God Almighty has not given birth to it as such. The differing levels between us in our knowledge, thoughts and intellects, and our inability to shed ample light on all matters, is manifest evidence of the fact that without the grace of divine providence, 'servitude' cannot exist. Every particle and shred of our body by nature may be likened to the angels (who are obedient to God). If this were not the case, the very foundation of medicine and even more so, of prayer, would prove meaningless and ineffectual.

Observe the heaven and earth, and all that is within them, and reflect: is all of this creation, in its being and essence, independent for its own life and existence? The whole of creation from the heavenly bodies to the things of this world all inherently possess a nature of servitude to God. Every leaf reveals and every branch proclaims that God's divinity is in full operation. The deep and profound powers of God which we cannot expound with our own thoughts and strengths—rather

to put an end to his life, Allah Almighty saved him miraculously and did not allow the fire to burn his body. [Publisher]

which we cannot even fully comprehend—are engaged in their work. Therefore, Allah the Exalted states:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ¹

*Allah — there is no God but He, the Living, the
Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining.*

This means, Allah Almighty is the only Being that is the compendium of all perfect attributes and who is free from each and every deficiency; it is He alone who is worthy of worship; it is His Being alone that is manifestly evident, for He is Living as an Independent Being and He is Self-Subsisting. Nothing besides him may be characterised as living or existing independently in its own right. What does this mean exactly? It means that with the exception of Allah Almighty, there is no one else that exists or lives independently without an initial cause, nor can there be any other prime cause—except for God of course—which brought about the creation of this universe with all its wise and balanced order. Hence, this discloses to us that besides God Almighty, there is no other being that can change or alter the creations of this universe or which can be described as having been the source or cause of the life and existence of all things.

Two Schools of Thought Among the Mystics— Oneness of Being and Oneness of Witnessing

A study of this verse also demonstrates that the Oneness of Being (*wahdat-ul-wujud*) is an ideology that has gone far from the truth and has failed to grasp the attributes of God. This concept is unable to realise the very relationship between servitude (*ubudiyyat*) and divinity (*uluhiyyat*). The reason for this, as it appears, is that from among those who subscribe to this ideology there were those blessed with visions and those engaged in spiritual struggle; when they ventured into the depths of contemplation, they were unable to distinguish between the characteristic nature of servitude (*ubudiyyat*) and divine providence (*rububiyyat*), and ultimately began to hold that the things God created are God Himself.

The Holy Quran descends upon the heart before it flows from the tongue. The heart possesses such a close affinity with the Divine that it became the recipient of God's Word. It is understandable that some could be misled by the deep and subtle nature of this subject. However, the fact of the matter is that when a person

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:256*

advances on the basis of a misunderstanding, they become trapped in a vortex of difficulty. As I have just mentioned, the interactions of God Almighty with human beings are so profound and multifaceted that no human power can articulate them. For if it was within the power of man to express, divine providence and the perfect attributes of Allah Almighty would not be expounded by Him in the Quran.

Our non-existence is the very proof of God's existence. It is certainly true that when man is helpless in every respect, he is essentially a non-entity. Certain people were unable to grasp this subtle and profound secret and as a result began to proclaim:

خَلَقَ الْأَشْيَاءَ هُوَ عَيْنٌ

God created things and He is those things.

From among the Wujudis and Shuhudis, the former are those who declare and believe that 'God created things and He is those things.' The latter group, however, believe in the annihilation of perception (*fana-un-nadhari*) and assert that man can become so engrossed in love that he can become annihilated in God (*fana fillah*); whereafter such people may be described as embodiments of the following verse:

من تو شدم تو من شدی من تن شدم تو جاں شدی

تا کس نکوید بعد ازین من دیگرم تو دیگری

I have become you, and you me, I the body, you the soul;

So that no one can say hereafter, that you are someone, and me someone else.

All of this aside, even mystics are compelled to accept the presence of God's independent, overarching power and control, whether they are Wujudis or Shuhudis. Various sages and masters from among them such as Bayazid Bastamith, Shiblith, Dhun-Nunth and Muhy-ud-Din Ibni Arabith have generally expressed this view in their discourses, either explicitly or implicitly. However, I would like to state clearly that we are not at liberty to mock them or look down upon them. On the contrary, they were wise and intelligent people. The fact of the matter is that this subject is a subtle and profound secret that relates to understanding the essence of the Divine, and so they were unable to grasp the nature of this relationship—that is all, nothing else.

In the face of God's supreme power and control, human beings seem as though they were lifeless creatures. When they observed man as such, they began to express the views I have just mentioned and their thoughts became inclined to such concepts.

The Servitude of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

Study the Holy Quran and you will see that there is not a single example of anyone who can match the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who was the perfect man, nor can he be matched until the end of time. Even though the Holy Prophet^{sa} was blessed with the ability to manifest miracles in which it appeared as though he could harness divine power, he was always characterised by his servitude to God. The Holy Prophet^{sa} would always declare, again and again:

إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ¹

I am only a man like yourselves.

This was to such extent that even in the Muslim creed which professes the Unity of God, the Holy Prophet^{sa} declared that it was incumbent to profess the Prophet's servitude to God as a necessary constituent—a declaration, without which a Muslim cannot be a Muslim. Reflect again and again! To entertain in our hearts and minds those ideas previously mentioned, is absurd and inappropriate, given how our Perfect Guide lived such a life that even after attaining to the highest possible status in nearness to God, he still did not fail to acknowledge his own servitude to the Divine.

Two Forms of Divine Power

Of course, a fact which no one can deny is that the powers of Allah the Exalted are countless and unlimited. It is impossible to count and enumerate them. The more a person progresses in piety and spiritual discipline, the closer they come to Allah the Exalted; and a tinge of these divine powers begins to manifest themselves in the person of such an individual proportionately. The door to the knowledge of these divine powers is opened to such people. It seems appropriate at this instance to state that the powers of the Divine are of two kinds: one which relates to the

¹ *al-Kahf*, 18:111

creation of God; secondly, that which relates to the nearness of God. One form of divine power which the Prophets, peace be upon them, are under, is that which relates to their being humans, created by God, as is described, for example, in the following verse:

يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ¹

He eats food, and walks in the streets.

Their health and suffering from illness, etc. is under the control of God. Then, a unique power of the Divine is experienced by the Prophets when they traverse through the various stages of divine nearness. Allah the Exalted comes close to them in such a manner that they begin to enjoy divine discourse, and their prayers are answered, but there are some who do not understand. This is not all, in fact, a time comes when, in addition to mere discourse, the mantle of divinity is placed upon them. God Almighty shows them diverse manifestations of His own existence. A perfect similitude of this nearness and relationship may be observed in iron which is placed inside a fire. The iron absorbs the effects of the fire and appears to be a red-hot, flaming body of fire itself. The iron begins to emit a fiery light and also develops the power to burn—a characteristic of fire. However, despite all this, it is well-established that the iron does not become fire itself, or a part thereof.

The Stage at which the Godly Perform Actions of Divine Nature

Similarly, it is my experience that the godly attain such a high rank in their nearness to Allah that a divine complexion wholly and perfectly covers the traces of their human character. This may be illustrated by the example of fire which engulfs iron to the extent that apparently nothing but fire is visible. Similarly, such holy individuals become imbued with the hue of God's attributes, by way of reflection.

At that time, without prayer or supplication to God, such a one performs actions, which possess the characteristics of divinity. The words they utter are fulfilled exactly as stated. There is clear mention in the Holy Quran of such occurrences as a result of the actions and words of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. For example, there is the following verse:

¹ *al-Furqan, 25:8*

مَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ¹

Thou threwest not when thou didst throw, but it was Allah Who threw.

There was the miracle of the splitting of the moon. Similarly, there are examples of the Holy Prophet^{sa} curing a vast number of the ailing and sick. The statement of the Holy Quran² مَا يَنْطَلِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (He does not speak out of his own desire) in favour of our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, alludes to the extreme and supreme divine nearness which the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, enjoyed. Truly, this is evidence of the immensely purified soul of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and his nearness to the Divine.

It is mentioned in a Hadith that Allah the Exalted becomes the hands, feet and eyes, etc. of a believing servant of God. This purports to say that all the limbs of such a person become so imbued in obedience to Allah that they are transformed into an instrument of the Divine, through which divine actions are manifested from time to time. Or they may be likened to a spotless mirror, which reflects with the utmost clarity, the will of God in its entirety. Or, one could say that in this state, such people relinquish their human character completely. For example, when a person speaks, they desire in their hearts that others should praise them for their eloquence, articulate speech and lucid expression. Yet, there are those who speak by divine power. When their souls become impassioned, it is from Allah the Exalted that a wave overwhelms them and inspires them in a manner that they cease to speak with their own voice and words; rather, they speak, permeated with the character, words and fervour of the Divine. Similarly, when they see, they do not see with their own concentration, as is the norm for others; but rather, their sight is free from human involvement and is illumined by the light of God Almighty—God shows them that which even the most scrupulous attention could not reveal to man.

Fear the Insight of a Believer

As it is narrated: *إِتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ*, i.e. be cautious of the insight of a believer, for yours is forced and theirs comes naturally; yours is superficial, while theirs is the reality. Take the example of a watch, which functions as a result of its mechani-

¹ *al-Anfal*, 8:18

² *an-Najm*, 53:4

cal parts. You can mistakenly say that it is seven o'clock when it is actually three o'clock; but a watch, which has been produced for this very purpose, will always tell the correct time and never make an error. If a person obstinately opposes the correct time of a watch, what will they gain except for disgrace? In the same vain, remember that it does not behove a righteous person to argue and contend with those who possess the rank of divine nearness and are known to the world by various names. Hence, be fearful and never oppose a believer; always remain cautious lest you should be proven false and then suffer the worst of consequences due to wrongdoing on your part. For a believer sees with the light of Allah the Exalted, whereas you are not blessed with this light. And so, it is conceivable that you should walk crooked, but a believer will always walk straight. I ask you, can a person who treads in darkness contend with a man who marches forward with the light of a lamp? Of course not. Allah the Exalted has stated himself:

هَلْ يُسْتَوَى الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ¹

Meaning, can a blind man and one who sees be alike? Indeed not. Now when we observe this fact, how wrong is it to not derive benefit from this example?

In short, one ought to fear the insight of a believer. It does not behove the wise to rise up in opposition to a believer. One may recognise a believer through the traces and signs that we have just expounded earlier. It was the awe of this very divine insight, conferred by Allah, which inspired the noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This awe accompanies the Prophets, peace be upon them, as a sign from God. When the Holy Prophet^{sa} made a statement, the companions would ask if it was based on revelation from God, so that if it was, they would not dare suggest an alternate view. They would be inspired by awe.

There is a grandeur and awe in the speech of a person that accords with their individual stature. One can observe that even when people stand before worldly judges, there is a difficulty and awe that they experience, because they know that the one before whom they stand possesses authority. In the same way, those who come to realise that a believer is supported by God, do not oppose such a person. If they do not understand something they have said or done, they sit in seclusion, reflect and analyse the matter deeply.

It is incumbent for all others to follow those who are cognisant and enlightened. This is the purport and meaning of the Hadith *إِتَّقُوا فِرَاسَةَ الْمُؤْمِنِ* (*Fear the in-*

¹ *al-An'am*, 6:51

sight of a believer). In other words, when a believer says something, one ought to be fearful of God, because whatever they say is from God Almighty Himself. To further elaborate, the love of God, which possesses a believer, results in their being enveloped by divine light. Although this light covers the believer and consumes their human character to an extent, just as iron is transformed when thrown into a fire, yet their servitude to God and humanness do not cease to exist. This is the secret that is hidden at the depth of the following verse:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ¹

Say, 'I am only a man like yourselves.'

Their human nature exists but it is dyed with a divine hue. Absorbed by the will of God Almighty, all the faculties and limbs of such a person become an illustration of the desires of Allah Almighty, and become devoted to His cause. It is this very distinction which makes such an individual a guardian over the spiritual development of tens of millions and a manifestation of perfect divine providence. If this were not the case, one Prophet could never be a guide and leader for such a multitude of people.

The Unparalleled Status of the Unlettered Prophet

Since our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, came for the spiritual development of all the people of the world, this characteristic was present in the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, to the point of utmost perfection. It is this very status of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to which the Holy Quran bears witness in numerous places. The attributes of Allah the Exalted are expounded in parallel to, and in the same manner, that the attributes of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are described. For example, Allah the Exalted states:

مَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ²

We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.

Similarly, He states:

¹ *al-Kahf*, 18:111

² *al-Anbiya*, 21:108

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا¹

Say, 'O mankind! Truly I am a Messenger to you all.

A study of other places in the Holy Quran reveals that Allah the Exalted has referred to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as 'unlettered.' This is because the Holy Prophet^{sa} had no other teacher except for Allah the Exalted. However, even though the Holy Prophet^{sa} himself was illiterate, nevertheless, philosophers and scholars of the highest calibre were to enter his fold, in addition to the uneducated and those of average learning. Allah the Exalted states:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا²

Say, 'O mankind! Truly I am a Messenger to you all.

There is a very subtle meaning alluded to in this verse that one may grasp. The word *jamee'aa* has two connotations: firstly, all of mankind or creation in general; secondly, people of all classes, i.e. human beings of every intellectual level, be they of average learning, the uneducated, or even philosophers of the highest calibre. In short, an individual at any intellectual level or of any disposition can develop a relationship with the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

When a person reads the Holy Quran, it is astonishing to note that this very unlettered person not only informed us of the Book and Wisdom, but enlightened us as to the ways that one can purify the soul, elevating people to the rank expressed in the following verse:

أَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ³

Whom He has strengthened with inspiration from Himself.

Observe and reflect deeply over the fact that the Holy Quran conveys a seeker of any disposition to their objective and satiates all those who are thirsty for virtue and truth. However, one ought to reflect: who was this ocean of wisdom and divine understanding, and this fountain of divine light revealed upon? The very same Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who on the one hand is known as unlettered, but on the other hand, from whose mouth flowed such sublimities and verities that have no parallel in the

¹ *al-A'raf*, 7:159

² *al-A'raf*, 7:159

³ *al-Mujadalah*, 58:23

history of the world. This is the perfect grace of Allah the Exalted so that the people may comprehend the level to which man can develop a relationship with Allah the Exalted. The purpose of this discourse is to expound that the relationships of Allah the Exalted reach an immensely subtle degree. Divinity becomes so intertwined with the elect of God that those who are inclined to worship God's creatures consider such human beings to be God Himself. It is absolutely true and correct to say:

مردان خدا ، خدا نباشند

لیکن ز خدا جدا نباشند

*The men of God are not God Himself;
Yet they are not parted from God either.*

The relationship that they enjoy with God Almighty is such that even without their supplications, He supports them. In short, the highest station among the various states of man is the soul at rest, which I discussed earlier in this discourse. In this state—rather in their every condition—people of such calibre, become so closely intertwined with God that their relationship with Him surpasses normal bounds and becomes a relationship that is truly special; this relation is no worldly or superficial one, it is a bond of the highest, heavenly nature. The purport is that this comfort can also be described as a prosperity (*falah*) and steadfastness (*istiqamat*), and has been alluded to in the following verse:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ¹

Guide us in the right path.

It is this very path that one has been taught to seek in prayer. This path of steadfastness is the path of those upon whom Allah has bestowed His blessings; they are those who receive the grace and favour of Allah the Exalted. The path of those upon whom Allah has bestowed His blessings has been mentioned so as to explain that though the ways of steadfastness are numerous, that steadfastness, which is synonymous with the paths of prosperity and success, are the paths of the Prophets, peace be upon them. Another point to note is that the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) is made by the tongue, heart and action of man. Now, when a person supplicates the Divine to become righteous,

¹ *al-Fatihah*, 1:6

they feel embarrassed, but it is the prayer *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ*¹ *وَإِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ*, i.e. Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we beseech for help, which eases the difficulty of this embarrassment.

Before Praying One Must Exert their Faculties to the Fullest

The entreaty *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*) precedes the submission *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (*Thee alone do we implore for help*), because when a person supplicates God Almighty, they come to Him after the full use of all their faculties. It is disrespectful and impertinent to come before God without first making use of one's own faculties and following the rules of nature's law. For example, if a farmer were to pray: 'O Lord! Make this crop blooming and fruitful', without first sowing the seed, this would be an act of insolence and mockery. This is equivalent to testing God and putting Him on trial, which is prohibited. We have been instructed to never test God, as clearly alluded to in the incident of the sending down from heaven, a table spread with food, in the context of the Messiah, on whom be peace. Contemplate and reflect over this point.

It is true to say that a person who does not perform appropriate action does not truly pray, but rather tests God. So, before one prays it is necessary to make full use of one's faculties and this is the meaning of the supplication just mentioned. First it is incumbent upon a person to analyse their own beliefs and actions. It is the custom of God Almighty to bring about reformation through the use of means. He creates some sort of means, which become the cause for a person's reformation. Those people who say that when there is prayer, means have no use, should reflect. Do such foolish ones not realise that even prayer itself is a subtle means that gives rise to other means? The clause *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*) which precedes the supplication *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (*Thee alone do we implore for help*) expounds this very point. Therefore, this is the way of Allah that we observe, whereby He creates means. Observe how God provides water to quench our thirst and grants us food to satisfy our hunger, but He does so through means. Therefore, this phenomenon of means functions as I have just described. Means must be created to achieve one's ends, because God has two names. As Maulvi Muhammad Ahsan Sahib mentioned earlier, Allah the Almighty states:

¹ *al-Fatihah*, 1:5

كَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا¹

Allah is Mighty, Wise.

By virtue of His name *Aziz* (the Mighty), God does whatever is needed and the name *Hakeem* (the Wise) denotes that His every action is done with wisdom, and done properly and adequately in accordance with the appropriate time and place. Just observe how plants and vegetation possess diverse properties. Even a *tolah* or two of turpethum is enough to clear the bowels, so too is the case with scammonia. Allah the Exalted has the power to clear a person's bowels without the use of any medicine, or to quench one's thirst without water, but it was necessary for mankind to learn of the wonders of nature. For the extent to which a person increases in their awareness and knowledge of the wonders of nature, is the degree to which they are increased in their understanding of the attributes of Allah Almighty; and this enables one to attain the nearness of God. Through medicine and astronomy we discover thousands of qualities present in nature.

The Properties of Things Are Another Name for Knowledge

What are the sciences? They are nothing more than a knowledge of the properties of things. If the celestial bodies, stars and vegetation did not possess effects, it would become difficult for mankind to believe in the attribute of Allah Almighty known as *Aleem* (the All-Knowing).

It is a certain fact that the foundation of our knowledge is based on our insight into the properties of things. The purpose in this is so that we may learn wisdom. The sciences have also been referred to as wisdom (*hikmat*). As such, Allah the Exalted states:

وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا²

And whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant good.

The Purpose of the Supplication 'Guide Us in the Right Path'

Hence, the purpose of the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) is that when a person makes this supplication, they ought to emulate the deeds, morals and beliefs of 'those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings'. In so

¹ *an-Nisa*, 4:159

² *al-Baqarah*, 2:270

far as possible, a person must not neglect the importance of doctrine, morals and deeds. You can understand with your own observation that until a person makes use of their faculties, they cannot progress. Or if a person is turned away from their actual purpose and objective, and are made to work in a way for which they have not been created, in this case as well, they will not progress.

If the eye were to be kept shut for forty days, it would lose its capacity to see. It is necessary to first engage one's faculties in the work for which they have been created, after which further progress may be achieved. It is my own personal experience that when I make the utmost use of my own practical capacities, Allah the Exalted blesses them even further. The essence is that first a person must correct their own doctrines, morals and deeds and then pray *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*). It is then that this supplication will truly manifest its effects.

A Community Blessed with God's Mercy

It becomes particularly evident that this blessed community has been born in an era of newly emerging calamities. Mankind is advancing towards sin and vice at the rate of a falling rock. The reason this ummah has been described as a community blessed with divine mercy (*ummat-e-marhumah*) is due to the rampant proliferation of sin. In this context, Allah the Exalted states:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ¹

Corruption has appeared on land and sea.

In another instance, He states:

يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا²

He gives life to the earth after its death.

A study of these verses makes it evident that in both instances Allah the Exalted has provided two illustrations. In the first verse, God describes the era in which our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was born. At that time, since the state of the world had become immensely pitiable and cried for mercy, and all traces of morality, good deeds and sound doctrine had vanished, this community was referred to as 'a community blessed with divine mercy.' For

¹ *ar-Rum*, 30:42

² *ar-Rum*, 30:20

in that era there was a dire need for God's mercy and this is why the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was addressed in the following terms:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ¹

And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples.

A person who is in a pitiable state and deserving of mercy is the one who is ordered to traverse a snake-infested land, in other words he is faced with grave dangers and severe calamities. And so, this nation was described as a 'community blessed with divine mercy' because it was in a difficult state. When someone is assigned a difficult task, their challenging situation arouses pity and they become deserving of mercy. The Holy Prophet^{sa} was confronted by a people who were experienced in the ways of mischief, were malevolent and hardened in evil. But the Holy Prophet^{sa}, as he stated himself, was unlettered and was untaught in the secular sciences. And so, those who were unlettered contended with those who were seasoned in scheming and mischief. This is why Islam has been referred to as *marhumah* (blessed with divine mercy). How pleased should the Muslims be, for Allah the Exalted has deemed them worthy of receiving His blessings and mercy. Previously, Prophets and other preachers appeared in times when the people were not experienced in plotting schemes. Some of these guides came to their own people. But in today's age the people are seasoned experts in fraud, and in secular knowledge and skill, as well as in philosophy and science. However, the righteous are scarcely involved in the field of secular knowledge; they have no interest in worldly mindsets, or its intricacies and artifices. It has been related in a Hadith that Allah Almighty said: 'O Jesus! I shall create a community after you who will be both devoid of sense and bereft of knowledge', i.e. they will be ignorant. Jesus responded: يَا رَبِّ كَيْفَ يَعْرِفُونَكَ i.e. 'O Allah! When they shall be deprived of knowledge and sense, how then shall they recognise you?' Allah the Exalted responded: 'I shall confer upon them knowledge and sense.'

The Affinity of Muslims with Heavenly Knowledge

This is a great glad tidings. For just as our opponents have a special relationship with secular knowledge, the Muslims have an affinity with heavenly knowledge.

¹ *al-Anbiya*, 21:108

The true visions and dreams of an unsophisticated Muslim are far more powerful than the visions of renowned philosophers, bishops and pundits. As Allah the Almighty states:

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ¹

That is Allah's grace; He bestows it on whom He pleases.

And so it is incumbent upon the Muslims to be grateful to their True Benefactor. For Allah the Exalted states:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ²

This means, if you are thankful to me, I shall increase for you the favour that I have conferred upon you, but if you are ungrateful, then my punishment is severe. Remember that since this community has been referred to as one that is deserving of divine mercy (*marhumah*), and it has been honoured with divine knowledge, gratitude must be paid in practice. Therefore, in the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) it is necessary for all Muslims to always give due regard to the words: *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*). For the words: *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*) have been given precedence to *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (*Thee alone do we implore for help*). Hence, before anything else, a person must demonstrate their gratitude practically; this is the underlying significance of the words *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ*. In other words, before making a supplication, it is incumbent for one to show due regard for and seek recourse to apparent means, and then turn to supplication. First and foremost, one must reform their own beliefs, morals and habits and then offer the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ*.

Morals Are the Sign of a Person's Virtue

Now I wish to mention an extremely important point. The significance of this matter cannot be understated. Our community must not listen to my words with an air of carelessness and inattention. Remember that morals are the sign of a person's piety. The general definition of a Muslim as narrated in the Hadith is that a Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue another Muslim is safe.

¹ *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:5

² *Ibrahim*, 14:8

Note: The Promised Messiah^{as} had delivered his address to this point, when it was time for Asr prayer. Hence, the Promised Messiah^{as} and all of the attendees offered the Asr prayer with immense sincerity and true passion. Afterwards, they all began to listen attentively to this Man of God, and the Promised Messiah^{as} resumed his address. —From the Editor

I brought my discussion to a hold on the point that in teaching us the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) Allah the Exalted wishes for man to keep three aspects in consideration: firstly, his own moral state; secondly the state of his doctrines; thirdly, the state of his actions. In summary, a person must first strive to reform his own state through the use of their God-given faculties and then supplicate before God. This does not mean, however, that a person need not pray once they have reformed themselves. Even in such a case, one should continue to pray. The words *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*) appear together along with *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (*Thee alone do we implore for help*), however, the former clause takes precedence even in the context of time. For by virtue of divine graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*), God made us human, and blessed us with a vast array of faculties and bounties, without any prayer or request on our part. When all this was conferred upon us we had not prayed, this was merely on account of God's grace—that is why these words are first in sequence.

The Graciousness and Mercy of God

One ought to remember that there are two forms of beneficence. Firstly, there is graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*); and secondly, mercy (*rahimiyyat*). The divine grace of *rahmaniyyat* is that which was in practice even before our beings came into existence. For example, before anything else, through the insight of His eternal knowledge, Allah Almighty created a heaven and earth and other worldly things and heavenly bodies, which would all fulfil some purpose in our lives—and so they do. It is humans that ultimately benefit from all of these creations. When goats and sheep, and other animals are themselves beneficial to man, what benefit do they derive in the real sense? Among those things that are physical, just observe how humans consume many exquisite and excellent forms of food. High-quality meat is reserved for humans whereas scraps and bones are thrown to dogs. At a physical level, the pleasures and comforts that humans enjoy are experienced by animals as well, but they are the primary privilege of mankind. Animals do not

partake of spiritual pleasure. Hence, there are two forms of beneficence. Firstly, that which resulted, since the earliest times, even before our existence, in the creation of the elements and matter, and which are bound to our service. All of these things were present even before our own existence, human desire or prayer, by virtue of the demands of *rahmaniyyat*.

The second form of beneficence is divine mercy (*rahimiyyat*); that is to say, when we pray, Allah the Exalted bestows. If one contemplates, it becomes evident that the relationship which underpins the law of nature is the exact relationship found to exist in prayer. Some people consider prayer to be a self-invented belief. However, I would also like to elaborate on the relationship that our prayer has with God Almighty.

When a child becomes restless with hunger and screams and wails for milk, a woman's breast begins to fill with milk. A child has no conception of prayer, but how do the cries of a child bring forth milk? Everyone is experienced in this regard. At times, it has been noted that a mother feels no milk in her bosom, but as soon as her child cries, milk begins to flow forth. Now can our cries before Allah the Exalted bring forth nothing? Indeed, divine favour does flow forth and all our cries are heard, but those who are blind, and consider themselves to be scholars and philosophers are unable to see. If an individual keeps in mind the relationship that a child has with its mother and reflects over the philosophy of prayer, it becomes very simple and easy to understand. The second form of beneficence teaches us that one form of grace is received by asking for it. If a person continues to beg, they shall continue to receive. Allah the Exalted states

أَدْعُوْنِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ¹

Supplicate and I shall accept.

This is not as an empty phrase; rather, this is an inherent characteristic of human nature.

To Beg is Human and to Bestow is Divine

To beg is human and to bestow is divine. A person who does not understand and accept this fact is false. The example of the child which I have just given clarifies amply the philosophy of prayer. The beneficence of graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*)

¹ *al-Mu'min*, 40:61

and mercy (*rahimiyyat*) are not two independent phenomena. Therefore, an individual who abandons one and seeks the other cannot benefit from either. The demands of graciousness are to develop within us the strength to benefit from the grace of God's mercy. One who does not do this is ungrateful for divine favour. The words **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** mean that we worship Allah alone, whilst always giving due consideration to the apparent ways and means that He has made available to us. If language, which is the product of our nerves and muscles, had not existed, we would not be able to speak. We were granted a language, which for the purpose of prayer, has the ability to articulate the very sentiments of our heart. If we never make use of our tongues to pray, this is our own misfortune. There are many illnesses, which if contracted by the tongue, can deprive it of its ability to function all at once, to the extent that a person becomes a mute. What a beautiful manifestation of divine mercy it is that we have been bestowed a tongue. Similarly, if the form of our ears became corrupted, we would not be able to hear a thing. So too is the case of the heart. If the state of fear and humility, and the faculties of contemplation and reflection with which man has been vested become corrupted, all these faculties, more or less, become useless. Just observe those who are mad and see how their faculties become futile. Is it not then incumbent upon us to value these God-given favours that we have been granted? If we abandon the faculties that Allah Almighty has blessed us with on account of His immense grace, so that they should rot, then we are invariably ungrateful for the favours of God. Hence, remember that if you leave your faculties and strength to hang idle and offer prayer, then such supplications will be of no benefit. For when we have failed to make use of the gift that has already been bestowed to us, how can we be expected to make good and beneficial use of another?

Guidance to Seek True Insight

Hence, the words **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** (*Thee alone do we worship*), proclaim that: 'O Lord of all the worlds! We have not abandoned the gift you have bestowed upon us already as a thing ruined and wasted.' In the prayer: **إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ** we have been taught that man should seek true insight from God Almighty. For if His grace and bounty do not come to our aid, we as humble human beings, are plunged in such gloom and darkness that we cannot even make recourse to prayer. Hence, until one derives benefit from the grace of God, which reaches them through the bounty of graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*), and prays, no fruitful result can be

attained.

I found, some time ago, that even in British law, in order to secure an agricultural loan, one is required to furnish proof of some assets. In the same manner, one ought to keep in view the law of nature and ask: have we made good use of that which has already been bestowed upon us? If having been blessed with reason, good sense, eyes and ears, we have not gone astray, and have not pursued ways of foolishness and ignorance, then you shall receive further divine grace through prayer, otherwise there are warning signs of destitution and misfortune.

The Meaning of Wisdom

Our friends will meet Christians often. They will observe that there is nothing in the religion of these uninformed people which may be attributed to the All-Wise God. What is the meaning of wisdom? It is as the Arabic phrase goes: *وَضَعَ الشَّيْءَ فِي مَحَلِّهِ* (*The placing of a thing in its proper place*). However, in the Christian faith you will find that no action or injunction falls true to this definition. When we closely reflect upon *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) the wording of this verse makes it clear that we have been taught to pray so that we may be guided to the straight path. However, the aforementioned verse is preceded by the following:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help.

This alludes to the fact that we must first derive benefit from this verse. That is to say, in order to traverse the stages on the path of righteousness, one must engage their faculties before seeking the assistance of Allah.

What Are Morals?

Now one should reflect over what things are worth asking for? Firstly, morals, which raise a person to the status of a human being. One should not surmise that gentle behaviour alone is what constitutes good morals. Creation (*khalq*) and morals (*khulq*) are two Arabic words which give corresponding meanings. The word *khalq* refers to physical birth, i.e. the creation of one's ears, nose, hair, etc., whereas *khulq* refers to inner, spiritual birth. As such, inner faculties which are the distinguishing factor between a human and non-human are all encompassed

in the term *khulq*. Even a person's intellect and thoughts, etc., and all their other faculties are a part of *khulq*.

Through *khulq* a person reforms their human character. If a person had no responsibilities, one would have to ask whether they were a human, a donkey or something else. When a person's *khulq* becomes corrupted, nothing is left but their physical form. For example, if one loses one's senses, they are deemed mad, and are considered to be a human only by virtue of their apparent figure. Hence, morals are to attain the pleasure of God Almighty (which is personified in the practical life of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). For this reason, it is necessary for us to mould our own lives in accordance with the life of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. These morals are a foundation and if this foundation is weak, an edifice cannot be built upon it. Morals are to place one brick over another. If one brick is misaligned, the entire wall shall be crooked. Someone has rightly stated:

خشت اول چون نهد معمار کج

تا ثیامے رود دیوار کج

*When the builder lays crooked the very first brick;
The wall will remain crooked even if it reaches the heaven.*

One ought to pay close attention to these matters. I have seen many men and analysed them closely to find that some are generous, but are also prone to anger and they are easily irritated. There are some who show forbearance but they are also miserly. There are some who are so bold that they will wound a person, striking them with bats in a state of anger and fury, but have no traces of humility and modesty in them. Then, I have observed some who are humble and modest to the utmost extent but are bereft of the quality of bravery, to the extent that they become petrified by even hearing about plague or cholera. I do not say that those who suffer a lack of bravery are devoid of faith. There were some from among the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} who did not have the strength and courage for battle. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would consider them excused. There are numerous aspects of morality. In my address at the Conference of Great Religions, I have described all of these aspects clearly and at length. All people neither possesses every moral quality, nor are they completely deprived either.

The Lofty Morals of the Noble Messenger^{sa}

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the most perfect model and example, who was a perfect compendium of every moral quality. This is why Allah the Exalted honours him by stating:

إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ¹

Thou dost surely possess high moral excellences.

At times, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would confound the congregation with his immensely eloquent speech. At other times he would make a valiant display in the field of battle. When it came to generosity, he would give mountains of gold. When it came to demonstrating the greatness of his forbearance, he would forgive criminals worthy of death. In short, God Almighty has showcased the unparalleled and perfect model of His Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and it may be likened to a magnificent tree in whose shade a person can sit to fulfil their needs from its every part: its fruit and flowers; its bark and leaves; in summary, every aspect of the tree is beneficial. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is like a magnificent tree that grants shade to tens of millions of creatures, who find comfort and refuge under it—just like under the wings of a hen. In battle, those who were with the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were considered to be the bravest. For the Holy Prophet^{sa} would be in the most dangerous place. Holy is Allah! How impressive! In Uhud, he was showered with swords, and such carnage ensued that the companions found it difficult to bear, but this valiant warrior stood firm like a rock and went on fighting. No blame lies on the companions, for Allah the Exalted forgave them. The underlying secret in this incident was to exhibit the bravery of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. On one occasion, he was struck by swords repeatedly, but he would firmly proclaim that he was Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. It is said that the Holy Prophet^{sa} sustained seventy wounds to his forehead. They were light wounds nonetheless, but this displays his exalted character.

There was a time when the Holy Prophet^{sa} owned even more sheep and goats than the Caesar and Chosroes. The Holy Prophet^{sa} granted them all to a person who asked for them. If he had not come to own anything, how could he have

¹ *al-Qalam*, 68:5

demonstrated his immense generosity. If he had never been a ruler, how would it be established that despite having the power to seek revenge, he had it within him to forgive the disbelievers of Mecca, who were deserving of death—the very same disbelievers who inflicted the harshest of torments upon the companions, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Muslim women. When they were presented before him, he announced: *لَا تَأْتُرُّنَّ عَلَيَّ الْيَوْمَ*, meaning, on this day I have forgiven you. If such opportunities had not arisen, how would the lofty morals of the Holy Prophet^{sa} have come to light? This greatness is unique to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Name a single moral quality that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not possess—and that too to the utmost level of perfection.

When one studies the life of the Messiah, on whom be peace, it must be said that his morals remained hidden. The evil from among the Jews who were given seats of honour by the government, and the Roman government respected them due to their influence, continued to trouble the Messiah, but during his life there was no time when he was in power, so that one could judge the degree to which he would exhibit forgiveness, despite having the authority to exact revenge. However, in contrast to this, the morals of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were such that they were established to be perfect on the touchstone of observation and experience. His morals are not imaginary notions, rather, we possess evidence of their reality just as the principles of mathematics and numbers are a fact and known to be true. We can establish evidence of his morals just as one is able to prove that two and two equal four. However, the follower of no other Prophet can do so. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sa} is like a tree whose every element, be it the roots, bark, fruit, flowers, or leaves, are all beneficial, and rather, prove to be beneficial to the highest degree; they bestow comfort and grant pleasure. After the Honourable Chief of the Universe, on whom be salutations, discord eventually arose among the Muslims and so as a community, it no longer preserved its good morals collectively. Instead, their collective morals were divided and dispersed across various factions of the community. This is why certain individuals are able to adopt selective morals with greater ease.

The Purification of the Soul and Success

Allah has given the following guidance:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا¹

In other words, He who purifies their soul will receive salvation, and ruined is the one who has corrupted their soul. The word *falhun* means to cleave asunder. The word *filahah* means cultivation in the context of agriculture. A kind of cultivation or ploughing is required in the purification of the soul as well. Spiritual struggle frees the soul of man from its deficiencies and hardened nature so that it may be sown with true faith. Then the tree of faith becomes capable of yielding fruit. In the early stages, since a righteous person is confronted with great adversity and hardship, the similitude of tearing apart is relevant in this context.

At another instance, Allah the Almighty states:

قُتِلَ الْخَرْصُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي عَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ²

In this verse, Allah the Exalted describes the state of the disbelievers, saying: ruined are those guilty of conjecture; whose souls are plunged in a state of *ghamrah*. The word *ghamrah* refers to something that weighs down with heavy pressure and prevents one from raising one's head. A form of *ghamrah* overtakes crops as well in the form of the pre-emergence crust on soil. Allah the Almighty says: perished are those who resort to conjecture, for at present their souls are drowned in a state of *ghamrah*. In this verse, a believer is given a parable and admonished that until a person's state of *ghamrah* is not removed, they cannot progress with full insight and cannot be classed among those who are enlightened. Here, Allah the Exalted uses the word *qutila* (i.e. to be cursed) in the passive form, because this alludes to the divine mercy with which they are blessed; that is to say, such people are themselves the perpetrators of the action that is responsible for their own ruin. There are certain individuals who are more prone to speaking with conjecture than others. They do not act with insight and far-sightedness, rather they lean towards ill thoughts and speculation. They consider this to be their greatness. My intent was to demonstrate before you the perfect example of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in the field of morals. Indeed, he was the epitome of perfection. After him, people have taken a portion from his morals selectively and individually. One person took a particular moral quality, while someone else took another, ultimately each suffering a deficiency or *ghamrah* in adopting the other quality. Just as it is necessary for a farmer to do away with the

¹ *ash-Shams*, 91:10-11

² *adh-Dhariyat*, 51:11-12

ghamrah that plagues his crop, so that the other plants do not suffer, in the same vein, it is incumbent that every individual cleanses themselves of the *ghamrah* within their souls. If not, there is a possibility that this may eat into their other good qualities as well.

For Every Illness There Is a Cure—The Broader Connotation

It is not true to say that a person has the power to adopt certain morals but not others. Not at all! There is a cure for every ailment, or in other words **لِكُلِّ دَاءٍ دَوَاءٌ**. It is a pity that people do not give due regard to this blessed saying of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and consider its scope limited to physical illnesses alone. How ignorant and erroneous is such a view! Just as there are means available for the improvement and well-being of the physical body, how is it possible that Allah Almighty would have provided no remedy for the spiritual ailments of man? Indeed, there are, without a doubt!

It is a sure and certain fact that Allah the Exalted helps those who help themselves. However, the indolent and idle, are ultimately ruined.

Two Forms of Old Age

Man is faced with a time when his physical form begins to weaken and this is known as old age. At this time the eyes lose their ability to see, while the ears are unable to hear. In summary, every part of the body becomes almost useless and incapable. Remember that there are two forms of old age: natural and unnatural. The natural form is as we have described just now. The unnatural form is when a person neglects the illnesses that they suffer from. In turn, such a person grows weak and begins to enter into old age prematurely, as it were. As this is the phenomenon in the physical realm, so too is the case in the inner, spiritual realm. If a person does not endeavour to transform their immoral ways into exemplary morals and good qualities, their moral compass is shattered completely. The guidance of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the teaching of the Holy Quran, clearly prove the fact that every illness has a cure. However, if indolence and sloth overtake a person, what other avenue is there except for ruin? If a person leads a life of carelessness like an old person, how can they be saved?

A Transformation of Morals Is Possible Through Struggle and Prayer

Until a person undertakes a struggle and seeks recourse to prayer, the overwhelming weight of ignorance that overtakes the heart cannot be removed. As such, Allah the Exalted has stated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَ حَتَّىٰ يُعِيرُوا مَا بَانَ لَهُمْ¹

Meaning, God Almighty does not dispel the diverse afflictions and calamities that befall a nation until its people themselves do not endeavour to remove them. If there is no determination and courage, how can a transformation be brought about? This is an unchangeable custom of Allah the Exalted, as He states:

وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا²

And thou wilt never find a change in the way of Allah.

Therefore, whether it is our community or anyone else, it is only through effort and prayer that a transformation of morals is possible. There is no other way.

Two Perspectives on the Transformation of Morals

The philosophers hold two views on the transformation of morals. There are those who hold that man has the strength to reform his morals, and there are some who say that man does not have the capacity for such reformation. The fact of the matter is that if an individual does not act indolently and out of sloth, and if they make an effort, a transformation is within their power. Here, I am reminded of a story. It is said that a person came to the renowned Greek philosopher, Plato, and when he arrived at the door, he sent word inside. It was Plato's practice that he would not allow anyone to enter until he was first apprised of their appearance and features. By virtue of his experience in physiognomy, he would come to a conclusion about the character of the person in question. Regardless, Plato's servant entered and described the person's physical features as was the routine, to which Plato responded: 'Tell the person that since you are a man of many ignoble morals, I do not wish to see you.' When the person at the door heard this response from Plato, he asked the attendant to go in and say: 'Whatever you have stated is true, but I have forsaken my evil habits and have reformed myself.' At this, Plato

¹ *ar-Ra'd*, 13:12

² *al-Ahzab*, 33:63

said: 'Indeed, that is a possibility.' And so the man was called in and Plato met with him very respectfully, showing him honour. Those scholars who believe that a transformation of morals is beyond the strength of man have erred. We have observed that when certain employees who once habitually accepted bribes offer true repentance, if after this, someone offers them a mountain of gold, they do not even care to cast a glance upon it.

Three Conditions of Repentance

Repentance, in actuality, truly enables and reinforces the acquisition of good morals and makes a person complete. In other words, a person who desires a change in their immoral habits must first repent with a true heart and firm resolve. It ought to be borne in mind also that there are three conditions for repentance, without fulfilment of which true repentance cannot be achieved.

The first of these three conditions is referred to as *iqla* in the Arabic language. That is to say, the discarding of one's evil thoughts, which arouse evil propensities. The fact of the matter is that one's ideas bear a very heavy influence. For every action takes on a form in our minds before it is manifested in the realm of deeds. Hence, the first condition for repentance is to abandon one's evil thoughts and ill fancies. For example, if a person has an illicit relationship with a woman, in order to repent, it is necessary for him to conceive of her as ugly and call to mind all her ignoble qualities. As I have said, the effect of one's thoughts are very powerful indeed. I have read in the accounts of various Sufis that they were able to carry their thoughts to such a degree that they were able to see a human being in the form of an ape or a pig. In short, everything takes on a hue that is consistent with our own thoughts. Therefore, those thoughts which arouse evil pleasures must be uprooted. This is the first condition.

