

How to be Free from Sin

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of Qadian^{as}**

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā'at

ISLAM INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

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First Urdu Edition:

The Review of Religions (Urdu), January 1902

First English Translation:

The Review of Religions (English), January 1902

Present English Translation:

UK, 2008

Published by:

Islam International Publications Ltd.

'Islamabad' Sheephatch Lane,

Tilford, Surrey GU10 2AQ

United Kingdom

Printed in UK at:

Raqeem Press

'Islamabad'

Tilford, Surrey GU10 2AQ

ISBN: 1 85372 978 7

Introduction

About the Author

Born in 1835 in Qadian (India), Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}, devoted himself to the study of the Holy Quran and to a life of prayer and devotion. Finding Islam the target of foul attacks from all directions and the fortunes of Muslims at a low ebb, he, as the Imam and the voice articulate of the age, undertook the task of vindicating Islam and presenting its teachings in their pristine purity. In his vast corpus of writings, lectures, discourses, religious debates etc., he argued that Islam was the only living faith, by following which, man could establish contact with his Creator and enter into communion with Him. He announced that God had appointed him the Messiah and Mahdi, according to the prophecies of the Bible, the Holy Quran and *Aḥādīth*. In 1889 he began to accept initiation into his Jamā'at, which is now established in over a hundred and eighty countries. He wrote more than eighty books in Urdu, Arabic and Persian.

After his demise in 1908, the Promised Messiah^{as} was succeeded by Khulafā (Successors), who have continued his mission. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalīfatul Masīḥ V^{at}, is the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslims Jamā'at and the fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

About the Book

The Islamic concept of salvation differs from that of other religions, and from Christianity in particular, because Islam rejects the concept of Original Sin and declares man to be responsible only for his own sins. He, therefore, needs to free himself from his own sins in order to attain salvation. In this article, the

Promised Messiah^{as} answers the all-important question, why does man commits sin, and how can he free himself from it.

The Promised Messiah^{as} writes that man is by his very nature averse to things he believes to be harmful, and if he commits sin it is only because he does not truly believe in the existence of God and in the Day of Reckoning. Had he possessed the same certainty about the accountability of sin, as he does, for instance, about the harmfulness of a poison or a snake, he would never even think of transgressing Divine commandments.

The Promised Messiah^{as} also argues that a true religion must be judged by its ability to lead its followers to certainty about the existence of God. The holy author makes a detailed comparison between Islam and other major religions, and concludes that Islam alone can lead man to perfect awareness and, consequently, to freedom from sin.

The first English translation of this article was published under the title *How to get rid of the Bondage of Sin*, in the English edition of *The Review of Religions*, January 1902. The current translation has been prepared by Wakālat Taṣnīf, Rabwah.

Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to the following for assisting me in the various stages of this translation: Raja Ata-ul Mannan, Syed Tanwir Mujtaba, Mirza Usman Ahmad Adam, and Tahir Mahmood Mubashar. I am also grateful to Munir-ud-Din Shams Sahib, Additional Wakīl-ut-Taṣnīf, for his help and support, and for providing the vital link for seeking guidance from Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V^{at}.

Chaudhry Muhammad ‘Alī
Wakīlūt Taṣnīf
Tehrik Jadīd
Rabwah
12 February, 2008

Publisher's Note

Please note that words in the text in normal brackets () and in between the long dashes—are the words of the Promised Messiah^{as}. If any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translator for the purpose of clarification, they are put in square brackets [].

The name of Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation *Ṣallallāhu ‘Alaihi Wasallam* (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The names of other Prophets and Messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for ‘*Alaihissalām* (on whom be peace). 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. The symbol ^{ra} is used with the name of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and those of the Promised Messiah^{as}, and it stands for *Raḍī Allāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā/‘anhum* (May Allah be pleased with him/with her/with them). Likewise, the symbol th stands for *Raḥimahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (may Allah have mercy on him), and ^{at} stands for *Ayyadahullāhu Ta‘ālā* (May Allah, the Mighty help him).

In transliterating Arabic words we have followed the following system adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society.

ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word 'honour'.

ث *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word 'thing'.

ح *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.

خ *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in 'loch'.

- ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English th in 'that'.
ص *ṣ*, strongly articulated s.
ض *ḍ*, similar to the English th in 'this'.
ط *ṭ*, strongly articulated palatal t.
ظ *ẓ*, strongly articulated z.
ع ʿ, a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
غ *gh*, a sound approached very nearly in the r 'grasseye' in French, and in the German r. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the 'gargling' position whilst pronouncing it.
ق *q*, a deep guttural k sound.
ئ ʾ, a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by:

- a* for —[˘]— (like *u* in 'bud');
i for —_˘— (like *i* in 'bid');
u for —[˘]— (like *oo* in 'wood');

Long vowels by:

- ā* for —[˘]— or ٱ (like *a* in 'father');
ī for ى —_˘— or —_˘— (like *ee* in 'deep');
ū for æ —[˘]— (like *oo* in 'root');

Other:

- ai* for ى —[˘]— (like *i* in 'site');
au for æ —[˘]— (resembling *ou* in 'sound').

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe.

We have not transliterated Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g., Islam, Mahdi, Quran, Hijra, Ramadan, Hadith, ulema, umma, sunna, kafir, pukka etc.

For quotes straight commas (straight quotes) are used to differentiate them from the curved commas used in the system of transliteration, ‘ for ξ, ’ for ε. Commas as punctuation marks are used according to the normal usage. Similarly for apostrophe normal usage is followed.

