

Selections from the Discourses and Exhortations of the Promised Messiah

by

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad
Mujaddid of the 14th Century (Hijrah) and
the Promised Messiah

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Introduction

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was the Divinely promised *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of the fourteenth century (*Hijrah*), the *Imam* of the Age, the Promised Messiah and the *Mahdi* in Islam. His whole life was devoted to the defence, revival and propagation of Islam, especially to the Western world, in accordance with the prophecy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) that the sun would one day rise in the West.

In addition to numberless speeches, pamphlets, posters and poems, he wrote more than eighty books in Arabic, Urdu and Persian, many of which have been translated into English, and in these he presented intellectual and spiritual arguments to sow the seeds of the ultimate triumph of Islam over all ideologies. We are happy to state that we are daily witnessing the fruits of the *Imam's* labour in the interest shown for Islamic knowledge in the Western world and the powerful impact his writings and that of his learned disciples such as Maulana Muhammad Ali and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din have made on the intellectual spirit of all those who have read these publications.

To commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of his death (b. 13 February 1835/ d. 26 May 1908), the Ahmadiyya Muslim Literary Trust, Trinidad and Tobago has published a small sampling of his daily spiritual discourses and exhortations which he imparted to his

disciples and have now been compiled under the title of *Malfuzaat*.

We hope that this will whet the appetite of the genuine seeker after truth and his deep spiritual insight to delve into the treasure chest of spiritual gems that he has left for posterity – especially for today's world that is rapidly descending into extremes: of fanaticism on one side and heedlessness of religious values on the other.

May Allah guide us all in our quest for the authentic Islam of the Qur'an and the *Hadith* as truly expounded by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Enayat Mohammed
Chairman, Ahmadiyya Muslim Literary Trust, Trinidad
and Tobago
May 2008

Brief Life-history and Literary Contribution of the Promised Messiah

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, was born at Qadian, a village in the Gurdaspur District, Punjab, on Friday 13th February, 1835 CE. (Coincidentally, it was the 14th (full moon) of Shawwal, 1250 AH.)

He came of a good old and venerable family of Central Asia and was the scion of a dynasty which originally belonged to Persia. As such, he was one of the “sons of Persia” as was foretold by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*Zurqani*, vol. 2, p.126). He was one of twins; a girl (Jannat Bibi) was born first. (It fulfilled a prophecy about the coming Messiah. *Ref.* Shaikh-i Akbar Hazrat Muhiy-ud-Din ibn Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*, p.83). His father’s name was Mirza Ghulam Murtaza. The family descended from the Berlas tribe of the Mughal family. His ancestors had long resided in Khurasan, a province of Persia, and were the dignitaries of the land.

In the tenth century of the *Hijrah*, when Babur ruled India, one of his ancestors, Mirza Hadi Beg, emigrated from Persia, most probably on account of some family dissension, with his family and about two hundred attendants and sought refuge in India. Settling in a vast and fertile sub-Himalayan plain, called the Majjhi, he founded there a village, about 70 miles from Lahore in a north-easterly direction, and called it Islampur. The ruling monarch granted him a vast tract of land as an estate with the right to exercise the powers of a *Qadi* (lit., a magistrate) or chief executive authority. Hence, Islampur became known as

Islampur Qadi Majjhi, ultimately shortened to Qadi, which later became known as Qadian.

In the latter days of the Moghul Empire it was undergoing the process of dissolution. The estate granted to the ancestors of Hazrat Mirza became an independent state. In the early days of the Sikh rule, when anarchy and oppression were the order of the day, and Islam and the Muslims were being persecuted everywhere, Qadian remained for a long time a place of peace and prosperity. Mirza Gul Muhammad, the great-grandfather of Hazrat Mirza, was then the head of the family. He had only eighty-five villages in his possession but, on account of his great love for piety and learning, many of the learned men who could not find shelter elsewhere felt assured of a warm reception at Qadian and were gifted some place to settle down.

After the death of Mirza Gul Muhammad, his son, Mirza Ata Muhammad, became the chief. He was soon overpowered by the Sikhs, who seized village after village until not a single village, except Qadian, was left in his possession. This place was strongly fortified, but somehow a body of Sikhs called Ram Garhias entered the town and took possession of the village. Mirza Ata Muhammad and his whole family were made prisoners and deprived of their possessions. Their houses and mosques were made desolate and the library was burnt. After inflicting all kinds of torture, the Sikhs ordered the family to leave the village of Qadian. Thus, expelled from their home, they sought shelter in another state, where Mirza Ata Muhammad was poisoned by his enemies.

The rule of Ranjit Singh brought the family some measure of relief. In the latter days of Rangit Singh's ascendancy, five villages from the large estate of his ancestors were returned to Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, father of Hazrat Mirza,

and they re-settled at Qadian.

The Sikh anarchy was, soon after Hazrat Mirza's birth, replaced by the peace and security of the British rule, and the Muslims in Punjab once again breathed a sigh of relief. The family naturally welcomed the change, and, in response, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza showed his staunch loyalty to the British rule in the mutiny of 1857. In recognition of his services, he received a handsome pension and was highly esteemed by the British officials. Hazrat Mirza's own impressions of the Sikh rule and the persecution of Muslims were deep-seated, and he always spoke of the coming of the British rule as a blessing and as saving the Punjab Muslims from the worse type of slavery and harassment.

Education

In his childhood, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received his education at home from tutors and learnt the Holy Qur'an, some classical Persian works and Arabic grammar. When he was seventeen, a tutor was employed to teach him ordinary Arabic text. He also studied some works on medicine from his father, who was a famous physician of Indian medicine of his time.

Righteous and God-fearing

From his early days, Hazrat Mirza had studious habits and he loved to remain in seclusion with his books. The frivolities characteristic of that age did not affect his heart. Gifted with a contemplative bent of mind, he loved solitude and books. His father was, on that account, very anxious about him and repeatedly asked him to leave his seclusion and books for the more practical business of life and to take an interest in the recovery of his lost estate. Such worldly occupations were hateful to Hazrat Mirza and he cared little for the restoration of the lost dignity and possessions of the family.

In obedience to his father's wishes he was compelled to accept Government employment at Sialkot where he remained in service for four years (1864-68). His experience in this aspect of life engraved on his heart a deep impression regarding the degeneration of those with whom he came in contact and therefore he always kept himself aloof. When his day's work was finished, he would straightaway go to his residence and bury himself in the pages of his books. His favourite books under his constant study were the Holy Qur'an, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Futuh al-Ghaib* (Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani), *Masnavi* (Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi), *Dalail-ul-Khairat* (Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Sulaiman al-Jazawli), *Tazkirat-ul-Auliya* (Shaikh Farid-ud-Din 'Attar) and *Safar-us-Sa'adat* (Mujaddid-ud-Din Ferozabadi).

It was in Sialkot that he came in contact with some Christian missionaries and had discussions with them on religious topics. Even at that early age in Sialkot he astonished those who listened to him with the power and clarity with which he expounded religious truths and supported the cause of Islam. Even some Christian missionaries used to listen to his conversations with rapt attention, so impressive were his words. At last, his father recalled him from Government service at Sialkot and he was again required to carry on the law-suits relating to his father's estate. Even while pursuing lawsuits, Hazrat Mirza devoted a part of his time to the refutation of Christian attacks on Islam. The town of Batala, about eleven miles from Qadian, was an important Christian missionary centre. He frequented the place in connection with the affairs of the estate, and it pained him to see how Christian propaganda, un-refuted as it was, misled ignorant Muslims.

Even after returning from Qadian, he still had to

undertake long and weary journeys, mostly on foot, to follow up lawsuits in courts. However, his trips in this connection to the hill courts at Dalhousie were not absolutely devoid of interest. He loved to tread the lonely tracks, up and down the hills and dales, chanting to himself and musing on the beauties of nature, in accompaniment with the nodding trees and the murmuring streams.

Love for the Holy Qur'an

At the age of forty, a new era dawned upon Hazrat Mirza as he experienced a number of visions and received news about the death of his father. And so he started to receive frequent Divine revelations. His father's death in June 1876 brought about a radical change in his life and his religious tendencies began to assume a more definite form. From then on the whole of his time was devoted to the study of the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic literature. His religious devotion was different from the one normally followed in those days. His only devotional exercise was the study of the Holy Qur'an in solitude or the making of deep supplications in his daily prayers and especially in the *Tahajjud* (or midnight) prayers.

Divine visions and revelations

True dreams started quite early in his youth, around 1868-69. One notable instance related to the death of one of his colleagues, Pundit Sehaj Ram, with whom he used to have frequent religious discussions in Sialkot and who, in due course of time, became an assistant to the Commissioner in Amritsar. Allah, Most High, informed Hazrat Mirza about Pundit Ram's death while Hazrat Mirza was in Qadian and it was so sudden that the news could not have reached him in any way on the same day.

Similarly, as he devoted all his time to studies and devotional prayers and was not taking an active part in the

management of the lands, it was his father, therefore, who was supporting him financially. On his father's death, Hazrat Mirza's elder brother, Mirza Ghulam Qadir became the successor. He was not quite fair in paying his share of income. His late father used to get a pension and also a good annual income from the British Government out of which he would make a payment to Hazrat Mirza as a special favour. But now after his death, this amount came to an abrupt end. In these circumstances, he was concerned about his finances. He then received a verse of the Holy Qur'an as a revelation: "*Is not Allah sufficient for His servant?*" (39:36). This revelation gave him much consolation. Afterwards, he never worried about finances as he received thousands of rupees for his publications and other projects from his supporters and disciples.

On one occasion, he saw a vision in which an old man appeared to him saying that, according to the law of prophethood, fasting was a necessary preparation for receiving Divine light. On the basis of this vision, he kept fasts for a period of eight or nine months, reducing his food during that time to two or three morsels. Nevertheless, he did it privately so as to keep the fact concealed from his nearest relatives. This long fasting, however, had no injurious effect upon his health. On the other hand, he saw many wonderful visions relating to the future, some of which were later on published in *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya*, his first great work in four parts (1880-84).

The publication of *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya* made a deep impression on the Muslims. They loved its author for his righteousness and piety, for his services to the cause of Islam, for his scholarly writings and his bold stand against the opponents of Islam. How greatly he was respected by the Muslims of India is evident from a review of *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya* by Maulvi Muhammad Hussain of Batala, the leader of the Ahl-i Hadith sect,

which ran into 14 instalments. The nature of the review is enhanced when it is borne in mind that there were differences between the Ahl-i Hadith and the Hanafi school of thought and it was to the latter group to which the author of the book belonged. I quote below a part of the review:

“In our opinion, in this age and in view of the present circumstances, this is such a book that the like of it has not been written up to this time in Islam. ... Its author ... has proved himself firm in helping the cause of Islam, with his property, with his pen and tongue and his personal religious experience, to such an extent that an example of it is rarely met with among the Muslims who have gone before ... who, besides helping Islam ... have also come forward with their religious experiences and have proclaimed, as against the opponents of Islam and the deniers of revelation, the manly challenge that whoever doubted the truth of revelation might come ... and witness the truth thereof and who have made non-Muslims taste of the same” (*Isha‘atus-Sunnah*, vol. 7, June-Nov., 1884, Batala, India).

Anti-Islamic Christian literature

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was, however, no mere visionary. From an early age of sixteen or seventeen he had been pondering over Christian objections and had collected all those objections which the Christians advanced against Islam, the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Prophet (*sas*). These were about three thousand. The fact remains that not for a moment had those objections made any impression on him or created any doubt in his mind. And this shows how deep was his conviction in the truth of Islam.

Christianity necessarily attracted his attention first, as that was the only foe of Islam in his early days in India. During his stay at Sialkot, he had discussions with Christian missionaries

about the comparative merits of Islam and Christianity. In fact, Christian propaganda against Islam was most active, and at the same time most scurrilous during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, being a devoted student of religion, closely studied that literature, and his heart ached at the way in which the holiest of men was being maligned and abused. The extensive Christian missionary network in India was challenging the very existence of Islam and was gaining ground among the Muslims. Hazrat Mirza, whose heart was full of the deepest conviction of Islamic truth, took up the challenge in real earnest. He started to write in response to aggressive Christian and Arya Samaj criticism and articles from his pen began to appear in leading Muslim periodicals such as *Manshoor-i Muhammadi* of Bangalore (Southern India), *Safeer-i Hind*, *Hindu Bundhu*, *Widya Perkaashak*, *Aftab-i Punjab*, *Wakeel* (Amritsar), etc.

Comparative study of religions

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not, however, a mere controversialist. He was a student of comparative religion, and, as early as 1873, while his father was still alive, he had determined to place the result of his researches before the public. The attention of the Founder was not confined to the religious doctrines only. In the comparative study of religions most of his writings should be regarded as research works vindicating the truth that Islam is a universal religion revealed to, and preached by all the prophets of the world and its teachings contain the pristine truths of all the previous religions. The following verses of the Qur'an allude to this:

“Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve”
(2:112).

“So set thy face for religion, being upright, the nature made by Allah in which He has created men. There is no altering Allah’s creation. That is the right religion ...” (30:30).

“Mankind is a single nation. So Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people concerning that in which they differed...” (2:213)

“It is clear messages in the hearts of those who are granted knowledge” (29:49).

“...Pure pages wherein are all right books” (98:3).

Re: Christianity

The Christianity of the present Church depicted Prophet Jesus (*as*) as the son of God, sitting on the right side of the Supreme God, sharing His attribute of forgiveness after being raised alive to the heavens from the Cross. Thus the death of Prophet Jesus (*as*) on the Cross and later on his resurrection became basic teachings of Christianity. Hazrat Mirza carried on an investigation in relation to the tribes of Israel and was successful in proving that those tribes had migrated from Palestine and settled in Afghanistan and Kashmir long before the appearance of Prophet Jesus (*as*). He also proved with historical facts that though Prophet Jesus (*as*) was nailed to the Cross, he did not die on it but escaped the accursed death and later travelled in disguise to Afghanistan and Kashmir after being taken down alive from the Cross, that he preached his message to the Israelite tribes that had settled there, and that he lived to the ripe old age of 120 years. The Founder also produced historical, philological and archaeological evidence that Prophet Jesus (*as*) died in

Kashmir and that his tomb was at Mohalla Khanyar, Srinagar (Kashmir).

Most of his writings dealt with the analytical study of the teachings of Islam and Christianity and the refutation of the opponents' criticism against Islam, the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, in the light of the Qur'an and the Bible.

But in some respects he made unique contributions by way of research based on old and modern classical works, history and archaeology about the lost tribes of Israel, Prophet Jesus' escape from death on the Cross and his later travels towards the East, and his settling down in Kashmir and his eventual death in Srinagar, Kashmir. (*Ref., Noor-ul-Qur'an*, Part II (1895), *Raaz-i Haqiqat* (1898), *Masih Hindustaan Mein* (1899), *Arba'een* (1900), *Tuhfa-i Golarwiyya* (1902), *Tuhfat-un-Nadwa* (1902 discovery of St. Peter's letter showing that Prophet Jesus died almost fifty years after the Crucifixion), *Al-Huda* (Arabic, June 1902.)

The book, *Masih Hindustan Mein* (1899), is in fact a brief but comprehensive research on this subject, widely quoted by scholars in the West. It also deals with the hypothesis on how Prophet Jesus' teachings were greatly influenced by Buddhism, which he studied during his first visit to India during his early youth. The basic research about Prophet Jesus was further carried on by another learned member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya section, Khawaja Nazir Ahmad, a leading advocate of Lahore (Pakistan) in his equally scholarly work, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*.

Re: Sikhism

In 1895 Hazrat Mirza went to the village of Dera Baba Nanak to find out the truth about Baba Nanak's Chola

Sahib (the Holy Cloak). The *Chola* is kept at this place as a relic of Baba Nanak, whose followers call themselves Sikhs (Sanskrit: Seekers of Truth). The *Chola* was shown to him by the custodian, and to the amazement of all who went with him, he found that the writings on the *Chola* were all verses of the Holy Qur'an. On his return he wrote a book called *Sat Bachan* in 1895.

The Cloak of Baba Nanak (1469-1539 C.E.), the Founder of Sikhism, was worn by him in the latter part of his life, and is preserved as his sacred relic at Kirtarpur, Dera Baba Nanak, India. He breathed his last also in Kirtarpur, but this place is in District Narowal of Punjab (Pakistan). His mausoleum is called Baba Guru Nanak Devji, Gurdawara Darbar Sahib.

The diagram of this Cloak is given in Sardar Kirtar Singh's *Jughrafiya Zila' Gurdaspur (Geography of Gurdaspur District)*, published by Mulk Raj Duggal, Booksellers and Publishers, India). According to the Sikh traditions, God presented this *Chola* to Baba Nanak. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement during his visit drew a sketch of the *Chola* and noted the writings on it. These consist of some chapters of the Holy Qur'an, the Divine attributes of God, the Muslim formula of faith etc. With this *Chola* was also a cap which Baba Nanak wore and it is reported that some Arabic verses have also been written on it. The exact text, however, is not known so far. Thus Hazrat Mirza put forward in that book solid arguments and historical facts that Baba Nanak really believed in the truth of Islam.

In April 1908, Hazrat Mirza sent a research group led by Maulana Muhammad Ali to visit the village, Guru Hersehai, in District Ferozepur to make enquiries about the *Pothi Sahib*. It was said to be in the possession of the descendants of Guru

Amdas, the fourth Guru. It is also said that the Golden Temple of Amritsar (i.e. Darbar Sahib) was dedicated to his name. The descendants of this Guru originally lived in Muhammadipur (Tehsil Chunian, Distr. Lahore). Later on, one of its elders, Guru Jevan Mal came down to the present place and settled here and named it Guru Hersehai, after the name of his son. It is related about the *Pothi Sahib* that Baba Guru Nanak always had it hung from his neck and constantly recited from it and considered its recitation as a mode of worship. It was considered so sacred that devotees of Baba Guru Nanak visited from far off places to have a glance of it and offered gifts in the form of cash or valuable sheets. In order to uncover the *Pothi Sahib*, the caretaker had to bathe 101 times and a fixed amount was to be paid by the visitor. At that time, the caretaker who was in possession of the *Pothi Sahib* was Guru Bishan Singh. Finally it was discovered to the amazement of all present that the *Pothi Sahib* was in fact a copy of the Holy Qur'an. (Ref. *Chashma-i Ma'rifat*, May 1908.)