The second condition is known as *nadam* in Arabic. In other words, to feel regret and remorse. Everyone's conscience is powerful enough to admonish a person when they commit an evil, but an ill-natured person neglects this conscience. Hence, a sinner must show remorse when he commits a sin or an evil action, and he should realise that the pleasures he derives are temporary and will last for a short span of time. He should also consider that on every instance there is a decrease in his pleasure and enjoyment. Ultimately, in old age when the faculties become weak and ineffectual, all of these pleasures of the world will have to be relinquished. Now, when all of these pleasures will ultimately escape us in this

very life, then what is to be gained by indulging in them now? Truly fortunate is the one who turns to repentance, and whose attention is turned towards discarding and uprooting all of their evil thoughts and fancies. When an individual is purged of this filth and impurity, they must be remorseful and feel ashamed for what they have done.

The third condition is called *azm* in Arabic. In other words, this means to make a firm resolve to never revert to these vices in the future. When a person remains firm in this resolve, Allah the Exalted shall grant them the strength needed for true repentance, to the extent that they will be wholly cleansed of their sins, and good morals and praiseworthy actions will take their place. This is a triumph of morals. It is the work of Allah Almighty to grant a person strength and ability in this regard, because it is He alone who is the Master of all strengths and faculties. God Almighty states:

أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا¹

All power belongs to Allah.

All of our faculties are to be exerted in the way of Allah Almighty. For man is frail and weak. His reality is expounded in the following verse:

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا²

Man has been created weak.

Therefore, in order to seek strength from God Almighty, if a person follows the three conditions mentioned earlier to the fullest extent and forsakes indolence and sloth, and becomes fully prepared to improve, and prays to God Almighty, then surely, Allah the Exalted will transform their morals.

Who is Truly Mighty?

Our community does not require people who possess the physical strength of mighty wrestlers. Instead, we require people who possess the strength to continue working towards the transformation of their morals. Without doubt, a truly mighty and powerful person is not one who can move a mountain from its place—not in the least. True courage is to muster the strength to reform one's morals. So remember, strive with all your strength and resolve to improve your

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:166

² *an-Nisa*, 4:29

morals, because this is true strength and bravery.

High Moral Excellences Are a Magnificent Miracle

I stated yesterday or perhaps the day before yesterday that high moral excellences are a magnificent miracle, which can even leave behind other extraordinary happenings. For example, if today, the miracle of the splitting of the moon took place, experts of astronomy and physics, and those who are enthralled by science, would immediately assert that this is an occurrence which may be categorised as a form of solar or lunar eclipse; and by doing so would seek to bring down the grandeur of the occurrence. If the previous instance of this miracle is presented, they simply disregard it as being a fabricated tale of the past. For example, take the solar and lunar eclipses which took place in the month of Ramadan, and which served as a heavenly sign from among the signs of the Mahdi. I have heard that some people allege that in light of astronomy, it was already established that this natural occurrence was bound to occur in the month of Ramadan. By saying so, they seek to diminish the value of this Hadith, which has been related by Imam Muhammad Baqir, on whom be peace. But these foolish people do not even realise that no ordinary individual can fulfil the requirements of prophethood. Prophethood means ‘to make prophecy,’ and it is not within the power of any ordinary person to go about making prophecies. The Prophet of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, foretold that in the era of the one who claims to be the Mahdi and Messiah, the solar and lunar eclipse would occur in the month of Ramadan, and this has never occurred since the creation of the heavens and earth. Hence, if there is any difficulty from a logical standpoint, those who object to this prophecy, may go ahead and see if they can lessen the grandeur of this prophecy in light of history. In other words, they ought to inform us of an era in time when the solar and lunar eclipse occurred in the month of Ramadan, where before the occurrence of this sign, a claimant had already announced his claim. Moreover, they should tell us of any era in which a Prophet prophesied that the solar and lunar eclipses would occur in the month of Ramadan to support the claim of a person who was to appear. However, it is impossible for anyone to show us any other such example.

My intent in relating this incident is merely to point out that people always find some excuse or other in relation to extraordinary happenings and seek to discredit them. However, an exemplary moral state is a miracle in which no one

can find fault. This is the very reason that the greatest and most powerful miracle granted to our Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was that of lofty morals. To this effect, the Holy Quran states:

أَنْتَ لَعَلَّ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ¹

Thou dost surely possess high moral excellences.

Notwithstanding this, even the extraordinary occurrences that took place at the hand of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are established with far greater evidence than the miracles of the other Prophets, peace be upon them. However, his miracle of morals stands at the very top, and it has no parallel in the history of the world, and will never be matched until the end of time.

It is my belief that any individual who forsakes their evil morals and ignoble habits, and adopts good qualities, shows a miracle. For example if a stern and rough-natured person, or someone who succumbs to anger, abandons these ill habits and adopts the qualities of forbearance and forgiveness, or if a person rids themselves of miserliness and becomes generous, or if a person develops sympathy in the place of malice, this is undoubtedly a miracle. Similarly, if a person forsakes self-conceit and self-admiration, and replaces it with lowliness and humility, then this very humility is a miracle. Who from among you does not desire that miracles be shown at their hands? I know that everyone holds this desire. Therefore, an everlasting and living miracle is if an individual reforms his moral state. For this is a miracle the effects of which never fade away; rather, its benefits carry on far and wide. A believer ought to become one who shows miracles before one's Creator and God's creation. Many immoral and decadent people have been seen to remain unmoved by signs of extraordinary happening, but they ultimately bowed their heads upon witnessing high morals; they were left with no other choice but to proclaim their acceptance and belief. You will find this underlying factor in the biographies of many people, who accepted the Islam, Religion of Truth, moved by the miracle of lofty morals.

(Note: The Promised Messiah^{as} was delivering his address in an immensely passionate and heart-touching manner when a few Sikhs, dressed like beggars, came in a state of intoxication and began to speak so inappropriately that

¹ *al-Qalam*, 68:5

the atmosphere of this spiritual gathering may well-nigh have been ruined. However, our True Leader, the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, demonstrated by his practical example the miracle of morality, which he had been alluding to in his address. The audience was so moved by this example that many of them burst into tears and began to weep emotionally. These evil people were ultimately handed over to the police, reprimanded and their drugs were confiscated.—Editor)

Do Not Disregard My Advice

Hence, I loudly proclaim once again, and my friends ought to take heed, that they must not disregard my words of advice and view them as the tales of a storyteller. Everything that I have said to you, I have said with a burning heart and true sympathy, which are inherently a part of my soul. Heed my words with the ear of your heart and act upon them.

Bear well in mind and know for certain that one day you shall be presented before Allah the Exalted. Therefore, if we depart from this world in an excellent state then this is cause for us to rejoice and enjoy felicitations, otherwise, there are grave dangers. Remember that when a person falls into a dreadful state their hell—a far off place¹—begins in this very world; that is to say, a change begins to take effect in them in the last moments of their life, even here on earth. Allah the Exalted states:

أَنَّهُ مَن يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ²

This means that any individual who comes to his Lord a sinner—for him is Hell; he shall neither die therein nor live. How clear is this statement. True pleasure is derived from the comfort and joy of life; and a person can only be deemed living when they are in a state of peace and comfort in every respect. If an individual is afflicted by some sort of pain, such as colic or toothache, their state becomes worse than the dead. The state of such a person is that they are neither truly alive, nor truly dead. Now judge from this, how dreadful a state one will suffer on account of the painful punishment of hell.

¹ In this instance, the Promised Messiah^{as} is alluding to *al-Furqan* (25:12-13) in which the blazing fire of hell is referred to as *makanim-ba'eed* or 'a place far off.' [Publisher]

² *Taba*, 20:75

A Sinner is One Who Severs their Relationship with God Almighty in This Life

A sinner is one who severs their relationship with God Almighty in this very life. For such a person was instructed to become devoted to God Almighty and to keep in the company of the truthful, but they instead became slaves to passion and desire, and joined hands with the wicked and those who were the enemies of God and His Messenger. In other words, they have demonstrated through their practical example that they have severed their relationship with God Almighty. It is the way of Allah that when an individual takes a step in one direction, they move further away from the opposing direction. If a person separates themselves from God Almighty and becomes a slave to carnal desires and passions, God, in turn, moves further and further away from them. As a person grows closer to their own passions and desires, their connection with God is weakened. As the proverb goes: 'love begets love'. Therefore, if a person demonstrates that they are averse to God in practice, then they ought to know that God too is averse to them. If, on the other hand, a person loves God Almighty and flows towards Him like water, then they ought to know that God is Gracious. When a person loves Allah the Exalted, He in turn shows him greater love. He is a God who sends down blessings upon those who love Him. God makes them feel that He is with them, to the extent that He blesses their words and their lips. The garments of such an individual and their every word become a source of blessing for others. In the ummah of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} there exists categorical proof of this even now, that when a person becomes devoted to God, God too befriends him.

A Person Who Strives Towards God Never Fails

When a person strives and exerts an effort towards God Almighty, He does not allow for it to go in vain. A landowner may lose his crop, an employee may cause harm to someone who dismisses them, and a person who is tested may fail, but a person who strives towards God is never met with failure. The promise of Allah the Almighty is true:

الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا¹

As for those who strive in Our path — We will surely guide them in Our ways.

A seeker of the avenues that lead to God Almighty ultimately reaches his final

¹ *al-Ankabut, 29:70*

destination. If we feel sympathy upon witnessing the effort and conditions of students who spend day and night preparing for worldly examinations, how can Allah the Exalted, who is boundless and infinite in His mercy and compassion, waste the effort of a person who strives towards Him? Of course not. Never would He do so. Allah the Exalted does not allow anyone's effort to go in vain. God Almighty states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ¹

Surely, Allah suffers not the reward of those who do good to be lost.

Allah the Exalted also states:

مَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ²

Then whoso does an atom's weight of good will see it.

We observe that every year thousands of students weep and commit suicide when they see their efforts and labours of many years washed away due to some reason or other. However, the grace of Allah the Exalted does not disregard even the most insignificant of actions. What a pity then that man becomes so engrossed in labouring for the sake of uncertain and insecure objectives to the extent that he deprives himself as it were of every kind of comfort; he bears a thousand pains and hardships merely on the tenuous hope that perhaps he will succeed. A businessman will invest hundreds and thousands of rupees in the hopes of profit, but even he is unaware for certain if this will bring guaranteed returns. However, I do not observe the same toil and effort by those who seek God Almighty (Whose promises are definite and categorical, and towards Whom an advance through even the slightest effort is never wasted). Why do these people not understand? Why do they not fear that they will have to die one day? Even after witnessing these other failures, are they not moved to consider this bargain, in which there is no prospect of loss or failure, and in which profit is guaranteed? How great an effort does a farmer invest in the cultivation of his crop, but who can say for certain that the result will prove fruitful?

How Merciful is Allah the Almighty! He is a treasure from whom one can collect a *cowrie*, a rupee or even a gold coin. Here, there is no fear of thieves and robbers, nor a chance of bankruptcy. It is narrated in a Hadith that if a person removes a thorn from the path, they shall receive a spiritual reward for this as

¹ at-Tawbah, 9:120

² az-Zilzal, 99:8

well. If when fetching water, a person pours a bucket into his brother's vessel, God Almighty does not allow it to go unrewarded. Remember that the path on which man can never fail is the path of God. The path of this world is full of obstacles that cause a person to stumble at every step, and hurdles threatening failure obstruct the way. Those who abandoned their rule of entire kingdoms were, surely, not out of their minds. People like Ibrahim ibn Adham, Shah Shuja, and King Abdul-Aziz, who is also known as a Reformer (*Mujaddid*), gave up their worldly rule, sovereignty and majesty. The reason is that there are obstacles at every step, which cause one to stumble. God is a pearl and when a person gains insight into His Being, he begins to view materialistic things with such contempt and scorn that he must force and compel himself to even cast a glance upon such matters. Hence, seek true insight of God Almighty and take your every step in His direction. For it is in this that all success lies.

The Miracle of Morals

The demands of faith are that a person seeks their own reformation from Allah the Exalted, while employing their own strength. It is narrated in a Hadith that Allah Almighty does not disregard the prayer of a person who raises their hands with firm faith. And so, beg of God, and implore him with firm faith and sincere resolve. I advise you once again that to exhibit good morals is no less than showing a miracle. If any of you assert that it is not your desire to show miracles, then realise that Satan has deceived you. By the manifestation of miracles, I am not referring to pride and conceit. Miracles enlighten people of the truth and veracity of Islam, and become a source of guidance. I proclaim once again that pride and conceit have no part in the miracle of morals to which I refer. Such a thought is the incitement of Satan. There are tens of millions of Muslims that can be seen to exist in various parts of the world. Have these Muslims come to Islam by the dint of the sword through compulsion and force? Absolutely not. This is completely false. It is the miraculous effect of Islam which has drawn them in. Miracles are of various kinds. Among these varying types, there is one form known as the miracle of morals, and it reigns supreme in all fields. Those who accepted Islam did so merely by witnessing the miracles of the righteous—miracles that left an impression upon them. It was Islam itself in which they witnessed an honourable light. The sword did not convert them. Many renowned and reputable British scholars have had to accept that the truthful spirit of Islam itself is so powerful

that it compels people of other religions to join the fold.

Safeguard the Dignity and Honour of the Community

An individual who exhibits a change in their morals, so that their neighbour may see how they were before and what they have become, manifests a miracle, as it were. This has a deep and lasting impression upon one's neighbour. People raise objections against our community and allege that they can see no improvement in those who have joined us and allege that our followers indulge in falsehood and do not restrain their temper and rage. Are such people not embarrassed that others flock to the community considering it to be exemplary? An obedient son becomes a source of honour for his father. Likewise, a person who swears an oath of allegiance to a divinely appointed one is also like a son. This is why the blessed wives of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are known as the Mothers of the Believers. In other words, the Holy Prophet^{sa} is a father to the Muslim community at large. A biological father brings a child into the world, becoming a cause for worldly life, but a spiritual father takes their child, as it were, into heaven and returns them to the original source from which they sprang (i.e. God). Would you view in a positive light the son who dishonours his father? What if a son were to visit prostitutes, indulge in gambling, consume alcohol, and commit other immoral actions which disgrace his father? I know that there can be no one who would approve of such actions. But nonetheless, when the undutiful son acts in this manner, the voice of the people cannot be silenced. The people will speak with reference to the father and say that the son of so-and-so indulges in such and such wrongdoing. Hence, the undutiful son himself becomes a means of disgrace for his father. Similarly, when an individual joins a religious community and does not remain mindful of its dignity and honour, and acts against its teachings, he is worthy of blame in the sight of God. For such a one does not only ruin themselves, but deprives others from the path of blessing and guidance due to their own immoral example. Therefore, insofar as is within your power, seek the assistance of God and endeavour to eliminate your weaknesses with all your strength and resolve. Wherever you fall weak, raise your hands in prayer with sincerity and faith. For hands that are raised with a spirit of humility and meekness as a result of sincerity and faith are never returned empty. I can say from experience that thousands of my prayers have been accepted, and continue to be accepted even now.

It is an invariable fact that if an individual does not possess within their hearts the fervour of sympathy for mankind, then they are miserly. If I see a path that leads to goodness and benefit, it is my responsibility to loudly proclaim it to the people, irrespective of whether anyone follows it or not.

کس بشنود یا نشنود من گفتگوئے میکنم

Whether anyone listens or not, I shall continue to speak.

If even a single soul emerges with life, then this is sufficient. I loudly proclaim that it does not behove me to give you this counsel out of a desire for spiritual reward. Not at all! On the contrary, my soul is imbued with an extreme fervour and pain. Though I do not know why I possess this fervour, there cannot be even an iota of doubt regarding the fact that I cannot stop myself from feeling this way. Therefore, all of you ought to consider my advice to be the words bequeathed by a man who you may not be fortunate enough to hear in the future; thus adhere so perfectly to my counsel that you become examples for others. You must teach those who are far from us through your own actions and words. If there is no need for action in the manner that I have explained, then tell me why anyone should come here? I do not want a hidden change in you; I require a noticeable transformation, so that our opponents are overcome with shame; and so that the hearts of the people are illuminated instantly, they lose hope in our opponents and realise that they are in a state of misguidance. Even the most wicked people repented at the hand of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. How so? It was the magnificent transformation that took place in the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and their model, which was worthy of emulating, and which moved the evil to feel contrition.

The Pure Example of Ikrimah

You have perhaps heard of the account of Ikrimah. It was he who was the mastermind behind the misfortune at Uhud. His father was Abu Jahl, but ultimately it was the example of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} which put him to shame. It is my belief that extraordinary happenings did not leave as lasting an impression on the people, and did not astonish them, as much as the pure model of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and the change that they witnessed in them. The people were amazed to see the heights that their relatives had attained.

Ultimately, they were forced to accept that they were in the wrong. There was a time when Ikrimah waged an attack against the very person of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, but then came a time when he annihilated the army of the disbelievers. Therefore, today we can present with pride—in the form of arguments and signs—the model which the companions exhibited during the era of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. As such, take the example of Ikrimah. In his days of disbelief, he was prey to disbelief, and other ignoble traits such as conceit, etc., and it was his utmost desire to expunge Islam from the face of the earth. But when the grace of God Almighty embraced him and he was blessed with Islam, he developed such lofty morals that not even the slightest traces of arrogance and conceit were left in him, and he became so humble and meek that his humility became a conclusive proof in favour of Islam and an argument in favour of the truth of Islam. On one occasion, there was a battle with the disbelievers and Ikrimah was the General of the Muslim army. The disbelievers waged a powerful onslaught to the extent that the Muslim army had almost drowned in defeat. When Ikrimah saw this condition, he dismounted from his horse and the people asked: ‘Why have you dismounted? Your horse will help you when the time comes to move swiftly.’ Ikrimah responded: ‘At this hour, I am reminded of the time when I would fight against the Prophet of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. It is my desire to lay down my life as an atonement for my sins.’ Now just observe the heights to which this person reached, where time and again he is remembered with praise. Remember that the pleasure of God Almighty is with those who endeavour to gather it within themselves. In countless places, Allah the Exalted has referred to these people as: ‘those with whom Allah was pleased.’ I advise each and every one of you to adopt these morals.

Sound Doctrine and Good Deeds

In addition to what I have mentioned already, there are two aspects which a genuine and sincere individual ought to bear in mind. One aspect is sound doctrine. It is an immense grace of Allah Almighty that He showed us the path of perfect and complete doctrine that is sound, through His Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, without any toil and effort on our part. There are many scholars who are deprived of the path, which you have been shown in this day and age. So be thankful for this grace and bounty of God Almighty upon you. In this context, true gratitude is to pure-heartedly perform those good deeds, which

follows on from holding sound doctrine. Seek assistance through practical action and supplicate to God Almighty that He may keep you steadfast in adhering to sound doctrine and so that He may enable you to do good works. In the matter of worship, Prayer, fasting and zakat, etc., other matters are also included. Consider the example of Prayer. This is a practice that has come to earth but does not spring from the earth. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, says: قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ (The delight of my eyes is in the Prayer).

The Timings of Prayer Are an Illustration that Reflect Man's Spiritual Conditions

You ought to bear in mind that the five times appointed for Prayer have not been set as a form of compulsion or to flaunt authority. In fact, if one ponders, it becomes evident that these timings are a reflection of the varying spiritual states of man. Allah the Exalted says: أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ¹ i.e. observe Prayer from *duluk-ush-shams* (the declining and paling of the sun). Now one can observe that in this instance Allah the Exalted states that the observance of Prayer begins from the time known as *duluk-ush-shams*. The word *duluk*—though there is a difference of opinion in its meaning—refers to the afternoon, when the sun begins to decline from its zenith. Now, from the time of *duluk*, five Prayers have been appointed. What is the wisdom and underlying mystery in this? The law of nature demonstrates that the stages of humility and meekness in the spiritual state of man begins with *duluk*, after which man experiences only five conditions.

Therefore, Prayer, which accords with our natural state, begins from the time when signs of grief, pain and agony arise in man. When a person is afflicted by some calamity or misfortune, they show immense humility and meekness. At this time, if there were an earthquake, you could appreciate how emotional and humble one's disposition becomes. Similarly, presume for example, if someone were subject to legal proceedings, upon the issuance of a summons or warrant, the individual comes to know that he has been charged under such and such section of the criminal or civil code. After the individual in question sees the warrant, their condition declines, just as the midday sun begins to decline in the afternoon. For before the issuance of the summons or warrant, the individual in question had no knowledge of the charge. It is at this time that a person thinks to themselves whether or not they will be able to find a barrister in court to defend them. Such

¹ Bani Isra'il, 14:79

apprehensions and concerns are the very decline that are illustrated in the state of *duluk*. This is the first state that is represented by the *Zuhr* prayer and it is this *Zuhr* prayer which symbolically reflects this initial condition. The second state that overtakes a person is when they are stood in the courtroom. The opposing party and court are engaged in questioning and cross-questioning. This is a most uncomfortable state and it is this condition and time which is illustrated in the *Asr* prayer. For the word '*asr*' means to suffocate and strain. When the state of affairs becomes even more delicate and a charge-sheet is prepared against the person in question, despair and desperation grow. For at this time the individual in question believes that they will be sentenced. This is the time which is symbolically reflected in the *Maghrib* prayer. Then, when the verdict is announced and the individual is handed over to the constable or court inspector, this is representative of the spiritual condition symbolically illustrated by the *Isha* prayer. Finally, the dawn of Prayer arrives and the state of *إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا*¹ (*Verily, there is ease after hardship*) is manifested. This is the time which parallels the spiritual condition that is symbolically reflected in the *Fajr* prayer.

In short, I address you and say once again that the purpose for which you should forge a sincere relationship with me should only be to bring about a noticeable transformation in your morals and habits, so that as a result, you may become a source of guidance and blessing for others.²

The End

¹ *al-Insbirah*, 94:7

² Report on the Jalsa Salana of 1897, p. 130-167

14 January 1898

Remember the Hereafter

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: It is incumbent for people to remember the hereafter. One ought to be fearful before punishment arrives.

مرد آخر میں مبارک بندہ ایست

A man who keeps their sights set on the hereafter is fortunate.

Observe how the people of Lot^{as} and others faced their end. It is essential that even if a person is hard-hearted, they ought to admonish it and teach it to be humble and meek. This is necessary for our community more than all others because they receive fresh insight in matters divine. If an individual claims that they are blessed with divine understanding, but they do not act upon it, then such claims are nothing but mere boasting and bragging. Therefore, our community must not become heedless on account of the negligence of others, nor allow their love to cool on account of the lack of passion in others. An individual harbours many desires. Who has knowledge of the hidden matters of destiny and decree? Life never moves in parallel with one's wishes. A person's longings are one thing, but the design of fate and destiny is quite another, and it is this phenomenon which is true to life. Bear in mind that the circumstances of a person's life are in the knowledge of God Almighty. Who knows what life has in store for them? This is why an individual must constantly awaken their heart to make it vigilant.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: It is a pity that although afflictions have become widespread, the arrogance and pride that consumes the people has not diminished. I truthfully say that they will not be dispelled until the obstinacy and prejudice of the people is removed. I observe that people are not fully prepared to reconcile with God Almighty. During the period of famine, the people remained unmoved. In earlier times, a religious edict issued from Mecca or Medina would frighten the people. When someone would say that an edict had been issued from Mecca, people would become awe-inspired, but now even the calamities of the present day do not inspire them in the least. It is my opinion that until people turn to God completely, divine decree will never change. Allah the Almighty states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ¹

*Surely, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts.*²

14 January 1898

On one occasion, there was some discussion related to the courts, and how witnesses are intimidated by lawyers and judges. The Promised Messiah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

Often, witnesses become so intimidated by lawyers and judges in court that they fail to protect the rights of mankind, and utter some untrue or false statement here or there, which results in injustice. To be in awe of the courts is also a form of associating partners with Allah. God Almighty states:

إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ أَظْلَمُ عَظِيمٌ³

Surely, associating partners with God is a grievous wrong.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: Some British judges are meticulous in examining the facts and only issue a verdict after deep contemplation and reflection. It so happened, as per the will of God, that on one occasion, during the time of Mirza Sahib (my father), I was in Amritsar to appear in the court of the commissioner for a case with some of our tenants. One day before the verdict was to be announced, the commissioner was unjustly favouring the tenants, and turning a blind eye to their mischief, and said in court that these were poor people and we were being unjust towards them. That night I saw in my dream that the very same Englishman was standing before me in the form of a child and I was patting his head with my hand. The next morning when we went to court, his state had changed completely, as if he was a new person altogether. He rebuked the tenants sternly and issued a verdict for the case in our favour, and also ordered them to pay for all our expenses.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: One of the ethical responsibilities of a judge is to reflect deeply over cases so that no one is made to suffer injustice.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: Until and unless an individual is strong-willed and calm in disposition, it becomes difficult for a person to stand in the presence of worldly judges. What then will be the state of such people when they stand

¹ *ar-Ra'd*, 13:12

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 22, dated 17 June 1901, p. 4

³ *Luqman*, 31:14

before the Lord who is the Greatest of Judges?

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: In light of the Torah, the seed which issues forth from adultery is accursed and one who is crucified is also accursed. It is astonishing that for their own salvation, the Christians have crafted the doctrine of atonement and for this purpose they have accepted that Christ was put on the cross and became accursed. When they have accepted one form of curse to be applicable to Christ, why do they not accept the other form of curse in his respect also, so that their concept of atonement may become even stronger? When the word 'curse' has been deemed acceptable, then it makes no difference whether it is applicable in one sense or two. However, the Holy Quran has refuted both these forms of curse in the case of Jesus and responds by saying that not only was Jesus of pure birth, but his demise was also by natural means, not by crucifixion.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: A righteous person turns to God and the entire world follows them of their own accord. But a worldly person bears grief and pain for the sake of the world, yet even still does not find comfort from the world. Just observe how the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} abandoned the world, yet despite this, they not only became wealthy in terms of materialistic goods, but also partook in the fruit of the hereafter.

The Sign of a Truthful Person and a Liar

The question was posed that even certain opponents claim to receive revelations, so how can one identify a truthful person and one who is a liar?

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: This is very straightforward. Any such claimant should come before us and publish the claim that if they are truthful, then the one who opposes them should die in their lifetime. I have been granted unwavering certainty from God Almighty that even if a ten-year-old child, who possesses all the provisions of this world and has their entire life ahead of them, were to make such a claim and stand in opposition to me, Allah the Almighty would cause them to die before me.¹

15 January 1898

Doctrines of the Shia Faith

The Shia doctrine is diametrically opposed to Islam. Firstly, it is a Shia doctrine

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 22, dated 17 June 1901, pp. 3-4

that Gabriel erred in bringing down revelation. Secondly, they believe that the companions who were gained as a result of the prayers of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, were God forbid, not Muslim. Thirdly, the Noble Quran, is the Holy Book of Allah Almighty and God himself promised to safeguard it, yet the Shias believe that the Holy Quran is no longer present in its original form. They believe that the original Quran has been taken into hiding by the Imam Mahdi. Fourthly, they believe that sainthood is limited to the twelve Imams and until the Day of Resurrection all the rest of mankind are as savages and that God Almighty has no love for them. Fifthly, they hold that cursing the companions of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who was the beloved of God, is more worthy of spiritual reward than invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Sixthly, they do not consider any of the saints or pious people to be righteous. I have heard from one of my teachers that Hazrat Syed Abdul-Qadir Jilanith would use foul language. The fact of the matter is that Yazid is most disgraced. As far as his involvement in the martyrdom of Imam Husayn^{ra} is concerned, he is responsible for this evil, but the Shias of today, even collectively, could not offer the religious services that he rendered.

The Food of the People of the Book

Babu Muhammad Afzal Sahib asked about eating the food of the People of the Book, to which the Promised Messiah^{as} responded: As far as social interaction is concerned, even the food of Hindus can be eaten. Similarly, there is no harm in eating the food of Christians. However, having said that, one must ensure that the vessel in which they eat is clean and free from any impurity.¹

15 January 1898

On 15 January 1898 news was received of Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din Sahib B.A. passing his LLB examination. After the *Fajr* prayer, the Promised Messiah^{as}, our Noble Leader, remained seated and delivered the following brief address:

Worldly Achievements and Joys Are Not Everlasting

Any occasion of success fills a person with joy. There are three kinds of joy mentioned in the Holy Quran: *lahw*, *la'ib* and *tafakbur*. The word *lahw* includes the

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 22, dated 17 June 1901, p. 4

delight gained through food; *la'b* refers to the joys of marriage and the like; and *tafakhur* refers to pleasure gained through wealth, etc. These are the three categories of pleasure; aside from these, there is no other delight. Always remember, however, that these achievements and joys do not last forever. In fact, if you attach your hearts to these pleasures you will be in a state of loss. Eventually, a time comes when this pleasure begins to turn bitter.

Worldly achievements are never free from trials. The Holy Quran states:

خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ¹

This means, God has created death and life so that He may try you. Success and failure too is a matter of life and death. Success is a kind of life. When a person learns that they have succeeded in something they are rejuvenated and a new life is breathed into them, as it were. If a person comes to know that they have failed, they die a living death, and often, many weak-hearted people even die.

It should also be borne in mind that ordinary life and death are easy, but a hellish life and death are intensely painful. A fortunate person ultimately succeeds after their failure, and thus becomes even more fortunate and their faith in God Almighty increases. Such an individual derives pleasure when they reflect over the wonders of God. Worldly success becomes a means of increasing them in their understanding of God. For such people, worldly success becomes a means of leading them to true success (which is known as *falah* in Islamic terminology). I say in earnest that true happiness and true comfort does not at all lie in the world and its possessions. The truth is that even after exhausting all the aspects of the world, a person cannot attain true and everlasting happiness. You observe that the rich and wealthy are always in a state of cheerfulness, but their state may be likened to a person who suffers from eczema. When a person scratches their skin they experience a soothing sensation, yet the final outcome of their scratching is that they begin to bleed. Therefore, do not become so jubilant over these worldly and temporary achievements that you lose sight of true success. Instead, consider your worldly achievements to be an avenue that leads to the recognition of God. Do not take pride in your resolve and effort and do not surmise that any achievement is due to any capability in you or effort on your part. On the contrary, you ought to believe that the merciful God, who does not let anyone's sincere effort go in vain, has given you the fruits of your labour. Do you not

¹ *al-Mulk*, 67:3

observe that every day hundreds of students fail in their examinations? Do all of these students not make an effort and are they foolish and mindless? Not at all. Some of them are so intelligent and bright that they are sharper than many of the students who have passed. Therefore, it is necessary and incumbent on a believer to perform prostrations of gratitude before God Almighty whenever they are blessed with an achievement that God did not let their effort go in vain. The result of this gratitude will be that a person will increase in their love of God Almighty and grow in faith. In fact, this is not all; such people will be graced with even further successes because God Almighty states that if one shows gratitude for His bounties, He shall increase His bounties upon such a one; but if one is ungrateful for His blessings, then remember that such a one shall be seized by a grievous punishment.

The Difference between the Success of a Believer and a Non-Believer

Always keep the principle in mind that the task of a believer is to feel embarrassed when they are blessed with any form of success, and praise God for having showered His grace upon them. This is how a believer advances, and by demonstrating steadfastness in the face of trial, they receive the favour of God. Apparently, the success of a Hindu and a believer are similar, but remember that the success of a disbeliever is a way that leads to misguidance, whereas the success of a believer opens for them the door of divine blessing. The success of a disbeliever leads to misguidance because they, in turn, do not incline towards God, but rather take their own effort, intelligence and capability to be God. A believer, however, turns to God and gains a new understanding of Him. In this way, after every success, a new relationship between them and God is forged and a transformation begins to take place. Allah Almighty states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا¹

That is to say, God is with those who are righteous. It ought to be borne in mind that the word *taqwa* (i.e. righteousness) has appeared in the Holy Quran many a time. This word is understood in light of the word *ma'a* (meaning 'with'), which appears before it. That is to say that those who give precedence to God, in return are given precedence by God and He saves such people from every kind of disgrace

¹ *an-Nahl*, 16:129

in this world. It is my belief that if an individual desires to be safeguarded from every kind of disgrace and hardship in this world, there is only one way and that is to become righteous. After this, such a one lacks nothing. Hence, the success of a believer moves them further ahead and they never remain stagnant.

Blessed Is the One Who Adheres to Righteousness at Times of Prosperity and Joy

There are books which contain accounts of numerous people describing how they were initially entangled in worldly matters, rather, they were immensely engrossed in materialism. However, it so happened that they prayed for something and their supplication was heard. After that, their state was transformed completely. Therefore, do not pride yourself over the acceptance of your prayers or on account of your achievements, but rather, value the grace and favour of God. It is a known fact that success breathes a new life into a person's resolve and determination. One should derive benefit from this life and through it, increase in their understanding of Allah Almighty. For the greatest of all things, which becomes a source of benefit, is this very cognizance of the Divine; and this develops when an individual reflects over the grace and mercy of God Almighty. No one can thwart the grace of Allah Almighty. Extreme poverty too can plunge a person into misfortune. This is why it is related in a Hadith: *الْفَقْرُ سَوَادُ الْوَجْهِ* (*Poverty glooms the face*). I have seen poverty drag many people to atheism. A believer, however, does not think ill of God no matter how stringent their circumstances, and deeming it to be the result of their own faults, they beseech God for His mercy and grace. Eventually, when this era passes, and the prayers of a believer come to fruition, they do not forget their time of weakness, but rather, remember it always. Therefore, if you believe in the fact that one is always in need of God, then adopt the way of righteousness. Blessed is the one who adopts righteousness in times of prosperity and joy; and unfortunate is the one who stumbles, yet does not turn to God.¹

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 23, dated 24 June 1901, pp. 1-2

**An Address by the Promised Messiah^{as}
Delivered on 18 January 1898**

Divine Decree

There are two kinds of decree: one may be referred to as suspended (*mu'allaq*) and the other is known as absolute (*mubram*). The operation of a suspended decree may be averted by the grace of Allah Almighty through prayer and almsgiving. An absolute decree, however, cannot be averted through prayer and almsgiving. However, nonetheless, these good deeds are not left useless, for this is contrary to the greatness of Allah Almighty. He returns the benefit of these prayers and alms by some other means. In some cases, God Almighty causes a delay in the operation of a decree or postpones it for some time.

The source from which we learn about suspended and absolute decrees is the Holy Quran. Although these exact words do not appear, however, the Holy Quran states:

أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ¹

The translation of this verse is, 'Supplicate and I shall accept.' Now this demonstrates that prayer can be accepted and through prayer, punishment can be averted. What to talk of thousands, nay, every affair of man can be settled through prayer. It ought to be borne in mind that Allah the Exalted possesses omnipotent control over everything. He does as He wills. Whether people are aware of His hidden powers or not, the vast experiences of a great many and the manifest outcome of the prayers of countless fervent supplicants clearly demonstrate that God commands a hidden and unseen power. He effaces whatever He wills, and establishes whatever He wills. It is not necessary for us to reach the depths of this phenomenon; nor need we endeavour to understand fully the essence and nature of this system. When it is in the knowledge of Allah Almighty that something will occur, there is no need for us to involve ourselves in a dispute or debate over how. God Almighty has subjected a man's destiny and fate to various conditions, and it may be averted through repentance, humility and meekness. When a person is touched by some sort of pain or affliction, they naturally and instinctively incline towards good deeds. They feel an apprehension and anguish within themselves, which awakens them and pulls them towards virtuous deeds, distancing them

¹ *al-Mu'min*, 40:61

from sin. Just as we learn of the efficacy of various medicines through experience, in the same manner an individual suffering from affliction receives glad tidings and satisfaction through true dreams and revelation when they fall down at the threshold of God Almighty with extreme humility and lowliness, beseeching and supplicating God, saying: O my Lord! O my Lord!

Hazrat Ali, may Allah honour him, says: When a prayer reaches its pinnacle through patience and sincerity, it is accepted. The fact that prayer, almsgiving and charity avert divine punishment is so conclusively established a fact that 124,000 Prophets are in consensus on the matter, and tens of millions of pious, righteous individuals and saints testify to this through their own personal experience.

Worship Has Been Invested with Pleasure and Delight

What is the formal Prayer? It is a special form of supplication to the Divine, but people consider it to be a tax that is due to kings. These foolish people do not even know that God Almighty has no need for such things. What need does His Independent Being have for man to pray to Him, extol His glory and praise Him, besought of all as He is? In fact, it is man who derives benefit and reaches his objective through these means. It gives me great pain to observe that in this day and age there is no love for worship, virtue and piety. The reason for this is the poisonous, widespread effect of evil custom. It is for this reason that the love of Allah Almighty is falling cold and people do not experience the pleasure they ought to in worship. There is nothing (in the world) which according to the design of Allah Almighty does not give pleasure or satisfaction in some form. A person who is ill cannot derive pleasure from even the most exquisite and delicious food, and considers it to be bitter or completely tasteless. So too is the case with those people who derive no pleasure and delight from the worship of God. Such people should worry about their ill state. For as I have just said, there is nothing on earth, which Allah the Exalted has not instilled with the characteristic of granting pleasure in some form or other. Allah the Exalted has created man so that he may worship Him. Why then would there be no pleasure and delight in this worship? There is definitely pleasure and delight in worship. If only there were those who would take it. Allah the Exalted states:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ¹

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.

Now when the very purpose of man's creation is worship, it is necessary for there to be immense pleasure and satisfaction in worship. We can appreciate this very well from our daily observation and experience. For example, grain along with all the things that we eat and drink have been created for humans. Do they not then derive a pleasure and satisfaction from these things? Does man not possess a tongue so that he can experience the taste, flavour and sensation that is associated with these things? Does man not derive pleasure from looking at beautiful things, whether plants or minerals, animals or other human beings? Do the ears not derive pleasure from attractive and beautiful voices? Then is any further argument required to establish the fact that there is pleasure to be derived in worship? Allah the Exalted states: We have created man and woman as mates and we have inclined man towards his mate. God has not made it so by way of coercion, but rather, He has encouraged by way of pleasure. If procreation and reproduction was the only intended purpose, this would not fulfil the actual objective. In a state of nakedness, shame would prevent a man and woman from having intimate relations with one another. However, God has made this process a source of pleasure and satisfaction for both man and woman. This pleasure and satisfaction is so great that there are some ignorant people who do not even care for children, and the only thing that they are interested in is pleasure. The actual purpose of God Almighty was the continuation of human beings, and for this objective he fostered a relationship between man and woman, and as a secondary element invested this relation with pleasure, which for many unwise people has become the only intended purpose. In the same manner, bear well in mind that worship is no burden or tax. This too possesses a pleasure and satisfaction; and this pleasure and satisfaction is far greater than all the delights of this world and all carnal pleasures. Although there is pleasure in the mutual relation between man and woman, only such men can derive satisfaction from this who are in the full possession of their faculties. An impotent man or a eunuch cannot find pleasure in such relations. Moreover, just as an ill person remains deprived of the pleasure of even the finest and most exquisite foods, so too is precisely the case with the unfortunate person who does not find pleasure in worshipping Allah.

¹ *adh-Dhariyat*, 51:57

The Reality of the Relationship between Man's Servitude and Divine Providence

The bond between man and woman is a superficial and temporary one. I say that the everlasting epitome of pleasure in its truest sense exists in the bond between man and God Almighty. I feel an immense agony, which at times consumes my soul, that if even one day a person is unable to enjoy the taste of their food, they will visit the doctor and beg and beseech them, even flatter them, and spend money and bear pains so that the pleasure they once felt may return. The impotent man who is unable to feel pleasure with his wife will at times feel so disturbed that he begins to contemplate suicide, and there are many cases of such deaths. But alas! Why does the ineffectual person with an ailing heart not make an effort to experience pleasure in worship? Why does such a one not feel miserable with grief? They will go to great lengths in pursuit of the world and its pleasures, but feel no thirst or agony for true and everlasting pleasure. How unfortunate is such a person? How deprived are they? They will search for a cure in order to experience temporary and transient pleasures and they are successful. Is it possible then that there be no cures which enable one to experience that pleasure which is enduring and everlasting? There are indeed. But perseverance and persistence are needed in the search for truth. In the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted has described the believers in similitude to women. There is a deep and hidden secret in this point. Those who believe have been likened to Mary and Asiyah; that is to say, God Almighty brings forth believers from among the idolaters. In any case, by likening believers to women there is in actuality a subtle mystery that has been revealed. To elaborate, just as a mutual relation exists between man and woman, so too is the relationship of man's servitude and divine providence. If a man and woman have a mutual understanding with one another and both are attracted to one another, then such couples are blessed and fruitful; otherwise domestic life is ruined and the actual purpose of this relationship goes unrealised. Men ruin themselves through other relations and are struck by hundreds of illnesses. Some contract infectious diseases like syphilis and are left deprived in this very world. And if such people do happen to have children, many future generations are left affected by this illness. On the other hand, the woman will begin to lead a life of immodesty and even after her honour and dignity has drowned completely, she is unable to attain true comfort. Therefore, when the pure relationship of husband

and wife is abandoned, this gives rise to countless forms of evil and disorder. In the same way, when a person abandons their spiritual relationship, they are left plagued and forsaken. Such a one falls prey to even greater grief and afflictions than in the case of their worldly relationship. Just as the bond of man and woman is in one way preserved by the pleasure that is derived from it, there is pleasure in the bond of man's servitude and divine providence, in order to forever maintain this relationship. The Sufis say that a person who is able to experience this pleasure finds it to be more satisfying than all the pleasures of the world. In a person's entire life, if even once they are able to experience it, they would lose themselves in it. However, the difficulty is that there are a large number of people in the world today who do not understand this secret and their Prayer is but meaningless movements, and nothing more than a process of sitting and rising in a laborious and burdensome state with an unmoved heart. It hurts me even more to observe that some people only offer their Prayers so that they may be deemed worthy and honourable in the world. As a result of their Prayers, they succeed in garnering for themselves a reputation for being holy and pious. Why are such people not consumed by grief that if such false, superficial and insincere Prayers can grant them such a status, why would they not be conferred with dignity if they become true servants of God? In fact, much greater honour would be bestowed upon them in such a case.

The Cause for Not Deriving Pleasure in Prayer and Its Cure

In short, I observe that people are negligent and indolent in observing their Prayers because they are oblivious to the pleasure and satisfaction that Allah the Exalted has invested in Prayer. This is a significant cause in this respect. Then, there is even greater negligence and indolence in cities and towns. Even fifty per cent of the people do not eagerly bow their heads before their true Master with sincere love. The question that arises is: why do the people not know of this pleasure and why have they never experienced this exquisite taste? Other religions do not prescribe such injunctions.

