

A Letter to a Dear One

Muhammad
Zafrulla
Khan



Majlis Ansarullah, USA

ایک عزیز کے نام خاطر

— از قلم —

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Letter to a Dear One

Muhammad Zafrulla Khan

Translated into English by
Shermeen Butt

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Contents

Foreword:	6
Acknowledgement:	7
An Important Statement About This Letter:	8
Letter to a Dear One:	10
A Delicate Point in Life:	10
Two Ways:	11
Objective of Life:	12
Divine Order:	13
Stages of Progress:	13
The Birth of the Human Soul:	15
Varieties of Life:	16
Divine Favors on Man:	17
The Wonder of Life:	19
Divine Knowledge Requires Knowledge of Divine Attributes:	19
Our God:	20
Unity of God:	22
Lord of All the Worlds:	24
The Gracious:	24
Merciful:	24
Master of the Day of Judgement:	24
One Who Grants Prayers:	25
Acceptance of Prayer:	26
Divine Revelation:	27
The Forgiving God:	28

- “Imbue Allah’s Attributes”: 29
- Pure Life: 30
- God’s Justice and Mercy: 32
- The Way to Closeness to Allah: 34
 - The Nature of Revelation: 34
- The Singularity of the **Qur’ān**: 36
- The Perfect Guidance of the Qur’ān: 37
 - The Great Miracle of the Qur’ān: 38
 - Safeguarding the Qur’ān: 39
 - The Order in the Qur’ān: 40
 - A Limitless Treasure: 42
- Model of the Holy Prophet** (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam): 43
 - The Perfect Morals of the Holy Prophet: 45
 - Treatment with Wife: 46
 - Affection with Children: 47
 - Treatment of Slaves: 48
 - The Holy Prophet as a Ruler: 50
 - The Simple Life of the Holy Prophet: 51
 - The Holy Prophet’s Forgiveness and Mercy: 53
 - Bravery: 54
 - Likeness for Moderation: 55
 - There is no Monasticism in Islam: 57
 - Rights of Mankind: 57
 - The Divine Mission of the **Promised Messiah**: 58
 - Islam in a Fragile State Before the Promised Messiah: 59
- The Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) Beneficence on The Promised Messiah (‘alaihissalām): 60
- The Promised Messiah’s (‘alaihissalām) Love for the Holy Prophet: 63

The Second Age of Islam: 68

Science and Faith: 70

The Angels: 70

Establishing **Salat** in Spiritual Reformation: 71

Remembrance of God: 79

Fasting: 80

Hajj: 81

Morals: 82

The Philosophy of Morals: 83

The Degrees of Morals: 87

Marital Life: 89

Training of Children: 95

General Social Etiquette: 97

Economic System: 98

The Prohibition on Interest: 99

Islamic Law of Inheritance: 100

The Reality of Death: 101

Life After Death: 103

Books to be Read: 105

Glossary: 108

Notes from the Publisher: 111

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Foreword

This valuable book of Hadrat Chaudri Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib (radiyallāhu ‘anhu), aimed initially for the new generation of his period, is relevant and contemporary even today. It is based on the timeless teachings of Islam, and is, therefore, free from the constraints of time.

The Majlis Ansarullah, USA has carried out a commendable job in getting this book translated from Urdu into English. For the large number of youth of our community growing up in the West, there is a dire need of such a book in the English language. *Inshā’allāh*, the publication of this book in the English language will enable the Ahmadiyya youth to understand the real Islam as rejuvenated by Hadrat Masīh Mau‘ūd (‘alaihissalām). Its guidance is crucial to their balanced perspective of life, which generally tends to follow materialistic pursuits at the cost of religious and moral values.

I hope and pray that this publication will be widely read, absorbed, and reflected upon by our youth who are to assume responsible leadership role in the period ahead. *Inshā’allāh*.

M. M. Ahmad
Amīr Jamā‘at, USA
June 12, 2001

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Acknowledgement

It gives me a great pleasure to acknowledge the selfless services of three individuals in bringing this wonderful book to our readers, namely,

- Sister Shermeen Butt (currently residing in UK)
- Missionary Mubasher Ahmad (Regional Missionary, currently residing in Chicago, Illinois, USA)
- Br. Syed Sajid Ahmad (Qa'id Isha'at, Majlis Ansarullah, USA, currently residing in Boise, Idaho).

Sister Shermeen Butt provided the English translation of this book. Missionary Mubasher Ahmad inspired Majlis Ansarullah, USA, to publish this book and also reviewed and edited its text. Br. Syed Sajid Ahmad carried out the actual layout, typesetting, and publishing of this book.

I know the numerous number of hours it took these three servants of Islam to put this book together. May Allah bless them with abundant reward. May Allah accept this humble service of Islam by Majlis Ansarullah, USA. *Amin.*

Sincerely,
Nasir M. Malik
Sadr, Majlis Ansarullah, USA
September 10, 2001

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَصْلِي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

An Important Statement About This Letter

I have liked literature from childhood. Therefore, any piece of good writing by someone is a particular source of pleasure. In the valuable writing of the respected Chaudhri Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan Sahib, member of the Executive Council, Viceroy of India, that Friends have in their hands right now, not only has he rendered a fine service to the Ahmadiyya Community but to mankind as a whole. This writing elucidates that path which can lead one to achieve high morals and become a godly person. There are many in this world to serve humanity in an academic, economic and political capacity. However, in the current materialistic age, very few have their attention drawn to moral and spiritual service. In this regard, this service of respected Chaudhri Sahib's, which, the world is in dire need of in this age, is extremely commendable.

The young Ahmadis will read it in any case. The need is to convey this useful writing in abundance to the non-Ahmadi and non-Muslims, so that they may satiate on the wholesome water of this pure fountain. The fountain that sprung forth some 1300 years ago from today in the land of Arabia, and after some time, having been polluted by the worldly grime, was lost in the soil just as precious fountains are lost in the times of incompetent people. Having being purified by the unseen hand of nature, this fountain has now sprung forth from the land of the Punjab.

This writing of Chaudhri Sahib is in the form of a letter, that he has, having felt his responsibility towards the next generation, written to a dear one. It is now being published for the good of the general public. The above-mentioned specifics of this writing have developed a special effect in it, because of this; Chaudhri Sahib's words are replete with an electrifying wave, which, in keeping with the law of nature, naturally 'flows' between one who loves and one who is loved. I know the name of the dear one, but Chaudhri Sahib has not disclosed it, therefore I shall not. In any case, it is also important for the name to remain un-

disclosed so that each person who reads this letter can imagine as if he is being addressed here, and his temperament is ready to accept that unseen effect that is passed, through the eternal Divine Law, from one heart to another.

With these brief words, I now present respected Chaudhri Sahib's most useful writing to Friends.

Humbly,
Mirza Bashir Ahmad
Qadian
March 1940

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Shimla

May 16, 1939

My Dearest One,

Assalāmu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhū

When we have left this world, our responsibilities will be placed on your shoulders and those of the dear ones even younger than you. Judging by the misery in this world and the speed with which it is spreading, I can guess that your responsibilities will be much greater than ours. If you discharge your duties well, our souls will be pleased and the future generations will consider you august. You will be famous and your name will live forever. Most of all, you will be accepted by Allah and will be blessed with His mercy.

We have certain obligations towards you, just as part of your future responsibilities will be regarding the generations to come after you. I wish to be relieved of some of my responsibility through this writing. *Wa mā taufiqi illā billāhil-‘aliyyil-‘azīm.*

A Delicate Point in Life

Right now you are going through a most sensitive phase of your life. All of us have been through such a phase in our own circumstances. While going through this phase we were aware of our difficulties. If a helping hand had been extended to us at that time we would have been overwhelmed with gratitude and the aspects of life, which seemed dark and horrific at that time, would have been made bright and pleasant. However, once we had passed through these stages we disregarded all the associated difficulties. Now that the same time is approaching for the next generation, no attention is being paid towards its difficult aspects by us, and there has been no sympathy and no helping hand extended.

Today I shall begin to try to set this inadequacy right. I do not know whether I will succeed in my effort. However, I will have tried to the

best of my ability, and at least you will have the realization that someone from your dear and near ones has deep concerns about your future.

Before I finish this preamble I request you not to disregard this writing as mere witticism. Instead, ponder over it and act upon the portions that require action. You can prove to be worthy of the trust that I have put in your comprehension and intellect in writing this piece by reflecting over it and by acting upon it. Moreover, if you develop a concern for your own progress and living your life in a fine manner, as much as the concern I have for you, then my feeling will change into a belief that you will, with the grace and mercy of Allah and with the guidance bestowed by Him, definitely succeed in achieving the goal of your life.

First of all, instill this point in your mind that life is an honor and a great gift from Allah. It is essential to give it much respect and deference. It is not a game. It is not an idle operation, its objective is lofty and, in achieving that objective, one attains eternal happiness and contentment. In order to achieve this objective, the most essential thing is to have and keep ambition, hope, and cheerfulness in one's heart. The most dangerous thing that essentially deprives one in achieving this objective is hopelessness and despair. One should steer clear of this in all circumstances.

Two Ways

Believe me, right now you are standing in front of two grand doorways and it is up to you to either enter the door on the right side or the one on the left side. If you choose the door on the right, you will go through a porch, which is somewhat dark and passing through it requires courage and resolution. It will soon lead you into a bright garden. This garden's passages, greenery, flowers and fountains are alluring to the heart and its fruits are fresh, sweet and nourishing and are also pleasing to the heart and mind. God willing, may you choose this door.

If, God forbid, you choose the door on the left, then its adjacent porch is apparently brighter and grander than the other porch. It has fine pictures, images and statues, but just past the porch it is dark, cloudy with lightning and thunder, with horrific scenes and frightening,

bloodthirsty animals. The water there is bitter, smelly, and polluted. The fruits are rotten, unsavory, and poisonous. In its entire area there is no peace, tranquility, or contentment. On the contrary, its entire atmosphere is that of fear, disease, and death. God willing, your heart will not be drawn towards entering this porch.

This choice is very easy for you at this time. You should make this choice now and then stay firm and resolute about it. The more you delay in making a choice the more difficulties will arise in your life.

Apparently you have chosen the door on the right hand side, but is your heart in it and does it verify it? Does your heart advise you to enter the door with courage and cheerfulness and does it promise to be resolute?

Objective of Life

What is life? What is its objective? What are the ways and means to achieve this objective?

Let it be known that all life, including human life, is a manifestation of the attribute of Allah to create. Throughout life's stages man seeks the manifestation of different attributes of Allah and benefits from them.

Each thing that feels and has been trusted with the ability to progress is living, be it from minerals, vegetables or animals, or be it from the heavenly bodies.

All creation has a zenith set for its progress. All creation has been given its individual distinctive perceptions and forces required to reach its own high point. Such strengths are present in them from the start. Certain alternating systems essential to the progress of these forces in a relative state have been put in place in the heavens and the earth. These can help in the progress. There is an appointed law for gradual progress for all creation, the progress is step by step and it takes many thousand years to complete a phase of the progress. As the Creator of the universe always has been and always will be, He does not entertain haste. He is the Master of time and rules over all things. He does not need haste. Only finite beings rely on haste or those, which change from one state into another with speed—those that require finishing a given task or reaching a certain result within a certain time span.

Divine Order

The first step in the process of all creation is Allah's Command. That is to say, if we investigate about the universe as to where did such and such thing come into being, we would eventually reach a point where we would have to concede that beyond it lies just the Divine Order and nothing else. When scientists started their investigation, they first said that all matter is made up of extremely fine particles. They said these fine particles unite and according to the method and form of this union, different shapes of matter are formed. In discovering the origin of matter, the scientists then went beyond particles and informed us that these particles are a cluster of extremely delicate electromagnetic bubbles, which rapidly rotate around each other. Due to their mutual attraction, these bubbles form a certain union, which creates particles.

Science will perhaps take a long time to go further than this but the definition of the bubbles and the suggestions made about their reality gives clear indications that the next stage would be for them to acknowledge that all matter started with the expression of a Mighty Being, it is as if, science is now making gentle noises about accepting that all matter was created with Divine Order.

Stages of Progress

As I said earlier, Allah has entrusted each particle with special attributes according to which it has the capacity to progress, and given suitable motives and circumstances, can accordingly make the progress. For instance, some particles have been given such attributes that form into stones but cannot gradually progress within themselves to go beyond the state of being a stone. Some form into diamonds, some pearls, some coal, some have such attributes that they can change in gold, silver, iron, copper, etc. Some have been given the attributes to become burrowing animals or snakes, scorpions, rats, etc. Some have been given the attributes that they can become any kind of vegetable, grain, tree or fruit, while the others have the attributes to become different kinds of animals. Some have been given the attributes from the very beginning to become human.

This is a chain of diverse kinds of progress. There is another kind of progress that goes on simultaneously. For instance, the particles of the

earth and the light and heat of the sun, the light of the moon, the effects of the wind, the freshness brought on by rain, all join forces to produce vegetable or fruit. Due to similar effects, animal was created and so was human. When a human or an animal eats vegetable or fruit, the fruit's certain elements become constituents of the human or the animal being. These elements thus take on human or animal attributes. When humans include an animal in their diet, a similar change occurs in the constituents of the animal, which take on the form of human elements. If you ponder over the universe you will find out how everything, in its own sphere, is working towards the completion of the Divine Order. We find delightful shapes in different species of life, which have all sorts of formation and link with each other.

Out of all these varied forms of life and different parts of the universe that we contemplate over, even the aspects, which our apparent senses do not notice, human being is the focal point. Although humans came into being over many millions of years in the same way as the other animals, it is, as if the vast and varied resources of this universe were prepared for human use and human progress. All creation came into being for the purpose of the birth of humans and that is why humans are called the most eminent of all creations.

It is often said that humans are made out of dust and water. This is not correct in the sense that a whole human body was made with dust and water and then a human spirit was blown into it. However, it is correct in the sense that the process of human birth started with dust and water. Although there were many phases from the initial stage to being human, but this initial substance of dust and water had the capability to be human from the very start. Having gone through very weak initial stages, this creation entered into the phase of being an accomplished animal, then a rational animal and then into the phase of wisdom. At this stage, it acquired the form of a human being. It has now been in this state for a very long period. When human being's intellectual and mental progress reached a stage that was stalwart enough to receive Divine revelation, it was then that the most accomplished man of that era received revelation from Allah. A few simple social commandments were revealed to him. He and his clan were instructed to live life according to these commandments. This man was called Adam. In actual fact, the human generation did not start with Adam. It had started earlier during inferior stages and had progressed through to the stage of a human being. **Hađrat Khalīfatul-Masīh** addressed this issue in detail at

last year's Jalsa Salāna. You should read this speech attentively when it is published, in addition to the speech which Hudūr [Hadrat Khalīfatul-Masīh II] delivered at the 1937 Jalsa Salāna and which has been published under the title of Inqilāb-i-Haqīqī [The Real Revolution].

The reference to dust in the birth of man is symbolic in that human nature has been made like that of soft clay. It is affected by outside influences and can be molded to any specification. Just as clay can be easily imprinted on, human nature too is receptive. This establishes that there is infinite strength and capability for progress and development in the human nature.

The origin of the birth of human was with dust and water, but having gone through its early stages when he came closer to the era of acquiring the form of an accomplished animal, his birth came about with sperm. Thus the foundation for spouse, family, nation and civilization was laid.

The Birth of the Human Soul

Thus far I have briefly outlined the physical human birth. There is another human birth far greater and superior than this and that is the birth of the soul. Just like human qualities were put in the original dust and water, which was to progress to the human form rather than any other animal or thing, similarly the elementary dust and water had also been given the ability, qualities and attributes to create human spirit. Just as many centuries were set for the completion of the physical human form, similarly when the time of the birth of the human soul was remote and distant, it was indeed present in the original dust and water just as the fragrance and perfume of the rose is very much present in the soil from which it grows.

The initial aspect of the birth of the soul, like the initial aspect of the birth of matter, is Diviner Order. There is a specific time set for its manifestation. When an unborn baby reaches a certain stage of development in the womb, its soul is created as if like a perfume. It is thus given a new creation. This compound of physical life appears as a separate entity and this process is commonly called 'birth.'

The main difference in the soul of animals and humans is that the human soul has been given a capacity and a sense of agitation to be near its creator. This is either missing in the animal spirit or is extremely weak and is thus negligible.

Varieties of Life

Let's stop a while and reflect on the different varieties and types of life. How colorful the creation is! What strengths and capabilities are present in different kinds of creation! What formation, beauty and charm! All sorts of benefits are associated with different creation and this is just a cursory examination. Upon reflection, the experts are astounded on the qualities of all creation. For example, just think about the physical human form. It has no limits to its strengths and capacities. The relation and link between each part of the body, each part having the capacity to carry out its function; its shape and qualities in full accordance to its function. Take the skin; it is so soft, flexible yet so strong. It has the capacity to withstand heat and cold and it protects the body in a most perfect way. The millions of pores that cause it to be soft and elastic help in exuding perspiration but do not allow blood to escape. Then, there are millions of blood vessels associated with the skin. The inside of the human body has a most colorful and detailed system. One could not find such delicacy and complexity in the most advanced of factories in the world. The entire system is functioning in total unison and with efficiency. You can figure it out yourself. You feel a certain need. Your brain carries out an order about it, which is carried to the central nervous system. From there it is sent to the different parts of the body to be acted upon. This is done with such efficiency that you do not feel the different stages it goes through. You feel the need for something and your limbs and organs carry the task out just as you had wished. If you think about it, it is as if a whole world inhabits inside you. Think about the feelings of your heart. Reflect over your brain, its conditions and its creations. The pain of the heart, its wishes, distresses, the pleasure and happiness it feels, at times the feeling of sympathy, at times sense of honor, the wish to take revenge, at times meekness, modesty, at times conflict.

Then there are the dimensions and variations of creation, and to realize that all this is immaterial. Then there are the material matters like eating and drinking, running and jumping around, sports, and

swimming. Then there is the digestive system, hunger and thirst, to watch beautiful scenes, to smell fragrance, to wear fine clothes, etc. Your parents, dear ones, friends, peers, teachers, acquaintances—each have a perception of what you are like—what sort of a person you are, your attributes, certain merits and beauty, maybe some flaw. However, deep down you know you are not what people perceive you to be. Each person has a different view about you, whereas you look at yourself in a different light. So much so that when you look into a mirror you often wonder if what you see is the self-image you have in mind.

You inhabit a world of your own, a detached creative world of your own. You have your own distinct matters of the heart that no one can intrude upon. Indeed, as much or as little as you would allow anyone to interfere in these matters. Fact remains that it is your very own world and you are its own pilot. You yourself are its guardian. Just think how colossal this responsibility is and how essential it is for you to recognize all aspects of this responsibility. It is crucial that you set forth on this journey of life with full awareness and concern—that you carry this world of yours forward with care and safety until such time that you achieve your objective.

Divine Favors on Man

Consider where your journey started from and all the stages that you have been through. You came into being as electric bubbles, which changed into particles, then into water and dust, and then step-by-step formed into a human being. Many generations passed before you came into being in the twentieth century. This earth with all its treasures was created for you, as was the sun with its light and heat, as was the moonlight and as the stars were created. The earth was ordered to move on its axis, day and night, heat and cold, sunshine and shade, mountains, rivers, oceans, lakes, trees, fruits, greenery, grain, animals, birds, all were created. The winds were created, as were the vapors. Clouds came into being to bring rain to dry lands and to maintain human life. Generation after generation humans progressed on mental, moral and spiritual levels. Civilizations came into being. Governments were set up; laws were made. Knowledge was spread. Inventions were made. The aeroplane, the railways and the motorcar were invented. The telegraph, telephone and the radio became available. All this happened so that you could spend your life in comfort with education; and

resources for mental, moral and spiritual progress. Surpassing all this, Allah Himself spoke to His chosen people and sent guiding revelations for the moral and spiritual progress of mankind, to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha, Krishna, Ramchander and to thousands more of His revered people.

Indeed, the master of all these prophets and Allah's beloved, Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam), and in the present age, His dear Ghulām Ahmad ('alaihissalām) received revelations so that you do not face problems finding out Allah's will, that you do not go astray, hence wasting time, in your endeavors to find Him.

Tell me, is there any blessing that you have not been provided with? You have been provided with all arrangements and all this is so that you can attain the perfection of your life. Remember, Allah needs and loves your progress just like the next person's. If you so wish, you can get as near to Allah and seek as much of His love as anybody else. All these favors and arrangements are created just as much for you as for everybody else. Just imagine how precious your life is and how great a gift it is. Your life is worthy of great merit and dignity. You have been made trustee of a weighty yet supreme trust.

Reflect on the fact that you are the focal point of this universe. You are the most eminent of all creation. You and your species have been given the strengths and capacities that other creation has not been given. The rest of the creation has been appointed to serve you and your species. You have been created in the best of the make, namely, you have been given all the strengths and understanding necessary for eternal progress. Thereupon, you should be overwhelmed with joy and your heart, mind and soul should prostrate before the Creator. You need to reflect over these issues during your daily routines. Praise your God and thank Him. Your heart should be in a state of cheerfulness. You should never entertain hopelessness and disappointment. You should have complete faith in the Powers of your Lord. Your entire trust should be in Him. Make a strong promise of love and steadfastness to Him. You should only fear Him, and He alone should be your desire, objective and beloved.

