“You were born for a great purpose at a great time” (Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih IV)
Hazrat Khalifa-tul- Masih V (May Allah be his helper)
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And they say, ‘None shall ever enter Heaven unless he be a Jew or a Christian.’ These are their vain desires. Say, ‘Produce your proof, if you are truthful.’ (Al-Baqarah Chapter 2: Verse 112)

So far Christians were not separately addressed in the preceding verses. But now the Holy Quran mentions them along with the Jews, indicating that their case was no better than that of the latter, both being under the delusion that one could obtain salvation merely by becoming a Jew or a Christian. They forgot the fact that when God had established a fresh covenant, salvation could not be possible without conforming thereto. If, however, the Jews and the Christians were justified in their claims, they should advance some reasons or scriptural evidence to show that it was enough for the purpose of salvation to join their folds. And they should not do it, because in their scriptures them selves there was foretold the
appearance of a Prophet whom it was enjoined upon them to accept and whose rejection was stated to lead to estrangement from God.

Christianity, as well as Judaism, was meant for the guidance of the Israelites alone. The mission of Jesus was not meant for the whole world (Matt. 7:6; 10:6; 15:24 Mark 7:27). Though later on the followers of Jesus violated the limit imposed upon his mission and claimed universality for it, yet the hard fact remains that he was sent only for the Israelites, and his mission was to uplift that people alone. As other nations of the world are also creation of the God, it is therefore only right to believe that God must have made some arrangement for their guidance as well. Hence, it is quite unreasonable on the part of the Jews and Christians to hold that the door of salvation was closed against the followers of other faiths. Such a view would mean that God had confined salvation to certain tribes, to the exclusion of others, which is evidently absurd.

Islam however, is not exposed to that objection. In the first place, it is not a tribal faith, but is universal in character. In the Quran, God enjoins the Holy Prophet (saw) to say O mankind! I truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah (7:159). Similarly, there is a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect, “I have been sent for the whole mankind while the prophets before me were sent to particular people only” (Musnad).

Secondly, unlike Judaism and Christianity, Islam does not hold Hell to be everlasting, but a place of reformation, where sinners will be purged of their sins to enable them to find their way ultimately to Heaven and enjoy the reward of whatever good deeds they had done in this world. On the other hand, Islam looks upon the bounties of Heaven to be everlasting. With Jews and Christians, it is only the wish that has been father to the thought and nothing else. Produce your proof, if you are truthful, says the Holy Quran.
Difference between an active and an inactive Muslim

Narrated by Hadhrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: The Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) said: “Whoso believed in Allāh and in His Prophet and established Prayer and observed fast in Ramaḍān, Allāh promises to admit him into Paradise whether he fights for His cause or sits in the garden house where he was born.”

They (the companions) said: ‘Should we then communicate these pleasant tidings to the people, O Prophet of Allāh?’ The Prophet answered thus: “There are a hundred grades in Paradise, prepared by Allāh for those who fight in the path of Allāh, and, in between each, is as great a distance as is between earth and heaven. So when you beg of Allāh, beg of Him the Firdaus: for, it is the most central Paradise and the highest one and aloft of it is the celestial seat of the Gracious God and there from spring the streams of Paradise.” (Bukhārī)

1. That there is not merely one grade in Paradise but that they are numerous, of which Firdaus is the highest and, so to say, is the source of all the streams of the Paradise.
2. That the difference between the top-grade of the sit-at home Muslims and the lowest grade of the Muslims who fight in His cause will be as great as distance between heaven and earth.
3. That Muslims should not only strive to deserve the grades reserved for soldiers of God but also for the highest of those grades, i.e., the Firdaus should be their target.
4. That the various grades of Paradise correspond to the various degrees of nearness to God, the Excellent, and therefore it is that the top-most grade of Paradise has been assigned a place close to the Divine throne.
5. That the gifts of the Paradise are not of a material character; they are spiritual in nature. For, their gradation is demarcated in terms of nearness to God. And though their spirit will partake of the body, as deeds do partake of it, none-the-less, in the Paradise, even the human body will be of a spiritual character; therefore, the physical gifts of that place will be, according to their basic spiritual standard, clear and pure.

This is the fine spiritual wisdom that accrues from this Ḥadīth. This observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is aimed at elevating the objective and ideal of the Muslims. No doubt a Muslim who observes the injunctions about fasting and prayer and other obligatory duties, with sincerity of heart, (Ḥajj and Zakāt have not been mentioned in this Ḥadīth since they are obligatory only on the well-to-do and people of substance and they are not obligations binding on every Muslim) but sits pretty at home, can attain to his salvation and save himself from Divine reckoning. But he cannot be worthy of the excellent gifts that entitle a man to the special favor of God’s nearness.
Those faithful ones, who are desirous of higher progress, owe it to themselves to give up their sit-at-home life and take to the role of soldiers of God and engage themselves in the service of the Prophet, day and night. The truth is that a sit-at-home Muslim, the benefit of whose faith and its effect remains confined to his own person, is not only depriving himself of the very best gifts but is courting for himself an hourly danger, for, he stands by the brink and a slight swerving on his part can hurl him from the place of salvation and make him the target of punishment. But a Muslim, who is a soldier in the way of God, is secure against this possible danger.

The question is what is the way to become a soldier of God? The answer is that there are scores of ways of participating in the great struggle as a soldier of God, but the Holy Qur’ān particularly emphasizes two. It says: “Allāh has granted eminence to those who fight in His way with their property and their persons over those who sit at home.” [4[Al-Nisā]:96] It appears that property and life are the two great sinews of the battle in the way of Allāh. The property’s part lies in its generous investment in the propagation and progress of Islām and the consolidation of faith. The life’s part, in the battle for God, lies in devotion of time, as much and as often as one can spare, in the service of faith (in its propagation and in inculcating discipline among others), and when the call comes, in offering life itself without hesitation—one who takes part, in these two types of battles of God, with his whole heart becomes worthy of the higher Divine favors meant for the soldiers of Allāh. But one who stays at home and offers prayers, observes fast should not expect to receive a prize greater than that reserved for a Muslim of stay-at-home type.

How intensely solicitous for our welfare is our Lord, the Holy Prophet, (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him ever and ever more). Like an overindulgent father, he tells us that while, without a doubt, we may save ourselves from punishment and attain to salvation, through prayer and fasting, but counsels us to have a higher aim and strive to attain to the glories, reserved solely for soldiers of Allāh. For, without it, the pace of national collective life cannot ascend to the lofty pinnacles. On the contrary, the life of such a sit-at-home people will always be exposed to grave risks. In this connection, it is primarily the duty of parents and then of the school teachers and college professors, to instill in the minds of children at early age, the active fervor of faith and a zeal for sacrifice and not to let them rest content with a static stay-stay-at-home life and to make them active servants in the cause of the faith and the nation to which they belong.
That is, O ye who believe, spend by way of generosity or benevolence or charity such of your wealth as you have acquired lawfully, that is to say, no part of which has been acquired through theft or bribery or dishonesty or embezzlement or wrongdoing. Do not select for charity out of it that which is useless or unclean.

The truly virtuous shall drink of a cup tempered with camphor. The reference to camphor means that their hearts will be cleansed of all the burning desires and impure urges of the world. The root of the Arabic word for camphor connotes suppression, or covering up, which means that their illicit emotions will be suppressed and they will become pure-hearted and will enjoy the coolness of understanding. Then it is said that they will drink from a spring which they shall cause to gush forth from the earth through their efforts. This indicates a deep mystery of the philosophy of paradise. Let
him who has understanding understand it.

The truly virtuous are in the habit of spending their wealth out of love of God on their kindred and on the upbringing and training of orphans and in making provision for the poor and for providing comfort for travellers and for those who ask and for procuring the freedom of slaves and discharging the burdens of those who are in debt.

They are neither extravagant nor niggardly but keep a balance between the two. They join together that which Allah has bidden to be joined, and fear their Lord. In their wealth those who ask and those who are unable to ask have a right. By those who are unable to ask are meant animals such as dogs, cats, sparrows, oxen, donkeys, goats and others that cannot express their needs in words.

They do not hold back in times of scarcity or famine, but continue to spend at such times also according to their capacity. They spend in charity secretly and openly; secretly, so that they might safeguard themselves against displaying their charity and openly, so that they might set an example for others. That which is set aside for charity should be spent on the poor and the needy, and on those employed in connection with its collection and distribution, and to help those who have to be rescued from some evil, and on procuring the freedom of slaves, and on those burdened with debts and the afflicted and on other purposes which are purely for the sake of God and on those striving in the cause of Allah.

*(page 70-74 The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam)*
In the name of Allah, the Gracious, Ever Merciful.

All distinguished guests Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuhu-peace and blessing of Allah be upon you all.

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the distinguished guests for attending this event. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to the eminent guest speakers, who in a very short space of time, have outlined their beliefs and views. I fully understand that to fully explain one’s beliefs, in such a short period of time is impossible and so perhaps our distinguished guests will have been unable to discuss everything that, they would have liked.

Nonetheless, the fact that the people of different backgrounds have gathered together this evening upon one platform proves that we, who are the followers of
various religions, are united by a common desire and objective. And that common objective is to work towards improving the lives of the Creation of the Creator of the Heavens and the earth- amongst whom human beings have been deemed to be the very highest form.

Over the course of the past year, various events have been held to mark and celebrate the Centenary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the United Kingdom, but today’s event is the best of all. It is an excellent means of providing a common platform for people to come together to discuss the importance of God in these times. Thus, those who have arranged this event are deserving of our thanks and gratitude. I am personally particularly grateful because through this evening’s event, I have been introduced to many new people.

These sentiments of gratitude I feel actually turn my attention towards that God, Who according to the teachings of my religion has commanded man to show gratitude to his fellow man wherever it is due. Thus, if someone is kind to you it is necessary to express your appreciation to them, because being grateful to man is an essential requirement of being grateful to God Almighty. It is this perception and portrayal of God that Islam provides. Certainly, if a person who follows the true teachings of Islam and who truly believes in God were to act upon just this one teaching with sincerity, he would find that his gratitude would be a means of spreading love and affection in society, just as a blossoming flower spreads beauty and fragrance amongst its surroundings regardless of which century this is being spread in.

If every single one of us were to act in this way we would find that the burning hatreds and conflicts of the world that emerge at different times, in different ways and on different occasions would all be buried once and for all and would be replaced by love and peace at all times and at all places.

Some people may think what I am saying is rather idealistic and impossible to practically achieve. Yet, when we look at the long history of religions we come to realise that such a compassionate and caring society is exactly what God desires.

God wills that mankind achieves these noble objectives and reaches such a
moral pinnacle. It is for these reasons that God has continually sent His prophets and righteous representatives to all parts of the world. They have been sent in order to reform mankind and to develop a spirit of mutual love, compassion and brotherhood amongst all people. God sent His representatives so that people would be drawn towards fulfilling the rights of God Almighty and discharging the rights of one another.

God’s Prophets and chosen people were able to form around themselves a community of such people who strived to lead their lives according to His teachings, whilst those who did not accept them invariably met a sorry fate. Whenever God sent His representatives they were not universally accepted and there were people who opposed religion and dissented. They would say that the claimant was merely trying to instil fear into the people and that in reality there was no need to believe in a God who was said to be the Possessor of all Powers. Yet, those very people who denied God and who opposed the Prophets were ultimately always destroyed.