Arabic – Mother of all languages

He also carried on research to show that Arabic was the mother of languages. Hazrat Mirza's hypothesis was that the first language taught by Allah, Most High, to man was Arabic, and as mankind spread to different parts of the world, this common language evolved into divergent dialects and gradually different languages came into being. In 1898, in a handout about the book *Minan al-Rahman* (The Favours of the Beneficent), he wrote:

“The unique theme of this book came to my mind by certain profound verses of the Qur'an (2:31; 26:195; 30:22; 41:21; 42:7) which referred to the diversity in languages as one of the great blessings of Allah, and it explains to us the philosophy of the diversity of languages. It also points to the underlying reality as to how different human dialects eventually developed into

different languages from a common source and origin ...

It may be pointed out that after thorough research of various languages it has been proved that the Qur'an is the only book which has been revealed in the language which is divine and is the mother of all languages and is also the source and origin of all the languages of the world.

It is obvious that the full elegance and excellence of God's book are the result of it being in a language that is from God's mouth. It excels all other languages, and is perfect in its structure. When we find perfection in a language that is beyond the ability of human strength and man's endeavour, and we see eminence deficient in other languages ... then we have to admit that such a language has a Divine source."

Minan-ur-Rahman was published after the death of Hazrat Mirza in its unfinished form. Even the partial work that has become available through publication shows the strength of its arguments. Had this book been completed, it certainly would have revolutionised the study of linguistics. This motivated Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, who was the chief assistant and the main discussion-partner of Hazrat Mirza in this research, to write a book called *Ummul al-Sinah* (Mother of Languages) based on the principal research theme of his master. Although this latter book is not as comprehensive in its deliberation and evidence as was conceived by Hazrat Mirza, yet Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was eminently successful in proving Arabic to be the mother of languages.

Hazrat Mirza's main mission as well as his passion was to present to the world the beauties of the Holy Qur'an and the

excellent precepts of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) as the perfect example to epitomise the message of peace and universal brotherhood of Islam. Though he dealt with the criticism of the opponents of Islam and the objections of the atheists and agnostics, yet he also tried to suggest ways and means of bringing peace, tolerance and amity between various religious sections of the society at large and in particular between the two dominant religious communities in India, namely the Hindus and Muslims. This passion occupied his mind even up to the time he was receiving continuous revelations about his approaching death.

He came to Lahore on 29 April 1908 for a change and also to deliver his message to the educated and elite of the city of Lahore. On 17 May, he addressed a public meeting at the Ahmadiyya Buildings explaining the true nature of his claim and the passion he had to present the authentic message of Islam and the excellent precepts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) to the world at large.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also intended to deliver a public speech on 31 May to convey to the Hindu community a message of peace and reconciliation, explaining how the two major communities of the Indian subcontinent could live together in peace and harmony. With this in mind, he started writing a lecture that was later published in the form of a booklet, *Paigham-i Sulh* (The Message of Peace). It was written during the last day or two of his life. He was taken ill due to the strain of entertaining a constant stream of visitors. In this condition he had a revelation in Arabic, the translation of which is, "The time for the march is nigh; again, the time for the march is nigh."

In spite of this revelation and his illness, he remained at work and proposed to deliver a lecture on how to promote peace

and goodwill between the communities of India. The writing of it produced a further strain on his exhausted body. His condition worsened. The night preceding the day on which he planned to finish it he again had a revelation in Arabic. Its translation is, "Trust not the ebbing life." Nevertheless, the following day, 25 May, he was able to complete the lecture.

The following night he became very weak. Late in the night his condition became even worse. He was given some medicine to sleep with the hope that this might have given him some relief. At early dawn he woke up and performed his morning prayer, but his voice was now completely hoarse. He tried to speak but could not. He ordered pen and paper but could not write. Soon drowsiness came upon him, his pulse faded away, and at about a quarter past ten, on 26 May 1908, his holy spirit passed away to the presence of that August Master to Whose service he had devoted his whole life. "*Verily we are from God, and to God we return!*" The *Message of Peace* remained therefore the last of his long list of writings, while the circumstance in which it was written invests it with an appeal, the power and sincerity of which few will fail to appreciate.

Passion for mutual understand and reconciliation

To give a glimpse of his passion for promoting peace and goodwill, we reproduce the following extracts from it:

"My God Almighty! My Guide beloved! Guide us into the path by which Thy truthful and sincere servants find Thee, and save us from the ways of those who seek to gratify their passions of revenge or hatred or their greed for things of the world!

And now, friends, all of us, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, notwithstanding hundreds of differences,

are one in believing in God, the Creator and Master of the world. Moreover, our cause is common not only because we are all human beings, but also because, as inhabitants of one and the same land, we are related as neighbours to one another. It is but proper, therefore, that we should live as true and sincere friends, and sympathise with one another, in difficulties both temporal and spiritual, and act as parts of one whole, and limbs of one body...

Dear countrymen, there is nothing like peace. Let us become one nation and one people by means of this compact. You see what discord there is in the land and how much the country has suffered on account of mutual recrimination. Come, and try now the blessing of mutual regard. This is the only way to reconciliation. To try and seek peace along any other way would be to neglect a sore which is bright and smooth outside, but which is full of foul matter inside...

I need not stop here to point out that the disunity is daily increasing in this land due not merely to religious differences, but also to political conditions” (pp. 1, 29).

Inter-faith dialogue

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad may not be mistaken for a stereotyped theologian with narrow mental grooves stuffed with a few conventional books, nor for a self-centred ideal visionary, knowing or caring to know little about contemporary thought. One has only to refer to his works such as *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya* – a deep rationalistic discourse in as many as four volumes – and *Aina-i Kamalat-i-Islam*, in which he dealt with the incomparable beauties of the Qur’an and the pre-eminent and unsurpassable precepts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). Unlike other thinkers and philosophers, Hazrat Mirza Sahib had the advantage

of having his light of reason supplemented by the light of revelation.

Those who are accustomed to look upon reason and religion as two distinct things which may even run counter to each other may be surprised at this. But such was not Hazrat Mirza's view of religion. He gave a beautiful illustration of the inter-relation between reason and revelation. He compared the latter to a microscope to the eye of reason. Just as the naked eye is limited in its vision to things up to a certain degree of magnitude, so is the naked eye of reason. But if one wants to see minute things, one must call in the microscope to its aid. Even so is the nature of the function of revelation with respect to the eye of reason. The one supplements the other.

If we glance at Hazrat Mirza's ministry (1884-1908) – I have purposely started it from 1884, the year in which he wrote his classic work, *Barahin-i Ahmadiyya* – which laid down the basis for his future course of interpretation and defence of the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam demonstrated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sas), it is quite surprising that with his announcement in 1889 that he had been appointed *Mujaddid* for the 14th century *Hijrah*, his style, diction and reasoning went through a revolutionary phase (*viz.*, *Izalah-i Auham*, *Taudih-i Maram* and *Fath-i Islam*). The classic style of diction frequented by synonyms was replaced by a simple, cogent and impressive flow of facts, arguments and references from scriptures and authentic books of all the major religions. It is still noteworthy that towards the close of his ministry – this first decade of the 19th century – he sought help in having access to the research being done in the West, especially about Prophet Jesus' unknown life and his travels towards the East after escaping an accursed death on the Cross, discoveries in the fields of archaeology, philology and classical works of history and medicine. Even

during this latter period of his life, he adopted the modern style of dividing a book in chapters instead of writing long footnotes regarding inter-related points connected with the subject under discussion (*viz.*, *Al-Huda*, *Masih Hindustan Mein*, *Minan-ur-Rahman* etc.). This shows his vast study, deep insight and understanding of the new thoughts emerging around him and that is why his writings, even after one hundred years of his death, are very much relevant and provide guidance and inspiration in presenting and defending Islam in the modern context.

Today we hear much talk about inter-faith dialogue; even the Pope of the Catholic Church in 1965 declared that, instead of considering Muslims as anti-Christ, they should be approached through dialogue for fostering understanding and co-existence amongst various communities in the present day world. Hazrat Mirza foresaw almost 100 years ago, at a time when the very idea was considered insignificant, that the only way to inculcate peace and tolerance between followers of different religions of the world was to present one's religious viewpoint from their respective revealed religions and by avoid hurling abuses and maligning their holy founders and prominent personages. The first major effort in this regard was undertaken by Hazrat Mirza Sahib with the help of a Hindu scholar, Swami Shogan Chandra, by holding a Great Religions Conference from 26 to 29 December, 1896 in Lahore. The five questions selected for the Conference were: **(1)** The physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man; **(2)** The state of man in the afterlife; **(3)** The object of man's life and the means of its attainment; **(4)** The action of the practical ordinances of the law in this life and the next; **(5)** The sources of Divine knowledge.

Hazrat Mirza, in his introductory remarks, laid down a very sound basis for interfaith dialogue which provided a sound basis to settle the worth of spiritual guidance provided in each

scripture claimed by different religions of the world to have been divinely revealed.

“I deem it a matter of the first importance that everybody who believes in any sacred scripture of the revealed Word of God should so set limits to his advocacy of the religion he supports as not go out of the holy book or depend upon arguments other than those which the book furnishes, for, if he does not observe this rule, he, as a matter of fact, makes and advocates a new book and not the one which he professes to support. Therefore, as it is my object to show the beauties of the Qur’an and to establish its exclusive excellence over all other books, I shall bind myself by the rule above-stated and depend solely upon the Qur’an for every assertion and argument, stating only that which is contained in it in plain words, or what may be reasonably inferred from its words. As the other gentlemen are also expected to set limits to their discourses by this reasonable rule, there will be a good opportunity for judicious minds to form a judgement as to the comparative value of the different books claimed to be revealed. For the same reason, I shall avoid all reference to the authorities containing the reported words of the Holy Prophet of Islam and not go outside the Word of God as revealed in the Qur’an” (pp. 1, 2).

Besides holding and encouraging such interfaith conferences on the basis of rules laid down, he also sent memoranda and petitions to the British Government with signatures of leading religious leaders of other religions and thousands of people urging the Government to put a check on speeches and writings hurling abuses and humiliation on the founders and prominent religious personalities of all the religions. In his last writing, *Message of Peace*, Hazrat Mirza

Sahib even went to the extent of expressing his willingness to prohibit his followers from eating the meat of cows if the Hindu community agrees to abstain from abusing and maligning the unblemished character of the Holy Prophet (*sas*), his companions and his wives.

Death

Hazrat Mirza's body was taken by train from Lahore to Qadian. It reached there on the morning of the 27th. Hazrat Maulana Noor-ud-Din led the funeral prayer and the body was laid to rest in Bahishti Cemetery in the afternoon in the midst of tears and the sobbing of hundreds of his devoted followers who came from far off places to bid farewell to this Great *Imam* of the present times. Later, a headstone written by Mir Nasir Nawab (father-in-law of Hazrat Mirza) and amended by Hazrat Maulana Noor-ud-Din carried the following wording:

*Janab Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib Qadiani
Ra'is Qadian, Masih-i Mau'ud, Mahd-i Mas'ud,
Mujaddid Sad Chahar Dahum
a'laihi wa 'ala mutaa-'i Muhammad
as-salaatu was-salaam.
Tareekh-i Wafaat, 26 Mai 1908*

which may be translated as:

Respected Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
Chief of Qadian, Promised Messiah, Auspicious Mahdi
and *Mujaddid* of the 14th Century,
upon him and upon his Master, Muhammad,
be blessings and peace.
Date of death, 26th May, 1908 C.E.

Sources

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Selections from the Discourses and Exhortations of the Promised Messiah

A Parable of the Pleasures of this World

The delight of the life of this world is like that of the itch. At first, when you scratch it, it is pleasing, but when you continue to do so it creates a wound from which blood flows and this may deteriorate to such an extent that it gives off a purulent discharge and becomes a running sore, which causes constant pain and discomfort to the sufferer.

The truth is that this worldly existence is unstable and without real substance. Oftentimes it comes to my mind that if Allah, Most High, should offer a deceased person the opportunity to return to this world, he will certainly ask pardon of his Lord as he declined the suggestion in his worldly life. Provided a person has deep faith in Allah, Most High, he can avoid the difficulties of this world, for his Lord listens to the fervent pleas of His servants.

However, there is one pre-requisite if man wishes to be successful – he must never get tired of supplicating his Master. If he slackens, not only will he fail but he will entertain evil thoughts about Allah Himself and this will lead to a greater danger – loss of faith in his Creator. For example, if a person is promised that if he digs under a

certain place in the ground he will discover a treasure and he digs to a depth of a few feet and then gives up for he discovers no treasure, he will not only resign himself to failure and disappointment but will go so far as to abuse the one who made the promise although it will be his fault and weakness and lack of perseverance for not having dug deep enough.

Similarly, when man makes *du'a* (supplication) for a while and then gets tired he does not attribute his failure to his own laziness and negligence but he begins to harbour unworthy thoughts of Allah, Most High, and this causes him to lose faith and he eventually ends up dying as an atheist.

Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger as saying: "A servant is granted an answer provided he does not ask for anything sinful or for breaking ties of relationship, and provided he does not demand an answer quickly."

On being asked what demanding an answer quickly meant, Allah's Messenger replied: "It is when he says he has prayed and prayed and does not think he will be answered, so he grows weary in such circumstances and gives up supplication" (Muslim). [*Mishkat*, Tr. Robson, vol.1, pp. 471-472]

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was at one time sitting under a mango tree that was laden with green fruits. On noticing this, he said, "If you observe, this tree is full of mangoes, but they are still unripe. If someone should eat

his fill of it and think he has done the right thing, then all he will get for his trouble are pimples or small boils and no benefit will accrue from his eating of the unripe fruits.”

In the same way, the similitude of half-educated *mullahs* (religious leaders) who, with little understanding are in danger of losing faith, is true. A wrong act is just like eating unripe fruits. They will misguide all those to whom they address and if you, too, should listen to them, you yourselves will end up following a crooked path.

Until man has not faced and triumphed over innumerable difficulties and trials in the path of the Almighty, he will never be able to obtain the desired success. This is why the Holy Qur’an asks: “*Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and would not be tried?*” (29:2).

Those who think that mere belief alone without trials is sufficient should remember that in another place of the Holy Qur’an they are designated as non-believers: “*And there are some people who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day, and they are not believers*” (2:8).

The same point is emphasised in another verse of the Holy Qur’an which runs as follows: “*The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You believe not, but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish aught of your deeds. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful*” (49:14).

Many people are like these, but to become a true,

firm and sincere believer it is necessary to undertake strenuous religious discipline as well as to pass through severe hardships and calamities and emerge with one's faith intact and even stronger.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 7, pp. 23-24]

## Advice to the Community

Today my Community, too, has to face the same difficulties that confronted the Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). Thus, the most familiar and the first of all the problems a person has to deal with when he becomes a member of my community is that, generally speaking, his friends, relations and his fraternity distance themselves from him even to the point that his mother and his father and his brothers become inimical to him. They refuse to respond to his greeting of “Peace be onto you,” and do not wish to read his funeral prayer (*janazah*). This kind of difficulty is very common.

I am fully aware that there are many weak-spirited people to whom such a problem causes great perturbation. However, they must bear in mind that this sort of problem is inevitable. You are not superior to the prophets and the messengers of Allah, Most High, and so this kind of trial and difficulty must arise so that your faith in Allah, Most High, may become strengthened and that you may be afforded the opportunity to make a pure transformation in yourselves. You should make constant supplication (*du‘a*) when this happens and you should imitate the example of the prophets and the messengers and choose the path of patience and perseverance. In fact, no damage at all has been done to you, for those friends who desert you because you have accepted the truth are not really true friends otherwise they should have stayed with you. Therefore, you should not quarrel nor do harm to those who abandon you and separate themselves from you just because you have chosen to become members of God’s anointed community. Instead, you must secretly make

supplication to Allah, Most High, to bless them also with the same insight and knowledge which He has bestowed on you out of His abundant grace.

Make firm the purity of your example and the nobility of your conduct so as to prove to them that you have chosen a beautiful way of life. Pay heed to this fact. I am appointed by Allah, Most High, in order to give you continuous guidance so that you should keep away from all places where quarrels and mischief may erupt and remain calm and patient even in the face of abuses. You should return evil with good and if an opponent is hunting for an opportunity to do evil, you should move away from that environment whilst replying with gentle words.

Many a time it may happen that a person may display vehement opposition to you and in doing so he may become so heated as to cause a great commotion which may influence the onlookers to become so inflamed themselves as to become ready to do violence. However, when they receive gentle words in return and curses are not answered by curses, then they themselves will become ashamed and evince sorrow and penitence for their ill-tempered outbursts.

I truly urge you not to abandon the virtue of patience (*sabr*). I assure you that patience is a weapon that can bring greater results than those won by the gun. It is patience that wins over hearts. You must certainly remember that it hurts me very deeply when I hear that someone from this community has fought with someone else. Thus, I am never happy and Allah, Most High, Himself does not wish that this community which is chosen to stand as an example of righteousness should

choose a path other than that of rectitude.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 7, pp. 203-208]

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Members of my Community should move away from such things. On the Day of Judgement, God will not ask them how many dreams they had. Rather, they will be questioned about righteous acts and about how many good deeds they performed. Revelation is an act of God; it is not an act of man. To consider God's act to be the cause of pride and joy is the work of an ignorant person. Observe the life of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) and see how he used to worship. At times he would stand up all night (in prayer) so that his feet would become swollen. When his wife enquired as to why he strove so hard when he had been purified of sin, he replied, "Should I not become a grateful servant of God?"