The Publishers

How to be Free from Sin

In this article, I intend to show that the remarkable material progress of the current age has been more than counterbalanced by its deplorable spiritual decline, to the extent that the souls of men have lost their ability even to grasp obvious truths. It is apparent from a close study of humanity that a hidden and formidable force is pulling it downwards, and man is swiftly being dragged into a pit which is termed *Asfalus Sāfilīn* [the lowest of the low]. Such a complete change has come over the intellects of men, that they have come to admire and praise things which are abhorrent and detestable to the spiritual eye. Every soul feels itself being dragged downwards by a force, which, through its devastating influence, has already caused a whole world to fall into decline. Pure truths are laughed at and ridiculed, and complete submission to God is looked upon as an absurdity. Every soul is drawn to-wards the world as if constrained by some hidden force.

As I have often stated before, attraction forms the basis for everything that happens in the world, and the side which possesses greater conviction is able to attract others towards itself. There is every truth in the principle that a force can only be counteracted by another more powerful than itself. It is impossible for this world, which is being pulled downwards by the force of base attractions, to rise up again, unless an opposing force appears from heaven to reinforce people's faith, and to show them that there is more sub-

stantial and lasting joy in submission to the commandments of God than in the fulfilment of carnal passions, and to convince them that transgression is worse than death. This heavenly light of conviction is granted to man through the 'Sun', i.e., the Imam of his age, and failure to recognize him amounts to dying a death of ignorance. The person who thinks he has no need of this true source of light is deluded, for he sets himself against the immutable laws of God. Human eyes, even though they possess a light of their own, cannot see without the sun. The sun is the source of the light which descends from heaven and illuminates the earth, and without it our eyes are as good as blind. He who attains conviction through this heavenly light is drawn towards piety, and it is natural for a struggle to ensue between the two attractions, one pulling him towards virtue and the other towards vice, one towards the East and the other towards the West. The clash is all the more ferocious when the two attractions are at their peak—as they are during times of tremendous material advancement. As the earth undergoes phenomenal progress, rest assured that spiritual preparations are also being made and an attraction has been formed in heaven to counter the earthly one. The days when neglect and evil reign supreme upon the earth are terrifying, because they have been marked for the spiritual battle foretold by the Prophets in the form of various metaphors. Some people describe it as the final battle between the Angels of heaven and the Satans of the earth, which will culminate in the end of the world; others naively think

that it will be a physical battle, fought with swords and guns. The latter are completely mistaken, for they naïvely interpret a spiritual battle to mean a physical one.

In short, a fierce clash between the darkness of the earth and the light of heaven is imminent, as foretold by all the Prophets, from Adam to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. The commander of the one side is called 'the Concealer of the truth', while that of the other is known as 'the Revealer of the truth'. The one who comes from heaven in the company of angels is the manifestation of [the Angel] Michael, and the one who is raised from the earth with the powers of darkness is the manifestation of Satan.

When we observe the well-armed legions of the earth busy in their preparations, having already accomplished a great deal, we are led to believe that the kingdom of heaven is not unmindful of its preparations either. The heavenly dominion is averse to show and ostentation and it accomplishes a great deal without anyone knowing about it. People finally become aware of it when there appears a light in heaven and a white minaret on earth; the heavenly light then falls upon the minaret and illuminates the whole world.

This last sentence requires some explanation. Although God's spiritual order is in complete harmony with the physical one, it does, at times, display singular features that are not easily discernable in the physical order. For example, when an earthly attraction is formed, it results in the formation of a heavenly attraction, even though the two are

opposed to one another. And it stands to reason that when these two attractions reach their pinnacle in the final days of the world, they must confront one another, for neither can gain supremacy without destroying the other. When two sides are equal in power and glory, they inevitably clash. Not only has this been foretold in all the books of the Prophets, but reason also demands that when two powerful and opposing attractions come into collision, one of them must vanquish the other or both must be annihilated.

In keeping with the description found in the books of the Prophets, it so happened that when a thousand years had passed after Jesus^{as}—the period in which, according to the prophecies, Satan had remained in shackles—an evil force began to assert itself upon the earth. This was the time when Islam began to decline in respect of its noble principles; its spiritual progress came to a halt, and its worldly conquests ceased. Islam was born in an age when Satan lay bound in chains—and so it must have been, for this is what all the Prophets, till John the divine, had foretold—and its downfall began when Satan was re-released after 1000 A.D., and Islam ceased to progress any further. Thereafter, all kinds of satanic activities took root and the tree of evil began to grow upon the earth, until some of its branches pervaded the East, some reached the farthest settlements of the West, and some spread over the North and South. Just as external evens have shown the period of Satan's imprisonment to be a thousand years, the period of his freedom is also a thousand years, as foretold by the Prophets, and it comes to an end at the turn of

the fourteenth century of the Hijra. These thousand years are to be reckoned according to the divine or lunar calendar, for it is according to this system that the Jews and Muslims have been taught to determine the time of [the fulfilment of] prophecies. Calculations based on the solar calendar are an innovation of man and go against the purport of the sacred writings.

These, in short, are the final days of Satan's respite, indeed they have already passed, for nineteen years have already elapsed since the turn of the Hijra century which marked the end of Satan's period of freedom. He, however, does not wish to be stripped of his power, and a struggle between the two forces is inevitable. This was ordained from the beginning, and God's word can never be false.

Another testimony which shows that these are the days [of the final battle], is that the sixth millennium since the birth of Adam, in which the second Adam was supposed to appear, has also passed. Since the sixth day is the day of the birth of Adam and, according to the scriptures, a day symbolizes a thousand years, we have to accept that the second Adam has already appeared in keeping with God's promises, even though he has not yet been fully recognized. We also have to believe that the place God has appointed for his advent is in the East and not in the West. Since Adam was given an abode in a garden towards the East (Genesis 2:8), the second Adam must also appear in an Eastern country in order to maintain his similarity to the first. Muslims and Christians are both equally

obligated to accept this, unless of course they are inclined towards disbelief.