The Holy Quran recounts the incidents of such people who moved far away from God Almighty and consequently became embroiled in various trials and tribulations and were ultimately left ruined. Conversely, those who established a close union with God were successful and always proved to be victorious. Such narrations are given not only in the Quran, but in the scriptures of other religions as well. Upon reading or hearing these accounts we are forced to consider and question, whether these stories are just myths and fables or are they steeped in reality? Did those consequences that God’s chosen people warned about actually come to occur? Were the signs fulfilled that God’s representatives proclaimed? Did God Almighty reward and bestow His bounties on His chosen ones? As a result of the teachings of the Prophets, did people who believed in God come to walk upon a path paved with love and compassion for others’?

In this short time, I cannot explain each individual issue in depth, but I can attest to the fact that the history of religions proves that the answer to all of these questions is most certainly ‘Yes’. The Holy Scripture that I believe in, the Holy Quran, clearly informs us that all of these things are true and that God Almighty sends His prophets with a mission to inculcate the very highest possible standards of spirituality in mankind by forming a close union with God. Through that union
man comes to fulfil not only the rights of God, but also by displaying the very highest moral standards they are led to fulfilling the due rights of God’s Creation. And as I said earlier, amongst God’s Creation it is human beings who have been deemed to be the very best by God Almighty. Both of these fundamental teachings are such that if they are established in any society, the people who abide by them will not only attain the pleasure of God, but will also be those who spread love, affection and brotherhood.

According to my beliefs as a Muslim, Allah the Almighty sent the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) for the reformation of the entire world and to instill these paramount objectives amongst mankind. In his efforts to reform, he preached this Divine message constantly and would strive endlessly, day and night. His efforts were not limited to preaching but rather each and every night he would bow down before His Lord in prayer, weeping with such anguish and heartache that the place where he prostrated would become submerged in tears.

What was it that the Holy Prophet (saw) prayed for so earnestly? It was not for his personal wealth or power. It was not to usurp any government or administration.

Rather, his every prayer was consumed by utter torment beseeching His Lord that why people were not spiritually and morally reforming. Why did they refuse to abandon their cruelties? Why were they unwilling to forsake wrong doing and evil? And because of all of this, why were they throwing themselves into an abyss of destruction? The Holy Prophet’s (saw) agony and anguish was so deep and his state of anxiety and despair was so great, that in the Quran Allah addressed him directly, asking if he would grieve himself to death because they did not listen or heed his message. (The Holy Qur’an, Ch.18:V.7.)

However, God Almighty is He Who listens to earnest and heartfelt prayers and so He answered those prayers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). History testifies to the fact that those very people who were ignorant and uncivilised, drunkards, fornicators, gamblers, thieves and involved in all types of vices, came to rid themselves of all of these evils and replaced them with the most magnificent moral values instead. Those very people were transformed. Those very people developed an unbreakable bond with God Almighty. Never could any worldly
power have brought about such a spiritual revolution.

In worldly terms the early Muslims were very weak, and even if the Muslims did gain any power, it was at a much later time. During that initial period they remained poor, destitute and without means, yet, due to their passionate and sincere faith and their close relationship with God they were ever ready to sacrifice their lives for His sake. They developed the highest standards of sacrifice and such an ardent desire to serve mankind that they were ready to hand over all of their possessions and whatever they had in their homes for the sake of helping other people.

If we compare and contrast the lives of those people before and after they came to believe in God, there can be no doubt of the great transformation and metamorphosis that occurred in their hearts, which was entirely due to having gained knowledge and understanding of God. Those very people came to witness the clear signs of God’s Help. The spiritual revolution that occurred was not the result of chance or due to a desire to achieve any worldly goal; rather, they witnessed and saw for themselves that the sentiments of love in the heart of the Holy Prophet (saw) towards other people were unparalleled.

Even Islam’s most bitter and ferocious foes were compelled to accept this fact. They were witnesses to the truth that the Holy Prophet (saw) responded to their brutality, hatred and vicious assaults with nothing but forgiveness, mercy and compassion. They were witnesses to the truth that when the Holy Prophet (saw) gained victory over the sworn enemies of Islam, who in the past had left no stone unturned in their efforts to destroy the religion, he responded with peace and forgiveness by saying to them: I have no personal enmity towards you. I do not wish to take any revenge for cruelties and persecution that you inflicted upon us in the past. As long as you guarantee that you will live peacefully you are free to remain in Makkah. You will not be treated cruelly or unjustly as a result of your religious differences or beliefs.

When the countless enemies of Islam observed this incomparable example of benevolence, they had no option but to acknowledge it. To give just one example: Upon seeing the conduct of the Holy Prophet (saw) an opponent of Islam called Akrama who had committed monumental cruelties against the Muslims,
instinctively said that only a person who was truly from God and whose love for mankind was peerless could act in such a compassionate way. Seeing the example of the Holy Prophet (saw) those enemies of Islam came to repeatedly and openly proclaim that the law revealed to him was unquestionably true and that the title the Quran had conferred upon him as being a ‘mercy for all mankind’ was entirely justified.

They acknowledged that from every organ, every pore and every fibre of his body gushed forth a spring of mercy and compassion for humanity. They openly affirmed that the Holy Prophet’s (saw) every act was an example of the very highest standards of mercy and proved the truthfulness of the Word of God. In light of these compassionate teachings one question or allegation could potentially be raised, and indeed, is regularly invoked by some non-Muslims. The allegation is that if Islam does teach Muslims to show love and sympathy towards others and if the Holy Prophet (saw) truly was the ‘mercy for all of mankind,’ then why were religious wars fought? To understand this question you must be acquainted with the true early history of Islam and keep in mind two important points.

Firstly, history testifies to the fact, which even impartial non-Muslim Orientalists recognise, that in the early years after the Holy Prophet (saw) made his claim, he and his followers were subjected to the most barbaric and horrific persecution in Makkah by those who were either not religious or were idol worshippers. Indeed many companions of the Holy Prophet (saw) including men, women and children, lost their lives. To give just one example of the brutal nature of the opposition: There were instances of Muslim women having each of their legs tied to a different camel and then the camels were made to run in opposing directions, so that the bodies of the Muslim ladies were literally wrenched apart and split asunder into two pieces.

In fact, there is a very long list of atrocities that occurred but I am unable to mention them all here. Yet, despite enduring such inhumane and savage cruelty the Muslims did not seek any form of revenge, either openly or in secret. Rather, after years of facing sustained and bitter persecution the Holy Prophet (saw) and most of his companions migrated from Makkah. Some of the Muslims went to live in the city of Medina, whilst some travelled to other places. In Medina, where the Holy Prophet (saw) migrated, a large number of people had come to
accept Islam. However the disbelievers of Makkah could not bear to see that the Muslims were now living peacefully and had become well settled.

Thus, just 18 months after migration they attacked the Muslims of Medina with an army of 1000 extremely well-equipped soldiers. In comparison, the Muslim army was made up of just 300 people bearing almost no weaponry, just a handful of swords and arrows. If the relative merits of the two armies is assessed then there is no doubt that the best option for the Muslims would have been to retreat and save themselves, rather than to stand up and defend themselves. However, at that time, Allah the Almighty finally commanded the Holy Prophet (saw) to fight back. This is mentioned in Chapter 22, Verses 40-41 of the Quran, where Allah says:

‘Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged and Allah indeed has power to help them Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful and Mighty.

From these verses it becomes clear that when those who had been remorselessly targeted were given permission to fight it was given in order to not only defend themselves but in order to safeguard all religions. And so the second reason permission for war was granted was that if the oppressors had not been forcefully repelled then the enemies of religion would not have let Christians live in peace, nor Jews, nor Muslims and nor the people of any other religion. The truth was that these opponents of Islam wished to eliminate all peace-loving people and instead engulf the world in strife and disorder for their own personal gains.

It was upon this background that Allah told the Muslims to not be afraid and that the powerful Makkkan army would be defeated because Allah’s Help was with the Muslims. History testifies to the fact that with the Help of God, the few and entirely ill-equipped Muslims were able to defeat their opponents who had wished to destroy the peace of the world. Where on the one hand, this was a victory for Islam it was also a timeless triumph for every person who desires for
peace to be established in the world. It was a victory for every person who desires for human values to be preserved and it was a victory for all people who believe religion to be a force for good and establishing peace in the world.

During the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and during the respective eras of his four Khalifas (the Rightly Guided Successors), history testifies to the fact that the wars fought by the Muslims were only fought to end cruelty and to establish peace in the world. They were never fought as a means of inflicting cruelty, injustice or terrorism. When the era of the Khilafat of the Rightly Guided Successors came to an end, in its place a form of monarchy was established. Regrettably, during that era the majority of wars were fought for political or worldly reasons. However, it must be made clear that those wars fought to expand kingdoms and to increase power were not in any way fought in accordance with the teachings of Islam as taught by the Holy Quran.

In a similar vein, the actions of Muslim governments or opposition rebel groups today cannot be said to reflect or represent the teachings of Islam in any shape or form. I say without any hesitation that the acts of certain extremist Muslims today, which they conduct in the name of Islam, are actually only serving to defame Islam and religion itself. If people follow such a religious ideology it is quite clear that religion or God cannot play a positive role in establishing peace in the world. In-deed, we would have to admit that those people who say that religion has been a cause of spreading disorder in the world have been proved correct.

However, my faith in my religion increases when I read the prophecies and guidance of the Quran and of the Holy Prophet (saw) about the latter days. Both the Quran and the Holy Prophet (saw) prophesied that a time would come when Muslims would forget the true teachings of Islam and would not follow the Quran. They further prophesied that those Muslims, who would call themselves religious clerics and leaders, would in reality be the source of strife, corruption and disorder. This is exactly what we are witnessing today. As I have said when I observe all of this, my faith does not diminish but rather increases.

I do not become frustrated and nor do I lose hope, because where the Quran and the Holy Prophet (saw) prophesied about the dire state of today’s world, they
also gave glad tidings that for sake of reviving true Islam, a person would be sent from amongst the Muslims who would be the Promised Messiah and the Imam Mahdi (the Guided One). He would be sent to end all religious wars, and at every level of society would transform all forms of cruelty into peace and harmony. He would work tirelessly to fulfill these noble objectives and would infuse the true spirit of Is-lam amongst his followers. That true spirit has been outlined in the following verse of the Quran where it says:

‘O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people’s enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Allah is aware of what you do’ (The Holy Quran, Ch. 5:v9)

Thus, this verse outlines the necessity for always being fair and just. The standard of justice required is that even if you have to testify against yourself, your parents or your loved ones, you must do so (The Holy Quran, Ch.4:V.36.) without hesitation, because such justice is a guarantor for establishing peace. This is the standard that Allah the Almighty has taught in the Quran; but the question is whether such a high standard can ever really be achieved?

As I mentioned earlier, the Quran and the Holy Prophet (saw) prophesied that a time of disorder, chaos and corruption would befall the world and we can see with our own eyes the way in which this has been fulfilled to the letter. Indeed, it is a great proof that the truthful Word of God has been clearly manifested. In the same way, along with the revival of the faith, which is to occur through the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, this perfect standard of justice will also be established in the world whereby the enmity of a nation will not prove an obstacle in the establishment of justice.

We, Ahmadi Muslims, are fortunate that we not only have faith in these prophecies, but we also have a firm belief that the person who was to be sent by God Almighty has come in the person of our Community’s Founder, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. We further believe that the task of reviving Muslims, which was started by the Promised Messiah, is continuing today through the institution of Khilafat - that is the system of spiritual succession. The truth of the Promised Messiah was proved through God’s help and support and countless
Divine signs in his favour.

One of the signs was an increase in earthquakes and other natural disasters resulting from the fact that mankind had forgotten its Creator and because of the widespread disorder and strife in the world. History proves that the numbers of natural disasters in the past century has exceeded those of previous centuries. Another sign was a prophecy by the Promised Messiah relating to the downfall of the Tsar of Russia. It was prophesied that due to the Tsar’s brutalities, he would be stripped of his title and reign. As history shows, this also came true. A third prophecy was about the world wars. We have witnessed two World Wars. If we do not mend our ways and recognise our Creator we will witness more of such wars and their horrific consequences. All these prophecies prove that he was a warner from God sent to reform man and bring him towards the right path.