A person should never give up hope. The onslaught of sins is a very severe thing and reform seems difficult, but one should not despair. Some people say that we are sinners and we are overwhelmed by the demands of the self, so how is it possible for us to become righteous. They should consider that a believer is never without hope. He who despairs and thinks that there is no hope is none other than Satan himself. A believer should never be a coward. No matter how much a person is overwhelmed by his sins, God has placed such ability in man that he eventually does overcome sin. God has placed in man a power that burns away sin and this power is there in man's nature.

You will note that no matter how much water is

heated – it can be heated so much that it burns whatever it touches – but even then, if this water is poured over fire, it will quell the fire. This is because God has placed this characteristic in water that if it is poured over fire, the fire is extinguished. Likewise, no matter how much a person is immersed in sins, no matter how much he is burning in bad deeds, even then he has the capacity to put out the fire of sins. However, if this ability had not been given to man, he could not then have been held accountable for himself. What is more, in that case even the appearance of Prophets and Messengers would have been unnecessary.

The reality is that the nature of man is pure and provision has been made for its requirements. If there is physical hunger and thirst, there is also food and water. A human being needs air to breathe, so there is air. In short, if all that is required for the physical body is provided for, why should there not be provided the requirements of the soul? God, Who is ever Merciful and ever Forgiving, and Who covers up the faults of His servants, has provided all the necessary provisions for the preservation of the soul. If a human being were to search for spiritual water, he will find it; if he searches for spiritual bread, it would be given to him. Just as there is a law operating in the physical world, so there is a law relating to the spiritual world, but the condition is that one must seek. He who seeks shall find. He who strives to find God shall certainly meet the pleasure of God.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 10, pp. 93-95]

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Having taken the Oath of Allegiance, a person should not be content with the belief that this movement is based on

the truth and that such a belief would bring blessings. The present time is one of tribulation and sinfulness is spreading all around. God is not pleased with mere belief unless it is accompanied by good deeds. Now that you have entered the fold of this Community, you should try to be good and righteous. You should avoid all ills and should spend your time in prayer – supplicate at the feet of God day and night. The time of tribulation is also the time of God’s anger and at such a time prayer, supplication, giving of alms and repentance should be the norm, and your speech should be kind and gentle. Prayers should also be offered during *salah* as the saying goes, “He who pleads, does not die.” Mere belief does not serve man – the belief of a person who puts his belief to one side cannot benefit him. Subsequently, it is meaningless to complain that taking the pledge of Initiation has been of no benefit! God is not pleased with mere words.

Righteous actions and belief

In the Holy Qur’an, God has set righteous actions side by side with belief. Righteous deeds are deeds that do not contain the slightest ill within them. However, remember that the good deeds of a human being are attacked by “thieves”. What are these ‘thieves’? These include actions that are carried out for show as well as the feeling of pride at one’s good actions. There are also numerous other ill deeds and sins that a person often commits. All such behaviour falsify the good deeds. The righteous deed is that which contains no element of cruelty, ostentation, pride or the usurping of the rights of others. Just as good deeds safeguard one in the next world, so is he saved in this world through good deeds. In a household, if there is even one person who performs righteous deeds, the whole household is safeguarded. It should, therefore, be well

understood that mere belief is of no avail until one steadfastly performs righteous deeds. When a physician writes a prescription, his intention is that the patient should follow that prescription and take the prescribed medicine. Should the patient not make use of the medicine and put the prescription aside, what benefit can possibly accrue to him!

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 4, pp. 274-275]

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Remember this well that unless deeds are done with a true and sincere intention and are accompanied by true spirituality, they can be of no benefit and will be of no avail. Deeds can only be referred to as righteous when there is no corruption in them of any kind. The opposite of rectitude is disorder. The pious person is he who is completely free from all forms of disorder and dissension. *Salah* (Prayer) that is in a state of disorder and is tainted with ulterior motives is certainly not for God – it does not “reach” up above the ground by as much as even a hand because such people are devoid of sincerity and spirituality.

### **Need for formation of a Community**

There are many people who raise the objection, questioning the need for the formation of this Community when according to them they, too, offer *salah* (prayer) and keep fasts. In this way they deceive others and there is no doubt that some people who are unfamiliar with our teachings and with our Community may well be deceived and join others in saying that we, too, offer our *salah* and keep fasts and recite the various prayers, why then has this division been created? Remember that such talk is the

result of ignorance and lack of recognition of God...

The reason for this is that man's spiritual state has become so weakened that it has reached the point where the force of faith has completely disappeared. However, God wishes to give new life to true faith and this He has done through this new Community. Given these circumstances the objections of the people who question the formation of this Community are absurd and without any basis. In short, remember this well that such doubts and suspicions should not enter one's heart and if one were to consider this matter fully, such thoughts should not even arise. It is when careful consideration is not given to these matters that doubts and suspicions arise and some people who look only at the surface, raise the objection that there are other people who are also Muslims. Such doubts and suspicions can very quickly lead a person to his destruction.

I have seen letters that have been written by people who apparently belong to our Community but say that they are asked by others as to what the need is for a new Community when they too offer *salah*, declare the same *Kalimah*, and keep fasts? Such people further write in their letters that those who question them appear to be good people, doing good works. Despite the fact that the writers of such letters belong to our Community, upon hearing objections and doubts, they write that they do not know the answer to such objections. I feel regret and pity for such people that they have failed to understand our true purpose and intention. They only see that other people customarily adhere to the practice of Islam and in this trait they seem to fulfil their duty to God but their practice lacks the spirit of truth.

Hence, such objections work like the suspicions created by acts of magic and [those influenced] do not care to think that our intention is to create a true faith that saves a person from the death of a sinful life. Such motives are not to be found in those who follow only customs and traditions. Their sight is set only upon the apparent – it is not upon the reality. What they have is only the outer skin, not the inner kernel.

Remember and understand this point that at the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) had the Jews abandoned the Torah? Had they abandoned practising the Torah? Certainly not! The Jews even now believe in the Torah and their practice is according to this Book. Their sacrifices and other customs are still carried on today as they were at that time. They continue to face towards the *Bait-ul-Muqaddas* while performing their prayers. At the time of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) there were also present great Jewish scholars and Jewish priests, so what need was there for the Holy Prophet (*sas*) and for the new Book of God (namely, the Holy Qur'an)?

There also existed at that time the Christian people. Among them, too, was a sect that believed in the Unity of God. What then was the reason for the appointment by God of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) and for the Book of God? This is a question that should be carefully considered by our opponents and by those who raise such objections against the formation of our Community. This is a very subtle issue but those who ponder and consider matters carefully will be able to see that it is not such a difficult matter.

### **Loyalty and sincerity**

Remember that God looks only upon the soul and upon spirituality. God does not look at outward actions – He looks only at the reality and the inner state as to whether the actions are tainted by an element of selfishness and personal desires or whether there is sincerity and true obedience to God. The outer form of deeds, however, may deceive a person. He may be led to think highly of a person who is seen with a rosary in hand, or if he observes a person offering voluntary prayers at night or mid-morning. Similarly, when he sees someone performing noble acts of virtue, he may believe him to be a saintly person but God does not like the show of “outer layer” of deeds. God is never pleased with [acts that are only] an outer shell, an outer covering – God is not pleased until there is loyalty and true sincerity.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 6, pp. 237-240]

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The initiation itself is like sowing the seed of goodness. If a gardener does not take care of his newly planted trees and seedlings, neither watering them nor protecting them, his plants would go to waste. Similarly, Satan is always there with human beings so that if a person does not take care to protect the good deeds he has performed, they will go to waste.

All people, including Muslims, perform the duties of their religion but many do not make any progress. The reason for this is that they do not think of developing further their sphere of good acts and hence their deeds enter the fold of custom and tradition. Consequently, if a person is born in a Muslim home he begins to recite the

Kalimah and if he is born into a Hindu home he starts to chant the name of Ram.

Repentance and commitment to faith

You should remember that at the time of initiation there is great blessing in making a statement of repentance. If there is also added to this the promise that one will give greater precedence in matters of faith over worldly concerns then there will be progress. However, the fulfilment of the promise of giving precedence to faith is not one that is entirely in your own control. God's help is greatly needed in its achievement. As Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: "*Those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways*" (29:69). That is, those who strive in our path, ultimately attain guidance. Just as a grain of seed that is kept without water and care is devoid of blessing and thus perishes, so will it be the case with you if you do not remind yourselves daily of your promise to give precedence to your faith, and if you do not call upon God with prayers to help you in this task with His blessing.

Fear of Allah

The definitive sign that the fear of God resides in the heart of a person is when others can see how far this individual's words and deeds are in consonance. If one can observe that this person's lip profession and actions do not correspond then it should be known that such a person will earn the punishment of Allah, Most High. If an individual's behaviour is impure, no matter how chaste his words, in the eyes of the Almighty he has no worth whatsoever. On the contrary, the Creator's anger may very well be inflamed.

Thus, members of my Community should understand that they have come to me to sow a seed from which a magnificent fruit-bearing tree will flourish. As a result, every member should peer deeply into his heart to discover its true condition and to discern the reality of his inner self. If my community (may Allah forbid) is such that the tongue utters something which is not in the heart, then such a group can never come to a good end. If Allah, Most High, sees that the heart of a community is empty whilst the tongue is full of false claims, then He, being the Self-Sufficient One, will have not the slightest concern for such people. Remember, the prophecy of success at the Battle of Badr was made long before the encounter took place. In every quarter the Muslims expected victory, yet the Holy Prophet (*sas*) still wept as he made supplication to Allah, Most High. When Abu Bakr (*ra*) asked him what need was there for such intense entreaty when promise of an outright victory was already given by the Almighty, the Holy Prophet (*sas*) replied: “Allah, Most High, is a self-sufficient Being.” In other words, it was possible that there might be some hidden conditions attached to the divine promise.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 1, p. 11]

Supplication–Key to Spiritual Perfection

The Unique Distinction of Islam

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Imam* of the Age, reminds us that as man is created weak (“*Allah desires to make light your burdens and man is created weak*” – Holy Qur’an, 4:28), he is in constant need of Divine assistance and the way to gain this is by making continuous *du‘a* (supplication) to the Almighty for without doing so man will deprive himself of a powerful means of attaining moral, intellectual and spiritual elevation. The Holy Qur’an itself warns us: “*Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer (du‘a)*” (25:77).

He continues by saying that supplications and hard, purposeful striving will bring rewards that no other religion can give to us and thus he strongly affirms that the chief characteristic of Islam is *du‘a*. He writes (in *Malfuzaat*, vol. 7, pp. 193-198):

One should know for a fact that this weapon and this grace have been granted to Islam alone and that all other religions are bereft of this special bounty. Why should the Arya Samaj people make *du‘a* when it is their belief that man cannot escape the endless cycle of reincarnation and so forgiveness for any sin is a futile affair? Therefore, what need or necessity is there for them to make *du‘a* and what benefits would they derive from it? From this, it is abundantly evident that according to the Arya Samaj religion *du‘a* is a fruitless exercise.

Similarly, why should the Christians make *du‘a* when they are sure that their sins would not be forgiven

twice, for their Messiah cannot be put on the Cross again (allegedly to die for their sins)?

Thus, these singular blessings are reserved for Islam alone and that is why this *Ummah* (community of the Holy Prophet [*sas*]) is so mercifully blessed. However, if we ourselves should deprive ourselves of this grace and close this door with our own hands, then who can we blame? When there is an ever-present life-giving spring from which we can satisfy our thirst whenever we desire then to spurn this opportunity to quench our thirst is tantamount to courting death and destruction from lack of water. The wise thing to do is to put one's lips to this fountain and drink to satiation. This is my advice which I consider to be the pith and kernel of all Qur'anic counsels. The Holy Qur'an is divided into thirty parts which all abound with excellent admonitions and advice. However, not everyone knows from all of these exhortations which is the single most important counsel that can guide him on all the spiritual pathways disclosed by the Holy Qur'an and which unlawful things he can avoid, provided he adheres strictly to that special advice and acts steadfastly according to it. However, I say to you that the key and power to everything good and pure is *du'a*. Take hold of *du'a*, therefore, with all your strength. I aver with total confidence and it is also through my own experience that I affirm that Allah, Most High, would smooth all our difficulties but there is one drawback – people are unaware of the essence and reality of *du'a*.

Du'a is not just the mumbling of a few words, for this amounts to nothing whatsoever. The true meaning of *du'a* is to beseech Allah, Most High, sincerely for His assistance. This petition becomes perfect and efficacious

only when man surrenders his all to Allah, Most High, with total anguish of heart, perturbation and heart-burning and makes supplication so fervently that his soul melts like water and flows at the threshold of Divine Unity. For example, look at how a person who is embroiled in a misfortune importunes people for help in moving terms and see what a wonderful change and transformation his appeal undergoes – the tone of his voice becomes full of anguish which attracts the mercy of people.

Similarly, when a person makes *du'a* to Allah, Most High, the tone of his voice changes also and is filled with tenderness and pain that causes the fountain of Divinity to gush forth with mercy. When *du'a* is being made the modulation of one's voice should be such that every limb of the body is affected and meekness and humility issue from the tongue. The heart must also be filled with softness and agony and the limbs must surrender with total submission to the Creator.

Patience and perseverance

Over and above all this, one must have consummate faith in Allah's mercy and generosity and entertain complete hope of acceptance of one's entreaty. If one should fall at the Divine threshold in such a state he will never be disappointed and in this condition he should beseech the Almighty over and over in the following manner:

“Dear Master, I am nothing but a weak, helpless sinner. Without Thy support and mercy I can never amount to anything. Please have pity on me and cleanse me of my sins for without Thy kindness and grace there is no one else who can purify me.”

When a person makes this kind of petition repeatedly and continuously and seeks Allah's assistance with patience and perseverance then at some unforeseen time a light will descend from Allah, Most High, and peace will suffuse the heart of the supplicant and thus the darkness which formerly covered his heart will be dispelled. Allah, Most High, will then endow him with a power that creates a revulsion in his heart for sins from which he will be saved. At this point he will realise that his heart which had become seized and imprisoned in low passions and carnal desires as if hundreds of thousands of chains had fettered him and were drawing him helplessly towards a life of sinfulness – at this stage he will find that these chains have been miraculously cut in a flash and he has been liberated. His former love for sin will be replaced by hatred for it and instead of fear and hatred for Allah, Most High, love for Him and a magnetic attraction in his heart for his Lord will be born as the Holy Qur'an delineates in 49:7-8: *"...but Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it seemly in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience. Such are those who are rightly guided — A grace from Allah and a favour."*

This is a powerful truth which Islam possesses and its veracity cannot be contradicted for it is a living reality in every age. I truly affirm and proffer my personal experience as proof that if man should truly understand this matter and become cognisant of the secret power of *du'a* he would win for himself extreme good luck and prosperity. In this regard, he should realise that all his desires would be fulfilled otherwise the immeasurable pain, grief and anxiety of this world are such that they would surely bring about his destruction.

The person whose sole concern is this world's life progresses a little and then comes up short for disappointment and futility dog him and finally lead him to perdition. On the other hand, the one whose gaze is centred on the Almighty and who employs all his faculties and powers in trying to achieve this goal and whose movements and periods of rest are all for the sake of his Lord will find that Allah, Most High, makes the world also subservient to him although there is a great difference in his case as compared with the case of the one who seeks only the pleasures of this world's life. This one becomes obsessed with this world's life whilst on the other hand the God-seeking person for whom the world has been made a slave finds no pleasure in the luxuries and comforts of this life. Instead, he develops a kind of distaste for it and he will feel as if for the first time and witness for himself that this is indeed love for his Creator and total surrender to Him. His former love, joy and ecstasy are not derived from this world but instead they descend from another source.

Fruits of true love for Allah

When man becomes a true lover of Allah, Most High, and all his comforts and pleasures are acquired from pleasing his Lord, then without a shadow of doubt this worldly life becomes his also. However, the origin of his peace and tranquillity spring from another source. He obtains no pleasure nor comfort from the pleasures of this world. It is the same way that the prophets and saints had to walk along the paths of this life but they derived no ecstasy from this earthly existence. This was because their soul was differently oriented. This is a universal law of nature: when man covets the joys of this world, he never gets

them; however, when he surrenders himself totally to Allah, Most High, and forsakes the world, and there is no yearning or desire for such in his heart, then, paradoxically, the world becomes his own but now no desire for it remains in his soul. This is a fixed principle of life which we would do well never to forget – success with Allah brings in its wake success in this worldly life too! Over and over in the Holy Qur’an Allah, Most High, has maintained that if a person chooses the paths of righteousness He will remove all his difficulties for him (*“And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He makes his affair easy for him. That is the command of Allah, which He has revealed to you. And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He will remove from him his evils and give him a big reward”* – 65:4-5) and that He will bestow on him sustenance from whence he perceives not (*“And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him, and gives him sustenance from whence he imagines not. And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him”* – 65:2-3). How magnificent are these boons and favours which can obliterate all straitness and difficulties from man and Allah, Himself, becomes the Surety for his sustenance! However, as the Almighty Himself says, this blessing can be achieved only through *taqwa* (righteousness) and nowhere does He say that this favour can be obtained through deceit and trickery in this life.

One of the signs of Allah’s true devotees is that they have a great disgust for being creatures of the earth. Consequently, whoever desires to win the pleasure of his Lord and to acquire the peace and repose of this world and the Hereafter should deliberately and consciously choose this path of *taqwa* (righteousness). On the contrary, if he should abandon this path for other ways,

then try as he might he will gain nothing whatsoever. There are many people who will spurn this advice and laugh at it. However, they should bear in mind that ultimately a time will come when they will realise the truth of these matters and they will manifest great regret on having wasted their lives in trifles. But by then it will be too late for regret for the opportunity will have slipped from their hands and the spectre of death will have come to them.

