

The
HONOUR
of
PROPHETS

HAZRAT MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

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—of—
PROPHETS

Every human being seeks salvation in some form or another. The concept of salvation holds pivotal importance in matters of religion. A faith unable to deliver its followers from sin is worthless, yet the progress and benefit of society depends on this very salvation. So where should one turn to attain it?

In this work, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, explains that since human nature is weak, salvation can only be attained through a mediator who, owing to their perfect relationship with God and deep sympathy for humanity, can serve as a link between God and man. In every era, God has conferred salvation upon humanity through His prophets, but none can match the unparalleled status held by the Prophet of Islam in this respect, who was the paragon of perfection. In the present age, it is this pure and blessed prophet who is the only intercessor that can grant humanity a living relationship with God and free mankind from the shackles of sin.

The author presents an exquisite exposition on the philosophy of divine intercession, sinlessness, forgiveness, human frailty and his advent as the Promised Messiah.



The Honour of Prophets

(Ismat-e-Anbiya)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

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The Honour of Prophets

An English rendering of *Ismat-e-Anbiya*

Written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be upon him,

Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

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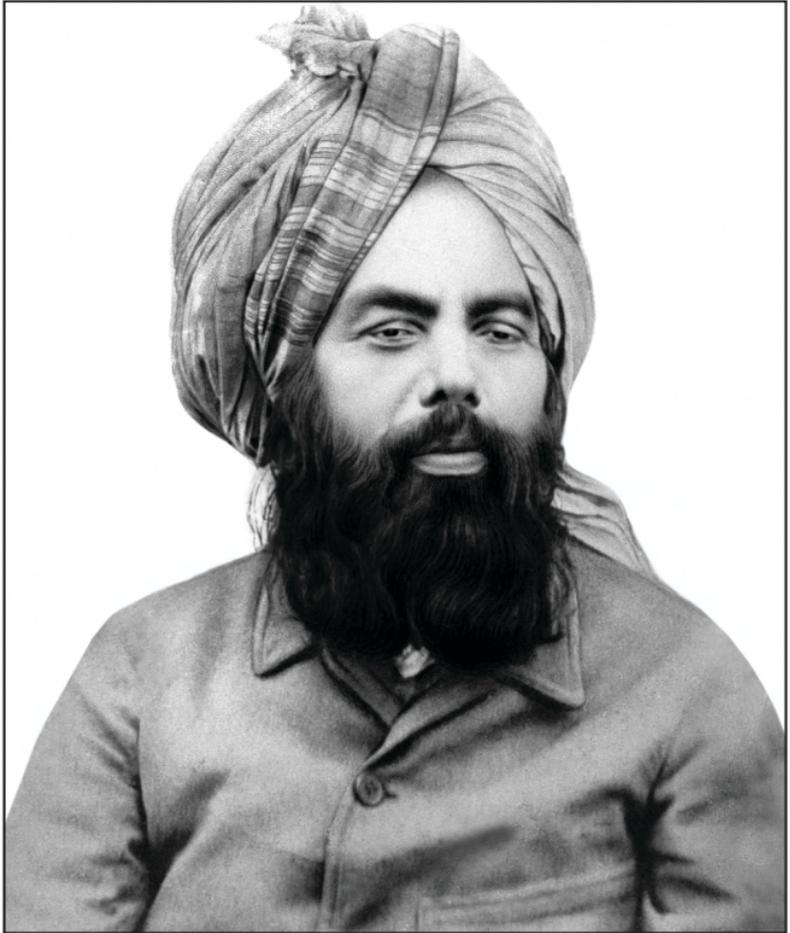
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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah & Mahdi
(peace be upon him)

About the Author

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

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, peace be upon him, started experiencing divine dreams, visions and revelations at a young age. In 1889, under divine command, he started accepting initiation into the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He continued to receive divine revelations and was thereafter commanded by God to announce that he was the divinely appointed Reformer of the Latter Days, as prophesied by various religions under different titles. He claimed

to be the same Promised Messiah and Mahdi whose advent had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is now established in more than two hundred countries of the world.

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

Publisher's Note

The words in the text in normal brackets () and in between the long dashes—are the words of the Promised Messiah, peace be upon him, and if any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translator for the purpose of clarification, they are put in square brackets [].

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

The name of Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam* (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other Prophets and Messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for *Alayhis-Salam* (peace be upon him). The actual salutations have not generally been set out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case. This treatise entitled *The Honour of Prophets* was published

in the May 1902 edition of *The Review of Religions* in Urdu. The subtitles which appear in this book were not present in the original Urdu manuscript written by the Promised Messiah^{as} but rather were added by the editor of *The Review of Religions*. In this book we have retained these subtitles as they appear.

Publisher

The Honour of Prophets

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ¹

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ²

How to Attain Salvation and its True Philosophy

In matters of religion, the question of salvation and intercession is so grand and pivotal an issue that all the objectives of following a religion culminate in it. Moreover, in order to test the truth and veracity of any religion, this alone is the clear and distinct hallmark by which it may be ascertained with full confidence and satisfaction that such and such religion is, in actuality, true and from God. Furthermore, it is absolutely true and correct that a religion which has not addressed this question adequately or which has been unable to clearly and distinctly demonstrate from among its followers current examples of those who have attained salvation, needs no further argument to establish its falsehood. However,

¹ In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. [Publisher]

² We praise Him and invoke blessings on His Noble Messenger^{sa}. [Publisher]

a religion which has truly exhibited the real essence of salvation and further, continues in the present era, to produce such individuals into whom the spirit of salvation has been fully breathed, then such a religion sets a seal on its own truthfulness and divine origin.

It is evident that in the face of countless forms of negligence, obscurity, onslaughts of the self, remissness, weakness, ignorance and darkness that glooms the way, as well as occasions where one stumbles, and due to constant peril, temptation and ever-abounding worldly afflictions and misfortunes, man naturally feels at heart that he stands in need of a mighty hand which can draw him out of all such evils. Inasmuch as man is weak by nature, he cannot for one moment trust himself to emerge from the darkness of the ego. This is the testimony of human conscience. Besides, if one reflects and ponders, it also becomes evident to one possessing sound intellect that an intercessor is needed for salvation. For God Almighty possesses the highest station of holiness and purity, while man is steeped in the deepest abyss of darkness, sin and impurity. Therefore, on account of a lack of association and affinity, the average human being is not fit to receive divine grace from God Almighty directly and in turn attain salvation through his own efforts. Thus, divine wisdom and mercy has ordained that certain exemplary

individuals from humanity at large who possess a special distinction in their nature should serve as mediators between God Almighty and mankind. These people are such whose natures should have taken on a portion of divine qualities and the best of human qualities. Thus, on account of their affinity with the Divine, they draw the grace of God towards themselves and on account of their association with the earthly realm, they convey the grace, which they have received from above to their fellow man below. It is quite correct to say that people of this type, on account of the perfection of their heavenly and earthly qualities, possess a special distinction among men—as though they are a different species altogether. The passion with which such people are granted for the manifestation of God's glory and greatness, and the degree of devotion with which their hearts are filled, and the overflowing sympathy for humanity with which they are bestowed, is such an extraordinary phenomenon that it is difficult for others to even fathom. Nonetheless, it ought to be remembered that all these individuals are not equal in rank and in these inherent excellences; some possess a loftier station than others, while some are lower in rank, and others even lower still. And so the undimmed conscience of an intellectual person can grasp that the question of intercession is not a hypotheti-

cal or man-made theory. On the contrary, from the very beginning there are examples of this phenomenon in the divine scheme of things. Furthermore, the law of nature, too, provides clear testimony to this effect.

The philosophy of intercession can be understood as such: the root word for intercession or *shafa'at* (شَفَاعَت) in Arabic is *shaf'un* (شَفَع) which means 'a pair'. Hence the very word 'intercession' or the Arabic *shafa'at* indicates that the necessary quality of an intercessor is that they possess a two-fold relation. On the one hand, the soul of such a person ought to have a deep relationship with God Almighty, as if through a perfect union he is paired with the One True God and bound to Him completely; and on the other, he ought to possess an unbreakable attachment to mankind, as if he were part of their limbs. Therefore, it is in reality these two aspects which are necessary for intercession and the foundation upon which its outcomes are based.