Further, it is quite clear that without the Help of God, a claimant from a small and remote village in India could not have become renowned throughout the world. And following his demise, without God’s help he could not have left behind such a flourishing Community. A Community which, due to being firmly attached to the institution of Khilafat, was furthering his mission throughout the world, which was to develop a relationship between mankind and God Almighty and of fulfilling the rights of mankind whilst upholding the very highest standards of justice. The Ahmadiyya Community has very limited resources and so without God’s Help its message could not have spread to the comers of the world.

Thus, where on the one hand this all proves the existence of God, on the other it shows that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been firmly blessed with Divine help and support. Today, it is the members of the Ahmadiyya Community who are making great financial sacrifices in an effort to help others and are even sacrificing their lives in an effort to establish and maintain peace in the world. In some countries our Community is severely persecuted and the most horrific cruelties are perpetrated against us, but we do not react or retaliate in any way through which the peace of society could be put at any risk.

This is undoubtedly because we act upon the Divine teachings of the Quran which were perfectly outlined and explained by the Founder of our Community. And so it is my prayer that the world comes to understand the need of the time.
I hope and pray that we, who are the representatives of different faiths and religions, and who have gathered here today to particularly demonstrate these loving teachings, all strive towards worshipping the One God, by treating His Creation with justice and by fulfilling their due rights. Certainly, these are the original teachings of all religions.

We should utilise all of our resources and capabilities to foster a better society, to help God’s Creation and to spread love, affection and peace at every level. The urgent and critical need of the world today is to establish peace and faith in God. If the world understood this reality then all countries, whether large or small, would not, in the name of defence spending, allocate millions and billions of dollars to expand their military capabilities. Rather, they would spend that wealth to feed the hungry, to provide universal education and to improve the living standards of the developing world.

If we assess today’s world in a fair manner then we must accept that even the economies of the developed world have become uncertain and unstable. The spending power of the members of the public has vastly diminished, living here in the Western or developed world, interviews are shown on television where it is said that in the past families used to be able to eat out regularly, but never mind eating out, now they are even forced to go hungry at home on occasions. It is simply not possible for them to eat and live as comfortably as before and the reason for this is that countries are prioritising their defence and military budgets over their social welfare budgets. There is a greater desire to send armies to foreign countries thousands of miles away and to send weapons rather than paying attention to alleviating the problems on one’s own doorstep and of solving the problems of a nation’s own people.

Thus, disorder is not being spread by religion, but it is actually being spread as a result of political games and ambitions and the fact that peoples and nations are seeking to assert their superiority over one another. Thus, it is the urgent need of the time that all people and all nations pay heed to this; otherwise the world stands on the brink of an unimaginable destruction. Some of the destruction we see in the world today is self-inflicted, whilst some are due to the horrific consequences of natural disasters.
And so in order to protect ourselves and to save mankind we need to turn towards God Almighty and we need to attach ourselves to the Living God Who did not forsake the Prophet Moses and his people and nor did He forsake the Prophet Jesus (as) and his disciples. Nor have true Muslims been deprived from attaining the blessings of God and seeing their prayers accepted.

These are not old stories or myths of the past but in fact God is an Ever-Living God who is alive today. The Promised Messiah has taught us that God continues to speak to His righteous people and shows them His true signs. Hence, it is our duty to pay heed to the words of the Reformer of the Age and recognise our God in the true spirit. We bear witness that God did show His signs through the Promised Messiah and continues to do so today.

At the end I would like to say that instead of laying the blame for our mistakes upon God and upon our religions, we should take a look in the mirror and assess our own shortcomings.

With these words, I would like to once again thank all of the guests for taking the time to come and listen to what I have said today. Thank you very much.”
I address you today on the Islamic Philosophy of the revival of religions. Religions are always revived through Divine intervention. A reformer is sent by Allah the Almighty to turn the people away from materialism and return them to their Creator. Such a reformer invariably calls for immense sacrifices in the name of God. He invites people to toil and sweat; to persevere and be patient, and informs them that those who seek to live must be prepared to part with their lives. He prepares them for a long and painful struggle against blind opposition and persecution at the hands of those whom they love and endeavour to save. Indeed this is the only real and eternal philosophy of religious revival: every philosophy opposed to it is mere fantasy. I must mention though that all sects of Islam are not in unison on this subject. A large number of Muslims believe that a fundamental change has come about in the form of religious revival. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, on the other hand, believes that this historical process is constant and unchanged.

Lest the difference of opinion amongst Muslims create a wrong impression, I deem it necessary to enumerate those shared fundamental beliefs which bind all the Muslims together, whatever denomination they belong to.

Every Muslim, regardless of sect, believes in the oneness of God and in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace and blessings). Every Muslim believes that Islam is the ultimate religion for the salvation of mankind. All Muslims believe that Islam will continue to fulfill all of man’s spiritual needs till the Day of Judgement. All Muslims believe that the Law revealed through the Holy Prophet Muhammad is unchangeable and that the Quran is incorruptible and unalterable to the extent even of an iota or a dot. Muslims of all shades of thought believe that the edicts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad have validity and authority till the end of mankind. Muslims of every sect believe that it is only through a bond with the Holy Prophet Muhammad that the light of
eternal truth may be perceived. These basic points of creed are shared by all Muslims without exception.

With so much in common, there still remains the fundamental difference which sets the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community apart from other Muslims- the difference on the issue of revival of Islam. All other differences emanate from this main issue.

How is the resurgence of Islam to come about? How is a new life and new vigour to be infused into it? Like the Ahmadiyya Community, all other Muslims, too, profess that the answer lies in the promised advent of Christ, Son of Mary, and in the appearance of the promised Imam Mahdi (the reformer appointed by God who would be divinely guided). This point of apparent concord, when interpreted, actually generates two diametrically opposed views.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community regards the prophecy of the advent of Christ as a figure of speech. It believes that the prophecies regarding the Imam Mahdi are also allegorical. We believe that the truly glorious import of these prophecies cannot be understood if they are taken at their face value. In complete contrast to this, the other sects of Islam insist on a literal fulfilment of these prophecies. This is the fundamental difference that distinguishes- and sets apart-the Ahmadiyya Community from other sects.

A Background to the Prophesies

The prevailing decline of the Muslims and their internecine strife are matters of which the Holy Prophet Muhammad was not uninformed. Through divine revelation, he prophesied fourteen hundred years ago that Muslims would split into seventy two sects. He described the pitiable plight of the Muslims in such detail as if a view of our era had been unfolded before his very eyes. The Prophet’s Traditions contain a graphic description of our times. He said, ‘Islam will have nothing left of it except its name. Mosques, though full of worshippers will be devoid of guidance. Their religious scholars will be the worst creation under the canopy of Heaven.’ However, along with these terrible portents, he also gave glorious tidings. He said that in spite of this dire distress the Islamic nation would not perish:

‘How can my followers be destroyed when I am at their beginning and Jesus, Son of Mary, at their end.’ (Masnad Ahmad: Kanzal Aamal Vol. 7, p. 203)

Then he said: ‘How will you be when Mary’s Son will descend among you; and he will be your guide from amongst you?’ (Bukhari: Book of Prophets)

And he repeated the news in these words:

‘I swear by Him Who has my life in His hand that the Son of Mary will indeed descend among you, and he will arbitrate with justice.’ (Bukhari: Book of Prophets)

The Holy Prophet also gave tidings of a great Imam - Imam Mahdi - who would appear along with Jesus, Son of Mary.

So, the Ahmadiyya Community is at one with the other Muslim sects in believing that the resuscitation of Islam and its global triumph are linked with the advent of Christ and the appearance of the Imam Mahdi. However, it differs from the rest in the interpretation of these prophecies. It insists that the prophecies be seen in the light of the divine law revealed in action and in consonance with the history of the earlier prophets. The other Muslim sects, on the contrary, assert that the prophecies have no inner, deeper message and adhere to their literal sense.
Non-Ahmadi Muslims’ Concept

In all fairness to our opponents, I shall now endeavour to elucidate the view point of our opponents who equate Islam’s renaissance with its economic and political dominance. There is perhaps an explanation for it. Lust for power and greed for gold have traditionally dominated human strife. The acme of national revival therefore would mean political and economic ascendancy. Divine favour would, according to them, fittingly manifest itself to bring about this result. This more or less, is the view held by many, concerning the revival of Islam. According to this belief, the advent of the Messiah will herald the era of Islam’s political conquests while the appearance of the Imam Mahdi will bring about their economic dominance.

First, I shall outline their concept of the Messiah’s advent. They believe that the very Jesus, Son of Mary, whom the Quran declares a prophet of the Israelites, will descend bodily from the sky. He will immediately set out with sword in hand and hack to death all enemies of Islam! His global sweep shall have three grand objectives. The first objective will be the destruction of the Cross. Not figuratively, but literally! He will set about destroying the symbol of Christian faith with such vigour that not a trace shall be left of it. There will not remain a single Cross to be seen—in Church or home or around any neck.

According to them, his next important task will be the extermination of swine of every variety-domestic as well as wild! So, the followers of the Cross will then be left with neither a Cross for prayer nor a pig for dinner. Thus, Christ will deprive the Christians of the articles not only of their spiritual sustenance but also of their physical nourishment.

The third task for the Messiah will be the killing of ‘Dajjal’ the Antichrist. Now who is this Antichrist? According to Traditions, if taken literally, as some would have it, he will be a one-eyed Colossus who will come riding an ass of extraordinary proportions. He will be so tall that his head will stand higher than the clouds. All prophets have warned their followers against the evil of this Antichrist. Now, while the Antichrist is busy ravaging the earth the Messiah will descend from the heavens. He will engage the Antichrist in battle near Damascus and slay him. He will then conquer the entire world. Having done this, he will hand over its governance to the Muslims.

This, in sum, is their philosophy of the Muslims’ political resurgence and ascendancy. It absolves the Muslims totally from waging any political struggle whatsoever. Now, those who are basking in the assurance that they will inherit the earth without moving a muscle can see no possible reason to concern themselves with political thought and action. They live in blissful oblivion of their decay and degradation. For, everything else apart, they know most assuredly that the happy hour is not far when a divine being will descend from the heavens and unleash a campaign of conquests. He will slay the swine. He will wreck the Cross. He will subjugate all Powers of the East and the West. Then, he will beckon to the waiting Muslim masses and say, ‘Come hither, ye soldiers of God; come here, O virtuous ones! Come and take this sceptre of the kingdom of the earth.’ This is the bellicose view of Muslim renaissance which the Ahmadi Muslims find abhorrent. They simply cannot subscribe to it in its crude literalism.

Next comes the non-Ahmadi Muslims’ concept of the economic resurgence of Islam. The scholars of the other sects hold the view that the remedy of the economic plight of the Muslims lay not in struggle and
sacrifice but in the appearance of the Imam Mahdi. This Imam Mahdi will be a contemporary of the Messiah. His most important act on arrival will be the distribution of limitless largess among the Muslims of the world. His bounty will be boundless; his generosity will defy description. This overwhelming wealth will far exceed the Muslim’s capacity to garner it. Thus will come to an end all lust for goods and greed for gold. This is the panacea, as conceived by some, for the economic ills of the world of Islam. According to this belief, the appearance of Imam Mahdi is in itself the answer to the economic misery of Muslims. There is no need for sweat, tears and toil. There is no necessity to explore the earth’s treasures, to peep into the heart of the atom and to seek out the secrets of space. Neither effort nor industry, nor inventiveness or application is needed. All that is needed is the arrival of the Mahdi. Again we differ and again we the Ahmadi Muslims find this concept childish, crude and unacceptable.