Seeking Allah's pleasure

I still affirm and advise you to be solicitous in seeking the pleasure of Allah for if He is kind to you then the whole world will respond to you in the same manner. However, if He is angry at you then no one can be of any service to you. When His anger descends on a person no mercy will be there for him on earth no matter how many tricks or stratagems he may employ to win the approbation of people. He may count as many beads as he wants, chant the name of God as much as he likes and put on green robes (as a sign of spirituality) yet the world will look upon him with contempt. If he manages to deceive people for a few days, his veneer of religiosity will be ultimately exposed and his insincerity and cunning will become manifest to all. However, whoever comes from Allah, Most High, will never be overcome no matter how ferociously the world opposes him and no matter what insidious subterfuges they use. They may curse and abuse him but a time will certainly come when those same detractors will submit to him and be compelled to acknowledge his truthfulness.

I say with all sincerity that if someone belongs to Allah, Most High, the world will flock to him. Of course,

it is true that those chosen ones who come from Allah, Most High, are initially received with enmity by the people who visit them with all kinds of persecution and place every conceivable manner of obstacle in their way. No prophet or messenger ever came to earth and failed to suffer pain and adversity nor failed to be branded as a trickster, a charlatan and a self-seeking opportunist. However, notwithstanding the multitudes who wished to shoot all kinds of arrows at them, to stone them and to abuse them, they paid not the slightest heed to them and no impediment could stand in their way. They persisted in their mission to preach the word of the Almighty to the people and they strained every nerve and sinew in propagating the message they brought from their Creator. The slings and arrows of persecution and torment from their enemies slowed them down not a bit but instead opposition made them more keen and enthusiastic to the point that there came a time when Allah, Most High, made those difficulties easy for them and the opponents came to their senses and those very people fell at their feet and gave public testimony to their veracity and rectitude: the heart of man lies in the hand of the Almighty Who can cause it to change whenever He wills.

Know for a fact that all prophets met with difficulties in the dissemination of their message. The Holy Prophet (*sas*) himself was the most pre-eminent and the greatest of all the prophets of God to such an extent that the chain of prophethood came to an end with him, that is, the excellences of prophethood reached a natural culmination in him. Nevertheless, despite the grandeur and magnificence of his status everyone is aware of the difficulties and impediments he faced in propagating his message and to what limit the unbelievers tormented and

persecuted him. Even his own people and his paternal uncle and other leaders of the society also took a most prominent role in their opposition to him. The period of his torment and persecution lasted so long that for thirteen years he suffered all kinds of torture from his people. In this condition, no one could have predicted his eventual success for opposition waxed warm in every quarter and even his relatives were thirsting for his blood. As a matter of fact, when his own family and ancestral relations refused to accept him it became more difficult for others to believe in him. In short, the period of the Holy Prophet's trials and tribulations seemed interminable.

Righteous face trials, hardships and opposition

Maulana Muhammad Ali in his book Muhammad, The Prophet, chapter 4, answers this question thus: "*Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and will not be tried*" (Holy Qur'an: 29:2).

Whenever the Divine will inspires a band of righteous people to work as torch-bearers of Truth to a corrupt humanity, there never fails to appear at the same time a band of those who pitch themselves in deadly opposition to them, and inflict upon them all kinds of trouble and torture. And in truth the storm of opposition is absolutely indispensable. The persecutions to which they [righteous people of God] are subjected serve as a crucial test of the sincerity of their motives. They unhesitatingly put up with humiliations, endure hardships and cruelties, but never for a moment give up the truth for which they stand. In fact, they live if they can, for the Truth; and die, if they must, for the Truth. Besides, afflictions constitute the only training ground for fostering virtues of steadfastness and perseverance, without which man

cannot attain to moral perfection. Unless one is hemmed in on all sides by overwhelming obstacles and visited with hardships and privations, one cannot cultivate these qualities. Adversities that befall such people are in fact blessings in disguise, which conduce to their moral advancement. Over and above these, there is a third object. The Almighty God wants to bring home to mankind that a plant tended by the Divine hand, however slender it may look survives the most furious blasts of hostile winds. Consequently, in accordance with this Divine law, the Holy Prophet and his companions had to suffer untold troubles at the hands of the opponents.

The best way of supplication is *salah*

Supplication (*du'a*) is like a sweet spring of water near to which the believer sits. Whenever he wishes he can quench his thirst to his heart's desire from this spring. Just as a fish cannot live outside of water, so, too, *du'a* is like water to the believer and he cannot exist without it. The most appropriate place for his *du'a* is in formal prayer (*salah*) in which he derives such comfort and ecstasy compared to which the pleasure which a debauched person obtains from his evil actions is like nothing worth mentioning. A most significant reward for *du'a* is closeness to Allah, Most High. Through *du'a* a man draws even nearer to the Almighty Who in turn draws the believer to Himself. When a believer makes *du'a* with total sincerity of heart and cuts himself clear of everything besides Allah, Most High, then the Almighty showers mercy on him and becomes his Guardian.

If a man should ponder over his life, he will realise that without the guardianship of Allah, Most High, his life deteriorates and becomes more and more bitter.

Take a person, for example, who has arrived at the height of maturity and begins to discriminate between what is good for him and what is evil for him, and then finds that he is dogged by a series of disappointments and frustration and all kinds of calamities begin to crop up in his life. In order to escape from this situation he tries everything possible: using his wealth, courting the friendship of judges as well as devising every kind of trickery and deceit. In spite of all this, he finds it difficult to achieve success through these stratagems. In many cases, the end of all his disappointments is suicide.

If the pains and sorrows and tribulations of worldly-minded people are compared with those that prophets and messengers had to face then those calamities of the former group would pale into insignificance. Yet the severe disasters that this righteous party had to bear never made them peevish, or despondent, or overburdened with grief and worry. Nothing could intrude in their perpetual condition of happiness and joy because as a result of their *du'a* they basked in the shade of the Almighty's patronage and protection.

Strongest support lies in the love of Allah

Just imagine if a person develops a friendship with a judge and if this judge also gives him the assurance that he can come to his assistance in every difficulty, then see how in time of calamity this person whose problems can be solved by his high-ranking friend will exhibit little grief or worry as compared with ordinary mortals who are not so blessed. Now, look and see how a believer who has a relationship with not just a judge but the Best of all Judges, will never be perturbed in the least when he has to face trials and tribulations.

If lesser people had to withstand a hundredth part of the difficulties that fell to the lot of the prophets of God, they would have been crushed to pieces under the pressure. When these holy ones came to this world for the purpose of reforming people they met a situation where the whole nation became hostile to them. Hundreds of thousands thirsted for their blood. However, even this dangerous enmity could not interfere with their peace and serenity. On the other hand, if a person becomes the enemy of another, he cannot rest for a moment out of fear of evil from his adversary. Yet, in spite of the antagonism of a whole nation, these virtuous souls could still enjoy a life of quietude. They endured all this acrimony with a cool heart. This patient endurance is a miraculous example of supernatural power. Of all the miracles of endurance that the Holy Prophet (*sas*) exhibited, one instance stands out with striking clarity and prominence – all the people were united against him and tempted him with wealth and power, worldly rank and status, beautiful and comely maidens with one over-riding condition: that he should abandon the most sublime of all teachings: *Laa ilaaha illal Laah*, that is, there is no god deserving of worship except Allah, Most High. In answer to all these supposedly enticing inducements, the most honourable Prophet replied: “If I were doing this out of my own desire, then I would have accepted everything. However, I am doing all this under the command of the Almighty.”

From another angle, his endurance of all calamities was an extraordinary feat of superhuman strength. All this power and fortitude are attained by means of supplication (*du‘a*), a gift which Allah, Most High, has graciously bestowed on a believer. Many a

time, the fervent and piteous *du'a* of such pure souls has quashed the bloodthirsty attack of people bent on murder.

Everyone must have heard of how Hazrat 'Umar (*ra*) was on his way to kill the Holy Prophet (*sas*) and what eventually took place. However, before this incident, Abu Jahl had circulated a kind of poster among the people promising to confer enormous wealth and honour on anyone who murdered the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). Before Hazrat 'Umar (*ra*) was honoured by accepting Islam, he had made a pact with Abu Jahl and was willing and prepared to assassinate the Holy Prophet (*sas*). He was searching for an opportune moment to do so. In the course of his investigations he came to the knowledge that the Holy Prophet (*sas*) used to go to the Ka'bah after midnight to perform his prayer (*salah*). Thinking that this was a fine time to accomplish his plan, Hazrat 'Umar (*ra*) went to the Ka'bah from early in the evening and sat in wait. At midnight the cry of *Laa ilaaha illal Laah* began to ring out from the jungle. Hazrat 'Umar (*ra*) made up his mind to murder the Holy Prophet (*sas*) whilst the latter was performing prostration (*sadjah*) in prayer. The Holy Prophet (*sas*), however, began to make petition to Allah, Most High, in such a sorrowful voice and so touching was his praise (*hamd*) of Allah, Most High, in prostration that Hazrat 'Umar's heart melted. All this caused his courage to desert him completely and his hand which was predisposed to murder became weak.

When the prayer was over and the Holy Prophet (*sas*) was returning home, Hazrat 'Umar (*ra*) followed him. On hearing the rustle of footsteps behind him the Holy Prophet (*sas*) looked back to see who it was and on

discovering that it was Hazrat ‘Umar, he addressed him thus: “O ‘Umar, will you not cease following me?”

Fearing a malediction (*bad du‘a*) from the Holy Prophet (*sas*), Hazrat ‘Umar replied: “O Prophet, I have given up my intention to kill you. Please do not make a *du‘a* of imprecation against me.”

From that time Hazrat ‘Umar (*ra*) used to say that that was the first night when love for Islam had germinated in his heart.

Supplication –the weapon of success

My whole being derives its vital force or is dependent on and seek Allah’s blessings through *du‘a* for it is a weapon which can bring success to the believer in every affair of his life. Allah, Most High, has emphasised to the believer the importance of making supplications to Him but the devotee is still remiss in doing so. I observe in my life that Allah, Most High, answers my petitions with special grace. Through supplication to the Almighty man can rescue himself from every calamity or infirmity. I once read in a newspaper that a piece of pencil point had broken off and lodged in the nostril of a certain police officer. There was some poisonous substance in the pencil and in a short space of time a tumour began to form on his hand. The swelling continued to increase to such an extent that it seemed as if his hand had become paralysed. A doctor was immediately summoned and he diagnosed that the effect of the poison had penetrated his arm and so he recommended the amputation of the arm as the only remedy to save the life of the patient. This policeman was unwilling to lose his arm and so after a short while he died.

I, too, once suffered the same mishap as the police officer. When I went for my usual walk I, too, noticed that a swelling had begun to appear in my arm and I remembered the policeman's plight. However, I immediately started to make *du'a* to Allah, Most High, in the words of Prophet Abraham (*as*): "And when I am sick, He heals me" (26:80) and I continued reciting it all the way on my return home and when I arrived at my residence the swelling had disappeared completely. I showed my arm to the people around and explained to them the whole story.

Similarly, once a tooth started to hurt me very painfully and when I mentioned this to others, many people advised me that to have it extracted would be the best course but I did not want to do so and instead I had recourse to *du'a* when I received the same Arabic words of the Holy Qur'an in the form of an inspiration. When this revelation came I felt a complete ease in my agonising discomfort. This happened nearly fifteen years ago.

This confirms the fact that man hates means only to the degree of his faith. That is, if his faith has reached a perfect degree his aversion to means will also be correspondingly great. In reality it has become apparent that this world is a place of colossal deceit: the very thing a man considers a source of his advancement turns out to be in truth the cause of his disgrace. In order to acquire an increase in worldly honour, eminence and wealth, people resort to all kinds of deception, deceit and treachery and try hard to gain their objectives by all sorts of dishonest and unprincipled actions. They attribute their success to

such acts of trickery to such an extent that they boast greatly to their friends of how they have triumphed because of their base stratagems.

But if one were to look deeply with the eye of justice and deep knowledge one would see that they can never enjoy any peace and comfort from such a course of behaviour. To tell the truth, an observer can discern that they are embroiled in blaming and complaining all the time and their condition is never blessed with tranquillity and contentment. One can enjoy peace and bliss only through the grace of the Almighty.

Righteousness is achieved through self-reformation

Unless man has perfect faith in Allah, Most High, and considers His promises to be true and believes Him to be the Fulfiller of all man's desires and chooses the path of integrity and righteousness he can never truly experience true peace and comfort. Allah, Most High, says in the Holy Qur'an: "*He safeguards the righteous*" (7:196).

If man has a guardian it lifts a great burden from his shoulders. Many of his responsibilities are lessened. For example, in childhood the parents are protectors and providers of an infant who has no care whatsoever over the necessities of life for they, themselves, take care of his clothes, food and drink and they, themselves, are constantly engaged in providing means for his clothing, eating and drinking.

They are also always anxious to keep him in good health and they bathe, wash, nourish and give him to drink so much so that many times they have to beat him to make him eat his food or to give him to drink or to put

on his clothes. A child does not bother himself with the necessities of life. This is done by the mother who takes it as her personal responsibility and is always anxious about fulfilling this obligation in the best way possible. When he grows older and is no longer under his mother's care and protection then man naturally falls in need of another patron. He thus takes all kinds of people as his protectors and guardians and these are all weak individuals who are so embroiled in errors and engaged in providing for their own needs that they cannot find time for others.

Allah is the Ultimate Guardian

However, all those who cut themselves away from all such patrons and opt for the path of self-reformation, virtue and righteousness (*taqwa*) find that Allah, Most High, Himself, becomes their Guardian and becomes the Surety for their needs and necessities. They stand in want of no artificial support. The Almighty takes care of their requirements so perfectly that they, themselves, could never have conceived of it in their wildest imagination and He confers such grace on them that they are struck with awe and amazement.

However, man has to pass through many different stages until he reaches the time of his life when Allah, Most High, alone is his Guardian. In other words, before attempting to acquire the sole guardianship of the Almighty, he has to traverse many diverse stages during which he seeks the assistance and patronage of others until Allah, Most High, alone becomes his one and only Patron as the Holy Qur'an states: "*Say: I seek refuge in the Lord (Rabb) of men, the King (Malik) of men, the God (Ilaah) of men, from the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (devil), who whispers into the hearts of men*"

(114:1-6).

At first his needs were taken care of by his mother. When he grew up into an adult he had to look to kings and rulers to satisfy his wants until moving further along he realised his error in that he became conscious of the fact that those upon whom he depended for his necessities were themselves quite feeble for they could not fulfil his requirements nor were sufficient enough to do so for him. He now turns humbly to Allah, Most High, and with firm conviction he makes Him his Lord and Provider. At this point he begins to enjoy considerable ease and comfort and enters into a life of sweet and extraordinary peace and tranquillity. In particular, when Allah, Most High, tells someone that He has become his Parton and Guardian, then at such a time the splendid comfort and quietude that this person acquires gives birth to a state of extraordinary bliss and ecstasy which cannot be described in words. This condition is free from all kinds of bitterness from which man cannot escape if his condition is oriented towards this world's concerns for the wilderness of this life is filled with thorns and acrimony.

A Persian couplet describes it so aptly:

Worldly desires are constant source of worry in
one's life till one is buried into the grave.
But it is only in solitude that remembrance of
Allah grants a believer true solace and
comfort.

The person for whom Allah, Most High, becomes the sole Guardian will discover that he has found deliverance from this world's grief and afflictions and he

enters an existence of genuine comfort and peace. For such a person Allah, Most High, has promised: “*And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him, and gives him sustenance from whence he imagines not.... And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He makes his affair easy for him*” (65:2-4).

Difficulties in the way of righteousness

There are several kinds of crimes in the world, some of which fall within the ambit of punishment prescribed in the Law (*Shari‘ah*) whilst some cannot be included in this category. For example, the commission of crime, fornication, burglary and the like can be punished under the rules of the Law. However, sins like falsehood, which occur very frequently, as well as bias and prejudice as regards human rights are not encompassed within the scope of punishment prescribed by the Law. Moreover, there are many affairs for which chastisement is not clearly laid down in the Law. However, the one who refrains from such sins through fear of the Almighty or who avoids all kinds of evils in order to win the pleasure of his Lord is called a *muttaqi*, that is, a God-fearing or righteous person. Allah, Most High, has promised the *muttaqi* in 65:2 of the Holy Qur’an: “*And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him.*”

In order to side-step the path of righteousness, people resort to all kinds of excuses and pretexts. Many aver that their business can never flourish if they do not stoop to lying whilst others make the charge that if the truth is told, then people would not trust them. Again, there are many who profess that if they do not take interest they cannot make a living. How can such people be called righteous? Allah, Most High, has promised to

remove all difficulties from the way of a pious person and to provide for him from whence he can never imagine. Further, He has plainly said that whoever assiduously follows His Book will be provided with sustenance in every way possible – from above their heads and below their feet. He has also stated: “*And in the heavens is your sustenance*” (51:22).

Piety helps to shun evil ways

This means that our sustenance is not dependent on our own efforts or labour or plans and strategies but it is beyond all that. Those people who indulge in sins do not profit from this promise and do not choose the path of rectitude. Whoever does not take to piety will definitely be immersed in sins, and countless obstacles will impede his path in life.

