

Elucidation of Objectives

English Translation of
Taudih-e-Maram

A Treatise by

Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi
Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at

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Elucidation of Objectives

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The Publishers

Translator's Note

Elucidation of Objectives is an English translation of *Taudih-e-Maram* (Urdu), a companion volume of the two treatises *Fat-he-Islam* and *Izala-e-Auham*, written in 1891 by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi^{as}, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at.

The book contains a detailed refutation of the conventional Muslim and Christian belief that Jesus was raised to the heavens alive and shall return in his material body some-time in the latter days.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has also discussed at length such abstruse and subtle themes as the nature of Angels, their relationship with God and man, and how they function as intermediaries and carry out divine commands.

Taudih-e-Maram was first translated into English by Professor Qadi Muhammad Aslam, of blessed memory, and was published in 1972. The present version is a completely new translation.

The name of Muhammad^{sa}, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been followed by the symbol ^{sa}, which is an abbreviation for the salutation 'may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.' The names of other prophets and messengers are followed by the symbol ^{as}, an abbreviation for 'on whom be peace.' The actual salutations have not generally been set

out in full, but they should nevertheless, be understood as being repeated in full in each case.

It should be noted that in transliterating Arabic words we have followed the following system adopted by the Royal Asiatic Society:

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a, i, u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word 'honour'.
- ث *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word 'thing'.
- ح *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.
- خ *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in 'loch'.
- ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English *th* in 'that'.
- ص *s*, strongly articulated *s*.
- ض *d*, similar to the English *th* in 'this'.
- ط *t*, strongly articulated palatal *t*.
- ظ *z*, strongly articulated *z*.
- ع ' , a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.
- غ *gh*, a sound approached very nearly in the *r* 'grasseye' in French, and in the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the 'gargling' position whilst pronouncing it.
- ق *q*, a deep guttural *k* sound.
- ء ' , a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by *a* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *u* in ‘bud’); *i* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *i* in ‘bid’); *u* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *oo* in ‘wood’); the long vowels by *a* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ or $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *a* in ‘father’); *ī* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ or $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *ee* in ‘deep’); *ai* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *i* in ‘site’); *ū* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (like *oo* in ‘root’); *au* for $\text{—}^{\text{◌}}$ (resembling *ou* in ‘sound’).

Please note that in transliterated words the letter ‘e’ is to be pronounced as in ‘prey’ which rhymes with ‘day’; however the pronunciation is flat without the element of English diphthong.*

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

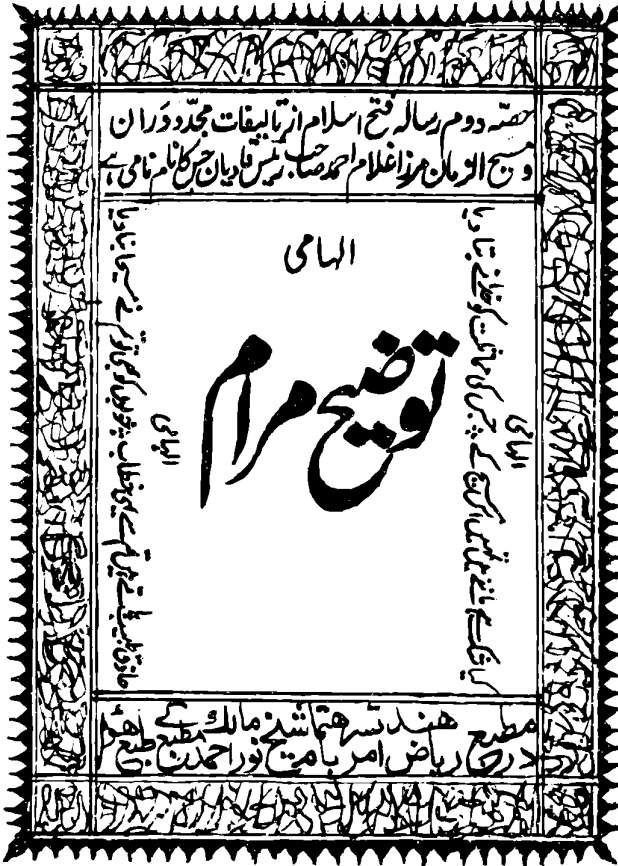
Please note that for quotes straight commas (i.e. straight quotes) are used to differentiate them from the curved commas used in the system of transliteration, ‘ for ξ and ’ for ϵ . Commas as punctuation marks are used according to the normal usage.

For further information please contact any branch of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama‘at International.

**Chaudhry Muhammad ‘Ali,
Wakil-ut-Tasnif**

* This is not included in the system of transliteration by Royal Asiatic Society.

FACSIMILE OF THE
TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION (1891)



The title page shows that ‘*Taudih-e-Maram*’ is a revealed name and so are the two accompanying verses which are translated as follows:

“What doubts do you have in acknowledging the Messiah, whose resemblance (to the former Messiah) has been vouched by God Himself;
“Whereas you hesitate not to confer this very title upon skilled physicians, and even a beautiful face to you is a Messiah.”

Announcement

After the publication of this book another book will shortly be completed and published the title of which is *Izala-e-Auham — Dispelling of Doubts*. The latter is the third part of *Fat-he-Islam — the Victory of Islam*¹.

This announcement is from Mirza Ghulam Ahmad '*ufiya anhu*'².

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah. Peace be on those servants of God whom He has chosen.

¹ The first book in this series.

² May he be forgiven by Allah.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ³
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَ السَّلَامُ عَلٰی عِبَادِهِ الَّذِیْنَ اصْطَفٰی⁴

THE SECOND COMING OF THE MESSIAH

Muslims and Christians both believe, albeit with some difference, that the Messiah son of Mary was physically raised to the heavens and that he will descend from the skies at some later time. I have already disproved this notion in the first part of this book. I have also pointed out that the 'Descent' or the 'Coming' does not mean the coming of the Messiah son of Mary; that actually it is a figure of speech signifying the coming of someone resembling the son of Mary; and that, in accordance with Divine intimation and revelation, it is the present writer—my own humble self—to whom it applies.

I am only too well aware that as soon as this view of mine, which is based on clear and definite revelation, is made public, many a hostile pen shall come alive and a public outcry full of horror and rejection will ensue. At first, I thought I should hold my peace for the time being and forego engaging in any detailed discussion, so that I could answer the objections as and when they

³ In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Ever Merciful. [Translator]

⁴ Praise be to Allah and peace be upon His chosen servants. [Translator]

were raised, and could lay down my reasons and arguments at fuller length, in view of the critics' perceptions. On second thought, however, this idea does not seem to be without blemish. I now feel that my silence is more likely to be misconstrued, not only by the Muslim laity, but also by some of the clergy, who, on account of their warped thinking—which is the unavoidable consequence of their decadent condition—and their being influenced by an old hackneyed belief, will rise up in protest and reject my claim out of hand. And, as party to their own cherished opinion, they will be eager at all costs to establish its bona fides. Indeed, it would be hard and rather impossible for them to retreat from a publicly declared position. It is common experience that once a Mullah has expressed his opinion publicly and pronounced it to be final, he finds it worse than death to retract it. Hence, before they should get entangled in the meshes of hidebound obduracy by confronting me, I decided that, as an act of pity, I should try on my own to bring home to them the truth with such clear and cogent reasoning as should adequately satisfy any intelligent and fair-minded seeker after truth. Later on, the occasion may arise when I am required to elaborate further for the sake of those who happen to be naïve and of lesser intellect and are unaware of the metaphors, terminology, and subtle and abstruse exegeses common to the revealed scriptures. They rather fall under the

category of ⁵لَا يَمَسُّهُ ۚ

Let it be clear, that according to the Bible, our own books of *Ahadith*⁶ and other records, only two Prophets are supposed to have physically ascended to the heavens, namely Elijah, also known as Elias, and Messiah son of Mary, also known as 'Isa or Jesus. Concerning both these Prophets some books of the Old and New Testament say that they were raised to the heavens and shall return to the earth sometime in the latter days, and that people will actually witness their descent from the skies. The *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet^{sa} also contain words to the same effect. Concerning Elias, whose Biblical name is Elijah, the Gospels positively declare that the prophecy of his descent from the skies has been fulfilled with the birth of Yahya or John, son of Zechariah. The Messiah son of Mary declares in unmistakable terms: "He is indeed the Elijah who was expected to come. Acknowledge him if you will."⁷

Through this arbitration by no less a person than a Prophet of God, the case of Elijah, his ascension to the skies and subsequent descent has been effectively settled and the manner and meaning of the 'Second

⁵ The full verse reads: لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ "None shall touch it except those who are purified." (The Qur'an 56:80) [Translator]

⁶ Sayings and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The plural of *Hadith*. [Translator]

⁷ Matthew 11:13-15 & 17:10-13 [Translator]

Coming' clearly determined. This, therefore, is the doctrine, consistent with the Gospels, to which Christians should unanimously subscribe, that Elijah, whose descent was awaited, did, in the time of the Messiah, return from the heavens in the person of John who was born to Zechariah, with the temperament and qualities of Elijah. The Jews, however, continue to await Elijah's descent. They believe that he will physically descend from the skies and land on the minarets of *Baitul Muqaddas*, where the Jews will assemble and lower him down to the ground with the help of ladders or some such device. When you confront the Jews with Jesus Christ's interpretation of the descent of Elijah, they fly into a rage and start abusing not only Jesus Christ but also John the Baptist, and condemn as heresy the solemn declaration of a Prophet of God. In any case, the real connotation of the term 'descent from the skies' has been determined by the verdict of Jesus Christ himself, and the dispute about Elijah's descent has been finally settled. The manner of his descent has also been conclusively established. But, concerning the descent of the Messiah, it is still claimed with great fervour that he will descend from the skies, clad in rich royal robes, accompanied by angels.⁸ The two camps have, however,

⁸ One wonders whether these garments will be made of wool or silk, like *churia* (a kind of striped silk fabric), *gulbadan* (another kind of streaked silk fabric), satin, brocade, *zarbaft* (a kind of silk fabric in which each yarn

continued on next page...

failed to agree on the place in which he will actually touch down. Will it be Holy Mecca, a church in London or some royal Russian Cathedral? Were the Christians not waylaid by their holding fast to their hackneyed opinions, they could have realized, more readily than the Muslims, that the descent of the Messiah should take place in exact conformity with what has already been spelled out in such clear terms by Jesus Christ himself, for it is impossible for two similar scenarios to admit of contradictory interpretations. This is a point which deserves serious consideration by all serious-minded people. If Jesus Christ's interpretation regarding the descent of Elijah from the skies is true, the question arises that the case of the Messiah being parallel to that of Elijah, why not draw the same conclusion, particularly when a Prophet of God has already lifted the veil off the face of this close secret? And, what is more, this interpretation is also in exact consonance with the laws of nature. Why then digress from the right and straight

is woven with a thread of silver or gold), *zari* (a silk fabric embroidered with threads of gold), *lahi* (a fabric made of coarse or raw (wild) silk); or some sort of ordinary cotton, like *nain-sukh* (a fine fabric of cotton, English name nainsook (OED)), *tan-zaib* (a fabric softer and finer than nainsook), *ingchikan* (embroidered muslin dyed in vermilion), *gulshan* (a cotton fabric with floral embroidery), muslin, *jali* (another kind of cotton fabric embroidered with flowers), *khasah* (a kind of fine cotton cloth of light weight), *duria* (a fine streaked fabric of cotton), or *charkhana* (a fabric with square holes in its texture like that of a lettuce). The Muslims and Christians are equally silent as to who will have done the weaving and the tailoring in the heavens. [Author] The translations in brackets are by the translator. [Publisher]

path and opt for one that is both crooked and objectionable? There is no reason to adopt an alternative interpretation. Can the conscience of honest and enlightened people, fully supported by Jesus' own verdict, accept any other meaning of the term 'Descent'? Incidentally, about ten years ago, some Christians published a prophecy in the British press to the effect that the Messiah's descent would take place within three years of its publication. Now that God has identified the Messiah who was to come, it is incumbent upon the Christians to be the first and foremost to accept him lest they are guilty of defying their own prophecy.