The Correct Interpretation According to Ahmadi Muslims

Although the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community does not in any way reject the prophecies concerning the descent of the Messiah and the appearance of the Mahdi, it does emphasise that to put a literal meaning on them is the height of naiveness and ignorance. We believe that it is as a result of not grasping fully the exalted station of the Holy Prophet that such a serious error is made in understanding his deep and philosophical message. Men of insight and wisdom often use parables and allegories to outline subjects of such great import but the superficial eye cannot perceive their meaning.

The Ahmadi Muslims believe that the whole range of subjects covering the Messiah, the Antichrist and his ass is allegorical. The Messiah, therefore, is not that earlier prophet who was sent among the Israelites. The Ahmadis believe that Jesus Christ died a natural death after surviving the torture of the Cross. The Messiah of the prophecy was in fact to be a new person who was to be born amongst the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Because of some characteristics and qualities he was to share with Jesus, he would be given the title of ‘Messiah, Son of Mary’ in much the same way as a great dramatist is called Shakespeare. The reference to the Cross, too, is a simile. The Messiah will not literally go around wrecking crosses: he will defeat the Christian faith with strong reasoning and powerful arguments.

The destruction of the Cross, therefore, stands for the ideological rout of Christianity. Similarly, the word ‘swine’ is not to be taken in the literal sense. It connotes the cultural filth of the western world which turns men into beastly beings. The word swine stands for the so called sexual anarchy sweeping across America and Europe. It stands for the disgusting debauchery which claims even innocent children as its victims. The Traditions most assuredly did not convey that the Messiah would hunt down herds of wild boar or domesticated pigs. This would be a strange image of a prophet of God. It would rather remind one of Ajax, a hero from Greek mythology, who cut to pieces herds of cattle and flocks of sheep in the mad belief that they were the Greek army’s chieftains!

The Antichrist, too, like the Messiah, the Cross and the Swine is symbolic. He symbolises a great and powerful nation which rules not only the earth but also space. The Cross and the Swine are in fact symbols pertaining to this nation. The Traditions say that the Antichrist’s right eye will be sightless but his left eye will be large and bright. This is a symbolic description of the fact that though this nation would be devoid of spiritual light yet its material insight and
therefore material attainments, would be great.

Lastly, the Ahmadi Muslims consider the Antichrist’s ass to be a symbol too - a symbol that was used to describe the means of transportation of the days to come. All the features describing this ass are without exception identifiable with the fuel-powered vehicles invented by the West. Consider the salient features of the ass - as described in the traditions - it will eat fire, it will travel over land, over sea and above the air; its speed will be so great that it will cover a journey of months within the space of a few hours; the passengers will travel not on its back but in its belly which would be lit up; it will announce its departure and ask passengers to take their seats. The fulfilment of these things with such wondrous exactness is a glorious testimony of the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him.

According to Ahmadi Muslims, the prophecies relating to the advent of the Imam Mahdi are also symbolic. The wealth he will distribute amongst Muslims is the wealth of spiritual knowledge and wisdom, and not worldly wealth. The refusal of some to accept it further indicates what kind of wealth it was to be; for man is never satiated with material wealth: it is only the spiritual treasures that he spurns.

Thus Ahmadiyyat rejects the philosophy of Islamic renaissance as explained above and propagated by the other sects of Islam. It holds that this philosophy is at variance with the real intent of the Quranic teachings, at variance with the history of the prophets and most of all at variance with the demonstrated actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Ahmadiyyat shuns this ideological opiate which lulls nations into inaction and leads them into the world of make-believe and fantasy.

Ahmadiyya Philosophy of Revival of Religion

This philosophy is no different from the one that is the common heritage of all religions. This is the only philosophy which history supports. Although the Scriptures and the legends mention many who ascended to the heavens, there is not one instance or account, since Adam, of the bodily return of anyone of them to earth.

So, regardless of the difference in the manner of the professed ascent to the heavens by some, there is none who is reported to have returned to earth after a long disappearance. Reformers have always appeared from the ordinary stock of human beings and have always been rejected and scorned by man. No ceremonial arches are ever erected to welcome them. No garlands are offered. No lamps are lighted in joyous illumination. On the contrary, those who came in the name of God were persecuted for committing this ‘crime’. Their paths were strewn with thorns. Dust was heaped on their heads and stones were thrown at them. They were crowned with the crown of thorns. Every conceivable torture was inflicted on them. You see them now, returning from the town of Taif bathed in blood from head to foot. You see them again, in the battlefield of Ohad, half-dead from their wounds, buried under the bodies of those who laid their lives for them.

You will find their followers suffering a similar fate. Every conceivable torment is practised on them. They are dragged by their feet through rough alley-ways. They are made to lie on burning sands under a sizzling sun. They are thrown on live coals and held there till the embers die down.

They are thrown out of their homes. They are driven into exile. They are threatened with starvation. They are put
to the sword. The husbands are taken from the wives and the wives from the husbands. Parents are deprived of their children. Every right that life bestows is denied to them. They are neither allowed to pray nor to build mosques. They are deprived of the right to announce their faith. They are not even permitted to name their own creed.

Thus is man granted a new spiritual life. This is the path that leads to the revival of religion. This is the phenomenon that we see at work in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and in the life of every prophet before him. It is by treading this perilous path that the prophets have ever revived their nations. This is the philosophy of the revival of religions since the days of Adam to the days of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). When such is the case, how can we then accept that the Almighty has decided to change this inviolable and time-honoured practice? How can we then accept that the Muslims will inherit the earth without shedding a drop of their blood and without making a stroke of effort? How can we believe that they will succeed without treading the path of sacrifice? It did not happen before. It will not happen again. The Promised Messiah, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community affirms this eternal and everlasting truth when he warns the nation thus:

‘There has not been a Prophet who was not laughed at. So it was to be that people laugh at the Promised Messiah.

The Almighty says:

Alas for My servants, there comes not a Messenger to them but they mock at him’. (Holy Quran 36 :31)

So it is a sign from God that every prophet is mocked. Now, who can mock a person who physically descends from the heavens in the company of angels amidst a waiting crowd? The wise, therefore, can see that the bodily descent of the Promised Messiah from heaven is false belief. Remember! no one will descend from the sky. All those who oppose me and are now alive will die and not one from amongst them will see Jesus, Son of Mary, descend from heaven. Then their children and their children’s children, too, will die, and Mary’s Son will still have not descended. Then will God fill their hearts with fear that the days of the ascendency of the Cross are gone and yet Jesus, Son of Mary, has not come down from the heavens. The wise will then tire of this belief. And, before three centuries have passed from this day, Muslims and Christians alike will discard this false creed in disgust and despair. Their shall be only one religion in the world and only one Guide. I have come but to sow the seed. This seed has been sown at my hand. It will now grow and bear fruit and there is no power on earth that can harm it.’ (Tazkarat-ul-Shahdatain, p. 64-65)

Every fair minded person can see from this comparison that the Ahmadiyya viewpoint is based on the history of religions while the philosophy of its opponents is mythical and contradicts the history of religious revival. We learn from history that everyone appointed by God was faced with a storm of opposition. All prophets came with the message of truth and eternal life but were opposed by those who preferred falsehood to truth, and spiritual death to spiritual life. This indeed is the process of the birth of religions. When impurities and corruption crept into religions, their rebirth also took the same course. The reformers sent by God also suffered as the prophets had suffered. Whenever the Almighty chose to revive a nation spiritually, it split into two groups - those who saw the truth and those who opposed it. And neither group ever changed its demonstrated attitude. The Holy Quran describes this oft repeated cycle in a most effective and moving
manner. A study of the Quran shows that:

a. Religions are born and revived through divinely appointed reformers. Never have the scholars ever reformed a religion through conferences and consultations.

b. The divinely appointed reformers are invariably rejected by their people and treated with arrogance and disdain.

c. Such reformers are always opposed by violence. They are accused of corrupting the religion of their forefathers. They are branded heretics and held guilty of apostasy.

d. The creed professed by the opponents prescribes death or banishment as the punishment for apostasy. The reformers are offered a choice of either a return to the fold or exile, failing which they are threatened with death.

e. The reformers never advocate violence. Their followers demonstrate steadfastness of such a high degree that they would rather be exiled or killed than recant.

f. The reformers do not entice people with promises of power and high office: they dispel worldly ambition. They do not lure people with wealth; they inculcate the spirit of sacrifice. The rich who believe consider it their good fortune to give their all in the service of God; the mighty shrug off the trappings of power. It is then that divine providence adjudges them fit to take over temporal power.

This is the process of religious revival of nations that the Quran and the Scriptures reveal. All prophets - from Adam to the Holy Prophet Muhammad - went through these stages. They gave their nations new life by leading them over the path of suffering and sacrifice. They taught love. They inculcated love of hard work, of sustained effort and incessant actions. It is this revolutionary spirit which breathes life into dead nations. This oft-demonstrated and unchanging divine law is in consonance with man’s nature, conscience and intellect. It is this law that the Ahmadiyya Community acknowledges.

As can be seen, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’s concept of revival of religions is not a new-fangled philosophy born of human intellect. It is derived from that continuous and unaltered historical process which is preserved most accurately and truly in the Holy Quran. It is founded on those eternal principles and truths which are the basis of every true religion. For instance, the Quran declares:

‘There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking, And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.’ (Al-Baqarah, Verse: 257)

‘Alas for My servants! there comes not a Messenger to them but they mock at him.’ (Yasin, Verse: 31)

‘Surely Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their heart.’ (Al-Ra’ad, Verse 12)

When the prophet Shu’aib was threatened by his people:

‘We will drive thee out O Shu’aib, and the believers (that are) with thee, from our town or you shall have to return to our religion.’ he merely replied, ‘Even though we be unwilling?’ (Al-A’raf, Verse 89)

Noah’s people, too, threatened him with stoning if he did not desist.
They said, ‘If thou desist not, O Noah, thou shalt surely be one of those who are stoned.’ (Al-Shuara, Verse 117)

This treatment was not reserved for just a few prophets. The Quran summarises people’s attitude to the prophets in these words:

‘And those who disbelieved said to their Messengers, ‘We will surely expel you from our land unless you return to our religion.’ (Ibrahim, Verse: 14)

Abraham was punished for recanting from the religion of his forefathers and for voicing the truth. The chiefs vented their wrath by declaring:

‘They said? ‘Burn him and help your gods, if at all you mean to do anything.’ (Al-Anbiya 21, Verse: 69)

Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross because he disagreed with the Jewish Scribes over the interpretation of the Bible although he avowed openly:

‘Think not that I have come to abolish the law, and the prophets; I have not come to abolish but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.’ (Mathew: Chapter 5, Verse: 17, 18)

May I remind you that the central difference between Jesus Christ and the Jewish scholars was on the interpretation of the verse:

‘And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven’ (2 Kings; Chapter 2, Verse 11).

The scholars stuck to the literal and apparent meanings of the verse. They believed that Elijah would descend bodily from heaven before the advent of Christ. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, asserted that this was an allegory, that the language was symbolic and not literal. He declared that Zacharia’s son John was the Elijah who was to descend from heaven. Jesus knew full well that John was born on earth and had certainly not descended from heaven.

In answer to the question ‘Then why do the Scribes say that first Elijah must come’, he replied:

‘Elijah does come and he is to restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did know him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the son of man will suffer at their hands. Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.’ (Mathew: Chapter 17, Verse 10-13)

Lastly and above all was the suffering of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). In his own words, ‘No Prophet suffered as much as I did.’

