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January 28, 1921

Islam's Prime Objective is to Create Sympathy and Love for Mankind

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا
نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْبِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا
تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ①

O you who believe, let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better than they; nor let women (laugh) at women, perchance they may be better than they. Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoso turns not, these it is that are the iniquitous. (49:11)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا
تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ
مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

O you who believe, avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and spy not nor let some of you back-bite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it! And keep your duty to Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. (49:12)

Deeds that Lead to Development of National Character

I have recited these verses of the Holy Quran from the second section of Chapter *Al-Hujurat*. In these verses, Allah the Most High has guided the Muslim nation toward deeds that lead to the development of their national character. The Holy Quran and Holy Prophet Muhammad have the unique distinction of giving guidance through comprehensive teachings, which address all aspects of human moral development. The breadth of this guidance extends from the most trivial to that of the highest order needed for development of human character. These directions are found in the Holy Quran and manifested by the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

The verses I have recited mention human behaviors that upon cursory examination may appear to be of minor importance.

The Holy Quran states:

“...let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better than they. Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names ... and whoso turns not, these it is that are the iniquitous.” (49:11)

These shortcomings, though appearing to be trivial in nature, in fact set the standard for reformation of the Muslim nation.

What, may we ask, is the Divine purpose behind these Quranic injunctions?

Promotion of Universal Brotherhood

In my observation, it is a unique characteristic of the Holy Quran that whenever there appears to be no connection between its two sections or two chapters, perusal of the preceding and closing verses of each clearly defines the link.

This objective is outlined in the preceding and following verses i.e. 49:10 and 49:13.

The preceding verse in this case states: “The believers are brethren so make peace between your brethren, and keep your duty to Allah that mercy may be had on you” (49:10).

Thus, in this particular instance in the verse (49:10) preceding this section, reformation within the community of believers is mentioned. The objective of the subsequent section (49:11-12) is also to further that goal by the establishment of a brotherhood whereby all causes of discord are uprooted.

From the verse that follows (49:13) we can further infer the purpose of all these commandments.

The Holy Quran states: “O mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware” (49:13).

In the beginning of this chapter, believers are specifically addressed with the words, “O you who believe.” The words used in this verse are, “O mankind.” This clearly proves that the intent of the Holy Quran is to create a universal brotherhood based on relations of mutual sympathy and love amongst all people.

Compassion Amongst the Human Race

In order to promote feelings of compassion amongst the human race, the Holy Quran has many prohibitions, that on the surface appear to be unacceptable.

For example, usury has been prohibited for Muslims. This raises the question: 'Since everybody invests money with the intent of making a profit, why is it that the one who lends money should not earn a profit on the money he invests?' The reason why usury was prohibited was because it led to the breakup of relations of mutual empathy amongst members of society.

There is no doubt that in the case of some individuals, usury may not have an apparent bad influence on their behavior. This is because every inequity does not necessarily have dire consequences, but it certainly leaves behind a harmful effect that may not be immediately perceived. To understand this, one should observe the cumulative impact of evil actions. For example, one cannot see an impression on a rupee note if it passes through the hands of one individual; but if the same rupee passes through a hundred thousand hands, it becomes obviously worn out and faded. In fact, every hand that touched it left its mark upon it, the full effect becoming obvious only after it has passed through a hundred thousand hands. Similarly, the consequence of an evil action is not perceived the first time, in most instances. When, however, the evil deeds exceed their limits, their results become quite apparent.

Those who have observed habitual consumers of usury know that such individuals not only lack love and sympathy for others, but are also unwilling to spend even for the sake of their wives and children. They hold money more dear than their own lives and many times this love reaches a state of insanity. This is why, regarding such behavior, the Holy Quran states, "whom the devil makes mad (or prostrates) by (his) touch" (2:275). In other words, love of wealth affects their mental and spiritual faculties.

Similarly, in order to preserve community relationships and empathy within society, the Holy Quran prohibits alcohol, gambling, and lottery etc. for Muslims in the following words:

“The devil desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you then keep back?” (5:91).

Now if we return to the subject matter of the verses under discussion, it becomes quite apparent that laughing at people, finding fault with them and calling them nick-names are behavior patterns that fracture ties of love, compassion, and fraternity amongst people. As a result, malice, rancor, and enmity are nurtured in their hearts.

Our attention is then drawn to further shortcomings of human character in the following words, “O you who believe, avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and spy not nor let some of you back-bite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it! And keep your duty to Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful” (49:12).

Six Prohibitions that Promote National Character

Muslims are enjoined six prohibitions in these two verses, all of which can cause a breach in relationships of love and sympathy amongst them. Whenever a nation or a society gets involved in name-calling, backbiting, suspicion, and spying on its own members, the consequences are uprooting of mutual love and compassion. Since the goal of the Holy Quran is to promote empathy and compassion it prohibits behaviors that jeopardize these virtues in a society. These infractions may appear to be minor, but like the seed of a plant, the seed of evil may also appear to be small and insignificant. The objective of the Holy Quran is to remove evil practices from a society. It therefore uproots the seed of evil before it gets implanted by not ignoring

even those that appear to be minor. To make the nation productive it was essential to curtail such habits and prevent the waste of energy and resources of its individual members.

The moral condition of Muslims in this day and age is such that they squander much of their valuable time in speaking ill of each other, name-calling, and backbiting. When friends gather together they often waste their time in such idle gossip. When questioned about prayers and the study of the Holy Quran, they come up with the excuse of not having time for these activities. They do not have time to spend in the service of God but can certainly find enough time to spend in such frivolous pursuits!

The Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet have prohibited Muslims from back-biting, fault-finding, and calling each other names.

The first injunction in these verses is: "let not people laugh (*yas-khar*) at people." The Arabic word *yas-khar* means humiliating someone.

The second injunction is: "Neither find fault (*tal-mizu*) with your own people." The root word in Arabic *lumuz* means to present someone's good deed in a disparaging manner.

We find this behavior described and explained further in another verse of the Holy Quran:

"Those who taunt (*talmizuna*) the free givers of alms among the believers as well as those who cannot find anything (to give) but with their hard labour — they scoff at them. Allah will pay them back their mockery; and for them is a painful chastisement" (9:79).

Thus the fault-finders deride actions of those who, when asked to give alms, give away all they have by calling it pretentious behavior. They also ridicule the poor who have nothing to give except their hard labor by labeling their efforts as an attempt to seek martyrdom (i.e. trying to acquire elite spiritual status through meager sacrifice).

The third prohibition is: “nor call one another by nick-names.”

In the days of ignorance, Arabs would give and call others by nick-names, which were offensive to the recipients. Their intention was to humiliate.

Such practices cause discord amongst nations, lead to the break-up of loving relationships, and foment hatefulness and deprecation amongst people.

Do not laugh at people, nor taunt them, nor call them by nick-names; all these are meant to humiliate people. I advise you to avoid these practices.

The three other prohibitions do not carry a sense of ridicule but do lead to the breakup of fraternal relations, hence the prohibition.

The first of these is: “avoid most of suspicion.” This means suspecting others of evil intent or behavior without due cause.

For example, if someone is observed going out at night, to make a presumption that he is certainly going out to have a drink or commit some other evil act, would fall into the category to be avoided.

The second prohibition in this class is: “and spy not.” This means purposefully looking into others affairs with the intent to discover their weaknesses and shortcomings.

The third injunction is, “nor let some of you back-bite others.” This means not to speak of your brother’s shortcomings or their misdeeds in their absence.

The Holy Quran asks us “Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?” The habit of backbiting is thus compared to eating the flesh of one’s dead brother, which would be an extremely abhorrent act. Alas! People avoid eating carrion but do not feel any moral inhibition in backbiting. A person’s shortcoming, or weakness, resembles his dead meat or carrion, because

he is not able to defend himself. Thus by correlating a spiritually offensive act to a physically abhorrent one, light has been shed on the true nature of backbiting. All these behavior patterns may appear to be insignificant, but when they are repeatedly practiced, they have a devastating effect. They sap away the strength of a nation or community and nurture feelings of malice amongst its members.

Opposition of the Promised Messiah

Whenever a man of God stands up to carry out a task, instead of being helped, he is subjected to taunts, humiliation and hostile criticism.

The Promised Messiah, in the beginning, was opposed by some good people, but when they understood his claims they readily accepted him. Thus investigating an issue or opposing it is not necessarily bad, but using it as pretence for faultfinding and vilification of a person is extremely evil. Spying with such intent is prohibited. If someone has a shortcoming, mentioning it behind his back is prohibited. If, on the other hand, that shortcoming is totally nonexistent, then its prohibition carries an even greater degree of priority.

Talking about someone's weakness behind his back is likened to consuming the carrion of one's dead brother. In other words, you find him in a weak and vulnerable state, unable to defend himself. Just as everyone finds it repugnant to consume the carrion of his dead brother, I urge you to abhor backbiting with the same degree of distaste.

Those who oppose us are in the habit of humiliating Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The leader of this opposition currently is Maulvi Sanaullah. None of his lectures is without humiliating and disparaging comments about Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Perhaps he does not recall these words of the Holy Quran: "let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better

than they.” Those who listen to him are also pleased with his talk, not realizing that in fact they are opposing the word of the Holy Quran. It has always been the way of this world. Some people get involved in the task at hand while others pursue the route of calumny and criticism. In the beginning, when Khawaja Kamal-ud-din¹ started the work of propagation in England, some *maulvi*² formed an organization with the sole intent of going to every corner of the city to deride his work and find fault with it. He was carrying out the great and noble task of propagation of the religion while it fell to the lot of these *maulavis* to find fault with it. Such activities were initially accompanied with much enthusiasm. Decisions were made and resolutions passed, but bringing them to fruition is a different matter, remaining unaccomplished. Instead of helping the work, they make it their call of duty to carp.

This type of behavior is not admirable; therefore I advise my friends to refrain from it. There is no harm in informing someone of their mistakes. No matter how humble your position might be you should inform your superiors about their mistakes; this is your duty. What is incorrect is spying on others with the intent to discover their weaknesses and recounting them behind their backs. No task in this world can make progress unless it is assigned to specific people. It is the job of the rest to help them with their wealth or other God-given faculties and strengths. Those who perform these tasks can make mistakes. There is no harm in pointing out their mistakes as they are duty bound to pay heed and take corrective action. It is certainly not for others that, instead of helping them with the work, they start finding fault with them and make this carping and vilifying the pastime of their social gatherings. Nor should they leave everything aside and spend all their time in spying on those who are doing the work. What would be the consequences of these behaviors? Those who are working may get disheartened and leave the

1. Founder of the Woking Muslim Mission Woking England

2. Term used for a religious scholar in Islamic literature.

work aside. We should abstain from all of these undertakings and genuinely strive to follow the path of Islam, the example of the Holy Prophet, and his revered companions.

Remember the words of the first sermon given by Hazrat Abu Bakr when he was chosen Caliph:¹ “Help me if I am in the right. Set me right if I am wrong!” So for every person who is assigned a task, if you find some shortcoming in his performance, let them know about it. This does not imply that you should spend all your time criticizing and spying on him. If he does not correct the mistake you have pointed out, you should not become suspicious of him and completely lose trust in him.

After the death of the Holy Prophet, all the tribes started to find fault with each other and a huge rift was created. Hazrat Abu Bakr’s first act on his accession to the Caliphate was the dispatching of Usamah’s army to the Syrian frontier. Orders for the expedition had been given by the Holy Prophet himself before he fell ill. The Companions approached the Caliph seeking to have him withdraw his orders. To deprive Madinah of the protection of the army, they argued, might tempt the insurgents to fall upon the capital itself and put an end to the Caliphate. “Who am I to withhold the army that the Prophet of God himself ordered to proceed!” was the firm reply of the Caliph. “Come what may,” he said, “Madinah may stand or fall, the Caliphate may live or die, but the Prophet’s words must be fulfilled.” The Companions listened to his advice and withdrew their opposition though his decision appeared to them to be a mistake.

I admonish you that pointing out a mistake or a shortcoming is an appropriate course of action but forming committees for this purpose and making them a subject of social gossip leads to hatefulness and malice. Abandon such practices in order to nurture the ties of sympathy and love amongst yourselves.

3. See *Early Caliphate* by Maulana Muhammad Ali

February 4, 1921

Wealth and Children: A Means of Trial — Spending in the Way of Allah, Leads to Success in the Hereafter

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُواهُمْ وَ
إِنْ تَعْفُوا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

“O you who believe, surely of your wives and your children there are enemies to you, so beware of them. And if you pardon and forbear and forgive, surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful. (64:14)

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَآجْرٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

Your wealth and your children are only a trial, and Allah — with Him is a great reward. (64:15)

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ
وَمَنْ يُؤْتِكُمْ شَيْخًا نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

So keep your duty to Allah as much as you can, and hear

and obey and spend; it is better for your souls. And whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are successful. (64:16)

إِنْ تَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضْعِفُهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ
حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

If you set apart for Allah a goodly portion, He will double it for you and forgive you. And Allah is the Multiplier (of rewards), Forbearing. (64:17)

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Wise.” (64:18)

Family Ties and Wealth: a Source of Trials and Tribulations

In these verses, Allah makes believers aware that they have adversaries from amongst their wives and children, so that they may take precautions against them. They are told that if they forgive and forbear in this matter, Allah is also Forgiving and Merciful. Further on it is stated that their wealth and children are a means of trial and if they remain steadfast in this matter, they will receive a great reward with Allah.

The love that a man has for his children and the bond of love that he shares with his wife is not found in his other relationships. He strives hard night and day for their love and welfare. Allah, however, cautions that some of them can be his adversaries and one must be vigilant towards them. This prompts the question that if this is the case, how can a person function in his own home? Moreover, Allah has commanded believers, regarding their wives: “And treat them kindly” (4:19). If one considers them enemies, how can one follow this injunction and at the same time act equitably in one’s own home? This is a valid objection. Allah’s command is certainly correct. One explanation of this ap-

parent dichotomy is that the Quran states, “surely of your wives,” referring only to a specific group among them — it is not making a generalization. For example, some wives may be willing to poison their husbands and take their lives or are dishonest in their dealings with them, as is the case with some husbands who may also be evil toward their wives.

On the other hand, all believers are enjoined to take this precaution. If we carefully study the Quran, we find that while it certainly teaches us to be kind and merciful to our spouses, nowhere does it tell us to also love them. The reason for this is that the Holy Quran was revealed as a treatment for our spiritual illnesses and moral shortcomings.

Holy Quran Addresses only Our Spiritual Deficiencies

If a deficiency does not exist, then no treatment is needed or prescribed. An illustration of this is the deep bond of affection that exists amongst parents for their offspring. It is clearly demonstrated in people who have awareness of their actions; but at an instinctual level we find this bond of love for offspring manifested amongst other animals. Just as a husband works hard to feed his family, so does a mother hen. Upon finding a morsel of food, rather than consuming it, she will allow her chicks to eat it. Similarly, a bird carries a seed or a worm in its mouth to feed its babies instead of satisfying its own hunger. Since every animal, including man, has this natural instinct of love towards its offspring, the Holy Quran has not specifically commanded us in this matter. This natural love could, however, exceed the proper limits and in an exaggerated form become harmful for our spiritual wellbeing; therefore remedial injunctions regarding this matter were necessary.

Love of one’s children and spouse can sometimes lead to great evil. For the sake of their love and in expectation of their future benefit, a man can accept bribes, steal, or participate in other illegal activities. In order to remedy this type of behavior,

the Holy Quran warns us: "Surely of your wives and children there are enemies to you, so beware of them." Excessiveness in the manifestation of love for his wife and children can be harmful for the spiritual well being of an individual; therefore those excesses are called his enemies. In reality, your wife and your children are not your enemies, for you have been commanded to treat them kindly and mercifully and fulfill their rights and needs. This would not have been the case if they were in fact your adversaries. Although these relationships are meant for our benefit, by following a wrong course of action, one changes a beneficial relationship into an adversarial one. Therefore man is cautioned against such behavior.

Path of Extremism

In the fulfillment of human rights, people frequently undertake a path of excess or fall short of their obligations. Some simply do not fulfill the rights of others. Others do so excessively, overlooking what is right or wrong. This is why Muslims are enjoined to pray, "Guide us on the right path," the path of those who follow a moderate course thereby avoiding excess and exaggeration on the one hand or falling short of duty on the other.

Since love for one's spouse and offspring is a natural condition, it has not been mentioned specifically in the Holy Quran. The pitfall of exceeding the limits in this matter was, however pointed out and the appropriate remedy shown so that you may not corrupt your morals and be held accountable in the Hereafter for following the wrong course of action. Whatever causes you grief and loss, and affects your spiritual development is thus identified as your enemy. Your spouse and children are not literally your enemies, but what you do as a consequence of unbounded love for them can be harmful to you, therefore these errant actions are called your enemies. You are thus advised to "beware of them," and hence save yourself from such destructive behavior. After this you are informed, "And if you pardon and forbear and forgive, surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

If they were literally your enemies, why are we commanded to forbear and forgive? This is because the statement, “surely of your wives and your children there are enemies to you,” raises doubt that this is a generalized statement. The injunction is therefore given to pardon, forbear and forgive so that by considering them your real enemies you may not cause them distress, or sever your relation with them. Do not exhibit extreme behavior as a result of your love for them. By doing so, your spouse and children become a source of enmity and harm for you. This is the nature of the caution given by the Holy Quran.

Temptation of Short Term Gains

This is a fine and intricate point: What appears beneficial to man may in fact be harmful to him. On the contrary, what is harmful may be perceived as wholesome. Actions that produce immediate results are easily understood. However, we often miscalculate the result of actions that have a delayed response. For example, actions that produce results in a year are more easily understood than those that produce consequences in a decade or a century. This is the reason that accountability in the Hereafter, which does not fit into our perception of time, does not easily draw our attention and is not easily understood. People who offer you a scheme of a cash return in a year are easily able to attract attention. If they present their offer as producing results after ten or a hundred years, they would not meet with success. This is the reason why, when people are offered a cash return, they are ready to make huge sacrifices. Those matters that do not provide quick results need frequent reminders, and one has to repeatedly explain their benefits. Just as a nail needs repeated strikes with a hammer to be firmly anchored in a wall, similarly, in order to leave a lasting impression on a man’s heart, one has to frequently repeat good advice and exhortation. This is the reason why the Holy Quran frequently undertakes such repetition. In particular, those injunctions that affect one’s morality are repeated with great frequency, so that by repeatedly read-

ing them, they may leave a lasting impression in our minds. Another reason for this repetition is that because the results of such actions are not immediately apparent, people may not easily perceive their beneficial effects. On the other hand, they readily accept what they perceive as producing immediate results.

Difference between Political and Spiritual Leaders

Sometimes we see people comparing political and spiritual leaders. They may say that a *Mujaddid* (Reformer) has not met as much success as a certain politician. They may also say that very few followed the former in comparison with the masses that follow the latter. The reason for the apparent success of political leaders is the promise of immediate return and benefit. If they would promise results in fifty years, people's support and enthusiasm for their cause would be proportionately reduced. One who invites people towards goodness, morality and religion promises the benefit of such actions not in one, ten, or a hundred years, but in the Life Hereafter. For many people, his words do not have the same impact as those of an individual who promises results after one year.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad came and removed such veils from the eyes of people and provided them with such cogent proof of the Life Hereafter that they could visualize it as a certainty with their mind's eye. That is why the Holy Prophet said, "That I and the day of judgment are joined together like the two fingers of the hand." He convinced them with such certainty that people perceived it as if they had actually witnessed it with their own eyes, and therefore made it the basis of their deeds. Those who come after the Holy Prophet are only a drop from the abundant rainfall of spiritual sustenance that accompanied the advent of the Holy Prophet, or only a fruit from his orchard; therefore, their work is proportionately less. It is inappropriate to compare their work with that of the Holy Prophet. Nor is it appropriate to compare them with political leaders. This is because spiritual leaders do not invite people towards a quick gain

and do not draw our attention as quickly as politicians. If these political leaders were to invite impedes people towards Islam or religion generally, they would get a similar response. In fact, I believe it would be even less. People ordinarily pay immediate attention to something they perceive as producing quick results. Religion does not promise immediate results. He who accepts what is beneficial, even if the results are in the distant future, is really the wise and farsighted one.

The love of one's children and spouse can sometimes lead to harm and distress. Since the consequences of evil actions taken on their account are not immediately apparent, people readily choose to lie and sin to achieve this objective. People whose good deeds were obstructed by their wives and children during the time of the Holy Prophet, though they were few and rare amongst the pure companions of the Holy Prophet, nonetheless existed. People of all time periods are faced with such predicaments. Excessive love for wives and children can become a barrier in the path that leads toward God, and in that way, impedes progress of individuals and society. Such excessive actions, taken on behalf of wives and offspring, are really your worst enemies, because the enmity of the beloved is of the worst kind. They become an impediment for spending in the way of Allah. Spending in the way of Allah is an absolute essential for national progress. That is why the Holy Quran has set special emphasis upon this. It is thus stated, "And they ask thee as to what they should spend. Say what you can spare." (2:219).

The Trust of Allah

The Holy Quran teaches that all material wealth is a trust of God given to mankind. Therefore, what remains behind after simple maintenance expenditures should be spent in the way of Allah for the needy and orphans. You have been given this wealth to help the indigent and to spend in the way of Allah. This is something that people have not understood. They understand the purpose of wealth is to ensure that the family is well

fed and maintained in good condition. They fail to understand that this is not the real purpose for which man was created. We should keep our religious duties above our worldly concerns and all our actions should reflect this. After this, it is stated: "Your wealth and your children are only a trial (*fitnah*)."*Fitnah* stands for the process of putting gold in a crucible and exposing it to fire, separating the pure metal from the dross. They are first called enemies and now *fitnah* or a means of trial whereby the pure are separated from the impure. This is the means of purifying you and advancing your spirituality, "so keep your duty to Allah as much as you can."

This duty has also been mentioned in Chapter 3, verse 100: "O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah, as it ought to be kept". Some people have suggested that this verse abrogates the verse: "So keep your duty to Allah as much as you can." This is not so, for whoever puts a full effort in keeping his duty, is in fact fulfilling the requirement: "as it ought to be kept." They both carry the same meaning; therefore it is not correct to assume that one verse is abrogating the other. The Holy Quran tells us: "and hear and obey and spend." Spending follows the injunction to hear and obey to indicate that this is the action that can provoke enmity. By supposing, in your mind, that your children and spouse prevent you from spending in the way of Allah, you make adversaries of your wife and children.

Spending in the way of Allah is called, "better for your souls." "And whoever is saved from the greediness (*shuba*) of his soul, these it is that are the successful." The Arabic word *shuba* stands for a combination of greed and parsimony. It represents the individual who does not fulfill his rights and obligations towards others, but is determined to take his own right from them. One should forego his own rights and be ready to give others their rights. Without this, it is difficult for humanity to survive and impossible to achieve success (*falah*) in this world or the hereafter. Without giving up greediness and parsimonious behavior, success cannot be achieved.

“If you set apart for Allah a goodly portion He will double it for you...” (64:17) If you give your good possessions and earnings in the way of Allah, He will give you manifold return. People lend money on interest to enhance their wealth. You should be hopeful of a return from Allah and spend in His way to receive multiple rewards. This return is not ten percent or a hundred percent, but the Holy Quran states: “The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies (further) for whom He pleases. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing” (2:261). Elsewhere in the Holy Quran it is called giving without measure: “And Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure” (2:212). What a great benevolence this is; Allah gives us without measure when we return to Him what is actually His trust. And, “Allah is Multiplier (of rewards), Forbearing.” He accepts if someone gives a small amount in His way, and gives much more in return. It is narrated in a *Hadith* that, “If a person walks towards Allah, He runs towards him.” This running means that Allah is cognizant of his goodness. It is indeed highly commendable to spend in the way of Allah. Having the intent in one’s heart to be ready to spend everything in the way of Allah will also be appreciated, and a time will come when man will realize the approval of having had such noble intentions. Another *Hadith* states that once the Holy Prophet asked his followers, “which one amongst you loves the property of his heirs more so than his own?” The companions responded, “Prophet of Allah who could such an individual be?” To this the Holy Prophet replied, “Indeed your property is what you spend in the way of Allah and what you don’t is the property of your heirs.”

In fact, only that part of our wealth is beneficial for us that we spend in the way of Allah. The rest is of no benefit to us because it will go over to our heirs. Those who love their money may not even spend it on themselves, their offspring or their wives. If this is true that no one wants to give away his wealth to others while he is alive, then he should spend it on what is

beneficial for him. What you spend in the way of Allah is for you, and what remains behind is for your heirs; hence it is of no benefit to you, for Allah is, "The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Wise."

February 11, 1921

Muslims to Decide their Affairs by Counsel amongst Themselves

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ
أٰمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

So whatever you are given is but a provision of this world's life, and that which Allah has is better and more lasting for those who believe and rely on their Lord. (42:36)

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَاِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ
يَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

And those who shun the great sins and indecencies, and whenever they are angry they forgive. (42:37)

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them. (42:38)

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

And those who when great wrong afflicts them, defend themselves. (42:39)

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

And the recompense of evil is punishment like it; but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with Allah. Surely He loves not the wrongdoers. (42:40)

وَلَمَنْ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿٤١﴾

And whoever defends himself after his being oppressed, these it is against whom there is no way (of blame). (42:41)

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and revolt in the earth unjustly. For such there is a painful chastisement. (42:42)

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾

And whoever is patient and forgives — that surely is an affair of great resolution. (42:43)

Temporary Nature of Worldly Provisions

In these verses, Allah the Most High tells us that whatever has been given to you — food, water, shelter or other material provisions, is of a temporary nature. That which is with Allah the Most High is better and everlasting. One may ask, who are the ones who get this everlasting gift? The Holy Quran tells us it is: “for those who believe and rely on their Lord.” Wherever the Holy Quran refers to material and worldly goods, it assigns to them a lowly status not worthy of our attention. Impressed by these words, many have given up the pursuit of material possessions. One wonders why provisions upon which our lives depend, such as food, water, clothing, etc. are belittled in importance and our focus is drawn away from them. Nowhere in the Holy Quran has the pursuit of materialism been glorified. In fact, frequently our attention is diverted from it. On the other hand, wealth has also been called goodness and God’s grace. Why, in spite of being called God’s grace, is the acquisition of wealth not been encouraged, but has been assigned inferior status?

The fact is that acquisition and love of wealth are natural desires that spontaneously attract the human mind. It does not need a teacher or a preacher to entice and encourage its acquisition and augmentation.

Repeated Reminders Essential for Guidance

On the contrary, what the Holy Quran calls: “better and more lasting,” remains so hidden and distant from human perception and interest that we frequently need to have our attention drawn towards these moral and spiritual values. Some, though they may be impressed by these teachings, remain oblivious to them and do not give them the attention they deserve. It therefore becomes necessary for the Book, revealed for the guidance of mankind, to give repeated reminders.

Qualities of the Believer

The verses I have recited describe three qualities of the believer: “And those who shun the great sins and indecencies, and whenever they are angry they forgive.”

Greed, lust, and anger are the three conditions that can make humans stray from the right path. Great acts of evil are committed under the influence of greed and sexual depravity; these lead to much indecency. Similarly, uncontrolled anger frequently leads to the violation of human rights. Forgiveness in the face of overwhelming rage is very difficult. It is indeed the attribute of the exalted believer that he controls his anger and treads the path of true forgiveness, for under these circumstances a person considers himself absolutely right, the other person totally wrong, and feels justified in making him the subject of his ire. Controlling one’s rage and exercising forgiveness under such circumstances is indeed a manifestation of excellent character.

After this, the Holy Quran states: “And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer,” which is followed by the statement: “and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them.” The believers are praised for deciding their affairs by counsel amongst themselves. This is indeed an admirable characteristic.

Seeking and Giving Help against Oppression

A further character trait is then described: “And those who when great wrong afflicts them, defend themselves (*yantasiroon*).” The Arabic root word *Intisar* means asking for help. *Nasr* means giving help. In this sense, it also means seeking retribution. When someone is subjected to oppression he calls out for help. The Holy Quran also calls this act of asking for help a venerable trait. From this we can conclude that the one who seeks help in the face of oppression and the one who gives help, both have an exalted status.

Turning the other cheek when slapped is not an exemplary teaching. Raising the voice against oppression is essential. There is a time to seek retribution for forgiveness under all circumstances; this does not result in reformation. If oppression is not opposed, peaceful coexistence disappears and repression takes hold in society. That is why seeking help against tyranny has been called commendable behavior by the Holy Quran. Those who raise objections to the Holy Prophet's stand against the Jews of Medina and disbelievers are in error. If the Holy Prophet had not stood up against their mischief, a small group that had been created for the propagation of truth would have been annihilated and the voice of truth would have been forever silenced. Opposing tyranny and seeking help against it is as worthy a cause as pardoning and forgiveness.

Caution to Avoid Extremism

In opposing tyrannical behavior however, one often falters toward the path of extremism and excess. This commandment is therefore accompanied by some precautions to maintain balance and fairness. The Holy Quran draws our attention towards these precautionary measures in the words: "And the recompense of evil is punishment like it," "but whoever forgives and amends," meaning forgiveness should be with the purpose or hope of reformation and the act of forgiveness does not enhance tyranny. Regarding such an individual, the Holy Quran states, "his reward is with Allah." Forgiveness on all occasions cannot be beneficial. Should the attack of an evildoer on the chastity of a woman not be repulsed? Should the perpetrator of such evil be forgiven? This, in fact, is not forgiveness but an extremely shameful act. The individual who callously tramples the rights of others certainly deserves punishment, otherwise there is great danger of advancement of oppression in society.

One of the basic principles of religion is sympathy towards God's creation. Whosoever is devoid of such empathy is not loved by Allah: "Surely He loves not the wrongdoers." We are fur-

ther told: "And whoever defends himself (or calls for help) after his being oppressed, these it is against whom there is no way (of blame)." "The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and revolt in the earth unjustly." They occupy the territory of the weak. "For such there is a painful chastisement."

Forgiveness after Empowerment

"And whoever is patient and forgives — that surely is an affair of great resolution." (42:43)

A person who is subjected to persecution for a period of time and eventually overpowers his oppressors, in spite of this empowerment, if he forgives his tormentors is indeed the recipient of a highly exalted spiritual status. This is an appropriate and timely manifestation of this excellent quality. If we think about it, true forgiveness occurs only after having patiently faced hardship and persecution. The example of forgiveness manifested by Jesus did not reach this degree of excellence. Jesus taught forgiveness at a time when he was powerless against his enemies. A person who is not empowered over his persecutors and chooses to forgive someone during his state of weakness and servitude really does not perform a great deed.

Holy Prophet Muhammad and his followers were severely persecuted by the disbelievers for many years. When the time for retribution came and he was the victor and they the vanquished, he manifested a unique example of forgiveness. Such a noble example has not fallen to the lot of any king or conqueror in the annals of world history. How noble and magnanimous was the heart that did not question their prolonged oppression and forgave his most dangerous enemies after overpowering them. He let all of them go with the simple but poignant words:

"No reproof be against you this day. Allah may forgive you, and he is the most Merciful of those who show mercy." (12:92)

Not only did he not punish, he even avoided a minor rebuke.

Is there anyone who when given power over his most dangerous and inveterate enemies manifests such an example of forgiveness?

Affairs to be Decided by Counsel

While discussing the meaning of these verses:

“And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them.”

I overlooked mentioning this point. I want to draw your attention towards the construction of this verse. In the Holy Quran, wherever keeping up of prayer is mentioned, it is always followed by the injunction of paying the poor rate e.g.: “And keep up prayer and pay the poor rate” (2:43). In this verse, the usual pattern has been interrupted by insertion of the statement: “and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves,” thus underscoring the importance that Islam gives to deciding by counsel. This chapter has also been called “The Counsel” (*Al-Shura*) to further stress the importance of this message.

Many other guidelines and injunctions have been mentioned in this chapter but the importance of counsel was such that it has been highlighted by the name *Al-Shura* indicating it was the most important message in this chapter. In fact, this is such an important injunction that it is mentioned in other places in the Holy Quran: “So pardon them and ask protection for them, and consult them in important matters” (3:159). Unfortunately, although people agree that mutual consultation is essential, they contend that a leader is not bound by such decisions. They say, “seek counsel from people but do what you think is best”. In fact this is showing contempt for the command of Allah the Most High. When there is no intention to act upon counsel, what is the meaning of seeking such advice?

The Holy Prophet sought the advice of his companions on many occasions. Frequently the advice was contrary to his own opinion, and he even had to face distress and affliction on account of it, but he did not waiver in following the consensus of the majority. In the battle of Uhud, the number of enemy forces Muslims had to face was far greater than their own. Counsel was necessary to decide whether to stay inside Madinah and face their onslaught or go outside and challenge them. This counsel, besides the companions, also included Abdullah Ibn Ubbayh¹. The Holy Prophet had received a revelation on this account indicating that Madinah was like a strong coat of chain mail and the battle should be fought within its confines. However, following the opinion of the majority, the Holy Prophet led his companions outside of Madinah to confront the enemy. Aside from this manifest example of the Holy Prophet, our intellect also bears witness to the principle that if counsel is sought it should also be followed, otherwise it would be a useless exercise.

This action of the Holy Prophet is also supported by other sayings.

Holy Prophet said: "As long as your leaders are the most excellent in piety, your affluent are the most giving and your affairs are decided by counsel, your life on this earth is better than your death."

When your leaders are wicked and your rich people are greedy and your affairs are decided unilaterally, your death will be better for you than your life on this earth.

This *hadith* enjoins us to have leaders who are the best in piety. In the modern context, leadership and piety are considered as divergent elements that cannot coexist. How succinctly do the words of this *hadith* apply to these times? Those in positions of power and leadership are most wicked and the affluent manifest exemplary greed (with a few exceptions by the grace

1. Leader of the hypocrites.

of Allah). Affairs, instead of being decided by counsel, are settled on the basis of individual opinion. This is in spite of the fact that during the Holy Prophet's lifetime and the time of his companions, affairs were always decided by counsel. The history of the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Uthman, and Hazrat Ali bear witness to this. All that was essential for national progress was taught by the Holy Quran, and the Holy Prophet and his companions put it into practice. Alas! Muslims today have discarded these wonderful teachings and have forgotten the sublime morals of the Holy Prophet and the practice of his noble companions. Those in power, instead of following consensus, give precedence to their own opinion.

There is no doubt that the personality of a leader has some influence; however, the teachings of Islam certainly mandate the principle of deciding affairs by counsel. The word *Shura* (counsel) is derived from the Arabic root word *Shara* and the Arabic phrase *shurt-ul-usul*, meaning, "I extracted the honey." In the process of seeking counsel one also reaches a common opinion by extracting or obtaining the essence of many opinions.

The leader of a certain community, showing his disdain for the process of *shura* (counsel), called it a loud useless noise *shor* (urdu). This in fact is showing contempt for a commandment of God.

Necessity for Seeking Counsel

Why is seeking counsel in affairs necessary? An individual has limited awareness of an affair, and his mind is focused on certain aspects of it. He forms an opinion on the basis of his limited knowledge and may be unaware of its shortcomings. Seeking opinions through counsel results in the input of many different opinions; as a consequence, all the benefits and disadvantages of a plan become apparent. Everybody becomes aware of these and the appropriate result is achieved.

The truth is that since the age of the companions of the Holy

Prophet, an opportunity has now arisen to realize the benefit of the principle of seeking counsel in affairs. The *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of this age has enjoined this. He said all affairs should be assigned to and decided upon by counsel amongst the members of the *Anjuman* (organized body of the members).

How cautious is he in this matter? People from all over send donations to him but he does not keep this money under his personal control. Those who send him money do not ask him for accountability. He devises means to safeguard these funds. He turns them over to the *Anjuman* and recommends seeking counsel as an essential step for the protection and spending of these funds.

A problem arose when his specific instructions were discarded and people, instead of following the majority opinion, started following their own individual opinions. We should learn a lesson from this incident and forego individual opinions in favor of majority decisions. There is no doubt that a decision arrived at by counsel could be wrong, but this is the path of rectitude; all should follow the majority opinion so that no one can say that not following their opinion resulted in loss. Whether someone belongs to our organization or not, I want all to know that until we seek counsel in deciding all our affairs we cannot succeed. We should seek counsel in all our affairs and then all should follow the decision of the majority. These are the teachings of the Holy Quran and the practice of our Holy Prophet upon which the Promised Messiah made us stand firm. You should have the courage not to allow any matter to be decided without counsel. Abandon your opinion in favor of the majority opinion. In this lies a great moral lesson and immense sacrifice.

February 25, 1921

**Holy Quran is the Source of Light for Propagation
of Islam: Task of Mujaddid is to Purify and
Inspire Truthfulness**

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

وَمَنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتِ إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

And of His signs is this, that thou seest the earth still, but when We send down water thereon, it stirs and swells. He Who gives it life is surely the Giver of life to the dead. Surely He is Possessor of power over all things. (41:39)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ يَأْتِي آمِنًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

Those who distort (*yul-bidoona*) Our messages are not hidden from Us. Is he then who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes safe on the day of Resurrection? Do what you like, surely He is Seer of what you do. (41:40)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ لَهُمْ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾

Those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it comes to them, and surely it is an Invincible Book: (41:41)

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

Falsehood cannot come at it from before or behind it: a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One. (41:42)

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو

عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

Naught is said to thee but what was said to messengers before thee. Surely thy Lord is the Lord of Forgiveness and the Lord of painful Retribution. (41:43)

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَبِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَأَعْجَبِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ

لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشَفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ

عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَٰئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾

And if We had made it a Quran in a foreign tongue, they would have said: Why have not its messages been made clear? What! a foreign (tongue) and an Arab! Say: It is to those who believe a guidance and a healing, and those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears and it is obscure to them. These are called to from a place afar. (41:44)

Beneficence of Allah

Upon cursory examination, these six recited and translated verses of the Holy Quran appear to be disconnected. It seems as if a few different subjects have been lumped together. In the beginning, there is a description of how rainfall brings life to dry and barren land in the form of growth and greenery. This is followed by a reference to the distortion of the messages of Allah

and heaven and hell. Those people who disbelieved and rebelled against the message of the Holy Prophet are referred to next. The Holy Prophet is consoled with the message that previous prophets had to face a similar challenge. The last verse draws our attention to the fact that the revelation of the Holy Quran is in Arabic and not a foreign language and that it is guidance for believers, leaving disbelievers in darkness and obscurity.

These subjects appear to be random and not connected with each other. Many people have erroneously concluded this to be a pattern throughout the Holy Quran. It is only through careful analysis that we discern latent properties and concordance among different components of various everyday observations that we make in our daily lives. This rule is also applicable to the study of the Holy Quran.

The Holy Quran possesses immense beauty, which is a source of great attraction. This beauty can only be discovered by those with the vision to appreciate it. Just as mere words cannot fully describe beauty of any sort, they also lack the power to capture the magnificence of the Holy Quran. Those who are more spiritually perceptive will certainly be more aware of its innate beauty but none can capture it all in a few words. At best, all one can do is discover a few jewels from amongst this treasure trove. Any commentary of the Holy Quran, no matter how voluminous, cannot expound its truths better than its own original words.

I advise all of you to be grateful regarding this beneficence of Allah. The honorable companions of the Holy Prophet were extremely appreciative of it. They acquired its treasures of profound wisdom and knowledge, and perceived the beauty and splendor of its teachings. Muslims of this age have, however, ignored it and do not ponder upon it. There are many bad habits and deeds they should give up but fail to do so in spite of frequent reminders. It is very easy for them to disregard the Holy Quran and for this they do not even need to be reminded. During the time of the Holy Prophet there were many excellent

poets in Arabia but their poetry did not inspire the hearts of the companions as much as they were impressed by the Quranic word. This was because they could appreciate its beauty and excellence. Unless you are able to do the same, your heart cannot be fully inspired by its love.