Thus, there should be no difficulty in understanding the truth, for it is quite apparent that this is the time for the final battle between light and darkness. The forces of darkness are exerting their utmost power, and it is futile to think that they can now be subjugated by any other means except through the light that descends directly from heaven.

Darkness has completely pervaded the world and the flickering lamp of righteousness is about to die out. Customary belief, traditional knowledge and superficial prayers can no longer bring back its faded light. Can the blind lead the blind? Can darkness dispel darkness? No! A new minaret has to be built on the earth which rises above the lowly dwellings, so that the heavenly lamp may be placed on it, and the whole world may be illuminated by its light. How can light reach distant places unless it is placed somewhere high?

What does the minaret symbolize? It represents the holy, pure and resolute soul, which is given to that perfect man who is worthy of heavenly light, and this meaning is inherent in the word 'minaret' itself. The loftiness of the minaret signifies the high resolve of such a man, its strength signifies the fortitude which he shows at times of trial, and its pristine whiteness represents his innocence, which must ultimately be established. And when all this has taken place i.e., when his truthfulness has been established with arguments, and his fortitude, steadfastness,

patience and perseverance has become apparent like a shining minaret, the period of his first advent—which was marked by trials and tribulations—comes to an end, and the time is now ripe for him to appear in glory. Spirituality, which is imbued with Divine glory, descends upon him who is like a minaret, and invests him with Divine powers by God's permission. All this happens in his second advent, and this is exactly the manner in which the Promised Messiah was supposed to appear. The Traditions prevalent among the Muslims which speak, for instance, of his descent near a minaret, are only meant to signify that his advent will be a glorious one and that he will be accompanied by Divine power. Heaven holds him back until the time God has appointed for his advent, but this does not mean that he was not [physically] present on the earth before that.

It is also a Divine practice that He uses physical illustrations to explain some spiritual matters. The Temple in Baitul Muqaddas [Jerusalem], and the Ka'bah in Mecca, for example, serve as symbols of Divine manifestation. It is in this context that the Islamic Shariah speaks of the Promised Messiah's descent on, or near a minaret, in a country which lies to the East of Damascus—just as Adam was given a dwelling in the East. There is no harm if a physical minaret is also built before his glorious advent; it is, in fact, mentioned in the Hadith literature that a minaret shall be built before the advent of the Promised Messiah, and it will serve as a sign of his glorious appearance.

The Promised Messiah is to appear in two phases. The first will be unremarkable, accompanied by all kinds of tribulations. This will be followed by a period of glory, before which a minaret must be built to comply with the Tradition which says that the physical minaret will be a reflection of the spiritual one.

The world will not recognize him before his glorious advent, for he will not be of the world, nor will it love him, for it does not love God from Whom he will have come. He must face trials and persecution, and aspersions must be cast upon him; indeed, Islamic prophecies foretell that the Promised Messiah will initially be rejected, and ignorant people will make mischief against him. They will attack him unjustly and think that they have acted piously, and others shall torment him and consider their actions pleasing to God. Thus will he be subjected to every kind of tribulation, until the time of his glorious advent which has been preordained by God. People with willing hearts will then reflect: 'What kind of an impostor is this who cannot be subjugated? Why does God help him instead of us?' An angel of God will thereupon descend upon their hearts and admonish them: 'Is it necessary that all the prophecies found in your Traditions should be fulfilled, and is this what hinders you [from accepting the Promised Messiah]? Is it not possible that these prophecies may be prone to error or misinterpretation, and is it not permissible to view some of them as metaphorical? Were the Jews not deprived of faith and fortune because they waited in vain for the literal fulfilment of all their prophecies ac-

ording to their own understanding? Considering that it is the same God, and His ways are the same, is it not possible that you are being tried in the same way?' Their hearts will ultimately incline towards the truth, just as in [the times of] the past [Prophets].

It would be a mistake to declare that in this age physical wars should be waged in order to spread faith and piety. The sword, rather than revealing the beauties and excellences of the truth, conceals them and shrouds them in ambiguity. Those who hold such beliefs are foes, not friends, of Islam. They are mean-natured and lack moral fibre, their hearts are cloaked in uncertainty, they are gullible and ignorant, and they provide the opponents of Islam with the opportunity to object that the progress of Islam depends upon the sword. This belief is detrimental to Islam. No religion has to resort to force when it is capable of establishing its truth through rational arguments, undisputed testimonies, and heavenly signs. On the other hand, no further argument is required to falsify a religion which does not possess these qualities and turns to the sword to compensate for its own weakness. Such a religion is in effect slain by its own sword.

Critics wrongfully object that if Jihad is considered unlawful in this day and age, why was it practised in the early days of Islam? These people do not seem to be aware that Islam rejects the use of force to spread religion under any circumstances. The Holy Quran categorically

says: ¹ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ 'There is no compulsion in religion.' The sword was raised [by the early Muslims] because the savages of Arabia, who had lost all sense of morality and human values, had become the sworn enemies of Islam. When the Unity of God and the truth of Islam was shown to them through unequivocal arguments, and it was impressed upon their minds that idolatry was wrong and against the dignity of man, they were unable to counter these arguments. The sensible among them, therefore, inclined towards Islam resulting in the separation of brothers from brothers and sons from their fathers. At this point the idolaters were reduced to severely punishing those who became Muslims as a means of preserving their false religion and dissuading people from Islam. These crimes were perpetrated by the Chiefs of Mecca, Abū Jahl being one of them.