Therefore, the history of religions teaches us that prophets have always been normal human beings. They do not descend from heaven like the heroes of some mythical tale. They have always suffered trials and tribulations. Their followers gain glory not through the toils of someone else but through their own sweat and blood.
Different people, being shortsighted and lacking high resolve, appoint different purposes for their lives and most of them limit themselves to worldly goals and ambitions. However, the real purpose of life that God Almighty has appointed for man, as mentioned in the following verse of the Holy Qur’an, is to worship God Almighty:

“And I have not created the Jinn (chiefs) and the men (common people) but that they may worship Me” (51:57)

Thus, the true purpose of man’s life is the worship of God, His understanding and complete devotion to Him. It is obvious that man is not in a position to appoint the purpose of his own life, for he does not come into the world of his own accord, nor will he depart there from of his own will. He is a creature of God, and the One Who created him and invested him with better and higher faculties than those of all other animals has also appointed a purpose for his life. Whether anyone penetrates to it or not, the purpose of man’s creation without a doubt is the worship and the understanding of God and complete devotion to Him.

(The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p 106, Published: 1996)

Various traditions of the Holy Prophet (saw), which are basically an explanation of the above verse of the Holy Qur’an, further explain the purpose of life. God Almighty revealed to the Holy Prophet (saw) the purpose of the creation of man, which is stated in the following tradition of the Holy Prophet (saw), which is as: “I was a hidden treasure then I decided that I be recognized and the world may know me, therefore, I Created Adam.” Another saying of the Holy Prophet (saw) which describes the purpose of creation of man is as follows:

God has Created Adam in His own Appearance.

The verse of the Holy Quran (51:57) and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (saw) mentioned above clearly establish that the purpose of man’s creation is that he should obey God. It is, therefore, imperative that one should keep this purpose constantly in mind. According to Islam, the object of human life is its complete spiritual transition, to worship One God and serve His creations. It teaches that everyone has the seed of perfect development, and it rests solely with a person to achieve or realize the full potential, or let it remain unaccomplished. Islam does not
support the idea that man is born in sin. Humans are the best of creation, according to Islam. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur’an: Surely, We have created man in the best of creative plans. (95:5)

Hadrat Khalifatul Masih IV (aba) gave this response to the following question from a Christian: What is the purpose of life according to the Islamic faith? He stated: “The purpose of life should be the same in all Divinely revealed faiths. It has to be so because in the faiths that have originated from God, the purpose cannot differ - that is impossible. This is exactly what the Holy Qur’an has mentioned. It states that all religions, whatever they were, wherever they originated, in whatever age, they all taught the same basic fundamentals that the purpose of life is to return to God consciously, not through death -- by paying homage to God, and by worshipping Him with all sincerity, without calling on any partners alongside God.

God Almighty says in the Holy Qur’an: “O ye men! worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may become righteous; Who made the earth a bed for you, and the heaven a roof, and caused water to come down from the clouds and therewith brought forth fruits for your sustenance. Set not up, therefore, equals to Allah, while you know” (2:22-23)

So if one is sincere in his dedication to worship of the One and only God, he is fulfilling the first message, which is given by all the Prophets of God, everywhere in the world, that the purpose of life is to worship God Almighty.

The following verse of the Holy Qur’an (51:57) specifically speaks of this purpose: “And I have not created the Jinn (chiefs) and the men (common people) but that they may worship Me (51:57). In this verse, God Almighty states that I have not created man, mighty or meek, but for the sake of worshipping Me.

At first glance, this purpose appears to be rather a selfish one, but upon deeper consideration it becomes totally different from what it initially seemed. The phrase ‘to worship Him’ needs to be clearly understood. Here, the English word ‘worship’ is misleading - in Arabic it does not have the same connotations. Worship is not just to formally bow to someone, to a thing, or to a god, or whatever. Worship means to completely divest oneself of all rights of ownership, to admit that these rights belong to God, not to us, because the word ‘worship’ in Arabic has the same root as the Arabic word ‘Abd, which means ‘a slave’. Now, the definition of a slave is one who does not possess even his own body - whatever he earns goes to his master. This common root is significant in understanding the meaning of worship in Islamic terminology. The meaning now becomes much broader and rises high above that which may have been assumed in the beginning, i.e., just to bow to God and all will be well is not at all a correct assumption. God reminds us that everything He has created belongs to Him; you will return to Him one day, and in that, you have no option. God says return to Me before that day and divest yourself completely of all your properties and possessions, even that which you desire to possess and submit it to God - this is worship.

The second meaning of worship is to follow somebody - to follow in the tracks of someone. So, the second meaning of worship would be to follow the attributes of God because, if He is the Master, you must know what the Master’s
desires are and you must respond accordingly. Here the meaning of worship is to understand what God requires of us and to do exactly as He requires. This is not a selfish concept from the vantage point of God. This is done for the sake of man, because all the advantages are gained by man, not by God. This aspect has been further clarified in the Holy Qur’an to remove any misunderstanding about this purpose.

In the Holy Qur’an, God states that even if He had not created man or even if all humanity had rejected Him, it would still not make the slightest dent in God’s Sovereignty, because there exist, in far greater number, other living forms like the angels and other spirits who bow to God without any question, who submit to Him as if it is ingrained in them - and it is ingrained in them. If this was the purpose, why should God have created man at all - He had plenty of other living beings to bow to Him. So the creation of man is for the sake of man and not for the sake of God. Its purpose is to be of benefit, not to God, but to man, because whoever gains nearness to Him becomes more beautiful.” (Review of Religions, December, 1997)

The true purpose of a human being’s life is the worship of God, the attainment of His understanding and complete devotion to Him. He should follow him perfectly as a slave follows his master. Allah has created human beings with the faculties that are appropriate for this aim, and revealed the Holy Qur’an so that he may seek Allah through it. Thus, a Muslim’s first duty is to serve His Creator; to worship Him and to follow His commands. This is known as “Haququllah “.

His second duty is to serve humanity, “Haququl ‘Ibad “, for this is a part of worship. A Muslim can show his love for His Creator by expressing love and compassion for all His creation.

**MEANS OF ATTAINING PURPOSE OF LIFE**

Man has been given a lease of life on this planet for the primary purpose of cultivating within himself Divine attributes, whereby he may become an embodiment of righteousness, shedding heavenly light wherever he treads. There is no worthier goal in life than the acquisition of holiness and righteousness, which Muslims have been exhorted to cultivate through obedience to the Laws of God Almighty. God Almighty has not only clearly stated the purpose of man’s life but He has also guided mankind through His Messengers and Books (Divine Scriptures) to the means of achieving the purpose of life. The object of human existence, being the winning of Allah’s pleasure, the means for the attainment thereof is obedience to Allah, and the visible illustration of that ideal is to be found in the Holy Prophet (saw) (saw). Thus, the highest spiritual awards are attainable only through obedience to Allah and the Holy Prophet (saw).

God Almighty states in the Holy Qur’an: “And whoso obeys Allah and this Messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs, and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these”. (4:70)

This verse of the Holy Qur’an reveals that the doors are even open to the higher realms of spiritual attainment, wherein lie terraces of blessings as far as the eye of the soul can see, because both in this life and in the next life, rewards are graded according to individual
achievement.

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said the following about achieving the purpose of life. Abu Umamah Bahili relates: I heard the address of the Holy Prophet (saw) on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage in the course of which he said: ‘Be mindful of your duty to Allah, observe the five Prayers and the Fast of Ramdhan, pay the Zakat duly and obey those in authority among you; you will enter the Garden of your Lord.’ (Tirmidh−i Kit−a bus Salat)

Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as) in his book, “The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam” has mentioned the following eight means of achieving the purpose of life:

i. The first means of achieving this goal, the purpose of life, is to recognize God Almighty correctly and to believe in the True God.

ii. The second means is to be informed of the perfect beauty of God Almighty; for the heart is naturally drawn to beauty, the observation of which generates love in the heart.

iii. The third means of approach to God is knowledge of His Beneficence; for beauty and beneficence are the two incentives of love.

iv. The fourth means of achieving the true purpose of life appointed by God Almighty is supplication.

v. The fifth means of achieving the purpose of life appointed by God Almighty, is striving in His cause; that is to say we should seek God by spending our wealth in His cause and by employing all our faculties in furthering His cause, and by laying down our lives in His cause and by employing our reason in His cause.

vi. The sixth means of achieving this purpose has been described as steadfastness, meaning that a seeker should not get tired or disheartened and should not be afraid of being tired.

vii. The seventh means of achieving the purpose of life is to keep company with the righteous, and to observe their perfect example.

viii. The eighth means of achieving the purpose of life is visions and true dreams and revelation. (The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, p 108-113, Published: 1996)

Worship of God is not confined only to prayer and meditation but embraces every thought, word and action; for whatever we think, say or do for the sake of God is an act of worship. While we are connected with this world, our goal in life should be self-purification. We should seek the attainment of this goal through prayer and constant effort in reflecting the attributes of God in our general behavior. High is the goal and tremendous the task; efforts made in this direction are always most rewarding. We should never despair despite our failures and weaknesses but rather find inspiration in the following words of Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II (ra) “Islam rescues man from despair and tells him that he can, in spite of his errors and mistakes, attain the purity of mind and conduct which is the highest goal of man. It thus encourages him to make constant efforts towards virtue and purity and enables him ultimately to arrive at his goal.”

(Review of Religions, Vol. LXXXV, No. 9, 1990, p 24)

SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION

Religion helps man to achieve the object of life. Religion guides man into communion with his Maker, and through such communion, puts him in beneficent accord with his fellow beings, all of the creatures and servants of the same Creator,
the One, without associate. It is the function of religion to furnish guidance on this behalf. How shall man know his Creator? How shall he form a concept of His attributes? What means shall he adopt to put himself in communion with Him? The Qur’an sets forth complete and perfect guidance on these and other cognate questions. God Almighty says in The Holy Qur’an: Surely, it is for Us to guide. (92:13) Religion is the way of life that should enable each individual to attain to the highest possible development in the spiritual, moral and physical spheres. Its function is to establish and maintain the most harmonious relationship between man and his Maker on the one hand, and between man and man on the other. The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as) has defined religion as follows: “Religion of a man is the way of life he adopts for himself. Everybody must have a religion. Even the person who does not believe in the existence of God has to adopt a way of life and that way is his religion. But of course, what one should ponder over is whether the way he has adopted is the one that gives him sincere steadfastness, eternal joy and unending contentment. Behold! Religion is a very common word. Literally, it means a walkway or a path. The word ‘Religion’ does not necessarily connote religion. The experts in various branches of knowledge - sciences, arts, archeology, chemistry and astrology - have a religion of their own. None can be without it. It is a must for man; one can not be without religion. Just as the soul of a man stands in need of a body and the interpretations need words and a mode of talking, the same way, man is in need of religion. I do not want to go into a discussion of what people say to the one they worship: Whether they say Allah or God or Premeshar. Give Him any name you like, but let me know what do you think of Him? What are His attributes in your mind? It is the ‘attributes of God’ which matter the most, and these are what one should ponder about.” (Malfuzat Vol. II, p 236)

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as) further states: “The purpose of religion is that man should obtain deliverance from his passions and should develop personal love of God Almighty through certain faith in His existence and His perfect attributes. Such love of God is the paradise which will appear in diverse shapes in the Hereafter. To be unaware of the true God and to keep away from Him and not to have any love for Him is Hell, which will appear in diverse shapes in the Hereafter. Thus the true purpose is to have full faith in Him.”