The other day I presented this quote from the famous German Philosopher Goethe, who said:

“As often as we approach the Quran, it always proves repulsive anew; gradually, however, it attracts, it astonishes, and, in the end forces admiration.”

Holy Quran to Revive the Dead

What has happened to your heart that it is not attracted to the Holy Quran? What you need is to study it carefully so that you can perceive its truths, and discover its manifest and hidden treasures of knowledge. The verses above may not appear to be connected or related to each other but with deliberation we will find that they deal with a common subject.

Initially, our attention is drawn towards the frequently observed phenomenon that tracts of dry land without apparent signs of life, when exposed to rainfall, bloom into verdant fields of grains, vegetables and luxuriant meadows. In dry weather before the rainfall it is hard to imagine the immense latent potential of the land; rainwater appears to run off the land without having any effect. In fact, these drops of moisture awaken the latent powers of the earth and set in motion its various elements. Similarly, the revealed word of God brings life to dead hearts and spiritual life is rejuvenated: “Surely Allah is Possessor of power over all things.” When these words were revealed to the Holy Prophet, the condition of the Arab nation had deteriorated to the extent that no one could have even imagined its revival. They belong to a chapter revealed to the Holy Prophet in the early Makkan period; people were calling him a madman for making such statements. Chances of spiritual revival amongst those peo-

ple was much less than the chance of spiritual awakening amongst Europeans today. The inhabitants of Arabia were not versed in learning and philosophy as are modern day Europeans. In fact they were totally ignorant. This is why the task assigned to the Holy Prophet begins with the words, “teach them,” i.e., educate them. The Holy Quran states:

“And teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them”
(2:129)

Who could have revived such ignorant and unlettered people? The answer to this is the One who revives the dead earth with water. Just as rainwater brings life to the dead earth, the revelation of God’s Word through the Holy Quran brought about their spiritual revival.

Distortion of the Message of the Holy Quran

After this prophecy of spiritual revival of the nation, a description of those who distort the messages of Allah is given. (The Arabic word *yul-bidoona* for distortion is derived from the root *lahad*, which implies leaning towards one side. That is why the portion of the grave that is towards one side is called the *lahad* and those who seek the path of perversity are called *mulbad*.) They have a tendency to drift from the right path, and regarding these, Allah says they: “are not hidden from Us.” Allah has knowledge of such people. After this we are given a description of two groups and the consequences of their actions. One of these groups include those who accept the messages of Allah. These are the ones who are successful. The other group include those who distort the messages of Allah, reject the path of righteousness shown by the Holy Quran, and choose instead to follow crooked ways. These are the ones cast into the fire and who are at a loss. People familiar with history know that opponents of the Holy Prophet, whether they were Arab polytheists or the Jews did not oppose the principles of the Religion of Islam. Instead they picked upon trivial matters to torment the Holy Prophet. They would raise objections on his eating and going

about his business. The Holy Quran states: "And they say: What a Messenger is this? He eats food and goes about in the markets" (25:7). In order to prove that the claims of the Holy Prophet were false they would raise such petty objections.

In spite of their attempts at distortion of the messages, they are told in the subsequent verse that all such current or future attempts, including any signs from the past are bound to fail as:

"Falsehood cannot come at it from before or behind it."

This is because it is: "a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One," Who has knowledge of the future and the past.

The Holy Quran is a book that most people, including its harsh opponents, feel constrained to praise. They readily admit that what was accomplished by the Holy Quran was unique and has no parallel.

The Holy Quran then informs us that in opposing and making fun of the Holy Prophet they mimic the behavior of the opponents of the prophets before him:

"Naught is said to thee but what was said to messengers before thee." This is because: "Surely thy Lord is the Lord of Forgiveness."

Forgiveness of Allah

Allah's attribute of Forgiveness is profound. He is not easily provoked, unlike mortals. One can observe and appreciate the immensity of Divine forgiveness in this world. The Holy Prophet and his noble companions were tormented and persecuted for a period of thirteen years. Why were those guilty of such behavior not subjected to immediate retribution? This affirms the extent of the Forgiving nature of the Master for until the message of truth is fully delivered and oppression has not exceeded its limits, He continues to pardon and forgive.

When, however, these limits are crossed, do not think that He

will allow tyranny to succeed, for He is also the: “Lord of painful Retribution.”

I will now comment on the words: “And if We had made it a Quran in a foreign tongue (*Quran-un- a'jamiyun*), they would have said: Why have not its messages been made clear? What! A foreign (tongue) and an Arab!”

Language of the Holy Quran

The Arabic phrase *Quran-un-a'jamiyun* does not refer to the Quran being in a specific language such as Arabic, English, Persian, Hindi etc. The word *ahjamiyun* is derived from the word *a'jamiyun*, the opposite of which is *ibanatun*, meaning clear expression and *I'jamun*, which means being doubtful. Animals are referred to as *ajmaou*, because they cannot express their thoughts. Arabic lexicon defines *ajamou* as the one whose expression is *ajmatun* i.e. it raises doubts irrespective of whether the individual is an Arab or elsewhere. Both of these can be called *ajamou* if they are not able to express their thoughts well. On the contrary, a non-Arab can be called an Arab if he can express his thoughts well. The expression *Quran-un- a'jamiyun* would therefore mean a Quran that does not describe matters in detail. They would have then raised the objection: “Why have its messages not been made clear?” The Holy Quran responds to this objection with the reply that it has been revealed in the Arabic language, a language that is clear in expression and does not leave any doubt. Besides the Holy Quran, the scriptures of all other religions leave a shadow of doubt in many matters and principles. The Holy Quran has been called: “light (*nur*) upon light” (24:35). The Arabic word *Nur* means that which manifests hidden things. The other scriptures can be compared to a lamp while the light of the Holy Quran is compared with the sun in its brilliance. No doubt remains in spiritual matters and guidance exposed to its light, and all principles of religion are described in complete detail. Those leaning towards distortion choose to raise objections to straightforward and clear messages. The more

detailed a description and explanation of a matter, the greater the amount of criticism and skepticism it faces. The subject matter of these verses is therefore the same from the beginning to the end.

The Righteous Guide the World from Darkness into Light

The righteous, wherever they may be, have one thing in common. Their opponents always choose the path of distortion when they are unable to answer their arguments with truthfulness. Before the advent of the messenger, their condition resembled the dead earth. The dead earth of their heart is revived with the light and waters of righteousness, and goodness takes hold instead of evil. They guide the world from darkness into light. This is the proof of their truthfulness and success.

A scientist, philosopher, or a wise person can accomplish much in this world. They can control electric power, make great strides in manufacturing and transportation, and control the power of rivers, oceans, and winds. There is one change, however, that they cannot bring about, and that is to establish righteousness in place of evil. The sole purpose of a righteous servant of Allah or a Reformer is to establish righteousness in place of evil. There is only one standard to gauge his truthfulness. Was the earth spiritually dead before his arrival? Was he able to bring about a spiritual revival? Did he bring the spiritually dead to life? This is the greatest sign of his truthfulness. Those who appear spiritually dead are raised through his callings and teachings. All these righteous servants and reformers, whether it is Hazrat Mohinuddin Chisti, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jelani, Hazrat Sayyid Muhammad Jaunpuri or Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, had one thing in common — they all revived dead souls.

Truth Cannot be Distorted

Their critics always try to distort their teachings. Name one righteous person who was not opposed. Why then should our

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad escape such criticism? His opponents also presumed, on many occasions, to have refuted his arguments. I remember when Hazrat Mirza Sahib published that he had been given this sign, that Allah the Most High had taught him the Arabic language. The Maulavis, instead of writing a book to match his claim, attempted to find errors in his Arabic writing. In one of his books, the Arabic phrase *ajibut labu* was written. Opponents objected, stating that the word *ajaba* cannot be in conjunction with the letter *l (lam)*, and felt they had cornered Hazrat Mirza Sahib and proved him wrong. When they were presented with the phrase *ajabun labu* from the *hadith* along with many other references, they were proven wrong.

Similarly, in another incident, Maulvi Sanaullah of Amritsar alleged that Hazrat Mirza Sahib had given a reference in Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya vol. five from his book, *Tafseer-e Sanai*. Because he had no such reference in his book he claimed that Hazrat Mirza Sahib had made a false claim and could not be a righteous person. He thought he had discovered a false statement and raised serious doubts about Hazrat Mirza Sahib's credibility. The truth was that in the city of Panipat, a saintly person Qazi Sanaullah who had passed away had written a commentary under the name *Tafseer-e-Sanai*. Hazrat Mirza Sahib had actually provided a reference from this book. Maulvi Sanaullah tried to mislead people by claiming that the reference was related to his own book.

These righteous individuals confirm the truth of the Quranic statement: "Falsehood cannot come at it from before or behind it." They cannot be annihilated physically or spiritually by the attacks of their opponents. Their opponents, though physically alive, are worse than dead. Hazrat Mirza Sahib invited Maulvi Sanaullah for a deprecatory prayer duel (*mubabila*). He clearly wrote down and invited Maulvi Sanaullah to put down something in writing to contradict what Hazrat Mirza Sahib had written and prepared for the deprecatory prayer duel. At that time, Maulvi Sanaullah replied that God gives a long life to mischief makers and liars and that he did not want to accept this manner

of asking God for a decision and did not dare enter such a duel with Hazrat Mirza Sahib.

In a deprecatory prayer duel, it is essential that both parties pray against each other. This is the way the Holy Prophet was substantiated by the Holy Quran.¹ When the Holy Prophet completed his comprehensive debate with the Najran delegation and they refused to accept his arguments, he was commanded by Allah to take this course. The next day the Holy Prophet came out with his near relatives and offered to settle the controversy in this manner. The Christian delegation of Najran did not accept his offer and refused to participate in a deprecatory prayer duel against the Holy Prophet. We do not find any proof that any of them passed away either during the Holy Prophet's life or even immediately afterwards.

This is the strongest proof of the truth of Hazrat Mirza Sahib's claim that at the time he made this offer to Maulvi Sanaullah he had already received news of his own impending demise from Allah and having firm faith in this had already prepared a will. His faith in the truth of his own claim was so strong that he invited a healthy young man to a deprecatory prayer duel, saying: "if you choose to pray against me you will be the first one to die and God will save me." Someone suffering from a chronic illness for several years, as Hazrat Mirza Sahib was, is certainly in danger of dying. Also God had informed him that the time of his death was near, but he had such a firm conviction in the truth of his claims that he was certain God would make him successful against his opponent.

A friend of ours has written that in this incident the Promised Messiah showed a strong resemblance to Jesus son of Mary. The Jews, by putting Jesus on the cross, according to their belief proved him to be accursed and the Christians accepted this. The matter of Jesus being saved from death on the cross thus became dubious. Ordinary people succumbed to similar doubts

1. 3:61

about Maulvi Sanaullah's prayer and that the Promised Messiah died because of Sanaullah's prayer. The truth of the matter is that just as Jesus did not die on the cross, the Promised Messiah did not die from the effect of deprecatory prayer against Maulvi Sanaullah. In fact such a deprecatory prayer duel never took place because of reluctance on the part of the latter to participate.

Another objection is being raised vociferously these days claiming the poetic verses of Niamat ullah Wali, to which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has referred in his writings, as incorrect. It is alleged that he has added his own verses to them and has not presented the original poetry of Niamatullah Wali². Those who raise such objections fail to use their common sense. If they had done so they would have realized that it would be very unlikely for someone such as Hazrat Mirza Sahib, who is under constant scrutiny of his opponents, to publish such an obvious fabrication. The truth is that Hazrat Mirza Sahib did not stand in need of Niamatullah Wali to verify his veracity, nor did those responsible for the propagation work of our community present these verses to substantiate the truth of Hazrat Mirza Sahib's teachings. We present the Holy Quran and the Hadith in support of the truth of his claims. If the Holy Quran and the Hadith fail to support his claims, the poetry of Niamatullah Wali would definitely not be enough. Hazrat Mirza Sahib had quoted his writings to present factual information that already existed.

It is interesting to note that one of the verses referred to is:

“I behold the Turk in a state of weakness. (turk ayyar sust mai ngrm) Also I see that his enemy is in a state of lassitude (khasm o dur khumar mai beenum).”

Where Hazrat Mirza Sahib has quoted these verses, he also gives the explanation that someone incorrectly interpreted these verses. He then gives his own explanation: “The meaning

2. Muslim saint in India about 749 years before the time of the Promised Messiah.

of this verse is that the strength of the Turkish Empire will be diminished during the time of the promised Messiah.” Now you witness how correct this statement proved to be. In the same paragraph he writes that the enemy of the Turks i.e., Russia, will not find the consequences of its victory very satisfying. He goes on to state that during this time attempts will be made to divide Arabia into smaller kingdoms.”³

All this is what Hazrat Mirza Sahib has inferred from these verses. Each word of his interpretation proved to be true. To label such an individual a liar is the greatest inequity and is extremely irresponsible behavior.

The truth of the matter is that there are several versions of these poetic verses. One of these versions has been quoted by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He has not fabricated anything but making false innuendo is the favorite pastime of many opponents of truth. They try to undermine the truthfulness of the righteous in this manner. Allah the Most High, however, manifests the truth of the righteous in face of false propaganda of the opponents. The one who is appointed as a Reformer (*Mujaddid*) by God is recognized through his works. The path that he endorses is the path of success for the nation; and there is no other way. Islam can only succeed by following the directions of the *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of this age. The sign of success for Muslims is not that they establish their rule in a portion of the Indian subcontinent. Do we not have sovereign Muslim states in Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan? Does their presence guarantee success for Islam? Even with the establishment of a sovereign state, the path for success lies only in the propagation of Islam. The task of *Mujaddids* is not the acquisition of wealth and power; it is to purify and invite people towards good. If their purpose is propagation of truth and goodness, then no-one other than Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has accomplished this task.

3. See Book *Nisban-e-Asmaani*.

March 3, 1921

**Islam Cannot be Propagated by the Sword —
True Faith Witnessed through Righteous Actions**

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ
الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ
شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ⑬

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)

إِمَّا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ⑭

The believers are those only who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then they doubt not, and struggle hard with

their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. Such are the truthful ones. (49:15)

قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

Say: Would you apprise Allah of your religion? And Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. And Allah is Knower of all things. (49:16)

يَمْتُونُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَبُوا قُلْ لَا تَمْتُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

They presume to lay thee under an obligation by becoming Muslims. Say: Lay me not under an obligation by your Islam; rather Allah lays you under an obligation by guiding you to the faith, if you are truthful. (49:17)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

Surely Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Seer of what you do. (49:18)

Different Stages of Belief

Allah The Most High has mentioned the believer and the Muslim separately in these verses. According to the dictionary meaning of these two words, belief means acceptance, and Islam and being a Muslim signifies submission. But in terms of *Sharia* they each carry specific meaning. In the Holy Quran, these words have been used in two different ways. Belief sometimes means mere verbal acknowledgement, for when someone accepts someone or some principle he first makes a verbal confession, as in the verse: "O you who believe, believe in Allah and his Messenger" (4:136).

In these verses, the first kind of belief alluded to is acceptance with the tongue, and the second type of belief is that which is verified by deeds and actions.

Sincere belief means acceptance with the tongue and the heart and demonstration of this acceptance through one's deeds. After verbal acknowledgement of a principle, it is essential to put it into practice. Islam declares only the type of faith that is witnessed by deeds as meeting the standard of truthfulness. Acknowledgement with the tongue is called belief, but is only a preliminary step in the path of righteousness. Confirming this belief through the use of one's faculties and deeds is also belief, but the more advanced stage of it. Similarly, the word Islam carries a dual meaning. Islam means submission. Mere verbal confession is also Islam, as is complete submission to its commandments and prohibitions. In the verses under discussion, the word Islam has been used to signify verbal acknowledgement.

Allah the Most High directs the Holy Prophet to tell the desert dwellers not to use the term, "we believe," but rather use the term, "we submit." The reason for this injunction is "faith has not yet entered into your hearts."

The commentators have speculated a lot as to the identity of those referred to in these verses, that perhaps they belonged to this or that group or tribe. In my opinion, it is not necessary to attribute this behavior to any particular group. This is a common behavior pattern amongst all people and is not limited to a particular time or group. Those who declare verbal acceptance, but practically ignore the guidance, meet the criteria of being called Muslims but have not yet become believers.

The reason for this is explained thus:

"The believers are those only who believe in Allah and His Messenger." This is verbal acknowledgement and is followed by: "then they doubt not." This indicates the second stage i.e., acceptance with the heart, which is then followed by the third stage of confirmation of belief through righteous actions.

Sacrifice Necessary to Establish Belief

Regarding these, the Holy Quran states they: “struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. What is it that they struggle for? It is not for earning wealth or provisions of daily life, their struggle and effort is in fact directed, in the way of Allah.”

Every one sacrifices for the sake of their wives and children and many people make great sacrifices for the sake of their nation. For a believer, however, the sole objective of sacrifice is the pleasure of Allah, for which he strives with all his faculties.

Criteria for Being a Muslim

There is endless debate amongst Muslims as to who is a disbeliever and who is outside the fold of Islam. The Holy Quran has given its verdict in these verses — that anybody who verbally acknowledges being a Muslim cannot be expelled from the fold of Islam as a disbeliever. Another verse of the Holy Quran clearly enjoins: “and say not to anyone who offers you salutation, Thou art not a believer.” (4:94). The Hadith also clearly states: “do not call anyone who follows the *Qiblah* (i.e., prays in the direction of the *Ka'bah*) a disbeliever” (*KANZ-UL -AMAL VOL. 1: 215*).

The *Qiblah* has been given such honor and importance but the Holy Quran also states: “It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West” (2:177). These appear to be two opposite positions but the well-defined principle that is being expressed is that anyone who manifests even such a simple sign of being a Muslim such as praying in the direction of the *Ka'bah* should not be called a disbeliever, and no one has the right to do so.

Those who verbally profess their faith, but for whom faith has not yet entered their heart are recognized as Muslims by the Holy Quran, as are the ones whose faith has progressed to the stage of excellence. These are people whose hearts and deeds

bear witness to the sincerity of their belief. It is therefore not permissible to follow the opinion of one person or another in hastily issuing edicts (*fatwa*) of disbelief. Just as it is wrong to issue an edict of disbelief against members of the Ahmadiyya movement on account of differences of opinion with them in certain specific matters, it is also incorrect to believe that by not being an Ahmadi one becomes a disbeliever. One does not become a believer or a perfect follower of his faith by simply belonging to one or the other group. Just as by calling himself a Muslim one does not spontaneously become a believer; similarly by merely professing to be an Ahmadi, one does not join the ranks of believers. Calling oneself a Muslim or an Ahmadi Muslim without righteous action does not suffice. If being a Muslim does not qualify one to be a believer, how can being called an Ahmadi without righteousness in deeds be of any benefit? When there is no distinction in practice amongst them and other Muslims, of what benefit is their acceptance of the *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of the age? Some people argue that if one can be a believer without accepting the *Mujaddid* of the age, then what is the need for a *Mujaddid*?

This argument, that if by rejection of the *Mujaddid* one does not become a disbeliever, is not correct. There is no need for the reformation for which he has been appointed by Allah. For example, a person who does not say his obligatory prayers cannot be said to be outside the fold of Islam but nobody argues on this basis that obligatory prayers are not necessary.

Striving in the Way of Allah

Three stages of faith or belief have thus been outlined: the initial stage of verbal affirmation followed by acceptance with the heart and finally by confirmation through righteous action. Those who reach this final stage according to the Holy Quran are the ones who: "struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah." Both of these sacrifices are also needed for the proclamation and propagation of the word of Allah, which

is the task entrusted to the *Mujaddid*. People's faith therefore does not reach perfection until they join hands with the *Mujaddid* of the age to strive in the way of Allah. This does not mean that those belonging to the first two stages are not believers; they are also believers.

The Holy Prophet and his companions treated hypocrites like they would treat Muslims although Allah condemns their witnessing to the Holy Prophets truth in the following words:

“When the hypocrites come to thee, they say: We bear witness that thou art indeed Allah's Messenger. And Allah knows thou art indeed His Messenger. And Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars” (63:1)

In spite of this condemnation they were treated like Muslims.

The Holy Prophet led the funeral prayer for Abdullah-bin-Ubayh, the leader of Hypocrites, and donated his own shirt for his burial shroud. You certainly do not have the right to call any person who verbally accepts Islam a disbeliever.

First, these people forcefully declared an edict of heresy against Ahmadis and prevented them from entering mosques and from burying their dead in Muslim graveyards. Now, a group from amongst the Ahmadiyya movement¹ is following in their footsteps by declaring non-Ahmadi Muslims disbelievers. The truth is that this behavior reflects compulsion and extremism on the part of both groups. Even a person who verbally acknowledges being a Muslim cannot be excluded from the fold of Islam and no one has the authority to do so.

Believers who attain the third stage of spiritual advancement do so by: “struggling (*Jabadu*) hard with their wealth and their lives.” Now ponder and observe who fulfills the requirement for this sort of striving (*jihad*). If anybody thinks that the Word of God can be propagated by the sword, he is making a grave error.

1. Group led by Mirza Mehmood Ahmad. See *Split in the Ahmadiyya Movement* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

The sword may be used for defending Islam against annihilation, but propagation of Islam certainly cannot be done with the sword. Today, world opinion and conditions bear witness to the fact that the defense of Islam cannot be accomplished with the sword. Muslims are facing great difficulties all over the world and the popularity of movements such as non-violence and non-cooperation testify to this, that safety of Muslims cannot be guaranteed with the sword. Thirty years ago Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was declared a heretic because of his belief that the progress of Muslims and Islam cannot in this day and age be accomplished through use of the sword. He was labeled as a denier of *Jihad* and called a disbeliever and heretic. Now, thirty years later, the whole world has testified to the truth of his statements. The truth of what could not have been imagined thirty years ago is being witnessed today. When Hazrat Mirza Sahib presented this he was called a liar and *dajjal*² on account of it. Today his truthfulness is being affirmed by testimony of the time and world events.

People also made fun of him when he proved, by intellectual arguments and written testimony, that Prophet Jesus had died a natural death and was not alive in heaven with his physical body. Today there are many who accept the fact Prophet Jesus is not alive in heaven. Call him what name you may! But, you cannot deny the truth of what he said. There is only one path of progress for Muslims, the path toward which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad directed them. Muslims cannot succeed unless they follow this path.

The truth of his arguments in explaining the concept of *Jihad* in Islam has also become evident.

Perfection in faith also demands striving in the way of Allah. This striving is not a political task, but has to be carried out by inviting people to the Word of God and propagating Islam by this means. Any political means of progress that may be adopted

2. For true understanding of the concept of *Dajjal*, see *Anti-Christ, Gog and Magog* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

today might prove to be wrong tomorrow and a new political maneuver may have to be adopted in its place. Even if we are able to establish an Islamic government in India and are also able to strengthen other Muslim nations and all this is to come about, it cannot help in propagating the faith of Islam. Propagation of Islam can only be accomplished by following the one who has been called a heretic and disbeliever!

Hazrat Mirza Sahib is the *Mujaddid* of this age because the path toward which Allah the Most High had directed him is the true path and now, with passage of time, the world is testifying to its truth. Thirty years ago, after being informed by God, he made the pronouncement that people will gradually accept him and a time will come when his acceptance will compare to that of the other righteous servants of Allah amongst Muslims.

Members of our organization (*Abmadiyya-Anjuman Ishaati-Islam Lahore*) should also remember that until they spend their wealth and their lives in propagating the Word of God they are practically not with the *Mujaddid* of this age. Nor are they at the level of belief that Allah wants them to be. Belief without spending in the way of Allah cannot benefit them. People who are poor and facing financial hardships, or people who are employed in offices, usually manage to make their monthly donations, but I am sorry to say that those who own property and are wealthy do not open up their hearts for spending in the way of Allah. The rich find it very hard to spend in the way of Allah and the love of wealth does not allow them to part with it. A person with limited means can easily figure out the amount he has to give for *Zakat* (obligatory contribution in the way of Allah). When a rich person figures out the amount he has to give, he feels reluctant. He does not seem to understand that God who has given him hundreds of thousands is only asking him to spend a few thousand in His way and he should not hesitate to do so.

We have fallen short of meeting this test of faith. Calling ourselves Ahmadi or Muslim and not following the Divine guidance

can be of no benefit. All this does is label us as Ahmadis by others, but this has no value in the eyes of God. Whether you are an Ahmadi or a non-Ahmadi your belief can only reach perfection before God if you sacrifice your wealth and lives in His way. Superficial observance will be of no benefit to those who cannot make this sacrifice.

People claim that by serving the government, one's belief is affected. It is my observation that those who are in service are more conscientious about spending in Allah's way. Many of them give a tenth of their income. This, however, seems to be a very difficult proposition for wealthy merchants and property owners who cannot contribute even two or three percent of their income. I therefore specifically want to draw their attention to the fact that one day they will be answerable before God. They will not be asked how many houses they had, or how much land they possessed, or what other luxuries of life they had. They will only be asked how much they spent in the way of Allah. This profusion of accumulated wealth will indeed become a source of difficulty for them. In this regard, the Holy Quran states:

“On the day when it will be heated in the Fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs will be branded with it: This is what you hoarded up for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard” (9:35)

People spend their wealth without hesitation for their nation and country and for the sake of false praise and honor in this world. There are also those who spend large amounts of money to try to annihilate the truth, but alas! There are very few who open up their hearts to spend in the way of Allah.

March 11, 1921

**Mere Acceptance of Allah is of No Benefit Unless a
Relationship is Established with Him**

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَدَيْنَهَا بَاطِنًا وَالْأَرْضَ مُسَوِّمًا ﴿٤٧﴾

And the heaven, We raised it high with power, and We are Makers of the vast extent. (51:47)

وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمُهَيِّدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

And the earth, We have spread it out. How well We prepared it! (51:48)

وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful. (51:49)

فَعِزُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

So flee to Allah. Surely I am a plain warner to you from Him. (51:50)

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾

And do not set up with Allah another god. Surely I am a plain warner to you from Him. (51:51)

كَذَلِكَ مَا آتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مُجْنُونٌ ﴿٥٢﴾

Thus there came not a messenger to those before them but they said: An enchanter or a madman! (51:52)

أَتَوَاصَوْا بِهَذَا بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَآغُوتٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

Have they charged each other with this? Nay, they are an inordinate people. (51:53)

فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِمَلُومٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

So turn away from them, for thou art not to blame (51:54)

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And remind, for reminding profits the believers. (51:55)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me. (51:56)

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾

I desire no sustenance from them, nor do I desire that they should feed Me. (51:57)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾

Surely Allah is the Bestower of sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong. (51:58)

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَذْنُوبًا مِثْلَ ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

Surely the lot of the wrongdoers is as was the lot of their companions, so let them not ask Me to hasten on. (51:59)

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

Woe, then, to those who disbelieve because of that day of theirs which they are promised! (51:60)

Natural Phenomena Presented to Explain Spiritual Truths

Many verses of the Holy Quran draw our attention to nature and natural phenomena. This is with the intent to explain and substantiate the spiritual truths being presented. Human beings generally have a tendency to accept what they have experienced. It is this personal experience that serves as proof for them, to further strengthen their conviction. In order to prove the existence of Allah the Most High, the Holy Quran has frequently used this technique. In some verses, Allah draws our attention to the fact that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, while other verses point toward the quickening of the dead earth by means of rainwater. Various natural phenomena are thus frequently presented in this manner.

Existence of the Divine Being

The fact is that existence of the Divine Being forms the basis of all religions. To prove the existence of the Divine Being is even a more formidable challenge than establishing the need for religion itself. In this respect, the Holy Quran has presented us both with rational arguments and the testimony of individuals, who have brought the message of guidance and wisdom to all nations and countries during different time periods in history. In addition, the Holy Quran appeals to our sense of observation and personal experiences based upon rational deduction. In these verses, our attention is drawn to the daily human observation and experience in the words:

“And the heaven, We raised it high with power, and We are Makers of the vast extent.” “And the earth, We have spread it out. How well We prepared it.” “And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful.”

Existence of Pairs in Nature

The relationship of the heavens and the earth is analogous to that of a pair, the heavens being endowed with the power to exert its effect, while the earth has the ability to be receptive to it. How does this union manifest itself? Rainwater falls from the heavens and the earth responds to it by displaying its hidden powers and abilities. This relationship between the heavens and the earth can be perceived by even the most casual observer, but Allah the Most High tells us that this creation of pairs is a universal phenomenon: “And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful.” There is nothing in the world that does not have a pair. This finds further expression in the Holy Quran in the following verses:

“Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they know not!” (36:36)

“And thou seest the earth barren, but when We send down thereon water, it stirs and swells and brings forth a beautiful (growth) of every kind (in pairs)” (22:5)

At the time the Holy Quran declared this truth, people of knowledge and understanding were aware of only a few pairs in nature. Modern scientific research has confirmed this finding in nature and it will receive further affirmation as scientific knowledge advances.

Man’s knowledge is limited and advances slowly but God who is aware of the future informs us thus:

“And We have made to grow therein of every beautiful kind (in pairs)” (50:7)

This verse refers to the existence of pairs in vegetation.

In fact, according to the Holy Quran: “And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful.” “So flee to Allah. Surely I am a plain warner to you from Him.”

Relationship of the Human Soul with God

After drawing attention toward the analogy of pairing between the heavens and the earth and the existence of pairs in all of nature, our attention is drawn to God in the words, "So flee to Allah." This is to make us understand that the relationship of the human soul with God creates a pair of sorts. This relationship is put forward as proof of the existence of the Divine Being.

If we ponder upon the history of the world, we observe that philosophers have also been called the teachers of goodness. They have done a great service for humanity by writing books of philosophy, especially in the field of innate human potential and character. These individuals give deep thought to world events and exposition of the truth underlying different things. They have written exhaustive works about different branches of knowledge and works of arts and crafts making, very subtle discoveries in these fields. They are, however, unable to accomplish the task of guiding man from the way of evil toward the path of righteousness. This task can only be accomplished by reformers; this group includes all the righteous servants of Allah and His messengers. There is a very clear difference between a philosopher and a prophet, for the former have never succeeded in bringing people from evil into righteousness. This task is always accomplished by those appointed by Allah for the purpose. We can search the pages of world history in vain to discover a philosopher who has brought about such revolutionary changes as accomplished by those appointed by God for the task of reformation. Reformers came to different nations during different time periods in history. Upon cursory examination their teachings may seem to conflict with each other, but their lives manifest one universal truth. Whether they came a thousand years ago, or in this day and age, in any region of the world, their common goal has always been to bring people from evil toward goodness.

It is useless to try to see God with one's eyes, for the persona of God is immaterial and the human eye only has the capability to visualize material objects. To visualize what human vision is unable to comprehend, there exists another methodology. At first, the principle is hypothesized and then the truth of its existence is proven by the results it produces.

For example we have the principle of gravitational pull. This force cannot be visualized by the human eye. It was first conceptualized and then its existence was proven on the basis of experiments and the results it produces. In the beginning, it was only a theoretical principle but now its existence is well proven. Similarly, no one earlier on thought that air, water, and electricity could be brought under control to perform all kinds of useful tasks. At that stage no one could prove by arguments that these elements could be brought under human control. When, however, someone demonstrated that these elements could be controlled, there remained no doubt that these are meant for our benefit. Just as man can control physical forces and use them for his benefit, similarly, by controlling his own desires he can benefit spiritually and morally.

Nurturing of the Human Soul

Human beings are a composite of two elements: the human body and the spirit. Just as we benefit by controlling the forces of nature, so it is possible for us to similarly benefit from our spiritual endowments. While atheists contend that there are no means to nurture the spirit, followers of religion believe that there are certainly resources available to strengthen the human spirit by means of the guidance and heavenly light that are provided for its growth. This argument comes down to one simple question. Has anybody, by establishing a relationship with God, ever received such abundance of spiritual and moral sustenance? If these examples are nonexistent, then certainly the existence of the Divine being becomes doubtful. Mere acknowledgement of the existence of the Divine being, however, is of no

benefit unless we are able to establish a relationship with Him. In one sense even the atheist accepts His existence by acknowledging the first cause. But this acknowledgement can be of no benefit to him unless he establishes a relationship with God. Human experience comes to the assistance of religion at this stage for any revolutionary change toward goodness has always been accomplished at the hands of those religiously inclined. Even in this day and age, in its imperfect state, it is only the force of religious teachings that keeps mankind more or less on the path of righteousness. In its perfect form, which exists in Islam, it guides people in a complete manner toward the path of truth. This is the difference between Islam and other religions. There are hundreds of righteous within the fold of Islam who have a perfect relationship with God while in other religions this spiritual relationship does not reach that stage of excellence. Such individuals have received great spiritual and moral benefits by establishing a relationship with God and have purified thousands as a result of it. It is also an undeniable truth that periodically such individuals have arisen amongst Muslims.

Faith in God Essential for Moral Development

Who, one may ask, has been more successful out of these two groups i.e., the philosophers or the reformers? Philosophers do not claim to have any relationship with God. Reformers, who have advanced goodness and moral development in the world, have received great spiritual benefits by establishing a relationship with Allah the Most High. As a result of certain circumstances, the reflection of Divine goodness that their characters portrayed was misunderstood and erroneous teachings were attributed toward them. It cannot, however, be denied that because of their efforts, people did acquire spiritual and moral purification. From this we can conclude that without a belief in God, the world cannot make progress in goodness and moral development. This is also certain, that the social and cultural order cannot be maintained without teaching righteousness and em-

phasizing moral development. People and nations who have accepted God have evolved morally and culturally and those who have rejected Him have never been successful. Even in the world today, faith and belief in God is the basis of peace — without it these civilized nations will turn to savagery.

Fear of God and accountability before Him is essential for maintenance of world peace. Progress in spirituality and morality cannot be achieved without awareness of the attributes of Allah. Just observe the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It was by teaching and creating correct awareness of the attributes of Allah that the Holy Prophet was able to bring about a spiritual and moral revolution amongst the savage tribes of Arabia. One cannot find any comparable example in the annals of history. He found them in the worst and most decrepit state of morality and was able to advance them to the highest levels of spirituality, a truth acknowledged even by enemies and hostile critics of Islam. The world is also a witness to the progress Muslims made in culture and civilization after the advent of Islam. This also proves that it is only through moral development that a culture can evolve. A firm conviction in accountability in the Hereafter is also established by a belief in the existence of God. It further confirms that the greater and more accurate the knowledge of the Divine being there is, the more advanced will be the level of moral development in a society.

Now if you do a comparative study of all the reformers and the philosophers of this world, you will discover that it has always been the reformers appointed by God who were able to establish goodness over evil in this world. If you leave all other religions and only look at Islam, you will find that there have been many of its followers who made progress to the highest levels of moral and spiritual development and were instrumental in curing many of the most dangerous spiritual illnesses. All these endowments connected with tombs of saintly personages that you see are in fact a tribute to those pious individuals whose spiritual and moral qualities are a source of great attrac-

tion to many. By observing these facts, one can conclude that these individuals certainly had a connection with God. As a result of this relationship, they made great progress not only in the development of their own character, but were also able to bring about a remarkable change in others. No group of philosophers brought about such a spiritual revolution, or influenced the character of others in such a manner. They may number in the hundreds of thousands but they do not have the spiritual dynamism to attract or bring about such a moral change amongst people. This clearly proves that belief in the existence of the Divine Being is the real foundation of human moral development, without which a human being does not deserve to be called human. For this reason, although mankind may have turned away from religion, he is unable to give it up altogether. Just as life cannot be sustained without sunlight, the world would plunge into spiritual darkness without acknowledging the existence of the Divine Being, at which time peace and harmony would become nonexistent. Those who acknowledge the existence of God, even with the concept of trinity or many gods, are better off than those who deny His existence.

The foundation of a society cannot be laid on the basis of the denial of the existence of the Divine Being. Even those religions that are considered as denying the existence of God have some concept of the Higher Power. Even though their concept may be defective, they are better off than the deniers. One such religion is Buddhism. According to their concept, different time periods in the world are divided into different ages or *yugs*. In each age, a Buddha is born, by concentrating upon whose attributes or by following his footstep, one gains salvation. The truth underlying this concept is the same — for they consider their Buddha as the equivalent of God. For the purpose of moral development, they consider a defective being as a Higher Being and focus upon his attributes to make spiritual progress. They cannot discard religion altogether. The more a religion can inform us of the attributes of God, the greater is its ability to at-

tract people toward it and advance their moral development. If you want to differentiate between a true and a false claimant of reformation, then consider if he has propagated goodness and morality. Those who do away with evil and enjoin goodness are always righteous and have a relationship with God. This relationship with God is the only force that has brought about reformation in the past and will be able to do so in the future.

Faith to Be Put into Practice

What I have explained today is that beliefs influence one's actions. Mere acceptance without deeds does not suffice. Acknowledging the existence of God can be of no benefit unless one is able to establish a relationship with Him. In the very beginning of the Holy Quran we are informed:

“This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty,

Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what we have given them” (2:2-3)

Those who keep their duty are the ones who believe in the Unseen and also keep up prayer. Prayer is essential for establishing a relationship with God. This is why the Hadith refers to prayer as the *Mebraj of the momin* i.e. ‘spiritual ascension of the believer’ for it brings the believer closest to God. It has also been referred to by the Holy Prophet as a source of coolness (tranquility) for his eyes, for while praying the believer sees God with his spiritual eye. The Holy Prophet also said that one should worship Allah with such humility as if he is seeing Allah. Stand in prayer as if you are seeing Allah, otherwise, the prayer in which one's attention is distracted can become a stumbling block in the path of spiritual development. Verbal acknowledgment and acceptance are not enough until the heart affirms that faith and strives to establish a relationship with God. Only this can lead to spiritual and moral development. Each individual should try to form a relationship with God. This is brought about by the keeping up of prayer, which in the words of the Holy

Quran is the greatest force keeping one away from indecency and evil:

“Surely prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest force” (29:45)

It is this type of prayer, when properly understood and affirmed by the heart and deeds, that leads man to a higher level of spiritual existence. We should not forget the remembrance of Allah the Most High in our daily pursuits of life. Acknowledging His attributes through prayer and practice and forming a relationship with Him should be the goal and purpose of our lives.

March 15, 1921

**Allah changes not the condition of a people, until they
change their own condition.**

*Marriage sermon delivered
on the occasion of matrimonial service for
Mr. Barkat Ali son of Karim Bakhsb.*

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah
and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and mes-
senger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed
devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ
وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ①

O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you
from a single being and created its mate of the same
(kind), and spread from these two many men and
women. And keep your duty to Allah, by Whom you de-
mand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of re-
lationship. Surely Allah is ever a Watcher over you. (4:1)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah, as it ought to be kept, and die not unless you are Muslims. (3:102)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾

O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and speak straight words: (33:70)

يُضِلِّحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ

فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

He will put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he indeed achieves a mighty success. (33:71)

Holy Quran the Commandment of Allah

I have just recited a few verses of the Holy Quran. What is the Holy Quran? It is the commandment of the greatest king of all, the masters of the heavens and the earth. It is the message brought to all mankind by our Holy Prophet Muhammad. It is a magnificent commandment from the best of judges for His subjects. Are you all familiar with what fate lies in store for those who disobey the commandments of an ordinary ruler or a king? They have to face the force of the law and are punished accordingly. You heard in the news last year how harshly those who were even suspected of disobeying government directives were dealt with. They were put in prison and subjected to various punitive measures. Recently, we saw that Sheikh Yaqub Hasan, who is a well-respected citizen, was imprisoned for not following directives of the district administrator. We can thus assume that any authority will exercise its power to punish those who disobey its commandments. It should be our firm belief that the Holy Quran is the commandment of the One who is above all kings, who provides us all with sustenance. The heavens and earth are all treasures of His bounties. We can estimate the mag-

nificance of His power from this, that He can destroy the most powerful of kings and their kingdoms in a split second.