May 19

The Wonder of Life

What is the objective of life? The wonder of human life is that man imprints Allah's attributes on himself. This should be done in a way that his being is completely influenced by the imprints of Allah's attributes. As it were, in his being, he becomes a manifestation of Allah's attributes. This state of perfection is called '*ubūdiyyat* (service of God) that is to say, to be a servant of God. Allah says in the Holy Qur'ān:

مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ

[I have created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me. (51:57)] That is to say, I have created all types of humans so that they become My servants, that is, manifestations of My attributes. The Holy Prophet (sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) elucidated the same objective by saying that one should adorn oneself with Allah's morals and attributes. This state and connection can also be described as that genuine nature with which man makes Allah his Beloved. The intensity of such a love would require producing the perfect Beloved's attributes within oneself. When man develops these attributes to human excellence within himself he then naturally becomes Allah's beloved. This is the eventual objective of life and is indeed the perfection of life.

Divine Knowledge Requires Knowledge of Divine Attributes

In order to achieve this objective it is essential to have knowledge of Allah's attributes and to repeatedly reflect on them. Study their manifestations and their effects. To imprint Allah's Omnipotence, Purity and Supreme Values onto one's heart, man has to be so agitated and melted down with the Perfect Grandeur and the luster of its Beauty that he has no wish of his own and he devotes each particle of his being in the way of the Real Beloved.

The knowledge of Allah's attributes is extremely extensive. It requires deep understanding. The truth of the matter is that the real knowledge between man and God is a mystery and it is impossible to

describe it in words. However, for someone who wants to take the first step on this way, the initial stage is to educate himself about the attributes of Allah and to habitually reflect on this subject to utilize all this to pursue knowledge.

Our God

Allah is the Exquisite Being Who ordered the entire cosmos to commence and to prevail. His power and control is infinite. He is One in Himself. He begets not, nor is He begotten. His Being is not dependent on any support to exist. Nothing is outside His power and control. Nothing can come into being without Him.

Everything is dependent on Him to survive. He has given qualities to everything to exist and progress in the universe and has made the universe abide by certain laws. He has the power to negate these qualities or indeed change them. He has the power to defer the execution of His laws in certain circumstances, although He has promised that He does not change His ways—for example, He has the power to give life to the dead but He Commands that He will not do so in order that humanity strives and progresses according to His appointed ways. At times, out of the ordinary, He shows signs to His people, these can be in the form of a vision or a dialogue—with an element of the unseen always present. As the Qur’ān declares that when his enemies put Abraham (‘alaihissalām) in fire, Allah’s command saved him from trouble. Allah’s blessings brought about a fierce wind or rain to abate the fire.

Hunger and thirst is inherently quelled with food and drink. At times, Allah’s kindness to His dear ones is such that He soothes them without any material food and drink, as if they have had a meal. For instance, although all matter is borne out of Divine order yet the naked eye sees matter change from one stage into another. At certain times Allah manifests His Power in a way that matter appears without apparent causes or reasons for a change to take place. Like the incident where the Promised Messiah (‘alaihissalām) had blood drops appear on his shirt. That incident was part vision and some effects of this vision were apparent in the form of matter that was lasting and could be later observed.

In other words, nothing is beyond Allah. He has power over everything. However, His way is such that when He has an objective, He commands a change in the apparent causes of the objective. This change is such that men of understanding see Allah's manifestation in the change, but people with diseased hearts who have lost their spiritual insight consider such changes and reformations natural consequences of the apparent causes.

We cannot compare or analogize Allah with any other being. There is nothing like Him. The span of language is limited; therefore we are forced to use the same metaphors and similes for Allah that we have for human use. These words, in their general connotations are not truly applicable to Allah's Being and His attributes. Therefore, even after the most extensive praise of the Almighty, we still have to say,

لَيْسَ كَمُثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ

[42: 12], nothing is like Him. For instance, He *speaks* but we cannot say that He has a tongue or a mouth or that He is dependent on air to get His message across to His servants. He *sees* the minutest and the most concealed, but we cannot say that He has eyes. He hears the human heart beat but we cannot say that He has ears.

Such limitations are only for us. Allah's being is much lofty for all this. East, west, north and south, day, night, light and darkness, months, years, and centuries; in short, time and era all are limitations of man and this world and they all are consequences of the mutual connections of the earth, moon and the sun. All these are the creation of Allah, as indeed are their consequences. He is the Creator and commands them all. He is not bound by any of this. He is free from time and age and rises above it all. Similarly, He is higher than all human standards and all human capabilities which are related to human life, His being is free from it all and above it all—therefore, we cannot compare or analogize His being within these limitations—but He is everywhere at all times. That is to say, His being is free from the restriction of time and space. He was here before time began, for He created time and age. He is in and outside each place, as He created all space. Our senses do not feel Him for He is infinite, non-material and exquisite. For instance, our eyes cannot see Him but they can see the manifestations of His attributes. His attributes are so exquisite that our mind cannot comprehend them. He is so remote and distant that our intellect cannot

have a conception of Him. Yet He is closer to us than our own thought processes. He has every excellence in its utmost perfection. His being is free from all defect and weakness, in fact it should be said that all excellence is an image of one of His attributes, and all weakness is a result of the fact that man has shied away from the splendor of one of His attributes. He is Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining and is Ever-Vigilant. Sleep and sloth are conditions brought on by lack or suspension of certain attributes and His Being is constant at all times and His attributes are always prevalent.

Unity of God

Let me say a little about the Divine attributes and hope that certain factors of these attributes will be imprinted on your heart. The first attribute of Allah that Islam lays emphasis on is His Unity—that is to say, Allah is One in being and attributes, He has no partner and is alone worthy of worship and is worthy that we let His will rule us in every way and imprint His attributes on ourselves; to believe in Him as the font of all excellence, virtue, power and favor and to implore Him for everything. His fear alone should be in our heart and in His love should we find all our happiness.

Unity of God establishes peace in this world. Plurality of deities would have caused much disorder. Human differences and dissensions aside, the mutual wars of various deities would have been never ending.

It was the Unity of God that established man's greatness, for those who do not believe in the Unity of God and worship rivers, seas, mountain tops and caves; some worship stones and trees, clouds and lightening, moon, stars and the sun, even animals—and the reason for this worship is to seek benefit from these 'things' or to be saved from their evil. The fact of the matter is that these things have no power or control to be beneficial or detrimental to anyone. All these things are created to benefit human being. They are appointed to serve him. A human, no matter how much power he can yield, does not have the authority to be truly detrimental or beneficial to another. When a person worships these things then his heart is overcome with their fear and awe, he thus fails to discover their mode and reason and indeed fails to take advantage of them. His condition is like that of an affluent person whose house has all kinds of amenities, with modern electrical facilities and all kinds of arrangements, many servants appointed to serve the

guests at all time. A house surrounded by huge grounds with orchards and beautiful gardens. If such a man were to invite an ignorant, wretched friend over, one who is un-accustomed to the riches, such a person would be in total awe of his well-off friend's house. He could jolly well take the liveried staff for some officials and be apprehended by them, and might implore for mercy, saying: 'O powerful deity! Have mercy on me and forgive my mistakes and keep me in your favors.' Upon entering a room and sighting an illuminated chandelier, he could fall down in prostration supplicating to it. He could very well also fall down in awe in front of huge mirrors reflecting the chandelier. If he notices that the electric fan is working of it's own accord producing pleasant cooling air, he could even turn to it, supplicating. Once outside in the garden, he could make similar gestures towards the flowers, shrubs, trees, fountains, etc. He could be totally aghast watching someone communicating on the telephone, and if he sights an aeroplane in the air, he could imagine it to be the deity of death descending and his own death imminent. People who worship the sun and moon and the stars, etc., are indeed even worse and astonishing than this wretched person. They deem these things to possess good and evil, whereas all this is created by Allah to serve mankind.

The Unity of God illuminates Allah's true dignity; it places man on his rightful station and save Allah's fear, eliminates all other fears from his heart. Doors to all kinds of knowledge open up to him. His mental powers are polished and ways and means to inventions and discoveries are laid open. When man's belief, that the universe and all it's arrangement is for man's progress and service, is strengthened, he then reflects and engages himself in finding out their real benefits—it is then that he discovers a new erudition everyday.

It is the Unity of God that has established equality in human beings. When all mankind is created by One Creator and He alone is their Preserver and has power over everything and is the Master of everything and is alone worthy of worship, and He issues forth all benefits, favors and progress, then no man in himself can be superior to another and the doors to Allah's nearness are open to all alike. As human beings each person is considered equal and the division of color and creed is eliminated. Indeed for recognition purposes national divisions remain—but these divisions are not a bench mark for honor or disgrace. Allah's love and His fear become the true measure of honor.

Lord of All the Worlds

One attribute of Allah is that He is Lord of all the worlds, that is to say, He takes the entire cosmos, through gradual progress, from an inferior state to a superior state. This takes place without any preference to any race or creed. This attribute negates all national and racial distinctions. The sun, moon, stars, clouds, rain, rivers and seas, are for everyone. Similarly, prophethood, dreams, visions, revelation and means of spiritual development were and are for all. This shows that Allah's blessing of revelation has been bestowed on all nations and people.

The Gracious

He is also Gracious, in that all the arrangement essential to human progress were in place even before we came into being. The earth was created with all manner of qualities and strengths. The heavenly bodies were created with varied qualities, capacities and forces. Milk was put in mothers' breasts. Humans were given all sorts of powers; sight, hearing and speech were given to us. The sense of smell and taste was given. The sense of touch and intellect was given. In short all sorts of faculties were given. The air was created, as were water and grain. Animals were made for man's varied usage. Infinite deposits for man's progress were created from the beginning.

Merciful

Another attribute of Allah is that He is Merciful, in that He rewards us for our good deeds in the best possible way with excellent results. He compensates for our minimal and limited deeds in a most generous and boundless way.

Master of the Day of Judgment

Another attribute of Allah is that He is Master of the Day of Judgment. He is the Master of the time of the reward and punishment of our actions. If He so pleases, He can give us an appropriate punishment of our sins and He can indeed pardon us and reward us as much as He pleases for our good deeds. He does not conform to an obligatory

punishment of each sin and in an exact way and indeed to an adequate reward of virtues—if He so pleases, He can reward as much as He pleases.

One Who Grants Prayers

It is an attribute of Allah to listen to one who calls unto Him. He accepts the prayers of His servants. This Divine attribute, like others, has always been prevalent. Although, the manifestation of this attribute is the most powerful and effective means of strengthening the relationship between the Creator and His servants, it is a shame that today only a formal belief remains of this attribute of Allah in majority of the Muslims. The Holy Qur'ān has claimed this attribute to be a proof of existence of God;

أَمْنٌ يُحِبُّ الْمُضْطَرَ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَ يَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ

[27: 63], how can you deny the existence of a God when you submit to Him in anxiety and call upon His mercy and He takes mercy on your desperation and helplessness and removes your problem? Allah does not lay the condition of belief and good deeds with the call of a distressed person. When a person is truly distressed and bows to the Almighty with total humility and seeks His mercy with a yielding heart, then He certainly shows mercy and listens to the call of the person. In such a situation, He does not consider the everyday insolence and rebellion of that person. Indeed, for His obedient and humble servants, who maintain a real relationship with Him, seek His pleasure and consider everything insignificant when compared to His pleasure, His treatment is most kind. A most unique relationship is established between Him and such people. Although the world does see the signs and results of such a relationship, it is only truly understood by these people themselves. These people may not hold any apparent significance but in Allah's eyes they are the chosen ones.

Allah the Exalted has a separate and distinct way of dealing with each person with compassion, affection and love. Just as an elder said:

O You who keep each person's secret separately—
Your dealing of each beggar is so distinct.

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that some people appear to be unkempt and in dire straits, however, trusting Allah implicitly they at times articulate that such and such will happen like so. Allah the Exalted keeps such regard that He makes it so.

The attribute of God to accept prayers is a most invigorating glad tiding for mankind. It creates a sense of satisfaction and contentment and indeed courage. When a believer goes through an extremely difficult time or is faced with great fear or danger, he certainly finds solace in the belief that his Lord is always with him and whenever he will supplicate to Him, He shall listen to his call, and that He listens to prayers. This belief alleviates all fear. This message has been given to mankind in the Holy Qur’ān;

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكُ عِبَادِي عَنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الْدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

[2:187] “And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: I am near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me.” What could be more satisfying and comforting than this that the All-Powerful Being in Whose Power is everything and nothing is out of the confines of His Power and nothing is beyond Him, actually tells us not to be anxious, that He is always near us and that He shall give us whatever we ask for, that He can change all grief to happiness. No one can encompass His blessings and grace.

Acceptance of Prayer

Impress the point upon your heart that our God is Living and All-Powerful and He indeed listens to supplication. He is our Lord and Master, He is the Knower of the un-seen and is not obligated to accepting our prayers in the exact way as we make them. Our vision is limited. At times we are unaware of what is best for us and is possible that we pray for something that is in actual fact harmful for us and can hinder our progress. To accept such a prayer would be against Allah’s attribute of Mercy. Although we are unaware but indeed He knows that such and such is harmful for us. At times we have to go through hardship for our own betterment. In any case when Allah listens to His servants, at times He also makes man listen to Him. It is a fact that a sincere supplication is not wasted. If it is not accepted in its actual nature, Allah always compensates for it.

You should never be negligent of the perception that no matter how deeply you are engulfed in troubles, the door to Allah is always open. You can run along to him and He will always be your refuge. He will protect you and will love you and you will have a share of His blessings and bounties.

It is a pity that Muslims of this age have turned away from this attribute of Allah and have practically rejected it. What a huge favor have they lost! Some have openly said that prayer is merely a means to satisfy oneself and that it does not have an external influence. The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) strongly rejected this and repeatedly wrote, inviting people, who did not have a belief in the effect of prayer, to visit him to see the signs of acceptance of prayer. So he declared,

O, You who question the effects of prayers!

Come to me! I shall provide you its proof like the shining sun.

Do not reject the secrets of God's power!

Cut short this talk. Come to me, and witness for yourself the acceptance of prayer.

Again, he says,

Although the miracles are non-existent for others,

Yet you are invited to come and observe them being performed at the hands of Muhammad's servants.

In this verse, the indication is towards the acceptance of prayer; and most of us have personally witnessed the high level of acceptance of prayers according to our individual standings.

Divine Revelation

Another attribute of Allah is that He 'speaks' to His servants. These days apart from the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam almost the whole world rejects this. Most people consider that although in times gone by Allah spoke to His servants, He does not do it anymore and is not going to do so in the future either. It is, as if they consider this attribute of Allah has been suspended. Then there is another section of people who were not convinced of this attribute at all. In any case, according to both

these schools of thought, this attribute of Allah is not prevalent in the present age. Such a supposition about Allah's Being is extreme distrust. The truth of the matter is that those who consider that Allah does not speak to His servants, even if they formally agreed that He once did have this attribute, they could never truly believe this factor. It is not possible that one who has true knowledge of the Divine attributes would ever believe that Allah once had this attribute, but it is now suspended. How could a Muslim consider that Allah once spoke to His servants but is now so displeased with the people of Muhammad (ṣ allallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) that not even the spiritually accomplished people among them can have this honor. Such a conjecture is not only a mistrust of Allah but is also puts the idea of man's spiritual development in doubt. The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) said if it were to be true that the mode of Divine discourse had stopped, then those who loved Allah would lose their lives and the faith in Allah would not reach the stage of being a 'certain' truth.

Therefore, rest assured that Allah still speaks to His loved ones as He did before.

Just as man's connection with Allah increases, according to his capacity and ingenuity, he sees manifestation of this Divine attribute, be it imperceptible, be it evident; whether it is in the form that it's parable is like that of dewdrops, whether it be like pelting rain.

May 2

The Forgiving God

An attribute of Allah the Almighty is that He forgives the sins of man, not just in the sense that they are spared punishment of their sins, but also in the sense that He absorbs and obliterates their sins as if they did not ever happen. This is because He has power over everything. Past, present and future are mere human requisites. Allah is above it all and commands it all. In short, His varied attributes, which one may learn through a study of the Holy Qur'ān and which are explained in detail in the writings of the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) and Ḥadrat Khalifatul-Masih II have all a mutual connection. Each attribute has its own operational sphere and does not conflict with the other. On the contrary it is a joint effort like that of an organized body where different departments manage different branches and sections, issue orders for

them and supervise and check them, similarly, though on a much larger scale, and on a much more organized way and with excellent elegance Allah's attributes are active within their spheres.

"Imbue Allah's Attributes"

The question could arise that in what way can man imprint Allah's attributes on his being or in what manner can he inculcate a reflection of these attributes within him.

Let it be known that certain Divine attributes are such that man cannot adopt them in the sense with which they appertain to God. For example, Allah is One and it is not valid for man to try to be the only one in the world, it is against the Divine Will and is designed to destroy humanity. Unity of God can only be an attribute of Allah for He always was and always will be. He is not dependent for His Immortality on another being, means or support. However, man can try to attain this attribute in a 'reflective' manner in that in accordance to the Qur'ānic command he can try to vie with others in good works. Everyone should try to take one's qualities and merits to excellence and to try to achieve uniqueness in assimilating the Singularity of the Creator. Just as the Khalīfatul-Masih II says,

I adore the Unique God and He is my Beloved—

If you too accomplish uniqueness, you shall be the apple of
my eye!

Another attribute of Allah is that He is Independent and Besought of all. As mankind and other species are all dependent on Allah for their existence, man cannot acquire this attribute in its rudimentary connotation. However, he can try to put his true trust and reliance on Allah alone. This would be inclusive of the fact that this attribute requires of man that he does not supplicate to anyone save Allah.

A person once came to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and asked him for something. His demand was met. He made a demand twice more and was given what he wanted. When he made the request for the fourth time, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) told the man that the most excellent among things was that the upper hand is always better than the lower hand and that he should give up the habit of asking. The man promised the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu

‘alaihi wa sallam) that he would do so. The man later acquired wealth. He was once riding a horse when he dropped his whip. A passer-by tried to pick up the man’s whip to hand it over to him. The man, however, told the passer-by not to do so for he had promised the Prophet of God (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) never to ask for anything, and that if he had let the passer-by pick up the whip, that would also be a kind of pleading.

There are certain attributes of Allah that are completely appropriated to Divinity. For example, the fact that He always was and always shall be, or that He has neither a father nor a son. Such attributes are totally to distinguish the difference between Allah and man. For example, these two attributes are a result of the true Unity of God. Another attribute as a consequence of the perfect Unity of God is that neither slumber seizes Him, nor sleep. Although it is necessary for man not to let ‘weaknesses’ like sleep and rest come in the way of carrying out his obligations; however, human nature also necessitates such states. In keeping with man’s nature, Allah has arranged for these demands to be met. It is a Divine favor that man feels the need to sleep and rest. Man is finite and it is essential for each finite being to rest after exertion. Allah has declared that it is one of His favors that He has created daytime for mankind to go about its business and has created night in order for man to rest.

Pure Life

It is quite evident that man’s strength and capacities and his scope is limited, therefore, he can only manifest these attributes within the confines of his scope and the Divine attributes can only be present in him in a reflective manner. For example, Allah is Holy. Man should also try and adopt pure ways and keep his heart and mind, thoughts and actions chaste. Islam does not teach that man was born in sin and does not have the capacity to avoid sin. On the contrary Islam teaches that each new born has pure nature, is innocent and devoid of sin. That is to say that the human nature is based on purity and virtue and evil comes externally. If this is how it is, then each person has the capacity to stay chaste, and if he has had wicked influence, he can return to pure ways. Evil can be repelled at anytime. If man completely shuns bad ways and adopts the ways and means of to nearness to God, and remains steadfast

on them, then according to the Divine attribute of forgiveness and absorption of sins, man can achieve complete purity and can thus be a manifestation of Allah's Holiness. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) said that one who truly repents from all sin is like one who has never committed a sin. What glad tidings, what a positive message for humanity, that fills hearts with hope and courage—as opposed to the school of thought that even if man does not commit a sin himself, in retribution of Adam's sin or sins of his earlier incarnations, he will be entangled in evil.

Purity includes both apparent and hidden purity. Some people assume that as purity has a connection with the heart, therefore, apparent purity is not important. Islam does not conform to this notion. Islam teaches us that body and soul have a deep connection and the soul's condition affects the body, as indeed does the body's condition affect the soul. It would be appropriate to explain this proposition at another time; however, it is important to state here that physical and apparent cleanliness is essential to have spiritual purity. That is to say, personal hygiene and clean environs is important. Allah is Holy and Pure; therefore, for one who wishes to obtain His nearness, it is important to keep his heart clean—to keep his body, mind, attire and environment pure and clean, so that this cleanliness affects his heart and soul and he is not a source of trouble for humanity. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) admonished about personal hygiene (bathing, brushing teeth), clean clothes and use of perfume.

Allah is the Lord of all the worlds. Man should try and inculcate the attribute to create and foster in him and not to keep the scope of this attribute contracted. On the contrary, as Allah's attribute to create and foster is extensive and available to all and encompasses all universe, man's practice of creating and fostering should also be extensive and for all. Just as Allah's treatment towards man is according to his ingenuity, man's capacity to create and foster will be in accordance to the ingenuity of those who will benefit from it. Wealth is not essential for such deeds; each person can carry out such deeds according to his/her capacity.

Allah is Gracious. Man should try and inculcate graciousness in him. A good deed does not have to be only in return of a good deed. On the contrary, goodwill should be spread spontaneously and without any

hope of a reward—like providing mankind with ways and means of comfort and assistance in general progress.

Allah is Merciful—He rewards good deeds manifold. Man should try to exhibit this attribute in him and should reciprocate good deeds, service and hard work in an excellent and proportionally enhanced manner.