Christians also believe that Jesus entered Paradise after he was raised to the heavens. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus, reassures one of the thieves saying: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."⁹ Christians also unanimously believe that no one, however sinful, will ever leave Paradise, having once entered it. The Muslims hold exactly identical view. Says Allah in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ¹⁰

that is, those who enter Paradise shall never be made to leave it. True, there is no pointed mention in the Holy Qur'an of Jesus entering Paradise, but his death is

⁹ Luke 23:43 [Translator]

¹⁰ 15:49 [Translator]

mentioned in three different verses.¹¹ And it is also true that the death of holy people and their entry into paradise is one and the same thing, because, according to the verses,

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ¹²

وَادْخُلِيْ جَنَّتِيْ¹³

they enter Paradise straight away, without any let or hindrance. Muslims and Christians are, therefore, under obligation to consider seriously if it is possible for a man of God like Jesus to enter Paradise and then be driven out? Wouldn't it be contrary to the Divine promise contained in all the Holy Scriptures with such frequency and detail, that those who enter Paradise will

¹¹ God Almighty has said:

فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ (See Surah Al-Ma'idah)

وَإِنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لَيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ (See Surah Al-Nisa)

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يُعِيسَى ابْنِي مَرْيَمَ وَرَافِعَكَ إِلَيَّ (See Surah Al-e-'Imran) [Author]

“But since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the Watcher over them.” (5:118).

“There is no sect or group from among the people of the Book but will have faith in him (Jesus Christ) before his death” (4:160), i.e. from all the tribes of Bani Isra'il there would be those who would accept him as the true Messiah before his death, as it happened. [Translator]

“When Allah said: O Jesus, I will cause thee to die and exalt thee in my presence.” (3:56) [Translator]

¹² “It was said: 'Enter Paradise.'” (The Qur'an 36:27) [Translator]

¹³ “And enter thou My Garden.” (The Qur'an 89:31) [Translator]

never be made to leave it. Would the breach of such a solemn and positive commitment not shatter the credibility of all Divine promises? Of a certainty, such a belief will not only unfairly place Jesus in an awkward position, but indulging in such futile exercise will also be disrespectful and derogatory to God Himself. The matter deserves a very keen and close study. Belief in a lesser doctrine of this kind, which can otherwise easily be explained as a metaphor, amounts to a virtual murder of cardinal religious verities. It is in fact a doctrine which is full of faults and is heir to a host of complex problems and difficulties. It provides the opponents with occasion for ridicule. As I have already mentioned elsewhere, the disbelievers of Mecca also wanted the Holy Prophet^{sa} to perform this miracle, namely, that he should ascend to the skies before their very eyes and then come down. The reply they received was:

¹⁴ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي

This means that it is against the wisdom and glory of God Almighty to show such palpably obvious miracles in this world of trials, and thus undermine the wisdom and value of belief in the unseen. Now I say to you: How is it possible that something, being against the divine law, should not be permissible for the Holy Proph^t^{sa}—who is the best of the Prophets— and be

¹⁴ "Say, 'Holy is my Lord' ". (The Qur'an 17:94) [Translator]

permissible for the Messiah. It amounts, to rank disrespect that we, with respect to the Holy Prophet^{sa}, regard a merit as impossible for him to have, and about the same merit we believe that it is possible for the Messiah to have it. Can a true believer be guilty of such insolence? Absolutely not! It may also be pointed out that this sort of thinking, which has become endemic among the Muslims for quite some time, is conspicuous by its absence in the entire range of basic Islamic literature. The truth of the matter is that it is the failure to understand *Ahadith* that has led to this mistaken belief, to which quite a few unwarranted details have been appended. To invest it with plausibility, some baseless decorative material has been added in utter disregard of the facts which would otherwise have shown the way to truth. In this regard, the most clear and crucial *Hadith*¹⁵ of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is the one recorded by Hadrat Muhammad Isma‘il Bukhari in his collection the *Sahih Bukhari*. Hadrat Abu Huraira^{ra16} reports that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said:

كَيْفَ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا نَزَلَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ فِيكُمْ وَإِمَامُكُمْ مِنْكُمْ¹⁷

i.e., (the Holy Prophet says:) how will it fare with you

¹⁵ A saying of the Holy Prophet^{as}, The singular of *Ahadith*. [Translator]

¹⁶ ‘ra’ short for ‘Radi Allah ‘anhu’, may Allah be pleased with him. [Translator]

¹⁷ Bukhari, *Kitabul Anbiya’*, Babu Nuzuli ‘Isabni Maryama, Hadith No.3449, published by Darus Salam, Riyad, 1997. [Translator]

when the son of Mary descends among you? Who will be this son of Mary? Indeed, he will be none other than your own Imam, your Mentor, who will be born among you. In this *Hadith*, the Holy Prophet^{sa} has unequivocally stated that you should never be led into imagining that the Messiah son of Mary will himself descend in person. Actually, the name son of Mary has been used metaphorically; in reality he will be your Imam from among your own people and, in character and temperament, he will be a living similitude of the son of Mary.

People who believe in old tales misinterpret this *Hadith* to mean that when the Messiah descends from the skies he will have resigned his office as Prophet and disowned the Gospels. He will accept Islam, practise the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, observe the five daily prayers and call himself a Muslim. But they fail to explain why he should suffer such relegation. In short, our Muslim brethren unilaterally admit that at the time of his Second Coming, the Son of Mary will be a Muslim by faith, will proclaim himself as one, and will have completely forgotten about his earlier station as a Prophet. It is an insurmountable difficulty indeed into which our brethren have managed to land themselves by treating a metaphor as literal truth. This is why they had to resort to proposing the removal of a Prophet from his Prophetic station. There was, however, an easy way out of this self-made difficulty, if only they had accepted

the simple and straightforward meaning of the sacred words of the Holy Prophet^{sa} already spelled out by Jesus Christ in the context of the second coming of Elijah. In that case they would neither have to expel from Paradise the soul of Messiah, nor would they be constrained to divest a pious Prophet of his Prophethood, nor would they be guilty of showing disrespect for the honour and glory of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, while believing that they are respectful to him. Nor will they have to pronounce what amounts to a veritable abrogation of Quranic injunctions.

Perhaps, as a last resort, they would demand some acceptable explanation of the signs concerning the Second Coming of the Messiah as mentioned in authentic *Ahadith*. For instance, it is on record that the Messiah, in his Second Coming, will dismantle the cross, repeal the *Jizyah*¹⁸, and kill the swine¹⁹. It is also mentioned that at the time of his second coming evil practices peculiar to the Jews will be conspicuous by their presence among Muslims²⁰. I tell you that the destruction of the cross does not signify war or armed

¹⁸ The poll tax which is levied on free non-Muslims, who choose to stay in a country conquered by Muslims in Jihad i.e. war in self-defence. The tax money is used to cover the expenses needed for the protection of their civic rights. [Translator]

¹⁹ Refer to Bukhari, Kitabul Anbiya', Babu Nuzuli 'Isabni Maryama, Hadith No.3448, published by Darus Salam, Riyad, 1997. [Translator]

²⁰ Ibid Babu Ma Dhukira 'an Bani Isra'il, Hadith No. 3456. [Translator]

conflict. It only means the demolition, by spiritual means, of the religion of the Cross, and to incontrovertibly establish the untenability of its creed. The abolition of *Jizyah* is self-explanatory. It only means that *Jizyah* will no longer be required. Human hearts will spontaneously respond to the truth, rendering recourse to war unnecessary. Winds of change will blow and people will flock to enter the fold of Islam. The gates will be flung wide open; it will be an influx *en masse*. As a result, *Jizyah* will become obsolete, for no one will be left to pay it. All this, however, will not happen at once; but its foundations are being laid here and now. Furthermore, the term 'swine' refers to the swinish humans who on that day will succumb to reason and be killed, as it were, by the sword of transparently clear arguments. It would otherwise be naïve to imagine that a Prophet of God would actually take to chasing and hunting swine in the jungles.

My dear people! These are but metaphors. Those who are blessed by God with insight will realize their true significance, not only with ease, but also with some relish. Literal interpretation of such subtle and profound metaphors is like distorting beauty into monstrosity. Fine metaphorical shades are the life and spirit of eloquence. That is why the Divine Word, which is the most eloquent of all speech, employs such refined figures of speech as no human speech can ever rival. To

persist in equating the pristine purity of the metaphorical original with crude and commonplace literality, regardless of context and occasion, is tantamount to reducing miracles of expression and style to dust. Such an exercise not only misses the point and purpose of the Divine Word, it also damages its subtle and delicate cadence. Instead of imposing self-made, ugly, crude and rather base meanings, which are more satirical than laudatory, the methods of exegesis that are truly graceful and pleasantly rewarding are the ones which pay due regard to the noble eloquence of the text and its superior intent and purpose. We wonder why such ugly, crude, and repulsive meanings should be preferred to the profound verities as ought to be, and indeed are, abundantly present in the Word of God? And why, for that matter, are such refined and subtle meanings not accorded due respect as are consistent with the wisdom and glory of God Almighty and His sublime and exalted speech! And why, for no reason whatsoever, are our doctors of religion so full of arrogance and allergic to Divine philosophy! Those who have devoted their lives and energy to the study of these truths will readily agree with what we have said. Indeed they will rejoice at the discovery of this truth and will communicate it to others with great delight and enthusiasm and contribute to the spiritual emancipation of mankind at large. But those who are no more than casual in their thinking and

reasoning, cannot be of any use to Islam. They will only add to the already existing heap of baseless objections or create unnecessary confusion.

Now let us turn to our Holy Master and Mentor—the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, the Seal and Certificate of all Prophets. In order to single out the second Messiah from the first, the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not merely announce that the former would be a Muslim by faith; that he would conduct himself in accordance with the Quranic Law; that he would pray and fast and carry out other Quranic injunctions like a Muslim; that he would be a born Muslim; that he wouldn't bring any new Law; and that he would not claim to be an independent Prophet. In addition to all this, the Holy Prophet^{sa} also disclosed that there would be a marked difference between the physical features of the two Messiahs.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} saw the first Messiah on the night of the *Mi'raj*²¹. According to a tradition mentioned in *Sahih Bukhari*, page 489, the Holy Prophet^{sa} described him as of medium height, reddish complexion, curly hair, and a broad chest²². But, in the same book, the Holy Prophet^{sa} is reported to have described the second

²¹ The spiritual ascension of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to the Heavens—a unique Vision of exceptional quality the like of which was experienced by no prophet. [Translator]

²² *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitabul Anbiya, Babu "Qaulillah Ta'la 'Wadhkur fil Kitabi Maryama..." , Hadith No.3437, 3438, published by Darus Salam, Riyad, 1997. [Translator]

Messiah as being of light brown complexion the colour of wheat, and having, not curly, but straight hair reaching down to his ears²³.