The Power of God

The Holy Quran mentions many nations whose power and strength were well known. They were destroyed in a short period of time by Allah the Most High because of their rebellion and disobedience. One such example was the people of the nation of Aad, who were the builders of large cities, tall buildings, and strong fortifications. They also had excellent physiques. They disobeyed the commandments of Allah the Most High and were eliminated as a consequence of their behavior. The Holy Quran describes their condition after the destruction: "As if they were trunks of hollow palm-trees," (69:7) their condition was like those of fallen down palm trees. What in reality is the significance of man in comparison with the Power of God? In fact, the power of the whole world fades into insignificance before the Might of God.

In our lifetime, we have witnessed the fate of great powers whose supremacy was curtailed right in front of our eyes. The Russian state was a great power whose dominion extended over the lives of many. When it came under the judgment of God, all its wealth and military might could not be of any help. One can visit the places where, at one time, there stood grand palaces but now are deserted graveyards. You can go to Delhi, where in days gone by, great and powerful emperors ruled over a vast empire. Today, not only are there no traces of their splendor, no one even remembers their name. All these mighty kings are of no significance before the majesty and glory of God. The God Who is the possessor of such greatness has sent to you His commandment in the form of the Holy Quran. Since the day you recited the *Kalima* (formula of faith) and acknowledged being Muslim you pledged that you will act upon any commandment given to you by Allah the Most High. Reciting the formula of faith does not mean that you recited a few words and thus fulfilled your duty.

Its implication is that you are submitting yourselves completely before the command of Allah. Whenever you are questioned, you again recite the formula of faith to affirm that you are Muslim and that you firmly believe in all the tenets of Islam and intend to act upon them.

Consequences of Relinquishing the Commands of Allah

All the adversities that Muslims have to face are rooted in their failure to follow the commandments of Allah. They have become so oblivious of their faith that they attribute their difficulties and humiliation to the hand of fate. The fate of Muslims during the time when they followed the tenets of Islam was certainly not so bad; in fact, it was the best of all. They were the dominant power in the world. All of Asia was under their rule; most of Europe and Africa were part of their domain; and their flag flew over Spain, Vienna, and Austria. Today they lament the loss of power and kingdom but do not question the reasons behind their downfall. Allah's rule is that, without reason, He does not take away a kingdom even from disbelievers. The Holy Quran tells us: "Surely Allah changes not the condition of a people, until they change their own condition" (13:11).

If Muslims today were as faithful as those who saw and accepted the Holy Prophet, they would not be in such a state of humiliation in the world. The revered companions of the Holy Prophet were so much in love with the Holy Quran that they manifested great zeal to gain its knowledge and put it into practice. This was the secret of their success. We have discarded the Holy Quran and do not even have as much respect for it as we would have for an ordinary letter. We do not rest until we read a letter or become aware of what is in it. Do we not even have as much respect for the Holy Prophet (we seek Allah's protection from this) as we would have for an ordinary employee who brings in a letter from the court? How scared are you of disobeying its orders? Have we even tried to find out what is written in the Holy Quran and what directions it gives us?

This is how Muslims have relinquished the commandments of Allah the Most High and He has also abandoned them. They may contrive many schemes to retrieve their lost honor, but until they follow the teachings of the Holy Quran, they cannot achieve success. They make up many other plans to be successful, but do not ponder upon the word of the Quran nor do they teach it to their children. Now you tell me, what kind of treatment do you expect from Allah the Most High whose directive you subject to such disregard? Granted, you show outward respect to the Holy Quran and utter its name in a respectful manner. You also wrap it up in brocade and put it in an elevated spot on your bookshelf. Tell me, if you took the order of someone in authority, and put it in a safe place but did not comply with it, would the authority be pleased with this strange mode of showing respect? Or will he chastise you for this behavior? Similarly, wrapping up the Holy Quran in fine material is not giving it genuine respect unless you put its teachings into practice. If you have faith in it, put it into practice. Not doing so can be of no benefit to you. This world's life is temporary and is followed by the Life Hereafter where you will be held accountable for your deeds. Be concerned for the Life Hereafter and obey the commandments of Allah.

Marriage and the Keeping of One's Duty to Allah and His Creation

In the three verses of the Holy Quran that I have recited I followed the practice of the Holy Prophet would recite these on the occasion of marriage ceremonies. The first of these verses is:

“O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah, as it ought to be kept, and die not unless you are Muslims” (3:102)

Keeping your duty to God does not mean that you fulfill one duty and discard ten others. It implies compliance with all duties assigned by Allah the Most High. If a person is thirsty, his thirst will only be quenched when he receives a substantial amount of water. Similarly, we cannot complete the right of discharging our duty toward God until we act upon all His commandments.

At the time of your death you should be a Muslim i.e., in a complete state of submission.

This verse is followed by the following two.

O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and speak straight words: (33:70)

He will put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he indeed achieves a mighty success (33:71)

You might think that by earning wealth and having children, your objective in life is achieved. Allah the Most High states that you can achieve the greatest objective in life by following Allah the Most High and His Prophet. If you do not follow the principles and practices of Islam, do not perform your obligatory prayers, and do not fast, you have failed to achieve success. In fact, you are a failure.

Allah the Most High has ordained payment of obligatory charity at 2.5% of your savings, to be given to the poor, the needy, and the orphans. This is compulsory for both men and women. Whoever meets this obligation achieves success. Whoever fails to do so meets failure. Similarly, Allah has ordained telling the truth. Those who do so will be rewarded; those who do not will be at a loss. In a similar manner it is also essential to not only nurture your children physically, but also to nurture them spiritually and educate them.

Allah further tells us in the Holy Quran:

“O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two many men and women. And keep your duty to Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship. Surely Allah is ever a Watcher over you” (4:1)

Allah the Most High has mentioned the rights of women along with the rights and duties we owe to Him. Just as it is

absolutely necessary to fulfill our duties toward God, it is absolutely essential to safeguard the rights of women. In this regard the Holy Quran further emphasizes:

“O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to take women as heritage against (their) will. Nor should you straiten them by taking part of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifest indecency. And treat them kindly. Then if you hate them, it may be that you dislike a thing while Allah has placed abundant good in it” (4:19)

It is also forbidden to threaten divorce and abandonment of conjugal rights with minor disagreements. In this respect the Holy Quran states:

“And you cannot do justice between wives, even though you wish (it), but be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination, so that you leave her in suspense” (4:129)

This type of thought process and actions are contrary to the commands of Allah and His messenger and are akin to the worship of one's low desires.

A woman came to the Holy Prophet and said that her marriage to a certain individual had taken place but she wanted to seek annulment. The Holy Prophet asked her, what were his flaws? She replied that she could not find any fault in him but she herself did not want to live with him. Upon hearing this, the Holy Prophet asked her if she was willing to give up the fruit orchard her husband had given her as the marriage dowry. She agreed to this and the Holy Prophet decided in favor of her annulment.

“But be not disinclined (from one) with total disinclination.” These words prohibit and warn against leaving women in a state where their marital and conjugal rights are not being fulfilled nor are they being divorced.

Muslims have disobeyed this commandment. As a result, many Muslim women have become Christians in order to get divorced.

When you do not give them their rights in a proper manner, they follow this method. As a consequence, Islam suffers a great loss. The Holy Prophet said: "The best amongst you is he who treats his wife the best." Good treatment of wives has thus been set up as the standard of moral excellence by the Holy Prophet. Read the life history of the Holy Prophet and you will learn how well he treated his wives and overlooked their failings. On one occasion he gave the example of the likeness of a woman to a rib. If you try to make them follow your will in all matters, the result will be a fracturing of the relationship.

When the Holy Quran says: "And women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner," how can you then make them obey all your wishes?

There is no doubt that you are given a degree above them, but in doing so Allah has increased your responsibility. The strong have been advised to control their anger and not to become angry with slight provocation, nor to start abusing them physically in trivial matters such as putting the proper amount of salt in food. Maintaining the household and raising children are onerous responsibilities that they discharge. Husbands only realize the true value of their work and contribution when they themselves have to assume these duties. If men have to take care of children, they soon realize how difficult a task it is. The Holy Prophet emphasized kind treatment of women in his last sermon. It behooves you to treat them gently, educate them, and teach them your religion so that they can better take care of the children.

These are a few words with which I exhort you. The purpose of this gathering is to announce the marriage of Mr. Barkat Ali, son of Mr. Karim Baksh, and Bashir-Begum, daughter of Mr. Islam Deen. The marriage dowry (*mahr*) has been fixed at fifteen hundred rupees. Fixing these marriage dowries in exorbitant amounts of hundreds of thousands or trivialities like wings of flies and mosquitoes is making a mockery of your religion. This

is the property right of the woman that Islam has bestowed upon her and should be given to her. With this, I declare this marital union. May Allah bless it!

March 17 1921

**Marriage is an Occasion of Commitment to Very
Important Responsibilities**

Marriage of Abdul Shakoor S/O Jamal-ud-Din

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ
الْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ①

O people, keep your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind), and spread from these two many men and women. And keep your duty to Allah, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship. Surely Allah is ever a Watcher over you. (4:1)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ②

O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah, as it ought to be kept, and die not unless you are Muslims. (3:102)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٣١﴾

O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and speak straight words: (33:70)

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ

فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

He will put your deeds into a right state for you, and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he indeed achieves a mighty success. (33:71)

Affluence Leads to Lack of Awareness of God

In times of celebration, man frequently forgets God. The more affluent a society, the more advanced this state of lack of awareness of God becomes. Those who have studied the Holy Quran know that it mentions not one, but several nations that were given material wealth. They were eventually destroyed by Allah the Most High because of their rebelliousness. Allah the Most High tells us that when He sends His prophets and messengers for the spiritual revival of people, their advent is accompanied with some tribulations in the form of sickness, grief and difficulties. The reason for these is not that Allah the Most High is pleased to bring such tribulations upon people; rather the purpose of such trials is so their hearts may soften and they bow down in humility before God. One frequently remembers God during difficult times, but forgets Him during times of ease and contentment. Those who are facing trials and tribulations remember God and their hearts turn toward Him. Affluent nations, living in the lap of luxury and with abundance of material provisions, tend to forget God.

Purpose of the Marriage Sermon

Today, the occasion of this marriage is also a day of celebration and happiness and in this happiness and celebration, it is quite possible to forget God. People consider it solely a day of joy and gaiety. For those whose lives are being bonded together for the rest of their lives, it is a day that realizes grave responsibility which will define the joys and sorrows of their united futures. This is the day when two individuals make a mutual commitment to fulfill their rights and duties toward one another. For a father who gives away his daughter, whom he has nurtured from her childhood with love and care, this is a day of mixed emotions. Having accomplished an important responsibility he feels contented, but his heart also experiences pangs of anguish over the pending separation from his daughter. The home where the bride goes will also be faced with a new responsibility.

The groom, who did not have any responsibilities, now makes a commitment to become responsible. He is bound to discharge his new set of duties and responsibilities. It is therefore not just a day of celebration, but a very important and necessary event. The Holy Prophet therefore made the marriage sermon mandatory so that both the bride and groom are made aware of their rights and duties. The woman who is becoming a part of another family is told how she is to treat her new relatives and that it is essential for her to be respectful toward them. Similarly the man she is marrying is made aware of his responsibilities.

This is the objective of delivering the marriage sermon, although these days it is considered a mere formality. At this time, whereas it is my duty to remind the marrying couple of their rights and responsibilities, it is also essential for me to remind them not to forget God on this joyful occasion. This is necessary, because at times of celebration and gaiety there is a tendency to forget God. Allah the Most High does not want His creation to be forgetful of Him on any occasion. He states this in the Holy Quran:

“So that yoreu grieve not for what has escaped you, nor exult in that which He has given you. And Allah loves not any arrogant boaster” (57:23)

Extravagance and Exultation to be Avoided during Celebrations

So when you receive a favor, do not exult in a manner that you forget the One Who has bequeathed that favor upon you. People frequently lose control on such occasions. Those who call themselves Muslims manifest behavior that does not have any connection with the example of the Holy Prophet. They follow the footsteps of the devil on such occasions by indulging in extravagant spending, fireworks and musical festivities.

Allah does not love such behavior by Muslims. Many people indulge in these activities to seek honor amongst their family and relatives. They worry about the response of their kin should they not participate in such activities. These are all false pretenses of worldly honor. I was repeatedly asked to give my opinion about one such activity, namely the playing of a musical band on such occasions. I do not like such festivities. On this particular occasion, since both parties are Ahmadis, I want to tell you this, that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not approve of such activities. He got married and had his sons and daughters married but did not have a musical band on any of these occasions. Similarly, Maulavi Noor-ud-din Sahib did not have such festivities on the occasion of the marriage of his son. You can go still further and you will find no such precedence in the marriages of the Holy Prophet or when he had his daughter married. If this festivity has no other disadvantage, is it not enough that valuable resources are misspent? This amount of money could be spent in a more useful manner and it is inappropriate to waste it for the purpose of pleasing family and friends. The thought that such humiliation before kin would be unbearable and the social disgrace would somehow be a threat to your existence is absurd. Were those pure and righteous individuals

whose examples we follow humiliated before their families because they did not arrange for a musical band on the occasion of their marriages? Did they become less honorable in the eyes of the world? By calling yourself an Ahmadi you have already accepted a form of social ostracization, You have only acquired this honor by choosing to sacrifice your worldly desires for the sake of your religion. By humiliating yourself before others, you became honorable in the eyes of God. Those belonging to our organization should abstain altogether from such useless customs. Real honor comes from following the commandments of God. If you discard such customs for Him you will be happy and content.

Mutual Rights in Marriage

The other essential subject that needs to be addressed is that on this occasion two individuals establish a new relationship. They have mutual rights toward each other and it is essential to mention those rights. Men have some rights over women. Since women are not present in this audience, I will mention the rights that they have over men.

The Holy Quran tells us about these rights in these words: “And women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner” (2:229).

What those rights are, and how they are to be fulfilled in practice, is stated as: “And treat them kindly” (4:19).

This verse tells us to console them with kindness and treat them in the best manner possible.

In one *hadith* a woman has been likened to a rib and it is said that if you try to straighten it you will break it. What this means is that those husbands who try to make their wives follow their opinion in all matters are making an error. Men and women have been created as pairs so that through marital union they are a source of quiet of mind, love and compassion for each

other, but many people spoil this relationship and a life of paradise becomes hell. They do not treat their wives well. Trivial matters, like putting the proper amount of salt in food, become a source of friction and physical violence toward women. This is extremely reprehensible conduct and should not occur.

The following anecdote is from the life of the Holy Prophet who took the advice of one of his wives and quit the use of honey. In this matter he was guided by Allah the Most High:

“O Prophet, why dost thou forbid (thyself) that which Allah has made lawful for thee? Seekest thou to please thy wives? And Allah is Forgiving Merciful” (66:1)

In this verse, Allah has advised against making a lawful thing unlawful in order to please your wife. It is certainly prohibited to make an unlawful thing lawful for this purpose. In all matters seek their counsel as far as possible. Bear hardship upon yourself and show patience toward verbal excesses or unpleasant deeds on their part. However, in order to please them, do not make the lawful what is unlawful or vice versa. It is a small matter to make the lawful unlawful, but making the unlawful lawful is a great sin. Do not lie and accept unlawful gratuities so you can provide your wives with expensive clothes and jewelry or so your children can live in luxury. Do not accept bribes, steal and accept the unlawful for their sake. Do not give up God’s pleasure in order to please them. Do not give up prayer or stop giving *zakaat* (obligatory charity) to meet their demands and continue to help orphans, the needy and the poor. Besides all this, try to do what pleases her as far as is possible and bear her unpleasant remarks and deeds with patience and tolerance to seek the pleasure of Allah.

The Holy Prophet was at the house of one of his wives when another wife sent in a bowl of food for him. This upset the wife he was attending to and she asked the maid to drop the food, as a result of which the bowl broke and its contents were spilled. A worldly man would certainly have burst into anger on such an

occasion but the Holy Prophet manifested patience, calmly collected the spilt food and shared it with his guests without even a minor rebuke to his wife or the maid.

The Holy Prophet had many daughters, one of whom survived to when the Holy Prophet was the head of state in Medina. Whenever she came to visit him he would stand up in her honor to welcome her. Your wife deserves even more respect than the daughter. Lying and employing unlawful means for their benefit are prohibited. The *hadith*, which says it is acceptable to lie to your wife is incorrect, as is the saying that lying to maintain peace is better than telling the truth if it will cause a disturbance. Remember, telling the truth or any truthful matter, is never the source of discord. In short, do not disobey the commandments of Allah for the sake of your wives.

The Holy Quran states: "Men are the maintainers of women" (4:34). They are also responsible for their proper upbringing and education. If your wife disobeys the commandments of Allah she should be gently counseled. If husbands are good role models, their wives quickly pick up on their goodness and follow them. Husbands usually want to reform their wives first, but if they reform themselves first, their wives will follow in their footsteps. Women are very quickly inspired by virtue. I have briefly presented before you these matters that deal with the mutual relationship of man and woman.

The purpose of this gathering is to announce a marriage. The marriage of Mr. Abdul Shakoor son of Mr. Jamal Din with Rehmat Bibi daughter of Mr. Abdul Rehman has been agreed upon and the dowry of five hundred rupees has been fixed.

March 18, 1921

Trials and Tribulations:

In times of distress and suffering one should remain patient and guard against inequity

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

لَتُبْلَوْنَ فِيْ أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيْرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

You will certainly be tried in your property and your persons. And you will certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from the idolaters much abuse. And if you are patient and keep your duty, surely this is an affair of great resolution. (3:186)

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْفُرُنَّهُ فَنبذوه وراء ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا فَبَيِّنُوا مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

And when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: You shall explain it to men and shall not hide it. But they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it. So evil is that which they buy. (3:187)

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٧﴾

Think not that those who exult in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done — think not them to be safe from the chastisement; and for them is a painful chastisement. (3:188)

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

And Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is Possessor of power over all things. (3:189)

Trials and Tribulations and Verbal Abuse at the Hands of Idolaters and People of the Book

Two statements are made in the first verse: "You will certainly be tried in your property and persons and hear much abuse from those who have been given the Book before you and the idolaters." Upon cursory examination, this does not appear to be an unusual announcement. One quite often has to face insult and injury from those in opposition. During the time of the Holy Prophet, Muslims suffered great loss of life and property. Even before the battles in Makkah, their wealth and property were pilaged and plundered and many lost their lives. They were subjected to all kinds of torture and there were hardly any amongst them who did not face adversity. Neither the rich nor the poor were spared. Hadhrat Uthman, who was a rich man, suffered much grief and poor slaves were bitterly persecuted. The battles present an even worse and more painful example of this type of behavior.

Battle of Uhud

Let us examine the battle of Uhud. The Holy Prophet and his companions suffered tremendously during this engagement. The Holy Prophet was injured and bleeding from his head and had fallen into a pit. All forms of insult and abuse had been hurled at him by the disbelievers. This verse was revealed at a time of great affliction in the year 3A.H. after the battle of Uhud. A period of great distress had just ended, when he was informed of further trials and tribulations to follow, in the form of loss of property and person. Before the battle of Uhud, Muslims had been subjected to much verbal abuse. The disbelievers of the Quraish were experts in composing such invectives in their poetry. The Jews of Medina also joined them in slandering and composing sexually explicit lyrics against chaste Muslim women. They also tormented the Holy Prophet by using malicious language. For example, they would address him in a gathering and instead of using the word *ra 'i-na* (2:104) (meaning excuse us), with a slight change of accent they would use the word *ra'ina*, which had the connotation of ignorance or stupidity. Similarly, instead of saying, "*Asalaamoalaikum*" (Peace be upon you), they would say "*Asaamoalaikum*" (meaning death be upon you). Those who openly manifested such insolent behavior were certainly capable of secret acts of malice and persecution. Loss of life and property had thus occurred before the battle of Uhud and certainly during it.

A Prophetic Reference to the Future

Because these verses were revealed after the battle of Uhud, one can conclude that the loss of property, person, and abuse specifically referred to here was more of a prophetic nature. By mentioning the coming of such tribulations after the great losses of Uhud, attention is drawn toward tribulations of a much larger proportion that were to occur in the future. What could be the reason for mentioning these future events in relationship to the battle of Uhud? In fact, the verses relating to Uhud occur in the

chapter *Al Imran*. It is also generally accepted that the first eighty verses of chapter *Al Imran* relate to Christianity. The Holy Prophet used these verses as a reference point in his discussions with the Najran delegation. His challenge of the Deprecatory Prayer (*Mubahila*) to this delegation is also mentioned in verse (3:61). Chapter *Al-Baaqarah* refers repeatedly to the Jewish faith, while *Al Imran* has a specific connection with Christianity. The chapter *Al Imran* begins and ends with the mention of Christianity.

In the middle of this chapter, we can see verses related to Uhud. In this battle, disbelievers had brought, along with their army, the famous Christian Monk Abu Amir. He was the first one to come forward in the battle of Uhud wearing the raiment of piety and chastity. The idea was to try to deceive the *Ansar* (people of Medina who had accepted Islam), because Abu Amir was well respected amongst the *Ansar*. This chapter and this battle, therefore, have a special relationship with Christianity. Mentioning Christianity along with losses of life and property indicates that in the future, Muslims will have to suffer even greater tribulations at the hands of those professing this faith. When Abu Sufyan (leader of Makkan disbelievers), finding the Muslims in dire straits during the battle of Uhud, called out in a loud voice, "Is Muhammad amongst you?" The Holy Prophet instructed his followers not to answer him. He then asked the same question about Hadhrat Abu Bakar and Hadhrat Umar, two of the Holy Prophet's most venerable companions. The Holy Prophet again gave the same instructions not to reply. Abu Sufyan proclaimed, "Indeed they must have all been killed, were they alive they would have answered." Upon hearing this, Umar could no longer remain silent. He responded, "O enemy of God we are all alive so that you may be humiliated."

Revival of Islam under Adverse Circumstances

From these statements, one can conclude that as a result of this battle, great loss of life had occurred amongst the Muslims.

Islam survived these great losses, though the enemy believed it had succeeded in destroying Islam. It will survive, even if it has to face these trials and tribulations again. Opponents may once more be under the impression that they have succeeded in destroying Islam but they will fail. Islam cannot be destroyed through their efforts. Just as Islam made significant progress after the battle of Uhud, it will once more be successful. Thus, on the one hand, these verses prophecy or predict that Muslims will face loss of property and lives at the hands of the people of the Book, alluding to the followers of Christianity. On the other hand, they inform us that though Islam may be in a dire predicament, this time of darkness will also be the harbinger of its acceptance and the manifestation of the light of its sun.

“You shall explain it to men and shall not hide it...” The grief and loss that Muslims have had to face in this age at the hands of the followers of Christianity have exceeded the losses they suffered in the past. How many Muslims lost their lives and belongings? Hundreds and thousands of them were killed, and their countries and personal properties were taken over by others. After the loss of life and property, the Holy Quran mentions Islam and Muslims being subjected to abusive and hurtful language. Though they had to face verbal abuse during the time of the Holy Prophet, the disbelievers of the time, despite their enmity and envy, were more fair-minded in comparison to the opponents of Islam today. Abu Sufyan, when he was called into the court of Heraclius of Rome, did not give false testimony against the Holy Prophet. The adversaries currently, however, subject the person of the Holy Prophet to vitriol of the worst kind, which is extremely hurtful to Muslims. They also publish their aspersions widely in their newspapers and magazines. From this, it appears that the Quranic prophecy, “And you will certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you, and from the idolaters much abuse,” is applicable to this day and age.

How to Respond to Verbal Abuse

We are given the prescription for this malady, “And if you are patient and keep your duty, surely this is an affair of great resolution.”

Patience encompasses two different meanings. One type of patience is to face difficult circumstances with forbearance and fortitude, and not give up hope. In terms of *Sbaria*, patience also means submitting to Allah’s commandments and keeping away from what he has forbidden with exemplary steadfastness. This verse implies both of these meanings. Remain steadfast in difficulties, accept what Allah has commanded, and abstain from what he has forbidden.

Keeping your duty (*tattaqu*) under these circumstances, means guarding against violation of human rights. Fulfill your duty towards Allah and abide by the rights of other human beings with due diligence. You do your work, and let them follow their undertakings.

The next verse refers to the people of the Book. “And when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: You shall explain it to men and shall not hide it. But they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it. So evil is that which they buy.”

All material wealth is in fact a meager return in comparison with Divine guidance. The Holy Quran tells us, “Say the enjoyment of this world is short” (4:77).

Meaning of Hiding the Covenant of Allah and Lessons for Muslims

Some commentators have interpreted 3:187 (“And when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: You shall explain it to men and shall not hide it. But they cast it behind their backs and took a small price for it. So evil is that which they buy.”) to indicate that they kept secret those prophe-

cies of the Bible which spoke of the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Other commentators hold the view that it refers to the ordinary commandments that were given in their Book. In any case, it is of no consequence. They were obligated by Divine command to explain and expound upon what they had been given and to not hide it. This includes the prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

All this contains a profound lesson for Muslims; in fact, it is an illustration of their condition today.

Whosoever is given Divine guidance, is given it with the stipulation that the recipient should manifest and explain it. Muslims, however, did not follow this guidance. In the early period of Islam, they propagated it with great fervor. When they became affluent, they became deeply absorbed in the comforts of life and focused their energies toward material acquisition. After the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, they started including stories and fables in their commentaries of the Holy Quran. They no longer paid attention to the commandments and prohibitions. As a consequence of this, they became oblivious to the real purpose of Divine guidance. This was equivalent to “hiding” the Holy Quran, though they had made a covenant not to hide it, but clearly explain and manifest its teaching. There is an outward pretense of respect in their actions. They wrap the Holy Quran in coverings of silk and brocade and display gestures and recite words indicative of reverence while opening or closing the Holy Book. They do not, however, read and try to understand its meaning.

Propagation of the Holy Quran

By using the words, “You shall explain it to men (*an-naas*),” the Holy Quran has indicated that this explanation should be both for Muslims, and for those who are not Muslims, but follow other religions. The Arabic word *an-naas* includes both Muslims and non-Muslims. The spiritual life of Muslims depends upon the

Holy Quran. It contains guidance in all matters. Leaving aside ordinary Muslims, even those who lecture on Islam may include references from many other sources in their talks. They, however, hardly make any mention of the Holy Quran, or seek guidance from it. If you look at those in charge of spiritual endowments, they have given up the Holy Quran and have replaced it with repeated recitals of their self-created formulas of worship. The Holy Quran, which was in reality revealed for the reformation of Muslims, has been entirely discarded. The purpose of explaining it to men in the words of the Holy Quran is to carry out its clear exposition amongst Muslims and people of all faiths. Muslims can succeed by following the Holy Quran's teachings and can guide others toward the way of truth. If this covenant to explain and manifest and not to hide the Book was taken from the People of the Book, Muslims are meant to be the immediate recipients of it. Otherwise, what would be the purpose of mentioning it in the Holy Quran? The intent of this is that:

You should abide by this covenant, explain and propagate it to Muslims, and to people of all other faiths. If you study it carefully, you will find within it the resolution of all your problems. If you reject it, your action will bring all forms of dilapidation upon you.

People frequently make tall claims, but fail to act upon them. Many would say that if there were a battle today against disbelievers, they would readily sacrifice their life and property. They, however, pay no attention to the greater jihad, which is presenting the truth and peaceful propagation of religion.

War and fighting (*Qital*) are limited by specific terms and conditions that arise only infrequently, as mentioned in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

“Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. And surely Allah is Able to assist them. Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say: ‘Our Lord is

Allah'. And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered, would have been pulled down. And surely Allah will help him who helps Him. Surely Allah is Strong, Mighty" (22:39, 40)
 "And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allah loves not the aggressors" (2:190)

These verses make it abundantly clear that this permission for defensive warfare is only appropriate when the need arises; that is, under the specific circumstances mentioned and with no other alternative available.

The Mighty Striving

The greatest Jihad is propagation of the Holy Quran as stated in: "So obey not the disbelievers, and strive against them a mighty striving with it" (25:52).

Fighting (defensive warfare under limited circumstances) is the lesser Jihad. Propagation of the Holy Quran is the greater Jihad.

The Hadith also tells us that after returning from a battle, the Holy Prophet said we have just returned from the lesser Jihad toward the greater Jihad. To convey the message of the Holy Quran to followers of other religions is part of the covenant taken from the Muslims and referred to earlier. Defense of Islam can be accomplished through defensive warfare, and by replying to objections raised against Islam. Propagation of Islam can only be carried out in one way: that is by means of the Holy Quran and by clearly explaining the limitations of defensive warfare outlined by the Holy Quran. This must be done by elucidation of the Quranic teachings. Propagation of Islam is therefore a very important and primary duty. Defensive warfare, the need for which only arises under special circumstances, is only of secondary importance in comparison. That is why, in the Quran and

Hadith, the former is called the greater Jihad and the latter is called the lesser Jihad.

For thirty years, a person (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) has repeatedly drawn your attention to the fact that your success depends upon propagation of Islam. Warfare and fighting, under the present circumstances, are no remedy for your suffering. Muslims, however, have not paid attention to this. On the contrary, Muslims doubt his intentions and ask what he has accomplished. While professing to be Muslims, they oppose him and do not follow the way he has shown. Why are objections raised against him when they do not follow his way? Neither do they themselves follow his path, nor do they let others tread on it. They are fully determined in their hostility toward him. The day when their preachers, leaders, and those in charge of their spiritual endowments start following the teachings of the Holy Quran and seek guidance from it, will certainly be the day of their success.

Exultant Behavior

After this Allah tells us: "Think not that those who exult in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done..."

On the one hand, we observe that those who are opposed to Islam gloat about whatever they have achieved. The condition of Muslims is also such that they are happy with what little they have accomplished. In fact, this verse appropriately describes the condition of Muslim leaders today. They hardly do anything but desire excessive praise.

If we compare this with the character of the companions of the Holy Prophet and Muslims of the early period of Islam, we observe that they appreciated criticism instead of praise. Hadith tells us that a believer serves as a mirror for another believer and makes him aware of his shortcomings. This is with the intention to create awareness, so an individual can reform his behavior.

The Holy Prophet has prayed for the disgrace of whomever encourages false praise and for whomever gives false praise. In comparison with this attitude, today we find that revered religious leaders (*pirs*) and those in charge of spiritual endowments (*sajada-nasbeens*), with few exceptions, desire praise and love to hear poetic eulogies composed by their followers. They do not even ask for the evidence on which such glorification is based. Hadith describes a form of association with Allah (*shirk*) to be smaller than the head of an ant, meaning so subtle that it is easily overlooked. Encouraging and giving such praise belongs to this subtle form of association with Allah (*shirk*). The followers of these leaders say what their hearts desire, and no one questions the reason for their eulogies. This is the kind of attitude that the Holy Quran describes as: "love to be praised for what they have not done." The consequence of this attitude for the one receiving false praise and not discouraging it, is that his spiritual progress is retarded and he is deprived of doing good.

We personally observed people listening to speeches of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (Promised Messiah and Mujaddid of the 14th century Hijra). Many participants were greatly influenced by them. Never did we hear him say, "I did this or that." Nor did he ever permit those speeches to be eulogized. Real praise is realized when the hearts of people are moved. Those who desire and love to listen to self praise are never praised behind their backs; in fact they are denigrated.

Duty of Members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Society for the Propagation of Islam

I want to mention something else in reference to this matter. In fact, we (members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Society for the Propagation of Islam) have also failed to fulfill our duty of propagating the message of Islam. Even now we are not meeting this obligation to the extent it deserves. When the whole Muslim nation is oblivious to this responsibility, what can a small organization? In terms of real work we have made very little progress.

We are competing against Christian propaganda! Is there any language into which they have not translated the bible? This is your work. In fact you are commanded to explain the Quran to all people. "You shall explain it to men." In obeying this commandment, it is your duty to undertake translations and commentaries of the Holy Quran in all languages. Muslims have shirked their duty in this matter. The Turks, in their five hundred years of rule, did not even publish a single translation of the Holy Quran in the Turkish language. Neither did they try to familiarize themselves with this book. Allah is not iniquitous toward anyone. They were unmindful of the word of Allah the most High and are facing the consequences of their error. There is no doubt that they defended Holy Places and staunchly rose up in their defense. However, they neglected the propagation of Islam. If they had performed this duty, they would not have had to face these tribulations. If we, the members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Society for the Propagation of Islam, also neglect our duty and do not publicize the Holy Quran, our very existence may be in jeopardy. Only those will remain who spread the word of God to the whole world.

March 25, 1921

Holy Prophet Enjoins his wives to Keep up prayer and Pay the poor rate

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يُنِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ
فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٣﴾

O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women. If you would keep your duty, be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease yearn; and speak a word of goodness. (33:32)

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ
آتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ
أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

And stay in your houses and display not (your beauty) like the displaying of the ignorance of yore; and keep up prayer, and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allah and His

Messenger. Allah only desires to take away uncleanness from you, O people of the household, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying. (33:33)

وَأَذْكُرَنَّ مَا يَتْلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا
خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

And remember that which is recited in your houses of the messages of Allah and the Wisdom. Surely Allah is ever Knower of subtilities, Aware. (33:34)

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَالصَّالِحَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and women who remember — Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward. (33:35)

Holy Prophet and the Dignity of Labor

One of the many unique characteristics we observe in the life of the Holy Prophet is that he performed all kinds of tasks with his own hands. A person who is impoverished either due to lack of resources or unavailability of work is bound to do his domestic

and personal tasks including cooking food, etc. However, when resources are available and there is ample help, it becomes very hard, and at times socially unacceptable, to participate in all these activities.

We observe these distinctive and amazing characteristics only in the life of the Holy Prophet. During the Madinah period of his life he was the sovereign head of state with increased access to its monetary resources. He still attended to all matters of state personally. He had to counsel and pass judgment in order to maintain peace between warring Arabian tribes who had been fighting each other for centuries. At the same time, it was his responsibility to plan for and lead the small Muslim community in all their defensive battles. Besides all these difficult tasks he had to attend to their moral and spiritual purification and education, which were the main objectives of his apostleship. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, would still manage to find time for his own household work, which included milking the animals, mending his clothes and shoes, and helping his wives with their domestic tasks. He did all this not only when he had few resources at his disposal but also as the head of state. At the same time, he carried out the teaching of wisdom and knowledge, and moral and spiritual purification of his followers. In the same period of the Holy Prophet's life we also observe him lifting loads, mending clothes, and helping widows and elderly women with their chores. Let alone kings, in these days, even those with limited amounts of wealth find it below their dignity to undertake tasks involving manual labor. The companions of the Holy Prophet were imbued with a similar spirit of caring and compassion. Hazrat Umar, the second Caliph, became the ruler of a vast empire including territories of the Byzantine Rome, Egypt and Persia. On one occasion, when a camel owned by the state treasury was lost, he went out in the hot Arabian mid-afternoon sun to search for it and would also personally apply medicine to the skin of a camel suffering from an itch. During a time of severe famine in the country he would

get up in the night and search for anyone in need. One evening he observed a woman stirring a pot over a fire with several children sitting around her crying. When asked, she replied that there was no food in the house and she was just stirring the pot with stones in the water to console the hungry children. Hazrat Umar was deeply moved by their plight and immediately went back to the state food bank and hauled a sack of provisions on his shoulders to feed the hungry family.

This is a noble example of the Holy Prophet and his companions. They considered it an honor to do manual labor, which is frequently looked down upon by those who become affluent. He whose stomach is full tends to look down upon the poor and he who rides a car feels superior to those walking on foot. Those closer to God do not stop performing work with their hands even when they are given power and kingdom. This is to confirm that they recognize and appreciate the work of the laborer. The Holy Prophet did not have to do these small tasks but because he was an exemplar for all mankind he performed the most menial of all tasks himself.

Holy Prophet's Wives as Teachers of Religion and Role Models

There are certain personal and private matters in the life of a man about which he cannot directly inform and educate the public. Thus, matters specifically related to women were assigned by the Holy Prophet to his wives, so that they could remember, practice them, and serve as an example for others. Many objections have been raised by people with vile thinking regarding the number of wives the Holy Prophet took. These very depraved people, who are themselves preoccupied with the exploitation of women, are in the forefront of raising such objections. They are the ones who say that the Holy Prophet was (we seek the refuge of Allah from saying so) a man with a sensual nature. The answer to these objections is provided by the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet treated his wives in the most

excellent manner, but at the same time he reminded them of the purpose behind his marriages. His wives had stood behind him in times of poverty but when there came a period of affluence it was very much their natural desire to demand a share in the wealth, which the community now possessed. In fact, they were more deserving than the rest to ask for such privilege. The Holy Prophet's character had evolved to such a level of excellence that there was seldom an opportunity for him to be displeased with his wives, but on this occasion he was quite offended with them. This provided an opportunity to demonstrate to his followers that differences can arise between a husband and wife.

These were the verses of the Holy Quran revealed at the time:

“O Prophet, say to thy wives: If you desire this world's life and its adornment, come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing.

And if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then surely Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward” (33:28-29)

Who does not desire wealth to spend for his wife and children? This, however, was the message that the Holy Prophet gave to his wives. Just as the heart of the Holy Prophet was purified of the desire for wealth, his wives underwent a similar change. This is because spiritually pure women are for spiritually pure men. They preferred the company of the Holy Prophet and gave up the desire for wealth and material provisions. From the life of the Holy Prophet we learn that even in times of national affluence his home was devoid of material comforts. Food was always in short supply and most of the time the prophet's household survived on dates and water. A container of water and a simple bed were the only furnishings in the house and his wives made ends meet under very restrained circumstances. Addressing them, the Holy Quran states:

“O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women.”

There is no doubt that they were in fact like other women. Why then, does the Holy Quran say that they were not like other women? This is because they were to serve as an example for other women to follow. In order to educate other women and be a role model for them, they had to be above the rest in qualities of goodness. This is further emphasized by the words: "If you would keep your duty." Again this does not imply that they were not keeping their duty. The truth is that keeping up with duty has different connotations for every individual. Keeping up one's duty means fulfilling one's obligations, which vary from person to person. People who have a higher level of calling have more important obligations and are further advanced in their degree of piety. The piety of the Holy Prophet was not of an ordinary nature. His duty, like ordinary Muslims, was not just to recite or lead the prayers. His duty was to bring about a moral purification, educate Muslims, and make them steadfast in following religious law. In a similar manner, the duty of the wives of the Holy Prophet was not the same as women of an ordinary level. They had given preference to the company of the Holy Prophet, instead of a life of ease and comfort. They were now obligated to follow the example of the Holy Prophet and become excellent role models for all Muslim women to follow.

They are therefore instructed by the Holy Quran to:

"be not soft in speech (*takh-zab-na*), lest he in whose heart is a disease yearn; and speak a word of goodness."