At times, it so happens that people are busy in their engagements and the call for Prayer is made. At such a time, there are those who would shut their ears, as though their heart begins to throb with pain. Such people are worthy of pity. There are certain people here as well whose shops are situated adjacent to mosques, but they never join in the Prayer. All I wish to say is that one ought to

fervently and passionately pray to God Almighty that just as He has granted us diverse forms of pleasure in fruits and other things, may He enable us to experience, even once, the sweet taste of Prayer and worship. One never forgets the taste of a thing. If an individual looks at someone beautiful with pleasure, they remember it well. Further, if a person sees an ugly and hideous figure, the entire state of such a figure comes forth as an embodiment in the mind of the observer, whenever they are reminded of it. Of course, if a person is indifferent and saw the figure in passing, then one remembers nothing. Similarly, in the estimation of those who do not pray, the Prayer is like a penalty, whereby one is unjustly forced to wake up in the morning when it is cold and leave their precious sleep to perform ablution, and compelled to forsake many comforts in order to offer it. The actual fact is that such a one is averse and therefore, is unable to understand; they are oblivious of the pleasure and satisfaction that is present in Prayer. How then can they experience pleasure in Prayer? I observe that when a drunkard or one who suffers from addiction is unable to find satisfaction, they continue to drink glass after glass, until they are finally inebriated. A wise and prudent individual can benefit from this example. In other words, one must remain persistent in Prayer and continue observing it until they begin to experience pleasure. Just as a drunkard conceives of a pleasure in his mind, which is the actual objective he pursues, in the same way, the mind and all of one's faculties must feel a propensity towards the acquisition of that very pleasure that exists in Prayer. Then, with sincerity and passion, at least to the extent that an addict suffers from anxiety, restlessness and pain, an individual ought to pray that they are able to experience the pleasure they seek. I say truthfully that surely and most definitely they will experience the pleasure of Prayer.

Then, in the observance of Prayer, one ought to strive to seek the benefits that are associated with it and keep in view the concept of goodness or *ihسان* (i.e. to worship God as though one can see Him or at least that God can see you). As God Almighty states: ¹ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ and that is to say, good works drive away evil. Therefore, whilst aspiring to goodness and striving to attain the pleasures in Prayer, one ought to supplicate that God enables one to observe the Prayer that is characteristic of the Truthful (*Siddiqin*) and of those who excel in good works (*Muhsinin*).

¹ Hud, 11:115

As mentioned, Allah the Exalted has stated: *إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ*¹ and this means that good works or Prayer drives away evil. In another instance, God Almighty states that Prayer saves one from indecency and manifest evil. However, despite this we observe that there are people who observe Prayer, yet still indulge in evil deeds. The response to this is that they observe Prayer, but not in its true spirit, nor with piety. They only perform useless movements in the form of a custom and habit. Their soul is dead. Allah the Exalted has not described this as *hasanat* (or good works). In this verse, God has used the word *hasanat* as opposed to *as-salat* even though the two words mean one and the same thing. This is because God wishes to allude to the merit and *husn* (or beauty) of Prayer, which in its true form possesses within it a spirit of truth and the effects of divine grace. This form of Prayer does indeed drive away evil. Prayer is not simply a process of sitting and standing. In fact, the essence and soul of the formal Prayer is that supplication which possesses within it a pleasure and satisfaction.

The Spirit in the Essential Parts of the Prayer

In actuality, the essential parts of the Prayer are a symbolic representation of the form observed in spirituality. Man is required to stand in the presence of God Almighty and standing is also from among the etiquettes of servants. The bowing position, which is the second posture in Prayer, demonstrates that one submits themselves by lowering their head in preparation to fulfil any command that may be given to them, as it were. Moreover, the prostration expresses, through action, the greatest possible reverence, utmost humility and lowliness, which are the objectives of Prayer. These reverential practices and rites have been appointed by God Almighty to serve as a reminiscence of the deeper reality and so that the physical body may partake of the inner, spiritual essence. In addition to this, in order to reinforce in man the inner, spiritual rites, God has appointed outwardly, apparent rites. Now if in outwardly practice (which is a reflection of the manner observed at a deeper and spiritual level), one merely imitates certain apparent actions superficially and if one seeks to complete these actions only to rid themselves of a heavy burden, then do tell me, what pleasure and satisfaction can one gain from such practice? Until one is able to feel a pleasure and delight in Prayer, how can its reality be perceived? This is only possible when the soul too falls in prostration at the threshold of God with a sense of complete self-effacement and

¹ *Hud*, 11:115

humility; and when the soul too proclaims the words uttered by the tongue. It is then that a pleasure, light and comfort is attained.

It is my desire to write about this in further detail. A person undergoes various stages before they become a human being, i.e. starting as far back as sperm; in fact, even before this there are the constituent elements of the sperm, such as its nutrients, as well as their layout and construction. Then, after the sperm develops through various stages, it transforms into a child; children grow into adults, who finally reach old age. Hence, one ought to accept that it is the providence of Allah Almighty which nurtures human life through all of these diverse stages at various times and this entire state of affairs ought to remain firmly rooted in one's mind. It is only then that a person can prove able to lay forth their own servitude in the presence of God's providence. In short, the fundamental point to note is that pleasure and delight in Prayer can only be derived when a relationship exists between man's servitude and God's providence. Until a person throws themselves before Allah Almighty, considering their own being to be nothing more than a complete non-entity or the like thereof—this being an inherent demand of divine providence—they cannot receive God's grace and light. However, when they do receive this blessing, they experience an intense pleasure, which cannot be matched by any other.

True Prayer

At this point, when a person's soul is humbled to the state of complete self-effacement, it begins to flow towards God in the form of a running spring and it becomes completely detached from all other relations beside Allah. At that time, the love of God Almighty descends upon such a person. At the time of this union, a unique condition is born through two surges of fervour: the fervour of providence surges forth from above and the fervour of man's servitude surges forth from below. This phenomenon is known as *salat* or Prayer. It is this very Prayer which incinerates evil, and leaves behind a divine light and brilliance in its stead, so that this may serve as a shining lamp for the seeker on their path in the face of dangers and perils; and so that it may show a seeker all the rubbish, debris, thorns and stones that may obstruct their way, thus safeguarding them. It is in this state that the verse ¹ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil) becomes applicable, because not in their

¹ *al-Ankabut*, 29:46

hand, rather, in the niche of their heart is a shining lamp. This rank is attained through utmost humility, through complete self-effacement, through lowliness and absolute obedience. How then can such an individual even think of sin? Such a one can never disbelieve, nor turn their gaze towards indecency. Therefore, such an individual experiences such pleasure and such satisfaction that I am at a loss for words to explain it fully.

Turning towards Anything besides Allah

It ought to be remembered that an individual can only observe and fully experience Prayer, in the true sense, with the help of supplication. To implore of anyone or anything besides Allah is diametrically opposed to a believer's indignation, because only Allah is worthy of being implored in supplication. Know for certain that until a person abases themselves completely and does not beseech Allah the Exalted alone, and does not implore Him alone, they cannot be deemed a true Muslim and a true believer in the actual sense. The very essence of Islam is that all of one's faculties—whether inner or external—must always lay prostrate at the threshold of Allah Almighty, just as a large engine fuels many other parts. In the same way, until a person's every action and movement is not made to follow the overall power and control of the engine, how can they believe in the divinity of Allah Almighty? Until this is so, can such an individual call themselves 'one who is ever inclined to God,' in the true sense when reciting the words: ¹ *إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ* (*I have turned my face towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth*). If a person reinforces their words through action and turns towards God, then undoubtedly such a one is a Muslim; they are a believer and one who is ever inclined to God. However, one who implores anything or anyone besides God, and submits to others as well, ought to remember that they are most unfortunate and deprived. For a time will soon come when they will no longer be able to submit to Allah Almighty, even with empty words or hollow gestures.

Another cause which gives rise to the habit of abandoning Prayer and becoming indolent is that when an individual inclines towards that which is besides Allah, the faculties of the soul and heart forever remain bent in that direction in the manner of a tree (whose branches are bent in a certain direction and then left to grow in that shape). The hearts of such people become so rough and hard that

¹ *al-An'am*, 6:80

they solidify, like a rock, in the very manner of the branches I have just described. After they harden, they cannot be bent in any other direction. So too is the case with a person's heart and soul, which continue to move further away from God with every passing day. Therefore, to forsake Allah Almighty and ask of another is a very dangerous thing and makes the heart tremble. This is why it is absolutely necessary to regularly observe the Prayer, so that first and foremost, it becomes a deep-rooted habit and a person becomes inclined to turn towards Allah. Then gradually a time comes when one attains to a state in which they become completely detached from all other relations to the exclusion of Allah; and in this state, they become the recipient of divine light and derive pleasure in Prayer.

I reiterate most emphatically that I unfortunately do not have the words with which to fully describe the evils in turning towards anything that is besides Allah. There are those who will submit to people and beg them with flattery. This rouses the jealousy of God Almighty because this is no different than 'praying' as it were, to other human beings. Thus, God Almighty distances Himself from such an individual and casts them away from Himself. I can describe the likeness of this in broad terms—although this is not the same thing—but one can clearly understand. For example, an honourable man who possesses indignation could never bear to see his wife engaged in intimate relations with another man. Just as this man would consider such a vile woman to be worthy of death—in fact, often such honour killings of the sort do happen to occur—so too is the nature of God's fervour and jealousy. Man's servitude and supplications must be devoted to Him alone. God cannot approve of anyone other than Him being declared worthy of worship or that anyone besides Him be implored. You must keep this in mind! I reiterate that you must take heed of this point! To submit to anything other than Allah is to move away from God. Whether one uses the word 'Payer' or the term 'oneness of God' it is all the same, because the practical expression by which an individual proclaims the oneness of God is through the formal Prayer. Furthermore, the Prayer is unblessed and devoid of benefit when it is not observed with a spirit of self-effacement and humility, and when it is empty of a heart that is ever inclined to God.

Making Recourse to Means Is Also an Aspect of Prayer

Take heed! The prayer which is referred to in the verse ¹ *أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ* (*Pray*)

¹ *al-Mu'min*, 40:61

unto Me; I will answer your prayer) is one which requires the spirit that I have just described. If a person's supplications and humble expressions do not possess a spirit of sincerity, they are nothing more than squawks. Can anyone say that there is no need to make use of means? This is a misconception. The shariah does not prohibit the use of means and if you ask, is prayer not also a means? Or, are means not synonymous with prayer? The very search for means is in itself a prayer, and prayer in itself is a magnificent fountain of means! The physical design of humans, i.e. the form of their two hands and two feet, naturally guide and lead us to understand that we have been created to help one another. When this design can be observed in humans themselves, how astonishing and surprising would it be if one finds it difficult to understand the purport of the following verse:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ¹

And help one another in righteousness and piety.

Indeed, I proclaim that you even ought to search for means through prayer! In the context of helping your fellow man, I would not expect you to reject my conclusion, when I have pointed out the internal system established by Allah Almighty which exists in your physical bodies and which serves as a perfect guide in this respect. In order to clarify and further expound this fact to mankind, Allah the Exalted has instituted a system of Prophets, peace be upon them, on earth. It was and is within the power of Allah Almighty that if He so wills, He would have left the Prophets with no need to seek any form of assistance in their task. Yet, still there comes a time when they are left with no choice but to announce:

مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ²

Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah.

Do the Prophets make this call in the form of a beggar who goes from house to house collecting scraps of bread? Not at all! Even in the words 'who are my helpers in the way of Allah,' there is majesty and grace. In actual fact, through this announcement, the Prophets desire to teach the people the importance of seeking recourse to apparent means, which is an aspect of prayer. Otherwise, they have complete and perfect faith and belief in the promises of Allah Almighty. They know that the following promise of Allah the Exalted is definite and categorical:

¹ *al-Ma'idah*, 5:3

² *as-Saff*, 61:15

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا¹

Most surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe in the present life.

I believe that if God does not move a person's heart to help another, how could anyone be motivated to do so?

The Secret Behind a Divinely Commissioned One's Call for Help

The fact of the matter is that the True Helper and Supporter is that Being Whose greatness is extolled in the Quranic appellations describing Him to be an excellent Protector (*ni'mal-mawla*), an excellent Helper (*ni'man-naseer*) and an excellent Guardian (*ni'mal-wakeel*). In the eyes of the godly, this world along with its support is like the dead. They do not consider it to be worth even a dead insect. However, in order to teach the world a fundamental rule of prayer, they adopt this worldly method as well. In reality, they consider God Almighty to be the one who takes care of their ministry; that is the absolute truth. As stated in the Holy Quran:

وَهُوَ يَتَوَلَّى الصَّالِحِينَ²

And He protects the righteous.

Allah the Exalted, however, instructs them to make their work known through other people. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would appeal to the people for assistance because that era was one of divine succour, and the Holy Prophet^{sa} constantly sought it in favour of the people. This is a subtle point which calls for deep reflection. In actuality, a person who is divinely commissioned does not seek the help of the people, but rather by proclaiming ³ مَنْ أَعَارَى إِلَى اللَّهِ meaning: 'who are my helpers in the cause of Allah,' he only seeks to welcome and receive the assistance of God; with immense desire and a throbbing heart they seek to find God's succour. The foolish and short-sighted surmise that they seek to solicit the assistance of human beings, but this process of calling upon the people becomes a source of mercy and grace for the heart of a person, who becomes a catalyst for the descent of divine mercy. Hence, the underlying secret in the divinely commissioned calling upon the people for assistance is what I have just mentioned and so shall remain the case until the Day of Resurrection.

¹ *al-Mu'min*, 40:52

² *al-Araf*, 7:197

³ *as-Saff*, 61:15

In propagating religion, those who are commissioned by Allah seek the help of others. Why is this the case? They do so to absolve themselves of their duty of inculcating the grandeur of God Almighty into the hearts of the people. If not, this is something which can reach a level that is near disbelief. Such holy personages can never deem anyone other than Allah to be a guardian of their affairs. This is absolutely impossible. I have just stated that the oneness of God is only completely realised when an individual considers the one and only Being of God to be the Bestower of all desires and the cure and remedy for every illness. This is precisely the meaning of *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ*, (i.e. there is none worthy of worship except Allah). In this instance, the Sufis have taken the word *ilab* to mean the Beloved, the object of one's longing, the Being Who is worthy of worship and the desire of one's heart.

Undoubtedly, the reality and truth is that until a person does not fully adhere to the Oneness of God, they do not develop feelings of love and reverence for Islam; and I return to my initial discussion and state that such people cannot experience pleasure and satisfaction in prayer. The entire foundation rests on the fact that until evil thoughts, and impure and unholy schemes are not incinerated, and until ego and pride are not replaced with a state of self-effacement and humility, a person cannot become a true servant of God. Further, the best teacher and most supreme means by which perfect servitude can be taught is through prayer.

I tell you once again that if you desire to develop a sincere relationship and living connection with God Almighty, then adhere to the regular observance of your Prayers. Hold fast to this practice not merely with your body and tongue, but with all the desires and passions of your soul, thus becoming an embodiment of prayer.¹

The secret in the sinlessness of prophets also lies in this fact. Why is a Prophet sinless? The response to this is that they are safeguarded from sin on account of their being wholly engrossed in the love of Allah. I am astonished when I observe various nations indulged in associating partners with God. The Hindus, for example, worship a plethora of idols; in fact, they even justify the worship of male and female genitalia. Then, there are those who worship a human corpse, i.e. Jesus Christ. Such people believe in the attainment of salvation or deliverance in varying forms. The former group, that is to say the Hindus, seek to be cleansed of sin through bathing in the Ganges, pilgrimage and other similar expiations.

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 13, dated 12 April 1899, pp.3-7

Those who worship Jesus, declare the blood of the Christian Messiah to be an atonement for their sins. However, I proclaim that until the spirit of sin remains, how can such people find peace and comfort through outwardly cleansing and self-contrived doctrines? Until inner cleansing and purification takes place, it is impossible for one to attain the result of salvation, which is to be truly cleansed and purified. Indeed, a lesson may be learned nonetheless. Without cleaning, the filth and odour of the body cannot be removed, and it cannot be safeguarded against imminent and threatening illnesses. Similarly, the filth and impurity that accumulates on the hearts of people in the spiritual sense due to impiety and countless forms of impertinence, cannot be washed without the pure and holy water of repentance. In the physical realm, just as there is a philosophy which underpins various phenomena, there is a corresponding philosophy that exists in parallel within the spiritual realm. Blessed are those who contemplate these matters and reflect.

The Philosophy of Sin and Methods of Safeguarding Oneself

At this instance, I also wish to exhort you in relation to the causes of sin. The elaboration in this regard is that in simple terms, when the love of anything other than God covers the heart of a person, the pure glass of the heart is sullied. As a result, gradually the heart becomes completely dark and an inclination towards that which is besides God begins to take its place, thus distancing the heart from God. This is the root of associating partners with Allah. But when the heart is possessed by the love of Allah Almighty and Him alone, this love reduces to ash any inclination to that which is besides God and makes the heart wholly devoted to Him alone; then this love becomes unwavering and assumes its rightful place to rule over the heart. When a limb happens to break and is fixed, this causes pain. But a broken limb is far more excruciating than the temporary pain experienced in fixing it, after which a person feels relief. However, if a limb is left broken, a time comes when it must be amputated completely. Similarly, in order to attain unwavering steadfastness, initially in the elementary stages an individual experiences a temporary pain and is confronted with difficulties as well, but when steadfastness is attained, there is everlasting relief and joy. When the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was instructed ¹ *فَأَسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتُ* (*So stand thou upright, as thou hast been commanded*) it is narrated that he had no

¹ *Hud*, 11:113

white hairs. But then his hair began to turn white and the Holy Prophet^{sa} said, ‘Surah Hud has made me old.’

Hence, until an individual becomes cognisant of death, they cannot turn towards virtues. I have told you that sin is bred when the love of anyone other than God takes root in the heart, and slowly but surely envelops the heart. Therefore, one way in which an individual can safeguard and protect themselves from sin is by remembering death and to constantly reflect over the wonders of God’s omnipotence. For this causes an increase in the love of Allah and in faith. Ultimately, when the love of Allah takes root in the heart, this is sufficient to incinerate sin.

The second means to safeguard oneself from sin is to remain conscious of death. If an individual kept death in mind, they would naturally abstain from evil-doings and faults; they would develop a new faith in God Almighty, and they would be enabled to repent and feel remorse for their past sins. What is the worth of a weak human? Life hangs by the thread of a breath. Why then does man not worry about the hereafter and fear death, and why does he waste away his entire life enslaved by carnal and beastly passions?

I have observed in recent times that even the Hindus have become cognisant of death as well. In Batala there was a man of about seventy or seventy-two years of age, named Kishan Chand, who belonged to the Bhandari caste. He is known to have left behind his family and possessions, and began living in Kashi, and it is here that he passed away. He did all of this on the hope that he would attain salvation.¹ Although this view of his was false, the least we can derive from this is that he was conscious of death, and consciousness of death safeguards a person from becoming entirely engrossed in the pleasures of the world and becoming distanced from God. This man’s belief that dying in Kashi would become the means for salvation was due to the veil of creature-worship, which had cloaked his heart. However, I am immensely disappointed when I see that Muslims are not conscious of death even to the extent of the Hindus. Look at the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him: just the one injunction alone that ² *فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ* (*So stand thou upright, as thou hast been commanded*) was enough to make him old. How cognisant was the Holy Prophet^{sa} of death? Why

¹ Kashi, also known as Varanas or Benaras, is a city situated in the south-eastern Uttar Pradesh state of Northern India. It is located on the left bank of the Ganges river and is one of the seven sacred cities in Hinduism. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Hindus hope to visit this city once in their lifetime and believe that death in this city will bring salvation. [Publisher]

² *Hud*, 11:113

was the Holy Prophet^{sa} so perceptive in these matters? So that all of us could take a lesson. Otherwise, what greater argument can there be of the pure and holy life of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, than the fact that Allah Almighty appointed him as the Perfect Guide until the Day of Resurrection and a leader for all of mankind. All of the instances from the life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} are a collection of practical teachings. Just as the Holy Quran is a book comprising the words of Allah Almighty, the law of nature is the book of His actions, as it were. Similarly, the life of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is a book of actions, which is an exegesis and commentary of the Holy Quran. I began to develop white hairs when I had only reached the age of thirty and at that time the late Mirza Sahib, my father, was still alive. White hair is also a sign of death, in a way. When a person reaches old age, which is characterised by these very white hairs, they can understand that the days of death are fast approaching. But it is unfortunate that even when such a time comes, man feels no worry. A believer can even learn sublime morals from a bird for example and other animals, because the book of God Almighty is open before them. All of the things that Allah Almighty has created in the world, are a means of both physical and spiritual comfort for man. I have read in the account of Hazrat Junayd, may the mercy of Allah be upon him, that he would say: 'I learned the art of meditation from the cat.' If a human being observes closely, they will find that even animals clearly display moral mannerisms. In my view, all of the beasts and birds individually display single moral characteristics and man encompasses them all collectively. The soul is a compendium of qualities and this is why it is also referred to as a microcosm. For all the qualities present in all of God's creatures are collectively encompassed within man. Then, all of the excellences present in mankind are collectively comprised within the person of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sa} was commissioned for the entire world and was described as 'a mercy for all peoples.' Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ¹

And thou dost surely possess high moral excellences.

This verse alludes to this very compendium of human excellences. It is in light of this that one can reflect over the sublime nature of the morals of Prophet

¹ *al-Qalam*, 68:5

Muhammad^{sa} and it was for this reason that all the excellences of prophethood in its completest form reached their pinnacle in him. It is an established fact that everything comes to an end when the primary purpose for which it exists reaches its climax. For example, when each and every point in a book has been expounded completely, the book comes to an end, as it were. Similarly, the primary purpose of messengership and prophethood was completely achieved in the person of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; this is the meaning of ‘the seal of prophethood.’ For this is a system which advanced with time and reached its final limit through the perfect man.

The ‘Greatest Name’ of Man is Steadfastness

I also wish to expound that steadfastness (*istiqamat*), which I have alluded to earlier, is synonymous with what the Sufis describe in their own terminology as complete annihilation of the inner self for God (*fana*). The Sufis also interpret the verse ¹ إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (*Guide us in the right path*) in the context of *fana*, which means that the soul, fervour and desires of man, become wholly devoted to Allah Almighty, and the emotions and inner desires of man die completely. Certain people who do not give precedence to the will and desire of Allah Almighty over their own will and desire, often leave the world without even having their worldly passions and desires fulfilled. Our late brother, Mirza Ghulam Qadir, would often remain engaged in legal suits. He was always so engrossed and absorbed by these cases that ultimately this litigation took its toll on his health and he passed away. I have seen many others as well who give more importance to their own objectives than to God. Ultimately, they fail to attain the objective of their own inner desires as well—which they gave precedence to— and instead of gaining benefit, suffer loss. If one reflects over Islam it becomes evident that failure is only caused when a person stands on falsehood. When God Almighty begins to turn away from a person, His wrath descends upon such people and this results in their failure and lack of success. Especially when those who possess insight, incline towards worldly objectives with all their zeal and desires, Allah the Almighty leaves them with their desires unrealised. However, the fortunate always keep the worthy principle in mind, which is the principle of being conscious of death. They realise that just as their mother and father have passed away, and other elders of the family have left this world, so too, one day they will also be faced with death.

¹ *al-Fatihah*, 1:6

At times, when people reflect over their age and realise that they have become old and their days are numbered, they become inclined towards God Almighty. There are certain families in which lifespans generally reach a certain limit, such as fifty or sixty for example. The family of Mian Sahib in Batala also generally has similar lifespans. In this manner, consideration for the estimated lifespan in a person's own family can move a person to become conscious of death.

Therefore, man ought to keep well in mind that ultimately a day will come when he shall be forced to leave behind the world and its pleasures. Why then should man not forsake the unlawful manner in which these pleasures are sought before this time confronts us? Death has not spared even the greatest among the righteous and the beloved of God, nor does it care for those who are young, or wealthy or great. Why then, would death spare you? Consider the world and its comforts to be nothing more than the means with which to sustain life and an avenue that leads to the worship of God Almighty. Sa'di has described this subject in the following words:

خوردن برائے زیستن و ذکر کردن است

تو معتقد کہ زیستن از بہر خوردن است

*Food is so that one may live and worship,
but you think that life's purpose is food.*

Do not think that God will be pleased with us for nothing and we will abide in a state of enjoyment. If such blinded people were even given a letter from God Himself, they would still never let go of the pleasures which they experience in the pursuit of their worldly desires and ambitions; rather, they give precedence to this pleasure over the pleasure that a believer feels in God. However, a letter of God Almighty is present already and it is called the Holy Quran; it promises paradise and everlasting comfort, yet no regard whatsoever is given in respect of the promises it makes to confer bounty. In the pursuit of temporary and self-conceived joys and comforts, how many pains and hardships does an ignorant person bear? But on the path of God Almighty, even the slightest difficulty hurls such a one into apprehension and they begin to think ill of God. If only they could measure the worth of these eternal and everlasting joys in comparison to the ephemeral pleasures of the world. In order to prevail over these difficulties and hardships, there is a perfect and unfailing cure, which is tried and tested by

tens of millions of pious souls. What is this cure? It is known as the formal Prayer.

What is the formal Prayer? It is a kind of supplication, which protects man from all forms of vice and indecency, and makes them deserving of good and the recipient of divine favour. It has been said that ‘Allah’ is the Greatest Name (*ism-e-azam*) of God. Allah the Exalted has kept all of His other attributes subordinate to this name. Now just reflect for a moment. The Prayer begins with the call to Prayer and the call to Prayer begins with the words *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the greatest). In other words, the call to Prayer begins with the name of Allah and ends in the name of Allah with the words لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (*There is none worthy of worship except Allah*). This honour belongs to the Islamic worship alone in that from beginning to end Allah Almighty is the only objective that is sought, and nothing else. I can confidently say that this kind of worship does not exist in any other nation or religious community. In the formal Prayer, which is a form of supplication, ‘Allah’, the Greatest Name of God Almighty, has been given the highest position. The Greatest Name (*ism-e-azam*), or the greatest quality of man is steadfastness (*istiqamat*).

The means by which the excellences of humanity can be attained is what is meant by the term, ‘Greatest Name.’ Allah the Exalted has alluded to this in the verse إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (*Guide us in the right path*). In another instance He states:

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا¹

*Those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then remain steadfast,
the angels descend on them, saying: ‘Fear ye not, nor grieve.’*

In other words, when a person comes under the canopy of divine providence, and when the egg of human nature is nurtured under man’s Greatest Name known as steadfastness (*istiqamat*), humans develop such capacities that angels begin to descend upon them and they do not suffer from any kind of fear or grief. I have stated that *istiqamat* or steadfastness is very significant. What is the meaning of *istiqamat*? When everything is precisely in the right place, this is *hikmat* (wisdom) and *istiqamat* (steadfastness). For example, if the components of a set of binoculars are separated and moved from their correct places to where they do not belong, the device will cease to function. Hence, the meaning of steadfastness is as the Arabic phrase goes: وَضَعُ الشَّيْءِ فِي مَحَلِّهِ (*To place a thing where it rightly belongs*). One could say, that the natural and uncorrupted state of a thing

¹ *Ha Mim As-Sajdah*, 41:31

is 'steadfastness'. Therefore, until the human form is not kept in the natural condition that it is meant to be, and it is not kept in a state that is *mustaqim* or 'right', it cannot develop excellences within itself. The system of supplication is that both these 'Great Names' must come together; and man must advance towards God without deviating towards anything other than Him, even if it be the idol of man's own carnal desires and passions. When this state comes about, it is then that the true pleasure of ¹أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ (Pray unto Me; I will answer your prayer) can be tasted.

Therefore, it is my desire that you should strive to attain steadfastness through spiritual exercise and discipline because this elevates a person to a level where their prayer is blessed with the honour of acceptance. At present, there are many who complain about the non-acceptance of prayer. However, I would say—and it is unfortunate that this is the case—that until people develop steadfastness within themselves, how can they experience the pleasure of the acceptance of prayer? It is in this very world that we observe the signs of the acceptance of prayer. After the state of steadfastness has been attained, a person's heart develops signs of coolness and tranquillity. Even when such a one is faced by apparent failure or disappointment, their hearts do not burn. However, in the case of one who is unaware of the philosophy of prayer, even the most trivial failures engulf the heart like hellfire and a person becomes extremely restless and distraught. This is exactly what the following verse alludes to:

نَارَ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةَ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ²

It is Allah's kindled fire, which rises over the hearts.

In fact, we learn from the Hadith that even fever is a reflection of the hellfire.

A String of Reformers within the Muslim Community

At this instance another point ought to be remembered as well. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was always destined to pass away, and in the apparent sense, an exemplar and instrument for the manifestation of God was to leave the world. Therefore, Allah the Exalted instituted a simple method: ³قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي (Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me'). This

¹ *al-Mu'min*, 40:61

² *al-Humazah*, 104:7-8

³ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:32

is by virtue of the fact that the beloved of Allah is always *mustaqim* (i.e. straight and right). A person who possesses a ‘crooked’ nature can never become a beloved of Allah. In order to increase and invigorate within our hearts the love of Allah’s Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, it is compulsory to invoke blessings upon the Holy Prophet^{sa} in each of the formal Prayers, so that a steadfast means for the acceptance of this prayer may become available to us. It is an accepted fact that the being of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, will remain alive in the form of spiritual reflection until the Day of Resurrection. The mystics say that the Reformers (*Mujaddidin*) are named after the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him; that is to say, the name of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is given to them in a certain way to indicate that they are a reflection of him.

The Shia view that the system of attaining to the rank of sainthood came to an end at Hazrat Ali, may Allah honour him, is absolutely false. The excellences which Allah Almighty invested in the institution of prophethood reached their pinnacle collectively in the person of our Perfect Guide, the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Now, for all times to come, the *Mujaddidin* will continue to spiritually reflect these excellences throughout the world. Allah the Exalted will make this phenomenon continue until the Day of Resurrection.

I proclaim once again that even now God Almighty has not left the world deprived and He has established a dispensation. Verily, He has raised a man with His own hand and that person is I who speaks to you now, in your midst. It is time for the descent of the mercy of God Almighty. So supplicate, seek steadfastness, and invoke blessings upon the Holy Prophet^{sa} often, for invoking blessings upon him is a powerful means by which to attain steadfastness. But do not recite these words as a habit and custom; rather, do so keeping in mind the beauty and kindness of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and so that his rank and status may continue to be elevated, and so that he may continue to succeed. The result of this will be that the sweet and delicious fruit of the acceptance of prayer shall be granted to you.

The Means for the Acceptance of Prayer

There are only three avenues for the acceptance of prayer: firstly, that which is described in the verse: ¹ *إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي* (*If you love Allah, follow me*); secondly,

¹ *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:32

that which alluded to in the verse: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا¹ (*O ye who believe! You also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace*); and thirdly, divine conferral. It is a general practice of Allah the Exalted that in the likeness of Prophets, He gives birth to many holy souls who in their very nature are vested with steadfastness.

You ought to keep in mind that in their nature, human beings are of three classes. The first class is of those who suppress their desires severely to refrain from evil. The second category is of those who 'take the middle course', i.e. they are virtuous to an extent, but not ridden completely of evil. The third class of people are those who abhor evil and exceed all others in goodness. This last group of people attain to the ranks where they are chosen and selected by God. The Prophets, peace be upon them, are from this holy class of people. This succession of people continues in every era. The world is not empty of such people.

Some people make a request for prayers so that supplications may be made in their favour. It is unfortunate, however, that such people are unaware of the etiquette of requesting for prayers. Would it be appropriate if the person in need sent someone else to request for prayers on their behalf? Of course, this would be of no benefit. Until the person making a request for prayer does not inculcate within themselves a propensity towards virtue and obedience, a prayer cannot bring about any benefit. If an ailing person does not consider it necessary to obey their physician, how can they be cured? Just as it is necessary for a patient to follow the advice of their physician with unwavering steadfastness and perseverance, similarly, there are etiquettes and procedures, which must be followed by one who makes a request for prayer. It is written in *Tadhkira-tul-Awliya* that someone made a request for prayers to a holy man, who responded to him by saying: 'Bring some milk and rice.' The person was surprised but complied. The saintly man prayed and the person was granted whatever they had sought. Afterwards the seeker was told that they were asked to bring the food items only so that a personal relationship could be developed between the two. Similarly, it is written in the account of Bawa Farid Sahib that a person lost their title deed and so they came to Bawa Farid to request for prayers, who instructed the individual to bring him some sweetmeat, *halwa*. When the person went to fetch some, he found his ownership document at the confectionery.

¹ *al-Ahzab*, 33:57

The reason I have related these incidents is to explain that until there is a relationship between a person who makes a request for prayers and the individual to whom they make the request, there can be no effect of prayer. Hence, until there is a state of agony, and until a supplicant feels as perturbed as the one who requested them for prayer, there can be no effect of supplication. At times the greatest trial is that people are unaware of the etiquettes of prayer, and on account of their inability to see any manifest benefit in prayer, they begin to think ill of God Almighty and their state becomes a pitiable one.

In the end I say that whether you pray yourself or request someone else to pray for on your behalf, you must develop purity and cleanliness. Seek steadfastness and submit in a state of repentance, for this is steadfastness. It is then that your prayers will be accepted and it is then that you will experience pleasure in Prayer.

ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ¹

That is Allah's grace; He bestows it on whom He pleases.²

The End

¹ *al-Jumu'ah*, 62:5

² A piece of writing by the Promised Messiah^{as} and a letter on the doctrine of Oneness of Being (*wahdat-e-wujud*) compiled by Sheikh Yaqub Ali Irfani^{ra}.

19 January 1898

The Reformer of the Fourteenth Century and His Task

After *Maghrib* prayer, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: The trial of the Christians is the Mother of Trials and this is why the task of the Reformer (*Mujaddid*) of the fourteenth century is the breaking of the cross. Now since this sign has been fulfilled in his person, the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century has been named the 'Promised Messiah'. For it is established in the Hadith that the task of the Promised Messiah^{as} was *يَكْبُرُ الصَّلِيبَ* (*he would break the cross*). Even our opponents must accept that the task of the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century should be to break the cross, because this is the trial with which he is confronted. How can there be any room to deny that the Promised Messiah^{as} would be the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century? My attention is directed to those who have a thirst for the truth; but what benefit can those people derive from us who have no desire to search for the truth and whose dispositions are crooked? Remember that only those are guided who refrain from prejudice. Those who do not contemplate gain nothing. So let the seeker of guidance know that, in the present circumstances, the task of the *Mujaddid* of the fourteenth century is to break the cross, because the perilous trial of the cross is rampant. Islam was such a religion that if even one person left the fold, a wave of astonishment would ripple through society. But now, how unfortunate it is that there are hundreds of thousands who have left Islam. Those who were born in Muslim homes now level all sorts of hurtful allegations against the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, who was the perfect man and whose inner purity has no parallel in the world. This is to such an extent that tens of millions of books have been published by this group accusing this Leader of the Sinless. Many regular weekly and monthly newspapers, as well as periodicals, have been established for this very purpose. Then in such a state of affairs, would God Almighty send no *Mujaddid*? And when the *Mujaddid* was to appear, think for the sake of God, would his task be to bicker and clash over matters such as raising the hands during the Prayer or reciting *ameen* aloud in the congregational Prayer?

One ought to reflect that if a disease were spreading in the form of an epidemic, would a doctor seek to cure that disease or would he provide a remedy to some other illness? The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has become the subject of extreme mockery. It is written that a companion of the

Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, went so far as to kill his mother upon hearing her dishonour the Prophet^{sa}. This was the jealousy and honour that the Muslims once possessed, but today, they read and listen to slanderous books and feel no indignation. They cannot even bring themselves to dislike such publications. On the contrary, they oppose, mock and ridicule the person who has been sent specifically by God to put an end to this calamity and who is possessed with a distinct jealousy for the honour and glory of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. May God Almighty Himself grant these people a discerning eye. *Ameen.*

A Magnificent Prophecy of Divine Succour and Assistance for the Holy Prophet^{sa}

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: Allah the Exalted revealed a chapter in the Holy Quran which manifests the status and rank of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The chapter which I refer to is:

الْمَرَّتْ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ¹

Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant?

This chapter was revealed at a time when the Master of the Universe, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was suffering with affliction and grief. Allah the Exalted gives the Holy Prophet^{sa} comfort in this state and says: ‘I am your supporter and helper’.

This contains a magnificent prophecy that: ‘Do you not see how your Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant?’ That is to say, Allah reversed their evil design upon them and struck them; He sent small and insignificant creatures to destroy them. These creatures carried no guns, only mud. The Arabic word *sijjeel* refers to clay. In this noble chapter of the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted has declared the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to be the Holy Ka’bah, as it were. Furthermore, by presenting the incident of the People of the Elephant, Allah Almighty has foretold of the success, divine support and succour that the Holy Prophet^{sa} would receive. To further elaborate, in order to frustrate the methods and schemes employed by those who seek to ruin the work of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, Allah the Exalted reverses the very designs and efforts of such people against themselves. No enormous means are required. Just

¹ *al-Fil*, 105:2

as the People of the Elephant were destroyed by small birds, the prophecy just alluded to will continue to be fulfilled until the Day of Resurrection. Whenever a 'People of the Elephant' spawn, Allah the Exalted will turn their schemes to dust in order to destroy them.

The fundamental aim of the Christian clergy is to attack Islam. Islam is the only weight on their chest, otherwise, they consider all the other faiths to be impotent. Even when Hindus become Christian, it is against Islam that they write books. Ramchandra and Thakurdas have written books in refutation of Islam with all their effort. The fact of the matter is that their conscience tells them that Islam is what will bring about their ruin. Naturally, one fears a thing from which they apprehend their own destruction. As soon as a chick sees a cat, it begins to chirp. This is why the followers of various religions in general, and the Christian clergy in particular, are exerting their entire strength to repudiate Islam. For they are certain, and deep down inside their heart tells them, that Islam is the only religion that will crush all other false doctrines.

The Defence of Islam Through Ahmadiyyat

At the present time, Islam is being attacked as in the case of the People of the Elephant. The Muslims suffer from many weaknesses. Islam is deprived and the 'People of the Elephant' are in strength. But even now, Allah the Exalted desires to manifest a similar demonstration as in the past. God Almighty will employ small birds, as it were. What is our community in comparison to them? In the face of their unanimity, strength and wealth, we hold no position at all. However, the incident of the People of the Elephant is before us and we observe the immensely consoling verses that have been revealed in the chapter under discussion. I too have received the same revelation, which clearly demonstrates that the succour and help of God Almighty will definitely do its work. Of course, only those people believe this who love the *Quran*. What regard can such a person give to these matters if they have no fondness for the *Quran* and possess no love for Islam? The very meaning of Islam and faith is to align one's thoughts and desires with the will of God. God does not care for the honour and dignity of any person who has no indignation and jealousy for Islam, irrespective of who they may be; such a person is no practising Muslim. Do not view the affairs of God with contempt, and consider worthy of pity those who have rejected the truth on account of prejudice and have said that there is no need for anyone's advent in this era of

peace. Pity be on them. They do not see how Islam is besieged by its enemies and onslaughts are being waged against it from all directions; the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is maligned. Yet, despite all this, they say that there is no need for anyone?

Islam Can Benefit from the Sedition Act

The Sedition Act is very beneficial for us. It is only we who can truly benefit from this law. This is also a means by which other religions will be uprooted. For we possess a treasure of divine verities and insights; we shall distribute these gems and this will never come to an end, but what insights can the Arya Samaj and the Christian clergy present? What have the Christian clergy demonstrated in the past fifty years? Do they have the ability to put forth anything other than abuse, so that one may imagine that this might change in the future? The Hindus possess nothing but allegations either. I can confidently say that if a follower of the Arya Samaj or a Christian missionary were called to expound the qualities and excellences of their respective religions, they would be unable to stand against us for even a moment.¹

19 January 1898

Atonement

The very first brick of religion is to recognise God. Until that foundation is well-placed, how can other deeds be pure? The Christians raise countless allegations against the inner-purity of others and they raise these objections whilst believing in a morally damaging concept such as atonement. I cannot understand how there can be any fear of accountability before Allah Almighty if one believes in the concept of atonement. Do the Christians not believe that the Messiah was tormented to repay for our sins to the extent that he was deemed accursed and remained in hell for three days? If with this concept there is punishment for sin, then what purpose does the Atonement serve? The very doctrine of atonement encourages sin. It is a matter of principle that the doctrine to which a person subscribes has a deep effect on them. One may observe that in the estimation of the Hindus the cow is immensely holy and sacred. The effect of this among the Hindus is to such an extent that even the urine and dung of a cow is deemed pure

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 26, dated 17 July 1901, pp. 1-2

and used for purification. Their passion for the cow exceeds all bounds and this is the very reason that they have made this concept a part of their fundamental belief. Remember that fundamental beliefs are like a mother and deeds are the resulting offspring. When the Messiah serves as an atonement and he has taken upon himself the sins of those who believe, what reason is left for people to refrain from sin?

It is astonishing that when Christians speak of the concept of atonement, they begin their discourse from the mercy and justice of God Almighty. But I would ask, if one person is hung for the crime of another, then what justice and mercy remains? If it is proclaimed as doctrine that Christ has taken upon himself the burden of all sins—even those sins which are yet to be committed—then what reason is there for anyone to abstain from sin? If the teaching was that this atonement was limited to the Christians of that era, then this would have been another matter; but when it is accepted that Christ has taken with him the burden of the sins of even those who shall be born until the Day of Resurrection, and he accepted punishment for this purpose, then how unjust is it to seize a sinner? In fact, to punish an innocent person in the place of a sinner is injustice in the first place. But further still, the second injustice is to first place the burden of sin on Christ and give sinners the good news that he has shouldered their sins, yet punishing those who then commit sin. This is some strange deception, which the Christians will never be able to explain.

Belief in the Atonement Emboldens a Person to Commit Sin

If someone were to assert that belief in the Atonement enables a person to attain salvation from a life of sin, and the propensity to commit sin no longer remains within them, then this is a statement with no proof at all. For there is sin at the very root of this concept. The strength to abstain from sin comes from a fear of accountability to God. But how can there be any fear of accountability when it is accepted that Christ has taken upon himself the burden of our sins? From this, I conclude that a person who subscribes to such a concept can never be God-fearing, because they would deem unnecessary all such actions that have their basis in principles of fear of God. One ought to remember well that inner-purity always begins with concepts, if not:

تَجَرُّبِ نَفْسٍ نَدَّ غَرْدٌ وَ بِمَالِهَا مَعْلُومٌ

The impurity of one's heart is not noticeable until many years have passed.

Then we should also observe what practical examples of inner-purity have been demonstrated by those who subscribe to the concept of atonement. The sinful actions of people in Europe are known to all. Alcohol, which is the mother of crimes and the mother of evils, is so heavily consumed that its likeness is difficult to find in any other country. I read in a newspaper that if all the liquor-stores in London were arranged in a line, they would extend to a distance of 75 miles. Christians ought to reflect and tell us that when they have been given a certificate for the pardoning of sin, and any sin they commit is deemed forgiven, what shall be the result of such a concept?