This secret is the reason that God in His wisdom created Adam in such a manner that from the very outset these two different relationships were instilled in his very nature. One relationship was established with God as is said in the Holy Quran:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ³

Meaning, when I have perfected Adam and have breathed into him My spirit, fall down ye angels in prostration at once.⁴

³ *al-Hijr*, 15:30

⁴ This verse reveals a profound secret—a sign of the highest excellence. That is to say, in the beginning man is only human in form but lifeless from within, devoid of spirituality. The angels do not serve him in this state because he is simply a shell—empty of substance. Then gradually a time comes when he who is blessed attains immense nearness to God and the soul comes face to face with the light of the Glorious God and there is no veil left to obstruct this light. It is then that the divine light, which in other words may be referred to as the spirit of God, enters such a person. It is this very special state about which it is said in the Divine Word that God breathed His spirit into Adam. Then, the angels are commanded to fall before him in prostration, i.e. to obey him completely as though they were prostrating before him. But this does not require any effort on their part and nor is this divine command like the orders given to men to follow a religious law. In fact, this command is inherent in the very nature of angels and not something new. This means that the angels themselves naturally feel that they ought to fall in service before such a one who takes on the image of God. Such parables related in the Word of God are not mere tales, rather the divine practice in the Holy Quran is such that there is always some intellectual truth underlying such stories. In this context, the underlying scholarly truth is that God Almighty has sought to expound by way of this parable the hallmark of a perfect man! So God states that the sign of the perfect man is that he must not be deficient in any aspect of his human nature, and his spiritual and physical faculties must be perfect in

The above-mentioned verse clearly proves that with the very creation of Adam, God instilled in his nature a relationship with Himself by breathing into him of His spirit. This was done so that man should have a natural relationship with God. In the same way, it was also necessary that man possess a natural relationship with his fellow-beings; as they would be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, they would also partake of the spirit which was breathed into Adam. And thus, Adam would naturally be their intercessor. On account of the righteousness vested in the nature of Adam due to the spirit having been breathed into him, it is necessary for those who spring from him to possess a portion of this righteousness as well. It is obvious that the young of an animal inherit the characteristics and behaviour of their progenitors. This also is the essence of intercession whereby

their human form, and his nature ought to be balanced completely. The second sign is that the divine spirit must have entered him. The third sign is that the angels prostrate before him, i.e. all the angels that are engaged in tasks of the heaven and earth become his servants and act according to his will. The truth is that when God Almighty stands by a person, His entire host of angels supports that individual as well and bow before him. It is then that the angels assist such a person in every field and at every time of difficulty, remaining ever-ready to obey him as if they were prostrating before him without fail, for such a one is the vicegerent of God. But men of earthly understanding cannot comprehend such matters because they are devoid of divine spirit. (Author)

a person becomes heir to their ancestor due to similarity of nature. As we have explained, the root word for ‘intercessor’ or *shafa’at* in Arabic derives from *shaf’un* which means to couple. Thus, a person who is by nature coupled with another will surely partake of the qualities of the latter. The transmission of qualities from the natural order of creation is based upon the same principles. In other words, a human child partakes of human faculties, the foal of a horse inherits the characteristics of a horse, and the offspring of a goat is born with the attributes of a goat. This inheritance under other but similar circumstances is known as deriving benefit from intercession. As the essence of intercession lies in the concept of pairs and couples, the entire basis upon which one derives benefit from intercession is that a person who desires to benefit from the intercession of another must have a natural relationship with that person so that he should be given whatever has been bestowed upon the nature of the other. A relationship between two human beings—as they are of the same species—has been established by nature without effort on their part, but it may be further increased through effort. When a person desires an increase in the inherent love and natural sympathy that they possess for mankind, such increase can be achieved in proportion to the scope of such a per-

son's disposition and affinity. The capacity for love surges forth in the same manner. At times a person increases their love for another, to the extent that they are unable to find comfort except by seeing their beloved. Finally, the intensity of such a person's love touches the heart of the other as well. Only such an individual who burns in the love of another can be their greatest and sincerest well-wisher. As such, this fact is observed and noticed by mothers with respect to their children.

Thus, love is the fundamental basis of intercession when accompanied by a natural affinity; for without natural affinity, love can never reach the required height to fulfil the precondition for intercession. In order to invest human nature with this relationship, God Almighty did not create Eve independently of Adam, but rather created her from the rib of Adam, as is said in the Holy Quran:

وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا⁵

This means that it is from the being of Adam that we created Eve, his mate, so that Adam's relationship to her and her progeny be natural and not artificial. This was done so that the affinity and sympathy between the children of Adam be enduring. Natural relations are

⁵ *an-Nisa*, 4:2

always enduring but artificial relations are not, for the latter lack the attraction which characterizes the former. Hence, God instilled a natural love in Adam, as it ought to have been, on both fronts; i.e. love for God and love for humanity. So it is clearly evident from this exposition that the perfect man who is capable of being an intercessor must be one who partakes perfectly of both these relationships. Without these two forms of excellence no man can be perfect. It is for this reason that after Adam the practice of Allah ordained that both these relationships were necessary for all the exemplary men who could serve as intercessors after him: firstly, a relationship on account of the breathing of the heavenly spirit into them, enabling the establishment of a union with God as if He actually descended upon them; and secondly, the bond of human companionship, which had its origins in the mutual love and sympathy between Adam and Eve, and with which their characters resplendently shined to the greatest extent. This was also the reason they entered into ties of matrimony. This is the foremost sign that they possess a spirit of sympathy for mankind. Furthermore, this is the very fact that is indicated in the Hadith, which is as follows:

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ بِأَهْلِهِ

That is to say, those most compassionate to mankind from among you can only be those who are most compassionate to their wives. However, he who treats his wife in a cruel and wicked manner cannot possibly behave beneficently towards others. For when God created Adam, it was his wife who was made the first object of his love. Therefore, he who does not love his wife or has no wife to love, cannot attain to the status of a perfect man and lacks one of the conditions of intercession. Even if he is sinless, he is not capable of intercession. However, he who marries a woman establishes for himself the basis on which sympathy for mankind is fostered, for a wife becomes the means for establishing a wide circle of relations, and when children are born they go on to marry too, then their children also come to have grandmothers and uncles etc. of their own. In this way, such a person becomes habituated towards love and sympathy and the sphere of this habit then extends to encompass everyone. But those who live a life of celibacy like yogis find no opportunity to extend this habit, and their hearts are left hard and arid.

Sinlessness has nothing to do with intercession because a sinless person only refrains from committing sin and the definition of sin is intentional disobedience to the

commandments of God, thus rendering a person liable to divine punishment.⁶

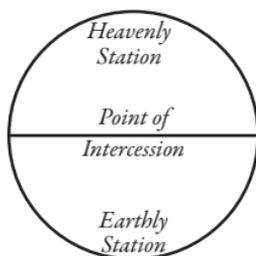
Hence, it is clearly evident that there is no natural correlation between sinlessness and intercession because

⁶ This is so because the definition of sin, which commends itself to every just and reasonable person, is that an act is a sin when a person becomes worthy of punishment by breaking the command of God. Therefore, when this is the case it is necessary for a divine injunction to exist in the first place to precede the commission of sin. Moreover, this commandment must have been brought to the knowledge of the offender as well. Further still, reason must dictate that the individual guilty of offence has reasonably become liable to punishment as a consequence of his action. For example, if some person lives in a far off land where the divine law has not reached him, and if this person violates one or several commandments of the religious law, he is not a culprit on account of disobeying divine injunctions, for he is oblivious to religious law. However, if this person starts worshiping idols despite possessing reason and understanding, and turns away from the Oneness of God, he shall be guilty even though the religious law may not have reached him. The Oneness of God which the Quran presents is not like the Christian Trinity, which is not etched in the nature of man. In fact, since the very beginning of creation, the Oneness of God has been ingrained in the nature of man. Thus, to be deemed guilty of defying the Oneness of God it is not necessary for religious law to have first reached a person; the presence of human reason is all that is required. On the other hand, if a religious law exists and has also reached a person, but the individual is immature or mad, and commits an act, which according to divine law is known as sin, the person in question will not be worthy of punishment, for they are bereft of human reason and so are innocent despite the presence of religious law. (Author)

according to the aforementioned definition, children who are immature and those of unsound mind who are born as such, are also sinless, for they are incapable of wilful disobedience. Furthermore, they are not liable for punishment in the estimation of God Almighty on account of any action they may commit. Without doubt, they are entitled to be deemed sinless, but are they also entitled to be intercessors for mankind and to be hailed as saviours? This clearly demonstrates that there is no real relationship between being a saviour and being sinless. Reason cannot discern that sinlessness has any real connection with intercession, but it can surely understand that the intercessor must possess the aforementioned two-fold relationship. Reason unhesitatingly dictates that if a person possesses these two qualities: a strong relationship with God on the one hand and a relationship of love and sympathy with His creation on the other, then such a person will indeed intercede wholeheartedly for those people who have not deliberately broken their relationship with him, and his intercession will be accepted. For if the nature of an individual is imbued with these two relationships, the natural consequence must be that such a person draws in divine grace due to his perfect love of Allah and then transmits that grace to mankind due to his perfect love for them. This

is the state which, in other words, is called *intercession*.

As I have just explained, it is necessary for an intercessor to hold such a deep relationship with God, as if God has descended upon his heart. The human self of such a person becomes extinct and the divine glory of Allah is manifested in their every hair. Their soul melts and flows like water towards God until it reaches the most extreme point of divine nearness. Moreover, it is also necessary for an intercessor that his heart soars in sympathy towards the one for whom he desires to intercede, as if he were about to faint, and the intense agony that he feels is as severe as if the limbs were parting from his body and his senses were scattered. His sympathy should carry him to a stage which exceeds that of a father, a mother and any well-wisher. When these two conditions take root in a person, he becomes united on the one side with the station of divinity and becomes paired with the earthly station on the other. Then both these aspects shall be present within him in equal measure. That is to say, he shall be a perfect manifestation of divinity as well as a perfect manifestation of humanity, and shall thus occupy the place of an intermediary between both realms, as shown below:



Referring to this very station of intercession, the Holy Quran alludes to the Holy Prophet in his grand position as intercessor in the following words:

دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ⁷

Meaning, the Messenger ascended towards God and approached Him as far as is possible for man, soaring through all the exalted stations of divine nearness, thereby attaining his full share of the divine realm. He then returned complete to mankind and attained to the highest pinnacle of servitude to God, thus acquiring the greatest measure of the holy attributes of humanity, i.e. sympathy and love for mankind, which is known as *earthly perfection*. Thus, he arrived at the pinnacle of perfection in the love of God on the one hand, and in the love of mankind on the other. Since he attained perfect nearness to God and then attained perfect nearness to

⁷ He drew nearer to God; then he came down to mankind. So that he became, as it were, one chord to two bows or closer still. (*an-Najm*, 53:9-10)

mankind, due to his equal nearness to both, he became, as it were, a chord between two bows. Therefore, the conditions that are necessary for intercession were present in him. This is the reason that in His Word, God put forth testimony that he stood between mankind and God just as a common chord between two arches.