The Arabic Word *takh-zab-na* from the root *khaza* implies leaning toward or becoming obedient. It does not imply not being gentle in speech. In Arabic idioms, verbal communication between the opposite sexes in a manner that can give rise to evil thoughts is called *khaza-bil-qaul*. It is thus a preliminary stage of evil instigation in the heart. The wives of the Holy Prophet were not being forbidden to speak to the general public because it was essential for them to communicate verbally in order to educate. People had to ask them about various issues related to the domestic life and conduct of the Holy Prophet.

Hundreds of individuals visited Hazrat Aisha to make such queries; in fact she was amongst the few companions of the Holy Prophet who were the eminent source of this knowledge. “Be not soft in speech,” therefore implies not to have an amorous manner of speech that could instigate evil thoughts in the hearts of men. “And speak a word of goodness,” to them. A word of goodness could only emanate from a heart that is pure. How could a woman whose heart is impure speak of goodness to others?

One observes this unique characteristic amongst the wives of the Holy Prophet. He left behind several wives; none of them were instructed to remarry. Some of them survived to a very old age. Hazrat Aisha was only eighteen years old at the time of the Holy Prophet’s death and lived to the age of sixty-eight years. If she had gone into seclusion at this age, it would have been much easier for her to remain chaste. Hundreds and thousands of men would visit her to ask questions about the private life of the Holy Prophet. This involved matters of his personal hygiene, bathing, relations with his wives, etc. In order to educate them she had to discuss some very personal issues related to the life of the Holy Prophet. Hazrat Aisha also participated actively in battles, at which time it is also very difficult for a woman to guard her chastity. In spite of all these challenges, even the worst enemies and critics amongst the Christians or the *Shia* or anyone else could not raise a finger against the purity and chastity of her character.

A similar example was followed by all the other wives of the Holy Prophet. Having been in the company of the Holy Prophet their lives became exemplary. That is why the Holy Quran says: “O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women.” This is also to inform others to appreciate their closeness and relationship to Allah. They are then told: “And stay in your houses.” This does not mean confinement to the four walls of their quarters. From this some people conclude that since Hazrat Aisha participated in battles, her conduct was contrary to this injunction.

This is incorrect. The Holy Quran elaborates the meaning further in these words; “and display not (your beauty) like the displaying of the ignorance of yore.” In other words you are allowed to go outside and participate in activities of daily living, but do not display your adornment like the women in the days of ignorance. Like European culture of modern times, women in pre-Islamic Arabia were deeply engrossed in displaying personal adornment and make up. They would spend hours in this process, standing in front of the mirror. This was and has been the cause of great decline in the moral standards of society. What is prohibited is going out without a genuine need. In fact, during the time of the Holy Prophet and his companions, women went out, attended services at the mosque with the rest of the congregation, and even participated in battles. About the battle of Uhud, it is written that women served water to the injured.

Keeping Up of Prayer and Paying the Poor Rate

Allah the Most High then gives the directive: “And keep up prayer, and pay the poor rate.” This directive is meant specifically for all women and for all ages — not only for the time of the Holy Prophet. The wives of the Holy Prophet could have said that their husband was The Prophet par excellence, spiritual leader of the world and they had given up material comforts of a worldly life to follow him. In spite of all this they are commanded to keep up prayer and pay the poor rate (*zakaat*). Many people complain when they have to pay the poor rate and even go so far as to say that Islam is bringing financial ruin upon them. When the wives of the Holy Prophet demanded a share of the wealth they were given the choice to part with him or live within the limited means already provided for them. They could have asked on what savings they were to pay the *zakat* (poor rate). Their personal property only consisted of the marriage dowry (*mebr*) or any jewelry they possessed. They were given the marriage dowry at the time of marriage. The common practice by Muslims these days is either to attach impossible conditions to

the payment of the marriage dowry or if an amount of dowry is fixed they avoid payment by asking the amount to be a loan, which they promise to pay later. Before their death they ask for even this loan to be forgiven. This is not the preferable manner of fulfilling a sacred injunction. It is recorded that one of the Holy Prophet's wives had some jewelry when this verse of the Holy Quran was revealed:

“And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's way — announce to them a painful chastisement.

On the day when it will be heated in the Fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs will be branded with it: This is what you hoarded up for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard” (9:34-35)

Upon hearing this she inquired if the silver bangle she was wearing fell under the category of hoarded wealth. The Holy Prophet responded by asking her if she was paying the poor rate on it. This shows the respect and concern they had for following the injunctions of the Holy Quran. This also reflects their sense of duty. They had already given up the world for the sake of Allah and the Holy Prophet but were still very much concerned about compliance with the divine law. What this injunction means is that it is not sinful to save or hoard wealth, but not paying the poor rate on these savings is a sin.

They are then commanded, “to keep up prayer.” If you do not keep up prayer, how can you be a role model for others to follow?

“And obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only desires to take away uncleanness from you, O people of the household, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.”

“If you do so, O people of the household Allah will take away all kinds of uncleanness from you, including the love of wealth.”

“And remember that which is recited in your houses of the messages of Allah and the Wisdom.” (0-00)

It is incumbent upon you to remember the verses of the Holy Quran that are recited in your houses and the wisdom underlying the example of the Holy Prophet, which you observe and convey to others. This is your goal and purpose in life. The wives of the Holy Prophet complied with these injunctions to the fullest and spread forth the message of Islam. Hazrat Aisha by herself has been the source of so many sayings of the Holy Prophet that she is included amongst the top narrators of *Hadith*.

The Holy Quran then gives the good news: “Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and women who remember — Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.”

All the qualities of women that are mentioned here were to be manifested by the wives of the Holy Prophet. There is more wisdom behind these Quranic words, for no word of the Quran is without a purpose. Just as the wives of the Holy Prophet are addressed in these words, so are these injunctions meant for all Muslim men and women. This divine intent is also expressed in another Quranic verse:

“And thus We have made you an exalted nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you” (2:143)

You are an example for the rest of the world, just as Muhammad the Messenger of Allah is an example for you to follow. The nation that follows the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is exalted above others and is to serve as an example for other nations. Today Muslims complain that such and such a nation is

inequitable and acts unjustly. You should first examine your own behavior and the standards that you were to uphold. You were to be an example for other nations. If you, the standard bearers, have strayed away from the right path then why would you expect the rest to follow the path of righteousness?

Duty of the Members of Lahore Ahmaddiyya Society for Propagation of Islam

I now want to address the members of the Lahore Ahmaddiyya Society for Propagation of Islam. You claim to be the followers of a *Mujaddid* (reformer) and have made a commitment to carry out the work of reformation of the world. Those who stand up for this task have to face much hardship and grief. Even leaders in worldly matters have to face great difficulties and tribulations. Certainly those who claim leadership in religion have to face greater degrees of trials and tribulations. You have to ask yourself this question, how far have you fulfilled your promise of keeping religion above the world? A genuine example does not need to be proclaimed verbally. People call this insanity: that Gandhi-ji gets off a train at ten o'clock in the evening and immediately joins a group of women to weave cloth on a hand loom, spending three hours doing this. I say this is no ordinary accomplishment. What needs to be appreciated is the drive he has to do his work. Follow the lesson his example teaches you, and manifest similar zeal to accomplish the task you have pledged to undertake. Just as he spins the loom for his dress, you should spin the loom for your dress. Your dress is keeping your duty! Your dress is keeping up your prayer! Fasting and paying the poor rate are your garments. Be driven to fulfill these duties and show concern for accomplishing them. The Holy Quran states:

“O children of Adam, We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty; and clothing that guards against evil — that is the best”

(7:26)

Manifest the example of goodness through the raiment of personal piety. Be driven to fulfill your duty. One can be an example only when one becomes oblivious to all else except the accomplishment of his duty and purpose in life. Until you love standing up for prayer more than sitting in the company of your wife and children, more than your comfort and pleasure, more than your wealth and possessions, you cannot serve as an example for others. Wherever the Holy Quran mentions prayer, it always enjoins keeping up prayer.

Fulfill all the injunctions related to the keeping up of prayer. One of these injunctions is: "Guard the prayers and the most excellent prayer, and stand up truly obedient to Allah" (2:238)

Someone has interpreted this as meaning if you guard the prayer, it will guard you. This is further confirmed by these Quranic words: "Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil" (29:45). The Holy Prophet said, "The coolness (tranquility, solace) of my eyes lies in prayer." When you pray, your moral condition should be such that you serve as an example for others. When the Holy Prophet was on his deathbed, he had the curtain of his apartment lifted so he could observe his companions praying. The site of the congregation praying brought a smile to his face and was a source of great comfort to him. With his own eyes he witnessed the spiritual change he had desired to bring about amongst his followers.

I want to draw your attention once more toward the payment of *zakat*, and I have done this quite frequently in the past. I have also reminded those who may be displeased to be reminded of this commandment. I remind you repeatedly because this obligation has almost been discarded like a dead body in need of revival. It is mentioned in the *Hadith* that to revive a practice of the Holy Prophet brings about great reward and blessings. In fact this is not just a practice but also a great obligation. You should bring about its revival. Pay the poor rate on

your wealth and urge those who are near to you to make a habit of paying it. Just as prayer is said in congregation, giving charity to a few individuals does not fulfill the obligation of *zakat*. It is essential to pay it to the national treasury. A few days ago an Englishman wrote us a letter stating that he wanted to accept Islam. Our Yaqub Khan Sahib responded to his letter to which he replied that he was willing to pay the *zakat* but only if it could be deposited into a national fund. He did not appreciate the customary manner followed by the people. This is the understanding and wisdom not appreciated by Muslims. They hand over the *zakat* either to a rich preacher or to those who do not deserve it. In this way my contribution and that of all Muslims goes to waste. It is not used in the way of Allah and His Prophet. You should make an effort to deposit all of these funds into the national treasury wherefrom it should be spent. If you do so, you will be an example for all Muslims and your conduct will deserve to be called exemplary.

April 8, 1921

Man depends on Allah the Most High for Guidance

**Difference between Islamic and Christian Doctrines
of Atonement**

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذَيِّبَ لَكُمْ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ سُنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

Allah desires to explain to you, and to guide you into the ways of those before you, and to turn to you (mercifully). And Allah is Knowing, Wise. (4:26)

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهْوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا
مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٧﴾

And Allah desires to turn to you (mercifully). And those who follow (their) lusts desire that you should deviate (with) a great deviation. (4:27)

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Allah desires to make light your burdens, and man is created weak. (4:28)

لِيَأْخُذَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آلا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً
عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

O you who believe, devour not your property among yourselves by illegal methods except that it be trading by your mutual consent. And kill not your people. Surely Allah is ever Merciful to you. (4:29)

وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عُدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

And whoso does this aggressively and unjustly, We shall soon cast him into fire. And this is ever easy for Allah. (4:30)

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكْفُرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُم
مُّدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

If you shun the great things which you are forbidden, We shall do away with your evil (inclinations) and cause you to enter an honorable place of entering. (4:31)

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا
اِكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اِكْتَسَبْنَ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾

And covet not that by which Allah has made some of you excel others. For men is the benefit of what they earn. And for women is the benefit of what they earn. And ask Allah of His grace. Surely Allah is ever Knower of all things. (4:32)

وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِيَ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَ الَّذِينَ عَقَدْتُمْ
 أَيْمَانَكُمْ فَآتُوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٣٣﴾

And to everyone We have appointed heirs of that which parents and near relatives leave. And as to those with whom your right hands have ratified agreements, give them their due. Surely Allah is ever Witness over all things (4:33)

Allah's Beneficence and Mercy

Allah the Most High wants to explain to you, and guide you toward the ways of those before you, and to turn to you (mercifully). And Allah is knowing, and wise. Allah's turning toward people is for their benefit so that He may help them advance to higher stages of spirituality. This is Allah's desire. Since He possesses all knowledge and wisdom, His commandments are also based upon knowledge and wisdom. The wisdom underlying His commandments is such that man cannot discover it using his own knowledge.

“And Allah desires to turn to you (mercifully). And those who follow (their) lusts desire that you should deviate (with) a great deviation

Allah desires to make light your burdens, and man is created weak.” (4:27-28)

Man is unable to distinguish the right path from other deviating paths; therefore Allah has lightened his burden and guided him on the right and beneficial path for all times. After informing him of this great beneficence and giving this wonderful news, the command that follows is this:

“O you who believe, devour not your property among yourselves by illegal methods except that it be trading by your mutual consent. And kill not your people. Surely Allah is ever Merciful to you.” (4:29)

Illegal Consumption of Property Begins With Near Relatives

After informing mankind of such a great manifestation of His goodness and glad tidings, this Divine command does not apparently seem to be of great significance. Does everyone already not know that it is prohibited to devour property by employing dishonest means? In fact it is this greed for material acquisition that leads man to commit all sorts of evil. When he desires to consume someone's property illegitimately he initially commits crimes of a minor nature and then advances, even to the point of committing murder. What the Quran says here is, "devour not your property among yourselves by illegal methods." It does not say devour not the property of all men unlawfully. This is because many people consume property of their near relatives illegally by lying and deception. This is also to point out that although you may have certain legitimate rights as far as your relatives are concerned, you are forbidden to consume their property illegally. The property of non-relatives certainly has an even greater priority not to be expropriated illegally. It is common knowledge that one cannot achieve much by illegally consuming a portion of someone else's property. The fortunes of worldly acquisition undergo constant change. Material possession is of a very temporary nature. In spite of all this knowledge, it has proven a stumbling block for many.

Wealth Can Be a Source of Trial

Wealth is not something to be proud of, although people consider it to be a matter of great honor and good fortune. In Hinduism, the belief in transmigration of souls is explained on the basis of distribution of wealth. The argument is that one person is born in a rich household while another is born to poor parents and is deprived of ample provisions and comforts of life. Since God cannot be unjust to anyone, it is most likely that He makes this decision based on the individual's actions in a previous life. These people do not realize that material wealth

does not bring about real pleasure. In fact it is the source of much pain and hardship. A child born to rich parents is not able to develop the qualities of a child born in poverty. Capability and proficiency are developed through hard work, and children born in affluent households seldom get opportunities to apply themselves in this manner. Wealth is therefore not a source of real happiness and can be the source of many evils and bad habits.

The Holy Quran states: “devour not your property among yourselves,” because initially this illegal consumption begins with the property of near relatives. This is followed by the injunction: “And kill not your people (*anfusa kum*) (meaning your people or yourselves). Whosoever makes such a plan is in fact killing oneself (*nafs*) before committing the evil deed.

“Surely Allah is ever Merciful to you.” This behavior on your part does not affect Allah the Most High in any way. It is to your advantage and for you to benefit from His mercy that He gives you this guidance. If man were to recognize this principle, that the worldly life and its provisions are of a temporary nature, it would go a long way in establishing peace and harmony, and as a result, the world would be a semblance of paradise. If people could give up illegal consumption of each other’s property, much difficulty and grief arising from these deeds would be prevented. This is followed by the warning, “And whoso does this aggressively and unjustly, We shall soon cast him into fire.” There is no doubt that it is Allah who casts into the fire, but the cause and fuel for this fire are created by man’s own hands. His own actions ignite the fire and lead him into it.

The words: “And this is ever easy for Allah,” express Allah’s practice in dealing with those people who illegally consume property belonging to others. A time comes when all their wealth and friendships are to no avail and their material acquisitions become fuel for this fire.

It seems to be simple to understand a commandment that

prohibits illegal consumption of property. You might ask what would happen if you comply with this injunction.

Evil Inclinations Progress from a Lower to a Higher Stage

The Holy Quran states: “If you shun the great things which you are forbidden, We shall do away with your evil (inclinations) and cause you to enter an honorable place of entering.” (4:31)

On the basis of this verse people have divided sins into greater and lesser categories. From the *badith* we learn that this type of division is incorrect. Some *badith* mention four major sins, while others mention only three, and differ in their interpretation of which sin is major, or which one is minor. The truth is that every evil starts out as a minor defect and gradually progresses into a major one. For example, a person who begins by quitting praying thinks that there is no harm in doing so. Eventually this leads to uncertainty or denial of the existence of God. Thus every sin starts out as being small but eventually evolves into one with greater consequences. Qualifying this statement with the words, “which you are forbidden,” indicates that all that is prohibited comes under the category of greater or major sin.

The Holy Quran has not given us a list of evil actions. The reason for this is that such delineation and categorization is not possible even if one makes an attempt to do so. A good action can turn into an evil one under certain circumstances. Using the sword can be good under appropriate and right circumstances, but can turn into an act of evil under various different conditions. To defend women, children, and the elderly against an enemy is a very noble act deserving much reward, while killing someone unjustly is a major crime. The Holy Quran therefore directs us to abstain from sins. Do not murder, do not steal, do not fornicate, etc., are some of the prohibitions mentioned. If you save yourself from these, Allah says: “We shall do away with your evil (inclinations).” This means that He will do away with the in-

clination within you to commit these sins. This also proves that not only is man born without sin but even the inclination to commit evil can be uprooted from his character; we find many examples of this.

The Holy Prophet once said: “The devil circulates in your body like the circulation of blood in your veins.” The companions asked him, “is that true in your case also O prophet of Allah?” To which he replied. “Yes, but Allah has given me control over him and my *shaitan* (devil) has become Muslim!” This hadith clearly indicates that even the inclination to do evil had dissipated from within him.

The Difference Between Atonement of Sins in Islam and Christianity

In these verses, Allah the Most High teaches us the technique and gives us the prescription to get rid of sin. When you abstain from greater sins, your heart will be strengthened and inclination toward evil will be uprooted from it. This is the prescription for atonement of sins in Islam, which if put into practice, not only does away with evil, but also the very inclination for it. In this way, sinful behavior is uprooted even before it takes hold.

In contrast to this, proponents of Christianity also propose a doctrine of atonement of sins. Believe in the death of Jesus on the cross they say and your sins will be washed away. This is an unwarranted claim. How can mere belief in an occurrence do away with the inclination for evil? I have asked many Christian preachers to describe the benefits of belief in atonement of sin. Does it either take away the inclination to do evil — which is no longer committed, or does it continue to be indulged in — as God keeps washing away sins of the evildoer as a result of his belief in atonement of sins? They do not have an answer to this question. Events testify that sin continues to be committed, perhaps at an even higher rate by those who believe in the Christian doctrine of atonement, just as it is committed by those who

don't. Simply believing in the atonement of sins does not remove the inclination to do evil. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that man continues to commit evil, and his sins are forgiven, because of the belief in the atonement of sins. What, one may ask then is the need to abstain from evil? In fact, this doctrine opens the doorway to evil actions.

Allah has taught Muslims about atonement of sins in the Holy Quran in these words:

“If you shun the great things which you are forbidden,
We shall do away with your evil (inclinations).” (4:31)

At its surface, this does not appear to be a very rational argument — that if man abstains from greater evils, inclination toward lesser evils is removed from him. One would think that it is harder to overcome a greater evil and easier to overcome a lesser one. From these words it appears that Allah has assigned the more difficult task to man. The truth, however, is that it is harder to overcome a lesser evil than a greater one. This is because it is in man's nature that when faced with a greater loss all his faculties come into action to prevent it and he stands up to meet the challenge with great fervor and zeal. He tries his best to avoid the loss, which is quite apparent and which he can easily perceive and avoid. He becomes oblivious to the evil whose harm is less and it is more subtle. In this way, the lesser evil becomes more difficult for man to avoid and overcome. The inherent potential that Allah has given man to avoid evil becomes sluggish under these circumstances. He is also less fearful in his heart to abstain from the evil, the consequences of which are not as apparent to him. Sometimes he adopts a hypocritical attitude toward such challenges and abstains only to avoid a bad name amongst his peers, although he is not afraid to commit them. He tries to abstain from all evil actions from which he can perceive a loss with certainty, but makes little effort to avoid those whose affects are more subtle in nature.

How Can Man Overcome Evil?

That is why Allah the Most High informs us that, "If you shun the great things which you are forbidden," whose consequences are manifest to you, the capacity to resist evil within you will gain strength and prosper. Human faculties develop by being put to use. A person who exercises his muscles gains strength, while one who does not put them to use loses strength. Although he may be consuming the most nourishing and wholesome food, his muscles continue to weaken. When a person does not expend his energy to combat evil, his faculty to abstain from it does not acquire strength. This faculty becomes stronger by facing and overcoming greater evils. The eventual result of using one's faculty to abstain from evil is that the very inclination toward immorality is suppressed. The faculty to resist sinful behavior strengthens with exertion and use and eventually overcomes evil. The more you try to abstain and exert yourself against inequity, the more you will suppress forces of evil and the more you will be inclined toward goodness. The companions of the Holy Prophet reached this stage wherein the inclination to do evil was uprooted from their nature. Their lives are a witness to the truth of this and they provide an example to the whole world that such a state is attainable. It is a generally accepted principle that a companion of the Holy Prophet never provided false testimony. The compilers of *hadith* have researched this issue extensively and have developed a tradition not to accept the testimony of an individual who can be proven to have lied even once in his lifetime. All agree upon this, that none of the companions have been proven to have ever provided false testimony in narrating a *hadith*. To make an error in interpretation, or to forget something, is a different matter altogether; but intentional lying on the part of any of the companions has never been proven. Wrongdoing should nevertheless be avoided, and the intent should never be that evil should definitely come one's way in order to avoid it. When, however, faced with opportunities to commit evil they should be avoided and one should not even

have the intent to commit evil. Allah the Most High has laid stress on the words, “devour not your property among yourselves by illegal methods.” The wisdom underlying this is that if man abstains from consuming his brother’s property by lying and fraudulent means, he is able to avoid and overcome much evil and save himself from the commission of sin. He will not lie for this purpose nor inflict harm by any other means. The other great lesson that is conveyed to us in these verses is that if we avoid the greater evils, they will become the means of atonement for our sins. In other words, they will become the catalyst to evolve the strength within us to avoid the lesser evils.

April 22, 1921

Islam Teaches Moderation

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَنِ قِبَلَتِهِمْ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا
قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٣٤﴾

“The fools among the people will say: ‘What has turned them from their qiblah which they had?’ Say: The East and the West belong only to Allah; He guides whom He pleases to the right path” (2:142)

وَ كَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَ يَكُونَ
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَ مَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ
مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَ إِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى
الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرءُوفٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٣٤﴾

And thus We have made you an exalted nation that you

may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you. And We did not make that which thou wouldst have to be the *qiblah* but that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels. And it was indeed a hard test except for those whom Allah has guided. Nor was Allah going to make your faith to be fruitless. Surely Allah is Compassionate, Merciful, to the people. (2:143)

Facing one or another direction is not significant

The subject of *qiblah* (direction of *Ka'bah* toward which Muslims pray), which is discussed in these verses of the Holy Quran, is very important. For a long time, some critics of Islam have raised the objection that Muslims worship the *Ka'bah*, or the black stone, which is part of it. It is true that *Hadith* have given such importance to the *qiblah* that it forms the basis of one's Islamic identity. It is also prohibited to call anyone a disbeliever who prays in the direction of the *Ka'bah*. In spite of being given so much importance, people still raise the objection that initially Muslims prayed facing the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, but since the *Ka'bah* has been declared the *qiblah*, they have their back toward the Holy Temple. To this objection, the Holy Quran responds: "Say: The East and the West belong only to Allah; He guides whom He pleases to the right path." This verse clearly states that, by itself, the direction — whether it is East or West — has no significance.

This is clearly explained in another verse:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the East and the West, but righteous is the one who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask to set slaves free and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and

the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict.” (2:177)

The Holy Quran goes on to describe them in the same verse as: “These are those who are truthful; and these are those who keep their duty.” (2:177)

Thus, on the one hand, the subject of *qiblah* has been given much importance while at the same time we are informed that facing in one direction or the other does not have any significance. In another verse, the importance of this subject is re-emphasized:

“And from whatsoever place thou comest forth, turn thy face toward the Sacred Mosque.” (2:150)

Stressing the importance of the *qiblah* and at the same time de-emphasizing the significance of turning in one direction or the other, seem to be two positions that are at odds with one another. In fact, however, there is no contradiction and the Holy Quran itself explains:

“And thus We have made you an exalted nation (*ummat-an-wasatan*) that you may be the bearers of witness (*shahid*) to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you.” (2:143)

Exalted nation to follow the course of Moderation

The real reason behind this is that Allah has made you a just, equitable, and good nation not inclining to either extreme and following the moderate course (*ummat-an-wasatan*). This is so that you become leaders and an example for the whole world and no one other than the Holy Prophet should be an example and leader for you.¹ Allah has certainly commanded you to

1. One explanation of *shahid* is that just as the Prophet delivered the message of truth to Muslims and was their purifier and leader, the role of the Muslim community was to deliver the message of truth to the whole of humanity and be its purifiers and leaders (from footnote 2:143b - English Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali).

follow a certain direction while saying your prayers, but merely turning in a direction is not a virtuous deed in itself. People allege that Muslims worship the *Ka'bab*. This allegation is refuted by the fact that at one time they prayed in the opposite direction, facing the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, with their backs toward the *Ka'bab* and their prayers were still accepted by Allah. Allah the Most High states that the only purpose behind this injunction is that you become a just and equitable nation following the course of moderation. An injunction can no doubt be important but only when applied at the proper occasion and under strict guidelines. In these verses, Allah tells us that He has commanded us to face in the direction of the *qiblah* and has designated it as an outward emblem of our religion and belief. Do not, however, conclude from this that it is the only direction where God exists and that he does not hear us in any other direction. The real reason behind this commandment is that you stay away from the path of extremism and follow a course of moderation, while you are to fully respect the commandment to face the *qiblah* wherever you are, for it is a sign of unity of purpose for the Muslim nation. You should also have the firm belief that God does not lie in any one direction and facing a certain direction is not a matter of great piety.

If they had not been given this Divine guidance, it is likely that Muslims would have become worshippers of the *qiblah*. The injunction to follow a moderate course kept them away from extremism. It also implies following a course of moderation in all matters. The objective is that you become leaders for the rest of the world in justice, equity, goodness, and moderation. This type of spiritual leadership (*imamat*) cannot be acquired without a firm commitment to follow the middle course or the path of moderation. It is very easy for mankind to fervently follow one extreme or another but very hard to stay on a course of moderation. Prophet Jesus taught his followers to be so soft-hearted as to turn the other cheek when slapped on one side of the face, or to give one's cloak away when the shirt is asked for,

or to walk four miles when forced to walk two. These kinds of teachings are easily followed. Mahatma Gandhi has a similar philosophy, which negates the use of force under any circumstances, no matter what the degree of persecution. He enjoins not even to lift a hand against a dacoit.

On the other hand, some have taught to fight the enemy and annihilate him completely, put to sword their women and children and torch their homes and lands. This type of behavior is also easy to follow. However, these are not the teachings of Islam. Islam teaches us to combine both stringency and flexibility. Some occasions call for toughness while other times call for kindness and soft-heartedness. It is essential for an individual to gauge circumstances and apply his intellect and thought to determine the most appropriate course of action. In this process, he is not to rely on someone else's intellectual faculties so much that he puts aside his own. He who makes decisions after deep reflection, deliberation, and consideration of the needs of the time, becomes an example and role model for others to follow. The one who blindly follows others, and does not use his own intellect, finds his intellectual faculties atrophy and he becomes incapable of making good decisions. Just as our external physical faculties decline when not put to use, similarly our inner intellectual and spiritual faculties weaken if not used appropriately. Islam therefore enjoins the middle course, or path of moderation, so that man can identify extreme behaviors and use his intellect appropriately according to current circumstance. The Holy Quran teaches us to follow this path of righteousness in the first chapter:

“Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom thou has bestowed favors not those upon whom thy wrath is brought (*maghdoob*) down nor those who went astray (*dhaleen*).” (1:5-7)

After supplicating and imploring for guidance along the path of righteousness and moderation, the prayer is to seek avoidance of two extreme behaviors. These behaviors have been identified by the use of Arabic words *maghdoob* and *dhal*. *Ghadab* (verb

from *maghdoob*) is behavior, which teaches one to be extremely wrathful and oppressive so that he becomes *maghdoob* or a manifestation of such behavior. Excessive manifestation of love for someone is called *dbal*. The Holy Quran uses the same terminology for such manifestation of excessive love in another verse while describing the love of Prophet Jacob by his sons:

قَالُوا تَاللّٰهِ اِنَّكَ لَفِي ضَلٰلِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ ﴿٩٥﴾

“They said: By Allah! thou art surely in thy old error.”
(12:95)

The word *dbalal* is used here to describe manifestation of excessive love.

The Holy Quran teaches the path of moderation and warns against excess love or hate. All evil in the world is a consequence of inappropriate use of these faculties. Hate manifested at the appropriate occasion becomes a virtue, while love under inappropriate circumstances becomes evil. Both these emotions are neither evil nor good unto themselves, and both become virtuous when displayed at the proper time. Neither love nor hate should follow the path of extremism. When a person manifests an extreme degree of hatred, he becomes *maghdoob* while the manifestation of an extreme degree of love is *dbal* or *dhaleen*.

Example of the Holy Prophet and his Companions

This is the course of moderation recommended by Islam so that by acting upon it, Muslims become forerunners and leaders of the world. This is not mere advice that appears pleasing to the heart while being impossible to practice. If this teaching was just a part of the Book, never put into practice by anyone, it would have been useless. Those who stood up to support the Holy Prophet and to whom this guidance was initially directed, were brought to the stage of spiritual development by Allah, the Most High, where they were able to moderate both the emotions of love and hate. When a companion of the Holy Prophet

came across a dog in the jungle licking the dirt because of thirst, he took off his sock and filled it with water to give to the dog. Although Muslims ordinarily avoid close contact with dogs, they show empathy toward them when circumstances call for it. They did not display either extreme hate or extreme love in their character. Islam enjoins controlling both hatred and love, and keeping these emotions within the confines of moderation. On one hand, is the commandment: "And kill not your people," (4:29) but on appropriate occasions it also commands, "And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive (2:190)." Your waging war should not be for worldly gain but in the way of Allah. "And kill them wherever you find them," (2:191) i.e., do not spare them during combat even if they are your near relatives.

The Law of Moses taught not to spare enemy slaves and maid-servants and put to sword their women and children. The teachings of Jesus, to the contrary, enjoins loving one's enemy. While the teachings of Moses are objectionable because of their harshness, the message of Jesus also fails to meet the standard of moderation. Followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad are enjoined to avoid both extremes of harshness and love and to follow the balanced and moderate course. The message is: "And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive (2:190)." Even in a state of war, treat your sworn enemy equitably.

On the one plane are the pious injunctions of Divine service, fasting, and abstaining from killing of any soul. War, on the other hand, is allowed in self-defense, but even when fighting in self-defense, Muslims are reminded not to use the sword indiscriminately. If the enemy accepts Islam and seeks protection, give it to him. How difficult is it to comply with this injunction? During a battle, a certain individual recited the *kalima* (formula of faith). The Muslim with whom he was involved in combat did not acknowledge his declaration, assuming that it was merely intended to save his life, and went ahead and killed him. When the

Holy Prophet heard of this, he questioned his follower who responded that the enemy had recited the *kalima* only to save his life. The Holy Prophet was greatly upset by this and asked him, “Did you open his heart and look into it,” meaning how did you know what his true intent was? A person can easily confine himself to a remote corner of the Himalayas or become a monk in some isolated monastery. It is also easy for an individual to use force and annihilate opponents, or for a stronger nation to dominate weaker ones. The greatest challenge is to control the opposing emotions of love and anger while accepting them both in one’s heart as part of human nature. You have both these emotions within you, but they should be under your control to be used appropriately on the right occasion.

One observes this distinguishing characteristic in the Holy Prophet and in his companions. They exerted emotions of anger and mercy in the appropriate occasion and never exceeded the limits.

There is great fervor in India at this time to seek independent self-rule. People are involved enthusiastically in many activities. They are all focused in this direction but are oblivious to their own reformation. Pay attention to the teachings of Islam. Even during the eight or ten years of warfare, Muslims (at the time of the Holy Prophet) remained mindful of national reformation; the task of reformation continued simultaneously. Muslims in this day and age should not give up on national reform. Keep self-rule and national reformation both in proper perspective. Advance forward but do not let your steps falter. Do not love and desire only the wealth and provisions of this world and become incapable of doing anything else. Earn wealth, but at the same time, spend it in Allah’s way.

The companions of the Holy Prophet earned wealth and were involved in trading and commerce. They abandoned their homes in a destitute state and sought refuge in Medina. Here, with little money, they were able to make thousands and at one time their

camel caravans would arrive loaded with valuable merchandise. Although this wealth was acquired after facing great poverty, unlike Muslims of the present age, their hearts did not covet wealth. They never hesitated to spend wealth in the way of Allah, nor were they prone to waste and extravagance. The Holy Quran enjoined them to respect and safeguard their wealth and not to let it go to waste in the hands of foolish persons:

“And make not over your property, which Allah has made a (means of) support for you, to the weak of understanding, and maintain them out of it, and clothe them and give them a good education.” (4:5)

These are the same people who spent willingly in the way of Allah under all circumstances. They were no fools, but were in fact highly intelligent. How difficult a prospect is it for Muslims today to give obligatory charity (*zakaat*)? Observe the companions of the Holy Prophet who would readily sacrificed all, half, or a fourth of their possessions in the way of Allah the Most High. They worked hard to earn wealth, but they were always ready and willing to make a sacrifice.

Meaning of Trust in Allah

People have a very wrong conception of trust in Allah (*tawakkul*). Those who do not work or put in any effort are regarded as (*mutawakkil*) i.e., those trusting in Allah. The Companions of the Holy Prophet did not accept such a concept. They strove hard in Allah's way, with their lives and properties. They were always ready to confront the enemy and were not intimidated by its their superior strength. Once, the companions complained to the Holy prophet that they had to be maintain watch around the clock. This shows that the Muslims hardly had any respite and had to be prepared at all times to strive against the enemy. They had to face an enemy much superior in arms and numbers but were always ready to meet him if the need arose. This was the true manifestation of trust in Allah. There also came a time when the enemy threat disappeared and the Mus-

lim community became affluent, but proliferation of wealth did not generate pride within them. Amongst them were men of noble lineage, and humble slaves who had been given their freedom. These very slaves were given command of Muslim forces and men of noble lineage like Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar willingly served under them. This was a practical demonstration of equality in Islam.

There was even a sense of balance in this obedience. They made sure that it did not violate the tenets of Islamic law. On one occasion, the Holy Prophet appointed a person to be leader (*imam*) of a group of men and dispatched them on a mission. He became displeased with his men in regards to some matter and asked them to jump into the fire at his behest. They replied they had become Muslims in order to escape from fire, why would he want them to jump into it? They let him know that it was only incumbent upon them to follow him in good and not evil. People sometimes become so subservient that they are ready to disobey laws of God in order to follow their spiritual leaders. Look at the followers of the self-proclaimed holy-men (*pirs*), how they fall for their designs and ignore their evil and disreputable deeds. These *pirs* may commit the worst deeds, but their followers obey them even if they apparently go against the teachings of Islam. Some Muslim places of religious endowment have a similar reputation.

There is no doubt that you have to and are enjoined to follow those in authority. During a battle, if the general wants a soldier to walk into the line of fire, he cannot disobey. Those who disobey face the death penalty. During the battle of Constantinople, Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari was ahead of everyone in fighting the enemy. Somebody saw him and drew his attention to the Quranic verse:

“And cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands...” (2:195)

To this he replied that the verse does not mean what you un-

derstand it to mean, i.e., do not intentionally put yourself with your own hands in a situation in which your life is at risk. What it implies is that you should use your hands for putting up a fight and save your nation from perdition. Your behavior should not be such that inaction on your part puts you and your nation at risk of demise.

The Quran teaches us not to act blindly but to act only after careful observation, deliberation, and use of our intellect. The command of one in authority should be followed, for an organization cannot succeed if its followers do not follow their leader. A house cannot be run in an orderly manner without someone being in charge. One person has to be given the responsibility of the home. The Holy Quran itself tells us: "Men are the maintainers of women," (4:34) meaning that men are given oversight of the administration of the house. They are in charge of the management of the house. It is also stated, "And women have rights similar to those against them in a just manner," (2:228). If this were the only statement, it apparently would seem to be a very noble and exemplary teaching unparalleled in any other society. But this is not practical. A society cannot function without those who are responsible for administration and those who are administered to. If all those responsible for compliance with the administrative directives refuse to carry them out until they have understood their purpose and analyzed it on intellectual grounds, the result would be chaos. The only worthwhile scrutiny is to ascertain that the directive is not against a clear commandment of revealed law or a principle of Islam (*shariah*). It is otherwise not right to criticize or use these measures as a pretext to propagate one's own embellished opinions. Muslims should follow the course of moderation in all matters. A balance should be maintained using our intellect and thought. We have a lot of responsibilities. We have to earn wealth, educate our children, and reform the nation. Besides this, is the all-important work of propagating the Word of God. This has been designated as the purpose of your very existence

as a Muslim nation:

“And thus We have made you an exalted nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people.” (2:143)

Earn wealth, consume it, spend it on the needs of your family, but do not exceed the limits of revealed law. If your wives and children impede your relationship with God then do not follow their desires. A person who is certain that his family is headed toward a fire would certainly make all possible attempts to stop them. If they are headed toward a fire of punishment then why do you not attempt to save them from evil paths and their avoidance of prayer, which can indeed lead to conflagration? When none of you would wish your wife and children to be harmed by a blaze, how can you push them into a spiritual inferno exposed to you by the Word of God? You are responsible for guiding them to the right path:

“O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire.” (66:6)

Love and take care of them but even in love do not follow the path of extremism. Follow the moderate course and encourage them to perform obligatory prayers and to pay *zakat* (obligatory charity).

I want to briefly express some other thoughts. In a previous convention, this matter was initiated by Khan Ajab Khan Sahib (a member of the organization) and signed by many. It was recommended that members of our organization should settle mutual disputes amongst themselves on the basis of principles of *sharia* and not go to courts for these matters. People have a strange attitude in this regard. They are willing to spend hundreds and thousands of rupees to pursue decisions of the court, but are reluctant to follow the decision based upon *sharia* law for which only a small amount of expenditure is needed.

The Holy Quran states:

“They desire to seek the judgment of the devil, though they have been commanded to deny him.” (4:60)

Both contending parties waste their resources in court cases and fortunes are lost. People refuse to pay heed to this, that if the dispute were to be settled at home in accordance with *shariat*, resources on both sides could be saved.

Some people are of the opinion that the tradition to accept the decision of a jury of peers is becoming established in the community and this system will become universally popular. Events on the ground do not support this, and it appears that the condition of people has not reached the stage at which they are willing to sacrifice for the nation or their religion. You can very easily settle your mutual differences at home rather than by going to court. You should, in order to uphold the honor of your nation and religion, seek a decision based upon the law laid down by Allah the Most High and His messenger. Are your learned scholars worse than court appointed judges and magistrates, that they cannot honestly settle your disputes? By following this course, unnecessary legal expenses and court decisions opposed to your religious law, can be avoided. You should have faith that there is a day of accountability when all these disputes and usurpation of rights of others will be exposed. The guilt of those who lied to trample the rights of others will become manifest and justice will be served. The righteous will receive justice and get their due rights while the guilty will be punished for their deeds.