If, God forbid, we subscribed to such a doctrine, this would have an immensely detrimental effect upon us. The lower self which incites the soul to evil is always in search of something to lean back on. Similarly, the Shias have fallen back on Imam Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, and they say whatever they please, hiding behind the concept of *taqiyyah*. Due to this concept of *taqiyyah* and the belief regarding the sacrifice of Imam Husayn^{ra}, I can confidently say that very few God-fearing people exist among the Shias. Khalifah Muhammad Hasan writes that the verse ¹ *فَدَيْنُهُ بِذَنْبِ عَظِيمٍ* (*We ransomed him with a great sacrifice*) in the Quran speaks of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn^{ra} and he is overjoyed by this point, as if he has discovered the essence of the Holy Quran.

His 'ingenuity' reminds me of the story about the foolish man. As the story goes, a foolish man had a water pot with a hole in it. Whenever he would go to answer the call of nature, before he could manage to relieve himself and then subsequently clean himself, all the water would drain out of his pot. Finally, after many days of thought and reflection, the bright solution that he came up with was that he began to clean himself with the water first, before relieving himself; and he was very pleased with his solution. Khalifah Muhammad Hasan has come up with an insight and solution that is as clever as this foolish man when he derives that the verse ² *فَدَيْنُهُ بِذَنْبِ عَظِيمٍ* (*We ransomed him with a great sacrifice*) speaks of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn^{ra}. The Shias cannot so much as keep their mosques clean. I used to have a Shia teacher, and dogs would come and urinate and defecate in the mosque. I do not remember anyone ever praying in that mosque. The

¹ *as-Saffat*, 37:108

² *as-Saffat*, 37:108

Shias claim that Imam Husayn^{ra} and the household of the Holy Prophet^{sa} were martyred for their sake, and to weep in grief for them and to mourn for them is sufficient. No other deeds are required except these to enter paradise. In the same way, the Christians say that the blood of the Messiah has guaranteed their salvation. Now my question is that if such people are going to be questioned and punished for committing sin, then what sort of salvation is guaranteed to them?

In actuality, a concept of this nature brings with it an immensely evil effect. If this belief did not exist, sin and impiety would not be so rampant in various countries within Europe, and such a flood of illicit behaviour would not surge forth as is the case at present. One may go and observe the indecency at hotels and parks in London and Paris and ask those who return from these places. Every other day the newspapers publish the names of illegitimate children in lists.

Atonement Contradicts the Law of Nature

It is doctrine that I focus on. Our doctrine states ¹ *فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ* (*Then whoso does an atom's weight of good will see it*). Now you may conclude for yourself what effect such a concept would bring about. Man will feel the need for action and endeavour to perform good deeds. Contrary to this, when it is asserted that man cannot attain salvation through his deeds, such a belief will weaken the resolve and effort of a person and will make them helpless out of despair. This also demonstrates that the concept of atonement abuses the human faculties, because Allah the Exalted has vested the human faculties with a nature inclined to progress, but the concept of atonement prevents the human faculties from advancing. I have just stated that we observe freedom and lack of restraint among those who believe in the doctrine of atonement, and it is due to this very concept that people engage in illicit relations, as though they were dogs. Acts of indecency are committed openly in London's Hyde Park and illegitimate children are born. Hence, we must not confine ourselves to mere words and statements, but rather, we must give importance to deeds. An individual who sees no benefit in deeds is immensely short-sighted and ignorant. Within the law of nature there are examples of actions which result in outcomes, but there is no example of anything that resembles the Atonement. For example, if someone is hungry, their hunger is satisfied after eating; or if someone is thirsty, their thirst is quenched with water. This demonstrates that the final outcome of eating or drinking is that one's thirst

¹ *az-Zilzal*, 99:8

and hunger are satisfied. But never does it occur that one person's hunger is satisfied if someone else eats bread on their behalf. If there was any such precedent in the law of nature, then perhaps there might have been room to accept the concept of atonement. However, when no such parallel exists in the law of nature, how can man, who is accustomed to accepting things through the observance of parallels, give credence to such a concept? There is no such precedent even in man-made laws. We have never witnessed that one person should commit murder and someone else is executed in their stead. Therefore, this concept of atonement is one which has no parallel.

Good Deeds and Righteousness

I address my community and say that it is good deeds which are needed. Indeed, it is good deeds that are worthy of being presented before God Almighty. God Almighty Himself states:

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ¹

Unto Him ascend good words.

At the present time, our pens are like the swords of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. However, victory and support is received by those who are righteous. Allah the Exalted has promised the following:

كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ²

This means, it is our responsibility to help the believers. He also states:

لَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا³

Meaning, Allah does not grant the disbelievers a way to prevail against the believers. So remember that your victory is tied to righteousness. The Arabs were nothing more than orators, speakers and poets. Yet, when they adopted righteousness, God Almighty sent down his angels to support them. If a person studies history, they will come to know that all of the victories that were attained by the noble companions, may Allah be pleased with all of them, were not the result of human strength or effort. In fact, by the time of Hazrat Uthman, may Allah be pleased

¹ *Fatir*, 35:11

² *ar-Rum*, 30:48

³ *an-Nisa*, 4:142

with him, within a period of twenty years, the Muslim empire had become world-wide. Now someone tell us, is this within the power of man? This is why Allah the Exalted has repeatedly stated:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ¹

Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good.

Allah the Exalted is with those who are righteous, but righteousness is not the only element which attracts the love of God; such people must be among those who do good.

A Righteous Person and One Who Does Good

The word *muttaqi* means ‘one who fears.’ One aspect relates to the renouncing of evil and the other aspect is to perform good. The word *muttaqi* implies the abandonment of evil, while the word *muhsin* alludes to the doing of good. I have read an anecdote in this regard. A noble man invited someone to join him for food, and he made all the arrangements for his hospitality and truly did justice in this respect. When they had finished eating, the noble man said with great humility: ‘I have not been able to serve you as you deserve.’ The guest responded: ‘Indeed, you have done no favour upon me; in fact, it is I who have done a favour upon you, because when you were engaged in your arrangements, I did not burn your house down. For what if I had set fire to your property, then what?’ Therefore, the task of a ‘righteous person’ or *muttaqi* is to refrain from evil deeds. The stage which comes after this is to perform good, which has been conveyed in the verse just mentioned through the word *muhsinun* (i.e. for a person to do good). Man becomes truly pious when he refrains from evil deeds and then reflects over the acts of virtue that he has done.

It is narrated that Imam Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, had a servant who brought him a cup of tea. When the servant came close to him, due to his lack of attention, the cup fell on the head of Imam Husayn^{ra}. Due to the inconvenience that he had felt, Hazrat Imam Husayn^{ra} shot the servant a sharp glance. In a submissive voice, the servant said: ² وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ (And those who suppress their anger). Upon hearing this, Imam Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, said كَلَّمْتُ (I have suppressed my anger). Then the servant said:

¹ *an-Nahl*, 16:129

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:135

وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ (*And those who pardon men*). In the state of *kazm* (i.e. suppressing anger) a person subdues their anger and does not express it, but is not pleased from within. This is why the condition of *afw* (i.e. pardoning others), has been set in this verse as well. To this, Hazrat Imam Husayn^{ra} said: 'I pardon you.' Then the servant recited the words: وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (*And Allah loves those who do good*). For the truly beloved of God are those who, after suppressing their anger and pardoning others, proceed to do good. On hearing this, Imam Husayn^{ra} said: 'Go then, I free you.' These are the examples of the pious where a servant is set free for dropping a cup of tea. Now tell me, is this example not due to an excellent doctrine?

The Spiritual Power of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

Allah the Exalted states: ¹ فَاسْتَقِمُّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ, i.e. become upright, and free yourselves of all forms of evil action and crookedness, then shall I be pleased with you; become upright yourself and make others the same. How difficult was it for the Arabs to make people upright.² When the people asked, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said that Surah Hud had made him old, because this injunction placed a very heavy responsibility upon him. As far as a person's own being is concerned, it is possible for an individual to make themselves upright and fully obey the commandments of Allah Almighty. However, it is not easy to mould others in this way. This demonstrates the lofty grandeur and the spiritual power of the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. How wonderfully did the Holy Prophet^{sa} fulfil this commandment. He produced a pious community of noble companions to whom it was said:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ³

You are the best people raised for the good of mankind.

Then, these same people were given the glad tidings:

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ⁴

Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him.

¹ Hud, 11:113

² Al-Hakam, vol. 5, no. 28, dated 31 July 1901, pp. 1-3

³ Aal-e-Imran, 3:111

⁴ Al-Bayyinah, 98:9

Before the Holy Prophet^{sa} passed away, no hypocrite was left in Medina, the Holy City. Hence, the Holy Prophet^{sa} received such success that its parallel cannot be found in the life accounts of any other Prophet. By this, the purpose of Allah Almighty was to teach that one must not remain limited to mere words and statements. For if we remain confined to mere words, statements and outward display, then what will differentiate us from others and how shall we be any better? You ought to exhibit a shining practical example that others find acceptable, because until your example possesses a true radiance, others will never accept it. Can anyone be attracted to a dirty and filthy thing? If even one stain is evident on a person's clothes, they do not look appealing. Similarly, until your inner-state is pure and shining, no one will hold you in esteem. Everyone admires things of fine quality and in the same manner, until your morals are of a high standing, you shall not be able to achieve anything.

The Actual Purpose of Man's Creation

In Surah Asr, Allah the Exalted has presented an illustration of the lives of both disbelievers and believers. The life of a disbeliever is no different than the life of cattle, who are engrossed in nothing but eating, drinking and carnal desires, as the Holy Quran states:

يَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ¹

They eat even as the cattle eat.

However, if a bullock were to eat fodder and when it came time to plough the land, it sat down, what would be the outcome? The farmer would take the animal to the butcher shop and sell it. Similarly, Allah the Exalted says (with reference to those who do not follow or have regard for the commandments of God Almighty, and who live a life of sin and impiety) the following words:

قُلْ مَا يَعْجُبُكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ²

Meaning what does my Lord care for you if you do not worship Him? One ought to remember wholeheartedly that in order to perform worship, love is needed. There are two forms of love. There is unconditional love and there is love fuelled by motives. The latter type refers to love which is caused by a few temporary fac-

¹ *Muhammad*, 47:13

² *al-Furqan*, 25:78

tors; and as soon as they cease to exist, the love also turns cold and becomes a source of grief and pain. However, unconditional love brings true pleasure. Man has naturally been created for God, as it is stated:

مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ¹

I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.

For this reason, Allah the Exalted has instilled within man's nature an inclination towards Himself and has created man to be devoted to Him through the most hidden means. From this we learn that the fundamental purpose for which God Almighty has created you is so that you may worship Him. However, as for those who detach themselves from this fundamental and natural purpose of theirs, and live like animals, and their only purpose in life is to eat, drink and sleep, they became distant from the grace of God Almighty and He no longer remains concerned for such people. God Almighty takes interest in the life of a person who believes in² مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ² (*I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me*), and then transforms their life. There is no telling when death will arrive. The couplet of Sa'di is true:

مَلِكٌ تَكْتُمُ بِرِ عَمْرٍ نَابِئِئِدَارِ

مَبَاشِ اِبْنِ اِزْبَازِي رُوزِ كَلارِ

*Do not depend on this unreliable life;
Do not be negligent of the schemes of time.*

The wise do not put their trust in this unreliable life. Death comes and smothers a man without warning. Now when man is forever in the clutches of death, who then can be in control of his life except for God Almighty?

A Life Devoted to God

If a person's life is devoted to God, then God Himself will protect it. There is a Hadith in *Bukhari* that when a person develops a bond of love with God Almighty, God becomes their limbs. It is stated in another narration that this relationship of friendship grows to such an extent that God becomes the hands and feet, etc. of such people; He even becomes the tongue with which they speak. In

¹ *adb-Dhariyat, 51:57*

² *adb-Dhariyat, 51:57*

actual fact, when a person cleanses themselves of their inner passions and adheres to the will of God, abandoning their own ego, none of their actions are unlawful; in fact, each and every one of their actions are in line with the will of God. Even more so, God Almighty declares their actions to be those of God Himself. This is a level of divine nearness which has caused those who have not fully traversed the stations in the spiritual quest, to stumble. In other cases, those who are unaware of matters divine, and have failed to understand the true meaning of divine nearness, have misconstrued the issue at hand and have invented the concept of Oneness of Being (*wahdat-ul-wujud*). One should never forget also that whenever a person falls to trial, it is because they act in a way that is not in accordance with the will of God; God Almighty desires something else. Such a one is subdued by their own desires and does not adhere to the will of God. However, a person who is referred to as the friend of Allah Almighty, and whose life God tends to, is one whose every action and inaction is determined by first consulting the Book of God. Such a person turns to the Book of Allah in preference to their own thoughts and desires, and seeks counsel from it.

The narration goes on to state that Allah the Exalted feels a great degree of hesitation in taking the soul of such a person. In reality, Allah Almighty is free from hesitating. What this actually means is that such people are given death due to a certain wisdom; indeed, it is due to a grand wisdom that they are taken to the next world. Were it not for this, God holds very dear the life of such a person. Hence, if a person's life is not such that God Almighty feels a hesitation in taking it to Himself, then such a life is worse than that of animals. Many people can be sustained on a goat, and its hide also proves useful, but man is of no use, not even after death. The effect of a righteous man, however, is felt by even his progeny and they too benefit from him. In fact, such a person does not die at all; when physical death overtakes him, he is granted a new life. David, on whom be peace, states: 'I was a child and now I have grown old. I have never seen a godly man in a demeaned state, nor have I seen the children of such people begging for scraps.' That is to say that God Almighty even takes it upon Himself to support the children of a God-fearing person. It is also mentioned in a Hadith that a wrongdoer is cruel to his own family as well, because they are affected by his evil.

The Purpose of Man's Creation Is Worship

Hence, it is immensely important for you to understand that the very purpose for

which God Almighty created you is so that you may worship Him and become devoted to Him. The world must not be the centre of your aspirations. I reiterate this single point again and again because in my estimation, worship is the sole purpose for which man has been created and it is this very instruction of which man is negligent. I do not say that you should abandon your worldly businesses, or forsake your wife and children to retreat to a jungle or a mountain. Islam does not deem this to be permissible and Islam does not allow asceticism. Islam desires to make man active, diligent and able. Therefore, I say that you ought to engage in your businesses with toil and labour. It is narrated in a Hadith that a person who owns land but does not use it for agriculture, will be accountable in the sight of God. Therefore, if someone understands this instruction to mean that they should detach themselves from the affairs of the world, they are mistaken. Not at all. The fact of the matter is that you ought to ensure that the pleasure of God Almighty is intended in the business that you engage in, and you must not ignore His will to give precedence to your own motives and emotions.¹

Therefore, if the objective of a person's life is to go on in a life of ease and comfort, and if the pinnacle of their achievement is nothing more than eating, drinking, clothing and sleep, and no room for God Almighty remains in their heart, then remember that such a person turns away from the nature with which God has made them. As a result, such a one will gradually waste away their faculties. It is an obvious fact that when we acquire a thing for a certain purpose, if it does not fulfil that very purpose, we consider it to be useless. For example, if one obtains a piece of wood to make a chair or table, but it proves to be unusable, it will be used as firewood. Similarly, the actual purpose of man's creation is the worship of Allah, but if man alters their inherent disposition on account of external means and superficial relations, rendering it useless, then God Almighty does not care for such people. It is to this very fact which the following verse refers:

قُلْ مَا يَعْجُبُكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ²

*Say to the disbelievers: 'But for your prayer to
Him my Lord would not care for you.*

On a previous occasion, I mentioned that I saw a dream in which I was standing in a jungle. There was a ditch that ran from East to West and sheep were laid on

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 29, dated 10 August 1901, pp. 1-2

² *al-Furqan*, 25:78

its edge. Each sheep was subdued by a butcher holding a knife over their necks. The butchers were looking towards the sky and I was walking near them. Upon beholding this sight, I understood that the butchers were waiting for a command from heaven. Then, I recited this verse:

قُلْ مَا يَعْجُبُكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ¹

Say to the disbelievers: 'But for your prayer to Him my Lord would not care for you.'

The moment they heard me, they ran their knives, saying: 'What are you? Nothing but refuse-eating sheep.'

Therefore, God Almighty cares for the life of a person who fears Him; He holds their life dear. As for the one who acts against His will, God casts him into hell. Therefore, it is necessary for each and every one to free their soul from the slavery of Satan. Just as chloroform induces sleep, in the same manner Satan ruins a person and sends them into a sleep of negligence. It is in this very state that Satan finishes such a person.

Two Classes Mentioned in Surah Asr

Once again, I return to my original discussion and state that two groups are alluded to in Surah Asr. Firstly, there is the class of the holy and pious, and then there are the disbelievers and sinners. The disbelieving and sinful class have been alluded to as follows:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ²

Surely, man is in a state of loss.

Then, the other class of people have been distinguished as follows:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ³

That is to say, there is a group that is in a state of loss, but not the believers and those who do good deeds. From this we learn that those who are disbelievers and those who do not perform good deeds are in a state of loss. The Arabic word *salah* (i.e. being sound or pious), is only applicable where there are no traces whatsoever

¹ *al-Furqan*, 25:78

² *al-Asr*, 103:3

³ *al-Asr*, 103:4

of *fasad* (which in Arabic means to be corrupt or devoid of virtue). A person can never become a *salih* (i.e. a virtuous person), until they cleanse themselves of ignoble and corrupt doctrines, and then their actions also become free from corruption. The word *muttaqi* (i.e. a righteous person), is in the measure of the form *ifʿiʿal* and this form is used to convey a meaning of ‘forced or strained effort.’ This demonstrates that a righteous person is forced to struggle immensely and exert an effort in doing good; and in this state, the soul reproves him for committing evil. When a person is living a beastly life, they are subject to the self that incites to evil, but when they emerge triumphant over the state where struggle is required, they enter a state of rest. A righteous person advances from the state where the self incites to evil and enters a state where the soul rebukes him for committing evil. This is why a distinguishing feature of the righteous is that they ‘establish’ or ‘set upright’ their formal Prayer, as it were, because in this too there is a kind of battle that ensues. Satanic whisperings and doubts come forth again and again to terrify a person, but they are not perturbed, and these satanic whisperings do not make them helpless. Such a one seeks assistance from God Almighty incessantly, and cries before God and weeps, until finally they prevail. Similarly, when it comes to spending in the way of God, Satan holds them back and makes it seem to them as if spending in the cause of Allah and extravagance are one in the same, even though there is a world of difference between the two. A person who is extravagant wastes away their wealth, but a person who spends in the way of Allah, is returned everything that they spend in far greater proportion. This is why God Almighty states:

وَمَا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ¹

They spend out of what We have provided for them.

The Right Path

The fact of the matter is that in a state of *salah* (i.e. being sound or pious), it is incumbent upon man to be pure from every kind of corruption, whether it be in relation to doctrines or deeds. For example, a person’s body is healthy when all its primary constituents are in their normal state, and there is no excess or deficiency. If even a single constituent abnormally increases, the body becomes ill. Similarly, the health of a person’s soul depends upon an equilibrium. It is this very equi-

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:4*

librium which is alluded to in the Holy Quran by the term *as-sirat-ul-mustaqim* (i.e. the right path). In a state of *salah*, a person becomes wholly devoted to God, as was the case with Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq^{ra}. Gradually, a *salih* (or a virtuous person) progresses until they attain to a station of rest and it is here that they experience ‘the expansion of their breast’, just as the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him was addressed:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ¹

Have We not opened for thee thy bosom.

It is beyond me to express in words this state of ‘the expansion of the breast’.

The Breast of Man Is the House of Allah and the Heart Is the Black Stone

Remember with all your heart that just as the Black Stone is placed in the House of Allah, so too does the breast of man house the heart. The House of Allah passed through a time when the disbelievers had it stocked with idols. It was possible that the House of Allah should not have undergone such a period in time, but no, Allah desired for this situation to act as a similitude. The human heart is also like the Black Stone and his breast is similar to the House of Allah. Thoughts of all that is other than Allah are the idols that find a place in this Ka’bah, as it were. The idols of Mecca, the Honoured City, were destroyed when our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, entered it victoriously with a community of ten thousand saints. These ten thousand companions have been referred to as angels in past scriptures and in reality their glory was comparable to angels. Human faculties are also in a way similar to the angels, for just as the angels are distinguished in that: ² *يَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ* (i.e. they do as they are commanded), in the same manner human faculties are characterised by the fact that they do as they are commanded. In the same manner, all human faculties and organs are subjected to man’s command. Therefore, in order to overthrow and dislodge the idols of all that is other than Allah, an onslaught must be waged against them as well. The host that is required for this is prepared through inner-purification and only such a one who engages in this cleansing process is granted victory. As such, it has been stated in the Holy Quran:

¹ *al-Insahirah*, 94:2

² *an-Nahl*, 16:51

قَدْ أَفَدَحَ مَنْ رَزَقَهَا¹

He indeed truly prospers who purifies the soul.

It is recorded in a Hadith that if the heart is reformed, the entire body is set right and repaired. Indeed, how true it is that the eyes, ears, hands, feet, tongue, etc., in fact, all the limbs, actually follow the ruling of the heart. A thought arises and the concerned limb becomes ready at once to follow its command.

Obey Me and Follow Me

In short, to cleanse and purify this House of God from idols, a jihad is required. I am to show you the way of this jihad and I assure you that if you act upon this, you will crush these idols. The way I show you is not of my own improvisation; in fact, God has commissioned me to inform you of it. What is the way? Obey me and follow me. This voice is not a new voice. To purge Mecca of its idols, even the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ²

Say, If you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you.

In the same manner, if you follow me, you shall grow able to break your inner idols and purify your breast of the multitude of idols that fill it. There is no need for forty-day retreats in order to purify your soul. The companions of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did not engage in such retreats, or perform the Sufi 'invocation of the saw' (*dhikr-e-arra*), or engage in meditative practices of 'negation and affirmation' (*nafi-o-asbat*), and so on. Quite the contrary, they had something entirely different at their disposal. They were engrossed in obedience to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The divine light that the Holy Prophet^{sa} possessed was carried to the hearts of the companions through the arteries of obedience, and would crush all thoughts that were besides Allah. Instead of darkness, their breasts would be filled with divine light. Bear well in mind that even today, the same state of affairs is applicable. Until your heart receives the divine light which is conveyed through the channel of the Divine, your soul cannot be purified. The breast of man is the place where divine light descends and this is why it is referred to as the House of

¹ *ash-Shams*, 91:10

² *Aal-e-Imran*, 3:32

Allah, as it were. The important task is none other than to shatter the idols that sit within it, until nothing but Allah, and Allah alone remains. It is narrated in a Hadith that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: *اللَّهُ أَلَّهُ فِي أَصْحَابِي*, i.e. nothing but Allah, and Allah alone resides in the hearts of my companions. Allah being the sole entity that resides in one's heart does not imply that a person ought to subscribe to the concept of Oneness of Being (*wahdat-ul-wujud*), suggesting, that every dog and donkey in the world is Allah, God-forbid. The actual intent is to allude to the fact that in every action of man, the pleasure of Allah Almighty ought to be the sole objective that is sought, and nothing else. This rank can never be attained without the grace of Allah Almighty.

بر کربماں کارها دشوار نیست¹

No task is difficult for the valiant.

Guidance of the Holy Quran for the Perfection of Knowledge and Practice

It ought to be remembered also that the Holy Quran gives guidance for the perfection of knowledge and practice. Accordingly, in the words *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ*² (*Guide us to the path*), the perfection of one's knowledge is alluded to, while the perfection of one's action is indicated in the words *صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ*³ (*The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings*). In both instances, one seeks the most supreme and complete result that can be achieved. When a plant is put into the ground, it cannot flourish and bear fruits until it grows completely. Similarly, if a guidance is devoid of the finest and most superlative results, then such guidance is dead, and it possesses no strength or power to nourish and develop. For example, if after completely following the Vedas a person can never expect to attain everlasting deliverance and salvation, and if they cannot be freed from the process of becoming bugs and insects, to receive eternal pleasure, what use is such guidance? The Holy Quran, on the other hand, is such guidance which, if followed, enables a person to attain the highest levels of excellence. Such a one begins to develop a true relationship with God Almighty to the extent that their good deeds—performed in accordance with the guidance of the Quran—begin to flourish and bear fruits in the similitude of a pure tree, as described by the

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 30, dated 17 August 1901, pp. 1-3

² *al-Fatihah*, 1:6

³ *al-Fatihah*, 1:7

Holy Quran; and they develop a unique kind of sweetness and taste. Hence, if a person's faith is bereft of the potential for growth and development, and if their faith is dead, what hope can there be that the pure trees of good deeds would ever bear fruit? It is for this very reason that in Surah Fatihah, where it states *صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ*¹ (*The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings*) Allah the Exalted has specifically indicated that this path is not a fruitless path, which confounds a person, leaving them to wander aimlessly. In fact, if a person takes this path, they attain success and triumph. Perfection in practice is necessary for worship, otherwise it is nothing more than a pastime. For if a tree does not bear fruit, it serves no benefit, irrespective of how tall it may grow.

The Opponents of One Divinely Appointed by Allah Lose Their Faith

The state of our opponents is one that may be apprehended to result in a loss of faith, because such people deem a good man to be evil and one commissioned by Allah, a liar. This is to war with God Almighty. It is a clear fact that God Almighty has commissioned me and sent me to the world as the Promised Messiah. Those who oppose me do not oppose me, they oppose God, for many of them held me in a position of esteem before I made my claim. Many such people considered it worthy of spiritual reward and a source of pride to hold my water pot and pour from it so that I could perform my ablution. There were many from among them who insisted upon swearing an oath of allegiance to me. But when this community was established in the name of God by His very command, these very same people stood up in opposition against me. This clearly demonstrates that their heartfelt enmity was not towards me, but towards God Almighty. For if they had a sincere relationship with God Almighty, their piety, virtue and fear of God demanded that when I made my claim, they ought to have come forth to accept my announcement; they ought to have prostrated in gratitude before God and welcomed me—but no. They took up their arms and set forth pushing in opposition to such an extent that they called me a disbeliever and a heretic; they named me the Anti-Christ. Alas! These foolish people fail to understand that as for the man who hears the divine words *قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ* (*Say, 'I am the first to turn towards Allah under His command in this age*) and *أَنْتَ مَبْنِي بِمَنْزِلَةٍ تَوْحِيدِي وَتَفْرِيدِي* (*You are to Me like My Unity and Uniqueness*) why should he care in the least

¹ *al-Fatihah*, 1:7

for the abuse and bitter language of such people? It is a shame that these foolish people do not even realise that disbelief and faith do not relate to this world; in fact, they relate to God Almighty. As far as God Almighty is concerned, He attests to my being a believer and divinely commissioned. Why then would I care about this absurd behaviour? Therefore, the stated facts evidently demonstrate that these people do not oppose me, but rather they oppose the commandments of God Almighty. It is for this very reason that the opponents of one appointed by Allah lose their faith. It is clear that my opponents are actually at war with God Almighty. If I am advancing towards light, and it is certain that I am, because countless signs have been and continue to be manifested by God Almighty in my support, and these signs are descending from heaven like rain, then it is also certain that my opponents are falling into darkness. Luminosity and divine light attract the Holy Spirit, while darkness moves one closer to Satan; in this manner, the opposition of a saint results in the loss of faith and joins a person with the worst of companions.

In short, a person becomes righteous and reformed when they attain to the ranks of perfect practice. It is stated in Surah Asr: ¹ *إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ* (*Except those who believe and do good works*), and the words *aamanu* allude to the perfection of one's knowledge, while the words *amilus-salihat* guide a person towards the perfection of practice. Wisdom also has two aspects: firstly, knowledge ought to be perfect and complete; and secondly, action must also be excellent and free from deficiency.

Exhort One Another to Accept Truth

In short, God Almighty states that those who are safeguarded from a state of loss first seek to perfect their knowledge, and secondly, they also prevent their actions from being sullied. In fact, such people advance the perfection of their knowledge to a degree where their actions too become sublime. Then, upon attaining perfect insight when their superb knowledge is established through their sublime actions, they are not miserly; they act upon the following words:

وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ²

They exhort one another to accept truth.

¹ *al-Asr*, 103:4

² *al-Asr*, 103:4

Then, they invite others to the truth which they have found. This also means that they manifest the light of their actions. If a person who exhorts others does not act accordingly, then their words can have no effect whatsoever. It is a general fact that if a man exhorts others but does not act upon his own words, this leaves a very bad impression. If a fornicator exhorts others to refrain from fornication, when his state of affairs is established, it may be apprehended that the people who listen to his admonitions could well-nigh become atheists. For they will think to themselves that if fornication is truly a dangerous thing and God Almighty punishes those who indulge in this act, then if God actually existed, why would the person who exhorts us against this act not refrain from it himself?

I am aware of a person who was about to become a Muslim due to his interactions with a Muslim cleric. One day he saw the same cleric drinking alcohol, and so his heart became hardened and he held back from converting. In short, the words ¹ تَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ (They exhort one another to accept truth) indicate that they advise others through the light of their actions.

Exhort One Another to Be Steadfast

Furthermore, their practice is ² تَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ, i.e. they exhort one another to be steadfast; that is to say, they exhort and advise others with patience. They do not become furious in an instant. If a Muslim cleric or leader becomes an Imam and a guide, and is quickly enraged, and if he does not possess the strength to act with tolerance and patience, why does he harm others? Another meaning of the above is that a person who does not patiently listen to advice, cannot gain any benefit. Our opponents do not come forward with a tolerant heart, and do not present their concerns with patience. In fact, their state of affairs is such that they do not even wish to look at the relevant book. They raise a commotion and seek to cloak the truth. How then can such people derive any benefit? What characterised Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab? It was this very impatience and frustration. They would demand that if you have come from God, then cause springs to flow before us. These unfortunate people did not show patience and were ultimately destroyed; after all, the Zubaida Canal did ultimately reach Mecca. Similarly, our opponents also demand that I should pray for them and it should instantly be fulfilled, deeming this to be the criterion of my truth or falsehood. They will present a few things

¹ *al-Asr*, 103:4

² *al-Asr*, 103:4

which they would like to see happen and say that if they can be made to occur, they will accept, but they do not hold up any conditions for themselves. Alas! It is these very people who represent those described in لَا يَخَافُ عَذَابَهَا¹ (*And God cared not for the consequences thereof*). Remember, only one who is patient attains to a station where their heart is opened. One who does not exhibit patience seeks to rule over God and does not desire to remain under His rule. An insolent and bold person of this nature, who does not fear the glory and greatness of God Almighty, will be deprived and cut asunder.

The Company of the Truthful

Moreover, it ought to be kept in mind that as far as the essence of patience is concerned, it is also necessary to remain in the company of the truthful; as it is said:

كُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ²

Be with the truthful.

There are many who reside afar and say that they will come to visit at some point in time, because they are busy at present. Can those who are blessed to be part of a community whose emergence was promised for thirteen hundred years, yet they do not come forth to support it, and who do not come to sit in the company of a man who was promised by God and His Messenger, ever prosper? Absolutely not.

ہم خدا خواہی وہم دنیائے دول

ایں خیال است و محال است و جنوں

*You seek God as well as this wretched world;
this is wishful thinking, rather impossible, nay insanity.*

Religion encourages one to remain in good company, but if one avoids good company, how can they expect to increase in piety? I have advised my friends many times before, and reiterate again, that they ought to come and stay here time and again, and derive benefit, but very little attention is paid in this regard. People are content to make an oath of allegiance on my hand that they will give precedence to religion over worldly affairs, but realistically, they do not struggle in this cause.

¹ *ash-Shams*, 91:16

² *at-Tawbah*, 9:119

Do not forget that your graves are calling you, and death approaches with every passing moment. Your each and every breath pushes you closer, yet you consider this to be a time of relief. It does not behove a believer to try and deceive Allah the Exalted. When death arrives, there is no pushing it forward or turning it back. As for those people who do not value this community and who see no greatness in it, let them go. However, even more unfortunate are those who have recognised this community to be true and were concerned to join the fold, but now they take it for granted—such people wrong their own souls. Those who do not visit often to stay in my company, and who do not hear and observe the signs which God Almighty manifests on a daily basis in support of this community, irrespective of how pious, God-fearing and righteous they may be, I would still hold that they did not value the community as they should have.

I have already mentioned that after a person's knowledge is perfected, the perfection in one's practice is required. Hence, perfection in practice is impossible without the perfection of one's knowledge, and until a person comes to stay here, the perfection of their knowledge is difficult. I receive a multitude of letters in which people write that some person raised the following allegation and we were unable to respond. What is the reason for this? This is because they do not come here to visit and do not listen to the insights which God Almighty manifests in terms of knowledge, to support this divine community.

Therefore, if you truly recognise the divine nature of this community and believe in God, and if you sincerely promise to give precedence to religion over worldly affairs, then I ask, what endeavours are being made in this regard? Has the commandment ¹ كُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ (*Be with the truthful*) been abrogated? If you truly have faith—and truly fortunate you are, if you do—then give precedence to Allah the Exalted over all else. If you consider this advice to be useless and worthless, then remember, you shall be deemed as one who mocks God Almighty.²

All the Insights of the Holy Quran Are Comprised in Surah Fatihah

If one deeply reflects over Surah Fatihah, which is a subtle outline of the Holy Quran and known as the 'Mother of the Book', one will find that it encompasses in brief all the insights of the Holy Quran. As such, the chapter begins with

¹ *at-Tawbah*, 9:119

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 31, dated 24 August 1901, pp. 1-3

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ, which means that all laudable qualities belong to Allah. This teaches us that all the advantages and all the benefits that one reaps in daily life springs forth from Allah alone. For when it is He who is worthy of all forms of praise, then only He can be the true Bestower of all. Otherwise, it will have to be accepted that there are certain types of praise and admiration of which He is not deserving, and this is blasphemy. Therefore, what a completely comprehensive teaching of God's Unity is contained within the words اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ (*All praise belongs to Allah*). This teaching moves one to understand that everything in this world is bound to the servitude of God and does not possess any inherent ability to be of benefit themselves. Further, it clearly and categorically impresses on one's mind that every benefit and advantage truly and inherently comes forth from God Almighty, because it is He alone who is worthy of all commendable attributes. Hence, give precedence to God Almighty over all benefit and advantage; there is no one other than Him who can come to your aid. If God so wills, even your own children can become enemies, and this does actually happen.

The 'Mother Attributes' of Allah Almighty

In this very same Surah Fatihah, the Holy Quran paints a portrait of God as it were, and presents it to the world for them to accept it. As such, four attributes have been presented in sequence which are known as the 'Mother Attributes' of God Almighty. Just as Surah Fatihah is the 'Mother of the Book', in the same manner, the attributes of Allah Almighty that have been mentioned in this chapter are His mother—or source—attributes. These attributes are *Rabb-ul-Alamin* (the Lord of all the worlds); *ar-Rahman* (the Gracious); *ar-Rahim* (the Merciful); and *Maliki Yawm-id-Din* (the Master of the Day of Judgement). When a person contemplates over these four attributes, it is as if one can see the face of God. The grace of God's providence (*rububiyyat*) is extensively far-reaching and general in scope, and it refers to the nourishing care by which God brings to a state of completion the whole of His creation in all their individual conditions, and the manner in which He supports their development to higher perfection. Now just reflect on how, when a person contemplates over the providence of Allah the Exalted, their hope becomes boundless. Then, there is God's graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*), which means that without any action on the part of an agent, God furnishes the means that are necessary for their existence. For example, the sun, moon, air, water, etc., have been set in motion to sustain our lives without

any prayer, request, action or deed on our part. Then, there is God's mercy (*rahimiyat*), which does not allow for our deeds to be wasted. Then, God being the Master of the Day of Judgement (*Maliki Yawm-id-Din*) demands that He grant us success. For example, if a person prepares assiduously for an exam, but they are short on their examination by a few marks, in worldly systems and institutions, no regard is given to this, and they are failed. However, in the case of God Almighty, His mercy covers a person's shortcomings and passes them, as it were. Divine mercy possesses a quality of covering shortcomings. The God of the Christians does not overlook faults even slightly, otherwise, what need would remain for the Atonement? Similarly, the god of the Arya Samaj is neither Lord nor Gracious, because he bestows nothing without labour and action. This is to such an extent that in accordance with the principles of the Vedas, the commission of sin seems necessary. For example, if an individual desired to give some person a certain quantity of cow's milk in return for a deed that they had performed—provided that this Hindu concept is deemed valid—reciprocally, it would be necessary for a Brahamo woman somewhere in the world at some point in time to commit adultery, so that in return for this act of transgression and immodesty, she may be transmigrated into the form of a cow, so that the person who is to receive the milk may have it—even if the woman was his wife at some point. Therefore, until such a process exists, no doer of any deed can possibly receive their reward from the treasures of the Vedic god, for the entire enterprise of this god runs on a process of doing and undoing.

However, the God presented by Islam is deserving of all praiseworthy attributes and this is why it is He Who is the True Bestower. He is the Gracious and He confers His grace without any action on the part of an agent. He is the Master of the Day of Judgement, as I have stated, and He grants success. A worldly government can never take it upon themselves that each and every person who has a Bachelor of Arts would definitely be guaranteed employment. However, the government of God Almighty is a perfect administration, and possesses a limitless treasury. There is no shortage in His resources. He grants success to anyone and everyone who acts accordingly. Though He rewards virtue and good deeds, He also covers up the various weaknesses and shortcomings of man. He is Oft-Returning with forgiveness and Forbearing. Allah the Exalted is privy to thousands of faults in His servants, but He does not reveal them. A time does come when man becomes bold and continues to increase in his vices, without deriving any benefit from the

forbearance of God and His covering up their shortcomings; in fact, he begins to grow stronger in an atheistic vein. It is then that the indignation of God no longer permits for such an audacious person to go unseized and so they are disgraced. Maulvi Abdullah Ghaznavi was given a revelation in relation to Muhammad Husain that he possessed a certain weakness. Muhammad Husain asked him to disclose it, but he responded by saying that the forbearing nature of Allah Almighty prevented him from doing so. Then, Maulvi Abdullah Ghaznavi also saw a dream in which Muhammad Husain's clothes were torn; this dream has now come true.

In short, my only intent was to elaborate that the mercy (*rahimiyyat*) of God has a distinctive quality which covers up the shortcomings of people, but before one's weaknesses may be hidden, there needs to be some action. If there is a deficiency or shortfall in one's actions, Allah the Exalted disguises them by virtue of His mercy. The difference between graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*) and mercy (*rahimiyyat*) is that the former has no relation to actions and deeds, whereas in the latter case, actions and deeds have a role to play; though human weakness exists as well. The mercy of God desires to cover man's shortcomings. Furthermore, the Master of the Day of Judgement is a being who fulfils the objective at hand. Remember well that these 'Mother Attributes' are a spiritual illustration, which depict God. As soon as one ponders over them, God immediately comes before us and the soul fervently falls into prostration before Him with pleasure. Hence, this chapter begins from *الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ* (*All praise belongs to Allah*), and continues from here in indirect speech. After the mention of these four attributes, however, immediately thereafter the style of speech changes since these attributes, in a manner of speaking, bring God before us. It was only proper and in accordance with the demands of eloquence that the style of address hereafter changes from indirect speech to direct speech. Therefore, the completion of this initial portion of the chapter naturally turns our faces towards the addressee and upon this we say:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ¹

Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help.

One ought to bear in mind that the words *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* appear together without anything between them. However, the phrase *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*) takes precedence even in the context of time, because it was merely on

¹ *al-Fatihah*, 1:5

account of the graciousness of God—and not due to any prayer or request of our own—that God made us humans and blessed us with a multiplicity of faculties and bounties. When these blessings were granted to us, we had not prayed for them; it was only since God had conferred His grace upon us that we received these favours. This is why servitude to God takes precedence.

Graciousness and Mercy

I would like to state once again—and this point is worthy of note—that divine favour is of two kinds. Firstly, there is graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*) and the second kind is known as mercy (*rahimiyyat*). The grace of *rahmaniyyat* is that which was in operation even before we ever existed or came into being. For example, even before we existed, Allah the Exalted created the heaven and earth, the sun and moon, as well as other earthly and heavenly creations, all of which exist to serve us, and from which we derive benefit. The animals also derive benefit from them, but when even they too have been created for the benefit of mankind, and come to their use, it can be said in general that man is the one who truly benefits from these creations. Observe how humans eat the highest quality food for physical nourishment; the highest quality meats are for man, while scraps and bones are for dogs. Although animals partake in physical benefits, they do not partake of spiritual pleasures. Hence, these are the two kinds of divine favour; the first kind is granted even before we have come into being; and the second kind is a demonstration of the grandeur of *rahimiyyat*, which is manifested after prayer and which requires action.

The Mutual Relationship between Prayer and the Law of Nature

It seems appropriate at this instance to elaborate that prayer has always had a connection with the law of nature. The entire toil and labour of the naturalists of this day and age, who are utterly uninformed and ignorant of the true sciences, is to imitate the social norms of Europe. They consider prayer to be a self-invented belief; therefore, it seems appropriate to explain in some detail the concept of prayer.

Now observe that when a child becomes restless and uneasy on account of hunger and weeps for milk, a mother's breast begins to surge with milk even though

the child knows nothing of prayer. Yet, what causes the wailing of a child to draw in milk? This is a phenomenon of which most people are generally aware. At times, it has been observed that mothers feel no milk in their breasts, and often there actually is none, but as soon as the painful cries of a child reaches the ears, milk begins to flow from within, as if the cries of a child have a connection with the drawing in and flowing forth of milk. I honestly proclaim that if our cries are as equally passionate, this arouses the fervour of God's grace and mercy and draws them in. I can say from my own experience that I have experienced the grace and mercy of God which descends in the form of the acceptance of prayer, being pulled towards me; in fact, I should say that I have seen it. If, however, the unenlightened philosophers of this day and age cannot feel or see this phenomenon, then this truth cannot be dispelled from the earth; especially when I am ready at all times to exhibit a demonstration of the acceptance of prayer.¹

In short, the acceptance of prayer has parallels in the law of nature, and in every era He manifests living examples. It is for this very reason that God has taught us the prayer:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ²

Guide us in the right path — The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings.

This is the will and law of God Almighty, which none can change. In the supplication إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (*Guide us in the right path*), we ask God to perfect and complete our deeds. When one reflects upon these words, it apparently seems that this verse instructs us to employ the use of these words to supplicate so that we may be guided to the right path. However, prior to this verse the words إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ³ (*Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we implore for help*) tell us to benefit from this instruction first. In other words, in order to traverse the stations of 'the right path', one must employ their untarnished faculties to seek help from Allah. Regard for apparent means are also necessary and one who forsakes them is ungrateful for God's blessings. Now observe, God Almighty has created our tongues which are composed of nerves and muscles and if it had not been created in this manner, we would not be able to speak. He granted us a tongue for prayer, which can articulate the sentiments and desires of our heart.