Allah is Forgiving, listens to man's repentance and forgives and obliterates his sins and even erases the consequences of the sins. Man should try and forgive mistakes of fellow human beings according to the situation. Where deserving, he should forget their mistakes and to erase the ill effects from his heart, having first forgiven them. A legend about a holy man narrates that his slave once committed some mistake upon which the holy man looked angry. His slave quoted from the Holy Qur'ān, "*those who suppress anger.*" On hearing it, the holy man's face became calm and he smiled. The slave then quoted the Qur'ān again, "*and pardon men,*" upon which he was told that he was forgiven. The slave completed the Qur'ānic quote, "*and Allah loves those who do good.*" The holy man laughed aloud and told the slave that he was freed. Allah describes believers in the Holy Qur'ān as,

وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

[3:135] "those who suppress anger and pardon men; and Allah loves those who do good."

However, Allah is Just and punishes a crime equitably and does not reward good works any less than their merit.

While Allah is Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance, He is also Severe in punishment. He punishes sins, and where appropriate, is very Severe in grasp.

God's Justice and Mercy

Some people have not truly understood Allah's attribute of Justice and Mercy and have been misguided. In order to fulfill the requisite of these two Divine attributes, they have created the idea of penance and atonement. In order to execute this tenet, they have had to consider a mere mortal, son of God and a partner in Divinity. There is no mutual clash in the Divine attributes of Mercy and Justice. It is their failure in

comprehending the definition of ‘justice’ as a definite and complete punishment for crime. Justice is when a crime is not punished outside of its limits and good deeds are not rewarded less than what their merit is. To pardon a crime or to introduce remission in its punishment is not contrary to justice. It is also not against justice to reward good works in a proportionally enhanced way. Many Christians live their lives by this principle and do not consider it contrary to justice and fairness. In fact if they did not practice this rule, they would definitely consider that true justice did not prevail. Their daily prayer reads, “Our father in heaven, forgive our sins, like we forgive the sins of those who commit them against us.”

In this respect Islam teaches,

جَرَأْ سَيِّئَةً سَيِّئَةً مُّتَلِّهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَاجْرَهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ

[42:41], that punishment should be in proportion to its crime, but if the situation is such that, rather than being punished, forgiving the perpetrator raises hope for his reformation, then it is better to forgive. If this line were followed, Allah would recompense it in a fine way. The two Divine attributes are hence neatly distinguished and there is no contradiction. Along with it is also determined that the real reason of punishment is reformation and not retaliation or to cause trouble. Here, the intention is of wider reformation, inclusive of those who are morally weak and need the deterrent of punishment to keep them away from crime.

This is a brief and sort of incomplete summary of the objective of human life. The Holy Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) told us that Allah declares that when man makes Allah’s pleasure his objective and gives up his own will for the sake of Allah’s Will then Allah becomes that person’s eyes for him to see, ears for him to hear, hands and feet for him to do things; in short because such a person’s intentions and will are in total subordination to Allah’s Will and are according to it, each action of his, due to the fact that it is with Allah’s Will, is, in a way, as if Allah’s Action. If man achieves this state, then it is as if he has achieved the objective of his life.

The Way to Closeness to Allah

What are the ways and means to achieve this objective? Briefly, it is man giving Allah's Pleasure preference over everything else. However, the question arises, how does man find out Allah's Pleasure? He is a most Remote and Exquisite Being. Although man possesses a soul in his body, but his life is engulfed in physical aspects. Due to the connections and intricacies of this material life, despite being subtle and fine, when compared to Allah's Being, the human soul is dense like matter. In everyday life, we observe that if we want to find out the wish of a friend, despite the fact that we are of the same species and as a friend we know him for some time and are familiar with his habits and opinions, unless and until our friend tells us what his desire or wish is or expresses it in some way to us, we cannot be sure of what he really wants. If we rely on conjecture then we are likely to make a mistake, in fact sometimes this leads to a misunderstanding. If this can take place between the same species, then how can we succeed in knowing the Will of Allah? This can only be possible if He takes mercy on us and Himself expresses His Will to us and unfolds the ways and means for us to attain His pleasure. In fact, this is how it should be, for when God has placed His love in the human heart, then it is essential that He teaches man the way to attain it as well. It would be contrary to His Mercy to having placed such an urge in the human heart without explaining any way to attain it. This is the reason why, since the time when the human mind progressed to the stage where it could feel the Love of God, the process of revelation has prevailed. It teaches man the ways and means to attain Love of God. As the human comprehension progressed so did the specification of revelation. The dimensions of the nature of revelation increased, until the time arrived when human comprehension and soul became affable to the perfect *sharī'ah* (revealed Divine law) and guidance. This perfect *sharī'ah* was thus revealed to the perfect man, Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) who was Allah's chosen beloved. This perfect guidance is called the Holy Qur'ān and it contains the perfect moral and spiritual teachings for mankind.

The Nature of Revelation

What is the mode of revelation and what are its specifications can be a long argument. However, one aspect of it has caused a lot of

misunderstanding in this age, and you should instill it in your mind; there are many ways with which Allah lets man know His Will. The elementary way is through righteous dreams and visions, where man has pure dreams and his condition is such that he can feel that they are from Allah. Such dreams come true in their apparent nature or according to their interpretation. If the dream has a harmful factor, then Allah either evades it through prayer and almsgiving or fulfills it. It is Allah's object to let His servants be apprised through such dream so that they are attentive towards prayer and alms-giving and reformation. If they do so, then at times Allah evades the imminent danger. He has declared that His Mercy surpasses everything.

A Divine vision comes next to dreams. Such a vision takes place when a person is in the state of semi-wakefulness or fully awake and has a vision in a manner as if a curtain has been lifted off and a vision is presented to him. This is either fulfilled in its original or in its interpretational form. At times the dream or inspiration does not indicate towards an episode in the future but is a mere expression of Allah's Love and Affection for man. It thus fills a person's soul with happiness and the spark of the love of God gets stronger in his heart and he goes about seeking the Pleasure of Allah with more vigor and zeal.

Further advanced from Divine inspiration is revelation. A revelation can be of many kinds. It can come in a weak state or in a most majestic, grand state. At times one hears a sound as if someone speaks from behind a veil and at times it is as if a person is there, who speaks. Other times, the words directly descend on the heart like the sounding of a bell and at times man simply speaks out in the revealed message. The point to remember, however, is that the words of revelation are purely from Allah and that it is Allah's discourse. Indeed, it also happens that at times Allah puts His Will in a human heart as if like lightening, and that Divine Will is thus intensely established in the person's heart. In this instance although the tenor is Divine, the words are the person's own.

A study of old religious books tells us that in early times the prophets of God mostly had their revealed knowledge through righteous visions or inspiration. They indeed had the honor to receive Divine revelation, but preserved texts of these revelations are few and far between. As the Divine law became more detailed and grander, it was revealed in words, rather than in imagery and vision. Therefore, we

observe that in the time of Ḥaḍrat Abraham ('alaihissalām) pure revelation was received. The Holy Qur'ān says about Ḥaḍrat Moses ('alaihissalām),

كَلَمُ اللَّهِ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا

[4:165], "Allah Himself spoke to Moses." The word of Allah revealed to Abraham and Moses (alaihimussalām) is not preserved in the original form, rather it's meaning was conveyed by the prophets in their own words, to their people. Although a good portion of the teachings of Moses ('alaihissalām) is present in it's detail, it is not the word of Allah, rather it comprises mostly of the words of Moses ('alaihissalām).

The Singularity of the Qur'ān

The word revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) is preserved in its entirety in the exact word of God. This is the Holy Qur'ān and this is the reason why it is referred to as the word of God. In comparison to other scriptures, it is the singularity of the Holy Qur'ān that it is the word of God that was revealed to Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and is preserved without any change or interpolation. This distinction of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) is mentioned in Chapter 18 of Deuteronomy, a book of Moses ('alaihissalām), where Allah declares that from the 'brethren' of Banū Israel (Banū Ishmael), He will bring a law-bearing prophet like Moses ('alaihissalām) who will receive Allah's word and will say what he will be commanded to say.

Those who reject the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) say that (God forbid) the Holy Qur'ān is authored by the Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) himself. Some Muslims these days hold the opinion that although the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) was a true prophet of God and the message of the Holy Qur'ān was indeed revealed by Allah to him, however, the words of the Qur'ān are not the words of Allah, rather they are the Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) words. It should be remembered here that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) had declared that the Qur'ān is indeed the word of God and it comprises of precisely what was revealed to him. This leaves no room for doubt or for any explanation. The style of the Holy Qur'ān is self-explanatory in that it is the word of God.

Indeed this claim is also repeatedly made in the Qur'ān itself. The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) words are present in the form of ahādīth. The comparison of the phraseology of the Holy Qur'ān and the idiom of the Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) speech clarifies this point and it really has to be acknowledged by all that the two locutions are not by the same Entity. The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) style of speech usually comprises of short sentences and is mainly amiable and beneficent. It can be compared to a fragrant drizzle. The phraseology of the Holy Qur'ān is majestic and glorious and its similitude is that of an overflowing ocean coming forth.

The Perfect Guidance of the Qur'ān

What a source of happiness it is that we have been facilitated with the word of God, which has perfect guidance in it. One who loves Allah should feel an ardor of happiness in his heart that Allah's Book is with us. We can study it, having made a little effort and we can infer principles for all kinds of mental, moral and spiritual progress from it. Alas, in this day and age, Muslims themselves have consigned this torch of blessing and guidance to darkened closets. They have thus deprived themselves of its enlightenment. They are in the dark but do not benefit from the light that Allah has revealed. They are thirsty but do not try to saturate themselves from the spring that is flowing by Allah's Command. They are hungry but do not come to the table laid out by Allah in front of them. They are destitute but do not help themselves to the treasure that Allah has issued for them. When Hitler's speech is announced they all gather around the wireless, eager to know what he has to say—although at times his speeches are a prelude to the unrest and turmoil in the world. Whereas they wrap up the 'speech' of God in a cloth and put it away in a safe place—the Qur'ān that carries all manner of detail for peace, progress, welfare and success. However, if the daily newspaper is not available in the morning people get anxious, knowing full well that the bulk of the newspapers carry baseless items, which are invariably repudiated the following day. Yet they do not approach the font of all truth.

Just as I have explained, the Holy Qur'ān carries perfect guidance in it and does not constitute of anything that could in any way be harmful to mankind because it is the word of a Being that has created man and indeed the entire cosmos. He knows the intricacies and depths

of human nature extremely well and knows the evil temptations and thoughts that can prevail therein. He knows what situations man has to go through and the difficulties he has to face. However, He has laid down a condition to understand His Word and to fully benefit from its cognizance; the reader has to have a pure heart and do pure deeds! This condition itself is a proof that the Holy Qur'ān is a Divine Word. Had the Holy Qur'ān been a human writing, no matter how scholarly, its comprehension would have only required general intellect and sound wisdom. The purity of heart and actions would have had nothing to do with it. However, it is a noticeable fact that those who have tried to understand the Holy Qur'ān with mere intellect have failed to comprehend its correct message. They have terribly misunderstood its majestic and deep composition. Those who fulfilled the requisite of purity of heart and pure deeds while studying the Holy Qur'ān have had doors of spiritual knowledge opened to them. Amazing insights into the Qur'ān have been disclosed to them. When these insights are pondered over, they fill one's heart with the grandeur of the Word of Allah. A human composition has never had this distinctive singularity, and, indeed, it never shall.

The Great Miracle of the Qur'ān

An amazing miracle of the Holy Qur'ān is that it contains teachings for all situations and all ages. This can be described with citing an example of the Solar System, the Earth; all have been present since the advent of man, in the same state as it is today. However, with time man has increased his knowledge, making discoveries, unraveling treasures, although these entire phenomena were present from the beginning. A little effort was required. As man made discoveries, he uncovered facts. Similarly, the Holy Qur'ān has been around for 1,400 years and in it all spiritual and moral guidance has been amassed. According to the needs of their time and era, God's holy people ponder over it and acquire its enlightenment—over the ages, they have sought its guidance according to the specific needs of their time. This singularity can only belong to the Word of Allah. No man has the power to make such a composition. Such a Book can only be from Allah, who is the Knower of the unseen and Who can foresee the future.

Safeguarding the Qur'ān

Allah the Exalted has promised in the Holy Qur'ān that He has revealed it and He shall safeguard it. There are two aspects to this safeguard: the apparent and the concealed. The apparent safeguard connotes that its words and its order will be safeguarded. That is to say, they shall neither be dissipated nor tampered with. Therefore, friends and foes alike, all agree that all the words and letters of the Holy Qur'ān and all its vowel points remain in the order that was established in the days of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) and that there has been no change of any kind in them. Today, the Holy Qur'ān is the only book in this world that shall remain if all the books in the world were to be destroyed, for it lives, and is thus protected, in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of its lovers. The ‘concealed’ safeguard means that its teachings will be safe and will be manifested according to the need of each era. Whenever human interpretations and commentaries will put a veil over its reality, Allah the Exalted shall manifest its genuine teachings through a chosen servant of His. Hence, this promise is also being fulfilled. There are scarce examples from earlier times of the revolution to have come about in the apparent and the concealed life of man at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. On the one hand, the apparent sciences have developed amazingly, on the other hand, the world has become completely negligent, in fact destitute, of spirituality. There was a particular need for the renaissance of the teachings of the Holy Qur'ān at such a time. Therefore the grace and mercy of Allah the Almighty brought this renaissance about through the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) and in this age the new life of Islam ensued with his hands. It is obvious that the Divine promise of the apparent and concealed safeguard and its practical arrangement demonstrates that the Holy Qur'ān is the Word of a Living, Mighty God.

In short it is a source of immense satisfaction and bliss for us that we have been granted the Word of Allah. All the guidance needed for our age has been delivered to us through the Divine Order and Arrangement, thus the doors leading to the ways and means to seek nearness to Allah have been opened to us.

May 21

The Order in the Qur'ān

Non-Muslim objectors criticize that the composition of the Qur'ān has no apparent order to it. At times, even the Muslims question as to why all the directives pertaining to certain issues were not amassed in one place. Similar other objections are raised due to lack of knowledge and lack of prudence. First of all, it should be understood that the present arrangement of the Holy Qur'ān certainly is not according to the order in which it was revealed. However, this order is according to the direction of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). When a verse of the Qur'ān was revealed, the Holy Prophet would instruct as to where it should be placed in the order. This arrangement is according to the Divine will. At the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, a Muslim organization was not already in existence. A new organization had to be formed. It was fundamental to instill the message of the Qur'ān in their hearts, and then gradually steer them towards the practicality of being a Muslim. Therefore, the arrangement that was required to form a new organization and its gradual training is the arrangement in which the Qur'ān was revealed. Therefore, the Ayahs and the Sūrahs that deal with faith, signs and prophecies were revealed first. Those relating to detailed directives were revealed later; once the organization was complete, and the faith was established. With the first generation of born-Muslims, another situation arose. In light of that situation, the portion of the Qur'ān pertaining to the training of believers was placed beforehand and the arguments, proofs and prophecies in support of faith were placed at the end. This is the apparent order of the Qur'ān. Prudence is required to discover its essential order. This is like traveling in a train and glancing at the landscape whizzing by. No real order appears. However, if one is aware of the geography of the land, and is in general interested in the physical features of the earth, then one can certainly deduce an order in the landscape. One can enhance one's knowledge with this and benefit from it.

Then the objection that why each issue, with its directives and its supportive arguments, is not arranged separately in the Qur'ān. This is indeed due to a lack of prudence. I have said before that the Qur'ān is a collection of perfect guidance and contains knowledge and guidance according to each age. This is just as ways and means have been placed

for man's progress in the earth and the entire cosmos. The Qur'ān is not a mere collection or an inventory of proofs and arguments but is a living word of God. It's utterly fresh gems bloom in every age and period. Firstly, purity of heart and action are required to truly decipher it. Prudence and a sense of discernment are essential too; they aid mental development. It is a quality of the Qur'ān that it's short verses carry millions of objectives. It would be impossible to have a count of these objectives. Allah the Almighty Himself declares in the Qur'ān, "And if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted." This can give an idea of the extensive insight of the Qur'ān. This insight can be derived from referring one verse to the other and comparing them and discovering their continuity and coherence. Some objectives of the Qur'ān can be learnt from the apparent order. However, analysts and scholars find out solutions to issues that require deliberation through the continuity in various places and their analytical eye sees the requisite order.

Its example can be illustrated in a journey taken from plains to a hill station. A certain order of the mountainous region can be seen. First small hillocks appear, dotted about with different fields and vegetation. As one ascends upwards in the journey, the flowers, shrubs, trees, etc., change in their variety. Certain vegetations disappear and only a few distinctive ones remain. As the height is increased in the journey, further changes take place. The air gets lighter and cooler and snow is visible on mountaintops in the distance. This is an order that is visible to all and sundry. However, a botanist will see a deeper order in all this. In light of his knowledge, when he sees various flowers and shrubs, he finds all kinds of order in them. He would make mental comparisons of this land with other lands, which could be at a distance of five hundred or even five thousand miles, their properties and special features. The benefits that could be derived from them and the ways they could be utilized. As he travels further, he observes diverse landscape and his journey is thus spent absorbed in what he beholds. Although they have traveled together, upon reaching the hill station, according to their knowledge and capacities, it is as if these two individuals have traveled through different regions. It is the individual way of their observation. Their deductions were varied and their knowledge was enhanced in different ways. This is a result of just a casual trip. If these two experts made studies and observations at their convenience, they could derive

all kinds of results in their own spheres and could increase their own and others knowledge considerably. Having compared and evaluated whatever they gained from here, they would present their recent findings to the existing knowledge and would come up with many useful principles and results. For example, some geologists go about in search of minerals or oil. They can make an approximation just by looking at the rocks and sand particles as to what sort of metal, mineral or gas is found at a particular spot. At times such rocks, sand particles, etc., are at a distance of hundreds and thousands of miles and it is the estimation of the experts that there is a under-ground connection between the two and that there is an extensive series of rocks that we cannot observe.

A Limitless Treasure

Similarly, the Holy Qur'ān has an unlimited number of objectives and varieties. It is not a mere book, but a Living Word. Its treasures will always be unfolding. One who 'looks' at it carelessly will find no order in it. A person with an ordinary foresight will see some order in it and a person who has a deeper prudence will appreciate a significant order and an analyst and an observer will indeed find many worlds within the Qur'ān. They would discover new knowledge and new treasures at every step. As these objectives are being discovered, there is no question of any diminution; rather further and deeper significances are found. The experts certainly are appreciative of the fact that indeed if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, then these pens and ink would run out but the words of Allah would not be exhausted.

This example is most suitable because this universe is an operation of Allah and the Qur'ān is His word, and not only is there no contradiction between the word and action of Allah, rather there is a deep connection, as indeed it should be. That is why the Qur'ān repeatedly mentions the creation of the heaven and the earth, the sun and the moon, their functions and the object of their creation. The Qur'ān emphasizes the study of these phenomena. They have been repeatedly presented as witnesses and proofs. At one point it says in the Holy Qur'ān,

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَآخْتَلَفَ الْلَّيلُ وَالنَّهَارُ

لَا يَلِمُ لَوْلَى أَلَّا لَبَّ
 الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيمًا وَعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ
 وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطَلًا سُبْحَنَكَ فَقَنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

[3:191-192] “In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed signs for men of understanding—Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; nay Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.” Therein is a prayer to make maximum use for all of the creation of Allah and there is an acknowledgement that if we do not do so, we would have spent our lives in ignorance, regret and a vexation on our loss.

Similarly Allah has repeatedly mentioned the history of early people in the Qur’ān as an example and a proof. Our attention is drawn towards their study. The reason to present these examples and proofs is to make man inclined towards gaining knowledge. As a result of this, he can make progress and develop his love for the Almighty.

Model of the Holy Prophet

Allah has granted us a perfect guidance in the Holy Qur’ān. In the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), He has granted us a perfect leader and guide. It says in the Qur’ān,

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

[33:22], “Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model.” At another point it says,

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبِّكُمُ اللَّهُ

[3:32], that is, O Prophet, “Say (to the believers), if you love Allah (then naturally it should be your desire that He also love you. If that is your desire) then follow me: then will Allah love you.” It also says,

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَ نُسُكِي وَ مَحْيَايَ وَ مَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ بِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَ أَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

[6:163-164], that is, O Prophet, say to the believers that all my worship and my sacrifices and all of my life is for Allah the Exalted Who is the Lord of all the worlds and Who has no partner. How can all this be called mine? I am nothing, He is the Genuine Article. This death of sorts that I have brought on my ‘self’ is for Allah the Exalted as well for He has so commanded me and I am first among those who submit.

In short the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) entire life was for Allah and for His approval. Once someone asked Ḥadrat Ā’isha (radiyallāhu ‘anhā) what was the practice and custom of the Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) life. Her answer was that his very nature was the Qur’ān. That is to say all the teachings and directives of the Qur’ān were his entire life. He was a living example of the Holy Qur’ān—and what an excellent and perfect model he was. Various other prophets were also models for their people in their own time. However, their life histories have not reached us in a complete form and whatever has reached us has not sustained human encroachment. Some prophets have had such traditions associated with them that if they were to be deemed true, such persons could not be even considered believers, let alone accepted as God’s chosen people and prophets. However, as the Qur’ān has verified their prophethood, we believe in them, and consider these ‘traditions’ calumnious because they are way below the dignity of a prophet. Besides, all other prophets did not bring a perfect Law; therefore they could not present an example or model in all spheres of life. We are only aware of two and a half years of Jesus’ (‘alaihissalām) life—and even these are incomplete. Then there are certain traditions written about him which are not befitting a prophet, for example, his changing water into alcohol, or having his feet anointed with a woman’s hair or addressing his mother as ‘O woman’ or cursing the fig tree for it did not bear fruit out of season. Having ignored these baseless stories we only deduce little from Jesus’ (‘alaihissalām) life story—that he taught to be patient and gentle, humble and forgiving and to forgive one’s enemies—but we do not see any expressions of these moral teachings in his life. As far as the Gospels tell us, Jesus’ (‘alaihissalām) enemies kept an upper hand on him through out his life. However, we do note that he presented a

model of pardon to his enemies. There is no model of one's treatment with parents, wife and children and various relatives, or the treatment of a master with a servant, a ruler with his subjects and indeed the subjects with the ruler—the qualities of a soldier, or a general, and the principles of warfare. Or what the treatment of a victorious general with his defeated enemy should be. How to spend one's life in hardship and in prosperity? What should be the principles of trade and what sort of a model should a tradesman present. In short Jesus' ('alaihissalām) life does not illustrate how should one lead an exemplary life in all these spheres of life.