Their claim is that they believe in the Holy Quran, but in reality they do not follow its guidance, even in trivial matters. They are even willing to drag their women from seclusion into the courts in these disputes. This is a curse that has consumed the nation. It is on account of demeaning the religious guidance that Allah has subjected them to such humiliation. Arbitrators are, after all, even appointed by the courts to settle these disputes between contending parties. Their decision is also not in favor of one of the disputants but how is it so readily accepted? The decision that is made at home by arbitration and following religious guidelines is somehow considered humiliating. Those who

call themselves *Abmadis* and manifest such behavior, not only humiliate their persons but the organization as a whole. They show outward signs of respect and address you with honorific titles but are not willing to obey you even in minor matters when the need arises. The ill effects of such behavior are quite apparent. They have to suffer loss in the courts, are forced to lie and call false witnesses and are dishonored and disgraced. They are unwilling to follow anyone's advice. It is very hard to follow the course of righteousness. I advise you, being an *Abmadi*, not to disgrace your nation and organization and to be cognizant of your national honor. If you have to suffer some loss in order to follow this advice, it does not matter. Can God, who gives you everything, not give you your due right by some other means?

April 29, 1921

**Purpose of Fasting is to Guard against evil
and Purify the Soul**

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil. (2:183)

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾

For a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man. So whoever does

good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know. (2:184)

شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَ
الْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا
الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks. (2:185)

Summaries of Injunctions Related to Fasting

In this brief section of the Holy Quran, injunctions regarding fasting are collected together. As well as covering many different subjects related to fasting, we are informed that fasting was enjoined for nations previously. The purpose of fasting and its benefits, those for whom fasting is made obligatory, and those who are exempt from this duty are identified. The distinction that the month of fasting (*Ramadan*) holds and its excellences, the excesses and deficiencies of other nations in this matter, and the remedy for such behavior are also given. The limitations of fasting, its timings, actions that are prohibited, are all mentioned, and in the end we are informed about the purpose behind this practice.

Now that the month of *Ramadan* is about to begin, I will elaborate the key injunctions in detail, so that while bearing the

hardship of abstinence from food and drink, the real purpose of fasting is not forgotten. Pay attention to these, as we do not need to get into extensive detail; only the essentials are highlighted.

The Holy Quran has described the purpose of fasting at the end of each verse starting with the words, “so that you may guard against evil,” (2:183) and closing with the words, “And swallow not up your property among yourselves by false means” (2:188). Since this purpose has been repeatedly mentioned throughout the discussion on this subject, I will discuss it toward the end.

Who Should Fast, Who Should Not and Who is Exempted

The Holy Quran states, “O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you” (2:183). Fasting is obligatory for those who are addressed in this verse i.e., the believers. Only those who have reached the age of maturity are obligated to follow the commandments of the *shariat*; therefore every believer who has reached the age of maturity must follow this injunction. Some are exempt from this and they are, “But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days.” The sick and those on a journey are exempted from fasting and are instructed to fulfill their obligation when they have returned from their journey or have recovered from the illness.

What kind of traveler or patient is exempt from fasting? This has not been defined, because illness and a journey cannot be specified. Every individual can decide for himself if he is ill or not. If he uses illness as an excuse not to fulfill his duty of fasting then he should understand that he is accountable before God who is aware of his intentions. If he makes a false excuse for not fasting he cannot be chastised for this by a third party and the matter rests solely with God. Who else can punish a person who eats and drinks in the privacy of his home and pretends on the outside that he is fasting? Similarly one should not readily give illness as an excuse in order to avoid fasting but due consideration

should be given to the nature and degree of illness. One should not look for excuses to avoid fasting, nor should one try to fast when genuinely sick. Similarly a journey, by any means of transportation, has not been defined. Some people have tried to define this as a journey of approximately twenty-four miles or twenty-four hours. The reality is that it is not possible to set these limits. Every individual knows best his intention of making a journey and any form of travel can influence one's capability to fast.

One finds a breadth of practice amongst the companions of the Holy Prophet regarding the injunction of fasting. Some of them kept the fast during a journey, while others did not. The Holy Prophet did not like fasting on a journey that involved hardship. There is a *Hadith* that a companion was fasting during a journey and became ill as a result of it. He was sitting on the ground and another companion was pouring water over his head to revive him. The Holy Prophet inquired about his condition and was informed that the individual was suffering on account of his fasting. Upon hearing this, the Holy Prophet said, "It is not an act of piety to fast during a journey."

People have also followed the paths of extremism, excess, or a dearth of effort, in the matter of fasting. There are some who feign illness and find all kinds of excuses for not fasting. There are also those who fast even when seriously ill and put their well-being in jeopardy, and deaths have occurred as a consequence. A similar attitude is manifested regarding fasting while on a journey. Some might call a short walk a journey, or intentionally arrange to travel during the month of fasting, while others are intent on keeping the fast while facing extreme hardship during a journey. Allah tells us: "Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you" (2:185). Allah's commandments are meant to bring about righteousness; therefore they are easy to carry out and bring about improvement. Allah the Most High does not put an unnecessary burden upon someone beyond their capacity. The Holy Quran tells us thus: "Allah imposes not on any soul a duty beyond its scope" (2:286).

Somebody has made a perceptive comment about this matter. There is no burden imposed by Allah's commandments. What appears to be a burden has the advantage of enhancing our capabilities. Compliance with the commandments leads to an increase in strength and determination to overcome difficulties. Many difficult tasks become easy and thus, from a state of hardship he is given a state of ease. For example, fasting appears to be a very difficult task. To overcome thirst in the hot summer months, to patiently face hunger, and to control one's passions, are all very difficult tasks. By following this exercise of fasting, however, it becomes easy to control one's hunger and desires. This should not be considered a minor accomplishment. To evolve the strength to control one's desires is indeed a very significant achievement.

“And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor man” (2:184)

This verse has also been heavily debated. Some, in order to avoid this debate, have considered this verse to be abrogated. Others have interpreted it to mean that whoever feeds a poor man is exempt from the obligation of fasting. It is irrelevant to discuss in this case what is abrogated and what is not. This verse deals with the commandment for fasting. If redemption by feeding a poor man meant exemption from fasting, then what would be the purpose of the commandment to fast? The commandment itself becomes redundant, for everyone who fasts has to face some difficulty, and should therefore take advantage of the exemption. Misunderstanding has arisen from the fact that people have taken the commandment, “And those who find it extremely hard,” to be meant for those who fast. The arrangement of these verses is such that at first the command to fast is given and this is made obligatory for all, “those who believe.” After this a few have been given exemption. The sick and those on a journey are thus given the alternative to fast at a different time. Mention is then made of those who find it difficult, implying those who are sick or on a journey and not all those who have been

commanded to fast. In this case, it means those who are sick or are on a journey, and their condition is such that they cannot even fast on alternative days. These are the ones given the exemption to feed the poor man. This difficulty does not pertain to the healthy, for it is essential for those in good health to bear the hardship of fasting. The difficulty faced by the sick or people on a journey is mentioned. Since those who are sick or are on a journey have already been exempted, this injunction is meant for those who find it hard to fast even on alternative days. This is because a sickness may be of a temporary nature and people can fulfill the obligation upon recovery. It can also be of a chronic nature and can last for a long period of time making it impossible for people to comply. These are the people who have been given the exemption to seek redemption by feeding a poor man.

The elderly in fragile health, who cannot bear this hardship, also fall under this exemption. The words, “and that you fast is better for you if you know,” are added on so that for those who can fast it is better that they fast. Pregnant and nursing women are also included in this exemption, for they have additional demands on their health. The period of pregnancy and nursing together can extend close to three years, and hence they are given the exemption to seek redemption by feeding a poor man.

The Paths of Excess and Deficiency Undertaken by Previous Nations

Similarly, another limitation is defined. It was essential to avoid pathways of extremism, those of excessiveness, or deficiency undertaken by previous nations. Fasting continuously without eating, or completely avoiding sexual relationships, even after the fast has ended, are some of these excesses. The commandment is therefore given in this matter:

“It is made lawful for you to go in to your wives on the night of the fast. They are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them” (2:187).

It is therefore appropriate to have conjugal relations during the night in the month of *Ramadan*.

The time of the fasting period is specified thus: “and eat and drink until the whiteness (*khait al abyadh*) of the day becomes distinct from the (*khait al aswad*) blackness of the night at dawn, then complete the fast until nightfall,” (2:187)

What is meant by the whiteness of the day and the blackness of the night? There is a Hadith regarding this; a companion of the Holy Prophet kept a piece of white and a piece of dark thread under his pillow when he went to sleep but could not differentiate their shades during the night. When this was related to the Holy Prophet, he said, “the black thread (*khait al aswad*) means the blackness of the night and the white thread (*khait al abyadh*) means the whiteness of the day.”¹

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1. Adiy ibn Hatim said, When it was revealed, “Until the khait al abyadz became distinct to you from the khait al aswad,” I betook myself to a black cord and a white cord and put them under my pillow, and I looked at them (now and then) during the night but I could not distinguish them; then I came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), in the morning and I mentioned this to him. He said, “By this is meant only the blackness of the night and the whiteness of the day” (B.30:37).

Footnote187c (Translation and Commentary of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali). Khait, which ordinarily means thread, stands here for the tint of the dawn as the words *min al-fajr* make it clear; *al-khait al-abyadh* means the whiteness of the day and *al-khait al-aswad* the blackness of the night (LL). This happens generally about an hour and a half before sunrise. The fast is to be broken with the coming of the night, which starts with the sunset.

An important question arises here regarding countries in which the days are sometimes very long, where it would be beyond the power of ordinary men to abstain from food from the breaking of the dawn to sunset. There is a report according to which the companions of the Prophet are related to have asked him about their prayers in a day that extended to a year or a month, and the Prophet is related to have answered that they should measure according to the measure of their days (AD 36:13). From this it would follow that in countries where the days are too long the time of fasting may be measured in accordance with the length of an ordinary day, or where practicable, postpone the fasts to shorter days of about normal length.

Thus consumption of food and drink are allowed during the time period between sunset and the tint of dawn, which occurs approximately one hour and thirty minutes before sunrise.

The Holy Prophet is reported to prefer consumption of food before beginning his fast in close proximity to this time at dawn. Many people consume their morning meal much earlier than this time. One should take care neither to eat and drink very early nor to extend it until the morning. As far as breaking of the fast is concerned, the time is specified as “then complete the fast until nightfall.” Just as it is preferable to have the morning meal close to the tint of dawn, it is preferable to break the fast as soon as the sun sets. One should hasten to break the fast as soon as the sun sets.

Purpose of Fasting

We are then informed of the meaning and purpose of fasting in the words: “So that you may guard against evil.” Fasting strengthens our resolve and teaches us how to resist evil. This is followed by the injunction, “So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.” Even if the duty of fasting and obligatory prayer is fulfilled by undertaking some degree of hardship, it has a beneficial effect on one’s character. This is the sign of life. A seedling put into the ground with difficulty, if not already dead, will start growing. Submission to Allah even under strained circumstances leaves its mark on the human spirit, rejuvenating and strengthening it.

I have repeatedly said that exercise strengthens the human body. Our muscles and physical faculties are strengthened by use and exercise, and we observe that a person who exercises regularly, albeit with difficulty, becomes stronger. Similarly, a good deed accomplished, even with effort, leads to the strengthening of the faculty to do good. Fasting also confers a great spiritual benefit. The lesson it conveys is that if someone chooses to

forego food and drink, which are lawful means of sustenance, for the pleasure of Allah, why would that individual not be prepared to give up what is unlawful? He becomes strong enough to control his desires and give up what is unlawful to seek the pleasure of Allah. That is the reason why the Holy Quran concludes the section about fasting with the words: "And swallow not up your property among yourselves by false means" (2:188).

The purpose of this command is for the spirit to evolve in obedience and submission to Divine Will. The message has another sublime significance. When food is not available at the usual time, the body becomes weak. The physical well-being and strength of the body is dependent upon timely consumption of food. Somebody has lightheartedly said that not eating during the day and eating at night leads to an untimely death.

Control of Desires

In order to maintain physical strength, it is essential to eat at regular times. Islam, however, does not teach us to give preference to our desires. The purpose of this is not that it prohibits following rules and regulations. It wants us to become the master and not the slave to our desires. Some people cannot even bear a mild degree of hunger and thirst, but Islam aims for a Muslim not to serve but to control his desires. Along with the desire for food and drink, sexual desire is also a part of human nature. The purpose of this faculty is to evolve and propagate the human race. Islam also wants us to control this natural inclination, so that we do not get overwhelmed by it at the slightest attraction and commit what is unlawful. There is testimony regarding the strength of character of the Holy Prophet in this matter in these words of Hazrat Aisha, "who amongst you has as much control over his desires as the Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had?"² Islam wants to teach us not to be a slave to our desires but for our desires to be subservient to

2. Fazlul Bari kitab-al haiz. 85

us. This is the spiritual strength it wants to create in a Muslim and it holds the key to success for all forms of human endeavor.

Striving in the Way of Allah

In order to achieve their objectives in life, people have made up all kinds of rituals. Some physically beat their chests to display their emotion while others repeatedly recite the *kalima* and claim that in this manner it comes from the heart, but most of these rituals result in loss. They have discarded the simple tenets of *shariat* and have created for themselves all kinds of complicated rituals and spiritual exercises. Allah The Most High has also shown us a method of striving in His way. Fasting for a whole month is indeed a major effort. We could have been enjoined to fast a few days at a time at ten or twelve day intervals, or fasting after taking short breaks. The secret of this month-long striving is to create a higher degree of patience and perseverance. It cannot be a significant striving until hardship and difficulty is consistently faced. Regarding this striving Allah tells us,

“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)

God Answers the Call of the Suppliant

There is no person in this world to whom God does not answer when called. Whosoever has the desire to get closer to God and strives in His way will definitely find Him, but people stray from the path that leads toward Him and seek alternate routes. They discard the path shown by the Holy Quran and *Shariat* and instead ask their spiritual mentors (*pirs*) for direction. They lay their trust in the prayers of these spiritual mentors. In fact, we should all have access to that stage of spiritual development where prayers find acceptance. These individuals depend upon others to get closer to God while Allah the Most High states, “when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh.”

Somebody has made a point here, that in the Holy Quran, wherever questions asked by people from Allah are mentioned, Allah The most High has used the word “*Qul*” meaning O prophet you give them this answer. Here the word “*Qul*” has not been used. Thus when nearness to Allah is sought, He has not asked Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to convey the reply but has responded directly to the query of His servants, “surely I am nigh.” In this world people have created many gods to seek access to Allah. Some seek intercession through their spiritual mentors (*pirs*) while others rely upon stone idols for this purpose. Nowadays people consider the prayer of their spiritual mentor (*pir*) as the major pathway toward achieving closeness to God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has not shown us any such means or intermediaries that are the way of getting closer to God.

In a *Hadith* narrated by Hazrat Ali, it is stated that during his illness, the Holy Prophet said, “brother, pray for me,” and supplication for the recovery of his health was made.”³ In another *Hadith*, Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Umar relates that he asked the Holy Prophet’s permission to perform the *Umrah* and the Holy Prophet gave him permission and stated, “My brother do not forget me in your prayers,” and later on during the stay in Medina the Holy Prophet said, “O brother include me in your prayer.”⁴ These *Hadith* confirm that any individual who cries out for help from Allah The Most High, is responded to for his supplication. Anyone who wants to reach this exalted state should supplicate and cry before Allah himself and not depend on other’s praying for him. Allah The Most High has elevated everyone who submits to Him (*Muslim*) to high levels of spiritual eminence. People, however, have strayed far from God. For whoever is ready to seek His closeness, Allah The Most High states, I am ready to meet Him. Allah is free of all faults and can be found by all those

3. Kanz -ul-amal vol 7. 253

4. Ahmad-bin-Hanbal vol. 49

who seek Him. The fault lies with you if you do not try to get close to Him. It is also narrated in the *Hadith* that if a person takes one step toward Allah, Allah takes two steps toward him and if one walks in His direction, Allah runs to meet that person.⁵ Whenever a person has the desire to meet Allah, he is able to find Him. People are engrossed in the pursuit of worldly desires and are not willing to part with them. How much do they humiliate themselves before the worldly for worldly gain? They entreat and show their helplessness! Little do they endeavor to seek closeness to Allah nor are they prepared to face any difficulty in this path. The heart should have the desire and longing only for this. The prayer that is taught to you, which you recite frequently in your daily and nightly prayers, also has this prayer within it. "Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom you have bestowed favors." If you recite this prayer while understanding its meaning, it will certainly get you to the level of being close to Allah. In this prayer we are taught to ask Allah for guidance to the right path, the path of those upon whom He has bestowed favors.

The Path of Those Upon Whom Allah Has Bestowed Favors

Some claim that this is a prayer seeking prophethood. I am telling you to first try to follow the path of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). When you cannot even follow a prophet how can you become one? I am also telling you another prophet does not follow the one before him unless there is a deficiency in the teachings of the previous prophet or new conditions arise that make his message defective. Thus, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the need for a prophet absolutely does not exist. This prayer is to seek the path of those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors. Those upon whom Allah bestows His favors are the prophets, the truthful,

5. Detail Hadith in Bukhari vol 2. 586

the faithful, and the righteous.⁶ It is a prayer seeking the ability to follow their path. This appears to be a small favor to ask. If your heart has the realization before Whom you are standing and what you are asking for, then it is not possible for you to act contrary to the practices of those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors. You stand before God to seek His guidance to follow their path. How can you then act contrary to it? While standing before Allah in your prayers you are not asking for wealth or worldly power, for Allah The Most High has himself pointed out that those upon whom favors are bestowed are not the worldly wise but the prophets, the truthful, the faithful and the righteous. You are beseeching God to guide you to follow in their footsteps. They avoided all evils and corruption and found God by avoiding all forms of association with Him. Their hearts became the seat of the love of God and manifestation of the knowledge of His attributes. It is their role model that a Muslim supplicates to follow and carry out the works they accomplished.

What are these works and achievements? The Holy Quran mentions these at length. The gist of these accomplishments is that whatever they have, or is within their power, becomes wholly for God. Their life's wealth and material possessions are all spent in the way of Allah. The heart that does not have the aspiration to sacrifice itself cannot follow their footsteps and the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. If you can imbue your heart with this degree of fervor, you are following their path and not otherwise. Remember the meaning of this verse whenever you recite it in your prayers. In your obligatory prayers you recite this prayer as prescribed, but in individual non-obligatory prayers at home (*nawafil*) you can repeatedly recite it while focusing on its meaning. May Allah give us the strength and power to follow the example of those upon whom He has bestowed

6. "And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous, and a goodly company are they!" 4:69.

favours. The goal of this group is not material acquisition. When Allah is ready to accept all your prayers, why would he not accept the prayer that He has Himself taught you and asked you to repeat frequently? If you beseech Allah, create a passion for it within your heart! What can be the benefit of a prayer that does not come from the heart? A prayer that does not come from the heart is useless and cannot be called a striving in the way of Allah.

The Throne of Power of Allah

The Throne of Power of Allah (*arsh*) is the heart of the believer. Perform your obligatory and non-obligatory prayers with a fervor that comes from the heart. A prayer without humility is bereft of spirit. It is a mere ritual and habit. *Hadith* informs us of the descent of The Lord to the first heaven in the latter portion of the night.⁷ What this means is that crying and supplicating before God during these hours of the night brings God closer to the suppliant. In these hours man is usually far away from his worldly pursuits and his desires are in a state of slumber. Islam lays special emphasis upon prayers performed during these hours. During the month of *Ramadan* The Holy Prophet did this with even greater determination and recited the *Tahajjud* prayers before *Fajr* (morning prayer). He would also wake up his wives for this purpose. The Holy Prophet and his companions would rise expediently to perform their *Tahajjud* prayers. Indolence in later times, however, deprived Muslims of this wonderful habit.

Spending in the Way of Allah

The other striving to be specially undertaken in this month is spending in the way of Allah. History tells us that Arabs were proud of their generosity, a distinguishing characteristic of their race, which was proverbial amongst the non-Arabs. The Holy

7. Fazlul-Bari Kitab - al-Tahajjud. 265

prophet was known as the most generous of all people, and he was most generous during *Ramadan*. In addition to fasting, spending in the way of Allah is the other striving to be undertaken in the month of *Ramadan*. He whose heart feels constrained to spend in the way of Allah should understand that this constraint is instigated by the devil. Your heart should derive pleasure from spending in the way of Allah. Allah The Most High has stated in the Holy Quran, “The devil threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly, and Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance. And Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing” (2:268).

In the month of *Ramadan*, which is about to begin, you can ascend to great spiritual heights and become closer to Allah. Acquisition of wealth is an easy task but closeness to Allah is a much greater achievement, essential for salvation. The one seeking wealth may not find it, but the spiritual wayfarer who strives to get close to Allah The Most High is never unsuccessful in his quest. The beggar to this threshold never returns empty-handed. Why do you not try to go there? Pray with great fervor during this blessed month, for yourself, for your family, for your nation. Pray for all Muslims that Allah The Most High may deliver them from this state of humiliation. Prayer is the most potent weapon you have — incomparable in its effect to anything else.

In the battle of *Badr*, The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, confronted a powerful force of disbelievers with only three hundred of his poorly-armed companions. In spite of the Divine promise of success, the Holy Prophet prayed with such fervor that *Hazrat Abu Bakr* took hold of his hand and said, “O prophet of Allah your prayer before your Lord (*Rabb*) has reached perfection.” Another *Hadith* uses the words, “Allah The Most High is sufficient for you, you have entreated your Lord much, He will most certainly reward you and keep His promise.” The Holy Prophet at this very moment received the good news from Allah that these disbelievers would be routed and would turn on their backs.

It is related by *Ibn 'Abbas* that the Holy Prophet prayed within his tent on the day of *Badr*, saying: "O Lord, I beseech Thee according to Thy covenant and Thy promise; O Lord, if such is Thy will, Thou mayest not be served after this day." *Abu Bakr* took his hand and said: "Allah is sufficient for thee, O Messenger of Allah." So he went out and he recited: "Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they will show their backs; nay, the Hour is their promised time, and the Hour is most grievous and bitter" (B. 56:89).

This was the same prophecy revealed many years earlier in the Holy Quran, "Soon shall the hosts be routed and they will show (their) backs" (54:45).

If you call yourselves the followers of the Holy Prophet then create this type of fervor in your hearts, to follow his path. This manner of pleading before Allah was adopted by many Muslim kings who achieved success in battle in very difficult circumstances by humbly supplicating before Allah the Most High. Who knows when Allah will accept His Prayer? Each one of us should try to pray with such fervor that his prayers come from the heart.

Pay special attention to what I have presented before you so that you do not fail in achieving the true objective of fasting in spite of going hungry and thirsty in this hot weather. Give up all that is evil. Do not lie, do not backbite, do not steal or unlawfully consume property belonging to others. Create fervor in your supplications. Those who can manage should follow the practice of *I'tikaf* in the last ten days of *Ramadan* as indicated in the Quranic verse: "while you keep to the mosques" (2:187).⁸ Also pray fervently during this period for the success of Islam and deliverance of Muslims from their state of humiliation.

8. "Mentioned here are those people who cut themselves off from all worldly connections during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, passing day and night in the mosques. This practice is known as *I'tikaf*. It is voluntary and not obligatory.

January 27 1922

Finality of Prophethood

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ
كَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ۝

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things. (33:40)

This verse of *Al-Abzab* (The Allies) forms the basis of a very well established and sacred principle of our religion, Islam. This principle has had uniform acceptance amongst the Muslims over the last thirteen hundred years and has survived an otherwise bitter sectarian divide. No one contested its validity.

Sometimes, however, the words of the Holy Quran are interpreted to suit one's personal views. In terms of *Shariat*, this form of interpretation is called commentary based upon personal opinion (*Tafsir-bil-rai*). In this quest, the words of the Holy

Quran and the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are casually rejected. Once an errant principle is stipulated, the words of the Holy Quran are manipulated in support of it and attempts are made to draw a wrong conclusion from them. When the followers of the *Shia* sect decided to elevate the status of Hadhrat Ali above the other venerable companions of the Holy Prophet, they started falsely accusing them. Many a verse of the Holy Quran were thus interpreted to prove the elevated spiritual status of Hadhrat Ali, Imam Hasan, and Imam Hussein and to declare the rest of the companions as hypocrites. Every word was thus falsely interpreted to support this wrong notion.

Following this defective standard of interpreting the Holy Quran, the belief of continuation of prophethood was invented by a section of the Ahmadiyya movement (under leadership of Mirza Mehmood Ahmad)¹. Attempts are now being made to derive this meaning from various verses of the Holy Quran. Even the verse of Al-Fatihah: “Guide us on the right path,” was put forth to support this errant view. Is the supplication to be guided on the right path a prayer for acquisition of prophethood? Was our Holy Prophet not a prophet when he was taught this prayer and hence was advised to ask for it? Certainly, after he had attained prophethood, there was no need for continuing to supplicate in this matter! This is indeed very strange logic that the Holy Prophet was taught to ask for prophethood after he had already been delegated this responsibility. It would have made more sense if this had occurred before he was given the mantle of prophethood.

In a similar manner, the words of *As-sala ‘ala-n-Nabiyy* are misinterpreted to prove this erroneous doctrine.

The other day, a follower of Mirza Mehmood Ahmed came to visit us and tried to prove this point.

1. Words in parenthesis added by translator, for further details refer to Split in the Ahmadiyya movement by Maulana Muhammad Ali.

He made this claim that the *as-sala 'ala-n-Nabiyy* clearly supports the doctrine of continuation of prophethood!

In this prayer we recite, "O Allah exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad as thou exalted Abraham and the followers of Abraham. Thou art indeed Praised Magnified. Oh Allah bless Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad as thou blessed Abraham and the followers of Abraham. Thou art indeed Praised, Magnified."

By this he implied that since the greatest blessing and exaltation given to the followers of Abraham was the gift of prophethood, it is what the followers of Muhammad are asking for when they recite these words.

If only these people would give some thought to their statements, they would realize what they are saying and appreciate its grave consequences!

If what they say is correct, and this is indeed the real implication of *As-sala 'ala-n-Nabiyy*, it would mean that the Holy Prophet has not yet been given prophethood and we are praying for this to happen. We are supplicating for the exaltation and blessing of Muhammad before his followers who are mentioned afterwards in this prayer. Thus, without thinking, these people come up with interpretations in accordance with their wishes. They create a doctrine and then attempt to manipulate the Quranic word and *hadith* accordingly. They come up with strange concepts in pursuit of their vain desires!

Similarly, they interpret this Quranic verse: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets," to imply continuation of prophethood.

As I will shortly explain, the manner in which they arrive at this conclusion negates the real purpose and intent of this verse.

The two statements “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah” do not seem to be apparently connected.

In reality, what this means is that although physically Muhammad is not the father of any of you, by being the Messenger of Allah, he becomes your spiritual father, for a messenger spiritually stands in such a relationship with his followers. By physically not being the father of any of you, does not imply any shortcoming. They agree with this interpretation up to this point that the Holy Prophet did not have any male offspring and he was the spiritual father of his followers.

Meaning of the Term, “Seal of the Prophets”

After this come the words, “and (he is) the Seal of the prophets.” From the time of the Holy Prophet to this date, these words have always been interpreted to mean that with the Holy Prophet all prophethood has ended and nobody has had the courage to contest this meaning.

We should now ask ourselves, what is the relationship of this statement with the previous one?

It is a fact that ever since the institution of prophethood was mandated by Divine intent, prophets have followed each other in succession.

When a prophet is succeeded by another, it implies that the spiritual dispensation of the previous prophet has ended and that of the new one begins.

This verse tells us that the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Seal of the prophets after whom there is no prophet. If another prophet comes after him, the implication would be that his spiritual dispensation has ended. The Holy Prophet, however, is such a spiritual father that his spiritual lineage extends till the Day of Judgment. The Holy Prophet was not the physical father of any of your men, but he is no doubt your spiritual father. No other

spiritual father is now destined to come into the world after him. Since every prophet stands in the position of a spiritual father, there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad; he is the seal of the prophets.

Now this verse is being interpreted (by the aforementioned group)² to mean that there will be prophets after the Holy Prophet Muhammad from amongst his followers and that they will be given this office through a stamp of approval by the Holy Prophet. In other words, in the past it was God who appointed prophets and now it is the Holy Prophet Muhammad who gives the stamp of approval for this purpose!

If you give it careful thought, with this interpretation, the verse is deprived of its original meaning. Considering this interpretation, it would mean that although the Holy Prophet Muhammad is not the physical father of any of your men, he is nevertheless your spiritual father. There will, however, be other spiritual fathers after him, even though they may be offshoots of his spirituality; they will still be fathers. The Holy Prophet is thus being informed by Allah that physically you are not the father of any of these men amongst your followers. However, your spiritual dispensation is also coming to an end because after you there will be others who will bear this spiritual relationship to your followers. By using the term messenger or prophet in opposition to the term father, it is ascertained that every messenger is in likeness to a spiritual father for his followers. Thus, if other prophets were to come, they would be the spiritual fathers of this nation.

This notion that the coming of prophets after the Holy Prophet Muhammad by his stamp of approval somehow elevates the status of the Holy Prophet, is completely wrong. Interpreting the Seal of prophets in this manner does not bring good news, nor does it elevate the status of the Holy Prophet. Indeed, it is sad news that along with the termination of the physical male

2. Followers of Mirza Mehmood Ahmed, also known as the Qadian section.

progeny of the Holy Prophet we are informed that his spiritual descendants are coming to an end and other prophets and messengers are to follow him; and these prophets would be in the position of spiritual fathers for this nation.

Which other verse of the Holy Quran can we now put forward as a proof that the spiritual dispensation of the Holy Prophet has not ended and will remain till the Day of Judgment?

If we analyze this interpretation of the Seal of the prophets from another angle, we also conclude that it is incorrect. It has always been the case that all messengers and prophets are spiritual fathers for their nations and therefore do not have any distinctive title. In the case of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, he was given the special distinction of being the Seal of the prophets by Allah. If the meaning of this word Seal of the prophets was not clear and for thirteen hundred years no one understood its correct meaning in spite of all the efforts, then one may ask why this word was used after all. Is it not strange that for thirteen hundred years all people understood this verse to mean that there was to be no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad? After thirteen hundred years this new meaning is realized. If this is in reality the meaning that prophets and messengers will continue to come, then this was nothing new because messengers and prophets have always been coming. What was then the need to use a new term Seal of the prophets? The other strange aspect of this interpretation is that Allah has not explained it in any other verse of the Holy Quran so that it may be understood by the people.

If this ancient tradition was undergoing such a momentous change, Allah should have clearly explained it elsewhere in the Quranic text, or advised the Holy Prophet so that he could have explained it in some *Hadith (saying)*. We have repeatedly asked the proponents of this view to produce a single *Hadith* that supports this meaning of the Seal of prophets, but they have failed to respond.

I ask this very simple question, which verse of the Holy Quran or Hadith gives this explanation of the verse “Seal of the prophets” as meaning from now on prophets will be made by receiving a seal of approval from the Holy Prophet Muhammad? Has the Holy Prophet Muhammad made such a statement anywhere? It is quite apparent that for thirteen hundred years Muslims did not understand this to be the meaning of the verse, “Seal of the prophets.” Nor did Allah the Most High or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, or any *Mujaddid* (Reformer) or Muslim saint give this explanation. In fact the Holy Prophet throughout his life understood and explained this verse differently.

In one Hadith he states: “I am the last of the prophets (*la nabiyya babdi*),” or, “nothing remains of prophethood except good news (*mubashiraat*).”

He also said, “I am the last brick of the edifice of prophethood,” and “If there were to be a prophet after me, it would have been Umar.”

On another occasion, he addressed Ali with the following words: “O Ali your relationship with me is like that of Moses with Aaron except that Aaron was a prophet and there can be no prophet after me therefore you cannot be a prophet.”

In addition, we have these “I have been named *Aqib* for *Aqib* is the one after whom there is no prophet.”

“There will be thirty liars, from amongst my followers who cover truth with falsehood (*dajjal*). Each one of them will think that he is a prophet. I am the last of the prophet’s there is no prophet after me” (*TIRIMDHI: VOL 1 812*)

All these *Hadith* are full of explanations of the term Seal of the Prophets, which confirms the Holy Prophet to be the last of the prophets. Contrary to this, there is not a single *Hadith* not even a weak one, or a statement of a companion of the Holy Prophet that gives the meaning of Seal of the Prophets being prophethood through a stamp of approval by the Holy Prophet

Muhammad. What this implies is that from the time of the Holy Prophet for thirteen hundred years to this date all of his followers remained unaware of this explanation and remained in a state of error regarding this principle of belief (we seek the protection of Allah from this). Alas! They have not presented even a weak *Hadith* to indicate that the Holy prophet was aware of this interpretation, though his followers did not accept it.

Philosophy of the Finality of Prophethood

I want to draw your attention to another aspect of the belief in finality of prophethood. Allah the Most High has declared finality of prophethood as the foundation of a magnificent union amongst the followers of Islam. This is the reason why with the mention of termination of physical male offspring of the Holy Prophet, the term Seal of prophets is mentioned. After the words, "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men" (it is stated) "but he is the Messenger of Allah." Thus calling him the Messenger of Allah after negating his physical male progeny clearly means that he is the Spiritual father. The reason for mentioning this with negation of physical sons is that if there were to be male descendants of the Holy Prophet they would have been given an honorable and distinctive position amongst his followers. This would have served as a deterrent against unity and equality amongst the followers. In order to establish equality and unity amongst the followers of Muhammad, Allah says that Muhammad is not the (physical) father of any of your men, for if that would have been the case, his progeny would have acquired a distinctive status amongst you and in this situation equality and unity could not have been maintained. On the other hand, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and therefore the spiritual father of his followers. All those who believe in him are thus his spiritual sons without any distinction. They are all brothers like the sons of the same father and are members of the same family. They have inherited the same property from their father and are equal partners in it. They follow a common law

and *Shariat*, and all Muslims from any nation or country that practice this are like one family and the sons of the same father.

In support of this concept the Holy Quran states: "The believers are brethren" (49:10).

Regarding the wives of the Holy Prophet it is stated: "And his wives are (as) their mothers." (33:6).

Thus by calling all Muslims children of one father and his wives their mothers, they were all made brethren and the basis of unity and cooperation amongst the Muslims was laid down. There is no racial distinction among Muslims; they are all on equal footing as sons of one father. If the Holy Prophet had physical progeny such a fraternal bond could not have been established amongst the Muslims. Some would have been called sons both through physical and spiritual lineage, while others would only have been spiritual children. As has frequently happened in the world, spirituality is totally abandoned in favor of the physical inheritors. Such preferential treatment leads to corruption.

Such behavior in our times has also led many people in the Ahmadiyya movement to falter and give preferential treatment to the son of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. As a consequence of this, they abandoned the Quran and Hadith and came up with the interpretations mentioned earlier. They have rejected the commandments of the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet, and the promised Messiah in deference to the directions given by the son (Mirza Mehmood Ahmad)³.

How full of wisdom is the Quranic revelation when it tells us that the Holy Prophet has no male progeny but he is the spiritual father of all believers and this distinction remains till the Judgment Day! This is further elaborated by these Quranic verses:

"He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His mes-

3. Son of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

sages and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom” (62:2).

“And others from among them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Mighty, the Wise” (62:3)

These verses tell us that the Holy Prophet’s teachings and purification extend to his followers for all times. In other words, he is their spiritual father till Judgment Day. In the verse discussed earlier, the term Messenger was used to indicate that he was the spiritual father. In these verses, the functions of the Messenger are mentioned as teaching and purification. Thus confirming that spiritual life will now only be dispensed through one father, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Though different words are used, the message and meaning of all these verses is the same.

Some people make this statement that before the time of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the teachings of the Holy Quran had become remote. I am surprised at this comment, for if the Holy Quran had become inaccessible in this manner, who taught Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad? In fact by teaching and purifying him, it was proven that the same purifying force, the Holy Quran, which purified and taught the venerable companions of the Holy Prophet, was still as effective and had not become weaker. It can still after thirteen hundred years produce men of such high spiritual caliber. This force is not diminishing, but gaining strength. If it was decreasing, it would one day disappear.

That is why the Holy Quran states: “And surely the latter state is better for thee than the former” (93:4).

This tells us that the spiritual power of the Holy Prophet will not diminish and the latter stage would be better than the former. As the rising sun goes on shining brighter till midday, so will the spiritual light of the Holy Prophet keep on gaining strength. His status of being the spiritual father will therefore not now be terminated to make room for the coming of another prophet or messenger. The followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad will

remain as brothers as is the case for the offspring of one father. All of you Muslims are brothers because of this spiritual bond. The brotherhood created amongst Muslims as a result of this spiritual relationship is however ignored by most people, although this spiritual bond should be appreciated more than the physical bond between a father and a son. We love our blood brethren despite their shortcomings and we overlook their weaknesses. Alas! We show enmity toward our spiritual brothers to whom we are related through our spiritual father and quarrel over minor differences. If you love the Holy Prophet, then you should also love his spiritual offspring. Why would you not love the Holy prophet, when the Holy Prophet himself has set the standard of your faith as the degree of love you show for him?

According to *Hadith* of Bukhari the Holy Prophet said: "None amongst you can be a believer till he loves me more than his father, his brother and all other people."

If you love Holy Prophet Muhammad more than anyone else, you will also love his spiritual children. In this manner, all Muslims will become brethren to each other, like the children of one father. In order to establish this fraternal bond among the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad has been made the only father of this nation. No new messenger can now come for this nation, nor can anybody else be its father. If in fact a new prophet does come, the bond of unity and cooperation amongst this nation will be shattered. The coming of a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad totally precludes harmony and unity amongst Muslims.

These claims that we will unite all under the banner of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad are mere verbal claims. So many prophets have come into this world; is there a single individual who has been universally accepted?

You should first demonstrate if you can make the world accept a person of the Holy Prophet's exalted status. Has the striving by Muslims for thirteen hundred years succeeded in making

the world accept him as a prophet?

You cannot by making Hazrat Mirza Sahib a prophet succeed in having the Muslims accept him as one.

You can, however, succeed in having him accepted as a *Mu-jaddid* (Reformer). You have the example of the previous *Mu-jaddids* in this case, who have been accepted by the majority of Muslims.

Be aware that making of a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad and nullification of his spiritual inheritance cannot be the basis of unity amongst the Muslims! In fact this spreads hypocrisy and dissension.

It is quite apparent that all Muslims will not accept a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. After efforts of hundreds for years, it may be possible that he may find acceptance amongst a portion of them. What else will be accomplished by such a belief other than destroying the current bond of kinship amongst the Muslims? Remember that unity amongst Muslims can only be maintained if Holy Prophet Muhammad is regarded as the spiritual father of this nation and if the belief of another prophet after him is not created.

Treat Each Other as Brethren

Those of you who are present here right now are few but consider each other as brethren. Just as a brother does not immediately get angry with his brother, but loves his brother because they are the sons of the same father, similarly you should, being the spiritual progeny of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, love each other. You in fact have re-established this bond by accepting the reformer of this age. Therefore, this bond of love should even be greater. It is not right to get offended by minor issues and make them the basis of strife. The Holy Prophet has laid down a principle to settle such mutual discord: "You cannot be a believer unless you love for your brother what you love for

yourself" (*BUKHARI* FIRST CHAPTER, 13). Whenever you are dealing with each other, remember this golden rule. You should have this concern in your heart before you usurp the right of another. You should always ask yourself the question, would I like this if I were in his place? If somebody does make a mistake, forgive him as you would forgive your brother.