In another instance, describing the nearness of the Holy Prophet to God, the Holy Quran says:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ⁸

In other words, announce to the people that my condition is such that I have become lost to myself and all my worship is dedicated wholly to God. This alludes to the fact that until a person attains to perfection, they cannot purely worship God. A portion of his worship is devoted to God while a portion of it springs from selfish motives, because such a one seeks greatness and grandeur for their own self just as one ought to desire greatness and grandeur for God, this being the essence of worship. Similarly, a certain extent of his worship is for the sake of people because the majesty, greatness, power and authority which ought to be reserved for God alone, he ascribes in part to God's creation as well. Therefore, he worships God just as he worships his own

⁸ Say, 'My Prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.' (*al-An'am*, 6:163)

self and other creation; in fact, he offers a portion of his worship to worldly means at large, for he believes that these means, too, intervene in the process of creation and destruction in the face of God's will and decree. Therefore, such a person cannot be a true worshipper of God Almighty, since at times he associates the grandeur of God with himself, at times with other creation, and still at other times, even with worldly means. On the contrary, a true worshipper is one who reserves all greatness, majesty and authority for God to the exclusion of all else. This is true Oneness of God and when an individual's worship reaches such a level, it is then that he can be called a true worshipper of God. Just as such a person declares with his tongue that God is One and without partner, so does he testify to the Oneness of God in practice, i.e. through his worship. It is this very rank of perfection that is referred to in the above verse wherein the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was instructed to announce to the people that all his worship was for God alone, which means that his inner self, creation at large, and worldly means have no share in his worship.

Then the verse goes on to state: "My sacrifice is also devoted especially to God alone, and so is my life and my death." Remember, the Arabic lexicon states that

nasikah (نَسِيكَه) means sacrifice, and the word *nusuk* (نُسُك) which appears in this verse, is its plural form. Furthermore, this word also means worship. Hence, the word employed here applies to both meanings: worship and sacrifice. This demonstrates that worship in its perfect form, in which a person's ego, creation at large, and worldly means have no part, is in fact a sacrifice; furthermore, perfect sacrifice is actually perfect worship. The verse then states: "My life as well as my death is for God." This last phrase is an elaboration of the word 'sacrifice' so that no one misconstrues this to imply the slaughtering of a goat, cow or camel; and so that it is clearly understood that the words "my life and my death is for God alone," signify that the purport of sacrifice in this instance is actually the sacrifice of one's soul. The word *qurbani* (قُرْبَانِي) or sacrifice is taken from *qurb* (قُرْب), which means nearness and this alludes to the fact that the nearness of God is attained when all the desires and passions of the flesh are slain. In short, this verse is a great proof of the Holy Prophet's perfect nearness to God. It serves as strong proof of the perfect divine nearness of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The verse in discussion states that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, had become so absorbed and lost in God that

every breath of his life and even his death had become wholly God's, and that ego, other creation and worldly means had no part in his being. His soul had fallen at the threshold of God so sincerely that not the slightest adulteration of anything other than God could be found in it. In this way, the Prophet fulfilled one of the two conditions which are essential for an intercessor. And the last part of the verse mentioned above is: "My life and my death are for God who is the Sustainer of all the worlds". This explains that the sacrifice of the Prophet is also for the good of the whole world. Similarly, the second qualification for intercession is compassion for mankind. As such, we have just mentioned that in the verse: *كُنِيَ فَتَدَلُّ*, the latter word, *tadalla* (تَدَلَّى), refers to this very compassion. Bear in mind that the triliteral root word of *tadalla* is *dalwun* (دَلْوٌ), which means to let the bucket into a well so that it may be filled with water. The word *dalwun* also means to take someone as an intercessor. And so, the meaning of *tadalla* here is to be moved to intercede with the utmost compassion and sympathy for a people who languish far off, and to draw extremely near to them so as to carry away their sullied water and to grant them pure water.

As the love of God and attaining a high station of nearness to Him is a matter of which others cannot be

cognizant, God Almighty manifested such actions of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, which established that he had truly given precedence to God over everything else. Every particle of the Holy Prophet, and his every vein and fibre was so permeated with the love and greatness of God that his own being served as a mirror to reflect in full the spectacle of God's manifestations. All the signs of perfect love of God, which can possibly be fathomed, were present entirely in the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

It is obvious that when a person loves someone, they do so on account of either the latter's kindness or beauty, because ever since the creation of man, it has been the universal experience of mankind that kindness kindles love. Notwithstanding all the differences in human dispositions, it is a sure fact that every individual, according to their temperament, is inspired by kindness, and develops a love for the one who does them good. Even the vilest, most hard-hearted and ignoble class of society such as thieves, robbers and other criminals, who live on various forms of criminality, do not remain untouched by kindness. For instance, if a thief who commits burglary finds the opportunity to break into two houses, and if one of the houses belongs to a person who has done

him some good while the other belongs to a mere stranger, the thief, despite being so impure of nature, would never deliberately leave the stranger's house and rob his friend's house instead. Let alone human beings, even animals and savage beasts display this quality and do not attack the one who is kind to them. In this respect, a dog's nature and behaviour is well-known to human experience in that it obeys the one who is benevolent to it. So there is no doubt that kindness fosters love and it is evident that beauty also rouses love, for there is pleasure in observing beauty and man is naturally attracted towards that which is pleasing. Moreover, beauty does not imply physical features alone such as the eyes, nose, forehead and complexion. In fact, what beauty refers to is the merit, excellence and fineness inherent in the very nature of things, which are of such a degree that they command an allure on account of utmost symmetry and matchlessness. So, all such qualities which human nature views with admiration are included in 'beauty' and the heart of man is drawn towards them. For example, if there were a brave and renowned wrestler whom none could match—not only that, but if he could fight lions with his bare hands and were able to defeat a thousand men in the field of battle with his might and valour; and if he could emerge unharmed from the siege of a

thousand enemies—such a man would naturally pull hearts towards himself and people would surely love him even if they derive no benefit from his unparalleled bravery and courage. In fact, even if this person resided in a distant land, which the people had never seen, or even if he lived in the past, yet they would still listen to his tales with admiration and would love him for his excellences. Now what is the cause of such love? Has this wrestler shown benevolence to anyone? Obviously he has not been kind to anyone, so the only cause for love in this case is beauty. Similarly, there is no doubt that all spiritual qualities are also a form of beauty—they are qualities which may be termed as beautiful morals and attributes, and they correspond to physical beauty. Now, the distinction between goodness and beauty of morals and attributes is that the excellent morals and attributes of a person are deemed goodness only when and only in relation to a person who actually derives benefit or advantage from the effects of the excellent moral or attribute. Therefore, excellent morals or qualities shall only be deemed goodness with relation to such a person who benefits from the virtuous deed or attribute and remembers the act with sentiments of praise and gratitude. But as for the rest, the excellent moral qualities of such a person would be deemed as beauty. For instance,

the quality of munificence and generosity is goodness for the one who is benefited thereby, but so far as others are concerned, this is only beauty in terms of attributes.

In short, both the divine law as well as the law of nature—which has existed since time immemorial and from the very creation of mankind—teach us that in order to establish a deep relationship with God, it is essential to have benefited from His goodness and beauty. As I have written above, goodness refers to the divine morals which an individual personally witnesses with respect to their own being. For instance, in a time when man was helpless, poor, weak and orphaned, God became his guardian and Himself fulfilled his requirements in a time of need and necessity. God Almighty stood by him in times of inconsolable, back-breaking grief and He Himself became his guide without the intervention of any mortal guide or mentor when he set out in search for God. In actuality, divine beauty signifies the magnificent attributes of God, which are experienced in the form of goodness. For example, God's perfect power, kindness, compassion, providence and mercy; and His general nourishment and provision, which may be observed; and the common favours abundantly bestowed on human beings for their comfort; and His knowledge which man acquires through His

Prophets and thereby escapes from death and ruin; and His attribute of accepting the prayers of those who are distressed and helpless; and His attribute that when a people incline towards Him, He turns to them even more eagerly—all these divine attributes constitute God's beauty. But when a person is especially blessed by these attributes, they are also termed as goodness in respect of that person, although so far as others are concerned, they merely represent beauty.