The Perfect Morals of the Holy Prophet

Comparatively speaking, we see that Allah's Will chose the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) to be a perfect model. This is the reason why he had to experience all the stages, which are mentioned above, so that there could be a model of excellence for humanity in all spheres of life.

Although the Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) father had passed away before his birth and his mother died after only a few years, he was brought up by his grandfather Abdul-Muttalib and later by his uncle Abu Tālib as their own. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) respected them both like a son would respect his parents. In particular during his youth he presented an excellent and exemplary model of obedience and support towards his uncle, in spite of the fact that his uncle did not accept Islam till his death. When his uncle was old and feeble, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) took charge of the upbringing of his son, Ḥadrat 'Ali (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu). This was to relieve his uncle of the responsibility. Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) brought up Ḥadrat 'Ali (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) with immense affection and later gave his daughter Hadrat Fātimah's (raḍiyallāhu 'anhā) hand in marriage to him. Many years later when his aunt (Abu Tālib's wife) passed away, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) himself cleared a grave for her and buried her himself. With tears in his eyes he said, 'You were a very good and affectionate mother for me.' The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) assertion that 'Paradise lies at the feet of a mother' speaks volumes about the dignity he associated with the status of a mother. He repeatedly counseled obedience to one's parents. He would relate an

incident about a most supreme and desirable act of a person: A person used to take a drink of milk for his elderly parents every evening. One evening he was delayed and his parents went to sleep. When the person got to his parents, he stood by their bedside all night; neither wanting to disturb their sleep nor wishing a break in their daily intake of milk. When they awoke in the morning, he offered them the milk to drink. (This is a part of a long Hadīth).

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) respected his wet-nurse Halīma (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) and had great love for his foster brothers and sisters. In fact he treated the entire tribe of Halīma (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) with kindness. His life was a model of excellence even before he was entrusted with Prophethood.

His chastity, trustworthiness, care of the needy, hospitality and generosity were acknowledged. In his youth he was given the name of ‘Al-Amīn’, which means the trustworthy.

Treatment with Wife

Hadīrat Khadīja (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) was an affluent lady of Mecca. She had employed the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), long before his Prophethood, for a trade to Syria. She was so impressed by his honest and trustworthy dealings that she sent a proposal of marriage to him. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) accepted the proposal. At that time Hadīrat Khadīja (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) was forty years old and the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was twenty-five years old. After the marriage Hadīrat Khadīja (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) entrusted all her wealth and all her slaves to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). He distributed that wealth among the needy and freed the slaves. Hadīrat Khadīja (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) lived for around twenty-five years after her marriage. She gave birth to three sons and four daughters. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) presented a model of excellence as a husband and father. Through his Traditions he taught to have social grace when dealing with women. He said, “The best of you are those who behave best towards their wives.” Hadīrat Ā’isha (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) would say that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) would talk about Hadīrat Khadija (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) in such a way that she would not feel envious of any of his living wives as she would of the deceased Hadīrat

Khadīja (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā). If a friend of Ḥadrat Khadīja (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā) came to visit, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) would stand up and spread his cloth for her to sit on. If there were ever a gift or something that he would distribute, he would always send Ḥadrat Khadija’s friend a share.

Affection with Children

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) treated all children with immense affection. He was once kissing his grandsons when a nomad asked, ‘O Prophet of God, do you kiss children?’ The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said, *Yes*, at which the nomad said that he had so many children but he had never kissed them. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) replied if Allah had hardened the nomad’s heart then what could the Prophet do.

Many times during the position of prostration in salāt, the Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) grandsons, Ḥadrat Hasan and Ḥadrat Husain (rađiyallāhu ‘anhumā), would climb on his shoulders, but he did not ever mind it.

However, this affection was well within its limits. It is a well-known fact that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) dearly loved his daughter Ḥadrat Fātimah (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā). However, he would always enjoin her to do good deeds for in the Hereafter; he told her, she would not be asked as to whose daughter she was, rather what her actions had been.

Once, upon arriving home, Ḥadrat ‘Ā’isha (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā) said, ‘Fātimah (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā) had come by and had something to say to you. I asked her to stay over but she went back home.’ Thereupon the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) went to Ḥadrat Fātimah’s (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā) house and asked what was the matter. Ḥadrat Fātimah (rađiyallāhu ‘anhā) said to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) that she had developed blisters on her hands due to grinding grain with stone, and would it be possible for her to have a slave-girl to do that job for her. This is the daughter of Allah’s beloved, the apple of the eye of the Seal of all the Prophets—imagine, she did not have any help in her home! When she asked her father for a slave-girl to save herself from the toil that gave her blisters on her hands, her father replied, ‘Why do I not tell you something which is better for you than

slaves and slave-girls in the Hereafter? Say Subhānallāh and Alhamdulillāh 33 times each and Allāhū Akbar 34 times before going to bed.' In other words, be occupied in praising Allah. His daughter thus obeyed and gave up the wish to have a slave.

Once the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was distributing dates as alms. His two grandsons were playing nearby. One of them picked up one date and put it in his mouth to eat. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) put his finger in the grandson’s mouth to take the date out and said that it was not proper for the children of Muhammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) to eat something out of what was meant for alms.

Once a woman from a noble family of Quraish was proven guilty of theft. A judgment was passed to have her hands cut off. The nobility of Quraish sent a message pleading that in light of her lineage, would the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) lessen or pardon her punishment. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) replied, “By God, in Whose hand is my life, even if my own daughter would commit theft, I would have her hands cut off.”

In late life, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had the only son called Ibrāhīm, who passed away. He bore Allah’s Will with patience and said that though his eyes wept and his heart was grieved but he would only say what the Lord liked and would never utter an expression that He did not like, although he grieved Ibrāhīm’s parting.

It has been mentioned that when the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was sent as an employee of Ḥadīt Khadīja (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) on a trade expedition how well and gracefully had he carried out his duties.

Treatment of Slaves

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) did not keep slaves himself. However, if ever a slave came into his care, he would free him. In the early days, in Mecca, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had a young man from a noble family called Zaid as his slave. Zaid was made a prisoner in a war and consequently sold as a slave and ended up in the Holy Prophet’s ownership. This was in the early days of

the prophethood. When Zaid's father and uncle got to know of his whereabouts they came to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) to 'buy' Zaid back. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) told them that Zaid had the choice to go wherever he wished to. Zaid refused to part with the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). Zaid's astonished father asked him whether he preferred a life of slavery to independence. Zaid replied that the slavery he was in was indeed better than a thousand freedoms. His relatives returned disappointed. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) took Zaid to the Ka‘aba and freed him immediately.

Hadrat Anas (rađiyallāhu ‘anhu) was in employment of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) as his servant for many years. He said he was not ever told off in the slightest throughout that period.

May 22

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) always enjoined to treat slaves well. He would say that one should clothe one's slave as one clothed oneself, and if the slave is given a strenuous job then one should lend them a helping hand.

As a result of this teaching, we note the following episode: When in the Caliphate of Hadrat ‘Umar (rađiyallāhu ‘anhu) Jerusalem was conquered, the Bishop of Jerusalem insisted on the Muslim Caliph to come to the city so that everyone could pay him allegiance in person. Hadrat ‘Umar (rađiyallāhu ‘anhu) started his journey. He had a slave with him and they had one camel between them. Hadrat ‘Umar (rađiyallāhu ‘anhu) insisted that they both shared the ride equally. When they were approaching Jerusalem, it was the slave's turn at the ride. ‘Umar bin Khattāb, the Caliph, leader of the believers walked into Jerusalem holding the rope of the camel.

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) always instructed to free slaves and it was considered a most virtuous deed. Once the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) saw a master whipping his slave. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) asked the man harshly as to what was he doing. The man was taken aback and immediately told the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) that he would free the slave. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that had he not done so the fire of hell would have touched his face.

It should be remembered that in Islam there is only one way to make slaves. It is when a nation oppresses a people from accepting Islam or forces them to forsake Islam and a war is waged against them for the freedom of conscience. If there are any prisoners taken in such a war and their people are not able to pay ransom or recompense for them to free them, in that case these prisoners can be made slaves. As they had tried to put others in spiritual slavery, they are thus put in physical slavery. However, it has happened many a time that such slaves, having lived among Muslims, accepted Islam, and the light that they had tried to take away from others brightened their hearts and minds and became the cause for their eternal freedom.

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was always prepared and eager to help orphans, widows and the needy. If he noticed a slave was made to do hard labor, which was beyond him, he would always lend him a helping hand. Such episodes took place in Mecca. Once in Medina, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was the ruler and had commanded against such matters.

The Promised Messiah, ‘alaihissalām, has presented this aspect of Hudur’s [Holy Prophet Muhammad, ᷣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam] character wonderfully:

He was the master, yet he served the weak; he was the
monarch, yet he helped the helpless.

The Holy Prophet as a Ruler

After his claim to Prophethood, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) and his Companions were much persecuted in Mecca. However, he did not ever make any plans against the system of government that prevailed in Mecca or sought a way to challenge it. When he arrived in Medina, the Muslims, Jews and the hypocrites acknowledged the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) as their leader. Gradually the hypocrites of Medina accepted Islam. Thus only Muslims and Jews were left in Medina. Later on the Jews conspired and were treacherous and were exiled from Medina. Some were even given capital punishment. However, as long as they resided in Medina they inflicted all kinds of troubles on the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) and the Muslims. The Quraish of Mecca and various other tribes of hypocrite Arabs were in constant preparation of war or were

repeatedly attacking Medina. The Muslims of Medina had absolutely no peace. They later recalled this period and how they longed for one night's peace and rest and to have no other fear but the fear of God in their hearts.

Despite these difficulties the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) held the government of Medina from the very beginning. Gradually the span of the government grew wider. After the fall of Mecca, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was acknowledged as the king of the entire Arabia. The era after the migration to Medina was thus the government of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). He presented a model of excellence as a general and a ruler. He would lead his armies in battles, although he never killed anyone himself. At times he was wounded in battles, and there were times when the situation in the battle became extremely dangerous and alarming—however, he did not at any point express any sign of weakness. Indeed he would pray most fervently to Allah at such times, for he had an absolute faith that victory or defeat is all in Allah's hands. He is free of all cares and grants victory to whomsoever He pleases. At certain times, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) sent expeditions under other people's command. He would do so under directions not to destroy the enemy's crops and orchards, not to cut down shady trees, not to hurt women, children and the elderly—not to harm travelers and priests, etc., if the enemy showed an inclination for a truce then he directed to lean towards a truce—and not carry on with the battle for the sake of revenge or for the ambition of collecting bounty.

It could be concluded from the fact that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) forbade to punish anyone with fire, that Islam, other than when being compelled to do so in self-defense, does not allow the use of such weaponry that would entail use of fire.

The Simple Life of the Holy Prophet

So how did this 'king' hold his court? There were no armed guards, silk and brocade robes, fanfare, palaces, etc. So much so that this noble person did not even have a bed to sleep on. He would sleep on the floor on a leather mattress, which was filled with dried date leaves. At times

he would lie on the floor on a rough mat of date leaves. When he would rise from the mat, his body would have the marks of the leaves. He lived in a mud hut. The mosque he offered his salāt in was also made of mud with a roof of dried date-palm branches, from which rain dripped through. This mosque was where all the consultations, etc., took place and all the important matters were discussed and decided. This is also where he met his Companions, and received representatives of great kings. There was no guard or a janitor. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) himself would be attired most simply. There were no rules and regulations, though everyone was in deep awe of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) and showed deep reverence to him.

The Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) diet was most simple and he would eat whatever was available. At times he would subsist on ground dates. When there was nothing to cook, no fire was lit in his house for days. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) would himself sow patches on his clothes, and mend his shoes. Ḥadrat ‘Ā’isha (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) was once asked what did the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) do when he was indoors. She replied that he would help with housework. He spent a large part of the night in worship of God. He would spend such a long time in salāt that at times his feet would swell up. Ḥadrat ‘Ā’isha (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) once asked the Holy Prophet why he spent so much time in worship when God had given him a promise of pardon. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that should he not be a grateful servant of his God.

When the construction of the Masjid al-Nabawi started in Medina, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) would carry the clay on the site along with his Companions. Similarly, during the Battle of the Ditch, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) took full part along with his Companions in digging the trenches—as he did so, to abate hunger pangs, he would wrap stones around his belly. In Arabia of those days flour was not milled. In latter days, after the death of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) when conquests were made, various conveniences became available, milled flour was one such convenience. Ḥadrat ‘Ā’isha (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) used to say that she choked when she ate bread made out of milled wheat because she remembered how the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had never eaten bread made out of wheat to his heart’s content. In his time,

wheat was crushed between two stones and used to bake bread.

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) did not amass wealth at any time in his life. However, he would borrow in time of need. It was his custom to always repay a little more than he had borrowed.

The Holy Prophet's Forgiveness and Mercy

The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) nature brimmed with mercy and forgiveness. After he declared his Prophethood in Mecca, he faced many hardships and life was made very difficult for him. His Companions were put through all kinds of afflictions. Some were brutally killed. One kind of torture was to tie one leg of a Companion with one camel and the other leg with another camel. The camels were then urged to go in opposite directions; this action tore the body of the Companion apart. Ḥadrat Bilāl (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu) was a slave and his idolatrous master would make him lay down in fierce sunshine on burning sand. He would then place hot stones on his chest and demand to deny Muhammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). Ḥadrat Bilāl (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu) would confess his faith with perfect composure. However, this torture left lifelong marks on the back and chest of Ḥadrat Bilāl (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu).

When the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) migrated to Medina, the hostility and enmity of the Quraish of Mecca did not abate. They repeatedly attacked Medina. Many times, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had to battle in self-defense. The Muslims thus suffered greatly and many were martyred. However, when Mecca was eventually conquered and his worst enemies were presented in front of him, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) inquired from them as to what sort of treatment should be meted out to them. They replied that whatever treatment they would get, they were guilty of it. However, they knew that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was a merciful person and that they hoped for his mercy. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) pardoned them and told them,

لَا تَشْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ

[12:93], that they were not going to be avenged. With the exception of a few, who were punished for their specific crimes, the Meccans were completely pardoned. This is a unique and matchless example of mercy and forgiveness in the history of the world.

Bravery

The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) personal bravery and courage and his faith and trust in Allah were supreme. His enemies used to say that Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) had fallen in love with his Lord. Indeed there is no doubt that he had fallen in love with his Lord and his Lord loved him.

During the migration to Medina, at one point the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) hid in a cave. A group of Meccans followed him to the cave. Ḥadīrat Abū Bakr (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) narrated that the feet of some of these people appeared just above the cave and had they peered down carefully they would have spotted the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam). When Ḥadīrat Abū Bakr (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) expressed his anxiety, the Holy Prophet said to him,

لَا تَحْزُنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

[9: 40], "Do not worry, our Allah is with us." What a perfect belief.

During a battle the Muslims were in a very weak position and only a handful of Companions were left with the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam). The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) was himself injured. The non-believers started calling out the names of certain noble Companions in order to find out whether they had survived or not. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) told his Companions, including the ones being called out, not to answer. When the Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) name was called out, everyone was again told to keep quiet. When the non-believers did not get a reply, they conjectured that everyone was killed. They raised a slogan of joy, hailing the name of one of their idols, calling out that it had overcome. The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) honor could not tolerate this. He told his Companions to raise a slogan aloud that Allah is the Greatest and the Supreme.

Once a battle was apparently going against the Muslims. There was no security arrangement left for the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) and there was chaos among the Muslim troops. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was almost left on his own. He galloped his horse towards the enemy, calling out aloud,

“Indeed I am the prophet of God and I am not false—

And I am the grandson of Abdul Muttalib.”

The Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) tenor was that indeed he used apparent means of battle and defenses by the command of Allah. However, his real trust was not in this apparatus but in Allah—and although he was human, like others, a grandson of Abdul Muttalib, but he was a true prophet of God, Who would, without doubt protect him and grant him victory over his enemies. Indeed that is exactly what happened; in that particular battle, the Muslims had a miraculous victory.

Once, on return from a battle the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) stopped over at a spot. He hung his sword and lay down under a tree to rest. It seems there was some negligence in the security and an enemy appeared on the scene. He picked up the Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) sword and having seen him asleep, advanced to attack. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) awoke. The enemy said, “O Muhammad, tell me, who can save you now?” The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) replied, “Allah.” This simple, spontaneous and assured reply filled the man with awe and the sword fell from his hands. Seeing his perplexity the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) quickly got hold of his sword and asked him, “Tell me now, who is there to save you now?” The man replied, “No one. Please have mercy on me.” The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) forgave the man.

Likeness for Moderation

The Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) nature was completely devoid of hypocrisy and formality. He is known to have said that often while leading salāt, he wished to prolong the Prayer. However, in such an instance, if he heard a crying baby, his mind would go to the mother and the trouble she would have to endure and

he would thus shorten the Prayer. A false prophet could never say something so lucid and true.

Once a complaint reached the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) that a certain imām prolonged the ‘Ishā (night) Prayer. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) expressed sadness at this and said whoever does so, puts displeasure in people’s hearts regarding faith. An imām should be aware of the fact that he leads a congregation with children and the elderly and some who are tired after a hard days’ work. He must keep them in mind. It was the direction of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) that congregational Prayer should not be prolonged—indeed worship in the privacy of one’s home could be as long as one wished. As I have mentioned before, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) himself would lengthen his standing posture in the voluntary Prayers so much that at times his feet would swell—indeed he spent a large portion of the night in worship.

There is a Tradition that once a man visited a friend. In those days, ‘pardah’ [hijāb] had not been enforced. The man saw that the hosts’ wife was all disheveled. He inquired as to why she appeared like that. The woman said, “Your friend does not pay any attention to me, he fasts all day and spends all night in voluntary Prayers. I have no one to adorn myself for.” The guest went silent at this. After dinner that night, both the friends offered their ‘Ishā Prayers and then everyone went to bed. A little while later, the host got up. The guest asked what was he up to. The host said he was preparing for the voluntary Prayers. The guest said that that was not the Tahajjud time yet and that he should go back to sleep. The host did so. After a while the host got up again, the guest again insisted that he should go back to sleep. This was repeated for sometime. In the end when it was Tahajjud time, they both got up and offered their voluntary Prayers and then offered their Fajr. Later, the host offered some food to his guest. The guest suggested they ate together. The host declined, saying he was fasting. The guest insisted that he would only eat if the host did. It is an Arabian custom to show deep respect to the guests. As the fast was voluntary, the host broke it and had breakfast with his friend. Later they both went to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). The guest narrated the whole episode of the night to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) and asked whether what he had done was correct or not. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that he had indeed done the right thing. He then turned to the host and told him that the man’s own

self had some rights on him, his wife had some rights on him and his guest had some rights on him.

There is no Monasticism in Islam

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) forbade monastery. He said, *Our way is to lead a married and family life*, and a believer should adopt this way of life.

It was his own way and he also taught that one must not isolate oneself from the world. On the contrary one should carry out one's obligations and duties to the world in a most desirable manner. However, one should not be committed to this world either. While one's actions pertain to this world, one's heart should be in remembrance of God. The Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) own life was a perfect example of this. He once explained to Ḥadrat ‘Ā’isha (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) that each person had a Satan within and should beware of it. Ḥadrat ‘Ā’isha (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā) asked if the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had a Satan within him as well. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) replied in the affirmative. However, he said his Satan had become a Muslim. This was meant to purport that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had no remaining wish or desire of his own and that all he did was with the Will of Allah.

Rights of Mankind

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) cared deeply about rights and about discharging of one's obligations. In his last days when he was very ill, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) inquired if anyone had any outstanding obligations towards him, they should settle it then, so that he could go to His Lord free of all responsibilities. In response, one man told of a meager amount that was outstanding towards the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) immediately repaid it.

Once during a battle the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) accidentally hit someone with his arrow. The man said, “O Prophet of God, I want retaliation.” The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) offered to be hit with an arrow likewise. His Companions felt

most restless at the situation. The man replied, “O Prophet of God, I was hit on bare skin, whereas your body is covered.” The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) lifted his attire and offered his blessed body to be hit. The man rushed forward and kissed the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) on his bare skin and said, “O Prophet Of God, this is all I wanted; to be able to kiss your body on this pretext.”

In short, the details of the Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) virtues are never-ending. He was a perfect model in all spheres of life. *Fidāhu abī wa ummī* [may my father and mother be his sacrifice].

May 23

The Divine Mission of the Promised Messiah

The followers of Muhammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) are extremely fortunate in that they have had a perfect guidance in the Holy Qur’ān and a perfect guide in the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). Alas! Majority of Muslims have put the Qur’ān aside and have forgotten the excellent model of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). They are busy pursuing the pros and cons of reasoning, and are entangled in superstitions and customs. In short, as the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) had predicted, a time did come when the Qur’ān was reduced to mere phraseology and Islam remained but in name. It is at this time that Allah’s Mercy took effect, and as per His promise, a true and devoted servant of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) was sent to revive Islam. He was sent to erase all the ungraceful marks from the beauty of Islam; marks that had appeared through the ignorance of the Muslims, in the shape of wrong beliefs and innovations. He was sent to once again set forth the spring of the correct knowledge of the Qur’ān, so that the world could saturate itself on this spiritual elixir—to establish a model of the Islamic way of life through his own life. The Muslims of this age present the excuse that the ways of the world have changed so much that the Islamic way of life cannot be established in it’s true form. Allah the Almighty sent the Promised Messiah (‘alaihissalām) in this age to lay a new foundation for the progress of Islam; to display Islam in its glory once again.