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 32, date 31 August 1901, pp. 1-3

² *al-Fatihah*, 1:6-7

³ *al-Fatihah*, 1:5

If we never employ our tongue for the purpose of prayer, then this is our own misfortune. There are many illnesses which, if contracted leave the tongue immediately paralysed. This is graciousness (*rahimiyyat*). Similarly, God has instilled within the heart a nature of humility and meekness, and has invested it with the faculties of thought and reflection. Hence, remember that if we forsake these strengths and faculties in prayer, then such a supplication will be neither beneficial, nor effective. For when a person has made no use of the gift already granted to them, what benefit will they derive from another? This is why the words *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*) which precede *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) express that we have not left unused, nor wasted away the gifts and faculties already granted to us by God. Remember! The distinctive quality of graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*) is that it bestows the ability to benefit from the grace of mercy (*rahimiyyat*). In this context, when God Almighty states *أَدْعُونِي أَجْتَبْكُمْ*¹ (*Pray unto Me; I will answer your prayer*), this is not a mere figure of speech; in fact, human dignity calls for it. To beg is human and to bestow is divine. A person who does not accept this is unjust. Prayer is a state of such bliss that unfortunately, I am at a loss to find the words with which I can fully describe this joy and pleasure before the world. This can only be understood when one experiences it themselves.

In short, among the conditions of prayer, firstly it is incumbent that one performs good deeds and believes. For such a one who prays without first rectifying their beliefs and performing good deeds, puts God to test, as it were. So the fact is that in the prayer *إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ* (*Guide us in the right path*) the object is to implore God so that He may perfect and complete our actions. Then, with the words *صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ* (*The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings*) it is made even more clear that we seek guidance to the path of those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings; we implore God to save us from the path of those who have incurred divine displeasure and who, on account of their evil deeds, are the subject of God's chastisement. Furthermore, reference to those who have erred indicates that we have been taught to pray so that we may be safeguarded from going astray, for without God's support, we would wander in misguidance.

Another point worthy of bearing in mind is that in this instance, there is a parallel series of clauses that correspond with one another to form a pattern.

¹ *al-Mu'min*, 40:61

Firstly, there is *اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ* (*All praise belongs to Allah*); that is to say, Allah combines in Himself all perfect attributes, possessing every excellence and free from every imperfection; secondly, there is *رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ* (*Lord of all the worlds*); thirdly, there is *الرَّحِيْمِ* (*the Gracious*); fourthly, there is *الرَّحِيْمِ* (*the Merciful*); fifthly, there is *مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ* (*Master of the Day of Judgement*). The supplications that follow hereafter correspond to these five aforementioned attributes. The sequence begins with *اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* and this corresponds with *اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ*. This may be paraphrased as: O Allah Who is the Possessor collectively of all noble attributes and is free from every defect, it is You alone Whom we worship. The God that Muslims know of is one who possesses all the excellences that may be fathomed by the human mind; in fact, He is even higher and far greater than what man can conceive. For the truth is that the human mind, human thought and human intelligence can never, and in no way encompass, the attributes of God Almighty. And so the Muslim believes in a Supreme God, Who is perfect and complete in His attributes. The followers of all other faiths feel embarrassed—and they must feel this way—when expounding their concept of God in public before others.

The Hindu Concept of God

Let us take the example of the god in whom the Hindus have believed. They state that the Vedas support the concept of a god who has not created even a particle in the universe, nor has he created souls. Can there be any place of escape for one who believes in such a god? What harm is there if such a god were to die? For when all of these things exist independently and sustain themselves, then what need is there for God's existence in order to support and sustain their lives? For example, if a person were to shoot an arrow, and the individual dies while the arrow is still in flight, how would this effect the state of the arrow? Once it has left the hands of the one who shot it, the arrow no longer depends on the archer. In the same vein, if it was suggested in relation to the God of the Hindus that he would die at some point, no Hindu would be able to tell us of any detriment that this would cause. However, we for our part cannot attribute such things to God, for in the word 'Allah' itself there is an indication that He is free from every ill and defect. Similarly, if an Arya Samajist believes that bodies and souls are eternal and have always existed, we would put forth that in the case that this is your belief, what proof at all can you give for the existence of God? If you respond by asserting that His task was to join things together, we would respond by saying

that when the Hindus believe that matter and souls are eternal and self-existing, then their being joined together is far more insignificant a phenomenon—and so they should well possess the potential to join themselves together as well. Similarly, when they speak of the teaching, for example, that God has instructed in the Vedas that if a woman is unable to conceive a child from her present husband, she may sleep with another man to bear a child, do tell us how such a God would be perceived? Or if for example, the teaching is presented that God is unable to grant eternal salvation to a person who loves Him and is devoted to Him, but rather at the Great Dissolution of the universe (*mahapralaya*), it is necessary for God to return even those who have attained salvation to the cycle of reincarnation; or if it is suggested about God that He cannot grant anything of His own grace and compassion, instead everyone shall receive only the results of their actions, then what need remains for such a God? Hence, a person who believes in such a God will have to suffer severe embarrassment.

The Christian Concept of God

In the same manner, when the Christians assert that their God is Christ and then they state in his relation that he was beaten at the hands of the Jews, Satan continued to test him, hunger and thirst took their toll on him, and he was put on the cross in a state of failure, what wise person would be prepared to believe in such a God? Therefore, in this manner, all of these nations are put to shame when they speak of the God in whom they believe. A Muslim, however, is never embarrassed in any gathering when they speak of their own God, because any merit and excellent quality that one can fathom is possessed by the God in whom they believe; and He is pure from any defect or evil that one can imagine. In Surah al-Fatihah, Allah is declared to be the possessor of all praiseworthy qualities. In truth, *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*All praise belongs to Allah*) corresponds with *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (*Thee alone do we worship*). After this appears *رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ* (*Lord of all the worlds*) and the task of divine providence (*rububiyyat*), is to nurture and bring to perfection, just as a mother nurtures her child, cleans it, keeps it away from all kinds of filth and uncleanness and feeds it milk. In other words, one could say a mother helps her child. Now corresponding to this we have here *إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (*Thee alone do we implore for help*) and then *الرَّحْمَنِ* (*the Gracious*), who bestows His grace without a desire from man, prior to his request and before any deeds are performed; if our body was not fashioned in its present form, we would not be able to prostrate, or bow. Therefore,

إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (*Thee alone do we implore for help*) has been stated here to correspond with divine providence (*rububiyyat*). Just as a garden cannot grow and flourish without water, in the same way, if one is deprived of the water of God's grace, we too cannot flourish and grow. A tree conducts water through xylem vessels and openings that extend from their roots. Botany tells us that the branches of a tree pull water upwards and possess a capacity to absorb. Similarly, servitude to God also possesses an absorbing capacity, which draws in and sucks the grace of God. Hence, الرَّحْمَنُ (*the Gracious*) corresponds with إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (*Guide us in the right path*); that is to say that if we were not blessed with God's graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*), and if God had not bestowed these strengths and faculties upon us, how could we have derived benefit from this divine grace?¹

Guidance is Received by the Graciousness of God

Therefore, إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (*Guide us in the right path*) corresponds with الرَّحْمَنُ (*the Gracious*) because it is no one's right to receive guidance; rather, it is only through the graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*) of God that this grace can be attained. Moving on, صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ (*The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings*) corresponds with الرَّحِيمِ (*the Merciful*) because one who offers this prayer incessantly derives grace from the fountain of divine mercy (*rahimiyyat*). In doing so, a person expresses: 'O God, Who accepts prayers through His special favour, show us the way of the Messengers, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous; who occupied themselves in prayer and spiritual struggles and were rewarded with a diverse multitude of insights, verities, visions and revelations; and who attained to the pinnacle of divine understanding through continuous prayer, humility and good deeds.'

Divine mercy (*rahimiyyat*) comprises the quality of compensating for loss. It has been narrated in a Hadith that if it were not for divine grace, salvation could not be attained. Similarly, we learn from the Hadith that Hazrat Ayesah, may Allah be pleased with her, asked the Holy Prophet^{sa}: 'Your holiness! Is this so in your case as well?' The Holy Prophet^{sa} affectionately placed his hand over her head and said: 'Indeed.' The foolish and ignorant from among the Christians have levelled allegations in this regard due to their lack of understanding and flawed knowledge. They do not comprehend that this was an expression of the Prophet's perfect servitude to God, and was a means of absorbing divine providence. I have

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 33, dated 10 September 1901, pp. 1-2

experienced this myself and found many a time that—rather I always find that whenever humility and humbleness reach an extreme, and our soul begins to flow with servitude to God and humility, reaching the threshold of God, the Bestower of all gifts, a luminosity and divine light descends from on high and appears to resemble the passage of pure water from one channel to another.

The Light and Blessings of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

Hence, on various instances, wherever the humility and humbleness of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, may be seen to reach the heights of perfection, it appears that he was supported and illumined by the succour and light of the Holy Spirit in equal degree. The state of the deeds and actions of our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, clearly demonstrate this. In fact, the sphere of his light and blessings is so vast that his manifestation and reflection can be observed to extend into all eternity. As such, all the bounty and grace of God Almighty that is being sent down in this day and age is received through obedience and subservience to none other than the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

I truthfully say and proclaim on the basis of my own experience that no one can perform true virtue, attain the pleasure of God Almighty, and be fortunate enough to receive the divine favours, blessings, insights, verities and visions, that are bestowed upon one who purifies their soul to the highest degree, until they are lost in subservience to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Evidence of this is found from the word of God Almighty Himself:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ¹

Say, 'If you love Allah, follow me: then will Allah love you.

I am a practical and living proof of this claim by God Almighty. Recognise me in light of the hallmarks that represent the saints and beloved of God Almighty as established by the Holy Quran. Hence, the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, possessed such perfect morals that even if an old lady took hold of his hand, the Holy Prophet^{sa} would remain there listening to her attentively; and until she would leave him, he would not leave her.

¹ Aal-e-Imran, 3:32

Guidance to Save Oneself from the Ways of Those Who Have Incurred Divine Displeasure and Those Gone Astray

Moving on, *غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ* (Not the path of those who have incurred Thy displeasure, and nor those who have gone astray) corresponds with *مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ* (Master of the Day of Judgement). One who incessantly prays to be saved from incurring divine displeasure and being led astray receives grace from the fountain of *مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ* (Master of the Day of Judgement). The meaning and connotation of this is: 'O You Who are the Master of the Day of Judgement, save us from being like the Jews who fell prey to the plague and other worldly afflictions, etc., and who were destroyed by divine wrath; or from being like the Christians, to whom the path of salvation was lost.' In this verse, the Jews have been described as *maghdub* or those who have incurred the wrath of God, because the misfortune of their evil deeds brought upon them divine chastisement in this very world. For they rejected the pious Prophets of God Almighty and His righteous servants, and hurt them time and again. It should also be borne in mind that here in Surah Fatihah, God Almighty has guided us to refrain from following the way of the Jews. Furthermore, He has brought this chapter to a close on the word *ad-daleen* and in doing so, He has taught us to save ourselves from the path of the misguided. What is the secret in this? The hidden reality is that an era was to dawn upon the community of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, when Muslims would imitate the Jews and only give regard to the apparent; they would rise up to reject the holy men of God, whilst applying literal meanings to metaphors, just as the Jews rejected the Messiah, son of Mary. The trial which the Jews were faced with was that they mocked the interpretation of Jesus^{as} and asserted that if God had really intended that someone else would appear in the likeness of Elijah, why then did God not clearly state this in the prophecy? Similarly, our opponents have taken the same route in practice and have left no stone unturned in rejecting me and causing me grief. They have even issued edicts of death against me and have sought to disgrace and annihilate me through all kinds of schemes and conspiracies. If, by the grace of God Almighty, the British government had not ruled this land, these people would have gladdened their hearts with my murder. However, God Almighty frustrated them in all their objectives and fulfilled His promise in my favour:

وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ¹

And Allah will protect thee from men.

Therefore, in this prayer, the phrase *غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ* (*Not the path of those who have incurred Thy displeasure*), informs us about the state of a party from among the Muslims that will oppose the Promised Messiah. Moreover, the word *ad-daleen* indicates that in the era of the Promised Messiah^{as}, the trial of Christianity would reach its pinnacle in severity. At that time, the dispensation unveiled by God Almighty would be the community of the Promised Messiah. It is for this reason that God Almighty named the Promised Messiah^{as}, ‘the one who would break the cross’, as we learn from the Holy Prophet^{sa} in the Hadith. The actual fact is that every Reformer (*Mujaddid*) came to rectify the disorders that were prevalent at the time. Now reflect for the sake of God and it becomes evident that presently, the pen and tongue have been employed in support of the Christian concept of salvation so forcefully that if one flips through the pages of history, no parallel can be found to exist in any other era, as far as efforts to support a false doctrine are concerned. At present, proponents who support this disorder of Christianity have gone to the very extreme in their writings. So when unjust and vigorous allegations have been levelled against the true concept of God’s Unity, and upon the chastity, dignity and truth of the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and upon the divine origin of the Book of Allah, would the jealousy of Allah Almighty not demand that he be sent from on high who was to come and break the cross? Has God Almighty forgotten His promise *إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ*² (*Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian*). Verily, remember that the promises of God are true. In accordance with His promise, He has sent a warner to the world, and while the world has not accepted him, God Almighty will surely accept him and demonstrate his truthfulness with immensely powerful onslaughts. I tell you truthfully that in accordance with the promise of God Almighty, I have appeared as the Promised Messiah; accept if you will, or reject me if you so please. But remember, your denial will amount to nothing. Whatsoever God has willed shall indeed come to pass, because God Almighty has already revealed to me, as recorded in *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyyah*:

¹ *al-Ma’idah*, 5:68

² *al-Hijr*, 15:10

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَفْعُولًا¹

The prophecy of Allah and His Messenger has been fulfilled at its duly appointed time and whatever God had willed was bound to happen.

21 January 1898

Seeking Forgiveness Is a Shield in the Face of Divine Chastisement and Grievous Calamities

The plague epidemic itself is a grievous affliction. Yet, another law that is even more severe exists above this; another calamity that far outweighs the phenomenon of disease. Women and children too are separated and houses are emptied at its behest. Reflecting over this illness and the law that governs it, I felt a pain in my heart, so I supplicated in my *Tahajjud* prayer upon which I received the revelation:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَ حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ²

Surely, Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts.

I now consider that perhaps the revelation: ‘O Lightning, do not strike from heaven,’ relates to this as well.

I would like you to understand that Allah the Exalted has mercy on those who supplicate before the descent of affliction, and who seek forgiveness from Him and give charity, and He saves them from divine chastisement. Do not listen to my words as though they were mere tales. I advise you for the sake of Allah that you ought to ponder over your circumstances. You ought to not only engage in prayer yourself, but exhort your friends to do the same. Seeking forgiveness from God serves as a shield in the face of divine chastisement and grievous calamities. In the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted states:

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ³

Allah would not punish them while they sought forgiveness.

Therefore, if you desire to be safeguarded from this divine chastisement, then seek forgiveness abundantly.

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, p. 34, dated 17 September 1901, pp. 1-2

² *ar-Ra'd*, 13:12

³ *al-Anfal*, 8:34

The government has the right to put the infected in quarantine. In other words, those that are isolated will be grappling with death. There will be no distinction between the rich and poor, male or female, nor old or young. Therefore, if God forbid the plague spreads to a locality in which any of you reside, I instruct you to be among the first who obey the laws of the government.

There are reports that in most areas the police forces have been met with confrontation. In my view, to oppose the laws of the government is rebellion, which is a terrible crime. It is, however, an obligation of the government to appoint such officials who are well-mannered and honest, and who are aware of the traditions, customs and religious practices of the land. In short, take it upon yourselves to obey the laws, and inform your friends and neighbours of the advantages that are attached to these regulations. I say repeatedly that now is the time for prayers; it appears that this epidemic has turned its face towards the Punjab. Therefore, it is necessary for each and every one to be forewarned and awakened so that they may supplicate and seek forgiveness from God. It is the stance of the Holy Quran that once divine punishment descends, seeking forgiveness cannot save one from chastisement.

How to Save Oneself from Divine Chastisement

Hence, before divine punishment arrives to close the door of repentance, seek repentance. When worldly laws arouse such fear, then why should people not fear the law of God Almighty? A person is left with no choice but to taste a calamity once it has arrived. Every one of you ought to strive and wake for *Tahajjud* prayer; and also offer special supplications in your five daily Prayers when you stand after the *ruku*. Repent from anything and everything which displeases God. Repentance is to abandon all the evil deeds and situations which cause the displeasure of God, and to bring about a sincere change; to move forward and adopt righteousness. One ought to hold morality in high regard, for this too brings the mercy of God; refine your habits; be free from anger and replace it with humility and meekness. Along with the reformation of your morals, give charity to the extent of your means as well. Allah Almighty states: ¹ يُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا¹, i.e. they feed, for the pleasure of God, the poor, orphans, and prisoners, and they say: ‘We give you only for the pleasure of Allah Almighty, and fear a day that is most terrifying.’ In short, engage yourselves in prayer and repentance, and continue to give charity

¹ *ad-Dabr*, 76:9

so that Allah the Exalted may treat you with grace and compassion.

A Course of Morality for the Community

Your moral state ought to be so admirable, that with pure intentions, when you seek to advise someone or direct their attention towards an error they have committed, you ought to do so in an appropriate atmosphere so that the person is not offended. Do not view anyone with contempt. Do not break anyone's heart. There should be no mutual discord within the community. Never look down upon your poor brethren in faith. Do not take pride unjustly in your wealth and riches, or in the distinction of your family background and consider others to be inferior and unworthy. In the sight of God Almighty, honourable is the one who is righteous. As such, Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىكُمْ¹

Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you.

One should treat others also with the best morals, for those who exhibit ignoble morals do not act with goodness. People search for excuses to engage in litigation against the community. While the people are afflicted with one plague, our community is faced with two plagues. If even one person from an entire community commits an evil, that sole individual tarnishes the whole community. Increase your capacity in wisdom, forbearance and forgiveness. Respond to even the most foolish of people with dignity and goodness. Nonsense must not be returned with similar absurdity. I am certain that the teaching of Jesus, on whom be peace, prescribed a similar wise practice, for if it were not so, Jesus^{as} would have gone about suffering physical abuse daily. The Romans were in rule, and the Jewish priests and Pharisees were held in high regard by the government. In that era, if Jesus^{as} had not turned the other cheek upon being slapped on one, he would be assaulted and made to stand trial every other day. Even though Jesus^{as} imparted such a soft teaching, the Jews would not leave him in peace. In that day and age the prevalent circumstances, as it would seem, called for a teaching like the Gospel. At present, our community is almost in a similar state. Do you not see how in the case brought against me by a Christian man named Martyn Clark, even

¹ *al-Hujurat*, 49:14

Muhammad Husain gave testimony in his support? Now you should know that we can expect nothing from even our own people. As far as the government is concerned, it is provoked to harbour mistrust against me; and in a way the government is excused if it does happen to think ill of me, because after all, it does not possess knowledge of the unseen. For this reason, I have been compelled to submit memorials to the government and inform them of my circumstances personally, so that they could be apprised of the true and honest facts. It is befitting in these trying times to subdue the inner self and adopt righteousness. My only desire in this discourse is to advise you so that this may serve as an admonition. The world is a transient abode and ultimately all must die. Happiness lies in religious objectives. Religion is our very purpose.

The Essence of Ramadan

The Arabic word *ramadun* refers to the heat of the sun. In Ramadan, a person restrains themselves from food and drink, and all other physical pleasures. Further, an individual develops within themselves a burning passion and fervour to fulfil the commandments of Allah Almighty. Therefore, spiritual and physical warmth and heat constitute the Arabic word known in dual form as *ramadan*. It is my view that those lexicographers who suggest that the word *ramadan* has its etymological roots in the fact that this was a month of heat is incorrect, because this is no distinguishing factor in Arabia. Spiritual ‘heat’ refers to spiritual fervour and joy, and religious zeal. The word *ramadun* also alludes to that heat which causes rocks and the like to become heated.¹

29 January 1898

Man’s Spiritual Capabilities Are Affected by that which He Worships

Man’s spiritual capabilities are affected immensely by that which he worships. It may be observed that whenever a Hindu is seen, one can sense from them an air of negligence. Why is this the case? This is because their self-invented deity is just as negligent and cannot be awakened until a bell is rung before it, just as the English ring a bell to announce that food is ready. It is for this reason that these people are deprived of the divine insight and healing that is reaped from a life

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 27, dated 24 July 1901, pp. 1-2

of true spirituality. Otherwise, materialistically speaking these people are quite wealthy and affluent.

Provisions by Way of Trial and Provisions by Way of Anointment

The fact of the matter is that provisions are of two kinds. There is one form that serves as a trial and the other is by way of anointment. Provisions by way of trial are those which have no relation with Allah; in fact, such provision continues to move man away from God, until it destroys him completely. It is to this that Allah Almighty alludes in the following verse: ¹ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ أَمْوَالِكُمْ، i.e. let not your wealth ruin you. Provision by way of anointment is that which is devoted to God. God becomes the Guardian of such people. Such individuals consider all their possessions to belong to God and they demonstrate this through their action. Consider the state of the companions—when faced with trying times, they sacrificed whatever they had in the way of Allah Almighty. Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq^{ra} was the first to don the garb of poverty. But how did Allah the Exalted reward him for this? It was he who became the very first Caliph. Therefore, in order to be blessed with true merit, goodness and spiritual pleasure, only that wealth can be of use which is spent in the way of God.²

30 January 1898

The Truth About the World and Its Pleasures

In reality, the world and its pleasures are nothing more than a sport and pastime. They are temporary and short-lived, and the result of these joys is that a person is distanced from God. However, the pleasure derived from attaining deeper insight into God is something which no eye has seen and no ear has heard; none of the other senses have experienced this sensation. It is a piercing phenomenon. At every moment it gives rise to a new form of pleasure which had not been experienced previously.

Man has a unique relationship with God Almighty. The divines have presented the most subtle discourses on the bond that exists between the human essence and divine nature of providence. If the mouth of an infant is put up against a

¹ *al-Munafiqun*, 63:10

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 22, dated 23 June 1899, p. 1

rock, could any sensible man entertain that milk would flow forth from within the rock and the child would be satiated? Of course not. In the same manner, until a human being falls down at the threshold of God Almighty, their soul does not pass through the process of complete self-effacement, which is needed to foster a relationship with divine providence, nor is this even possible until the soul is reduced to a state of non-existence or to a state that resembles nothingness; for this is what divine providence requires. Until this is so, the soul cannot be nourished with spiritual milk.

The Arabic word *lahw* comprises all the pleasures of food and drink. The ultimate outcome of these pleasures, as you can observe, is nothing but distaste. Pride over forms of adornment, modes of transport, fine houses, authority or family background are all things that are ultimately viewed by their possessors as abhorrent, causing grief, saddening one's disposition, and turning it restless.

The Arabic word *la'b* among other things, implies a love for women. When a man is intimate with a woman, his passion and pleasure ultimately turns dull. However, if all this is preceded by true love for none other than Allah Almighty, a person experiences satisfaction upon satisfaction, and pleasure upon pleasure, until finally the door of true divine insight is opened to them and they enter into an eternal and undying satisfaction, where nothing but purity and cleanliness exists. That pleasure lies in God, so strive to seek Him and search for Him, for this is true pleasure.¹

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 22, 23 June 1899, p. 1

**An Address Delivered by the Promised Messiah^{as}
on 31 January 1898 After *Fajr* Prayer**

Man Inherently Seeks to Follow Perfection

It ought to be remembered that in the likeness of transmittable diseases, excellent qualities too must be contagious. A believer has been commanded to elevate their morals to a degree where they become contagious. For even the finest of actions cannot be admirable or worthy of emulation until it possesses an inherent radiance and magnetism; its luminescence draws in the attention of others while its magnetism attracts them. Ultimately, the outstanding merits of the action itself encourages a person to act accordingly. One may observe that Hatim has a good name because he was renowned for his generosity, though I cannot say for certain whether his generosity was sincere. Similarly, Rustam and Asfandiyar's courage are known to all, though we cannot say without a shadow of doubt that they were sincere. It is my faith and belief that until a person becomes a true believer, their acts of virtue, irrespective of how magnificent they may be, cannot be free from the gild of ostentation. Nonetheless, since the actions themselves are virtuous at their root, it is this valuable essence which is seen as honourable in every instance. Therefore, despite the gild of deception and pretentious display, such actions are held in esteem.

On one occasion, Khwaja Sahib related a narration to me and I have read this story myself as well. When Sir Philip Sidney was wounded in the siege of the fort at Zutphen in the Netherlands during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in his throes of death, at a time of intense thirst, a small vessel of water was brought for him. At the time, water was scarce. Another wounded soldier lay nearby and he too was terribly thirsty. The soldier began to look at Sir Philip Sidney with intense longing and desire. Upon noticing the soldier's wish, Sidney did not drink the water himself, but rather gave it to the soldier as an act of selflessness, saying: 'Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.' Even in the face of death people do not refrain from ostentation. Often those who wish to establish or portray themselves as possessing sublime morals do perform such deeds. Therefore, human beings do not always do good with pure intentions when confronted with tribulation or death. However, the question is why does man not follow all that is good? In response to this, I would say that man by way of his nature does not follow anything until it possesses the fragrance of perfection. It is this very secret, on

account of which Allah the Exalted has always raised the Prophets, peace be upon them, and maintained the institution of Reformers (*Mujaddidin*) after the Seal of the Prophets, because along with their own practical example, these personages command a spiritual attraction and influence, and virtue of the highest degree can be observed in their persons. This is because a human being inherently seeks to follow perfection. If the nature of human beings had not possessed this faculty, there would be no need for the institution of Prophets, peace be upon them.

What Causes the Divinely Commissioned to Be Opposed?

There is the question as to why the Prophets, peace be upon them, and those who are commissioned by God Almighty, are opposed, and why people disregard their teaching? This is caused by the state of people themselves—a state which becomes the very reason for the advent of these holy personages in the first place. An ocean of sin and impiety rages on amidst the people, while they indulge in all forms of malefaction and wickedness, distancing them and depriving them of God Almighty; and it is this that suppresses their fine and virtuous essence. Since evil actions are at their pinnacle, the essence of human nature, which drives towards every form of perfection or uppermost limit, is diverted to follow a course of evil. It is this very hidden reality, which causes people to initially oppose the Prophets, peace be upon them, and those who are divinely commissioned by God, and to neglect their teaching. Ultimately, a time comes when people begin to turn towards these paradigms of virtue and the masses are once again attracted to perfection in goodness. This is why God Almighty states:

وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ¹

And the Hereafter with thy Lord is for the righteous.

The Effect of Apparent Grace

In short, human nature has been instilled with the characteristic that it desires to pursue every form of perfection. You may observe how in the case of modern British craftsmanship, for example, even things like the needle and knife, etc., are held in high regard. These items are preferred immensely over domestic products, even though not few, rather most of these foreign products, are artificially glossed. But even so, their apparent splendour and sheen is so alluring that they

¹ az-Zukhruf, 43:36

dazzle the eyes, and their glow is so captivating that they draw in one's attention. Do you not observe how quickly the sale of gilded artificial jewellery continues to increase? If this merchandise is placed next to genuine goods, the genuine appears to be artificial, while the artificial appears to be genuine. The lustre and glow of these items shines so brightly that our native craftsman are unable to produce a similar likeness. Therefore, even though people are perfectly aware that these goods are coated artificially, this fabrication does not bother them in the least. Observe any of the things they produce, whether domestic clothing or shoes, the educated gentleman expresses an aversion to these things. Why? Only because British goods possess a distinct, outward grace and elegance. These folk process a piece of leather to such an extent that they are able to achieve a softness and glow. Leaving this aside, even something as insignificant as a thread manufactured by these people is immensely attractive. In short, these items have reduced all domestically produced goods to nothing. In fact, I have even heard that certain local chiefs are so averse to domestic products that even their clothes are sent to Paris to be cleaned and they even have their drinking water sent to them from abroad.

What is the hidden cause that underpins such consumer decisions? The fact is that the British produce goods that possess an apparent beauty, lustre and charm. This is why people have turned to them. Although there are other honest people as well, yet people are inclined towards the disbelievers, due to their apparent elegance and splendour. This is the case with morals and deeds as well. Until their splendour and radiance is elevated to such a degree, humankind cannot be influenced. Those who are weak themselves cannot attract others who are weak.

The Truth Behind the Holy Quran Taking Oath on Created Entities

God Almighty states:

وَالْعَصْرَ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّابِرِ¹

By the fleeting Time; surely, man is in a state of loss; except those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to accept truth, and exhort one another to be steadfast.

Here, Allah states: 'By the Time,' i.e. the era of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. Our unwise opponents of the present day and age

¹ *al-Asr*, 103:2-4

object that the Holy Quran has taken oaths on created things, while it has prohibited the rest of us from doing so. In places it swears by the fig, at other places the night and day, and still at other places, by the earth and even by the human soul. These allegations have a very negative effect.

It ought to be remembered that it is common practice in the Holy Quran and in the way of God that in order to prove and establish various matters of ideological nature, He makes reference to such things whose inner properties are evidenced by clear, manifest and visible proof. Hence, to swear by such creation is to present them as an argument and precedent.

Is India *Dar-ul-Harb*?

Prior to answering this allegation in further detail, I should first like to speak of another important matter. Every Muslim must remember that in the context of government, we do not consider India to be *Dar-ul-Harb* (i.e. the Abode of War). This is my belief. Although other scholars who oppose me have fiercely disagreed with me on this issue, and have spared no opportunity to cause me grief, I cannot hide the truth out of fear of these temporary pains and present grief. It is my faith that in the context of rule, India is certainly not *Dar-ul-Harb*—not in the least. Just think about the court case filed against me. If the very same lawsuit had been filed against me under the Sikh reign and if one of their Gurus or a Brahman stood against me in court, executing me without any investigation or inquiry would be no significant matter. However, it is truly an excellence of the British empire's rule that a doctor, who is also a renowned reverend, stands against me in court, but I am not treated harshly at all in the investigations and proceedings of the court. Captain Douglas was not concerned in the least of the reverend's own eminence, or of his position or rank; and so he expressed to Mr. Le Marchand, who is a high ranking officer of police in Gurdaspur, that he felt uneasy at heart about the case and that Abdul-Hameed should be questioned again. Ultimately, in view of justice, the Captain acquitted me.

Then, the British do not prevent us from practising the tenets of our faith; in fact, they have brought with them many blessings on account of which I have received ample opportunity to propagate my religion. I have been granted such peace and comfort that is unheard of in previous reigns. In this case, it is gravely unjust and far from Islamic teachings and morals that we should be ungrateful to them. Remember! A human being who is not grateful for the goodness shown

by another of their own kind cannot be grateful to God Almighty either. For he can observe the good done by man. How then will he be able to show gratitude for the favours of that Being Who is the most hidden of all and whom he cannot even see? Therefore, as far as government is concerned, I do not consider this land to be *Dar-ul-Harb*.

However, in my view, India is a *Dar-ul-Harb* as far as the pen is concerned. The Christian clergy wage a horrific war against Islam and they have stepped into this field of battle with the lances of the pen, not with spears and arrows. Therefore, the weapon with which we ought to enter this field of battle is the pen and nothing but the pen. I hold that it is the responsibility of each and every Muslim to participate in this war. Such attacks are made against Allah and His chosen Messenger that I am overwhelmed with grief and my heart trembles. Can we sit at rest after seeing such offensive books as *Mothers of the Believers—The Mysteries of the Court of Mustafa*,¹ which is a book whose very title resembles those of obscene novels. It is astonishing, however, that even in the estimation of the government, books such as *The Mysteries of the Court of London* are deemed worthy of being banned from publication, but a book which hurts the sentiments of 80 million Muslims is not banned. I do not desire in the least to make such a request of the government; in fact, I deem such a request to be most inappropriate as I have made evident in my memorial. However, I raise this issue because it is the duty of the government themselves, nonetheless, to monitor such writings. In any case, the government has granted complete freedom that if a Christian writes a book for the purpose of raising allegations against Islam, a Muslim is free to pen a rebuttal and write books in refutation of the Christian faith.

What Does Indignation for Islam Demand?

I say on oath that whenever I happen to come across a book of this nature, the world and all its possessions seem as insignificant to me as a fly. I ask, can such a person who is not impassioned on such an occasion be considered a Muslim? What face will they show God when they die? If you wish to see the example of Muslims, then look towards the community of the noble companions, who were not bothered by any kind of loss to their lives and wealth. They gave precedence

¹ In 1897, Ahmad Shah Shaiq, a Muslim turned Christian, wrote an extremely offensive and hurtful book attacking the wives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and named it *Ummahat-ul-Mu'minin—Darbar-e-Mustafa'i Kay Asrar*, i.e. Mothers of the Believers—The Mysteries of the Court of Mustafa. One thousand copies of this book were sent free to Muslims in India. [Publisher]

to the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger. To be content in the pleasure of God Almighty was the sole action on account of which the entire Holy Quran is full of praise for them, and it is due to this that they were awarded the medal of, ‘Allah being pleased with them.’ Therefore, until you develop such a distinction within yourself and until you feel such fervency and indignation for Islam, you must not consider yourself complete.

Our community ought to remember that in the context of government, we do not consider India to be *Dar-ul-Harb*—not in the least. In fact, due to the peace and blessings that we have received under this government and the freedom that this government has granted us to practice and propagate the tenets of our faith, my heart—like a bottle full of perfume—is replete with the fervour of loyalty and gratitude. However, I do consider this land to be a *Dar-ul-Harb* due to the Christian clergy. The Christian clergy have published almost 60 million books against Islam. In my opinion, those who observe and hear such attacks, yet remain absorbed in their own worry and grief, are not human. At this time, everyone ought to do whatever is possible to support Islam and demonstrate their loyalty in this war of the pen. When this just government does not prohibit us from publishing books in support of our religion and to repudiate the allegations of other faiths, in fact, when the government has assisted us in this cause through the press, post office and other means of publication, it is a grievous sin to remain silent in these circumstances. Of course, whatever is presented ought to be done so in a sensible manner and the purpose must not be to offend anyone. He who does not possess a burning heart and a tearful eye for the sake of Islam ought to remember that God Almighty has no concern for such people. Such a one ought to consider the degree to which they think over the means for their own success and the number of plans they devise for worldly purposes. Have they ever felt the same burning passion, fervour and heartfelt pain by the thought that attacks are being made against the holy personage of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and whether they concern themselves to defend him? And if nothing else is within their power, do they bother to pray before God with a burning heart? If any such ardour and heartfelt pain was present within them, it would be impossible for signs of this pure love to not manifest themselves. If someone purchases a pot that turns out to be broken, even this causes regret; in fact, a person is disappointed even if they misplace a needle. Then what sort of faith and belief in Islam is this that in the present era of peril, when onslaughts

are being waged against Islam one after the other, people sleep blissfully in peace and comfort. Do you not see that in addition to weekly and monthly newspapers and periodicals, the Christians distribute a large number of two-page leaflets and brief pamphlets daily, which equal fifty thousand at times, and sometimes they reach in the hundreds of thousands? They reprint these writings repeatedly and spend tens of millions of rupees like water.

Why Does Christianity Oppose Islam?

You ought to bear well in mind that in the minds and estimations of the Christian clergy, the Hindus are of no consequence, nor are they even slightly bothered by the other religions. As such, you will never hear that the Christians have published even half the number of books against Hinduism, which they publish to repudiate Islam. These people have no concern whatsoever with other religions, because they are devoid of the spirit of divine origin and truth themselves. They are lifeless religions like Christianity itself. However, these people spare no effort in their attempts to turn Islam into a lifeless faith, even though it is a living religion that comes from the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining God. On one occasion, I gathered all of their allegations and they have reached 3,000 in number; and now this number must have increased.

Remember that a mischievous individual plants doubt into the minds of others. Since they are bereft of truth, purity and virtue, they do as they please. I am absolutely certain that the Afghans of Amritsar do not observe the Prayer and consume alcohol. When they raise allegations in front of others, the people believe them and think that since they are descendants of saintly men, why would they lie? This gives rise to ill thoughts in the hearts of the common people, who begin to think that these allegations are valid. This is how these people hatch conspiracies. Thus, on the one hand, we have the Christian clergy, who openly write and publish books against Islam; and on the other hand, we have the current style of education in the West which, along with their books, carry a hidden poison. Philosophers in their own manner and historians in their own way present the actual occurrences in a negative light and then attack Islam.

In short, at present, the attacks made against Islam are of two sorts: firstly, those made by the Christian clergy and secondly, those levelled by philosophers. And so, in this hour, one ought to analyse their own faith in Islam.

The Philosophy of the Holy Quran Taking Oath on Created Entities

I once again, return to my initial discussion and state that the objections which are raised against the oaths of the Holy Quran are also similar in nature, to those mentioned above. After much reflection and contemplation, the secret disclosed to me is that wherever in the Holy Quran, at any particular instance, an improvident individual has raised an allegation, in the very same place lies hidden a treasure of the most sublime verities and insights. The reason such people remain oblivious to them is because they harbour an enmity for the truth; they only read the Holy Quran to criticise it and raise allegations against it. Bear in mind that there are two parts of the Holy Quran—in fact, there are three. Firstly, there is a part which even the simplest and most uneducated person can comprehend. The second part is disclosed to those people who sit at an average level; although they are not completely uneducated, yet they do not possess a very large capacity for knowledge. The third part is for those people who are abreast of the highest degrees of knowledge and who are known as philosophers. It is a distinct quality of the Holy Quran alone that it educates all of these three classes of people without differentiation. There is only one means by which an educated and average person, as well as a philosopher who sits at the highest level, can be educated all the same.

It is a matter of exclusive pride for the Holy Quran that every class of people derives grace from it in accordance with their own individual capacity and rank. Now for a response to the allegation which is levelled against the Holy Quran on its taking oaths. In the absence of a witness, an oath is deemed to stand as a witness in its place. Both in terms of customary and religious law, and even in common practice, it is an accepted fact that when a witness is not available, a sworn oath suffices and takes the place of testimony. Similarly, the custom employed by Allah Almighty in the Holy Quran is that in order to establish ideologies, God presents entities, which are plainly evident to serve as testimony for matters of conceptual nature.¹

It ought to be remembered that the method employed by Allah Almighty in the Holy Quran is that in order to establish matters of ideology, He presents things that are plainly evident to serve as a witness; and this is done so in the form of oaths. One must never forget that comparing the oaths of Allah the

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 20, dated 31 May 1901, p. 1-4

most Glorious with the oaths of man is to mix two things which have no relation whatsoever. The reason Allah Almighty forbids man from swearing on anything other than God is because when an individual takes an oath, their purpose is to put forth that which they have sworn on to take the place of such an eyewitness who by their personal knowledge can either attest to the truth or falsity of the statement in question. For if a person reflects, it becomes clear that the actual connotation of an oath—as I have just stated earlier—is but testimony. When an individual is unable to present ordinary witnesses, they are compelled to swear on oath, so that they may seek of it the benefit they otherwise could have expected from an eyewitness, if one had been present. However, to suggest or hold as a matter of doctrine that anyone besides God is Omnipresent, and able to affirm or reject someone's truth or punish them, or possesses power in any other matter, is brazen blasphemy. It is for this reason, that Allah the Exalted has instructed man in all divine scriptures that one must never take an oath on anything other than Allah.

This discourse makes evidently clear that the oaths of Allah Almighty are of a different nature and grandeur. God's objective is to present those entities that are plainly evident in the book of nature to serve as a witness in order to clear and unravel the complex secrets of the divine law. This end is achieved by swearing on oath. When someone who takes an oath, swears in the name of God Almighty for example, their intent is to demonstrate that Allah the Exalted is a witness over a certain incident which relates to them. In the same way and precisely in this manner, various apparent and evidently manifest actions of Allah Almighty bear witness to His immensely subtle, hidden secrets and actions. For this reason, in numerous places throughout the Holy Quran, God Almighty has put forth His visibly apparent actions as evidence to establish those divine workings of His, which are conceptual in nature. It is utterly foolish and ignorant to assert that Allah Almighty Himself has taken oath of something that is besides His own Being. For Allah the Exalted actually swears by His own actions, not on anything besides His own Being; and of course, God's actions are a part of Him. For example, when Allah swears by the heaven or a star, His purpose is not to take oath on an entity besides Himself; in fact, His intent is only to put forth as testimony the divine design and wisdom that is present in the heaven and stars, so as to shed light on His hidden actions.

Hidden Insights in the Oaths of God Almighty

In short, the oaths of Allah Almighty contain infinite secrets of divine insight, which are visible only to the sagacious. Therefore, by taking oaths, God Almighty presents as a witness things which are plainly evident in the law of nature to expound the various complexities in His divine law. God Almighty does this so that the book of his actions (the law of nature) serves as a witness for the book of His words (the Holy Quran). This mutual accord in God's word and action exists so that an honest seeker may increase in divine insight, tranquillity and faith. This is common practice in the Holy Quran. For example, God Almighty clinches the argument against the Brahamos and those who reject divine revelation by stating:

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ¹

Meaning, 'By the clouds, which give rain.' The word *raj'un*, among other things, refers to 'rain'. There is a permanent system of rain, just like there is order in the solar system. The night and day, as well as the solar and lunar eclipses follow their own system. Illness is governed by a process and a physician can say in light of this process that an epidemic will break out on a certain day. Therefore, there is a system that underpins everything because the law of nature established by Allah Almighty possesses order and perfect structure. None of His actions are without system and order.

Just as Allah the Exalted desires that people should fear Him, it is also His wish for people to be enlightened with knowledge, so that with its support, they are able to traverse the stations of divine insight. For on the one hand, where being acquainted with true knowledge gives birth to true fear of God, on the other hand such knowledge also results in worship of God. There are certain unfortunate people who become so engrossed in knowledge that they lose sight of divine decree and fate and begin to doubt the very Being of Allah Almighty. There are others who become so dependent on divine decree and fate that they forsake the acquisition of knowledge altogether. However, the Holy Quran has taught both aspects, and has done so perfectly. The Holy Quran desires to acquaint people with true knowledge and draws their attention to this aspect because this gives birth to fear of God. The more an individual increases in their understanding of God Almighty, the grandeur of God Almighty becomes equally apparent to them and they develop a love for Him in equal proportion. The reason a person

¹ *at-Tariq*, 86:12

is taught to believe in divine decree and fate is to ensure that they develop the attribute of trusting and believing in the Being of Allah Almighty; and so that once they learn of the essence of being content in the pleasure of Allah, they may attain true tranquillity and comfort, which is the fundamental purpose and objective of salvation.