The other day when I was travelling, somebody mentioned two brothers who were aggrieved with each other. I said it was easy to resolve this matter. Assuming that they have hurt each other to some degree, letting this linger on is detrimental to the religious cause. Is personal loss not worth sacrificing for the religious cause? If one could understand this, all quarrels can be set aside. I advise all my friends to set aside their personal differences and jealousies. It does not behoove a Muslim to reject the command of Allah and His prophet for matters of the world and be resentful of his fellow Muslims. This can sometimes result in great loss. Even as it is, Muslims are being destroyed by mutual sectarian strife. I pray that we are not amongst those who hold rancor for each other in our hearts and are of those who strengthen the mutual bond of love and decrease discord.

February 11, 1922

Moderation Essential in Expression of Love and Anger

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and Messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾

So when the great Calamity comes;

يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾

The day when man remembers all that he strove for,

وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِمَن يَرَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾

And hell is made manifest to him who sees.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Then as for him who is inordinate,

وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٤١﴾

And prefers the life of this world,

فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْهَأْوَىٰ ﴿٤٢﴾

Hell is surely the abode.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَتَمَّهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ ﴿٣٠﴾

And as for him who fears to stand before his Lord and restrains himself from low desires, (*Hawa*)

فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۖ ﴿٣١﴾

The Garden is surely the abode. (CH.79:34-41)

Controlling or Being Controlled by Desires

Two groups are mentioned in these verses of the Holy Quran – one with a preference for the life of this world striving to make it the aim and objective of existence, while the other one includes restraining and controlling their worldly desires of avarice and lust. By comparison of the two, it is pointed out that the one making material acquisitions as the object of their life, falls down or becomes a slave to these desires. The result of this is the abode of fire. He who is able to control his desires enters into the Garden or Paradise.

Hell and Heaven Begin in this Life

The Arabic word *Hawa* means going down or falling down. Uncontrolled desires are called *Hawa*, because they make man fall down to a lower and more humiliating stage of spiritual existence. One who stands in fear of the accountability before his *Rabb* (Lord), or is concerned about falling down from the state where Allah the Most High has brought him, for him, “The Garden is surely the abode.” The Holy Quran does not say here that he will only be in the Garden (*jannat*) in the Life Hereafter. In fact, what is stated is that his abode will be in the Garden or he is already in that Garden. In other words, he has gained entry into the Garden (*jannat*) in this very life. For the same person it is stated elsewhere in the Holy Quran, “And for him who fears to stand before his Lord are two Gardens.” Thus for him who stands in fear of the accountability before his Lord, there are two Gardens, one

in this world's life, and one in the Hereafter. Life in Hell and Heaven begins in this world. A person takes away his hell or heaven with him from this life based upon his deeds here. The only difference is that the awareness of this state is not fully realized in this world but becomes a more palpable reality in the Life Hereafter. The one who prevents his soul from becoming a slave to his desires enters the Garden in this world. Those whose life is controlled by their desires can perceive hell in this world. Unbridled avarice and lust ignite the burning and fire within the hearts, which consumes their peace of mind pushing them to remain in a state of agitation throughout their lives. The Holy Quran describes this condition in these words: "It is the Fire kindled by Allah, Which rises over the hearts" (104:6, 7). What is the nature of the fire of hell? It inflames the hearts and minds. In brief, uncontrolled pursuit of avarice and lust create the hell in this world, and those who follow this path fall into it.

The Path of Moderation

There are two sides to greed and lust as a consequence of which man stumbles and falls frequently. One is manifested as excessive love and the other as hatred. *Al-Fatiba* (the opening chapter of the Holy Quran) gives us the most comprehensive guidance in this matter. It states: "Guide us on the right path the path of those upon whom Thou has bestowed favors¹." This is asking for guidance toward the path of moderation that is safeguarded and distinguished from all sorts of excesses and deficiencies. These behaviors are manifested either as extreme hatred or extreme love with abandonment of the moderate course. In the *Hadith*, the Jews and Christians, relative to the manner they treated Jesus, have been cited as examples of these behavior patterns. The Jews took the extreme position of malice

1. "And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous, and a goodly company are they!" 4:69.

toward Jesus while the Christians' love for Jesus followed the extreme behavior of raising a mortal to the position of godhead. Nothing in the world can be accomplished without these two emotions of love and hate. Extremism in the manifestation of these is also the basis for all discord in human relations. Love of or separation from someone, mutual attraction, or dislike are the basis for all ties in nature and they provide the impetus for all human undertakings.

Sometimes it appears that there is a disruption of flow and connection among the various verses of the Holy Quran. A closer observation, however, reveals a novel connection among the very same verses. For example, murder and fornication are generally mentioned together. On the surface, one does not see a connection between the two. In fact, however, murder is committed when the emotion of anger is let loose while uncontrolled love results in fornication. Every individual who recites the *Al-Fatibah* also beseeches Allah to, "guide us on the right path," and in fact aspires to reach this level of spirituality. It is therefore essential for him to always be aware of not taking the extreme position in exhibiting his love or anger. Our condition is such that when we love a person we are ready to follow him blindly, even if we have to go against the word of the Quran and *Hadith*. Similarly, we take the extreme position that when we hate someone we totally disregard all his virtues. These are positions that stall the progress of nations. In order to make progress, it is absolutely essential to follow the path of moderation in exhibiting both of these emotions.

Emotions of Love and Anger Form the Basis of Human Development

It is a mistake to try to eliminate these two emotions. They are an essential part of the human character and nothing in the world can be accomplished without them. It is also necessary to follow a course of moderation in expressing these emotions. Following the path of excess in the case of both love and hate

is evil. Both of these attributes are also a part of the nature of Allah The Most High and they work in a manner that one does not nullify the other. A nation at one time can be the subject of His wrath as a consequence of its evil deeds. The same nation, if it does good deeds becomes deserving of His love. Even when a nation that belies His Religion and is subject to His wrath, undertakes some worldly matter and works diligently at it, He rewards it with abundance of wealth and it is not treated inequitably because of its disbelief. When a pious person commits some evil, he is punished accordingly and the good deed of the evil one is not wasted. The Holy Quran states: "So he who does an atom's weight of good will see it. And he who does an atom's weight of evil will see it."

Allah the Most High, as a manifestation of His attributes, punishes or rewards every individual. It is, however, certain that His love takes precedence over His wrath. When a person does a good deed, he is given ten times more in return. When someone is subject to His wrath, his good deed is not wasted and his evil act may even be forgiven. This is proof that His love takes precedence over His wrath. For every individual, both of these attributes are manifested accordingly; evil is forgiven but good is never forgotten. It is the duty of every Muslim to ensure that these attributes are a part of his nature and that they find expression in a similar manner. One's love for a person should not be so extreme that even his evil deeds appear to be good. Similarly, our dislike for an individual should not make us overlook his good qualities.

To be Manifested under Appropriate Circumstances

Both anger and love should be manifested at the appropriate occasion. Just as love when manifested under the appropriate circumstances becomes an act of goodness, similarly anger shown under the right conditions becomes a good deed. You should not love someone to the extent that his evil becomes good for you; nor should your hatred for a person be such that

it takes away the opportunity for you to do good to that individual. Disregard of this principle leads toward decadence and destruction of nations, cultures, and societies. Muslims in the present age are subject to this condition. When someone commits a mistake, they do not forgive him. When they like someone they totally ignore his shortcomings. This is inappropriate behavior. A Muslim should inculcate the emotions of love and anger in his words and deeds in the manner he finds them manifested in the Divine nature.

The Holy Prophet's nature is an example of both these qualities working alongside each other and being manifested under the appropriate circumstances. Under the appropriate circumstances, he manifested his anger by calling for the stoning of adulterers², cutting the hands of habitual thieves, and beheading of opponents during the defensive battles he had to undertake. When it was the occasion to manifest his love and caring for humanity, he forgave even his most inveterate enemies without seeking revenge from them. How endearing an example of the Holy Prophets character is this incident? On one occasion some people bore calumny against the noble character of Hazrat Aisha. This also involved a few Muslims. Hasan bin Thabit, a famous poet and Mastah from amongst the relatives of Hazrat Abu Bakr was amongst them. Because of his poverty, the Holy Prophet would often offer assistance to him. When, however, this slander was proven false, the Holy Prophet did not hesitate to spare anyone. Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, who in the past had helped Mastah, stopped his assistance.

The hostile critics say that the Holy Quran is a reflection of the Holy Prophet's own thought, which he himself has created. They and everyone else should ponder these circumstances. A baseless and extremely dangerous accusation is made against the noble wife of the Holy Prophet. On such an occasion, anyone holding the reins of power would be ready to unleash their

2. (while following the dictates of the prevalent Jewish law)

wrath against the perpetrators of such a personal attack. The Holy Quran offers this advice regarding the incident, to Hazrat Abu Bakr:

“And let not possessors of grace and abundance among you swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah’s way; and pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful” (24:22)

Thus Hazrat Abu Bakr is commanded to continue his financial assistance of Mastah. This is a very difficult situation to be in particularly when the false accusation is made against your own daughter. Not only is he commanded to forgive but also to continue his assistance of the accuser. Someone may say that the Holy Quran has just given this command, which is very difficult to put into practice. They should, however, ponder this. The companions of the Holy Prophet had such faith in the Holy Quran that Hazrat Abu Bakr immediately resumed his assistance in obedience to this revelation. Hasan Bin Thabit was forgiven. One finds no malice or vilification against him and he is returned to his previous status of respect in society. His vicious calumny is forgotten and hatred for him is replaced by love. This incident is forgotten as if it did not occur. The feeling of resentment was resolved and replaced once more with the feeling of love. The guilty were thus similarly punished during the time of the Holy Prophet. After being punished, they were treated like everyone else. The hand of a habitual thief was cut off but after his punishment was rendered, no one had the right to look down upon him.

Lessons to be Learned from Example of the Holy Prophet and his Companions

You should learn from these events. If you are attacked personally, or your sons and daughters are falsely accused, you should not make this a permanent source of resentment and enmity. Get rid of hatred from your heart and replace it with love.

Follow the Holy Quran and the noble example of the Holy Prophet. Carefully study his life history and character, for it frequently happens that lack of knowledge leads to one's spiritual demise. Having the proper knowledge will prevent this. Once you become aware of this, you should act upon it. That is why I am giving you this information. Before you take any action, give due consideration to the circumstances. Keep your emotions of anger and love under control to follow the course of moderation. Do not let your love for someone exceed the limits that his evil seems good to you. Do not let your hatred for someone make you oblivious of his good qualities. If someone commits an indecency that affects his person, try to cover his faults and forgive him as much as possible. If it is an evil deed that affects someone else, then punish him and do not hold hatred in your heart toward this individual afterwards. If it causes harm to the nation, the person should certainly be penalized. Malice toward the individual should not be borne and nurtured further in one's heart. Allah the Most High gives an opportunity to everyone to reform after committing wrong. When you bear ill will in your heart, you act contrary to this attribute of Allah.

February 18, 1922

Islam Negates all Forms of Class Distinction

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى ①

He frowned and turned away, (80:1)

أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى ②

Because the blind man came to him. (80:2)

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى ③

And what would make thee know that he might purify himself. (80:3)

أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى ④

Or be mindful, so the Reminder should profit him (80:4)

أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَغْنَى ⑤

As for him who considers himself free from need (80:5)

فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى ٦

To him thou dost attend. (80:6)

وَمَا عَلَيْكَ الْإِيزَى ٧

And no blame is on thee, if he purify himself not. (80:7)

وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى ٨

And as to him who comes to thee striving hard, (80:8)

وَهُوَ يَخْشَى ٩

And he fears — (80:9)

فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَى ١٠

To him thou payest no regard. (80:10)

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ ١١

Nay, surely it is a Reminder. (80:11)

فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ ١٢

So let him, who will, mind it. (80:12)

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكْرَمَةٍ ١٣

In honoured books, (80:13)

مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ١٤

Exalted, purified, (80:14)

بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ١٥

In the hands of scribes, (80:15)

كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ١٦

Noble, virtuous (80:16)

Incident of the Blind Man

A minor incident from the life of the Holy Prophet is mentioned in these verses. He was explaining his message to a gathering when a blind man turned up and interrupted his discourse by asking that a certain matter be explained to him. The Holy Prophet did not appreciate his intrusion and continued the discourse without responding to him. At that very moment, he received this revelation from on High: “He frowned and turned away, because the blind man came to him. And what would make thee know that he might purify himself. Or be mindful, so the Reminder should profit him. As for him who considers himself free from need. To him thou dost attend. And no blame is on thee, if he purify himself not. And as to him who comes to thee striving hard and he fears — to him thou payest no regard.”

It is natural and common, that when a person is interrupted in the middle of a conversation, he does not appreciate it. It is not mentioned here that the Holy Prophet was exhorting a group of Arab dignitaries. All that is mentioned is that he did not pay attention to a person’s query. This is not an unusual happening; the Holy Prophet’s response was quite natural under the circumstance. Reprimand from Allah the Most High was essential however, for He wanted the Prophet’s response to be above the ordinary and at a much higher spiritual plane.

Significance of the Incident

This became an extraordinary incident for two reasons.

It dispels the notion that revelation is a phenomenon that comes from within a person’s heart like the inspiration of a poet when he composes an appropriate, profoundly meaningful, or unique composition. Some Muslims have erroneously assumed that revelation arises from the human mind. This incident clearly proves that revelation comes from an outside source and is certainly not a product of the human mind. When a person is explaining something to someone with full focus, his mind does

not appreciate being diverted in another direction. To be rebuked for something for which one feels justified in his own mind proves with certainty that the revelation was not a product of the Holy Prophet's own mind and thought process.

The second lesson one learns from this incident being recorded in the Holy Quran is that it is not appropriate to ignore the petition of any seeker of knowledge, irrespective of his appearance and demeanor. Although, under the circumstances, the Holy Prophet was helpless in this matter, nevertheless his reaction was publicized in order to give proper guidance to his followers. If it was inappropriate for him, how could it be appropriate for his followers? Whether a person is from humble stock or he belongs to aristocracy, whether he is rich or poor, all are equal in the eyes of God. Belonging to a powerful family or tribe does not elevate your status before God. This incident proved that whether you belonged to a warrior Arab tribe or you were a poor blind man, Islam eliminated all distinctions of class, color, race, physical superiority or social status.

Islam Eliminated Class Distinction

The excellence and beauty of Islamic teachings is that through it the extremely poor were raised to positions of great worldly and spiritual eminence. If we ponder, we realize that the social, moral and spiritual revolution brought about in society through the teachings of Islam is unmatched by any other religion. Lawless Arab tribesmen, who had no experience or tradition of governance or established rule, became rulers and leaders of powerful states. The totally unlettered and ignorant who took pride in calling themselves illiterate became so immersed in the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge that they became the teachers to the rest of the world. They were unfamiliar with God or ways of worshipping Him and were deeply submerged in idol-worship and superstition, being far ahead of everyone else in following these practices. Those whose minds had not been previously captivated to worship God, became so engrossed in

worship and submission to Him that they could not find peace and solace in any other pursuit. The ones who could not even count to a thousand were given wealth beyond their imagination. The ignorant were given such bounteous knowledge and wisdom that they became the guardians of knowledge for future generations. Those from a nation hopelessly addicted to alcohol became leaders of the world and scholars. They were not from the household of the Holy Prophet but were menial slaves of the *Quraish* nobility. These were ordinary people without any connection to the physical lineage of the Holy Prophet's family, who, by embracing his message, were raised to the highest levels of worldly and spiritual eminence. It frequently happens that the poor embrace and benefit from the exhortation of a prophet and the rich do not because they ignore it. This is not, however, the rule. Whether it is the affluent or the poverty-stricken, whosoever accepts good advice, benefits from it.

Some who have taken an extreme position in this matter, consider that religion is only for the poor, the rich having no share of it. We find these teachings reflected in the words of the bible:

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (MATTHEW 19:23-24)

Some other religions, also following an extreme position, have totally rejected people of lowly social status and consider them not even worthy of being addressed by God.

Justice to be Maintained under All Circumstances

Islam takes the moderate course between these two extremes. Someone of a humble origin who is poverty stricken and clad in rags and a rich powerful wealthy person are both equal before God. Merely being rich or poor does not give a special

status to anyone. Whosoever purifies himself of evil is uplifted and becomes closer to God. The Holy Quran enjoins its followers to relinquish such class distinctions in these words:

“O you who believe, be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah, even though it be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives — whether he be rich or poor, Allah has a better right over them both. So follow not (your) low desires, lest you deviate” (4:135)

Therefore you should be maintainers of justice irrespective of whether someone is rich or poor. There is certainly a difference between the rich and poor. This becomes a source of difficulty for many people. This difference is what creates the opportunity to manifest a high moral caliber and civility versus uncivilized behavior and turpitude. In fact, it provides an opportunity for the proper dispensation of justice, for both the rich and poor. People ordinarily are advised not to give weight to the affluence of the wealthy when dispensing justice. The Holy Quran however, uses the words: “whether he be rich or poor” thus clearly indicating that preferential treatment should not be given to the rich or poor as far as the maintaining of justice is concerned. Some people detest the rich while others look down upon the poor.

The Holy Quran tells us that Allah does not look down upon the rich or the poor because of their poverty or affluence. For a rich and powerful person to look down upon the poor or for the poor to scorn the rich are both unrighteous behaviors. There are some poor who behave arrogantly toward the rich. Avaricious behavior can be shown by both rich and poor. If it is not permissible for the rich to denigrate the poor, it is also not right for the poor to have a repulsive attitude toward the rich. Both can equally benefit from God’s providence. Both can act according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and make spiritual progress. People should pay attention to this, that mere affluence or poverty does not denigrate a person. There is no doubt that considerations of etiquette do call for a difference of treatment

between the two. Those who have been given affluence by the Grace of God should be shown respect, and this is what Islam teaches. There is also no doubt in this, that the rich should also treat the poor with affection. This is what the Holy Prophet taught us:

“He is not from amongst us who does not show mercy towards those who are our little ones and respect to our great ones” (MM. 24:15). The words of this tradition are general and apply not only to those younger or older in age but also to degrees of position and authority.

No nation or society can function without these differences in wealth distribution. If the rich show mercy to the poor and the poor show respect toward the rich, mutual love and caring is nurtured and a nation makes progress. There are some people who object to this attitude and raise the question, “If a person is rich, why should we respect him?” His wealth is for him and his home. This type of attitude is not correct. No matter what the circumstances are, a dignitary or a rich person deserves a higher degree of respect. If a dignitary comes and needs something from me, it is essential for me to be respectful toward him. It is also, however, not right to treat the poor with indifference. A person cannot be treated with disrespect because of his affluence or poverty.

During the time of the Holy Prophet, some of the poor used the mosque for shelter. They were known as the *Ashab-i Suffa*. They have great respect in the eyes of Muslims today. Hazrat Abu Huraira, who belonged to this class, has narrated approximately five thousand *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet. He was ahead of everyone else in this matter. Even during his lifetime, some people raised the objection that Abu Huraira narrated a lot of *Hadith*, which he himself explained in the following manner. He said that while merchants and traders were involved in their business transactions, he would stay with the Holy Prophet in order to make sure that his belly got filled and he did not go hungry. He

liked to convey to the people whatever he heard from the Holy Prophet. These poor people have, in this way, performed very valuable service and whosoever looks down on them makes a mistake. The poor have performed greater services for Islam than the rich, and although rich and poor existed amongst the companions of the Holy Prophet, they held no avarice toward one another. On one occasion, some poor companions came to the Holy Prophet and complained that the rich had an advantage over them, saying: "They participate in all other forms of worship and are also able to sacrifice their wealth. Since we are unable to make this sacrifice, they come ahead of us. O Prophet of Allah give us some advice in this matter." The Holy Prophet advised them to recite the words: "Allah is free of all faults, All praise is for Allah, Allah is the Greatest." In other words they were instructed to build up their relationship with God.

Sacrifice of wealth achieves the same purpose. They could do the same by following this advice. In a short time, the rich companions of the Holy Prophet found out about this and started following the same practice. The poor group of companions returned and reported that the well-off were now following their practice. To this the Holy Prophet replied that these were Allah's blessings. He may give them to whom he pleases. The affluent should be respected not because of their wealth, but because they spend in the way of Allah. One should act upon the good advice he receives. It is not right to hold malice in one's heart against someone on the basis of his being rich or poor. If you study the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet, you will discover that a nation becomes stronger when the poor in that society are uplifted. The empathy that the Holy Prophet had for orphans and the helpless is exemplary. In fact there has been no Prophet in the world who has not stressed the care of the poor and the orphans. Nations that do not care for their poor and orphans are soon destroyed.

February 24, 1922

Trials and Tribulations Essential for a Believer to Enter into the Garden of Paradise.

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah , the Beneficent, the Merciful.

سَلِّ بِنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَهُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾

Ask of the Children of Israel how many a clear sign We gave them! And whoever changes the favour of Allah after it has come to him, then surely Allah is Severe in requiting (evil). (2:211)

زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾

The life of this world is made to seem fair to those who disbelieve, and they mock those who believe. And those who keep their duty will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure. (2:212)

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ
مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُحْكَمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اختلف
فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِأُذُنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

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. And none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, envying one another. So Allah has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed. And Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path. (2:213)

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلُّوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ الْآلِ إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

Or do you think that you will enter the Garden, while there has not yet befallen you the like of what befell those who have passed away before you. 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)

Trials and Tribulations Essential for Spiritual Development

These words of the Holy Quran paint a picture of what is frequently evident in the world. On one hand, truth is revealed and

people are invited to it. The attitude of those who reject the truth is described in these words by the Holy Quran:

“The life of this world is made to seem fair to those who disbelieve,” and, “and they mock those who believe.” (2:212)

Conversely, those who accept the truth have to face trials and tribulations and as a result of these difficulties and their poverty they are mocked by worldly inclined rejecters of truth.

It is then prophesied that the time is near at hand when those facing difficulties will be rewarded immeasurably by Allah the Most High: “And Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure.” Divine law for spiritual advancement is thus stated: that without facing difficulties you will not enter the Garden.

This is followed by the words: “Or do you think that you will enter the Garden, while there has not yet befallen you the like of what befell those who have passed away before you?”

What was it that befell the previous nations? “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?” The inviter to truth and Allah (Holy Prophet Muhammad) also was in such a helpless state that he and the believers with him also cried out: “When will the help (*nasrullahi*) of Allah come?” They are informed that when they see such a condition they should understand that, “Now surely the help of Allah is nigh!”

A believer can only receive the help of Allah and enter the Garden after facing trials and tribulations. This is the inevitable law of God for those who strive to follow His path. Those who try to go in a different direction to avoid these difficulties fail to reach the desired goal. Sometimes man achieves success without facing difficulties, but it is not a manifestation of Divine assistance, nor is it the real Garden of Paradise. This form of success draws comparison with the glitter of a false diamond. Remaining engrossed in luxury and comfort is a trial and not a manifesta-

tion of Divine acceptance and pleasure. In the similitude of the formation of a real diamond in nature, the stage of Divine acceptance does not evolve in a person without facing hardship.

The Holy Prophet Had to Face Great Trials and Tribulations

Our Holy Prophet had to face all the difficulties that are common to those who invite toward goodness. He had to face all the tribulations collectively faced by the prophets before him. This is a unique facet of his spiritual eminence, which distinguishes him from all other prophets. His exemplary display of patience under these circumstances is also unparalleled.

Prophet Jesus had to face a unique set of adverse circumstances. He was captured by his enemies, treated like a criminal, and eventually put on the cross. They mocked him saying: "What kind of Prophet of God is he who is being humiliated by us?" That is when he cried out, "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" (MATT. 27:47)

The Holy Prophet had to face similar difficulties. In the battle of Uhud, he was nearly alone and completely surrounded by the enemy who were bent upon killing him. He was seriously injured and had fallen down when rumor spread amongst friends and foes that Muhammad had passed away. At this juncture these words of the Holy Quran were revealed: "And Muhammad is but a messenger — messengers have already passed away before him. If then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?" (3:143). Thus, conditions similar to the difficulties faced by Prophet Jesus are observed in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. What, in comparison, is the degree of patience and fortitude manifested by him? While Jesus cries out, "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?", no such words were spoken by the Holy Prophet. Amongst the prophets, he displays a singularly unique strength of character. In the condition when he has fallen to the ground, Abu Sufyan the leader of the Qureish calls

out: “Is Muhammad alive amongst you?” The Holy Prophet instructs his followers not to reply. A similar call was made for Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar and not responded to, following the Holy Prophet’s instructions. Abu Sufyan then gloated: “We have *Uzza* (one of the idols worshipped by the disbelievers of Makkah) and you do not have *Uzza*.” The Holy Prophet’s sense of honor for the Unity of God became manifest upon hearing these words and he advised his companions to respond: “Allah is our Patron and Helper! And you have no patron or helper.” Observe the difference between the response of Jesus and Muhammad. Both are facing similar circumstances. One cries out regarding the difficulties he is facing personally, while the other remains silent when inquiry is made regarding his person. His response, irrespective of the imminent threat to his personal security, is overwhelming and robust when the honor of the Unity of God is at stake.

Our Holy Prophet also faced trials and tribulations similar to those faced by Moses. This is the reason why the Holy Quran repeatedly makes mention of Moses. Recently, we discussed the section that mentions the period of eight or ten years when Prophet Moses stayed in the city of Midian. In the same chapter Allah informs the Holy Prophet:

“He Who has made the Quran binding on thee will surely bring thee back to the Place of Return” (28:85)

This foretells the Flight of the Holy Prophet from Makkah, his stay in Madinah for eight to ten years and his subsequent triumphant return to Makkah. Just as Moses returns from Midian after eight years, the Holy Prophet returns from Madinah to Makkah accompanied by ten thousand of his pure companions and Makkah is taken. In this way, we observe a reflection of all the difficulties faced by previous prophets in the life of the Holy Prophet.

Miracles of the Holy Prophet

He had to face the same fire that Prophet Abraham had to face. People do not consider it a miracle until they observe the real fire. They do not perceive the fire of war and the Holy Prophet's triumph over it as a miracle and are always looking for extraordinary occurrences to classify as miracles. Both are in fact miracles. There is no difference between them. To cool the fire of opposition and enmity against the Holy Prophet is no less a miracle than saving Prophet Abraham from the effects of a real fire ignited by his enemies. As the Holy Prophet had to face all the difficulties faced by previous prophets, his character was a composite of all the goodness possessed by these individuals. Someone has beautifully expressed this concept in a Persian couplet:

“The beauty of Joseph, Jesus raising the dead and the
white hand of Moses
All The good qualities of these together are found in your
person alone.”

This is indeed a very fine mode of expression. What was the beauty of Joseph? It was not the attractiveness of his figure, which many may have. It was the beauty and strength of his character that he rejected all forms of seduction and maintained his chastity. To resist such temptation is a great manifestation of character. It is easier to resist greed for material acquisition, but the pull of lust can be very strong and lethal for the spiritual well being. The Holy Prophet had to face circumstances similar to those of Prophet Joseph. In exchange for giving up his message of the Unity of God, he was offered the hand of the fairest maiden in Arabia by the Qureish delegation. His refusal to succumb to these temptations was a display of the beauty of character similar to that displayed by Prophet Joseph.

What was the miracle of Jesus? People relate his calling out over the dead body of Lazarus to come out, and its revival as a result, or they cite a few other examples in this connection. It

was not the task of Jesus to revive the physically dead. In fact if we ponder upon this miracle, it was actually the revival of spiritually dead souls. The Holy Prophet Muhammad revived many more dead souls through his teachings.

What is the white hand (*yad baida*) of Moses? *Yad baida*, literally *a white hand* signifies an argument made very clear. The deeper significance in this case was that his arguments would prevail. Moses' arguments prevailed over a few enchanters and they accepted his message. The disbelievers of Makkah and all of Arabia eventually accepted the message of the Holy Prophet. His message and arguments in support of it were so potent that even the most stone-hearted succumbed.

We observe in the life of the Holy Prophet that he received these favors after facing great trials and tribulations. How can you expect to gain such favors without facing difficulties? Remember this, if you do not want to face hardship, you cannot make spiritual progress and seek Divine favors. If this is the case with the prophets, you should also realize that you cannot gain entry into the Garden of Paradise without being subjected to trials and tribulations. The one who has not faced difficulties cannot claim ownership of this Garden. It is the only through this door that you can have access to it. *Hadith* mentions the tribulation of the *Dajjal* and also states that your trial in the grave would be like the tribulation of the *Dajjal*. When the believer is questioned in the grave, he will clearly witness his faith. When the hypocrite is asked the same question, he will say that he heard people say something. This is because he does not have the strength of faith and good deeds. He is not prepared to face hardship; therefore God is not ready to allow him entry into Paradise. If anyone desires this Garden he should strengthen both his faith and the practice of goodness and be gladly prepared to face all difficulties in this path.

The condition of us Muslims is such that anyone from amongst us, who does a small amount of work, is extremely

proud of it; I do not exempt myself from this. We are all have a tendency to take excessive pride in our minor accomplishments. Someone who contributes a penny thinks that he has given a mountain of gold in the way of God and has bought Paradise for himself. In this we are mistaken. To achieve that spiritual status is indeed very difficult. It is the door of adversity that cannot be entered with ease. There are also those amongst us who do evil but consider themselves to be the doers of good. They consider themselves to be like Joseph, but their deeds are like those of Joseph's brothers. Joseph was abandoned by his brothers in the same way you turned out your own brethren. Doing the deeds of Joseph's brethren you cannot lay claim to be Joseph.

Joseph was taken away from his home, abandoned in a well, and was subjected to all sorts of afflictions. When, however, he was reunited with his brethren, he treated them well and he said: "No reproof be against you this day. Allah may forgive you, and He is the most Merciful of those who show mercy" (12:92). While claiming to be Joseph, the deeds of these people are akin to his brethren. They also claim to be like Hussein while their deeds resemble those of Yazid. Hussein laid down his life for the cause of truth; what kind of Hussein are those who are intent upon taking the life of others? One cannot become Hussein by doing the works of Yazid. Your deeds are evil but you pretend to be good. To consider one's minor accomplishment as major is not a creditable act. Whoever assumes this, his deeds are wasted. I even give this advice to those of my friends who have indeed made great sacrifices of their wealth and undertaken long and difficult journeys for the cause of truth, not to be complacent. The moment this thought enters their heart it will make their deed useless. It is the duty of the rest of us to respect and cherish the work of those who strive in the way of Allah, but those who do this work should not be boastful of their accomplishments. You should continue to do the work of God but let not pride enter into your heart. Consider it your duty to face grief

and adversity in Allah's way. Look at the helplessness of the Holy Prophet when he was driven away from Taif. This is how he supplicated before Allah the Most High: "I desire your pleasure and satisfaction until you are pleased."

This is a grave error that can befall our friends, even those who have in fact done some work. They should remember that they have not had to face the difficulties encountered by the companions of the Holy Prophet.

A man of Hazrat Abu Bakr's caliber, who had sacrificed all his wealth for God, gives this statement when chosen as Caliph: "O People! I am only a follower and not a leader. If I do right, help me, and if I go wrong, correct me." Observe the humility in his statement. This should always be one's attitude. What an exemplary manifestation of steadfastness by him at a critical time when a great majority of Arab tribesmen had apostatized. Also, observe the strength of his conviction — his patience and the determination with which he faces adversity.

See also the example of Hazrat Umar, who never hesitated to sacrifice his person and property in the way of Allah. During his time, the Islamic dominion spread far and wide. His condition was such that he never manifested any pride over his power and kingdom.

I repeat, do not gloat in your apparent successes. This is not help from Allah (*nasrullahi*). Help from Allah comes only after facing adversities and disappointments.

March 1, 1922

The Mighty Striving and Propagation of Islam

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا
الشَّمْسُ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Seest thou not how thy Lord extends the shade? And if he pleased, He would have made it stationary. Then We have made the sun an indication of it, (25:45)

ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

Then We take it to ourselves, taking little by little. (25:46)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا ﴿٣٧﴾

And He it is Who made the night a covering for you, and sleep a rest, and He made the day to rise up again. (25:47)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
ظَهُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾

And He it is Who sends the winds as good news before his mercy; and We send down pure water from the clouds, (25:48)

لِنُنحِيَ بِهِ بَلْدًا مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا ﴿٤٨﴾

That We may give life thereby to a dead land, and give it for drink to cattle and many people that We have created. (25:49)

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ اللَّاتِي أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴿٤٩﴾

And certainly We repeat this to them that they may be mindful, but most men consent to naught but denying. (25:50)

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَذِيرًا ﴿٥٠﴾

And if We pleased, We could raise a warner in every town. (25:51)

فَلَا تُطِيعُوا الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَجَاهِدُوْهُمْ بِهٖ جِهَادًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٥١﴾

So obey not the disbelievers, and strive against them a mighty striving with it. (25:52)

How Natural Phenomena Correlate with Spiritual Development

A distinctive and unique feature of the Holy Quran, unsurpassed by any other scripture, is that it takes everyday, ordinary, natural phenomena, and uses them to draw our attention to profound spiritual truths. This is not something that has only been recently discovered after much effort. On the contrary, the Holy Quran itself uses clear and unambiguous language to expose its meaning. To the casual observer, this form of expression may appear ordinary and he may question its need. The careful observer, however, appreciates the profound spiritual truths toward which the Holy Book draws our attention through these analogies.

In the verses above, which I have recited for you, the Holy Quran states: "Seest thou not how thy Lord extends the shade? And if he pleased, He would have made it stationary. Then We have made the sun an indication of it, Then We take it to ourselves, taking little by little. And He it is Who made the night a covering for you, and sleep a rest, and He made the day to rise up again. And He it is Who sends the winds as good news before his mercy; and We send down pure water from the clouds, that We may give life thereby to a dead land, and give it for drink to cattle and many people that We have created."

It then gives us reason for repeatedly using this mode of expression i.e., people should heed this advice. (And certainly We repeat this to them that they may be mindful.) We are thus informed of the magnificent teachings that God has revealed to His prophets for the guidance of man, teachings which are rejected by the majority.

Propagating the Message of the Holy Quran

It is then stated that if God had so desired he could have raised a warner in every town (25:51). This, not being the case, you who have received the message of the Holy Quran should not obey the disbelievers and strive with this book, the Holy Quran, a mighty striving (25:52). In other words, work diligently and carry the message of the Holy Quran to those who have not received it.

Now let us focus on the relationship among these verses. There is a profound and meaningful connection between them.

In the beginning, the rising of the sun and the extension and contraction of the shade is mentioned. When the sun rises, we observe that shadows are extended; however, as it moves overhead the length of the shadow contracts. Similarly when the spiritual sun (Holy Prophet called the light giving sun, 33:46) rises, the world is enveloped in darkness. With the advancement of its light of knowledge, the shadows of darkness are dispelled.

Before sunrise, there is darkness everywhere and people are lying in deep slumber. As soon as there is daybreak, people wake up and get involved in their daily activities. Similarly, the emergence of the spiritual sun brings a sense of spiritual awakening among the people and they make spiritual progress. Those lying idle are energized by the radiance of religious knowledge.

After this our attention is drawn toward another natural phenomenon: the movement of wind currents before rainfall. By observing wind patterns, an intelligent person can gauge the possibility of rainfall. Similarly, before the coming of divine revelation or a prophet, which is likened to rainfall, there are currents that draw people's attention toward truth and Divine Mercy. Thus before the advent of the Holy Prophet, we observe that some people became naturally attracted to the belief in One God. However, just as mere blowing of wind without rain cannot nurture vegetation, similarly mere thought of the Unity of God cannot enliven spiritually dead nations.

The Holy Quran then tells us: "and We send down pure water from the clouds, that We may give life thereby to a dead land, and give it for drink to cattle and many people that We have created."

This pure water is Divine revelation. Just as rainwater gives life to the dead earth, Divine revelation enlivens the hearts that are spiritually dead. People who are leading their lives like animals benefit from it and those who are more civilized partake of its sustenance.

It is then stated: "And if We pleased, We could raise a warner in every town."

Just as rainfalls over different communities, if God had so willed, Divine revelation would have spontaneously been bestowed upon different people. In this manner, however, the marvelous change that was brought about by the excellent example and untiring effort of a single individual, the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, would not have occurred. The principle that forms the basis of this mighty striving is then mentioned: "So obey not the disbelievers, and strive against them a mighty striving with it" (The Holy Quran). What is the connection between sending a warner to every nation, and not following the disbelievers, in fact carrying out a mighty striving against them with the Quran? This means that while the disbelievers strive for the progress of disbelief, you should make an uncompromising effort to spread the truth that is Islam by means of the Holy Quran. In this, you are shown the path of your success in opposing disbelief. If you carry out the striving (*Jihad*) with the Holy Quran, by inviting people to it, you will be facilitating the propagation of righteousness. The Arabic word *Kabir* (mighty) in *Jihadan Kabiran* also signifies the importance and immensity of this task.

***Mujaddid* (Reformer) of this Age Assigned the Task of Propagating the Message of the Holy Quran**

Because of the importance of this work, it was entrusted to the *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of this age. We can only gauge the importance of the work of spreading Islam through the word of the Quran, by observing and assessing the condition of the world around us. The work of the Holy Prophet, we know from the Holy Quran, is not restricted to a particular age and people. It is for all nations and for all times. It is therefore essential to appreciate the magnitude and importance of the task that you as a community have been given. A casual observer is unable to perceive its true significance.

Need to Propagate Islam through the Holy Quran Understood by the Companions and Early Followers of the Holy Prophet

The companions of the Holy Prophet and the early Muslims understood the vital nature of this task, and carried the propagation of Islam to all corners of the known world. In fulfilling this duty, they did not care if they survived or passed away in

distant lands. They travelled across oceans and continents to carry the message of the Quran. This is the reason you will today find Muslims in remote corners of the globe, in places where you have no knowledge that the message of Islam was propagated. How far have Muslims of this age neglected this crucial duty? They are aware of the loss of their worldly kingdoms but are totally oblivious to the fact that Islam itself is departing from Muslim nations. The unwavering commitment of early Muslims to their faith is illustrated by the following incident.

When Abu-Sufyan, a well-known opponent of Islam, appeared before Heraclius, the emperor of Rome, he was asked the following question. "Do any of them get turned off from their faith and revert once they have entered it?" His answer was a resounding "no!" This was testimony provided by a disbeliever in front of a Christian Monarch. It is regrettable that today hundreds of thousands of Muslims are turned off from their faith and are apostate, but the Muslim nation remains unconcerned. God did not create Muslims to confine Islam to their own persons, it is their duty to spread Islam in the world and invite others to it, even their rulers. The state of neglect and inertia in this matter has reached its limit.

Hostile Missionary Propaganda against Islam, its Scope and Harmful Effects

If you want to know the extent of hostile propaganda against Islam, you should read the reports of missionaries. You will find out the amount of monetary resources allocated for the purpose of propagating their religion, building hospitals, schools, and colleges and for distributing free religious literature. You would despair to learn how many people are involved in this effort and how many people are leaving Islam as a result. We have learned from one missionary magazine that a large number of Western missions are involved in the propagation of the Christian faith. Amongst them only a few missionary societies from England have spent three million, nineteen hundred thousand Rupees for

this purpose. There is one society amongst them dedicated only to the translation of the bible into different languages and to propagating it. Their annual income is thirty-five hundred thousand Rupees, and they have distributed fifteen hundred thousand bibles or portions over the last year. Besides these English missionary societies, there are in addition American, Scotch, and German missions working independently in this field. These are only the Protestant missions. The Catholic missions are in addition to these. Study and evaluate the work of these missionary societies and ponder upon the critical nature of the work of propagation of the Quran, so that you understand the strong opposition you will encounter in this field. These societies have vast resources, including missionary schools, colleges, hospitals and enjoy the support of governments. How many missionaries are working for them? In Japan alone, which is a relatively small country, there are one thousand and ninety six missionaries of non-Japanese origin. The total number, including native Japanese totals four thousand. In the Philippine Islands, there are now only about two hundred and fifty thousand Muslims remaining on the Island of Mindanao. In 1919, seven hundred Christian missionaries were dispatched to this area to preach.