The biggest objection the Muslims raise to the claim of the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) is that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) indeed claimed Prophethood. This is a long-drawn argument, but a short fact should be noted that the Holy Qur'ān is a perfect guidance encompassing the final Divine Law. There is no need for another set of Divine Law after it, as indeed there is no possibility for the coming of another law-bearing prophet, who can cancel or amend the perfect guidance. Indeed, the rank of Prophethood cannot be granted if one is not in obedience to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam). Without paying obedience to the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and compliance to the commands of the Holy Qur'ān one cannot be a true believer, let alone be a recipient of the highest spiritual favor, namely, Prophethood. However, a prophet of God can still come in total compliance of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam). Allah can indeed grant such a person the honor of being spoken to and appoint him to revive Islam. Such a Prophethood is in fact in the image and part of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam)—it is not separate from the Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) Prophethood. It is a blessing for the people of Muhammad (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) and is in no way contradictory to the finality of Prophethood. It distinguishes the Muslims from people of other faiths for their teachings and their laws are canceled and there is no special arrangement for their revival. However, the Qur'ān is living and can never be canceled. It is essential for its intrinsic protection and to have an established model according to its teachings that Allah arranges its revival. It is, therefore, that kind of a Prophethood that has prevailed in Islam.

Islam in a Fragile State Before the Promised Messiah

Before the Promised Messiah's ('alaihissalām) Divine mission Islam had reached a most feeble state. The Muslims had forgotten the love of their faith. The knowledge of the Qur'ān was all but lost. Superstitions and customs, etc., were an established part of the society. Muslims were gradually falling into an abyss of ignominy. The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) took the gauntlet to protect Islam, with Allah's help and His guidance; he instituted Islam anew and thus

gave it a new lease of life. He issued forth the source of Qur'ānic knowledge once again. Within a few years, using decisive arguments, the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) presented Islam's supremacy over other faiths. Today Muslims can hold their heads high at the fact that we have a Divine guidance, which carries an antidote for each ailment and grief in the world. By complying with this guidance man can reach the objective of his life. We have indeed seen with our own eyes Allah's promise of safeguarding and protecting the Holy Qur'ān, His own word.

The Holy Prophet's (*sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*) Beneficence on The Promised Messiah (*'alaihissalām*)

All that took place was in actual fact the beneficence of the Holy Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*). Just as the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) has said on numerous occasions, for instance:

I am ready to offer my heart and soul for the beauty of
Muhammad (*sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*); and my
body is the mere dust of the street tressed by
Muhammad's progeny.

I have seen with my heart's eye, and heard with perceptive
ears,

Muhammad's beauty is being proclaimed everywhere.

The running spring water, which I freely distribute among
God's creation is only a drop of the wondrous ocean of
Muhammad's excellences.

Muhammad is the heat-emitting sun; I take my warmth
from him.

The water that I possess is from the sweet and limpid
spring-source of Muhammad.

Again, he says:

Next to the love of God, I am intoxicated in Muhammad's

love,

If this is a ‘disbelief,’ then by God, I am a staunch
‘disbeliever.’

Each particle of mine sings hymns of love for him;
I have no personal sorrows, but I do suffer the pangs of his
love!

My life may be sacrificed for the sake of Muhammad
Mustafa’s religion;

This alone is my heart’s desire, and I pray for its
fulfillment.

Again, he says:

He is the king of the worlds; his name is Mustafa; he is the
leader of all those who love God and among them he is
like a shining sun.

All lights are caused by his light; his good pleasure is
approbation of God.

For life, he is like running water;

And in knowledge, he is an ocean limitless!

For his truthfulness and excellences, there are thousands of
shining proofs and clear signs in the world.

His face carries Light Divine; his way manifests of the
works of God.

All prophets and saints are subservient to him like the dust
on his doorsteps.

His affection extends to heavens. He shines like the
brilliant moon in purity.

Again, he says:

Other than God, no one can fully comprehend Ahmad’s
glory in its totality;

Between “Ahmad” and “Ahad” (The One), he took the ‘m’
out and nothing stood in-between the two.

He lost himself in the love of his beloved God so much so
that he reached the utmost heights; and in his person
God the Merciful manifested.

The fragrance of the True Beloved was evident on his face;
in his characteristics one could see the attributes of God
being reflected in their perfection.

I would call Ahmad's heart the Throne of God even at the
risk of being deemed faithless and alleged to have gone
astray!

If I lose my head and life in Muhammad's love, this would
be my heart's desire, my prayer, my determination.

Again, he says:

By the Grace of God, we are Muslims,

Muhammad Mustafa is our Imam and leader.

We were born in this religion, and we will pass away
staying in this very religion.

The Book of Truth is the Holy Qur'ān, and our goblet of
gnosis is brimful with it.

The Prophet whose name is Muhammad, he is the purest,
we follow him, we cling to him!

I am saturated with his love; his love to me is like milk to a
baby. My soul is connected with his soul; there remains
no distance between us.

He was the best of the best among all the prophets, among
all humans.

He being the Seal of Prophets, all kinds of prophethood
climaxed and ended in him!

We drank to our fill all the drinks we obtained from him.

All the revelations and directions we received came to us
because of him.

We gained light and excellence from him; without him, it
was not possible to have union with the True Beloved.

To obey his command is set in our souls; whatever is proven coming from him is thus a part of our faith.

The Promised Messiah's ('alaihissalām) Love for the Holy Prophet

Being in love with his master, he said unhesitatingly,

There is a unique light in Muhammad's life;

There are wondrous diamonds in the mine of Muhammad.

The darkness of [his] heart is dispelled, one who falls in love with Muhammad!

The ignorant hearts surprise me that do not understand that all Light is because of Muhammad.

I am not aware of anyone in both the worlds who has the grandeur and glory equal to Muhammad.

If you want to get rid of the rebellious Self, then come and be among those who love Muhammad.

If you wish God might praise you, then put your heart to praising Muhammad.

If you want to know the proof of his truthfulness, then be in love with Muhammad. Muhammad is a proof for himself.

I am always ready to offer my head over the dust of Ahmad's feet; I am always willing to sacrifice my heart for Muhammad's sake.

I am chained in the locks of the Prophet of Allah; I adore his resplendent face.

Even if I be killed or burnt alive for being in the circle of Muhammad's friends, I shall never abandon him.

I am not fearful of this world for service of faith, because I have adopted the religion of Muhammad.

It becomes so easy to be cut off from worldly worries if one just gets absorbed in the beauty and grace of

Muhammad.

Each particle of mine is willing to be sacrificed in
Muhammad's way, as I have sighted his unseen charm.

I do not know the name of any other teacher, as I am taught
in Muhammad's school.

I do not need any other beloved, as I am sold on
Muhammad's beauty.

I only want to be the focus of his attention; I do not need
anything else but the garden of Muhammad.

Do not try to find my heart's pain in my chest; I have given
my heart to him.

I am one of those happy birds of purity that live in the
garden of Muhammad.

Your love has made my face to glow, O Muhammad! May
my life be sacrificed for your sake.

O, I may die a hundred times for him and may this offering
be considered appropriate to Muhammad's glory.

Muhammad is strong and brave, possessing such awe that
none could withstand him.

The world has lost the Way to God; seek it through
Muhammad, his progeny and his helpers.

O, you who deny the greatness of Muhammad and reject
Muhammad's manifest light! Come, and see for
yourself.

Though the miracles are non-existent with others, yet come
and see them being performed by the servants of
Muhammad.

Again, he says:

My heart is full of commotion, praising my lord and master
who is unparalleled in his good attributes.

His life adores the One, and his soul is united with the
Eternal Friend.

He was an absorbent of God's good graces; he was like a child whose rearing was flawless.

He is a magnificent ocean of righteousness and eminence; in his kindness he is the most unique jewel.

In generosity and mercy, he is like the cloud of spring season; he is like the sun in his grace and charity.

He is a reflection of the mercy of the Most Merciful God; he is the manifestation of God's compassion and love.

He was so charming that even a glimpse of him turned an ugly face into a beautiful one.

The light of his heart made thousands of darkened hearts shine like the stars.

Through his blessed person we became aware of Him and through him appeared God's Mercy upon us.

Through him Ahmad of the latter days became a shining sun for the dead of the hearts.

He is the best in beauty among all mankind, and in purity of heart he surpasses all the pearls.

From his lips flow fountains of wisdom; his heart overflows with cognizance of spiritual matters.

He made himself bereft of all worldly things for the sake of God, and none is like him over land or water.

He is a lamp, and God lighted him, so that no wind can ever extinguish him.

He was a pillar of strength, a soldier of Glorious God, with a powerful scimitar set on his belt.

His arrow was the fastest in every field, his sword showed its mettle at every place.

He humbled all the idols of the world, and, on the other hand, he established the powers of God Almighty.

He loved the truth, wisdom and purity; he hated falsehood, disorder and mischief.

He was the master, yet he served the weak; he was the monarch, yet he helped the helpless.

The love and kindness that mankind found in him was greater than the mother-love found in this world.

His splendor reached every nation, and his light illuminated every country.

He was a Sign of Compassionate God for each seeing eye; for every wise person he was a proof of God's existence.

For the weak, he was rain of mercy; for the afflicted, he removed their grief with his kindness.

The elegance of his face surpasses the moon and the sun; the dust of his path is better than the musk and ambergris.

The sun and the moon fade away facing him, as innumerable stars of God's light illuminate his heart.

For the one connected with his beautiful person, just a glance is better than the entire life.

I know his beauty perfectly well; therefore, I offer my life, while others offer only their hearts to him.

The remembrance of his elegance makes me forget myself; I am intoxicated by drinking the cup of his love.

If I had wings to fly, I would constantly be flying towards him.

What could be a better proof of his truthfulness that he was not schooled but was unparalleled in teaching knowledge and wisdom!

God made him drink deep the wine of knowledge; the light he emitted made every star appear faded.

All the potent human qualities appeared in utmost perfection in his person.

All excellences reached their climax in his immaculate personality; thus, without any doubt, all prophethoods

ended in him.

He is the sun for every earth for all ages; he is the guide for the black and the red.

In him assembled two oceans—the knowledge and the divine cognizance; in him combined the cloud as well as the lightening!

My eyes searched extensively, but could not find a clean and pure spring like his religion.

For the seekers of the truth, there is no other leader than him; for the travelers (on the path to God) there is no guide but him.

On the one hand, the monarchs are amazed looking at him; and on the other, the wise are speechless observing him.

No one could match his knowledge and power; he defeated each and every arrogant braggart.

He is not in need of anyone's praise; to praise him is an honor in itself for the praising.

He resides in the pleasure garden of God the Pure, the Almighty; he is above and beyond the imaginative flights of those who wish to praise him.

O, Lord! Convey our greetings of peace to him; we recognized all the prophets through him.

Every Messenger was like a sun carrying the shining rays of the Truth.

Each Messenger was a way to save and serve the religion; each one of them was like a fruit laden orchard.

Had this immaculate group (of the Messengers) not arrived, the religion in its entirety would have been destroyed.

In the beginning came Adam, and at the end came Ahmad; and how lucky is he who saw the last era!"

Prophets are brilliant pearls. Ahmad exceeds them all in brilliance.

The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) wrote volumes of prose and poetry inspired by the deep love of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam), in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) spent his entire life in the angst to 'irrigate' the garden of his master, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) to his satisfaction, and wished to see it verdant. As he says:

My soul is overburdened with these two fears concerning
the faith of Ahmad:

The enemies of his followers are many, but the friends of
the religion are only handful!

And again:

Everyone makes a prayer of his liking at the prayer time,
but all my prayers are for seeing your garden fresh and
blooming!

And once again:

O my friends, just sacrifice yourselves for the sake of the
Friend; in the way of the most dear Friend offer your
lives and hearts!

He who seeks the personal pleasures of this world should
become concerned and anxious for the sake of
Muhammad's religion!

Come out of the pleasure-seeking leisurely life-style of
yours, O men of the True God! Be anxious and restless
for the sake of Islam.

And the Promised Messiah's ('alaihissalām) own life's condition is somewhat evident in his following saying:

We are not afraid of death, we have done away with all the
fears; we died on that very day when we pulled our
heart away from all others but God.

We have sacrificed our hearts and souls for our beloved;
and if he demands more from us, that is exactly what
our hearts yearn for!

The Second Age of Islam

The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) saw the beginning of the second age of the triumph of Islam. Allah the Almighty granted him an organization, which is constantly endeavoring to spread the message of Islam and whose each member is ready to sacrifice his life for Islam. Islam's second triumph shall come about through this organization, through the knowledge and evidence that was manifested to the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām). He unfolded several aspects of the Holy Qur'ān and presented Islam with new evidences. This is the spiritual fountain that he started and it is gushing forth right now and besides quenching the thirst of those searching for truth, it is giving them delightful energy.

My objective through this long yet short writing is that you may be able to truly identify this fountain and you may develop an interest to search for it and saturate yourself on it rather than be content on a few sips. This is the same fountain that sprung forth 1350 years ago in Arabia and now in our age it has sprung in the Punjab in the town of Qadian. Its water is cool, refreshing and life-giving. One who saturates himself on this spring; it is as if they have achieved eternal life. One, who is deprived of it, has apportioned pain, vexation and affliction to his life. As the Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) says,

Come people! For this is where you shall find the Divine
Light

Here, I have acquainted you with the means of satisfaction!

Just look around you and see how much pain and affliction there is in the world today. It is as if peace has left the earth. Humanity is distressed and does not know how and where to attain true satisfaction. Everyone is searching for peace but cannot find it. They seek satisfaction but it has abandoned them. They all have the apparent creature comforts. Compared to the past, man's life on earth today should be of peace and contentment and this very earth should be a model of paradise. However, this earth is getting more and more hellish. The nations who claim to be the most civilized and sophisticated are in pursuit of destruction. They are preparing means of pain, affliction and death of mankind in frenzy. All this is because man has left that way to seek peace, which was appointed by God and has adopted his own self-made methods. By doing so, instead of attaining

peace man has reached a point of fear, restlessness, discord and ruin. However, God has not abandoned man at his self-destruction. Through His Mercy He has opened doors for man's salvation. Whoever identifies this way and steps out on it will indeed one day reach the sanctuary of peace, content and tranquility. Those who leave this way and adopt their own thought-out plans and do not pay heed to the word of God will surely be ruined. They will be consigned to memory like other fallen nations of the past, like 'Ād, Thamūd, Pharaohs, Romans, Greek, and Persians.

Science and Faith

So far I have mentioned faith and belief, let me say a little about some practical aspects. It will be probably useful to explain a little beforehand. These days if a scientific explanation is not found about something, it is either dismissed or branded suspicious. This is despite the fact that science in itself is far from a complete knowledge. It is ever-increasing information and we cannot be certain about its newly discovered facts. As an example I shall tell you that the Holy Qur'ān mentions that our hands and feet will bear witness against us on the Day of Judgment. Prior to the invention of cinema and video this could not be understood on a scientific level. However, through a video one can see how the movement of the hands and feet can certainly bear witness, having been captured on film. An actor can himself look at his own images and have an idea of the way he moves his limbs, etc. In 1911, when King George V, arrived in India the Court of Coronation was held in Delhi. This ceremony was filmed and later shown in London for an extended period of time. The Royal family also went to see the film. Once Queen Alexandria went to see it with King George. As she sat watching the King and the Queen in the film, the King, sitting next to her, explained to her the whole proceedings as an episode from the past personified in front of their eyes.

Similarly, before the invention of radio or wireless, revelation could not be comprehended intellectually. However, with all the modern technology available, it is indeed feasible for man to try to understand such aspects of Divine nature.

The Angels

It is still difficult for the human mind to understand the existence of angels. I shall try and use an example to make you understand, this is a mere example, if you wish to understand it in depth, refer to Ḥadrat Musleh Mau‘ūd’s speech ‘Angels of God.’

I have said that Allah is a most remote and most exquisite Being and man is made of matter and is ‘dense,’ although man has exquisite mental and spiritual powers and senses, it is still difficult for a direct and unmediated contact between man and God. Human faculties do not have the capability for a connection such as the one the Holy Qur’ān tells about; when Ḥadrat Mūsa [Moses] (‘alaihissalām) made a request to Allah that he wished to see Him. He was informed that indeed he did not possess the power and faculty to see the Almighty, however, if he looked at a mount, he would be able to see a manifestation of the Splendor of the Almighty. When the Brilliance and Luster of Allah’s manifestation fell on the mount, the earth trembled and Ḥadrat Mūsa [Moses] (‘alaihissalām) fainted. Its example is like that of an electric cable that carries a current of such high magnitude that it could blow up all the connections. Therefore, when this electricity is to be used, its magnitude is lessened to a level that all its connections are able to tolerate, and only then is this electricity used.

This example also makes the comprehension of the existence of angels a little easier. Broadly speaking, consider that angels are those exquisite beings who make a connection between God and man possible. This, indeed, is a very general explanation. Just as I said, if you wish to have a detailed knowledge of the angels then study the speech of the Khalifatul-Masih II that I have mentioned.

Establishing Salāt in Spiritual Reformation

Islam lays the greatest of emphasis on *salāt*, prayers and remembrance of Allah for spiritual reformation. The importance of *salāt* can be judged by the example of considering that at the time of *salāt*, it is as if Allah holds a court and all courtiers are commanded to attend. Honors and favors are distributed and pleas are listened to. Stages to nearness to Allah are attained. The courtier who is absent

from this court is thus accountable for that. An obligatory *salāt* is, as it were, attendance of the court. One should wait for the time of *salāt*, and when the time arrives, should prepare for the ‘attendance to the court’ with ardor and fervor—make one’s ablutions, have clean clothes on and in keeping with the etiquette of the court, present oneself on time and with full respect. One should stay present until a leave is granted, making all one’s pleas; take advantage of this chance of tête-à-tête and try and attain Divine nearness. Once a leave is granted, then attend to one’s other businesses, however, one should keep one’s mind afresh with the pleasure of the attendance one has just had and anticipate the next such attendance with fervor and zeal. In this way, remembrance of Allah continues in between *salāt* times. As Hadrat Khalīfatul-Masīh II said:

Inculcate the practice of remembering Him, for it is not possible

To have the beloved’s adoration in the heart and not utter his name!

One should reflect on the Divine attributes, and repeatedly remember His favors. The Holy Qur’ān should be read in the early morning and it should be reflected upon. When there is a chance, one should pray to Allah. If *salāt* is like attending a court on a regulated time, then praying to God, compared to *salāt*, is like knocking on Allah’s door in between those ‘attendance’ times, to plead and to supplicate. Allah says that He is always near His servants and listens to them at all times. If one starts one’s day in such a manner and spends and finishes the day likewise, and indeed during the night remembers Allah, and offers optional *salāt* in the late hours then one’s whole life, as if, becomes a continuous worship. In actual fact this is how a true believer’s life should be. May Allah grant us such a life. *Āmīn.*

Let’s talk about how to prepare for *salāt*. The first part of this preparation is the apparent cleanliness. One should try and have clean clothes on. In the eyes of Allah everyone is equal, and only those are honored most whose hearts are filled with the love of God. When attending Allah’s ‘court,’ there is no ostentatious formality; however, a few rules need to be observed, and among them the first factor is that of cleanliness. Along with the cleanliness of one’s attire, one should pay attention to keeping one’s body clean. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) laid great emphasis on oral hygiene. He said that had

he not deemed it a burden for his people, he would have made brushing of teeth obligatory before each *salāt*.

You are aware of the details of the *wudū* (the ablution) before Prayer. I do not need to explain, however, it is appropriate to mention that along with the obvious cleanliness through *wudū*, it also signifies a purification of one's inner self. When a worshipper washes during *wudū* with the intention of Praying, he also reflects on his inner purification and cleanses his mind from worldly thoughts, and draws the attention of his soul to be in attendance of the court of Allah. Washing one's limbs with water concentrates one's dispersed thoughts towards worship. It refreshes the mind and alleviates mental and physical fatigue.

The greatest benefit of *salāt*, providing it is observed and adorned with all the requisites, is that it purifies one's deeds and thoughts. The Holy Qur'ān tells us,

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

[29:46], that the *salāt* restraints us from indecency and manifest evil.

The Holy Prophet (sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) said that a person who is regular in his *salāt* is like one who has a stream flowing in front of his house and washes in it five times a day. As a consequence of regular five Prayers daily Allah wipes out all the spiritual faults of the worshipper.

You are aware of the different timings of the Prayers and the different *raka'āt*. There are a few factors about the *salāt* that some objections are raised about. Firstly, it is often asked as to what is the significance of all the different postures of *salāt* and that if the essence of *salāt* is spiritual then why these physical postures? It is important to remember in this respect that there is a deep connection between what is on the outside and the inner self of a human being and they both affect each other. For example, when someone feels happy his face has traces of the happiness. At times there is a smile or laughter. When one's heart is saddened, then the face appears aggrieved. In case of deep grief, tears can well up. In such an instance if an effort is made to cheer up the dejected person, he feels somewhat consoled. Likewise, if a meek appearance is maintained in a temper, it has an effect in abating the rage. This is the reason why the *salāt* has courteous and meek postures; when a worshipper stands for *salāt*, his heart is full of humility. The

physical postures need to be in keeping with this mental attitude. Therefore, these postures affect the heart and indeed the heart's humility affects the physical postures in turn.