Let us pause for a moment and consider. Surely the distinguishing marks of the two Messiahs, as stated by the Holy Prophet^{sa}, adequately assure us that the first and second Messiah are two entirely different persons. As for addressing each of them as ‘the son of Mary’, this is a metaphor which is as subtle as it is fine: it has been employed on account of the temperamental and spiritual affinity between the two Messiahs. Is it not true that because of such resemblance in disposition and character, two different persons, known for their piety, may well be addressed by the same name, just as two bad characters, who equally share evil, may be called counterparts? Muslims often name their children after the names of Prophets such as Ahmad, Musa, ‘Isa, Sulaiman, Dawud, and so on. They do so as an augury, hoping that, as a good omen, the children thus named might acquire the spiritual qualities and character of these archetypal ideals to the extent of becoming their true copies.

However, if the objection is raised that since the first Messiah was a Prophet of God, the second Messiah too

²³ Ibid Hadith No. 3440. [Translator]

Note: The page number of Bukhari given in the text is that of the conventional Indian edition, published in large format. [Translator]

ought to be a Prophet, the answer is that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not make Prophethood as the condition precedent for the Second Messiah: it is clearly recorded that he would be a Muslim by faith and practise the Quranic law like other Muslims. He will not claim to be anyone other than a Muslim and the Imam of Muslims. There is no doubt that Allah has appointed me, a humble person, as *Muhaddath*²⁴. A *Muhaddath*, in a way, is also a Prophet. It is true that his Prophethood is not absolute or complete, but he is, in part, a Prophet, for he has the honour of talking to God and the secrets of the unseen are revealed to him; like the messengers of God and His Prophets, the revelations he receives are free from satanic interference; he is taught the deeper meaning and essence of the Law; he is ordained exactly like Prophets and, like them, he is under obligation to openly pronounce and declare his ministry; and anyone who rejects him incurs a kind of Divine chastisement. Prophethood too requires these same characteristics to be present in the person who claims to be a Prophet.

To the objection that the door to Prophethood is closed forever, and that the revelation which the Prophets receive has now ceased, my answer is that neither has the door to all kinds of Prophethood been completely closed, nor has

²⁴ Literally one who is spoken to; someone to whom God speaks; a recipient of non-law-bearing Divine Revelation. Full explanation of the word given in the text.

Note: The plural of 'Muhaddath' is 'Muhaddathin', (refer to page 18).
[Translator]

every kind of revelation been stopped. The fact is that the door to Prophethood remains open to the Ummah. But let it be understood, once and for all, that the institution of Prophethood, which is forever interminable, is neither absolute nor complete but is only partial, as I have just mentioned. Another name for it is *Muhaddathiyat*²⁵. It is granted only through total submission to the Perfect Man who is the repository of all excellences pertaining to perfect Prophethood.

فاعلم ارشدك الله تعالى انّ النّبى محدّث والمحدّث نبى باعتبار حصول نوع من انواع النبوت وقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لم يبق من النبوة الاّ المبشرات اى لم يبق من انواع النبوة الاّ نوع واحد وهى المبشرات من اقسام الرؤيا الصادقة والمكاشفات الصحيحة والوحى الذى ينزل على خواص الاولياء والنور الذى يتجلّى على قلوب قومٍ موجع. فانظر ايها الناقد البصير أَيْفَهُمْ من هذا سدّ باب النبوة على وجه كلى بل الحديث يدلّ على انّ النبوة التامة الحاملة لوحى الشريعة قد انقطعت لكن النبوة التى ليس فيها الاّ المبشرات فهى باقية الى يوم القيامة لا انقطاع لها ابداً. وقد علمت وقرات فى كتب الحديث انّ الرؤيا الصالحة جزءٌ من ستة واربعين جزء من النبوة اى من النبوة التامة فلما كان للرؤيا نصيباً من هذه المرتبة فكيف الكلام الذى يوحى من الله تعالى الى قلوب المحدّثين فاعلم ايدك الله ان حاصل كلامنا ان ابواب النبوة

²⁵ The condition of being a Muhaddath. [Translator]

الجزئية مفتوحة ابداً وليس في هذا النوع إلا المبشرات او المنذرات من الامور المغيبة او اللطائف القرآنية والعلوم اللدنية. واما النبوة التي تامة كاملة جامعة لجميع كمالات الوحي فقد اتمنا بانقطاعها من يوم نزل فيه. ما كان محمدًا ابا احد من رجاكم ولكن رسول الله و خاتم النبيين²⁶

If you ask what exactly is the quality and spiritual

²⁶ “Do try to understand—and may Allah guide you aright—that a Prophet is a *Muhaddath* and a *Muhaddath* a Prophet, i.e., a *Muhaddath* is vouchsafed one out of many kinds of Prophethood. The Holy Prophet^{sa} says that of the different kinds of Prophethood, nothing remains except *Mubashirat*—glad tidings. In other words, only one kind of Prophethood is left, namely, spiritual experiences, for example, true dreams, visions and revelations of which the elect of God are the recipients and the accompanying light that illumines the dismal hearts of suffering humanity. Do consider, my sharp and wise critic! How can you ever conclude from this that the door to all kinds of Prophethood is totally closed? On the contrary, this tradition of the Holy Prophet^{sa} proves that Prophethood of the principal kind containing revealed law has of course been terminated but the Prophethood comprising *Mubashshirat*—true dreams, visions, revelations, etc., continues and will never come to an end till the day of resurrection and shall never be terminated. As you are well aware, and should have also read in books of *Ahadith*, true dreams constitute one out of the forty six parts of Prophethood, i.e., Prophethood of the perfect kind. Whereas even true dreams partake of the Prophetic station, you can well imagine the exalted quality of the word of God revealed to the hearts of *Muhaddathin*. Therefore, do try to understand—and may Allah be your help—that the doors to this kind of partial participation in Prophethood are always open. And this kind of Prophethood contains nothing but *Mubashirat* and *Munzirat* (glad tidings and warnings) concerning hidden and unseen phenomena, Quranic subtleties and Divine knowledge. As for the kind of Prophethood that is supreme and perfect and comprehends all the excellences of revelation, we certainly believe it to have terminated since the Divine revelation:

" Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets.' " (The Qur'an 33:41) [Translator]

power in which the two of us—the Messiah son of Mary and my own humble self—resemble, the answer is that it is an overall quality with which the spiritual sensibilities of the two of us have been endowed. At one end, the chain stretches deep down below, and at the other, reaches high above. The descent signifies the extreme anguish and concern for the good of God’s creatures. It reinforces the already close and strong ties that exist between the Messenger of God and his devoted disciples, and transmits the spiritual vitality inherent in the holy person of the Messenger to all the green and vibrant branches. The upward journey symbolizes the superior love, which is rooted in strong faith. God so wills that love at first sprouts in the heart of the worshipper and then attracts the love of the Almighty Himself. When the two loves meet—each functioning as the male and female counterpart—they give birth to a strong communion and intense affinity between the Creator and the created. The blazing flames of Divine love set afire the tinder dry firewood of human love, giving birth to a third phenomenon known as *Ruhul Qudus*²⁷.

The spiritual birth of man at this level is deemed to take place when God Almighty especially wills such love to

²⁷ Literally the Spirit of Holiness (The Qur’an 16:103). In the present context the meanings are explained in the text. [Translator]

be born. Figuratively speaking, it would not be wrong to say that this spirit, saturated as it is with the love of God, grants a new birth to the human soul which, through God's will, is now filled with His love. That is why this love-laden spirit, again figuratively speaking, is like an offspring to the Divine spirit, the author of this love. Since *Ruhul Qudus* is born in the human heart as a result of the union of the two souls, we can say that it is like a son to both. This indeed is the holy trinity which is the necessary accompaniment of love at this level and which the impure of heart have misconstrued polytheistically. They have tried to equate a miniscule particle of mere possibility which is so self-negating and unreal, with the Supreme Self-Existent God.

In case it is asked, if this spiritual station is already occupied by my humble person and the Messiah (son of Mary), what station would remain for our lord and master, the best of Messengers and the Seal of Prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}? Let it be clear that his is the most exalted and superior station, the sole occupant of which is the Holy Prophet^{sa}—the Perfect Man—alone. No one else can even remotely approach its unsurpassing quality—let alone attain it.

شان احمد را که داند جز خداوندی کریم
 زان نطف شد محو و بس که کمال اتحاد
 بوئے محبوب حقیقی میدمد زان بوئے پاک
 گر چه نسویم کند کس سوئے الحاد و ضلال
 منت ایندو لاکه من بر غم اہل روزگار
 از عنایات خدا و از فضل آن داور پاک
 آن مقام و تربیت خاصش کہ بر من شد عیال
 در ره عشق محمد امین سر و جانم رود
 آنچنان از خود جدا شد کہ میال افتادیم
 پیگیر او شد سیرا سر صورت ربّ کریم
 ذات حقانی صفاتش منظر ذات قدیم
 چوں دل احمد نے بیستم دگر عرشے عظیم
 صد بلارایم خرم از ذوق آن عین انعم
 دشمن فرسوخو نیانم بہر عشق آن کلیم
 گفتے گر دیدے طبعی داریں را ہے سلیم
 ایں تمنا ایں دعائیں دردلم عزم صمیم²⁸

²⁸ Except the Lord of Mercy,
 Who can ever comprehend the lofty station of Ahmad?
 He effaced himself to such an extent
 As if the letter *M* had fallen away
 From the name Ahmad.
 So lost was he in the Beloved Lord
 That because of his extreme love
 His person became the very similitude
 Of the Gracious Lord.
 From his holy countenance
 Emanates the fragrance of the True Beloved.
 His Divinely inspired person and its attributes
 Became the very mirror of the Eternal Lord.
 Even if I am accused
 Of heresy and disbelief,
 I cannot help saying
 That there is no loftier Divine Throne
 Than the heart of the Holy Prophet—Ahmad^{sa}.
 God be thanked
 That despite opposition on the part of the worldly-wise
 I would court a thousand and one troubles
 For the sake of that Spring of Grace.

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In order to get an idea of the great spiritual station of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, it must be pointed out that the stations of love and of close relationship to God in the context of spiritual levels are of three kinds. The lowest level which in its own right is exalted enough, is where the flames of Divine love do warm the human heart even to the extent that the resultant warmth sometimes begins to function quite like fire; yet it falls short of being radiant like it. As the flames of Divine love fall on love at this level, the warmth generated by these flames may be described as Peace and Tranquility and sometimes even as Angels.

The second level of love has already been described above. At this level, the two loves meet; the flame of Divine love heats up the human heart to the extent that it begins to glow like fire but its flames are not angry or aggressive but only lambent and are described as *Ruhul*

By the grace of God and by His bounties
 I am an enemy of the Pharaoh and his hordes,
 Because I love this Moses of mine—the Holy Prophet^{sa}.
 The unique and exalted station
 Of the Holy Prophet^{sa} as revealed to me
 (was so passing strange) that
 I can't help proclaiming it aloud
 If only I could find
 One eager heart along the path.
 This alone is my wish, my prayer, and my firm resolve
 That may my heart and soul be sacrificed
 In the sacred path of love
 For the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. [Translator]

Qudus.