Those who are acquainted with the early history of Islam are no doubt aware of the cruelty and barbarity that was perpetrated by the opponents in Mecca, and the number of innocent people who were killed as a result. But this did not deter people from embracing Islam. Even those of limited intelligence could see that its teachings were far more rational and convincing than those of the idol-worshippers. When the opponents saw the futility of their efforts, they decided that the only solution was to assassinate the Holy Prophet^{sa}, but God rescued him from their hands and led him to Medina in safety. The Meccans,

¹ Al-Baqarah, 2:257 [Publishers]

however, persisted in their evil designs, and continued their efforts to kill him even in Medina. Under these circumstances, the Muslims had to defend themselves and to avenge those who attacked them unjustly. The Islamic wars were not fought to spread the faith but only to protect the lives of the Muslims. Can any reasonable person believe that Islam was unable to prove the Oneness of God before the idolaters—who worshipped stone idols and other inanimate objects, and were engrossed in all kinds of vice—and had to resort to the sword for this reason? God forbid! These allegations are groundless and those who make them, do a grave injustice to Islam by concealing the truth.

The Maulawīs have played their part in perpetrating this injustice, but the Christian clerics are no less guilty, for they too have impressed these thoughts in the minds of the Muslims by highlighting the edicts of foolish Maulawīs. When Muslims hear their own Maulawīs issuing edicts in favour of Jihad, and hear the Christian clerics—who are also eminent scholars—raising the same objection against Islam, they fall prey to the concept that Islam encourages this kind of Jihad. Both these positions have given rise to these unfounded objections against Islam.

Had the Christian clergy not adopted this course, and had they honestly and truthfully admitted that the edicts of the Maulawīs are based on sheer ignorance, and that the circumstances which had necessitated the Jihad during the early days of Islam are not present in this age, the very notion of this kind of Jihad would have disappeared from

the world. But they failed to understand this, being guided more by their passions than their reason.

God only permitted the Muslims to fight when He saw that the disbelievers had become deserving of death due to their atrocities. But He also made the provision that anyone who accepted Islam would be spared. It is this which has, perhaps, caused the critics to draw erroneous conclusions. They do not seem to understand that the injunction was concerned not with coercion but with offering clemency to those who deserved to die. Calling this teaching coercive is the height of absurdity. They merited their punishment, not because they were non-Muslims, but because they were killers. And since God was aware that they had perfectly understood the truth of Islam, therefore, out of His grace, He granted them an opportunity to atone for their sins. This is further evidence that Islam did not teach coercion, rather it provided respite to those who should have been killed for their bloodshed.

Muslims suffered many hardships, and the degree of prejudice that existed against them was such that if any member of a tribe entered Islam he would at once be executed or would live in constant fear of his life. Muslims had to fight to win peace. But even under these difficult circumstances, they never drew the sword unless the two conditions of war were met. War was always thrust upon them and they never fought with the intention of spreading the faith. They only fought for the sake of security and self-defence, but ignorant Maulawīs later gave it a different complexion and began to take pride in something

quite barbaric and shameful. But it would be wrong to lay the blame on the teachings of Islam. The blame lies wholly with those who do not value human life, and are so thirsty for blood that they eagerly await a Mahdi who, they believe, will come to cause bloodshed. They wish to convince people that Islam has always depended upon force and coercion for its propagation and that it does not possess an iota of truth.

The Maulawīs do not seem to be content with the decline of Islam, for they wish to drag it to even lower depths by advancing such doctrines. Rest assured, however, that God will never allow Islam to become a target of such aspersions. Our foolish opponents merely dig their own grave by adhering to the belief that Islam was spread by the sword from the very beginning. The time has now come to banish this false belief from our minds instead of promoting it. The Maulawīs will do Islam a great favour if they can unite to dispel this notion from the minds of ignorant Muslims. In so doing, they will not only help to reveal the excellences and beauties of Islam, but will also remove the aversion which religious opponents have for it on account of their misconceptions, and they will be able to benefit from this fountain of light.

Just as a murderer is feared by everyone, particularly by women and children, the people of other faiths are likewise afraid of those Muslims who hold such beliefs about Jihad. They are afraid of spending a night in their company, lest these zealots should want to become *ghāzīs* [champions of Islam] by murdering their guests. There are

people of the Frontier who think that this act of 'piety' will make them deserving of Paradise and all its bounties. The Muslims should be ashamed that people of other faiths no longer feel secure in their vicinity, and expect the worst from them. I have encountered many people who show fear on account of this latent belief of the Muslims.

An Englishman came to visit Qadian on 20th November, 1901, or thereabout. Many of my followers were with me at the time and we were engaged in religious discourse. He stood there for some time until we courteously invited him to join us. He then introduced himself as an English tourist who had also been to Arabia, and expressed his desire to take some photographs of my Jamā'at. We assented to his request and afterwards asked him to stay with us for a few days. But he seemed reluctant and said that he had heard of many Christians being mercilessly killed at the hands of Muslims, and even related a few incidents that he had witnessed in Baghdad. But we explained to him that our Jamā'at, known as the Ahmadi sect, is strongly averse to such beliefs and abhors the perpetrators of these crimes, and our major service to mankind lies in trying to root out such beliefs. This satisfied him and he spent the night in our company.

The purpose of narrating this incident is to show that these beliefs, which run counter to the true teachings of Islam, have distorted its image in the eyes of people of other faiths, and have caused them to harbour mistrust and hatred against the Muslims. They only expect human sympathy from Muslims who are not of the religious bent

of mind and do not care for the tenets of the faith. A great deal of suspicion persists against Islam and, unfortunately, it is the Muslims who are to be blamed for this. Can there be any greater sin than to deprive the world of the blessings of Islam—as the Muslim clergy and their followers have done—and can such a religion be considered Divine which is unable to inculcate its teachings into people's hearts without brandishing the sword? Nay, the true religion is the one whose irrefutable arguments and inner excellences themselves act as a sword, and it requires no sword made of steel.