One who experiences these divine attributes of beauty and grace in the form of kindness as well, is vastly strengthened in faith and he is drawn towards God even as iron is drawn to a magnet. His love for God intensifies exponentially and his trust in God is reinforced powerfully. Since he has experienced that all his wellbeing depends on God, his hopes in the Divine gain immense strength and he is inclined towards God naturally without any affectation or pretension, and he finds himself ever and always dependent upon God for assistance. Moreover, in view of these perfect divine attributes, he firmly believes that he will surely succeed, for he has personally witnessed numerous examples of God's grace, favour and kindness. Hence, his prayers spring forth from the fountain of power and certainty, and his determination is immensely firm and strong, and

in the end, having witnessed divine blessings and favours, the light of certainty enters into him with great force so that his very being is entirely consumed. On account of his abundant contemplation of divine grandeur and power, his heart becomes the abode of God.

Just as man's soul can never be parted from his body while he is still alive, so too the certainty with which he is instilled by the Glorious God of Power, never parts from him. The holy spirit which pervades his being surges forth within him at all times. He speaks by the instruction of that holy spirit, and divine verities and insights pour forth from within him, and the grandeur of the Lord of Honour and Majesty remains encamped in his heart. The pleasure of certainty, sincerity and love constantly flows within him like water, which irrigates his every organ and keeps them visibly blooming. A unique spark of satisfaction is noticeable in his eyes; his forehead beams indescribable light due to this satisfaction; his countenance is showered with the rain of divine love for all to see; and his tongue is also fully enriched by the bloom of divine light. A freshness visible in all his organs resembles the charming verdure observed after rainfall in spring on the branches and leaves of trees, as well as in flowers and fruit. But a person on whom this spirit has not descended and who has not been satiated by this

water is like a dead corpse. This verdure, freshness, and bloom, which no pen can describe, cannot be attained by a lifeless heart which has not been vitalized by the spring of the light of certainty; rather, such a heart emits a rotten and foul stench. But as for the one to whom this light is bestowed and in whom this spring gushes forth, one of the signs of such a person is that they are ever desirous of seeking strength from God in their every matter, word and action. This alone is the cause of their pleasure and this alone gives them comfort. They simply cannot survive in any other way. And the term specified in the Word of God to seek strength is known as *istighfar* (اسْتِغْفَار).

The true meaning and essence of seeking forgiveness or *istighfar* is to implore God so that no human weakness becomes manifest and so that God may support human nature with His strength and envelop it within the circle of His protection and succour. The word *istighfar* is derived from *ghafrun* (غَفْرٌ), which means to cover up. Hence, this supplication implores from God that He, with His power, may cover up the natural weakness of the person who seeks forgiveness from God. This meaning is then extended to the masses at large in that God may cover up such sins which have already been committed. However, the true and proper meaning is

that God protects from human frailty the person who seeks forgiveness and performs *istighfar* with His own divine power and grants him strength from His own strength, and knowledge from His own knowledge, and light from His own light. For after having created man, God has not left him alone, but as He is man's Creator and the Maker of all his external and internal faculties, He is also the Sustainer of man. In other words, He safeguards with His unique support everything that He has created. God is All-Sustaining and maintains creation through His own support. It is, therefore, incumbent on man that since he has come into existence by the creating hand of God, he should seek to safeguard the features of his creation from corruption through God's support. For the divine attribute of creation has bestowed upon man the favour of creating him in God's image. Hence, God's support demands that the pure image of man, which God has fashioned with His own two hands be saved from adulteration and ruin. Therefore, through *istighfar*, man has been taught to seek strength from God's support. So even if sin had no existence in the world, there would still be *istighfar*, because the true purpose of *istighfar* is that the edifice of humanity constructed by God's attribute of creation does not collapse, but rather stands firm. And it is impossible for something to stand

firm without divine support.

Therefore, this is a natural requirement of man for which he has been directed to perform *istighfar*. It is to this that the Holy Quran refers in the following:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ⁹

In other words, it is God alone who is worthy of worship because He alone is the one who grants life and it is by His support alone that man can survive. That is to say, the emergence of man required two things: a Creator and an All-Sustaining Being, so that the former could bring him into existence and the latter would preserve him from corruption. And so it is God who is both the Creator and Sustainer. The attribute of creation was manifested when man was brought into existence, but the divine function of providing sustenance was to work ceaselessly. Hence arose the need for constant *istighfar*. Every attribute of God bestows a form of grace and *istighfar* is needed to draw out the grace of God's support. It is to this that the following verse of *Surah Fatihah* refers:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ¹⁰

This means, you alone do we worship and you alone

⁹ *al-Baqarah*, 2:256

¹⁰ *al-Fatihah*, 1:5

do we implore so that your support and providence may uphold us and protect us from stumbling lest we fall prey to weakness and are unable to worship you.

It is obvious from this entire discourse that the true meaning of *istighfar* is not that a sin has occurred, but stems from the desire that no sin should occur. Human nature finding itself weak naturally seeks strength from God, as a child seeks milk from its mother. Therefore, as God has bestowed upon man from the beginning a tongue, eyes, a heart and ears etc., so has He impressed in him, from the beginning, the desire for *istighfar* and has made him feel that his own being stands in need of God's assistance. This is indicated in the verse:

وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ¹¹

This means that the Holy Prophet was directed to supplicate: pray to God that He may safeguard your nature against human weakness and that He may strengthen your disposition with His own strength, so that this weakness does not become manifest. Pray also by way of intercession for those men and women who believe in you so that they may be saved from punishment for faults they commit on account of the weakness of their nature and so that their subsequent

¹¹ And ask forgiveness for thy frailties, and for believing men and believing women. (*Muhammad*, 47:20)

course of life may be safeguarded against sin.

This verse comprises the sublime philosophy of protection against sin and intercession. Moreover, this indicates that a person can only achieve the lofty rank of sinlessness and intercession if they pray for the suppression of their own weakness and if they constantly implore God as well for the deliverance of others from the poison of sin; and only if they draw divine strength to themselves by earnestly supplicating God Almighty and then desire that others who are bound to them in faith also benefit from this strength. A sinless person is in need of seeking strength from God because human nature possesses no excellence of its own but at every moment, attains to perfection from God; and possesses no strength of its own but at every moment, receives strength from God; and possesses no perfect light of its own, but at every moment light descends upon it from God. The underlying secret here is that a perfect nature is bestowed an attraction so that it may draw to itself strength from on high, but it is God alone who is the treasure trove of power. It is from this very treasure that the angels too draw strength and so also the perfect man draws the strength of sinlessness and grace from this fountainhead of strength through the channel of devotion and servitude to God. And so, he

alone from among men is perfectly sinless who draws divine power to himself through *istighfar* and occupies himself without fail in passionate and humble prayers so that light continues to descend upon him. Such a heart resembles the house whose doors open to the East and to the West and every other direction, and faces the sun from every aspect so that the sun illuminates it at all times. However, a person who does not seek strength from God is like the cell whose doors are shut on all sides, so that not a ray of light may creep into it.

Now, what is *istighfar*? If likened to a thing, it is the instrument through which power is obtained. The entire secret of God's Oneness lies in the principle that the attribute of sinlessness be not regarded as the permanent possession of man, but that God be deemed the sole fountain from which it may be attained. By way of illustration it may be understood that God Almighty resembles the heart which houses a store of pure blood and the *istighfar* of a perfect man are like the veins and arteries which are connected with the heart and draw pure blood from it, conveying it to the limbs that stand in need.

Difference between Frailty and Sin

It is quite erroneous to say that the word *dhanb* (ذَنْبٌ) which actually means 'frailty' in the context of the verse ¹² *وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ* implies sin, because there is a difference between the Arabic *dhanb* and *jurm* (جُرْمٌ). The word *jurm* or sin is always used for such an offence which is deserving of punishment. However, *dhanb* is applicable also to human frailty. Hence, the word *dhanb* applies to Prophets due to their human weakness, but the word *jurm* is never applicable to them. No Prophet has ever been referred to as a sinner in the Book of God. Further, the Holy Quran, which is the book of God, warns the sinner with hell; in other words, God promises that the sinner will be thrown into hell, but no such warning is given to such a one who is weak by human nature. Allah the Exalted states:

مَنْ يَأْتِ رَبَّهُ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ ¹³

Meaning, he who comes to his Lord a sinner, his punishment is hell; he shall neither die therein nor live. Now in this instance, God has used the word *mujriman* which means 'a sinner' and not the word *mudhnbiban* or one to whom human weakness may be attributed. For

¹² And ask forgiveness for thy frailties. (*Muhammad*, 47:20)

¹³ *Taba*, 20:75

in certain cases, even a sinless person can be referred to as a *mudhrib* (مُذْنِب) but he can never be referred to as a *mujrim* (مُجْرِم). There is another argument in support of this, as is evident in the following verse of Surah Al-e-Imran:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ
ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ
قَالَ أَأَقْرَضُكُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَلِكُمْ إصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَبْنَا¹⁴

This verse categorically establishes that all the Prophets, including the Messiah, were commanded to believe in the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and they did affirm their belief in him. Read the above-mentioned verse with the following:

وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِدُنْيِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ¹⁵

Now if, God-forbid, the word *dhanb* here is taken to mean sin, then even Jesus would be a sinner according to

¹⁴ And remember the time when Allah took a covenant from the people through the Prophets, saying: 'Whatever I give you of the Book and Wisdom and then there comes to you a Messenger, fulfilling that which is with you, you shall believe in him and help him.' And He said: 'Do you agree, and do you accept the responsibility which I lay upon you in this matter?' They said: 'We agree.' (Al-e-Imran, 3:82)

¹⁵ And ask forgiveness for thy frailties, and for believing men and believing women. (Muhammad, 47:20)

this verse, for he is also among the believers who believed in the Holy Prophet; and so, undoubtedly he too would be a *mudhnib*. The Christians ought to reflect over this point. In short, these verses demonstrate with absolute clarity that *dhanb* as it appears in this context, does not mean sin, but rather refers to human frailty, which is not blameworthy. It is essential for human nature to possess such weakness; and the reason it is termed *dhanb* is because the nature of man is characterised by deficiency and flaw, so that he may always remain dependent on God and continue seeking His strength to suppress his weakness. There is no doubt that the weakness of human flesh, if not attended to by divine strength, is bound to lead to transgression. So that which leads to *dhanb* or sin is metaphorically called *dhanb* as well. It is a well-known and familiar practice in expression that the very symptoms which cause certain ailments are sometimes given the name of those ailments themselves. So, weakness in human nature is also an ailment and its remedy is *istighfar*.