I have just presented an example from the Holy Quran of an oath, where God states:

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ¹

Meaning, 'By the sky,' after which Allah Almighty uses the word *raj'un*. The word *sama'un* is used to mean the sky, atmosphere, rain or height. The word *raj'un* refers to something which returns again and again at the appointed time. In the rainy season, rain falls repeatedly, therefore it too is called *raj'un*. Similarly, rain falls from the sky also at its appointed times. Then Allah goes on to state:

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ²

Meaning, 'And by the earth which opens out with herbage.' The root cause of rain is the earth. When water in the earth evaporates into the sky, it rises into the atmosphere and condensation causes it to return in the form of precipitation. In this case, since the rain comes from the sky, it may be referred to as heavenly. Then, there is another particular time when rain is especially required—at the time when it is needed by farmers. If it rains immediately after the seeds are sown, everything is washed away. However, at other times rain is needed for growth and nourishment. In short, the need for rain, its benefit and the sight of it descending from the sky is perfectly and plainly evident; even a simple village farmer is aware of this phenomenon. Moreover, it ought to be remembered that if rain does not fall from the sky, the water on earth begins to dry as well. Hence, in times of drought, many water wells become dry completely and many others are left with scarce amounts of water. However, when rain descends from the sky, the waters of the earth too are stirred and begin to surge forth. At this instance, my intent in presenting this example is to demonstrate that Allah the Exalted has taken these oaths so they may serve as a witness to shed light on another matter, because even an ordinary landowner is aware of this phenomena. The matter which has been evidenced by these phenomena is:

¹ *at-Tariq*, 86:12

² *at-Tariq*, 86:13

أَنَّهُ لَقَوْلٌ فَضْلٌ وَمَا هُوَ بِالْهَزْلِ¹

In other words, it is surely the word of God and is a decisive word. It has come precisely at the appointed time of need and is accompanied by truth and wisdom; it has not come uselessly. Now observe that when the Holy Quran was revealed, did the spiritual order not demand that the word of God Almighty be revealed and that some man from heaven be commissioned to give back to the world its lost property? Study the history of the era in which the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah, was commissioned and you will learn of the state of the world. Worship of God Almighty had disappeared from the world and the imprint of God's Unity had been erased. Worship of Allah the Most Eminent had been replaced by false doctrines and the worship of false gods. A terrifying mask of ignorance and darkness had covered the earth. On the face of the earth, there remained no country, no patch and no land where the One God who is Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining was being worshipped. The Christians, being a people who worship the dead, were entangled in the spiral of trinity, and those residents of India who erroneously claimed that the Vedas taught divine oneness also worshipped 330 million gods. Therefore, God Almighty has drawn an illustration of that era Himself in the following words:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ²

Corruption has appeared on land and sea.

This statement is absolutely true; no man's tongue or pen can describe the state of that era in better words. Now observe the general law of God Almighty that precisely at a time of drought, ultimately divine grace is manifested and God's rain of mercy descends, granting the people joy. In the same way, when similar circumstances arose spiritually, it was necessary for the word of God Almighty to descend from on high. In other words, by showing the physical system of rain, God has guided man to understand the phenomenon of spiritual rain. Now who can deny that rain is in our best interests? This suggests that just as rain follows a system, there are appointed times for other forms of rain. Now does this context in the Holy Quran not speak of spiritual rain? You were drowned in discord. Your actions were corrupt and so was your faith. The world was about to fall into the pit of destruction. Why then would God not send down the rain of His

¹ at-Tariq, 86:14-15

² ar-Rum, 30:42

grace? Would He who has established a special system for the protection of our physical body ignore the spiritual system? Therefore, God presents as a witness the phenomenon of rain in the form of an oath because prophethood is a matter of spiritual and conceptual nature. Since the disbelievers of Mecca could not comprehend this spiritual system, God presents the physical system to help them understand. Therefore, this is a secret which the ignorant have failed to understand, and due to their foolishness and enmity against the truth, they have raised an allegation. They have ignored the actual objective that was intended in this usage by Allah the Exalted.

The Meaning of Giving a Loan to Allah

In the same manner, a foolish person has alleged that مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا¹, i.e. who is it that will lend Allah a loan, demonstrates that God-forbid, Allah is pressed by need. The ignorant person fails to understand, how does this prove a need on the part of God? Here the word *qard* or 'loan' actually implies such things for which there is a guaranteed return. However, this ignorant person has falsely asserted that this implies a need or poverty on the part of God. Here the word 'loan' means, who will give Allah the Exalted their good deeds, so that He may grant them a manifold reward. Man's servitude to God possesses a relationship with divine providence in a manner that behoves the greatness of God. When a person reflects over this relationship, the concept becomes clear. For God Almighty nurtures everyone without their performing any good deed, or prayer and supplication, and without distinction between disbeliever and believer; by the grace of His providence (*rububiyyat*) and graciousness (*rahmaniyyat*) He bestows his favour on all. How then, can He allow anyone's good deeds to go to waste? The greatness of God Almighty is such that He states:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ²

Meaning, whoso does an atom's weight of good shall be rewarded and whoso does an atom's weight of evil will also be punished. This is the actual purport of the word 'loan' which is derived from the verse just quoted. This verse expounds the actual meaning of the word 'loan.' Since the actual purport of the word 'loan' is derived in context, God Almighty first states:

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:246

² *az-Zilzal*, 99:8

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا¹

Who is it that will lend Allah a goodly loan

Then, in commentary of this verse Allah Almighty states the following:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ²

Then whoso does an atom's weight of good will see it.

The Reason for the Decline of the Christians

The ignorant Christians have deified a weak and humble man and have placed the burden of their sins and vices on his shoulders. They have admitted that he was accursed. Even though the Christians have nothing on their hands but curse, they raise allegations against others. As they have rejected the holy Law of God Almighty on account of the Atonement, they no longer enjoy the pleasure and joy that is present in good deeds. Since they have labelled all the pious people of God Almighty as thieves and robbers, they have been smitten with curse. Therefore, one must never forget that to reject and deny the virtuous people of God Almighty destroys an individual and is a lethal poison for one's spiritual powers and faculties. One who thinks ill of the truthful and disrespects them is deprived of divine verities and insights. The curse that has fallen upon the Christians is that they have deemed all those who are virtuous to be sinful.

Therefore, the subtle insight in this verse is that the rains follows a fixed system and people are able to determine when the rainy days draw near. For example, the people know that it rains from mid-December to mid-February and also from mid-July to mid-September. Then, another secret is that it never rains needlessly. In fact, rainfall always occurs at a time that is best suited for it. The phenomenon of spiritual rain also functions in the same manner and this is a discussion which relates to a conceptual matter. Hence, in this context, God Almighty has put forth physically apparent phenomena to serve as a witness and has employed the use of an oath to take the place of a witness. Furthermore, God Almighty has used this word in exactly the same manner that He uses the word 'loan', as I have just mentioned.

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:246*

² *az-Zilzal, 99:8*

A Succession of the Recipients of Revelation and the Reformers

Now, another matter worthy of reflection is that one form of rain descends so that the seed may be sown, and another form of rainfall descends so that the seed may grow, develop and flourish. In the same manner, the rain of prophethood descends to sow the seed. After this, the rain of the recipients of divine revelation (*Muhaddithin*) and the Reformers (*Mujaddidin*) falls, so that this seed may sprout, grow and develop as alluded to in the following verse:

نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ¹

*Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation,
and most surely We will be its Guardian.*

I have stated countless times that prophethood serves as an anchor for divinity. An individual who rejects prophethood, slowly but surely reaches a state where they deny the existence of God. Moreover, sainthood serves as an anchor for prophethood. When a person rejects a saint, eventually and gradually they lose their faith.

At present, you may observe that a period of over 1300 years have elapsed since the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. If God Almighty had remained completely silent until this time and if He had not manifested Himself, Islam would have no more value than a tale or fable and it would have no distinction or superiority over any other religion. For example, the Hindus attribute miracles to their saints and relate these stories as they appear in their *puranas* and *shastras*, but can demonstrate no such feats today. In the same manner, if today the miraculous signs of Islam were related by Muslims as they appear in their books, but they could not show any such signs in this day and age, what superiority would it possess over other religions? Human nature is such that it expresses a dislike and aversion to such things that do not possess a superiority over others. Faith in Islam would fall weak if it did not possess a superiority, because faith cannot remain strong unless it finds perfection in a matter. Therefore, the hedge of sainthood has been planted around the tilth of prophethood. You may reflect and see how clear and subtle a response this is to those who raise objections against God taking oaths.

¹ *al-Hijr*, 15:10

The Wisdom Behind a Temporary Cease in Revelation

Upon learning of this subject-matter one can accept with great ease that the Holy Quran discusses profound subjects in a most beautiful style and manner. At another instance in the Holy Quran, the night has been taken as an oath. It is said that this oath was taken at a time when the flow of revelation to the Holy Prophet^{sa} had come to a temporary halt. It ought to be remembered that this is a phase which all such people experience who receive the blessings of ongoing revelation. Constant revelation increases one in love and yearning, but absence makes the heart grow fonder, which elevates a person to the highest levels of love. Allah the Exalted has made this a means of progress as well, because a temporary cessation in revelation increases an individual in pain and distress and increases the soul in restlessness and anxiety, by which a spirit of prayer is blown into them. The soul hastens towards the threshold of God crying out, 'O Lord! O Lord!' with sentiments of extreme zeal and fervour. This may be likened to a child who helplessly runs to its mother wailing, after being separated from her bosom for some time. In the same manner, or rather, with intensely greater anxiety, the soul hastens towards Allah. This great effort and toil, restlessness and agony possesses a pleasure and joy that I cannot explain in words. Remember! The more restlessness and anxiety that is experienced by the soul for God Almighty, the more an individual is enabled to offer supplications that attain to the level of acceptance. Hence, this is a period in time that dawns upon those divinely commissioned and sent by God, and upon those who are blessed with divine converse. The purpose of Allah the Exalted in this respect is so that such people may partake of the sweet flavour of love and the joy of the acceptance of prayer; and so that God may elevate them to the highest ranks.

Hence, by taking oath on the forenoon and the night, the lofty ranks of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, have been alluded to along with his degrees of love. Then, the Messenger of God has been absolved by Allah, Who says that one ought to observe the creation of the day and night, and the distance in time that exists between the alternation of the two, considering the time of the forenoon and the time of darkness. Then the Quran states: *مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ*¹, i.e. God Almighty has not forsaken you and has not disliked you. On the contrary, God says, this is Our law; just as We have created

¹ *ad-Duha*, 93:4

the night and day in alternation, there is a law in relation to the Prophets, peace be upon them, whereby on certain occasions revelation is brought to a halt so that the Prophets turn to prayer with greater fervour.¹ The forenoon and night have been presented as a witness so that the Holy Prophet^{sa} may be increased in his sense of hope, satisfaction and comfort. In short, Allah the Exalted has taken these oaths for the fundamental purpose that God may expound matters of a conceptual nature by means of plainly evident phenomenon. Now consider how this manner of expression was so full of wisdom, yet these unfortunate people have raised allegations in this respect as well.

چشم بداندیش که بر کندہ باد

عیب نماید ہنرش در نظر

*May the malevolent eye be ruined;
To it, even skilful excellence appears a flaw.*

There is an underlying philosophy in these oaths, which open the gates of wisdom.

The Jihad of This Era

Hence, this is the war that is required of us in this day and age. This opens the doors of knowledge and crushes the opposition with conclusive argumentation and a clear sign. By the grace of God, the people of the Punjab continue to be enlightened with divine insights and verities, while these are nowhere to be found among the people of Greater Syria and other Muslim lands. And so we are faced with the calamity that onslaught upon onslaught is being waged on all fronts. Therefore, I am required to make use of my faculty of reflection and present these difficulties before God Almighty through prayer. As a result, God Almighty comes to my support by His mere grace and compassion and discloses to me the deeper verities and divine insights that are contained in His book. Physicians state that if a certain faculty is not exercised for forty days continuously, it becomes useless completely. I am reminded of a maternal uncle of mine who was struck with madness. He underwent a phlebotomy and was strictly instructed to not move his hand. And so for some months he did not move his hand at all and as a result, his hand became as lifeless as a piece of wood. Therefore, if a limb is

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 21, dated 10 June 1901, pp. 1-4

left idle, it becomes useless.

Yogis, ascetics and the like from among the Hindus who are left unable to have intimate relations with women become as such on two accounts. Either they have indulged in illicit relations abundantly, or they have completely abandoned any and all relations with women. There are thousands of such examples, where if a part of the body is not used, it ultimately becomes lifeless.

At the present time, the swords of the pen are being wielded against us and the arrows of allegations are being rained upon us. It is our responsibility to ensure that we do not leave our faculties idle and we must sharpen the spears of our pens for the sake of God's pure religion and to prove the truthfulness of the prophethood of God's Chosen Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. This responsibility falls upon us more than anyone else especially when Allah the Exalted has granted us the greatest opportunity, as we have been born under the British rule.

Gratitude is Part of My Nature

Those ignorant people who are oblivious to the principle of showing gratitude to a benefactor for their favours equate such of my statements and writings to flattery. However, my God knows best that it is impossible for me to flatter any person on earth—it is not in my nature. Of course, to show gratitude for a favour is a part of my nature. God Almighty, by His grace, has kept me free of the impure traces of ingratitude and disloyalty. I appreciate the favours of the British government and deem it a divine favour that in order to grant us deliverance from the oppressive era of the Sikhs, God sent from thousands of miles afar, a just government to rule over us. If this empire had not been present now, I truthfully say I would not have been able to even direct my attention towards these allegations, let alone respond to them.

In the present circumstances, I am at complete liberty to respond to these allegations. If then, I were to show disregard for this favour of Allah Almighty, you could be sure that I was immensely ungrateful and unappreciative. I have been granted the opportunity to reflect and contemplate, to immerse myself in prayer, and in this way the gates of divine grace have been opened to me. Although Allah Almighty is the fountainhead of grace, man becomes able through his own effort to an extent and then receives divine grace in accordance with his individual capacity and ability. It is a matter of joy that due to this opportunity, the people

of India, and the Punjab, in particular are being transformed into able gems and their intellectual faculties are developing as well.

The Weapon of This Era is the Pen

In short, this land is a *Dar-ul-Harb* in our contest against the Christian clergy. Therefore, we must not sit idle. However, do remember that our war against them must be like in kind. We must go forth with the same form of weaponry that the Christian clergy have brought into the field of battle; and that weapon is the pen. It is for this very reason that Allah the Exalted has named my humble self the King of the Pen and has named my pen the *Dhul-Faqar* of Ali. The secret at the heart of this is that the present era is not an age of war and battle, but an era of the pen.

Victory Demands Righteousness

Now when this is the case it ought to be remembered that righteousness is required in order for the gates of hidden truth and insight to be opened. Therefore, adopt righteousness because God Almighty states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ¹

Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good.

I cannot count the number of times these words have been revealed upon me. I have received this revelation in great abundance. If all we do is utter mere words, then remember that this brings no benefit. Victory demands righteousness. If victory is what you seek, then become righteous.

Financial Sacrifices Are Needed for the Propagation of Islam

I observe among the Hindus and Christians that even their women bequeath vast properties and wealth for this purpose. No such examples exist among the Muslims of this age.

The greatest difficulty that confronts us today is that we require financial support in order to propagate Islam. You ought to bear well in mind that ultimately, God Almighty has willed to establish this community with his own hand and He himself is the Supporter and Helper of this community. However, since God

¹ *an-Nabl*, 16:129

desires to make His servants worthy of spiritual reward, the Prophets are compelled to make an appeal for financial support. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, called for assistance, and in the same manner—upon the precepts of prophethood—I too apprise my friends of the community's needs. In any case, I would like to reiterate that even if we do collect an amount for the propagation of Islam, it is obvious that we cannot match the amount that is at the disposal of the Christian clergy. And even if we do, it is still my faith that victory is only given to those with whom God is pleased.

Improve in Your Morals and Actions

Hence, the important thing to consider is that we must improve in our morals and actions, and adopt righteousness, so that we may be conferred the grace of God's support and love. Then, with the help of God, each and every one of us is obliged to show no negligence in responding to these attacks. However, when responding, our intention must be for the glory of God Almighty to be manifested.¹

The End

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 22, dated 17 June 1901, pp. 1-2

January 1898

An Instruction to Visit the Centre

The Promised Messiah^{as} states: People place their hand in my hand and repeat the words that they will give precedence to religion over worldly affairs, but when they leave from here they forget this promise. What benefit can such people derive if they do not come here to visit. The world has seized them. If they truly gave precedence to their faith over the world, they would take time out to come here.¹

1 February 1898

The Promised Messiah^{as} states: Two days ago I received the following revelation:

يَوْمَ تَأْتِيكَ الْغَاشِيَةُ يَوْمَ تَنْجُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ يَوْمَ نَجْزِي كُلَّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ

This means: 'A terrifying time that will overwhelm the people and surround them from all four fronts is approaching. At that time, each and every person will receive deliverance on account of their actions. At that time, every individual shall be recompensed in accordance with their actions.'

After quoting these revelations, the Promised Messiah^{as} emphatically urged the community: Prepare yourselves. Be humble in your formal Prayers, inculcate the habit of *Tabajjud* and weep in your supplications during *Tabajjud*. For God Almighty does not waste those who beseech him and follow the ways of righteousness.

Our blessed Imam, on whom be peace, advises us time and again: May the community become righteous and inculcate the habit of humility and meekness in their formal Prayers. One day, he stated with immense pain: Reform yourselves and adopt righteousness, lest you become a hindrance in my path.²

Special Guidance for Those Travelling Abroad

On returning to East Africa from India, Babu Muhammad Afzal Sahib submitted to the Promised Messiah^{as}: 'I came here from a place that is drowned in a surging flood of countless doubts, suspicions and inner darkness. Since I am re-

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 5, no. 4-5, dated 16 November 1911, p. 3

² As recorded in a letter of Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib^{ra}, written on 4 February 1898 and published in *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, no. 2, dated 6 March 1898, p. 10

turning to the same place, pray for me.’ In order to emerge from such difficulties, the Promised Messiah^{as} advised of the following four methods: Firstly, recite the Quran regularly; secondly, remember death; thirdly, maintain a written account of your journey; fourthly, if possible, send me a postcard daily.¹

A Prayer of the Promised Messiah^{as}

Here are the holy words of a prayer by the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, as expressed by his own blessed lips:

O Lord of all the worlds! It is beyond me to offer You gratitude for all Your favours. You are most Merciful and Compassionate, and the bounties that You have conferred upon me are countless. Forgive me my sins, lest I am ruined. Fill my heart with sincere love for You, so that I may receive life. Cover my faults and allow me to perform such deeds which become the source of Your pleasure. I seek refuge in Your noble countenance lest your punishment befalls me. Have mercy and save me from the calamities of this world and the hereafter. For all grace and compassion is in Your hand. *Ameen*, and again, *Ameen*.²

24 February 1898

The Holy Words of the Promised Messiah^{as}

The Relationship between a Disciple and a Spiritual Guide

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: The relationship between a disciple and their spiritual guide is such that a mother and father do not love their children as much as a spiritual guide loves a disciple. A mother and father strive to train and teach their children physically, but a spiritual guide gives birth to his followers in a spiritual sense and is responsible for their inner education and training, provided that he is pious. If a so-called guide is guilty of ostentation and deceit, he is worse than an enemy.³

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, no. 7-8, dated 13 April 1898, p. 12

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, no. 1, dated 20 February 1898, p. 9

³ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 3, no. 20, dated 9th June 1899, p. 1

February 1898

Polygamy

In relation to polygamy the Holy Quran explicitly states two, three or four, however in the same verse justice has also been instructed. If an individual cannot maintain justice and their love becomes one-sided, or if their income is insufficient, or if their faculties of virility are weak, then one must not marry more than one woman. In my estimation it is better for man to not put himself into trial by his own hands, because Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ¹

Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.

Do not over-emphasise the permissibility of something to the extent that you become licentious. Now, if an individual becomes preoccupied in wives just because he is permitted to marry more than one, then this too is wrong. All people are not able to understand the will of Allah Almighty. This permission is not granted so that men may become so utterly infatuated with women that they are enslaved by their own carnal pleasures. In the same vein, however, God does not desire for man to adopt asceticism either; but rather, He desires for us to act in moderation and refrain from indulging in unnecessary preoccupations.

If Allah the Exalted makes an exception for the Prophets, peace be upon them, then those foolish ones who raise allegations against them are guilty of misleading others in error. One may observe in the Torah how the Jewish priests were given special privileges and the Brahmans from among the Hindus also enjoy special concessions. Therefore, it is foolish to object against any special exceptions made for the Prophets, peace be upon them, because their greatest distinction which separates them from other ordinary people is that they are Prophets.

The Diverse Nature of God Is a Mercy

The changing nature of God is also a mercy. In the case of the people of Jonah, on whom be peace, God sent down categorical revelation, but when they began to weep and wail, their punishment was averted and God turned to them with mercy. Hence, there is a distinct delight that is experienced in the changing nature

¹ *al-Baqarah, 2:191*

of God, but only those people can enjoy it who weep before Him and beseech Him with humility and meekness. I am often astounded to see that people will flatter other human beings like themselves but do not turn to God in the same way.

A Delay in the Acceptance of Prayer Leads to Success

Remember that if you receive a swift response to your prayer this is generally not a good sign. Hence, do not lose hope in your supplication. The longer a prayer takes to be accepted whereby it appears that you have received no answer, offer prostrations of gratitude, because this is better and more advantageous for you. Delay results in success.

The Reason that Punishment Was Averted from the People of Jonah^{as}

Prayer is a powerful shield that leads to success. The people of Jonah, on whom peace, were saved from impending punishment on account of their weeping and prayers. In my understanding, the word *muhawatat* means ‘anger’. The Arabic word *hoot* means ‘fish’ and the word *noon* in Arabic is used for both ‘anger’ and ‘fish’. In short, Jonah^{as} was overwhelmed by a state of anger. The fact of the matter is that when the punishment had been averted, thoughts of objection and complaint arose in his mind in that the prophecy made by him and his prayer had gone to waste. He was also upset that what he had foretold did not come to pass. All these thoughts constituted his state of anger. The lesson we learn from this is that Allah can alter the decree of fate, and that weeping and wailing and charity can reduce a verdict of punishment to nothing; hence the principle of giving charity. These are the ways to please Allah. In the science of the interpretation of dreams, wealth is represented by one’s liver. This is why giving alms is equivalent to giving away one’s life, as it were. When a person gives charity, they exhibit an immense degree of sincerity and steadfastness. However, the fact of the matter is that mere words are of no use until they are supported by practice. The reason charity is called ‘*sadaqah*’ in Arabic is because it is the hallmark of the Truthful (*Sadiqin*). In the life account of Jonah^{as}, *Durr-e-Manthur* has recorded that Jonah^{as} said to Allah Almighty: ‘I always knew that if anyone came before You, You would have mercy.’ As God states:

ایں مشت خاک را گر نہ بخشم چه کنم

If I do not forgive this handful of dust then what am I to do?

The Interpretation of Offering Eid Prayer in the City

Whilst interpreting a dream of Munshi Rustam Ali, a Court Inspector in Delhi, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: To offer Eid prayer in the city signifies grand success.

The Meaning of ‘The Father of Fire’ and ‘The Woman Carrying Firewood’

The term the Father of Fire (*Abu Lahab*) in the Holy Quran implies a general connotation and does not refer to a specific individual. This term refers to any such person who possesses a flaming or fiery disposition. In the same manner, ‘the woman carrying firewood’ (*hammala-tal-hatab*) refers to any backbiting woman who engages in slandering and lighting the fire of mischief among men. Sa’di says:

سخن چین بد بخت ہیرم کش است

The wretched backbiter only adds firewood to the flame.

Prayer Ought to Evoke Desire

Upon hearing an allegation in relation to Surah Lahab, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: Material wealth and worldly rule are not a cause for envy. Prayer ought to evoke our desire. Today, I prayed profusely for all those of my friends whose names or faces I could remember, whether they are present or not. I prayed so fervently that if I had prayed on a dry branch, it would have become lush green. This is a grand sign for our friends. (May Allah reward you with good in both worlds.—Editor)

All praise belongs to Allah that the month of Ramadan has passed. We were blessed with health and vigour during these days. God knows who will live to see the following year, and who knows if they will be present come next year? Then how unfortunate would it be if we were to forget those members of the community that have passed away. The Promised Messiah^{as} stated this when a list of those people was being prepared who were still alive.

Excessive Literalism Results in Misguidance

The calamity which befell the Jews was that they went on rejecting the Messiah, on whom be peace, on account of their strict literal understanding of words. Not only this, they even continued to reject our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The Jews believed that when the Messiah was to appear, he would come as a king and that he would sit on the throne of David^{as} with great majesty and glory. They also held that Elijah^{as} would descend from the sky before the advent of the Messiah, but when the Messiah did appear, he said that John was the Elijah that they were expecting. Moreover, instead of appearing as a King, Jesus^{as} demonstrated such humility that he could barely find a place to rest his head. But how could those Jews who held an extremely literal view accept this? And so, they rejected the Messiah fiercely and to this day they continue to do so. Today, the Muslim clergy are prey to the same affliction. They expect that the Messiah and Mahdi will come to fight wars, but this was never the will of God Almighty anyway, and the words *يَضَعُ الْحَرْبَ* (*He will suspend war*) in *Bukhari* have put an end to this dispute. However, despite all this, they do not wish to accept this ambassador of peace and security.¹

February 1898

Those Who Are Mindful of the Hereafter Are Forever Blessed

I observe that despite the appearance of calamity upon calamity and the emergence of danger on all fronts, the hearts of the people are as hard as stone, and they continue in pride and conceit. How long will these foolish people go on in this heedlessness? Until the people give up their obstinacy, refrain from their evil activities and do not reconcile with God Almighty, these calamities and afflictions will go nowhere. I have observed and closely reflected that in the days of famine, the people did not feel the burden of this tribulation. Drinking houses were teeming just as before and evil and immorality was rampant just as before. Previously, when edicts attributed to Mecca or Medina were issued, the people would become afraid, and the mosques would become full, but in the present time insolence and imprudence has exceeded all bounds. May Allah have mercy.

A wise person is heedful of punishment before it descends and a far-sighted person is one who remains concerned to save themselves from an affliction before

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, no. 2, dated 6 March 1898, p. 2

it appears.

It is incumbent upon all people to be mindful of the hereafter and repent from evil actions because true happiness and pleasure lies in this. It is a matter of certainty that no evil deed and sinful act can give a person true happiness, even for a moment. A sinful person of ill conduct is always haunted by the fear of his secret being exposed. How then can such a person find a means of comfort in wicked actions? Those who have their sights set on the hereafter are forever blessed.

مرد آخر میں مبارک بندہ ایست

A man who keeps their sights set on the hereafter is fortunate.

Observe the state of those nations who were faced with chastisement from time to time. Everyone must ensure that even if their hearts are hard, they should rebuke them to teach them a lesson of humility and meekness. If you do not know how to weep, then make a weeping face, and ultimately tears will follow themselves.

Develop in Yourselves a Pure Transformation

What is most significant for our community is that they develop within themselves a pure transformation, for they are blessed with fresh insight of the Divine. If a person claims to be the recipient of divine insight but does not act accordingly, then such claims are nothing more than vain boasts. Hence, the indolence of others must not make our community negligent and must not embolden them to become idle, nor should they become hard-hearted on witnessing the indifference of others.

Man possesses many longings and desires, but who has knowledge of the hidden decrees of fate? Life does not transpire in accordance with one's yearnings. The ongoing desires of man are one thing and the phenomenon of divine destiny and decree is another; and the latter always prevails. The course that a person's life takes is known to God, Who knows what is written in their book of fate. Hence, an individual ought to awaken their heart to make it vigilant.

An Aspect of God's Oneness

One aspect of the unity of God is to erase one's inner desires for the love of God Almighty, and to lose one's own person into the grandeur of God's Being.¹

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, no. 3, dated 13 March 1898, p. 1

1 May 1898

The Confiscation of Books Against Islam

After Respected Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib of Sialkot had finished reading out the memorial, which the Promised Messiah^{as} had penned to rectify the points stated in the memorial by the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam in regards to the book *Ummahat-ul-Mu'minin*, the Promised Messiah^{as} said in a raised voice:

‘This memorial has been written to defend Islam and the Muslims at large, and to establish the true honour of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the greatness of the Holy Quran, and to demonstrate the pure and immaculate face of Islam. Hence, this memorial has been read out before you with the sole purpose of seeking your counsel. Is it advisable at present to write a rebuttal to this book or better to submit a memorial to the government calling for action to be taken against the authors of such books and banning their publication? Anyone from among you is most welcome to put forth their arguments freely.’ Only one person from the congregation spoke and said: ‘If the publication of this book is not banned, it will go on being reprinted forever.’

To this, the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, said: ‘If we truly do not bring a halt to the publication of this book, which is only possible for all intents and purposes if a rebuttal is written against it, let alone once, we can approach the government even a thousand times to solicit aid so that the publication of this book may be banned, but its publication will continue. Even if for some time the book is banned, such a proposal will be no less than a lethal poison for many weak-natured people and generations to come. For when they come to know that a certain book could not be rebutted and then the government was called upon to ban it, they will develop a kind of ill-will towards their own religion.

Therefore, my principle has always been to write a rebuttal to such books and benefit from the sincere support which the government has already given us, i.e. freedom. We ought to pen such an ample response to the book that its supporters feel ashamed themselves to reprint it. Take, for example, the case of Dr Clark; when they realised that the case had lost its credibility and when their mirage of deception faded away, they did not even present the wife and son-in-law of Atham as witnesses. Hence, my opinion and the verdict of my heart is that a crushing rebuttal ought to be given in the softest and kindest terms. Then, if God

so wills, they will lose the courage themselves to reprint the book.¹

2 May 1898

On Eid day, in Qadian under the banyan tree towards the east, after the Eid prayer, the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, delivered the following address in the gathering that was held about the plague:

The Temporary World

All of you gentlemen are aware that Allah the Most Eminent has stated in the Holy Quran, and the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has stated in the Hadith, that a time has gone by when nothing existed; no humans, animals, beasts and birds, the heaven and earth, everything on the earth and in heaven. There was God alone. This is the Islamic belief: *وَلَمْ يَكُنْ مَعَهُ شَيْئًا*, i.e. there was nothing with God. Allah the Exalted has informed us by means of the Holy Quran and the Hadith that another time is yet to come where nothing will exist with God. That era is a most terrifying one, but it is obligatory upon every believer and Muslim to have faith in it, and one who does not believe in the dawn of that era is not a Muslim but a disbeliever and faithless. Just as one is commanded to believe in heaven and hell, the Prophets, peace be upon them, and the holy scriptures, in the same manner, one must believe in the hour on which the trumpet will be blown and all will be reduced to nothing. This is the way and custom of Allah.

Three Arguments in Support of the Hereafter

Allah the Exalted has employed three methods so that we may understand the nature of the time just mentioned above. Firstly, God has granted man with an intellect and if he makes use of this faculty even slightly and reflects, the mind is able to grasp very clearly that the brief life of man sits between two kinds of non-existence and can never be everlasting. Analogical reasoning can enable one to learn about things which are not present. If an individual reflects, for example, as to the whereabouts of their forefathers, they are left with no choice but to accept that everyone must follow the same course. Foolish is the one who has thousands of examples before them but they do not take a lesson therefrom and fail to un-

¹ *Risalah al-Indhar*, pp. 37-38

derstand. It is generally observed and this is an accepted fact that in any village or city, the number of graves outnumbers the living population—some graves are hidden while others are visible. It has often been observed that when a water well is dug in a particular city, bones are excavated as well. Generally, there are graves everywhere on earth beneath us. It is another matter if these graves are not physically visible. Nevertheless, from this we learn that a vast number of people are no longer with us.

There is another logical argument in support of the existence of the hereafter. The manner in which vegetation grows in a field is a beautiful sight. A time comes when it turns yellow and dries. Then it is reduced to broken straw, and when this loss begins to occur, the farmer who has sown the crop begins to cut the crop himself, so that the crop is not wasted away in the wind.

The world is the tilth of God Almighty. On account of certain points of wisdom and in view of the best final outcome, just as a farmer harvests his crop before it ripens on certain occasions, and waits for it to mature to an extent on other occasions, so too, we are nurtured, whereafter we are cut at precisely the appropriate time by divine will and desire. One ought to take a lesson from the practice of a farmer, that the life of man follows exactly the same course. Just as certain seeds do not even sprout and rot away in the ground, in the same manner certain children are lost in their mother's womb and other infants die a few days after they are born. In short, precisely in accordance with this law and phenomenon a human being goes through the stages of infancy and adulthood, and finally reaches old age. The scythe of God's will cuts them at different stages from time to time in view of various points of wisdom. Sometimes children die young and people refer to this as a case of *athra*. Then, adults who possess a healthy body, strong and well, also die. The elderly also pass away after reaching a state of feebleness and old age. In short, this process of being cut and severed operates throughout the world to teach man the lesson at every moment that the world is not an everlasting abode. Hence, this is also an argument which establishes the existence of the hereafter.

In addition to this, there is another argument which God Almighty has presented to establish the reality of the time which is to come; in other words, those miracles of the Prophets, peace be upon them, which manifest divine wrath and due to which the earth was overturned at once and almost all signs of creation were erased. Man is at the mercy of God's wrath, He can destroy him whenever He pleases. Allah the Exalted presents this as an argument that certain illnesses

spread in such a terrifying and forceful manner that those people who have witnessed such epidemics would say that they resemble the Day of Judgement. From among such severe illnesses, there is the plague, which runs rampant in our land at present. It has ravaged Karachi and Bombay. We have also received terrifying news of the spread of the plague in the hill station of Palampur and even in Kolkata. And so a grave danger confronts us at this hour. The reason that I address you is because man is met with enormous trials, as God Almighty states Himself:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ¹

Allah says: ‘We shall continue to try you, at times with fear, at times by a loss of wealth, and at other times still by a loss of fruits.’

The Meaning of a ‘Loss of Fruits’

Books of exegesis explain that a ‘loss of fruits’ also implies a person’s children and the loss of one’s efforts. For example, one’s effort to acquire knowledge; one’s effort to succeed in business; the efforts of a farmer. The loss of such efforts is a terrible misfortune. Man is forever concerned with attaining success. However, ultimately, the knowledge of God and His wisdom demands at times that people fail, or that their crops do not bring harvest, or that they are unsuccessful in business.

The Plague Is a Sign of Divine Wrath

We gather from this verse that Allah the Exalted has decreed to try us in four ways: firstly, fear; secondly, at times a loss of wealth; thirdly, a loss of life; fourthly, a loss of fruits. However, it is terrifying and dreadful to note that in the case of the plague, all four of these trials have come together at once. Those who are aware of the current circumstances and suffering that people are having to bear know that wherever there are outbreaks of the plague, all four of these trials arise one after the other. The matter is not only limited to the death of a person. As a matter of fact, in view of a dire need and in the best interest of the people—as sometimes, mothers are required so as to care for, protect and nurture their children—the British government has passed a law that in any home where an incident of plague occurs, the residents of that home are moved out, and when required, neighbours and surrounding residents, and in extreme circumstances, even entire villages are

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:156

emptied. The infected are to be kept in quarantine and the healthy are to be kept separate. Such people must be kept in a place where there is proper ventilation, no low-ground water source and ample way of passage. There should be a graveyard adjoining such places so that the dead may be buried without delay, so that their offensive remains do not further contaminate the environs.

This is such an extreme calamity that people in Bombay, Pune and other places have stumbled. Although the government has intended goodwill—and nothing but goodwill—in undertaking these measures, it is regrettable and immensely unfortunate that the people have deemed them to be evil in nature. What is astonishing and remarkable is that these preventative measures implemented by the government are not self-invented. Greek physicians have agreed that if there is an outbreak of plague in a certain household, this claims the entire home; rather, it exterminates the entire city, nay the entire country. These physicians have given many examples which demonstrate that this horrific epidemic—known as the plague—did not rest until it tore down cities, transforming them into desolate wastelands. Most people are unaware. It saddens me that despite the ferocious spread of this terrible epidemic and its threat to destroy a large segment of the country, I observe that the people are not consumed by a grief which should move them to become engaged in repentance and seeking forgiveness. I find that the people do not weep and wail before God Almighty, nor do they take it upon themselves to observe their Prayers, instead they indulge in transgression and immorality. The plague has the nature of flying from one place to another swiftly in the likeness of a bird. The movement of this epidemic is not systematic so that it should move from one place to the next in stages, but rather it will cover a distance of approximately 400 or even 800 miles sporadically and suddenly.

Now just give thought to the considerable distance between Bombay and Jalandhar. What logical explanation can one give for its sudden movement to Jalandhar. In short, no one can make any predictions about its next target. Today one is healthy and safe, but who knows what will happen tomorrow? This is a dangerous epidemic and its bouts last for extended periods of time. On occasions, it will last for even sixty years at a time and this is a known and established fact. It is not like cholera, which breaks out from mid-July to mid-September and comes to an end within twenty to twenty-five days. Physicians have said that *ta'un*, which is the Arabic word for plague, means 'that which kills with the spear.' Grammatically, the word *ta'un* in Arabic is the superlative form of the word

which implies that it never misses the target, and widespread death occurs. It has also been alluded to in the Torah. This affliction fell upon the Jews in the time of Moses, on whom be peace. Where God has warned of the people being struck with boils, this actually refers to the plague. The Holy Quran also speaks of the Jews being destroyed by the plague due to their disobedience.

The Reason for the Emergence of the Plague

Upon reflecting over these instances in the Torah and the Holy Quran it becomes evident that the plague is related to man's transgression and wrongdoing. For the custom of Allah demonstrates that people were destroyed by this epidemic in times of prevalent sin. This is a sign of God's wrath. As I have mentioned earlier, this is a third sign in favour of the Day of Resurrection. This illness is a lesser manifestation of the grand reckoning. The fact that this epidemic took up an abode, as it were, in Europe, Greater Syria, Iraq and other foreign lands in the past, would perhaps be considered nothing more than a tale by those who are unaware. But it is a recent arrival in our land and so the people are yet to become acquainted with its characteristics and habits. On one hand, the people are fearless and ignorant of God, and do not seek His forgiveness. Yet, on the other hand, they do not act upon the government's advice either and view it with suspicion, and go on raising a clamour of opposition. I say truthfully—and hypocritical praise is not in my nature—that the rule to quarantine people from villages where the disease has broken out, and to bar inward and outward movement to such places, and to move the infected to open areas, and to relocate people at times so that entire villages are emptied, is a most excellent and necessary undertaking.

Our books tell us and the Torah also teaches us that the substance of this disease emerges from the ground. It is thought that this disease spreads from rats. Along with other reasons, this too is a cause. The fact of the matter is that a land, which due to evil and transgression becomes an accursed land, develops a poisonous nature and is gripped by chastisement in the most horrific of ways. However, someone ought to tell us what wrong the government has done in instructing people to move out of infected homes? Sensible people do not think ill of schemes that are employed for their own well-being. As I have said, if the government were to order people to remain in their homes, people would find this instruction to be far worse. For when the plague begins to spread throughout a village and people begin to die, no one would choose to remain in their homes. You can observe that

if a snake is ever sighted in a certain home or house, people become frightened. Even if the snake is killed, people will not enter the home again when it is dark. This is a natural human instinct. It is astonishing that a person should know of an imminent danger to exist somewhere, and then for them to remain there in peace and comfort. Is it possible that death upon death should strike a certain home, and its residents continue to abide therein? Obviously, the residents would abandon such a home themselves at once and will move away from it, deeming it to be unblest. Had these people been left to their own designs and if the government had not intervened at all, these people still would have done what the government is undertaking now. The fact of the matter is that people are not fully aware of the seriousness of the plague; they consider it to be a common illness like the cold or catarrh.

The Plague Is a Punishment

Allah has named this illness *rujz* and punishment is also referred to as *rujz*. The lexicons state that *rajazun* is a disease in the camel's rump. A form of bacteria, referred to in Arabic as *naghafun*, attacks the muscle. From this we learn a deep and subtle point. Since camels possess somewhat of a rebellious nature, this demonstrates that when humans become rebellious they are afflicted by the painful punishment just mentioned. The lexicon states that *rujz* also refers to something which is continuous or lasting and the disease in discussion is also one which lasts for lengthy periods of time and leaves only after it has claimed the lives of entire households. This also demonstrates that the calamity of the plague wipes clean the homes of men, makes orphans out of children, and turns many a helpless woman into widows.

Unhealthy Environments Give Rise to the Plague

Upon reflecting over the meaning of the word *rujz* the cause of this disease also becomes clear. This illness is caused by filth and impurity. Places that are not properly cleaned, where the walls of homes are unkempt and resemble graves, where there is no light or ventilation, the noxious substance that is caused by filth takes birth, which results in the spread of this disease. The Holy Quran states: ¹ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ¹, i.e. shun all forms of uncleanness. The Arabic word *hijr* means to

¹ *al-Muddaththir*, 74:6

distance oneself from something. This teaches us that those who desire spiritual purity must be physically clean and pure. For one strength affects another and one characteristic affects another.

The Effect of Physical Cleanliness upon the Inner Self

There are two states of man. Anyone who desires to develop an inner state of righteousness and purity must also be physically clean as well. In another instance, Allah the Exalted states: *إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الشَّوَابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ*¹, i.e. I am a friend of those who desire inner and outward purity. Physical cleanliness encourages and fosters inner purity. If an individual is neglectful in this respect and does not clean themselves after defecating for example, they would not develop the slightest inner purity. Hence, remember that outwardly cleanliness is necessary for inner purity. Therefore, it is necessary that in the least, one bathes once a week on Friday, performs the ablution before every Prayer, and uses fragrance before joining the congregation for Prayer.

The instruction to make use of fragrance on the two Eids and on Friday is for this very purpose. The actual reason is that where there are large congregations, there is a danger of the spreading of filth. Therefore, bathing, clean clothes and fragrance, will prevent the spread of noxious matter and filth. Just as Allah the Exalted has instructed this during one's lifetime, He has established a similar rule after death.

The Properties of Camphor

Muslims apply camphor to the bodies of the dead in accordance with the custom of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, because camphor is a material which kills epidemic bacteria and noxious elements. It cools the human body and prevents the spread of diseases that arise from filth. This is why the Quran states that believers will be given the cold drink of camphor. Modern research has also established that just as camphor is beneficial in cholera, it is beneficial in the case of plague as well.