One begins the *salāt* standing respectfully with folded arms. As one's humility increases for the true Beloved, one goes into the *rukū'* posture. When further wrought with the state of meekness, one then prostrates before one's Lord. Once a *rak'ah* is finished, the worshipper begins to express his devotion and reverence anew. The different postures of the *salāt* are intrinsic to expressing humility. Indeed, *salāt* is the supreme fusion of all such correct expressions of worship from all the religions of the world.

At times it is queried as to why are there several *raka'āt* and why are some obligatory and some optional, etc? The brief reply to this is that it is universally accepted that repetition affects the human nature. When repetition is observed within reason, it deeply affects the condition of the heart. When *salāt* is observed properly, the human heart is extremely moved and this increases the humility and state of meekness. The obvious example for that is, if the *salāt* is the spiritual food for the human mind, then this 'food' should be in a given quantity that is plentiful for the heart and mind. That, it eliminates external effects from the human heart and refreshes and purifies it spiritually. At times, one cannot concentrate to maintain humility in one portion of *salāt*, but can make up for it in a latter portion. Just as a mouthful of a delicacy is not enough to satisfy our hunger and we need to eat a reasonable portion to do so, the spiritual food needs to be taken in a certain amount.

The same principle applies to the repetition of *salāt* during twenty-four hours. Just as the human body is tired and fatigued at intervals and needs food, the human soul is similarly affected and requires spiritual food to refresh itself.

The reason for the emphasis on the physical aspects of *salāt* is that although it is a spiritual exercise and its essence is to create heart-felt humility and longing, however, the human body is essential to sustain the human soul. Milk is a source of food for us. However, it needs to be put in a container to be stored and kept. If the container breaks, the milk cannot be kept. Similarly when the human body dies the soul cannot remain in the same state.

Although you know the different prayers of *salāt*, I am not sure if

you understand all the meanings. Therefore, I shall give the simple meaning of the important portions of the *salāt*:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[*Tasmiyyah*] [*bismillāh-ir-rahmān-ir-rahīm*:] In the name of Allah, Who provided all the resources for our training and progress, and Who rewards our deeds with the best recompense.

subhānakallāhumma wa bihamdika: Holy Art Thou, O Allah, and all praise is Thine.

wa tabārakasmuka: And, blessed is Thy name

wa ta'ālā jadduka: And, exalted is Thy state.

wa lā ilāha ghairuka: And, there is none worthy of worship save Thee alone.

a 'udhu billāhi minash-shaitānir-rajīm: I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed (that is, I seek refuge from all adverse effects and thoughts which take away from Allah, the Almighty). [Followed by *tasmiyyah* mentioned earlier.]

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

[*al-ham dulillāhi Rabbil-ālamīn*:] All praise belongs to Allah, who gradually advances all the universe from a lower to a higher state.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[ar-rahmān-ir-rahīm]: It has been translated above.

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

[mālikī yaumiddīn]: Master of the Day of Judgment.

إِلَيْكَ نَعْبُدُ

[*iyyāka na 'budu*:] Thee alone do we worship (that is, we make your pleasure our objective and want to follow your morals).

وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

[wa iyyāka nasta 'īn]: And, Thee alone do we implore for help (we

search only for your support).

اَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

[*ihdinas-sirāt-al-mustaqīm*:] Guide us along the right path, and provide us the opportunity to follow it and make progress.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

[*sirātalladhīna an'amta 'alaihim*:] The path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings (that is, the path by treading upon which, people inherited your rewards).

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

[*ghairil-maghdūbi 'alaihim wa laddāllin*:] Those who have not incurred Thy displeasure, and those who have not gone astray (that is, neither should we be the ones to incite your displeasure through our actions nor should we be the ones to lose the path).

subhāna rabbiyal-‘azīm: Holy is my Lord, the Most Great, who is above all blemish or flaw.

sami‘allāhu liman hamidah: Allah listens to him (accepts his prayer) who praises Him (ponders on His attributes, and calls out that all excellences are focused in the being of the Almighty).

rabbanā wa lakal-hamd: O Our True Lord, Thine is the praise, because all wonders are gathered in You.

hamdan kathīran tayyiban mubārakan fīh: Entitled to the praise which is bountiful, pure and blessed.

subhāna rabbiyal-a‘lā: My Lord who is higher in status than anyone else, and is above every fault or defect.

attahiyyātu lillāhi was-salawātu wat-tayyibātu: All salutation is due to Allah and all Prayer and everything pure.

assalāmu alaika ayyuhan-nabbiyyu wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh: Peace be upon thee, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

assalāmu ‘alainā wa ‘alā ‘ibādillāhis-sālihīn: And peace be on us and on all righteous servants of Allah.

ash-hadu allā ilāha illallāhu: I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah.

wa ash-hadu anna muhammadan ‘abduhū wa rasūluh: And I bear witness that Muhammad is His perfect Servant and His Messenger (bearing a reflection of His attributes).

allāhumma salli ‘alā āli muhammadin wa ‘alā āli muhammadin kamā sallaita ‘alā ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli ibrāhīma innaka hamīdum-majīd: Bless, O Allah, Muhammad and the people of Muhammad (bestow upon them similar rewards), as Thou didst bless Abraham and the people of Abraham. Thou art indeed the Praiseworthy, the Gracious.

In the second “*Assalātu ‘Alannabī*” the word ‘Salli’ is replaced by ‘*Bārak*’, which means ‘to bless with prosperity.’

You know that in the first two *raka’at* after *Surah Fātiḥah* a portion of the Holy Qur’ān is read. After the *Assalātu ‘Alannabī* some prayers in the tradition [of the Holy Prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam,] are said. In *salāt*, one can also pray in one’s own language. Below is the translation of a short chapter (*Sūrah Ikhlās*) and a few prayers known to be the practice of the Prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam. [Beginning with *tasmīyah* mentioned earlier.]

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

[*qul huwallāhu ahad*:] Say, He is Allah, the One.

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

[*allāhus-samad*:] The Independent and Besought of all.

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوَلَدْ

[*lam yalid, wa lam yūlad*:] He begets not, nor is He begotten.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُواً أَحَدٌ

[*wa lam yakullahū kufiwan ahad*:] And, there is none like unto him.

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبِّنَا وَتَقْبَلْ دُعَاءِ

[14:41] [*rabbij ‘alni muqimas-salāti wa min dhurriyyatī rabbanā wa*

taqabbal du ‘ā:] My Lord, make me observe Prayer, and my children too. Our Lord, bestow Thy grace on me and accept my prayer.

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَلَدَيْ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

[14: 42] [rabbanaaghfir lī wa li wālidiyya wa lil-mu'minīna yauma yaqūmul-hisāb:] Our Lord, forgive me and my parents too and all the believers on the Day of Judgment.

رَبَّنَا إِاتَّنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَ فِي
الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقَنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

[2:202] [rabbanā ātinā fiddunyā hasanatan wa fil-ākhirati hasanatan wa qinā adhābannār:] Our Lord, bestow on us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and shield us from the torment of the Fire (burning of heart, regret, grief, etc.).

allāhumma innī a ‘ūdhubika min jahdil-balā’i wa darkishshiqā’i wa sū ‘il-qadā’i wa shamātātil-a ‘dā’i: O Allah I seek refuge with You from being ensnared in trial or an adversity to hit me or a misfortune to befall me or to be at a stage where my enemies deride me.

The prayer to be said during the brief sitting between the two prostrations is as follows:

rabbighfirlī warhamnī warzuqnī wahdinī wajburnī wa ‘āfinī wa ‘fu ‘annī: Our Lord, forgive me and have mercy on me and provide for me and guide me and make good my shortcomings and grant me security and pardon me.

The *Witr raka‘at* are offered in the *Ishā salāt*. The following prayer, called *Du‘ā-ul-Qunūt*, is offered in the third *rak‘ah* after the *rukū‘*:

allāhumma innā nasta‘muka wa nastaghfiruka, wa nu’mīnu bika wa natawakkalu ‘alaika, wa nuthnī ‘alaikal-khaira, nashkuruka wa lā nakfuruk, wa nakhhlā‘u wa natruku man yaffuruk, allāhumma iyyāka n‘abudu wa laka nusallī wa nasjudu, wa ilaika nas‘ā wa nahfidu, wa narjū rahmataka, wa nakhshā adhābaka, inna adhābaka bil-kuffāri mulhiq: O Allah, we beseech Thy help and ask Thy forgiveness and believe in Thee and trust in Thee and we praise Thee in the best manner and we thank Thee and we are not ungrateful to Thee, and we cast off

and forsake him who disobeys Thee. O Allah, Thee alone do we serve and to Thee alone do we pray and make obeisance and to Thee we flee and we are quick and we hope for Thy mercy and we fear Thy chastisement, for surely Thy chastisement overtakes the unbelievers.

I once read a book written after the famous earthquake in San Francisco. The writer of the book went to the city and was moved to see the metal structures of the buildings still standing. The writer tried to use this example to make a point that if man divides his day in a few portions and prays at the end of each portion, which would be the beginning of the next portion, then, his day would be divided into spiritual structures. If there is any element of worldliness in the in-between parts of his day which will be detrimental to his spirituality, then that effect would be dissolved when the next prayer time came and his spirituality would be refreshed. That is to say that if at any time his spirituality is shaken as the earth is in an earthquake, the metal pillars of prayer will keep his spiritual metal structure erect, and the bricks and mortars of the building that fall off can be put up once again with a little effort. When I read this I thought that Islam has already arranged for man to refresh his spirituality at prescribed time with intervals. This is so that the foundation of man's life is on spirituality and when and if external influences affect his life, they can be regularly revoked.

Remembrance of God

The remembrance of Allah mainly concerns the heart. The condition of the heart of a believer should be such that when he is busy in the duties pertaining to the affairs of this world his heart should have a constant thirst that only the remembrance of Allah can abate.

As I have said before, the real time for prayer is when observing *salāt*; because *salāt* is all glorification and praise of Allah and is a perfect prayer. The time of *salāt* is a special time for acceptance of prayer. However, one can pray outside the time of *salāt* as well. The Promised Messiah ('alaihissalām) repeatedly said that it is a source of extreme delight and satisfaction for a believer that the God, who has power over everything, listens to prayers and accepts them. There are many requisites of prayer but the main condition is that there should be faith in the complete Power of the Almighty and the prayer is thus made

with the certainty that He listens to prayers. That nothing is beyond Him. It should also be remembered that He is Lord and Master and is Most Compassionate and Merciful and accepts prayers but that He also has total control over mankind. Man does not always have the insight into the matter that a prayer he makes is truly beneficial for him or is detrimental in anyway. Allah is the Knower of the unseen, and is indeed aware of the conclusion and outcome of everything. At times, He does not listen to a certain prayer. His Mercy dictates that the particular prayer is not accepted because its acceptance is detrimental to the person who is supplicating. However, Allah does not let one's sincerity go fruitless, if the prayer is made with true intention and sincerity then man always reaps its reward, no matter in what form. Therefore, man should neither try to test his Lord while praying, nor should he put conditions regarding his love of God.

Fasting

Along with *salāt*, another important form of worship is fasting. It is obligatory for each Muslim, apart from those exempted, to fast in the month of *Ramadan*. Apart from the fasting in *Ramadan*, one can keep optional fasts at other times. During the hours of fasting, as you know, food and drink and conjugal relations between husband and wife are forbidden. It is enjoined that during fasting in general and in the month of *Ramadan* in particular, one should pay attention to remembrance of God and study the Holy Qur'ān in abundance. If one is not regular in offering the *Tahajjud salāt*, then make a point to do so in *Ramadan*. One should try to curtail one's worldly pastimes as much as possible during *Ramadan*, and to be particularly inclined towards charity and almsgiving, and to avoid wrangles and disputes.

There are numerous blessings of *Ramadan* that require detailed description. However, I shall briefly explain a few factors. Human life is dependent on food and drink and the continuation of the human race depends on the marital relationship. While fasting, one refrains from them both. As if bearing witness to God that for His pleasure man gives up the factors upon which his very existence depends. Although this refraining is temporary, (the objective of fasting is not to wipe out humanity, but to reform and bless it) but this temporary sacrifice is presented as a covenant that if the need should arise, one will be ready

to sacrifice one's life and lineage in the cause of Allah. This is a great promise and a huge responsibility. If one makes this promise with sincerity and is prepared to fulfill it, then Allah blesses him with great reward and much grace. Allah the Almighty says that the objective of fasting is not to stay hungry and thirsty, but it is designed to inculcate the fear and love of God.

The various other benefits of fasting are that man gets to exercise sacrificing physical comfort and to endure hunger and thirst. Fasting creates a sense of equality between the rich and the poor. By developing an appreciation of hunger and thirst, it makes the well-off think of the needs of the poor and impresses a feeling of compassion in their hearts. It makes them appreciate, by experiencing the practicality of it, the state a human being endures when hungry and thirsty.

Ramadan is a most effective and excellent means of spiritual development for mankind. Allah the Almighty says that various forms of worships have other rewards; however, He Himself is the reward of observing fast. The blessings of fasting can indeed be deduced from this alone.

Hajj

Hajj is another form of worship. It is obligatory for each adult Muslim who can afford it. Apart from the financial aspect, the ability to afford the pilgrimage also means that one is able to travel and perform the *Hajj* in peace. During *Hajj*, the person who intends to perform it, is required to travel to Mecca during the prescribed days and observe all the rites and ceremonies. There is no need to go into the details of these ceremonies here, however, it is important to draw your attention to the fact that the valley and city of Mecca have been the landing place of Divine Light. Ḥadrat Ibrāhīm [Abraham, ‘alaihissalām] and Ḥadrat Ismā‘īl [Ishmael, ‘alaihissalām] built the Ka‘ba here. Then the greatest of all prophets, Muhammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), was born here and was indeed brought up here. This is where he entered adulthood and then prophethood was bestowed upon him. This is where the Holy Qur’ān was revealed and the guidance for the world was entrusted to Prophet Muhammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), thus the spiritual fountain was sprung, which is the font of the true life. One who saturates on this fountain finds eternal life and one who stays away is deprived of the true life.

Islam has established a system whereby people of each neighborhood assemble in their neighborhood mosque five times a day to worship Allah. Each Friday, they gather in a large area for the Friday Prayers. Before the Prayer, the imam gives a sermon, in which he draws the attention of the worshippers to matters relating to Islamic teaching, whether that aspect is spiritual, moral or social. There are the two ‘Īds during a year when all Muslims gather at a large place and observe the ‘Īd Prayers together and benefit from the sermon. During *Hajj* Muslims from all corners of the world gather in Mecca and perform the rites of *Hajj* and thus strengthen the bond of Muslim unity.

While performing the ceremony of *Hajj*, the one thought that fills each pilgrim’s heart with ardor and moves him to tears is that it is the land where the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) spent the bulk of his blessed life.

Each place brings to mind some event of the blessed life of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam). It refreshes the memory of the supreme sacrifices made by the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) for the sake of Islam—how Islam was first introduced to the world and all the difficulties and problems it faced. How Allah the Almighty fulfilled all His promises and despite the powerful enemy and the very few Muslims and severe lack of apparent apparatus, Allah granted the Muslims victory. All these thoughts go through one’s mind and rejuvenate a Muslim’s faith; it also brings about a sense of pain and longing at the current state of the Muslims and makes one pray for the renaissance and victory of Islam.

Morals

Now I shall come to that part of Islamic teaching that deals with the human morals. I shall try and instill some of its points in you. In pre-Islamic days little attention was given to this aspect, therefore this is a most important part of the teachings of Islam. Other religions do not have directives pertaining to this aspect. Indeed everyone agrees that all religions have taught man to have good morals. In substance each religion has taught its followers to speak the truth, not to usurp others’ rights, not to kill, etc. However, no other religion has elucidated upon the philosophy of morality and has appointed ranks of morality and has taught ways and means to educate and train in morals and virtues. Only Islam has the distinction of drawing attention to these factors and has

made morals achievable by explaining the ways and means to attain them. This factor has been thoroughly elucidated in the Promised Messiah's ('alaihiṣsalātu wassalām) book, "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam." Hadrat Khalifatul-Masih II's book, "Ahmadiyyat, the true Islam," also explains this aspect. Both these books are worth an in-depth study and you should make a point of reading them.

The Philosophy of Morals

What is the definition of good and bad morals? It should be noted that regarding this Islam includes thoughts along with 'deeds' and has, therefore, taught reformation of both deeds and thoughts. Thoughts are the font of deeds. Whilst keeping deeds and actions in mind, it should be noted that no action is good or bad as a mere action. It becomes either good or bad depending on the intention of the one who acts upon it. It is obvious that all deeds arise of man through a few intended actions. These actions, in themselves are neither good nor bad, but they rather depend on the person who makes the actions and the occasion they are carried-out in. It is the 'intention' and the 'occasion' that make each human deed either virtuous or wrong.

There is indeed a famous Tradition of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) when he said, "Verily deeds are judged by the intentions." Similarly the definition of piety and evil is that each deed that is performed with good intention within its scope is pious and each action that is done out of occasion and with a wicked intention is wrong. If someone commits a murder, the murder in itself is neither good nor bad. The intention and the occasion make it good or bad. If someone sees a man violating a woman and the woman is in a weak position and there is no other way to help her other than by attacking the perpetrator and if during the ensuing struggle the perpetrator loses his life, then although the act was of taking someone's life, but the intention behind it was good, therefore the deed becomes good. A soldier defending his country in a war kills the enemy. His act is laudable. A doctor operates on a patient with the best of intentions and tries his very best to heal and save him, but the patient dies. The doctor's action remains commendable. However, if the doctor based on his knowledge and experience and the patient's case history and condition had known that the operation was not suitable for the patient, but had still gone ahead with the operation, whether the patient had died

as a result of the operation or had a miraculous escape, the doctor's action remained wicked and would have incurred the wrath of Allah.

During one of the early battles of Islam, one man was fighting with great vigor and bravery from the Muslim side. He had killed and injured many of the enemy. When the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) saw him, he told his Companions that the man belonged to hell. Upon hearing this, one of the Companions was intrigued and followed the man in order to observe his fate. The man fought with much enthusiasm and made many assaults on the enemy. Later he was injured and left the battlefield. He stood his sword on its clutch and by dropping his body on it, killed himself. He thus proved that he indeed 'belonged to hell.' It was later found out that the man had not joined the battle in the cause of Allah; rather he had enmity against a few of the opposite side and had used the occasion to take revenge. He had joined the Muslim side and killed and injured the people he had personal enmity with. His course of action was the same as the rest of the Muslim force and he had apparently helped the cause of the Muslim side a lot. However, those who were fighting in the cause of Allah indeed earned paradise whereas this person chose the path to hell by killing himself.

In another battle the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) noticed that one of his Companions who, despite being weak and frail, was going about haughtily in order to show off to the enemy. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that Allah does not approve of haughtiness. However, at that moment Allah the Almighty approved of the person's haughtiness against the enemies of Islam. That is to say, an un-desirable action, with regards to its intention and circumstances, became the source of Allah's approval.

The same applies to marital relationship. In its origin, it fulfills a natural urge that is neither good nor bad. According to the circumstances it can be either good or bad. A married couple who live with love and affection and treat each other with kindness and stay within the limits prescribed by Allah and the foundation of their relationship is based on piety, and they wish for virtuous offspring with the intention that the offspring will be righteous and will uphold Allah's pleasure in the world, have a blessed relationship. However, if a man and a woman have a relationship based on physical attraction and they are not married, then this relationship, due to being inappropriate is

wrong. Even if this couple is married and is therefore proper in the eyes of the apparent law and jurisdiction, their relationship cannot be deemed commendable with regard to true morals, for it is not based on goodness of intention. Such a relationship would be corrupt in any case. A worldly decree or a judicial verdict only work on what is apparent. An action that stays within the limits of law is admissible in this respect. An action outside the limits of the law is not admissible and is censurable. However, these are inferior states of morals. As the fear and love of God concerns one's intention and heart, its station is loftier. High morals can only be achieved by attaining piety. An appropriate action is just and admissible, however, if it is done with a good intention it becomes an action of high moral and will be an act of piety. The objective of faith is not just to shun crime, but also to avoid sin. Moreover, the aim is to try and be righteous with high morals. The main difference between law and religion is that law only keeps correction of actions in view; its application is on the actions that are apparent. More often than not, once the deed is done it entails in punishment. However, religion deems correction of morals as its object. Matters of the heart, intention and object govern it, so that the font of all action taken is 'cleansed' and whatever action stems from therein is virtuous. As a result of this actions are by design corrected and reformed. That is why in the matters of faith, thought and intention are considered both meritorious and censurable. It is deemed that a moral deed is based on its intention; reliance on mere occasion is not sufficient.

Similarly, the actions that are based on a supreme intention are therefore highly meritorious. As a result, they affect the moral and spiritual development of one who carries them out.

In the days of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) one of his Companions built a house near a mosque. He invited the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) to the house as a matter of blessing. The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) went to the house. He noticed a window and inquired what was the purpose of the window. The Companion said that that was there for air and light. The Holy Prophet said that air and light would have come through the window anyway, had the person made an intention to have the window placed there in order to hear the *Adhān* clearly, he would have earned a reward for that intention.

The Promised Messiah (‘alaihissalām) said that one should try and

make a virtuous intention for each action and thus make each action worthy of reward and blessing. For example, everyone eats and drinks and enjoys doing so. Generally speaking people eat to fulfill the requirements of hunger and thirst and to savor the flavors of food and indeed to provide nourishment to the body. If a believer makes an intention to eat and drink because Allah the Almighty has told us that He has created everything for us, to earn our good livelihood, enjoy food, and nourish ourselves and expend our energies in seeking Allah's pleasure. If this be the intention of a person for partaking food then the pleasure in eating would be enhanced for him, compared to the rest; one would eat food as a matter of course but would be rewarded for it, and the eating and drinking will help one in spiritual development and be the cause to attain God's nearness.