Thus, the Book of God uses the word *dhanb* to connote the weakness of the flesh, which testifies to the fact that man possesses a weakness in human nature. As such, Allah Almighty states:

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا¹⁶

In other words, man is created weak. It is this feebleness of man, which without the helping hand of God, leads to diverse forms of sin. The essence of *istighfar* therefore is that one should ever and always seek the succour of God, and beseech Him so that human failing, which is frailty of the flesh and is inescapable, may not come to light. A person who constantly takes to *istighfar* furnishes evidence that they have overcome human frailty through the descent of divine light, which covered it and prevented it from being exposed. Here, it ought to be remembered that the word *istighfar* is derived from the Arabic *ghafrun* meaning to suppress and cover up, i.e. to supplicate that human frailty does not become manifest, causing harm, but rather remains covered. Man is neither God, nor independent of Him, and so he resembles the child who at every step is dependent on its mother so that she may protect it from falling and stumbling. In the same way, humanity depends upon God at every step so that He protects them from stumbling and faltering. And so, *istighfar* is the remedy which aids this purpose.

At times, the meaning of this word is extended to apply to such people who have already committed a sin. In such cases, the meaning of *istighfar* or seeking forgiveness

¹⁶ *an-Nisa*, 4:29

is that God may save them from the punishment of the transgression that has already been committed. However, this secondary meaning is not valid and acceptable in the context of the elect of God. For to them, God has already disclosed that no punishment shall touch them and the lofty stations of paradise would be conferred upon them and they shall be seated in the lap of God's mercy. And not once but hundreds of times they are given such promises and they are enabled to behold paradise. Hence, if they sought forgiveness in the sense that they might not be cast into Hell due to their sins, then such *istighfar* would itself make them guilty of sin, for this would assume that they do not believe in God's promises and consider themselves removed from divine mercy. How can one imagine about whom God Almighty says: ¹⁷ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ i.e. We have sent you as a mercy for all peoples and you are mercy personified, that he himself doubted whether or not he would have God's mercy; how then could he be a mercy for others?

All these circumstances clearly reveal to those who are fair-minded that ascribing this second meaning of *istighfar*, as mentioned above, to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is a grave error and nothing short of mischief. In fact, the first

¹⁷ *al-Anbiya*, 21:108

sign of a sinless person is that they remain engaged in seeking forgiveness from God more than anyone else and unceasingly seek strength from the Almighty at every moment and in every situation, to protect themselves from human weakness; this, in other words, is called *istighfar*. The child that always walks with the support of its mother's hand and does not leave her side even for a second will, without doubt, be saved from stumbling. But a child who is not led by its mother, and climbs up and down a dangerous set of steps alone, is bound to fall one day, and a terrible fall it shall be. Thus, just as it is preferable for a fortunate child never to part from its beloved mother and never to leave her lap and bosom, so is it the practice of holy personages that they lie at God's threshold as children do in their mothers' laps. A child fulfils all its needs through the strength of its mother and when faced by the opposition of another child, or when confronted by a dog or some other danger, or if it finds itself in a wavering situation, the child immediately calls for its mother so she may rush towards it and protect it from danger. So too is the case with spiritual children who consider their Lord to be their mother and consider His power to be their treasure, and at every moment without fail, they seek strength from Him. To illustrate, at a time of hunger when a suckling baby puts its lips to

the breast of its mother and desires to draw out milk by virtue of its natural instinct, the mother immediately feels that just as the soft and tender lips of her wailing child touch her breast, milk gushes forth from her and pours into the baby's mouth. The same law applies to such children who seek and thirst for spiritual milk.

Need for Intercession

On this occasion, the question may arise as to why man stands in need of intercession and why it is not permissible for a person to seek pardon directly from God through repentance and forgiveness. The law of nature itself answers this question. It is an established fact, which none can deny that the system of procreation not only in humans but also in animals, is based on intercession. As we have already stated, the Arabic word for intercession, that is *shafa'at*, originates from *shaf'un*, which means to couple. Hence, how can there be any doubt in the fact that all the blessings of procreation have and continue to issue forth from coupling? Inner qualities, faculties and physical features descend from one person to another in this way, i.e. they are the result of union. Similarly, within the animal species, all the qualities which are transmitted among animals from their progenitors, such as in the case of a goat, ox,

donkey, etc., are also in actuality the result of union. Hence, this union, when taken to imply that an imperfect being develops a spiritual relationship with a perfect one by which the former finds remedy in the soul of the latter and is safeguarded from passions of the flesh, is known as *shafa'at* or intercession. Likewise, the moon, when opposite the sun, develops a sort of union and connection with it and as a result immediately receives the light of the sun. Since the spiritual bond between affectionate hearts and the Prophets resembles the relationship existing between father and son, therefore those who are spiritually blessed are viewed as the progeny of the Prophets in God's estimation. Those who perfectly undergo this spiritual birth acquire the same attributes, morals and blessings that exist in the Prophets. This, in fact, is the true nature of intercession and just as physical union or pairs inherently necessitate that offspring take after their parents, so it is the case with spiritual union.

In short, this is the reality of intercession, inasmuch as the natural law of God since time immemorial, in both the physical and spiritual realms, are based on the fact that all blessings originate from pairs; the only difference is that one is called *shaf'un*, which means to couple and the other is named *shafa'at* or intercession. Just as humans require *shaf'un* or union to preserve the system

of procreation, likewise *shafa'at* or intercession is necessary to preserve the spiritual system. The Word of God has explained both. As such, at a certain instance in the Holy Quran, Allah the Exalted says that He created Adam along with his consort and produced from this couple many men and women. God also says that He created Adam as His vicegerent on earth and he was a man who possessed the divine spirit. This light then passed from Adam to the other prophets; and Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus, etc., all became heirs to this spiritual light until finally, the last heir, our beloved Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, appeared. Just as all these blessed prophets inherited the physical features of Adam, also by virtue of being his deputies, they received the spirit of God. And then through them other people became heirs from time to time as well.

Proof of the Holy Quran on the Intercession of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

The intercession of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, has been mentioned at various places in the Holy Quran. As such, it states at one instance:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ¹⁸

The translation is: say, if you love God, then come and follow me, so that God may love you as well and forgive you your sins. Now, observe how clearly this verse states that the necessary result of treading in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, the requirements of which are to love, honour and obey him, is to make a person the beloved of God and absolved of their sins, in that if a person has consumed the poison of sin, then the antidote of love, obedience and subservience does away with the effects of this poison. Just as a person can be healed of their disease by the application of medication, so too can they be cleansed of sin. Then, just as light dispels darkness, an antidote counteracts the effect of venom, and fire burns, in the same way true love and obedience yield positive results. One may observe how fire consumes in an instant; similarly, virtue performed earnestly for the sole purpose of manifesting God's glory acts like fire to consume the chaff and rubbish of sin. When a person believes sincerely in our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and recognises him in all his grandeur and eminence, and follows him with loyalty, purity, affection and subservience, so that on account of

¹⁸ *Al-e-Imran*, 3:32

their complete resignation to him, they reach the stage where their inner self is effaced completely, the divine light which descended upon the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is received in portion by this individual as well, due to their deep relationship with the Prophet. As light and darkness cannot coexist, the darkness in such a person begins to vanish until no part of it remains within. Being thus strengthened by light, virtue of the highest order proceeds from such people. The love of God shines out in their every limb. It is then that all their inner darkness is wholly dispelled. The intellect of such a one is illumined and so too their actions beam light. Finally, by the combination of these lights, the gloom of sin leaves their hearts.

It is obvious that light and darkness cannot coexist in the same place, and thus the light of faith and the darkness of sin can also not coexist. It is possible that such a person may never have had an occasion to commit a sin, but the benefit such a one derives from following the Holy Prophet^{sa} is that the temptation to sin in the future is completely destroyed in them and a disposition to virtue is created. As such, Almighty Allah Himself says in the Holy Quran:

حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ¹⁹

Allah has endeared every good to you by making the holy spirit descend upon you, and He has rendered disbelief, transgression and disobedience hateful to you.