At the third level of love, the blazing flames of Divine love fall on the inflammable wick of human love and set it afire, enveloping it in all its parts and ramifications, and transforming it into its complete and perfect manifestation. In this condition, the fire of Divine love not only lends the human heart a kind of glow, but all of a sudden, the entire being (of the recipient) also catches fire; its flames illuminate the environs quite like the bright day. Not a vestige of darkness remains. One's entire being turns into light, complete with its fiery qualities. This condition which is so ablaze, comes into being with the union of the two loves and is known as *Ruhul Amin*²⁹, for it provides immunity against every kind of darkness and is free from any estrangement. Its other name is *Shadidul Quwa*³⁰ because the revelational experience it denotes is of the mightiest degree. A mightier revelation is unthinkable. It is also called *Dhul Ufuqil A'la*³¹—the master of the loftiest horizon—because it is a manifestation of Divine revelation of the highest order. It is also known as *R'a ma R'a*³² (He saw what He saw), for the comprehension of this condition

²⁹ Literally the spirit faithful to the trust (the Qur'an 26:194). The text explains the meanings of this phrase with reference to the most exalted station of the Holy Prophet. [Translator]

³⁰ Literally 'Mighty Power'. (The Qur'an 53:6). [Translator]

³¹ Refer to the Quran 53:8. [Translator]

³² Refer to the Quran 53:12. [Translator]

is beyond human ken, imagination, or fancy.

This super-condition was vouchsafed to the one and only person in the entire world—namely the Perfect Man. He alone is the culmination and apex of human excellence. It is in his person that the evolutionary cycle of human potentiality reached absolute perfection. Indeed he is the last point on the higher scale of the extended line of God's creation and constitutes the absolute pinnacle of all spiritual heights. Divine wisdom initiated the evolutionary process at the lowest level of creation with the meanest of creatures and caused it to attain the highest point, the other name of which is Muhammad—peace and blessings of God be upon him. The name Muhammad^{sa} signifies the most praised one or the one who is the supreme embodiment of all perfection and excellence. Just as the Holy Prophet's^{sa} innate spiritual station was extremely exalted and so high and lofty, the quality of revelation vouchsafed to him was also very high. It is too exalted a station for me or the Messiah to attain. It is known as the Meeting Point or the point of Absolute Union. The earlier Prophets who foretold the coming of the Holy Prophet^{sa} envisaged the same station and its hallmark. Indeed it was to this unique station that they chose to refer. Furthermore, the spiritual station the Messiah and I share, could figuratively be described as that of being the spiritual son of the Holy Prophet.^{sa} His spiritual station is in fact so lofty that the earlier Prophets

described the coming of its occupant as if it were the coming of God Himself. For instance, the Messiah also says in a parable: At first, the Lord of the vineyard—God—sent his servants to collect the harvest. By servants he meant those who were close to God, in short all the righteous and the saintly who lived during or prior to the time of the Messiah. But when the tenants declined to surrender His share of the crop, the Lord of the orchard sent his own son to emphasize the point in the hope that recognizing the son, they would forthwith surrender the yield of the orchard. Hence, the son means the Messiah who enjoyed a still closer degree of nearness and love, but the husbandmen refused to deliver the fruit even to the son. Instead, in their own arrogance and fancy, they killed him. The Messiah then adds: Now the Lord of the vineyard will come Himself. In other words, God will Himself appear in person in order to kill the tenants of the garden and transfer its possession to those who would surrender the harvest on time.³³ Here the coming of the Lord God symbolizes the coming of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, whose station of love and nearness to God is of the superlative quality.³⁴ Indeed all

³³ Matthew 21:33-41 [Translator]

³⁴ It was not the Messiah alone who described our lord and master, the Seal of the Prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, in this vein and declared that his coming was, in fact, like the coming of God; other Prophets too have used the same kind of diction in their respective prophecies about the Holy Prophet^{sa} and, figuratively speaking, have likened his coming to the

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these stations are spiritual in nature and are appropriately described in figurative terms. Of course, 'sonship' here

coming of God Almighty. Indeed because of his being the most perfect manifestation of God, they have addressed him as if he were God. In the Psalms of David 45:2-7 we read:

"Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured unto thy lips; therefore, God hath blessed thee forever. (i.e., Thou art the seal of all Prophets). Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach terrible things. Thy arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. O God Thy throne is for ever; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Let it be clearly understood that the verse in Psalms: "*O God Thy throne is for ever and ever; scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom,*" is merely a figure of speech. Its purpose is to highlight the spiritual greatness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Similarly in Isaiah too, we read:

"Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law*... The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar, he shall prevail against his enemies.**"

Now the expression that the Lord shall go forth as a mighty man is also a figure of speech symbolizing the awesome coming of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. See Isaiah Ch. 42. Some other Prophets too have used this figure of speech in their prophesies pertaining to the Holy Prophet's^{sa} advent. I would rest content with what I have already said because it would be rather lengthy quoting them in detail. That three stations of intimacy and love of which the third is alone the loftiest and belongs to the Holy Prophet^{sa} alone is not a view of my own based on any a posteriori reasoning. It is in fact the truth, which has been communicated to me through Divine revelation. [Author]

* Isaiah 42:1-4. [Translator]

** Ibid verse 13. [Translator]

does not mean literal sonship or 'divinity' literal divinity. It would not be out of place here to point out that our interpretation of the term *Ruhul Qudus* or *Ruhul Amin* is in fact not inconsistent with the Islamic concept regarding Angels. Muslim scholars, for one, do not subscribe to the view that Angels, with some kind of material bodies quite like humans, have to walk on foot to come down to earth. This kind of thinking would evidently be false. Were it necessary for Angels to come down to earth in any formal shape to carry out their respective duties, it would have been absolutely impossible for them to complete any task. For instance, the angel of death has to take the lives of thousands of people per second, who live at distances of thousands of miles from one another, in different parts of the world. If he were under obligation to foot it up to each country, town and home to find the opportunity to take a life, then let alone one second, even months wouldn't suffice to carry out such a huge task. Is it possible for a person moving about like humans to go round the world in a split second or even less? No, not at all. On the contrary, Angels do not even fractionally stir from their true stations allotted to them by God Almighty. Quoting the Angels, God says in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافِقُونَ³⁵

Hence the fact of the matter is that just as the Sun keeps to its orbit and its heat and light continue to envelope the earth and benefit each and everything in accordance with the capacities of each, the same is true about spiritual entities. Call them what you will; for instance, celestial spirits after the Greeks or, in terms of the Avesta³⁶ and Vedas³⁷, call them spirits of stars, or, in the simple and straightforward manner of those who believe in One God, call them God's Angels. The fact remains that these strange beings, each in its own particular station, are staying put and holding fast. In the infinite wisdom of God Almighty these spiritual entities are busy serving everything that exists on earth and has potentiality and are helping everything attain its desired goal to the fullest extent. The functions they perform are both visible and invisible. Just as our bodies and overt functions are influenced by the Sun, the Moon and other planets, all these Angels too are exerting their respective influence on our hearts, minds and indeed on all our spiritual functions in keeping with our respective capacities. Be it a particle of dust or a

³⁵ And there is no one of us but has an appointed station. And verily we are those who stand ranged in ranks. (37:165-166) [Translator]

³⁶ The sacred book of ancient Iran, contains the teachings of the Prophet Zoroaster. (see Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics). [Translator]

³⁷ Four sacred books of Hindus. [Translator]

drop of water that enters an oyster shell, or the womb of a mother, through the spiritual influence of these Angels of God it is transformed into a ruby, a sapphire, a diamond, a highly lustrous and large pearl, or a human being with great qualities of head and heart.

The Avesta, considered by the Magians³⁸ to be their revealed scripture, claims that it was revealed way back sometime in remote antiquity a billion times earlier than the Vedas. By this reckoning, the Vedas, whose age has been approximately fixed at a billion and nine hundred and sixty million years, are not even fractionally antique. On the contrary, the Avesta for its part claims to be as much as three trillion years old. Indeed, ours is only a modest estimate for the Avesta's own claim is that it is not three but three hundred trillion years old. Now this scripture not only describes spirits pertaining to stars and other heavenly bodies as Angels, but also enjoins that they should be worshipped.³⁹ The Vedas too repeatedly highlight and praise these spirits not merely as intermediaries but as beings to whom prayer must be

³⁸ Priestly class of the ancient Medes (the ancient people of Medea of Northern Iran) and Persians, who after the advent of Zoroaster became Priests of Zoroastrianism. See Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics for further detail. [Translator]

³⁹ Angels are known as '*Mala'ik*' because they sustain the heavenly as well as earthly bodies. In other words, they are like souls in the context of the creation and survival (of these bodies). Another reason for calling them '*Mala'ik*' is because they function as messengers. [Author]

offered. Of course, the possibility is there that such unholy teachings might have been added and interpolated later quite like so many other false teachings. For instance, the teaching that this universe is without a creator, or that every existent in terms of its matter and spirit is eternally original, self-existent, and its own god, or the teaching that there is no escaping the vicious circle of reincarnation, or the teaching that a married woman who happens to be without a male issue is permitted to cohabit with a stranger with a view to begetting a son, or the teaching that eternal salvation is impossible even for the saintly including the *rishis*⁴⁰, or the saints to whom the four Vedas are reported to have been revealed. Nor, for that matter, can they ever earn the permanent title to be remembered with an enduring reverence and respect. Instead, it is quite possible that getting caught in the cycle of birth and rebirth, they may well assume the shape of an animal and cease to be human. Indeed this metamorphosis may well have actually taken place. According to their warped thinking when a person is spiritually superior to an *Autar*⁴¹ or even the *rishis* of the Vedas, it is not only possible but necessary for him since it is inexorably laid down under their supposed laws of Nature, that he should be reborn

⁴⁰ Literally worshipper of God; an ascetic. [Translator]

⁴¹ The one in whom God manifests Himself; prophets; in whom God appears to the world. [Translator]

as a mere insect or an extremely foul and obnoxious animal belonging to some minor species of the animal kingdom. Needless to say that all such teachings are spurious and have been concocted by those who were evil-minded and mentally sick. According to them it was not only permissible for mankind in general to indulge in all kinds of shameful misdeeds and suffer shameful metamorphoses, they also allowed that prayers could legitimately be addressed to spirits inhabiting stars, and that they should be worshipped as one worships God. But the Holy Qur'an throws open all avenues to the pure and unalloyed belief in the Oneness of God. It does not allow mixing God's worship with the worship of any other creature. Nor does it believe in a God whose authority is imperfect and weak and who is not the source and fountain of all existence. Nor, for that matter, does it allow us to let any other evil enter and infest our social fabric.