The current decline of Islam demands a Reformer. Islam today is in a very precarious state, and its light has been almost completely eclipsed. The Muslims have erred not only in their beliefs but also in their practices. They have fabricated some Traditions which have not only adversely affected their character, but are also contrary to the Divine law of nature. For example, Divine law has established three basic human rights: One must not kill an innocent person, one must not injure someone's honour, and one must not unjustly appropriate another person's property. And yet there are Muslims who break all three of these commandments. They murder innocent people and do not fear God, and their foolish Maulawīs have even issued edicts declaring it lawful to lure away or capture women of other religions—whom they consider infidels—and to take them as wives. Similarly, they consider it lawful to usurp the property of any disbeliever through embezzlement or theft. Just consider the perilous state of the

religion whose Maulawīs issue such edicts! All this is the work of egotistic people who falsely attribute such teachings to God and His Messenger. They must bear the burden of all the sins that are being committed by ignorant Muslims. They are like wolves in sheep's clothing, deceiving the people, and they are a poison but feign to be a wonderful antidote. They harbour malice towards Islam and God's creatures and their hearts are devoid of compassion and sympathy, but they pretend otherwise. Their sermons are misleading and calculated to serve their own selfish ends. They come into mosques masquerading as holy men whilst concealing their sinful character. This is not specific to any country, city or sect. The Muslim world is rife with those who call themselves ulema, attire themselves as Maulawīs, and try to assume a spiritual countenance in order to appear godly, but their deeds betray their true nature and character. They do not desire piety or compassion to spread in the world, for this would go against their own interests.

Thus Islam is now entrenched in difficulties. Most hearts are dead and there is no perceptible movement towards righteousness. The path of moderation has been abandoned, and there is even a sect which worships at shrines and performs circuits—*Ṭawāf*—around them as is done around the Ka'bah. They believe that the souls of their departed saints are omnipotent and that this power has been transferred to them by God. The majority of shrines are built around graves which the custodians expect their followers to worship. If a miracle is asked for, thousands of

miracles of the saint are related without a shred of evidence. Considering this to be the essence of Islam, the people of these sects view all other Muslims as misguided.

While these people have gone to one extreme, there are others who have gone to the other, crossing all the limits in their denial of spiritual blessings. Let alone sainthood, they do not even have the slightest regard for Prophethood. They reject miracles, deride them and mock at them, and consider revelation to be a product of the recipient's own mind, resulting from an inherent genius. They consider prophecies, that are not a result of a person's own foresight and belong purely to the realm of the unseen, as impossible. They believe that no revelation descends from God, there is no truth in miracles or prophecies, the graves of the dead are mere mounds of earth bearing no relationship with the souls, the day of resurrection is a myth which dates back to the age of ignorance, and that worrying about the Hereafter is sheer insanity. They believe that all wisdom lies in the acquisition of material gains and following and emulating those who are relentless in their pursuit of the world. These are the extreme positions which the Muslims hold vis-à-vis Prophethood and Resurrection.

Even in their day to day conduct we find the Muslims at one extreme of the spectrum or the other. They lack any sense of moderation in words, actions, morals, marriage, divorce, parsimony, wastefulness, anger, mercy, revenge, or forgiveness. They are in a strange quandary; their ignorance has no limits and their transgression knows no

bounds. If these people, who hold up the banner of *Tauḥīd* and moderation, have crossed all limits, is there any use lamenting over the condition of the people of other faiths?

The Christians inhabit a part of the world that is known for its intellectual prowess. This should have been a source of great hope, but I regret to say that they have squandered their acquired knowledge of science and philosophy when it comes to matters of religion and the Unity of God. When we see their worldly projects and their systematic methods and how they invent new industries virtually everyday, and then observe their pathetic understanding of God and how they have come to consider a humble human to be the Lord of the worlds, we are at a loss to understand how their intellect can work so wonderfully in worldly matters but fails them completely when it comes to recognizing God!

The difference between the extreme views of the Muslims and the Christians is that, while many Muslims usurp the rights of their fellow beings, the Christians on the other hand infringe upon the rights of God. Muslims no longer have love and compassion for their fellow beings because their misconceptions about Jihad have made them hard-hearted. Indeed, some vicious people among them readily kill innocent people for small personal gains or due to some satanic inspiration, nor do they refrain from humiliating people or seizing their property. By disregarding these essential human rights, they tarnish the very image of humanity. As for the Christians, they have infringed upon the rights of the Almighty in every possible way.

They have unreasonably taken a humble person to be their God, but are no closer to achieving their purpose which was to attain salvation. If belief in the Crucifixion of Christ was the only remedy for getting rid of sin, why has it failed in the case of the Europeans who indulge in such sinful acts that one is even ashamed to speak of them? They have advanced in sin and transgression to an extraordinary degree, and we cannot say that they are any less immoral than the Asians. In view of all this, why has this obsolete remedy not been replaced? Even in this short life, every doctor and patient sees to it that if a cure fails to produce the desired result within a week or so, it has to be replaced by a better alternative. Why then has this remedy [of Crucifixion] not been replaced to this day, even though its ineffectiveness has been categorically shown? After nineteen hundred futile years, is it still worth believing that faith in the Crucifixion can bring about true salvation? Despite the fact that no such signs have hitherto appeared, is it still wise to hold out in the hope that a time will come when Christians shall refrain from evil and intemperance more than the people of other faiths?