However, at this instance, a question may arise as to the nature of the light that is bestowed upon one who follows the Prophet, peace be upon him, and which subdues the passion of sin. The answer to this question is: It is a *pure understanding* untainted by the darkness of doubt and scepticism; it is a *pure love* unalloyed by any selfish motive; it is a *pure delight* which exceeds all pleasures, free from all impurity; it is a *powerful allure* that cannot be overcome by any other attraction; it is a *potent antidote* which rids all inner poisons. These are the five things which descend in the form of light upon the heart of a sincere follower as a light along with the Holy Spirit. Hence, such a heart not only abstains from sin, but instinctively begins to loathe it. To individually outline the powers of these five things requires a great length of detail. However, it should suffice to expound at some length the qualities of pure understanding, to grasp the underlying reality of how it wards off sin.

It is obvious that humans and even animals shrink

¹⁹ *al-Hujurat*, 49:8

away from what they know with sure and certain knowledge to be harmful. A thief can never dare rob a place where he is certain that a party of men lie in wait, hiding in order to lay their hands on him. In fact, even if a bird is able to identify that a snare has been laid out beneath the grains placed on the ground, it does not approach the grain. Similarly, even if the most exquisite and delicious of foods were prepared, this could never tempt a man, if he were certain that it is poisoned. Thus, all these observations evidently demonstrate that man never approaches a dangerous or harmful thing after having ascertained its nature, in fact he flees at the sight of it. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that if a person came to know through some means that sin is a fatal poison that kills instantly, then without doubt, he would never commit sin after having attained this knowledge. However, the question that naturally arises here is what that 'means' is? Can 'reason' be that means? The answer is that reason cannot at all be a perfect means, unless aided by heavenly support. Firm heartfelt belief in the fact that there is definite punishment for committing of sin—and from which man cannot escape—is perfect belief, which can only be had when a person has full knowledge that God exists in the first place, and that He can punish a man for sin. A mere rationalist, who has not been blessed

by heavenly light, cannot possess perfect belief in God Almighty because he has not heard the word of God and has not beheld His countenance. His knowledge of God Almighty, even if he arrives at a true conclusion after reflection on the creation he observes in the earth and heaven, is that all this ought to have a Creator. However, this does not take a person to the definite and categorical knowledge that that Creator exists. And it is obvious that there is a notable difference between **ought to be** and **is**. In other words, a person whose knowledge comes to a halt at the stage of 'ought to be' and for whom there is nothing but darkness beyond, cannot match the knowledge of a person who not only believes that this True Creator **ought to exist** but also feels that **He does in fact exist** by testimony of the light that is granted to him. This heavenly light not only allows man to witness the existence of God, but through its guidance, his faculties of reason and mind are sharpened to such an extent that even his own logical inferences are the most superb. And so, such a person believes in God Almighty with a two-fold power.

The heavenly light spoken of here means that the individual in question is blessed with unmistakable converse with God Almighty or they possess a very strong and deep relationship with a recipient of such

converse. Converse with God does not refer to the dubious words for which common people claim the dignity of revelation. Questionable revelation amounts to nothing; in fact, it is even inferior to reason itself. On the contrary, what is referred to here is actually the sure and certain revelation of God Almighty, which is both pure and perfect, and which is necessarily accompanied by heavenly signs as a part thereof. Such revelation possesses an inherently sublime glory and grandeur, and penetrates the heart like an iron nail with its awe-inspiring and exquisite words, and bears the shining seal of divine signs and extraordinary phenomena.

The first thing a man requires to have perfect faith in God is that he himself is blessed with the revelation just mentioned, or that he holds a strong relationship with one who is blessed with it—one who draws hearts towards himself by his spiritual influence. Therefore, any religion that cannot claim fresh revelation accompanied by living signs may be likened to decaying bones that have more or less turned to dust. It is absolutely impossible for such a religion to bring about any real transformation. Only those individuals take pride in such doctrines who are content to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors and in their souls they neither search for the truth, nor do they desire it. In fact, due to their immense

prejudice and fondness for misguidance, the inner condition of such people undergoes a degeneration. They are not bothered by how one can develop a certain belief in God, or the attributes that a True God ought to possess; a God in whom a person can hold firm faith; or the circumstances which can bring about complete assurance about the existence of God Almighty; or the signs of certainty that serve as the distinct hallmarks of those who are blessed with perfect faith. It ought to be kept in mind that even if a certain religion possesses an aspect of rationality, and an apparent decency and culture, this is not enough to claim that such a religion leads a person to the station of certainty with respect to the existence of God Almighty and His attributes. On the contrary, all the religions of the world are utterly vain and useless, absurd, lifeless and dead until they take a seeker to the pure fountain of certainty.

Alas! Most people do not understand what it means to believe in God's existence and being, in His majesty and power and in His beautiful attributes. On the contrary, if someone were to tell them out of sympathy for their regrettable state that they are deprived of the pure fountain of certainty, and therefore, devoid also of true purity which is attained after certainty, they become enraged at this and vehemently proclaim: "Do we not have faith

in God? Do we not believe in Him?” The only response to this is that they, in fact, neither have faith in God nor do they believe in Him. Sadly, they do not realise that although they would never thrust their hands into a hole, which they know for certain contains a poisonous snake, because in doing so they foresee their own death, yet they brazenly commit any sin. They do not consume a deadly poison knowing they will die, yet they commit the very deadliest of sins. Let alone certainty, even a high degree of probability holds them back from acting in a manner where harm may be sustained. For instance, such people would not approve of sleeping under a roof with a cracked beam, nor would they desire to remain in a village where cholera or the plague had broken out. Why then, despite their claim to belief, do they violate the commandments of God Almighty? Rest assured that such people do not truly possess certainty—not even a high degree of probability—that an Omnipotent Being exists who can destroy them in an instant.

The Christian Deity

In the present age, this disease is not specific to a particular group; as it afflicts the Christians, so too it afflicts the Muslims. To their individual extent, the people of the East and the West have equally partaken of this ill.

There is a difference, however, between the Muslims and Christians. The Muslims are heedless of the true and mighty God due to their negligence, even though He has always manifested His light upon them, and in every age, has drawn them towards Himself, and many blessed individuals partake of this light. But the Christians have long forgotten God, firm faith in whom brings about a pure transformation and cognisance of whose majesty and grandeur produces true aversion from sin. Instead of believing in an Ever-Living and All-Sustaining God, such people proclaim a humble man, Christ the son of Mary, to be God. However, he can neither answer prayers, nor speak to anyone himself. It is beyond him to manifest even his own greatness and power to say the least. How then can true purity be attained through him? The manifestations of his power are well-described in the scriptures. He suffered all sorts of grief at the hands of the Jews; his night-long prayer was not accepted; a shameful allegation was levelled against his mother, but he was unable to defend her through any display of divine power. His miracles, even if considered true, do not possess any excellence, which is not to be found in the miracles of other prophets. In fact, the miracles of the Prophet Elijah and his resurrecting the dead are a manifestation of divine power far greater than

the miracles of Christ. Similarly, certain miracles of the Prophet Isaiah are truly matchless when compared to the miracles of the Messiah. Moreover, the prophecies of the Messiah are so utterly meaningless that when a person reads them they cannot help but laugh—let alone be positively impressed—at the nature of these prophecies, which foretell the coming of famines, earthquakes and wars, when all this was already prevalent in the land even before these prophecies. So, how can a wise person believe in such a god? These are old tales. God knows the degree of truth in these accounts and the extent to which they are ridden with falsehood. In any event, it has become increasingly difficult for the people of this age to believe in this new god, the slightest trace of which is nowhere to be found even in the Jewish teaching. For these people have neither witnessed with their own eyes the resurrection of the dead, nor evil spirits being driven out of the sick. Further, the promises made with respect to these people were not fulfilled either. For example, they were told that poison would have no effect if they drank it, and mountains would move at once on their command, and they would hold serpents in their hands but they would not bite. Now we observe that plenty of Christians in Europe die of suicide and poison begins to take its toll on them in a heartbeat. Let alone a moun-

tain, they cannot even do so much as flip an overturned shoe without using their hands. Moreover, snakes and other such poisonous creatures kill them all the time. It may be argued in response that these verses should not be taken literally, but metaphorically. For instance, drinking poison implies that they swallow their anger and serpents signify the wicked who can do them no harm. However, before we delve into these interpretations, we would be justified in posing a question. All these claims were to serve as signs and the Messiah repeatedly declared that the signs which he showed would also be displayed by his followers. Now if all this was figurative and metaphorical in nature and no real sign was implied, then why should this not categorically prove that all the miracles attributed to the Messiah are also to be taken as metaphors? For he has frequently said in the Gospels that whatever miracles he manifests, his true followers would also show the same.

Now when we demand such miracles to be shown, the answer we receive is that these statements do not refer to miracles, but merely to the moral state of the Christian people. Why then should it not be said that the miracles of the Messiah too are of the same nature and not actual miracles? In short, this question is one of insurmountable difficulty for the Christians to which

they have no answer. In fact, at this instance, if one reflects further, it becomes clear that a Christian does not face one but three difficulties in this regard.