**THE CONTINUITY OF RELIGION**

Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV writes about religion: “We believe in the continuity and universality of religion. That is why Islam lays emphasis on the institution of Prophethood as a universal phenomenon, which means that Prophets have to be accepted in their totality. Rejection of one out of the community of Prophets is tantamount to rejection of all, because, in fact, one bows to the Prophets only in view of their hailing from the same source. In this context, the term ‘continuity’ should be understood as something that is similar but not exactly like the evolution of life. We believe in the progressiveness of the message, advancing in step with general human progress in all spheres of human activity. It appears that the earlier forms of revealed religions, though possessing the same fundamental teachings, covered relatively smaller areas of detailed instruction. That is to say a
smaller number of do’s and don’ts. These then gradually grew into a larger number of imperatives and prohibitions covering a wider field of human activity. Also, it appears that religions belonging to the ancient civilizations addressed themselves to comparatively smaller audiences belonging to particular tribes, clans or regions. Their messages were confined to the requirements of the time. They could be more aptly described as tribal, clannish or national religions. The case of the Children of Israel and Judaic teachings is a fitting illustration to prove the point.

The historic trend of development, therefore, can be summarized as twofold:
1. A progressive elaboration and comparative perfection of the teachings.
2. A progressive shift from smaller to larger denominations.

Continuity does not mean that the same religion that was revealed to Adam continued to address mankind and underwent a gradual progressive change, widening its field of instruction and address. What it means is that in different parts of the world, where different civilizations took root and flourished, Divine revelations gave birth to such religions with corresponding social developments of man in those parts of the world. All of these religions, however, were developing in the same general direction.” (Christianity: A Journey from Facts to Fiction, pp 123-124)

**Unity of Religions**

The principle that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) testifies to the truth of all previous revelations, furnishes a strong foundation for harmony between the various religions of the world, as well as for the unity of the human race. The fact that all of the foregoing Prophets testify to the truth of Prophet Muhammad (saw) constitutes a yet stronger testimony to the truth of Islam and the unity of religions. The Prophets who lived thousands of years ago and in countries distant from Arabia, all foretold the advent of the mighty Prophet of Islam. In fact, those very Prophets might well have impelled both Jews and Christians to settle down in Arabia; for the land of the Promised Prophet was specified by name in their Scriptures. (Muhammad in the Bible, Khalil A. Nasir, Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, USA)
When the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) claimed monotheism in the polytheistic society of Mecca, they turned against him and his followers had to face persecution for 13 long years. He migrated to Medina, but the Mekkans did not leave him alone there and attacked Medina. It was in these circumstances that the following verses were revealed:

“Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged — and Allah indeed has power to help them — Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’ — And if Allah did not repel some men by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques.” (Al Quran 22:40-41)

By mentioning Churches and Synagogues before Mosques, the revelation was laying the foundation of genuine religious freedom for the whole of humanity.

There was no room for pre-emptive strike in Islam. Any motive other than the safeguarding of the faith and putting down any mischief against it was regarded as inconsistent with the purpose of Jihad. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be on him, had announced that anyone who went forth to battle for the sake of spoils, or for the display of his bravery, or for any other worldly motive, disentitled himself to any spiritual reward.

The verses of Sura Hajj mentioned above are the fundamental teachings in regards to defensive warfare that is allowed in Islam. The other verses that should be considered fundamental on
this issue are the verses 191-194 of the second chapter of the Holy Quran. Fighting is permissible only to repel or halt aggression; but even in the course of such fighting; Muslims are not permitted to adopt unduly aggressive measures. “Fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.” (2: 191) ‘Persecution is worse than killing’, for it seeks to destroy the soul. (2:192) Therefore, “fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is freely professed for the sake of Allah; but if they desist, then remember that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors.” (2: 194) The phrase ‘but if they desist’ is mentioned not only in verse 193 but also in 194 clearly sealing the interpretation that the warfare is only defensive. Pertaining to these set of verses, Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, who was perhaps one of the best legal minds of the last century has written, “These are basic and fundamental directives. There is a host of other directions in the Quran with regard to the prosecution of war, but they are all subject to the conditions here laid down, and must be so construed.”[1] Once one understands the guiding principles on the issue of war and peace the details become self evident to the well read. These principles also help us defend any criticism, levelled by the non-believers against the peaceful teachings of Islam.

Even when hostilities break out, the Holy Quran wants to capitalize on every opportunity to peace and advises the Muslims, ‘if they (enemy) incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah.’ The Holy Quran says:

“And make ready for them whatever you can of armed force and of mounted pickets at the frontier, whereby you may frighten the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you know not, but Allah knows them. And whatever you spend in the way of Allah, it shall be repaid to you in full and you shall not be wronged. And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who has strengthened thee with His help and with the believers.” (Al Quran 8:61-63)

The instruction that if enemy inclines to peace the Muslims should also incline towards the same is mentioned more than once in the Holy Quran. Whereas, many a secular military teachings will suggest crushing the weakened enemy, but, the Holy Quran suggests, ‘So, if they keep aloof from you and fight you not, and make you an offer of peace, then remember that Allah has allowed you no way of aggression against them.’ Here is the whole context:

“They wish that you should disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you may become all alike. Take not, therefore, (intimate) friends from among them, until they emigrate in the way of Allah. And if they turn away, then seize them and kill them wherever you find them; and take no friend nor helper from among them; Except those who are connected with a people between whom and you there is a pact, or those who come to you, while their hearts shrink from fighting you or fighting their own people. And if Allah had so pleased, He would have given them power over you, then they would have surely fought you. So, if they keep aloof from you and fight you not, and make
you an offer of peace then remember that Allah has allowed you no way of aggression against them.” (Al Quran 4:90-91)

Similar teachings are mentioned in 8:39-40 also. Even when the enemy is treacherous, the Quran directs the Muslims to be reasonable and announces that Allah does not love the treacherous:

“And if thou fearest treachery from a people, throw back to them their covenant with equity. Surely, Allah loves not the treacherous.” (Al 8:59)

The Holy Quran declares every human life sacred and of infinite value and equates killing of a person to a holocaust or genocide:

“We (Allah) prescribed for the children of Israel that whosoever killed a person — unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land — it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoso gave life to one, it shall be as if he had given life to all mankind. And Our Messengers came to them with clear Signs, yet even after that, many of them commit excesses in the land.” (Al Quran 5:33)

It is not that only a Muslim’s life is deemed sacred, in the eyes of the Creator, who created mankind and loves every one of us more than a mother, every human life is precious. The Holy Quran says:

“It does not become a believer to kill a believer unless it be by mistake. And he who kills a believer by mistake shall free a believing slave, and pay blood money to be handed over to his heirs, unless they remit it as charity. But if the person slain be of a people hostile to you, and be a believer, then the offender shall free a believing slave; and if he be of a people between whom and you is a pact, then the offender shall pay blood money to be handed over to his heirs, and free a believing slave. But whoso finds not one, then he shall fast for two consecutive months — a mercy from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.” (Al Quran 4:93)

According to the above verse blood money is applicable, in case of a murder, whether the victim is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, as is clear by the above clause, ‘if he be of a people between whom and you is a pact, then the offender shall pay blood money to be handed over to his heirs, and free a believing slave.’ Even when the parties are at war and a Muslim kills one of the enemy combatants, who turns out to be a Muslim, the one who has killed by mistake has to free a believing slave. This opens up another door of peace at the eleventh hour, in the heat of battle and fighting. If the enemy declares to be believers in Islam, in the final moments before their ultimate defeat, the Muslim army cannot go on a rampage and has to take their word, regarding their belief. The Holy Quran explains:

“And whoso kills a believer intentionally his reward shall be Hell wherein he shall abide. And Allah will be wroth with him and will curse him and will prepare for him a great punishment. O ye who believe! When you go forth in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, ‘Thou art not a believer.’ You seek the goods of this life, but with Allah are good things in plenty. Such were you before this, but Allah conferred His special favour on you; so do make proper investigation. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do.” (Al Quran 4:94-95)
Even in the midst of fighting, Allah ordained four sacred months, during which fighting was prohibited, so peace could be secured and cooler heads prevail:

“They ask thee about fighting in the Sacred Month. Say: ‘Fighting therein is a great transgression, but to hinder men from the way of Allah, and to be ungrateful to Him and to hinder men from the Sacred Mosque, and to turn out its people there from, is a greater sin with Allah; and persecution is worse than killing.’ And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can. And whoso from among you turns back from his faith and dies while he is a disbeliever, it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These are the inmates of the Fire and therein shall they abide.” (Al Quran 2:218)

“The reckoning of months with Allah has been twelve months by Allah’s ordinance since the day when He created the heavens and the earth. Of these, four are sacred. That is the right creed. So wrong not yourselves therein. And fight the idolaters all together as they fight you all together; and know that Allah is with the righteous.” (Al Quran 9:36)

The fifth verse of Sura Taubah of the Holy Quran has been criticized by critics of Islam and has been labeled as sword verse:

“And when the forbidden months have passed, kill the idolaters wherever you find them and take them prisoners, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, then leave their way free. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.” (Al Quran 9:5)

The Holy Quran describes that the root cause of hostilities belongs to the non-believers, as it states: “How can it be when, if they prevail against you, they would not observe any tie of relationship or covenant in respect of you?” (Al Quran 9:8) The Holy Quran emphasizes that the idolaters have taken the lead in aggression and the Muslim stance is only defensive, as Allah says: They observe not any tie of relationship or covenant in respect of anyone who trusts them. And it is they who are transgressors. (Al Quran 9:10) Additionally, if we read the verse before and after the so called sword verse criticism disappears in thin air, as the teaching is placed in the proper context:

“Excepting those of the idolaters with whom you have entered into a treaty and who have not subsequently failed you in anything nor aided anyone against you. So fulfill to these the treaty you have made with them till their term. Surely, Allah loves those who are righteous. And when the forbidden months have passed, kill the idolaters wherever you find them and take them prisoners, and beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, then leave their way free. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge.” (Al Quran 9:4-6)

The polytheists were not to be forced to accept Islam. They had lost the war after more than 20 years of persecuting and warring against the Muslims. The Muslims had succeeded with God’s help and this was time of political
Nevertheless, there was no religious coercion. They were only prohibited to enter the sacred Mosque or Kaaba the first house ever built for the worship of One God. (Al Quran 3:97) The Holy Quran stated in the same Sura Taubah under discussion:

“O ye who believe! Surely, the idolaters are unclean. So they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year of theirs. And if you fear poverty, Allah will enrich you out of His bounty, if He pleases. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. Fight those from among the People of the Book who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor hold as unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have declared to be unlawful, nor follow the true religion, until they pay the tax with their own hand and acknowledge their subjection.” (Al Quran 9:28-29)

The taxation was a form of Federal security tax, as they were being provided security by the Muslim Government. However, if the polytheists were to accept Islam, they were not to be discriminated against in any way and they immediately become brothers and equals of all the Muslims:

“But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, then they are your brethren in faith. And We explain the Signs for a people who have knowledge.” (Al Quran 9:28-11)

In summary, each and every human life is sacred and not to be trifled with, so only hostility permitted to a believer is one in defence and never pre-emptive or to loot and pillage, in any disguise! The purpose of defensive wars allowed by God to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) and prior prophets has always been to restore order and justice. The Holy Quran talks about the Jewish Prophet David

in the following verse and highlights, ‘had it not been for Allah’s repelling men, some of them by the others, the earth would have become filled with disorder.’ Read the whole verse, as it talks about Munificence of Allah to not only the Jews and the Muslims, but to all peoples:

“So they routed them by the command of Allah; and David slew Jalut, and Allah gave him sovereignty and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And had it not been for Allah’s repelling men, some of them by the others, the earth would have become filled with disorder. But Allah is Munificent to all peoples.” (Al Quran 2:252)

Sir Zafrulla Khan, in his biography of the Holy Prophet, “Muhammad: Seal of the Prophets”, has outlined fifty different practices of the Holy Prophet, pertaining to the battles that he participated in:

We are now approaching the time when the first pitched battle between the Muslims and Quraish was fought at Badr. Before entering upon an account of that famous battle, it might be helpful to set out briefly the policies, principles and tactics that the Holy Prophet followed in respect of his military and paramilitary activities, and which he directed the Muslims to observe:-

1. Where he had a choice, he preferred to set out on a Thursday, in the morning hours.

2. Before setting out, it was his practice to make suitable supplications to the Divine, along with the whole of his company.