I would like to inform my community that this is an extremely beneficial substance. It is my belief that since the Holy Quran has informed us that camphor cools the sensation of burning, and also soothes and relaxes the heart, this encourages us to make use of camphor. A new discovery has established

¹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:223

that it is beneficial to use camphor with delphinium denudatum. You should procure a quantity of white turmeric, mix it with vinegar and make capsules of 243 milligrams each, and take these capsules with fresh lassi. It is very beneficial to administer these capsules to women and children daily. I am also preparing a medicine which, if God desires, will prove immensely beneficial.

The fact of the matter is that this disastrous illness is such that it is useless to depend on any form of remedy, until Allah the Exalted showers His grace. Nonetheless, to promote general well-being and to take health precautions are an excellent means of protection and have proven advantageous. Hence, it is advisable that one refrains from all such things which result in the spread of noxious substances and filth. Foods that are warmer in their inherent nature, and which cause an increase in blood pressure, such as excessive meat or sweets; or extended periods of exposure to heat; or strenuous and exerting labour, should be avoided.

To Make Use of Apparent Means Is Not Forbidden

Seeking recourse to apparent means is not forbidden by the shariah. Someone asked the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, whether they should make use of medicine. The Holy Prophet^{sa} responded by saying: ‘Yes, use medicine; there is no illness for which a remedy does not exist.’ Indeed, this is absolutely true. No physician or doctor can claim that a certain medicine will definitely cure an illness, for if this was the case why would anyone die? Physicians and doctors ought to become righteous. They must have recourse to medicine, but pray as well. They ought to supplicate in seclusion. Those who were consumed by their pride were the first to be disgraced. It is said that Galen prided himself on being able to cure cases of diarrhoea. Yet, the power of God is astonishing. Galen died of this very disease himself. In the same manner, certain physicians develop fever or tuberculosis and then pass on from this temporal world.

Depend on Allah Almighty Alone

My purpose is to show that God Almighty disclosed the hollow nature of their claims and uncovered the reality of their vain boasting. They were defeated in the very field that they claimed expertise. This demonstrates that one should not make tall claims. My late father was also a renowned physician, with fifty years of

experience. He would say that no prescription was definite. This is certainly true. Nothing is possible without the power of Allah.

An individual who turns to God Almighty is blessed. One must not be arrogant in the face of affliction and must never depend on anyone other than Allah. Minor illnesses take on a grave state almost suddenly. At times, a person under treatment for their heart is struck by an affliction of the brain. At other times, people undergoing treatment for low body temperature suddenly find themselves in the grip of a severe fever. Who can overcome these illnesses? One ought to depend on God. Who can fully determine the extent of these bacteria on earth and their poisonous effects? It is impossible for man to count the number of illnesses that exist. It is written that there are some 3,000 ailments that possess the potential to afflict the eye alone. Some diseases are so dreadful that even before a physician can finish writing up a prescription, the ailing person is taken by death. Hence, one ought to seek the refuge of Allah Almighty.

It can be observed at present that people are seriously negligent and utterly unconcerned of God. Graves are being dug, while angels are preparing the means of death, and people are perishing one after the other. Yet despite this, the foolish do not take heed. The plague has reached just 35 miles from Qadian, or thereabouts. Although the disease has subsided for now, due to an increase in temperature, who can say with certainty that even though this is the case at present, it will not return the following year? It has been disclosed to me a few times by way of revelation and vision that the epidemic will spread throughout the country. I have published in advance that I saw in a vision that black trees were being planted and when I inquired of those who were planting these trees, they responded by saying that these were the trees of plague. This is a matter of grave danger.

Prophecies Warning of Divine Punishment Can Be Averted Through Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness

Similarly, I have already stated that prophecies that warn of imminent punishment from God can be averted through repentance and seeking forgiveness. This is to the extent that even if one is written off by God as hellbound, this verdict may be reverted. If the people turn and incline towards repentance and forgiveness, Allah the Exalted will protect this land and country. God does as He pleases, but He says: *قُلْ مَا يَعْجُبُكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ*¹, i.e. tell the people that if you do not devote

¹ *al-Furqan*, 25:78

yourselves to Me, what do I care for you?

Certain people say that there are physicians on every street, doctors are present and hospitals are in operation, so if required, they can be treated immediately and restored to health. However, such people are unaware that in Bombay and Karachi many renowned doctors themselves contracted the disease and passed on. Those who were appointed and went to serve in this difficult time have fallen prey themselves. This is how God Almighty manifests His power and control, and tells us that it is unwise to depend merely on doctors or treatment. God desires for the people to develop faith in the next world as well. Let us see how people fare with the will of God. Man writhes over even a few inches of land; he conspires and bears the burden of cases in court, but does he feel within himself the same pain and distress if he does not fulfil a certain commandment of God Almighty? Not in the least. Man is foolish and calls upon God when he is struck by severe illnesses and when he is granted respite in the form of a trial, he returns to his artifices and follows such a course of action as though he will never die. Even death caused by minor illnesses rarely moves the hearts of people. They are emotionally affected only superficially for two or three days, but then they return to the same mockery, jest and nonsense, just as they were indulged before. They go to graveyards and bury the dead but do not stop to think that ultimately, one day, they too will be presented before God. Therefore, God Almighty sees that normal death does not affect the people any longer. In Amritsar and Lahore, there is perhaps a daily death rate of about sixty to seventy. The number of deaths in Kolkata and Bombay is even larger. In itself though this is a fearful sight, but who notices this? Those who are bereft of foresight will say that these deaths are proportionately normal in view of the entire population; such people do not care and are unable to benefit from the death of others. It is for this reason that God Almighty has employed another method and has sought to warn the people by means of the plague.

In any case, I advise you that now what is destined to happen will surely come to pass. But do not entertain thoughts that will further displease God Almighty and deem the government to be deserving of blame. What will you achieve by denigrating the government? The plague has come due to your own evil actions; in fact, the government is confronted by calamity because of you.

The Measures of the Government in These Days of Plague Are Correct

If the government does not hold sincere sympathy for you, do explain why it would bother to spend such a hefty sum of money? Why would places of treatment and doctors be made available for this purpose? Why has it appointed thousands from among the police force to oversee these arrangements? Does the government enjoy wasting its money? Of course not. In fact, upon observing the present state of the country, in the likeness of an affectionate mother, it is restless from within. The government too is from among the people. Perhaps the people are unaware, but it is narrated in a Hadith that on the Day of Judgement people will be destroyed by the plague. Although the predictions of astrologers are not worthy of mention, but various astrologers from India and Europe say that in November 1899 the stars will come together and a horrific time will appear. Although I do not give any significance to the predictions of astrologers, what causes me grief is that the revelation given to me has also warned of impending danger in the two winters to come, provided that people do not adopt the path of righteousness and do not turn to God Almighty. If people do not refrain from sin, fornication, theft and all forms of deceit and falsehood, and evil action in every shape and form, grave danger is apprehended. A terrifying and dreadful sight is before us.

Now tell me why we should hold the government responsible for any fault? I advise my people that it does not behove our community to act as the ignorant do, nor follow in the way of those who act like short-sighted fools. I assure you that all of the guidelines the government has given are immensely beneficial for your health.

In our books of history, for example, in *Tabari* and other such books, which were written more than a thousand years ago, it is narrated that in the time of Hazrat Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, when the Muslim army was in Syria, an epidemic broke out. At that time, the army was forced to take refuge on a mountain. Therefore, the government has not employed a self-invented practice; in fact, it is established that this is an Islamic practice as well. Just as the Muslims moved from lower ground to higher mountain terrain, in the same manner even now, humid and damp homes located in lowlands are emptied to move the infected to open fields. Avicenna has also stressed that homes must be

cleaned well, because so long as the cause of infection exists, its outcome cannot be dispelled. What more can a physician do than to give one or two grams of medicine? However, what can medicine do to thwart the effects of that filth which is inhaled with every breath? How can plague be cured if one remains in the same house? People are oblivious to the fierce clutches of the plague. It is impossible for a person to breathe where someone has died of the plague due to the filth in such places.

It is vile to think ill of the government. The plans devised by the government are apt. It is incumbent on my community to support the government and advise their neighbourhood friends, whether Hindu or Muslim. They ought to dispel the misunderstanding of those who erroneously believe that the government has conspired to kill them. Someone ought to ask these foolish people that is the government spending hundreds of thousands of rupees just to wipe out the people? Does the government enjoy bearing such burden? The fact of the matter is that the plague is a most deadly epidemic.

What is Plague?

Firstly, one ought to understand the nature of plague. It causes severe fever, fainting, nausea, headache, memory loss, heavy shivering, anxiety and fear. Then, after a few days a bubo develops, which at times resembles a small pimple and at times a large blister. At times, this abnormal growth develops in the upper area of the thigh, at times behind the ear and at times on the neck, and even results in meningitis. All of this perhaps transpires within twenty-four hours.

The government receives information of such infected people rarely, because for the first twenty hours or so, the family mistakes the symptoms to be nothing more than a common fever. Then, after it becomes clear that these are symptoms of plague, they begin to hide the matter and the government receives intimation only after the illness has reached its final stages. If after this stage, an infected person does not die within an hour or two, what else is to be expected? This is nothing less than foolish and absurd that the people themselves are to blame, yet they cast aspersions on the government. If the government commits an error, we are responsible for pointing it out. However, the pure intentions of the government and their desire for the people's well-being is so great that they themselves have sought advice on the best course of action. However, our country really is full of near uncivilised and ignorant people. They have nothing but anger and ill-will.

They blame the government for their own wicked actions without any thought. Alas! If only the hundreds of associations that are being established throughout the country turned their attention to this objective and worked towards dispelling the suspicions in the hearts of the foolish, what a magnificent service to humanity this would be.

You are sleeping in the covers of negligence and are completely oblivious of the difficulties and hardships in which your fellow man are drowning. If the amount of money which the government is spending on its beloved citizens to alleviate them from these difficulties were based on donations, and if it was instructed that the people of every village were required to submit donations, no one would be prepared to give even one penny. It is my intention to prepare a medicine as well and I am currently engaged in this task. May God bestow a handsome reward to Sheikh Rehmatullah Sahib who has given 200 rupees to support this beneficial work for the sake of God Almighty alone. I have closely analysed the causes of this disease. The fact of the matter is that this disease has various aspects and it is necessary for a physician to keep in consideration those various aspects and causes. Poor quality foods and noxious winds spread this disease far and wide, and give it perilous dimensions. These noxious winds that exist in land areas of lower elevation infect and contaminate the human bloodstream, either through breathing or food.

Current Scientific Research Supports Islam

Current investigations into the plague have established that the root cause of the plague is bacteria and small germs. I am pleased with this research because it establishes the grandeur of Allah's Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the truthfulness of Islam. In the Hadith, this disease has been termed *naghaf*. The Arabic word *naghaf* refers to the parasite which develop in the nasal passages of goats and camels, and also refers to the plague. Great pride is taken in present-day research, but those who have studied the sacred words of the Holy Founder of Islam, may on whom be peace, derive immense pleasure and joy when they find that the statements that flowed forth from his blessed lips 1300 years ago are being proven true today. The Holy Quran also uses the word 'insect' to speak of the plague.

O you who take pride in modern research! For the sake of God, deal with justice and tell us whether such a religion can be the product of human design,

which already speaks of such verities that have been discovered now after toil, investigations and efforts spanning 1300 years. These are the intellectual miracles of the Holy Quran and our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

The Arabic word for 'heart' is *qalb*, which refers to anything that causes a thing to circulate. Now we know that the circulation of blood depends on the heart. Present-day findings have only recently disclosed after a long period of effort and contemplation the phenomenon of blood circulation. However, in Islam the word *qalb* is already used for the heart, and has therefore not only alluded to this truth, but has also safeguarded it as well.

The Causes of Plague

Now I return to my actual topic. The second cause for the rise of this disease is uncleanliness, the third is noxious infection, the fourth is fever and the fifth is abscesses. Now there is a disagreement as to whether the primary symptom is the emergence of abscesses or fever. Doctors assert that the main symptom is fever, while the Greeks maintain that abscesses are the actual symptom. In my opinion, the view of the Greeks is correct because the Torah also speaks of abscesses. Fever, however, is necessary. At times, fever is most prevalent, but on other occasions, it is not. As a matter of fact, in certain instances the affected depart even before one goes down with fever. The medical field has established that a person can meet their end even before signs of fever arise. Therefore, the primary symptom is the emergence of abscesses, not of fever. If an incision is made and the pus from an abscess is removed, the fever one may be suffering from also subsides to the extent that the ailing person is restored to health.

In any case, this disease is deadly and dreadful. This is the very reason that even though the administration is working for the welfare of its citizens with sincere sympathy and immense empathy, the government has still earned a bad name. For the government does not receive quick and timely reports and by the time information is received, what can be done? For, the ailing are out of the government's hands. Due to the goodwill and sympathy for humanity which God Almighty has Himself instilled in my heart, I have thought over the guidelines published by the government for those infected by the plague, and I can say without fear of reproach by any critic that these measures are most appropriate and effective. For example, to empty a home, or clear a neighbourhood when required, and keep the infected in quarantine are all absolutely appropriate and proper measures.

There are some who say that if a child afflicted by plague is taken into quarantine in view of these guidelines, they would die on account of being separated from mother and father. People who raise such objections ought to know that the mother and father are permitted to accompany such a child, but they will be subject to the same restrictions imposed upon those who are infected by the plague.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} states: *إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ* (*Deeds are judged by intentions*). The intention of the government is completely pure and they do not wish to separate and divide the people. The administration has not thought of employing these measures out of any evil intent or conspiracy.

Obedience to Those in Authority

I am at a complete loss to understand what benefit the government would derive from such a conspiracy? The Quran commands:

أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ¹

*Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those
who are in authority among you.*

Now here, there is a clear instruction to obey those in authority. If someone were to assert that the government is not implied in the words *minkum* (i.e. from among you), this is a blatant error on their part. Any instruction of the government which accords with the religious law of Islam is implied in the words *min-kum*. Anyone who does not oppose us is a part of us. It is derived from the Holy Quran that the government ought to be obeyed and its instructions ought to be followed. In fact, what the Muslims should have done is send memorials expressing gratitude to the government for their efforts to thwart the plague. But instead of showing thankfulness, the people have shown ungratefulness. There appears to be no reason for their displeasure except for their objection that male doctors touch Muslim women to check their pulses. Firstly and foremost, the government has heard this complaint with full attention and has even dealt with it by appointing female nurses. However, I would like to make clear that even if this was not the case, there would still be no room for objection. In such cases and circumstances, in the face of God's wrath when thousands of people are dying, such extreme measures regarding the veil are not permissible. It so happened that the

¹ *an-Nisa*, 4:60

wife of a king died and there was no one to carry away her dead body; what use is the veil in such circumstances? As the proverb goes, ‘what a man will do when faced with death.’ It has been narrated in a Hadith that a baby in the mother’s womb can be delivered by a man if required. Our religion is not one of difficulty and anyone who creates inconveniences is guilty of making their own religious law, as it were. The government also has not violated any injunctions relating to the veil and their rules are softened as required. When the people put forth their recommendations for reform, the government listens to them carefully and deliberates over them in an appropriate manner according to the dictates of wisdom at that time. Someone ought to tell me where checking a pulse for medical purposes is prohibited in the injunctions of the veil.

Adopt the Ways of Prosperity

The fact of the matter is that one ought to be diligent in developing virtue and piety, and adopt the ways of prosperity. Only then can we achieve anything. The Holy Quran says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَهُ حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ¹

This means, God Almighty does not change a people’s condition until they first bring about a change in their own state themselves. To indulge oneself in futile thoughts and take an extreme approach is absolutely absurd.

What is needed now is for people to turn towards God Almighty, offer their Prayers, pay zakat, and refrain from usurping the rights of others and committing wicked actions. It is clearly an established fact that on certain occasions, when one person is guilty of evil, they bring about the ruin of the entire city or household in which they live. So abandon evil, for this is the cause of destruction. Eighty villages in Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur are being ravaged by the plague. What room is there for heedlessness? Do not think ill of the government by way of ignorance.

If your neighbour is mistrustful, then advise them to remove their doubts. To what extent will the people show negligence? Everyone ought to be fearful, lest the day dawn when all the people are overtaken by epidemic and destroyed in a single sweep. The Hadith states that prayer is accepted before the fall of calamity. When a person is surrounded by fear and danger, any individual can be moved to pray and turn to God at such a time. Fortunate is the person, however, who

¹ ar-Rad, 13:12

supplicates before God in a time of peace. Man ought to observe the state of those who are afflicted by this misfortune. The plague is rampant in significantly close proximities around us. People should ascertain the circumstances prevalent in these places. The disease is gaining force in the district of Jalandhar, though it is less vigorous in the district of Hoshiarpur.

Observe Your Prayers with Strict Regularity

However, I do not believe that this epidemic will subside as of yet, for winter is coming. Hence, take refuge with God Almighty and observe your Prayers with strict regularity. Sometimes people will only offer one Prayer, but remember that there is no concession in the matter of Prayer. Even the Prophets were not excused.

It is recorded in a Hadith that a newly converted party of Muslims came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and they asked to be granted relief from offering the daily Prayers. However, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: 'A religion bereft of action is no religion at all.' Never forget this point. Allah the Exalted states that one of His signs is that the heaven and earth are established by His command. On occasion, those people who develop an inclination towards naturalistic ideologies assert that naturalism is the belief that people ought to follow, for if one undertook no measures to safeguard their health, then what use is mere righteousness and piety? Another sign also from the signs of Allah Almighty, is that sometimes medicine proves to be inefficacious and physical methods for the safeguarding of health are of no use. Neither does medicine prove beneficial, nor the physician. However, if the command of God favours a thing, the impossible becomes possible.

The Trial of Abraham^{as}

Reflect over the trial of Abraham^{as}, when he was ordered to take his wife and child to a distant land away from Canaan. He took his family to the place where Mecca is now situated—a place where there was neither food nor drink. Upon reaching this land he said: 'O Allah! I am leaving my offspring in a place where there is no food or drink.' Sarah^{ra} wanted Ishmael^{as} to die somehow, for she was the one who told Abraham^{as} to leave them in such a land. Although Abraham^{as} took offence to this, God instructed him to do as Sarah^{ra} had said, but not because He preferred Sarah^{ra}. In fact, Sarah^{ra} had expelled Hagar^{ra} previously as well and at that time an

angel of God spoke to Hagar^{ra}. Allah the Exalted speaks to those of His servants as well who are not Prophets. As such, God Almighty spoke to Hagar^{ra} twice.

Therefore, Abraham, on whom be peace, did as he was commanded and with a scarce amount of water and dates, he set out with his wife and child, and left them in this land. After a few days, when their small quantity of food and water was exhausted, Ishmael^{as} began to fall into the clutches of death. In that hour, the mother could not bear to see her child die, and so she ran here and there a few times in the hope of finding a passing caravan. She travelled a distance to climb a small hill and began to scream. This was a time when she only had one son and she was separated from her husband—as though she were a widow. There was no prospect of her bearing any children in the future. She cried for help. It was then that an angel called out: ‘Hagar, Hagar.’ She looked here and there but could see no one; but then she noticed that water had begun to flow around her child. It was as though life had been breathed into the dead. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ‘If the water had not been contained, it would have become a spring that flowed out into the world.’

The purpose in narrating this story is to demonstrate that this is the manner in which God Almighty manifests the marvels of His power in places that are empty of even food and drink. As such, the first wonder of God was the water He provided. This was also a foreshadowing that the grandeur of the water which the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was destined to distribute could be described as follows:

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا¹

Know that Allah is now quickening the earth after its death.

That is to say, the water given to Hagar^{ra} endowed life to Ishmael^{as}, but the water belonging to the Holy Prophet^{sa} gave life to an entire world. The intent is to elaborate that where no physical means existed, Allah the Almighty provided a means for their deliverance. Allah the Exalted states that the heaven and earth exist by His command. Just reflect upon how God Almighty transformed an intensely hot wilderness, where there was no sign of human life. Now, tens of millions of people flock to this land from all over the world. The open plain upon which the people gather for the Hajj is precisely where at one time there was neither food nor drink.

¹ *al-Hadid, 57:18*

Bring About a Change in Yourselves

The fact of the matter is that God does as He pleases. He transforms desolate wastelands into inhabitations and reduces flourishing cities to ruins. What happened to the city of Babylon? Human schemes longed to see a certain place thriving with people, but God turned it into a forsaken land, inhabited by owls. However, there was another place where people wanted to see nothing but wilderness, yet God turned it into a land in which throngs of people amass from all the corners of the earth.

Hence, bear well in mind that to depend on medicine and human strategies whilst putting aside God Almighty is extremely foolish. What is required is a completely new life; one full of seeking forgiveness from Allah. Those who are engaged heavily in worldly matters ought to be more fearful. Those in employment often fail to observe their obligations to God. On certain occasions, it is permissible to combine the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers, and also to combine the *Maghrib* and *Isha* prayers. I know that if the authorities are requested to grant leave for the obligatory Prayers, they are accommodating. Government officials are under instruction by their superiors to grant permission for the observance of Prayer. To neglect the Prayer by resorting to feeble excuses is nothing but a weakness of the self. Do not fail to offer the rights owed to God's servants and the rights owed to God. Fulfil your obligations and do not think ill of the government for even a moment. Do you not remember the state of affairs under Sikh rule? The call to Prayer was banned in the mosques. Harsh penalties and immense cruelty was inflicted upon people for consuming even small amounts of beef. And so, Allah the Exalted brought this empire from afar so that we were able to benefit from it. We have now begun to practice our religious duties in peace.

How full of gratitude should we be for this government? Bear well in mind that one who does not thank their fellow man is ungrateful to God as well. It is an established principle that if a human being abandons the use of a limb, it becomes useless. It is said that if an individual keeps their eye closed for forty days, it will become blind. Therefore, I wish to advise you emphatically that the government's favours upon us are many. A multitude of books containing verities and divine insights arrive here from far and wide. We have benefited from the liberties granted to us. When attacks were made against our religion and difficulties arose, I reflected and contemplated, after which divine insights and

verities were disclosed to me in accordance with the following promise of Allah Almighty that:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَهُمْ سُبُلَنَا¹

*And as for those who strive in Our path —
We will surely guide them in Our ways.*

Therefore, the government is also a catalyst for the revelation of these divine insights.

And so, in the end, I would like to reiterate that you ought to develop a true relationship with God Almighty and to not look towards the government with suspicion. On the contrary, follow the guidance of the authorities and assist them. —End—²

16 May 1898

Join the Beloved of God

These are truly fragile times. Everyone ought to fear the wrath of Allah Almighty, for He has no care except for those who are His pious servants. Foster brotherhood and love amongst yourselves; forsake barbarity and mutual dissension. Withdraw completely from all forms of jest and mockery, for mockery moves the heart far away from the truth. Treat one another with respect. Each and every one of you ought to give preference to the comfort of your brother over themselves. Reconcile sincerely with Allah the Exalted and become subservient to Him once again. The wrath of Allah Almighty is descending upon the earth and only those will be saved who fully repent of all their sins and return to God.

Remember that if you bring yourself to obey the commandments of Allah Almighty and endeavour to support His chosen religion, God will remove all the obstacles in your way and you will be successful. Do you not observe how a farmer will uproot weeds from the field so that healthy plants can flourish; and how he adorns his field with beautiful and fruitful trees; and safeguards and protects them from everything that could cause them harm? However, owners do not care if cattle eat away at such trees and plants which do not bear fruit, and which begin to rot and dry, or if a lumberjack cuts them down and throws the wood of such trees into a furnace. In the same manner, you too ought to remem-

¹ *al-Ankabut*, 29:70

² *Risalah al-Indhar*, pp. 54-73

ber that if you are deemed among the truthful in the sight of Allah Almighty, no one who opposes you can cause you grief. If, however, you do not set aright your state of affairs and if you do not make a firm covenant of obedience with Allah the Exalted, then God has no care for such people. Thousands of sheep and goats are slaughtered daily, and no one is moved by mercy to prevent this; yet if even a single human being is killed, a long string of questions will follow. Therefore, if you let yourselves become useless and carefree in the likeness of animals, you shall meet the same fate.

You ought to join with those who are loved by God so that no disease or calamity can muster the courage to lay its hands upon you. For nothing can transpire on earth except with the permission of Allah Almighty. Rid yourselves of all mutual conflict, aggression and enmity. Now is the time for you to set aside trivial matters and engage yourselves in important and magnificent work. The people will oppose you and the members of the Anjuman will be displeased with you, but you ought to advise them gently and not act vehemently towards them. This is the advice that I bequeath to you. Always remember my counsel in the form of a testament that you must never act angrily or harshly, but rather you must advise everyone gently, softly and courteously. Clearly explain to the members of the Anjuman that such a memorial¹ is actually harmful to the religion of Islam. The reason we have opposed their memorial is because it is injurious to the religion.²

25 July 1898

The Best Response to Abusive Language

Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala dispatched his periodical *Isha'at-us-Sunnah* of 1895, volume 18, numbers 5 to 12, with Muhammad, the son of Chughta, who belongs to the Awan people, a resident of Hammu, Ghakhar, district Sialkot, in which many unjust attacks had been made against the Promised Messiah^{as}. On the afternoon of 25 July 1898, the Promised Messiah^{as} returned the original copies of these bound periodicals to the messenger and wrote the following on the top of the front page:

¹ A Christian by the name of Ahmad Shah published an immensely hurtful book entitled *Ummahat-ul-Mu'minin* in the quantity of 1000 copies in 1898 and dispatched it free of charge to the renowned Muslims of that time. As a reaction to this, the Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam Lahore submitted a memorial to the government which proved to be of no benefit. This comment of the Promised Messiah^{as} makes reference to this memorial.

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, nos. 12-13, dated 20-27 May 1898, p. 10

رَبِّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ صَادِقًا فِي قَوْلِهِ فَأَكْرِمْهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ كَاذِبًا فَخُذْهُ - آمِينَ¹

*O my Lord! If this person is true in what he says then grant him honour,
but if he is false then seize him. Ameen.*

1 August 1898

After the morning Prayer, His Holiness the Promised Messiah^{as} said: I saw a dream in which I removed a piece of a decayed molar from my mouth. I found the piece to be very clean and kept it in my hand. Then the Promised Messiah^{as} said: In a dream if someone throws away a tooth, this is an ominous sign, otherwise it is an indication of glad-tidings.

After this, Muhammad Sadiq related two of his own dreams; one of which was about him receiving clothes made of divine light, and the second one was about him neatly writing out a treatise of the Promised Messiah^{as}. The Promised Messiah^{as} interpreted these dreams to be a sign of success in attaining his objectives.

Insights Descend upon the Heart through Divine Succour

After this the Promised Messiah^{as} said: One form of God's support is manifested in a clear and evident manner; and this can be witnessed by the general public as well. However, there are certain hidden kinds of support. I am at a loss to think of any method by which I can show this hidden succour of God to the common masses. For example, there are my written works in Arabic. I know well the extent of my expertise in Arabic literature, but the fact is that when I begin to pen a treatise in Arabic, I am inspired with words—one after the other—which fit precisely in places that are most appropriate and apt. Do tell me, how am I to show you this form of divine succour whereby words are revealed upon my heart?

You may observe that most of the subject-matter discussed in my book *Ayyam-us-Sulh* is nowhere to be found in my previous works. Allah the Exalted knows full well that before this time these concepts never came to my mind, but now they have been revealed upon my heart in such a manner as is beyond a person's ability to fathom, until they themselves receive a portion of such divine succour and they become able to understand this phenomenon. God Almighty bestows this grace upon such people whom He desires to use for an important task.

The fact is that until a person enjoys good health and has time at their disposal, it is impossible to produce written work. Only those people are granted this grace

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, nos. 20-21, dated 20-27 July 1898, p. 5

of God Almighty whom He wishes to use for an important task. In such a case, God Almighty makes available to such a person all the means that are necessary for them to engage in written work.

Consideration for Apparent Means

The Honourable Maulvi Nur-ud-Din Sahib, may Allah be pleased with him, had been feeling unwell since 31 July 1898 due to stomach pain. The Promised Messiah^{as} sent someone to inquire about him and when he received news of his recovery, he said: All praise belongs to Allah. The Promised Messiah^{as} went on to say: Maulvi Sahib has now reached an age which only leads the physical body to a state of decline. Therefore, caution is required and he ought to watch his every step. Life and death is in the hands of God's decree, but it is not appropriate for man to disregard apparent means.

Then the Promised Messiah^{as} stated: In actuality, the time for a person's physical decline begins after the age of thirty. Any extreme, whether less or more, is harmful at this age. I have seen some people who eat precise quantities of food and even drink a measured amount, while others are so extreme that they eat and drink without any limits. Both of these practices are improper. As I have said, the time of one's youth only lasts until the age of thirty and that too if a person's faculties are strong and healthy. Otherwise, there are some who, even in their young age, resemble the elderly.¹

The Evening of 23 August 1898

Why Does Modern Philosophy Give Rise to Irreligiousness?

The Promised Messiah^{as} posed the question: 'Why does present-day philosophy incline the dispositions of people towards irreligiousness?' Master Ghulam Muhammad Sahib of Sialkot said: 'In actuality, those natures which are already disposed to irreligiousness are the ones that are influenced by this philosophy. Often, there are many renowned priests who are inclined to philosophy yet they adhere firmly to their faith.'

The Promised Messiah^{as} said: 'After reflecting on these matters, sadly, one's mind is diverted to another issue. On the one hand, these reverends teach philosophy and logic in schools and colleges, yet on the other hand, they believe

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, nos. 22-23, dated 6-13 August 1898, p. 16

the Messiah to be the son of God and in fact God himself; they subscribe to doctrines such as the trinity, etc. One cannot fathom how such beliefs can be reconciled with philosophy. Western logic is based on induction. Then by what sort of inductive reasoning is it established that Christ is the son of God? What string of argumentation would they formulate? They would probably assert that individuals who possess the following characteristics are either God or sons of God, and since these attributes were present in the Messiah, he too was God or the son of God. However, such reasoning in this context is absolutely impossible, as this would necessitate plurality. Whenever I reflect over this issue, my astonishment only increases. I do not understand how these people fail to realise this fact.

The pure principles of Islam are not ones which fail to prove themselves any less than perfect when judged against the yardstick of philosophy and inductive reasoning. In fact, I have contemplated many a time that it is stated about the Holy Quran: *فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ*¹, i.e. this well-preserved book is hidden in the heaven and earth. All people do not have it within them to recite this book; however, the Holy Quran is a reflection of that book which is hidden in the heaven and earth. The Quran has shown a manifestation of that God to which the heaven and earth bear witness. But on what testimony and evidence has this self-crafted, fabricated and dead God of 1900 years been deified?

Hence, it is an excellence of Islam alone and a means of pride for the Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that he brought such a religion which has existed since time immemorial and whose teaching is evidently present in even the pages of the heaven and earth, as it were.²

25 August 1898

Present-Day Persian

On the morning of 25th August while discussing the Persian language, the honourable Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib of Sialkot said: ‘Nowadays, the Iranians have directed their attention heavily to the writing of literature. They have begun to use Arabic words so abundantly that except for connecting words, the actual usage of Persian vocabulary has fallen drastically. They have begun to use words in the measure of the Arabic forms *mufa’alah*, *infi’al*, *istif’al*, etc., so greatly that one’s mind is left astonished.’ At this, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: ‘In earlier times the

¹ *al-Waqi’ah*, 56:79

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, nos. 24-25, dated 20-27 August 1898, p. 9

word *fehmidan*, etc., was in common usage. But today, this word is rarely used.' Maulana Abdul-Karim Sahib humbly submitted: 'These days, they simply say *mufahamah*, *tafhim*, etc.'

The Breadth of the Arabic Language and the Support of Islam

In the context of this discussion, the Promised Messiah^{as} went on to say: 'The Arabic language is immensely vast and contains all kinds of terminology. Written works are being produced so abundantly that only God has a knowledge of their number. Simply take the example of the Hadith. No one can claim confidently that they have seen all the books which relate to the science of Hadith.'

After this, Maulana Abdul-Karim Sahib stated during the course of discussion: 'Just recently, Maulvi Sahib (i.e. Respected Maulvi Nur-ud-Din Sahib, may the Lord protect him) has received a list of the books from the Khadawiyah Library in Egypt, which extends over seven volumes. The list has been compiled in a manner that it is enjoyable to just read through it. The books have been numbered systematically in such a manner that even a person who has not visited the library before can walk in and locate precisely where a certain book is placed, provided that they have read through the list at least once.'

At this, the Promised Messiah^{as} inquired: 'Can these books be issued?' Maulvi Sahib responded: 'Yes, these libraries place no such restriction; books can be copied as well, etc.'

Then, our Noble Leader, the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace, said: 'How abundantly has God Almighty supported Islam. If any foolish person were to deny the divine succour furnished in favour of Islam, they would have to accept that God has never supported anyone in the world before. For a language to be so vast in its scope, and then for so many written works to be produced in that language, is a means of support for Islam, for this actually supports the Holy Quran. Whenever a lexicographer defines an Arabic word, if the word has appeared in the Holy Quran, they have always written the relevant verse as well.'

At this, Maulana Abdul-Karim Sahib said: '*Lisan-ul-Arab* has adhered to this practice strictly.' Then, the Promised Messiah^{as} stated in the course of his discourse: 'Languages such as Sanskrit and others have almost died away. Neither is written work produced in those languages, nor anything else. So too is the case of the Christians, who have paid no attention to maintaining their Gospel in its original language.'

The Spiritual Revolution Brought About by Islam

In the context of this discussion, the Promised Messiah^{as} stated: I am surprised then why people take issue with Islam. The God of Islam is not an artificially contrived God, rather He is the same Powerful God that has existed since eternity.

In addition, reflect over the purpose of prophethood. Firstly, the Messengers appeared at a time of need and then they fulfilled that need in the best possible manner. This pride also is reserved for none other than our Noble Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The state of Arabia and the world in general at the advent of the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is not hidden to anyone. The people of that time were barbarians who knew nothing but eating and drinking. They were ignorant of the rights due to their fellow man and oblivious of the rights due to Allah. In one instance, God Almighty presents an illustration of their state by saying: ¹يَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ (They eat even as the cattle eat). But then the teaching of the Holy Messenger^{sa} influenced them so impressively that their state become such that ²يَبْتَئُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سَجْدًا وَ قِيَامًا³, that is to say, they would spend their nights in the remembrance of their Lord, prostrating before Him and standing in His presence. My goodness! How magnificent is the superiority of the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him! It was through him that an unparalleled revolution and a magnificent transformation was brought about. He established the rights owed to humankind and the rights due to Allah in perfect balance. He transformed a lifeless people that consumed carrion into a pure and living nation of the highest degree.

There are only two forms of excellence: intellectual and practical. As far as their practical state is concerned, this is described in the words: ³يَبْتَئُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سَجْدًا وَ قِيَامًا³. Then, their intellectual state may be gauged by the fact that the abundant stream of written works which have been produced by them, and the ongoing service rendered to expand the language, continues in an unparalleled manner.

On the other hand, when I look at the Christians, I am only astonished. For what success did the disciples attain due to their adhering to the Christian faith? Judas Iscariot, the treasurer of Christ, would sometimes misappropriate funds, and everyone already knows that he had his teacher apprehended for thirty

¹ *Muhammad*, 47:13

² *al-Furqan*, 25:65

³ *al-Furqan*, 25:65

pieces of silver. Christ's pouch would remain filled with a sum of 2,000 in the currency of that time. On one hand we have this example, but in contrast, when the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was about to leave this world, he inquired whether there was anything in the home. Respected Ayeshah Siddiqah, may Allah be pleased with her, said that they had one dinar, to which the Holy Prophet^{sa} responded: 'Distribute it, for how is it possible that the Messenger of Allah moves on to meet his Lord leaving behind one dinar in his own home.'

I am amazed that the Christians are strong proponents of philosophy, but God knows where has this philosophy disappeared to when it comes to matters of doctrine. Just look at the Atonement; it may be likened to a mythical animal. What has the Atonement brought about? If intellectual arguments are put to one side, this concept neither reformed the disciples at an intellectual level, nor in the practical sense. As far as intellectual reform is concerned, the Gospel clearly establishes that they were of rudimentary intelligence, undiscerning and greedy. The degree to which they were reformed practically has also been illustrated in the Gospel; while a certain person curses Christ, there is another who had him arrested for thirty pieces of silver, and what to talk of other sins. Darkness and gloom begin in this very world, just as Allah the Exalted states:

مَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى¹

But whoso is blind in this world will be blind in the Hereafter.

Now cast a glance upon the disciples of Christ, and think about whether any change took place in their persons. When an individual is purged of sin, this enlightens them and grants them insight, yet the disciples are bereft in this regard. Then what purpose was served by the Atonement?²

26 September 1898

Glad Tidings of Success

On the morning of 26th September after the *Fajr* prayer, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: Now I have reached a state where even if I see a dream, I do not consider it to be confined to my own person or soul, rather I consider it to be related to Islam and my community. I can swear on oath and say that when I see a dream, I do not

¹ *Bani Isra'il*, 17:73

² *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, nos. 24-25, dated 20-27 August 1898, pp. 9-11

consider my own self even slightly.

In this context, last night I saw that I drank a large cup of sherbet. Its sweetness was beyond my ability to bear, but despite this, I went on drinking it. The thought also crossed my mind that I suffer from diabetes, so why am I drinking such a sweet sherbet in so large a quantity? But despite these thoughts, I drank the entire cup. Sherbet signifies success and so this is a glad-tiding of success for Islam and our community.

In truth, the string of a person's dreams extend in their scope and breadth to the extent of their relations with other people. For example, if someone lives in Kolkata and I do not even know him, I will not see dreams in their connection. As such, many years ago when only a few people knew of me, the dreams that I experienced were limited to those few people alone, but now I see dreams related to thousands of people.

The Excellences of the Arabic Language

The course of discussions took a turn to medicine on account of the fact that the Promised Messiah^{as} had given the honourable Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib some medicine the previous night. The Promised Messiah^{as} inquired about whether it had proved effective. In this context, various exchanges continued about eastern syrup and strychnine, and their properties which strengthen the muscles or *a'saab*. On this, Maulana Abdul-Karim Sahib said to the Promised Messiah^{as} that the word *asab* is based on a deep philosophy. He went on to say that in Arabic, *asab* means to tie something. Now the sinews and muscles or *a'saab*—like ropes—bind the limbs of the body together. In contrast, the English word 'nerve' is simply a word with no deeper wisdom.

At this, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: This is also a miracle of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, that even individual Arabic words are replete with intellectual insights. This is why Arabic is the Pinnacle of Languages. Since the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was granted a magnificent miracle such as the Quran, its greatness in the academic sense is also immensely remarkable.

In this context, the publication of *Minan-ur-Rahman* remained under discussion. The Promised Messiah^{as} stated: When certain means and resources, which are necessary, make themselves available, the book shall be printed.

Four Categories of Signs in Favour of My Truthfulness

In the course of this discussion, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: I have mentioned countless times that Allah the Exalted has granted me signs, which may be classified in four categories. I have written and published them more than once, and have made strong challenges in this regard.

Firstly, the sign that relates to my knowledge of the Arabic language. This was bestowed upon me when Muhammad Husain of Batala wrote that I—a humble man—was ignorant of even a single Arabic tense. I had never claimed on any prior occasion that I did know a single Arabic tense. However, in any case, those who have studied Arabic writing and composition can understand its complexities and can appreciate its qualities. Maulvi Sahib (referring to Maulvi Abdul-Karim Sahib) has been observing from the very outset the miraculous nature in which Allah the Exalted has helped me. One is faced with great difficulty when they are unable to find an appropriate word from purely classical language to fit an instance. In such instances, Allah the Exalted inspires me in a flash with the perfect word. To produce new and self-crafted expressions is easy, but to make use of pure and classical language is challenging. Then, I have published my Arabic works with hefty offers of reward and have said that people are free to solicit assistance from whomsoever they please—even natives of the language. For God Almighty has assured me that no one has the ability to match me in this respect, for this sign is from among the miracles of the Holy Quran and has been granted to me by way of reflection.

Secondly, there is the acceptance of prayers. I have experienced during the composition of my Arabic works how abundantly my prayers have been accepted. I have prayed on each and every word. I hold the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, as an exception (for everything that I have received is by his grace and on account of obedience to him), but I can say that my prayers have been accepted to such an extent that perhaps no other person has experienced such acceptance. I cannot enumerate whether such instances equate to ten thousand, two hundred thousand, or even more. In fact, there are certain signs of acceptance that are known to a world of people.

Thirdly, there is the sign of prophecies, i.e. the disclosing of the unseen. Astrologers and diviners do, by way of conjecture, make predictions which prove to be true in part. History tells us that even in the time of the Messenger of Allah,

peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, there were soothsayers who would disclose matters of the unseen. Sateeh was also a known soothsayer. However, there is a difference between the hidden knowledge of diviners and soothsayers, and the disclosing of the unseen by those who are commissioned by Allah and who are recipients of His revelation. The revealing of matters unseen by the recipients of revelation possesses within it a certain Godly power and divine awe. Therefore, the Holy Quran clearly states:

فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ¹

*And He reveals not His secrets to any one, except to him
whom He chooses, namely a Messenger of His.*

In these verses, the very use of the expression *izhar* demonstrates that divine prophecies possess a grandeur and strength.

The fourth sign relates to the subtleties and insights of the Holy Quran. For the insights of the Quran cannot be revealed to anyone who has not been purified by God. The Holy Quran states:

لَا يَمَسُّهَا إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ²

None shall touch it except those who are purified.

I have said many a time that those who oppose me ought to pen a commentary on a certain chapter of the Holy Quran and I shall do the same. Then the two commentaries may be compared. However, no one has dared to take up this challenge. Muhammad Husain and others have asserted that I do not know a single tense of Arabic grammar; yet when my books were presented to him, he would raise weak and futile arguments asserting that my Arabic was so poor and disjointed that it could not even be called Arabic, but he was unable to produce even a single page himself and demonstrate that this is how one writes proper Arabic. Hence, these are the four signs that I have been granted especially in favour of my truthfulness.³

¹ *al-Jinn*, 72:27-28

² *al-Waqi'ah*, 56:80

³ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, nos. 28-29, dated 20-27 September 1898, p. 3-4

3 October 1898

A Dream

On the morning of 3rd October after the *Fajr* prayer, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: Last night, after *Tahajjud* prayer, I lay down and saw in a state of light slumber that I had in my hand four pages of *Surmah Chashm-e-Aryah*. I heard someone saying: The Arya people themselves are now publishing this book.