Firstly, the words of the Messiah that miracles equal to and even greater than those shown by him, would also be shown by his followers, proved to be plainly false. Secondly, the non-fulfilment of this prophecy also proves that the Messiah did not work any miracle. For if he had manifested any miracles, his followers ought to have possessed the power to show the same. Thirdly, we could hypothetically assume that the Messiah did manifest miracles and ignore such sections of the Gospels which state that: "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but none will be given it." However, the divinity of the Messiah cannot be sufficiently established through miracles, which are no greater than those of the earlier prophets, but rather inferior. Now, when no intelligent individual can firmly believe in the divinity of the Messiah, how then can it prevent sin? I have already pointed out that the foremost thing which restrains one from sin is firm faith in the existence of God. In other words, complete certainty in the fact that there is a God who punishes sin. But how can one develop such belief in the Messiah? Would anyone care to tell us what distinguishes him from the dead? We and any wise person

know well that there must be a distinction between God and His creatures. However, let alone this distinction, in Christ we do not observe even the distinction found between a dead person and one who is living. Sadly, the Christians clamour and cry to establish the divinity of the Messiah, but we are prepared to accept them if they are even able to establish him as a living man.

We bear no malice towards any religion. If the son of Mary is God, we should like to be the foremost in accepting him. If indeed he is the intercessor, I desire to be the first of believers. But how can we accept sheer falsehood, utter absurdity and untruth? If God is such a weak and helpless being as Christ the son of Mary, then there is no need to believe in such a God, nor is it possible in any way to have firm faith in him. God Almighty has always established His existence in every age through the prophets as well as independently. Even those who had not heard of any heavenly scripture did not remain ignorant of His being. If this is the case with Jesus Christ, then we are ready to accept his divinity as well. Now is there anyone on the face of the earth who can show us any distinctive feature of the Messiah so that we can hear his voice, and behold the signs of his divinity? For as I have repeatedly written, doubtful faith even in the true God cannot deliver a person from sins.

How then, can doubtful belief in the divinity of a self-contrived god who was beaten at the hands of the Jews, deliver one from affliction? The fact of the matter is that belief in that God, who is the True God, can only relieve a person from sin when their belief attains to the rank of certainty.

Therefore, to afford the status of God to a man and not put forth any conclusive arguments in support of his divinity is shameful indeed. In actuality, such people are the enemies of truth. I am unable to understand why these people felt the need to adopt such a shameful dogma. What harm could they have foreseen in believing in the Eternal God, for whom this false deity compensated?

I bear witness that the True God who revealed Himself to Adam and then to Seth, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and all the Prophets and to our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. In earlier times, just as He proclaimed 'I am present' through the medium of His prophets, so too does He proclaim this in the present age. Just as in earlier times the prophets heard His majestic voice and witnessed His signs, we too hear His voice and witness His signs. Moreover, just as in the past He heard the prayers of His people and answered them, so too does He listen

to our prayers and answer them even today. And as the righteous of old attained to true purity by loving Him and beholding His countenance, so too is our case. And so only a blind person who is most unfortunate would abandon such a Powerful and Mighty God. We are absolutely certain that throughout the world, all those who have been set up as false gods, such as the Christ son of Mary, Ramchandra, Krishna and Buddha etc. were deified without any proof. This is no different than suggesting that a goat is human, even though it can neither speak, nor walk like humans. It neither looks human, nor possesses human sense. In short, it possesses no human features. Now could anyone refer to a goat as human even though it possesses certain characteristics found in humans? For example, a goat eats as man eats, and it urinates and defecates as does man. However, can anyone explain whether the Messiah or Ramchandra etc. possess any specific commonality which can be proven to exist in God?

The reason such people are deified is nothing but a phenomenon of extreme exaltation as against extreme denigration. For instance, King Ravana deeply humiliated King Ramchandra and bitterly hurt his people by abducting his wife and taking her to Lanka. Hence, Ramchandra's supporters at once expelled Ravana

from the human race and declared King Ramchandra to be God with such absolute certainty that to this day all Hindus chant the name of Rama instead of remembering their Parmeshwar. In fact, even their words of greeting are: “*Ram Ram.*” Now, one can deduce from this that the Christians have not yet become as unbridled in deifying Christ as the Hindus have become in attributing Godhead to Ramchandra. This has occurred to such an extent that the Hindus have almost forgotten the name of their Parmeshwar and on every occasion they utter ‘*Ram Ram*’. Hence, just as King Ramchandra was deified to establish his honour and excessive superiority by way of reciprocation, so too was Christ son of Mary given the status of God. First, the wicked Jews declared the birth of the Messiah to be unlawful and accused Mary of adultery. They further cast grave aspersions on the Messiah’s character. This is evident from various books written by certain Jewish scholars which are in my study at present. These books, as it may be ascertained, have portrayed a terrible picture of Christ’s life. In these days, the books of such Jewish scholars are read in our evening gatherings for the sole purpose that our community may come to know that the attacks made on the life of Christ are far worse than the ones levelled, by way of slander and calumny, against the practical life

of our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, by certain ignorant priests. Some of the charges are such that shame and modesty prevents us from even quoting them. A gravely indecent charge is imputed to his mother. Similarly, some of his grandmothers, Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba, were accused of adultery and the Christian priests admit this as well. And the worst allegations are those mounted against the character of the Messiah; that is, how he made recourse to deception in every matter and ultimately how God suffered him to die according to the promise of the Torah. A Muslim cannot read any of these words of disgrace, insult and calumny without being infuriated. When the Messiah was disgraced to a degree that put him lower than even an ordinary person, it was natural for the community who believed in Christ to gradually incline towards exaggeration in praise. Hence, impassioned individuals, who were already enamoured by polytheism, would not be made content with anything less than deifying the Messiah—as if they sought to retaliate against the Jews for their violent attacks made upon the Messiah.

What is even more surprising is that the Gospels, on whose basis the Christians seek to prove the divinity of the Messiah, are the same books by which a Jewish scholar has attempted to establish that God-forbid,

Christ was in fact a materialistic and deceitful man, who neither showed any miracle, nor pronounced a single true prophecy. He writes that whatever the Gospels state regarding the numerous miracles that the Messiah showed to the Jews is belied by the account of the Gospels themselves. For it is established by the Gospel testimony that whenever the elders of the nation would ask Christ for a miracle, it was his practice to make use of vile language and say to the elders in response that no miracle would be shown to them. He further writes that even if we grant that Jesus cured certain ailing people, this does not serve as a real argument for his divinity because his opponents, too, showed similar miracles in the same era. How then can reason accept that such miracles establish the divinity of Christ when other Prophets manifested far greater miracles?

In short, when the Jews subjected Christ to the greatest disgrace, the essential consequence of this was that while one party took a course of extreme denigration, the other responded by adopting a path of excessive exaltation. Thus, when the flood of excessive exaggeration surged forth among the Christians, it was then that the foundation for the deification of the Messiah was laid. This point can be fully understood when we observe the onslaughts of the Jews on the one hand, and closely

reflect over the exaggerated statements of the Christians to defend against these attacks on the other. Now, books written by Jews have also been published and certain renowned Jewish scholars have printed them in French as well. Moreover, these books have also been printed in English. So, it is very easy these days for seekers of truth to understand the real state of affairs. All Jewish sects agree that ever since Moses was given the Torah, none of the Prophets who appeared after him from time to time ever brought a teaching of trinity. Conversely, they only taught that God is One and Unseen. The Jews also make the case that when Moses requested God Almighty on Mount Sinai to show His countenance, why did God reply by saying that nobody could behold His countenance? God ought to have shown the face of Christ and said that this was His own countenance. Thus, the Jews have tried to prove that Christianity is a religion that seeks to shred the testament of the Torah, testified to by all the Prophets and is bent upon uprooting the concept of Divine Oneness, which is the corner-stone of the Torah.

In brief, the Christians have sought to propagate an abominable, self-invented creed in the world by presenting a god who is diametrically opposed to the teaching of the Divine Being as taught by the Torah

and the Holy Quran. They do not concern themselves in the least to rationally prove this new belief, which opposes the Torah and the scriptures of other Prophets. They are strangely indifferent to the way of reason as if rational argumentation has no jurisdiction over religion. According to them, reason has no right to testify in the matter of Divine Oneness or trinity. They are in the habit of criticising and condemning others, yet surprisingly, they do not examine their own doctrine even by mistake. Their foremost objective ought to have been to first prove the divinity of the Messiah, which is rejected by the Torah and the Quran, and reason as well. After this, they could have put emphasis on the self-contrived beliefs of atonement and salvation etc. But they did not do so and whilst ignoring the foundation of their doctrine, have instead become indulged in absurd discussions.

However, I would also like to add here that beneath this error lies a hidden truth, though its face has been blackened by absurd superstitions so that only a ghastly and hideous image of it remains. Nevertheless, a genuine truth does shine forth from this dark cloud and can be seen ever so slightly even in this pernicious belief of deifying the Messiah. To explain, it is evident from the Torah that God created man in His own image, placed

His light in him and breathed into him His spirit. The Holy Quran says the same. Now, it is well within the capacity and nature of man for God to descend upon the pure heart of His servant with all His glory so that the grandeur of God is encamped in his heart. Such a person develops a relationship with God that may be likened to iron, which when cast into an intensely scorching and blazing fire, seems to take on the appearance of fire, but in reality it is still the same iron, not fire. And so in actuality, the same relationship exists between God and those who truly love him. Such individuals begin to feel in themselves that God has descended in them. And sometimes in this state of union with God, some of them utter apparent blasphemies; that is to say, they explain this Divine relationship in a manner whereby common people mistake them to be claiming divinity for themselves. Words to this effect are found in all divine scriptures.