It is recorded that a particular saint was living in a certain town and he had a neighbour who was extremely worldly-minded. Every night this neighbour noticed that the saint would rise and perform his *tahajjud* (after midnight) prayer. One day the idea crossed the mind of this worldly-minded person that he should imitate the saint by reading the *tahajjud* prayer himself. Thus, in his determination to put his idea into operation he got up one night and performed the *tahajjud* prayer. However, in performing this prayer he suffered such difficulty that his waist started to pain him severely. When the saint heard of what happened to his materialistic neighbour he paid him a visit and inquired after his health. On being apprised of the cause of his neighbour’s predicament, the saint asked him what was the purpose of his futile action. He advised him that he should first of all purify himself and then make intention to read *Tahajjud* prayer; for

Allah, Most High, answers the prayer of only the righteous ones. To this effect the Holy Qur'an states: "*Allah accepts only from the dutiful (muttaqin)*" (5:27).

That is, if man does not choose the path of *taqwa* (righteousness) the Almighty will not turn to him. Allah, Most High, possesses unique attributes. So those who walk along His path are informed of these qualities and themselves partake of and are coloured with these very attributes. The delicious sweetness of a loving relationship with Allah, Most High, is so extremely delightful that no fruit in the world contains such a syrup. A person cannot gain the care and custody of the Almighty in one shot. On the other hand, if the Almighty is the Patron of a person, he derives immeasurable benefits. Firstly, he enters a life of tranquillity and he enjoys such comfort and contentment that no seeker of the world can ever possibly gain and he acquires such a blissful feeling of ecstasy that cannot be found anywhere else.

Further, Allah's guardianship is so firmly established that He takes His servant very quickly out of every difficulty and takes responsibility for his custody. The backsliders are implicated in all kinds of senseless quarrels: they follow false words and if they perform prayer (*salah*) they do so only out of ostentation and never engage in it in the manner prescribed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) – the manner which can elevate a person to sublime spiritual heights at which stage his sins are banished and his supplications are answered and he gains a closer and closer relationship with his Creator. The Holy Qur'an asks: "*Do men think that they will be left alone on saying: We believe, and will not be tried?*"

(29:2).

It is futile to think that man can escape trials. Allah, Most High, sends difficulties on the believer and this is the way of Allah, Most High, in regard to all virtuous persons: they definitely have to endure all kinds of severe calamities from the Almighty.

Significance of difficulties and trials in the way of achieving spiritual progress

There are two kinds of difficulties, one of which falls under the rubric of the Law (*Shari'ah*). In order to achieve full compliance with the commands of the Almighty man must cut himself clear of all worldly connections which attract and divert him from the straight path; for example, wife, children, friends, worldly traditions and customs and connections which are all trying to act like a magnet drawing him to them, making him enamoured of them. In order to be attracted to the fulfilment of Allah's commands it is imperative that he separates himself from all such enticements and in forsaking them he comes face to face with a kind of death.

I do not at all mean that all these should be completely abandoned without the slightest connection with them; for then in one way wives would become like widows and children turned into orphans, for loving care and attention to them would cease. Instead, my intention is that people should fully maintain and fulfil their relationship with their wives and children; they should nurture them and complete their obligations to them and treat them with love and affection. However, their hearts should not be totally attached to them, nor to worldly means. Instead, this principle should take precedence: My

hand is at work but my heart is with my Friend. Although this is a very delicate matter, yet this is the path of true separation which is incumbent on believers. The time will come when they become so engrossed in Allah, Most High, that they will become blind to everything else.

It is written about Hazrat ‘Ali (*ra*), the fourth Caliph of Islam, that once he was asked this question by his son, Imam Husain: “Do you love me?”

Caliph ‘Ali replied in the affirmative. Imam Husain was stuck with amazement on receiving this response and questioned his father further: “How can two loves reside in one heart? If a time comes when there is a competition between these two loves (that is, love for the Almighty and love for his son), to which one will you yield?”

The Caliph’s answer was short, direct and decisive as he said: “To Allah, Most High.”

In short, separation was hidden in his heart and on the right occasion his love was reserved only for his Creator.

Sahibzada Abdul Latif, the martyr, also exhibited an outstanding example of spiritual isolation from worldly concerns. When the King’s guards came to arrest him (he was away from home) people suggested to him that he should return home first. His response was, “What connection do I have with home? My relationship is with my Lord. His decree has been issued and so I depart at once.”

Living testimony of demonstration of love for Allah

A time comes when the genuineness of everything is tested. The companions of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) had everything: wives and children, wealth and relatives as well as honour and business. However, they took the testimony of belief (*shahadah*) so seriously as if they had been given a delicious fruit. They loved death for the sake of their Creator. On the other hand, they fulfilled their responsibilities to their family and children to perfection whilst on the other hand they became so disinterested and dispassionate as if they were blind to them to such an extent that they preferred death for the pleasure of their Lord. They displayed no cowardice but advanced with courage and determination in His path even to martyrdom. With such profound love they gave their lives in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) that they considered their children as a trial. In fact, if their wives or children intruded in their objective, they regarded them as enemies. This is the true meaning of cutting oneself clear of all besides Allah, Most High. It is quite unlike today's practice of monkery in which one has to cut one's relationship completely off wives and children and renounce the whole world. Heaven is not pleased with this kind of behaviour.

The Sufis, too, exhibit an example of true separation in that they remain faithful to wives and children and to the Almighty also. However, when the occasion demands, they forsake their wives and children and give themselves wholly and solely to Allah, Most High. These are the ones who turn fully to their Creator after distancing themselves from everything besides Him.

Look at the example of Prophet Abraham (*as*). He

was ready and willing to do harm to himself (and his son) for the sake of his Master, but Allah, Most High, did not desire him to do so and did not allow his noble gesture of sacrifice to become extinct in the world.

How friendship with Allah can be developed

My objective here is to encourage people to become so intensely sincere to Allah, Most High, and to make such strenuous efforts in His path that He would be pleased with them. A friend can never be happy with a friend unless his faithfulness to him and his firm trustworthiness are not clearly manifested. Take the example of a master with two servants. One of them is faithful and strongly and genuinely reliable and fulfils his obligations not in a perfunctory or grudging manner but instead he does so with utmost love and sincerity. The other one does his work in a superficial and casual way whilst his heart is not in it. Which one will the master prefer? He will certainly be pleased with the first servant and will listen to his words. He will also repose trust in him and love him for his reliability.

Performing prayer in a superficial and routine manner does not gain the pleasure of Allah, Most High. The friendships of this world are not formed by mere hollow words – sincerity is a necessary pre-requisite. The word Islam itself makes a person a Muslim, that is, one who surrenders himself totally to the will of the Almighty. The meaning of Islam is to lay down one's neck willingly at the altar of Allah, Most High, with faithfulness and sincerity whilst seeking His pleasure and observing His commands. The name Islam was not assigned to any other community. This is Allah's special favour to this community. What Islam desires can be

acquired right here in this world by following the religion as the Holy Qur'an affirms: "*And for him who fears to stand before his Lord are two Gardens*" (55:46), that is, one in this world and one in the next.

Further, one is blessed with the perception to see Allah, Most High, in this very life as the Holy Qur'an explains: "*And whoever is blind in this (world) will be blind in the Hereafter, and further away from the path*" (17:72).

Friends of Allah

Allah states (in the Holy Qur'an) that "*We are your friends in this world's life and in the Hereafter*" (41:31).

Visible signs of Allah's friendship

In other words, Allah is stating that He is a Friend of the righteous in this world and the next. Implicit in this verse is also the denial of the belief held by some that angels descend only at the time of death and do not descend at any other time in this life. If that were the case, how is it that Allah is a Friend in this world and the next?

It is indeed a blessing that those who are the friends of Allah are able to see angels. The next world is one in which we believe through our faith but a righteous person is shown the next world in this very life. Righteous people find Allah in this life – they see Him and He speaks to them. If this is not available to a person then his death and his departure from this world will be a very bad one. A past saint has stated that "He who has never had a true dream will face a frightful end." The Holy Qur'an holds this to be a sign of a true believer. Take note that he who does not possess this sign, does not possess righteousness.

Hence, this should be a prayer from all of us that this condition is fulfilled in us, that Allah may grant us the blessing of revelation, of true dreams and of visions. This is a special characteristic of a true believer and, hence, it should be present. There are many other blessings that are granted to the one who is righteous. For instance, in the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an,

Surah Al-Fatihah, Allah teaches a believer to pray thus: “*Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor those who go astray*” (1:6-7).

In other words, “guide us to that path which is straight and which is the path of those who are the recipients of Your blessing and grace.” This prayer has been taught so that a human being should acquire high resolve and should understand the intention of the Creator. That intention is that this *Ummah*, the followers of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) of Islam, should not spend their life like animals; rather that all veils should be removed (to reveal true knowledge of Allah). It is the belief of the *Shi’a* sect that attainment of knowledge of Allah came to an end after the twelve *Imams*. Contrary to this, the prayer (taught in *Surah Al-Fatihah*) shows that Allah had intended beforehand that the righteous should enjoy the blessings of prophets and the pious. Another point that is made through this is that a human being has been granted many capabilities that need to be nurtured and developed.

When a person of high resolve hears the stories of prophets and messengers, he does not only wish to have faith in the blessings granted to that group, but he wishes also to gain knowledge of them. He desires to acquire the different levels of knowledge regarding those blessings, beginning with knowledge that is certain (but based on inference), then certainty that is witnessed to the certainty of experience and absolute truth.

Three stages of knowledge

There are three stages of knowledge: knowledge by way of certainty of inference, knowledge by way of certainty

that is witnessed, and the stage of knowledge acquired through the certainty of experience. For example, being certain of the existence of fire, having seen smoke rising from a place, is inferred knowledge that is certain. However, to see the fire with one's own eyes is certainty that is witnessed, but even higher is the stage of absolute certainty of truth. An example of this would be like putting one's hand in the fire and from the burning sensation and the movement of the fire ascertaining that the fire is actually there and real. How unfortunate is the person who does not possess any of the three levels of knowledge (of the spiritual realm).
[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 1, pp. 18-20]

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No matter how many holy people and saints there may have been, they all spent their time striving and perfecting their worship. Baba Ghulam Fareed of Shakarganj and all the other past holy and saintly people reached their high station due to striving and carrying out special and strenuous spiritual exercises. Moreover, these people followed fully and strictly the practice of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) and it was only after such strict practice and much effort that their pride, their arrogance and their egoism left them. They became as if they had gone through the eye of a needle – through which all such people have to pass. It is only after much strenuous efforts that such people attain their station. It is such people whose prayers are accepted; otherwise, you see that a physician's medicine has no efficacy unless one exercises abstinence. So is the secret of the acceptance of prayer – prayer has no efficacy unless a person abstains fully (from all that is disliked by Allah).

Remember that no one has ever attained a special and high station without bringing about a death over himself or without fully following the tradition and practice of the Holy Prophet (*sas*). However, this much is certainly true that without there being a capability, nothing can be achieved. The capacities of some people and their nature is made such by Allah that pride, arrogance, conceit and other similar ills are easily extricated and it is as if these had never existed.

Just as a seed becomes like dust when it is buried in the earth and then Allah's power makes it grow, so these people first lose everything in the path of Allah and then Allah brings them back to life, makes them develop and spread, and their acceptance by other people is made easy. Hence, if a person steadfastly bears the difficulties and tribulations that from time to time confront him by way of a test from Allah, and bears all this without laying down any conditions or limits and leaves his affair to Allah, then Allah, through His blessing, shows him all that makes his faith stronger and his heart wholesome. However, when people are stubborn and wish to make Allah move according to their wishes, then such people remain deprived. After this, what care can Allah have for such people? Allah is indifferent. There are tens of millions of His servants. If a person does not accept, that is up to him, but such a person then joins those who are destined for hell. In showing signs, Allah does not take any notice of people's wishes and plans. Manifestation of signs also depends upon the capabilities (of people). If a grain that has been chewed is sown within the earth, it will not grow or develop. Similarly, unfortunate people cannot become the heirs of Allah's blessings and signs.  
[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 10, pp. 208- 209]

Allah is not pleased with mere words. You should become so true that your sincerity and your anguish reach up to the heavens. Allah protects and blesses the person He considers to have a heart that is truthful and full of love. He looks at hearts and peeks into them. He does not care for empty words. He enters the heart that has been cleansed thoroughly and purified of all impurities. He enters such a heart and makes His home there. On the other hand, the heart in which there remain impurities is declared to be an accursed one. Remember that faith without good deeds is an incomplete faith. How is it possible for true faith not to be accompanied by good deeds? Make your faith and belief perfect. People do not strengthen their faith and yet they complain that they are not receiving the promised blessings and rewards. Allah has, of course, promised: *“And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him, and gives him sustenance from whence he imagines not”* (65:2-3).

That is, he who is righteous and is so in the sight of Allah is safeguarded by Allah against all hardship and Allah grants him provisions from sources that are unimaginable. This promise of Allah is true and it is our belief that Allah is Most Gracious and Most Merciful and He fulfils His promises. He who becomes Allah’s is saved by Allah from humiliation and is fully taken care of by Allah. However, those who declare themselves to be righteous and yet complain that they have not received the accompanying rewards, leave us wondering as to which of their two claims to believe.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 5, pp. 243-244]

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### **Precedence of Faith over material world**

Allah, Most High, makes men pass through different trials so that He may see whether the believer gives precedence to his faith over the material world. There are many who profess a belief in Allah but when they find such belief interfering with their material advantages they forsake the cause of Allah, or when they have any fear of harm from rulers, they abandon the path of Allah. Such people are, in fact, without faith and they do not know that in reality it is Allah Almighty Who is the Judge over all judges.

Doubtless, the path of Allah is a difficult path and unless a person (undergoes such extreme striving in the path of Allah) that is akin to tearing off one's own skin, he cannot find acceptance before Allah. Do we not dislike a servant who is disloyal? Is it not true that a servant who is not faithful to his master and is not constant in his duty is not looked upon with honour anywhere? Thus it is also in the presence of Allah. The person who forsakes his Divine Master for the sake of limited material gain is the most disloyal and faithless of persons.

It is wrong to think that one who walks in the path of Allah ultimately suffers loss. He who serves Allah faithfully cannot suffer any loss. Loss is his who is false, who breaks the covenant he has made with Allah for the sake of this world. Let him who is guilty of such disloyalty remember that no ruler or king would be able to deliver him when the hand of Allah is upon him. He has to eventually meet the Judge of all judges. It is, therefore, necessary for every true believer to have faith in Allah, Who is the King of all the heavens and the earth, and to turn to Allah with true repentance. This is certainly a most difficult thing to achieve – it is only possible when Allah

makes the heart move in that direction. Hence, it requires much prayer.

The person who walks along the path of Allah with true sincerity is granted extraordinary power and capability. The heart of the believer has within it a power of attraction such that other people are drawn to him. I cannot understand why people should not be drawn to you if there is within you sufficient attraction of love in the path of Allah and a magnetic power generated within you. [Malfuzaat, vol. 7, pp. 29-30]

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Some people consider that merely by visiting some holy person and without any effort or inner purification they will be able to join the fold of the Truthful. This is just wishful thinking. You should study the Holy Qur'an to see that you cannot win the pleasure of Allah unless you too endure hardship and tribulation as did the prophets of Allah. Some of their ordeals and suffering were so extreme that (in the words of the Holy Qur'an): "*Distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Now surely the help of Allah is nigh!*" (2:214).

It has always been the case that the servants of Allah have been put through many an ordeal and hardship before they were accepted by Allah.

The Sufis have written about two paths that lead to success in this struggle: one is the path of *saluk*. This is the path of people who, by using their own intelligence

and wisdom, adopt the path of Allah and His Prophet (*sas*). Allah, addressing the Holy Prophet (*sas*) states in the Holy Qur'an: "*If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you*" (3:31).

That is, if you wish to become the loved ones of Allah then you should follow the path of the Holy Prophet (*sas*). He is the perfect guide and he is the Prophet who underwent such extreme hardship and suffering that the like of it has never been seen anywhere in the world. His quest was such that it did not let him rest even for a day. The followers (of this Prophet) will only be those who truly and sincerely follow his every word and every deed. The true follower is he who follows in every way. The person who has scant regard (for Divine injunctions) and a harsh attitude (towards other people) is not liked by Allah. Such a person will, instead, come under the wrath of Allah.

The injunction to follow the Holy Prophet (*sas*) places an obligation on the seeker to first study the whole history of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) and then to follow in his footsteps. This is what is meant by *saluk*, (that is, "initiation"). There are in this path numerous ordeals and hardships. It is only after showing steadfastness in the face of numerous hardships that a person becomes a *salik*, that is, a "devotee."

Absorption in the love of Allah

The status of the people on the path of *jazb* is greater than those on the path of *saluk*. (The term *jazb* implies absorption in the love of Allah.) Those who strive on the path of *jazb* are not left at the stage of *saluk*. Allah deliberately puts them through ordeals and tribulations in

order to draw them closer to Himself through the eternal power of absorption, that is, *jazba-e azli*. All the Prophets of Allah were *majzub*, that is, they were drawn to Allah and were absorbed in Allah.

When the human soul is faced with painful ordeals and tribulations, the experience and the consequent humility make it radiant, just as iron or glass, while possessing the capacity to shine, do so only after they have undergone a lengthy process of burnishing and then they shine so brightly that in them is reflected the face of the person who looks into it. Striving in the path of Allah also works as a process of burnishing. The burnishing of the heart should be to such a degree that the “face” is reflected in the resulting “mirror” (of the “heart”). What is meant by “reflection of the face”? The meaning of this is to become the fulfilment of the saying, “Create within you morals in accordance with the character of Allah.” The heart of the *saalik*, that is, the devotee, is a “mirror” that is burnished so much through undergoing experiences of great suffering and tribulation that the reflection of the moral qualities of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) are fixed upon it. This occurs at a time when, having undergone numerous spiritual exercises and inner purification, there remains no resentment or impurity within. It is only then that this status is attained. Every Muslim believer needs this kind of cleansing to some extent. No believer will find salvation whilst being without the “mirror” of the heart.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 1, pp. 27-28]

The Path to Righteousness

Reward of faith

The reward of faith is the Garden of Paradise and, as streams of water are required to keep the garden green and luscious, such “streams of flowing water” are the consequence of acts of goodness. The reality of this is that acts of goodness performed in this world will take on a symbolic resemblance to the flowing streams of water in the next world. In this world, too, we witness that the more a person progresses in his acts of goodness and the more he safeguards himself against deeds that may be acts of disobedience to God Almighty, and the more he abandons the practices that go outside the limits set by God, the greater is his faith. Every new act of goodness brings him greater satisfaction and he attains a deeper inner strength. The knowledge of God begins to give him pleasure until such time as a believer is granted by God’s grace, a state of love for God in which he becomes totally immersed. The light of God engulfs his heart completely and all types of darkness and hindrances are removed from his path. In this state, all difficulties and tribulations that are placed in the path towards God do not worry the seeker for one moment. Instead, facing tribulation in the path of God becomes a source of pleasure for such people. This is the final stage of belief.