The Promised Messiah^{as} interpreted this dream saying: Perhaps this means that the reluctance of the Aryas and their suspicions as regards my various prophecies—such as the one relating to Lekhram, etc.—would be removed and the real truth of the matter would reveal itself to them. In the case filed by Clark, the lawyer Ram Bhajat was an Arya man. When he met me at Amritsar station, he openly told me: ‘The only reason that I agreed to fight the lawsuit without a fee was so that I could uncover a lead in the Lekhram murder, because I was certain that you were behind his murder.’ Similarly, other religious communities may perhaps harbour similar suspicions. And so it seems from this dream that God Almighty would manifest the actual truth upon them and establish an argument over them that would demonstrate their wrongdoing.

Then, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: The Patti announcements were no different. Even at that time, it was the other party themselves that was responsible for the publication of the announcements.¹

At this, Maulana Maulvi Nur-ud-Din Sahib^{ra} said: ‘When this event comes to pass, we will be able to appreciate its grandeur and worth in a manner that others will not. For we clearly observe the challenges that confront us.’ To this, the Promised Messiah^{as} said: ‘Absolutely, but not only in this case, in fact this is our state of affairs when we witness the acceptance of any prayer or observe the greatness of any sign. Take the example of a person in a bleak and barren desert with no water for thousands of miles, who prayed and God Almighty granted them a glass of water by His grace. If this incident was narrated only briefly—excluding the details and without speaking of the necessary means required for water—those unaware of all the circumstances would laugh instead of appreciate the extraordinary nature of this occurrence. However, if the same people were

¹ Patti is the name of the village of Mirza Sultan *Mubammad*, the husband of *Mubammadi* Begum, and their relatives and associates. When the Promised Messiah^{as} made his prophecy about *Mubammadi* Begum, they vehemently opposed him and published announcements in opposition. [Publisher]

apprised of the difficulties, they would look at the incident with feelings of immense reverence and awe. Similarly, if an illiterate person read through an English book, those who were aware of the person's inability to read would find this to be extraordinary. However, if a Master of Arts or Bachelor of Arts was to read the same book, people would view this with little importance, or rather deem it inconsequential altogether. Therefore, the grandeur or insignificance of anything depends on the nature of the means to acquire it and the difficulties that surround it.'

The Acceptance of Thirty Thousand Prayers

The Promised Messiah^{as} went on to state: People will perhaps consider my words to be a lie where I have written that at least thirty thousand prayers of mine have been accepted by God. However, my Lord knows well that this is the truth and my words are free from even the slightest fabrication. The reason being that I have prayed for each and every one of my undertakings, whether religious or worldly in nature, and Allah Almighty made the matter at hand opportune and good for me.

The Effects of Prayer in My Arabic Works

Each and every word in my Arabic works are the result of prayer. The reason being that it is beyond human power to challenge others as I do. If this is not the effect of prayer, then why does no Muslim scholar or Arab native dare to come forth against me in contestation? It is due to the special grace of Allah Almighty that my works are written in the style and expression of native speakers. For even each and every native speaker is not aware of all the accepted idiom in a certain language. Therefore, I am blessed with God's grace.¹

¹ *Al-Hakam*, vol. 2, no. 30, dated 8 October 1898, p. 6

Glossary

Many of the Arabic terms used in this translation are found in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, including, Islam, Quran, Hadith, Sunnah, etc. Such words have not been italicised in the text, and generally, are not glossed here. In various places, the Promised Messiah^{as} has explained various words in a linguistic context or expounded their deeper spiritual meaning, as is the case, for example, with *lahw*, *ghamrah*, *istiqamat*, *rujz*, among others. Such words, though italicised in the text, have not been included in the glossary. Similarly, foreign terms which can adequately be translated into English—though given in the text on certain occasions—have not been elaborated here. Therefore, please note that only such terms are included in this glossary which require an explanation above and beyond a simple translation in English.

alhamdulillah literally, ‘all praise belongs to Allah’, which is an expression in Islam for showing gratitude to God.

Asr the third of the five daily prayers, which is offered in the late afternoon.

athra an illness caused by a weakness in the womb. On this account, a woman is either unable to conceive at all, but if successful she repeatedly miscarries; those who do give birth either deliver stillbirth or lose their children in young age.

Badr the second official organ of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community established on 31 October 1902. This weekly newspaper was published from Qadian, District Gurdaspur, in the Urdu language.

Bayazid Bastami Abu Yazid Tayfur ibn Isa ibn Surashan al-Bastami, commonly known as Bayazid Bastami was a Persian Sufi from north-central Iran. He is considered by some to be one of the pioneers of the concept of *fana*.

Bustan literally, ‘The Orchard’ is a famous collection of Persian poetry by the renowned Sheikh Sa’di comprising his wise judgements on life and other anecdotes.

cowrie the flattened yellowish shell of the money cowrie, formerly used as money in parts of Africa and the Indo-Pacific area. Cowrie is derived from the 17th century Hindi word ‘kauri.’

Dar-ul-Harb literally, ‘Territory of War’ and refers to such territories where no treaty of peace with the Muslims exists. Various schools of thought and jurists believe that an Islamic territory taken by non-Muslims becomes a *Dar-ul-Harb* when Islamic law is replaced.

Dharam Mahautsav the ‘Conference of Great Religions’ held at the Lahore Town Hall on 26th-29th December 1897 on the efforts of Swami Sadhu Shugan Chandar. The purpose of the conference was for the learned representatives of various religions to set forth the excellences of their respective faiths. For more information, please see *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, on whom be peace.

dhikr-e-arra literally, the 'invocation of the saw'. A Sufi invocation, commonly found among the Yasavi order and others. The sound that comes from the throat of those performing this chant aloud resemble the grinding of a saw and is symbolic for the Sufi 'sawing their desires.'

Dbul-Faqar The famous sword of Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib^{ra}, the fourth Caliph of the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Fajr the first of the five daily prayers, which is offered at dawn before sunrise.

fana-e-nadhari literally, 'annihilation of perception,' is a concept held by the Sufis and saints. The Promised Messiah^{as} explains elsewhere in *Malfuzat* that *fana-e-nadhari* or 'annihilation of perception' is when man keeps his attention towards Allah in every action and movement, and becomes so absorbed in God that he can see nothing in the world to possess any power in its own right. Such an individual can perceive and observe nothing but the power and control of Allah in all things, and he comes to realise that everything in the world happens only by God's will.

fana literally, 'annihilation' or 'to cease to exist'. The Sufis speak of three stages in man's spiritual journey to God. The first stage is *fana*, or the complete denial of the self and the realisation that only when a person imposes a death upon their own soul can they be truly united with God. The second stage is *baqa* (subsistence or life) and the third stage is *liqa* (meeting), which is the state of union with God. The state of *fana fillah* means to be lost or absorbed completely in the love of Allah.

Al-Hakam the first official organ of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community established on 8 October 1897. The first editor of *Al-Hakam* was Hazrat Sheikh Yaqub Ali Irfani^{ra}. This weekly newspaper was published from Qadian, District Gurdaspur.

Hujaj-ul-Kiramah a book by Nawwab Siddiq Hasan Khan, relating to signs of the Latter Days.

ihسان a favour, but in the context of worship, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has expounded that *ihسان* means to worship God as though one can see Him, and if this is not possible, then at least to stand before Him in worship knowing that He can see you.

Isba the last of the five daily prayers, which is offered in the evening, shortly after nightfall.

Maghrib the fourth of the five daily prayers and offered right after sunset.

mahapralaya the Grand Dissolution of the universe. The Hindus believe that the fourteen realms (*loka*) are destroyed; the universe and all souls are absorbed in Shiva, and a state of non-existence, as it were, prevails.

Mahdi literally 'the guided one' and also refers to the Imam Mahdi—a title meaning 'Guided Leader,' given to the Reformer of the Latter Days prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

mabram a man or woman with whom marriage is not permissible. A *non-mabram*, therefore, refers to a man or woman who one can marry and between whom the shariah instructs segregation in light of the Islamic injunction of veiling.

Malfuzat written records of sayings, discourses and audiences of pious men, Sufis and religious divines.

Maqamat-e-Hariri a collection of 50 stories by Abu Muhammad Al-Qasim ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman Al-Hariri, commonly known as Al-Hariri of Basra, who was an

Arab poet and scholar of the Arabic language. His work *Maqamat-e-Hariri* is a classical text and also studied for its language as a literary masterpiece.

maulvi a Muslim cleric

muttaqi generally translated as ‘righteous’ but has far deeper connotations than can be encompassed in the English word ‘righteous’ alone. The word ‘*muttaqi*’ is from *ittiqa*; in Arabic, *taqwa* and *ittiqa* mean to guard oneself against sin or trouble. Ubayy ibn Ka’b explains *taqwa* by elaborating that a *muttaqi* is one who walks on thorny bushes, cautiously taking every possible care that his clothes are not caught in and torn by the branches. This also implies a fear of God which is inspired by reverential respect, awe and love—*taqwa* is a fear of God at the thought of losing His love. In *Malfuzat*, the Promised Messiah expounds that *ittiqa* is a lower level of piety, where an individual must force themselves to do good. He has explained that while a *muttaqi* remains in constant battle against evil, stumbling at times and overcoming Satan in others, a *salih* (also generally rendered in English as ‘righteous’ or ‘virtuous’), sits at a higher level where virtue becomes second nature to them. In the text, wherever the word ‘*muttaqi*’ appears it has been rendered as ‘righteous’ for the ease of English readers, but where the difference between *muttaqi* and *salih* is expounded by the Promised Messiah, the original Arabic has also been given in italics to allude to the deeper connotation just described.

nafi-o-asbat a meditative practice among the Sufis, in which they recite, as a formula, the Muslim creed *la ilaha illallabu muhammadur-rasulullah*, and direct the energy of these words throughout their body, whilst holding their breath. First they recite *la ilaha* (there is no God) and this constitutes a negation (*nafi*) of all that is besides God. Then they recite *illallab*, (except for Allah) which is an affirmation (*asbat*) of the One True God.

paise a paisa is a monetary unit in India that is equal to one hundredth of a rupee. The plural is *paise*.

pilau an Indian rice dish cooked in stock and spices, typically with meat or vegetables.

puranas Eighteen well-known works of theology compiled by the poet Vyasa (and narrator of the Mahabharata) giving his version of Hindu mythology and theology.

ruku The bowing position in the formal Prayer.

Sab’ah Mu’allaqah literally, ‘the seven hung’ which refers to seven renowned poems of the pre-Islamic era. They are called the ‘seven hung’ poems because they were hung on the Ka’bah as a display of literary mastery.

salahiyyat a higher level of virtue. Please see *muttaqi* and *salih*.

salih a virtuous person. Please see ‘*muttaqi*’.

sama literally means ‘listening’. It is a Sufi practice that combines music, chanting and dance to induce mystical trance and spiritual ecstasy.

shastras a Sanskrit word generally means precept, rules, collection, book or treatise.

Syed a descendant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Tadhkira-tul-Awliya literally ‘Memorial of the Saints’ is a book written by Farid-ud-Din Attar, a Persian poet and Sufi, about the life of renowned mystics and their miracles.

Tahajjud the voluntary prayer offered in the middle of the night, before the obligatory Prayer at dawn.

taqiyyah a Shia doctrine that permits one to conceal their faith, hide the truth or forgo ordinary religious duties under threat of death or injury.

tolah a traditional Indian unit of measurement, equivalent to approximately 11.664 grams.

wahdat-ul-wujud literally, 'Oneness of Being' is a Sufi doctrine generally attributed to Ibn Arabi, which suggests that God and His creation are one in the same thing. Those who believe in this doctrine are referred to as Wujudis.

wahdat-ush-shuhud literally, 'Oneness of Witnessing' is a doctrine that is opposed to Oneness of Being (*wahdat-ul-wujud*). The doctrine was taught by the Indian Sufi Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi and puts forth that though God and His creation are not one, God's creation is a reflection of His Being.

Zuhr the second of the five daily prayers, which is offered in the afternoon after the sun begins to decline from its zenith

Index of Verses of the Holy Quran

al-Fatihah

1:5.....	120, 204, 206
1:6.....	18, 44, 109, 119, 171, 196
1:6-7	17, 206
1:7.....	196, 197

al-Baqarah

2:3.....	19, 20, 92
2:3-4	27
2:4.....	28, 30, 31, 103, 193
2:5.....	32
2:6.....	28, 34
2:19.....	106
2:33.....	89
2:113.....	73, 79
2:122.....	136
2:191.....	242
2:202.....	8
2:215.....	25
2:223.....	254
2:243.....	3
2:246.....	232, 233
2:256.....	111
2:270.....	121
2:287.....	60

Aal-e-Imran

3:32.....	26, 174, 175, 195, 211
3:56.....	47, 93, 99
3:93.....	73
3:111.....	187
3:135.....	186
3:141.....	24
3:191.....	62
3:191-192.....	61
3:192.....	64
3:201.....	54, 74, 77

an-Nisa

4:29.....	136
4:60.....	262
4:142.....	185
4:159.....	121

al-Ma'idah

5:3.....	165
5:28.....	104
5:68.....	213
5:118.....	47, 93

al-An'am

6:51.....	116
6:60.....	13
6:80.....	163

<i>al-A'raf</i>		<i>al-Hijr</i>	
7:159.....	83, 118	15:10.....	71, 91, 92, 93, 95, 213, 234
7:173.....	62	15:22.....	82
7:177.....	29, 39	<i>an-Nabl</i>	
7:197.....	166	16:51.....	194
7:200.....	99	16:91.....	33
<i>al-Anfal</i>		16:129.....	9, 153, 186, 235, 238
8:18.....	115	<i>Bani Isra'il</i>	
8:32.....	214	17:73.....	19, 27, 274
8:35.....	12	17:89.....	79
8:61.....	54	<i>al-Kahf</i>	
8:64.....	42	18:111.....	113, 117
8:129.....	60	<i>Taba</i>	
<i>at-Tawbah</i>		20:75.....	139
9:119.....	200, 201	<i>al-Anbiya</i>	
9:120.....	141	21:70.....	109
<i>Yunus</i>		21:108.....	117, 123
10:63.....	15	<i>al-Hajj</i>	
10:65.....	14	22:40-41.....	43
<i>Hud</i>		<i>al-Mu'minin</i>	
11:113.....	166, 168, 169, 187	23:2.....	34
11:115.....	160, 161	23:97.....	77
<i>ar-Ra'd</i>		<i>an-Nur</i>	
13:12.....	134, 149, 214, 263	24:31.....	85
13:32.....	104	24:56.....	40, 47
<i>Ibrahim</i>		<i>al-Furqan</i>	
14:8.....	124	25:8.....	114
14:11.....	52	25:65.....	273
14:79.....	146	25:73.....	22
		25:78.....	188, 191, 192, 256

<i>al-Ankabut</i>		<i>az-Zukhruf</i>	
29:3.....	14, 24	43:36.....	221
29:46.....	162		
29:70.....	18, 23, 45, 140, 267	<i>Mubammad</i>	
		47:13.....	188, 273
<i>ar-Rum</i>			
30:20.....	122	<i>al-Hujurat</i>	
30:24.....	122	49:12.....	35
30:42.....	231	49:14.....	36, 216
30:48.....	185		
		<i>Qaf</i>	
<i>Luqman</i>		50:16.....	87
31:14.....	149		
		<i>adh-Dhariyat</i>	
<i>al-Ahzab</i>		51:11-12.....	132
33:41.....	84	51:57.....	109, 157, 189
33:57.....	37, 176		
33:63.....	134	<i>an-Najm</i>	
		53:4.....	115
<i>Fatir</i>			
35:11.....	185	<i>al-Waqi'ah</i>	
		56:78-80.....	63
<i>Yasin</i>		56:79.....	92, 271
36:80.....	87	56:80.....	81
<i>as-Saffat</i>		<i>al-Hadid</i>	
37:108.....	183	57:18.....	265
<i>Saad</i>		<i>al-Mujadalah</i>	
38:46.....	65	58:23.....	118
<i>al-Mu'min</i>		<i>as-Saff</i>	
40:52.....	166	61:3.....	66
40:61.....	102, 126, 155, 164, 174, 207	61:4.....	74
		61:15.....	165
<i>Ha Mim as-Sajdah</i>			
41:31.....	14, 15, 24, 173	<i>al-Jumu'ah</i>	
41:32.....	17	62:4.....	39, 45, 93
		62:5.....	38, 124, 177

<i>al-Munafiqun</i>	<i>ash-Shams</i>
63:10.....218	91:10..... 195
<i>at-Talaq</i>	91:10-11..... 132
65:3-4..... 10	91:14.....200
65:4..... 11	<i>al-Inshirah</i>
<i>al-Mulk</i>	94:2..... 194
67:3.....152	94:7..... 147
<i>al-Qalam</i>	<i>al-Bayyinah</i>
68:5..... 79, 98, 130, 138, 170	98:3-4.....80, 81
<i>al-Jinn</i>	98:4..... 39
72:27-28.....277	98:9..... 187
<i>al-Muzzammil</i>	<i>az-Zilzal</i>
73:16..... 40	99:8..... 141, 184, 232, 233
73:18-19..... 40	<i>al-Asr</i>
<i>al-Muddaththir</i>	103:2-4.....222
74:6.....253	103:3..... 192
<i>ad-Dahr</i>	103:4..... 192, 198, 199
76:9.....72, 215	<i>al-Humazah</i>
<i>at-Takwir</i>	104:7-8..... 107, 174
81:5-11..... 49	<i>al-Fil</i>
<i>at-Tariq</i>	105:2..... 179
86:12.....229	<i>al-Ikblas</i>
86:13.....230	112:2..... 81
86:14-15.....231	112:2-5..... 38
<i>al-Fajr</i>	
89:28..... 108, 109	
89:28-29.....106	

Index of Subject Matter

A

Abdul-Karim, Maulvi 1, 87, 240, 247, 271, 272, 275, 276

Abraham, Prophet. 36, 87, 109, 264, 265

Abu Bakr 10, 43, 194, 218

Actions 98

harmony in, 66, 198

Afzal, Babu Muhammad 151, 240

Ahl-e-Hadith

believe that signs for advent of

Promised Messiah have appeared 48

Ahmadiyyat 216

faith of the community 32

purpose of establishment 180

to be a model for others 8

Allah the Exalted

all things whether heavenly or earthly

reflect, 105

Attributes

covering of shortcomings 204

Gracious and Merciful, the 204

primary attributes 202

purpose of wrath 9

Self-Sufficient, the 10

demands that Prophets be sent to the

world 90, 210

Divine Understanding

a source of pleasure 219

foundation of religion is in, 181

God cannot be comprehended by

reason (Razi) 87

philosophers could not find God

through reason alone 63

does nothing without means 94

Existence of God

arguments from Holy Quran 52

manifestation required in this era ... 234

Graciousness and Mercy of God 125

His Greatest Name 97, 173

His treatment of the righteous 11

it is against the grandeur of God to

ignore prayer and almsgiving 155

Love of God

The results of developing a, 189

manifests worthy qualities and is pure

of defects 111

Mighty and Wise, the 121

personal name of God signifying

praiseworthy qualities 97, 207

philosophy of oaths taken on created

entities 227

possessor of all power and strength ... 86

power and control of, 113

purpose of God's signs which manifest

His wrath 250

the godly perform actions which reflect

divine nature 114

there is no God but Allah, He is the

Living and Self-Subsisting 111

to beg is human and to bestow is

divine 127

true source of bounty 237

Unity of God

associating partners with God goes

against indignation of believer 163

idols of the heart 194

Almsgiving	
decrees may be averted through,	155
importance of,	243
Amritsar	75, 149, 226, 257, 278
Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam	
Promised Messiah's comment on	
memorial by,	247
Anti-Christ	39, 46, 48, 50, 197
Arabic language	
being the mother of languages	56
comprehensive nature of,	272
excellences of,	275
Aristotle.....	63
Arrogance	
caused by anger.....	35
Arura, Munshi Muhammad	1
Arya Samaj (also see Hinduism)	
analysis of beliefs.....	208
vision of the Promised Messiah	
regarding,.....	278
Asiyah	158
Atheism	
caused by Wujudi and Naturalist	
views	68
Atonement (also refer to Christianity)	
consequences of,.....	181
illogical nature of,.....	60, 184, 203
Reverend Pfander's viewpoint on	
judgement	61
Authority	
shariah	262
Ayeshah.....	30, 210, 274

B

Badr	5, 7, 8, 10
Baqir, Imam Muhammad.....	137
Bayazid Bastami	112
Belief in the Unseen	
by a Muttaqi	28

develops virtue and piety	53
rejecting the Promised Messiah results	
in loss of faith	198
Beliefs and Teachings	
India and Dar-ul-Harb	225
Bombay.....	250, 251, 257
Brahmo Samaj (also refer to Hinduism)	
denial of revelation prevents	
salvation	63
British, the	
favours of,.....	225, 237
government responsibility to confiscate	
offensive material against Islam	224
people prefer goods produced by,	222
religious freedom and justice....	223, 225
sent by Allah to save Muslims from Sikh	
atrocities.....	266

C

Certainty	
stages of,.....	32
Children	
best time for religious training	68
effects of parents on,	190
saving, from Christian and Arya	
belief.....	69
Christianity	
belief on God	203, 209
cause of decline.....	233
Christian concept of mercy and justice	
rebutted	182
efforts against Islam.....	180, 226, 239
illogical doctrines of,	128, 270, 273
level of faith of disciples	273
permissible to eat food made by,	151
practical example of those who believe	
in atonement.....	183
publish thousands of books against	
Islam	225
rebuttal of atonement	61, 181
referred to in the Holy Quran as	
astray	212
sacrifices made for their faith	71, 238

- state of, at the advent of Holy Prophet.....231
 the mother of all trials178, 213
- Clark, Dr Martyn 216**
- Cleanliness**
 Avicenna’s view on importance of, during epidemic258
 importance of inner and outer purity254
- Comfort**
 salvation is another word for, 107
- Companions, the**
 achievements of, 185
 Distinctions of,
 in financial sacrifices 218
 in giving precedence to faith over worldly affairs 224
 in having indignation for the Holy Prophet 179
 in worship at night and fasting..... 54
 matchless devotion and sacrifice 42
 ribat 54
 unparalleled examples of sincerity and loyalty 42
 gradual development of, 44
 Status
 Allah and nothing but Allah resides in my companions (Hadith) 196
 blessed with company of the Holy Prophet 273
 companions at Victory of Mecca called angels in past scriptures 194
- Company of the Righteous**
 importance of,200
 influence of the Holy Prophet upon the companions.....187, 273
 returning to Qadian repeatedly200
- Contentment of Heart**
 cannot be explained in words 194
- D**
- Dar-ul-Harb**
 India is not223, 237
- David, Prophet..... 190**
- Developing Relationship with Allah**
 Allah and nothing but Allah resides in my companions (Hadith)..... 196
 argument of the Holy Quran for those who reject revelation229
 concept of God in Christianity.128, 203
 concept of God in Islam and other religions..... 80, 203, 208, 209
 concept of God in the Hindu and Arya faith203, 208
 difference between soothsayers and Prophets277
 do not test God Almighty 120
 God has no concern for one who has no passion for Islam225
 hidden powers of God manifest themselves through His Word.....90
 meaning of ‘giving a loan’ to God.....232
 prayer is a means 196
 revelation for the righteous..... 64
 revelation needed for comfort and steadfastness 63
 revelation of Maulvi Abdullah Ghaznavi regarding Muhammad Husain204
 who benefits from divine revelation ..67
- Dhus-Sinin**
 seen at the advent of Promised Messiah..... 49
- Disciples**
 intellectual and spiritual level of, based on Gospels42, 274
- Divine Decree**
 two categories of..... 155
- Douglas, Captain..... 223**
- Dreams**
 carry meaning to the extent of one’s relations.....275
 dream of Maulvi Abdullah Ghaznavi regarding Muhammad Husain204
 of the Promised Messiah .. 256, 269, 278

E

Education	
childhood is the best time for	
religious,.....	68
Elijah, Prophet	245
Elizabeth, Queen	220
Europe ...	33, 34, 183, 184, 205, 252, 258

F

Faith	1, 197
types of,	1
Fear of God (Taqwa)	
divine understanding requires,.....	53
true insight develops,.....	229
Forgiveness	
on seeking, often	266
the Holy Prophet seeking, from Allah	
seventy times daily.....	3

G

Galen	255
Ghaznavi, Maulvi Abdullah	204
Gospels, the (also refer to Christianity)	
comparison with the Quran.....	32, 82
for a specific time	82
illogical and impractical teaching	60
intellectual and practical level of the	
disciples based on,.....	273
no importance given to, in original	
language	272
Graciousness (rahmaniyat)	
what is required of man	219
Gratitude	
becoming an example in showing, ...	266
essence of "All Praise belongs to	
Allah"	202
importance of,	124, 153
is in being God-fearing and pure.....	75
is in our nature (Promised Messiah)	237
to a just government.....	237

H

Hadith	3, 12, 39, 46, 47, 48, 84, 88, 115, 116, 123, 124, 137, 141, 142, 154, 174, 178, 189, 190, 191, 195, 196, 210, 213, 248, 258, 260, 263, 264, 272
Hagar	264, 265
Hasan, Khalifah Muhammad	183
Hatim	220
Hell	
painful punishment of,	107
Hereafter	52
arguments in favour of,.....	248
importance of remembering,.....	52, 245
Hijaz	50
Hinduism	203
eating food cooked by Hindus.....	151
Holy Quran, the	
all insights comprised in Surah al-	
Fatihah	201
"An Exhortation" and "A Hidden	
Book"	92, 271
challenge of Promised Messiah	
regarding,.....	277
compared with the Gospels	61, 82
compared with the Torah.....	83
doctrine and injunctions stated with	
argumentation	85
every injunction is based on wisdom .	60
insightful subjects contained	
in,	229, 235
miracle of,.....	80
miraculous eloquence of,.....	79
miraculous nature and superiority	
of,	86, 92
need for,.....	231
philosophy of oaths in,	222, 227
preserved by Allah Himself.....	59, 91
prophecies regarding advent of	
Promised Messiah	49
prophecy in Surah al-Fil	179
purpose behind revelation of,.....	81
shall last until the day of	

resurrection.....	82, 192
supported by the law of nature	63
teaches people of all intellectual levels	227
the Promised Messiah's knowledge of,	40
Hoshiarpur.....	263, 264

Humility

divine succour needed for development of,	44
how to develop,.....	44

Husain, Muhammad.	204, 217, 268, 276, 277
--------------------------	------------------------------------

Husayn, Imam	69, 151, 183, 184, 186, 187
--------------------------	--

Hyde Park, London	184
--------------------------------	------------

I

Ibbetson, Mr	75
---------------------------	-----------

Ibni Arabi, Muhy-ud-Din	112
--------------------------------------	------------

Ill-Thinking

about God	102
evils of,.....	96

Importance of prayer.....	244
----------------------------------	------------

man ought to seek true insight from God Almighty.....	127
to pray for one's enemies and opponents	99

Incidents

an elderly man mentioned in Bustan .	98
of a fire-worshipper.....	71
truthfulness of Syed Sheikh Abdul- Qadir Jilani	76

Insight

given to Prophets by God.....	116
importance of,	64, 132
to be sought from God	127

Interpretation of Dreams

a tooth in one's hand.....	269
a vision about the Aryas	278
drinking sherbet.....	275

giving away one's liver.....	243
offering Eid prayer in the city	244
receiving garments of divine light	269

Iscariot, Judas	273
------------------------------	------------

Isha'at-us-Sunnah	268
--------------------------------	------------

Ishmael, Prophet.....	264, 265
------------------------------	-----------------

Islam

affinity of Muslim divines to spiritual knowledge.....	123
a living Faith	226
God Almighty desires deeper essence of,	74
no difficulty in,	263
philosophy and logic prove principles of,	271
true meaning of,	163
Truthfulness of a proof of Islam being a true religion	261
discoveries establish truthfulness of Islam and the Holy Prophet	260
unparalleled transformation brought about by,.....	186, 273

J

Jalandhar	1, 251, 263, 264
------------------------	-------------------------

Jesus, Prophet	47, 48, 49, 93, 99, 123, 150, 167, 168, 216
----------------------------	--

Jihad

meaning of ribat	54
Unparalleled bravery of the Holy Prophet.....	130
two strengths in war	57

Jilani, Sheikh Abdul-Qadir.....	29, 76
--	---------------

Judaism

plague in the time of Moses	252
state of Jews at the advent of Jesus	46
their incurring the wrath of God.....	212
treatment of Jesus and his followers.	216

Junayd.....	170
--------------------	------------

- K**
- Karachi**250, 257
- Khan, Genghis** 9
- Khan, Hulagu**..... 9
- Kharqani, Abul-Hasan** 97
- Khilafat**
has not ended after the twelve Imams 17
similarity in the Khilafat of the
Children of Israel and Children of
Ismael 40
- Knowledge**
definition of, 121
example of human, in hadith 88
scientific discovery supports the Holy
Quran 260
spiritual, cannot be complete until one
visits the centre..... 200
- L**
- Lahore**..... 2, 257, 268
- Lahw**
difference between la'b and
tafakhur..... 151
mockery distances a person's heart from
truth..... 267
- Language**
superiority of the Arabic language 56
- Law**
to act against laws enacted by
government is rebellion..... 215
value of laws imposed by government in
wake of plague 250
- Law of Nature**
atonement contradicts, 184
cannot be confined 86
relationship between, and prayer 205
- Lekhram**..... 50, 278
- Linguistic Explanations**
Abu Lahab and the woman carrying
firewood 244
Arabic works of Promised Messiah
divinely inspired..... 279
meaning of muhatabat, hoot and
noon..... 243
meaning of ta'un, rujz and naghaf 253
Promised Messiah's divinely granted
knowledge of Arabic 269, 276
the Arabic form ifti'al expresses
meaning of forced effort..... 193
- Lot, Prophet**..... 148
- Ludhiana**..... 50
- M**
- Mankind**
attributes of the perfect man 113
a weak and frail creature..... 132
creation from sperm is a mystery of
nature..... 87
- Human Nature**
destiny can change through repentance
and humility 156
inherently inclined towards
God..... 109, 189
man is able to transform all his
morals..... 133
man is accountable due to faculty of
reasoning 60
the breast of man is the House of Allah
and the heart is the Black Stone . 194
manifestation of God's attribute of
graciousness in favour of man..... 127
man is naturally of three types..... 176
purpose of man's creation 188
three states of, 98, 105
to beg is human and to bestow is
divine..... 127, 207
- Mary** 99, 158, 212
- Mecca**.. 43, 131, 148, 194, 195, 199, 232,
245, 264
- Medicine**
an organ unused for forty days loses
ability to function 236
a sign of God when, fails 264
eastern syrup and strychnine 275
health decline after the age of thirty 270

- importance of prayer along with,.....255
- importance of precaution in matters of health.....253, 255
- importance of seeking cure in Islam 255
- medicine prepared by Promised Messiah in the wake of plague260
- new discovery on circulation of blood proves truth of Islam.....261
- phlebotomy236
- Medina**..... 148, 188, 245
- Miracle**
- Abraham thrown into a fire..... 87
- definition of,109
- denial of, leads to rejection of Prophets90
- miracles of the Holy Prophet 38, 78, 260
- of the Holy Quran92
- of the splitting of the moon 87
- Promised Messiah miraculously taught Arabic276
- purpose of a,90, 249
- saints demonstrating power of God.114
- Sir Syed Ahmad Khan rejected, of Quran's eloquence79
- the excellence of a,82
- types of,96
- Morality or Khulq**
- a believer can learn good morals even from animals..... 170
- a believer's morals ought to move others.....220
- on the community developing lofty morals74, 98
- truth regarding, 128
- Moses, Prophet**..... 41, 48, 252
- Muhammad Ahsan, Maulvi**..... 120
- Muhammad Arura, Munshi** 1
- Muhammad, Master Ghulam**..... 270
- Muhammad, Prophet** 4, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 50, 54, 65, 66, 69, 72, 73, 78, 83, 84, 91, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 113, 115, 116, 117, 118, 123, 129, 130, 131, 133, 138, 143, 144, 145, 146, 150, 151, 166, 169, 170, 175, 179, 184, 187, 188, 195, 210, 211, 213, 222, 224, 235, 236, 248, 254, 255, 262, 264, 265, 274
- blessings of invoking salutations upon,.....175, 194
- exemplary morals of,..... 16
- the lofty example of the Holy Prophet
- Holy Prophet was the epitome of exemplary morals 129
- the morals of the Holy Prophet were a miracle.....79, 97
- Muslim Community, the (see also Islam)**
- a prophecy of the, becoming like Jews213
- Mujaddidin within,.....174
- must be grateful for the divine knowledge granted to it.....122
- news of the Promised Messiah being sent as the Arbiter after discord develops in community46
- the reason for this blessed community being worthy of divine mercy 123
- Mysticism**
- analysis of the Wujudi belief.....190
- eminent mystics and their qualities .112
- relationship between a disciple and a spiritual master.....241
- the mutual relationship between man's servitude and divine providence158
- N**
- Nature**
- Holy Quran is hidden in the Book of, 92
- human, inclined towards Unity of God 108
- using human faculties according to, 121
- Nur-ud-Din, Maulvi** 270, 272, 278
- O**
- Oath of Allegiance**
- benefit and need of,.....4
- true essence of,.....4

- Obedience**
shown by the companions 195
- Opposition**
attempts by opponents 217
- Ostentation**
forbearance and, 22
spiritual battle against, 20
- P**
- Palampur** 250
- Patience**
company of the righteous necessary
for, 199
illustration of, 23
importance of, 23, 155
importance of, and steadfastness 200
reality of, 199
- People of the Elephant, the**
a prophecy regarding the Holy
Prophet 179
destiny of our community to defend
against, 180
- Pfander, Reverend** 61
- Pharaoh** 40, 41
- Philosophy**
attacks against religion 226
modern day, encourages atheism 270
no philosopher can explain the essence
and actual nature of things 88
- Plague**
caused by a bacteria as per Hadith ... 260
government's efforts to cure people are
commendable 258
material and spiritual causes of, 252, 261
precautionary measures to safeguard
oneself against, 258
Promised Messiah speaks of, 248, 251
safeguarding oneself by supplications,
prayers and Tahajjud 215
symptoms and nature of, 259
terrifying outbreaks throughout
India 250
- vision of the Promised Messiah
regarding, 256
- Plato** 134, 135
- Pleasure of God, the** 45
blessed are those who ignore their pain
to seek, 73
true good fortune is to give precedence
to God over all else 201
- Prayers for the Community**
Our friends must not let our prayers go
in vain 104
- Prayer, the. See also Worship**
attaining pleasure in, 160
blessings of, 4
evil whisperings during, 29
importance of regularity in, 5, 264
importance of weeping in, 10
true Prayer and its effects 162
why people abandon, 163
- Promised Messiah, the**
books 71, 213
Barahin-e-Ahmadiyyah 71, 213
Minan-ur-Rahman 56, 275
daily prayers for his followers ... 103, 244
"Our friends must not let our prayers go
in vain" 104
prayers of, 101, 240
thousands of prayers accepted 279
- Prophecies of the Holy Quran**
Divine succour for the Holy Prophet
until the day of resurrection 180
pitiable state of the Muslims in Latter
days 93, 212
- Prophecy**
prophecies of impending punishment
can be averted through repentance 256
- Prophethood**
a grace of God Almighty 91
arguments of truthfulness 232
complete faith in Allah the
Almighty 165
need for Prophets and heavenly
scripture 84

one hundred twenty four thousand Prophets	156
sinlessness of Prophets.....	167
status of Prophets and purpose of their advent	91, 119, 220, 234
the Messiah's prayer for a table spread of food	120
wisdom in a temporary cease in revelation to Prophets	236
wisdom in Prophets asking people for assistance in their mission.....	166

Provision

connotation of,	31
forms of,	218

Pune	251
-------------------	-----

Purity of Self

effects on inner self	254
importance of,	132, 194

Q

Qadian	8, 50, 248, 256
---------------------	-----------------

Qadir, Mirza Ghulam	171
----------------------------------	-----

R**Ramadan**

essence of,.....	217
sign of solar and lunar eclipses during,	49

Ramchandra	180
-------------------------	-----

Razi, Imam Fakhr-ud-Din	87
--------------------------------------	----

Reason

attaining pure,	70
God cannot be comprehended by reason alone (Razi)	87
man is accountable due to faculty of reasoning.....	60
those granted understanding.....	91, 246

Rehmatullah, Sheikh	260
----------------------------------	-----

Religion

giving precedence to,	217
meaning of din-ul-aja'iz	1, 22, 23
religious freedom under British rule	225

the use of modern-day knowledge to serve,.....	67
training of children	68
understanding God is fundamental to,	181
wisdom in Prophets asking people for assistance in their mission.....	166

Remembrance of Allah

leads to pure reason.....	64
mystics invented forms of,.....	195

Renaissance of Islam, the

a glad tidings regarding the future of Islam	275
God sent Promised Messiah to prove superiority of Islam over other Faiths	96
God's protection of Islam in this day and age	70, 91, 95, 234
in this day and age the best worship of a Muslim is to defend Islam	190, 225
the difficulties in converting people to Islam in today's day and age	91
the manner in which to gain the good fortune of serving in the case of Islam	74, 180
the need for spiritual struggle and the pen to defend Islam in the present age.....	59

Repentance

an essential aspect of the oath of allegiance	2
not useful when divine punishment descends	215
reality of forgiveness.....	215

Righteousness

a prerequisite for the acceptance of prayer.....	104
blessings of,.....	70, 76
meaning of,	154
on developing, within the community.....	104, 154
required for insights into the Holy Quran	238
significance of,.....	59, 104

success is tied to,.....185, 238
Rustam.....220, 244

S

Sa'di 98, 172, 189, 244

Sadiq, Mufti Muhammad..... 2

Salvation

cannot be attained by following
 Vedas.....196, 209
 conditions to attain,.....108, 132
 false concept of,.....167
 purpose of,230

Sarah..... 264

Satan

can become a Muslim 20
 greatest scheme of, 53
 scheme of, to ruin Adam 192
 spiritual battle against, 23

Sateeh

famous soothsayer.....277

Science

discoveries establish the truthfulness of
 Islam and the Holy Prophet.....260

Seal of Prophethood, the

the wisdom in raising Mujaddidin
 after,.....221

Servitude (ubudiyat)

all creation possesses a nature of, 110
 Holy Prophet's expression of his own, to
 God..... 113
 how to be saved from divine
 punishment..... 155, 214, 245
 people of Jonah saved from punishment
 through prayer.....243
 proponents of Wujudi faith unable to
 understand nature of divinity..... 111

Shariah

abandoned by Christians.....60, 233
 righteousness is the sum total of,..... 104
 the Holy Quran named "An
 Reminder" 92

Shiaism

doctrine contradicts the Quran..... 17
 why, does not progress..... 183

Sin

definition of,9
 perfect faith and fear of God saves one
 from, 182
 protects man from arrogance and
 conceit 3
 relationship with repentance 3

Soul, the

the distinctions of the soul at
 rest 100, 105, 106
 three states of,.....98

Special Guidance

advice to reform morals..... 98, 124, 239
 all people ought to prepare for the
 hereafter 52
 a plan for the community to develop
 morality.....216
 become an example for others 100
 develop righteousness 9
 glad tidings for the future of the
 community.....275
 guidance for the community....104, 267
 guidance for those in employment...266
 importance of financial sacrifice for the
 propagation of Islam.....240
 members must safeguard the honour of
 the community200
 members of the community that have
 passed on must not be forgotten244
 obedience to the authorities258
 on developing forbearance, forgiveness
 and kindness216
 on developing righteousness.....8, 104
 on fostering relations of mutual
 brotherhood and love268
 on offering Tahajjud and prayers240
 on reforming one's inner self 99
 pray for religious adversaries 7
 Promised Messiah's desire for pure
 transformation in his community ..246
 reforming one's inner self..... 10
 supplicate: "Our Lord, grant us good in

- this world..." 8
- the demands of being a part of God's grand promise..... 100
- the importance of believing in Allah Almighty 52
- to perform good deeds..... 185
- Spending in the way of Allah**
- example of the Holy Prophet 30
- levels of, 30
- the word 'provision' does not only refer to wealth..... 31
- Splitting of the Moon**
- response to those who deem it against law of nature 87
- Steadfastness**
- of the Prophets 119
- revelation needed to attain, and comfort..... 63
- steadfastness is greater than showing miracles 78
- true meaning of, 109
- Supplication**
- Acceptance of Prayer
- do not take pride in your, 154
- a prayer offered before the descent of punishment is accepted (Hadith)...263
- blessings
- to be saved from plague offer supplications, seek forgiveness and give alms 214
- Conditions
- etiquettes..... 120, 127, 207
- for acceptance 125
- to beg of anyone besides God is against the indignation of a believer..... 163
- importance of, 124
- mutual relation with the law of nature.....205
- on praying for oneself and asking others for prayer.....176
- People of Jonah saved from punishment through prayer.....243
- prayers of naturalists are not accepted.....206
- reality of,205
- secret for the acceptance of,..... 177
- the rules and laws related to, 102
- the wisdom in certain prayers of the righteous not being accepted..103, 243
- when prayer reaches it's pinnacle through patience and sincerity it is accepted..... 156
- T**
- Tabari** 258
- Tadhkira-tul-Awliya**..... 21, 71, 176
- Tahajjud**
- a practice of pious and holy people 54
- Ta'if** 15, 16
- Tawaffi**
- meaning of,47
- Teaching**
- a conspiracy against Islam's,70
- attacks of the priests, philosophers and historians against Islam's,.....59, 181
- God and His attributes in Islam's,61, 79, 203
- Islam's need for divine support..... 94
- large scale abandonment of Islam's, .178
- literature printed in the millions against Islam's,70, 224
- on confiscating books against Islamic,247
- philosophy behind injunctions of purity and cleanliness.....253
- "There is no asceticism in Islam" 191
- why Christianity exclusively opposes Islam180, 226
- Thakurdas** 180
- Torah, the**
- compared with Holy Quran 83
- Jesus studied, from a teacher 41
- only addresses the Children of Israel .85
- Trials**
- necessity of, 14, 24
- Trinity**..... 38, 61, 62

U**Unity of God, the**

- analysis of wahdat-ul-wujud and
wahdat-ush-shuhud 112
- imprinted in all things 62
- meaning of, 246
- misplaced love draws chastisement.. 109
- seen in the law of nature 62
- taught in Surah al-Fatihah..... 202
- when nothing exists except God..... 248

V**Veil, the**

- concept and philosophy of, 33
- special circumstances..... 263

W**Wisdom**

- meaning of, 128, 198

Word of God, the

- hidden powers of the Divine manifest
through,..... 90

World, the

- at the advent of Holy Prophet..... 231
- purpose should be to advance in
faith 191
- reality of worldly joys 107, 218
- the transient nature of, 248

Worship

- conditions needed for proper, 197
- only in Islam Allah is central in, 173
- purpose of humanity is to,..... 191
- why God is worthy of,..... 111

Y

- Yemen 50**