Words and Actions of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

It is in this meaning that the Holy Quran has described the words and actions of our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to be the words and actions of God. For example, the verse regarding his speech is:

مَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ²⁰

That is to say, the words of this Prophet do not spring from human instinct or impulse, rather his words are the words of God. Therefore, according to this verse all the words of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are declared to be those of God Almighty. In this context, there is another verse that establishes how even the actions of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are the actions of God Almighty. Allah states:

مَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ²¹

In other words, whatever you threw was not thrown by you, but it was Allah who threw. Thus, it is established by this verse that the actions of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are the actions of God. This establishes that the words of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, are the words of God, and his actions are the actions of God. The only conclusion that follows from this is that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the perfect manifestation of the Divine Being. However, despite this, wise Muslims neither declare the

²⁰ Nor does he speak out of *his own* desire. (*an-Najm*, 53:4-5)

²¹ *al-Anfal*, 8:18

Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to be God, nor do they proclaim him to be a person of the Godhead like the Christians, and this notwithstanding the fact that there is practical proof to substantiate the idea. For example, just as God is jealous for His own Being, He was also jealous for the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. God Almighty did not allow the Prophet to leave this world until those who had tormented him and exiled him from his homeland, and who had shed innocent blood, were made to taste divine punishment, and until those who had supported him were seated on thrones.

When we compare the circumstances of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, with those of Jesus Christ, we must declare that in the practical sense, Allah the Exalted did not manifest any succour in favour of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, God continued to support the Jews, until they had nailed Jesus to the cross and subjected him to immense humiliation. When Khosrow Pervez²² intended to murder the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, he himself was put to the sword that very same night. On

²² Khosrow II was the king of Persia who reigned between 590–628 AD, under whom the Sasanian Empire achieved its greatest expansion. He was deposed and executed by his son.
[Publisher]

the other hand, when the arrest warrant for Jesus Christ was issued on account of the false allegations of the Jews, a few guards had arrested him within three hours before he was put into custody. One can wonder now whether any divine glory accompanied such a person who could not escape arrest despite his night-long supplications. By contrast, we observe that conspirators assembled in large numbers around the house of the Noble Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and besieged his home with the intent to attack and kill him, but failed in spite of their utmost efforts. Further, accompanied by divine benevolence, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was saved without supplicating all night like Jesus Christ, and emerged from this siege unharmed and unnoticed. However, the heart-rending cry of the Messiah: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” which is mocked and ridiculed by the Jews even today, was rejected, and according to the Christians themselves, the only consequence that followed was Jesus being crucified.

Such were the dealings of God Almighty with the Messiah, and his disciples too fared no better. He had promised to them his own return in their very lives. Now observe how clearly this prophecy proved false. It has

been nearly two thousand years, and there is no sign of his return. All those who waited died; the Jews would taunt them and ask about the return of their teacher, but this question would always embarrass them and they could offer no reply. They were promised twelve thrones, but one disciple become an apostate even in the Messiah's lifetime and another more or less, acted no differently. In this way only ten thrones remained even though the prophecy spoke of twelve. Our Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, promised his companions that they would be seated on thrones in this very world and even our opponents know that this promise was fulfilled. In short, there is nothing exceptional or extraordinary about the words comprised in the teaching of the Messiah, which supposedly afford him divinity, because such words have been used to honour other Prophets as well. Adam has also been called the son of God, as was Israel; in fact, at one place it is written that you are all gods. However, should we conclude from such words that the people to whom these words are addressed are in fact God or sons of God? The Messiah too has used similar words.

Advent of the Promised Messiah

Thus, it must be said with utmost regret that in the case of the Messiah, a mountain has been made out of a molehill. Pay heed, for **I also receive revelations from God**. For more than twenty years, God Almighty has been conversing with me and about one hundred and fifty signs have appeared. I swear by God Almighty that I too have given life to the dead in the manner that divine practice has always allowed for the dead to be revived. I can also swear on oath that more than ten thousand prayers of mine have been accepted. God Almighty has used far greater words for me in His word than those which occur for Jesus Christ in the Gospels and supposedly establish his divinity. I have published such words in my books as well. God has named me Adam. God has named me Abraham. God has named me the Promised Messiah and informed me that I am the Promised one whom all the Prophets have waited for but passed away. But despite all this, I do not claim to be God or the son of God, although there are numerous expressions about me in the word of God, on the basis of which I could be declared God with greater ease than the Messiah son of Mary. But I know that this is unbelief. That is why I am surprised more than anyone else in the entire world as to what special distinction the Messiah son of Mary

possesses, for which he was made God. Did he manifest special miracles? On the contrary, I find that much greater miracles are being shown in my support. Were his prophecies of a superior nature? I would be wrong if I do not declare that the prophecies granted to me are far greater than those of **the Messiah son of Mary**. How can I accept that the Gospels contain such lofty words with regards to the Messiah son of Mary that they prove his divinity? I swear by God, a false oath in whose name brings a curse in this world and the next, that the words revealed by God Almighty in my honour—and again I declare on oath that they are purely the words of God, and not interpolated, changed or altered like the Gospels—are much superior in grandeur than the ones which Christian missionaries quote from the Gospels in relation to the Messiah son of Mary. But would it be permissible for me to claim divinity or to be called the son of God? Rest assured that the Messiah son of Mary, too, is neither the son of God nor God. I am **the Messiah of Muhammad^{sa}** and he is the **Mosaic Messiah**. Divine destiny had decreed the coming of a Messiah at the end of the Israelite dispensation whose law began with Moses. In parallel to this, it was also decreed that a Messiah would appear at the end of the Ishmaelite dispensation whose law began with Muhammad, the

Chosen One, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and so too has this come to pass.

Moses, a servant of God, brought the religious law for the Israelites. However, God knew that fourteen centuries after Moses, the Children of Israel would forsake the deeper truths and subtleties of the law and their moral condition would have extremely deteriorated. So for this purpose, God raised the Messiah son of Mary in the fourteenth century after Moses in a land where the Israelite kingdom was no more. Just as the likeness of Moses—Muhammad, the Chosen One, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him—appeared in the world as per the book of Deuteronomy in the Torah, so too God raised a Messiah fourteen centuries thereafter in the likeness of the first and **I am that Messiah**. And as the like of Moses is superior to Moses in many respects, the like of Jesus is **also** superior to Jesus in many respects, and this is a degree of excellence which God bestows on whomsoever He pleases.

How Can Sinlessness be Proved?

I find that the issue of sinlessness and intercession, which is repeatedly presented by the Christians, is a sheer delusion into which they have fallen. If sinlessness is to be inferred from the fact that no criticism is levelled against

the practical life of an individual by their enemy, then allow us to draw your attention to books by the Jews who have strongly criticised the character of the Messiah and his mother. And if sinlessness is to be inferred from the fact that a person himself claims to be good, then allow us to show you from the Gospel that the Messiah himself admits that he is not good. Hence, the sinlessness of the Messiah son of Mary cannot be established in any respect. In fact, certain actions as recorded in the Gospels prove to the contrary: for example, drinking, violating the eternal laws of the Bible regarding circumcision and the prohibition of swine etc., unjustly damaging the property of others, swearing at the Scribes and Pharisees, allowing harlots to touch his body, allowing a sinful woman to anoint him—which was unlawful in the sight of God—and allowing his disciples to pluck ears from the fields of others. Now tell us whether or not these matters fall under sin or not? If drinking was good, then why did John abhor it? Daniel said that the doors of heaven remain shut upon those who drink. Circumcision was an eternal command, so why was it forbidden, even though, according to recent investigations, it cures many diseases? Similarly, swine was prohibited for all times, then why was it declared lawful? Christ said that the Torah had not been abrogated and then himself pro-

ceded to abolish it.

It ought to be realised that to prove the sinlessness of the Messiah son of Mary in light of the Gospels, is as difficult as proving the health of a consumptive who has been reduced to a mere skeleton and suffers from diarrhoea. Was it not essential that first of all the Christians ought to have proved the sinlessness of the Messiah before criticising others? Upon seeing the word *istighfar* in the **Quran**, is it honest on their part to rashly assert that this presupposes sinfulness, and turn a blind eye to the statement of the Gospel: "I am not good"?

Then, besides all of the above, we also see that one can be an intercessor in the Hereafter only if he has shown some example of intercession in this world. In view of this criterion, when we look at Moses, he proves to be an intercessor, for he often averted imminent chastisement with his prayer as is testified to by the Torah. Similarly, when we look at Muhammad, the Chosen One, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his being an intercessor appears to be a resplendently self-evident truth. For it was by the influence of this very intercession that his humble companions were raised to sit on thrones. Moreover, it was indeed as a result of his intercession that people, who were brought up in idolatry and polytheism, became such believers in the

Oneness of God as remains unprecedented in history. Further still, it was also the effect of his intercession that to this day his followers receive true revelations from God, and God converses with them. But how and where can we find all these evidences for the Messiah son of Mary? What could be greater and more impressive evidence in favour of the intercession of **our Chief and Master, Muhammad, the Chosen One, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him**, than the fact that **whatever we receive from God through our Revered Master, cannot be attained by our enemies**? Should our opponents come forward to test this, the matter could be settled in a few days, but they do not seek a verdict. They press us to believe in a god who can neither speak nor see, nor can he foretell anything beforehand. However, our God has power over all such things. Blessed are those who seek such a God.