Seven aspects of faith and doors of Paradise

There are seven aspects of belief and an additional, final, one that is granted through the love and grace of God. This is why there are seven doors of paradise and the eighth one is opened only through the special Grace of God. It is worth remembering that the heaven and hell

that will be found in the next world will not be something entirely new. They are an image formed by a person's faith and his actions and this is its true philosophy. It will not be something that will be given to a person from the outside – it is something that emanates from within a human being. For the true believer there is a “paradise” in this world for every situation in which he may find himself. The “paradise” that exists for him in this world contains the promise of paradise in the next world. How clear this matter is that paradise lies within people's own beliefs and good deeds! The enjoyment of its pleasure begins in this very world. It is the same belief and righteous actions of this world that appear as gardens of paradise together with the flowing streams of water.

[*Malfuzaat*, Vol. 2, pp. 386-388]

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The best and most satisfactory state for a human being is that in which the state of his deeds is clear and correct. His actions should vouch for this and the blessings of God and powerful and extraordinary signs should be with him and always support him. It is only then that he is with God and God is with him. Satan creates an opportunity for himself in everything to deceive and divert people from the right path. It is because I have repeatedly presented my own revelations that some people have had the idea that they, too, should do the same. This is a tribulation that has been imposed upon them and Satan helped them in this path of destruction. Consequently, they began to receive satanic revelation and to hear voices from within themselves. ...

Taqwa, that is, righteousness is no small thing.

Through it one has to battle against all those “satans” that overwhelm a person’s inner strength and power. All these forces in the state of *nafs-e ammara*, that is, the self that incites to evil, are a satan within man. If these forces are not controlled they will eventually enslave a person. Knowledge and intelligence also become “satans” when used improperly. The task of the righteous person is to develop these and all of his capacities correctly. Similarly, those who consider revenge, anger and marriage to be a bad thing in all circumstances, also go against nature and they battle against the basics of human nature and human instinct. The true religion is that which nurtures human capabilities and not one that degrades them. Anger and virility of man are aspects of human nature that have been placed there by God and, therefore, to abandon them such as becoming a hermit or a monk is to fight with God. All such matters that go against human nature usurp the rights of human beings. If matters were in fact as they try to depict them then it would be posing an objection against God who created and placed within us those capabilities. [Malfuzaat, vol. 1, pp. 33-51]

The Wisdom of Supererogatory Acts of Goodness

The *Hadith* tells us that those who do extra good in addition to the compulsory duties prescribed in the Law will gain closeness to Allah, Most High. Abu Hurairah reported Allah's messenger as stating that Allah has said:

“If anyone is hostile to a friend of mine, I have declared war against him.

No one draws near to Me with anything dearer to Me than what I have made obligatory for him.

If My servant keeps drawing near to Me with supererogatory acts, I shall love him, and when I love him I shall be his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he grasps, and his foot with which he walks.

If he asks from Me I shall certainly give him and if he seeks refuge in Me I shall certainly give him refuge.

I have not hesitated about anything I do as I hesitate about taking the soul of a believer who dislikes death, for I dislike grieving him, but he cannot escape it.”

From this we can see that there are two kinds of actions: obligatory (*fard*) which pertain to those commands of the Almighty which we are commanded to

perform and supererogatory acts (*nafl*) meaning what we willingly do beyond the scope of the compulsory duties laid down by the Law (*Shari'ah*). These actions are performed so that if there is any deficiency in our obligatory duties, our voluntary deeds will make up for the shortfall.

Some people restrict the range of the *nawaafil*, that is, voluntary duties, only to the prayer service. However, this is not correct, for every single action of man has something extra attached to it. For example, we pay *zakat* (compulsory tax) at the stipulated rate of two and a half percent (2 ½ %) but we should sometimes give a little more. Similarly, we observe the compulsory fasts in the month of Ramadan but outside of this month there are other fasts which we should perform. Again, we may take a loan from someone but we should return more than the capital for this is an act of great kindness.

Voluntary acts of goodness complete and perfect our obligatory duties, for when performing some extra goodness, our hearts are filled with humility and fear which tend to compensate for any deficiency in our compulsory obligations. The secret of voluntary acts of goodness lies in bringing a person closer to the Almighty. This state is engendered when the heart is filled with humility and meekness and has separated itself from everything besides Allah, Most High. This is why fasting on the 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month and the six extra fasts in the month of *Shawwaal* are all grouped under the heading of supererogatory acts in a devotee's striving to attain proximity to Allah, Most High.

Thus, we should be aware that voluntary acts of

righteousness are a means of helping us to win Allah's complete love. The result is that Allah, Most High, promises to such a believer that He will become the eyes by which he sees and that his glance will fall wherever he wills it to alight.

The *hadith* also says: "I (Allah) shall become the hand by which he holds." In many cases, through his hands, man commits deeds that transgress the limit of what is permissible. Allah, Most High, says that a believer should not improperly exceed the bounds of what is legally allowed.

Again, the Almighty says: I become the tongue by which he speaks." An indication of this is given in the following Qur'anic verse which says in relation to the Holy Prophet (sas): "*Nor does he speak out of desire*" (53:3). That is why whatever the Holy Prophet (as) spoke was uttered only in accordance with the command of Allah, Most High, and as regards his hand, the Holy Qur'an states: "... *and when thou threwest (a handful of dust) it was not thy act, but Allah threw ...*" (8:17) (at the battle of Badr). In other words, through voluntary acts of goodness, man attains a lofty spiritual rank and draws ever closer to his Creator until he is included in the company of the saints.

The *hadith* also says: "Whoever becomes an enemy of My friend should get ready to do battle with Me." And it also states that Allah, Most High, will pounce on such an adversary just as a tigress would do in order to protect her young from being taken away. In short, man should always strive and labour to achieve this station. No one knows when death will suddenly strike. It is the duty

of the believer never to become negligent and he should always entertain the fear of the Almighty in his heart”
[*Malfuzaat*, vol.2, pp.198-200 old edition]

Three Categories of the Faithful

“And I call not myself sinless; surely (man’s) self is wont to command evil, except those on whom my Lord has mercy” (12:53).

“Nay, I swear by the self-accusing spirit!” (75:2).

“O soul that art at rest, Return to thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing, so enter among My servants, and enter My Garden!” (89:27-30).

“Surely Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred” (16:90).

The three conditions of man

In his commentary of the above verses, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, delineates a direct affinity running through these verses on three points:

- 1.** Three conditions of man.
- 2.** Three states or stages of goodness.
- 3.** Three categories of true believers.

He explains as follows:

The first question relates to the physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man. The Holy Qur’an observes this division by fixing three respective sources for this threefold condition of man. In other words, it mentions three springs out of which these three conditions

flow.

The first of these in which the physical conditions of man take their birth is termed the *nafs-e ammara*, which signifies *the uncontrollable spirit*, or *the spirit prone to evil*. Thus it says: “*Most surely (man’s) self is wont to command (him to do) evil*” (12:53). It is the characteristic of the *nafs-e ammara* that it inclines man to evil, tends to lead him into iniquitous and immoral paths and stands in the way of his attainment of perfection and moral excellence. In short, man's nature is prone to evil and transgression at a certain stage in his development, and so long as he is devoid of high moral qualities, the evil nature is predominant in him. He is subject to this state so long as he does not walk in the light of true wisdom and knowledge, but acts in obedience to the natural inclinations of eating, drinking, sleeping, becoming enraged or excited, etc. like the lower animals.

However, as soon as he frees himself from the control of animal passions and, guided by wisdom and knowledge, holds the reins of his natural desires and governs them instead of being governed by them; in short, when a transformation is worked in his soul from grossness to virtue, he then passes the physical stage and is a moral being in the strict sense of the word. The source of the moral conditions of man is called the *nafs-e lawwama*, or the *self-accusing spirit* (conscience), in the terminology of the Holy Qur’an.

In the chapter entitled, *The Resurrection*, we have “*And nay! I call to witness the self-accusing spirit*” (75:2) on every dereliction of duty or on the slightest act of disobedience, being conscious of having offended. This is

the spring from which flows a highly moral life and, on reaching this stage, man is freed from bestiality. The swearing by the self-accusing soul indicates the regard in which it is held. For the change from the disobedient to the self-accusing soul, being a sure sign of its improvement and purification, makes it deserving of approbation in the sight of God.

Lawwama literally means *one who reproves severely*, and the *nafs-e lawwama*, or the self-accusing soul, has been so called because it upbraids a man for the doing of an evil deed and strongly hates unbridled passions and bestial appetites. Its tendency, on the other hand, is to generate noble qualities and a virtuous disposition, to transform life so as to bring the whole course and conduct of it to moderation, and to restrain the carnal passions and sensual desires so as to keep them within due bounds. Although, as we have said above, the self-accusing soul upbraids itself for its faults and frailties, yet it is not the master of its passions, nor is it powerful enough to practise virtue exclusively. The weakness of the flesh has the upper hand sometimes and then it stumbles and falls down. Its weakness then resembles that of a child who does not like to fall but whose infirm legs are sometimes unable to support him. But it does not persist in its fault, every failure bringing only fresh reproach to the mind. In short, at this stage, the soul is anxious to attain moral excellence which is the characteristic of the first, or the animal stage, but does, notwithstanding its yearning for virtue, sometimes deviate from the line of duty.

The third or the last stage in the onward movement of the soul is reached on arriving at the source of all

spiritual qualities. The soul at this stage is, in the words of the Holy Quran, the *nafs-e mutma'innah* or *the soul at rest*. Thus it says: “*O soul that art at rest (and rests fully contented with thy Lord), return to thy Lord, well pleased (with Him), well pleasing (Him); so enter among My servants and enter into My garden*” (89:27-30).

At this stage, the soul is freed from all weaknesses and frailties and is braced with spiritual strength. It is perfectly united with God and cannot live without Him. As water flows with great force down a slope and, on account of its great mass and the total absence of all obstacles, dashes down with an irresistible force, so does the soul at this stage, casting off all trammels, flow unrestrained towards its Maker. It is to this that the words of the verse quoted above refer. It is further clear from the words, “*O soul that hast found rest in thy Lord, return to Him,*” that it is in this life and not after death that this great transformation is worked and that it is in this world and not elsewhere that an access to paradise is granted to it. Again, as the soul has been commanded to return to its Lord (Supporter), it is clear that such a soul finds its support only in its Lord. The love of God is its food and it drinks deep at this fountain of life and is, therefore, delivered from death. The same idea is expressed elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an in the following words, “*He will indeed be successful who purifies it and he will indeed fail who corrupts it*” (91:9-10).

In short, these three states of the soul may be called the physical, the moral and the spiritual states of man. Of these, the physical state, that is, that in which man seeks to satisfy the passions of the flesh, is most

dangerous when the passions run riot, for it is then that they deal a deathblow to the moral and spiritual states of man, and hence this state has been termed *the disobedient spirit* in the Holy Word of God.

Comparison of three spiritual conditions of man with the stages of goodness

Let us now make the comparison between the three conditions of man and the three stages of goodness open to him.

Three spiritual conditions of man

Change is impossible without the help of God. Thieves, adulterers, and other bad people do not stay in the same state all the time. They, too, at times show concern about their inner state. This is the case with every person who carries out an evil deed. What this shows is that there is necessarily in man the concern to do good, but for actually turning such a concern into action, he is in great need of God's help. That is why five times daily there is the injunction to recite *Surah Fatihah*, in which are contained the words, "*Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help*" (1:4). That is, addressing God we say: "It is Thee we worship and it is from Thee that we seek help." This verse points to two things – in carrying out every good deed, one should make full use of one's capacities, one's effort and good planning, as well as prayer. This is hinted at in the word *na'budu* (we worship) because a person who merely utters words of prayer and does not make the accompanying effort cannot succeed, just as the farmer who does not make any effort to take care of the seedlings he has planted cannot, consequently, hope to see the fruit of those plants. Such is the practice

of God!

For example, if there are two farmers and one of them works hard on his land and irrigates it well, he will necessarily be more successful. The other farmer who does not work very hard or does very little will see that the development of his plants will be slack, giving such a low yield that he would probably be unable to even pay the government taxes levied on his land and he will always remain poor. Matters of faith are of a similar nature. There are to be found in the sphere of faith people who are hypocrites and people who are useless. There are also to be found within the same realm people who become pious, people who become holy and people who become saints and attain a lofty status in the sight of God.

There are some people who have been offering *salah* for over 40 years and yet it is as if they have progressed no further than the first day and they have not undergone any change whatsoever. Such people do not feel the benefit from 30 days of fasting. There are many who state that they are accomplished righteous people and have been offering *salah* for a long time yet they do not exhibit the signs of the assistance of God. The reason for this is that their worship is customary and traditional. They only follow what others do. They do not think of progressing. They have no inclination towards sin but they do not seek true repentance. Hence they stay at the first step. The state of such people is not far removed from that of animals. The *salah* of such people brings affliction from God. True *salah* is that which brings with it progress. If a patient is being treated by a physician and he feels that his condition is daily getting worse instead of better, then after a few days, the patient will get

concerned that the prescription is not curing him and that it should be changed. Similarly, to adopt just a customary form of worship is not the right course.

The performance of *salah* involves prayer and *darood*, that is, invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet (*sas*), which are in Arabic. But it is not forbidden that you should also pray in your own language. If this is not done, there will be no progress. It is the commandment of God that *salah* should be a state in which there is presence of heart and mind, humility and supplication. Those people who try to perform *salah* in this manner, their sins are washed away. There is a verse of the Holy Qur'an in which it is stated, “*Surely good deeds (hasanaat) take away evil deeds (or shortcomings)*” (11:114). Here, by *hasanat*, is meant *salah* and the presence of heart and mind during *salah*. Such presence is achieved by imploring and beseeching God in one's own language. During *salah* you should, therefore, from time to time, pray in your own words. However, the best prayer is *Surah Fatihah*, because it is a complete prayer.

When the farmer has learnt the skill of farming, he would then be on the right path of farming and he will be successful. Likewise, you should search for the right path that leads to a union with God and you should pray to Him saying, “O God, I am a sinful servant of Yours and am miserable and worthless. Please guide me.” You should present all your needs, be they great or small, before God because He alone is the Provider. He who prays the most, is the most good. If a person were to beg every day at the door of the meanest person, one day he too would give something. Why then would a person not find what he asks at the door of God, Who is the most

Generous, without comparison.

Another name for *salah* is prayer (supplication), as is stated by Allah in the Holy Qur'an: "*And your Lord says: Pray to Me, I will answer you*" (40:60). And again it is stated, "*And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way*" (2:186). Some people doubt the existence of God's Being but you should call Him and ask of Him. He will call you in return and will answer your call and will remember you. However, if it is said that we call upon Him and He does not answer, then you should consider this example. You are standing at a point which is at a great distance from the person you are calling and you also suffer from deficient hearing. It will then be the case that although the other person hears you and responds to you, yet when he calls you from a distance then, because of your own deficient hearing, you will not be able to hear him. However, as the veils that divide are gradually lifted and other impediments are removed, you will certainly hear that voice.

Ever since the world was created, there has been proof that God speaks to His special servants. If this were not the case then gradually the notion that God even exists would have totally disappeared. Hence, a very powerful means of proof of God's existence is that we are able to hear His voice. There is either seeing or hearing as a proof of someone else's existence. These days hearing takes the place of seeing but as long as there is some veil between God and the one who prays, he will be unable to hear. When the intervening veil is lifted then the distant voice

will be heard.

Some people say that for the past 1,300 years the system of God's communication with man has been closed. The reality of such utterances is like that of a blind person who thinks everyone is blind as there is no light in his own eyes. If it was the case that Islam did not possess the distinction of enabling man to reach the level where God speaks to man, then Islam would have been nothing and it would have been dead like other religions. You should not, therefore, think like those belonging to dead religions who are "dead" themselves and consider Islam to be dead. On the contrary, Islam, is a religion the practice of which can make a person progress to such a high station that he can shake hands with the angels. If this was not the case then one could legitimately ask why was prayer taught to us. "*The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours*" (1:6). This voices not only the desire for material endowment but also for spiritual endowment and blessing. So, if you wish to remain blind, why do you utter this prayer?