To return to the subject of Angels, I would like to point out that the Quranic perception regarding Angels is so clear, straightforward and reasonable that one cannot help accepting it. A close study of the Holy Qur'an would show that the presence of certain intermediaries is essential for external and internal development, not only of mankind but also of all terrestrial creation. At places in the Holy Qur'an there are clear and positive hints to the effect that some of these pure and holy

beings, known as Angels, are variously related to the different levels of the heavens. Through their specific influence, some of them perform the function of controlling winds while others control rain. There are still others who bring their influence to bear on this earth. Without doubt, because of their affinity to light, these holy spirits may well have some kind of relationship with the bright and luminous stars found in the heavens. But this relationship should not be confused with the kind of relationship the living organisms on earth have with life. Instead, these holy entities because of their own light and lustre with which they are spiritually blessed, have a subtle and mysterious relationship with the stars. This relationship is so close and intense that it is not possible to imagine any separation between the two without undermining their strength. It is through the hidden hand of these beings that all the stars are busy performing their assigned tasks. As God Almighty is the life force of the entire universe, so are these enlightened spirits, not wholly but in part, the *elan vital* of these stars and planets. Their separation would mean disaster for the existential condition of the stars. To date, no one has ever differed from the view that all heavenly bodies—stars and planets—are busy all the time contributing to the development and completion of life on earth. In short, it is a considered and fully established truth that day and night heavenly bodies continue

to work their influence on all existence, animate or inanimate. If nothing else, even an ignorant peasant would at least know for a certainty that moonlight effectively nourishes fruit and sunlight ripens it and that certain winds help increase its yield. Now if the apparent order of the universe is subject to the different influences of these phenomena, can there be any doubt that the latent order of the universe too is being influenced by these enlightened spirits—Angels—at God's command. Since the apparent order of external reality is being constantly nourished and moulded by the influence of such phenomena, how is it possible to doubt that the latent and innate order of reality is also subject to the influence of these luminous forces. In fact, they are as intense to the luminous stars as life is to our organism.

Consequential to all this, let it be clear that although on the face of it, it may seem highly disrespectful that an intermediary should be posted between God and His Holy Prophets^{as} for the reception of the light of revelation. However, a little reflection would make it easy to understand that it does not imply any disrespect at all. On the contrary, it is wholly in keeping with the laws of nature, which are so palpably observable in the entire range of phenomenal reality, for we find that Prophets too in respect of their physique and physical functions require the use of normal stimuli. Like the eyes of

ordinary humans, a Prophet's eyes, however enlightened and blessed, also need sunlight or its substitutes in order to see. Nor can he hear without the medium of air. Hence the incontrovertible Quranic position that the enlightened souls of these heavenly bodies must also be exerting their influence, most of all on the spiritual sensibilities of Prophets.

The fact is that the purity and perfection of this influence is directly proportionate to the purity and perfection of the capacity to receive it. It is the established position of the Holy Qur'an that the material substance of each of the stars and planets has a soul of its own which may well be called its mind. These heavenly bodies, in respect of their physical form, have a number of characteristics which in turn influence each and every thing on earth according to their optimum capacity. Similarly, their spiritual selves also have characteristics of all kinds and categories which, as decreed by the All-Wise, also exert their influence on the inner side of terrestrial reality. The same spiritual entities, by assuming material form make their appearance to the perfect servants of God and become visible by assuming human shapes.

Remember, what I have said is no rhetoric. It is a fact which the seekers after truth and wisdom must accept. Indeed are we not obliged to believe that this terrestrial universe is being shaped and moulded through the

influence of heavenly bodies? From an inductive point of view, however extensively we study these heavenly bodies, we are struck by the self-evident signs of this moulding influence affecting all earthly phenomena—vegetables, minerals and animals. Hence by means of this open experiment, we are forced to conclude that to whatever extent spiritual excellence and the illumination of head and heart might evolve, these enlightened entities do contribute their share to the process. It is in this context that, figuratively speaking, the *Shari'ati gharra*⁴² lays down the imperative to believe in Angels as intermediaries between God and His messengers. Indeed this belief is considered to be one of the basic requirements of faith. There are those who in their ghastly ignorance do not understand this Divine philosophy—e.g. the followers of Arya⁴³ creed are those of Barhamu⁴⁴ creed. Due to their hardbound stingy obduracy and their malice, with which their minds are cluttered, they raised the objection against the Quranic teaching that it posits Angels as the necessary link between God and His Prophets. They did not understand, nor did they care to understand that God's universal law to sustain and develop, which is operative

⁴² The Law of Islam in all its brilliance and lustre. [Translator]

⁴³ A Hindu sect. [Translator]

⁴⁴ Brahma Samaj — an offshoot of Hinduism. (See Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics). [Translator]

on earth is itself based on this very law. Take the case of the *rishis* to whom, as supposed by the Hindus, all the four Vedas were revealed. Did they not stand in need of the agency of these heavenly bodies for the proper working of their physical functions? Could they see with their eyes alone without utilizing the light of the Sun? Or could they hear without the waves of sound? The simple answer to all this would be: No, not at all. They too stood in dire need of the aid and benign influence of the heavenly bodies for their growth and full development. Nowhere do the Vedas of the Hindus deny the existence of these Angels. Rather, they over-emphasize belief in these intermediaries and their importance to the extent of equating their status with that of God Almighty Himself. A glance at the Rig Veda would show that it contains passages pertaining to the worship of heavenly bodies and the elements. How it eulogizes and lauds them page after page and how prayers are offered to them with such abject humility and deference! Of course, these prayers were never accepted! In contrast, the Quranic Law does nothing of the kind. It merely calls these spiritual entities Angels and genii. They are a kind of enlightened beings. Their relationship to heavenly bodies, elements and nebulae is like that of life to an organism. Nor does the Quranic law denote that these luminous entities, which have a station of their own on these glowing stars and planets,

enjoy any kind of link which would imply that these Angels have authority and an independent will of their own. On the contrary, their relationship to God is quite like the relationship of a lifeless object in the hands of a person who is alive and uses it as he wishes. That is why at places, every material particle is described in the Holy Qur'an as an angel because all particles hearken to the call of their Gracious Lord and do exactly what they are asked to do. For instance, changes in the human organism make for either health or illness. Each and every particle tasting such changes moves backwards and forwards in keeping with the Divine Will.

A closer scrutiny would reveal that the Quranic concept of such intermediaries does not at all imply any *Shirk*⁴⁵, nor does it detract in any way from the Majesty of God Almighty. On the contrary, these facts exemplify such verities of true knowledge and profundities of wisdom as are writ large on each page of the laws of nature. Indeed, you cannot demonstrate the absolute Might of God Almighty without belief in this kind of phenomenal reality. Nor, for that matter, can God's cosmic design be expected to function without positing belief in the existence of such phenomena. For how can this cosmos function in accordance with the Divine Will unless each of its particles is engaged as an angel in

⁴⁵ Associating partners with God. [Translator]

carrying out His imperatives. Can anyone try to disprove this truth? Furthermore, if the spiritual order of heavenly bodies or Angels is allegedly derogatory to the Omnipotence of God, then why wouldn't the physical order of the same Angels, of which the spiritual order is the exact prototype, also detract from God's omnipotence? The truth of the matter is that on account of their rank ignorance, the Arya and their ilk invent such baseless objections as apply a fortiori to their own polytheistic teachings. Because of their sightlessness, they have so unfairly mistaken a beautiful truth for falsehood.

چشم بدانند لیش که برکنده باد عیب نماید هنرش در نظر⁴⁶

It had better be remembered that according to *Shari'ah*—the Law of Islam—the characteristic qualities of Angels are not any greater than the characteristic qualities of humans. Rather, the qualities of man are superior to those of Angels. That Angels are appointed to function as agents in the physical and spiritual order of existence does not prove their superiority. The Quranic position in this regard is that they have been appointed to perform their duties as servants. The Holy Qur'an says:

⁴⁶ Woe betide the misperception of the ill-wisher to whom right appears as wrong. [Translator]

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ⁴⁷

This means: ‘God has made the Sun and the Moon subservient to you.’

Now the point at issue is, that if the royal courier delivers dispatches from the reigning monarch to a provincial chief or governor, will this show that the emissary, who is the link between the monarch and the Governor General, is superior to the addressee. Exactly similar is the case of the emissaries, who in the physical and spiritual realms communicate the commands of the Almighty to earth and are engaged in their implementation. In the Holy Qur’an, God makes it clear at a number of places that whatever has been created in the heavens and the earth is for its part dependent on man and has been created for his sake. His is the highest and loftiest station of all creation. He is the liegeland whom all creation is ordained to subserve. Says the Holy Qur’an:

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبِينَ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ
اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَآتَكُم مِّنْ كُلِّ مَآسَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِن تَعُدُّوا
نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ 14:34. [Translator]

⁴⁸ 14: 34-35. [Translator]

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا⁴⁹

That is, "And We put the Sun and the Moon at your service. They are always on the move and in their phases and states, they never stand still." For instance, the Sun in spring is quite different from the Sun in autumn. Sometimes these bodies display peculiar kinds of characteristics and at times their exact opposites. The Holy Qur'an adds: "Days and nights have been subjected to serve you. You have been provided with all that your nature demanded and given all that you needed. You would never be able to count God's bounties, even if you tried." In another verse, God says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ⁵⁰

This means: "We created man in the best of moulds, in an ideally balanced nature, and that in point of this balance, man surpasses all creation."

Elsewhere, the Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ

يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا⁵¹

i.e., "We offered our trust—signifying *love Divine*, and

⁴⁹ 2:30 "He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth". (Not translated in the text). [Translator]

⁵⁰ 95:5. [Translator]

⁵¹ 33:73. [Translator]

total devotion and submission in the face of extreme trials—to all the Angels and indeed to all creation including mountains that looked so huge; yet all declined to assume responsibility and were overawed by the magnitude of the task. But man dared because he was gifted with two special qualities, namely, the ability to be so exacting and even cruel to his own self in the path of God, the capacity to come down hard on his own person for the sake of God as well as to attain total intensity of love Divine to the exclusion of all else."

Elsewhere God says in the Holy Qur'an:

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ خَالِقٌۢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ طِيْنٍ فَاِذَا
 سَوَّيْتَهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِىْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ
 ۝۵۲ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اٰجْمَعُوْنَ اِلَّا اِبْلِيْسَ

i.e., recall the time when your Lord (whose perfect manifestation you are) said to the Angels: I am about to create man from clay. When I have fashioned him to perfection and breathed into him my spirit, fall you down in submission to him (the Perfect Man) and get busy serving him in all humility and make your obeisance as if you were lying prostrate before him. All Angels made their obeisance to the Perfect Man except *Iblis* who was too unfortunate to avail of this opportunity."