Anyone who lives in a European country can bear witness, indeed any sensible person who has ever visited Europe and spent some time in Paris and other cities will not hesitate to testify, that in certain parts of the continent people no longer consider adultery a sin. They consider polygamy to be unlawful, but find nothing wrong with casting covetous glances at women. In France one can find thousands of women who do not feel the need to get

married. Is all this because a new verse of the Bible has been discovered which renders all these things lawful, or because the blood of Christ has had the opposite effect and the promise of salvation has not been fulfilled? The fact is that this was never the correct remedy, because the death of one person can have no bearing on the salvation of another; rather all blessings emanate from a Living God, not a dead one; and light shines forth when the sun rises and not when it sets.

The failure of this remedy to grant salvation from sin also falsifies the doctrine that the son of God gave up his life for this purpose. We can never ascribe to God a death whereby He sacrifices His own life and yet fails to achieve His purpose. It is also contrary to the eternal law of God that He should submit Himself to death and mortality and weakness and abasement and be born from a woman's womb. There is no precedent which validates this concept—it would be satisfying to know that God has experienced similar births several times before—nor is it substantiated by the kind of Divine miracles which man can never show on his own. Furthermore, this doctrine has not achieved what it was aimed at. Is it not true that the people of Europe excessively indulge in drinking and debauchery, the two major sins which satisfy the carnal passions, and is it not true that most men and women in Europe partake their full share of both of these sins? It would not be an exaggeration to say that Europe has surpassed the nations of Asia in the consumption of alcohol. In Europe, stores which sell wine are so common that

their number exceeds the number of all the shops in our towns and villages. Experience shows that drinking is the root of all evil, for, in a matter of minutes, it excites a person to a state where he is even ready to commit murder, not to mention the other sins that go with it. I emphatically declare that drinking and fear of God can never go together, and he cannot be called wise who does not understand the evil consequences of consuming alcohol. Another dangerous thing about alcoholism is that not everyone can give it up after it has become a habit.

If the blood of Christ cannot cleanse man of his sins, which it has obviously failed to do, is there any other way to achieve salvation? A life of sin is, after all, worse than death. In answer to this I say, on the basis of my own personal experience, that from the birth of man to these final days of the world there has been only one way of avoiding sin and disobedience. When man attains true recognition of God, through categorical arguments and luminous signs, and is virtually able to behold Him, he comes to realize that Divine wrath is a consuming fire; and when God manifests His beauty to him, he realizes that in Him lies perfect bliss. All the veils between him and Divine majesty and beauty are thus lifted, and this alone can check egoistical passions and bring about true reformation.

My answer may invite the response: "Do we not believe in God? Do we not fear Him? Do we not love Him? Do not all people, with the exception of a few, believe in Him? And do they not still commit every kind of sin, and are they not involved in every type of evil and impiety?" I

say that there is a great difference between belief and true awareness. I do not say that everyone who believes is able to refrain from sin, I say that only he who truly recognizes God can safeguard himself against it, for he has experienced Divine fear as well as Divine love.

It may also be asked, "Why does Satan disobey God while he possesses true awareness?" The answer is that Satan does not possess the kind of awareness that is bestowed upon those who truly deserve it. Man, by his very nature, is affected by knowledge, and keeps away from the path of destruction when it reveals its hideous countenance. Belief only means accepting something in good faith, but true awareness means to actually experience that belief. It is impossible for true awareness—*Ma'rifat*—and sin to dwell in one heart, just as it is impossible for it to be day and night at the same time.

Our everyday experience shows that we are at once drawn towards things that are useful, and shun those we are afraid of. For instance, if you do not know that the thing you are holding in your hand is arsenic, and you imagine that it is only bamboo sugar or some other useful medicine, you will not hesitate to consume ten or even twenty grams of it; but if you know it to be a deadly poison which will kill you instantly, you will never dare to take even a gram of it. Similarly, when man truly realizes that God exists and that every sin is punishable in His eyes, he refrains from every sin, whether it is theft, bloodshed, fornication, cruelty, breach of trust, associating partners with Allah, falsehood, bearing false witness, arrogance,

ostentation, acquiring wealth by illegal means, treachery, cursing, fraud, unfaithfulness, leading a life of carelessness, not being grateful to God, not fearing Him, not being compassionate towards His creatures, not remembering Him with fear and humility, being lost in pursuit of worldly comfort and pleasures, forgetting the true Benefactor, being heedless about prayer and humility, selling adulterated goods, not giving in full measure, underselling, not caring for one's parents, not treating one's wife with civility, not being obedient to one's husband, casting evil glances at other men or women, being heedless about the needs of orphans, the weak and helpless, being unmindful of the rights of neighbours, deriding others in order to prove one's own superiority, mocking at people with words that are meant to hurt them, pointing out someone's bodily defects in order to humiliate him, calling people by foul names or slandering them, imputing falsehood to God or, God forbid, falsely claiming to be a Prophet or Messenger, denying God's existence, rebelling against a just ruler, and mischievously creating disorder in the land.

If someone insists that another method for attaining salvation must exist, because belief is not a check against sin, I respond by saying that no one would commit sin if he was sure that lightening would strike him the moment he did so. The logic behind this argument is irrefutable. Just consider, do you ever transgress when you are certain that punishment will be forthcoming? Would you put your hand into a fire, or throw yourself from a mountain, or jump into a well, or lie down before a moving train, or put