The prayer of *Surah Fatihah* is a complete prayer and an extraordinary prayer such that the like of it has never been taught before by any other Prophet. So, if it is no more than mere words and God has not approved them, then why is it that God has taught us these words? If the high station is not to be attained by us, why are we enjoined to waste our time five times a day on this prayer? There is no stinginess in God's character, nor do the Prophets come for the purpose of being worshipped themselves. They come in order to teach that those who adopt their path come under their shade, as is stated in the Holy Qur'an: "*If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love*

*you, and grant you protection from your sins” (3:30). That is, “In following me, you will become the beloved of God.” It was because the Holy Prophet (sas) was a beloved of God that there were such blessings showered upon him. Can it then be the case that if someone else were to become God's beloved he would get nothing? If Islam was such a religion, one would be repelled by it. Islam, however, is not such a religion. The Holy Prophet (sas) has brought a spiritual “food” that can be attained by whoever wishes to acquire it. He did not bring a worldly treasure nor did he come as a banker. He brought the treasure of God and he himself became the distributor of this treasure. So, if that was the nature of the wealth that he distributed, and it was not a material wealth, did he take the treasury back with him? However, it is true that the blind person who has no light cannot make the claim that he possesses light and distributes it. God states: “*And whoever is blind in this (world) he will be blind in the Hereafter, and further away from the path*” (17:72).*

The Prophets themselves possess a very high level of vision. As for those who say that any kind of vision will not be given to anyone else, will they themselves leave this world in a state of blindness? If such people had true faith in the Holy Prophet (sas) and they sincerely believed that the Holy Prophet (sas) came to distribute heavenly treasure, and that his followers are to be distinguished above all others, then they would not have denied the possibility, in the present age, of communication with God. They accept that the mother of Moses (as) received revelation from God. They should have asked: whether any men among them have received similar revelation?

There was a *maulvi* in Lahore with whom I was involved in a discussion over the word *muhaddas*. I said that in the traditions it is stated that a *muhaddas* is one who can communicate with God and this was in relation to Hadrat Umar (*ra*). The *maulvi* replied that because Islam after the Holy Prophet (*sas*) is not granted the blessing of such communication, that is why Umar (*ra*) did not attain this station.

The time of the Messiah, in accordance with the prophecies contained in the traditions (of the Holy Prophet), is identified as this very age. In the chapter of the Holy Qur'an entitled *Al-Nur*, and in *Bukhari*, the word *minkum* (from among you) is very clear. All the prophesied signs have appeared. The eclipse of the sun and the moon in the month of Ramadan and the plague – these are very clear and evident signs but people continue to say that such events occur anyway. They do not tire of denying the signs and God does not tire. Ultimately, you know what the result will be: it will be that the Holy God will win.

Their reasoning is full of human error and you should beware of those errors. God is Most Gracious and Most Merciful. If a person wears a piece of clothing for a week, he begins to be concerned about having it cleaned. What then is the reason that instead of 100 years, 120 years should pass and no plan for the revival of religion should be suggested?

At present, nearly three million Muslims have become Christians. This was a nation in which in the past a single conversion to Christianity would have caused an outcry. Now a Hindu sect has raised its head, and is

forcing Muslims to become Hindu Aryas. God Himself, however, has stated: “*Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian*” (15:9). That is, God states, “We have sent down the Qur'an and We shall safeguard it. Whenever there occur errors in its meaning and understanding We will appoint a Reformer for its correction and reform.”

The three stages of goodness

“*Surely Allah enjoins justice ('adl) and the doing of good (to others) (ihsaan) and the giving to the kindred (itaa'i dhil qurbaa)*” (16:90).

State of justice

The stage of '*adl* (justice) can be compared with that of the *muttaqi* (the God-fearing servant) when he is at the stage of the *nafs-e ammarah*, that is, the spirit that is wont to command evil (or the animal stage). To reform this condition, the principle of justice has been instituted. Here, opposition from his inner passions is bound to arise in a man. For example, a person has to repay a debt but his *nafs* or *inviter to evil* makes the suggestion that he should renege on his payment and it so happens that the stipulated date of payment passes. What happens now is that the evil whisperer becomes bolder and more daring, inciting the defaulter with the suggestion that he cannot be legally called to account. But that is not correct behaviour. Justice demands that the debt obligation be duly fulfilled and no stratagem nor excuse be made to evade it.

It is sad, but I am forced to confess that many people do not pay much regard to these matters and there are even members of my Community who pay scant

attention to the repaying of their debts. This is contrary to justice. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) did not read the *janaza* prayer of such people (who failed to honour their debts). So every one of you should always remember that you should not be recalcitrant in paying your debts and you should steer far from all kinds of treachery and dishonesty for this is against the Divine command which Allah has revealed in the verse (16:90). [*Malfuzaat*, vol. 8, pp. 312-313]

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Referring to this verse in another place, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also explains '*adl* (justice) as doing good in return for good; or doing good only to those who do good to you and this is the lowest rung of the ladder of righteousness.

### ***Stage of goodness***

The second stage is that of *ihsaan* or goodness. That person who has respect for justice and does not exceed the limits of propriety is given guidance and power from Allah and he makes greater progress in the doing of good, so much so that he does not only give as much as he receives, but for a little favour he receives, he gives a very great amount in return. But even at this higher level of goodness there is a hidden weakness, and that is that at some time or the other he may reproach someone for favours rendered. For example, a person may be feeding another for ten years, and the recipient may disobey him in a certain matter and he may reproach him thus: "I have been feeding you for ten years and yet you are ungrateful." He thus makes his deed null and void. In truth, in the hearts of the doers of good, there is a hidden

desire for ostentation.

However, the third rank is exempt from all kinds of film and pollution and that is the *ita'i dhil qurba* stage, that is, the giving to the kindred.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 8, p. 313]

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Elsewhere he explains *ihsaan* as doing good even to those who have not done any good to you. He also points out that: **(i)** at this stage there is still a struggle within us between the inviter to good and the inciter to evil and that sometimes good triumphs and at other times evil overcomes us, just as it happens in the second or moral condition of man, and **(ii)** sometimes, too, the reproach is suppressed for a long time but there is the ever-present danger that one day it will involuntarily escape and invalidate our good actions.

Giving to the kindred

The stage of giving to the kindred is a natural condition; that is, when goodness flows from a man as if it were an inherent demand of his nature. For example, look at how a mother nurses and fosters her child. She does not entertain the thought that when the child gets older he will provide for her. In fact, she will rear him so sedulously that even if some king or the other should command her to refrain from suckling him and promise that if the child dies she would not be called to account, she cannot cease nursing her child and not only will she disobey the order but she may very well give the king a few choice words. And that is because fostering her child is a natural obligation and is not based on hope or fear.

In this way, when a man continues making steady progress in righteousness and he reaches the stage where goodness emanates from him as if it were a natural function, then that condition is called *the nafs-e mutma'innah* (the soul at peace).

In short, the meaning of *yuqimunas salaata* (they establish prayer) is that until the soul is not at rest, it will be susceptible to pulling and tugging. Sometimes the lower passions will have the upper hand and sometimes the good impulses will triumph. For example, a person may get up early in the morning and he sees that the water is cold but at the same time he is under an obligation to bathe (before performing prayer). If he listens to his lower self he will forego the prayer, but if he is courageous he will overcome his base passion.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 8, pp. 313-314]

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### **The three categories of believers**

Those who submit to God are, in fact, of three types. First, those who, on account of the obstruction of worldly means, are not able to see God's beneficence clearly, and are not inspired by that eagerness which is generated by an appreciation of the grandeur of Divine beneficence; nor are they moved by the love which is inspired by a concept of the greatness of the Benefactor's favours. They casually acknowledge God Almighty as the Creator, but do not contemplate the details of Divine beneficence which would impress a true concept of the Divine Benefactor upon their minds, inasmuch as the dust of exaggerated regard for material means creates a veil which prevents them from observing the full countenance

of the Creator of the means. They are thus unable to appreciate the full beauty of the Bountiful. Their defective comprehension is confused by their regard for the means, and, as they are not able to estimate duly the bounties of God, they do not pay as much attention to Him as would be generated in their minds by a proper appreciation of His favours. Thus, their comprehension is somewhat misty because they put their trust in their own efforts and in the means that are available to them.

### **Acknowledge Allah as the Creator**

They also acknowledge formally their obligation towards God on account of His being the Creator and the Provider. As God Almighty does not require of anyone that which is beyond the limits of his intellectual capacity, He only requires of them an expression of gratitude for His favours. In the verse, “*Surely Allah enjoins justice*” (16:90), “justice” implies only this kind of obedience. But above this there is another grade of comprehension which is reached when a person, disregarding the means, clearly observes God’s gracious and beneficent hand and emerges completely out of the veils of material means. At that stage, he realizes the futility and falsity of expressions like “I obtained this success through proper irrigation of my fields”; or “I obtained this success through my own efforts”; or “I achieved my purpose through the favour of X”; or “I was saved from ruin by the care of Y.” Rather, he beholds only one Being and one Power and one Benefactor and one Hand. Then he views the favours of God Almighty clearly without the least obstruction resulting from associating means with the Benefactor.

This view is so clear and certain that in his

worship of the true Benefactor he does not contemplate Him as being absent but conceives Him as being present. Such worship is designated by the Holy Qur'an as *ihsaan*. The Holy Prophet (*sas*) has himself attributed this meaning to *ihsaan*, as reported in *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. There is yet another grade above this, which is "*the giving to the kindred.*" It means that when a person continues to view Divine favours, without the association of material means, and worships God conceiving Him to be present and to be the direct Benefactor, he begins to have personal love for God.

### **Acknowledge Allah as the Bountiful**

The continuous contemplation of beneficence necessarily generates in the heart of the beneficiary love for the Benefactor, Whose unlimited favours surround him on all sides. In such a situation he does not worship the Benefactor merely out of an appreciation of His bounties, but out of personal love for Him like the love of an infant for its mother. At this stage he not only views God at the time of his worship but is also filled with delight like a true lover. This is the grade which God Almighty has designated to be like beneficence between kindred, and this is the grade which is indicated in the verse, "... *laud Allah as you lauded your fathers, rather a more hearty lauding,*" which throws light on the verse, "*Surely Allah enjoins justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred.*"

### **Complete submission to the Will of Allah**

Here God Almighty sets out the three grades of comprehension of the Divine. The third grade is that of personal love, at which all personal desires are consumed, and the heart becomes so filled with love as a crystal vial

is filled with perfume. This grade is also referred to in the verse, “*And of men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is Compassionate to the servants*” (2:207).

Again it is said, “*The truly delivered are those who commit themselves wholly to God and, recalling His favours, worship Him as if they behold Him. Such have their reward with God and they have no fear, nor do they grieve*” (2:112).

That is to say, God and His love become their whole purpose, and their reward is Divine favours. At another place it is said: “*And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you, for Allah’s pleasure only — We desire from you neither reward nor thanks*” (76:8-9). These verses show clearly that the Holy Qur’an has described the highest grade of Divine worship and righteous action as that which is inspired by true love of God and sincere seeking of His pleasure.

This excellent teaching, which is set out so clearly in the Holy Qur’an, is not explained with such clarity and detail in the Gospels. God Almighty has designated this religion as Islam, so as to indicate that man should worship God not out of selfish motives, but out of spontaneous eagerness. Islam means discarding all desires and submitting to Divine will. In this world, no religion other than Islam lays down such objectives. There is no doubt that for the demonstration of His mercy God has promised the believers diverse types of bounties; but He has instructed those believers who are eager to achieve the highest grade that they should worship Him out of

spontaneous personal love.

[*Nur-ul-Qur'an*, No. II, *Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 9, pp.437-441]

## Purification of the Inner Self

One of the signs of *nafs-e mutmainnah*, the spirit at rest, is that it finds comfort and peace in the company of those who are themselves at peace. On the other hand, the person whose soul is (at the lower stage) of *ammarah* will display signs of *nafs-e ammarah* – the soul that incites to evil. Moreover, the person who keeps company of those who possess *nafs-e mutmainnah* will also begin to feel a sense of contentment within him, a sense of peace and tranquillity.

### Inner peace

The first reward that is granted to the one who attains the stage of *nafs-e mutmainna* is that he finds comfort in God, as is stated in the Holy Qur'an: "*O soul that art at rest, Return to thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing, so enter among My servants, and enter My Garden!*" (89:27-30).

That is, God, addressing the soul that finds peace and comfort in Him, states: "Come to your Lord - He is pleased with you and you are pleased with Him." There is a very deep point of spiritual wisdom in the statement. The fact is that until a person reaches this stage, and remains in the state of *lawwamah* – the "self-accusing spirit," he is in a kind of "battle" with God—that is to say, at times he is disobedient to God at the behest of the self. However, upon attaining the state of *mutmainnah*, this war comes to an end and there is a truce with God. At that point, when no resentment remains and the war ends, a person becomes contented and pleased with God and God becomes pleased with him.

This point should be well remembered that every person is inclined to show discontentment or complains against God. There are occasions when it so happens that a person prays to God and has great expectations for his desired objective but his prayers go unanswered or something happens that is against his expectations, and then he begins to “fight” with God. He shows ill feeling towards God and displays signs of discontentment with God. However, the pious and the true servants of God are never at war with God because they always submit to the will of God.

The truth is that real faith develops only when people are at a stage that God’s will is their will and there is no resentment or regret in their hearts. On the contrary, they are ready to accept with complete satisfaction whatever God may decree. In the verse, “*Return to thy Lord, well-pleased, well-pleasing*” (89:28), the words point exactly to this. This is the highest state of pleasure and acceptance. At this spiritual station there is no fear of being tried or of faltering. At all other stages there remains the danger of faltering in trial but when one is totally satisfied with God’s will and there does not remain any cause for resentment or complaint, then there awakens the true and real personal love for God. Until such a personal love for God is aroused within, a person’s faith is in a state of great danger. However, when personal love for God develops within, a person attains safety from the attacks of Satan. One should try to attain this personal love (of God) through prayer—until this develops, one remains under the rule of *nafs-e ammarah* and is imprisoned within its clutches.

The people who are under the rule of *nafs-e*

*ammarah* appear to be in a state which is beautifully described in a Punjabi saying: “This world is sweet — who has seen the next?” Such people are in a state of grave danger and so are those who are at the stage of *nafs-e lawwamah* as they are friends of God one minute and the next they are with Satan. They are not of one colour because their battle against the self has begun but it is one in which at times they are victorious and at other times the lower self wins. They are, nevertheless, praiseworthy because they perform good deeds and there is fear of God in their hearts.

However, those possessing *nafs-e mutmainnah*, the spirit at rest, are totally victorious as they are out of all danger and fear, attaining a place of safety and peace. Such people are in the house of peace beyond the reach of Satan. But the one who is at the state of *lawwamah*, however, is at the threshold of the house of peace. Sometimes the enemy succeeds in launching an “offensive” against him and at other times he suffers attack by lesser “weapons.” Thus it is that to the one possessing *nafs-e mutmainnah*, the spirit at rest, is said (by God): “*So enter among My servants, and enter My Garden!*” (89:29-30).

### **Two stages of righteousness**

This voice comes at a time when a human being observes perfect *taqwa*, that is, righteousness, to its ultimate limit. *Taqwa*, or righteousness, has two stages. The first stage is safeguarding of oneself against sins and occupying oneself with the performance of good deeds, and the second state is to attain the station of those who are beneficent in their goodness. God will not be pleased unless this second station is achieved and this station

cannot be achieved without the Grace of God.

When a person abstains from bad deeds and his heart yearns to do good and he supplicates before God to this end, then it is that God assists him through His Grace and holds the hand of such a person and takes him to the house of safety and peace. It is then that he hears the voice that says: “*So enter among My servants, and enter My Garden!*” (89:29-30). That is to say, “your battle has come to an end and you are now reconciled and at peace with Me. Come and enter the fold of My faithful servants, the fold of those who are granted a share of the spiritual inheritance and who exemplify the verse, ‘*The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours*’ (1:6).” The verse, “... *enter My Garden*” (89:30), is not, as is commonly understood, applicable only after death – it is a voice that is heard in this life also.

For those who undertake the journey in search of God, there are different stages. The ultimate stage, the final destination of their spiritual journey, the point where their efforts spontaneously submit to the will of Allah and it is called the stage of *nafs-e mutmainnah*, that is, the spirit at rest. At this stage the Almighty God removes all the difficulties and bestows upon them the blessing of entry into the fold of the *saliheen*, the pious, as stated in the Holy Qur’an: “*And those who believe and do good*” (29:9). That is, those who believe and perform good deeds, shall most certainly enter the fold of the *saliheen*, the truly pious and righteous.

With regard to this point some people raise the objection that those who do good deeds are *saliheen* so what is meant by allowing them entry into the fold of the

*saliheen*? The reality is that herein lies a very deep and subtle point which is that God describes capacities as being of two kinds.

One kind of capacity is that of a person who, after a great deal of effort, carries the burden of goodness—he performs good deeds but he finds it to be arduous and a burden upon his soul and inwardly there continues a struggle between him and his soul. When he opposes the wishes of his inner self, it causes him considerable pain and suffering. However, when he acts piously and does good and believes in God, as is the desired objective of this verse, then all difficulties and suffering disappear. The difficulties that he was trying to overcome in his striving for righteous deeds are lifted and there develops within him a natural capacity for doing good. Goodness comes to form an integral part of his physical and mental capacities in such a way that good deeds emanate from him of their own accord. At this point the difficulty and pain he suffered previously in trying to do good deeds, cease to be difficulties or suffering. Instead, he begins to perform good deeds with a sense of deep enjoyment and pleasure.

Between the two kinds of *taqwa* or righteousness this is the difference – in the first kind, good deeds are performed but these are performed as an arduous task and in the other kind of *taqwa*, good deeds are performed with a sense of intense pleasure and enjoyment to such an extent that goodness becomes a source of “nourishment” without which he cannot live. The previous element of formality and a sense of suffering in the performance of good deeds is now transformed into interest, enjoyment, and pleasure. This is the station of the *saliheen*, the truly

righteous and pious, about which it is stated: “*We shall surely make them enter among the righteous*” (29:9).

Upon attainment of this stage, there remains no rebellion or resentment within a believer. Such a believer becomes secure against any inclination of the self towards disobedience and, having conquered his emotions and attained contentment, he enters the house of peace and security.