⁵² 38:72-75. [Translator]

Remember, this injunction to prostrate does not relate to the occasion when Adam was created. It is a separate commandment to the Angels to the effect that whenever a human being attains the true and ideal human station and harmony, and the spirit of God comes to reside in him, they should always hasten to make their obeisance to him. That is, they should visit him with heavenly light and invoke the blessings of the Lord on him. Reference here is to the age-old and ever operative Divine Law that whenever a person attains perfect spiritual harmony and the Divine Spirit comes to reside in him, or in other words his baser self dies and he attains eternal life in God, Angels begin to visit him constantly. True, even during the elementary stages of his spiritual journey Angels are ever busy serving and helping him. But this angelic visit is so consummate and total that it is almost tantamount to *Sajdah* or prostration. By using the term *Sajdah*, God has made it clear that Angels are not superior to the Perfect Man. Rather, quite like the royal functionaries, they are busy making obeisance to him all the time. Similarly in chapter *Al-Shams* of the Holy Qur'an, by using very subtle and delicate symbols and metaphors, God Almighty declares that the Perfect Man's station is superior to all the denizens of the earth and heaven. Says He:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا وَاللَّيْلِ

إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا وَنَفْسٍ
 وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَ
 قَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا إِذِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا
 فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا
 فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسَوَّاهَا وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا⁵³

i.e., By the Sun and the sunlight; by the Moon that follows the Sun; by the day and the daybreak; by the night which is so dark; by the earth and by Him Who shaped it; by the soul of man and by Him Who bestowed upon it the entire range of different excellences pertaining to perfect equilibrium and steadfastness, and did not deprive it of any of the excellences. Instead, He centered all the excellences listed above under different categories in such a way that the person of the Perfect Man embodies the properties of the Sun as well as the sunlight. It also contains the properties of the Moon, as has the capacity to receive from others what is good and can absorb light from another source and make it its own. It also has the properties of a bright day, quite like the workers and labourers who are better able to perform their respective tasks well during the day. So do

⁵³ 91:2-16. [Translator]

Note: The underlined part of the verse which means, "And by the Heaven and its wonderful structure" is not translated in the text but is later explained on page 45-46. [Translator]

the seekers after truth and the wayfarers of the spiritual paths carry out their spiritual assignments with facility and ease by following the example of the Perfect Man. In other words, the Perfect Exemplar, like the bright day, can manifest himself to perfection because he is the embodiment of all the characteristics of daylight.⁵⁴ In a way, the Perfect Man has a kind of resemblance to a dark night. Despite his extreme devotion to the Divine and withdrawal from the mundane—each a gift of God, he sometimes, under Divine expedience and wisdom, happens to pay attention to the human needs of his person. In other words, he carries out all the obligations pertaining to the human person which might appear to oppose and obstruct Divine light, for instance, eating, drinking, sleeping, carrying out his duties towards his spouse and finding time for the children. He fulfills all

⁵⁴ Divine wisdom has so ordained that the Sun symbolizes some 730 functions and thus exerts its multifarious influences on the world. Each function has a name of its own. Indeed the days of the week—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. are but the names of the Sun vis-à-vis its specialized functions, imperatives and influences. We call it the Sun when we do not refer to the special functions and merely mean the singular and commonly applied condition. But when we denote the same Sun in the context of its unique functions, influences and phases, we designate it as day or night, or Sunday or Monday and even call it July, August or September. In short, all these are the names of the Sun. Human soul too in the context of different functions, stations, phases and conditions is addressed differently. At times it is called the emancipated soul, the impulsive soul, the accusing soul, and the satisfied and serene soul. In short, the human soul too has as many names as does the Sun. To avoid further elaboration, we had better stop short here. [Author]

his responsibilities and opts for this ostensible darkness for a while not because he is genuinely inclined to it but because the All-Knowing and the All-Wise God is pleased to direct his attention towards it. This is to enable him to find a little relaxation from his arduous spiritual regimen with a view to recouping him to once again take on his extremely hard (spiritual) exercises and duties.

The following verse is quite to the point:

⁵⁵ چشم شهباز کار داناان شکار از بهر کشادن است گردوخته اند

Likewise, when overwhelmed by extreme mental fatigue, concern, stress and strain, these perfect persons permit themselves some relief in physical pleasure and their frail physique is re-charged with fresh strength and vigour to keep company with the spirit. Indeed because of this fractional diversion, he is able to cover vast spiritual distances. Apart from this, the human psyche also contains some other characteristics of the night as discovered through close scrutiny by astronomers and natural scientists. Similarly, the Perfect Man also resembles the heavens. Just as the spatial void of the heavens is so vast that nothing can possibly fill it, so is the mind and spirit of the godly elect extremely vast and expansive. Despite knowing thousands of spiritual

⁵⁵ The knowledgeable hunters blindfold the eagle's eyes, to help sharpen its vision. [Translator]

secrets and verities, they continue to exclaim: "We are far from knowing You." Just as the expanse of the heavens is full of shining stars, so is he—the Perfect Man—endowed with many highly luminous qualities. Also, his person bears resemblance to a rich and fertile soil. A good rich top quality soil in which seeds are sown, with adequate ploughing and by meeting all requirements of irrigation, farming and toil, yields a thousand times more harvest than other soils. What is more, its fruit as compared to other fruits, in quality and quantity, is extremely fine, sweet and delicious. Similar is the case of the person of the Perfect Man. Planted as he is by Divine imperatives, the saplings of his good deeds sprout forth with a rare kind of verdure and greenery. The fruit they bear are superfine and delicious, so much so that the beholder is reminded of the Holy Dominion of God Almighty and involuntarily proclaims: ⁵⁶ سبحان الله، سبحان الله Indeed the verse:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ⁵⁷

clearly testifies that the Perfect Man in quality and connotation is a universe of his own and contains, in miniature, the qualities and characteristics of the macro-universe. God Almighty first recounts the characteristic qualities of the Sun and then, by implication, of all

⁵⁶ Allah, Holy art Thou; glory be to Thy name. [Translator]

⁵⁷ The Qur'an 91:8 [Translator]

things on earth—our habitat. He singles them out by swearing by them and invokes the person of the Perfect Man to bring home to us the fact that the Perfect Man is the embodiment of the myriads of excellences found individually and severally in all other things and by which God swears. If it is asked why God should swear by what is His own creation which in comparison with the Divine is so insignificant and almost non-existent, the answer is that throughout the Holy Qur'an it is the usual Divine style and practice that for the affirmation and demonstration of certain subtle principles, God refers to such phenomena as contain clear, open and self-evident proof of their characteristics. For instance, no one would doubt that the Sun is very much there and sunshine too; so is the Moon and the moonlight which it derives from the Sun; also, the daylight which all can see and the night which is also visible to all. Likewise the vacant expanse of the skies is there too for all to witness, and also the earth which is the habitat of humans. Now all these phenomena have definite existence and qualities of their own which admit of no doubt whatsoever. But the human self is something so latent and inferential that its very existence has given rise to a host of controversies. There are schools of thought which refuse to believe that there is such an entity as the human self or soul which is permanent with an existence of its own and which continues to

survive forever, even after separation from the body. Even those who otherwise believe in the existence of the human self and its survival and immortality, do not accord its potentialities the value and esteem they deserve. Some of them are content to believe that the sole purpose of their sojourn on earth is to spend their lives, quite like lower animals, in eating, drinking and indulging in baser appetites. They are not in the least aware of the great powers and potentialities of the human self. Indeed were man to put his mind to acquiring and attaining excellence, he could so quickly encompass quite like a circle the entire range of virtues and excellences found in the universe in all their kinds and categories. This is why God in this chapter of the Holy Qur'an is pleased to provide evidence of the existence of the human self and its unique, infinite and transcendent qualities.

In order to invoke the relevant framework of thinking, God begins by stating the variety of characteristics pertaining to the Sun, the Moon and other existents, and goes on to refer to the human self because it is a compendium of the entire range of characteristics and qualities. Since all such high qualities and characteristics are collectively present in their entirety in the human self as are severally and individually found in the terrestrial and celestial bodies, it would be the height of foolishness to entertain the illusion that such a

glorious compendium of multifarious excellences is a mere nothing and that it cannot survive death. In other words, you do not have the least doubt about the permanent existence of the concrete and observable phenomena; even the blind come to believe in the existence of the Sun by experiencing its heat during the day. Since all these aforesaid properties are collectively present in the human self, how on earth can you ever doubt that which has an enduring existence of its own? Is it possible that something which does not exist in its own right should still have the properties of all existents?

Furthermore, God is pleased to take oath in this context and style because an oath is tantamount to testimony. This is why temporal rulers also rely on oath, because in the absence of eyewitnesses—one oath performs the function of at least two witnesses. Since an oath is looked upon as a surrogate for a non-existent eyewitness from the point of view of reason, usage, common law and *Shari'ah*,⁵⁸ God here equates an oath with an eye-witness. Therefore, when He says: *I swear by the Sun and the sunlight*, this means that the Sun and its light and heat bear witness to the human self being an existent and an enduring entity because, besides its other properties, the solar qualities of light and heat are

⁵⁸ Islamic jurisprudence. [Translator]

also found in the human self. Indeed, the light of spiritual experience and the heat of fervent devotion found in the souls of perfect human beings are far more miraculous than the light and heat of the Sun. Now if the Sun can exist as a self-existent entity, why can't the human soul which in properties is its equal and peer and even superior. Similarly, God swears by the Moon when it follows the Sun. The sense and substance of the oath is that the Moon testifies to the human soul as an existent and enduring entity because the Moon has the characteristic quality of deriving light from the Sun. Just as the Moon is recipient of light from the Sun, the human soul also, as an eager seeker after truth, by following the Perfect Man, comes to partake of his spiritual bliss even more than the Moon could ever partake of the light of the Sun. This is because after owning the sunlight, the Moon also disowns it, which the human self or soul never does. Since the soul is the dominant partner with the Moon in the acquisition of light and contains all the remaining properties and characteristics peculiar to the Moon, there is no earthly reason why the Moon should be considered an existent and subsistent entity and the human soul denied its equally enduring existence. In short, all the objects of oath mentioned prior to the oath regarding the human soul are declared by God, because of their intrinsic qualities, as crucial proof, testimony and reminder that

the soul of man does in fact exist. Elsewhere at places in the Holy Qur'an, God swears by certain objects. Every time the sole purpose and intent of such oaths is to invoke the manifest as witness to the secret because of the qualitative resemblance between the two. A question would, however, arise regarding such witnesses as are produced to prove that the human soul is an existent entity. The question is how can the properties of objects invoked as witnesses be shown to be the properties of the human soul also? And what is the proof? It is to dispel this doubt that God goes on to say:

فَالْهَمَّهَا فَجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا⁵⁹

Which means, with the creation of the soul of man, God has thrown open the doors to light and darkness, luxuriance and aridity. He who opts for the ways of darkness and sin or, in other words, the paths of evil, is allowed to approximate to the extreme logical end so much so that he comes to bear close resemblance to a dark night. He loses all taste except for sinfulness and depravity; he begins to enjoy and think evil; he likes evil companions and evil pastimes alone. Consistent with his evil-mindedness, he is motivated by sinfulness alone; he always thinks of vice and depravity and never of what is moral and good. On the other hand, if he chooses the enlightened path of piety, he is constantly guided by

⁵⁹ The Qur'an 91:9-11 [Translator]

revelations which sustain the light. In other words, through special revelations God helps the innate light, which is present like a seed in the seeker's heart, attain perfection and thus He sets afire the spark of Divine communication. It is at this stage that on beholding his own inner light which is so bright, and after experiencing its inherent property to radiate and absorb light to benefit and be benefited, one comes to believe with absolute conviction that in his own self too is present the light of the Sun as well as that of the Moon; that like the expansive, lofty and starry heavens, his bosom too is the repository of enlightened belief and courage and that his head and heart are the seat of capabilities which are resplendent quite like the stars. At this stage, he does not at all need any external evidence to comprehend this truth. Instead, the perennial spring of perfect truth now dwells within him and continues to quench his thirsty heart. If the question is asked as to how one can observe and experience these characteristics of the soul during this spiritual journey, the answer in God's own words is:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ حَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا⁶⁰

That is, he who purifies his soul and weans himself totally off all evil and misconduct and humbly surrenders to the Will of God, shall achieve the (cherished)

⁶⁰ The Qur'an 91:10-11 [Translator]

goal and quite like a mini-universe, his soul or self will look like the repository of a multitude of excellences. But he who does not cleanse himself of sin and lets himself wallow in the mire of low desires will fail to attain the goal. In sum, the human self or soul undoubtedly contains all the different kinds of excellences found in the entire universe. In order to restore faith in this truth, the one straight path in accordance with the intent of the Divine Law, is that one should turn one's attention to the purification of the soul; for only with a purified soul, will the truth of these latent potentialities unfold itself, not only as empirical knowledge but also as true knowledge.