your hand in the mouth of a wild beast, or happily be bitten by a mad dog, or remain standing in the midst of terrible thunderstorm? Would you not rush out of a house that is about to collapse, or jump out of a bed in which there is a snake, or escape from a building that is on fire? If you are keen to avoid these possible dangers, then why do you not shun those sins that I have just mentioned? The answer, which a wise person will give after proper deliberation, will be that this contradiction is due to the difference in the way we perceive the two things. Most people do not have sufficient awareness about sin and, even though they consider them to be harmful, do not avoid them as they would avoid a lion or a snake. Deep in their hearts, they do not really believe that they will be punished for their sins. They even doubt whether God really exists, and, if He does, whether their souls will survive after death, and, if they do, whether or not they will actually be punished for their sins. Most people do harbour such thoughts without being aware of them. But, at the same time, they avoid all the dangers that I have mentioned above, because they fear certain death if they go near them, and if they come face to face with such a danger they waste no time running away from it. The fact is that man is certain about the harmful effects of these things, but in the case of religious injunctions, he is not so sure and his knowledge is based only on conjecture and myth, instead of personal experience, and myths cannot help a man to free himself from sin. Hence, even if a thousand Messiahs were to be crucified, they would never

bring about true salvation, for sin can only be got rid of through perfect fear or perfect love. The Crucifixion of Christ, which is itself a false belief, has nothing to do with stopping the surge of sin. Be mindful that this doctrine is based on ignorance, our experience does not testify to it, and the Messiah's suicide cannot redeem people of their sins. The very concept of true salvation is that man should be saved from the inferno of sin in this very world. Have the Christians been saved from it on account of these stories, or has anyone ever been saved because of these absurd tales, which have nothing to do with the truth and true salvation?

Look to the East and the West, you will not find anyone who has attained, through these myths, the purity that leads to certainty about God. Such purity not only makes man averse to sin, but for him the pleasures of the truth become akin to the fruits of Paradise, and his soul flows like water upon God's threshold, and a light descends from heaven which dispels all egoistic darkness. For example, when all the windows of a room are opened in broad daylight, it is at once filled with the light of the sun; but if they are kept closed, no amount of fables or tales can bring in the light. One must stand up and open the windows before the light can illuminate his room. Likewise, merely thinking about water cannot quench one's thirst; one must somehow reach water and put his mouth to it before it can satiate him.

The water which satiates thirst and quenches the fire of sin is none other than certainty. Nothing else under the

sun can avail you in this; no cross can redeem your sins and no blood can restrain you from your carnal passions, for these have no affinity with true salvation. Try to understand the facts and ponder over the truth. If you try this remedy as you try your worldly remedies, you will soon realize that no light, apart from the light of true certainty, can deliver you from the darkness within you, and that nothing, except the pure water of perfect insight, can cleanse you of your inner filth, and that the clear water of Divine 'sight' alone can soothe the burning of your heart. Whoever suggests anything to the contrary is a liar, and whoever tries a different remedy is a fool. Such people do not bring you light but lead you deeper into a dark abyss, and increase your burning and craving, instead of providing you with satiating water. No blood can save you except that which has been produced by the 'food' of conviction. No cross can redeem you but the cross of righteousness, which means remaining steadfast upon the truth. Open your eyes and reflect! Is it not true that, unless there is light, you cannot see, and unless you follow the right path, you cannot reach your destination? The spiritual order can easily be understood by comparing it to the physical one. Hence, reflect upon that which you can readily understand and, with its help, endeavour to comprehend that which lies beyond your perception. The laws that prevail in the physical world also hold true in the spiritual one, for they emanate from the same Divine source. Is there anyone who can see without eyes, or hear without ears, or speak without a tongue? Why not apply

the same laws to the spiritual order? Is it possible for anyone who has eyes to remain standing on the brink of a bottomless pit? Can anyone who has ears be unaware of the coming of burglars into his house? Would anyone, who is able to distinguish sweet from sour, eat something bitter and poisonous that results in suffering and death? If we apply these physical phenomena to the spiritual world, we can readily understand that, in order to sustain the spiritual life, one requires a light to show him the paths of danger, one must possess hearing which warns him of the dens of thieves and robbers, and one must have the sense of taste in order to distinguish sweet from bitter and poison from antidote. These are the requirements of salvation, and no one who is blind and has not been blessed with light can ever attain salvation through the blood of another.

Salvation is not something specific to the Hereafter. True salvation begins in this very life. It is a light that descends upon the soul and reveals the path that leads to destruction. Tread the path of truth and wisdom so that you may be led to God, and strengthen your hearts so that you may move towards the truth. Unfortunate is the heart that is cold, and the spirit that is dead, and the conscience that possesses no insight. Become like a pail that is lowered down a well empty and comes out full, and not like a sieve that cannot hold any water. Take care of your [spiritual] health, and rid yourselves of the fever of materialism, whose poisonous influence causes your eyes to go blind, and your ears to go deaf, and which deprives your

tongue of taste, and your hands and feet of vigour. Cut yourselves off from this world so that you may forge a connection with the Celestial One. Prevent your heart from moving in one direction so that it may move towards the other. Throw away the impurities of this world so that the shining jewel of heaven may be granted to you. Return to your origin and to the purity of your father Adam at the time of his birth, so that you, too, may be granted sovereignty over all things.

The day is drawing to a close and sun is about to set. You still have time if you wish to see, or you may be too late. Before you depart [from this world], send before you good things to eat rather than stones and bricks; and send forth clothes to wear, instead of thorns and rags. God, Who produces milk in the mother's breast even before a child is born, has sent for your sake, in your own age and your own country, one who will feed you like a mother. He shall feed you the milk of conviction, which is whiter than the sun and more exhilarating than any wine. If you have any life in you and are not dead, then rush towards him so that you may drink this fresh milk. Throw out the stale milk which has become infected with bacteria, for it cannot bring you life, and will only make you sick the moment it enters your body, for it has become a poison. Do not look adorningly at everything that is white; black is sometimes better. Black hair, for instance, reflects the vigour of youth, while white hair signifies frailty, weakness, and old age. In the same way, the 'whiteness' of ostentation and showing off one's virtue is of no avail,

and a sinful but simple person is comparatively better for he does not deviously hide his sin, and I am convinced that he is closer to the mercy of God. Do not put your faith in uncertainty, which is devoid of true light and is not based on a Divine philosophy, for all these lead to ruin. If you want to know how you can discard evil, look closely at what your hearts truly desire, and ask your conscience which remedy is the best for getting rid of sin. Can anyone believe that the blood of Christ is enough to make him fearful of committing sin? On the contrary, experience has shown that it further emboldens them, because anyone who puts his trust in the blood of Christ thinks that his sins have already been forgiven.