3. He had established a fairly effective system of intelligence concerning the movements of the enemy. Those entrusted with this duty were instructed
that they should not report to him when he was among company. If he received some intelligence, which occasioned anxiety, he did not make it public, and communicated it to only selected individuals.

4. When he set out on an expedition he did not normally announce his goal. On some occasions he would proceed for a few miles in a direction different from the direction of his goal and would then veer round to the direction of his goal.

5. At a short distance from Medina, he would make a halt and check up on everything. He set out finally after being satisfied that everything was in order.

6. On the occasion of important campaigns, the Holy Prophet (saw) called for volunteers and those who were prepared to accompany him arranged their own equipment and mounts. Anyone who was himself well-off might help another less favoured one in this respect. The Holy Prophet urged such aid and assistance and rendered it himself when he was able to do so.

7. Boys below fifteen years of age were not permitted to go to battle. Those who, out of their eagerness, sometimes slipped into the ranks of the volunteers were, if detected at the time of checking up, sent back.

8. A number of women generally accompanied the volunteers to help in arranging for food and to nurse the wounded and to take care of them. They also distributed water among the fighting men in the course of the battle. On certain occasions, women are known to have taken part in the fighting also.

9. The Holy Prophet took one or more of his wives with him on such journeys. They were selected by lot.

10. When the Holy Prophet received intimation that an enemy tribe was preparing to attack the Muslims, he forestalled their design in order to frustrate it. On such occasions he so contrived that the Muslim force should arrive unexpectedly at the enemy encampment or settlement. This method safeguarded the Muslims to a large degree, and, in many cases, it rendered fighting unnecessary and thus safeguarded the enemy also.

11. Whenever he dispatched a force on such a campaign, he directed the commander that when the enemy were encountered, they should be invited to embrace Islam, and if they agreed they should be urged to migrate to Medina. If they became Muslims, but could not migrate, they were permitted to stay at home in peace. If the enemy rejected the invitation to accept Islam, they were invited to stop fighting the Muslims and to submit to the Islamic state. If they rejected all these offers, they should be fought.

12. When he dispatched a force on a campaign, he admonished them: ‘Muslims, go forth in the name of Allah, and fight in the cause of Allah. Do not defraud in the matter of the spoils, nor cheat the enemy. Do not mutilate the enemy dead nor kill women or children or monks or priests, nor those who have arrived at extreme old age. Always try to improve people’s condition and behave benevolently towards them. Allah loves the benevolent.’ In his time, Hazrat Abu Bakr used to add: ‘Leave alone those who have dedicated their lives to the service of God and also that to which they are dedicated; do not cut down fruit trees nor ruin an inhabited place.’ All this was designed towards making
war humane and to put an end to the inhuman practices that were current in Arabia before the advent of Islam.

13. Whenever the Holy Prophet (saw) dispatched a party or a force, he appointed an Amir (commander, or leader) over them. He directed that even if as few as three persons should set out on an errand, they should appoint one of themselves as their leader. He insisted on the rendering of full obedience to the Amir. He said, ‘Even if a stupid Negro slave is appointed Amir over you, render him full obedience,’ though he added that if the Amir should require something to be done which was clearly opposed to a divine command or to a direction of his own, he should not be obeyed in that respect, but his authority must be upheld at all times.

14. In the course of a journey, when the Holy Prophet and his Companions had to ascend a height they glorified Allah in the words ‘Allah is Most Great’ and when they had to descend from a height, they glorified Allah in the words ‘Holy is Allah’.

15. The Muslims were directed that during the course of a march, they should not make camp in a manner that might prove inconvenient for other people, nor should they march in a manner so as to block the way. He said in the course of a journey he who does not safeguard the comfort of others in marching or camping would be deprived of his reward in respect of his jihad.

16. When the Holy Prophet encountered the enemy in the field of battle, he always supplicated the Divine before the commencement of the fighting.

17. He preferred fighting during the forenoon, and stopped fighting during the heat of the day and resumed it in the late afternoon.

18. Before a battle, he himself arranged his forces in battle order and resented any kind of irregularity or confusion.

19. An Islamic force generally carried two standards, one white which was rolled around a staff and was called Liwa; the second was generally black which floated from a staff and was called Raya. In battle, these standards were committed to the care of selected individuals.

20. The Holy Prophet appointed a password for his forces before a battle, which helped to distinguish between friend and foe.

21. He disliked noise or confusion among the ranks and called for silent and diligent performance of duty.

22. Before a battle the Holy Prophet appointed Amirs over different groups of his forces who were clearly instructed in their duties. In selecting these company commanders he kept in mind the consideration that the person selected for the command should be one esteemed among his group or company.

23. On special occasions, the Holy Prophet invited his Companions to take a special oath of allegiance and loyalty, as was done at Hudaibiyya, of which mention is made in the Holy Quran (48:19).

24. When the Holy Prophet was himself present, battle was not joined till he gave permission.

25. During the course of battle he issued special directions from time to time and announced them himself or directed someone with a powerful voice to go on announcing them.
26. Muslims were not permitted to run away from battle or to lay down their arms. They were commanded to prevail or to become martyrs. There was, however, permission to retreat as a manoeuvre (8:16, 17). If due to some weakness anyone contravened this injunction the Holy Prophet was not wroth with any such, and gave them the benefit of the doubt that they might have retreated as a manoeuvre and encouraged them to be steadfast in future.

27. Muslims were forbidden to inflict an injury upon anyone’s face. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, observed that a Muslim should be most careful in inflicting an injury.

28. Muslims were under a strict injunction to take no prisoners, except in the course of regular fighting (8:28).

29. Prisoners of war were either released after the battle as an act of benevolence, or in return for ransom (47:5). Or else, they could ask for their ransom to be fixed which they could pay out of their earnings, in which case they were set at liberty so that they could earn their wages freely. Indeed, those to whom they were allotted were themselves urged to contribute towards the payment of their ransom, as an act of benevolence, as is said: ‘Write out a deed of manumission for such of those under your control as desire it, if you see some good in them, and help them to secure their freedom with a portion of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you’ (24:34).

30. Prisoners of war must be dealt with compassionately. Those taken prisoners in the battle of Badr testified to the extreme kindness with which their captors treated them.

31. Ransom was not insisted upon to be paid in cash. For instance, those of the prisoners taken in the battle of Badr who were literate were told that their ransom would be to teach a certain number of Muslim children to read and write.

32. Muslims were forbidden to pillage or plunder.

33. If anyone of the enemy declared his acceptance of Islam, even in the course of fighting, he was to be spared as no danger was apprehended any longer from him. In the course of fighting on one occasion an enemy combatant, when confronted with Usama bin Zaid, who was about to kill him, declared that he embraced Islam, but Usama killed him nevertheless. When this was reported to the Holy Prophet, he was greatly displeased and inquired from Usama, ‘Why did you kill him after he had declared his acceptance of Islam?’ Usama submitted, ‘Messenger of Allah, he merely said so out of fear. He was not sincere.’ The Holy Prophet (saw) retorted, ‘Had you cut open his heart to make sure whether he was sincere or not?’ The Holy Prophet went on repeating, ‘How will you justify your action before Allah on the Day of Judgment?’ Usama was so unhappy over the Holy Prophet’s severe displeasure, that in relating the incident afterwards, he said, ‘I wished that I had not been a Muslim before this event and had embraced Islam only after it, so that I should not have been the cause of such severe displeasure on the part of the Holy Prophet.’ On the other hand, there are also instances in which the Holy Prophet himself did not accept the declaration of a person’s embracing Islam if he was satisfied that he was making it only out of fear or temptation. A case is mentioned in Muslim that in a battle a prisoner was
taken who belonged to a tribe who were allies of Banu Thaqeef. When the Holy Prophet passed near him he sought release by addressing him in the words, ‘Muhammad, why am I being kept a prisoner? I accept Islam.’ The Holy Prophet responded to him, ‘Had you embraced Islam before you were taken captive, God would have accepted it of you and you would have achieved salvation, but not now.’ In the end, he was exchanged in return for two Muslims who had been taken prisoners by Banu Thaqeef. There is not a single instance that any one was converted to Islam by being put in fear of death.

34. Muslims were enjoined strict fulfilment of their covenants and pledges. The Holy Prophet himself was most particular in this regard. On the occasion of the battle of Badr, Hudhaifah bin Yaman, having migrated from Mecca, joined the Holy Prophet (saw) and the Muslims just at the time when fighting was about to start. He submitted to the Holy Prophet that when he was about to leave Mecca, Quraish had made him promise that he would not take part in fighting against them. On learning this, the Holy Prophet directed him to fulfil his promise and to refrain from joining in the battle. This is an illustration of the extreme strictness of the Holy Prophet in such matters, for a promise given under coercion would not legally be construed as binding. Hazrat Umar was so strict in these matters that in his time he announced that if a Muslim were guilty of cheating the enemy or of failing to carry out his pledged word to the enemy, he would be executed.

35. The bodies of those Muslims who became martyrs in battle were neither washed nor wrapped in a shroud. They were buried just as they had fallen.

36. In case of an emergency a number of martyrs were interred in a single grave. On such occasions, their bodies were lowered into the grave in the order of their degree of knowledge of the Holy Quran. Martyrs were buried on the field of battle.

37. The funeral service for martyrs was either held immediately after the battle, or if circumstances were not propitious, at some later time.

38. The Holy Prophet generally arranged that the enemy dead should be given decent burial by the Muslims.

39. In the time of the Holy Prophet, Muslim fighters were paid no salary.

40. On the occasion of the division of spoils, the commander first selected some article for himself as a memento, and thereafter, one fifth of the spoils was set aside as the share of Allah and His Messenger. The rest was divided equally between the fighters, those who were mounted receiving three times as much as those on foot. The personal belongings of an enemy who had been killed went to the Muslim fighter who killed him.

41. The one-fifth that was set-aside for Allah and the Holy Prophet was administered at the discretion of the Holy Prophet. Part of it he distributed among his family and kindred, but the greater part was devoted towards fulfilling the collective needs of the community. The Holy Prophet observed on one occasion, ‘I am forbidden to take even the equivalent of a single hair of a camel in excess of the one-fifth; the greater part of the one-fifth is also returned to you.’

42. In the field of battle the order of Salat was modified so that while the Imam led the service throughout, part
of the fighting force joined in the service and then withdrew to make room for other parts, one after the other. In this manner, the greater part of the battle force continued to confront the enemy during the service (4:103).

43. After fasting had been prescribed, some of the Muslims observed the fast when they were on a journey and some did not. Eventually, the Holy Prophet forbade the observing of the fast in the course of a journey.

44. By ancient custom among the Arabs, a spy was liable to be executed. The Holy Prophet (saw) maintained the penalty.

45. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, forbade severely any interference with the emissary of the enemy or doing him any harm or inflicting any injury upon him. On one occasion, some emissaries of disbelievers came to him and spoke very impertinently to him. He was provoked, but observed, ‘You are emissaries, and I am, therefore, not permitted to make a harsh retort to you.’ On another occasion, an emissary came to him and after talking to him he embraced Islam and submitted that he did not now wish to return to his people. The Holy Prophet observed, ‘You are an emissary and must return to your people. I will be no party to any disloyalty. After you return to your people, you can come back if you so wish.’ So he went back and after some time found the opportunity of coming back.