After this God Almighty, citing the example of the people of Thamud, says that they rejected the Prophet of the time because of their innate arrogance. The spearhead of this rejection was the most arrogant of them all. The Prophet of the time admonished and warned them not to meddle with the she-camel of God or with the place where she was wont to drink water. But they refused to comply and hamstrung the she-camel. As punishment for the crime, God visited them with death and reduced them to dust. Their widows, orphans and other dependents were left friendless in their distress. Actually, this example is a very subtle figure of speech. Its import here is that the human soul is like the she-camel of God. The sole purpose of its

creation is that it should function as *Naqatullah*—the she-camel of God. When the human self is immersed and totally lost in God, He, in His majestic and glorious Holiness, is pleased to ride on it as one does on a she-camel. Addressing those who turn away from truth, God serves notice as a warning and deterrent and says: Like the people of Thamud, you are denying the she-camel access to the spring of drinking water, i.e. remembrance of God and the contemplation of Divine verities on which the very life of the soul depends. Not only that, you also propose to hamstring it with a view to seriously disabling it from treading the paths that are God's. Therefore, in your own interest, do not ever deny it the elixir of life. And do not amputate its feet with the axe of your illicit appetites. If you dare do this, the she-camel consigned to your care as God's mount will die of the wounds and you will be cut down like useless dead wood to feed the flames. After you die, God will never visit your survivors with pity; rather, they too will face the consequences of your sins and misdeeds. Not only will you perish on account of your evil actions, but you will also place the survival of your near and dear ones in serious jeopardy. These categorical verses unequivocally prove that man is the best of God's creation. The fact that Angels, heavenly bodies, elements etc. are functioning as intermediaries between man and God does not signify their superiority. Nor do they in any

way invest man with honour because of their role as intermediaries. Rather, it redounds to their own credit that they have been appointed to serve the elect of creation. Hence, the fact is that they are servants, not masters. How aptly Sa'di of Shiraz (on him be the mercy of God) has said:

ابر و باد و مه و خورشید و فلک در کارند تا تو نانے بکف آری و بغفلت نخوری
 این همه از بهر تو سرگشته و فرمانبردار شرط انصاف نباشد کہ تو فرماں نہ بری⁶¹

To return to the point under discussion, the Angels of God—as has been mentioned before, do not have the same station and rank. Nor are the functions assigned to them of one and the same kind. Rather, all Angels, individually and severally, have been appointed to perform their separate and unique functions. In all cases cosmic influences are busy at work whether it is the changes and revolutions you come across in the world, or when the possible and potential becomes the actual and real, or when souls and bodies attain their cherished fulfilment. Sometimes, the same angel exerts different kinds of influences on different kinds of capacities and

⁶¹ The clouds and the wind
 The moon and the Sun
 And the firmament
 Are all so busily engaged
 So that you may earn your bread
 And do not eat it ungratefully.
 All are at your service, eager and obedient,
 Would it not be unfair if you did not obey the Lord. [Translator]

potentialities. Gabriel, for instance, is a great angel—the archangel in fact. He is associated with an extremely resplendent heavenly body and has been assigned a number of duties which are in consonance with the functions that this particular sphere is required to perform. Although this angel visits each and every person who is blessed with Divine revelation, it should be remembered that the nature of this so-called angelic visit is not actual; it only signifies the influence it exerts on the recipient.

However, the sphere of its influence is further divided into larger or smaller spheres depending on the potentialities and capacities of the vassals (*at the receiving end*). The largest sphere of this spiritual influence is the one which is concerned with the *Wahi* or revelations received by the Seal of Prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. That is why the kind and quality of truths and verities it contains and the surpassing beauty, cadence and eloquence of its style and diction are found in the Holy Qur'an alone. No other book can come anywhere near it. It should also be kept in mind, as has already been pointed out, that the angelic influence on the human soul or self is of two kinds: (i) the influence exerted through God's pleasure on the kinds of seed in the womb; (ii) after the formation of the human person has taken place, this influence helps the latent potentialities of this form

develop to their possible limit. The second kind of influence is known as *Wahi*; when it becomes operative vis-à-vis a Prophet or an eminent saint. It so happens that when an eager soul, impelled by the extremely intense light of faith and love, establishes a close rapport with the Fountain-head of all good, God's life-sustaining love overshadows and envelopes the soul's own love. So far, any step forward a person is able to take is, in fact, in consequence of the secret influence exerted by God's angel when the human embryo is in the womb. After man has reached this embryonic stage, impelled as he is by the force of the earlier angelic influence, the same angel exerts his influence once again. Not that the angel does it on his own. He is only an intermediary serving quite like the pipe that receives water at one end and conveys it to the other. But the angel also absorbs the light of Divine grace. When man, because of the union of the two loves, places himself near the receiving end of the passage of *Ruhul Qudus*, all of a sudden, the grace of Divine revelation pours into him through it (*the passage*). In other words, Gabriel on such an occasion inscribes his reflection and casts his luminous image on the eager heart of (the recipient). Consequently, just as the heavenly seat of this angel is known as Gabriel, so is his reflected image called Gabriel. Or for that matter, since the angel is named *Ruhul Qudus*, his reflected image too is given

the same name. Not that the angel actually forces his way into the human person. Instead, it is only the angel's image that is projected on to the mirror of the human heart. For instance, if you place a flawless quality mirror before you, the image of your face, consistent with the size and range of the mirror, will be straight away reflected into it. That does not in any way mean that your face and head will be severed and removed from the neck and placed in the mirror. No, both will stay put and remain in place as indeed they should. Only their image will be reflected which, of course, will not always be of the same size. Its size will depend on the size and dimensions of the mirror i.e. the mirror of the heart. For instance, if you see your face mirrored in an *Arsi*, which is a mini mirror set in a ring worn on a finger, although you would be seeing your full face, the size of each facial feature will be much smaller than its original. But if you look at your face in a large mirror, which adequately reflects the image in full, the facial features reflected in the mirror will be normal and of actual size. The same is the case of the influence exerted by Gabriel. He it is who casts this influence consequential to revelation even in case of the most minor of the saints. Yet, it is the same Gabriel who has been communicating revelation to the heart of the Best and Seal of Prophets, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The difference between the two

revelations is the difference between the aforesaid *Arsi* (mini-mirror) and the large-sized mirror. Although, on the face of it, it is the same Gabriel and the same impulse, but in extension and clarity, the capacity to receive is not always of the same quality. I have used the term 'clarity' to show that the difference between the various kinds of influence exerted by Gabriel is not only the difference in quantity but also in quality. All recipients of revelation are not of the same spiritual station because of the difference in the purity of hearts which is the condition precedent to the spiritual reflection mentioned above. As you know, all mirrors are not of the same quality; some are highly burnished and clear. As expected, the image of the beholder is reflected in them in full. Some mirrors are so dull, hazy, dusty and smoky that the image they reflect is not distinctly visible. Also, there are other kinds of mirrors which are so defective that if one's lips are visible, the nose is not, and if the nose is visible, the eyes are not. Human hearts too are like mirrors. A pure heart reflects a clear image while an impure heart reflects an equally dull and hazy picture. The most perfect and ideal purity belongs to the heart of the Holy Prophet^{sa} alone. No other heart is equal to his in purity.

It shall be mentioned here that God Almighty being the Cause of all causes, the Existence of all existents depends upon His existence alone. Out of pleasure or

displeasure, whenever God chooses to move or wills to bring about a phenomenon, the move if absolute and categorical, becomes the *sine qua non* of the movement of all existents in the universe. If for some reason, the movement is partial, parts of the universe also start moving partially. The fact of the matter is that the relationship between God on the one hand and His creation and the myriads of worlds on the other, is like the relationship between body and soul. Just as all parts of the body are subservient to the behests of the soul and incline in the direction in which the soul tends to incline, the same relationship exists between God and His creatures. I do not say, like the author⁶² of *Fusus*, that ⁶³ خلق الاشياء وهو عينها but I do venture to say:

خلق الاشياء وهو عينها. هذا العالم كصرحٍ ممرِّدٍ من
قوارير و ماء الطاقت العظمى يجرى تحتها و يفعل ما
يريد يخيل في عيون قاصرة كأنها هو يحسبون الشمس
و القمر و النجوم موثراتٍ بذاتها و لا موثر الا هو.⁶⁴

The All-Wise God has disclosed this closely guarded secret to me that this universe and its complements are

⁶² Muhiyuddin Ibnul ‘Arabi. [Translator]

⁶³ God created things and He is those things. [Translator]

⁶⁴ God created things and He is like those things. This universe is like a palace paved with smooth slabs of glass, beneath which strong currents of water flow. He does what He wills. Defective eyes mistake these things for God. They think that the Sun, the moon, and the stars are independently effective and functional on their own, whereas none is truly independent and effective but God. [Translator]

like His organs and are meant to carry out the imperatives and intentions of God Almighty, the Cause of all causes. The universe and its constituent parts are not self-existent; they derive strength and substance from the Supreme Soul—God, quite like all the bodily functions which exist because of life. To the Supreme Existent or Spirit, this universe is constituted, figuratively speaking, of so many surrogate limbs or organs. Some of these existents are in a manner of speaking the light of Divine countenance. Internally or externally, consistent with the Divine Will, they serve as the beacon. Some objects are like His hands, as it were, some are like His feet and some others like His breath. In short, this cosmic plurality in relation to God is, again in a manner of speaking, a kind of bodily expression whose life and splendour emanate from the Supreme Spirit—God, the Sustainer. Whenever God, the Sustainer, wills a volitional movement it is followed by a corresponding movement as desired by Him in all or some of the constituent parts of the physical universe.

In order to pictorially visualize the implications of the foregoing statement, let us imagine that the Supreme Sustainer of the universe is indeed the Supreme Being who has an infinite number of hands and feet; their number is uncountable, and their breadth and width limitless. Like an ‘octopus’, as it were, the Supreme Being has tentacles reaching out to all corners of the

universe and functioning as its gravitational pull. Indeed, these are the self same organs also known as the universe. Whenever the Sustainer of the universe wills a movement in part or in full, these so called organs are also bound to move accordingly; indeed He carries out all His commands and intentions through these organs, without using any other means. In short, this is only a simple example of the great spiritual truth about which it is asserted that each part of the universe is subject to the Divine Will and, like a faithful and humble servant, symbolizes the realization of God's latent objectives and is busy implementing the Divine imperatives in total submission to His Will. But this submission is not of the kind which is based on force and coercion. On the contrary, everything is attracted to God by a kind of magnetic pull. It seems that every particle has such a built-in tendency to incline towards God, as do the different limbs towards the body. Hence this alone is the truth, indeed the stark truth that the entire universe is like the organs of the Supreme Being. That is why He is called the Sustainer of all the worlds; just as life sustains the body, so does God sustain the entire universe. Were it not so, the entire cosmic order would turn into utter disorder and chaos.