In the verse that follows, (God states): “*And among men is he who says: We believe in Allah; but when he is persecuted for the sake of Allah, he thinks the persecution of men to be as the chastisement of Allah*” (29:10). That is, there are many who make verbal promises of faith and make exaggerated statements about the extent and intent of their beliefs, but when they are put to trial, the reality of their faith is exposed. At the time of trial and hardship their faith in God does not remain the same and they begin to complain—it is this that is referred to as the “punishment of God”.

Deprived indeed are those who do not attain the status of the *saliheen*, the truly righteous and pious. It is so because this is that state when a human being sees for himself the fruits of the different stages of faith and he can witness and feel the effect of this upon his own self and, consequently, a new life is granted to him. However, this new life first demands a death, and such reward and blessing is linked to trials and tribulations. Remember this well that great blessing always comes with great trial and tribulation and such trial is a necessary condition for a true believer, as is stated: “*Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and will not be tried?*”

(29:2).

That is, do people have the notion that their verbal declaration of faith by itself should be sufficient and, consequently, they will not be tried? On the contrary, for the test of his faith, the believer has to enter a most dangerous “fire” of tribulations from which he is saved by his faith and comes out of it safe and sound—the “fire” having been transformed into a “bed of flowers”. After becoming a believer, one should never consider oneself to be free from trials. Indeed, in the face of trials, there is need for ever greater steadfastness. In reality, a true believer is he who at the time of tribulation finds his faith to be even sweeter and more enjoyable. His faith in God’s powers and in God’s ability to manifest wonderful signs becomes even stronger and he turns to God with ever greater attention than before and, through supplication, seeks victory over his trials and success in being accepted by God. It is a regrettable fact that a human being should desire a high station and a high status and yet should seek to escape the difficulties that are essential for their attainment.

### **Trials and tribulations**

The point that trials and tribulations are a condition of faith needs to be stressed and should be remembered well. Without it faith is not complete and no great bounty can be achieved without trial. In the world it is a common rule that for the acquisition of material things of luxury and enjoyment, one has to exert great effort and undergo all manner of difficulties, expending great energy. It is only after a long struggle that a person may find success and even then it is dependent upon the Grace of God as to whether he actually succeeds in acquiring that which he

seeks. How then can it be possible that the greatest and unparalleled treasure of all, that is, Allah the Almighty, can be attained without any trial?

In short, he who desires that he should attain God should be prepared for every trial. It is the case that when God establishes a new system, as is being done at the present time, the people who enter it at its beginning are made to suffer all manner of hardships. They have to listen to verbal abuse and threats from all sides. One group hurls one type of abuse and another group tries to hurt them with some other kind of abusive language combined with threats of expulsion from their own place of abode. If they are employees, they are threatened with loss of their employment and, if it is feasible for them, they do not hesitate to take their lives.

At such times, those who show weakness in the face of trial should remember that the belief they claim to hold has no worth whatsoever in the eyes of God. This is so because at the time of trial such a person does not fear God, but fears other human beings and he does not respect the greatness and omnipotence of God Almighty. He does not, in fact, have any belief at all because he gives precedence to threats over his faith and is ready to abandon his belief. Consequently, he is deprived from entry into the fold of the *saliheen*, the truly righteous. This is the summary and meaning of the verse: “*And among men is he who says: We believe in Allah; but when he is persecuted for the sake of Allah, he thinks the persecution of men to be as the chastisement of Allah*” (29:10).

Our Community should remember that unless they

abandon weakness in the face of trials and unless they are prepared for all adversity in the path of God with steadfastness and courage, the Community cannot enter the fold of the *saliheen*. You have, at this time, forged a link with the movement established by God. It is necessary therefore that you should be made to suffer and face tribulation. You will have to listen to abuse; you will face threats of excommunication from the circle of your kinship. In short, you will be made to suffer all that the opponents can possibly muster. You should try to face successfully every challenge posed by trial and tribulation and to achieve this you should seek the help of God Almighty. If you were to do all this, I can state with complete certainty that you shall then, having entered the fold of the *saliheen*, attain the most great and glorious treasure that is God Almighty and, having surmounted all difficulties, you shall enter *Darul Aman*, the House of Peace.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 6, pp. 249-255]

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The true discernment

The human soul is of three types: *ammarah*, the self that incites to evil, *lawwamah*, the self-accusing spirit, and *mutma'innah*, the soul at rest. One level of *mutma'innah* is called *nafs-e zakiyyah*, the pure or innocent soul.

Nafs-e zakiyyah is the soul of children and of people who have not been touched by the false desires of the world and, being unaware of the “ups and downs” of worldly desires, they move on a level surface. *Nafs-e ammarah*, the soul that incites to evil, on the other hand, is that state of the self when it is influenced by worldly

desires. Whereas *nafs-e lawwamah*, the self-accusing spirit, is the state of realisation when there develops a concern to avoid stumbling by making an effort with prayer to safeguard oneself against evil. A person at this stage of spiritual development gains an awareness of his shortcomings. *Nafs-e mutma'innah*, the spirit at rest, is that state when, by the Grace of God, a person is granted the power and strength to safeguard himself against weaknesses and shortcomings and he finds himself protected against all manner of tribulations. Moreover, there is deep satisfaction in his heart and a calmness that leaves no trace of anguish or agitation.

Mind, heart and tongue as the controlling factors

God has placed within a human being three types of controlling factors: the mind, the heart, and the tongue. The mind uses reasoning and intelligence and its job is to be occupied at all times in formulating ideas and forming ever new thoughts, explanations and arguments. The mind has been assigned the duty of assessing the results and conclusions of various formulations. The heart, on the other hand, is the king of the whole being of man. It does not use arguments and proofs because it has a link with the King of Kings – that is why it is sometimes informed with a clear and evident revelation and sometimes with a secret or hidden revelation. Another way of stating this is to say that the mind is a “Minister”. Ministers are statesmen and that is why the mind is occupied in formulating ideas and schemes as well as the means and consequences. The heart has no business with that. Within the heart God has created the power of instinct just as an ant manages to reach exactly the place where there is something sweet. The ant does not have any proof of the fact that there is something sweet at a

certain place. It reaches there because God has provided it with the instinct that guides it. In this sense the heart shares a similarity with the ant because it, too, has an instinctive sense within it that guides it and that does not depend upon proofs, arguments, conclusions and results. However, it is another matter that the mind is able to and does provide such proofs for the “heart.”

One meaning of the heart is apparent and physical. The other meaning of the heart is spiritual. The literal, meaning of the word *qalb* (Arabic for heart) is that which moves around or returns. As the heart is the source of the circulation of blood in the body, that is why it is called *qalb*. In the spiritual sense, its meaning is that the progress that a human being wishes to achieve is also based around the heart. Just as the circulation of blood which is crucial for sustaining human life originates from the heart, so the spiritual progress is dependent upon the spiritual heart.

Some ignorant people, including some of today's philosophers who place the mind at the centre of all the best activity, do not know that the mind is only the seat of the cognitive powers of reasoning and argument. The power of thought and memory is in the mind but there is an aspect of the “heart” that makes it the ultimate sovereign. The activity of the mind has a contrived element about it which is not there in the case of the “heart”. That is why the “heart” bears a resemblance to *Rabb-ul-Arsh*, God of the Heavenly Throne. It is able to recognise spiritual truths without proofs and arguments, just with its instinctive powers. That is why it is stated in a *hadith* of the Holy Prophet (*sas*), *Istafih qalbaka*, that is, ask your heart for a verdict. It does not say “ask your

mind for a verdict.”

It is to the “heart” that the “wire” of God is linked and no one should consider this a far-fetched idea. It is, indeed, difficult and abstruse but those who purify themselves know that the heart does possess such noble qualities. If the heart did not possess such qualities, then the very existence of the human being would have been considered useless.

The Sufis and those who carry out spiritual exercises know this well that the heart has been seen as giving out light in the form of pillars of light that reach towards the skies in a straight line. This issue is certain and well-witnessed. I cannot here state specific examples but those who have to undertake such exercises or those who have wished to journey through the different stages of *salook*, mystic initiation, have found this to be true according to their experiences. It is as if there is a fine “wire” connecting ‘*Arsh* and *qalb*, linking the Divine Throne and the spiritual heart. The *qalb* finds pleasure in the commands it receives from God – it is not dependent upon external proofs and evidence. It becomes a *mulham*, one who is a recipient of divine revelation, and internally converses with God and forms verdicts.

However, it is true that for as long as the heart remains only a heart, it becomes a proof of the condition illustrated in the verse of the Holy Qur'an, “*Had we but listened or pondered, we should not have been among the inmates of the burning Fire*” (67:10). That is, there is a time when a human being does not possess the powers of heart and mind. Then there comes a time when the mind develops its powers and faculties and then a time comes

when the *qalb* becomes engulfed by light – a light bursts forth and it is illuminated. When the time comes for the “heart” to come to the fore, the human being attains spiritual maturity and the “heart” rules over the mind. At that stage, the powers of the mind do not have supremacy over the “heart”.

It should be noted that the different states of the mind are not specific to the believers alone. Hindus and others all use the mind alike. Those who are involved in worldly affairs and in trade and business all use the powers of the mind and their mental faculties are developed to the fullest. Every day new ideas and inventions are made to further their affairs. In Europe and the New World you can see how well they use their mental capacities and how frequently and how many new inventions they make. However, it is when the work of the *qalb* is carried out that a person becomes God's. It is at that time that all inner powers of rule and control become non-existent and come under the power and rule of the “heart” which attains a firm control, power and strength. It is at such a stage that a human being becomes a complete human being. This is the time when he becomes a living proof of the verse of the Holy Qur'an where God states, “*So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down making obeisance to him*” (15:29).

At that time he becomes a new human being. His soul is filled with pleasure and joy. It should be remembered that this pleasure does not resemble the carnal pleasure of an adulterer, nor does it resemble the enjoyment of an avid listener of beautiful singing. No, it does not resemble any such thing and one should not be

deceived by this. The pleasure of the soul is attained when a person's being begins to melt and flow like water at the thought of and at the fear and awe of God. It is at this stage that he becomes the *Kalimah*, that is, “the word” and the essence of this verse begins to work within him: “*His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it, Be, and it is*” (36:82).

Similitudes of spiritual heights attained

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah, Most High, has given two similitudes of a believer. One example is Pharaoh’s wife, who seeks refuge in the Almighty from a tyrannical and unbelieving husband. This model pertains to those believers who are prone to yield to their base emotions and are entangled in errors. They evince great regret and remorse, make constant repentance and seek the protection of Allah, Most High. Like Pharaoh’s wife, their animal passions constrict their soul. They are at the second stage of spiritual development – that of the *nafs-e lawwamah*, that is, their conscience upbraids them when they regress to the primitive level of behaviour – the *nafs-e ammarah*, that is, the first or animal stage where the inner self commands evil. At this second stage, the believer is continuously striving to escape the commission of evil deeds.

The next class of believers is the one who has advanced to a much higher level. The believers in this category are concerned not only with avoiding evil but are actively engaged in doing righteous deeds. Their example has been given as that of Lady Maryam of whom the Holy Qur’an says: “*And Mary, the daughter of Amran, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into him of Our*

inspiration, and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His Books, and she was of the obedient ones” (66:12).

The example of the righteous given in this parable illustrates how divine inspiration is granted to perfect ones. The words, “We breathed into *him* of our inspiration” are remarkable. Evidently the word *him* (Arabic, *hi*) cannot refer to Hazrat Maryam.

Every believer who has reached the highest level of righteousness and purity is a Lady Maryam in the form of a *barooz*, that is, a manifestation in whom Allah, Most High, infuses His spirit whereby he becomes, as it were, Lady Maryam.

Thus, this verse indicates that in every believer who attains perfect faith, Allah, Most High, infuses His spirit. And it further contains a prophecy that in this community (*ummah*) of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) the son of Lady Maryam will be born.

It is indeed astonishing that people name their sons after the prophets of the Almighty like, for example, Muhammad, Jesus, Moses, Jacob, Isaac, Ishmael and Abraham and they consider it lawful to do so. Yet, on the other hand, they regard it as unlawful for Allah, Most High, to name someone son of Maryam (*ibn-i Maryam*).
[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 2, pp. 317-318, old edition]

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### **Spiritual mantel is bestowed as Divine grace**

From the word of the Almighty it is quite clear that a

*muttaqi* (or a righteous person) is one who conducts himself with forbearance and meekness and whose speech is not tainted with pride or arrogance. Instead, his manner of speaking is like that of a subordinate to his superior.

We should always try to behave in such a way that will bring prosperity and success to us. Remember, Allah, Most High, is not the lease-holder of anyone. On the contrary, He is interested in nothing but *taqwa* (righteousness). Neither Prophet Abraham (*as*) nor Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) attained his lofty station as an inheritance from his forebears. Although we believe that the Holy Prophet's father, Majid Abdullah, was not a polytheist, yet he did not confer prophethood on his son, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*). As a matter of fact, prophethood came purely as a grace from Allah, Most High. His purity and sincerity which were inborn qualities of his were inspired by Divine favour.

On account of his truthfulness and righteousness, Prophet Abraham (*as*), the father of prophets, was not reluctant to sacrifice his son. He, himself, was thrown into a fire. Take a look also at the genuine faithfulness of our Holy Prophet (*sas*). He had to confront every kind of hostile plot against him. Trials and calamities dogged his every footstep, yet he paid no heed to them. It is for these qualities of truth and sincerity that Allah, Most High, bestowed untold bounties and favours on him and Himself commanded in the Holy Qur'an: "*Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, call for blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation*" (33:56).

It is evident from this verse that so noble were the

deeds of the Holy Prophet (*sas*) that Allah, Most High, did not use any specific words to praise him or to describe his praiseworthy qualities. Of course, words could have been found to do so but the Almighty did not choose to use any restrictive words to delineate his character. That was so because praise of his righteous deeds was beyond the confines of verbal restriction. No other verse like this was used to portray the personality of any other prophet. Such purity and faithfulness suffused his soul and so beloved were his deeds in the sight of the Almighty that He gave this command for all times so that future generations would send blessings (*darood*) to the Holy Prophet (*sas*) as a form of thanksgiving.

So stupendous was his courage and so genuine his honesty that even if we search the heavens and the earth we cannot find one like him. As a form of comparison we can examine the Age of the Messiah, Prophet Jesus (*as*), and observe how much of an effect his bravery or his spiritual purity and faithfulness had on his disciples.

Everyone can readily understand how difficult it is to change the attitude and conduct of an ill-behaved person. We all know that it is well nigh impossible to alter firmly-entrenched habits of thought and behaviour. Nevertheless, in the face of all that, our Holy Prophet (*sas*) was able to transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and make them upright and God-fearing citizens – people who were formerly worse than beasts and so depraved that many, just like animals, could not differentiate between their mothers and daughters in their sexual perversion; further, they embezzled the wealth of orphans and stole the property of the dead; many were worshippers of the stars and other elements of

nature whilst others were diehard atheists. What was the peninsula of Arabia like at that time? It contained a conglomeration of diverse religions. However, with the pure revelation of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (*sas*) was able to eradicate all false tenets and to elevate a barbarous nation to the dazzling heights of material and spiritual resplendence.

[*Malfuzaat*, vol. 1, pp. 37-38]

## What is the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement?

It is a Muslim movement based in Lahore (Pakistan), working since 1914 to present Islam as *tolerant, rational, progressive, compassionate, peace-loving* and *highly spiritual*. This is the Islam of the Quran, illustrated in practice by the Prophet Muhammad — so vastly different from its common image.

The Lahore Ahmadiyya organization was established by some leading followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908), Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, six years after his death. An internal danger had arisen which altered the original aims and beliefs of the Movement as set by the Founder. In response they created a new body, headed by Maulana Muhammad Ali (d. 1951), known as the *Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i Islam Lahore* to continue and preserve the real mission of the Founder.

This Movement went on to produce world renowned literature on Islam which it disseminated widely, and to run some highly-respected Muslim missions.

The key beliefs of the Movement are:

- The Holy Prophet Muhammad was the Last and Final Prophet, after whom no prophet can come, new or old.
- All those who profess Islam by the *Kalimah Shahada* are Muslims and cannot be expelled from its

fold by anyone.

- We must present Islam to the world peacefully and lovingly, while living in harmony with all other people.

## The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement stands for

**Spiritual:** It is a *spiritual* movement in that it believes spiritual experiences to be actual, objective realities, and it stresses the necessity of man attaining nearness to God.

**Rational:** Yet it is also a *rational* movement which applies the test of reason in understanding belief. It does not accept blind, unthinking belief nor accounts of 'miracles' and supernatural occurrences when these are mere stories without evidence and any deeper lesson.

**Liberal:** It is a *liberal* movement in the interpretation of Islamic teachings and law, but it derives its liberal stance from the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) themselves and firmly believes in totally adhering to their injunctions.

**Modern:** It is a *modern* movement in that it believes that Muslims must accept all the good that the modern world has to offer and adjust to the new times, not retreat into a closed world of their own. Yet it also preaches most emphatically that the modern world cannot survive unless it accepts Islamic principles for its moral and spiritual development.

**Peaceful:** It is a *peaceful* movement which proclaims that violence in the name of religion is prohibited by Islam.

**Passionate:** It believes *passionately* in refuting the false portrayal of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sas*) and Islam by their anti-Islamic critics, but it equally believes that

this must be done *only by word and argument, not by rage and threats of violence.*

**Tolerant:** It is a *tolerant* movement, which believes that Islam allows full freedom of thought, belief, religion and expression to all, to non-Muslims as well as to those within its fold; and it believes in developing dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Muslims and others, as well as among different Muslim sects. At the same time, the Movement strives to the utmost to convince others that the truth, in its whole form, is to be found in *Islam only*, and that the mission of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the most effective and appropriate way for the progress of Islam in this age.

Today, one full century after the death of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a Muslim movement with *these qualities is exactly what is required for the right progress of Muslims in the world* and for establishing peace and harmony on earth between Muslims and people of other faiths and nations.