46. After the Hedjaz had been purified of all paganism, the Holy Prophet announced that if a pagan should wish to come to Medina as a seeker after truth, he would guarantee his security and safe return (9:6).

47. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, was most particular with regard to the security and the rights of the pagans who established treaty relations with the Muslims. He observed, ‘A Muslim who kills any covenanting pagan will not be permitted to perceive the breeze of paradise.’ He also directed that a Muslim who should be guilty of killing a covenanting pagan by mistake must, in addition to paying his blood money to his heirs, also arrange to procure the freedom of a slave.

48. He also observed, ‘I shall on the Day of Judgment seek justice on behalf of a covenanting pagan who is wronged or harmed in any way or is burdened beyond his capacity, or is deprived of something against his will.’

49. When the Holy Prophet went forth to battle, he did not stop for more than three days at the place of the fighting after he had achieved victory, so that the presence of the Muslim forces should not become a source of inconvenience or a burden for the local people.

50. Any motive other than the safeguarding of the faith and putting down any mischief against it was regarded as inconsistent with the purpose of jihad. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had announced that anyone who went forth to battle for the sake of spoils, or for the display of his bravery, or for any other worldly motive, disentitled himself to any spiritual reward.

Reference
According to traditional western writers, all science and civilization is derived from Greek heritage i.e. 6th Century BC to 2nd century AD. This heritage was lost during the Dark Ages i.e. 5-15th century AD, recovered during the European Renaissance -15-16th centuries, and revived for our modern world.

In order to explain how the heritage was lost for 1500 years, and recovered, it was Muslims who found it, recovered it, preserved it, and added to it from 8th to 15th century. Had the Muslims not preserved this Greek learning, it would have been lost forever. The mathematics, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geography, mechanics of 16th century bears no resemblance to that left behind by the Greeks.

It was the Islamic civilization, not Greek that invented paper, printing, irrigation, windmills, farming techniques, the compass, industrial production, glass making, cotton production, trade mechanism, system of numerals 1-10, paper money and the cheque. Gardens, flowers, art of living, urban design, personal hygiene, are all products of Muslim thinkers.

Western scholars gained this knowledge after Sicily, Islamic Spain were conquered, and their contact with Muslims during the 11th and 12th centuries. European scholars started translating Arabic books during the 12th century. Thus all Arabic scientific knowledge was transferred into Latin during the next three centuries.

This fact has been acknowledged by many notable historians and scholars. John Glub says: the indebtedness of Western Christendom to Arabic civilization was systematically played down, if not completely denied. A tradition was built up by censorship and propaganda, that Muslim imperialists had been mere barbarians that the rebirth of learning in the west was derived directly from Greek and

The Greeks and the Roman had no universities in the sense in which the word has been used in the past seven or eight centuries. Universities are the product of Islamic lands of the middle ages.

It is stated that Roger Bacon of England was the first person to draw a diagram for a flying machine, and thought of human flight. Leonardo da Vinci had prepared prototypes of flying machines. The truth is Islamic Spain’s engineer, inventor and aviator Abbas ibn Firnas (d.887) was the first person in history to make a flying machine in Cordoba. He made a glider (or used vulture feathers as wings) with which he flew off a hill in Cordoba and was air-born for few minutes. Upon landing he suffered injuries, because he did not have a tail on the glider, the way birds use their tail upon landing.

It is said in the West that glass mirrors were made in Venice in the 13th century-1291. The fact is that glass mirrors were made in Islamic Spain in the 11th century. People of Venice gained the technical knowledge for glass making from Syria.

It is said that first mechanical clock was made in Milan, Italy which was weight driven. According to Will Durant, first clock was made by Ibn Firnas in Cordoba in 9th century. Clocks were made during the time of Caliph Haroon al-Rashid, who had sent a clock as a gift to King Charlemagne of France. Europeans gain knowledge of clock making from the Latin translations of Arabic books.

It is said Galileo was the first person to have invented pendulum. The truth is that 10th century Egyptian astronomer Ibn Yunus had invented pendulum in Cairo in the 10th century. In his book he had described oscillatory motion. Muslim clock makers used pendulum in their clocks in the 15th century.

Iraqi scientist Yaqoob al-Kindi invented a discipline of medicine called posology which dealt with the dosages of the drugs. Dosages for the drugs were a guessing game in the ancient world. He formulated an easy to use table that pharmacists could refer to when filling out a prescription. By documenting amounts with a mathematical formula that anyone could follow, al-Kindi revolutionized medicine. Drugs could now be formulated according to set amounts with the result that all patients would receive standardized dosages. (Cover page for Ibn al-Haytham’s Book of Optics.)

Ibn al-Haitham did extensive investigations on light, lenses and camera obscura. In fact he invented the pin-hole camera. It is said that Newton was the first person to have stated that white light consists of various colours. The fact is that this discovery was made by ibn al-Haitham and Kamaluddin Farsi, who prepared an edited version of Kitab al-Manazir, Tanqih al-Manazir. In Newton’s personal library a copy of Kitab al-Manazir in Latin translation was found.

Ibn Sena discussed how to deal
with a fracture to the metacarpal bone in the thumb, which modern books describe as “Bennett’s fracture”, named after the man who supposedly discovered it in 1882, nearly 900 after Ibn Sena. (House of Wisdom, page 179, by Jim al-Khalili, NY 2011)

Zakariyya al-Razi introduced controlled experiment and clinical observation in medicine. He carried out the earliest known example of a clinical trial employing a control group. Razi began by selecting two sets of patients, all of whom are showing early symptoms of meningitis. He then treated one group with bloodletting, but not the second. He writes that ‘by doing this, I wished to reach a conclusion (on the effectiveness of bloodletting) and indeed all those of the second group contracted meningitis’. (Jim al-Khalili, The House of Wisdom, London, 2011 p. 147) He was laying the foundation of what in allopathic medicine will be called controlled studies, which is the favoured way of investigating any therapy in this day and age. (Zakaria Virk’s book “111 Muslim Scientist’)

Trigonometry was a theoretical science with Greeks, but Muslims made practical use of this branch of mathematics. Al-Batani in fact invented basic functions such as sine, cosine and tangent. Arabic root for sine is Jaib. Similarly it is said that decimal fractions was first used by Dutch mathematician Simon Stevin in 1589. The fact is decimal fractions were used by al-Kashi in his book Miftah al-Hisab (Key to Mathematics). It is also said that X & Y symbols were first used by French mathematician Vieta in 1591. Algebra was invented by Muslims who used these symbols in finding solutions of cubic equations.

It is said logarithm tables were invented by John Napier in 1614, but this is a Muslim invention.

Omar Khayyam made a significant contribution in mathematics called Binomial coefficients, but in Europe it is called Pascal’s triangle.

Persian astronomer Nasiruddin Tusi developed a mathematical device called Tusi Couple. Zauj-Tusi was used by Nicolaus Copernicus in his reformulation of mathematical astronomy. Al-Urdi theorem was developed by Muay al-din al-Urdi in 1250. The same theorem was found in Copernicus master piece on astronomy.

Al-Battani computed his own Zij in 10th century, translated into Latin and Spanish in 12th and 13th centuries. Seven hundred years after it was written, Copernicus will refer to this Zij a total of 23 times in his work On the Revolution of heavenly spheres.

Syrian astronomer Allauddin ibn Shatir prepared a model of moon and mercury, which was later found in Copernicus book.

Jabir ibn Aflah was Islamic Spain renowned mathematician. He used trigonometry in solving some very complicated problems. Astonishingly same solutions were found in Johann Mueller book in 1464. This intellectual theft was discovered by Italian mathematician G. Cardano (d1576). After reading Jabin ibn Aflah’s
book Islah al-Majisti (Corrections to Majisti), Copernicus criticised Ptolemy's system of Universe and presented a new model in which sun was in the centre.

Islamic Spain's foremost surgeon Abul Qasim Zahrawi described in his book Kitab al-Tasrif modern clinical techniques i.e. for treating a dislocated shoulder (now called Kocher's method) and simplifying difficult labours (now called Walcher position).

Nasirurddin Tusi developed a special geometrical construction in connection with Euclid's fifth postulate, which was used by England's John Wallis (d.1703) in his researches. Subsequently this technique was used by Saccheri (d.1733), but both of them did not give credit to Tusi.

Baghdad's 9th century mathematician Sabit ibn Qura (d.901) devised a formula to find the amicable numbers. Seven hundred years later France's Pierre Fermat (d.1665) used a similar formula to find second pair of amicable numbers, but did not bother to give credit to Sabit ibn Qurra.

Badi u Zaman Al-Jazari (d.1206) invented combination lock, it appeared in England in 17th century. Al-Jazari's inventions later appeared in Europe, including conical valve, patented in England in 1784. In his monumental book, 'A book of Ingenious devices', on mechanical devices he mentioned valves and piston. He is considered father of robotics. He invented more than 50 automatic devices. He invented crankshaft which is essential to so many machines. In his water pump to raise water he used pistons, paddles and camshaft, crank connecting rod system, forcing water up through pipes and out to city streets. Crank connecting rod is used in bicycles also.

The Elephant Clock was one of the most famous inventions of Al-Jazari.

Syrian doctor Allauddin ibn Nafis described function of pulmonary circulation of blood in 13th century, 300 years later Michael Servetus (d.1553) and then William Harvey were credited with this discovery.

Persian chemist Zakariya al-Razi stated that characteristics of sulphur, salt and mercury are found in almost everything. The same discovery was made by Paracelsus in Europe.

Ibn al-Haitham stated that when light passed through a medium, it takes the easiest and fastest path to travel. In Europe it was called Fermat's principle of least time.

German astronomer Regiomontanus wrote a book on Trigonometry- De Triangulus, 4th part of this book is stolen from Jabir ibn Aflah's (d.1150) book.

I quote the following from Wikipedia: “Much of the material on spherical trigonometry in Regiomontanus’ On Triangles (c.1463) was taken directly and without credit from Jābir’s work, as noted in the 16th century by Gerolamo Cardano.[3] The trigonometry that Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543) outlined in the first part of his epochal work De revolutionibus was also
apparently inspired by Jābir.

A Muslim scholar from Tunisia who converted to Christianity and took the name of Constantine the African (d.1087) introduced Arabic sciences into Europe. He translated many Arabic books into Latin, and put his name as their author. He outstripped many in plagiarism.

The tides on the Earth are mostly generated by the Moon’s gravitational pull from one side of the Earth to the other, the tidal forces. According to Phillip K. Hitti this was first described by Abu Mashar Balkhi, however the credit is given to Kepler.

Spain’s astronomer Abu Bakr Ibn Bajja (df.1138) discovered law of motion: speed of a moving object is equal to moving force. He also postulated that the force that keeps the planets in their orbits is the same that makes an apple to fall to the ground. Galileo after studying Ibn Baja’s theories rejected Aristotle’s view that speed of a body is proportional to its weight.

It is stated in Wikipedia: “in Islamic physics, Ibn Bajjah’s law of motion was equivalent to the principle that uniform motion implies absence of action by a force. This principle would later form the basis of modern mechanics and have a subsequent influence on the classical mechanics of physicists such as Galileo Galilei. Ibn Bajjah’s definition of velocity was also equivalent to Galileo’s definition of velocity:[8]…………Velocity = Motive Power – Material Resistance

I would like to finish this article by giving a quote from a book:” Razi’s physics consisted, as far as its principles were concerned, of fundamental ideas which, given the different level of scientific knowledge, were similar to surprising extent to those of Newton’s system” (Arabic Versions of Greek Texts, and in Medieval Sciences by S. Pines, EJ Brill, Leiden, 1986, p 197)

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