Everything the Supreme Sustainer wills, be it overt or latent, temporal or spiritual, is expressed only through these intermediaries created for this purpose by God

Himself. No Divine purpose or intention is expressed in the world except through the medium of these intermediaries. This alone is the age-old and time-honoured law of nature extant since the beginning of time. One marvels at the warped reasoning of those who believe that it is because of the clouds that rain falls on the earth, and that without the water-laden clouds, rain cannot fall on its own. Yet out of rank ignorance, they choose to mock at the rain of revelation which falls on the pure of heart and for which the agency of Angels required by the Law is a must. They say, "Couldn't God send down revelation directly without using Angels as the go-betweens?" On the one hand they believe that it is against the law of nature to hear sounds without the medium of air. And on the other, they are oblivious of the same law of nature and of the spiritual breeze which transmits the voice of God to the hearts of the recipients of revelation. They also believe that the light of the Sun is required for eyes to see; but they do not believe that there is any need of heavenly light for the spiritual eyes to see.

Now that we have come to know the divine Law of God Almighty, that this universe and all its internal and external 'sense organs' are like His organs, that all objects are engaged in functioning as His organs in their respective spheres and that God's Will always finds expression through these organs and never without their

medium, we should also realize that the role and function of Gabriel concerning Divine revelation, as and when vouchsafed to the pure of heart, is an established fact and is considered to be a subject of great theological importance in *Shari'ah*—the law of Islam. Indeed this functional relationship is based on the same philosophical truth that we have just discussed and the details of which are as follows; in the context of the foregoing law of nature that for communicating Divine revelation, or for investing someone with the capacity to receive it, there have to be some functionaries or agents created by God to serve as instruments for the implementation of His revealed Will and spiritual intent, just like other organs as are busy performing their physical functions. The specific 'organ' for this task, also known by the name of Gabriel, starts functioning spontaneously in obedience to the Will of the Supreme Being, quite like an actual limb or organ. When God responds to a loving heart with love, Gabriel, in accordance with the aforesaid principle has also to respond in kind. As required by the law of nature, just as a shadow moves with the movement of its original, Gabriel also moves in kind in simultaneous and spontaneous response to the Divine Will. When the angelic light of Gabriel moves in consequence of the Divine urge, inspiration and breath, a reflected image of what may well be called *Ruhul Qudus* is at once im-

printed on the heart of the true lover and becomes an inseparable attribute of true love. At this level, it is able to perform the functions of the ear for hearing the voice of God and those of the eyes for beholding His wonders. It provides vital energy to the wheel, as it were, of the tongue to enable it to articulate the revealed word and stimulates it—the tongue to move at great speed along the revealed lines. Without this power, the human heart is as good as blind, and the tongue is like a railway train without a locomotive. Remember, this force or the *élan vital* known as *Ruhul Qudus* is not always of the same strength and quality when it visits hearts. Rather, just as human love is either perfect or imperfect, the influence exerted on it by the angelic light of Gabriel too is proportionate to its quality.

Remember! this power and strength of *Ruhul Qudus*, which is consequential to the union of the two loves is born in the human heart as a result of the reflection of the angelic light of Gabriel. Its existence does not require that the recipient should be hearing the Holy Word of God all the time or have spiritual visions constantly. Instead, such phenomena are rather like immediate causes for the perception of heavenly light. In a manner of speaking, it is something from God, a kind of light for spiritual eyes, or a kind of spiritual air for communicating sound to spiritual ears. It is also quite clear that unless there is something to see, light

alone cannot help one see it; and unless the speaker speaks, air alone cannot communicate any signal to the ear. So is this light or air merely a kind of spiritual medium for the spiritual sense organs just as sunlight is the medium or stimulus for the eyes and air for the ears. When God Almighty wills to communicate His Word to the recipient's heart, consequential to His volitional intent, there is a simultaneous wave of light, a vibration of air and a kind of energy generated to stimulate the recipient's tongue in readiness for spiritual communication in terms of the light of Gabriel. Because of this vibration or energy, at once the written Word of God appears before the eyes of the recipient or the tongue begins to articulate the revealed words. However, prior to revelation, the recipient is endowed with spiritual sense organs and a special spiritual light or perception as a kind of faculty. Both are granted to equip the recipient with the capability of receiving revelation before it is actually received. The reason for this is that if the recipient's heart were without the spiritual sense organs, or if his spiritual eyes were without the light of the *Ruhul Qudus*, how could he ever see the revealed Word of God—and that too without spiritual vision? This is why both of these are granted to the recipients well before the experience. The foregoing discussion should make it clear to our readers that the role Gabriel performs regarding revelation is three-fold:

(1) When the seminal sperm is introduced into the womb for the creation of a person whom God's grace (which does not stand in need of human help) wants to shape with the innate capacity to receive revelation, He casts a reflection of the light of Gabriel on what is still a sperm. It is then, through God's grace, that the nature of this person develops its revelatory quality and is invested with spiritual sense organs.

The second function which Gabriel is required to perform is when, by God's grace, the human love takes shelter under Divine love, the light of Gabriel is also activated and a reflection of this light falls on the heart of the genuine lover (of God). In other words, when the reflection of this light is cast on the heart of the true lover, a reflected picture of Gabriel is produced performing the functions of light, air and heat, which comes to stay in the heart of the recipient as a faculty to receive revelation. At the one end, it is imbued with the light of Gabriel and at the other, it enters the heart of the recipient. In other words, we may well call it *Ruhul Qudus* or its pictorial reflection.

The third function Gabriel performs is that when God's Word finds expression in speech, he (Gabriel) becomes vibrant like the breeze and communicates the Divine word to the spiritual ear of the heart; or places it before the (recipient's) visual field in the form of light that burns bright, accentuates the stimulating heat and

guides the tongue to articulate the revealed words.

Here, I would like to dispel the doubts and misconceptions of those who may like to know what after all is unique about the revelations and visions of Prophets and saints as against those of ordinary people. If the affairs of the unknown are disclosed to Prophets and saints, at times they are also disclosed to others. Even rogues and rascals are wont to relate their dreams and visions which later on turn out to be true. If Prophets, saints, rank sinners and notorious scoundrels all happen to share the same kind of spiritual experience, why should Prophets and saints be singled out and accorded preference?

In answer to this, I would like to point out that this question underlines one basic fact and to that extent it is valid and correct. The fact is that out of the forty-six parts of the angelic light of Gabriel, only one part covers and is distributed over the entire world. No sinner or evildoer even of the first order is outside its purview. I even believe, and experience testifies to it, that on occasion even a woman of loose morals who belongs to the class of prostitutes and whose youth has been spent in illicit sex, may sometimes have a true dream. It is even more surprising that such a woman soaked in drink and in bed with her lover, can even during such a night have a dream which turns out to be true. But remember, it happens exactly as it should; for

the angelic light of Gabriel is quite like the Sun. From his headquarters, he is exerting his influence over the entire universe consistent with the potentialities of the recipients. Hence, not a single human being in the world is totally left out in the dark. Even the lowest of the low retains a minuscule particle of this love for his true homeland and the true Beloved. Under the circumstances, it was necessary that parts of Gabriel's influence should have been extended to all humans including *majanin*⁶⁵; which as a matter of fact is the case. *Majanin*⁶⁵, who are commonly termed as *majdhub* by the laity because of a kind of withdrawal from reality on their part, sometimes happen to fall under the rays of Gabriel's light. As a result, some of the rays of this light are reflected on their inner sight because of which it comes to have an inkling of the secret workings of Providence. But such dreams or visions pose no threat to the status of a Prophet or a saint and in no way do they detract from their exalted station, nor for that matter, can any confusion arise between the two. Between them there is such a marked and clear difference as can be easily understood by a rational human being, because the dreams and visions of the spiritual elite and those of the commoners can in no way be equated directly or indirectly, qualitatively or quantita-

⁶⁵ Not used here in its literal sense (i.e., lunatics, the insane) but as a synonym of *majdhub* the meaning of which is explained in the text.

tively. The elite of God partake of Divine bounties to an extraordinary degree. The rest of the world shares this grace the way a poor beggar who happens to have a penny could be considered to share the coffers of a reigning monarch. It is evident that this minuscule participation in ownership does not in any way detract from the royal splendour, nor for that matter does it elevate the beggar's position. A little reflection will show that the glow-worm also known as *Pat Bijna* and *Jugnu*, too, has a kind of infinitesimal resemblance with the Sun, but can it ever claim any share of the Sun's glory because of this resemblance? Let it be understood that all excellences require a high degree of perfection in quality as well as quantity. A novice by learning to identify letters in alphabetical order does not become a scholar of repute; nor can one who chances to compose a poetic line be considered equal to the great poets.

No part of wisdom or authority is without this microscopic commonality. If a ruler rules over the world, so does a labourer in his cottage rule over his wife and children. As to why God allowed this commonality of experience between the good and the bad, and why at all did He favour the indifferent with this heavenly bounty as a specimen, the answer is that He did so as a countermeasure and clincher of an argument, so that because of this genetic affinity every sceptic should be able to testify to the noble condition of the elect of God.

When a person, even in the context of his limited scope, witnesses these phenomena for himself and then also happens to hear such people speak of it, it becomes impossible for him, because of this glimpse, however momentary, to deny in all fairness the possibility of such spiritual experiences. Hence after personally bearing witness to even a minor example of spiritual truth, he *ipso facto* becomes answerable to God, and can only deny the truth on pain of being apprehended. For instance, the Arya today believe that after revealing the four Vedas God suddenly applied closure to revelation forever. But Divine Law gives the lie to their belief for they themselves know that the institution of revelation continues to operate even to this day. At times, even the sinners among them happen to see true dreams. It is quite clear that God who did not deprive even the sinful and the worldly of His spiritual grace and despite their lack of total affinity does on occasion shower His blessings even upon them, *mutatis mutandis*, what will He not confer upon those of His righteous servants who implicitly follow His Will and whose submission to Him is total. The moral of this genetic participation is that every person however sinful and evil, even a blood-thirsty infidel, should realize by reflecting upon this resemblance that God did not create him to go to waste. Instead, He has invested him with a built-in capacity for development and given him the basic form quite like a

seed. It is for him to move forward. No one is by birth denied access to the bounteous table of God except the one who suffers deprivation by purposely digressing from the right path and letting the light that is planted inside him lie unused. It will be his own doing, the consequences of which he will have to face, if he deliberately chooses not to follow the natural paths to salvation.

Reminder

In the treatise *Fat-he-Islam*, after mentioning the five branches of the divine project entrusted to us by God Almighty, we have reminded our sincere friends of the faith and well-wishers of Islam, of the need for assistance to which our devoted and eager brethren should attend at the earliest so that all programmes can start functioning in the most suitable manner.

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For the Information of all Muslim Scholars

Whatever this humble self has written about the similitude of the Messiah, the theme has been variously set down in the three treatises, namely, *Fat-he-Islam*, *Taudih-e-Maram* and *Izala-e-Auham*. It would be meet and proper not to be hasty in expressing any opinion without first closely studying all the three monographs. Peace be upon those who follow the Guidance.

The Author,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

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