In the last few years in India, the acceptance of Christianity by maulvis (Muslim preachers) and aristocracy has stopped. This has been largely due to the efforts of the *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of this age. This is not, however, a matter of great joy. Even here, the report of just one church missionary society indicates they baptized four thousand, five hundred individuals. Whoever they may be, was it not our duty as Muslims to invite them to Islam? Also, consider how much hardship these missionaries readily face for the sake of their religion. How difficult and cumbersome is it to travel to the Sahara desert in Africa? When one missionary lady found out about a community in the Sahara, she travelled five hundred miles from Tripoli to reach Kaffra. On her way there she feared for her life; therefore she pretended to be a follower of Islam. She came back and published the conditions

there in her journal and now preparations are underway to preach Christianity there. Some people may get discouraged by looking at the efforts of these missionary societies and may question the chances of success of a Muslim effort under these circumstances.

There is however no reason for us to be discouraged. It is Divine law that a single individual, when he embarks on a journey to spread the truth, can accomplish what cannot be achieved by monetary resources and political sponsorship. The followers of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, did just that and left their homes only with the message of truth and righteousness. They were remarkably successful in spreading Islam, unfortunately, thereafter Muslims went into a state of inertia. They said God himself will take care of this. It is true that this cannot be accomplished without the help of God, but in order to evoke His Blessings and Mercy, you must make an effort. Muslim consciousness is stimulated by the loss of power and kingdom, because Muslims have witnessed this with their own eyes. They, however, are least worried about their faith, which has been abandoned by thousands of individuals. Very few are worried about its destruction and loss.

Philippine Islands Identified as an Area of Need

In the Philippines Islands, which are now under American control, the efforts of missionary societies have successfully converted hundreds of thousands of Muslims to Christianity. Now only two hundred and fifty thousand Muslims remain on the Island of Mindanao. The American Mission has sent seven hundred missionaries there within one year. Seven hundred preachers for a population of two hundred and fifty thousand! This shows the intensity of effort being made there.

Twenty-four thousand to this day have converted to Christianity on the Island of Java, and three hundred Muslims every year are leaving Islam and accepting Christianity.

Duty of Those Who Have Taken the Pledge

If someone's heart grieves under these circumstances, he should give thought to the grave difficulties the religion of Islam is facing. Other Muslims do not pay attention to this. Those who have taken the pledge at the hand of the Reformer of this age, are satisfied with only this: that they have been given incontrovertible arguments against the onslaught of missionary propaganda and have thus crumbled the cross. It is true that God, through the Reformer of the age, has provided you with the means to break the cross (allegorical reference to the irrefutable arguments against Christianity), but it is up to you to make an effort.

This Reformer (Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) has given you a strong and powerful weapon in the form of these arguments to counteract Christian missionary propaganda. It is your responsibility to use it. If you fail to do so, it will get rusty and useless. These arguments were already in the Holy Quran. He drew your attention to them. You, however, became satisfied that you have this weapon to counteract Christian missionary propaganda. You took a step and did some work at Woking England, and Allah assisted you in this undertaking. The truth, however, is that it was the result of the striving of one individual.

The second error at this stage is to become inactive, happy and contented with this effort. Your objective should be to initiate the propagation of Islam all over the world on a large scale. That is why the Holy Quran commands your attention with the words: "And if We pleased, We could raise a warner in every town." This implies that your representatives should carry the message to every community. When one person carries the seed, God helps him and multiplies his one seed with a thousand. He who does not make an effort to carry the seeds, cannot benefit from the Mercy and Blessings of Allah. You have the seeds of truth and righteousness in your possession. If you endeavor to spread them, you are promised seven hundred fold return on your investment. It is true that we do not possess the means to open colleges, hos-

pitals and schools to propagate our faith. Nor can we print religious literature in hundreds of thousands of copies. We do not have the monetary resources to do this as an organization. It is our duty, however, to make Muslims aware of the difficulties Islam is facing, so that they can contribute in whatever way they can.

The Muslims of India do have some awareness of this cause. That is why God sent His Reformer (*Mujaddid*) to India. You are therefore duty bound that wherever there are Muslims, you should try to save them from the influence of Christianity. If the Reformer had come in their midst, it would have been their duty to do the same for you. But the Reformer came to you, so it becomes your responsibility to help them. It has been fourteen years since the Reformer passed away, and you have yet to fulfill your duty. You have not conveyed this message to other countries. It is not necessary that you go there with great pomp and show. You should go forth with your limited, even scarce resources. God will assist individuals there who strive in the way of His religion. If somebody embarks on this journey with sincerity and a truthful yearning in his heart, Allah will not let his effort go to waste. Christianity does not have these seeds of truthfulness in its religious dogma. That is perhaps why it has not been as successful as it might have been, or has only been able to influence poverty stricken and less civilized nations. With all the resources at their disposal, they cannot accomplish what a possessor of truth and righteousness can do. Each one of you should carry the message to another country. If someone is afraid of dying in an alien land, he should know that death will overtake him even here. Instead of dying with his family, he will give up his life striving in the way of Allah. What could be a better way than this?

Monetary Sacrifice Needed to Carry Out the Work of Propagation

The other fact, which I repeatedly draw your attention to, is that we do not have vast financial resources. One has to spend

money for the propagation of faith. If you become aware of the difficulties Islam is facing, and contribute even a small amount toward this effort, it can add up to a lot. Monthly contributions should be paid with regularity. After all, we pay taxes whether we like it or not. Why then should we feel that it is hard to spend in the way of Allah? By Allah's blessing there are certain individuals amongst us who could underwrite the expense of running an entire mission. If you leave behind a lot of money when you die, you will not feel the happiness and contentment that you would if you spend it now in propagating the word of God. Hundreds of millionaires lose their assets in this world. What if somebody becomes poor spending in the way of Allah? Alas, some of our members do not even give their monthly contributions with regularity. This is because we give the lowest priority to spending in the way of our religion. First we want to fulfill our material needs, then if something is left over we spend it for the cause of religion. This should not be the way. Those who have pledged to keep religion above the world should behave accordingly. Whether you are poor or rich, you should make an effort to spend in the way of Allah. Respect those who give in the way of Allah. Be the first to pay your dues. Those who are rich have a special responsibility. Since God has given them so much, they should be ready to spend in His way. We should all pay our *Zakaat* into the treasury of our organization. We should also solicit contributions for this purpose from other Muslims, so they have an opportunity to participate in this mighty striving. If we are able to get the monthly pledge and the *Zakaat* contributions from our members and all members assist us with their financial resources, we can, by the grace of Allah, accomplish much for our religion, in spite of being few in numbers. You should make it a habit to voluntarily pay your *Zakaat* and monthly dues. It is a time of great need for assisting your religion. Those who cannot go out to propagate Islam can perform a great service by spending in the way of Allah. The Holy Quran also calls spending in Allah's way as wisdom: "He grants wisdom to whom He pleases. And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed

is given great good” (2:269). In the same context where we are encouraged to spend in the way of Allah, we are also informed that the devil prevents us from spending in the way of Allah. The apprehension that comes to mind when making such a financial sacrifice is attributed to the devil. The Holy Quran describes this in the words:

“The devil threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly” (2:268)

The devil threatens you that you will become poor if you spend for Allah’s cause. Save yourself from this false insinuation of the devil, and learn to spend in the way of Allah. Fulfill your monthly pledges with regularity. Whenever we take stock of our accounts, many people are found in arrears. Wake up from this state of inertia, and pay your monthly dues regularly. If you assist the religion of Allah with your wealth, He will become your Helper.

March 31, 1922

**The Significance of *Salaat* (Obligatory Prayers)
and *Zakaat* (Obligatory Charity)
for the Strength of the Muslim Nation**

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بَأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

The believers are those only who believe in Allah and His Messenger, then they doubt not, and struggle hard with their wealth and their lives in the way of Allah. Such are the truthful ones. (49:15)

قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

Say: Would you apprise Allah of your religion? and Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. And Allah is Knower of all things. (49:16)

يَمْتُونُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمْتُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ
 أَنْ هَدَيْتُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ①٥

They presume to lay thee under an obligation by becoming Muslims. Say: Lay me not under an obligation by your Islam; rather Allah lays you under an obligation by guiding you to the faith, if you are truthful. (49:17)

Two Groups

The Holy Quran describes two groups of people: those who verbally declare their acceptance of Islam and those who follow this verbal declaration by righteous action. By making the announcement: “nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (*la-ilaha ill-Allah Mubammad-un Rasulu-llah*),” a person qualifies to be called a Muslim. To become a believer, certain other requirements need to be met.

Amongst the commandments of the Holy Quran, we also find that you should recite your prayers facing the direction of the *Kaabah*. This is said to be representative of the unity of Muslims. *Hadith* also tells us not to call anyone a disbeliever (*Kafir*) who prays in the direction of the *Kaabah*. Because of this, much importance and devotional significance have been attached to this injunction.

Despite the honor and reverence given to praying in the direction of the *Kaabah*, we also find this in the Holy Quran:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is the one who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives away wealth out of love for Him to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask and to set slaves free and keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate; and the performers of their promise when they make a promise, and the patient in distress and affliction and in

the time of conflict. These are they who are truthful; and these are they who keep their duty” (2:177)

This makes it evident that real goodness is distinct from this external symbol of Muslim unity and is the higher goal for a believer.

The Two Basic Principles

There are some basic principles of faith that then need to be put into practice. The two given special importance amongst these are keeping up of obligatory prayers (*Salaat*), and paying the poor rate (*Zakaat*). Both of these practices have been repeatedly stressed in the Holy Quran, usually together. Some of the guidance and injunctions in the Holy Quran are related to individual performance while obligatory prayer and paying the poor rate are both principles related to the Muslim nation as a whole. There is no doubt that the voluntary portion of the prayer such as the *sunnat* (*prophet's practice*), the *nafileh* (*voluntary prayers*) and the *Tabajjud* (voluntary prayer said after rising from sleep in the latter part of the night), are all individual practices. Similarly, a portion of *sadaqah* (charity) can be given upon personal discretion.

Congregational Practices

Obligatory prayers and obligatory charity are, however, related to congregational practice. In other words, obligatory prayers should be said in congregation. The poor rate must also be collected through an organization and distributed from there, according to Quranic directions. Keeping up of prayer and paying the poor rate are the two foremost, distinct practices of Islam, essential for a believer. Belief in God is merely a verbal acknowledgement that needs to be put into practice.

In the Holy Quran, we find many statements that we presume are meant for others and do not apply to us. For example the Holy Quran says:

“And they honor not Allah with the honor due to Him,
(39:67)

When a Muslim reads these words, he automatically assumes they are meant for disbelievers. Remember, when a Muslim’s actions are similar to those of a disbeliever, he takes on a portion of disbelief. When he gets a divine commandment that runs contrary to his desires and he does not sacrifice his self-interest and submit to it, he falls into the category:

“And they honor not Allah with the honor due to Him.”

Obligatory Prayers

When the *Adhan* (call for prayer) is called out in the mosque, and the words are recited, “Come to prayer,” it is not the voice of the caller, but God’s calling. Think about this: how many of you answer the call of prayer? If you do not come to pray, you have ignored God’s command. It is also true that Muslims read the Holy Quran for purposes of reward, or for discovering fine points of interpretation, but not for putting its commandments into practice. The companions of the Holy Prophet read the Holy Quran to find out about a specific religious commandment, to find how to put it into practice, or to solve a problem. Currently, when we read the Holy Quran, it is with two goals in mind. If we recite it without understanding the meaning, we do this with the intent that we will be rewarded for this action. If we understand its meaning, then our intent is to elaborate intricate points of its knowledge and to display them proudly to our audience. There are very few who read or teach the Holy Quran with the intent of putting it into practice. The person who does not bow his head to the Call of God upon hearing the *Adhan*, and does not come to the mosque for prayer, does not fulfill his obligation as a *Muslim* (one who submits).

The Holy Prophet taught his companions that prayer was of prime importance, and stressed this more than any other. In his last days when the Holy Prophet observed the companions from

the window of his apartment and saw them busy in prayer, it brought a smile to his face. He was very pleased to see that they stood before Allah with the same fervor that they exhibited while he stood in their company.

Our friends living close to the mosque, who do not come upon hearing the call of prayer, should think and ask themselves this question: "Am I not drifting in the direction referred to in the verse?"

"And they honor not Allah with the honor due to Him" (39:67).

Prayer should be said in congregation. One must come to the mosque upon hearing the call of prayer. Praying at home under these circumstances is not what Allah has commanded. Allah enjoins prayer in congregation. There are many who hear the words: "Prayer is better than sleep," with the morning call for prayer. Many of you also read these words in the Holy Quran:

"They forsake (their) beds, calling upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and spend out of what We have given them"
(32:16)

When, however, it is time to forsake their beds upon hearing the call for prayer, they are unable to do so. A claim cannot reach fruition unless it is put into practice.

We also find reported in *Hadith*:

Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said:

"I swear by him in Whose hand is my soul, I had almost determined that I should order that wood should be collected, then I should order that a call should be sounded for prayer, then I should order a man that he should lead the prayer, then I should go to the people who have absented themselves and burn their houses on them"¹
(B.10:29)

1. The words are meant simply to lay stress on the point that Muslims should try their best to join the congregational prayer.

See how much stress is laid upon congregational prayer. Now think about your own condition. If one of your friends, or superior officers, comes to call on you — even if it is past midnight — you are immediately ready to give up your rest and sleep and respond to their call. Unfortunately, the Call of Allah is not even given the same honor and appreciation. Your condition should be such that upon hearing the Call of Allah your heart becomes restless and you hasten toward Him.

Obligatory Charity

The second principle of faith and its practice, which is obligatory upon every Muslim, is *Zakaat*. Islam has outlined three methods of spending in the way of Allah. First is the Obligatory Charity (*Zakaat*), second is *Saduqaat*, which also enjoins other charitable donations for help of the poor and needy, and third is striving for the cause of Islam. *Zakaat* is one fortieth of the amount of savings due after one year and it is obligatory to spend this through the organization. Everyone cannot individually direct where to spend his contribution. In fact, this decision is to be made by the representative body that is responsible for collection of these funds. I have repeatedly emphasized that until Muslims follow the commandment of, “pay the poor rate,” they cannot meet with any success.

I have repeatedly advised them to form central bodies for *Zakaat* collection (*bait-al-mal*) but nobody has paid attention to this. By God’s grace, our organization does have such an institution. It is therefore incumbent upon members to deposit their *Zakaat* into this foundation. Do not spend these funds individually. Disperse them through your organization. It is the right of the organization to determine the appropriate use of these funds. This is not my directive, but the command of Allah, about which I am informing you. Disregard the person who is bringing this information to you. Just as in the call of prayer the words, “come to prayer,” are not those of the caller but the command of Allah, in this case I am only the one making you aware of your responsi-

bility. The great importance of deposition of these funds into the national treasury is reflected by Hazarat Abu Bakr's statement: "I will fight against anyone of you who withholds as much as a rope of a camel belonging to the *Zakaat* fund (*bait-al-mal*).” If someone has fifty two rupees worth of savings or fifty two grams of silver in his savings, it is incumbent that they donate one fortieth or 2.5 percent of these savings to the *Zakaat* fund. Some people have opined in this matter that *Zakaat* is not mandatory upon jewelry which is used. This controversy is settled by a *hadith*: "The Holy Prophet questioned one of his wives as to whether she was paying *Zakaat* on the necklace she was wearing.” Thus *Zakaat* is mandatory upon all jewelry whether it is used or not used. Women should gladly pay *Zakaat* on their jewelry. The thought might cross their minds that by paying one fortieth of the value of this jewelry every year, after forty years its value would not be of much worth, or it may no longer be subject to *Zakaat*. They must bear in mind that in forty years they may not have the jewelry or may themselves have passed away, and thus parted from all their jewelry anyway. Thus something that we have to eventually relinquish is better spent in the way of Allah and better to be a source of happiness for us rather than remorse.

Man comes into this world alone and leaves it unaccompanied by anyone else. He leaves behind his wealth, relations, and all the jewelry and his prized possessions. Allah the Most High states in the Holy Quran:

“And certainly you have come to Us one by one as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs what We gave you” (6:94)

Just as man comes alone into this world from his mother's womb, he enters into his grave unaccompanied by anyone else. The Holy Quran is therefore, very emphatic regarding the payment of the *Zakaat*.

The Holy Prophet and his companions, recognizing this importance, have under certain circumstances dealt with those

strictly who were guilty of non-payment of *Zakaat*. During the time of the Holy Prophet there was a man named *Thalabat* who was very poor. He left the confines of Medina with his few goats and sheep to make a living elsewhere and soon became very wealthy. The Holy Prophet sent his special emissary twice for the collection of *Zakaat* to *Thalabat*, who turned him down each time. Later on when he came to pay the *Zakaat* in person, the Holy Prophet refused to accept it from him. It is narrated that this man was subsequently turned down by all the three righteous caliphs whenever he came to pay the *Zakaat*. Why was he dealt such harshness? It is because he initially refused to fulfill a very important and essential duty, on a timely basis.

Zakaat is also due from the savings of a widow, or an orphan. Whosoever tries to find excuses not to fulfill this duty is trying to deceive God. In fact he is cheating his own soul (*nafs*) by depriving it of its spiritual benefit. Never neglect payment of *Zakaat*. I remind my friends of this duty every year so that no one is negligent of this duty. Whosoever still ignores this commandment of Allah and does not pay *Zakaat* due on his savings, his matter rests with Allah, the Most High. I request all my friends to calculate this amount every year and deposit it in the fund set up by our organization for this purpose. Just as you are commanded by Allah to keep up your obligatory prayers in congregation, you are also commanded to deposit the *Zakaat* into the funds set up for this purpose. Those who are involved in business should pay one fortieth of their business earnings into this fund. Just as *Zakaat* is due on your immovable property, it is also due upon your business earnings, being one fortieth of them. People, either because of lack of knowledge, or intentionally, will find an excuse not to pay *Zakaat* by paying a small amount of charitable donation somewhere else.

The Holy Quran specifies eight categories of spending the *Zakaat* Fund:

“(Zakat) charity is only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer it, and those whose hearts

are made to incline (to truth), and (to free) the captives, and those in debt, and in the way of Allah and for the wayfarer — an ordinance from Allah. And Allah is Knowing, Wise” (9:60)

Zakaat payment has no connection with house tax, property tax, or any other tax levied by the government. Some consider these payments as an excuse for not paying *Zakaat*. These are all errors. Payment of *Zakaat* is unrelated to these expenditures. It is meant for the welfare of the Muslim community and the defense and propagation of the religion of Islam. This has no connection with government taxes, nor can anyone excuse himself from this duty toward God by paying these taxes. We should submit and bow down our heads before the commandments of Allah.

I understand I won't have to repeatedly remind you of this duty, for you take pride in being the followers of the Reformer (*Mujaddid*) of this age. It is, however, not enough to accept the Reformer of the age or the Holy Prophet, or God, if you do not follow His commandments. The commandment regarding payment of *Zakaat* is there in the Holy Quran. It is not my command. I am just informing you of this divine injunction. Do not love your wealth, wives, and children, more than you love Allah. People discard the love of Allah for the love of this world. Set an example and send your *Zakaat* within two or three months to be deposited into the *Zakaat* fund. Do not fear that if you have less and you give a smaller amount of *Zakaat*, this will somehow lower your esteem in the eyes of other people. The Holy Prophet, on one occasion of Jihad, called for donations. One of the companions had eight thousand dirhams of which he contributed four thousand. A less well-off companion had just a small amount, half of which he donated. They were both considered equal before Allah. The rich sometimes find it more difficult to give, because they have to part with a larger amount of their wealth. Whether you are rich or poor it is essential for you to submit to Allah's command.

May 26, 1922

Our Eid is:

**Striving to Propagate Islam's Message of Peace and
Reconciliation in the World.**

(A Special Message from Maulana Muhammad Ali)

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّنَا

مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My messenger, they said: We believe and bear witness that we submit. (5:111)

إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ لِيَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا

مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

When the disciples said: O Jesus, son of Mary, is thy Lord able to send down food to us from heaven? He said: Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers. (5: 112)

Objective of a Prophet's Mission

When the followers of Jesus (peace be upon him) asked him: "Is thy Lord able to send down food to us from heaven?" he received the sublime answer from the One Who Nurtures unto Perfection: "Keep your duty to Allah if you are believers." This does not mean that they should fear Allah and not ask such a question. In a message full of wisdom, they are informed that the objective of a prophet's mission is not to give food or to establish the power of a nation but to make them aware of their duty to Allah. They are told that if they believe in Jesus as a prophet and messenger sent to them by Allah, the Most High, then it is not appropriate to ask for material sustenance. As believers, they should understand the real purpose of his mission, which is to have a correct understanding of the way in which they can fulfill their duties toward Allah and safeguard human rights. Unfortunately the prayer of the Gospel asking God to: "Give us this day our daily bread," resulted in the loss of this pearl of Divine wisdom. The Holy Quran gave it back to us and guided us toward its true meaning. The real *Eid* of the believers is not related to eating and drinking, but in fulfilling our duties as human beings. On this occasion, I want to specifically draw the attention of members of our organization toward this objective. Islam has connected its two *Eids* with two magnificent sacrifices, which individuals have either made, or it wants them to make. We are told that real happiness for a believer lies in giving something for, or in giving something up to, seek the pleasure of Allah. This is the greatest blessing that can be given to man.

"And none has with him any boon for a reward, except the seeking of the pleasure of his Lord, the Most High"

(Ch.92: 19-20)

Seeking the Pleasure of Allah

So everything eventually perishes and only the work of God remains. Allah, the Most High will sustain the works that are done to seek His pleasure. Thus, with thirty days of fasting in *Ramadhan*, a Muslim is taught to refrain from eating and drinking during the day, solely for the pleasure of Allah. He is to withhold his tongue from saying evil, his ears from hearing bad words, and his eyes from seeing what is prohibited. Besides giving up all of this, he is advised to spend more in the way of Allah, and worship Him more than his regular obligations. After a person has done all this for the pleasure of Allah, he is told to be happy and celebrate. This is the reason why Eid falls after the month of fasting.

Our real happiness lies in that we were successful in accomplishing something for the pleasure of Allah. Whatever task we accomplish is a stepping stone for our future progress, and if we do not use it to ascend the ladder of progress, the task becomes useless. This is why we have the Eid sermon (*khutba*). The purpose of the Eid sermon is to inform Muslims of their obligations and the important issues they are currently facing. It is therefore my desire that members of our organization, wherever they are gathered for the Eid prayer, inform their members of this eminent duty, which is the foremost means of attaining the pleasure of Allah.

Propagating the Word of Allah

What is this duty? It is propagating the word of Allah, the task of the truthful, the faithful, and the righteous. O Allah, “guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom thou has bestowed favors” (1:6-7). Our sights should be set upon this lofty goal and not the fulfillment of our basic desires. We should exert all our efforts for this purpose so that the time of our death is also a time of happiness for us. Our condition, in the words of the Holy Quran, should be such that our: “Faces on that day will be bright, laughing, joyous” (80:38-39).

All our friends are to be reminded of this duty which we have taken, the pledge of propagating the word of God at the hands of the Promised Messiah. We should have full respect for this commitment in our hearts. The greatest desire in our hearts should be to convey Islam's message of peace and reconciliation to the whole world. In fact, we have only taken the first step in this direction. For those who follow us we will be foremost, but no one becomes foremost by coming first in time. We can truly be in the forefront only by exceeding in righteous deeds, and making a full effort for this purpose.

I have repeatedly informed you of the task that lies in front of us. Let alone those who have not accepted Islam, Muslims themselves have forgotten this message, which was sent for them to be successful. Amongst us should be those who have such fervor for the propagation of Islam that they go forth with such passion that traversing difficult and mountainous terrain becomes easy for them. After all, seemingly insurmountable hardships can crumble before human determination. Others amongst us, while performing their daily work, carry within their hearts the desire that whenever given the opportunity they will go forth in Allah's way. They should always be ready for this task. There must also be amongst us those who are ready to sacrifice their wealth in the way of Allah, for no organization can run without such diversity. Our Eid must rejuvenate such feelings in our hearts such that we ask ourselves these questions. What is the responsibility we have taken upon our shoulders and how much effort is needed to discharge it?

It is the job of all preachers to remind you of this. It is only with Allah's blessing that one gets the opportunity for action. I firmly believe that the word coming forth from a truthful heart will always have its effect. It is also my duty to inform you that this magnificent work cannot be performed without the collective striving of the whole community. We should always be concerned about increasing the number of those who are willing to participate with us in serving this cause. Allah, the Most High has

not sent the Reformer (*Mujaddid*) and Messiah of this age in vain and it is only by affiliating with him that we can perform this task successfully.

You must also be concerned about the future existence and the performance of the organization that has been formed. Make an effort to promote mutual love and affection amongst yourselves. Create opportunities to meet each other in comradeship. This helps in building up strength amongst individual members. The best purpose of a gathering is only achieved if we can initiate Quranic lessons (*dars*) within our organization, wherever it exists. It is also the duty of every *Ahmadi*¹ parent that his child, whether it is a girl or a boy, be able to recite the Holy Quran and understand its meaning. They must also have a basic understanding of the principles of religion (*sharia*) and the life history of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Congregational prayers and payment of obligatory charity (*Zakaat*) should also be emphasized.

1. Member of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Society for the Propagation of Islam.

October 27, 1922

**The Coming of Reformers (*Mujaddids*)
is Clear Proof of the Truth of Islam**

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَ
يَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن
رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

Say: We believe in Allah and (in) that which has been revealed to us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit. (2:136)

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ
فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٤﴾

So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right course; and if they turn back, then they are only in opposition. But Allah will suffice thee against them; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (2:137)

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عِبْدُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

(We take) Allah's colour, and who is better than Allah at colouring, and we are His worshippers. (2:138)

قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلِنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَ
نَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

Say: Do you dispute with us about Allah, and He is our Lord and your Lord, and for us are our deeds and for you your deeds; and we are sincere to Him. (2:139)

Religion of Abraham

People belonging to different faiths, whether they were Jews or Christians or any other faith, would tell the Holy Prophet or the Muslims that if they join their faith, they would be on the right course. All people consider their faith to be the right one and ask you to join it.

Islam presents its Golden Principle in response to this and tells us that the religion of Abraham is the correct one and is worth following. He was firm in sticking to the right state and followed the path of moderation, free of extremism, both in his beliefs and practices. He was not of the polytheists, while you have tainted your beliefs to some degree by associating others with Allah.

Universal Message of Islam

This is then followed by a presentation of Islam in the words: “(O Muslims!) Say: we believe in Allah,” and in that which has been revealed to us.”

In addition, we also believe:“(in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes.”

And, we accept, “that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them.”

This is the breadth of inclusiveness offered to other faiths by the Religion of Islam. Not only does it offer acceptance of its own Prophet and Book, but belief in all prophets wherever they may have been. In Islam we have this spirit of tolerance, while elsewhere, there is an attitude of strict adherence to the literal word.

The ones with this attitude are bent upon acceptance of only their own rigid views and they reject all else. A follower of Judaism wants only his prophets to be accepted and deems it improper to accept prophets of other nations. Christians tend to follow their own sets of beliefs and are unwilling to listen to anyone else. Contrary to this attitude, we are informed that the Religion of Islam is very tolerant of other faiths. It does not say that you only accept what was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. It enjoins belief in all prophets and in all that was revealed to them. It is this principle that excels in Islam above other faiths and ascertains its ultimate prevalence over them. It does not encourage the follower of any other faith to discard their book or reject the prophet in whom they already believe. It does not prohibit a Jew from following his belief in Moses or the Torah, nor does it encourage a Christian to give up the Bible or his belief in Jesus, or a Hindu not to believe in Rama. It encourages belief in all of them and gives them equal status and honor as prophets. In this way, these verses teach Muslims to believe in all the prophets and convey another very perceptive message. We are told: “for us are our deeds and for you your deeds” (2:139). While stressing such munificence in belief, it is also pointed out that what really matters is how an individual or a nation puts its belief into practice. If we have an excellent be-

belief system but fail to put it into practice, it is of no benefit to us. We can form an opinion about a person or a nation only on the basis of their actions. Our own progress is also dependent upon the effort we put in. A principle of belief can only be useful if it guides toward righteousness. You can think about this and reach the conclusion that liberality and tolerance in beliefs and goodness in deeds are the two principles of faith that will ultimately be successful. Islam gives you the principle to believe in all prophets and gives guidance for your character to evolve to the highest stage of spiritual excellence. These are the two outstanding features of your faith, which will ultimately draw the attention of the world, for no other religion can compare with Islam in this matter.

Lesson of History

History repeats itself. As members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Society for the Propagation of Islam we should learn a lesson from this Quranic guidance. The Muslims were taught to have a belief that does not disparage anyone. The Promised Messiah has not endorsed any principle that puts down the beliefs of others. We, as a community are vilified by others, but no-one puts into words those reprehensible teachings that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed has taught his followers that have provoked these *fatwas* (religious edicts) of heresy.

Reformer of the 14th Century Hijra and his Followers

Just as the Muslim nation is the only nation that considers all the prophets as righteous, the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed are the only group amongst Muslims who accept all the righteous servants of Islam. Every other sect is constrained within their narrow sectarian confines and is ready to call others evil. Hazrat Mirza Sahib on the other hand wants his followers to give equal respect and honor to all of the righteous — belonging to any sect.

A member of the *Shia* sect speaks ill of Hazrat Abu Bakr. A *Kharijee* denigrates Hazrat Ali. The *Hanafis* and *Ahl-e-Hadith* look down upon the righteous belonging to each other's sect and subject them to name calling. There are some who challenge the veracity of a righteous and dutiful servant of Allah like Imam Bukhari, while others speak ill of a great reformer like Imam Abu Hanifa. These are all extreme behaviors indicative of excessive love or extreme hatred. Hazrat Mirza Sahib advocated the course of moderation and enjoined his followers not to speak evil of anyone and to respect and honor religious personages belonging to any sect. Our alleged shortcoming is that we accept the reformers (*Mujaddids*) of all the thirteen centuries of the Islamic era and consider Hazrat Mirza Sahib as the reformer (*Mujaddid*) of the fourteenth century *Hijra*. It is not explained to us by our opponents why this chain of reformers (*Mujaddids*) amongst the Muslim nation ends with the thirteenth century *Hijra*. Who is the Reformer of the fourteenth century, and why are we considered sinful when we accept him?

In short, the Promised Messiah taught us to respect and honor all the righteous personages of the faith. In the matter of deeds, he did not teach anything immoral. The condition of the people is such that they reject a person who claims to be the Reformer (*Mujaddid*) of the age, does not promote wrongdoing, and in fact guides people toward the right path. They expel him and his followers from the Muslim community. No one however, expels an alcoholic, a fornicator, an evil doer, a thief, or a gang member from the fold of Islam. They persistently and maliciously insult one who teaches goodness and their hearts are not at rest unless they do so, but they remain silent against evil and evil doers. You can go to any village and observe that no matter how immoral or evil a person is, no one cares. If however, a person joins Hazrat Mirza Sahib in practicing the Religion of Islam, he is vilified. One who has spiritual incite can understand that this group is not from amongst the wrongdoers. They are being treated in the manner to which all followers of righteousness

are subjected. A person may be very pious but because he is a follower of Hazrat Mirza Sahib, it is considered lawful to socially ostracize and persecute him. The truth of the matter is that, without exception, he is subjected to all forms of grief and affliction.

What may we ask is the evil path that Hazrat Mirza Sahib has asked us to follow? Why don't you think and consider? There are many so called *Majzoobs*¹ amongst you whom people follow and as a result indulge in many non-Islamic practices. You have *pirs* (religious leaders) whose teachings go against the teachings of Islamic *Sharia* but you do not disapprove of them. You feel it incumbent though to slander and persecute a group of righteous people who consider following the Holy Quran and the *sunnat* of the Holy Prophet above all else. I understand that we have shortcomings and may have committed mistakes, but Hazrat Mirza Sahib has taught us nothing else besides following the Book and the example of the Holy Prophet. He taught us no evil; in fact he generated the fervor in our hearts to serve and propagate Islam. Why is it that the followers of Mirza Sahib spread far and wide with the zeal to propagate Islam in their hearts? If this spark for the love of Islam was not generated in their hearts by Hazrat Mirza Sahib, then where did it come from? It is strange that others consider it an essential part of their belief to be prejudiced and biased against such a righteous person who guided a nation toward righteousness. There are those who say, "what does it matter to us if Mirza Sahib is righteous?". You should realize that if he is from God, then you are denigrating God's deed. Allah The Most High considers it essential to send reformers (*Mujaddids*), while you think this is unnecessary!

1. Arabic— Absorbed in, lost in, one who is lost in Divine meditation, a mad man. (A common belief amongst the masses in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent that a person who loses his senses and becomes oblivious of his personal hygiene etc., has become so absorbed in the love of God that he has given up all material comforts. They are considered as means of seeking God's help and frequently requested for prayer on behalf of someone or for something.)

Sacrifice is Essential for the Propagation of Islam

Why is it that other Muslim organizations do not succeed in propagating the message of Islam? I have frequently thought about this. Every other day they come up with a plan for this purpose but are unable to take a practical step or if they do proceed, their plans fail. One reason for this is the general lack of deep thinking and deliberation. They are also not prepared to sacrifice for the cause of truth. In order to invite people toward Islam, it is essential that a spirit to think about religious truths be generated in the hearts and minds of people, and they should be prepared to sacrifice and face difficulties for this purpose. If we ourselves lack these qualities, how can we create them in others? The coming of a *Mujaddid* (Reformer) is a truth; the death of Jesus is also a truth. But how many Muslims are there who think about these matters? How many are there who, after finding these truths, are ready to face opposition from their fellow Muslims for a short time? The matter is very straightforward. If we believe in something that goes against the Quran or the *sunnat* (example) of the Holy Prophet, or we disrespect some Imam or religious elder, we should be informed about it. We stand ready to quit any such practice. What Mirza Sahib did was to take a firm commitment from us to follow the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet and created a passion in our hearts for God's religion. How can it be permissible to slander such a person who guided us toward the Book and the way of the Holy Prophet and performed the noble deed of imbuing hearts with the love of propagating Islam?

I therefore draw your attention to this: the task with which you have been entrusted can never be unsuccessful. For this task, which the Promised Messiah has undertaken, Allah promises: "that He may make it prevail over all religions," (48:28). Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed did not undertake a duty that calls for people to be spiteful toward him. He did not create a sect such as others that exist amongst Muslims. The sectarian divisions amongst the *Sunnis*, the *Shias*, the *Hanafis* and the *Ahl-e- Ha-*

dith allow them to disparage each other's religious personages and elders. A *Hanafi* does not give a *Hadith* much credence compared to a saying of Imam Abu Hanifa and the *Shia, Sunni,* and *Ahl-e- Hadith* manifest a similar attitude. They also reject any *Hadith* that is against their school of thought. The *Ahl-e- Quran* call for rejection of all *Hadith* even those that do not contradict their practice. Hazrat Mirza Sahib has not given us any such direction. He taught us to give first priority to the Holy Quran. After this it is also essential to accept all *Hadith* that do not contradict the Quran. The purpose of the organization that he has created is only to propagate Islam and make the Holy Quran accessible to all people.

Thus we do not vilify anybody, nor do we want to be part of slanderous talk. We also do not accept that someone makes disparaging remarks about Hazrat Abu Bakr before us without standing to reply to such false accusations. Similarly, if someone denigrates Hazrat Mirza Sahib before us we cannot remain silent. We consider it our duty to honor and support all the righteous, and if someone speaks ill of them, to respond.

The baseless acrimony of people toward Hazrat Mirza Sahib is so evident that if his name is mentioned in a social gathering, one can clearly observe a change in the facial expressions of those present. I am perplexed by this attitude and left wondering about the cause for such malice. How can such rancor be justified against someone who accomplished so much good? There are many who get perturbed by the fact that Hazrat Mirza Sahib was the recipient of true dreams or saintly revelations in the form of the spoken word (*ilham*). If an ordinary Muslim relates his dream, no one gets upset by it or puts him down. If the true visions and the truthful words (*Ilham*) spoken to the righteous are mentioned, it is considered a matter of pride for the followers of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). They however, get offended if the truthful visions (*ru'ya*) and the truthful words (*ilham*) spoken to Hazrat Mirza Sahib are mentioned.

A friend wrote to me from England that in order to propagate Islam in this country, it was essential to mention the name of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed. I asked him the reason for this and he wrote back to me that there is a large group of people who belong to the spiritualist movement; the basis of their belief is that communication can be established with the spiritual world. This thought is becoming very popular. We can tell them that this concept already exists in Islam. There have been people before and in this age amongst Muslims who have been recipients of such Divine communication. To elaborate this concept Khawaja Kamal-u-din has related some of his dreams in the pages of *The Islamic Review* magazine and demonstrated how they were fulfilled. They seem to accept this, but if it is brought up that Khawaja Sahib's religious mentor Hazrat Mirza Sahib had any such experience, they reject it.

Why is there such malice toward Hazrat Mirza Sahib when true visions and saintly revelation in the form of the spoken word (*ilham*) are a common experience of the righteous from among the Muslim *Ummah* (community)? They are only perturbed by Hazrat Mirza Sahib's name. The truth is that we will employ any technique that we find useful for the propagation of Islam. When Maulavi Noor-ud-din Sahib was going to Multan to give a deposition, someone asked him how we should propagate the message of Islam in England. He said, first convince them to accept *La ilaha ill- Allah* (nothing deserves to be worshipped besides Allah). Once they accept the Unity of God then encourage them to accept Muhammad as the Messenger of Allah (*Muhammad- un -Rasulullah*). This is the appropriate method of propagation, for acceptance is always gradual.

Acceptance of the *Mujaddid* is Essential for Success in the Propagation of Islam

Amongst the means employed for the propagation of Islam, the acceptance of the *Mujaddid* of the age is essential, for it provides evidence of the truthfulness of Islam. Atheists commonly

raise this objection: that if God used to speak in earlier times, why does he not continue to do so in the present age? The answer to this objection is that God still speaks with righteous and saintly persons among His servants, and this type of revelation has clarity in it. We do not consider this type of revelation to be at par with or like Quranic revelation. This form of revelation continues as good news to witness the truth of the Holy Quran and to prove that Allah the Most High still speaks. It is only the Quran and the *Hadith* that are essential for us to follow, and no new form of guidance can now come. Amongst the followers of Islam there have, however, been thousands of individuals with whom God speaks and who have received the honor of being addressed by God. One amongst these is Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, the *Mujaddid* of this century, and the promised Messiah of the Muslims. Why do you want to put such a seal on this attribute of God that He does not speak to His servants any longer? If it is an accepted Islamic religious principle that such divine communication continues with saintly and righteous persons from amongst the followers of Islam, and it is proof of the truthfulness of this faith, then why is there such bias and malice against Hazrat Mirza Sahib? Why are people offended when I say that Hazrat Mirza Sahib also received this form of saintly revelation from Allah? The direction of our organization is quite clear. We will continue to proclaim the principles we follow. If we hide them we will be held liable. If these principles are against the Quran and the *Hadith*, then people have the right and obligation to raise objections.