Similarly, if a believer keeps an excellent intention while carrying out all natural requisites, he can spiritually benefit from each action of his life and can, therefore, rapidly progress in attaining nearness to God. Eating and drinking, dressing up, earning a livelihood, making a home, exercise, study, marriage, running a house, children, their training—all of these can be actions of high morals and spirituality. A man provides for his wife and children. Works hard to earn a livelihood to feed his children and to meet their needs. If he carries out all these responsibilities with the intention of pleasing Allah, and because Allah has commanded to provide for one's family, it will be as if such a person is constantly seeking Allah's pleasure. This hard work of his will come under piety and will cause him to earn a Divine reward. If he applies the same intention to everything he does, his life would be naturally reformed and none of his actions will be without piety. If a person earns a livelihood with the intention that I have described above then it will be impossible for him to earn his living through any ignoble means, to usurp or deceive someone or take a bribe, etc. His intention will be to be obedient to Allah and to please Him, he will therefore earn his living through means that are preferred by Allah.

Similarly, an employee should carry out his duties with the utmost honesty—not to gratify the employer in hope of a reward and a promotion—but to please Allah, for Allah's Will is for each employee to perform his duty with efficiency and honesty and that each employer is kind and benevolent to the employee.

If each person reforms his intention in this manner, the entire benchmark of deeds changes and life becomes totally peaceful and

harmonious.

The Degrees of Morals

Islam has appointed degrees of morals. One can keep them in view to check and reform one's actions and morals. Allah the Almighty enjoins,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَيَنْهَا عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ

[16:91], “Verily, Allah enjoins you to abide by justice, and to treat with grace, and give like the giving of kin to kin; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil and transgression.” Within these prescribed limitations the lowest degree of bad deed is that of transgression, next is manifest evil and then indecency. The lowest degree of virtue is that of justice, greater than that is grace and higher than that is to give like the giving of kin to kin.

“Transgression” implies those deeds that inflict pain and grief on others, which usurp others' rights. Verbal abuse, physical assault or thefts, etc., are all such deeds. In short any such action that causes pain and suffering to another and infringes their rights is transgression.

“Manifest evil” entails those deeds which other people dislike, for instance, general verbal abuse or impropriety; disagreeable acts like urinating in a public place or spitting on a clean floor in assembly, or an act that affects the sensibilities of others and hurts their feelings.

“Indecency” infers to those deeds, which do not apparently affect others, but if they are not curbed there is a trepidation that evil deeds will stem from them. In this sense such deeds are detrimental to one's spirituality and morality. Subject to this, undesirable and odious thoughts and imaginations come to mind. As I said before, in Islam thoughts and imaginations are also included in ‘deeds,’ as they are the font of apparent actions.

Everyone can check one's deeds and morals by these references and can pay attention to their personal reformation. Furthermore, one can judge the pace of this development. It is not essential to concentrate on ridding of ‘manifest evil’ only after one is completely rid of the degree

of ‘transgression’ or to completely discard ‘manifest evil’ before considering the ‘indecency’ issue. One can start reforming all these degrees simultaneously. This way reformation of each degree can contribute towards the reformation of the other and as one keeps a check on oneself and realizes which faults one is most inclined towards; particular attention can be paid to ridding of those faults.

Although discarding bad habits is an essential stage of moral development, however, even if one rids of all of one’s vices, one cannot be called a person of high morals; high morals entail virtuous morals as well. A person cannot be content on the fact that he does not steal, commit murder or rape, that he does not deceive and plunder peoples’ property, is not guilty of indecency, does not think evil thoughts and evil plans. This can satisfy him to the extent that he is rid of bad habits, however, he cannot have the satisfaction that he has achieved a virtue or a high moral. It is as if he has only covered one stage of moral reformation and development. The second and more important stage that still needs to be covered is that of acquiring good, namely, the stages of abiding by justice, treating with grace, and giving like the giving of kin to kin.

“Justice” connotes that in return of good conduct, a person at the very least does an equally good deed, that his morals are so reformed and developed that he habitually at the very least gives as much as he takes and when faced with bad conduct, does not have a rather harsh attitude.

By “grace,” it is meant that a person’s morals are so well developed that he exceeds in returning a good deed and fends bad conduct with good conduct. Allah the Almighty enjoins to return bad conduct with good conduct. This leads to one’s enemy becoming one’s closest friend.

The tenor of “giving like the giving of kin to kin” is that a person does not do a good act with the idea of getting a reward; rather it should become a part of his nature. Regardless of the treatment he gets from others, he should always act out good deeds. He should perform good deeds as naturally as he loves his family with a most natural feeling. To illustrate this degree of high morals one can imagine that upon throwing a stone at a beehive only sweet honey exudes, indeed that is all a beehive contains. Having reached this stage of high morals a person’s disposition is an embodiment of goodness and no bad aspect remains.

Reflect on how Islam has elucidated the principles of moral

development. Firstly, the ‘limits’ of Allah explain the permissible and the non-permissible, then by explaining the factor of “deeds are determined by intentions alone” in Hadīth, intention, thought and objective were reformed, the principle to make each deed virtuous was taught. By defining degrees of morals, it is as if human beings were ‘morally’ classified. As a result, each person can test himself/herself and decide, according to different morals, which rank or degree he/she belongs to. It is considered a huge benefit of this classification that it inclines one towards moral development and fosters hope. When one is at a lower rung of development one should try and reach the next stage, and so on. Even if one is in the doldrums of morality, one should wish to pay attention towards one’s moral reformation, and will be encouraged at passing through each stage as one realizes the development one is making.

When a child first goes to school, his attention is towards the immediate next stage in his schooling rather than higher education. His concern is to go from one class to the next. As he advances in his schooling, his hopes are raised and he gains confidence and happily makes progress. However, there is one difference between a schoolboy and the moral classification of a person; a child attends the same level of class for all his subjects, despite the fact that some children excel in certain subjects. A student of the school of morals has his classification on varied levels. For certain aspects he is in a higher level and for some he is not.

Islam gives detailed arguments and directives about specific morals and their scope and their interaction. You can study these issues in the books I referred to earlier on. This study will make you appreciate that no other religion has given a detailed education regarding morals as Islam has done. There are similar directives about sociology, economics, politics and international relations. Much of these details have been elaborated in “Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam.”

Marital Life

In all social relationships, the marital relationship is the most important. The first and foremost circle of human life is the family. Its foundation is laid on marital relationship. I have said that Islam considers the cause and motive of this relationship establishing piety and continuation of the human race. The mutual attraction between man

and woman is a natural requisite and emotion. Like other natural emotions, in itself this emotion is neither good nor bad. Rather the ‘occasion’ and the intention to carry this requisite out, makes it permissible or non-permissible. Islam has laid out the Nikāh as the limitations of its occasion. In short, it means that there is no lawful impediment between a man and a woman, for example, there is no prohibition over their Nikāh or the woman is not already in Nikāh with someone else. To establish piety and to carry forth the human race, they decide to form a permanent marital relationship. This proposal and consent is made in front of witnesses. The consent is then announced and a dowry is fixed which the man has to pay his wife, which is announced as well.

These are legal and Islamic conditions that are the building blocks of this relationship. However, without a spiritual connection, this relationship, like the others, cannot attain its true objectives. The conditions mentioned above certainly satisfy what is decreed, however, to achieve ‘piety,’ Islam makes some further explanations.

Regarding the choice of a wife, the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that some people are mindful of wealth, some family respectability and some beauty in this respect. However, a believer should be mindful of the factors that enable the completion of the spiritual requisites in this matter. His intention should be based on piety. The Holy Qur’ān enjoins the believers to choose a spouse with piety in mind and to be mindful of the factors one is basing one’s future on.

The Holy Prophet’s (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) point was not to consider wealth, family respectability or beauty as wrong, rather, the object was that a person’s intention in making this choice should be the fulfillment of spiritual matters and the choice should be made on this viewpoint. Other factors should only be given their due importance. For example, wealth should be a factor only in the context that the husband is able to afford to keep his wife in suitable circumstances. If he cannot do so, then the Qur’ān enjoins that he should wait for better circumstances with chastity. As far as appearance is concerned, of course it is important that both the husband and wife like each other and one partner should not be disgusted at the sight of the other; the Holy Qur’ān enjoins to marry women that one likes. It is important to keep in mind the family factor in the sense that both the parties come from a

similar background. Otherwise social issues can cause severe problems. Therefore, the objective of the Holy Prophet's (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) instruction is not to make these factors the aim and object in essence. For example, a man wishing to marry a woman for her beauty or for the fact that her father holds a high position or is wealthy, despite the absence of the criterion necessary for establishing piety. It could be that the woman and her family are oblivious of matters of faith and do not take any interest in them. Or the woman could be affected with a disease that might be repulsive in nature, or that could have finished her chances to bear children. These and similar factors need to be sorted out. It is a good idea to perform '*Istakhāra*' so that the right choice is made with the grace of Allah. The decision about marriage is the most important decision of one's life; it affects the rest of one's life and the next generation. Therefore, it is important to exercise due care, and reflect and pray in abundance.

Once the choice has been made, the man should remember that in marriage the woman's sacrifice is comparatively larger. In most cases, the woman is younger than the man and therefore of less experience. Her traditional upbringing does not expose her to the world much. She is used to the warm love and affection of her family. After marriage she has to leave the company of these dear ones and establish a relationship with, at times, a strange family. She has to start her life anew with a comparative stranger. Naturally, she has a little fear and anxiety and certainly some hopes regarding her future. She also possesses, compared to the man, sensitivity of nature, and her feelings are different from that of a man. Due to natural bashfulness, she is not very expressive about her needs in the beginning. In these circumstances the responsibility of her comfort and her happiness lies with her husband. If his attitude is not of perfect affection, kindness and charm, she can get hurt. This could end up being detrimental to their mutual relationship. The husband should also remember to bring an aspect of guidance to their relationship. It is necessary to have an element of affection and kindness in this as well. It is important to take extra care in the beginning. More often than not the state of the marriage ends up being what it is in the first few months and years.

Kind treatment of the wife also entails kind treatment of her family so that she is not hurt in any way and her natural feelings of pride she has for her husband are not wounded. The husband also expects in a natural sort of a way that the wife considers his family as her own, is

respectful and compliant towards them. Similarly the wife has a rightful expectation that her parents are treated in kind.

The Holy Qur'ān enjoins,

لَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ

[2:229], that women's rights are similar to their duties. It is not correct for the husband to enjoy all his rights but fall short of fulfilling her rights. Allah the Almighty enjoins to "consort with them in kindness." The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said, "The best of you are those who behave best towards their wives."

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said about the treatment of women, "Woman has been created from a rib and the most crooked part of the rib is the uppermost. If you try to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it alone it will remain crooked. So treat women kindly."

When two people are meant to spend the rest of their lives together, there is bound to be disagreement and it is also possible that some habits are disliked by each other. Allah the Almighty enjoins not to do haste in such temporary matters and factors that are not to one's liking. One should appreciate that Allah the Almighty has some wisdom in the fact that certain things are disagreeable to you or if you find something most desirable, it is detrimental to you. When being aware of something you do not like, just remember the hundreds of things that you find pleasing.

It is said about mutual relationship that Allah has put love in your hearts so that you find comfort from each other.

As I have said it before, the marital relationship should be based on piety. Just as it is important to have good intention and to take care to carry out other natural requisites—like when one is hungry one eats food. However, gluttony can lead to digestive problems and ill health. Similarly, congruous marital relations are an excellent disposition; beyond their limitations is mere carnality, which can affect one's morals and spirituality.

It is important for the husband not to hurt his wife's feelings. This is the most delicate of all human relations and its early days are indeed the most susceptible. It is therefore important that husband and wife

always maintain a sense of respect for each other's feelings and that they always hold each other in esteem.

The Islamic viewpoint about marital relationship is evident from a saying of the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), directing to offer this prayer when meeting wives, “Shield us, O Allah, from all the evil, and keep all evil away from the issue which Thou has provided.”

Many lessons can be learnt from this directive. First of all we realize the standard of marital relationship and we are guided towards the requisite mindset at these times. We also realize that the mindset and emotions of the time affect the offspring. This fact has also been scientifically proven. Our attention is also drawn to the fact that the training and protection of the offspring starts at conception.

When, with the blessings of Allah the Almighty, the parents are expecting a baby, the husband needs to increase his kindness and affection, because the wife goes through a sense of great obligation and trepidation. During pregnancy, a woman is responsible for two lives and her own health is affected. She needs much kindness in these days and should be relieved of housework as much as possible. Attention should be given to her diet, light exercise and fresh air, and she should be spared mental and physical suffering. In short, the husband's love and affection should increase manifold during these days.

The Holy Qur'ān has also drawn attention to this condition of women, “his mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years.”

Besides showing affection and kindness to the wife, the husband should try and spend time in prayers, and this indeed is the best way to express kindness. The un-born baby should be included in these prayers, along with the wife.

Islam has drawn attention to the event of the birth of a baby and it's training. Just as a baby is born, the *Adhān* is said in his right ear and the *Takbīr* in the left ear. There is wisdom in this for the parents to carry out the training of the baby according to the principles and objectives that are set out in the *Adhān*.

These days much is made of women's emancipation. Just as there is intemperance in all the other matters of the world, some people have exceeded limits in this affair whereas some have gone the other way. The Holy Qur'ān has established these rights by saying that women

have similar rights and duties to men, and has also elucidated the factor that in the partnership of men and women, men are the senior partners. No doubt, as human beings, men and women are equal, however, the difference that nature has created between them is evident from the sphere of the functions and responsibilities they have in human life. In view of these responsibilities and sphere of functions, men have been given some austere and heavy duties and women have been given relatively light duties. Their physique and other faculties are in accordance with these duties so that they are able to carry their responsibilities in a becoming way. Man has been given the responsibility to work hard to earn a living to keep his family and to provide for their comfort to the best of his ability, to protect them, and in any time of trouble, safeguard them.

Wherever in the world there is a partnership, one partner is essentially given slightly more rights than the others so that in case of a disagreement, there can be arbitration. These rights, however, are not used at every opportunity and circumstance. The relationship of a husband and wife is such that if they both carry out their responsibilities properly then these 'special' rights will not be needed. However, if the chance does arise for the implementation of these rights, it should be clear who has the authority to carry them out.

Islam has made arrangements for a solution in times of differences to the extent that it has not even excluded a short journey from it. It is enjoined that when two or more people set out on a journey, they should appoint an 'Amīr.' The Amīr has to be obeyed during the journey. The company of husband and wife is one of life long journey and an Amīr is therefore required for this journey. Islam has appointed man the Amīr of this journey. The main reason for this being that man has been given the responsibility to earn the livelihood and to provide for the family. He should also have the last say in the expenditures, etc., as well. However, you have read how much it has been impressed upon him to be kind and affectionate.

Some people have gone to the other extreme and their treatment of women is inhuman. They deprive them of all rights and choices. At best, her status is that of a maid-servant in the house although this is totally against the teachings of Islam. Within the limits of Islam, a woman has as much freedom of thought and opinion and decision-making and action as man has in his sphere of functioning. If this is not so then the running of the household cannot be pleasant and there is a

probability of some matters remaining incomplete and imperfect. This can cause anxiety and disquiet to the man and the woman, and will affect the upbringing of the children.

Training of Children

With the arrival of children, when a family unit is formed, the parents are directed to bring their children up with affection and tenderness whereas the children are directed to be obedient to parents and to respect them. As the children grow and the parents attain old age, the children should increase the expression of affection and love and should serve their parents in a most suitable way.

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) has taught us a most exquisite principle regarding the training of children and [unfortunately] not much attention is given to this aspect. He directed, *Honor your children*; that is to say, along with love and affection, treat them with respect. This inculcates confidence in the children and musters courage, and they learn good morals and values easily. Alas, in our country [Indian subcontinent], the parents do not pay much attention to the training of the children. The mothers are sort of forced into this role to some extent but mostly the fathers shy away from this responsibility. They consider it enough to entrust the child to a teacher or a boarding school at young age, although nothing can replace parents' personal attention. As a result, there is a sense of alienation between the parents and the offspring that cannot be removed at a later stage. A sort of a screen comes in between them, which suppresses the expression of the most natural of emotions. The children are thus deprived from a huge advantage and the parents, specially the fathers, are deprived of the most natural love that children have for their parents.

The Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) said that one who is not respectful to elders and is not affectionate and compassionate to the younger ones is not from among us. Although it is urged to treat the wife and children with extreme love and kindness, there is also a reminder not to let the love of one's family make one oblivious to the remembrance of Allah. It is said that the family is like a trial for us. The analogy to a 'trial' connotes that the way one treats one's family is a test in itself; lest one is negligent of one's duties and is not mindful of piety in carrying out the duties. On the other hand, they are a 'trial' in

the sense that they may make one neglectful of the remembrance of Allah. Their love could be one's main objective, and in fulfilling their wishes and necessities, one could adopt ways that lead away from piety. For example, some people take bribes or acquire wealth through deception, etc., to meet the needs of their family. Therefore, Islam has set limitations here; the love of one's family is a most desirable quality as long as the intention behind it is seeking the pleasure of Allah rather than one's own material wishes. It is important that this love is limited to its suitable sphere.

On the other hand, the offspring are most strictly enjoined to be respectful and obedient to the parents and to treat them most kindly. It is said in the Holy Qur'ān:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالِّولَادِينِ إِحْسَنًا
 إِمَّا يَبْلُغُ عِنْدَكُمُ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَّاهُمَا فَلَا تُنَقِّلُ لَهُمَا أَفْ
 وَلَا تَتَهَرَّهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا
 وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ
 رَبُّ أَرْحَمَهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَنِي صَغِيرًا

[17:24-25] Thy Lord has commanded, "Worship none but Him, and show kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, never say unto them any word expressive of disgust nor reproach them, but address them with excellent speech."

A most pertinent aspect in these verses that requires reflection is that Allah has mentioned the obedience and kind treatment towards parents immediately after the mention of the Unity of God. This illustrates that Allah holds parents' respect and kind treatment in a very high regard. There are similar teachings about kind treatment with other relatives, according to their status. As you must have noticed, Allah the Almighty has defined high morals as: when virtue and goodness penetrate man's nature as naturally as the disposition to be kind to relatives.

The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَنًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ
وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنْبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ
وَآبَىنِ السَّيْلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

[4:37] "... show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbor that is a kinsman and the neighbor that is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer and those whom your right hand possesses..."

There are also instructions to treat animals in a noble manner and to be kind to them.

General Social Etiquette

Islam has set out rules regarding table manners and etiquette for assemblies, etc. Every kind of social manners and regulations are explained. The believer is directed to spend life with dignity and good morals. The details of such matters are so explicit that small points like leaving space for late comers in assemblies and not to leave without the permission of the 'chair' are all explained. Upholding of dignity has been taken care of to the point that the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) enjoined not to eat in market places and not to walk around with just one shoe on; either be barefoot or have shoes on both feet.

There is also instruction to keep roadways clean and tidy and to remove certain harmful things from them.

Then there are different instructions and guidance for businessmen that are designed to ensure that justice is done to each person and that there is no deception. These guidelines are not sufficed to alert the consumer; but have made it a duty of the vendor to be honest in presenting his merchandise and not to carry out any kind of deception.

Three reasons and motives have been given for setting up organizations, etc. The first is to promote the help of the needy, second is the intention of promoting knowledge and research. The third aim is of spreading peace and unity among humanity—be it on national or international level.

In short, such wholesome principles have been given that their application can truly make this life paradisiacal. You should study these principles in detail and should act upon them.

Economic System

I shall briefly talk about a few principles of the Islamic economic system. There is much discussion about these aspects in the West these days. People go to extremes in these matters and our young people adopt certain ways without reflecting on the Islamic teachings. This has a very detrimental effect on their lives.

The first point to instill in one's mind is that Islam has appointed a golden rule for all affairs; moderation is best in all matters. In economics, Islam neither totally supports individuality nor partnership.

Islam recognizes individual ownership to a certain point. Certainly, different people have different capacities and some individuals make correct use of these capacities whereas some do not. There are degrees of this usage. Different people work on different standards and put in varied effort. It is therefore essential that they be rewarded on different measures. It is human nature not to put in maximum effort unless there is aspiration of individual ownership and reward. However, having recognized individual ownership, Islam has laid down all sorts of restrictions. As a result, the bad effects stemming from an extreme employment of this principle are revoked.

It is a fundamental principle of Islamic economic system that in creating wealth, apart from the capitalist and the worker, others have a share as well. Obviously the true 'capital' of this world, which in essence creates all wealth, is the earth and all its treasures. The air and the heavenly bodies all belong to Allah that He has granted to mankind. Therefore, in creating wealth, along with the capitalist and the workers, all humanity is included, for whose service this universe is created. As a result, all mankind has a share in all wealth produced. Islam calls this 'share' *Zakāt*. By definition, the word *Zakāt* means purifying. Therefore, if this share is not taken out, the wealth does not remain pure and wholesome. As this wealth has a share that needs to be paid out, it remains an unfair system. As it is at times considered, *Zakāt* is not a charity or alms. It is a tax levied on capital and income and its payment is an obligation on one who owns property. The Holy Qur'an has

repeatedly enjoined this. Islam has fixed rates for the payment of *Zakāt* and ways of spending it are clearly determined as well. It is the duty of the government to collect this tax and use it on the fixed objectives only. The government does not have the right to use it on general obligations. The foremost disbursement of *Zakāt* is that it is used to remunerate the staff that is employed to collect it. The needy and the poor are supported and helped out with it. Scholarships are granted to those who are engaged in researching knowledge and cannot earn a living. Skilled people, who do not have a capital, are given monetary help to get started in business.