But he who has knowledge of the poisonous nature of sin, will never dare to commit it, for he knows how it will destroy him. A man has, therefore, been sent by God to lead you to that knowledge which will help you to see God and to see the poison of evil, after which you will run away from sin just as you run away from a wild beast.

The purpose of this article is to spread God's true teachings and signs in the world, so that those who seek salvation through the Crucifixion and Blood of Christ may find the fountain of true salvation.

True salvation cannot be found in filthy water. The water that cleanses the heart comes from heaven at its appointed time, and the river that carries it is free from dirt and filth, and its clean and pure water is eagerly used by people. The river that has stopped flowing and consists of stagnat-

ing water cannot enjoy such purity, for it gets mixed with mud and the excretion of animals. The heart which has been blessed with the knowledge of God and with conviction is like a full-flowing river that irrigates all the fields in its way, and whose cool and clear water brings peace and solace to their burning hearts. Such water is not only pure but it also purifies others by granting them wisdom that cleanses the rust of their hearts and makes them averse to sin. But the one who is like a little pool of water that is mixed with mud, cannot do mankind any good, for he cannot even purify his own soul. This is the time to rise up and start searching for the water of conviction, for it will be given to you. Once you have been filled with conviction, you should flow forth like a river, cleanse yourself of the filth of doubt and suspicion and distance yourselves from sin. This is the water that will wash away all traces of sin and purify your hearts and prepare you to mould yourselves into the image of God. You can never obliterate the inscriptions of the ego from the slate of your hearts unless you wash it with the clear water of certainty. Make a resolution so that you may be given strength, and seek so that you may be provided for. Soften your hearts so that you may understand these things, for a hard-hearted person is not likely to comprehend them. Do you imagine that you can truly hate sin unless your hearts have been filled with the majesty of God, and you have been made cognizant of the glory and power of the Living One, and your hearts have been filled with the light of

certainty? No. There is only one way, just as there is only One God and one Law.



Index

A

Abū Jahl, 10

Adam, the second: has already appeared but has not yet been recognized, 5; must appear in the East like the first Adam, 5; supposed to appear in the sixth millennium, 5; the Promised Messiah is, 5

Adam^{as}, 3, 28; born on the sixth day, 5; was given an abode in the East, 5, 7

Ahmadi Sect: is averse to coercion in religion, 14

B

Bait-ul-Muqaddas, 7

C

Christians: belief in the Crucifixion has failed to rid them of sins, 19; do not put into use all their knowledge of science and philosophy when it comes to religion, 18; have infringed upon the rights of the Almighty by taking a humble man to be God, 18

Crucifixion, 19, 25, 29

D

Damascus: prophecy about the Promised Messiah appearing in the East of, 7

Day: one day symbolizes a thousand years in the holy scriptures, 5

E

East: prophecy about the Promised Messiah appearing in the, 5

H

Hadith: a Minaret shall be built before the advent of the Promised Messiah, 7;

Muslims have fabricated some Hadith which adversely affect their character, 15

I

Islam: strongly forbids the use of coercion in religion, 12; the deplorable state of Islam in this age calls for a Reformer, 15

J

Jerusalem, 7

Jews, 5; were misled because they expected all the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah to be fulfilled literally, 8

Jihad with the sword: early Muslims resorted to , in self defence, not for spreading Islam, 10; the concept of , is detrimental to Islam, 9

K

Ka'bah, 7, 16

L

Lunar calendar: the time for the fulfilment of prophecies has to be reckoned by the, 5

M

Madina, 10

Maulawīs: can do a great service to Islam by dispelling the false notion about Jihad, 13; have given Jihad a wrong complexion, 12; must bear the burden of the sins committed by ignorant Muslims, 16

Mecca, 7, 10

Michael, the Angel, 3

Minaret: a physical Minaret will serve as a reflection of the spiritual one, 8; is a metaphor for resolve, strength and purity, 6; prophecy about the Minaret signifies that the advent of the Promised Messiah will be a glorious one, 7; prophecy about the Promised Messiah descending near a Minaret, 7

Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet, 3, 10

Muslims: are viewed with suspicion due to their belief in Jihad with the sword, 14; early Muslims were forced to take up the sword in self-defence, 10; have become hard-hearted due to their wrong concept of Jihad, 18; lack moderation and adhere to one extreme or the other, 17; some Muslims deny prophecies and miracles and do not have any regard for Prophethood, 17; some Muslims worship shrines, 16

P

Promised Messiah, the: building of a physical Minaret before the coming of, 7; destined to make his appearance in two phases, 8; is the Second Adam, 5; prophecies about , appearing in the East of Damascus, 7; prophecies about , appearing near a Minaret, 7

Q

Qadian, 14

R

Religion: a true , does not require the sword to convince people of its truth, 15

S

Salvation: despite taking a humble man as God, the Christians have failed to attain salvation from sin, 19; even if a thousand Messiahs were to be crucified, they would never bring about true salvation, for sin can only be got rid of through perfect fear or perfect love, 24; true salvation begins in this very life, 27; true salvation means to be saved from the inferno of sin in this very world, 25

Satan, 3, 4, 5, 22

Solar calendar: is an innovation of man, 5

T

Tauḥīd, 18