It must be clearly understood that we do not believe in any prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The prophets before him were like shining lamps that came one after the other to bring spiritual light to different nations. The Holy Prophet Muhammad is the 'light giving sun,' whose spiritual light is perpetual and is meant to illuminate the whole world. We do not accept the need for any other light in his presence. People who receive the honor of

being spoken to from amongst the followers of the Holy Prophet only come to serve the cause of Islam. The chain of prophecy has ended with the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Prophet Jesus cannot also come back, for he was also a prophet. We believe that he was a spiritual light of prophecy from the past. For those who believe in his return, their action is akin to seeking the light from an old lamp in the presence of the sun. Remember that no spiritual light is now needed in the presence of the light of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, which is to last for all time. We need to bring all Muslims toward this direction. Do you still think that the argument surrounding the death of Jesus still persists? Many have now accepted the reality of his death. No-one can now turn the tide of this realization. This is due to the influence of the *Mujaddid* of this age. This is his small miracle; that whosoever today accepts the death of Jesus, no follower of Christianity can stand up to him. This is the path of success for Islam. Follow it and do not oppose the One sent by God. Hazrat Mirza Sahib has not taught anything immoral, he has only asked us to follow the Holy Quran, and the example of the Holy Prophet. You can part ways with him if he has even enjoined a single deed that goes against the Book and the example of the Holy Prophet. If he has not done so, then those who part company from him risk straying from the path of righteousness.

November 10, 1922

The Goal of a Muslim as an Individual and as a Nation is to Achieve Success in Religion and the World

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ①

Successful indeed are the believers, (23:1)

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ②

Who are humble in their prayers, (23:2)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ③

And who shun what is vain, (23:3)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ④

And who act for the sake of purity, (23:4)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ⑤

And who restrain their sexual passions— (23:5)

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاحِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ④

Except in the presence of their mates or those whom their right hands possess, for such surely are not blameable, (23:6)

فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعُدُونَ ⑤

But whoever seeks to go beyond that, such are transgressors — (23:7)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رِعُونَ ⑧

And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant, (23:8)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ⑨

And those who keep a guard on their prayers. (23:9)

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ⑩

These are the heirs, (23:10)

الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ⑪

Who inherit Paradise. Therein they will abide. (23:11)

Meaning of Success in the Holy Quran

“Successful indeed are the believers.” What is meant by success in Quranic terminology? In the *Arabic* language, being completely successful in acquiring goodness, both in the worldly and religious (spiritual) sense is called *falab* (success). Believers are thus able to accomplish their goals related to their material existence and they are able to achieve all goodness in a moral and religious sense. This is a chapter from the Makkan period when early believers in Islam had yet to make progress in worldly terms. They were in fact facing severe persecution. They had not yet won any battles or acquired any territory. The past tense is however, used in these verses, indicating that they will indeed

be successful and the certainty of this is to such a degree that it is as if it has already happened.

Six Qualities That Lead to the Success of a Believer

Who are these believers who are successful? A few of their qualities are described.

“Who are humble in their prayers.”

“And who shun what is vain.”

“And who act for the sake of purity.”

Their actions are based on purity and they make an effort to nurture their human faculties. The word *zakaat* also carries the meaning of nurturing the human faculties. In other words, whatever action they undertake results in strengthening and advancement of, not only their physical faculties, but also is a means of their spiritual cleansing and growth.

“And who restrain their sexual passion.”

In other words they have control over their sexual desires, are not overwhelmed by them, and use them appropriately.

“And those who are keepers of their trusts and their covenant.”

“And those who keep a guard on their prayers.”

Thus six conditions have been enumerated in these verses for believers to achieve complete success (*falah*). The first and last of these are related to prayer. The remaining four also are not related to civic or social issues, nor do they appear to provide a resolution for the issues Muslims were facing at the time. These few Muslims were facing great difficulties and had grave concerns about their means of subsistence and lack of monetary resources. They were involved in trade and other means of employment, even if it was ordinary labor, and had many other civic and social challenges.

Rather than offering a remedy for these problems, what is described here by the Holy Quran are principles that, through

practice, a believer is guaranteed complete success.

We have to analyze these principles and practices to see if they are actually conducive toward the success of a nation. In fact, the Holy Quran does not teach a hypothetical belief system. It provides us with arguments and makes us aware of the consequences of our actions before seeking our acceptance. We have to see why these aforementioned practices, which are not related to social and civic matters and ordinarily not considered essential for the progress of a nation, are relevant. Every building has a foundation, besides the roof and windows, etc. The subject matter related in these verses of the Holy Quran has to do with laying the foundation upon which the structure of national advancement is to be built. The rules that the Holy Quran has laid down as the foundation for building the Muslim nation are not related to material progress. It was essential for the Holy Quran to contain such comprehensive principles based upon truth that could form the basis of nation building.

Your nation building cannot be accomplished by being taught a few social and civic principles that you then follow to achieve this end. Your nation building can only happen if you become people of a high moral caliber who have a close connection with God. The Holy Quran has stressed how you can become God fearing, spiritual, and moral beings of a high caliber. This forms the basis, or the root of your belief system, while other civic and social principles and practices are branches of this tree.

We observe much enthusiasm in the world today for the idea that spiritual and moral development are the only foundation on which genuine progress can be built. Besides the Holy Quran, no other scripture has endorsed this idea. You can search the Bible and the Torah; nowhere will you find these principles of moral and spiritual development being advanced as the means of a nation's development. No scripture has in fact linked national development with moral and spiritual principles.

Congregational Prayers are the Cornerstone of Moral Development

From amongst these principles and practices the Holy Quran has laid special emphasis upon prayer. If you think about it, keeping up prayer has been stressed more than any other practice in the Holy Quran. The condition of Muslims is such that they intentionally try to avoid prayer. In fact I would say that even the majority of those who pray do not completely fulfill the requirements of this practice. Prayer is the prime institution the Holy Quran has mandated as the foundation of our nation building. Observe how much love and fervor the companions of the Holy Prophet had for prayer. Their example in this matter is unparalleled. This is in fact where we should seek their example. If we think about the life of the Holy Prophet and study the history of the companions, we reach the inevitable conclusion that they considered no other duty above that of keeping up prayer.

Islam enjoins the keeping up of prayer in congregation. People today often ignore this commandment. How many are there whose hearts are eager to join congregational prayers? Observe the conduct of the Holy Prophet's companions. They did not abandon congregational prayers in the mosque even in the face of grave difficulties and times of grief. The Holy Prophet succumbed to a bout of pneumonia but even during this terminal illness whenever he could muster enough strength, we see him seeking support and coming to the mosque for prayer. In the last days of his life, when the Holy Prophet observed the companions from the window of his apartment and saw them busy in prayer, it brought a smile to his face. He was very pleased to see that they stood before Allah with the same fervor that they exhibited while he stood in their company. What could have been more pleasing for him than to witness the fulfillment of the mission for which he was sent? He had guided them and now saw them adhering to the path upon which Allah desired the progress of the Muslim nation.

Study the history of the blessed companions of the Holy Prophet and you will be surprised that amongst them were those who walked a distance of several miles to join congregational prayers in the mosque. The Mosque at *Quba* and the Holy Prophet's mosque were at a distance of three miles from each other and the companions of the Holy Prophet went to both of these for congregational prayers. This shows that they had to travel a considerable distance in order to join these services. They would do this even for late evening and morning prayers. The Holy Prophet would sometimes intentionally delay the late evening prayer for this purpose. It was his desire that the whole community participate in this task of national development. The women and children would sometimes fall asleep while waiting. It is stated in the *hadith* that on one such occasion Hazrat Umar called upon the Holy Prophet and informed him that the women and children were falling asleep. The Holy Prophet then came to the mosque and led the congregational prayers. This tells us how eager the whole community of Muslims was to participate in congregational prayers; that women and children made an exceptional effort to participate.

November 24, 1922

The Problem of Caliphate

I bear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُنزِّلَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى
 لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا
 وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them rulers in the earth as He made those before them rulers, and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them, and that He will surely give them security in exchange after their fear. They will serve Me, not associating aught with Me. And whoever is ungrateful after this, they are the transgressors. (24:55)

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you. (24:56)

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَأْوَهُمُ النَّارُ وَلَبِئْسَ
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾

Think not that those who disbelieve will weaken (the Truth) in the earth; and their abode is the Fire. And it is indeed an evil resort! (24:57)

Muslims to be Made Rulers of the Earth

This is the well-known verse of the Holy Quran also called the verse of the Caliphate (*ayat-e-istikblaf*). This verse should already be known to most Muslims or Muslims need to be made aware of it. In this verse, they are promised to be made rulers of the earth; their religion will be established and their state of fear will be changed to one of security.

In a Sound Hadith (*Hadith Sahih*) it is narrated: The Holy Prophet said: "The earth was contracted for me. I was shown its Eastern and Western lands and my followers (*ummah*) will be given dominance in what was shown to me."

What were shown to the Holy Prophet in a vision were Eastern and Western lands, indicating that the dominance of his followers would spread from the outer limits of the eastern to those of the western lands. There are other *hadith* on this subject. Some mention specific names. One *hadith* mentions the palaces of Caesar, Chosroes, and Sana, and the Angel Gabriel giving news to the Holy Prophet that his followers would be given possession of all of these.

This promise was eventually fulfilled. The aforementioned Quranic verse and the *hadith* are from a time when Muslims were not dominant in any land. In fact, some prophecies relate a time when the followers of Islam were in a very weak state, struggling against great difficulties and extreme persecution. The

enemy was so strong that it was a struggle even to survive. Promise is given under these adverse circumstances that although you are undoubtedly in a very weak state, Allah the Most High will make you strong. Although right now you are in a state of fear, surrounded on all sides by enemies, this state of fear will eventually go away and peace will be established for you.

These prophecies were ultimately fulfilled — and with amazing clarity and precision! In accordance with the Divine promise, “He will surely make them rulers in the earth,” Muslim rule spread to the East and the West, though they lost a portion of it later. The promise of Allah the Most High was, however, fulfilled and a time will come in the future when Islam will take hold in the West, although it seems improbable at this time. A similarly hopeless situation exists now as it did at the time when this promise was first given to the Muslims. As it was fulfilled in the past, it will certainly reach fruition once more. The Holy Quran is a wonderful means of keeping alive the faith of Muslims, but unfortunately not much attention is given to it. You hear a lot of hue and cry being made about this issue of the *Caliphate* or Muslim rule, but there are very few people who pay attention to this verse, to see where in the Holy Quran this promise is made, and see what conditions need to be fulfilled to bring it about.

The words of this verse, “Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good” clearly tell us that this promise is only for those who believe and put their belief into practice through righteous deeds. These two conditions, in other words, are necessary for the fulfillment of this promise. It is then stated, “He will surely establish for them their religion.” This indicates that the purpose of this rule is to establish your religion for you so that doubts do not arise about the religion of God. Although Muslims are in a subjugated and oppressed state, they unfortunately do not pay any attention to these matters. They do not even look at the Holy Quran or think about this; otherwise they would have known what conditions need to be fulfilled for their rule to be established.

Display of Ungratefulness After Being Made Rulers

After being given this promise, it is stated, “And whoever is ungrateful after this, they are the transgressors.” If you are ungrateful and your deeds are like those of the disbelievers, you will be treated, not as Muslims, but as the transgressors (those who cross the limits laid down by Allah). If you have to face such difficulties because of this attitude of ungratefulness and want relief, you have to “keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate,” “so that mercy may be shown to you.” Again this underscores that righteous deeds are an essential condition for this promise to be fulfilled.

Physical Dominance or Rule of the Muslim Nation

You must have noticed that in this verse of the *Caliphate*, the promise to be made rulers is with the Muslim nation and not to one or two individuals. Such a promise of rule is not made with one or two individuals. Always amongst the followers of Islam there exist persons who are righteous in their deeds. Even during times when Muslims were in a state of great decline, as far as political power is concerned, there remained amongst them people whose deeds were righteous.

Spiritual Caliphate

In the time period just preceding ours, in the Indian subcontinent, there have been eminent examples of such righteous people, like Hazrat Shah Waliullah and Hazrat Mujaddid *alfe-thani*. These were certainly righteous individuals, but the general condition of the Muslim nation was in decline. When generally the moral fabric of a nation is in a decadent state, and the majority manifest evil and the righteous are few, the nation becomes subject to the Divine decree meant for evildoers. The whole nation cannot be called righteous because of the presence of a few righteous individuals. So this promise — to be made rulers — was with a nation and not with an individual. In reality, such dom-

inance is always given to nations and not individuals. Muslims are making this grave error when they consider a single individual as deserving of this rule. In another verse of the Holy Quran, while addressing the children of Israel it is stated: "He raised prophets among you and made you kings" (5:20). It is not said here that, "He made kings amongst you," but rather that, "He made you kings." On the other hand, it is said, "He raised prophets among you," showing that prophets are raised within nations and the whole nation does not receive this gift of prophecy, while it is the whole nation that gets the kingdom. Prophethood and its heritage, which is *mubadathiyya* and *mujadidiyya*, are only bestowed upon individuals. There is no doubt in this, that others also share in its spiritual benefits when individuals are given the heritage of prophecy. These are but a few and the whole nation does not become righteous or spiritually eminent.

Since kingship or rule is given to the nation and not individuals, the concept of caliphate that the people hold, should be looked into. How far is it in consonance with the Quranic teachings? An error is, after all, an error whether it is committed by many or by just a few. Even when world opinion is behind such an incorrect stance, one with the knowledge of the Quran should not honor it.

How is this Spiritual Caliphate (leadership) Received?

The spiritual caliphate is received through knowledge of religion. The physical caliphate is through kingship; that is the caliphate of your nation. This middle way that has been contrived, is that a man is made the king and it is then accepted that besides being the physical ruler, he is also the inheritor of the spiritual caliphate. This has no basis in the Quran or *hadith*. There is a common trend amongst Muslims that they blindly follow the opinion of one individual and disregard the Quran and the *hadith*. One should refer to them, looking to see what concept of caliphate has been presented. Study Islamic history and you will observe that generally the kings were not also the spir-

itual caliphs or leaders. There were very few temporal rulers in Islam who were also deserving of being spiritual leaders. For this, Allah has a separate system. We should search amongst this group for those who are deserving of this status in accordance with the Quran and *badith*. The promise of this spiritual leadership is given in these words of the Holy Prophet,

“Surely Allah will raise in this *ummah* (community), at the head of every century one who will revive their religion for them.”

What is the status and purpose of this *badith*? What happened to that promise? Why are spiritual leaders not born amongst us? Has the coming of *mujaddids* ended?

The consequences of this lack of awareness are such that perhaps both friends and foes developed this misunderstanding, that the caliph of Islam was like the pope in Christianity. This issue was first raised by Christians, that Muslims can call someone a caliph. But how do you correlate this with kingship? The general Muslim community replied to this, and we also did. Today, however, Muslims are following the same path. Instead of making each other aware of this error, they follow individual opinions in this matter, even if it goes against the Quran and the *badith*.

We need to consider the attitude of the companions of the Holy Prophet. Even in those days, women were ready to raise awareness of an erroneous statement made by an elder and respected person¹ such as Umar. Today such statements made by elders are silently accepted. My understanding of the concept of caliphate is this. A nation from amongst the Muslims should be made rulers and guardians of the Kaabah. It should be considered their internal administrative matter as to who they choose

1. When Umar desired to ban big dowries, it was with the recitation of this Verse, “And if you wish to have (one) wife in the place of another and you have given one of them a heap of gold, take nothing from it” (4:20). A woman in the audience corrected him, and he had to take back his orders saying that “the women of Madinah had more understanding than Umar.”

as their leader or king. Physical leadership or kingship does not however qualify someone for spiritual dominion. It is surprising that Muslims give this spiritual status to their physical rulers or caliphs and then turn around and strip them of their spiritual leadership when they decide to remove them from their worldly position. If indeed an individual had those spiritual qualities, how could they be taken away from him when he was removed from his political office? Someone's spirituality cannot be taken away from him upon removal from his worldly position. The spiritual eminence of a person does not change when he gives up his position of power in the material world.

The Caliphate in the Early Days of Islam

We need to consider whether the caliphate in the early days of Islam was like this. Were Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali *caliphas* of this kind? For God's sake, someone should think about what is happening. That people who were given such a rational religion as Islam and are following such a course is indeed regrettable. It is the nation's right to elect an eminent person from among themselves to be ruler or accept his rule as king on the basis of heritage. Although the truth of the matter is that heritage has no meaning. Hazrat Umar, when he solicited a few names to elect a Caliph, he intentionally left off the name of his son Abdullah-bin-Umar. He did not even allow him the opportunity to be elected. The condition today is such that even if a person is not deserving of being given power, we do not care about it. We make a person from a family a ruler. No one thinks whether a person is eligible for becoming the spiritual caliph or leader, but they are determined to declare him as such. For God's sake, tell us what will be the task of this caliph. Will he be following the example of the four righteous caliphs?

The Need for a Spiritual Caliph

Nobody considers the real purpose of a spiritual caliph. They are determined to make a caliph in name. The need is for a spir-

itual leader who according to the *badith* of the Holy Prophet would strive for revival of the faith. The weaker the condition of the faith is, the greater is the need for a strong spiritual leader so that he can strengthen the faith. Remember that the task of a spiritual leader is only to propagate the word of Allah and strengthen the faith, and nothing else.

In Delhi, I questioned a Muslim scholar, asking under what conditions he accepted the Sultan of Turkey as the Caliph. His reply was that since the promise in this matter exists in the Holy Quran, he therefore considers it a spiritual caliphate. This matter however has no connection with spirituality. The task of the spiritual caliph is only to guide Muslims to the right path. Propagating the word of Allah is his task, and for this, spiritual leadership is needed. The whole world knows that those who establish the spiritual order and call toward God are a distinct group. In India such spiritual caliphs included such spiritually eminent personages as Hazrat Makhdoom Ali Hajveri, Hazrat Mohinuddin Chishti, Hazrat Ahmed Sirhindi, and Hazrat Shah Waliullah. The group to which the political rulers belong is usually not capable of spiritual leadership. You can go directly to Turkey and observe that those who give religious education are quite a distinct group. According to the *badith*, "the religious scholars are the inheritors of the prophets." This is not the work of the kings, neither are they eligible for it. Muslims should not look into these matters superficially. In fact they should evaluate the impact of such beliefs and see how they result in distancing them from the teachings of the Holy Quran and the *badith*.

December 15, 1922

**The Significance and Benefits
of the Annual Gathering of the Community**

Ibear witness that none deserves to be served besides Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allah.

After this, I seek the protection of Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ
لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِذَا اسْتَأْذِنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذْنِ لِمَن شِئْتَ
مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a momentous affair, they go not away until they have asked leave of him. Surely they who ask leave of thee, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger; so when they ask leave of thee for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom thou wilt of them, and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (24:62)

لَا تَجْعَلُوا دُعَاءَ الرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَاءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذٍ فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ
تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

Make not the calling among you of the Messenger as your calling one of another. Allah indeed knows those who steal away from among you, concealing themselves. So let those who go against his order beware, lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement. (24:63)

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَ يَوْمَ
يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

Now surely Allah's is whatever is in the heavens and the earth. He knows indeed your condition. And on the day when they are returned to Him, He will inform them of what they did. And Allah is Knower of all things (24:64)

Quranic Prayers Generally Follow a Congregational Format

Al Fatihah is the essence of the Holy Quran. By studying this chapter we arrive at the conclusion that Allah The Most High has chosen His words for all of mankind and not for a single individual. We do not find any prayer in this chapter that reflects individual intent or supplication, such as: "I am asking for this", or "have mercy on me". What we find instead is, "Thee do we serve", and "Thee do we beseech for help" (1:5), "Guide us on the right Path" (1:6). Similarly, we find in the Holy Quran, "Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake" (2:286). We do not find, "do not punish me if I forget or make a mistake." In this way, most prayers in the Holy Quran have a congregational mode of expression.

Some people raise this objection: "Why did the Holy Prophet ask for guidance on the right path, was he not already following

it?" There is no doubt that he was certainly on the right path. In fact his prayer was for others to be guided toward it. He asked for guidance toward the right path for others. In my opinion, if I pray, and in my prayer I do not include my brethren, it would indeed be very lamentable. Our hearts should cry out before Allah on behalf of all. We should pray for others besides ourselves; we should pray for our relatives, our community, for all Muslims, indeed for all of humanity.

The Holy Quran frequently adopts this type of format. These verses that I have recited are from the chapter *Al Nur* (The Light). This chapter frequently discusses matters that relate to a person, his home, or family. Toward its end, in these verses, we are told that these individual matters are not as important as those that relate to the whole body or congregation. Accordingly, it is stated, "Only those are believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and when they are with him on a momentous affair, they do not go away until they have asked leave of him."

The Momentous Affair

What is this momentous affair? All very important tasks related to the whole congregation and nation, are included under this heading. It is not mentioned here that those believers actually attend this momentous occasion. It is implied in the words, "They do not go away until they have asked leave of him," indicating that attendance on such occasions is certainly even more essential. The need for attendance is further stressed in the words, "Surely they who ask leave of thee, are they who believe in Allah and His Messenger." Attending such a momentous affair therefore becoming a very important condition of faith and these words further emphasize the importance given to the matter. All of this is further strengthened by the words, "So when they ask leave of thee for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom thou wilt of them," indicating that all who seek permission cannot get it except those whom the Holy Prophet permits. The words, "and ask forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely Allah

is Forgiving, Merciful,” show that even leaving after seeking this type of permission is not very commendable, and that forgiveness of Allah is needed for this action. This clearly proves the importance of participation in such important matters of national interest.

Calling of the Messenger

Further on we are enjoined, “Make not the calling among you of the Messenger as your calling one of another.” Contrary to this, in this day and age, we notice that people readily join gatherings to which they are invited by others. If there is a gathering of poets or a meeting to recite poetry or some other social occasion, people participate enthusiastically. Such enthusiasm is, however, seldom noted when a meeting is arranged to discuss the word and command of the Holy Prophet. The command of Allah was that you should give more importance to the call of the Prophet than to your mutual invitations and to not look at them as being on par with each other. There are perhaps very few other events that Muslims treat with such callousness as they show toward the calling of the Prophet. If a friend invites us to his house for dinner, we are ready to walk a distance of several miles to participate. But if it is time for prayer, people make all kinds of excuses not to attend. The consequences of such neglect are expressed in the words, “Allah indeed knows those who steal away from among you, concealing themselves. So let those who go against his order beware, lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.”

Careful thought in this matter leads me to the conclusion that all the trials and afflictions faced by Muslims in this age are a consequence of not giving any importance to the call of the Prophet.

What is the calling of the Prophet? Has this call expired, and as a result are these verses abrogated? The calling of the Prophet includes all those matters that were the purpose of the Holy

Prophet's mission. Wherever this purpose is fulfilled, that is the call of the Prophet. The work of the Holy Prophet was to exalt the name of Allah The Most High. That is the reason you are told not to consider this calling like any ordinary invitation. This calling for the work of the Holy Prophet has not come to an end and his invitation is still very much alive. All prophets and messengers have passed away, but the message of the Holy Prophet is still alive and will remain so until the Day of Resurrection. His calling is still an open invitation toward God.

If from amongst the servants of the Holy Prophet someone calls us toward religion and the Word of God, his voice is also the calling of the Holy Prophet. In this age, a servant of the Holy Prophet stood up and called us toward the word of Allah. He revived the same call that was the call of the Holy Prophet. His calling was the calling of the Holy Prophet. He has now passed away. It now falls to you to keep alive this calling. You took a pledge at his hands that you will continue this revival of the Holy Prophet's call.

Our Annual Gathering

An important part of this calling is our annual gathering. This is not a fair or an exhibition. The purpose of this gathering is to keep alive the objective for which we have taken the pledge.

It is through such gatherings that tranquility (*sakinah*) descends on and strengthens the hearts of participants. Take, for example, the obligatory prayers. We could recite those within our homes. What then is the purpose of congregational prayers five times a day? It is for acquiring this tranquility and moral strength. These gatherings are further expanded through Friday prayers and the prayers of the two Eids. Muslims from all over the world are then enjoined to gather in the Kaabah to further advance this feeling of tranquility and unity. One often hears the stories of the hard heartedness of pilgrims, but certainly, even the most stonehearted melt and fall in submission to Allah when

they witness the gathering of the pilgrims dressed in simple white robes on the plain of Arafat. Many people have admitted that in fact the way one's heart falls in submission before Allah during this experience is unique.

Many of our friends have not understood the purpose of our annual gathering. If somebody attends this gathering to meet a friend or give an offering or kiss someone's hand to show his reverence and respect, then they might as well have not come. The main purpose of this gathering is to pray together for the success of the work that we have undertaken, and to collectively consider ways and means of accomplishing and advancing the task that we have committed to and to benefit from each other's advise in this matter.

I emphasize this to members of my organization that they should, "Make not the calling among you of the Messenger as your calling one of another."

Those of you who are present here are listening, but I am also addressing those of our friends who are not present. I am addressing all of them to hearken to the call of the Holy Prophet and together find ways of reviving this call. Try to find ways of removing the difficulties that are arising in its way. Pray before Allah The Most High to make it easy for us to propagate His word.

Editor's Note:

In the second *Khutba* (sermon) Maulana Muhammad Ali further added these words. "I am asking you again to dedicate these days to the task that is in front of us in the form of this annual gathering. Remember that there is no better cause to serve Islam than its propagation. There are other ways to serve Islam, but this is the foremost. This was the task of the companions of the Holy Prophet. They left their homes and spread all over the world to carry out this work." The *Mujaddid* (Reformer) of this age also invited us to this task. You should come to attend this

gathering and bring others with you, so that they may witness whether it is the name of Allah that we propagate in the world or our own name. What else do we propagate except, “Nothing deserves to be worshipped besides Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” Even those who have foolishly made Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a prophet cannot convey any other message than this. When you ask them what is it that they propagate when they go abroad, they admit it is the very same message of “Nothing deserves to be worshipped besides Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”

So you should come yourself and bring those who are under your influence and show them that we propagate the name of Allah. You should ask them to join you in propagating this message of the Unity of God.

March 22, 1929

**How to respond to Slandering
of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and Islam?**

Ibear witness that there is no God but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

After this, I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾

O you who believe, say not *Ra'i-na* and say *Unzur-na* and listen. And for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement. (2:104)

مَا يَوْدُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ
مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ
الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾

Neither those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book, nor the polytheists, like that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord. And Allah chooses whom He pleases for His Mercy; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace” (2:105)

Misrepresentation

A certain individual has written a book that discusses the subject of expansion of Islam. In the concluding remarks he has written five or six points, the intent of which is to create an impression in the mind of the reader that the Holy Prophet (we seek refuge in Allah) was a cruel and heartless person. Whenever someone uttered a slanderous or rude remark about him, he was immediately put to the sword. To support his allegations the writer has quoted references from books of *Sirat* (biography).¹

Difference between Books of *Hadith* (Tradition), and *Sirat* (Biography)

The truth is that in these books of *Sirat* all sorts of legends have been compiled without much investigation. Whosoever got hold of a narrative, included it in these books. This is the major distinction between the books of *Hadith* and *Sirat*. The compilers of *Hadith* took great care in verifying their content. In spite

1. Note by Khwaja Kamal-ud Din on this subject (taken from his book, "The Ideal Prophet")

There are numberless books on the life of the Holy Prophet, some of them written in the early days of Islam, and among these, books of *Sirat* and *Maghazi* are conspicuous. Nevertheless, they should be put to the test of the Books of *Hadith* — the traditions of the Prophet - before they can be accepted as reliable on the subject. Hafiz Zainuddin, a well-known "traditionalist" very rightly remarks in his book, *Al-fiya-fissyar*, "The seeker should remember that books on the *Sirat* (biography) of Muhammad gather all kinds of traditions and sayings, both those that are true and those which should be rejected." The *Sirat* and *Maghazi* books were not over-carefully compiled, and many unreliable accounts, in the nature of fiction, crept into them. On the other hand, in the books of *Hadith*, we have the statements of about 13,000 persons — who had spoken with the Prophet and seen him — that have been written down and passed on to us. "In order then, to ascertain whether a certain narrator of a certain tradition is trustworthy, we consult a special branch of Arabic literature known as *Asma-ur-Rijal* that is to say, the names of those who have either spoken to or seen the Prophet. In these books are preserved the accounts of the lives of the persons who are narrators of traditions, and it is from these books that we learn whether such should be accepted or rejected. Thousands of "traditionalists" spent their whole lives in

of this precaution, some matters have crept into *Hadith* that are in contradiction to the Holy Quran. In the case of the Books of *Sirat* no such precaution was taken in the collection of their material; therefore, the chance of such spurious elements having been recorded in them is much higher. The Holy Prophet's instruction in this matter is that, "You should reject any matter that contradicts the Holy Quran." It is thus absolutely essential to be very careful in accepting the veracity of such reports.

The Holy Quran and Reports of *Sirat*

I have considered this matter at length and have come to the conclusion that these reports are not even remotely connected with the persona of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him. The more we reflect upon the Holy Quran, we see clearly that the Holy Prophet's character ascended far above such triviality. In fact, the Holy Quran is the only authority that keeps us on the right course. These reports

preparing this branch of knowledge. They took long journeys to meet and interview the people who could relate any events of the life of Muhammad. They met them and inquired about them; whether the narrator was a pious man; what were his occupations; whether he had a good memory; whether he was of a superficial or deep character; and if he proved to be in any way deficient, his evidence was rejected." It was under this system of sifting the truth that the books of *Sihah Sittah*- six reliable books of traditions were prepared and became the basis of all other books on the life of the Prophet. The books of *Maghazi*, (books dealing with battles Holy Prophet had to undertake) on the other hand, have not appealed to the Muslim Divines and "traditionalists," and their writers have not been accepted as reliable. Among these writers, *Waqidi* and his *Katib* have been regarded, in the Muslim world, as the least trustworthy and most careless biographers of Muhammad. Of the former *Ibn Khalikan* speaks thus: "The traditions received from him (*Waqidi*) are considered of feeble authority, and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity (vol. iii, p. 62). *Imam Shafi'I* - one of the four great Imams of the Muslim world — says that all the books of *Waqidi* are a load of lies, and other "traditionalists" say the same. Unfortunately *Waqidi* is the chief authority with some of those European writers, who approach the subject with sinister motives and for obvious reasons. They can get such material in this fiction writer's account of the Campaigns of Muhammad as, with little distortion, will help them to malign the Holy Prophet.

have been tainted to a great degree by the thought process of the narrator. Whatever understanding of certain occurrences the narrator had, he described it according to his own perception. In particular, they have greatly misunderstood the causes of the battles in which the Holy Prophet took part. The process of collecting these reports occurred at a time when Muslims had power and kingdom. Their mental attitude was that of a dominant power, where use of aggression against other nations was not considered objectionable. As a result of this mindset such reports made their way into books of *Sirat*.

Quranic Directive

The Holy Quran brings about correction of such reports and reformation of this mentality. The Holy Quran states, “Say not *Ra’i-na* and say *Unzur-na* and listen.”

The difference between these two words is explained by the Holy Quran itself:

Some of those who are Jews alter words from their places and say, we have heard and we disobey; and (say) Hear without being made to hear and (say), *Ra’i-na*, distorting with their tongues and slandering religion. (4:46)

Ra’i-na is equivalent to *give ear to*, *bearken*, or *listen to us*, but with a slight change of accent it becomes *ra’ina*, which means *he is foolish* or *stupid* or *unsound in intellect*. The Jews of Medina with the intent to ridicule, changed the accent, thus “distorting” the word and changing its meaning. It is quite apparent that they used these derogatory words right in front of the Holy Prophet. Certain *Hadith* report that instead of *Asalaamo alaikum* (peace be upon you) they would say, *Asaamo alaikum* (death be upon you). They would also say, “Allah is poor and we are rich” (3:181). There is also mention of making fun of the Holy Prophet, and use of abusive language. In the verse quoted above, the Holy Quran categorizes this behavior as, “slandering religion” (4:46). The Holy Prophet Muhammad,

Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him, never punished any of those who used such offensive language.²

A Prophecy

The Holy Quran also states, “And you will certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and idolaters much abuse.” This verse from the chapter *Al-Imran* clearly points out that Muslims will have to face insult and verbal abuse. Under such circumstances they are enjoined, “And if you are patient and keep your duty, surely this is an affair of great resolution” (3:186). Along with patience, stress is laid upon keeping one’s duty. What is keeping one’s duty under such circumstances? It is not only being tolerant of such maltreatment, but responding to it with goodness. This, in the words of the Holy Quran, is an affair of great resolution.

Holy Prophet’s Conduct in Dealing with Slanderers

You are all aware that a prevalent idea amongst Muslims is that whosoever abuses the Holy Prophet should be put to death. I have explored this issue, and found it in contradiction with Quranic teachings. As I have pointed out, the Holy Quran gives clear instructions to bear slander with patience, tolerance and benevolence. We find incidents in the life of the Holy Prophet wherein, faced with such circumstances, he never responded in the manner commonly understood by Muslims, and which they attribute to him. Take for example the case of Abdullah bin Ubayy. In one of the campaigns outside Medina, he threatened the Muslims with: “Upon return to Medina we shall see how the respected and honored inhabitants will expel the wretched ones.” In spite of this insolence, he was not reprimanded for it by the Holy Prophet.

2. Note: The Holy Prophet at this stage had been accepted by the inhabitants of Medina as their ruler and could have easily done so if he chose to.

Harmful Effects of Imposing the Death Penalty on Slanderers of the Holy Prophet

Seemingly, this proposition appears very attractive. It stokes our ego that we hold such love and honor for the Holy Prophet in our hearts that we are impulsively ready to kill his slanderer! In my opinion we need to re-study the Holy Quran for guidance in regards to many ideas that have become entrenched in our psyche. Sometimes it is even necessary to overlook the commentaries and study the Holy Quran independently. It is essential that we consider how such a mindset and behavior on our part will affect others. One aspect of this is that we have such an inviolable sense of honor for the Holy Prophet that we are ready to mete death upon the perpetrator of such insolence. The other side of this is that people, instead of being attracted to Islam, will despise it and think of it as a violent and intolerant religion. We need to deeply consider this matter. For example, if some individual raises an objection against, or insults an honorable and powerful man, do we expect him to respond with kindness and thus manifest his magnificence of character, or do we prefer that he should chase the perpetrator with the intent to beat him up? The Holy Quran in fact teaches us to endure insult with restraint and mercy and not respond with intolerance and injury.

Response to Abuse

What Muslims are lacking in these times is a spirit of tolerance. This lack of tolerance is the reason for endless. In fact, the real honor of a Muslim lies in that he accepts difference of opinion and faces difficulties and tribulations with patience and steadfastness. These are commendable attributes. There is no moral superiority in answering abuse in kind. Strength of character lies in being patient. I enjoin you to tolerate difference of opinion. Face abuse and insult with fortitude. In this lies your magnanimity. If someone utters a few derogatory words against you, and you get angry and respond in a similar manner, you have lost the high moral ground.

Principal Underlying the Strength and Progress of a Community

The Holy Quran extols the Holy Prophet in the following words, “And hadst thou been rough, heard- hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around thee” (3:159).

This is the principle of strengthening an organization. A person should not be abrasive, but instead be so kindhearted as to tolerate abusive language and be ready to forgive. The Holy Quran contains such teaching in abundance. In one verse it says, “And say to my servants that they speak what is best. Surely the devil sows dissension among them” (17:53). Another verse tells us, “Repel (evil) with what is best” (41:34). And if you adopt this attitude, you will find that, “he between whom and thee is enmity would be as if he were a warm friend” (41:34).

Essence of Quranic Teaching

Now keep all these teachings in perspective, and ask yourself the question, where does the Holy Quran lead us in this matter? The Quran teaches us to treat even our most inveterate enemy with kindness and to tolerate his abuse with patience. There is no doubt that insult provokes anger in us and we think that the perpetrator is our enemy and should therefore be disgraced. The Holy Quran, however, seeks the moral spiritual elevation of man through its guidance.

Advise to Members of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement

I present these arguments for my own personal reformation and the reformation of the members of my *jamaat* (organization). Some people have the temperament that they get very angry when insulted. What good does it do to us that we narrate the excellent example of the Holy Prophet, but do not follow him? We tell other people how the Holy Prophet forgave his enemies after gaining victory over them. Do we for a moment consider that we should follow his example? Why do we not follow the excellent attributes of the Holy Prophet whereby we prove

his magnanimity? How great were the difficulties and afflictions he had to suffer at the hands of his opponents and with what unparalleled generosity did he forgive all of them? Not for a moment did he seek blame or ask for an apology. I know that this word “forgiveness” is hard on both parties. For the person who is aggrieved it is very hard to forgive his tormentor. He does not feel rested until he has fully humiliated his adversary. For the one who has caused this injury, it is also very difficult to ask for forgiveness. It is in forgiveness that graciousness and nobility lie for both of them.

Respect for One’s Brother

My understanding is that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad formed this organization for a specific purpose. Our greatest goal is to sustain and strengthen this movement. We drift further from our goal and become weaker as we prolong our mutual discords. I therefore remind you of the Quranic injunction, “And obey Allah and His Messenger and dispute not one with another, lest you get weak hearted and your power depart; and be steadfast. Surely Allah is with the steadfast” (8:46).

The Holy Prophet said, “Just as you regard this month, this day, this city, as Sacred, so regard the life and property and honor of every Muslim as a sacred trust.” Dishonoring your brother is like spilling his blood. Both these actions are similar. Remember first and foremost is to abstain from speaking an evil word against your brother.

The Question of Apology

The second step is that if someone aggrieves you, forgive him. Do not hold on until the individual is humiliated and asks for an apology. While apologizing is a commendable action on his part, for you to demand an apology is not. Remember well that he who caused the grief did evil. Similarly, not forgiving his action is immoral. *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet enjoins us to, “Create Allah’s qualities within you.” Allah’s attribute is that He

is, “Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance” (40:3). He forgives without one asking for forgiveness, and also accepts repentance. We should also forgive our brother without seeking an apology from him and forgive him when he apologizes. Every individual who is a member of this organization, and all the elders amongst you, should have it in their heart to forgive those who speak evil of them. Follow the example of the Holy Prophet and create the same spirit within you.

Before his death, the Holy Prophet said this to his companions, “If one of you has been hurt or offended by me, he should take recompense from me now.” A man from amongst the audience spoke thus, “O Prophet of Allah, in one of the battles your elbow grazed my shoulder.” The Holy Prophet, Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him, laid bare his shoulder and gave him permission to hit it with his elbow. He came forward, and affectionately kissed his shoulder instead, saying, “You, oh Prophet of Allah and causing me any hurt? Certainly not! My intent was to kiss you!”³

Real Strength of Character

Remember this well, that the real measure of your strength does not lie in your ability to denigrate someone, but lies in your forgiveness of the one who has aggrieved you, and in your overlooking his faults. This has a great significance for the strength of your organization, hence I repeatedly advise you of this. Your community cannot be strong unless you overlook the weaknesses and faults of your brethren. The more you forgive your brothers, the more contentment and pleasure it will bring to your heart. Finding fault with others and speaking ill of them are habits you should let go. I say to all of you that if somebody has caused you harm, you should quickly try to put the matter

3. This shows not only the sublime sense of awareness the Holy Prophet had for the rights of other individuals but also the great affection and love his followers had for him.

behind you and forget the grievance. In fact, the *Hadith* tells us that a person should not stop speaking to his brother for more than three days. This is the extreme limit; the best course is to forgive his omission immediately.”