It is a shame that Muslims have abandoned the payment of *Zakāt* and the system of its disbursement. It certainly has the answers to economic problems and necessities.

The Prohibition on Interest

Islam has forbidden usury and interest. The main reason being that it gives way to a perversion, which gradually eliminates the sense of human kindness and brotherhood. Lending on interest results in wealth accumulating with a few people and the rest of the society is totally dependent on their mercy in matters of economics. Although a few amass great wealth due to this system, on the other hand, thousands remain penniless and indigent. The Islamic viewpoint is that wealth should not amass among one group of people but should circulate among varied groups of people and should be divided among as many people as possible. Those who have the capacity and ability to increase the wealth may do so, and it can be divided all over again. The Holy Qur'ān predicts that interest and usury can lead to wars. An observation of history shows that if usury were not in custom, certain wars in history would not have prolonged as they did. In the current age, endless arrangements are being made for a fierce war, its causes lie mostly in interest and usury as well. If this custom did not prevail, various nations could only prepare for warfare on a very small scale. This would not put so much financial burden on them and there would not be such a danger of destruction.

It should not be deduced from this that Islam has forbidden giving and taking of loan or has forbidden taking out mortgages and business partnerships. Islam considers taking and giving of loan without interest admissible. Islam directs to put all such dealings in writing regardless

of the amount under consideration. The said document should then be witnessed and a repayment period should be fixed. The person taking the loan should formulate this document. If they are under age, etc., then someone should act on their behalf. There are similar instructions about all pacts and contracts.

It is directed that there should be no interest involved in all pacts and partnerships. ‘Interest’ means, one party lays a clause that in return of the usage of their money or goods they would receive a fixed amount of money or goods or would receive the money or goods loaned on a fixed rate. Indeed, a partnership based on the principles of business whereby both or all parties are equally responsible and have equal rights to receive profit and loss on a fixed rate, is admissible and is not objectionable.

Islamic Law of Inheritance

In Islam, the third way to prevent accumulation of wealth with a few is the Islamic system of inheritance. An adult Muslim has the choice to bequeath any portion of his estate in his lifetime or to spend it as he wishes. Once the bequest is made, he should remove any claims over that part of the property. He cannot have an arrangement whereby he benefits from that property during his lifetime and the property or estate is transferred after his death. He only has the right to make a bequest when in good health. In case of contracting a terminal illness, he cannot make a bequest, however, he can make a will. According to the [Islamic] rules, he cannot transfer more than a third of his estate, this rule is applicable even when giving to charity or for religious purposes. There is a restriction regarding this one-third share; it cannot be given to an heir. The obligatory outcome of doing so would result in that particular heir receiving a larger share of the estate in comparison to the other heirs. Therefore this is not allowed. It is not proper for a Muslim to deprive his natural heir from his inheritance or to lessen his share. The Shari‘ah does not permit (although the Islamic Jurisprudence lays no such restriction) a person to give one heir a portion of his estate in his lifetime, unless various other heirs have received their fair share as well. The funeral arrangements of the deceased should be paid for from the estate, as should be any outstanding debts of the deceased be paid off. The remainder of the estate should be divided between the rightful heirs according to their appointed shares.

Under the Islamic inheritance law, after the death of a man, his widow, father, mother, sons and daughters, whoever survive him, are heir to his estate. However, males have double the share of females. As the Islamic system has plenty of heirs, the estate is well distributed and does not accumulate in one place.

Non-Muslims often object to the fact that males have double the share of females. The answer to that is that in Islamic law the husband is obligated to provide for his family no matter how hard up he is and no matter how much personal property his wife has. That is to say that each man has been given the responsibility to support his wife and children whereas, a woman, regardless of her wealth, has not been given any such responsibility. As man has been given this obligation and the woman is independent of any such duty, man has been given double the share in matters of inheritance.

In case of a disabled person, who cannot afford to support himself and does not own property that can earn him a living, his heirs-to-be have a responsibility to support him in proportion to their standing in the law of inheritance.

In short, Islam has established an economic system, subject to which, the beneficial elements of individuality and partnership have been put together—either canceling their excesses and deficiencies or reforming them.

Similarly, Islam lays down detailed instructions about government and to the public—the rights, duties and inter-relations. There are also directives about international relations. In short, no aspect of human life has been left out from a series of principled directives.

The Reality of Death

I shall now give a brief account of life after death according to the teachings of Islam and indeed my own perceptions.

The first and foremost point to remember about death is that it is not a calamity or a pain in itself. Indeed it is painful when a dear one departs from this world. This is a natural emotion.

However, death in itself is not something to regret. When an offspring separates from the parents for higher education, all concerned are sad. However, the separation, which is the cause of the sadness, is in

itself a pleasant affair. Similarly, when a man has to separate from his family for a long period of time in order to earn a living, all concerned are sad. When a girl gets married, the occasion is of happiness and the new relationship that is to be formed is expected to bring many blessings and developments, however, given to the occasion, the parents and the girl feel a most natural grief at the parting. Same is the case in the instance of a dear one's death. The 'separation' brought about by death is painful because on an apparent level it permanently separates a dear one from the relatives. Death, however, in reality is a mercy of Allah for the bereaved and for the departed soul as well. Although at the time of death, the intense grief overwhelms all the other factors and this point is not perceptible to us at all.

Just think about all our elders, who have passed away and whom we still miss, and indeed their elders whom they missed after death and so on and so forth. In short it becomes an infinite succession of dear ones who have passed away. Had they all lived, there would have been no space left on this earth, and the running of all affairs would have been in the hands of our ancestors from a hundred generations ago. This world would have been one chaotic place. Just think about the present time. Although you are very dear to me and I also love you, but it is most important for your development that when my time is over, I should leave this world and you may take over. That time will indeed be of grief but we should try to bear that grief in the way Allah wants us to. The departing soul should be content and thus prepare to face the Master. The bereaved should also try and be happy at the Will of their Master. Although death overcomes man and he is separated from his dear ones, Allah is Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining, death does not overtake Him, and He is everyone's Master, and we are all His servants, and we all have to gather in His Presence. When the time to leave this world comes for a true believer, ever hopeful of Allah's mercy, he prepares to present himself in the attendance of his Master. The Holy Prophet (sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) is known to have said shortly before he passed away that Allah the Almighty had given one of His servants the choice to stay in this world or to depart and that the person had made the latter choice. Upon hearing this, Ḥadrat Abū Bakr (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) wept. The other Companions later felt that Ḥadrat Abū Bakr (raḍiyallāhu 'anhu) had then realized that the 'person' the Holy Prophet (sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam) had mentioned was indeed himself.

I had the experience of observing my own mother depart from this world in a most content and happy disposition. She instructed us to be patient and then she departed. She took out from her heart the thought of separation from us so as she did not have any feeling of separation from us at all. Certainly this was the same mother that I did not like to part from for a moment. Just before her death, when she was not well, my heart anticipated the ‘parting’ and was also aggrieved at the realization that my mother’s heart was not with us anymore. However, this gave me the satisfaction that the state my mother was in was indeed the state a true believer should be in. She was not perturbed or anxious at the thought of death and was rather content and happy to present herself to her Master. I pray that when my time comes, Allah has mercy on me and gives me the same state of mind and that He gives me death in a state when He is happy with me, and the doors to His mercy are open for me. *Āmīn*.

I have previously mentioned the connection between the body and the soul. This connection is suitable for the life on this earth and the soul develops accordingly with the help of the body. However, a time comes when the soul cannot develop any further in its present state and it is essential for its further development that it enters another realm that is totally different from this world. In order to enter that realm, it is essential that the connection between the soul and the body is terminated. If this did not happen, the human soul could not advance any further. As it is through death that the human soul rids of the condition that hinders its further development and enters into a realm that has new vistas for its advancement, death is indeed a mercy for the departing soul.

Life After Death

No one can state the life after death based on observation or experiment. The door to death only opens one way, and once a person goes through it, there can be no return. Therefore, this can only be stated based on the teachings of Islam. As we have firm belief and trust that this teaching is from Allah the Almighty, Who is the Knower of the unseen, therefore, we can accept and believe this part of the teaching just as we accept and believe other parts.

The reality of life after death is that our thoughts and deeds in this world affect our soul and as a result of these thoughts and deeds our

spiritual development or indeed regression takes place. At the time of death, each person's spirituality has developed according to the circumstances of his/her life. Some reach excellence, some achieve a little less and some regress and thus in these states the soul enters a new exquisite domain. It enters this new realm in a state of oblivion just as a newborn baby comes in this world. According to the exquisite realm the soul has appropriate senses and powers just as the human body has at birth. The soul has a similar sense of the new realm and experiences it and observes it just as the body does in this world. The soul then develops an 'essence' in the new realm and another connection between body and soul is formed. The soul of this world is then, as if the 'body' in the new realm with apposite senses and qualities. This 'body' has a spiritual body within and a most exquisite soul is developed and this combination of body and soul perceives its exquisite and spiritual environment much more acutely than our bodies feel the nature of this life. Thus the human soul starts a new life in the spiritual world where there is room for infinite development. In short the condition and state of that life is such that our present senses and capacities cannot fully decipher it.

As I mentioned before, some souls leave this world and enter the new in a state of excellence, some in a lesser state and some in a degenerative state. The souls that start the new life in a state of perfection are happy from the beginning—as they develop further and advance in spirituality. They go through stages to attain nearness of the Creator with velocity. The souls with some defect or drawback have to first endure stages where reformation takes place—as a result of this the same conditions that cause rapture and pleasure for the souls in excellent state are a source of pain and torment for the flawed souls. However, as their reformation takes place, their pain gradually decreases and they eventually reach an integral stage. It is then that the same prevailing conditions cause them happiness and rapture.

One way to understand this is to take an example of a human eye with a defect, which causes pain. Sunlight can be bothersome for an affected eye and it helps the sore eye to avoid the light for a while. Until such a time that the eye is properly healed, the sufferer has to miss out on sunlight. While afflicted, the very sunlight becomes a source of torment for him, as opposed to a healthy person for whom that very sunlight is a blessing in countless ways. Indeed deprivation of sunlight is a torment for the healthy person. Similarly, if a person has a mouth

ulcer or some such ailment and is made to eat spicy food, it can be a torment for him. Spicy foods can be extremely delicious and pleasure-some to a healthy palate. Once the mouth ulcers are rid of, indeed the same person can enjoy the same food he once found troublesome.

Such will be the condition of the soul in the Hereafter. The souls that have had flaws in this world will have to endure conditions that will reform their flaws and errors. This will be for a limited period. It will be like a stay in a hospital and each soul will be in pain and suffering in accordance with its ‘affliction.’ However, upon reformation each soul will start developing, conforming to the conditions prevailing in the realm.

These examples are only to gauge those conditions to a certain extent. Otherwise the Holy Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam) has said that the state of the Hereafter is such that the human eye cannot see it, the human ear cannot hear it and the human heart cannot completely conceive it. Rather, the potential advancements of that realm are such that they have been mostly described in the phraseology of “light and Divine nearness.”

Books to be Read

I shall briefly outline certain aspects of the teachings of Islam that we get through the elucidation of Ahmadiyyat. The motive behind this outline is that you may develop an interest in Islamic teachings and once you have discovered the hidden treasures of this teaching that you may, due to this brief outline, yourself study different aspects of Islamic teaching. The sequence of this ‘study’ should be such that first and foremost you should start reading the Holy Qur’ān with its translation. You should maintain a continuous study of this because the Qur’ān carries infinite treasures of wisdom and spirituality. You should make a habit of its in-depth study. The more you will read it the greater your knowledge will be.

Among the writings of the Promised Messiah (‘alaihissalām) you should at least read the ones I mention below. If possible you should try to read all his books at least once.

1. The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam
2. Kishtī-i-Nūh

3. Brahīn-i-Ahmadiyya, all five parts
4. Izālah-i-Auhām
5. Ā’īna-i-Kamālāt-i-Islām
6. Tiryāq-ul-Qulūb
7. Chashma-i-Ma‘rifat
8. Tohfa-i-Golarhwiya
9. Nuzūl-ul-Masīh
10. Haqīqatul-Wahī

Among the writings of the first Khalīfatul-Masīh, ‘Fasl-ul-Khatāb’ and ‘Nūr-ud-dīn’ and among second Khalīfatul-Masīh’s writings ‘Ahmadiyyat, the True Islam,’ and ‘An Invitation to Ahmadiyyat,’ and indeed all his speeches made at the Jalsa and his Friday sermons, current and future ones for sure, and the previous ones if they can be accessed, should be read.

It is most important to read the biography of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (*sallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam*). Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr Ahmad’s book is most appropriate in this respect. Two volumes of the work have been published so far. *Inshā’allāh*, the third volume too will be published soon and it is hoped that the writing will be completed in three volumes.

Among the various collections of ahādīth one should at least try and study the Bukhāri collection. However, before reading that you should read the brief collection of ahādīth entitled ‘Gardens of the Righteous.’ Ḥaḍrat Mīr Muhammad Ishāq Sahib has also published a brief collection of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam*).

You should also familiarize yourself with the biography and sīrah [character] of the Promised Messiah (‘alaihissalām). There is also a brief life history by the second Khalīfatul-Masīh. Three volumes of Sīratul-Mahdī, compiled by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashīr Ahmad Sahib, have been published comprising traditions relating to the Promised Messiah. Their reading also is beneficial.

A collection of the Promised Messiah’s revelations, dreams and visions is published by the name of ‘Tadhkira.’ This should also be kept

under study.

Hadrat Mirza Bashīr Ahmad Sahib is preparing a brief history of the Ahmadiyya Movement, which should be published during the year with the title of *Silsilah Ahmadiyya*. This should also be read.

If you try and complete these books in the next two to three years then you will at least have knowledge of the history of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. You will also have an idea of what is required of you by Islam in this age and you will be aware of your true duties.

My other objective will be thus fulfilled of its own accord; as the eldest in the next generation of this family, you will comprehend your responsibilities well and will begin to carry them out. This will indeed give me the satisfaction that the responsibility that I have taken upon myself is well understood by the next generation and that they will try their best to accomplish it.

I have written this rather in a hurry and might have made a few errors and at places not got my tenor across. Read it carefully and whatever does not seem clear to you, please ask for an explanation and try to instill that in your mind. Allah willing, this should help you a lot and you will thus be spared of much exploration and searching and will be able to train yourself on religious and moral principles. May Allah make you benefit fully from this and may He fulfill the objective for which I have written this. May Allah forgive me if I have said something here that is erroneous or if it is not in the spirit of the teachings of Islam, and may Allah protect you from its effect. *Āmīn*.

Wassalām.

Humbly,

Zafrulla Khan

Shimla—31 May 1939

Glossary

abū: father of

Abū Bakr: The first successor to the Holy Prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

Adhān : اذان : Call for formal Islamic Prayer. [Azān]

ahādīth : احادیث : Plural of ḥadīth.

Aḥmadī : احمدی : A follower of Ḥadrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah, peace be on him.

Aḥmadīs: Plural of Aḥmadī

Aḥmadiyyat : احمدیت : Muslim sect believing Ḥadrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, peace be on him

'alaihissalām : عليه السلام : peace be on him

alḥamdlillah: All praise belongs to God.

'Ali: The fourth successor to the Holy Prophet, Muhammad.

allāhu akbar: God is the Greatest.

Āmīn : آمين : So be it.

Amīr : امیر : Commander, Head.

assalāmu 'alaikum : السلام عليكم : Peace be on you.

āyah: a verse

āyāt: verses

ayyadahullāhu ta'ālā binaṣrihil-'azīz : ایدہ اللہ تعالیٰ بنصوہ العزیز : May Allah support him with His Mighty Help

Banū: Sons of, from the progeny of, tribe of.

bismillāh-ir-rahmān-ir-rahim: In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. [Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahim, Bismillāh al-Rahmān al-Rahim, Bismillāh-ir-Rhmān-ir-Rahim]

Bukhārī : بخاری : The most reliable source of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

Chanda : چندہ : Monetary contribution, donation.

du'ā : دعا : prayer, supplication

Fajr: The dawn-to-sunrise formal Islamic worship.

Fitranā: specified alms to be given at the 'Id al-Fitr

Hadith : حدیث : Saying of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, sallallahu alaihi wasallam.

Hadrat : حضرت : His Holiness [Hazrat, Hadhrat]

Haj: Formal pilgrimage to Mecca during appointed time of the year.

Hijāb: pardah, modesty

ḥuḍūr : حضور : Your Honor/Holiness, His Honor/Holiness [huzur, hazoor]

'Id : عید : Islamic celebration at the end of Ramadan and at the conclusion of Pilgrimage. [Eid]

imām : امام : Leader. Person leading salāt.

inshā' allāh : ان شاء الله God willing.

'Ishā: Late night formal Islamic worship.

Ishā'at: publication

Islām: peace and submission

Istikhāra: Seeking God's support and guidance through a formal prayer and worship.

Jalsa Salāna : جلسہ سالانہ Annual Convention, annual gathering

Jamā'at : جماعت Community, Organization

Jumu'ah : جمعہ Friday Prayer services. Friday.

Ka'ba: House of God in Mecca

Khalīfah: vicegerent

Khalīfatul-Masīh : خلیفۃ المسیح Successor to the Promised Messiah, 'alaihissalām.

Khilāfat : خلافت Succession

khulafā : خلفا Plural of khalīfah.

khutba : خطبه (Friday) sermon. [khutbah]

Majlis Ansarullāh : مجلس انصار اللہ Organization of Helpers of God. The organization of all Ahmadi men over 40 years of age.

Masīh : مسیح Messiah

Masīh-i-Mau'ūd : مسیح موعود The Promised Messiah (Hadrat Mirza Ghulām Ahmad, 'alaihissalām). [Masih Mau'ood]

Muṣliḥ-i-Mau'ūd : مصلح موعود The Promised Reformer. Hadrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalīfatul-Masīh II, rādiyallāhu 'anhu, who fulfilled the prophesy of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him, about the advent of a Reformer. [Musleh Mau'ood]

nikāh : نکاح Marriage announcement

Pardah: modesty [Hijāb]

Qur'ān : قرآن The holy book of Muslims, revealed to Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

rādiyallāhu 'anha رضی اللہ عنہا May Allah be pleased with her.

rādiyallāhu 'anhu رضی اللہ عنہ May Allah be pleased with him.

rādiyallāhu 'anhūم رضی اللہ عنہم May Allah be pleased with them. [razi allaho anhom, radi allaho anhom]

rak'a رکعہ One unit of Islamic prescribed formal worship, ṣalāt, comprising qiyām, rukū' and two sajdahs.

raka'āt : رکعتات Plural of rak'a.

Rasūl : رسول prophet, messenger. [Rasool]

Şadr : صدر President.

Sahabi: companion

Şahāba, Şahabah : صحابہ Companions (of the Holy Prophet

Mohammad, sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam, and of the Promised Messiah, 'alaihissalām.)

Şāhibzadah : صاحبزادہ Son of a respected person, respected gentleman.

Şalāt : صلوٰة Formal Prayer offered according to a prescribed procedure.
 ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam : صلٰى الله علٰيه وسالم peace and blessings of
 Allah be upon him.

Sharī'ah : شريعة Islamic jurisprudence

subḥānallah: Holy is Allah

Sunnah سنه : practice of the Holy Prophet Mohammad, ᷣallallāhu 'alaihi
 wa sallam.

Surah سوره : A chapter of the Holy Qur'ān.

Tahajjud: Getting up in the night for worship. Pre-dawn formal Islamic
 worship.

Takbīr: Pronouncing the greatness of God [allāhu akbar].

tarbiyyat : تربيت training

Urdu اردو : A language spoken in Pakistan and adjoining regions
 comprising mostly of Arabic, Persian and Hindi expressions.

wa mā taufiqī illā billāhil-'aliyyil-'azīm: And my success in
 accomplishing this task is dependent upon Allah, the High, the Great.

wassalām والسلام : And peace. [wa al-salām]

Wuḍū وضو : ablution. Prescribed cleaning before engaging in formal
 Prayers. [wuzu]

Zakāt زكوة : Prescribed alms.

Notes from the Publisher

Maulana Mubasher Ahmad (Muballigh), Nasir Mahmud Malik (Sadr Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A.), and Dr. Basharat Munir Mirza played a pivotal role in expediting the publication of this translation and making it happen.

A reproduction of the cover of the original Urdu edition translated in this publication appears inside front cover.

In transliterating Arabic words and expressions, we have tried to follow the system adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society, except for we have not provided all necessary accents. We have provided a glossary at the end of the book for readers' assistance. The glossary includes most Arabic and Urdu words and expressions used in the translation and other closely related terms.

Though translated in England, reader will see a predominant use of American English style, especially in punctuation, as it is being published in the United States.

If there are any deficiencies, please send them to the Sadr, Majlis Ansarullah, U.S.A. for their resolution in the future printings of this translation.

The writing of the letter spanned many days. Intermediate dates of writing the letter are given in the margins of the original Urdu edition. We have included them in the main text.

We have used Prayer (proper noun with its first letter capitalized) for prescribed formal Islamic worship to distinguish it from ordinary non-formal prayer or supplication, whether individual or collective.

The text in parentheses, (), is author's while the text in brackets, [], is not author's but is added for clarity or explanation.

Arabic script does not need capitalization at the beginning of the sentence or for proper nouns, therefore, we have not used any capitals in Arabic transliteration unless an Arabic word or expression is a part of an English expression or sentence.

We have also added a contents page for readers' assistance.

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